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TRANSLATING AND LITERARY AGENTING  
ANNA HOLMWOOD'S *LEGENDS OF THE CONDOR HEROES*

DIAO HONG

PHD

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

2021

TRANSLATING AND LITERARY AGENTING  
ANNA HOLMWOOD'S *LEGENDS OF THE CONDOR HEROES*

by  
DIAO Hong  
刁洪

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Translation

Lingnan University

2021

## ABSTRACT

Translating and Literary Agenting  
Anna Holmwood's *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

by

DIAO Hong

Doctor of Philosophy

The role of literary agents in translation is intriguing yet under-researched. The mechanism of literary agenting *vis-à-vis* the initiation, production, and promotion of translated literature is under-explored. How literary agenting affects translation epistemologically, aesthetically, and technically remains uncharted territory. This dissertation attempts to fill the gap by investigating how Anna Holmwood, a translator-cum-literary agent, conceives and conducts the English translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* (“射雕英雄傳”), a *wuxia* (武俠) *magnum opus* by Jin Yong (金庸).

It first employs an NVivo-based theme analysis to unearth how the translation has been received and perceived by general readers. Next, it develops the notion of professional habitus based on Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Capitalizing on first-hand materials such as email exchanges, speech transcriptions, interview records, agent reports, and unpublished essays, it then examines how Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent empowers her to act as the initiator (as demonstrated in translation selection, contract-signing, and pitching), coordinator (as demonstrated in designating co-translators, and establishing and strengthening connections between various actors), and promoter (as demonstrated in coining the tagline “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”) of the translation project, and recounts the process in which this translation comes into being. Next, it conducts a textual analysis of the first two volumes of the translated book with various corpus tools (AntConc, L2SCA, MAT, etc.), showing how Holmwood's literary agent identity shapes her approach to *wuxia* translation, and demonstrating her “fingerprints” on the “tone”, “pitch”, and “pace” of the translated texts. It is revealed that Holmwood's translation is distinct from previous translations of Jin Yong's novels on multiple linguistic levels, and that her translation style is imprinted on the translation by Gigi Chang, the co-translator. Finally, Holmwood has appropriated such cinematic techniques as undercranking, fast cutting, zoom in shot, and extreme long shot in her translation, making it reminiscent of Tsui Hark's *wuxia* films.

Thanks largely to her literary agenting experience, Holmwood produces a reader-oriented translation that is readable, dynamic, and fast-paced, and projects Jin Yong *wuxia* as entertaining, individualistic, apolitical, multicultural, and cosmopolitan. This mixed-method study not only refreshes our understanding of literary agenting of translation, but also contributes to the research methodology of translation reception and translation style.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

SIGNED

(DIAO Hong)

Date: 23/9/2021





CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

TRANSLATING AND LITERARY AGENTING  
ANNA HOLMWOOD'S *LEGENDS OF THE CONDOR HEROES*

by  
DIAO Hong

Doctor of Philosophy

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# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation investigates the multiple roles of Anna Holmwood (Chinese name 郝玉青), a translator-cum-literary agent, in the translation of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* (hereafter *Legends*), and her “fingerprints” on the “tone”, “pitch”, and “pace” of the translated texts. The investigation is based on a thorough examination of first-hand materials (interview records, email exchanges, speech transcriptions, agent reports, and unpublished essays), and a corpus-assisted analysis of the translated texts. This introductory chapter presents the research background, research objectives, theoretical and methodological considerations, and outline of the dissertation.

## 1.1 Research Background

*Wuxia xiaoshuo* (武俠小說, hereafter *wuxia*) can be roughly translated into “Chinese martial arts fiction”.<sup>1</sup> As the only type of Chinese traditional fiction to have survived beyond the imperial era, it is still avidly consumed today (Wan, 2009: 1). In particular, the works of Jin Yong, originally serialized in newspapers and magazines in Hong Kong from 1955 to 1972, continue to be reissued and adapted for films, TV series, radio dramas, video games, comic books, and theme parks. As a maestro of *wuxia* fiction, Jin Yong is ranked 28<sup>th</sup> on one list of best-selling fiction authors of all time.<sup>2</sup> He is regarded as the J.R.R Tolkien of Chinese literature (BBC, 2018). His works have literally become the common language of Chinese around the world, and are applauded for their panoramic engagement with Chinese history, dazzling complexity of story plotting, vivid and multifaceted characters, adventurous exploration of human relationships, and seamless integration of modern sensibilities and Western literary techniques with the quintessential elements of the traditional *wuxia* genre (Hamm, 2004: 1-2). Rather than a trivial matter of popular entertainment or an ideologically

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<sup>1</sup> *Wuxia*, instead of martial arts is used to refer to Jin Yong’s fiction in this dissertation. The reason for doing so will be elaborated in Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> “List of best-selling fiction authors”. Retrieved on May 13, 2021. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_best-selling\\_fiction\\_authors](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_best-selling_fiction_authors)



regressive and artistically fossilized reading, they are persistently linked with the master narratives of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century China: revolution, revitalization, enlightenment, nationalism, and colonialism, and provide “an entry point into the culture and mind of China” (Song, 2019: 78).

However, *wuxia* translation into English is extremely challenging. Chard rightly notes that “the technical vocabulary of weapons, fighting moves and stances, pressure points for immobilising an opponent, and the like, rarely have precise English equivalents” (1996: 606). It is thus not surprising that most works of Jin Yong have not been translated into English, and previous translations (*Flying Fox of Snow Mountain*, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, *The Deer and the Cauldron*, and *The Book and the Sword*) have been fairly unknown. Consequently, Jin Yong’s cultural influences have long been confined to Asia. Few Anglophone readers have heard of him or read his fiction.



Figure 1. Book Covers of *Legends* (British version and American version)

However, this conundrum has been somewhat resolved by the publication of *Legends*,

the English translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* (“射雕英雄傳”, hereafter *Shediao*). Anchored in the historical reality of the late Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), *Shediao* is a well-loved *wuxia magnum opus*, in which Jin Yong creates a series of impressive characters (e.g., Guo Jing, Yang Kang, Huang Rong, Hong Qigong, Huang Yaoshi, Ouyang Ke) through his vivid and in-depth descriptions of their love and hatred, heroism and cruelty, morality and degeneracy, and integrity and corruption. The main plot of this epic novel follows the training in martial arts, romantic entanglements, psychological “odyssey”, and transformation to a hero of Guo Jing—the honest, righteous, but slow-witted young protagonist. The primary engine of the story’s plotting is, however, foreign invasion and heroic defense. As Jin Yong’s third *wuxia* fiction, *Shediao* was first serialized in *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* between January 1, 1957, and May 19, 1959, and was revised in the 1970s and the 2000s.

*Legends* was published in two versions, i.e., the British version (published by MacLehose Press) and the American version (published by St. Martin’s Press) (see Figure 1 for book covers of the two versions). In terms of the British version, *A Hero Born* (volume 1, translated by Holmwood) was published on February 22, 2018; *A Bond Undone* (volume 2, translated by Gigi Chang) on March 5, 2019; *A Snake Lies Waiting* (volume 3, translated by Holmwood and Chang) on February 6, 2020; *A Heart Divided* (volume 4, translated by Chang and Shelly Bryant) on March 25, 2021. In terms of the American version, *A Hero Born* was published on September 17, 2019; *A Bond Undone* on March 24, 2020; *A Snake Lies Waiting* on September 8, 2020; *A Heart Divided* is scheduled to be published on August 24, 2021. According to MacLehose (2018), *Shediao* will also be translated into German, Italian, Spanish, Finnish, and Portuguese.

As the first English translation of Jin Yong’s fiction published by trade publishers,<sup>3</sup> *Legends* has elicited hundreds of customer ratings and reviews on Amazon, and thousands of ratings and reviews on Goodreads. It has been covered by some major news media such as *BBC*, *Quartz*, *The Guardian*, *The New Yorker*, *The Irish Times*, *National Public Radio*, *The Telegraph*, *The Economist*, *Global Times*, *Taiwan News*, *Newsweek*, and *Beijing Review* (see

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<sup>3</sup> Trade publishers are publishers that produce “general-interest books, both fiction and non-fiction, that are written for a non-specialist readership and sold through the general retail trade” (Thompson, 2019). Retrieved on May 17, 2021 from <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198794202.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198794202-e-12>. The most typical trade publishers are Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, etc.

Appendix 1 for the complete list of relevant media reports). Book reviews of it have been published in *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, *Historical Novel Review*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Publishers Weekly*, *New York Journal of Books*, *Kirkus Reviews Magazine*, and *Shanghai Book Review* (see Appendix 2 for the complete list of relevant book reviews). The translators and publishers have been interviewed on several occasions (e.g., *Storydrive*, 2018; *The Paper*, 2018; *BBC*, 2019). It seems that *Legends* has outperformed earlier *wuxia* translations thus far in terms of market success, and has undoubtedly become a cultural phenomenon.

Central to this translation project is Holmwood, the principal translator and co-literary agent. It is she who initiated the translation project, who set the “keynote” for the whole translation, who coined the sensational tagline “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”, and who attracted most media attention. Besides a literary translator, Holmwood has been an editor, business designer, and literary agent. She was the Editor in Chief of “Books from Taiwan”, a government-funded initiative to introduce a series of literary titles in Chinese to international publishers and readers, from 2014 to 2015. She has worked in such literary agencies as Johnson & Alcock (London), Andrew Nurnberg Associates (London), The Grayhawk (Taipei), and Diamond Kahn and Woods (London) before and during the translation of *Legends*, assessing manuscript submissions, handling translation rights of literary works, editing translation samples, and researching international publishing houses. The high visibility and intriguing identities of Holmwood channel my interests into literary agenting of translation, an under-researched topic in translation studies. This unique case of literary translation provides an exciting opportunity to refresh our understanding of literary agenting of translation, and advance our knowledge of translation initiation, production, promotion, and reception.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

Translation publishing is a field where the dynamics are shaped by multiple actors—authors, translators, publishers, editors, literary agents, booksellers, book reviewers, who cooperate with and yet compete against one another, and pursue interests that coincide in certain aspects and diverge in others. As key players in translation publishing, literary agents

represent authors and offer their works to prospective target-language publishing houses, who then appoint translators (Munday, 2001: 154). Partaking in the economic, cultural, and political mediations in the transnational field of translation (Cottenet, 2017: 176), they have considerably facilitated the international success of such writers as J.K. Rowling, Dan Brown, Gabriel García Márquez, Stieg Larsson, and Jung Chang. Whereas the practice of literary agenting is common, the very concept of it is nebulous for many translation scholars. Literary agents, like valiant soldiers with unknown identities on battlefronts, take a rather marginal place, compared with authors, translators, publishers, and editors in translation studies. That said, the dearth of research has been somewhat remedied recently. Buzelin (2006) analyzes how literary agents collaborate with independent publishers in handling translation projects. She regards literary agents as “the most accomplished embodiment of the hybridity (and impurity) of literary and publishing practices” (ibid.: 159). Tamaki (2009) recounts the position of translation in the Japanese book market by focusing on the call-for-translators system, co-established by publishers and TranNet, a literary agency. Sapiro (2010a, 2014, 2015a, 2019) touches upon the topic of literary agenting in her studies of the publishing industry from sociological perspectives. Her studies, however, unanimously accentuate the dominant position of publishers. Kuitert (2015) joins the discussion by examining how Prins & Prins literary agency has promoted the boom of Latin American literature in the Netherlands based on bibliographical and archival information. In a similar vein, Cottenet (2017) investigates how Agence Hoffman, one of the oldest French literary agencies, has facilitated the translation and promotion of American literature into France against a complex ideological and economic backdrop in the 1940s and 1950s. Roig-Sanz & Meylaerts (2018) treats literary agents as increasingly essential cultural mediators in the international translation market.

These important studies have shed light on the dynamics of literary agenting of translation in different cultures and from various historical periods. They have not, however, systematically theorized or coherently synthesized the various issues raised in their research. The micro-level mechanism of literary agenting *vis-à-vis* the initiation, production, and promotion of translated literature is still imperfectly understood, and how literary agenting affects translation epistemologically, aesthetically, and technically remains uncharted territory.

This dissertation endeavors to contribute to the existing knowledge of literary agenting

of translation, and thereby foster the conjunction of translation studies and publishing research, by illuminating how Holmwood has conceived and conducted the translation of *Shediao*, and has facilitated the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural travel of *Legends*. It foregrounds her multiple roles in the translation project and her “fingerprints” on the “tone”, “pitch”, and “pace” of the translated texts. These roles and “fingerprints”, as will be demonstrated, are largely attributed to her literary agenting experience and mindset. Put most simply, her identity as a literary agent significantly affects her conveyance of the style and flavor of Jin Yong *wuxia*. Based on a thorough examination of interviews, emails, and speeches, and the corpus-assisted textual analysis, I will showcase that Holmwood presents Jin Yong *wuxia* as entertaining, apolitical, multicultural, and cosmopolitan, and thus reconfigures the otherwise nationalist and traditionalist genre into a postmodern cultural commodity geared toward a global readership. Her simultaneous translating and literary agenting are embedded within a constellation of interpersonal relationships and societal realities. It is worth noting that Holmwood’s literary agenting of *Legends* must be interpreted at two levels: (1) In a metaphorical sense, she functions like a literary agent in the initiation, production, and promotion of *Legends*. (2) In a practical sense, she is the co-literary agent of *Legends*. In collaboration with Peter Buckman, the primary literary agent, she directly participates in the contract-signing and pitching of the translation project, which is confirmed by Holmwood herself, “I co-agented on this project, and my part of the work was focused on obtaining rights on the Chinese side, as well as writing the pitch and translating the sample” (Holmwood’s email to me, May 17, 2019).

### 1.3 Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Subsumed under the label of “socio-translation studies” (Simeoni, 2007), this dissertation is exploratory and interpretative. A plurality of theoretical concepts are applied. Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology has profoundly influenced translation studies in the past two decades and will continue to open up new directions of research (Hanna, 2016: 1). His field theory and economy of symbolic goods are potent for deepening our understanding of the production and distribution of literary translation. His concepts such as habitus, capital, and field will be used in this dissertation. In particular, I question some of the established underpinnings of the notion



of habitus, and call for a clearly expressed and well-justified definition of “professional habitus”. Through a rigorous examination of Holmwood’s various extratextual activities, I lay bare how her professional habitus as a literary agent is prototyped, developed, and operationalized, and how intention/consciousness and instinct/unconsciousness act in concert in these processes. In accounting for Holmwood’s translation style, I problematize “reader-oriented translation”, a seemingly old hat notion but a potentially facile assumption, based on the criteria of translation usability proposed by Suojanen et al. (2015), and then crystallize the notion with evidence collected from Holmwood’s public discourses and translated texts. Inspired by “cinematic novel”, a well-developed concept in literary studies, I propose and unleash the analytical potential of “cinematic translation”, in exploring how *wuxia* films influence Holmwood’s translation. It will be showcased that Holmwood has appropriated a polyphony of cinematic techniques such as undercranking, fast cutting, zoom in shot, and extreme long shot to accelerate the narrative pace of, and confer a cinematic aura to her translation. It will be demonstrated that Holmwood’s translation style is closely associated with her identity as a literary agent.

A mixed-method approach will be adopted in this dissertation. A qualitative analysis will be conducted in examining email exchanges, speech transcriptions, news reports, book reviews, etc, and a quantitative analysis is used to closely study the translated texts. Various methods are tailored for different research purposes, but together they serve the overarching argument of this dissertation.

I had the great fortune to establish contact with, and secure invaluable first-hand materials from Holmwood (principal translator and co-literary agent of *Legends*), Chang (co-translator of *Legends*), Buckman (primary literary agent of *Legends*), Darryl Sterk (potential co-translator of *Legends*), John Minford (translator of *The Deer and the Cauldron*), and Hannah Sheppard (literary agent of D. H. H. Literary Agency). In addition, I conducted an interview with Chang in Shenzhen, and transcribed three speeches and a BBC interview of Holmwood concerning *Legends*. Prior to the study, permits of use of email exchanges, speech transcriptions, interview records, agent reports, and unpublished essays were obtained from these interested parties. These materials form the “cornerstone” of my research. In addition, I retrieved news reports and book reviews, and collected reception indexes from the Internet.

NVivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, is used in the thematic analysis of Amazon customer reviews.

Literary translation has been analyzed by an increasingly sophisticated range of quantitative methods, and corpus-based translation studies “has emerged as the locus of a new phase of methodological innovation” (Halverson, 2017: 10). In this dissertation, various corpus tools are adopted: NLPIR-Parser and CLAWS web tagger are used for part-of-speech tagging of the source and target texts; AntConc, WordSmith, L2SCA, MAT, ProWritingAid, and Analyze My Writing for conducting textual analysis; SPSS for statistical analysis and chart creation. In particular, this dissertation demonstrates how L2SCA and MAT, designed initially for second language writing research and genre analysis, can be fruitfully employed in translation studies, and offer fertile grounds for methodological advancements.

## **1.4 Outline of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is composed of the introduction, five themed chapters, and the conclusion. While each themed chapter addresses specific topics and thus inevitably contains idiosyncratic elements, these idiosyncrasies do not undermine the overarching theme and central arguments of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 introduce the core terms of this dissertation and conduct literature review of Jin Yong translation and literary agenting respectively, thus paving the way for further analysis in the following chapters both theoretically and practically. Chapter 2 begins by elucidating the term “*wuxia*”, followed by a brief introduction to Jin Yong and his fiction. It then surveys the existing English translations, printed or otherwise, of these stories. Finally, it reviews relevant research published in English and Chinese respectively, identifying major research gaps.

Chapter 3 traces the historical development of literary agenting, evaluates the evolving roles of literary agents, and sketches the contours of the ecology and mechanism of literary agenting in the dynamic translation field. It investigates how literary agents have navigated and been navigated by the publishing industry, analyzes their interplay with other actors, introduces three influential literary agencies specializing in the representation of translation

rights, and identifies literary agents' four socio-cultural roles in literary translation, i.e., initiator, mediator, gatekeeper, and promoter.

Chapter 4 presents a multidimensional study of the reception status of *A Hero Born*, the first volume of *Legends*. It begins by offering a succinct yet critical survey of the existing research into translation reception. It then explores how the translation is received and perceived by individual readers (general readers and professional readers) and institutional readers (the news media and libraries). Reception in general readers serves as the center of gravity of this chapter. The topic of translation reception will thus assume fresh prominence. The findings of this chapter will be frequently referred to in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 are the principal parts of this dissertation. Chapter 5 attempts to “tell the publishing story” of *Legends*. It is committed to unraveling how Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent empowers her to act as the initiator (at the pre-translation stage), coordinator (at the pre-translation and the in-translation stages), and promoter (at the post-translation stage) of the translation project. It firstly introduces Holmwood's family and educational background, career development, and translated works, before analyzing the genesis and development of her professional habitus as a literary agent. It reveals that the principles of literary agenting are embodied in Holmwood such that she inclines, and is able to adopt various strategies and perform a series of specific actions. By parsing out the key differences between generalized and professional habitus, this chapter contributes to the ongoing theoretical debate concerning the nature and application of habitus. It then recounts the process in which *Legends* comes into being, focusing on Holmwood's collaboration with Buckman in translation selection and project pitching, and her designation of co-translators and intermediation between various actors. By concentrating on “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*” and her public discourses, it demonstrates that Holmwood has adopted an arsenal of strategies in bringing Jin Yong *wuxia* closer to Anglophone readers and promoting the sales of her translation.

Chapter 6 is mainly devoted to textual analysis. The common thread of this chapter is the influence of literary agenting on translation practice. It showcases Holmwood's “fingerprints” on the “tone”, “pitch”, and “pace” of the translated texts, that is, her special way of recasting *Shediao* for Anglophone readers. It starts with an investigation into Holmwood's conception



of target readers and her interpretation of Jin Yong *wuxia*, followed by a corpus-assisted examination of the global linguistic features (target and source text length ratio, sentence length distribution, passive construction frequency, and nominalization frequency) of *A Hero Born* compared with two previous English translations of Jin Yong's fiction. It then compares *A Hero Born* with *A Bond Undone* on various syntactic and lexico-grammatical levels with L2SCA and MAT, revealing that Holmwood's translation style is imprinted on the translation by Chang. It also showcases that Holmwood and Chang have synergistically mobilized various figures of speech such as metaphors, allusions, and hyperboles in their public discourses, to position themselves, to reconstruct a *wuxia* world, to guide general readers through, and to engage with the media. Finally, it scrutinizes the impacts of *wuxia* films on Holmwood's translation through the twin lenses of film analysis and narrative analysis, exploring how Holmwood "slow[s] the pace, speed[s] up the pace", and "brings battles to life in English" (Holmwood, 2014).

The final chapter draws upon the whole dissertation, offers a summary of major findings and research significance, and includes a discussion of limitations, unresolved issues, and implications for future research.

## CHAPTER 2. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF JIN YONG'S *WUXIA* FICTION AND RELEVANT RESEARCH

### 2.0 Introduction

As this dissertation centers around *Legends*, the English translation of *Shediao*, it is necessary to present a synopsis of existing English translations of Jin Yong's *wuxia* works and research thereon. This chapter starts with a brief introduction to *wuxia* as a literary genre, Jin Yong, and his fiction, followed by an evaluation of existing English translations, printed or otherwise, of these stories. Next, a survey and critique of relevant research are presented, in which lacunas are detected, and a proposal for future research is put forward. Relevant studies published in English and Chinese are evaluated respectively since they differ thematically to a noticeable extent.

### 2.1 Introduction to Jin Yong and His *Wuxia* Fiction

#### 2.1.1 *Wuxia*: A Chinese Literary Genre

To begin with, it is essential to settle the question of terminology. After that, the characteristics and history of *wuxia* as a literary genre will be outlined. “*Wuxia*” (“武俠”) is “derived from the Chinese words *wu* denoting militaristic or martial qualities, and *xia* denoting chivalry, gallantry, qualities of knighthood and heroism” (Teo, 2009: 2). Arguably, it is *xia*—a set of values and qualities such as gallantry, altruism, justice, loyalty, truthfulness, individual freedom, contempt for wealth and power, disregard of law and order—instead of *wu*—skills and prowess demonstrated in combats—that is accentuated and valued by Jin Yong. For Jin

Yong and many other *wuxia* writers, *wu* is only a means, while *xia* is the ultimate end. Liang Yusheng, a *wuxia* story master, contends, “俠是靈魂，武是軀殼” (*xia* is the soul, *wu* is the body) (1980: 96).<sup>4</sup> It is therefore necessary to expound more on *xia*, a heavily culture-loaded term. The character “俠” (*xia*) first appears in *The Five Vermin* (“五蠹”) by Han Feizi (韓非子) (Luo, 1990: 2). It refers to bands of wandering, cavalier, and lawless knights-errant. These knights-errant emerged “against a background of political instability, social unrest, and intellectual ferment” (Liu, 1967: 1). Despising *xia* as one of the five vermin to society and the ruler, Han remarks, “儒以文亂法，俠以武亂禁，而人主兼禮之，此所以亂也” (The Confucians with their learning bring confusion to the law; the knights with their military prowess violate the prohibitions. Yet the ruler treats both groups with respect, and so we have disorder).<sup>5</sup> Contrary to Han’s hostile attitude, Sima Qian (司馬遷) pens biographies for, and comments positively on *xia* in his monumental *Records of the Grand Historian* (“史記”),

今遊俠，其行雖不軌於正義，然其言必信，其行必果，已諾必誠，不愛其軀，赴士之厄困。既已存亡死生矣，而不矜其能，羞伐其德，蓋亦有足多者焉。

6

As for the wandering knights, though their actions may not conform to perfect righteousness, yet they are always true to their word. What they undertake they invariably fulfil; what they have promised they invariably carry out. Without thinking of themselves they hasten to the side of those who are in trouble, whether it means survival or destruction, life or death. Yet they never boast of their accomplishments but rather consider it a disgrace to brag of what they have done for others. So there is much about them which is worthy of admiration.<sup>7</sup>

Though both *wu* and *xia* are traditionally rooted in Chinese cultural and ideological customs, the term “武俠” was coined by the Japanese science-fiction writer Shunro Oshikawa in his novel *Bukyō no Nippon* (“武俠の日本”) in 1902 and was brought to China by Chinese writers and students studying in Japan (Teo, 2009: 2). *Wuxia* is historically and culturally unique to East Asia, especially China and Japan. Notably, however, *wuxia* is different from

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<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all the English translation of the Chinese citations in this dissertation are mine.

<sup>5</sup> The source of the Chinese is Han, Feizi (2010). 韓非子 [*Han Feizi*]. Huaping Gao, Qizhou Wang, and Sanxi Zhang (trans. & eds.), p. 709. The translation is by Burton Watson in *Han Feizi: Basic Writings*, p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> The citation is from Sima, Qian (2010). 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*]. (Zhaoqi Han trans.), p. 779 (electronic version).

<sup>7</sup> The translation is by Burton Watson in *Records of the Grand Historian*, p. 410.

*kungfu*, probably a more well-known term, thanks to movies starring Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan. In terms of popular culture, *wuxia* is more comprehensive as it encompasses literature, movies, video games, and other forms of arts, but *kungfu* is almost exclusively related to movies, especially those produced in Hong Kong.

The closest counterpart of “*wuxia*” in English is “martial arts”, “various skills or practices that originated as methods of combat” (Lorge, 2012: 3). *Wuxia* and martial arts are often erroneously thought of as synonymous. As an umbrella term, martial arts include, but is not limited to, *kungfu*, *judo*, *ju-jitsu*, *karate*, *kendō*, *Taekwondo*, *Muay Thai*, *kalarippayattu*, *sambo*, and *savate*. It might not be far-fetched to state that martial arts stress the *wu* side while ignoring *xia*, hence “compris[ing] only half of the term *wuxia*” (Wan, 2009: 2). This resonates with Minford, who explains that “the problem with ‘martial arts’ is that it leaves untranslated *xia*, and instead substitutes *shu* [術]” (1993: 2), though he uses “martial arts” in his translation nevertheless. I therefore hold the view that *wuxia* is different from and cannot be replaced by or used interchangeably with “Chinese martial arts”. *Wuxia* is one of the terms which are “very difficult to translate because they are so imbued with cultural or historical meaning” (Gogolitsyna, 2008: 6). *Wuxia*, like *kungfu* and *taiji*, should be preserved and popularized both as a cultural and academic term. I would use *wuxia* to refer to Jin Yong’s fiction hereafter in my dissertation. Having demystified the above jargon, I now shift the focus to the history and themes of *wuxia* fiction.

The prototypes of *wuxia* fiction can be traced to the story of Prince Dan of Yan (燕丹子) in the Han Dynasty and the story of Li Ji (李寄) in *Anecdotes about Spirits and Immortals* (“搜神記”) (Mok, 1998: 104). Although fictionalized accounts of legendary knights-errant—such as *haoxia* (豪俠) fiction in the Tang Dynasty and *xiayi* (俠義) fiction in the early Qing Dynasty—were circulated incessantly, it was in the Republican period that *wuxia* fiction in the modern sense came into being (Chen, 2010: 53). *The Legend of the Jianghu Knights-errant* (“江湖奇俠傳”), authored by Pingjiang Buxiaosheng (平江不肖生) and published in 1923, is widely hailed as the first *wuxia* fiction. The genesis and production of this novel are neatly delineated by Hamm (2019). Besides Pingjiang Buxiaosheng, Zhao Huanting (趙煥亭), Gu Mingdao (顧明道), Li Shoumin (李壽民), Wang Dulu (王度廬), Bai Yu (白羽), Zheng Zhengyin (鄭證因), and Zhu Zhenmu (朱貞木) are important *wuxia* writers in this period.

Most of their works were published in Shanghai, Beijing, or Tianjin.

The latter half of the 1950s witnessed a rising popularity of *wuxia* literature in Hong Kong and Taiwan, or the emergence of the so-called “new school” *wuxia* fiction, which denotes a shift of themes and writing style. Jin Yong (金庸), Gu Long (古龍), and Liang Yusheng (梁羽生) are regarded as the most prominent *wuxia* fiction masters. Gu Long (1938-1985), born in Hong Kong and lived most of his life in Taiwan, is best known for *Legendary Siblings* (“絕代雙驕”), *Little Li’s Flying Dagger Series* (“小李飛刀”), *Chu Liuxiang Series* (“楚留香”), and *Lu Xiaofeng Series* (“陸小鳳”). Credited as the pioneer of the “new school”, Liang Yusheng (1924-2009) wrote a total of 33 fictions, the most famous being *Dragon and Tiger Fighting in the Capital* (“龍虎鬥京華”),<sup>8</sup> *Seven Swords* (“七劍下天山”), and *Story of the Wandering Hero of Great Tang* (“大唐遊俠傳”).

*Wuxia* stories are fairy tales for adults (Eisenman, 2016). Thematically, they usually center around personal growth, martial arts contest, romantic love, treasure hunt, and revenge. A typical *wuxia* story concerns the adventure, quest, and romance of a young, handsome, and gallant male protagonist who is sometimes burdened with revenge, and who usually ends up becoming a master after a plethora of setbacks. Rehling (2012) regards *wuxia* fiction as a form of fantasy and relates it to *Happy Potter*, with which I am not in accord, though I am well aware of the connections between Chinese *wuxia* and Western fantasy. *Wuxia* undoubtedly incorporates some fantastic elements, but it is a literary genre in its own right. This topic will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

The heyday of *wuxia* fiction has passed, but they are still avidly consumed throughout the Chinese-speaking world, and their adaptations into TV series, movies, video games, and comic books continue to flourish. This long-lasting popularity is worthy of academic investigation. Examining the popularity of *wuxia* fiction in China with Hook’s theory of hero-worship, Chen rightly concludes that the following factors contribute to Chinese indulgence in *wuxia*: constantly chaotic social order, unrealized personal aspiration, and undeveloped individuality (2010: 8).

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<sup>8</sup> Serialized in *New Evening Post* in 1954, this is regarded as the first “new school” *wuxia* fiction in general.

### 2.1.2 Jin Yong and His *Wuxia* Fiction

Jin Yong, né Cha Leung Yung (查良鏞), is widely venerated as the most renowned *wuxia* novelist, whose works have literally become the common language of Chinese around the world. He is also a prominent editorialist, publisher, and public intellectual, who has participated in a plurality of significant political events, including serving on the drafting committee for the handover of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China.

Born into the scholarly Cha clan of Haining, Zhejiang province in 1924, Jin Yong was an avid reader in his childhood, with a predilection for historical classics such as *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* (“資治通鑑”), old-school *wuxia* fiction such as *The Female Knight-Errant from Huangjiang* (“荒江女俠”), and fiction by French novelist Alexandre Dumas. He compiled, with his classmates, *A Guidebook for Candidates for Junior Middle School* (“獻給投考初中者”) and published it in 1939, at the age of 15 (Fu, 2003: 47). In 1943, he was admitted to the Department of Foreign Studies at the Central University of Political Affairs, one of the then top universities in China. He dropped out of school one year and two months later after a clash with the school authorities and was then employed by the Central Library. Three years later, he was admitted to the Faculty of Law of Suzhou University. He became a translator-cum-journalist instead of a diplomat in late 1947 and moved to Hong Kong when *Ta Kung Pao* (“大公報”), the oldest Chinese language newspaper, was relocated there in 1948. In 1959, Jin Yong, in collaboration with his friend Shen Pao Sing (沈寶新), founded *Ming Pao* (“明報”), a newspaper, which was considered hostile to the Chinese authority before 1997. In 1981, Jin Yong became the first Hong Kong representative to be granted an audience with Deng Xiaoping, the then leader of China and a Jin Yong fan, marking “the expansion of his role from that of publisher and political commentator into that of a direct participant in the political maneuverings between Hong Kong and the mainland” (Hamm, 2004: 199). He was awarded Doctor of Philosophy by Cambridge University with the thesis titled “Imperial Succession in Tang China, 618-762” in 2010. He passed away on October 30, 2018, at the age of 94.

Between 1955 and 1972, Jin Yong published fifteen fictional works (twelve novels, two novellas, and one short story) serially in newspapers and magazines (see Appendix 3 for

detailed information of these works).<sup>9</sup> These works were later published in books and were revised several times. He composed an elegant seven-character couplet by joining together the first characters of each of his fourteen novels and novellas: “飛雪連天射白鹿，笑書神俠倚碧鴛” (I shoot a white deer while snowflakes are fluttering about the sky; with the company of green mandarin ducks, one writes the divine chivalrous legends).

Well versed in Chinese narrative conventions and modern literary devices such as allegory, cliffhanger, foreshadowing, vignette, and oxymoron, Jin Yong produces an oeuvre that is full of passion, romance, imagination, humor, and wisdom, by crafting an array of memorable characters—not the least of whom are Guo Jing, Yang Guo, Huang Rong, Xiao Feng, Zhang Wuji, Zhao Min, Chen Jialuo, Huo Qingtong, and Linghu Chong—and by displaying kaleidoscopic Chinese cultural knowledge—not the least of which are calligraphy, music, poetry, ink landscape painting, Chinese herbal medicine, alchemy, religion, Buddhism, Daoism, etc. His achievements in reinventing vernacular prose while rejecting Europeanized Chinese writing, in creating dazzlingly complex plots and *kungfu* moves, and in introducing and promoting traditional Chinese values to a culturally and linguistically diverse readership, are widely applauded. His works are held in high regard to the extent that Jin Yong’s name is arguably synonymous with *wuxia* literature. Bailey cogently summarizes Jin Yong’s literary success as follows: “his interpretations of traditional Chinese genres seem to cut across the geographical and ideological barriers separating Chinese communities with a success no other contemporary writer has yet achieved” (1997: 99). In the report of BBC (October 31, 2018), Jin Yong is referred to as the J.R.R Tolkien of Chinese literature.

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<sup>9</sup> There are different categorizations: some would treat “白馬嘯西風” and “鴛鴦刀” as short stories; I treat them as novellas. Jin Yong published “月雲”, an autobiographical prose style short story, in *Harvest Magazine* in 2000. Since it is not a *wuxia* story, it is not included in our discussion.



## 2.2 Existing Translations of Jin Yong's *Wuxia* Fiction

### 2.2.1 Printed Translations

*Wuxia* fiction by Jin Yong has been translated into numerous languages and has gained millions of fans worldwide. According to Luo, these works were rendered into Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, Cambodian, and Malay in the 1970s, and into Korean in the 1980s. In 1996, しょけんおんきゅうろく (“書劍恩仇錄”), the first Japanese translation of Jin Yong’s works, was published by Tokuma Shoten Publishing House in Japan, followed by several reprints. These *wuxia* stories did not reach European readers until 2004, when *La Légende Du Héros Chasseur D’aigles*, the French version of *Shediao* was published by Paris Editions You Feng (2011: 51). The picture below, taken at the Jin Yong Gallery of Hong Kong Heritage Museum, displays the published translations of Jin Yong’s works:



Figure 2. Published Translations of Jin Yong's Fiction (photo by the author)



That said, Jin Yong's works are largely untranslated in English: of his fifteen stories, only four have appeared in book form in English. P. Liu rightly attributes the dearth of English translations to "their extraordinary length, the unprecedented density of their historical allusions, and the lexical complexity of their prose" (2011: 113). In addition, Chan convincingly asserts that "cultural proximity" and "historical contingency" are largely responsible for the success or failure of Chinese canonical works into different languages (2003: 326). However, we should not be content with these interpretations at the expense of losing sight of such other factors as translation mode, literary agenting, publishing and dissemination, cultural promotion, diplomatic relationship, which increasingly complicate the reception issue of literary translation in a global age.

These book-form English translations are: *Flying Fox of Snow Mountain* translated by Robin Wu; *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* translated by Olivia Mok; *The Deer and the Cauldron* translated by John Minford; *The Book and the Sword* translated by Graham Earnshaw, and edited by Rachel May and John Minford; the most recent *Legends*, co-translated by Holmwood, Chang, and Shelly Bryant.<sup>10</sup> In addition, John Minford and Sharon Lai (also known as Tzu-Yun Lai) translated the first chapter of *Shediao* and published it as "Eagles and Heroes (Chapter 1)" on *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation*. In the first place, Minford and Lai planned to translate *Shediao* in full, but their plan was regrettably canceled. Wu's translation was published in the US. The translations by Mok, Minford, and Earnshaw were published by university presses based in Hong Kong. The British version of *Legends* was brought forth by MacLehose Press, a small trade publisher in London, while the American version was published by St. Martin's Press, a multinational publishing conglomerate.

Detailed information of these book-form translations is listed below:

Translation title	Chinese original	Translator	Publishing house	Publication year
<i>Flying Fox of Snow Mountain</i>	《雪山飛狐》	Robin Wu	Asian-American Resource Center	1972

<sup>10</sup> Shelly Bryant joined the team at a later stage and participated in the translation of the last volume of *Shediao*. She will not be discussed in this dissertation.

<i>Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain</i>	《雪山飛狐》	Olivia Mok	Chinese University Press (Hong Kong)	1993
<i>The Deer and the Cauldron</i> (3 volumes)	《鹿鼎記》	John Minford	Oxford University Press (Hong Kong)	1997, 1999, 2003
<i>The Book and the Sword</i>	《書劍恩仇錄》	Graham Earnshaw	Oxford University Press (Hong Kong)	2005
<i>A Hero Born</i>	《射雕英雄傳》 (卷一)	Anna Holmwood	MacLehose Press	2018
<i>A Bond Undone</i>	《射雕英雄傳》 (卷二)	Gigi Chang	MacLehose Press	2019
<i>A Snake Lies Waiting</i>	《射雕英雄傳》 (卷三)	Anna Holmwood	MacLehose Press	2020
<i>A Heart Divided</i>	《射雕英雄傳》 (卷四)	Gigi Chang & Shelly Bryant	MacLehose Press	2021

**Table 1. Overview of the English Translations of Jin Yong's Fiction**

In what follows, I survey existing English translations of Jin Yong's fiction. My qualitative evaluation will adopt various perspectives that take existing academic comments into account. *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* and *The Deer and the Cauldron* will be further investigated textually in Chapter 6.

Published in *Ming Pao* in 1959, *Xueshan Feihu* (“雪山飛狐”) depicts a story that takes place in a single day, featuring a frame narrative and storytelling flashbacks. According to Lai, Robin Wu, a Chinese American based in New York, published his highly abridged translation of *Xueshan Feihu* in four installments in *Bridge Bimonthly* in 1972 (1999: 358). Regrettably, I have not obtained this translation.

The first full English translation of Jin Yong's fiction, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, translated from *Xueshan Feihu*, was credited to Olivia Mok, who was also the author of the doctoral dissertation *Martial Arts Fiction: Translational Migrations East and West*. Her translation contributes enormously to a long-ignored area of modern Chinese literature. She follows closely with the original, which is both a blessing and a curse: Accuracy is guaranteed while readability is sacrificed. The following is a typical example in this regard:

這秘密起因於李闖王大順永昌二年，那年是乙酉年，也就是順治二年，當時胡苗範田四家祖宗言明，倘若清朝不亡，須到一百年後的乙丑年，方能洩漏這個大秘密。乙丑年是乾隆十年，距今已有三十餘年，因此當二十七年前胡大

爺跟閻基說話之時，百年期限已過，這個大秘密已不須隱瞞了(Jin, 2013a: 46)。

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. In that year, the forefathers of the four families pledged that, should the Manchu Dynasty survive, the secret should be held back for one hundred years, and could only be divulged in the year Yi Chou, being the tenth year during the Reign of Emperor Qianlong, which was some thirty years ago. It was assumed, twenty-seven years ago, when Master Gully entrusted Yama with the mission, that the one-hundred-year period had already expired. There was no further need for not divulging the secret (Mok, 1993: 141).

Chinese calendar and era names, the reign period or regnal title used when numbering years in an emperor's reign, are extremely complicated, posing a great challenge to any translator. The above translation is faithful inasmuch as every detail of the era names is taken care of, but such an English version packed with tedious, if not incomprehensible expressions would probably not win many readers. An alternative might be: "The incident took place in 1645"; "the big secret could only be divulged in 1745". As such, the Chinese calendar is directly transformed into the standard Gregorian calendar, thereby increasing the readability of the English.

It is noted that the translator has adopted several strategies to improve the accessibility of her translation to English readers, including a list of the main characters and genealogical tables of the martial arts schools. However, they are somewhat counterweighed by her renditions of technical terms—*qing gong* and *nei gong* are translated into "endomarts" and "levitation", for instance—and her conspicuous overuse of exotic and archaic idioms which may slow down reading. These concerns are echoed by Hegel,

And surely Jin Yong's fiction is stylish, a fact hard to convey into another language. For this reason [,] Western readers may not be captured by this rendition, despite the valiant efforts of its translator and the rare view she offers of this unmistakably Chinese genre (1994: 203).

Inspired by a legend in the author's hometown and set during the reign of Emperor Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty, *Shujian Enchou Lu* ("書劍恩仇錄") is Jin Yong's debut *wuxia* story, at the core of which are chivalry in the service of overthrowing the Qing monarchy and romance between Chen Jialuo, the protagonist, and two Muslim sisters, namely, Huo Qingtong and Princess Fragrance. It was initially published in *New Evening Post* from 1955 to 1956.

Graham Earnshaw, the editor-in-chief of Xinhua Finance and the managing director of SinoMedia Ltd., finished the translation and posted it online as early as 1995, but did not publish it in book form until 2005. Earnshaw's translation is characterized by excessive abridgements. The four-volume original is condensed into a one-volume English version. He omits lots of *kungfu* moves and introductions to historical and cultural backgrounds. In the following translation, for instance, all the *kungfu* moves (in boldface) are deleted without compromising the main clue:

語聲未畢，左掌向外一穿，右掌“**遊空探爪**”斜劈他右肩，左掌同時翻上，“**猛虎伏椿**”，橫切對方右臂，跟著右掌變拳，直擊他前胸，轉眼之間，連發三招。張召重連退三步，以“**無極玄功拳**”化開 (Jin, 2013b: 205)。

[A]s he spoke, his left fist shot out and his right hand sliced across towards Zhang's right shoulder. Then in a flash, his left fist flipped over and aimed for the right shoulder while the right hand went for the chest. Zhang retreated three paces and fended off the blows (Earnshaw, 2005: 228).

Nevertheless, what might concern readers are the pervasive abridgements of story plots and characters. The translator justifies his omissions in the preface: “I was as faithful to the spirit of the original as I could be, but took the view that it was necessary to simplify some elements of the story and the writing in order to make it more acceptable to an English-reading audience” (Earnshaw, 2005: 1). Careful readers, however, may disagree with his remark since they will discover that too many arbitrary omissions make the translation an incomplete one.

As the last novel of Jin Yong, *Luding Ji* (“**鹿鼎記**”) portrays the adventure of an eccentric and interesting figure, Trinket (Wei Xiaobao), a generous yet self-serving “knight-errant”, a witty yet illiterate chancer, an eloquent liar, an unbridled libertine, and a greedy gambler. It is arguably Jin Yong's most unchivalrous, and in many ways his least typical *wuxia* fiction. Its English translation was undertaken by John Minford, the erudite British translator of Chinese classics which include *The Art of War* and *The Story of the Stone*. Minford admits in the translator's introduction that the translation has been a great challenge, especially when the Chinese version reads with deceptive ease (1997: 9). This translation has been critically discussed by, among others, Lai (1999), Liu (1999), and Shen (2007). One consensus is that Minford, equipped with rich translation experience and encyclopedic knowledge of Chinese

culture, has been deft in dealing with numerous thorny issues such as *kungfu* move names and metaphors, while opinions on whether his translation can win over general readers sharply diverge. A close comparison between Minford's translation and the Chinese original leads to the impression that he has deciphered and reproduced in English nuances of the protagonist's personality and subtlety of authentic Chinese culture, which would otherwise be ignored if the translator is not conversant with Jin Yong's style, wit, and humor. The following character names and *kungfu* move names give us a flavor of Minford's translation:

### **Character names**

韋小寶: Trinket

茅十八: Whiskers

觀音菩薩: The Goddess of Mercy, Guanyin

小玄子 (a fake name of Kangxi, the emperor): Misty

### ***Kungfu* move names**

浮雲去來: Drifting Clouds

鯉魚托腮: Carp-Fin Flick

神行百變: The Art of Escape

覺後空空: Void after Enlightenment

飛燕回翔: Princess Flying Swallow

金馬嘶風: Gold Horse Neighs in the Wind

碧雞展翅: Emerald Cockerel Spreads Feathers

八卦遊龍掌: Eight Trigrams of the Roving Dragon

*Legends* is the English translation of *Shendiao*, which is widely believed to be the *wuxia* paragon and is one of the most adapted masterpieces of Jin Yong. This voluminous novel is the first part of the *Condor Trilogy* (“射雕三部曲”), the other two being *Shendiao Xialü* (“神雕俠侶”) and *Yitian Tulong Ji* (“倚天屠龍記”). As *Legends* will be thoroughly analyzed in the following chapters, no more introduction is necessary here.

In summary, the existing English translations of Jin Yong's fiction largely differ in terms of the degree of abridgement and rewriting, translator's identity, dissemination channel, publication house, publication time, and reader reception. The translations of Mok and Minford are largely “source-oriented” and they stand in contrast to the renditions of Earnshaw, Holmwood, and Chang. This suggests that Mok and Minford are more cautious and dance more closely to Jin Yong's tune in their translation practice. Market-wise, *A Hero Born* and *A Bond Undone* are better received than the other translations, the reasons for which are

multifaceted and will be further unraveled in Chapter 4 and 6.

### 2.2.2 Fan Translations and Comic Adaptations

In addition to these printed translations, a profusion of fan translations appeared online. At least the following fan translations are available: *The Deer and the Cauldron* (“鹿鼎記”) translated by Foxs; *Eagle Shooting Hero* (“射雕英雄傳”) translated by Minglei Huang, et al. and edited by James Gataiant et al.; *Heavenly Sword, Dragon Slaying Saber* (“倚天屠龍記”) translated by Athena, et al.; *Divine Eagle, Gallant Knights* (“神雕俠侶”) translated by Noodles, et al. and edited by James Gataiant; *Smiling Proud Wanderer* (“笑傲江湖”) translated by Lanny Lin, et al.; *White Horse Neighing in the West Wind* (“白馬嘯西風”) translated by Junzi; *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils* (“天龍八部”) translated by Moinllieon, et al.; *Ode to Gallantry* (“俠客行”) translated by Ian Liew, et al.; *Sword of the Yue Maiden* (“越女劍”) (anonymous translator); and *A Deadly Secret* (“連城訣”) (anonymous translator).<sup>11</sup> These translations are disseminated by online *wuxia* forums such as WuxiaSociety, Wuxiaworld, Immortal Mountain, Webnovel, and Novel Updates. Most translators herein use aliases. They usually work as a team, each responsible for one or several chapters. In addition, most of these translators are non-professionals, i.e., “individuals not only without formal training in linguistic mediation but also working for free” (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012: 151). The translation is usually preceded by a disclaimer and sometimes a brief introduction to the original story. Figure 3 presents the book covers of two fan translations:

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<sup>11</sup> They were downloaded from WuxiaSociety <https://wuxiasociety.com/translations/>





Figure 3. Book Covers of the Fan Translations of *Shediao* and *Yitian Tulong Ji*

These fan translations have thus far drawn little academic attention, a situation which will probably change as more scholars are engaged in fan literary translation research (see Jiménez-Crespo, 2017; Shafirova, et al., 2020). Though translation of this nature is conducted with different strategies, a cursory glance of these versions suggests that a shared feature is “translationese” due to overly literal translation, as an example from *A Deadly Secret* attests:

葡垣神情很是得意，道：“上個月初五，師父把連城劍法練成了。”戚長髮更是一驚，將酒碗重重往桌上一放，小半碗酒都潑了出來，濺得桌上和胸前衣襟都是酒水……說著仰脖子把半碗白酒都喝幹了，左手抓了一只紅辣椒，大嚼起來。葡垣臉上卻沒絲毫笑意……(Jin, 2013c: 10)。

Bu Yuan<sup>[s expression]</sup> was complacent. “On the fifth of <sup>[the]</sup> last month, teacher has already completed his training of the Liancheng Swordplay.” Qi Zhangfa felt even colder. All of a sudden, he slammed the bowl of wine on the table. More than half the bowl of wine spilt out as a result, causing his clothes and the table to be flooded with wine...And with that he finished off the remaining half of his wine, while he grabbed a hot red pepper with his left hand and chewed on it. Bu Yuan<sup>[s face]</sup> showed no hint of laughter...(anonymous, n.d.: 13).

To begin with, the enclosed words can be omitted without losing crucial information of the original. Furthermore, “小半碗酒” is mistakenly rendered into “More than half the bowl

of wine”. It is speculated that these shortcomings are attributed to inadequate translators and editors.

Finally, three English comic books adapted from Jin Yong’s fiction were published: *Return of the Condor Heroes* (1998) (see Figure 4 for its book cover) from *Shendiao Xialü*, illustrated by Wee Tian Beng, and translated by Jean Lim; *Heaven Sword & Dragon Sabre* (2005) from *Yitian Tulong Ji* by Ma Wing-shing, and *The Legendary Couple* (2005) from *Shendiao Xialü* by Tony Wong.

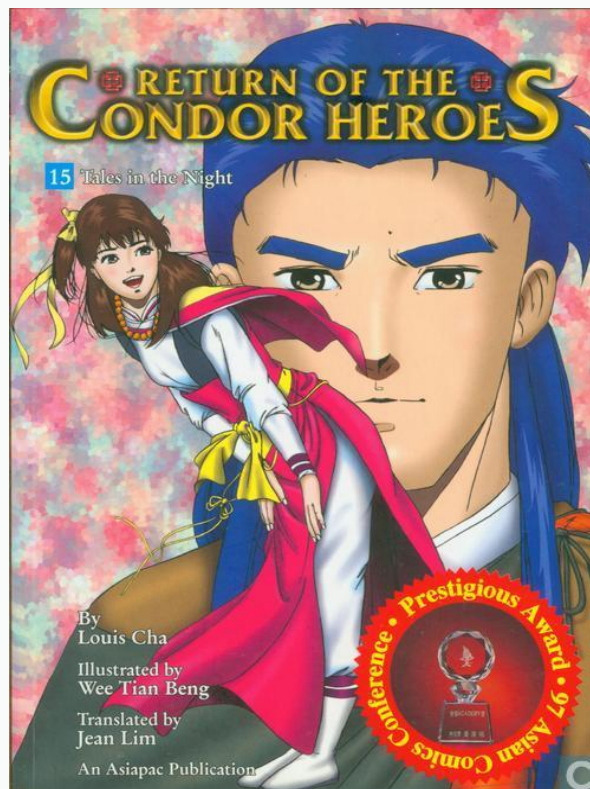


Figure 4. Book Cover of the Comic Book *Return of the Condor Heroes*

## 2.3 Existing Research

### 2.3.1 Research Published in English

Naturally, the voluminous research on Jin Yong’s fiction, which amounts to the so-called “Jin Yong Studies” (金學), overwhelmingly dwarfs the academic exploration into their translations. Significant scholarly contributions to Jin Yong’s fiction include, on no account limited to, Ni (1980), Wu (1990), Xiang (1995), Ni & Chen (1997), Lin (1998), Pan (1999),



Song (1999), Yan (1999a), Chen (2004), Hamm (2004), Han (2004), Teo (2009), P. Liu (2011), Chen (2015), and Zheng (2016). Among them, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and Modern Chinese Martial Arts Fiction* (2004), authored by Chris Hamm, is the first book-length study of Jin Yong's fiction written in English. The themes that these scholars have queried range from fictional characters, different forms of poetry, cultural concepts, historical backgrounds to gender politics, political allegories, and anticolonial nationalism, to name but a few.

Existing research on the translation of Jin Yong's fiction in English was published mainly between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s. Scholars explore such themes as translatability/untranslatability, linguistics-based quality, and translation strategies of culture-specific terms. The following section will epitomize and remark on research in this regard.

As an outgrowth of the symposium on *wuxia* translation held in Lingnan College (now Lingnan University) in March 1996, *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation* (1997) is a pioneering academic publication. In their articles, a dozen or so scholars, most of whom were based in institutions from Hong Kong, approach *wuxia* translation from translatability, translation strategies, and cultural transfer. For instance, Lai (1997) critically examines the translator's adoption of simplifications and omissions in translating Jin Yong's *Shujian Enchou Lu* and unravels the effects of foreignizing ways in maintaining and constructing the exotic flavor of Jin Yong's works. Wong (1997) begins his article by expressing apprehension about the quality of Minford's then-upcoming translation of *Luding Ji*, though he is fully confident in Minford's knowledge of Chinese tradition and culture. He attributes his worries to the seemingly insurmountable obstacles in undertaking the translation, namely, a cloud of imaginative *kungfu* moves and symphonic fighting scenes. These ostensible "missions impossible", however, are accomplished by the translator in question to the extent that Wong's "reservations began to give way to a more optimistic view" (ibid.: 115) after his reading of the first two chapters of the English version. He further asserts that Minford has proved to be deft and resourceful, following his thorough investigation into the translator's handling of many thorny issues.

These important studies are of relevance to my research in two aspects. Firstly, they have strengthened my belief that the translation of *wuxia* literature is well worth academically rigorous examination and have inspired me to probe into some unresolved issues; secondly,

they provide me with richly nuanced accounts of how scholars in the 1990s have tackled topics that are still frequently discussed today. Yet this essay collection is significantly limited: “reception” does not prove to be the central concern as the title and introduction claim. Reception has indeed been somewhat touched upon, but no in-depth investigation regarding readers’ response and translation dissemination has been conducted. However, this shortcoming is understandable considering the then academic zeitgeist in which discussions of literary translation were largely text-oriented.

A conference entitled “Jin Yong and Twentieth-Century Chinese Literature” was held at the University of Colorado in 1998. Nine years later, *The Jin Yong Phenomenon: Chinese Martial Arts Fiction and Modern Chinese Literary History* (2007), which was based on papers presented at the conference and others, was published, not only contributing enormously to the literary studies of Jin Yong’s fiction but also “ushering the research of Jin Yong’s fiction into the interdisciplinary world of political, social, cultural, and film studies” (Huss & Liu, 2007: 4). As the only article specifically on translation in this essay collection, “Translating Jin Yong: The Context, the Translator, and the Texts” focuses on the translation of *Luding Ji* by investigating Minford’s approach to the philosophy of translation and questioning to what degree the complicated “Chineseness” can be duplicated in English and savored by readers. Based on the textual analysis of several translation examples, the author demonstrates that the ambiguities and ironies, which are intrinsic in the original, are somewhat discounted in the translation. Culturally and historically contextualized, this important study sheds new light on the recurrent issue of “untranslatability” and puts forward agendas for future research in the field of translator identity and translation politics.

In 1998, Mok submitted her doctoral dissertation named *Martial Arts Fiction: Translational Migrations East and West* in the University of Warwick. With an aim to “add further to the limited inventory of case studies in urgent demand to test the polysystem theory” (Mok, 1998: 7), this ground-breaking research investigates how the translational migration of *wuxia* fiction took place in Asian countries and the West in different historical backgrounds. In so doing, she accentuates the models of transmission and universe of discourse in translating *wuxia* works. Mok’s micro-level study pivots around her venture into translating *Xueshan Feihu*. Mok then published several follow-up articles, addressing specific strategies in

translating appellations, classical allusions, philosophical teachings, historical anecdotes, and religious beliefs of Jin Yong's works (see Mok, 2001a, 2001b, 2002). The significance of Mok's studies cannot be overstated in that they not only largely expand the research realm of *wuxia* translation but also innovatively adopt an autoethnographic model, which yields fruitful results.

*Translating Chinese Martial Arts Fiction, with Reference to the Fiction of Jin Yong* (1998) is another doctoral dissertation in this regard. Lai, the author, firstly traces the development of *wuxia* fiction as an important literary genre and then examines domestication and foreignization before reviewing existing translations of Jin Yong *wuxia*. Featuring first-hand materials, in-depth analysis, and thought-provoking discussions, this pivotal work opens up future lines of inquiries. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that this dissertation should not be regarded as a book-length treatment of Jin Yong translation, or even *wuxia* translation, since the bulk of translation cases in this thesis concerns *The Fortunate Union, A Romance* (“好逑傳”), *Outlaws of the Marsh* (“水滸傳”), *Strange Tales of Liao-zhai* (“聊齋志異”), *The Seven Heroes and Five Gallants* (“七俠五義”), *Tales of Magistrate Bao and His Valiant Lieutenants* (“三俠五義”), etc., which are, *stricto sensu*, non-*wuxia* fiction.

Hong Jie finished her doctoral dissertation *Translations of Louis Cha's Martial Arts Fiction: A Genre-oriented Study* in 2015, and published it with the same title in book form in 2017. This study puts forward a theoretical framework of “genre matchmaking”, and against this theoretical background, the author conducts a corpus-based analysis of the English translations of Jin Yong's fiction. By and large, the contribution of this study lies not so much in the purported theoretical innovation as in research methodology. As the first corpus-based descriptive study of this field, it is a significant complement to qualitative analysis.

By examining Jin Yong's portrayals of gender-relationship, heroism, and the notions of happiness and success, Li (2006) demonstrates how Jin Yong draws on Chinese traditions *vis-à-vis* history, culture, and ideology, and how his fiction can be linked to European chivalric literature. Li's study does not focus on translation but relies heavily on the translations of Minford and Earnshaw in its textual analysis. Luo (2017) applies positioning theory to examine how Earnshaw has reconstructed aspects of Chinese *wuxia* culture in *The Book and the Sword*. D. Li (2021) is the latest study on *wuxia* and *xuanhuan* (Chinese mysterious fantasy)

translation, though her focus is online novels instead of Jin Yong's works.

### 2.3.2 Research Published in Chinese

The following literature review on Yong translation published in Chinese will be conducted through a quantitative and qualitative analysis based on data collected from CNKI. The bibliometric study of Tan (2018) indicates that there are altogether 60 journal articles on *wuxia* translation published in Mainland China from 2005 to 2016. To obtain an updated panoramic picture of research on Jin Yong translation, I conducted an advanced search in CNKI (older version) with the following query criteria on March 5, 2021:

Document type: journal article  
Source type: all journals  
Search term: “金庸” and “翻譯” / “金庸” and “英譯”

The total number of papers is 122. Considered to be less of research in nature, interviews, book reviews, and news reports are removed. Duplicate and irrelevant contents are also deleted. Finally, 103 articles are included in the corpus, which will be further investigated in the following part. A bibliometric figure is created automatically in CNKI:

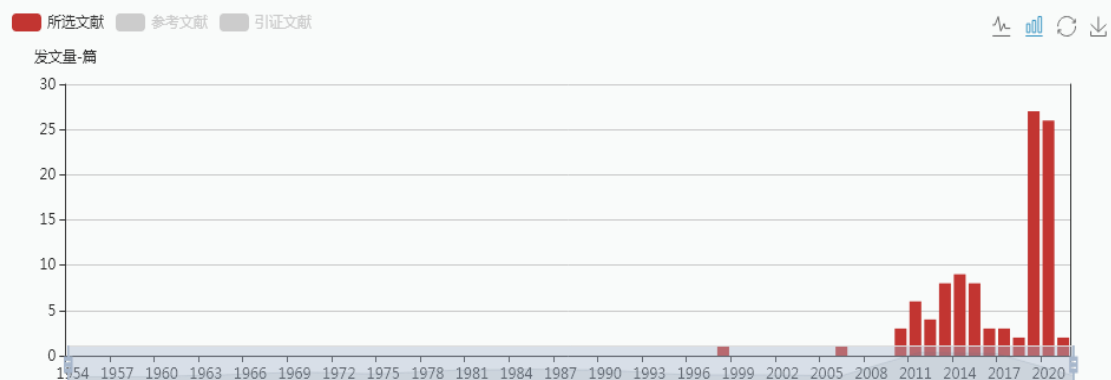


Figure 5. Time Span of Bibliographical Records

As is showcased in Figure 5, research on translations of Jin Yong novels in Mainland China emerged in 1998 but did not gain momentum until 2010. The sluggish development might be attributed to, among other factors, the fact that *wuxia* had long been treated as an inferior literary genre and that Jin Yong, together with his works, was ideologically

controversial until the 1980s. The number of studies plateaued in the next three years before peaking in 2014, during which year 9 articles were published. It hit bottom in 2018 before rebounding in the following year. As many as 27 articles were published in 2019. The research is projected to gain strength in the near future as “sending-out” translations flourish and academic articles thereof increasingly proliferate (Chan, 2019: 98).

A close reading of these articles points to three major topics. The first is translation strategies and methods (e.g., Chen, 2006; Ding, 2012; Lu, 2014; Zhou, 2020). Chen (2006) analyzes *The Deer and the Cauldron* from the perspective of domestication. I concur with the author when he suggests that domesticating translation will serve cross-cultural communication better and continues to be the dominant practice in *wuxia* translation. The second topic is translation reception (e.g., Hong & Li, 2015; Wang, 2017; Su & Han, 2019; Zou & Li, 2019; N. Zhang, 2020; Zhang & Wang, 2020). For instance, Zhang & Wang (2020) investigates the reception status of *A Hero Born* in the Anglophone world based on reader ratings and comments of Goodreads. The third theme is translation ideology and translator identity (e.g., X. Liu, 2011; Tang, 2014; Wei & Yu, 2016; Lin & Wang, 2019; Zhang, 2020). Liu (2011) asserts that Minford has substituted his ideology for Jin Yong’s ideology in the translation. M. Zhang (2020) examines the formation of Holmwood’s translator habitus and its influences on her translation.

In terms of research methods, most articles in question adopt qualitative methods such as literary criticism, leaving lots of topics unmined. Two excellent exceptions are made by Wu & Li (2018) and Hong (2019). Wu & Li (2018) innovatively incorporate qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the normalizing tendencies of the following categories: lexical richness, normalized part of speech distributions, high-frequency words, and the naturalizing percentages of *wuxia* terminology, based on the self-built corpus incorporating *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, *The Deer and the Cauldron*, and *The Book and the Sword*. This thought-provoking study is methodologically inspirational for my research. Hong (2019) also builds a corpus based on the above three translations. The author focuses on the translation of verbs.

In a nutshell, research on translations of Jin Yong’s fiction started from Lingnan College in 1996. Since then, numerous studies, written in both English and Chinese, have been

conducted and it is believed that more scholars will be drawn by this field in the near future. While Minford's translation had attracted the lion's share of scholarly attention from 1996 to 2017, the translations by Holmwood and Chang have come into the limelight in the past two years. By and large, existing research is mainly qualitative and text-centered. Though several studies are corpus-based, there is no corpus-based investigation into the translations by Holmwood and Chang. Several studies in Chinese (e.g., Su & Han, 2019; Zhang, 2021) are somewhat flawed by ideologically slanted perspectives which are fueled by the academic craze of "going out". Their conclusions are largely based on dogmatic assertions instead of in-depth analysis. Studies of translators are mostly based on second-hand materials such as news reports and media interviews instead of emails and original interviews. More importantly, few scholars have examined *wuxia* translation from broader sociological perspectives, and no research has been conducted from the angle of literary agenting. The genesis, production, and dissemination of *Legends*, and the collaboration and contention among Holmwood, Chang, the editor, the publisher, and many other actors in the translation project are still beyond the ken of translation scholars.

## 2.4 Summary

This chapter starts with the elucidation of the term "*wuxia*", followed by a brief introduction to Jin Yong and his fiction. It then reviews existing English translations, printed or otherwise, of these stories. Finally, it reviews relevant research published in English and Chinese respectively. Jin Yong's works are largely untranslated in English. Research published in English was mainly conducted between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s, focusing on translatability/untranslatability and linguistics-based quality assessment. Research published in Chinese has flourished starting from 2010, and is predominantly qualitative and prescriptive.

To recapitulate, widely known through their many newspaper and book versions, TV series, films, videogames, and comic-book adaptations, Jin Yong's fiction is a cornucopia of *wuxia* literature and has accumulated a cultural currency arguably equal to that of *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings* in the Sinophone world. However, they are largely untranslated in

English and thus remain little known to the West. The translations of Jin Yong's *wuxia* fiction are also under-researched, leaving numerous topics unexplored. *Legends* offers a good chance for English-language readers worldwide to encounter one of the world's most beloved and best-selling writers, and provides new materials and topics for translation scholars.

# **CHAPTER 3. DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY AGENTING AND REPRESENTATION OF TRANSLATION RIGHTS**

## **3.0 Introduction**

That any academic investigation should be preceded by proper definitions of concepts and unequivocal demarcations of research objects is perhaps a truism. Unfortunately, a clearly expressed definition of “literary agenting” is absent even in the most substantial studies of this field (e.g., Hepburn, 1968; Mariotti & Fife, 1995; Mayer, 1998; Baker, 1999; Hoegh, 2004; Gillies, 2007; Thompson, 2012; Childress, 2017). This absence may lead to much confusion among readers and, more seriously, the danger of obfuscating the essential properties of literary agenting, and consequently relegating it to a minor position academically. At the crux of the problem is the taken-for-granted assumption that literary agenting is so widely known that it does not merit a definition whatsoever. This assumption proves to be false: I asked six peer Ph.D. students, and four of them did not know what literary agenting was. This problem is compounded by the recurrent, if not indiscriminate application of “agent” and “agency” in numerous academic disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, communication studies, education studies, and political science. In these academic contexts, agent is the “one that acts or exerts power”, and agency is “the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Both terms are with philosophical and conceptual connotations. In this dissertation, however, (literary) agents/agencies should be interpreted practically as business representatives.

New York Society of Authors’ Representatives does define literary agent in its pamphlet: “The agent is an author’s business representative. He is responsible for all business and many other matters relative to the writer’s total literary output” (as cited in Cottenet, 2017: 3).<sup>12</sup> But

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<sup>12</sup> This citation comes from a secondary source. The original source is “Society of Authors’ Representatives,



this definition is too broad and overtly gender-biased.<sup>13</sup> To avoid ambiguities and foreground the *ad hoc* context of this dissertation, I would like to propose the following definition: Literary agenting is the profit-seeking activities, undertaken by individuals (literary agents) and/or organizations (literary agencies), of representing authors to publishers and other institutions, and of exploiting all rights (i.e., book, radio, television, motion picture, translation, video game) of authors' written works. In most cases, "agent" and "literary agent" are used interchangeably, as are "agency" and "literary agency" in my dissertation. Translation rights should be interpreted as the "copyrights" of a literary work in foreign languages.<sup>14</sup>

Mayer outlines the specific duties of a literary agent, in the modern sense, as the following: formulating a general plan to sell the writer's works, matching the writer with the appropriate editor and publishing house through "best bid" auctions, retaining subsidiary rights of the work, handling translation rights of the work, resolving conflicts between writers and editors/publishers, dealing with legal matters, monitoring the publishing process to ensure that the contracts are properly fulfilled, suggesting changes to a proposal or a manuscript, and discouraging ill-conceived projects (1998: 7-13). This comprehensive description should nevertheless not blind us to the fact the duties and roles of literary agents have witnessed tectonic changes over the past one and a half centuries, which will be unfolded in further analysis.

The central concern of this chapter is to identify how literary agents, as intermediaries and nexuses, have navigated and been navigated by the evolving publishing industry, and how they promote the international circulation of translated literature. The aim is to pave the way for the macro and micro-level analysis in the following chapters both theoretically and practically. To this end, I base my writing on a critical survey of and close engagement with existing literature, and an in-depth analysis of interview records and relevant cases, striving to answer the following questions: What cultural and social factors contributed to the emergence of literary agents? How do they cooperate with and compete against other actors in the

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undated [1946?] pamphlet, SAR MS#1173, Box 1", which is inaccessible.

<sup>13</sup> Based on my survey of the websites of dozens of literary agencies, there are indeed more female literary agents than male ones.

<sup>14</sup> Not all works have the potential to sell in translation, but for some works, translation rights can be "a major source of revenue, and a significant way of extending the market" (Jones & Benson, 2006: 123).

publishing industry, i.e., authors, publishers, editors, translators, booksellers, distributors, literary critics, etc., thus pursuing and maximizing their economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital? How have the roles of literary agents evolved over time? How are translation rights represented by literary agents? As such, both the diachronicity and synchronicity of literary agenting will be accounted for.

It is worth noting that literary agenting, the development of which depends on a plurality of factors, has developed quite unevenly around the world. Literary agents originated from the UK, and can now be found in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Japan, etc. It is also true that agents work in idiosyncratic manners in some countries. Without claiming to be exhaustive or all-encompassing, my analysis will largely be restricted to the Anglophone world, the UK and the US in particular, where agenting is most developed and widely practiced.

To reduce bias and over-simplification, which qualitative research of this nature usually if not inevitably suffers from, I will refrain from cherry-picking in discussion and consult with real-life literary agents when necessary,<sup>15</sup> bearing in mind that literary agenting, a market practice as well as a cultural phenomenon with multifarious aspects, can only be interpreted through multiple methodological lenses. Furthermore, I have aspired to, though not always with success, contextualize literary agenting by siting it within the socio-cultural field in which it takes place, and by relating it to literary production, dissemination, and consumption that interplay with it. I am also on guard against the tendency to exaggerate the status of literary agents while understating that of other actors in the literary field.

## **3.1 Early Literary Agents**

### **3.1.1 Emergence of Literary Agenting in the 1880s**

Although the focus of my research is firmly on literary agenting, it is assumed that it cannot be adequately delineated without touching on the socio-cultural context it grew out of

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<sup>15</sup> I would like to thank Peter Buckman from The Ampersand Agency, Hannah Sheppard from D. H. H. Literary Agency, and Jing Zhao from Sichuan People's Publishing House for their kind replies to my questions concerning the practice of literary agenting.

in general, and the development of book production and book distribution in particular. Put otherwise, the history of literary agenting, though it is significant *per se*, can only be understood as part of a bigger picture. This survey therefore starts with three key themes: the transformation of the book trade, a literate population, and the professionalization of authorship.

The early history of books has been amply documented (e.g., Finkelstein & McCleery, 2005; Febvre & Martin, 2010; Pearson, 2011; Gameson, 2012; McElligott & Patten, 2014). Notably, the book industry has developed in a nonlinear and uneven trajectory, with periods of prosperity and growth alternating with those of depressions and downturns. For instance, the trade of manuscripts was prosperous in ancient Athens. On the contrary, between the fall of ancient Rome (the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century) and the 12<sup>th</sup> century, writing was exclusively practiced by monastics from monasteries and abbeys, and books were largely contained within the ecclesiastical sphere (Feather, 2005: 9). It is generally acknowledged that it was Johannes Gutenberg, a German goldsmith, who invented mechanical movable type printing in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, and that his invention ushered in a printing revolution, which facilitated the democratization of knowledge, and paved the way for The Protestant Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and The Age of Enlightenment two centuries later. The effect of this printing revolution was soon felt by Great Britain. William Caxton, a printer as much as a writer, translated the French courtly romance, *Recueil des Histoires de Troie*, into English under the title *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* and printed the translation in either Louvain or Bruges circa 1474. Regarded as the first book printed in English, it marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the English book trade (Lemke, 1978).

The industrial revolution starting from the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century brought about a plurality of innovations such as railways, steam-powered machines, telegraph lines, and the mechanized factory system, transforming the ways in which books were produced, distributed, and read, and leading to the continual division of labor in the book trade. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were firms that could be labeled as publishers in the modern sense (Feather, 2005: 83). The magnitude of the transformation is further demonstrated by the meteoric growth of workforce—for instance, the number of workers engaged in the paper, printing, books, and stationery trades in Britain increased from 50,000 in 1841 to as much as 397, 000 in 1911—

and the swift emergence of printed advertisements, posters, billboards, tickets, pamphlets, and catalogues.<sup>16</sup> Publishing began to take on its familiar modern form.

One cause of and response to the transformation was the widespread literacy in the UK and the US, where illiteracy increasingly hindered personal and social development. While the pursuit of near-universal literacy can be traced back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Protestant reformers argued that salvation could only be attained by reading the Bible individually, it was at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that it was finally realized (Feather, 2005: 108). It was against this context that publishing boomed:

<b>Year</b> <b>Publication type</b>	1880	1900
Fiction and juvenile literature titles	1299	2109
Geography, travel, history, and biography	648	960
Poetry and drama	187	370

**Table 2. Number of Publications in the British Market in 1880 and 1900<sup>17</sup>**

Table 2 suggests a dramatic increase of publications in the twenty years from 1880 to 1900. According to Altick, daily newspapers also enjoyed robust growth in readership: *The Times*, a national newspaper based in London, had a steady sale of 50,000-60,000 *per diem* in the period 1854-1868; by 1882, this figure had risen to 100,000 (1998: 394-396).

Along with the modernization of the publishing industry and the rise of readership came the professionalization of authorship, which means that an unprecedented number of authors were able to earn livings with their pens. Literary authorship had long been regarded as “a pastime for spare moments, one of the areas in which the gentleman or courtier was expected to be proficient” (West III, 1990: 9), and had not been undertaken as a means of breadwinning.

<sup>16</sup> These numbers are derived from Table F6: Labor Force Occupied in the Paper, Printing, Books and Stationery Trades 1841-1921 of Eliot, Simon (1994). *Some Patterns And Trends In British Publishing 1800-1919*, p. 154.

<sup>17</sup> This table is adapted from tables C3-C5 of *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919*, pp. 128-129.

We may presume that the overtone of dilettantism and destitution attached to authorship significantly impeded the professional development of authors. The migration of authorship from pastime to profession was finally realized by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as is attested by Besant, who maintained, “[t]he calling of letters, then, now belongs to the nobler professions” (1899: 22). His criteria for “profession” may sound arbitrary today, but were widely accepted in his days:

First of all, it must be independent: i.e., the members must not be servants of anyone: the barrister takes his work from the solicitor, but he is not the servant of the solicitor: next, it must be entitled to share in the national distinctions as much as a soldier, a sailor, or a statesman: and, thirdly, it must have in its gift great prizes, whether of distinction, or of money, or both (ibid.).

If the professionalization of authors depended on “great prizes”, then the protection and exploitation of literary property were of utmost importance to authors (Gillies, 2007: 19). At the core of the issue were the ownership and control of copyright, which were not secured until the promulgation of a series of copyright acts and the introduction of royalties at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>18&19</sup> thanks to the unremitting efforts of individual authors and author associations. The exploitation of literary property was first assisted by manuscript readers: the predecessors of literary agents. We cannot be wrong in supposing that these manuscript readers appeared at least as early as the 1850s. The following advertisement was posted on *The Athenaeum*, an influential literary magazine published in London, in 1850:

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, *The International Copyright Act of 1891* and *The Copyright Amendment Act*. See *Copyright Law and the Public Interest in the Nineteenth Century* for more information.

<sup>19</sup> Royalties are typically agreed upon as a percentage of gross or net revenues derived from the sales of a book. Prior to royalty system, authors usually sold their book rights for a lump sum, i.e., a certain single payment.

forwarded with the Magazines.—Subscriptions for the Stamped Edition  
 ling Office, 14, Wellington-street North, Strand, London. For France  
 { JAMES HOLMES, TOOK'S COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

**TO PUBLISHERS and AMATEUR**  
**AUTHORS.**—The Author of numerous Works, historical  
 and imaginative, is desirous of EMPLOYMENT as Reader to a  
 Publisher, Editor of a Periodical, and in preparing Manuscripts  
 for the Press, in which occupations he has had many years' expe-  
 rience in one of the first publishing houses in London. His assist-  
 ance would be found of great advantage to Noblemen or Gentlemen  
 having any Work in progress, which he would not only carefully  
 revise, but would negotiate its publication, and correct the proof  
 sheets. Address, pre-paid, to A. B., care of CHARLES MEARS, Esq.,  
 9, Westbourne-place, Eaton-square.

Figure 6. The Advertisement of Manuscript Reading on The Athenaeum (January 12,  
 1850. P. 33)

This advertisement was indicative of the services manuscript readers could provide, which seemingly approximated to that of literary agents. However, there are two major differences: First, as is shown, the target readers of the advertisement were “publishers” and “amateur authors”, while later advertisements of literary agents would unanimously address “authors”; second, instead of “sell the rights” or “represent the author”, “negotiate its publication” was used, a sign of the weak and informal bond between manuscript readers and authors/publishers.

To the question of who the first literary agent was there is no absolute answer.<sup>20</sup> It is A. P. Watt who is widely hailed as the first outstanding literary agent. His rise was by no means an accident. By the 1880s, the conditions for the emergence of literary agents were ripe in the UK: (1) The continuously flourishing book market triggered the proliferation of publishing houses—Routledge was founded in 1836; Macmillan in 1843; Taylor & Francis in 1852—and vigorous growth of professional authors. (2) The improvement of authors’ financial and social standing shifted the power relations, and furthermore, as Gillies cogently points out, “the rules that governed the literary marketplace had changed utterly, leaving readers, writers, and publishers to find their own ways” (2007: 25). (3) The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works issued in 1886 prompted the international sale of translated literary

<sup>20</sup> For instance, according to James J. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes, Thomas Aspinwall, whose professional career as a literary agent began as early as 1827, might be the first literary agent in Britain or America. Barnes, James J. and Patience P. Barnes (1984). Thomas Aspinwall: First Transatlantic Literary Agent, *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 78 (3): 321-331.

works. Against this historical backdrop, a new player was needed to maximize authors' interests and profits, to settle conflicts between publishers and authors, and to handle the increasingly complicated subsidiary rights: dramatizations, special editions, translations, etc. Professional literary agents became "a commercial inevitability" (McHaney, 1970: 177). Ironically, however, this new player was not welcomed by publishers at the beginning:

This is the age of the middleman. He is generally a parasite. He always flourishes. I have been forced to give him some attention lately in my particular business. In it he calls himself the literary agent (Heinemann, 1893: 663).<sup>21</sup>

But I unhesitatingly say that in carrying his functions farther, the agent has been the parent of most serious abuses [...] has become a very serious detriment to literature and a leech on the author, sucking blood entirely out of proportion to his later services (Holt, 1905: 583).

The two vehement critiques above were representative of publishers' animus towards literary agents at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The similes of "parasite" and "leech" may seem as impertinent as unfathomable. A better interpretation of this resentment necessitates consideration of the next four factors: First, there was general disdain towards middlemen, which literary agents quintessentially were, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was more obvious in the book trade since it was believed that books were nonprofit-seeking and should be treated as such. Second, literary agenting required neither special qualifications, such as a college diploma and a trade certification, nor considerable financial capital as publishing did, which made agents somewhat below the salt in publishers' eyes. Third, agents broke down the old power asymmetry between writers and publishers, resulting in, among other things, the wild rise of royalties and advance payments,<sup>22</sup> which was understandably to the discomfort of publishers. Finally, as is reported by Hoegh, the misbehavior by some unscrupulous agents due to the lack of standard code of conduct and trade oversight damaged the reputation of literary agents *in toto* (2004: 55-56). It is no exaggeration to state that literary agents were born

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<sup>21</sup> Excerpted from Heinemann, William (1893). "The Middleman as Viewed by a Publisher", p. 663. This blunt criticism is frequently referred to in introducing the topic of publishers' resistance to literary agents' entry into the publishing industry. For example, James Hepburn in *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of Literary Agent*, Mary Ann Gillies in *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, and Julie E. Hoegh in *Agent of Change: The Literary Agent and Contemporary British Publishing and Bookselling* all quote these same lines.

<sup>22</sup> An advance payment, or simply an advance, is the prepaid sum received by the author in advance of book publication.



with an “original sin”. So how did this agent-publisher tension shift to a symbiotic relationship, and to what extent did agents transform literary production and, by extension, the publishing industry? These questions will be discussed in the next subsection.

### 3.1.2 A. P. Watt and J. B. Pinker

Although first American literary agents—such as Paul Revere Reynolds and Elisabeth Marbury—appeared at roughly the same time and were of the same anecdotal sort as their British counterparts, it was two British agents who defined the profession and dominated the scene for nearly half a century.

Alexander Pollock Watt (A. P. Watt) (1834?<sup>23</sup>-1914) is regarded as the man who established the profession of literary agenting (Gillies, 2007: 27). Among his clients were established authors such as Thomas Hardy, Rider Haggard, and Rudyard Kipling. According to Hepburn (1968: 51-52), Watt was born in Glasgow in 1834 and grew up in Edinburgh, where he made a living as a bookseller. He married the sister of Alexander Strahan, a well-known publisher who founded several journals such as *Good Words* and *Contemporary Review*. In 1862, Watt joined Strahan in London as his assistant, manuscripts reader, and head of advertising, an experience which familiarized Watt with esoteric knowledge of publishing and enabled him to have contact with such prominent literary figures as Alfred Tennyson and George MacDonald. While the exact date that Watt became an agent is uncertain, it is assumed that by 1892 he was already an established agent:

There are few writers of Fiction [sic] in this country who are not familiar with the name of A.P. Watt, and perhaps the number is equally small of those who are unfamiliar with the office on the first floor of 2, Paternoster Square. For it is there that the contracts are made under which, directly or indirectly, most important periodicals in this country, America, Australia, and elsewhere are supplied with the greater part of the novels and stories so necessary to their existence (F. W., 1892, as cited in Gillies, 2007: 27-28).<sup>24</sup>

The above account by F. W. might be hyperbolic, but it indicates A. P. Watt’s popularity

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<sup>23</sup> Watt’s year of birth is controversial. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography has it as 1838.

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-48381>

<sup>24</sup> This citation comes from a secondary source. The original source is “F.W. (1892). ‘An Interview with Mr. A.P. Watt.’ *Bookman* 3 (13): 20–2”, which is inaccessible.



as a literary agent. Despite great success, Watt's path was not easy; if anything, he learned by trials and errors and his career waxed and waned. According to Gillies, one of the first challenges was the agenting fee. He began by charging an attorney's fee commensurate with the quality of service in meeting-arrangement, letter-writing, telegraphic expenses, etc., but he found that lots of his clients procrastinated or failed to pay him; he eventually adopted a flat fee of ten percent of royalties, which worked as follows: the publisher paid the whole royalty to the agent, who took ten percent of this sum as the commission fee and forwarded the rest to the author (2007: 29). It is a practice that is still working today. Where an author is represented by an agent, their contract will usually contain a clause authorizing the agent to receive all monies payable on behalf of the author (Jones & Benson, 2006: 96). This innovative method not only provided a cast-iron guarantee of agents' income but also increased their leverage. A thornier issue for Watt was the relationship with publishers, who, as previously discussed, harbored hatred towards agents. He took advantage of manifold strategies: he worked for Strahan and gained an *entrée* into publishing, which would otherwise had been denied; he established a close personal friendship with and thus gained the trust of renowned authors, which meant publishers' refusal of cooperating with him would usually reduce their chances of publishing works with great financial value, a loss which few publishers could afford; finally, he worked efficiently and professionally, allowing publishers to see the value of courting him (Gillies, 2007: 56).

It is worth pointing out that Watt was aware of the potential value of translation rights and strived to reserve and exploit them for authors, which are evidenced by two cases: In Clause 7 of the contract between George MacDonald (an important client of Watt) and Hurst and Blackett, a London publisher: "the rights of translation and dramatization together with the rights to publish said new novel in English on the Continent of Europe are reserved by the said George MacDonald" (*A.P. Watt Records* as cited in Gillies, 2007: 53).<sup>25</sup> The other case in point is that the works of Lucas Malet (another important client of Watt) were widely translated into French, German, and Italian (*ibid.*: 73). To conclude, Watt's success can be gauged by the

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<sup>25</sup> This citation comes from a secondary source. The original source is "Typed Memorandum of Agreement dated 31 March 1897 between MacDonald and Hurst and Blackett. A.P. Watt Records, Chapel Hill", which is inaccessible.

accomplishments he made during his lifetime—not the least of which were undergirding agents’ position and mitigating the adversarial relationship between agents and publishers—and by the legacies he left—not the least of which were the model of literary agents and the standard services of literary agenting.

It can be deduced from a host of correspondences between Watt and authors/publishers (see Pinney, 2016) that Watt, as many of his contemporary agents such as Harold Ober and George Thurman Bye did, acted as a “double agent”: On the one hand, he represented the interests of authors, placing their works in the right market with the right publishers at the right time, negotiating terms and contracts on their behalf, and managing their public images; on the other, he also worked for publishers in procuring manuscripts and selling copyrights. He was paid mainly by authors but sometimes also by publishers. This practice could be attributed to the fact that in the infancy stage of literary agenting, agents were disadvantaged and therefore had to win the trust of both sides and build a power equilibrium so as to maximize their economic capital (e.g., money and property), and social and symbolic capital (e.g., social recognition and professional status). The practice of “double agent” was not without drawbacks: agents were prone to be labeled as “Janus-faced”, “greedy”, “slippery”, and “disloyal”. J. B. Pinker was the one to change this agent template.

James Brand Pinker (1863-1922) is more widely known as J. B. Pinker. His clients include such renowned writers as Henry James, Joseph Conrad, T. S. Eliot, Dorothy Richardson, and Stephen Crane. There is little information about his origins, save the fact that he started his career as a newspaper and magazine editor, working on *Levant Herald*, *Black and White*, and *Pearson’s Magazine* (Hepburn, 1968: 57).

Pinker was like Watt in many ways: Both gained rich experience of publishing prior to the agenting career; both were sociable, hardworking, and entrepreneurial; and both worked mainly in London. But Pinker differed from Watt dramatically in the following ways: (1) He had always positioned himself as the author’s agent (Gillies, 2007: 92) and had taken an author-centered approach in business. In this sense, he was more professional than Watt. (2) He was dedicated to nurturing young infamous authors and nonmainstream authors (ibid.)—Arnold Bennett, George Egerton, David Herbert Lawrence, etc.—by unstintingly supporting them through financial assistance, literary instruction, and publishing expertise. (3) Moreover,

to borrow the words of Gillies, Watt was the “literary patron” (ibid.: 99) in many senses. According to Swinnerton, Joseph Conrad, one of the greatest novelists to write in English, would literally starve had Pinker not watchfully rendered aid to him (1956: 128). (4) Finally, he was more involved in the editing process. By adjusting the business template initiated by Watt and making numerous innovations, Pinker consolidated literary agents’ position in the publishing industry, further standardized literary agenting practice, and pushed forward the agent-author relationship in new directions. Hence, it is safe to maintain that Pinker’s achievements are on par with Watt’s, albeit in a different fashion.

To sum up, as representatives of early literary agents, Watt and Pinker established literary agenting as a profession and blazed a trail for their successors to follow, in the process of which they transformed publishing landscapes, ushered in new literary modes, and promoted the popularization and commercialization of literature. Their success owed just as much to propitious times as to their personalities and tactics alike. Far from being “parasites” and “leeches”, literary agents thereafter became recognized actors in the publishing industry. That said, it should be stressed that literary agents were in a peripheral position well into the 1960s.

## **3.2 Literary Agenting since the 1970s**

### **3.2.1 Restructuring of Publishing Industry and Proliferation of Agents**

The period from the 1920s to the 1960s is skipped not because agenting was absent in this period but because it developed comparatively stably. The analysis in this section thus starts from the 1970s, a time characterized by a new wave of technological revolution and large-scale mergers and acquisitions, which restructured the publishing industry and produced publishing conglomerates, which, in turn, sparked the proliferation of agents and transformed agenting practice.

To come to grips with this intricate situation, we need first to probe into “the growth

conundrum” faced by publishing houses (Thompson, 2012: 161).<sup>26</sup> Right after World War II, publishing flourished as readers’ demand soared, and printing and book distribution had constantly been improved by technical innovations—such as phototypesetting, offset lithography, and computer-assisted typesetting—and the popularization of transoceanic airlines. That said, just two decades later, the continuous increase of advances, the white-hot competition between publishers, along with a mature market, sidelined large congregations of small independent publishers and forced the rest to amalgamate to achieve economies of scale. By the early 1980s, publishing houses were increasingly treated by their holding corporations as just another income generator and were identified with the media and entertainment industries rather than as a distinctive category. Against this context, mergers and acquisitions became more common throughout the industry, and were subject to the vagaries of corporate strategies (Feather, 2005: 222). Gradually, the traditional family-owned independent publishing houses, which were usually run by capable bibliophiles, lost their luster in a site where commerce and culture clashed more often than converged. Many independent publishers did survive mainly through publishing, with an almost missionary dedication, works by avant-garde authors or works written in (translated from) minor languages. By contrast, international conglomerates managed by white collars and black ties such as Pearson, Bertelsmann, News Corporation, Penguin Random House, and Columbia Broadcasting System took over publishing and changed the way the business was run. Moreover, the industry is evolving in an increasingly oligopolistic direction.

The impact of this transformation in the publishing industry on literary agenting was mainly threefold: Firstly, the amalgamation and hierarchization of publishing companies largely deprived authors of the opportunities of interacting with editors/publishers face-to-face, further necessitating the employment of agents. Secondly, the subsidiary rights of literary works were further diversified and complicated, which meant that the poor management of literary property would beget higher economic loss for authors, hence prompting the need for more agents. Finally, a large number of editors and publishers previously working in independent houses became agents. Though the number of literary agents/agencies has, most

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<sup>26</sup> This is page number in the electronic version of the book.

of the time, steadily increased since their birth in the 1880s, the increase over the past half a century has been spectacular. If agents were rare in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and not unusual in the 20<sup>th</sup>, “[n]owadays it is rare to find an author who has not got one” (Cuddon, 2013: 16). The Association of Author Representatives, an influential agents’ association, lists more than 395 agents on its official website.<sup>27</sup> Hoegh reports that the number of literary agencies increased by 60% from the early 1980s to the early 2000s (2004: 91). This increase rate should be treated with caution as it was based on incomplete data, but the general trend of increase, which is further verified by Thompson (2012: 113-115), should be without doubt. By and large, the proliferation of agents was both a symptom of and a testimony to the profound changes in the publishing industry.

Not only has the number of literary agents changed significantly, so has their status. *The Bookseller*, a publishing trade magazine, noticed:

Agents [...] have in recent years shed the image of operators who feed off the talent and industry of others. Indeed, agenting might be said to be the most fashionable book trade calling, pursued by many of the smartest editors who become disillusioned, or downsized, by the conglomerates. Agenting is seen as being independent, and creative, and profitable (Anonymous, 2000: 20).

Moreover, the roles of literary agents have become increasingly complicated. The following diagram is drawn to better illustrate this point:



**Figure 7. Evolution of Literary Agents’ Roles**

In Figure 7, words in bold concern the actual and primary roles while words below indicate the metaphorical and secondary roles. As previously discussed, manuscript readers before the 1880s differed dramatically from professional agents, so I regard them as “amateur

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<sup>27</sup> <http://aaronline.org/Find>. This was retrieved on March 13, 2021.

agents”; early agents were usually “double agents”, who served both authors and publishers. Approximately since the 1920s (the end of Pinker’s career), however, agents have increasingly become the unadulterated advocates of the rights and interests of their sole clients: authors. Why and how so?

On the one hand, as authors had fewer opportunities to communicate with editors and publishers, they tended to rely mainly, sometimes solely, on agents in pitching, manuscript reading and revision; meanwhile, employing an agent “indicated to the world that the writer was a professional whose work was significant enough to be managed by another professional” (Gillies, 2007: 26). On the other hand, some writers such as J.K. Rowling (her literary agency is The Blair Partnership) became global stars with prodigious market potential in various forms. They were just more essential than publishers in encouraging readers to buy books. Nobody goes to buy a Bloomsbury fantasy; they go to buy a J.K. Rowling fantasy. Aware of this, agents clung closer to authors, especially star authors. Paradoxically, editors/publishers’ reliance on agents has increased by a similar measure starting from the 1970s. According to Thompson, as publishing companies are increasingly hierarchical and consolidated, editors are burdened with heavier workloads and have to rely more on agents to provide the initial screening of manuscripts (2012: 118). Mayer argues that “some editors won’t even look at a book unless it comes from two or three top agents” (1998: 53). Moreover, agents also do the initial scouting for new writing talents through scouring literary magazines, taking part in conferences and book fairs (London, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, etc.), and visiting college campuses. In a way, editors and publishers have “outsourced” editing and scouting to agents. But do not be misguided: agents are not paid by editors or publishers whatsoever.

Overgeneralized the above diagram might be, it facilitates our comprehension of the shifts in the status and roles of agents, and offers us a vantage point from which to penetrate the intricate ecological system of literary agenting.

As agents had proliferated, so had the conflicts between different agents and between authors and agents. A control and intermediary mechanism, which adopted rules of conduct and professional ethics, and thereby furthered the professionalization of agenting, was in need. Various associations of literary agencies were thus established. The most influential are The Association of Author’s Agents (AAA) and The Association of Author Representatives (AAR).

Founded in 1974, The AAA “is a voluntary body set up to provide a forum for member agencies to discuss industry matters, to uphold a code of good practice, and to provide a vehicle for representing the interests of agents and authors”.<sup>28</sup> The AAA’s Code of Practice (see Appendix 4), which is the *de facto* modern-day common standard of literary agenting in general, stipulates what constitutes good practice and what should be avoided. For example, the “OTHER” section reads: “No Member Agency should knowingly, recklessly or maliciously injure the professional reputation or practice of the Association or another agency, regardless of whether the agency is a member of the Association” (ibid.). Despite the influence of the AAA, some large agencies refused to join it for different reasons.

Notwithstanding all the progress discussed above, literary agenting is now facing grave challenges, of which e-publishing is the most serious. Some debutant and undiscovered authors would turn their rejected manuscripts into e-books and sell them to platforms such as Amazon, iTunes, and Kobo within just a few days and with just a few clicks of the mouse. Everything can be done online, seemingly obviating the need of a publisher or literary agent. As self-publishing is becoming a force to be reckoned with, literary agencies have taken several strategies: Some agencies updated their service. Dystel, Goderich & Bourret LLC, for example, launched its e-publishing services as early as 2011. According to its blog, it aspired to “facilitate e-publishing for those of our clients who decide that they want to go this route, after consultation and strategizing about whether they should try traditional publishing first” (Dystel, Goderich & Bourret LLC Blog, 2011). A more radical strategy is launching an e-publishing arm. A case in point is the Bedford Square Books, a new e-book and print on demand publishing venture coming from the London-based Ed. Victor Literary Agency. In essence, Bedford Square Books is a literary agency-cum-publisher. This will probably become a trend that will further transform the industry of publishing and agenting.

Important agents since the 1970s include Toni Strassman, Rod Hall, Virginia Kidd, Sterling Lord, Georges Borchardt, Deborah Rogers, Giles Gordon, Theresa Park, etc. It is noted that most of them are based in the US instead of the UK, contrary to the landscape in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are largely small in size and unitary in business. However, as the

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<sup>28</sup> Official website of AAA. <http://www.agentsassoc.co.uk/> Retrieved on October 29, 2019.

world entered the new millennium, super-agents and mega-agencies emerged, a particularly explicit expression of the transformation of literary agenting from a periphery and secondary to a central and primary position.

### 3.2.2 Super-agents and Mega-agencies

I will present the story of Andrew Wylie since he is an excellent representative of super-agents and an interesting figure in many ways. Unaffectionately known in the publishing industry as “the Jackal”, Wylie was famous thanks to his established clients such as Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, and Martin Amis, and equally notorious due to his unorthodox business practice, especially overt client poaching. The Wylie Agency, which he founded in 1980, now has offices in New York and London, and represents over seven hundred clients. Unlike most of his predecessors, Wylie entered the agenting industry without any experience in publishing. But he has his own advantage: he studied French literature at Harvard, graduating *magna cum laude*, and is fluent in French and Italian. As previously discussed, client poaching is generally regarded as a practice beyond the pale, but Wylie has no moral compunctions in so doing. In Thompson’s interview with Wylie, the latter maintained:

I think it’s lazy or quaint or both to assume that one doesn’t poach. It is pretending that publishing is a business peopled by members of a social elite who have a sort of gentlemanly game going, and the gentlemanly game was played to the disadvantage of the writer (Thompson, 2012: 109).

Wylie practices what he preaches. In 1995, poached by Wylie, Martin Amis, a British novelist, essayist, and screenwriter, deserted Pat Kavanagh, his agent of 22 years, and joined the Wylie Agency. It is reported that Wylie secured an advance of £500,000 from HarperCollins for Amis’s novel *The Information* (Lambert, 2010). This resulted in a rift between Amis and his long-time friend Julian Barnes, Kavanagh’s husband. Besides being hard-nosed, Wylie is also innovative: when he entered the industry, American agents typically sold translation rights through a network of sub-agents in other countries, a practice which reduced cost but broke off the ties between authors and the foreign market. Instead of commissioning the rights to sub-agents, Wylie would fly directly to Paris, Tokyo, and Beijing,



to take part in book fairs and other social gatherings to locate the most appropriate publishing houses and translators and thereby maximize the authors' revenues. This legwork did pay off (ibid.). However, Wylie's strong-arm approach sometimes put publishers in predicament. According to Hoegh, though *The Information* won the author a handsome advance and was aggressively marketed by HarperCollins, it did not sell well and ended up as a commercial fiasco (2004: 237-238).

Wylie's outspoken comments further upgraded (damaged) the reputation of his agency. His harshest lines were ironically reserved for Amazon, his former business partner. In an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Wylie said, "My advice is: if you have a choice between the plague and Amazon, pick the plague!" (Reach, 2014). If this is hostile, the next is nothing but horrendous. In a keynote speech in Toronto, he condemned the "brutality" of Amazon's tactics and called it "ISIS-like distribution channel" (Ellis-Petersen, 2014). What lies behind these harsh remarks is actually the sometimes-discordant relationship between publishers/agents and well-capitalized online booksellers.

Wylie, together with many of his contemporaries such as Morton Janklow and Ed. Victor, constitutes nothing less than a mighty and aggressive force in the publishing industry, which reflects the further proactivity and independence of literary agents and the increasingly nuanced interplay between agents and authors/publishers/ booksellers in a dynamic field. The status of literary agents has arguably been upgraded. In more practical terms, agents' commission fee rises from 10% to 15% of the gross revenues received from publishers and the commission fee for translation rights is even higher. Another major change is the diversification of business of some literary agencies, which will be discussed in the next part.

Literary agencies vary drastically in size and history. Despite the fact that most of them are family-run shops with no more than five hands, there are some mega-agencies. Their common features can be summarized as follows: they are usually the results of mergers & acquisitions; they are large and hierarchically structured; besides books, they also represent audiobooks, original audio shows, theaters, films, and TV series. In some cases, book rights are only a small part of their business. Founded by Albert Curtis Brown in 1899, Curtis Brown Agency has a long and illustrious history as a global literary agency representing famous figures including Winston Churchill, Samuel Beckett, and John Steinbeck. Since 2002, the

company has re-positioned itself in the UK market by establishing and developing Department of Comedy, Department of Heritage, Department of Film and Television, and Department of Translation Rights (with 17 agents). It now boasts 160 employees and a strong global network. Other influential mega-agencies are William Morris Agency, International Creative Management Partners, etc. These mega-agencies achieve a business scale that A. P. Watt and J. B. Pinker had probably never dreamed of.

### 3.3 Representation of Translation Rights

#### 3.3.1 Literary Agencies Specializing in Translation Rights

As previously demonstrated, A. P. Watt, J. B. Pinker, and Andrew Wylie have all represented translation rights. The representation of translation rights is homologous with that of non-translation rights inasmuch as agents assume similar basic duties, namely, selling rights to publishers, dealing with legal matters, and monitoring the publishing process, but it is distinctive in at least three manners: Firstly, it charges higher commission fee, usually 20%-30% of the whole royalty.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, it requires better bilingual or multilingual competence of agents as different languages are involved. Thirdly, it is more complicated, not the least because translators are brought in and various political and cultural jurisdictions are entailed. Translation rights can be represented either by general literary agencies or by specialized ones, for whom the representation of translation rights is the *raison d'être* instead of a sideline. As the first case has already been thoroughly discussed, I will probe into specialized agencies in this sub-section, focusing on three influential ones, namely, Intercontinental Literary Agency, The Grayhawk Agency, and Carmen Balcells Literary Agency. But before that, it is worth noting that the representation of translation rights is complex to the extent that even agencies of the same category/country/size can adopt drastically different practices.

Established in 1965, Intercontinental Literary Agency (ILA) specializes in translation

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<sup>29</sup> This percentage is explicitly specified by several literary agencies such as Foreword Literary, Inc., The Margaret McBride Literary Agency, Triada US Literary Agency, etc., as is listed in *Guide to Literary Agents 2020*.

rights of books in all languages except English. As is posted on its official website,<sup>30</sup> of its seven in-house agents, each has his/her expertise and is responsible for certain rights. For instance, Sam Edenborough, a director of the agency and the President of the AAA from 2014 to 2016, handles rights from Brazil, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Jenny Robson, also a director, handles rights in the Arabic-speaking countries, Eastern European and Scandinavian countries. Instead of offering representation to authors directly, it collaborates with its clients, i.e., other literary agencies—such as LaunchBooks Literary Agency and Luigi Bonomi Associates—and publishing houses—such as Cassava Republic Press and Old Street Publishing—in handling translation rights. In other words, as the sub-agency, it works exclusively on behalf of writers who are recommended to it by its clients. ILA's approach is a blessing inasmuch as it increases efficiency and reduces cost, and a curse inasmuch as it rules out those promising translation rights not recommended by the clients.

By contrast, The Grayhawk Agency is more proactive. One of the leading translation agencies in Taiwan, it was founded by Gray Tan (譚光磊). Born in Taiwan in 1979, Tan received his B.A. and M.A. in English literature from National Taiwan University. As a fantasy fan who excels in both Chinese and English, he is the first Chinese translator of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Interestingly, as was disclosed by himself in an interview,<sup>31</sup> it was this translation that enabled him to embark on literary agenting in 2004. More interestingly, his first deal was the translation right for *The Kite Runner*, a bestseller, in the Sinophone market. Four years later, he established The Grayhawk Agency, which has taken more initiatives in selling Chinese literary works to other countries than bringing in foreign rights. It states on its official website: "We make no claim to represent 'Chinese literature' as an entity, but we do believe passionately that great stories know no borders and have the power to travel across the globe".<sup>32</sup> It has heretofore represented such Chinese authors as Mai Jia (麥家), Zhang Ling (張翎), Chi Wei-Jan (紀蔚然), Kan Yao-Ming (甘耀明), and Sharon Chung (鍾曉陽). The agency's greatest commercial success in recent years might be *Decoded* ("解密") by Mai Jia.

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<sup>30</sup> Official Website of ILA. <https://www.ila-agency.co.uk/#about> Retrieved on October 29, 2019.

<sup>31</sup> 讓好書遇見好編輯 公視藝文大道 第 203 集. Retrieved on November 10, 2019.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttoPuKmltcg>

<sup>32</sup> Official Website of The Grayhawk Agency. <http://grayhawk-agency.blogspot.com/> Retrieved on October 29, 2019.

Both Wu (2016) and Teng & Zuo (2018) reveal that the author was unaware of the potential foreign market for his work until the agency approached him in 2009. They signed the agenting contract of *Decoded* in no time. The agency then sold the English right to Penguin Books in the UK and Farrar Straus and Giroux in the US, with the cooperation of Olivia Milburn, the English translator of the book. The book was well received in the global market (Liu, 2014). According to Wang (2015), the agency will focus on promoting *The Man from the River South* (“琅琊榜”) in the coming years. Its success can be attributed to the wide network it has always endeavored to establish and expand, and to the strategy of, to borrow the term of Tan, “合縱連橫” (“Vertical and Horizontal Alliance”, opposing stratagems devised by the School of Diplomacy during the Warring States Period of China) (2011: 39).

By the same token, Carmen Balcells Literary Agency has vigorously championed the international circulation and canonization of Hispanic literature. It was founded by Carmen Balcells, a legendary figure and Wylie’s equivalent in the Hispanic world. Dynamic, fearless, and sometimes tyrannical, Balcells increased remuneration for translations, improved authors’ leverage by introducing new clauses into publishing contracts, and, more importantly, promoted his clients into the international arena. She is often regarded as the driving force behind the Boom of Latin American literary talents in the 1960s, and its associated style: magic realism (Eaude, 2015). Through taking care of their literary works as well as their personal lives, she established a close relationship with and gained the life-long loyalty of many of his clients. Led by Balcells, the agency has represented more than 300 writers, including six Nobel Laureates in Literature.

### **3.3.2 Literary Agents in the Dynamic Translation Field**

In the final part of this chapter, I endeavor to modelize literary agents’ roles in the dynamic translation field by summarizing what has been discussed above while engaging with key literature in literary production, especially that of Pierre Bourdieu and Gisèle Sapiro. It is believed that this model, tentative as it might be, will generate more nuanced and less binary explanations, deepen our understanding of the relationship between literary agenting and translation, and thus put forward a significant topic that is highly under-researched. In this

process, I am constantly on the alert against the pretense of being universal, which theoretical modelization usually suffers from, bearing in mind that an indiscriminate acceptance of models can impede objective analysis.

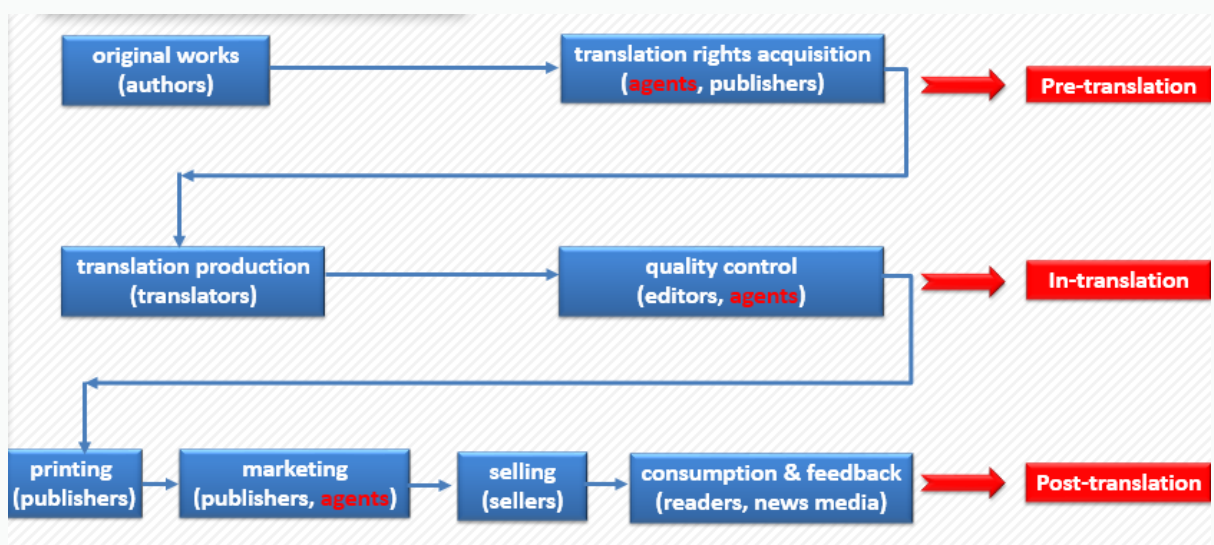
The impact of Bourdieu's sociology on translation studies in the last two decades is far-reaching. Arguably, it has propelled a paradigmatic shift within translation studies toward a more process and product-centered sociological analysis. His key concepts such as field, habitus, capital, and *illusio* have been (con)tested in a significant number of journal articles and Ph.D. theses. Bourdieu defines "field" as "a network of objective relations (of domination or subordination, of complementarity or antagonism, etc.) between positions" (1996a: 231). The positions are distributed in oppositional terms: old/young, consecrated/novice, dominant/dominated, orthodox/heretic, to name but a few (ibid.: 239). The concept of field enables scholars to "circumscribe individuals' action at the meso level, in differentiated social spheres with their own rules of the game and specific interests" (Sapiro, 2015b: 140). Bourdieu became interested in the production and circulation of literature, especially the roles of publishers in the literary field very early. For instance, Bourdieu (1971) examined the market of symbolic goods based on the opposition between large-scale and small-scale circulation; Bourdieu (2008) analyzed the structure of the publishing field, asserting that it was the publisher who bestowed a consecration upon the author. That being said, literary agents were largely ignored in his analysis.

Despite the fact that Bourdieu never asserted that the borders of the literary field need to be national, he applied his theory mainly to address issues in a single country. Sapiro (2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2015a, 2016, 2019) extrapolates Bourdieu's theories to the translation field and sheds new light on the mechanisms of the production and international circulation of translated literature. Her investigation, which draws heavily on world-systems analysis and network flows analysis while taking full advantage of in-depth interviews, is intriguing and thought-provoking. However, I part with her insofar as the hierarchical positions taken by different actors in the translation field are concerned. Although she is aware that literary agents play an increasingly significant role in the global book market (Sapiro, 2010a: 423), her research unanimously accentuates the central position of publishers in the translation field. Publishers, she observes, "creates the creator [author]" (Sapiro, 2008: 155) and "have a transnational

consecrating power” (Sapiro, 2015a: 342). By contrast, other actors, i.e., authors, translators, literary agents all take peripheral positions. Theoretically, this rationale, which is in line with Bourdieu, seems to be static and monolithic. Practically, her view can be refuted by simply citing the examples of Allen & Unwin and J. R. R. Tolkien—in which the publisher is indeed consecrated by the author—and self-publishing, where publishers are just absent.

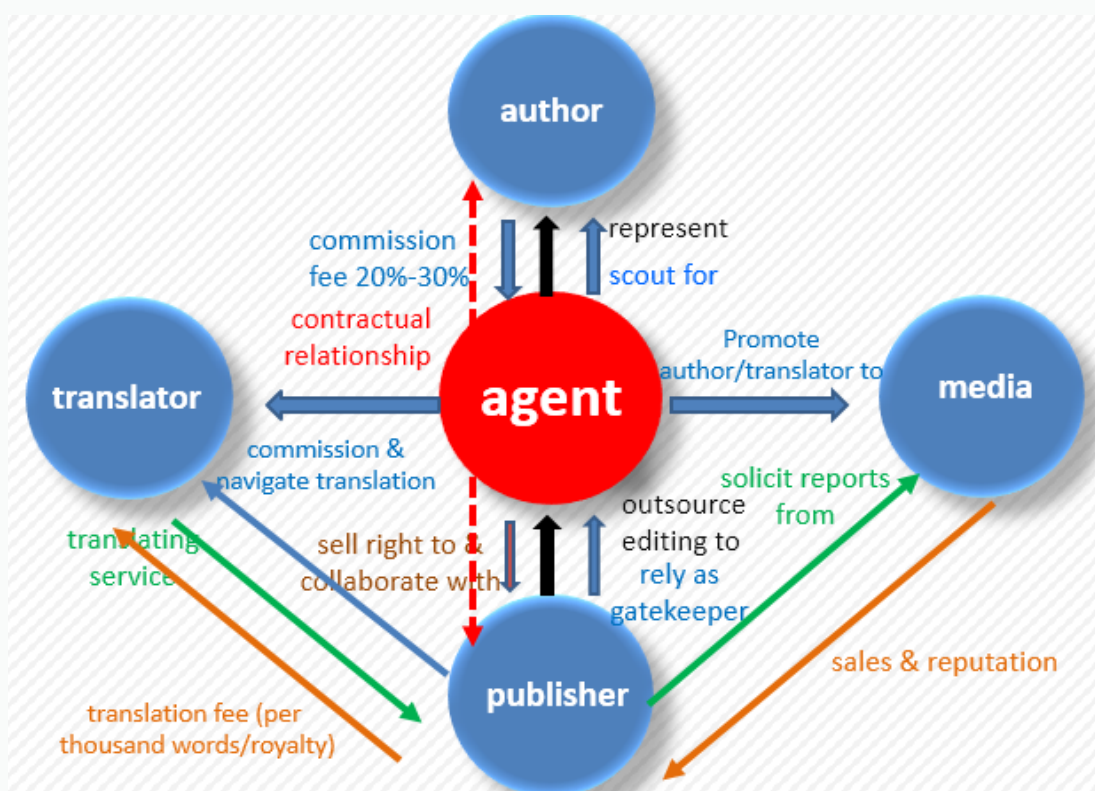
Departing from both Bourdieu and Sapiro who stress “struggle”, “rupture”, and “antagonism”, I take a more conciliatory approach and would like to venture a provisional account of the dynamic translation field in which different actors—authors, translators, publishers, literary agents, booksellers, translation critics, etc.—take less hierarchical positions and establish a symbiotic relationship. This field is partially homologous to the general literary field, but it is idiosyncratic in many ways. It is regulated by “its institutions and established repertoire” (Sela-Sheffy, 2005: 6), and thus should be treated as such. By “dynamic”, I mean: (1) The constitution of the field is dynamic. In some cases, one or more actors are absent. (2) The positions of different actors are dynamic, i.e., there is no absolute hierarchy. As demonstrated above, translators and literary agents can sometimes take central positions. (3) The flow of economic/social/cultural/symbolic capital is dynamic. The publisher is not always the biggest winner. In more cases, different actors cooperate to achieve a win-win situation. In other words, translation publishing is not necessarily a zero-sum game.

So, our ultimate question is: what are the roles of literary agents in this dynamic translation field? To answer this, we need to focus on the following chart:



**Figure 8. The Process of Literary Translation**

As showcased in Figure 8, literary agents are involved in all the three stages of literary translation. At the pre-translation stage, literary agents acquire translation rights from certain authors and sell them to appropriate publishers through “best bid” auctions; at the in-translation stage, literary agents, together with editors, navigate translation quality and suggest necessary revisions; at the post-translation stage, literary agents assist publishers in the marketing of translation products and the promotion of authors and translators. To better illustrate the interlaced relationship between different actors in this dynamic translation field, let us shift our attention to the diagram as follows:



**Figure 9. Relationship Diagram of Different Actors in the Dynamic Translation Field**

In Figure 9, words in a certain color correspond with lines in the same color; the direction of line arrows indicates the direction of action executed by a certain doer upon a certain doee; the dotted line indicates the indirect relationship between authors and publishers; media refers to the news media. Though agents are in the center of the diagram, they do not take a central



or dominating position in the field (As a matter of fact, both publishers and authors too can be put in the center); rather, this diagram is used to emphasize that literary agents correlate with, albeit to various extent, other main actors of the dynamic translation field. In a sense, literary agents, who are usually tactful, resourceful, and well-informed (as previous examples uncover), act as the nexus of the field. In a field where the dynamics are shaped by different actors—authors, publishers, editors, literary agents, translators, booksellers, and translation critics—cooperating with and competing against one another, and pursuing interests which coincide in some respects and diverge in others, and where one actor’s malfunction will undoubtedly lead to that of others and consequently the collapse of the whole field, a nexus, which connects all actors and cushions the frictions within them, which is firm yet flexible, tough yet resilient, is indispensable.

While Figure 8 and 9 concern literary agents’ practical roles in the micro-level, Figure 10 reflects their socio-cultural roles in the macro-level. This diagram should be interpreted with the knowledge that literary agents *can* assume the following roles, but do not necessarily do so in practice. I will interpret these roles one by one.



**Figure 10. Literary Agents’ Socio-cultural Roles**



**Literary agents as initiators.** They act as scouts for writing talents and promising translation rights through taking part in book fairs and conferences, and through establishing a wide network. In addition to my analysis of The Grayhawk Agency and Carmen Balcells Literary Agency, Kuitert (2015) addresses literary agents' active role in the boom of Latin American literature in the Netherlands. By analyzing the archive of Prins & Prins Literary Agency, the author reveals how the works of such Latin American authors as Paulo Setúbal, García Márquez, and Vargas Llosa were translated and introduced to the Netherlands with the assistance of literary agents in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As discussed, literary agents can also act as literary patrons for authors and usher in new literary modes.

**Literary agents as mediators or coordinators.** They mediate the relationship between authors and publishers and between translators and publishers; they resolve conflicts and disputes among different actors. A telling case is Agence Hoffman, one of the oldest French literary agencies. Cottenet (2017) reveals that the ingeniousness and resourcefulness of agents in this agency in conducting negotiations and resolving disputes has greatly facilitated the introduction, translation, and promotion of US literature into France, against a complex ideological and economic backdrop following World War II.

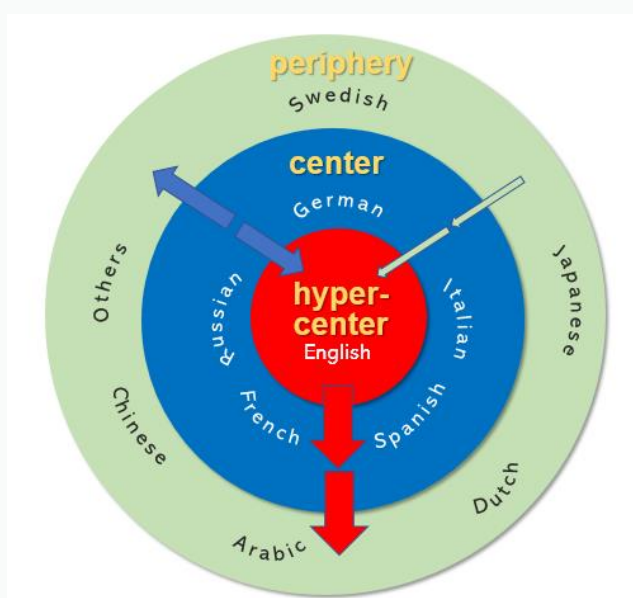
**Literary agents as gatekeepers.** On the one hand, they do not accept manuscripts indiscriminately. They function as a filter which keeps out literary manuscripts that are not up to standard. On the other hand, literary agents are involved in the editorial work of manuscripts/translation drafts, especially when cooperating with conglomerate publishers, where editors became less important since the center has shifted from the editorial department to the marketing and sales ones (Hoegh, 2004: 111). This point of view is further supported by the literary agent Hannah Sheppard, who explains in my email interview, "[the representation] start with edit notes, the aim is to get it to a level where I think I can sell it, not to a 'finished' state. This may be one round of edits, it may be more".<sup>33</sup>

**Literary agents as promoters.** The role of promoter should be construed on both commercial and cultural levels. Commercially, they act as sales promoters (this will be

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<sup>33</sup> This email interview was conducted on November 9, 2019. The interviewee is a literary agent based in London.

discussed in 5.3). Regarding cultural promoters, they promote the international exchange of literature and culture, represent writers from minority languages (The Grayhawk Agency and Carmen Balcells Literary Agency), and facilitate the cross-fertilization and hybridization of globalization. According to Bielsa, the number of translations into English has remained between 2% and 4% of the total book market in the UK and the US since the 1950s (2013: 160). To visualize the time-honored and incontestable notion that translations principally circulate from the center to the periphery (Even-Zohar, 1990a; Heilbron, 1999; Sapiro, 2010a), I designed the following “international flow map of literature”, drawing on the latest statistic from *Index Translationum*, UNESCO’s database of book translations:<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 11. Flow Map of International Literature**

The hyper-center is English, a language translated from most; the center is taken up by five European languages, i.e., German, Italian, Spanish, French, and Russian; other languages, including Chinese, are in the periphery. It is quite likely that the number of works transferred from the periphery to the hyper-center and the center might be lower without literary agents, who are the *sine qua non* of the international circulation of literature.

<sup>34</sup> The statistic refers to “‘TOP 50’ Original Language” of *Index Translationum* retrieved from the following website: <http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatexp.aspx?crit1L=3&nTyp=min&topN=50>

### 3.4 Summary

To recapitulate, this chapter offers a comprehensive survey of the historical development of literary agenting. It has proposed a definition of literary agenting, which is with both real-world significance and epistemological credibility. It has investigated how literary agents have navigated and been navigated by the evolving publishing industry, analyzed their interplay with other actors of the industry, and identified their four socio-cultural roles in the dynamic translation field, i.e., initiator, mediator, gatekeeper, and promoter. Being polymorphous and multilayering, literary agenting is as much a sociocultural phenomenon as a market practice. The topic of literary agenting of translation is highly under-researched. When carried out in conjunction with sociological and ethnographical research methods, this line of inquiry promises to enhance our understanding of translation production and dissemination, thus contributing to the so-called socio-translation studies. By and large, this chapter has set a stage for the further analysis of this dissertation. In the following chapter, I will examine how *A Hero Born* is received by individual and institutional readers.

## CHAPTER 4. RECEPTION OF *A HERO BORN*

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter investigates the reception of *A Hero Born* (hereafter *Hero*) in the Anglophone world. The research of translation reception is tricky, despite a significant number of publications in this field. The thorny issues one must cope with include demarcating research objects, setting up appropriate parameters, collecting sufficient data, and ensuring methodological rigor and validity, etc. The research conducted in this chapter differs from, and at times, opposes previous studies, in that it focuses predominantly on general readers' reactions, perceptions, and evaluations of *Hero*. This chapter will conduct a multi-dimensional reception study of *Hero* by adopting a mixed-method approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data analysis. To begin with, it offers a succinct yet critical survey of existing research into translation reception, categorizing translation readers into three types: general readers, professional readers, and institutional readers. Next, it summarizes the reception indexes of *Hero* based on three online platforms, and conducts a thematic analysis with NVivo (12 Pro) (QSR International) to unearth how *Hero* is received and perceived by general readers, as are embodied by Amazon customers. This part will be the highlight of this chapter. Finally, it briefly examines professional book reviews, media reports, and library holdings of *Hero*. In so doing, this chapter aims to reveal the overall reception status of *Hero*, refresh our understanding of translation reception, extend the theoretical and methodological frameworks for it, and broaden its object of study. Studies of translation reception is both a science and an art and should be dealt with as such. I believe that scholars who are interested in translation reception, should endeavor to reconstruct the reception story by understanding it not only through their own eyes, but also/more through the eyes of readers. The findings of this chapter will be frequently referred to in the next two chapters.

## 4.1 Reception Studies of Translation: A Survey

One “necessary evil” produced by the profusion of theoretical and practical investigations in arts and humanities is a plethora of terms and concepts, which, on the one hand, have opened up new possibilities for otherwise impossible research, but, on the other, have led to a plenitude of bewilderments and controversies in the academia. This is all the more true in reception studies. It is unambiguous that there are two main traditions in the conceptualization of literary reception: “a European and an American one” (Brems & Pinto, 2013: 142). In the 1960s, Hans Robert Jauss coined “*rezeptions-ästhetik*” (aesthetics of reception), which was later loosely translated into “reception studies”. This German theorist, together with his colleague Wolfgang Iser, founded the “*Konstanzer Schule*” (The Constance School) and pioneered the shift of research focus from the text/author to the reader. By contrast, in the 1970s, literary scholars in the US, represented by Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, and Elizabeth Freund, initiated Reader-response Criticism (or Reader-response Theory), which focuses on readers and their reading of a literary work (ibid., 143). What is ambiguous, though, is the distinction between “reception studies”, “reader response”, “audience response”, “reception theory” and “reception history”. One consequence of this ambiguity is that some reception scholars strive to find the answer but unfortunately, they have already forgotten the question. To reduce vagueness, I will apply reception studies and translation reception consistently in this chapter. Translation reception is defined as “the way a target culture reacts to a translated text, to its publication and to its contents” (Karas, 2020: 25). In what follows, I will briefly review and critique existing studies in this regard.

Brems & Pinto (2013) distinguishes two levels of reception studies in translation, i.e., studies of theoretical readers (social level) and studies of real readers (individual level). It is theoretical readers that have drawn the lion’s share of scholarly attention (see Real, 2005; Andringa, 2006; Brown, 2007; Kershaw, 2010; Tam & Chan, 2012; Bergam, 2013; Polezzi, 2013; Marinetti & Rose, 2013; Wilson, 2013; Bai, 2017; Strowe, 2018; Wang, 2018; Zhang, 2019; Ninet & Mestre, 2021, etc.). A typical study in this regard investigates how a translated work, an author, a translator, or a genre have transgressed political and cultural borders and been received in the target culture, through analyzing translation criticism and intertextual

elements. For instance, Bergam (2013) discusses the reception of the Yugoslav poet Vasko Popa in the UK, aiming at explaining how poetic and ideological stances influenced the flows of translated poetry in Europe. Ninet & Mestre (2021) joins the discussion by examining how censorship has hindered the Spanish reception of *The Unlit Lamp*, a feminist work, hence the development of an LGBT culture. Approaches of this kind carry with them a major limitation. Approaching translation reception from historical, cultural, and ideological perspectives, these scholars' focus is "translators' and critics' attitude toward how foreign works ought to be translated rather than general readers' response to the translated literature itself" (Chan, 2014: 89). Seeking to shed light on such issues as translatability, acceptability, literary value, cultural diplomacy, intercultural literary flow, translation censorship, etc., these studies foreground an elitist literary aesthetics and pivot around scholars' intuitions and tastes, inadvertently relegating general readers to a secondary, if not marginal position. Reception studies thus becomes literary criticism in disguise.

Reception studies of real readers has been mainly conducted on audiovisual translation (AVT). In the age of artificial intelligence and social media, the reactions and expectations of listeners and audiences are increasingly analyzed by providers, as they have a strong bearing on the fate of a product or service. It is against this backdrop that reception studies in AVT has mushroomed in the past two decades or so: The World Hobbit Project was conducted on a global scale;<sup>35</sup> a special issue of AVT reception appeared in *The Translator* (2003, Volume 9, number 2); *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation*, a comprehensive essay collection edited by Elena Di Giovanni and Yves Gambier, was published in 2018. AVT reception studies is interdisciplinary and is usually conducted in a mixed-method approach.

By contrast, reception studies of real readers on literary translation are scarce. That said, this paucity has been somewhat remedied recently (e.g., Kruger, 2012; Liang, 2015; Liang & Xu, 2018). A pioneering study is Wang & Humblé (2020), which deals with readers' stylistic perception of a self-retranslation based on reader reviews acquired from Amazon, providing a contextualized description of general readers' reading experience. Although this important

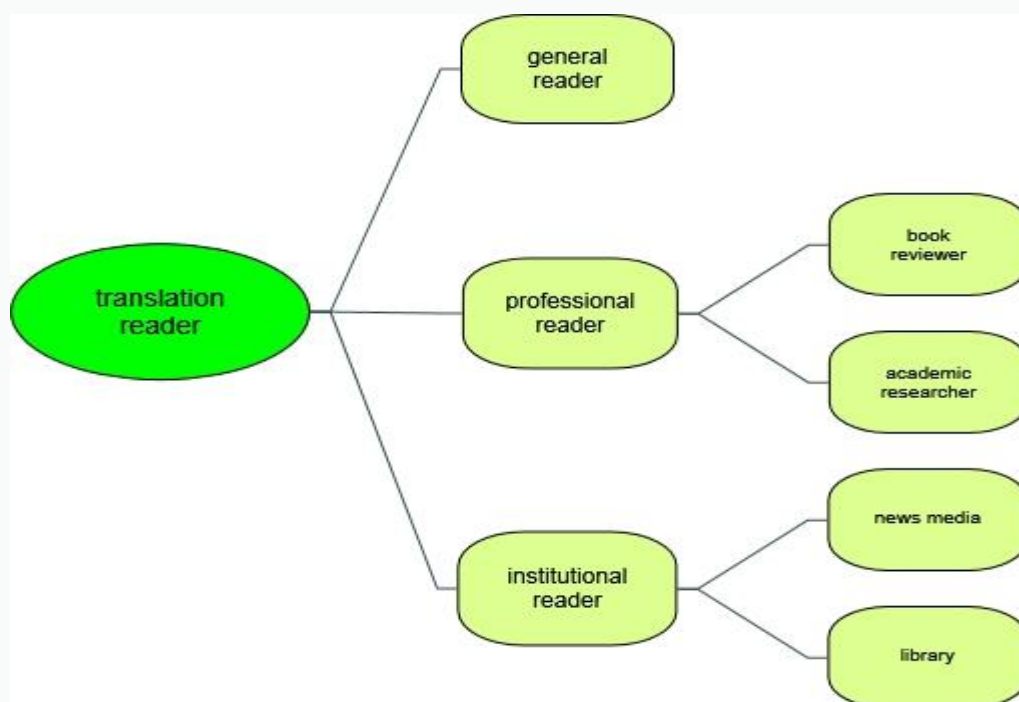
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<sup>35</sup> It is an international audience study of *The Hobbit trilogy*. Over 145 researchers in 46 countries have participated in this study, which involves a survey translated into 35 languages. <https://globalhobbitca.wordpress.com/home-a/>

study offers a perfect starting point of exploration for the current research methodologically, it focuses particularly on stylistic perception and does not offer a holistic account of readers' reactions and evaluations of the translation.

To conclude, reception studies of translation is a burgeoning field. A large portion of studies concerns theoretical readers, and is historical, hermeneutical, and aesthetical, pivoting around the intuition of researchers while largely ignoring the reactions of the market and individual readers. Regarding studies of real readers, although fruitful results have been yielded in AVT, little academic attention has been bestowed on literary translation. The “dynamics of reader perception and sensations” (Gambier, 2018: 46) of literary translation have thus far been under-explored, and reader-centered empirical research is still lacking. Readers' reactions to translated literature have not yet been examined systematically and empirically in a satisfactory manner (Wang & Humblé, 2020: 757). To fill this gap, I crystallize “target culture” in Karas (2020)'s definition as three types of readers and examine their reception of *Hero* respectively. In particular, I focus on Amazon customers' reactions and assessments of *Hero* by examining their evaluative reviews with NVivo. Reviews and ratings on Amazon are essential indicators of the reception status of literary translation among general readers (Liang, 2015; Nanquette, 2016; Liang & Xu, 2018).

In addition to Chan's two categories of translation readers, i.e., “general readers” and “professional readers” (2014), “institutional readers” is incorporated. To be precise, in the context of this research, “general readers” are non-specialist readers; “professional readers” are book reviewers and academic researchers who read and evaluate the book professionally or academically, and publish their reviews in magazines, journals, and blogs; “institutional readers” refer to the news media, libraries, and other institutions. General readers and professional readers are regarded as individual, while institutional readers are collective. It is worth noting that “the boundaries between ordinary [general] and professional readers are becoming blurred” (ibid.: 9). In 4.3.1, I will limit my analysis to book reviews published by established reviewers and scholars. The categorization of translation readers is showcased in Figure 12:



**Figure 12. Categorization of Translation Readers**

Accordingly, my primary research questions in this chapter are:

- (1) How has the book been received and perceived by general readers, as are embodied by Amazon customers? What are their major concerns?
- (2) How do book reviewers and academic researchers (professional readers) evaluate the book?
- (3) What are the reactions of the news media? How many libraries in the world hold the book?

## 4.2 Reception in General Readers

### 4.2.1 Reception Indexes

Reception indexes include best sellers rank, star ratings, number of customer ratings of Amazon (both UK and US), average ratings, number of ratings, and number of reviews of Goodreads, and number of members of LibraryThing. These three online platforms are selected due to their global influence and easy access. Amazon is the world's largest e-commerce company, bookselling being a significant part of its business. Launched in 2006 and owned by Amazon, Goodreads is a social cataloging platform that allows users to search its database of books, ratings, and reviews. LibraryThing is an online-based community tailored



for cataloging and organizing library collections. The cutoff time of data collection of these reception indexes is February 26, 2021. All the data is collected manually.

The indexes of *Hero* will then be compared with those of the other three English translations of Jin Yong's *wuxia* novels: *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, *The Deer and the Cauldron (Vol. 1)*, and *The Book and the Sword*. To avoid hasty generalization, the indexes of *Hero* will also be compared with those of the following four translated books of reference:

Translation title	Translator	Publication year	Chinese original	Author	Publication year
<i>The Three- Body Problem</i>	Ken Liu <sup>36</sup>	2014	《三體》	Liu Cixin	2006
<i>Frog</i>	Howard Goldblatt	2014	《蛙》	Mo Yan	2009
<i>The Four Books</i>	Carlos Rojas	2015	《四書》	Yan Lianke	2011
<i>The Untouched Crime</i>	Michelle Deeter	2016	《無證之 罪》	Zijin Chen	2014

**Table 3. Overview of the Four Translated Books**

These books are selected since they are representative novels authored by prominent contemporary Chinese writers, they cover different literary genres (hard science fiction, magic realism, historical satire, and espionage), and the publication of their English translations are approximately synchronous with that of *Hero*. The comparative analysis outlined above will enable us to locate *Hero*'s general reception status, which will otherwise be impressionistic, if not biased. Reception indexes of the eight translated books in question are presented in Table 4:

<sup>36</sup> Chinese persons' names are in nonidentical styles: family names come both before and after given names. I record them as they are publicly.

Translations <sup>37</sup>	Amazon (US)			Amazon (UK)			Goodreads		LibraryThing	
	Best Sellers	Average	No. of	Best Sellers	Average	No. of	Average	No. of	No. of	No. of
	Rank	Customer	Customer	Rank	Customer	Customer	Ratings	Ratings	Reviews	Members <sup>39</sup>
		Ratings <sup>38</sup>	Ratings		Ratings	Ratings				
<i>A Hero Born</i>	63,866 (2) <sup>40</sup>	4.6 (2)	388 (2)	158,471 (2)	4.5 (3)	334 (2)	4.02 (3)	2390 (3)	574 (2)	233 (3)
<i>Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain</i>	549,151 (5)	3.4 (6)	22 (6)	715,954 (6)	4.7 (2)	15 (5)	3.84 (7)	520 (7)	34 (8)	29 (7)
<i>The Deer and the Cauldron (Vol. 1)</i>	1,124,312 (8)	4.2 (4)	21 (7)	4,401,024 (8)	4.1 (5)	5 (7)	4.29 (1)	991 (4)	55 (5)	64 (5)
<i>The Book and the Sword</i>	226,035 (3)	4.9 (1)	10 (8)	311,983 (5)	4.9 (1)	10 (6)	3.89 (6)	583 (6)	38 (7)	56 (6)
<i>The Three-Body Problem</i>	590 (1)	4.3 (3)	7439 (1)	2,159 (1)	4.2 (4)	6906 (1)	4.06 (2)	165,469 (1)	16,401 (1)	4812 (1)
<i>Frog</i>	435,279 (4)	3.9 (5)	44 (3)	266,249 (4)	3.9 (6)	40 (3)	3.75 (8)	3140 (2)	384 (3)	237 (2)
<i>The Four Books</i>	747,697 (6)	4.2 (4)	40 (4)	178,485 (3)	4.2 (4)	37 (4)	3.96 (4)	985 (5)	143 (4)	126 (4)
<i>The Untouched Crime</i>	889,443 (7)	3.9 (5)	26 (5)	1,622,315 (7)	3.9 (6)	15 (5)	3.91 (5)	321 (8)	44 (6)	5 (8)

**Table 4. Reception Indexes of the Eight Translations**

As is shown in Table 4: First, most of the indexes of *The Three-Body Problem* are head and shoulders above those of other translations, indicating that this hard science fiction novel is immensely successful. Second, in six indexes (Best Sellers Rank US, Average Customer Ratings US, No. of Customer Ratings US, Best Sellers Rank UK, No. of Customer Ratings UK, and Goodreads No. of Reviews), *Hero* takes a second place. Third, in Amazon Average

<sup>37</sup> There are usually different versions of one book, so the version with the most reviews, No. of Holdings, and No. of Members is selected.

<sup>38</sup> The full score of all ratings is 5.

<sup>39</sup> Members refer to those registered accounts who own the book in question. No. of Members is an essential indicator of the popularity of the book.

<sup>40</sup> Numbers in parentheses are the rankings of the indexes in the column.

Customer Ratings UK, and Goodreads Average Ratings and No. of Ratings, *Hero* ranks third. The tentative conclusion is that *Hero* is better received than the other English translations of Jin Yong's novels, *Frog*, *The Four Books*, and *The Untouched Crime*, but is outshone by *The Three-Body Problem*.

It should be noted that the present reception appraisal is imperfect in two detectable ways: First, data of these websites are fluctuant, reducing the accuracy of assessment. Second, data from other sources are ruled out, making the assessment somewhat biased. These results therefore need to be interpreted with caution. The examination of the reception status of translation can never be assured of easy success. That said, these indexes are adequate to construct a general picture of the reception status of translations in question, "something comparable to the early maps of the New World, which showed the contours of the continents, even though they did not correspond very well to the actual landscape" (Darnton, 2002: 240). While reception indexes provide us with a panoramic view of the reception status of several translations, the following thematic analysis penetrates deeper into the micro-level reception of *Hero*.

## **4.2.2 NVivo-assisted Analysis of Amazon Customer Reviews**

### **4.2.2.1 Data and Methodology**

By March 27, 2021, *Hero* has elicited 400 customer ratings and 169 customer reviews on Amazon (US). These reviews are our research data in this subsection. They are a type of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which is defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to multitude of the people and institutes via the Internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004: 39). A large and growing body of studies points to a positive correlation between Amazon customer review valence and product sales (e.g., Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Forman et al., 2008; Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011; Li & Shimizu, 2018). In this case, existing customer reviews not only reflect their reception of *Hero*, but also affect the purchase intentions of other customers.

The appropriate use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), it is generally agreed, can largely enhance the handling/analysis process of data, and thus advance the robustness of qualitative research (Bringer et al., 2006; Johnston, 2006; Hutchison et al., 2010; Robins & Eisen, 2017; Dalkin et al., 2021). As a typical CAQDAS, NVivo is able to analyze texts, audiovisual materials, emails, images, spreadsheets, and web content, and is equipped with such tools as data management, query, and visualization, which can facilitate data identification and classification, and the comparison of different relationships in the data.<sup>41</sup> It is necessary to introduce four key terms of NVivo: **Coding** is the process of gathering material by topics, themes, or cases; **nodes** are containers for coding that represent topics and themes; **cases** are containers for coding that represent “units of observation”; **case classifications** are used to record information about cases (NVivo 11 Pro for Windows Getting Started Guide: 6).

#### 4.2.2.2 Analytical Procedure

Customer reviews are downloaded from Amazon (US). I will then conduct thematic analysis on these reviews with NVivo. Thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (‘themes’) within qualitative data” (Clarke & Braun, 2017: 297). It is one of the most common forms of data analysis in qualitative research. As my aim is to identify how Amazon customers receive and perceive *Hero*, I adopt the inductive thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). I do not start with a pre-established analytic frame and all the nodes and themes I develop are grounded in the customer reviews. The coding process enables me to discover themes embedded, both explicitly and implicitly, throughout these reviews. As the coding progresses, key themes (nodes), which occur frequently in the reviews, will emerge, and connections between these themes can be subsequently detected.

Multiple coding (two or more independent coders conduct the coding simultaneously) can reduce research bias and improve the coding quality. Due to limited time, I only invite a

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<sup>41</sup> NVivo official website. <https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>

second coder to assist my thematic coding.<sup>42</sup> I code these 169 customer reviews according to the following five criteria, which are the results of the discussion between me and the second coder:

1. Evaluative contents (e.g., “There is great story telling along with some wonderful fight scenes.”) and personal experience/expectation (e.g., “While I was reading, I felt like I was in a movie theater”) concerning the book are coded.
2. Other contents (e.g., introduction to the *Shediao* story) are not coded since they do not concern readers’ reception.
3. Reviews copied from professional book reviews are not coded.
4. Review headlines are not coded since similar contents appear in the body of the review. Repetitive contents in the same review are not coded.
5. No reviews will be coded more than once.

After my initial coding, the second coder reviews the nodes and offers revision suggestions (which concern about 20% of the coding references) (see Appendix 5 for revision suggestions by the second coder). I revise and reorganize the nodes based on her suggestions. A sufficiently high level of intercoder agreement is reached. It is worth noting that some preliminary nodes (such as “book cover” and “audio version”) with fewer than 8 coding references are deleted, as they are not thematically significant enough. Figure 13 showcases the coding process:

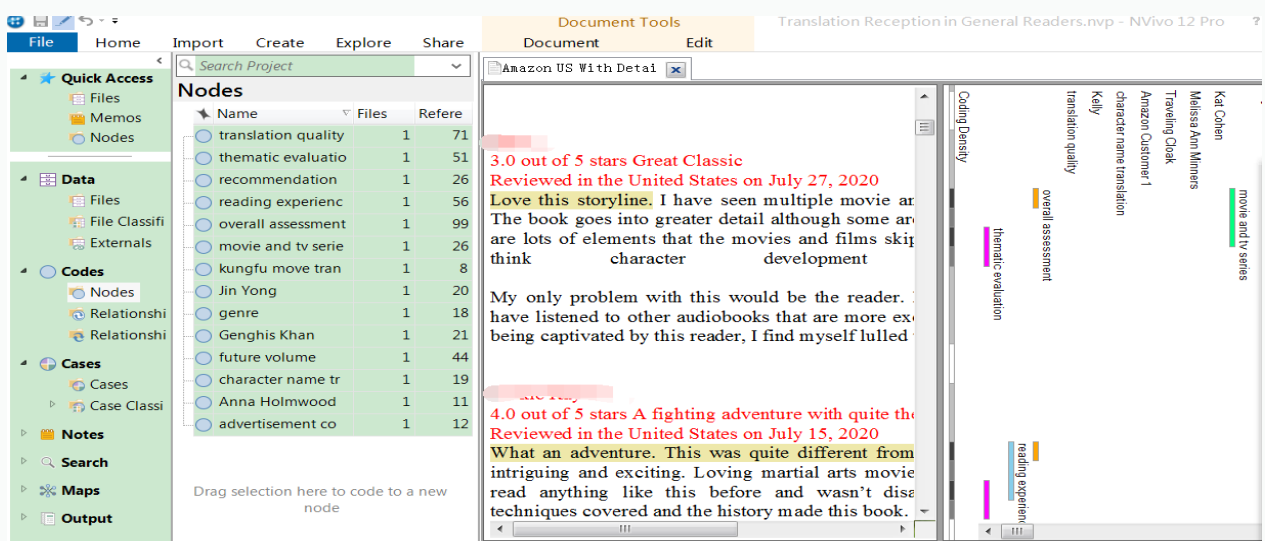
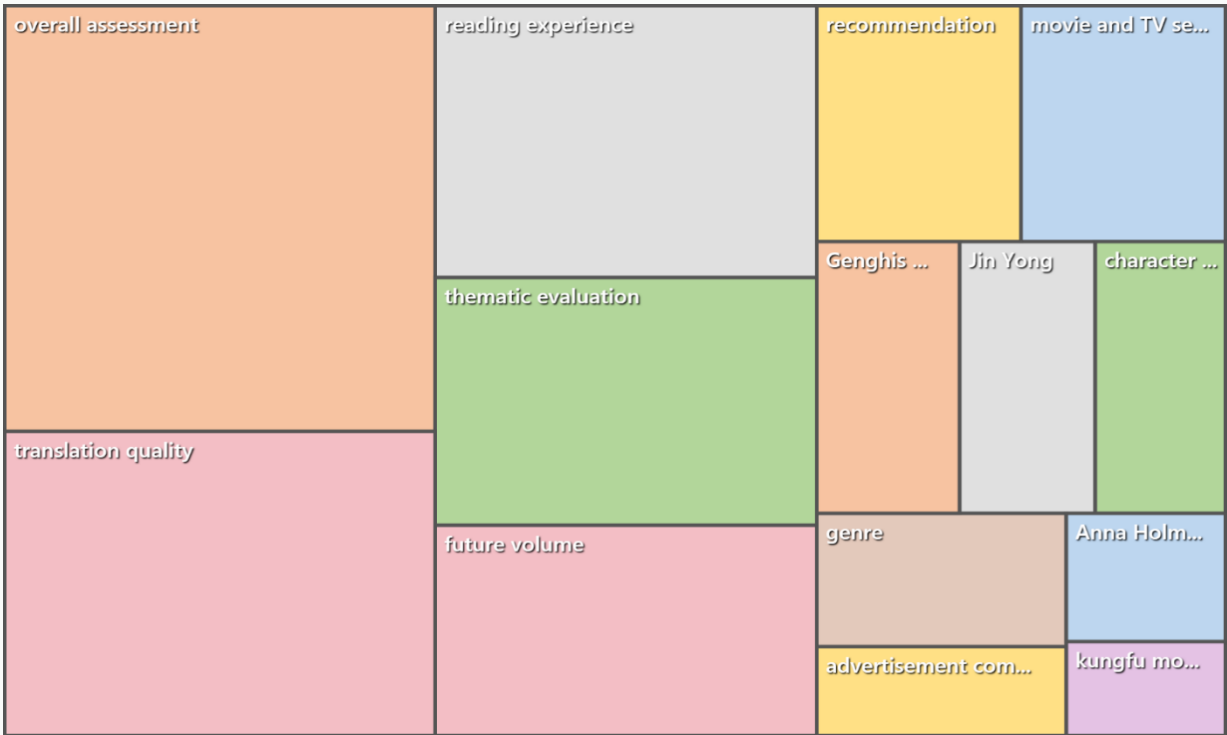


Figure 13. Screenshot of NVivo Thematic Coding

<sup>42</sup> The second coder is Ms. Yuxin She, Senior Lecturer from Chongqing Technology and Business University.

The names of reviewers are deleted to protect their privacy. When the coding is finished, I run “hierarchy chart” and “text search” in NVivo respectively to produce two visualized results. Thematic Node Hierarchy displays the most significant themes, and Word Cloud is based on word frequency.

### 4.2.2.3 Results and Analysis



**Figure 14. Thematic Node Hierarchy (compared by the number of coding references)**

In the above hierarchy chart, the area a node takes up is proportional to its coding references, hence its frequency and thematic significance. There are altogether 482 coding references. Amazon customers are mainly concerned with fourteen key themes (in a descending order): “overall assessment”, “translation quality”, “reading experience”, “thematic evaluation”, “future volume”, “recommendation”, “movie and TV series”, “Genghis Khan”, “Jin Yong”, “character name translation”, “genre”, “advertisement comment”, “Anna Holmwood”, and “kungfu move translation”. It should be noted that there are some overlaps among these nodes. Due to the limited space of the chart, several themes cannot be fully displayed. The hierarchy chart is corroborated by the following Word Frequency Query (exact

matches, minimum length 3):



Figure 15. Word Cloud in All Nodes (functional words eliminated)

In Figure 15, the font size of a word indicates the frequency of it in the whole text. As is shown, “book”, “story”, “translation”, “read”, “Chinese”, “characters” etc. are the most frequent words in all nodes. I will now analyze some themes in Figure 14 in detail.

While “overall assessment” (e.g., “a very entertaining book”), “future volume” (e.g., “Can’t wait for the next in this four part series”), and “recommendation” (e.g., “I highly recommend it”) are recurring themes in customer reviews, they do not represent customers’ in-depth evaluation of *Hero*, and thus will not be further analyzed. Since “advertisement (‘A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*’) comment” will be thoroughly examined in 5.3, it will not be discussed here either.

Four nodes concern translation, i.e., “translation quality” (in a general sense), “character name translation”, “Anna Holmwood”, and “*kungfu* move translation”. A close reading of these coding references indicates that readers are generally satisfied with readability and the translation of *kungfu* moves. For example,

1. The translator’s prose reads fairly fluidly and engagingly, which is why I give it another star.
2. A very fine job translating of the martial art moves, including those awesome sounding specialty moves like Bare Hand Seizes Blade, Deadly Dragon Flies the Cave...

By contrast, readers' criticism centers around overall translation accuracy and the translation of character names:

1. A surface-deep translation, quite readable but frequently inaccurate.
2. My one issue is the transliteration of certain names (seemingly random). Guo Jing is still Guo Jing, but Huang Rong is Lotus Huang.

It is worth noting that most of these critics, as indicated in their comments, are overseas Chinese or non-Chinese who are familiar with the Chinese language and culture. Despite their discontent and occasional frustration, they give comparatively higher ratings to the book nevertheless. Their generous rating is probably attributed to cultural affinity.

Comments on the translator Holmwood are generally positive, praising the translator's contribution in bringing Jin Yong and Chinese culture to the whole world. For instance,

1. Anna Holmwood has done an unmatched job in rendering the Chinese into an English version that is elegant and pleasant...
2. I will reiterate that Holmwood's clear adoration of and care for the original text and structure propelled this narrative along, even for a reluctant reader.

"Reading experience" refers to readers' feelings and emotions in reading the book. They use such positive words/phrases/sentences as: "enjoyable", "intriguing and exciting", "completely hooked", "get caught up in the story", "I couldn't put it down", and such negative words/phrases/sentences as: "worried", "struggling", "frustrating and confusing", "it wasn't really an entertaining experience".

"Thematic evaluation" concerns thematic elements and character development. It reflects readers' "deep reading" of the book. For instance,

1. The major themes of honor, martial arts, and personal connections to the people you allow into your life are huge elements of this novel...Another aspect I appreciated from this novel was the imagery and descriptions that came with the world-building.
2. Like many of the Asian novel's I've read, this one has a plethora of characters which can mean it's difficult to identify and distinguish protagonist from antagonist sometimes.



In terms of “movie and TV series”, numerous reviewers refer to *kungfu* movies and TV series they have watched, e.g., *Five Deadly Venoms* (五毒), *Fist of Fury* (精武門), *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (臥虎藏龍), and *House of Flying Daggers* (十面埋伏). It seems that some readers choose to read *Hero* purely because they love these products. For instance,

1. I’ve always loved *kungfu*; from Bruce Lee to David Carradine, from the classic movie *Fist of Fury* to the Academy Award winning *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. So, I was truly looking forward reading “A Hero Born.”
2. I have watched a couple different TV series versions of this story and I am elated to read this story in an English translation.

This reminds us that the reception of translated literature is by no means an isolated issue, and thus should be studied alongside the reception of the original work’s adaptations such as movies, animes, TV series, video games, etc.

Genghis Khan, though a supporting character in *Hero*, has been widely discussed by Amazon reviewers. The story of Genghis Khan, thanks to elements of universal appeal such as legendary *Bildungsroman* and conquest, seems to win the hearts of fans from across the globe. Several reviewers state their enormous interest in Genghis Khan and hence the book, as exhibited in the next two examples:

1. We even get to meet Ghengis [sic] Khan in the story. I am really looking forward to all the novels being translated.
2. The whole section with the Great Khan in Mongolia was great and I can’t wait for our hero to get back there.

By contrast, the theme of “Jin Yong” (20 coding references) has not attracted as much attention as is expected. Some reviewers praise Jin Yong’s literary achievements while others compare him with J. R. R. Tolkien and J. K. Rowling. Notably, some readers are obviously unfamiliar with the author, as they mistakenly treat “Yong” as the surname.

In the theme of “genre”, readers’ opinions diverge widely. Roughly one-third of these readers regard *Hero* as fantasy and the mixture of history and fantasy. Another one-third treat it as a classic novel. The rest find it difficult to pin down the exact genre identity of the book.

To encapsulate, NVivo-assisted thematic analysis of Amazon customer reviews unfolds: (1) “Overall assessment”, “translation quality”, “reading experience”, “thematic evaluation”,

etc. are the major themes. (2) Many readers are drawn to the book thanks to movies and TV series they have watched and the historical figure Genghis Khan. (3) In terms of translation-related issues, readers are generally satisfied with readability and the translation of *kungfu* moves while criticism is made regarding the overall translation accuracy and the translation of character names. Reviewers' evaluation of Holmwood is mostly positive. (4) Jin Yong is a lesser-known author in the Anglophone world.

## 4.3 Reception in Professional and Institutional Readers

### 4.3.1 Reception in Professional Readers

Book reviews of *Hero* have been published in *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *MCLC Book Review*, *Historical Novel Review*, *Asian Review of Books*, *Bookish Asia*, *The Complete Review*, *Library Journal*, etc. Most of these reviewers are literary translators, translation scholars, literary critics, or historians. They write book reviews only as a sideline activity. In what follows, four representative reviews will be examined.

Published in *Asian Review of Books* on March 19, 2018, Møller-Olsen (2018) is probably the earliest professional review of *Hero*. Currently a postdoctoral fellow at Lund University, the author has published extensively on contemporary Sinophone fiction. Her review enthusiastically endorses *Shediao* and Holmwood's translation. Situating *Shediao* in a "post-postmodern" context, she holds that "it is refreshing to meet literary characters that are so completely and uncomplicatedly heroic". She is aware of the inherent blemishes of Jin Yong *wuxia*, such as simple plots and inconsistencies, but she does not think they undercut the overall glamour of the work. She labels the translation as "smooth and highly readable".

Hull (2018) was published in *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, a top journal of multi-disciplinary cultural studies. The author is Assistant Professor of Chinese language, literature, and culture at Washington College, and a literary translator. After a cursory interpretation of "Chineseness" in Jin Yong *wuxia* from the perspective of diaspora, he devotes the bulk of his review to the translation. He explicates the myriad challenges in undertaking the translation, and then assesses Holmwood's rendition in terms of lexical and syntactic

choices. He concludes, “Holmwood has successfully presented a delicate balance of the ‘too-foreign’ Chineseness of the *jianghu* world with a welcoming prose that leads to the same thrilling engagement the reader has with the original”. While Hull contends that Holmwood has not made herself visible as a narrative guide in the translation, my analysis in Chapter 6 suggests otherwise.

Chiu (2019) was published in *Ricepaper*, a magazine which showcases Asian Canadian literature, culture, and the arts. The author’s interests lie in the translation of humors and minor details such as “汗水, 眼淚, 鼻涕” (sweat, tears, nose mucous). She thinks that Holmwood has captured and conveyed Jin Yong’s sense of humor, wisdom of human psychology, and the unique personalities Jin Yong forges in his characters.

If the above three reviews adopt a positive tone, Etvolare (2019) articulates harsh criticism of the translation. According to her self-introduction, the author is a *wuxia* fan, drama addict, and an online *wuxia* translator. Her major complaints concern the translation of character names and *kungfu* move names. She argues that terms such as *qinggong* are the bones of *wuxia* novels and should therefore be accurately explained. She attributes some unsatisfactory renditions to the translator’s insufficient knowledge of *wuxia* culture and parlance, and implies that the translation should have been undertaken by an experienced *wuxia* or *xuanhuan* translator.

Compared with Amazon customer reviews, professional book reviews are more formal, logical, critical, and authoritative. Professional readers would approach the translation from various perspectives (linguistic, cultural, political, ideological, philosophical, etc.), laying particular stress on Jin Yong’s literary style and the translation quality. They frequently use first-person plural (us, we) and constantly engage with their implied readers: “we are lucky to have it brought West”, “often baffle foreign readers”, “it does not help us very much in understanding”, “we were naturally tremendously excited to see an emblematic work come out in our sphere” etc.

### 4.3.2 Reception in Institutional Readers

As indicated in 4.1, the reception study of *Hero* in institutional readers will center around media reports and library holdings. The publication of *Hero* has attracted broad media attention around the globe. English media which has reported on it include *BBC*, *The Guardian*, *The New Yorker*, *The Irish Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Economist*, *The Straitstimes*, etc.

Media stance is demonstrated in their report headlines since they not only “define the most prominent or most relevant information of the news”, but also express “the top of the underlying semantic macrostructure” (van Dijk, 1988: 188-189). These reports hold a similarly positive stance toward the publication of *Hero*, and applaud Jin Yong’s works and Holmwood’s translation. In doing so, they collaborate with the translator and publisher in the publication promotion. Take the following headlines as examples,

*The Economist*—A martial-arts mega-hit finally arrives in English: Jin Yong offers  
fantasy, fighting, philosophy and subtle reflections on China.

*The Guardian*—A hero reborn: ‘China’s Tolkien’ aims to conquer Western readers:  
The world’s most popular *kungfu* fantasy series is finally set to  
become a UK bestseller.

*NPR*—Chinese Classic ‘Condor Heroes’ Takes Wing in English.

Table 5 showcases the library holdings status of *Hero*. The data is collected from WorldCat (OCLC). Boasting the world’s largest bibliographic database, WorldCat is widely used by librarians for cataloging and scholars for academic research (e.g., Turner, 2010; White & Zuccala, 2018). Thanks to “its comprehensive coverage, ready availability, and flexible search interface” (McClure, 2009: 81), WorldCat offers an overview of the reception status of *Hero* in libraries around the globe. The cutoff time of data collection (all editions and formats) is February 26, 2021. In accordance with Table 4, the data of *Hero* will be compared with that of the other seven translations.

Translations	WorldCat No. of Holdings
<i>A Hero Born</i>	483
<i>Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain</i>	126
<i>The Deer and the Cauldron (Vol. 1)</i>	11
<i>The Book and the Sword</i>	138
<i>The Three-Body Problem</i>	1,393
<i>Frog</i>	754
<i>The Four Books</i>	519
<i>The Untouched Crime</i>	4

**Table 5. WorldCat Library Holdings of *Hero***

Table 5 suggests that *Hero* takes the fourth place in the number of library holdings. It is held by more libraries than the other translations of Jin Yong works. A close examination of the search results in WorldCat reveals that *Hero* is held by libraries in such countries as the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, etc.

## 4.4 Summary

The convoluted history of the reception of Jin Yong's novels in translation unfolded speaks volumes about the obstacles that Chinese *wuxia* literature encounters in the Anglophone world. A question broached here is what contributes to the better reception of *Hero* compared with other *wuxia* translations. There are no hard-and-fast answers, but the following factors might be essential.

The first factor is the publisher. As discussed in Chapter 2, previous translations of Jin Yong's novels were published by Chinese University Press, and Oxford University Press (Hong Kong), two academic publishers, while *Hero* was published by MacLehose Press and St. Martin's Press, two commercial publishers. The two types of publishers are dramatically different in structure, target readers, financial arrangements, geographical reach, etc. As an

integral part of academic research, academic publishers are usually a part of their host universities and, according to Thompson, most of them are registered as charities or not-for-profits organizations (2005: 87). Some presses of this nature, such as Cambridge University Press and University of Chicago Press, are large and have a high annual turnover. But Chinese University Press and Oxford University Press (Hong Kong), just like most of their counterparts, are small and are primarily aimed at cultural and symbolic capital instead of economic capital. Therefore, they are in a disadvantaged position in promoting *wuxia* novels, a peripheral genre in the international market. By contrast, MacLehose Press, a London-based commercial publisher specializing in translated literature, has collaborated with writers and translators *par excellence* around the world and has published such masterpieces as *Millennium* Trilogy. Headquartered in New York, St. Martin's is one of the biggest English-language publishers in the world. They are equipped with publicity staff and a wide range of promotional methods. The two publishers sent a significant number of free copies of *Hero* to general and professional readers worldwide in exchange for book reviews, a way of marketing simply cannot be afforded by academic publishers. In terms of professional review outlets, Barry Gewen, book review editor of *Times*, acknowledges that submissions "from major publishing houses—Knopf, Random House, and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, for example—may be given more time compared to those from, say, a small university press" (Lumenello, 2007: 4). This explains why *Hero* has been more widely reviewed on top journals and magazines.

In response to *The Bookseller's* question: Why have Jin Yong novels not been translated into English by a trade publisher before? Holmwood remarks, "A lot of it has to do with timing" (2018a). "Timing" is indeed of great significance to translation reception. The cultural, economic, political, and ideological milieu in which the international circulation of translated literature takes place has changed exponentially in the past two decades. Although "globalization has reinforced the domination of English" (Sapiro, 2010a: 423), the number of translated works from "peripheral" languages such as Swedish, Arabic, Japanese, and Chinese is on a constant rise. The Nielsen Book research (2019) indicates that the proportion of translated fiction in the UK market is now 5.63%, a great leap forward compared with the widely accepted "3% rule". Whether China's rising political prowess in recent years bolsters or hinders the reception of its literature remains to be investigated. What is certain, however,

is that more economic and intellectual resources are invested in the translation and promotion of Chinese literature. Against this backdrop, the works of Chinese authors such as Mo Yan, Yu Hua, Yan Lianke, Mai Jia, Jia Pingwa, and Liu Cixin are widely translated and some of them are well received. In the case of *Hero*, *kungfu* movies and TV series, together with *wuxia*-themed fan websites such as Wuxiaworld.com, WuxiaSociety.com, and immortalmountain.wordpress.com provide another catalyst for its reception.

Finally, Holmwood, the principal translator and the co-literary agent of *Legends*, has contributed her share to the reception of the book. A more comprehensive investigation into Holmwood's roles and textual "fingerprints" that have contributed to the reception of *Legends* as a whole will be conducted in the next two chapters.

Whilst the publication of translated literature has accomplished the shift from a product-led to a market-led industry, most translation scholars have ignored the market and reader-based approach in their investigation of translation reception. My intention is not to denounce the macro-level reception studies, which focus on literary impact, cultural transmission, ideological repercussion, etc.; instead, I aspire to call academic attention to the micro-level reader-centered reception, which merits data-based analysis.

This chapter has investigated how individual readers (general readers and professional readers) receive and perceive *Hero*, and has unearthed how institutional readers (the news media and libraries) react to its publication. It has demonstrated that CAQDAS such as NVivo could herald a new era in mixed-methods research, whereby an in-depth investigation of translation reception can be achieved. A research methodology thus formed should promise solutions to some conundrums besetting the research of translation reception.

## CHAPTER 5. ANNA HOLMWOOD'S MULTIPLE ROLES IN THE TRANSLATION PROJECT

### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter critically mobilizes the Bourdieusian concept of habitus and further develops the notion of professional habitus to unravel the special identity of Holmwood—the principal translator and co-literary agent of *Legends*, investigating her multiple roles in the translation project, i.e., initiator, coordinator, and promoter, based on interviews, email contacts, and media reports. Besides unlocking the mystery of literary agenting of translation and recounting how *Legends* comes into being, this chapter will also disambiguate between generalized habitus and professional habitus, thus contributing to the ongoing theoretical debate of the nature and application of habitus. This chapter is therefore exploratory and interpretative.

This chapter proceeds as follows: in 5.1, I make a complete, though not exhaustive, introduction to Holmwood's family and educational background, career development, and translated works. I will introduce the concept of habitus and scrutinize its application in translation studies, arguing that the mobilization of habitus is still relevant despite all the criticisms it attracts, and that habitus of literary translators merits a more in-depth treatment. Following this argument, I will parse out the key differences between generalized and professional habitus prior to elucidating the generation and operationalization of Holmwood's professional habitus in relation to literary agenting. 5.2 investigates how Holmwood's professional habitus empowers her to act as the nexus of the literary translation field, and function as the initiator (at the pre-translation stage) and coordinator (at the pre-translation and the in-translation stages) of the translation project, capitalizing on the agent report, interviews (conducted by me and journalists), email contacts (between me and different actors, and between these actors),<sup>43</sup> and media reports. Similarly, 5.3 investigates Holmwood's role as the

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<sup>43</sup> The use of these email contacts in my research are formally consented by email senders and sendees.



promoter (at the post-translation stage), concentrating on “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”, an advertising tagline invented by Holmwood, and relevant workshops and interviews.

Although habitus is highlighted throughout this chapter, I by no means intend to rule out other factors such as personality and contingencies that shape Holmwood’s social practice. It would be simplistic and deterministic to do so. What I aim to demonstrate is that her professional habitus as a literary agent is a powerful force behind her extra-translational activities. By the same token, although Holmwood figures prominently in the initiation, production, and promotion of *Legends*, it is unequivocally a collective project, in which co-translators, the primary agent, publishers, editors, Jin Yong’s representative all have played their roles.

## **5.1 Anna Holmwood and Her Professional Habitus**

### **5.1.1 Introduction to Anna Holmwood**

#### **5.1.1.1 Family and Educational Background**

Anna Holmwood (Chinese name 郝玉青) was born in Sweden in 1985. Her father is British and her mother Swedish, providing her a bilingual and bicultural environment during childhood. She is essentially a British nationality with both British and Swedish blood. Not much is known about her early life, except that she lived with her family in Edinburgh before moving to London for college education and that she has developed an interest in writing since childhood.<sup>44</sup> She has been a literary translator, literary agent, editor, and business designer. Married to Mardy Lin (林家緯), a Taiwan actor, filmmaker, and YouTuber,<sup>45</sup> she now lives in Sweden with her husband and two sons. Holmwood has been active on social media, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Weibo (微博). She published her educational background and work experience in detail on LinkedIn.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> BCLTUA website. [https://bcltuea.tumblr.com/anna\\_holmwood](https://bcltuea.tumblr.com/anna_holmwood)

<sup>45</sup> The address of his YouTube channel is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXFouXddePcN1Yu7KPZ5OkQ>

<sup>46</sup> Holmwood’s LinkedIn.

She studied modern history at Oxford University from 2003 to 2006. It was probably the course of Chinese history that sparked Holmwood's passion for Chinese language and culture. After graduating with a B.A., she went on to pursue M.Phil. in modern Chinese studies at the same university as a recipient of the AHRC fully-funded research preparation studentship. During this period, she spent half a year at Peking University as an exchange student. By then, she must have acquired some in-depth knowledge of Chinese language and culture and have demonstrated excellent academic performance. That was proved by the fact that in 2009, right after she received her M.Phil. diploma, she was selected as a recipient of Taiwan Department of Education's Mandarin Enrichment Scholarship to join in the program of Classical and Modern Chinese training at National Taiwan Normal University. This government scholarship aims to encourage international students to study Mandarin courses in Taiwan, to provide them with opportunities to improve their understanding of Taiwan culture, and to facilitate mutual understanding between Taiwan and the international community.<sup>47</sup>

In 2010, she came back to London to pursue an M.A. degree in Chinese literature in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, where a large number of top-notch academics specializing in Chinese language, literature, politics, and history can be approached. A snapshot of her educational background might lead to the conclusion that she was hard-working and that she was well equipped to translate Chinese literature. Surprisingly, however, she ventured into the publishing industry instead of becoming a literary translator immediately after graduation, which made her story more intriguing.

#### **5.1.1.2 Career Development**

Holmwood's first job was an intern in Johnson & Alcock, a London-based literary agency founded in 1956. The company represents and serves commercial and literary novelists, poets, playwrights, and serious non-fiction authors. Holmwood was responsible for assessing submissions and manuscripts, researching international publishing houses, and maintaining

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<https://www.linkedin.com/in/annaholmwood-%E9%83%9D%E7%8E%89%E9%9D%92-6933b032/>

<sup>47</sup> Taipei Economic and Cultural Office. [https://www.taiwanembassy.org/cayvr\\_en/post/3474.html](https://www.taiwanembassy.org/cayvr_en/post/3474.html)

client information. Before long, she returned to Beijing, preparing submission materials for Chinese authors in English and assessed English-language manuscripts for the Chinese market for Andrew Nurnberg Associates, a British literary agency and a member of the Association of Authors' Agents.

She was employed by the Grayhawk Agency (see 3.3) as a literary agent in July 2012 and worked there for the next year and a half. From January 2014 to June 2015, Holmwood served as a development producer in Zhejiang Century Visual Culture, mainland China. As the only non-Chinese member of the team responsible for developing television formats, she was brought in to contribute with international trends and ideas. She was assigned Editor in Chief of "Books from Taiwan" in January 2014. It is an initiative funded by the Taiwan Ministry of Culture to introduce a series of literary titles, including fiction, non-fiction, children's books and comics, to international publishers and readers.<sup>48</sup> Up to now, hundreds of books by dozens of writers from Taiwan have been translated under this initiative. Her job is mainly twofold: to edit English-language samples and book introduction for print and online publication, and to collect and analyze articles from translators, agents, publishers, and other stakeholders on various aspects of selling rights internationally.

In February 2018, Holmwood was appointed as the Foreign Rights Manager of DKW literary agency. DKW works closely with the following organizations for international translation rights: L'Autre Agence (French, Scandinavian and Nordic languages), Berla & Griffini Rights Agency (Italian), Sebes & Bisseling Literary Agency (Dutch), The Rights People (English), etc. DKW announced the appointment of Holmwood,

Having reached the milestone of our fifth birthday in November 2017, we're thrilled to enter an ambitious new phase of expansion. Anna's experience, entrepreneurial attitude and enthusiasm made her the perfect fit for this exciting new role, and we're looking forward to working with her to develop further international opportunities for our clients.<sup>49</sup>

Holmwood replied,

I have been following DKW go from strength to strength since their founding

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<sup>48</sup> "Books from Taiwan" Official Website. <https://booksfromtaiwan.tw/>

<sup>49</sup> DKW official website. <http://dkwlitagency.co.uk/2018/02/anna-holmwood-appointed-foreign-rights-manager/>

in 2012 and am delighted and honoured to be able to join the team. Ella, Bryony and Elinor have made a name for themselves for their creative eye and client-centred service, and I can't wait to be able to help them grow. Most of all, I look forward to seeing our fabulous list of authors find homes all over the world (ibid.).

Besides working for the above-mentioned organizations, Holmwood is an independent rights consultant specializing in cross-cultural contract negotiation. Her clients are, among others, Taiwan Ministry of Culture, the British Council, Scottish National Theatre, and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Before delving into her translations, it is necessary to introduce the British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) to gain a better understanding of her early career as a translation trainee. The BCLT, a research center at the University of East Anglia, is devoted to supporting the professional development of literary translators and promoting the recognition of literary translation as a profession through Sebald Lecture, International Summer School, and other initiatives. Established by the late Professor W.G. Sebald in 1989, the BCLT has won great fame in the literary translation circle by nurturing translation talents and promoting mutual understanding between writers and translators worldwide.<sup>50</sup>

In her memoir, Holmwood maintains that she would not be the translator she is today without the BCLT. She joined the summer school of 2010, and there she approached Nicky Harman, who became her translation mentor after discussing with her topics ranging from word choice, the placing of full stops, to contemporary Chinese writers.<sup>51</sup> Nicky Harman, the co-chair of the Translators Association, is the winner of first prize in the 2013 China International Translation Contest. It is reasonable to assume that Harman, with rich experience in translating Chinese literature and a wide social network in literary translation, might have exerted highly positive influences on Holmwood's future career both as a translator and a literary agent. The benefits Holmwood obtained from this summer school cannot be overestimated. She was granted the first BCLT mentorship in 2010 by the then director Valerie Henitiuk, whereby she was able to work on her first novel translation: *Under the Hawthorn Tree* authored by Ai Mi. She summarized: "The BCLT gave me a way into a new industry and the practical skills and knowledge in order to thrive. But in fact, the real lesson I learned there

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<sup>50</sup> BCLT website. <http://www.bclt.org.uk/about>

<sup>51</sup> BCLT UAE website. [https://bcltuea.tumblr.com/anna\\_holmwood](https://bcltuea.tumblr.com/anna_holmwood)

turned out to be more profound. That translation is taking part, a community, a sharing of literature, knowledge and passion” (ibid.). It was in that spirit of the BCLT that Holmwood, together with Rosalind Harvey and Jamie Lee Searle, established the Emerging Translators Network (ETN), a support network and forum for young literary translators working into English. By running ETN and participating in all sorts of translation-related activities, Holmwood has established a wide translation network comprised of authors, translators, editors, publishers, and literary agents, which has arguably defined and will continue to define her career.

I would now to shift to Holmwood’s translated works. According to Paper Republic,<sup>52</sup> Holmwood’s major translated works are as follows:

Translation title	Category	Original title	Author
<i>Black Flame</i>	Children’s book	黑焰	Gerelchimeg Blackcrane
<i>Murdering Melons</i>	Short story	殺瓜	Dong Libo
<i>Monsters at Volleyball</i>	Short story	妖怪打排球	Lu Nei
<i>A Perfect Crime</i>	Novel	下麵我該幹些什麼	A Yi
<i>Under the Hawthorn Tree</i>	Novel	山楂樹之戀	Ai Mi
<i>Amazing Story of the Man Who Cycled from India to Europe for Love</i>	Novel	<i>New Delhi-Borås: Den osannolika berättelsen om indiern som cyklade till Sverige för kärlekens skull</i>	Per J. Andersson

**Table 6. Holmwood’s Major Translated Works (adapted from Paper Republic)<sup>53</sup>**

On top of these translations, she has also translated 11 story excerpts. It is fair to say that Holmwood is an industrious translator, considering her age and the hectic schedule as a literary agent while doing translation. The three novel translations will be further analyzed.

<sup>52</sup> “Paper Republic was founded in 2007 by a group of translators in Beijing as an online forum for translators of Chinese literature to share information about Chinese books and authors, and discuss how to get them translated and published abroad” (Paper Republic official website).

<sup>53</sup> <https://paper-republic.org/pers/anna-holmwood/>

She began in 2010 to translate *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, a publishing sensation in China since its debut on the Internet in 2007, and an emerging classic based on which Zhang Yimou (張藝謀) directed a box-office champion in 2010. The novel, authored by the Chinese American writer Ai Mi (艾米), is a typical piece of “scar literature” or “literature of the wounded” centered around a love story set during the end of the Cultural Revolution in a small village in Hubei Province. In the translator’s introduction, she maintains that the novel’s huge success is attributable mainly to the demonstration that a thwarted love story can transcend the political and historical boundary, and touch the hearts and souls of readers of all ages (2011: viii). In wrestling with place names, a somewhat thorny issue in this book, she resorts to transliteration to follow the consensus that has formed on the Internet. The translator demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the political and cultural background of the novel, one evidence being her observation: “Jingqiu [the protagonist]’s sexual naivety may strike the Western reader as rather incredible, yet it shows the startlingly intimate reach of politics in that period” (ibid.).

Her second translated novel is *A Perfect Crime*. The original work, “下麵，我該幹些什麼” is authored by A Yi (阿乙). The introduction on Bookdepository makes a succinct yet enlightening summary of the work: “A shocking investigation into the despair that traps the rural poor as well as a technically brilliant excursion into the claustrophobic realm of classic horror and suspense...”.<sup>54</sup> *Amazing Story of the Man Who Cycled from India to Europe for Love*, is translated from New Delhi-Borås: Den osannolika berättelsen om indiern som cyklade till Sverige för kärlekens skull, a Swedish novel about the true love story of a young Indian man and a Swedish woman.

It was not until the publication of *Legends* that Holmwood made her name. The initiation of the translation project and the translation of the first volume of *Shediao* took about five years, starting from 2013 (see Figure 16 for the photo of Holmwood and Paul Engles, the editor of *Legends*, from Maclehorse Press).

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<sup>54</sup><https://www.bookdepository.com/Perfect-Crime-Yi/9781780749297?ref=gridview&qid=1622126109512&sr=1-3>



**Figure 16. Anna Holmwood and Paul Engles<sup>55</sup>**

The following pages focus on Holmwood's literary agenting. The Bourdieusian concept of habitus will be revisited and the development of Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent will be examined.

## **5.1.2 Literary Agenting: Holmwood's Professional Habitus**

### **5.1.2.1 Bourdieusian Concept of Habitus**

In the quest for a sociology that is able to transcend a series of dichotomies—theory and practice, subjectivism and objectivism, structure and agency, individual and society, mind and body, etc.—Pierre Bourdieu invented and continuously developed a set of “thinking tools” such as habitus, doxa, and symbolic violence in his in-depth investigation of the various actors and layers of society.<sup>56</sup> While these thinking tools are inseparable and are usually applied simultaneously, it is habitus that will be the predominant theoretical tool in this study. Literally, habitus “is a Latin word which refers to a habitual or typical condition, state or appearance,

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<sup>55</sup> This photo is from [https://www.ocacnews.net/overseascommunity/article/article\\_story.jsp?id=233027](https://www.ocacnews.net/overseascommunity/article/article_story.jsp?id=233027)

<sup>56</sup> In an interview with Wacquant (1989: 50), Bourdieu argues that instead of “attempting some kind of ‘synthesis of classical theory’”, he is developing “a set of thinking tools”. Although Bourdieu is widely praised as a theorist, he rejects grand theories and most of his so-called theories are developed to allow him to examine various sociological phenomena such as cultural reproduction, social mobility, and educational inequality.

particularly of the body” (Jenkins, 1992: 45). Although habitus as a sociological concept is found in various guises in the works of sociologists such as Emile Durkehim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, and Marcel Mauss (Haugaard, 2008: 189), it was popularized in the 1980s by, and is now mainly associated with, Bourdieu. Ironically, however, his treatment of habitus, like that of some of his other concepts, is subject to constant and sometimes contradictory modifications. That is why Swartz avers that even those who are conversant with Bourdieu’s works diverge widely on what Bourdieu’s habitus represents (1997: 96). The concise interpretation of habitus is “mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation and action” (Wacquant, 1992: 16). Nevertheless, the complete and oft-cited definition of habitus by Bourdieu is,

[S]ystems of durable, transposable **dispositions** (my emphasis), structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively “regulated” and “regular” without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

To comprehend this tortuous definition—which is indicative of Bourdieu’s “unnecessarily long-winded, obscure, complex and intimidatory” (Jenkins, 1992: 1) writing style—necessitates the accurate understanding of “dispositions”, the kernel of the definition. In a footnote to *Outline of A Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu expounds on the word “disposition”, arguing that it is “particularly suited to express what is covered by the concept of habitus” as it encompasses three meanings, i.e.: (a) “the result of an organizing action”; (b) “a way of being, a habitual state”; and (c) “a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination” (1977: 214). This succinct explanation of “disposition” grasps the essential characters of habitus. For Bourdieu, habitus is an invisible yet enduring force—engendered by social structures, internalized and achieved by individuals in social practices and interactions—that shapes individuals’ approach to the world, that is, predisposes them to perceive, believe, behave, and react. As a latent force behind the interplay between social structures and social practices, it is embodied in and crystallized by individuals, i.e., social actors. Habitus, to use Bourdieu’s own words, “makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions



inherent in the particular conditions of its production” (1990: 55). It converges with personality and character in the psychological sense. To interpret habitus as a force engendered by social structures, however, should in no way suggest that it is mechanical or automatic; rather, it is the “socialized subjectivity that agents embody both individually and collectively” (Costa & Murphy, 2015: 7) or the “practical sense emergent from experience” (Lau, 2004: 382).

Innovatively conceptualizing habitus, Bourdieu builds a “bridge” between object and subject, individual and collective, structure and agency while foregrounding a dialectical and reciprocal relationship, and in doing so, untangles some theoretical conundrums besetting him and other sociologists alike. That being said, habitus has nevertheless encountered many theoretical controversies. In arguing that Bourdieu’s habitus has its limitations, I am moving the focus to several critics of this concept, aiming to highlight some outstanding issues pertaining to the concept and thus lay the foundation for my development of “professional habitus”.

One of the harshest criticisms comes from Margaret Archer. In emphasizing the power of reflexivity in late modernity, she challenges habitus—of its *raison d’être*—and goes so far as to abandon the concept (Archer, 2012). In their seminal article on habitus, Noble & Watkins (2003) outline three problems of the concept: (a) being deterministic: Bourdieu overemphasizes structured structures/fields, and degrades agency as a simple result; (b) being static, that is, not sufficiently interactive and dynamic; and (c) the removal of consciousness in the generation and development of habitus. I am particularly concerned with the last problem. Bourdieu’s disregard of the role of consciousness is evident not only in his aforementioned definition of habitus, but also in his elucidation of the concept. He states that the acquisition and reproduction of a habitus-like model take place in the absence of consciousness (Bourdieu, 1990: 73). To Bourdieu, consciousness only intercedes in “times of crises” (Wacquant, 1989: 45). His downplaying of consciousness is paradoxically inconsistent with his constant emphasis on reflexivity. It should be pointed out that, however, criticisms on his disregard of consciousness are mostly conducted at a purely theoretical level (e.g., Watkins, 2005; Farrugia, 2013; Vogler, 2016; Pula, 2019). Based on empirical evidence, my research will unfold how consciousness figures prominently not only in the generation (5.1.2.2), but also in the operationalization (5.2 and 5.3) of Holmwood’s professional habitus as a literary

agent. It will thus be argued that habitus is a system of both habitual/unconscious and purposeful/conscious dispositions.

The above criticisms are partly a result of Bourdieu's insistency on the conceptualization of habitus. As a matter of fact, its application by Bourdieu himself and other scholars has usually deviated from its "orthodox" denotation. With its development, habitus denotes more mental dispositions than bodily dispositions. While all these criticisms, mild or fierce, provide useful starting points for amending or developing habitus, they cannot obliterate the quintessential nature of the concept, rendering it invalid. The fact that scholars have constantly refined, diverged, and refuted in their continuous pursuits of better interpretations and applications of the concept, is precisely a testimony of its theoretical potency and versatility.

The operational limits of habitus have been extrapolated well beyond sociology. It was Simeoni (1998) who first introduced habitus into translation studies. Thereafter, several attempts have been made to examine the impact of habitus on translators' lifestyle and self-image (e.g., Sela-Sheffy, 2005, 2008, 2014; Meylaerts, 2010; Voinova & Shlesinger, 2016), and to analyze how translators' habitus shape their translation (e.g., Vosloo, 2007; Buzelin, 2014; Yannakopoulou, 2014; Xu & Chu, 2015; Guo, 2021). These important studies enable the dynamic interaction between translators' agency and the norms of translation and, on that basis, activate the sociological inquiries into translators as a social group with its distinct interests and capital. Methodologically, a habitus-driven investigation reconciles the empiricist-descriptivist approach and hermeneutic-historical approach advocated by different translation scholars (Buzelin, 2014: 65). By and large, however, these studies do not take account of the generation and development of habitus—that is, translators' habitus is taken for granted—nor do they examine the influences of translator's habitus on extra-translational activities. Otherwise put, existing research ignores the fact that translators' habitus is a system of acquired dispositions that are conditioned and shaped by the multilayered social milieu, and remains confined to the investigation of translator identity and translated texts. Another lacuna lies in the conceptualization of professional habitus, which will be dealt with in the next part.

### 5.1.2.2 Development of Holmwood's Professional Habitus

As Holmwood is both a translator and literary agent, two sets of professional habitus are in operation. This dissertation, however, will only analyze how her professional habitus as a literary agent wields influences on her extra-translational activities and translation practice. In fact, Bourdieu himself has analyzed different kinds of habitus, e.g., class habitus (1984), linguistic habitus (1991), scientific habitus (1993), etc. But these habitus denote more of social strata than professions or occupations and should therefore be regarded as the sub-sets of generalized habitus. Although “professional habitus” appears sporadically in translation studies (e.g., Ben-Ari, 2014; Xu & Chu, 2015; Voinova & Shlesinger, 2016) as well as other research fields (e.g., Scheffer, 2007; Spence & Carter, 2014; Harrington, 2017; Erixon & Arreman 2018), it is neither fully spelled out nor adequately developed. Ben-Ari (2014) mentions “professional habitus” in passing, without elucidating its nature or function. Xu & Chu (2015) conveniently circumvents the definition question and contends that the professional habitus of Edgar Snow, a journalist and the translator of Shen Congwen, is the combination of dispositions of both a translator and a journalist (the so-called “adjacent discipline”). Their argument contradicts their article title “Translators’ professional habitus and the adjacent discipline” and thus violates the law of identity in a logical sense. Another criticism of their work is that if the translator’s professional habitus is generated by both professions, i.e., translation and journalism, and, as indicated in their article, by the translator’s complete social trajectory, what is the point of professional habitus? Such an approach remains problematic analytically and theoretically. In Voinova & Shlesinger (2016), “professional habitus” is equated to “specialized habitus”, and indiscriminately juxtaposed with “generalized habitus”, “social habitus”, and “other habituses”. The ambiguous mobilization of professional habitus as such will inevitably undermine its theoretical potency, and induce a plethora of confusions and divergencies, which would, in turn, muddle any scholarly inquiry in this regard. In light of this, a brief yet reasoned account of the ontological status of professional habitus is merited.

To achieve this requires us to understand generalized habitus first. Meylaerts rightly defines it as an “individual’s mental and physical structures as shaped by early socialization

within structures of family, class, and education” (2010: 2). It is a result of both nature and nurture.

Following this train of thought, I propose that professional habitus should be interpreted as social actors’ dispositions in certain social practices and mental schemata, systematically engendered by and accumulated in enduring professional involvements in specialized contexts. Generated by *a posteriori* knowledge, it differs from generalized habitus by virtue of its secondary and nurtured character. Woven into the structure of professional habitus are elements of specialized training, professional qualifications, and thus the capacity of providing goods and services of specific kinds. In the context of literary agenting, professional habitus is associated with activities such as matching the author with the appropriate editor and publisher, handling translation rights of the author’s works, monitoring the publication and dissemination process to ensure that the interests of the author are properly protected, promoting the author’s public image, to name but the most essential duties of literary agents. Let me thus stress that professional habitus is autonomous to a certain extent and depends for its very existence on a particular profession or occupation. Simply put, it is field-specific. This, however, in no way suggests that professional habitus is disconnected from generalized habitus, or that one professional habitus is insulated from other professional habitus. As will be demonstrated later, professional habitus is the continuation of generalized habitus in a professional environment, and is an intrinsically open and dynamic system. Professional habitus should be understood both existentially—as a general way of being—and behaviorally—as a general way of behaving. My tentative definition of professional habitus tallies with Bourdieu’s belief that habitus can be changed by education, training, and new experiences (2005: 45).

By now, the nature of professional habitus and the differences between generalized and professional habitus should be clear. So how is Holmwood’s professional habitus as a literary agent, or her “‘feel’ for the game” (Bourdieu, 1998: 25) of literary agenting prototyped and developed?

Bourdieu (1996b)’s research on the educational system indicates that a person’s preferences of academic disciplines and educational institutions connote the status of her/his family background. Given Holmwood’s trajectory of higher education (B.A. in modern history

and M.Phil. of modern Chinese studies from Oxford University, M.A. in Chinese literature from University of London), one can assume that she is from a middle or upper-class family, and therefore has gained a portfolio of economic and cultural capital in the first place, which enables her to marshal various resources to position herself advantageously in social practices. Her educational background and experience in Beijing and Taipei enhance her proficiency in Chinese, familiarize her with Chinese literature, culture, and history, and thus lay a solid foundation for the generation of her professional habitus as a literary agent.

She has worked in Johnson & Alcock agency, Andrew Nurnberg Associates, and the Grayhawk Agency. By 2014, the profession of literary agenting—its tradition, code of conduct, and mode of working—must have imprinted on Holmwood’s mind and approach to literary works. She already felt the “pulse” of the literary market, especially that of translated literature; she came to understand what kind of books would sell well and how Chinese writers should be promoted in the Anglophone market. That is why in January 2014 she was assigned Editor in Chief of “Books from Taiwan”. In the complicated societal interlacements with different actors of the literary field, Holmwood gained valuable insights into Chinese literature as well as the “game” of literary agenting. These experiences engendered and constantly reinforced her socialized subjectivity as a literary agent. Along with the development of her professional habitus, her social, cultural, and symbolic capital steadily increased. In February 2018, she was appointed Foreign Rights Manager of DKW literary agency. In the interview by *The Bookseller*, Holmwood reflects on her job in DKW, “selling rights is always a huge challenge: it takes patience, tenacity, instinct, and luck. It is a real privilege to work with writers, to know you are helping them find more readers around the world” (2018a).

At this stage, the primary internalization of literary agenting-related social structures in Holmwood is complete, generating in her a set of durable and stable dispositions and propensities which guide her general social practices. So what are the features of this professional habitus?

This question prompts us to consider the nature of literary agenting. As discussed in Chapter 3, literary agenting is essentially the activities of representing authors to publishers and other institutions, and of exploiting all rights of authors’ written works. Involved in all the stages of literature initiation, production, dissemination, and promotion, and constantly

interacting with authors, publishers, editors, translators, booksellers, distributors, literary critics, the news media, etc., literary agents need to be, and in reality, usually are, sociable, pragmatic, proactive, tactical, resourceful, and flexible. Some of them are unapologetically aggressive or even notoriously unscrupulous (see the story of Andrew Wylie in 3.2.2) in getting their clients' works into the marketplace as effectively and efficiently as possible. They prioritize salability and profitability over artistic or cultural value when assessing a manuscript; they highlight effectiveness while ignoring formalities in communicating with others; they place the interests of authors above those of publishers when conducting negotiations; they focus on readability instead of accuracy in approaching translated literature; they spare no efforts in promoting potential best-sellers but would not waste a minute on junk books. What they rely on for living is a social network and business acumen.

In her reply to my email (May 17, 2019), Holmwood states, "agenting is very people and relationship led, it is all about being a good communicator and someone who can get a feel for what might work in another country". In collaborating with, as much as contending against other actors in the field, literary agents gain a vantage point which promises a panoramic view of the literary market and industry. Literary agenting "brings you into contact with so many different editors, companies and lets you see the market in its entirety" (ibid.). It is these qualities and characteristics that engender Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent, predisposing her perceptions, stances, mentality, and intuition, which, in turn, shape her *modus operandi*—in this case, her approach to Jin Yong's *wuxia* novels. In an interview by *The Paper*, Holmwood explains the influences of being a literary agent on her translation practice and extra-translational activities,

從事出版業的經驗確實有很大幫助。因為瞭解出版人挑選和包裝一本圖書的方式，我可以給出版流程也提出建議。包括文字的編輯、要不要使用註腳、封面的風格等等，出版社也把我當作團隊的一員。而經紀公司在推廣的過程中，有人提出什麼樣的報價，他們也會聯繫我。

The experience in the publishing industry is indeed very helpful in the following aspects: firstly, as I am familiar with publishers' criteria in selecting manuscripts and their ways of marketing, I can advise on the publishing process, including editing, the use of footnotes, book cover design, etc. Publishers would literally regard me as one of their team members; secondly, many literary agencies would also consult me on offering when negotiating with publishers (Holmwood, 2018b).

The above analysis allows us to conclude that it is in a gradual process and within a multilayered system that Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent has been forged. This habitus propels and stimulates her to take determinate measures and produce determinate discourses in certain contexts; this habitus distinguishes her from other "ordinary" literary translators. Translators usually see themselves, or are seen by the public, as introverts who are uneasy at working with others and who prefer to befriend papers (Sela-Sheffy, 2005: 18). This seemingly overgeneralized and biased persona is empirically supported by Hubscher-Davidson (2009), in which a personality test discloses that most participants (translation students) are "introverted" instead of "extroverted". In particular, literary translators are usually confined to their study, the ivory tower, disinterested in the market or readers. Although the causal-effect relationship between personality and translation profession remains unsolved, literary translators' typical habitus, coupled with the increasingly competitive publishing industry, hinders them from maximizing their capital of all sorts, and deepens their invisibility and submissiveness imposed by cultural and social constraints. Holmwood is an "atypical" translator in many aspects. In what follows, we will put the spotlight on how Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent capacitates her to become the nexus of the literary translation field, and to function as the initiator, coordinator, and promoter of the translation project of *Legends*.

## 5.2 Initiator and Coordinator

The initiation, production, and dissemination of translated literature usually involve authors, publishers, editors, translators, literary agents, booksellers, translation critics (book reviewers), the news media, etc. In the case of *Legends*, Jin Yong is the author; MacLehose Press (Christopher MacLehose as its founder) and St. Martin's Press the publishers;<sup>57</sup> Paul Engles the editor (of MacLehose Press); Holmwood and Gigi Chang the translators; Darryl Sterk the potential translator; Peter Buckman the primary literary agent (of The Ampersand

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<sup>57</sup> MacLehose Press is the original publisher of the translation and it is mainly responsible for the British market; St. Martin's Press is the secondary publisher and is mainly responsible for the American market.

Agency);<sup>58</sup> Holmwood the co-literary agent; finally, Jin Yong's representative is also involved. Despite the fact that most of these actors work independently in different parts of the globe, they are closely connected by and during the translation project.

### 5.2.1 Initiator: Genesis of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

During lunch one day with Graham Earnshaw, the translator of *The Book and the Sword*, Jin Yong expressed his wish that his *wuxia* novels could gain some international recognition commensurate with their impact in the Sinophone world (Earnshaw, 2018).<sup>59</sup> Has his wish come true? Yes and no. As analyzed in Chapter 2, Jin Yong's works have been well received in Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, South Korea, and Japan. By contrast, however, they have "remained unknown to most Western readers" (*The Economist*, 2018: 76), despite several translation attempts made by Wu, Mok, Minford, Lai, and Earnshaw. The drastically different reception status of Jin Yong's *wuxia* novels in Asia and the West is nothing surprising, considering the "cultural proximity" between China and other Asian countries, and the "cultural distance" between China and the West (Chan, 2003: 327). Also working behind this is the so-called cultural discount, i.e., a cultural product attractive in one environment has a diminished appeal in other environments (Hoskins & Mirus, 1988: 500). Moreover, the poor reception status in the West is attributed to the incorrect timing and ineffective strategies of translators and publishers, as discussed in Chapter 4.

No wonder when Buckman came across Jin Yong's name on Google as one of the top ten bestselling authors worldwide in 2012, he was deeply surprised, as he, a veteran literary agent, had never heard of Jin Yong or his works. As Buckman could not read Chinese and hence were unable to decide on the feasibility of the translation of Jin Yong's works, he approached Holmwood, with whom he had already established contact, and relied on her for

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<sup>58</sup> Peter Buckman is notable for having discovered and represented Vikas Swarup, the Indian author of *Q & A*, which is filmed as *Slumdog Millionaire*. His clients also include renowned authors such as Georgette Heyer, Quentin Bates, Cora Harrison, and Alex Rogers. Buckman started the Ampersand Agency in 2003, and before that he was on the editorial board of Penguin Books (Official Website of The Ampersand Agency).

<sup>59</sup> Jin Yong also wished to receive a Nobel prize, as is disclosed by John Minford in "To Mark the Passing of Louis Cha".



suggestions on whether Jin Yong's works would be saleable in the West, and which books would be suitable for English translation. Holmwood's answer was positive and her suggestion was the *Condor Series* (“射雕三部曲”) (Buckman's email to me, May 14, 2019). This whole translation project spans twelve volumes, encompassing *Shediao*, *Shendiao Xialü*, and *Yitian Tulong Ji*. This process was verified by Holmwood in an interview with Yilin Wang in *Nineteen Questions*, “I met with a UK agent, Peter Buckman, to talk about working on Chinese books together. We decided that martial arts fiction, and Jin Yong, in particular, had great potential” (Holmwood, 2018c). Faith in the market potential of a novel is a prerequisite to working on it for literary agents (Childress, 2017: 76). It is deduced that Buckman and Holmwood are optimistic about the market potential of Jin Yong *wuxia* in the Anglophone world.

The first question broached here is: Why did Holmwood reckon the translation of Jin Yong's novels feasible? There was undoubtedly a great potential risk since Jin Yong's novels were, as many believe, too Chinese to be translatable (e.g., Shen, 2007; Zhao, 2015), and all the previous English translations had not produced desired results insofar as sales volume was concerned. As Holmwood was then still in her early stage of career both as a literary agent and a translator, the consequence of misjudging and mismanaging this enormous translation project would be catastrophic, reducing her cultural, social, and symbolic capital, and even worse, jeopardizing her future career. In explaining her motive to propose the translation project, Holmwood said,

I think there is something about his writing that is universal and can be translated even though so few of his books have been translated. There are a few translations before by university publishers, university presses but not by trade publishers before in English (Holmwood, 2018d).

Having a sense of what can sell and whom to sell it to is a basic quality of a successful literary agent (Mariotti & Fife, 1995: 81). Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent operates in this process in three ways: (1) As discussed in the previous subsection, literary agenting requires and enables its practitioners to be highly sociable. It is exactly this disposition that empowers Holmwood to establish and constantly expand her social network, without which she would probably have been unable to establish contact with Buckman in the

first place. (2) Her literary agent's eyes enable her to see the market potential of Jin Yong *wuxia* in the Anglophone world. Firstly, she believes that what makes Jin Yong novels outstanding is the story itself instead of such cultural details as acupuncture points (Holmwood, 2018b). In other words, excellent stories are universally appealing. Secondly, she thinks that the Anglophone market is ready for *wuxia* novels as readers are increasingly familiar with *wuxia*-related cultural products, and Chinese contemporary literature has been agented to the international market for almost a decade (ibid.). This is not a groundless supposition: Movies spawned by *wuxia* novels such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* are indeed widely acclaimed, and contemporary authors such as Liu Cixin have indeed won many fans abroad. Thirdly, she rightly highlights the Mongols as an appealing element to Western readers. Our analysis in Chapter 4 suggests that many readers are attracted to *Hero* thanks to the character of Genghis Khan. (3) As a literary agent, she is aware of the differences between university publishers and trade publishers and the kind of readers *wuxia* novels should be targeted at. Regarding outbound literary translation in China, she comments, “嚴肅地擺在‘文學’的架子上，真正去讀的人恐怕不多” (translated works are put on the shelf of “serious literature”, consequently they are rarely read) (ibid.). Her remark hit the bull's eye: Several studies (e.g., Geng, 2012, 2014; Xie, 2014) indicate that the enormous translation project of “The Panda Books Series” (“熊貓叢書”) patronized by the government was not fruitful, thanks largely to improper publishing houses (academic publishers) and marketing strategies. This explains why Holmwood and Buckman aimed at trade publishers from the beginning.

The second question is why did Holmwood propose the *Condor Series* instead of other works of Jin Yong? It certainly is not a random choice. Furthermore, no evidence suggests that she is an aficionado of the series. Therefore, we may assume that her choice is based on as much as her intuitions and her calculations, i.e., her investigation into Jin Yong's works. Her calculations, in turn, hinge on salability and profitability more than artistic or cultural appeal. She would otherwise have proposed *Tianlong Babu* (“天龍八部”) or *Luding Ji*, which have drawn far more academic attention (see, e.g., Wang, 1999; Huss & Liu, 2007; Zheng, 2016). To Holmwood, the translation of the *Condor Series*, thanks to its large portion of romantic, fantastic, and light-hearted elements, might enjoy higher market feasibility.

Immediately after the books for translation were decided, Buckman and Holmwood

proceeded to acquire the translation rights from Jin Yong. According to Buckman's email to me (May 14, 2019), he and Holmwood flew to Hong Kong to negotiate with Jin Yong's representative, and then they signed the agenting contract, also agreeing that Holmwood would be the translator. This was by no means a standard practice as agenting contracts are usually signed before and independently from the designation of translators. In other words, translators are usually approached and appointed by literary agents or publishers after translation rights are acquired. Buckman recounted what happened next,

Anna prepared a sample chapter of the first book in English, and an outline of the series, and I sent this to a number of publishers. Only two made an offer to publish, and MacLehose made the larger offer, which met with Jin Yong's approval (ibid.).

This is corroborated by Holmwood: "And so we kind of embarked on this process together to find a way to describe Jin Yong's work and also for me to make a sample" (2018d). "Outline of the series" described by Buckman and "a way to describe Jin Yong's work" in Holmwood's words indeed refer to literary agents' book pitching to editors and publishers. As an essential part of literary agenting, pitching determines the destiny of a book, that is, the price at which it will be sold, where it will be published, and how it will be marketed. Literary agents, Childress rightly argues, are matchmakers for authors and editors (2017: 77). According to Thompson, pitching a book by an established author is simple and straightforward while pitching a book by a lesser-known author necessitates sophisticated strategies (2012: 134). Jin Yong is certainly a lesser-known author in this context. It is noted that an agent usually sends the manuscript (translation) to the most appropriate publishers in their mind (Mariotti & Fife, 1995: 13). As disclosed above by Buckman, only two publishers made offers to publish Jin Yong's works in English. Holmwood (2014) explained the difficulties of pitching Jin Yong's novels, "So, in order to convince them to translate and publish Jin Yong, you have to be very proactive and engaged. Translating Jin Yong is a huge adventure for a publishing house". Being proactive and engaged is indeed the prerequisite of successful pitching. She went on,

You have to give them a very convincing reason that it will sell. *Shediao* [the

*Condor Series*] has 12 books, which is a big project and a huge challenge for publishers. It took about a year of work behind the scene to get the editor to buy the book (ibid.).

The most vital part of her pitching tools is a document titled “Jin Yong’s Oeuvre” (hereafter *oeuvre*),<sup>60</sup> in which she synthesizes the *Condor Trilogy* (the *Condor Series*) and other novels of Jin Yong, and more importantly, she elaborates on why it should be translated and published. This is indeed an agent report, which evaluates “the manuscript’s literary strengths, weaknesses, and marketing potential” (Mariotti & Fife, 1995: 47). In the first part of the report which concerns a succinct introduction to *Legends*, she writes,

He grows up among Genghis Khan’s retinue, and fights with them in an attempt to overthrow the Jin barbarians who are pushing the Han Chinese further south...Having been brought up among the Jin, Vitality Yang has turned against his country and is fighting for the enemy, a betrayal of all his father Ironheart Yang and Serenity Guo’s father Skybolt Guo believed in (*oeuvre*, p. 1).

“He” refers to Guo Jing, and “Vitality Yang” refers to Yang Kang. Readers conversant with *Shediao* will notice that the above description centers around the historical background instead of the story plot. Should not the story plot be prioritized in an introduction? Apparently, Holmwood does not think so in this case. She foregrounds the historical backdrop and the minor characters Genghis Khan and the Jin tribe. Genghis Khan is one of the greatest conquerors of all time and is well-known throughout the globe. Originated from Northeast China, the Jin tribe established the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), which predated the Mongol conquest of China. In so doing, she tactically situates the story and the protagonists in a politically tumultuous and culturally polyphyletic context, and narrows the cultural distance between ancient China and the modern West, hence adding luster to the story and bringing the novel closer to the target editors and publishers, which might not be realized had she outlined the story conventionally. Although her focus is on the *Condor Trilogy*, she treats Jin Yong’s novels as a whole and rightly captures the complex interconnections among them *vis-à-vis* characters and historical events. This is evidenced by her comment, “Jin Yong’s fourteen books therefore create a patchwork of stories and characters, often overlapping” (ibid.). The highlight

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<sup>60</sup> This document was obtained from Buckman and its use in my research was consented by both Buckman and Holmwood.

of the *oeuvre* comes at the end,

These are books with their own rich world, but whose storytelling and moral code are still recognisable to those who read historical fantasy, books of chivalry, and other very ‘Western’ genres. The fact that martial arts films are so popular in the West, and that Jin Yong’s books are the only Chinese novels to have extensive Wiki entries and websites devoted to them in English—and that is without English translations by mainstream trade publishers—shows that these books could be a real success in translation. Jin Yong is the ‘founding father’ of modern martial arts fiction in Chinese, so it is about time they were made into beautiful, polished English editions for a wider readership (*oeuvre*, p. 3).

Written in an engaging if not alluring manner, this compendious concluding paragraph deftly mobilizes five strategies that aim to convince readers (i.e., editors and publishers) that the *Condor Trilogy* should be published as soon as possible. These strategies are, namely, (a) establishing a close relationship between *wuxia* and Western genres which are otherwise detached; (b) utilizing martial arts films to predict the market potential of these novels; (c) using relevant Wikipedia entries and websites as an indicator of the wide popularity of Jin Yong’s novels; (d) arguing that the absence of trade publishers points towards future commercial successes instead of risks; (e) reiterating Jin Yong’s status as the founding father of *wuxia* novels.<sup>61</sup> As such, Holmwood provides editors and publishers not only with an accessible introduction to the broad array of exotic literary works but also, more importantly, a promising blueprint of publishing the translations. It is precisely in the conception and wording of the *oeuvre* that Holmwood’s professional habitus as a literary agent is manifested to the full extent. Her portrait of novel characters is concise; her delineation of historical background accurate; her tone upbeat; her considerations practical; her proposal appealing; and her justifications cogent. Her rich experience in promoting Chinese literature in general, and in composing book proposals in particular, enable and predispose her to write the *oeuvre* in a specific way that is appropriate and natural from her perspective.

The upshot of the above analysis is that Holmwood has figured prominently in the translation selection, contract-signing, and pitching—usually the duties of literary agents—and in so doing she, in collaboration with Buckman, has conceived and initiated the translation

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<sup>61</sup> As a matter of fact, it is Liang Yusheng (梁羽生) who published the first “new school” *wuxia* fiction, and is widely hailed as the founding father of modern *wuxia* fiction (e.g., Pan & Wang, 1993; Sun, 2002; Hamm, 2005).

project of *Legends*. Selling the translation rights of *Legends* to MacLehose marks the end of translation initiation and the beginning of translation production, a phase in which Holmwood functions as the principal translator and coordinator, as will be demonstrated in the next part.

### 5.2.2 Coordinator: Intermediary among Various Actors

Since *Legends* is a prodigious and kaleidoscopic novel with four volumes and more than 918, 000 Chinese characters, its translation, if conducted by one translator alone, would take so long that readers will be impatient and the publisher will be financially burdened. In light of this, Holmwood decided to collaborate with another translator after a discussion with the publisher. As presented in 5.1, in literary agenting as well as in establishing the Emerging Translators Network, Holmwood has built up a strong social network, which she constantly utilizes in her career. To get a co-translator, she firstly approached Gigi Chang (張菁), a Hong Kong literary translator who is now based in Shenzhen. According to my interview with Chang (August 23, 2019), Holmwood talked to her about Jin Yong translation at the end of 2014,<sup>62</sup> after which Holmwood introduced her to MacLehose, the publisher. Chang was then invited to conduct a translation sample. Chang explained how Holmwood put her “fingerprints” on the translation sample, “she would advise me on adjusting the narrative pace when she thought that the story does not proceed fast enough. She would also offer suggestions when my translation read unnaturally” (ibid.). After Chang’s translation sample was approved by both Holmwood and MacLehose, Chang flew to London to sign the translation contract and discussed with them the details of the translation project in September 2015 (ibid.).

Holmwood also approached Darryl Sterk, a prolific Canadian literary translator and then Assistant Professor of National Taiwan University. In her first email to Sterk concerning Jin Yong translation, Holmwood wrote,

Just wondering what your schedule would be like for doing a Jin Yong sample for MacLehose Press? Do you have any time coming up? If so, I’ll write to introduce you to the editors... if you are able to take on a sample (and are still interested, please say yes!) then let me know and I’ll arrange (Holmwood’s email to Sterk on October

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<sup>62</sup> The exact date is unclear, as was stated by Chang.

6, 2015).

In a sense, Holmwood wrote the email (she probably had sent similar emails to other translators) under the request and on behalf of the publisher and editor, who, due to insufficient knowledge of *wuxia* genre and translators working on Chinese literature, relied on Holmwood in the appointment of co-translators. That is to say, Holmwood wrote the email in an attempt to find appropriate co-translators not only for the publishing house but also, more significantly, for herself. Three months later, Holmwood wrote to Sterk again, inquiring on the status of the translation sample, “I’m just wondering how everything is going on the Jin Yong? Have you been in touch with the editors? I want to write to them to get things sorted a bit” (Holmwood’s email to Sterk on January 14, 2016).

Sterk finished the translation of several excerpts of Book 3 of *Shediao* and emailed it to both Holmwood and Chang,

I’ve done a couple of excerpts from book three of *Condor Heroes*, which I have found to be excruciatingly hard....I think I should show you two what I’ve got to see if I’m going to be a good fit for the material (Sterk’s email to Holmwood and Chang on February 11, 2016).

It is obvious that Sterk’s interest in translating *Shediao* was declining. Sterk later withdrew from the translation project. It was finally decided that Holmwood would be responsible for Book 1 and 3, and Chang would be responsible for Book 2 and 4. One volume will be published each year in four consecutive years. The next task was naming for the translated books. In the interview by *The Paper*, Holmwood recounted the naming process,

每一本單獨起一個書名。否則如果只叫“射雕英雄傳(一)(二)(三)”，對西方人來說太籠統了，和內容沒有很強的聯繫。起“英雄誕生”這樣的書名當然考慮了西方人的閱讀習慣。書名是我和張菁一起討論出來的，我們希望每一組書名之間有聯繫，同時提到故事中的一些核心概念。

Each volume should have an independent and unique title. Instead, if we name them *Legends* 1, 2, 3, 4, following the Chinese original, Western readers will be perplexed since they cannot see the relationship between content and the book title “Legends” as Chinese readers do. We reckon that names such as “A Hero Born” will cater to the reading habits of Western readers. I discussed with Chang on book titles, hoping that each title, while encapsulating that specific book, is also interconnected (Holmwood, 2018b).

The discussion between Holmwood and Chang led to the following book titles: *A Hero Born* (Book 1), *A Bond Undone* (book 2), *A Snake Lies Waiting* (book 3), and *A Heart Divided* (book 4), which were subsequently approved by the editor and publisher. Phonetically, these titles are catchy; syntactically, they share a similar structure, demonstrating translators' kinesthetic understanding of *wuxia* narrative; semantically, each title captures the core plot of successive segments of the story, and together they form an interconnected series; aesthetically, "hero" and "snake" denote *wu* violence while "bond" and "heart" denote *xia* chivalry, prefiguring the distinctive aesthetic properties of the genre and the dramatic structure the books. Meanwhile, all of them are accompanied by a uniform overarching title "Legends of the Condor Heroes". In collaboratively coining these sophisticated yet reader-friendly book names, Holmwood and Chang strike a balance between culture and commerce. Their rationale behind the choices of book titles reflects their approach to *wuxia* literature and hints at how readers should and, in their anticipation, would appreciate the novel.

Holmwood's role of the coordinator is further displayed in the translation of character and *kungfu* move names and the editing of translation drafts. As Holmwood is the principal translator, her translation style prescribes Chang's to a certain extent, especially regarding character and *kungfu* move names. According to Chang (my interview with her on Wechat on May 8, 2020), "她是拓荒者、先驅，因為卷一是她起步的。大方向是她定的，我是繼續走下去" (She [Holmwood] is the pioneer, the forerunner, since she started volume one. She set the general direction of the translation and I followed along). Chang cited the example of the names of Apothecary Huang (黃藥師)'s six disciples. As "陳玄風" and "梅超風" are translated by Holmwood into "Hurricane Chen" and "Cyclone Mei" respectively in Book 1, all containing "風" (wind), Chang also needs to translate the names of the other four disciples in Book 2 into something with "風" (wind). As a result of intensive discussion between Chang, Holmwood, and Engles (the editor), "曲靈風" "陸乘風" "武罡風" "馮默風" were finally translated into "Tempest Qu", "Zephyr Lu", "Galeforce Wu", and "Doldrum Feng" respectively. Chang added that as Holmwood, Engles, and the copyeditor all took part in the editing of her translation draft, Book 2 was essentially a piece of co-work (ibid.). Holmwood's role of "co-editor" is largely attributed to her experience of literary agenting, since manuscript screening and editing, as discussed in Chapter 3, are part and parcel of being a literary agent.



The cooperation between Holmwood and Chang will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Being sociable, proactive, resourceful, and flexible, Holmwood established and strengthened the connections between Chang and Engles, Chang and MacLehose, and Chang and Sterk. She practiced what she preached, “I think more time has to be spent on establishing trust on all sides in order to sell work in a language the publisher doesn’t read” (Holmwood, 2018e). The social structures of literary agenting internalized and archived in Holmwood generate “both the inclination and the capacity” (Bourdieu, 1993: 18) to designate co-translators, to intermediate between co-translators, the publisher, and the editor, to coin reader-friendly book titles, and to take part in translation editing. To conclude, as the coordinator, Holmwood ensured that the translation project progressed smoothly and efficiently.

### **5.3 Promoter: *Wuxia* Translation Promotion**

In this section, the term “promotion” is interpreted both narrowly and broadly: narrowly since it is construed as the synonym of “advertising”; broadly since it refers to all activities that publicize products and services. The buying and selling of translated literature is a colossal industry, in which promotion plays an indispensable role. However, while the translation of promotional texts has piqued considerable scholarly interests (e.g., Kong, 2012; Torresi, 2014; Sulaiman, 2016; Sulaiman & Wilson, 2018; B. Li, 2021), the promotion of literary translation has been largely overlooked by translation studies. In the face of various promotional activities of translated literature—initiated by authors, publishers, translators, literary agents, etc.—such as tag lining, book review solicitation, market segmentation, cover design, titling and blurb writing, point of sale display, author/translator interviews, reading events, etc., translation scholars have been rather quiet.

This section focuses on Holmwood’s promotional discourses, that is, her rhetorical and persuasive messages in promoting her *wuxia* translation. The section starts by examining “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”, an advertising tagline invented by Holmwood. It investigates the dynamics of co-creation and dissemination of this tagline, a process participated by various parties: Holmwood is the addresser; the publishers are the sponsors and endorsers; the news

media, literary critics, and customers are the addressees and co-producers. It then shifts our attention to workshops and media interviews in which Holmwood promotes her translation and Jin Yong *wuxia*, analyzing the overall style of Holmwood's public discourses. It will be unearthed that Holmwood's role of the promoter is generated by her identity as a literary agent, and is demonstrated in various activities and throughout the whole translation project.

### 5.3.1 “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”

Advertising is defined as “the promotion of goods or services for sale through impersonal media” (Collins Dictionary Online), or “[a]ny paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor” (Kotler & Keller, 2016: 582). In the age of social media, advertising has gained renewed values (e.g., it is conducted not necessarily through impersonal media and is sometimes not directly paid, as will be demonstrated below) and thus merits reconceptualization. “[B]oth an industry in itself and a tool used by a wide range of people” (Farbey, 2002: 3), advertising is ubiquitous in the modern world. It is conducted to construct or reinforce an image, affect people's behavior, and make people think (Munday, 2004: 200). It is a *sine qua non* to a translation's successful entry to the market.

“A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”, an advertising tagline invented by Holmwood, appears at the bottom of the book covers of *Legends* (British version). From the perspective of literary criticism, the analogy might be imprecise at best, and ludicrous at worst. Several book reviewers (e.g., Li, 2019; Nia, 2019) have expressed their disparagements of it. Li (2019) asserts that this tagline represents a serious misinterpretation of Jin Yong's *Shediao* and thus constitutes a form of cultural vandalism. Nia (2019) holds that this tagline is inappropriate since there are no similarities between *Legends* and *The Lord of the Rings* (hereafter *Lord*). These conclusions, forceful as they seem, are drawn largely based on emotional and ideological accusations rather than a comprehensive analysis. Moreover, to declare the tagline aesthetically desirable or otherwise is essentially a value judgment, which contributes little to our current discussion. What is more worthwhile is to examine the relationship between

Chinese *wuxia* and Western fantasy in general and *Legends* and *Lord* in particular, and, more importantly, to investigate Holmwood's motivation for inventing this tagline.

The complex relationship between Chinese *wuxia* and Western fantasy can be unpacked from several perspectives. To begin with, they converge at the following aspects: (1) Both belong to genre fiction, although at no point is it clear what genre fiction is, except by negation from literary fiction. Put otherwise, both *wuxia* and fantasy fiction are literary fiction's other. (2) Both are escapist literature, the products of rich and powerful imagination. Their charms are largely attributable to the tension between the supernatural and strange elements, and modern notions of rationality and facticity. (3) Both utilize afresh ancient and traditional materials. (4) In both genres, the heroes will eventually triumph over the evils.

Nevertheless, these similarities should not blind us to the fact that they are two strikingly different genres. Rehling regards *wuxia* as a form of fantasy, arguing that *wuxia* bears strong resemblances to Western high fantasy (2012: 72). Her genre typology is problematic as *wuxia* lacks the intrinsic qualities of fantasy literature, which will be demonstrated below.

One of the most widely adopted definitions of fantasy is provided by Eilers, to whom fantasy is "a post-Enlightenment prose fiction genre composed of narratives in which an extranatural power plays a fundamental role and that aims to create an illusion of reality" (2000: 318). As a subgenre, high fantasy "consists entirely of fiction set in secondary worlds" (Stableford, 2005: 198).<sup>63</sup> Although firmly rooted in European history and mythology, high fantasy novels are usually set in unrecognizable places in unrecognizable times, and are essentially surreal, phantasmagoric, transcendental, and otherworldly. Authors of high fantasy aspire to construct a wide and multilayered cosmos, inhabited not only by human beings but also, sometimes primarily, by gods, angels, elves, dwarves, imps, beasts, orcs, trolls, wizards, giants, elementals, gnomes, kobolds, etc. By contrast, however, *wuxia* is essentially worldly—socially and historically embedded—and is void of alternative universes—self-contained and autonomous spaces. The cosmos *wuxia* constructs or engages with—*jianghu* (rivers and lakes) and *wulin* (martial forests)—constitutes only one layer of the real world. This cosmos is

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<sup>63</sup> Besides *Lord*, typical high fantasy novels include *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Wheel of Time*, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, *Malazan Book of the Fallen*, *Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn*, *The Death Gate Cycle*, *The Chronicles of Amber*, etc.

usually suppressed and marginalized. Characters in *wuxia*, no matter how proficient in martial arts (e.g., Xiao Feng and Zhang Sanfeng) or how hermitic in lifestyle (e.g., Linghu Chong and Zhou Botong), are never able to escape from being entangled in political and ideological struggles of the mundane world. Unlike lords in high fantasy who are usually omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient, heroes in *wuxia* are only augmented human beings. If anything, *wuxia* is but a form of semi-fantasy with fantastic elements such as heroes with extraordinary martial prowess and herbs with magic power. The closest counterpart of high fantasy in China might be *xuanhuan* (mysterious fantasy). Featuring reincarnation, heaven realm, immortals, demons, magical beasts, etc., *xuanhuan* draws heavily on Chinese folklore and mythology, and must acknowledge a great thematic and narrative debt to Western fantasy. On the other hand, *Don Quixote* and its likes might be the closest counterparts of *wuxia* in the West.

Now I would shift to the two novels in question, focusing in particular on character development and thematic development. No doubt, both *Legends* and *Lord* are *Bildungsroman* novels since a shared dominant theme is the psychological and moral growth of the protagonists from youth to adulthood (Guo Jing in *Legends* and Frodo Baggins in *Lord*). In their course of growth, both experience good and evil, atrocious and merciful, generous and avaricious, honest and hypocritical, though Guo Jing matures mainly by practicing *kungfu* of various schools while Frodo Baggins matures by venturing into Mount Doom, a precarious world. Nonetheless, *Lord* is distinguished from *Legends* by virtue of a more dynamic character development represented by a “divided self” (Chance, 2001: 9)—heroes and monsters, saviors and destroyers, and vice versa—and a more nuanced thematic development—the good become the evil, the lived wither and the dead revive, enslavement becomes emancipation, an end is a beginning, a loss is a gain, and vice versa. Superpower is trained or accidentally acquired in *Legends*, but it is born with or bestowed by the ultimate lords in *Lord*.

Holding a B.A. in modern history from Oxford University and an M.A. in Chinese literature from University of London, Holmwood was surely aware of the above divergencies between *Legends* and *Lord* in terms of genre and theme, and she was presumably conscious of the potential risks lurking behind the tagline. But she ventured to coin this tagline to promote *Legends* nevertheless. In the interview by *The Paper*, Holmwood explained her motivation for creating “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”,

我用的推介語就是後來飽受批評的：“這是中國的《指環王》。”但我的本意不是向讀者這樣介紹，而是把它作為出版人之間的一種溝通方式。出版方瞭解這是什麼類型的書，並且產生興趣以後，才會進一步去看我準備的那些材料：金庸的地位、故事的梗概、有哪些共通的價值觀可以打動西方讀者等等。他們也把這些材料發給懂中文的第三方人士“鑒定”過，判斷市場的價值和翻譯的品質。

My promotional tagline is the highly controversial “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”. But my original intention was not to introduce Jin Yong to readers via this tagline. Instead, I took it as an effective means of communicating with publishers. I think this tagline will assist them in understanding the nature of the books, Jin Yong’s literary status, and story plots, and will also arouse their interest. Only on that basis, will they proceed to evaluate my translation proposal and translation sample, and the universal value of these books. They can then evaluate the market potential of the books and the quality of my translation after soliciting suggestions from the third party who understand Chinese (Holmwood, 2018b).

Although she denied that readers were the initial target of this tagline, it is logical to deduce that when devising the tagline, the addressees Holmwood had in mind were not only the publisher, but also future readers. It is therefore reasonable to believe that she created the tagline both spontaneously and strategically: The professional habitus as a literary agent propelled her to invent an appealing and laconic comment that was in essence an advertising strategy, rather than literary criticism. In this sense, we may treat “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*” as a brand name for *Legends*. It is devised by Holmwood “as a means of identifying and guaranteeing to consumers the homogeneity and quality of the advertised goods” (Jones & Slater, 2003: 28). By analogizing *Legends* to *Lord*, one of the most popular novels worldwide, Holmwood attempts to direct readers’ attention to the interconnectedness, interdependence, and relationality between these two works, and to appropriate the “systems, codes and traditions” (Allen, 2011: 1) established by *Lord* for sales promotion. This brand name thus participates in the (re) construction of *Legends*’ identity and character. Though *wuxia* and high fantasy diverge more than converge and are thus largely incommensurable, they are nevertheless connected by this tagline. Simmering behind the tagline are Holmwood’s barely hidden claims: The merits of *Legends* are on par with those of *Lord*; Jin Yong’s *wuxia* novels are for Chinese readers what Tolkien’s fantasies are for Western readers. Embedded in these claims, then, are her advertising concerns and aspirations, nurtured and triggered by the profession of literary agenting.

To further understand Holmwood's advertising strategy, we need to consider the features of reading culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are living in a consumer world where consumers' desire for leisure and entertainment is swelling. Reading for fun outweighs reading for knowledge. Against this backdrop, fantasy literature holds sway. As Rehling rightly points out, fantasy literature is hugely popular just because they are like rich, colorful, and surprising comfort food that can satisfy readers' intellectual and emotional needs (2012: 71). *Lord* is undoubtedly a mega-bestseller and a multi-media success. By branding *Legends* as a fantasy novel and analogizing it to *Lord*, Holmwood endeavors to heighten public curiosity and raise readers' expectations, to satisfy their cultural curiosity and mitigate undesirable culture shock, to pioneer an inroad of *wuxia* into Western popular culture, to create a space where Jin Yong (the maestro of *wuxia* literature) and J. R. R. Tolkien (the father of high fantasy) can converse, to show that the two novels are coterminous in the genre sense, to ensure that *Legends*, a "literary debutant", will not be inconspicuous and thus neglected in the Western market. Holmwood believes that Jin Yong novels are popular literature rather than highbrow literature in nature and should be appreciated, benchmarked, and promoted as such (2018b). She understands that creative artists' goals today will be "not so much to preserve cultural traditions as to put together the pieces of the culture in innovative ways" (Jenkins, 2006: 121). Various parties and voices are involved in dialogical relationships in advertising production and dissemination (Karimova, 2011: 477). In this case, publishers, the news media, literary critics, and customers are involved.

MacLehose, the publisher of the British version, is the sponsor of the tagline. Though it did not directly pay Holmwood for the "advertising service", Holmwood would get higher commissions if the translation sells well (that is, the tagline works). MacLehose prints this tagline on every volume of *Legends* as a way of endorsing the tagline. By contrast, St. Martin's Press, the publisher of the American version, does not use this tagline on its book covers. Instead, it uses "300 million copies sold worldwide" as its advertising slogan. It is speculated that St. Martin's Press chooses to abandon Holmwood's tagline since it has stirred so many controversies (this will be discussed in the next part).

Holmwood's sensational tagline has been widely referred to by the news media (e.g.,

*Quartz*,<sup>64</sup> *The Guardian*,<sup>65</sup> *The New York Times*,<sup>66</sup> *National Public Radio*,<sup>67</sup> *The Straits Times*,<sup>68</sup> and *South China Morning Post*<sup>69</sup>). For instance, *Quartz* uses the news title “The ‘Lord of the Rings’ of Chinese literature is finally being translated into English”. We may logically assume that these reports have influenced readers’ choices. The tagline has also drawn positive comments from literary critics. For example, Møller-Olsen (2018) remarks,

*The [sic] Hero Born* has in turn been compared to Tolkien’s novels, and while there are of course no direct inspiration either way, brilliant and much loved works like these can be said to engage in a kind of post-publication dialogue through their readers and their reception in global popular culture.

Many studies have shown that consumers are not passive receivers (addressees) of advertising messages (e.g., Buttle, 1991; O’Donohoe, 1994; Ritson and Elliott, 1999; Bao, 2015). They play active and creative roles in the advertisement production and dissemination (Karimova, 2011: 471-472). They may accept the latent messages contained in the advertisement or refuse to do so. By expressing their opinions publicly (e.g., on Amazon and Goodreads), they generate and transmit electronic word-of-mouth. Let us now focus on customer comments of “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*” on Amazon (US) (C stands for reader, date in the bracket refers to the date on which a particular comment was posted):

C1 (October 16, 2019):

I can understand the appeal to some but it definitely wasn’t comparable to *Lord of the Rings* for me.

C2 (September 26, 2019):

This book has been advertised as the “Chinese *Lord of the Rings*.” When I first got the email when this book was being translated I knew I had to read it.

C3 (September 24, 2019):

Despite what you read on the covers (e.g. “It’s like *Lord of the Rings*”) ignore all of that. It’s nothing like it.

C4 (June 19, 2018):

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<sup>64</sup> The “Lord of the Rings” of Chinese literature is finally being translated into English  
<https://qz.com/quartz/1125004/jin-yongs-epic-condor-trilogy-the-lord-of-the-rings-of-chinese-literature-is-finally-being-translated-into-english/>

<sup>65</sup> A hero reborn: ‘China’s Tolkien’ aims to conquer western readers  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/nov/26/chinese-fantasy-kung-fu-legend-of-the-condor-jin-yong>

<sup>66</sup> Jin Yong, 94, Lionized Author of Chinese Martial Arts Epics, Dies  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/obituaries/jin-yong-dead.html>

<sup>67</sup> Chinese Classic ‘Condor Heroes’ Takes Wing In English  
<https://www.npr.org/2018/03/04/590357630/chinese-classic-condor-heroes-takes-wing-in-English>

<sup>68</sup> Scottish translator Anna Holmwood translates the Chinese writer’s *Legends of the Condor Heroes series*  
<https://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/arts/jin-yongs-heroes-now-in-english>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2119853/could-hong-kongs-condor-trilogy-be-chinese-game-thrones>



The Chinese *Lord of the Rings*? I had to read it!  
 C5 (June 14, 2018):  
 “Chinese *Lord of the Rings*” is a heady title, but one which is richly well-deserved.  
 C6 (February 27, 2018):  
 Clever marketing but inept writing. The tag invoking *Lord of the Rings* was cute, it reeled in the punters, like me, but this can only work once.

Roughly speaking, C2, C4, and C5 are positive comments insofar as these customers are drawn by and endorse the tagline, while C1 and C3 are negative in the sense that these customers disapprove the *Legends* and *Lord* analogy. C6 is more neutral: In his/her mind, the tagline is a clever buzz-building strategy which is attractive at first sight but will immediately lose its potency.

To sum up, the professional habitus as a literary agent predisposes Holmwood to tactically devise the advertising tagline “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”, in an attempt to draw the attention of the news media and readers to her translation, and thus increase the sales of the books. It is widely referred to by the news media. However, it has produced mixed effects among Amazon customers, some of whom have been attracted and buy the books as a result, while others disapprove of it and thus turn away.

### 5.3.2 Workshops and Interviews

Besides coining the advertising tagline, Holmwood also participated in various workshops (That is China,<sup>70</sup> China Exchange,<sup>71</sup> StoryDrive,<sup>72</sup> etc.) and interviews (*The Bookseller*,<sup>73</sup> *BBC*,<sup>74</sup> China Plus,<sup>75</sup> etc.), promoting *Legends* and Jin Yong *wuxia*. The following analysis will concentrate on one workshop and two media interviews.

On March 17, 2018, approximately one month after the publication of *Hero*, Holmwood took part in a workshop themed “The Legend of Jin Yong” conducted by China Exchange.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>70</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q\\_sMGuM5TUK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_sMGuM5TUK)

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-zafHs66Qw&t=999s>

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.storydriveasia.com/en2018/Speakers/speaker.php?id=10>

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.thebookseller.com/insight/translated-fiction-847836>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0001y9m>

<sup>75</sup> <http://chinaplus.cri.cn/mychina/art-and-literature/1410/20180625/149270.html>

<sup>76</sup> It is a British forum of cultural exchange. As is stated in their website introduction, the staff team “curate activities and experiences that offer people the chance to become more curious about China and to present an alternative perspective on Chinese culture”. Recent speakers include Yan Geling and Su Tong. The official



In answering Louise (the anchorwoman)’s question “What did you learn to appreciate about the stories through the translation process”, Holmwood said,

...I was still caught up in the story, I was still finding it exciting, I was returning the pages and wanting to keep translating. And I think that is the quality of Jin Yong’s writing...I mean you are just flipping through the pages, being caught up in the action and the poetry of his world (Holmwood, 2018d).

It is worth noting that Holmwood presented herself both as the translator and an ordinary reader. As the translator, she “replayed” her cognitive process in translation, indicating that the glamour of Jin Yong made the otherwise excruciating translation process enjoyable and captivating (she wanted to keep translating, or so she claimed). As an ordinary reader, she brought her reading experience alive by using discursive strategies: “just flipping through the pages” and “caught up”, nudging the many readers of the workshop and of the YouTube video to experience Jin Yong’s novels themselves.

In Holmwood’s reply to the question, “For someone who have not read his books, why would you recommend them to read them?”, she remarked,

They are fun. That is the main thing. I really want to emphasize this. It is not about getting to know China, doing your homework. It is just the pleasure of being able to sit down and enter into a story, characters, that sort of things. The heart of Jin Yong’s writing is to have fun and that is the way they should be read as well, I think (ibid.).

Holmwood stressed the recreational nature instead of the cultural identity/value of Jin Yong’s writing as she probably assumed that the former quality was what really aroused general readers’ interest, and that flagging “Chineseness” may produce a backfire effect.

On August 22, 2018, Holmwood was interviewed by *The Bookseller*, an influential British magazine reporting news on the publishing industry. She again expounded on the appeal of Jin Yong’s novels,

There’s a lot in Jin Yong’s work that gives it potential in English. The essential moral universe of the characters, the importance of right and wrong, justice and pride, the flawed nature of all heroes—none of this is culturally specific. Readers,

especially of epic fantasies or historical novels, love to enter a richly conveyed “fictional world” with plenty of specificities and are not put off by new vocabulary, concepts or names...I also think English readers will find it exciting to read a Chinese take on the Mongols (Holmwood, 2018a).

By comparing *wuxia* to “epic fantasies or historical novels”, with which readers in the West are familiar, she endeavored to demystify *wuxia*. She stressed that “new vocabulary, concepts or names” will not pose a great challenge for reading. The mentioning of “the Mongols”, minor characters in *Legends*, is another strategy to add the glamour of Jin Yong novels.

On January 11, 2019, she was interviewed by BBC, in which she introduced Jin Yong’s family background and literary status, and *wuxia* as a literary genre. She was eloquent and quick-paced. Her promotional intention was particularly evident in the following discourse,

I would say that there is not a Chinese person under the age of twenty who does not know who Jin Yong is...He is still a ubiquitous part of the Chinese cultural landscape...He is exploring very universal themes of power, corruption, ambition, greed through these martial arts fighters...Jin Yong was allowed to be published in China and that really secured his place as the most prominent writer of his generation (Holmwood, 2019).

Thanks to its global audience, the BBC interview was undoubtedly a great opportunity of sales promotion. She drew listeners’ attention at the beginning by employing a hyperbolic rhetoric: “There is not a Chinese person under the age of twenty who does not know who Jin Yong is”. As a matter of fact, many uneducated people in China have never heard of Jin Yong. Moreover, his novels were most popular during the 1980s and 1990s. Adolescents in China probably know more about adapted TV series than Jin Yong’s original works. It is middle-aged people who are more familiar with Jin Yong and his novels. Next, she again (she adopts the same strategy in pitching) stressed the universal themes of these novels, attempting to bring the author closer to the listeners. Jin Yong’s literary standing is disputable (see Yan, 1999; Chen, 2017). For that reason, it is controversial to eulogize Jin Yong as “the most prominent writer of his generation”. This will probably incur scathing criticisms from many literary scholars, who will argue that writers of Jin Yong’s generation such as Eileen Chang and Qian Zhongshu are more illustrious. But this alluring eulogy will likely arouse listeners’ interest in

Jin Yong and his works. To recap, by demystifying Jin Yong *wuxia* and dispelling readers' worries, Holmwood has taken full advantage of various workshops and media interviews to promote her translation.

In addition, as discussed in 5.1, Holmwood has established a wide social network and has been active on social media. She shared her translation experience and posted the publication information of *Legends* on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc., which facilitated the dissemination of her translation.

As discussed in 3.3, literary agents can assume the role of promoter. Holmwood's activities discussed above, i.e., coining "A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*", promoting Jin Yong in workshops, media interviews, and social media speak eloquently of her role as a promoter of *Legends*. The tagline, though controversial, is an innovative attention getter and buzz-building device, which could potentially lead to *succès de scandale*. Her public discourses concerning *wuxia* translation are usually oratorical, rhetorical, and motivational. While accentuating and aggrandizing the merits and charismas of Jin Yong *wuxia*, she avoids and disguises its unattractive elements (e.g., redundancy, factual errors, narrative inconsistency, plethoric violence and bloodshed, clichéd story plots, and Han Chinese nationalism) and "inconvenient" facts (e.g., Jin Yong is an outspoken critic of the Cultural Revolution, and his novels are rich in political allegories). Her considerations behind these promotional discourses are practical and commercial, instead of academic and aesthetic. By adopting an arsenal of promotional strategies engendered by her professional habitus as a literary agent, she endeavors to bring Jin Yong and his novels closer to Western readers, and thus increase the sales of the translation, which would be an economic bonanza for all interested parties. It is concluded that Holmwood has increased the visibility of Jin Yong *wuxia* in a global arena, and has thus contributed to its international reception.

## 5.4 Summary

An in-depth analysis of interviews, email contacts, and media reports reveals that Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent empowers her to play multiple roles in

the translation project, i.e., initiator, coordinator, and promoter. “Planted” in Holmwood is a semi-automatic mechanism, through which the principles of literary agenting are embodied such that she inclines and is able to adopt various strategies and perform a series of specific actions. Meanwhile, the process in which *Legends* comes into being is chronologically recounted, displaying how Holmwood collaborates with other actors in the translation field.

Notwithstanding its limited scale, this chapter has fulfilled two theoretical functions. Firstly, it discloses that consciousness figures prominently not only in the generation, but also in the operationalization of Holmwood’s professional habitus as a literary agent. In the genesis of this habitus, her feel for the game of literary agenting is acquired not only through her mechanical imitation of agenting practice in various literary agencies over time, but also through her conscious adjustments and calibration of her practices according to specific contexts. In the operationalization of this habitus, her instinct takes over, for instance, in coining “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*” but her conscious calculation is in charge, for instance, in her research into Jin Yong’s works in the translation initiation. As is demonstrated, intention/consciousness and instinct/unconsciousness usually act in concert; spontaneous impulses and strategic calculations work together. Being highly reflective, Holmwood is anything but a passive receptor of literary agenting-related social structures. Accordingly, her professional habitus as a literary agent is not a passive construct. It is therefore reasonable to reconceptualize habitus “by articulating it with the modalities of consciousness, rather than opposing habitus to consciousness” (Noble and Watkins, 2003: 535). Habitus, we may now safely conclude, is a system of both habitual/unconscious and purposeful/conscious dispositions. Secondly, this chapter spells out the nature of professional habitus and unravels how Holmwood’s professional habitus as a literary agent is prototyped, developed, and operationalized. My development of the concept is an engagement with, rather than a rejection of Bourdieu’s original elucidation of habitus. I contend that if professional habitus is applied without clarification, which it usually is, its theoretical value will be undermined. The question as to how one form of professional habitus interacts with other habitus remains to be answered.

By positioning Holmwood’s extra-translational activities within the initiator-coordinator-promoter triad, this research has set the agenda for an emergent research field—literary agenting of literary translation. The next chapter will examine Holmwood’s “fingerprints” on

*Legends*, i.e., her way of interpreting and reconstructing Jin Yong novels. Contra scholarly elites such as Minford and Mok who take a scholarly interest in Jin Yong novels and conduct translation practice accordingly, Holmwood bases her approach to these novels on her calculations of the needs of a broad reading public.

## CHAPTER 6. ANNA HOLMWOOD’S “FINGERPRINTS” ON *LEGENDS OF THE CONDOR HEROES*

### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter will apply mixed methods to conduct a series of textual analysis of *Hero* and *Bond*, showing Holmwood’s “fingerprints” on the “tone”, “pitch”, and “pace” of the translated texts, that is, her special way of recasting Jin Yong’s *wuxia* novels for Anglophone readers as a literary agent. In accordance with my top-down approach, this chapter will be divided into three sections, which supplement and corroborate each other. The detailed structure of this chapter is as follows.

6.1 begins with an investigation into Holmwood’s conception of target readers, and then examines the global linguistic features of *Hero* compared with previous translations of Jin Yong’s *wuxia* novels. It will demonstrate that her translation is characterized by: lower target and source text length ratio (0.58), that is, a large number of omissions, especially of cultural and historical background; wide application of short sentences, especially ultra-short sentences (one-three words); and low passive construction frequency and nominalization frequency.

6.2 compares *Hero* with *A Bond Undone* on various syntactic and lexico-grammatical levels. It is discovered that although the two translations diverge in some respects, they are highly homogeneous. Results yielded from the corpus-based comparison support my argument that Holmwood plays a dominant role in the whole translation project and has put her “fingerprints” on Chang’s translation. Although I will construct several corpora and adopt various tools in these two sections, I do not take a simplistic “more-is-better” approach; rather, I aim at an integrated study, being cognizant of the limitations of corpus methods and statistical indices.

6.3 explores how Holmwood “speeds up the fighting”, “pushes it (the excitement of fighting) further”, and “brings battles to life in English”. Her “cinematic techniques” in translation such as undercranking, fast cutting, zoom in shot, and extreme long shot will be presented.

## 6.1 *Wuxia* Translation for General Readers

It is probably a truism to state that most translators take their readers into account in translation (Suojanen et al., 2015: 1). However, the type of readers they have in mind, and the extent to which their translations meet target readers' needs could differ widely. This section sets out to investigate Holmwood's "reader-oriented" approach to Jin Yong translation and examine the stylistic features of *Hero* that have probably facilitated its reception. Yet I will firstly problematize "reader-oriented translation"—a seemingly old hat notion but a potentially facile assumption—by engaging with existing literature, and then crystallize it with evidence collected from Holmwood's discourses and translation. Phrased otherwise, this section will address the following interlocking questions: What is reader-oriented translation? How does Holmwood prioritize the needs and expectations of general readers in translating *Shediao*? Are there any measurable and quantifiable features of literary translation for general readers? However, it is not my intention to pursue an inquiry into the so-called translation quality of *Hero*, bearing in mind that quality assessment of literary translation *per se* is problematic, and that reader-orientedness is not necessarily related to quality.

This section is structured as follows: 6.1.1 presents a brief survey of existing research on reader-oriented translation and critically introduces the four elements of translation usability proposed by Suojanen et al. (2015), which will function as the theoretical underpinning of this section. 6.1.2 examines Holmwood's approach to Jin Yong translation, revealing how she, as the principal translator and co-literary agent, conceives the target readers of the translated book, and interprets Jin Yong novels for these readers. 6.1.3 conducts a corpus-based analysis of the translation style of *Hero vis-à-vis* two previous translations of Jin Yong novels, unearthing Holmwood's strategies to bring Jin Yong *wuxia* to the Anglophone market, that is, to render the translation comprehensible, readable, and accessible for general readers. 6.1.4 is the discussion and summary.

### 6.1.1 Reader-oriented Translation

Some ink has been spilled on reader-orientedness of translation. It is Nida who introduces the modern thinking that translators should attend to communicating with readers. As an advocate of domesticating translation, Nida grants reader experience a significant position in his theoretical system of dynamic equivalence, arguing that textual adjustments are necessary to produce a satisfactory translation which does not impose an excessive cognitive burden and thus discourages readers from reading (1964: 131-132). He emphasizes the understandability of translation for recipients, proposing that “the efficiency of a translation can be judged in terms of the maximal reception for the minimum effort of decoding” (ibid.: 182). Echoing the prevalent communication theories of the 1960s, Nida’s line of thought marks a pioneering contribution to the discussion of reader-oriented translation. Treating translation as a goal-oriented action, *skopos* theory regards locating appropriate target readers as one of the translator’s key tasks. Vermeer summarizes this as follows, “The translation is meant to serve its intended purpose in the target-culture as well as possible, including, naturally, the intended recipients (‘addressees’)” (1996: 6). Attempting to dethrone the source text, *skopos* theory legitimates translators’ intentional interferences with translation texts, and thus provides vital theoretical support for reader-oriented translation. However, its central concern is the purpose and function of translation instead of readers as such. As a pioneer of polysystem theory, Even-Zohar observes a correlation between translation norms and the position of translated literature, noting that translators usually adopt target-oriented strategies if the literary work occupies a peripheral position (1990b: 50-51). Gu categorizes literary translation practices into four groups, namely, author-centered translation, text-centered translation, reader-centered translation, and author-text-reader-negotiated translation, arguing that the value of a literary translation lies mainly in the targeted readers (2014: 9-10).

Reception studies of translation (e.g., Jäckel, 2001; von Schwerin-High, 2004; O’Hagan, 2009; Bergam, 2013; Brems & Pinto, 2013; Chan, 2014; Lindgren, 2015) evince an overwhelming interest in readers, both professional and general, emphasizing the central role of readers in translation. By and large, however, these studies fail to shed light on the relationship between reception and translation text, nor do they query the nature of reader-



oriented translation.

The studies presented thus far provide evidence that reader-oriented translation is a rather ambiguous and ill-founded notion, which is usually premised on intuition. How reader-orientedness is conceptualized and realized by literary translators remains unresolved. Far too little attention has been paid to translators' perceptions of target readers. It is argued that without an in-depth exploration of both translation texts and translation contexts, we are unable to understand reader-oriented translation in its entirety.

Suojanen et al. (2015) puts forward a proposal for a user-centered model of translation, foregrounding the concepts of usability and user experience. Although this model is mainly designed for non-literary translation, I find their conception of elements of translation usability, i.e., legibility, readability, comprehensibility, and accessibility rather useful in assessing reader-orientedness of literary translation, and in this case, *Hero*. Concerning typographic aspects of texts such as font style and overall page design, legibility requires that translation should be visually discernible and decipherable. Readability focuses on the stylistic features of translation, i.e., word choice, sentence length, transition between paragraphs, and active versus passive voice. While readability is a textual matter, comprehensibility is more situational and interpersonal, that is, it lays stress on the cultural and mental distance between the translator/translation and readers. Finally, accessibility denotes how easy readers can access the translation (Suojanen et al., 2015: 50-58). This section will apply readability and comprehensibility as the main parameters to evaluate the reader-orientedness of Holmwood's translation.

But before that, I would like to examine Holmwood's approach to Jin Yong translation, to disclose how her eyes and mind as a literary agent influence her conception and projection of target readers, and her interpretation of Jin Yong *wuxia*. This examination is based on materials collected from three sources, namely, my email interview with Holmwood, my transcriptions of her speeches at National Taiwan University and in "China in Context",<sup>77</sup> and other media interviews of the translator.

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<sup>77</sup> This speech was recorded by Professor Darryl Sterk from Lingnan University.

## 6.1.2 Holmwood's Approach to Jin Yong Translation

### 6.1.2.1 Target Readers

Instead of “implied reader” (Iser, 1974), which is an abstract representation of readership, “target reader” is preferred in this study. The working definition of target readers of literary translation is: the intended recipients of translated works, whose reading habits, linguistic preferences, aesthetic standards, cultural attitudes, and ideological norms are taken into account by translators before and during translation. Target readers usually share similar demographic features such as age, educational background, and socioeconomic status. They play a significant role in translators' decision-making. To some extent, they equal the target market.

As an experienced literary agent, Holmwood has gained insights into the translation market of Chinese literature. In her reply to my email (May 17, 2019), Holmwood wrote, “Agenting is a brilliant way to do this as it brings you into contact with so many different editors, companies and lets [sic] you see the market in its entirety”. In her speech entitled “Bringing Chinese Martial Arts Battles to Life in English” at National Taiwan University on October 7, 2014, Holmwood stated,

I have been a literary agent...also working on promoting Chinese language authors from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese into other languages. So, I have been consciously taking part in the industry side of translation. So, I will spend my morning thinking about the word like “thud”, but in the afternoon I have to switch my brain into something bigger than the page I am working on, i.e. what is happening in translation in the global context, how do you make a career right, why was that book chosen to be translated, who started that conversation (Holmwood, 2014).

Moreover, she served as the Editor in Chief of “Books from Taiwan”. Presumably, these experiences raise her market awareness, which in turn enables her to see the market potential of Jin Yong novels in the West (as discussed in 5.2) and, more importantly, to effectively locate the target readers. In answering one audience's question “How would you market Jin Yong' novels?”, Holmwood remarked,

I think Jin Yong should be a book for young people...They will hope to

catch **young adult readers** (my emphasis)...I think to reach the gamers—people in the community who are obviously very passionate with fans-translation of Jin Yong,<sup>78</sup> and people who are conversant with Jin Yong culture but do not speak Chinese is very important. There will be a word of mouth (ibid.).

In a workshop themed “The Legend of Jin Yong” conducted by “China in Context” on March 17, 2018, Holmwood again mentioned the target readers, “I just hope that Jin Yong can sort of reach new **young people, new young readers** [my emphasis], like he inspires every year in China all those young people who still read him” (Holmwood, 2018d). All the above evidence indicates that Holmwood’s target readers of translation are young adult readers in the Anglophone world, including Jin Yong fans of online *wuxia* forums. She contends that it is these general readers who will be interested in reading Jin Yong and thus will probably buy the translated books. These readers are certainly different from professional readers who have specialized cultural-historical knowledge and/or advanced bilingual proficiency (such as literary critics and translation scholars). However, just because she has specific readers in mind does not mean she will not hope to attract readers outside of the intended demographic. It is just that her main intended recipients of Jin Yong translation are general readers. Tellingly, Holmwood’s conception of target readers is based on her perceptions of the translation market as a literary agent, and her knowledge of readers obtained through investigating online *wuxia* forums and constantly interacting with readers in workshops and book fairs. Her translation philosophy accords with Cronin’s assertion, “the putative general reader powerfully determines norms of acceptability” (2012: 380), as will be demonstrated below.

### 6.1.2.2 Reading Jin Yong for Pleasure

Jin Yong is one of the greatest writers in contemporary China. Widely regarded as the national cultural treasure by millions of readers and scholars in China, his *wuxia* works are distinctively Chinese, epitomized by, among others, the celebration of cultural traditions and the nostalgic imagination of ancient China. As discussed in 5.3, there is simply no counterpart

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<sup>78</sup> “Community” here refers to Chinese *wuxia* and fantasy novel websites such as Wuxiaworld, Gravitytales, Novel Updates, Webnovel, Hui3r, Immortal Mountain, Volare Novels, etc.

genre in the West. Bringing these works to publication in English and garnering the interests of a large number of readers is therefore an uphill battle for any translator.

Holmwood seems to take a somewhat unorthodox approach to Jin Yong novels compared with other translators. She created the tagline of “Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”, hoping to bring Chinese *wuxia* closer to Western readers. In the introduction to the book, she remarks,

Many have considered Jin Yong’s world too foreign, too Chinese, for an English-speaking readership. Impossible to translate. And yet, the story of love, loyalty, honor and the power of individual against successive corrupt governments and invading forces is as universal as any story could hope to be. The greatest loss that can occur in translation can only come from not translating at all (Holmwood, 2018f).

The thrust of her argument is that Jin Yong novels could be universally appealing since they address the common concerns and themes of humanity. She seems to contend that Chineseness in *wuxia* novels should be understood and appreciated in relation to something other/more than Chinese, and that reading Jin Yong is analogous to reading J. K. Rowling, J. R. R. Tolkien, George R. R. Martin, and Stieg Larsson. Jin Yong, in her discourse, is first and foremost an excellent story writer. By extension, historical backgrounds and cultural traditions in Jin Yong novels, in her opinion, should take a backseat to character developments and story plots. To her, translating and marketing Jin Yong novels as classic works will backfire, evidenced by her comment, “嚴肅地擺在‘文學’的架子上, 真正去讀的人恐怕不多” (translated works are put on the shelf of “serious literature”, consequently they are rarely read) (Holmwood, 2018b). Interpreting Jin Yong the master this way, she casts off the mental shackles imposed by the “impossible task” of *wuxia* translation, and arguably narrows the “cultural distance” between target readers and these novels.

She made her proposal clearer, “Although the context, the history, and everything is very Chinese, but at the very center, you will find these characters are motivated by the same kind of things, you and I in the modern day” (Holmwood, 2018d). What she attempts to achieve here is to narrow the “time distance” between target readers and characters in the stories, to make Jin Yong *wuxia* more approachable temporally.

By now, it should be clear that Holmwood conceives general readers, especially young adults as the target readers of her translation. She prioritizes readers’ reading pleasure over the

cultural value of Jin Yong novels, commercial successes over academic achievements. She stresses the intimacy and proximity of the novel and readers. In what follows, I will demonstrate how Holmwood crystallizes her considerations for general readers in the translation practice, how she prioritizes readability and comprehensibility, and how *Hero* is stylistically distinguished from two previous translations.

### 6.1.3 Translation Style of *A Hero Born*

#### 6.1.3.1 Data and Methodology

As discussed in Chapter 2, only four novels of Jin Yong have been translated into English. I will analyze the translation style of *Hero* compared with *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (hereafter *Fox*) translated by Olivia Mok, and *The Deer and the Cauldron* (Book One) (hereafter *Deer*) translated by John Minford. These three translations constitute comparable corpora. *The Book and the Sword* is not chosen since it is not a complete translation (as discussed in 2.2). All files are sourced from the Internet. Chinese originals are in text format. English translations are in PDF format, which are converted into plain text (.txt) files with UTF-8 encoding. All files are subsequently proofread and corrected against printed books. Pictures, symbols, and paratextual elements are deleted. Chinese texts are POS tagged by NLPir-Parser,<sup>79</sup> and English texts are POS tagged by CLAWS web tagger (C7 tagset) (see Appendix 6 for details of the tagset).<sup>80</sup> The basic information of the three translations is presented in Table 7:

Translation (word count)	Chinese original <sup>81</sup> (character count)	Translator	Publication year
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<sup>79</sup> NLPir-Parser is available from: <https://github.com/NLPir-team/NLPir/tree/master/NLPir-Parser>

<sup>80</sup> CLAWS web tagger is available from: <http://ucrel-api.lancaster.ac.uk/claws/free.html>

<sup>81</sup> Jin Yong novels have been published in three editions: 1. original edition, serialized on newspapers and magazines from 1955 to 1972; 2. revised edition, published by Ming Ho Publications Corp. (明河社) in Hong Kong and Joint Publishing Corp. (三聯書店) in Mainland China from 1976 to 1999; 3. New revised edition (New Century edition), published by Ming Ho Publications Corp. in Hong Kong and Guangzhou Publishing House (廣州出版社) from 2003 up to now. *Hero* is based on the new revised edition, while *Fox* and *Deer* are based on the revised edition.

<i>Hero</i> (124,220)	《射雕英雄傳》（卷 一）(213,057)	Anna Holmwood	2018
<i>Fox</i> (117,207)	《雪山飛狐》 (128,982)	Olivia Mok	1993
<i>Deer</i> (Book One) (190,462)	《鹿鼎記》（第一至 十回）(243,350)	John Minford	1997

**Table 7. Basic Information of the Three Translations**

Style in translation is used rather loosely. Depending on researchers' interests and purposes, it can be termed as translational style, translating style, translator style, etc. I do not attempt to tackle terminological differences here, but some interesting discussions of these terms can be found in Malmkjær (2004), Marco (2004), Saldanha (2011a), Huang & Chu (2014), and Huang (2018). Without denying the practical and theoretical validity of these terms, I restrict the use of style to the distinct stylistic features of one translation text (*Hero* in this case) compared with others (*Fox* and *Deer* in this case). Translation style, thanks to its narrower semantic scope, seems a more appropriate term for this research.

To ensure that stylistic choices are primarily attributed to translators, the preferred strategy is to investigate various translations of the same source text (e.g., Bosseaux, 2007; Winters, 2007, 2009; Ji, 2009; Li et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2011; Wang & Li, 2012). However, this strategy is not perfect as different translations are sometimes produced in distant historical periods, making the diachronic evolution of the target language an uncontrolled variable. Moreover, in practice, a rather limited number of literary works (usually canonical ones) have been rendered into more than one version of the same foreign language. In this case, none of Jin Yong's novels has been retranslated. Baker cogently points out that it is impossible to fix all the variables and extract various linguistic features that can be unambiguously attributed to translators alone (2000: 262).

Before delving into the English translations, I conducted a preliminary investigation into some stylistic features of Chinese originals in question. The result is showcased in Table 8.

Chinese original	STTR	Mean word length (by character)	Mean sentence length (by character)
《射雕英雄傳》 (卷一)	44.58	1.72	30.59
《雪山飛狐》	45.25	1.74	29.88
《鹿鼎記》 (第一至十回)	41.47	1.73	30.07

**Table 8. Stylistic Features of the Chinese Originals**

STTR (Standardized type/token ratio) is the mean value of the TTRs of standard-size text segments. In Table 8, the values of STTR and mean word length are produced by WordSmith 8 (Scott, 2020), while the values of mean sentence length are calculated by dividing character number by sentence number (number of 。 ! ? ). The table shows that the STTR value of “鹿鼎記” is lower than the other two books while differences of other values among books are considerably slight. These findings are corroborated by Xia et al. (forthcoming), which reveals that Jin Yong maintains a stable style in terms of lexical choices and syntactic features throughout his fourteen novels. We may then postulate that the original works do not constitute an uncontrolled variable such that it renders the comparison of the translations of different originals invalid.

Instead of focusing on STTR, readability index, and mean word length of the translated texts, which rely heavily on original texts, I will probe into target and source text length ratio (TSLR), sentence length distribution, passive construction frequency, and nominalization frequency, which are arguably not determined by original texts. The purpose of doing so is to further minimize the impact of the Chinese originals. These linguistic features under study largely reflect translators’ intentional choices, and hence individual styles. The results produced will then be complemented with a qualitative analysis of translation examples. This expedient solution is devised out of pragmatic considerations. Although not without its drawbacks, it provides us with a way to address the methodological impasse posed by the scarcity of retranslations.

In terms of research tools, ProWritingAid and Analyze My Writing are used in analyzing

sentence length distribution;<sup>82&83</sup> AntConc 3.5.8 (Anthony, 2019) is applied for calculating passive construction frequency and nominalization frequency; SPSS 26 (IBM, 2019) is used for creating charts.

### 6.1.3.2 Results and Analysis

#### TSLR

TSLR is a salient indicator of overall translation style, demonstrating how explicit/implicit the translation is, and how additions and omissions are applied in translation practice. The equation for TSLR is simple:

$$\text{TSLR} = \frac{\text{No. of words in target text}}{\text{No. of words in source text}}$$

The value for *Hero* is 0.58, for *Fox* 0.91, and for *Deer* 0.78. It indicates that *Hero* is more condensed compared with the other two translations. A close examination of *Hero* text lays bare that its lower score is mainly attributed to Holmwood's omissions and simplifications of historical and cultural backgrounds.

For example, *Shediao* opens with a detailed introduction to the historical background:

#### Example 1

張十五道：“想當年徽宗道君皇帝……所用的奸臣，像蔡京、朱繡、王黼，是專幫皇帝搜括百姓的無恥之徒；像童貫、梁師成，是只會吹牛拍馬的太監；像高俅、李邦彥……終於徽宗、欽宗都給金兵擄了去。這兩個昏君自作自受，那也罷了，可害苦了我中國千千萬萬百姓。”……說道：“嶽爺爺有兩句詩道：‘壯志饑餐胡虜肉，笑談渴飲匈奴血。’這兩句詩當真說出了中國全國百姓的心裏話……說著三人大笑 (Jin Yong, 2009: 7-8)。 (724 characters)

Based on actual historical events, this narrative lambasts the corrupted imperial court of the Song Dynasty and the invading Jurchen tribes. It demonstrates Jin Yong's rich knowledge of history and discloses his ideological stance. The characters' conversation, especially the

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<sup>82</sup> ProWritingAid is available from: <https://prowritingaid.com>

<sup>83</sup> Analyze My Writing is available from: <https://www.analyzemymywriting.com/index.html>



citation of the poem by Yue Fei (嶽飛), will likely evoke the collective memory and patriotic nationalism among Chinese readers. Viewed from the perspective of Western general readers, however, this introduction could be interpreted as tedious and homiletic on the one hand, and ethnocentric if not jingoistic on the other. Being aware that her target readers will probably not resonate with the author, Holmwood deletes this introduction altogether in her translation. In so doing, Holmwood aims to narrow the cultural and mental distance between her translation and the target readers, thus promoting the comprehensibility of Jin Yong *wuxia*. Her omissions and simplifications of historical and cultural backgrounds can also be found on pages 10, 18, 19, 37, 53, 56, 58, 102, 137, and through the rest of *Hero*. This strategy can be best understood by reference to Holmwood's consideration of readers' needs,

If the translator tries to tell the readers everything, the readers will be put off, and they will feel that it is too much...the idea that one has to give all the background, otherwise the readers won't get it, won't enjoy it is wrong. It is kind of talking down the readers. They can go read and explore more if they want to know more background (Holmwood, 2018d).

Exceptions are made for names of dishes, which are also rich in cultural knowledge. For instance, when Lotus (Huang Rong, the female protagonist) met Guo Jing for the first time, she ordered a full-course meal,

#### Example 2

那少年道：“這種窮地方小酒店，好東西諒也弄不出來，就這樣吧，乾果四樣是荔枝、桂圓、蒸棗、銀杏。鮮果你揀時新的。鹹酸要砌香櫻桃和薑絲梅兒，不知這兒買不買得到？蜜餞麼？就是玫瑰金橘、香藥葡萄、糖霜桃條、梨肉好郎君” (Jin Yong, 2009: 202)。

Holmwood translates it into,

“I doubt you serve anything of note in a poor little inn like this,” he said, “so we'll have to make do with dried lychees, longans, steamed jujube and ginkgo nuts. As for the fresh, give us whatever's in season. And we want sliced, perfumed sour cherries and sour plums with ginger. Can you get them here? And the honeyed? Hmm. Rose-scented kumquats, grapes, sugar-coated peach and some pear, done in the style of Lord my Master” (Holmwood, 2018f: 272).

In Example 2, Holmwood has translated everything into English, including “梨肉好郎君”, a culture-loaded dessert name invented by Jin Yong. This might be because the translator believes that these dessert names would catch the eyes of readers.

Compared with historical and cultural backgrounds, fighting scenes, *kungfu* move names, and story plots are rarely omitted. Take the following fighting scene for instance,

### Example 3

郭靖乘勝直上，忽見敵人一個踉蹌，似在地下絆了一下，當下一個連環鴛鴦腿，雙足齊飛。哪知對手這一下卻是誘敵之計，韓寶駒與韓小瑩同聲呼叫：“留神！”

郭靖畢竟欠了經驗，也不知該當如何留神才是，右足剛踢出，已被敵人抓住。那少年道人乘著他踢來之勢，揮手向外送出。郭靖身不由主，一個筋斗翻跌下來，嘭的一聲，背部著地，撞得好不疼痛。他一個“鯉魚打挺”，立即翻身躍起，待要上前再鬥，只見六位師父已把那少年道人團團圍住。(Jin Yong, 2009: 143)

Victory felt close, so he pressed on. The young man stumbled and Guo Jing performed a Mandarin Duck kick, one foot following the other like a pair of mating birds.

But the young man had laid the perfect trap.

“Watch out!” Ryder Han and Jade called out together.

But Guo Jing did not know what he should be looking out for. Before he knew it, the young man had grabbed hold of his right foot and hit him with his palm. Guo Jing could only somersault out of the hold and land on his back with a thump. Despite the pain, he flipped to his feet in a Flying Carp. He was about to attack again when he saw the Freaks had surrounded his opponent (Holmwood, 2018f: 189).

This is the fight between Guo Jing and Harmony Yin (尹志平). Holmwood translates not only the two *kungfu* move names but also every move of the two opponents. Furthermore, she shortens the paragraphs to speed up the pace of fighting.

By contrast, *Fox* scores as high as 0.91 in TSLR. Mok, the translator, follows closely with the Chinese original. She elaborates on almost every cultural term, including paralytic points. Her approach guarantees accuracy and loyalty, yet weakens the comprehensibility of the translation, especially for general readers. Typical examples concern the translation of appellations. For instance, “青藏派玄冥子道長” is rendered into “Profundity the Taoist Phongie of the Kokonor-Tibetan School” and “崑崙山靈清居士” is rendered into “Spirituality the Buddhist Devotee of the Altyn Tagh in Chinese Turkestan”.

Minford adopts a more flexible approach compared with Mok. However, his translation

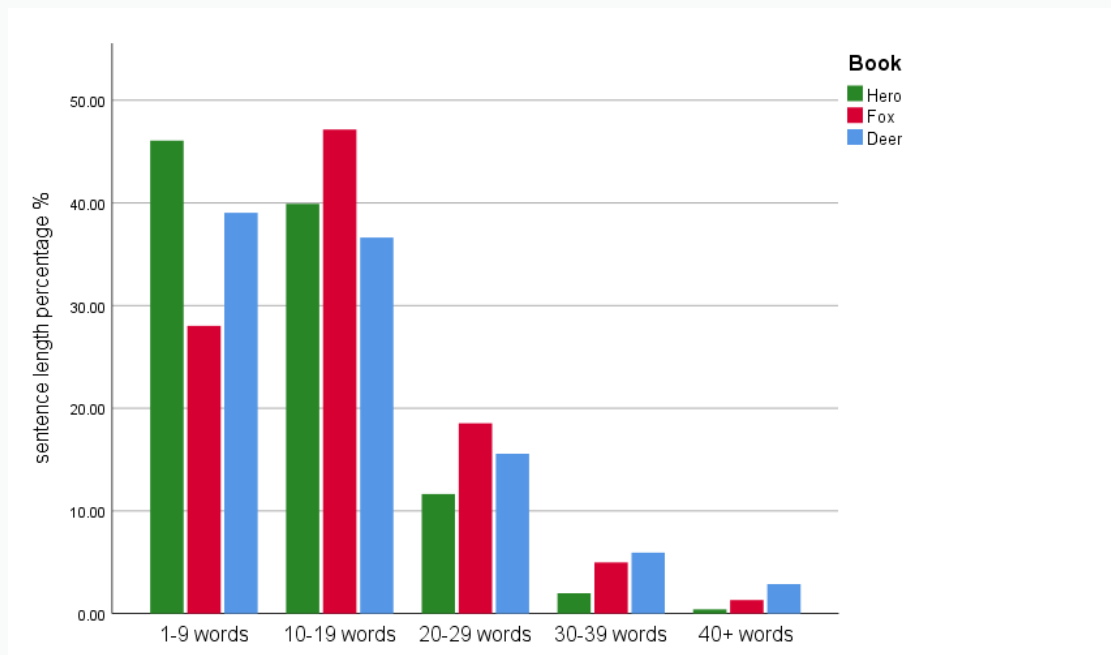
is characterized by excessive annotations within text (e.g., pages 6, 28, 51, 52, 59, 99, 179, 181, 299, 337, 474), an emblematic manifestation of what Appiah (1993) calls “thick translation”. Take two annotations for instance. On page 51 of *Deer*, Minford provides an annotation (in 28 words), explaining how the name “Slender West Lake” (瘦西湖) came into being. On page 179, the division of Manchu Eight Banners is introduced by another annotation (in 23 words). These annotations considerably increase the TSLR of *Deer*.

### **Sentence Length Distribution**

Sentence length is defined as “the number of words that come between the opening word starting with a capital letter and the end punctuation mark, namely a full stop, exclamation mark and question mark” (Rudnicka, 2018: 225). It has long been investigated in literary style research (e.g., Yule, 1939; Williams, 1940; Sichel, 1974), and has recently been treated as an essential variable of translation style (e.g., Pym, 2008; Patton & Can, 2012; Huang, 2015; Li, 2017). Sentence length is positively correlated with syntactic sophistication and variation. Complex syntactic structures necessitate complex mental processing operations (Givón, 2009: 10). For instance, two neuro-cognitive experimental studies suggest that relative clauses require more cognitive efforts than conjoined clauses (Booth et al., 2000; Caplan et al., 2006). Sentence length is a main variable in various readability formulas such as Lexile Reading Measure and Gunning Fog Index.

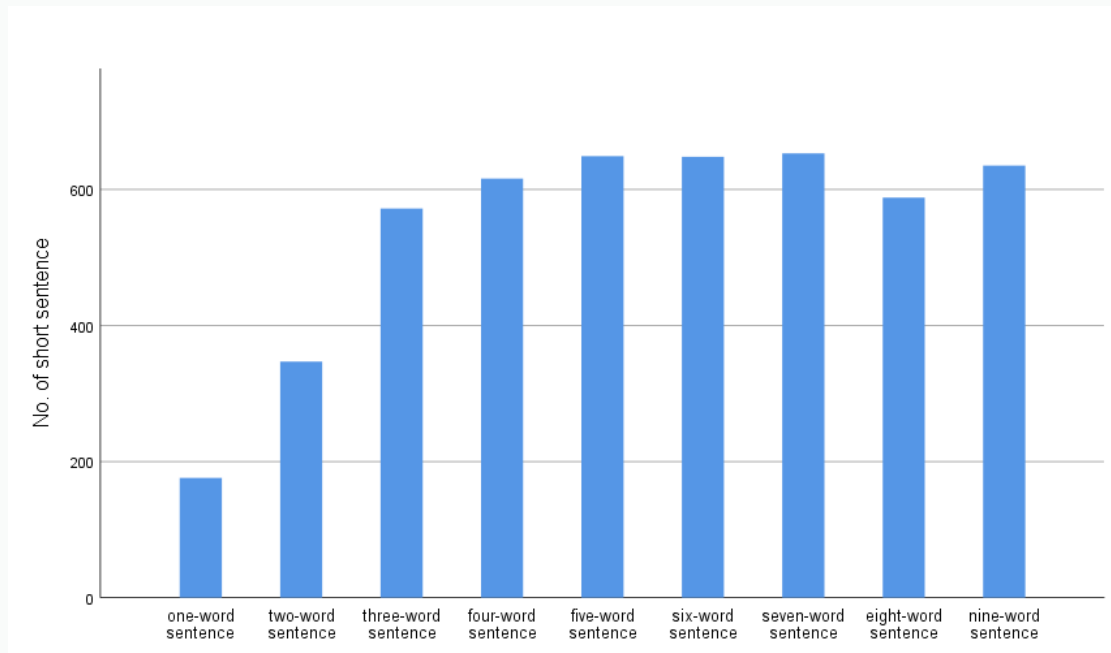
Several studies based on diachronic corpora (Biber & Conrad, 2009; Hundt et al., 2012; Rudnicka, 2018) suggest a steady decrease in sentence length of written English across time. Although no studies of diachronic sentence length in translated English has been conducted, we may postulate that a similar trend can be observed. In light of this, any comparison of various translations produced in different periods must consider the diachronic evolution of sentence length. In this case, since the publication time of the three translations (1993, 1997, 2018) does not differ dramatically, diachronic evolution is regarded as a minor variable.

ProWritingAid, an online text analysis and editing tool, is applied to calculate the mean sentence length and sentence length distribution of the three translations. The results will be reported below.



**Figure 17. Sentence Length Distribution of the Three Translations**

The results show that *Hero* has a mean sentence length of 11.65, which is significantly shorter than *Fox* (15.04), and *Deer* (14.41). Figure 17 presents an overview of the sentence length distribution of the three translations. It is noted that the percentage of short sentences (1-9 words) in *Hero* is markedly higher than in *Fox* and *Deer*. The inverse trend, nevertheless, can be detected in long sentence (30-39 words and 40+ words) distribution. In particular, only 0.41% of sentences in *Hero* are as long as or longer than 40 words, while this value for *Fox* and *Deer* is 1.32% and 2.87% respectively. To investigate the wide use of short sentences in *Hero*, one of its distinctive features, I calculated the number of one-word sentences to nine-word sentences with Analyze My Writing, an online text content and readability analyzer. The result is presented in Figure 18:



**Figure 18. Short Sentence Distribution of *Hero***

There are 4,912 short sentences (1-9 words), accounting for 46.06% of the total in *Hero*. That is, almost half of the sentences in *Hero* are shorter than ten words. I will now focus on ultra-short sentences, i.e., one-word sentences (176), two-word sentences (347), and three-word sentences (572). They constitute a significant portion (10.27%) of sentences in *Hero*. A close reading of the text suggests that ultra-short sentences are chiefly used in the following three contexts:

1. **Character dialogues**, e.g., “Exactly!” (p. 5); “Stop, now!” (p. 7); “A fight?” (p. 51).
2. **Description of settings**, e.g., “Silence.” (p. 11); “Thud!” (p. 93); “Deadlock.” (p. 242); “Dead.” (p. 357); “A warning.” (p. 79); “Another army.” (p. 108); “Fighting continued.” (p. 110); “He bowed.” (p. 226); “A dawn attack.” (p. 245); “A loud crack.” (p. 342).
3. **Character actions**, e.g., “Temujin snorted.” (p. 129); “Lotus fumed” (p. 347); “Fear paralysed her.” (p. 25); “Audiences in raptures.” (p. 74); “Nan ducked away.” (p. 164); “Guo Jing obeyed.” (p. 197); “She turned slowly.” (p. 220); “Jamuka seemed moved.” (p. 222); “The others froze.” (p. 216); “He rode closer.” (p. 238).

While ultra-short sentences in character dialogues (the largest portion) is not an idiosyncratic trait of *Hero*, their wide application in the description of settings and character actions speaks eloquently of Holmwood’s stylistic preference, that is, she prefers short sentences with a brisk pace. Besides nominal sentences, reduced relative clauses are also

widely employed. Moreover, consecutive short sentences are constantly used, evidenced by the following example,

#### Example 4

眾人驚呼喝止，已經不及。兩頭獵豹本已蓄勢待發，忽見有人過來，同時吼叫，猛地躍起。眾人齊聲驚叫。(Jin Yong, 2009: 135-136)

A gasp rose from the crowd.  
But it was too late.  
The leopards roared.  
The crowd cried out (Holmwood, 2018f: 179).

Holmwood renders this paragraph in Chinese into four consecutive short sentences/paragraphs in English. The motivation might be to maintain or quicken the pace of the extremely dangerous scene, in which Khojin, a four-year-old girl, is about to pat the head of a leopard. The tenseness will probably be compromised had she translated this scene with longer sentences. My interpretation is supported by Holmwood (2014)'s remark, "I purposefully made it [her translation] faster than Jin Yong". In stark contrast to this conciseness is Minford's overuse of long and complicated sentences. For the purpose of comparison, I will present the translation of monetary measurement by Holmwood and Minford respectively:

#### Example 5

*Hero:*

鐵木真叫道：“抓住這賊子的，賞黃金三斤”(Jin, 2009: 85).  
“Three *jin* of gold to whoever catches him!” Temujin called (Holmwood, 2018f: 112).

*Deer:*

第三只錦盒中裝的卻是金票，每張黃金十兩，一共四十張，乃是四百兩黃金 (Jin, 2006: 430).

The third box was full of banknotes, forty in all, each with a face value of ten *taels* of gold, making a total value of four hundred *taels* which, at an exchange rate of eighty to one, was the equivalent of thirty-two thousand *taels* of silver (Minford, 1997: 474).

While Holmwood puts “斤” directly into “*jin*”, Minford elaborates on the conversion between banknotes and *taels* of silver with a fairly lengthy sentence. Long sentences pose a great cognitive challenge to general readers as they create an extra load on working memory (Mikk, 2008: 120).

The mean sentence length of *Hero* (11.65) is also shorter than that of the ten translations by Howard Goldblatt (15.47) (Zhang & Fu, 2019: 58) and the ten translations by Julia Lovell (16.43) (Li et al., 2018: 73). Both Goldblatt and Lovell are literary translators of contemporary Chinese literature. The mean sentence length of *Hero* is indeed close to the mean sentence length of fiction in COHA (12.07), the largest diachronic corpus of English (Rudnicka, 2018: 233).

The above analysis suggests that *Hero* contains more short sentences and fewer long sentences than *Fox*, *Deer*, and many other literary translations, demonstrating Holmwood's idiosyncratic representation of Jin Yong novels. Short sentences reduce the cognitive load in sentence processing and improve the acquisition of text content (Mikk, 2000: 190-195). Her treatment of syntactic structure seems to be based on her observation of the literary trend (steady decrease of sentence length) and the literary translation market (what kind of translation style will sell). Her aim, then, is to improve the readability and comprehensibility of Jin Yong for a mass readership. Adding to this conclusion, one could hypothesize that the reception of both *Fox* and *Deer* among general readers is partially handicapped by the overuse of long sentences and complex syntactic structures, typical characteristics of academic writing and scholarly translation. Nonetheless, only large-scale corpus research will suffice for the generalization of the correlation between sentence length and translation reception.

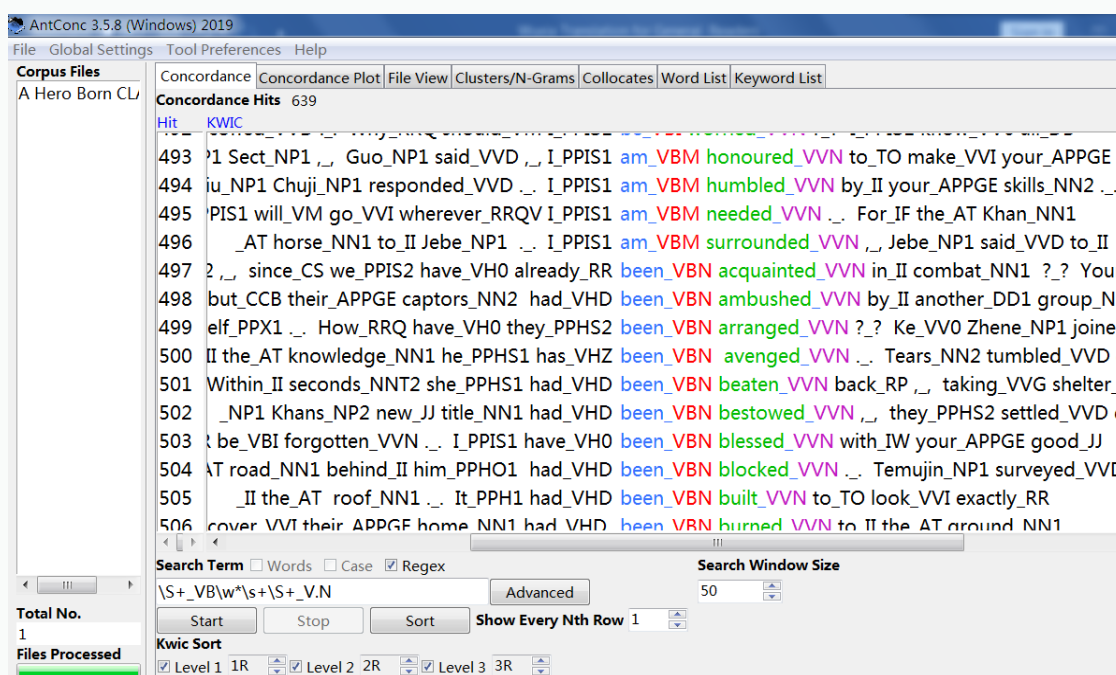
### **Passive Construction Frequency and Nominalization Frequency**

Passive constructions and nominalizations are addressed together since they tend to co-occur (Biber, 1988: 14) and they are both characteristic of scholarly writing. Wanner offers a morpheme-based definition of passive constructions, "passives in English are morphologically marked. The core of the passive is the passive participle" (2009: 28). Traditionally regarded as "the hallmark of good scientific writing" (Hansen, 1998: 437), passive constructions may produce the impression that the author is an objective recorder and observer and, instead of an active participant (Wanner, 2009: 161). However, the evaluation of passive constructions has undergone dramatic changes in recent decades. They are now criticized as undynamic, pseudo-objective, and evasive (ibid.: 191). The newest APA publication manual gives blanket advice: "Use the active voice as much as possible to create direct, clear, and concise sentences" (2019:

47). Although passive constructions have been extensively discussed in linguistics, they are under-researched in translation studies.

I searched for passive constructions in the three translations with AntConc. I used the following regular expression as the search criteria:

\S+\_VB\w\*\s+\S+\_V.N<sup>84</sup>



**Figure 19. Screenshot of Passive Construction Concordances**

Though this regular expression will miss some passives such as interrogatives, it is able to capture most of the commonly used passives. I then manually inspected concordances generated (Figure 19) and filtered out those “false positive” constructions such as “Guo Jing was confused,” and “As individuals they were accomplished,” which are participial adjectives indicating a state rather than an action. In other words, I only kept those passive constructions that function as verbs. The final result is as follows:

<sup>84</sup> The generation of this regular expression was assisted by Dr. Andrew Hardie, Reader in linguistics of Lancaster University.



Book	Frequency of passive construction	Per million
<i>Hero</i>	598	4,814
<i>Fox</i>	764	6,518
<i>Deer</i>	956	5,019

**Table 9. Passive Construction Frequency of the Three Translations**

Table 9 suggests that the normalized frequency (per million words) of passive constructions of *Hero* is slightly lower than *Deer*, but dramatically lower than *Fox*. A noticeable feature of *Fox* is the application of consecutive passive constructions. For instance,

...the landowners pressed the deprived for their dues and rents which were owed. Many serfs who failed their obligations were either sentenced to death by the official administrators or thrown into jail by the rich landlords. My father taught me a poem, written by a young gentleman, who was reputed a literary man and an accomplished martial artist (Mok, 1993: 27-28).

The overuse of passive constructions clogs the march of sentences. “Were owed” and “was reputed” are unnecessary passives as the former can be replaced by “outstanding” (before “dues and rents”) and the latter can be omitted without damaging the completeness of information. By contrast, Holmwood and Minford rarely use passive constructions consecutively.

Nominalizations are “complex nouns that are derived from verbs, adjectives, and other nouns” (Lieber, 2016: 3). Nominalizations are closely associated with academic writing since they assist in maintaining an impersonal tone and creating textual cohesion (Baratta, 2010: 1017). They are regarded as a manifestation of implicitation in translation (Hou, 2014: 1). For analytical purpose, I will only explore nominalizations with four suffixes (plus their plural form): *-tion*, *-ment*, *-ness*, and *-ity*, a criterion borrowed from Biber (1988). To retrieve all the nominalizations with these suffixes, I typed in the following search queries one by one in AntConc:

1. \*tion|\*tions
2. \*ment|\*ments
3. \*ness|\*nesses
4. \*ity|\*ities

Next, three kinds of “false positive” results were excluded through manual investigation: (1) Non-nouns such as “mention” and “vehement”. (2) Simple nouns that are not derived from verbs, adjectives, and other nouns, such as “city” and “nation”. (3) Character names such as “charity” in *Hero*. The final result is presented in Table 10:

Book	-tion	-ment	-ness	-ity	Total	Per million
<i>Hero</i>	411	119	106	102	738	5,941
<i>Fox</i>	539	175	92	208	1,014	8,651
<i>Deer</i>	862	270	202	195	1,529	8,028

**Table 10. Nominalization Frequency of the Three Translations**

The table suggests that *Hero* contains far fewer nominalizations than the other two translations, though *Hero* contains more *-ness* than *Fox*. Among the four types of nominalizations, *-tion* is most widely used. *Fox* and *Deer* thus appear to be more “concrete” as nominalizations increase their “solidity, stability, and fixed factuality” (Banks, 2005: 350).

Both passive constructions and nominalizations are characteristic of scholarly writing, and, by extension, scholarly translation. Although they are indicative of translators’ erudition and linguistic proficiency, their overuse might hamper the readability and comprehensibility of the translation. Divergences in the use of passive constructions and nominalizations again bespeak that *Hero* is stylistically distinct from *Fox* and *Deer*.

#### 6.1.4 Discussion and Summary

While the above corpus-based analysis presents the stylistic features of the three translations, extratextual explanations can reveal the more intriguing aspects of style (Saldanha, 2011a: 31). In 1998, five years after the publication of *Fox*, Mok submitted her doctoral dissertation “Martial Arts Fiction: Translational Migrations East and West”, in which she unequivocally stated her research object, “to add further to the limited inventory of case studies in urgent demand to test the polysystem theory” (1998: 7). As such, *Fox* served as the “prelude”

to Mok's doctoral research at the University of Warwick and the "experimental plot" of the polysystem theory. Put otherwise, she translated and published *Fox* primarily for academic research. As an inexperienced translator yet an ardent devotee of Jin Yong *wuxia*, she adopts a translation outlook which is highly prescriptive and conformist. As a result, her predominantly source text-oriented translation is in thrall to literalism, exhibited by, among others, high TSLR, overuse of passive constructions and nominalizations. By contrast, Minford is an established and prolific literary translator. Equipped with an encyclopedic knowledge of Chinese culture, he is deft in dealing with numerous thorny issues such as metaphors and *kungfu* move names. It would be groundless to blame that Minford did not take readers into considerations. He stressed the need to be "'Homo Ludens', to play with the novel" (Minford, 2018) in translating Jin Yong,<sup>85</sup> and he created an array of ingenious linguistic devices—such as "Trinket", the English name of "韋小寶" (the protagonist in *Deer*), and "Tamardy", the transcreation of "他媽的" (literally Damn it)—to facilitate readers' appreciation. However, the scholastic introduction, copious annotations within text, and overuse of long and complicated sentences endow *Deer* with an academic flavor, which is reminiscent of his translation of *The Art of War* and *Tao Te Ching*. As such, his translation of *Deer* is, consciously or otherwise, directed more towards professional readers than general readers.

What Mok and Minford have in common, notwithstanding their noticeable divergencies, is probably the fervent belief that the translation should first and foremost convey the original flavor of Jin Yong *wuxia*, and that familiarity with historical background and cultural knowledge predispose readers to better appreciate *wuxia*. Consequently, they conduct translation in a manner as if they were intellectually, if not morally, obliged to incorporate and recreate nearly all aspects of the Chinese originals. To be sure, their translations have been seriously discussed by literary critics (e.g., Hegel, 1994; Liu, 1999) and extensively researched by translation scholars (e.g., Lu, 2014; Tang, 2014). Unfortunately, however, it seems that their overloaded translations have not won mass readership (as reported in Chapter 4).

Holmwood's approach to translating *Shediao* grew in the fertile soil of literary agenting.

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<sup>85</sup> This citation is from "To Mark the Passing of Louis Cha", authored and sent to me by John Minford. The Chinese translation of this article is rendered by Tzu-Yun Lai and published with a title "金庸不只是作家，更是個象徵—誌金庸辭世" on *Ming Pao Monthly*, 2018 (12): 129-131.

From the perspective of a literary agent who constantly researches readers and the market and whose survival hinges on the market success of books, bringing the novel to the general readers is the top priority, and winning mass readership is the *raison d'être* of this translation, and any other translations. By extension, it is the entertainment value instead of the literary value that should be prioritized. A literary translation, in her mind, is “an instrument of understanding a story which would have been inaccessible in the original language” (Suojanen et al., 2015: 35). Regarding her translation, Holmwood remarks, “I have been consciously adding some elements into Jin Yong to fit into the modern context. In other words, I am consciously taking into consideration what the audiences in the UK are used to reading” (Holmwood, 2014). She seems to contend that if she puts *Shediao* “faithfully” into English, neither meaning nor form survives, that the happy union of loyalty and readability is impossible, that the appeal of Jin Yong for general readers resides in the pure pleasure of reading excellent stories, and that literary translation should not be judged primarily by its relationship to the source text or the author, but by the extent to which the linguistic and stylistic preferences satisfy the product users, i.e., the target readers.

The habitus and various forms of capital of a translator, pointed out eloquently by Qi, not only affect his/her translation strategy, but also partly pre-determine the readership of the translation text (2018: 214). Holmwood’s multiple roles (initiator, coordinator, and promoter, as discussed in Chapter 5) secure her a prominent standing in the translation field, which, in turn, permits her great liberties to adopt strategies that are, in her mind, in the interest of bringing Jin Yong to a wider general audience. She envisages a rather detailed picture of future readers (young adults) before translation and makes her stylistic choices accordingly in translation. By strategically omitting background information, employing a large number of short sentences, and reducing passive constructions and nominalizations, she produces a translation that is conversational, readable, fluent, straightforward, dynamic, and fast-paced. Meanwhile, she presents Jin Yong *wuxia* as individualistic, transnational, apolitical, and multicultural. The high readability and comprehensibility of the translated text, together with legibility and accessibility secured by editors, publishers, and distributors, account for *Hero*’s remarkable reception among general readers.

Unsurprisingly, however, the “side effect” of Holmwood’s emphasis on “user experience

and cultural usability” (Suojanen et al., 2015: i) is that Jin Yong’s erudition and sophistication are considerably shortchanged in her translation, which has not escaped criticism, especially from scholars of Mainland China (e.g., Shi, 2018; Li, 2019), who regard certain elements of the *wuxia* genre sacrosanct, and who believe Jin Yong fiction carry the responsibility of cultural representation. Despite the profound implication drawn from this case study, we should nevertheless caution against any simple generalization regarding reader-oriented translation, both practically and theoretically, bearing in mind that literary translation is a rather complicated linguistic, cognitive, social, cultural, and commercial activity.

This section has investigated Holmwood’s approach to *wuxia* translation and examined the stylistic features of *Hero* compared with two previous translations of Jin Yong novels. Holmwood identifies the book as a popular *wuxia* novel for general readers and accordingly has inscribed her “fingerprints” on the “tone”, “pitch”, and “pace” of the translated text.

By conducting a case study of reader-oriented *wuxia* translation, I hope I have made two small contributions in this section. First, I have problematized the notion of “reader-oriented translation” and then substantiated it with evidence collected from Holmwood’s discourses and translation. Second, I have offered a solution to the methodological impasse posed by the scarcity of retranslations in the research of translation style. Given the pilot nature of this study, the preliminary results produced from the corpus analysis remain to be tested with textual evidence collected on a larger scale. The following section will compare *Hero* with *A Bond Undone* on syntactic and genre levels, revealing how Holmwood has put her “fingerprints” on Chang’s translation.

## **6.2 Homogenized Co-literary Translation: *A Hero Born* and *A Bond Undone***

Literary translation is an intrinsically sophisticated, creative, subjective, multivariate, heterogeneous, and improvisational human activity. It is commonly believed to be the only “translation fortress” that machines, however intelligent, can never capture. Just as there are a thousand Hamlets in a thousand persons’ eyes, there are dissimilar translations under different

translators' pens (or on different keyboards). Following this line of thought, it is logical to assume that the “uniformity” of co-literary translations—in which each translator responsible for an independent part or volume—is confined to terminological and typographic aspects, and is largely attributed to the editorial intervention. It is further deduced that co-literary translations by translators of different cultural backgrounds, mother tongues, and personal histories, will be more heterogeneous. The section title “Homogenized Co-literary Translation” thus seems to be exaggerated at best, and preposterous at worst at first glance. This is compounded by the usually negative connotation of words such as “homogeneous” and “uniform” in English and Western culture. However, *Hero* (volume 1 of *Legends*) and *A Bond Undone* (volume 2 of *Legends*) (hereafter *Bond*), as my investigation will unfold, are surprisingly homogenized to a considerable degree and on various levels. Moreover, the two translators' discourses concerning Jin Yong *wuxia* are also highly homogenous. This section presents, illustrates, and discusses the stylistic similarities and differences of *Hero* and *Bond* based on two specialized corpora, and explores the dynamics of the collaboration between Holmwood and Chang in promoting Jin Yong *wuxia* based on their public discourses. I thereby hope to lay bare how Holmwood has put her “fingerprints” on Chang's translation, and how they have marketed their translations in a concerted manner. By channeling the focus of corpus-based translation studies into syntactic and genre dimensions, I also aim to contribute to the research methodology of translation style.

### 6.2.1 On Co-translation

Co-(collaborative) translation is the translation produced by two or more agents in some cooperative way (O'Brien, 2011, 17). It has also been explored under the heading of “multiple translatorship” (Jansen & Wegener, 2013) within the context of literary translation. There are three general types of co-translation: collaboration between a translator and the author; between the author and a group of translators; between two or more translators (Zielinska-Elliott & Kaminka, 2017: 169). Co-translation is a time-honored practice in numerous cultural traditions such as China, where translation has usually been a collaborative act (St. André, 2010), and Europe, where co-translation figured prominently in the Middle Ages and

Renaissance (Bistué, 2013). However, it has not received considerable scholarly attention until recent years. As the centrality of collaboration in translation is gaining recognition, co-translation has also undergone polymorphic analytical and theoretical conceptualization, epitomized by “translaboration”—a blended concept which is invented “to bring translation and collaboration into open conceptual play with one another” (Alfer, 2017: 286)—and “shared translation”, which refers to the translation produced by the concerted efforts of multiple agents such as translators, authors, directors, and scripters (Decroisette, 2017).

With the benefit of hindsight, this vigorous scholarly interest in co-translation might be attributed to the increasingly transdisciplinary nature and trend of translation studies (collaboration is a central concept in organization studies) on the one hand, and the rapid development of crowdsourcing and online co-translation enabled by new technologies on the other. However, the bulk of scholarly attention has been directed to the socio-cultural aspects of co-translation (e.g., Vanderschelden, 1998; Liang & Xu, 2015; Brown, 2017; Cordingley & Manning, 2017; Cranfield & Tedesco, 2017; Ivaska & Paloposki, 2018; Drugan, 2020; Hemmat, 2020; Kang & Kim, 2020; Zwischenberger, 2020). Insights from previous research into co-translation point to the need for close scrutiny of stylistic features. To date, studies in this regard are scarce. A pioneering study is Rybicki & Heydel (2013), which adopts stylometric tools to investigate the Polish co-translation of *Night and Day*. Despite the interesting findings yielded, word frequency-based stylometric methods it employs only reveal translators’ lexical choices, telling a small part of the story (i.e., translation style), and are more suitable for translatorial attribution analysis. Part of the aim of the present section is to redress this imbalance by focusing more on syntactic and genre dimensions.

In a nutshell, very few studies explicitly address the stylistic features of co-translation. Much work remains to be done to disclose how co-translation converges and diverges stylistically, and “in determining how co-translators affect the text and each other” (Cordingley & Manning, 2017: 21). The case presented here is particularly suited to filling this gap. Taking full advantage of techniques designed initially for second language writing research and genre analysis, this section will break new grounds in the study of translation style. It will also throw new light on the process and mechanism of co-literary translation.

## 6.2.2 A Multidimensional Comparison with L2SCA and MAT

### 6.2.2.1 Data and Methodology

The electronic versions of *Hero* and *Bond* (in PDF format) are sourced from the Internet. Both PDFs are subsequently converted into plain text (.txt) files with UTF-8 encoding and manually corrected against printed books. Pictures, symbols, and paratextual elements are deleted. Finally, *Hero* (124,220 words) and *Bond* (157,566 words) constitute comparable corpora. To facilitate fine-grained comparison of these two corpora, I divide *Hero* into nine text samples, and *Bond* into ten text samples, corresponding to their chapter division.

Quantitative methods have made considerable inroads into translation style research in recent years. Existing research in this regard focus either on general variables such as STTR, mean word length, and mean sentence length (e.g., Li et al., 2011; Huang & Chu, 2014; Youdale, 2020) or micro linguistic items such as reporting verbs and loan words (e.g., Bosseaux, 2004; Winters, 2007; Saldanha, 2011b; Yao, 2013; Peruzzo, 2019). As a result, the macro and meso-level stylistic features are largely ignored. This section breaks with these traditions by systematically probing into the syntactic and genre features of *Hero* and *Born*. Achieving this necessitates a range of tools. I investigate the syntactic complexity of the two translations by measuring the fourteen variables produced by the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA) (Lu, 2010), which is inserted in TAASSC 1.3.8 (Kyle, 2016), and I will then conduct Multi-Dimensional Analysis (MDA) of the two translations with MAT 1.3.2 (Nini, 2019). These tools are chosen because of their high reliability, free availability, and capability to process files in batches. SPSS 26 (IBM, 2019) is used for statistical tests. In what follows, L2SCA and MDA will be briefly introduced.

L2SCA, developed by Xiaofei Lu, is a tool that allows researchers to examine the syntactic complexity of written English, using fourteen syntactic complexity indices which cover length of production units, sentence complexity, subordination ratio, and particular structures. This tool works as follows: It firstly uses Stanford syntactic parser to examine the syntactic structures of the sentences in the texts, and then uses Tregex to query those syntactically-parsed texts so as to retrieve and count the occurrences of particular structures,



and finally calculates the fourteen indices (Lu, 2010: 478-479, 484). It was initially designed for second language writing research and has been widely applied in this field (e.g., Kim, 2014; Yang et al., 2015; Lu, 2017; Jin et al., 2020; Lu & Bluemel, 2020; Yin et al., 2021). Although it has not been applied in translation studies, it is equally effective in assessing English translations, which are essentially written English. Below are the fourteen measures incorporated in L2SCA:

Code	Measure	Definition
<i>Type 1: Length of production unit</i>		
MLS	Mean length of sentence	No. of words/No. of sentences
MLT	Mean length of T-unit	No. of words/No. of T-units
MLC	Mean length of clause	No. of words/No. of clauses
<i>Type 2: Sentence complexity</i>		
C/S	Sentence complexity ratio	No. of clauses/No. of sentences
<i>Type 3: Subordination</i>		
C/T	T-unit complexity ratio	No. of clauses/No. of T-units
CT/T	Complex T-unit ratio	No. of complex T-units/No. of T-units
DC/C	Dependent clause ratio	No. of dependent clauses/No. of clauses
DC/T	Dependent clauses per T-unit	No. of dependent clauses/No. of T-units
<i>Type 4: Coordination</i>		
CP/C	Coordinate phrases per clause	No. of coordinate phrases/No. of clauses
CP/T	Coordinate phrases per T-unit	No. of coordinate phrases/No. of T-units
T/S	Sentence coordination ratio	No. of T-units/No. of sentences
<i>Type 5: Particular structures</i>		
CN/C	Complex nominals per clause	No. of complex nominals/No. of clauses
CN/T	Complex nominals per T-unit	No. of complex nominals/No. of T-units
VP/T	Verb phrases per T-unit	No. of verb phrases/No. of T-units

**Table 11. Syntactic Complexity Measures (adapted from Table 1. The Fourteen Syntactic Complexity Measures Automated, Lu, 2010: 479)**

Biber (1988) has revolutionized genre research by innovatively applying factor analysis, a statistical technique used to model and condense observed variables, in the extraction of latent dimensions from co-occurrences of sixty-seven lexico-grammatical features (such as place adverbials, first person pronouns, agentless passives, WH relative clauses on object positions, and subordinator-that deletion), a methodology later named MDA. In essence, MDA is a data-driven and bottom-up form of analysis. Its usability and flexibility are demonstrated by its wide application in the research of, *inter alia*, academic discourse (e.g., Gray, 2013; Thompson et al., 2017), television register (e.g., Al-Surmi, 2012; Sardinha & Pinto, 2019), Internet discourse (e.g., Biber & Egbert, 2016; Sardinha, 2018), and pop songs (e.g., Bértoli-Dutra, 2014). MDA of translation is still in an embryonic stage (two studies have thus far been conducted in this regard: He, 2017; Zhao, 2020).

MAT (The Multidimensional Analysis Tagger), designed by Andrea Nini, is a corpus tool for text-type or genre analysis that replicates Biber's (1988) tagger. It uses the Stanford Tagger for initial POS tagging and then identifies the linguistic patterns described in Biber (1988) within the texts.<sup>86</sup> Next, it calculates the scores for each dimension, and then plots the data onto the MD space while assigning each text to one of the eight text types identified by Biber (1989).<sup>87</sup>

The two corpora are analyzed by L2SCA and MAT respectively. The results are as follows.

## 6.2.2.2 Results and Analysis

### Syntactic Complexity

Syntactic complexity is interpreted as the variety and degree of sophistication of syntactic structures in texts (Ortega, 2003; Housen & Kuiken, 2009; Pallotti, 2009). It is an

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<sup>86</sup> The Stanford Tagger is available from: <http://nlp.stanford.edu/software/tagger.shtml>

<sup>87</sup> They are: Intimate Interpersonal Interaction, Informational Interaction, Scientific Exposition, Learned Exposition, Imaginative Narrative, General Narrative Exposition, Situated Reportage, and Involved Persuasion.

essential constituent of the larger construct of linguistic complexity (Bulté & Housen, 2014). Syntactically simple writers prefer short, single clause sentences while syntactically complex writers tend to use longer sentences and subordinate clauses which denote more complicated syntactic relationships (Beaman, 1984: 45). Syntactic complexity has been assessed by several approaches. Hawkins (1990) and Arnold et al. (2000) use the number of syllables, words, intonation units, etc., as proxies of syntactic complexity. Szmrecsányi (2004) proposes the “Index of Syntactic Complexity”, which is calculated by adding the linguistic tokens of subordinating conjunctions, WH-pronouns, verb forms, and noun phrases in a sentence. Due to the lack of reliable computational tools and techniques, the above approaches examine few variables and a small amount of data. L2SCA provides us with a more objective, comprehensive, straightforward, and non-intuitional way to assess how sophisticated and varied the syntactic structures are in translated texts.

Measure	<i>Hero</i> (N=9)		<i>Bond</i> (N=10)		Mean Diff.	t	Sig.
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation			
<b>MLS</b>	<b>12.51<sup>88</sup></b>	<b>.53</b>	<b>12.31</b>	<b>.70</b>	<b>.20</b>	<b>.688</b>	<b>.501</b>
<b>MLT</b>	<b>11.29</b>	<b>.44</b>	<b>11.45</b>	<b>.60</b>	<b>-.16</b>	<b>-.668</b>	<b>.513</b>
<b>MLC</b>	<b>8.84</b>	<b>.35</b>	<b>8.73</b>	<b>.34</b>	<b>.11</b>	<b>.662</b>	<b>.517</b>
<b>C/S</b>	<b>1.42</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>1.41</b>	<b>.09</b>	<b>.01</b>	<b>.156</b>	<b>.878</b>
<b>C/T</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>.04</b>	<b>1.31</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>-.03</b>	<b>-1.374</b>	<b>.187</b>
<b>CT/T</b>	<b>.23</b>	<b>.02</b>	<b>.26</b>	<b>.04</b>	<b>-.03</b>	<b>-1.786</b>	<b>.092</b>
DC/C	.20	.02	.23	.02	-.03	-3.214	.005
DC/T	.26	.03	.31	.04	-.05	-2.708	.015
CP/C	.19	.02	.16	.02	.03	3.438	.003
CP/T	.24	.03	.20	.02	.04	3.028	.008
T/S	1.11	0.01	1.07	.02	.04	3.495	.003
<b>CN/C</b>	<b>.69</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>.72</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>-.03</b>	<b>-1.189</b>	<b>.251</b>

<sup>88</sup> In 5.1, the MLS of *Hero* is 11.65. The difference is caused by different algorithms adopted by ProWritingAid and L2SCA.

CN/T	.89	.06	.95	.09	-.06	-1.821	.086
VP/T	1.66	.05	1.69	.10	-.03	-.620	.543

**Table 12. Syntactic Complexity Values of *Hero* and *Bond* (Note: statistical significance at the level  $p < .05$ )**

Table 12 summarizes the means and standard deviations of the syntactic complexity values of the two translations, as well as the results of the t test for independent samples of the means. It indicates that the two translations diverge mildly in all the fourteen measures, and nine measures show statistically insignificant mean differences (highlighted in the table, where the  $p > .05$ ). That is to say, the two translations are highly similar in mean length of sentence, mean length of T-unit, mean length of clause, sentence complexity ratio, T-unit complexity ratio, complex T-unit ratio, complex nominals per clause, complex nominals per T-unit, and verb phrases per T-unit. To better demonstrate their syntactic similarities, I will shift our attention from numbers to concrete examples. The following two translation sections describe fighting scenes in *Hero* and *Bond* respectively,

His focus turned to finding an escape route.  
Then, a thud.  
One of Zhu Cong's cloth shoes hit him with considerable force in the back. Qiu Chuji swayed, and a blanket of mist clouded his eyes. He was losing consciousness.  
Thud! (Holmwood, 2018: 92-93)

Their hands met.  
Pang!  
Both men stumbled back three paces.  
Who is he? His strength surprised Qiu Chuji.  
The man's arm throbbed. With an angry howl, he launched his fists once more. Qiu thrust out his palms in quick succession.  
A dozen blows flew between them. (Chang, 2019a: 72)

The frequent occurrence of short sentences (mostly simple sentences) is a distinct common syntactic feature of the two translations. It contributes significantly to the approximation of MLS, MLT, and C/S between the two books. As the above examples showcase, the wide application of short paragraphs is also a shared feature of the two translations. Noticeable differences begin to emerge when it comes to DC/C, DC/T, CP/C, CP/T, and T/S. The results suggest that Chang uses dependent clauses more frequently than

Holmwood, whereas Holmwood employs coordinate phrases and short T-units more frequently than Chang. Take coordinate phrases as an example,

As Qu's inn was the only place to buy wine in Ox Village, Yang had no choice but to brave the blizzard and walk the two miles to Red Plum Village. (Holmwood, 2018f: 11)

This is a typical sentence that is indicative of Holmwood's syntactic style compared with Chang. The two coordinators, namely, "but" and "and" connects three coordinate phrases, namely, "had no choice", "brave the blizzard", and "walk the two miles". Despite these differences, we can conclude that the syntactic sophistication and variation of *Hero* and *Bond* are fairly similar.

### Multi-Dimensional Analysis

The following MDA is conducted by MAT. The results of MAT analysis consist of several output files. For the purpose of this research, I will only analyze the results in two output files, namely, "Dimensions.txt" and "Corpus\_Statistics.txt". "Dimensions.txt" shows the scores for all the six dimensions of the corpus. "Corpus\_Statistics.txt" calculates the frequency per 100 tokens for all linguistic features in the corpus. The dimension scores of *Hero* and *Bond* are reported below:

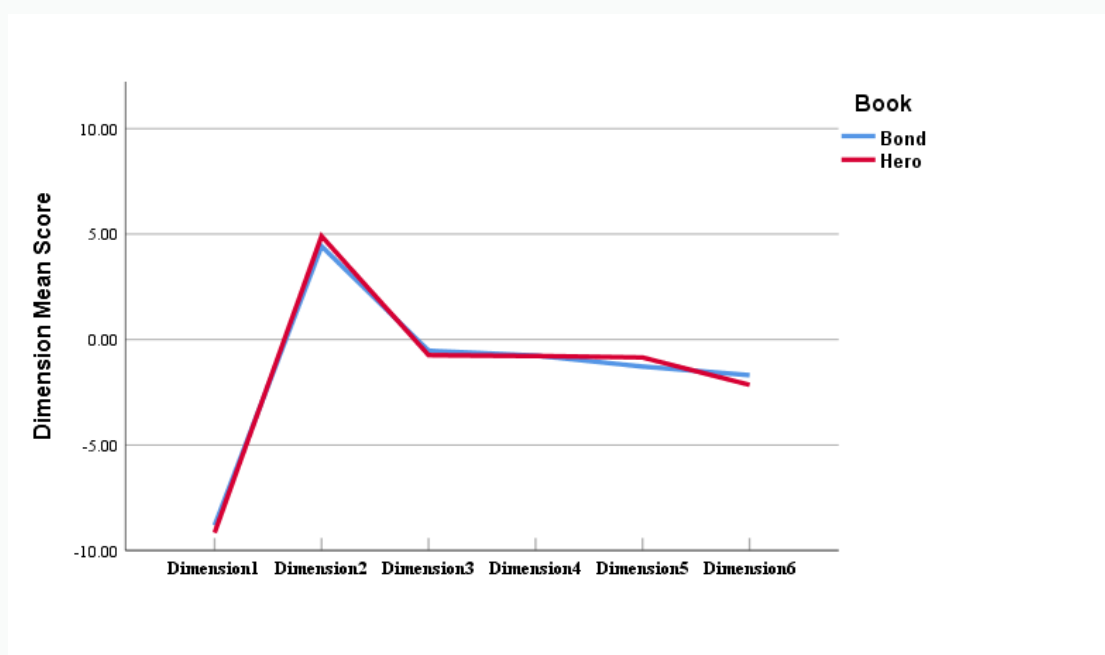
Dimension	<i>Hero</i> (N=9)		<i>Bond</i> (N=10)		Mean Diff.	t	Sig.
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation			
<b>1. Involved versus Informational Discourse</b>	<b>-9.16</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>-8.81</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>-.35</b>	<b>-.312</b>	<b>.759</b>
<b>2. Narrative versus Non-Narrative Concerns</b>	<b>4.90</b>	<b>.45</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>.77</b>	<b>.48</b>	<b>1.619</b>	<b>.124</b>
<b>3. Explicit versus Situation-Dependent Reference</b>	<b>-.74</b>	<b>.28</b>	<b>-.53</b>	<b>.62</b>	<b>-.21</b>	<b>-.944</b>	<b>.359</b>
<b>4. Overt Expression of Persuasion</b>	<b>-.78</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>-.76</b>	<b>.71</b>	<b>-.02</b>	<b>-.073</b>	<b>.943</b>

5. Abstract versus Non- Abstract Information	-.85	.45	-1.28	.35	.43	2.321	.033
6. On-line Informational Elaboration	-2.15	.25	-1.69	.28	-.44	-3.755	.002

**Table 13. MAT Dimension Scores of Hero and Bond (Note: statistical significance at the level  $p < .05$ )**

Table 13 presents the means and standard deviations of the MAT dimension scores of the two translations, as well as the results of the t test for independent samples of the means. The two translations score closely in all dimensions. Four mean differences are statistically insignificant (highlighted in the table, where the  $p > .05$ ). In Dimension 1, a high score indicates that the text is very affective and interactional, while a low score points to high informational density. In Dimension 2, a high score suggests that the text is narrative, and vice versa. In Dimension 3, a high score means that the text is not dependent on the context, and vice versa. In Dimension 4, a high score suggests that the authors (translators) explicitly express their views and attitudes. In Dimension 5, a high score points to technical and abstract information, and vice versa. In Dimension 6, a high score suggests that the text is very informational and improvisational (MAT 1.3.2 manual, 7).

Low scores (-9.16 and -8.81) in Dimension 1 indicate that both translations are informationally dense. They score closely (4.90 and 4.42) in Dimension 2, demonstrating their high narrativity. Again, they score fairly closely in Dimension 3 (-.74 and -.53), indicating their moderate context-dependency. Their scores in Dimension 4 are almost the same (-.78 and -.76). But their gaps in Dimensions 5 and 6 are much wider. Both translations (by chapter and as a whole), however, are categorized as “general narrative exposition”. The genre similarity between the two translations can be better understood when juxtaposed with two relevant studies. Zhao (2020) suggests that five (dimension) mean scores of *The Plum in the Golden Vase* and *The Golden Lotus*—two translations of *Jin Ping Mei*, a Chinese novel of manners—are statistically significant. In a similar vein, He (2017) reveals that *Lunyu (The Analects)*’s two English translations register widely different scores in five dimensions, especially in Dimension 1.



**Figure 20. MAT Dimension Mean Score Plot of *Hero* and *Bond***

Figure 20 is drawn based on the dimension mean scores of *Hero* and *Born*. It provides us with a clearer visualization of the genre closeness between the two translations. While obvious gaps exist in Dimensions 1, 2, 5, and 6, differences in Dimensions 3 and 4 are hardly noticeable.

Next, the analysis will focus on linguistic features on which the two translations register the same or considerably close scores.

Linguistic Features	<i>Hero</i>	<i>Bond</i>	Mean Diff.	t	Sig.
Average word length (AWL)	4.24	4.29	-.05	-1.466	.161
Conditional adverbial subordinators (COND)	.24	.26	-.02	-.933	.364
Demonstrative pronouns (DEMP)	.24	.23	.01	.634	.534
Downtoners (DWNT)	.24	.20	.04	2.107	.050
Emphatics (EMPH)	.66	.59	.07	1.561	.137
Existential there (EX)	.11	.11	.00	-.016	.988

Hedges (HDG)	.01	.01	.00	-.946	.357
Necessity modals (NEMD)	.18	.17	.01	.518	.611
Nominalizations (NOMZ)	.75	.78	-.03	-.457	.653
Other adverbial subordinators (OSUB)	.10	.10	.00	.657	.520
Agentless passives (PASS)	.71	.63	.08	1.625	.123
Perfect aspect (PEAS)	.92	.97	-.05	-.913	.374
Phrasal coordination (PHC)	.65	.64	.01	.126	.901
Present participial clauses (PRESP)	.37	.33	.04	.948	.357
Split infinitives (SPIN)	.00	.00	.00	.623	.541
Stranded preposition (STPR)	.17	.14	.03	1.893	.076
That relative clauses on object position (TOBJ)	.05	.05	.00	-.021	.984
Past participial WHIZ deletion relatives (WZPAST)	.13	.14	-.01	-.557	.585
Present participial WHIZ deletion relatives (WZPRES)	.23	.20	.03	1.487	.155

**Table 14. Homogenous Linguistic Features (Note: statistical significance at the level  $p < .05$ )**

The 19 linguistic features above cover all the six dimensions. The results of t test for independent samples indicate that the mean differences of these linguistic features between *Hero* and *Bond* are not statistically significant. All these linguistic features (except AWL) have similar frequencies in the two corpora. In what follows, my analysis will center around four linguistic features, i.e., AWL, DWNT, SPIN, and STPR.

The average word length (AWL) of the fiction subcorpus of The Translational English Corpus is 4.36 (Olohan, 2004: 80) and the value of the ten translations by Howard Goldblatt is 4.52 (Zhang & Fu, 2019: 42). By contrast, however, the values for *Hero* and *Bond* are 4.24



and 4.29 respectively, indicating that both translators prefer short and simple words. In terms of downtoners (DWNT), which “indicate the degree of probability of an assertion” (Biber, 1988: 114), “only”, “almost”, “barely” occur frequently in both corpora, while Holmwood tends to use more “merely” and Chang prefers “slightly”. SPIN occur very infrequently in both written and spoken English. The values of SPIN in this case are .00 and .00, suggesting that split infinitives (e.g. he wants to convincingly prove that...) are rare (existent only in four chapters of *Hero* and three chapters of *Bond*) in both translations. Stranded prepositions (STPR) “represent a mismatch between surface and underlying representations” (ibid.: 244). They occur slightly more frequently in *Hero* (.17) (e.g., “It’s not for you to worry about.”; “the best we normal folk can hope to do is muddle along.”) than *Bond* (.14) (e.g., “Beggars are abused and looked down upon, even by dogs.”).

To recapitulate, this section offers an original examination of the stylistic features of *Hero* and *Bond* from a solid empirical perspective. Taken together, results based on L2SCA and MDA suggest that *Hero* and *Bond* are highly similar on various syntactic and lexico-grammatical levels. In particular, both translations are characterized by simple words and short sentences, and are categorized as “general narrative exposition” by MDA with high informational density and narrativity.

That said, the two translations diverge markedly in several aspects. In terms of the treatment of cultural and historical backgrounds, while Holmwood makes a large number of omissions and simplifications, Chang takes a more cautious approach and translates most background information faithfully. For instance, Chang translates the introduction to “伏羲六十四卦” (the sixty-four hexagrams of Fuxi the Sovereign), a cultural background, into English faithfully on page 179 of *Bond*. Moreover, she makes several additions (e.g., pages 26, 54, 62, 200, 354) in her translation. For example, on page 26, she translates “禦史” into “Censor-in-Chief” and adds an explanation of this official title, “in charge of uncovering misdeeds and corruption among the Empire’s officials”. As a result, the target and source text length ratio of the two volumes differs noticeably (the value for *Hero* is 0.58, for *Bond* 0.64). Finally, the two translators diverge in the use of punctuation marks. Chang uses more long dashes in her translation.

### 6.2.3 Unified Voice

Having applied various methods to the corpora, we are now in a position to discuss the extratextual elements. This subsection will report on how Holmwood and Chang, strategically or otherwise, articulate their values and beliefs concerning Jin Yong *wuxia*, construct their identities, and interpret the way their translations should (not) be appreciated, in a multitude of speeches and interviews.

To begin with, both Holmwood and Chang constantly highlight the potentially universal attractiveness of Jin Yong *wuxia*. For example,

These stories are very authentically Chinese, but modern Western readers will also recognize the themes of loyalty, betrayal, the individual against the system, corruption and love...whose storytelling and moral code are still recognizable to those who read historical fantasy, books of chivalry, and other very “Western” genres (Holmwood, 2013: 3).

我們都是人，不同文化裏，人性對喜怒哀樂、生離死別的反應有基本、普遍的共通點。高尚的情懷 父子家國等超出個人利害關係的精神，也是共通的，並非僅金庸故事才有的情節。(We are all human beings. Although we live in different cultures, we have similar and universal responses to happiness, anger, sorrow, and separation between loved ones in life or death. Noble spirits that exceed personal interests, such as patriotic devotion to the country, are also common. They are not only present in Jin Yong’s stories.) (Chang, 2019b)

As discussed in 5.1, this is Holmwood’s strategy of narrowing the “cultural distance” between target readers and these quintessentially Chinese novels. Chang follows suit by foregrounding common feelings (happiness, anger, sorrow, etc.) and spirits (patriotic devotion to the country).

Secondly, they maintain that the core value of Jin Yong novels lies in good stories and reading them should be a pleasant sensation. For instance,

I am excited by reading this. I think that is the main goal for me to translate, I produced something that makes the reader wanna keep reading (Holmwood, 2014).

我們的目標是當英文讀者讀譯文時，能夠想像、領悟中文裏相似的感覺。小時候讀金庸，讀得很爽，很有快感。(Our goal is to enable English readers to imagine and comprehend similar feelings enjoyed by Chinese readers. When I read Jin Yong as a child, I was totally enchanted.) (Chang, 2019b)

What they stress is that if reading the Chinese original is fun, reading the translation should also be fun. It is the recreational enjoyment that should be delivered in the translation and should be prioritized in the reading. Literary translation entails close reading. Both translators strengthen their positioning of general readers through describing their reading experience and interpreting Jin Yong *wuxia* from the perspective of non-specialists. In the context of discourse analysis, positioning is “a discursive process through which people negotiate their own and others’ identities in interaction by portraying themselves as ‘characters’ in jointly produced narratives” (Jones, 2012: 1). Their identical positioning as empathetic general readers instead of authoritative and detached translators on many occasions is another strategy to win mass readership. It also lends them a convenient and justifiable excuse for potential flaws in their translations which are the results of not only inadequate capabilities but also tight schedules.

Their unified voice is further demonstrated in their interpretation of the *wuxia* genre. As previously discussed, Holmwood labeled *Legends* “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*”. Although this promotional slogan has attracted many criticisms, Chang endorses it, and further expounds on the reasonableness of this analogy,

這是與西方現有的文學大類相對最貼近的配對……西方對“武俠”的概念相對陌生，即便是流傳最廣的李安的電影《臥虎藏龍》，也只能算是小眾裏的大眾。另一方面，“俠”文化在傳統西方中也是有的，中古歐洲時期的騎士文化……拋開宗教、皇室傳統的不同，他們的內核都是相似的。(The *Lord of the Rings* is the closest counterpart of *wuxia* in the Western tradition...*wuxia* is indeed a very foreign notion to people in the West. Even *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a highly popular *wuxia* movie directed by Ang Lee, is a minority. On the other hand, Chinese *xia* culture resonates with the culture of chivalry in Medieval Europe... Although the religious and royal traditions are different, they have a lot of common ground.) (Chang, 2019c)

Chang’s comment above is situated squarely within Holmwood’s discursive framing of the genre categorization of *wuxia*. Chang argues at great length that “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*” is definitely not ridiculous, as is claimed by many literary critics; rather, it is a “necessary evil”, if not an ingenious invention. In so doing, she, just like Holmwood, endeavors to channel the focus of readers and the media to the cultural commensurability of two distinct genres, i.e., Chinese *wuxia* and Western fantasy.

In a nutshell, Holmwood and Chang mobilize a plethora of figures of speech such as metaphors, allusions, and hyperboles to position themselves, to reconstruct a *wuxia* world, to guide general readers through, and to engage with the media. Their discursive constructions of self-identities as general readers and Jin Yong *wuxia* exhibit strong resemblances. These resemblances and stylistic similarities alike, as will be unfolded next, are anything but coincidental.

#### 6.2.4 Discussion and Summary

The homogenous translated texts and promotional discourses are attributed to a multitude of factors. In terms of translated texts, we start the discussion with the gravitational pull hypothesis (GPH) in translation (Halverson, 2003, 2010, 2017). Halverson hypothesizes that “highly salient structures will exert a gravitational pull, resulting in an overrepresentation in translation of the specific TL [target language] lexical and grammatical structures that correspond to those salient nodes and configurations in the schematic network” (2003: 218). Halverson divides the original GPH into three sources of translational effects, i.e., target language salience (magnetism), source language salience (gravitational pull), and link strength effects (connectivity) (2017: 14-15). Due to limited space, I will focus only on the prominence in the source language category, which is interpreted as “a true form of cognitive gravity, i.e. a cognitive force that makes it difficult for the translator to escape from the cognitive pull of highly salient representational elements in the source language” (ibid.: 14). A case in point is fighting scenes in *Shediao*. Fighting scenes (usually described with short sentences and simple lexical patterns), as a prominent and recurring element of *wuxia* literature, and thus a basic domain in the semantic network of translators, might generate in both translators a high cognitive salience, which, in turn, affect their translation choices. That is, both translators tend to foreground fighting scenes, and translate them with simple words and short sentences. Put otherwise, fighting scenes are overrepresented by both translators, thus smoothing out syntactic and lexico-grammatical differences of the two translations on the whole.

The next factor is translation motivation. O’Brien proposes three major motivators for co-translation, namely, commercial, social, and personal (2011: 18). In this case, the

collaboration between Holmwood and Chang is undoubtedly commercial, since they, unlike university professors who usually translate for social, cultural, and symbolic capital, translate primarily for economic capital. In my interview (August 23, 2019) with her, Chang discloses that the income of professional literary translators is comprised of two parts: a lump sum remuneration plus a commission based on the sales volume of their translations. Simply put, whether the translation sells well has a direct and considerable bearing on their income and livelihood. This determines that they must take the readers and the market into full consideration in translation and in relevant speeches and interviews. As a result, both translators take a practical approach to Jin Yong *wuxia* and aspire to produce reader-friendly translation while eschewing constraining faithful translation. Both translators discard the so-called cultural incommensurability and foreground the fun nature of Jin Yong *wuxia*. The commercial nature of their collaboration is conducive to the homogeneity of their translated texts and promotional discourses.

The most important factor might be the multiple roles of Holmwood. As discussed in 5.2, since Holmwood could not finish the four volumes in such a tight timeframe, she appointed Chang as the co-translator with the consent of MacLehose, the publisher. This makes Holmwood the *de facto* principal translator, which has far-reaching implications for Chang's translation and discourses. Chang explains this in my interview (May 8, 2020) with her, “她是拓荒者、先驅，因為卷一是她起步的。大方向是她定的，我是繼續走下去 (She [Holmwood] is the pioneer, the forerunner, since she started volume one. She set the general direction of the translation and I followed along)”. It was Holmwood together with the publisher who decided whether Chang would be the suitable co-translator. Holmwood's “fingerprints” on Chang's translation are manifested first on Chang's translation sample, as disclosed by Chang below:

試譯稿的時候，她有跟我解釋節奏上的做出的選擇，哪些地方可以更強調速度快慢等等，或者有些地方怎樣調整閱讀上更自然……有些這樣的建議，在試譯時她給了我建議。(When I conducted the translation sample, she explained to me her choices of textual pace. For instance, the pace should be quicker or slower. She also gave me suggestions to make my translation read more naturally...all kinds of suggestions. Yes, she gave me suggestions when I did the translation sample.) (ibid.)

She further explains this on another occasion,

我開始翻譯第二卷時，郝玉青已大致完成第一卷的翻譯，定了英譯本文風的主調。所以我第一個任務就是熟悉她的譯文。我需要理解她在閱讀中文原文與寫作英文譯文之間做出的判斷與思考，我也要認識已出場的人物角色的語氣與聲音，以及不同武打場面的節奏與感覺，然後根據我的理解，試譯了一節與郝玉青分享，讓她給我建議 一起討論 (When I started volume 2, Holmwood had almost finished volume 1. She had set the “keynote” for the translation. So my first task was to familiarize myself with her translation. I needed to understand her judgements when reading the Chinese original and her choices in putting it into English. I also needed to fully appreciate the tone and voice of those characters that had already appeared, as well as the pace and tempo of all those fighting scenes in volume 1. I then conducted a translation sample and shared it with Holmwood. In our discussion, she gave me lots of suggestions.) (Chang, 2019d)

As the publisher and the editor are not conversant with the Chinese language or *wuxia* literature, they need to rely on Holmwood to assess Chang’s translation sample, and to negotiate with Chang on specific issues of translation. Moreover, Holmwood participated in the editing of Chang’s translation, evidenced by Chang’s statement,

編校第二卷時，郝玉青也有參與，確保了一、二卷以及她現在正翻譯的第三卷之間翻譯風格的延續。(Holmwood also participated in the editing work of volume 2, to ensure that the translation style of different volumes is consistent.) (ibid.)

As discussed in 5.1, Holmwood was the editor for “Books From Taiwan” for two years, which familiarized her with book editing. As the principal translator, Holmwood plays a predominant role in the collaboration. As a literary agent, Holmwood is more sociable, proactive, resourceful, and thus more visible (most news reports and media interviews center around her). In terms of translation text, Holmwood’s intervention, in advising on Chang’s translation sample and in translation editing, alters the otherwise highly intuitive, subjective, and polyphonic translation approach, and, more practically, smooths out stylistic differences and normalizes various translation choices (Cordingley & Manning, 2017: 21-22). In their ongoing and constructive discussions, consensus on a series of translation strategies and decisions has been reached. In editing Chang’s translation manuscript, Holmwood, consciously or otherwise, inevitably imprints her own translation style (e.g., lexical and syntactic preferences). Moreover, copy editors also make their efforts to maintain the unity of

style. Consequently, their translations turn out to be homogenized to a considerable degree and on various levels (syntactic and lexico-grammatical). In terms of promotional discourses, they are also highly consistent. Holmwood's voice seems to dominate while Chang's voice is somewhat "suppressed", in deference to Holmwood. This, however, does not amount to Chang's lack of subjectivity or innovation. Rather, as is revealed in her discourses, she is well aware that the successful translation collaboration necessitates her ability to cooperate and compromise, without which their collaboration may come to a halt and the publication of their translations may be postponed. As such, they face the general readers and the media as if they were one person. They have strategically and deftly co-projected an image of Jin Yong *wuxia*, which is modern, universal, and entertaining, which, arguably, has facilitated the reception of their translations. Engaged in a common enterprise, Holmwood and Chang aspire to, and indeed have achieved the so-called unity in diversity.

In summary, this section presents the first corpus-based investigation of co-literary translation and sheds new light on the dynamics of collaboration between literary translators. It innovatively employs L2SCA and MDA to investigate the various stylistic and linguistic features of *Hero* and *Bond*. The study demonstrates that the two translations are homogenized to a considerable degree and on various levels, and that the two translators' discourses concerning Jin Yong *wuxia* are also essentially similar. These similarities are the results of strategic plans and arrangements instead of coincidences.

## 6.3 Cinematic Translation

At the mention of "cinematic translation", one probably thinks first of subtitling, dubbing, and voiceover, the three most common ways of translating the languages of films (O'Sullivan, 2011: 9). However, cinematic translation is meant here in a metaphorical sense. This metaphor is founded on specific techniques embodied in certain literary translations. To be precise, a translation can be designated as cinematic when it demonstrates the qualities characteristic of motion pictures and/or when it resonates with certain films in terms of narrative texture, plot development, *mise-en-scène*, etc. Scholars of literary criticism will immediately discern the



close analogy between “cinematic translation” and “cinematic novel”, a well-developed and oft-discussed concept. Seeking to effect a similar theoretical reflection evoked by “cinematic novel”, I develop “cinematic translation” and apply it as the theoretical prism in analyzing Holmwood’s translation of *Hero*, with reference to *Once Upon a Time in China* (“黃飛鴻之壯志凌雲”) (1991) (hereafter *Once*), a martial arts film directed by Tsui Hark (徐克), by which Holmwood is inspired in her translation. In so doing, I endeavor to chart out how the cinematic translation of *Hero* is desired, conceptualized, attempted, and achieved by Holmwood, and appraised by general readers, thus bringing home to us the multiple levels at which *wuxia* films animate *wuxia* translation, and, more broadly, films influence literary translation epistemologically, aesthetically, and technically. As such, cinematic translation is entertained as a mode/genre of its own right. The concept of cinematic translation will hopefully contribute to the explication of the dynamics at work between literary translation and motion pictures, and will open up a research venue in which translation studies and film studies can illuminate each other. Methodologically, this section explicates Holmwood’s cinematic translation through the twin lenses of film analysis and narrative analysis.

Before any further investigation, however, it should be pointed out that cinematic translation is not necessarily desirable. Moreover, designating Holmwood’s translation as cinematic does not indicate that Jin Yong’s writing as such is altogether uncinematic. According to Yan, his writing is indeed indebted to cinematic and theatrical techniques (1999b: 139-157). What this study attempts to demonstrate is that the way Holmwood has rendered *Shediao* into English is somewhat comparable to a film director’s shooting and cutting.

The rest of the section will be arranged as follows: 6.3.1 revisits the concept of cinematic novel, presenting a succinct survey of films’ influences on novels, arguing that cinematic translation should be treated as a genre of its own right; 6.3.2 elucidates how *wuxia* films have informed and inspired Holmwood’s translation, highlighting the cinematic techniques Holmwood has probably appropriated from *Once*; 6.3.3 investigates how Holmwood materializes the traverse of certain techniques (i.e., undercranking, fast cutting, zoom in shot, and extreme long shot) from films to her translation, laying bare how she creates a cinematic aura, or otherwise put, how she “slow[s] the pace, speed[s] up the pace” and “brings battles to life in English” (Holmwood, 2014) in her translation. 6.3.4 discusses general readers’ response



to, and Holmwood's motivations of, cinematic translation, and draws the conclusion.

### 6.3.1 From “Cinematic Novel” to “Cinematic Translation”

It may be worth beginning by outlining the multilayered divergences between novels and films. While the novel has a history of nearly two thousand years (Doody, 1997: 1), the first film *La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon* (*Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory in Lyon*) (dir. Louis and Auguste Lumière) did not appear until 1895. While the novel is an art of stillness, the cinema is an art of movement, suggested by its Greek etymology *κίνημα* (movement). While novels are usually unisemiotic (with the exception of illustrated novels and picture books), films are hybrid and syncretistic, “polysemiotic media which signify through combinations of visual, verbal and acoustic elements” (O'Sullivan, 2011: 15). The novel is symbolic and discursive rather than mimetic and diegetic; its narrative mode is predominantly telling. By contrast, “film is an expository medium: its narrative mode is ‘showing’”. Its power to affect is based on showing” (Bal, 2009: 44). These divergences notwithstanding, novels and films have long been sister arts, living in symbiosis and confrontation. I will not examine their intricate reciprocal relationship in detail, the contours of which have already been finely delineated (see McFarlane, 1996; Corrigan, 1999; Lothe, 2000; Elliott, 2003; Stam & Raengo, 2004; Cahir, 2006; Pethő, 2008). Instead, I will shift the focus from the cross-fertilizations between them to films' influences on novels.

Semantically, the term “cinematic novel” may refer to at least the following categories, i.e., novels about/relating to films, novels suitable for film adaption, novels imitating filmic forms and styles, and film novelization (novels adapted from films). It is exactly its broad domain that invalidates any attempt to offer a stable and apposite definition of it. This study will settle for Moses's definition (although he uses “film novel”): novels showing “firm notion about the art of cinematography as a whole, intermittent and sometimes extensive attempts at the creation of film-mimetic literary passages, and an exploration through narrative means of the place this medium has in human experience” (1995: xvii). Though somewhat restrictive, this definition is instrumental as it foregrounds the cinematic qualities of novels and thus

unequivocally points to a promising analogy, which can be traced back to as early as 1924, when Gilbert Seldes published his article “The Cinema Novel” in *The 7 Lively Arts* (Cruz, 2019: 23). Although this analogy has been energetically debated (see Murray, 1973; Bennett, 2011; Bellardi, 2018), it has served both literary and cinematic interests. In particular, it has been vigorously championed by literary scholars (including adaptation scholars) since it empowers them to appropriate theories and methodologies from film studies to rejuvenate literary criticism, while maintaining a commanding position secured by their credentials and prestige as literary experts. Notably, however, the term “cinematic novel” does not only carry positive connotations; rather, it “can be applied pejoratively, honorifically, or neutrally” (Kellman, 1987: 471), depending on historical periods and film genre to which the novel is compared. For instance, Virginia Woolf disparaged *The Early Life and Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett*—Compton Mackenzie’s new novel—as “a book of cinema”. She commented, “as in a cinema, one picture must follow another without stopping, for if it stopped and we had to look at it we should be bored” (Woolf, 1918, as cited in Packard, 2011: 192).

Research into cinematic novels has been carried out in two avenues: those addressing the cinematic properties of novels in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and those discovering cinematic novels anachronistically prior to the birth of cinema (Elliott, 2003: 113). Novelists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as James Joyce, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Marcel Proust, William Faulkner, and Hilda Doolittle have attracted the most scholarly attention (see Spiegel, 1976; Kellman, 1987; Seed, 2013; Lurie, 2020).

These novelists certainly have a clairvoyant vision of writing. However, they would have composed their stories more cinematically if they were still alive, simply because we human beings are increasingly shifting from a word-minded species to an image-minded species. It is a *fait accompli* that visual arts of all sorts have drastically redefined modes of reading and writing. Stein cogently and presciently points out that readers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are used to seeing stories as a result of the pervasion of film and TV (1995: 122). This is even more true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are now indubitably dominated by digital products such as movies, short-form videos, TV shows, video games, Japanese manga, etc. These graphics and animations are equally competent in communicating story content since “narrativity can be constituted in equal measure in all textual and visual media” (Fludernik, 1996: 264). Woven

into the fabric of these visual products is a digital narrative characterized by hybridity, variability, and interactivity, which are drastically distinct from traditional storytelling. This new narrative, in turn, shapes our way of interaction, our sense of temporality and spatiality, our relationship with the world, and, more importantly, our approach to literature reading. The traditional narrative runs into a bottleneck due to its abstract and immaterial projection of a fictional meta-world. An understanding and engagement of this world necessitate the abilities and the willingness of rational analysis, proactive immersion and rumination, the very qualities which people in the digital age lack or are “deprived of”. Van der Linde’s speculation that the digital narrative will lead (has already led) to the rise of a post-literate culture (2013: 215) is not farfetched.

Against this backdrop, the notion “show, do not tell” seems to have gained an increasing currency. Donald Maass, a literary agent and author, urges his fellow writers to “make characters do something that readers can visualize” (2012: 62). C. S. Lakin, an award-winning novelist and editor, even wrote a self-help book *Shoot Your Novel: Cinematic Techniques to Supercharge Your Writing* (2014). Their rhetoric might be too sensational, but in this cine-saturated society, no prose writers are insulated from the influence of film (Keevil, 2017: 167). “Visual” storytelling is presumably more effective in catching a wide readership.

Unfortunately, however, literary translation has received little critical attention in this regard. Existing research on the interaction between translation and film has been primarily conducted from the perspective of audiovisual translation (e.g., Nornes, 2007; Day, 2009; Mubenga, 2009; O’Sullivan, 2011; Ellender, 2015; Ramos Pinto, 2018; Chen, 2019; Aleksandrowicz, 2020) and adaptation (e.g., Zatlin, 2005; Venuti, 2007; Krebs, 2014; Yau, 2016; Perdikaki, 2017). An excellent exception is made by Kapsaskis (2017), which treats translation as a critical tool in understanding fundamental concepts in cinema. All in all, the cinematic texture in literary translations remains largely unidentified and unexplored. This scarcity of literature symptomizes and reinforces the cliché and sterile binary thinking of the original text as authentic and creative, and the translation as derivative and passive. If Hermans’ call that the translator’s discursive presence in translated literature should be recognized and approved (1996) is justified, then nothing should prevent extending the notion of cinematic writing from original literature to translated literature. It is indeed both justifiable and tempting

to do so. This is the exact venture I would like to take in this section.

My definition of cinematic translation, then, is: translations that utilize various translation strategies to incorporate a range of cinematic allusions and techniques, which represent constant attempts to create cinema-mimetic translated texts and to arouse cinema-provoked synaesthetic sensations among readers. The efficacy of this definition rests on the approximation between words and images, texts and videos. Wired into the conceptual and ontological foundation of “cinematic translation” is, of course, an agenda to elevate the status of literary translation. Though pregnant with symbolism, this tentative definition requires and enables us to further investigate the imbricated relationship between literary translation and film, two distinct sign systems, at a granular level.

Turning to the *wuxia* translation of Holmwood, I will demonstrate that the concept of cinematic translation is theoretically and empirically sustainable. Holmwood, as is detailed below, “shows” rather than tells in her translation. By seeking inspiration from *wuxia* films and innovatively appropriating a polyphony of cinematic allusions and techniques, she choreographs the fighting scenes and accelerates the narrative pace, attempting to make her readers “see” and “engage” in the fighting scenes, and convey an array of impressions generated by her audiovisual perceptions in watching these films. In the next part, I will examine the influences of *wuxia* films on her translation, highlighting the cinematic techniques Holmwood has probably replicated from *Once* for her translation.

### 6.3.2 Martial Arts Films and *Wuxia* Translation

As a genre, martial arts films originated from Shanghai in the 1920s (Teo, 2010: 99). It can be roughly divided into two categories: *wuxia* and *kungfu*, though they are sometimes intermingled. *Wuxia* films feature sword-fighting, and are usually associated with historical, fantastic, and supernatural elements. By contrast, *kungfu* films feature fist-fighting and emphasize body and training (Teo, 1997: 98). Assuming a more idealistic, inscrutable, narcissistic, and pre-modern tone, *wuxia* films are usually adapted from *wuxia* novels or are based on folklore. For example, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (dir. Ang Lee, 2000),

probably the most internationally acknowledged *wuxia* film, is based on *Wohu Canglong Zhuan* (“臥虎藏龍傳”), a novel by Wang Dulu (王度廬).

Holmwood explicated the influences of martial arts films on her translation at least on three occasions. In the interview by *The Paper*, she explained the interconnection between *wuxia* films and translation,

但電影是視覺的、緊湊的，跟小說的呈現方式必然不同，二者不可能一模一樣。同樣地，翻譯也意味著妥協和選擇。(But films are visual and compendious. They are necessarily different from novels in modes of presentation. You cannot expect them to be totally the same. In the same manner, compromises and choices are part of translation.) (Holmwood, 2018b).

Implicit in this argument is the proposition that *wuxia* translation could also be “visual” and compendious, though to a lesser degree than films. In the workshop themed “The Legend of Jin Yong”, Holmwood explained her approach to pacing in *wuxia* translation,

They [*wuxia* novels] are influenced a lot by films. You know, if you think of a film, you have like this (moving her hands), speeding up and slowing down, and all of these techniques that are used when martial arts stories are filmed...Chinese verbs are kind of very short and they can be easy, you know punching, kicking, and they can read very fast. One of the things I find important is that the pacing in the translation is equally exciting (Holmwood, 2018d).

It seems that Holmwood is conscious of the intertextuality between *wuxia* novels and films. She regards the exciting pacing as one of the essential qualities of *wuxia* genre. What she aspires to evoke among readers is a response and experience in close resemblance to that in watching martial arts films. On October 7, 2014, Holmwood delivered a speech entitled “Bringing Chinese Martial Arts Battles to Life in English” at National Taiwan University. At the beginning of the speech, she played for the audience a clip of *Once*, and figuratively described her role in translation, “I hope that I am one of the fighters of the *wuxia* film when I translate...the author, Jin Yong, is the main character of the fighting scene. He is Jet Li” (Holmwood, 2014).<sup>89</sup> She then explicitly explained how *Once*, together with other martial arts films, had informed and inspired her translation,

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<sup>89</sup> Jet Li (Li Lianjie) is a Chinese-Singaporean film actor. He played Huang Feihong, the protagonist of *Once*.

I think it is really important to engage with the visual languages of *wuxia* films because obviously I am interacting with the English audience...In a way, because we have this very strong visual language of this troupe, how fight scenes in *wuxia* film look, I am conscious about that when I do the translation as well. I am not shunning away from trying to add that sense of slowing down and speeding up (ibid.).

“Slowing down” and “speeding up” in translation might be analogous to slow motion and fast motion, two basic visual effects in films. She went on to explain the “framing” in translation,

I think it is also important to pay attention to “framing”, just like how things are framed in the film. It is a very helpful way to look at how novels work, how people write. You know that if there is only one pace, it will be boring. That is the case with frame, or the perspectives (ibid.).

As a film terminology, framing is “[t]he arrangement and composition of elements in a film frame, i.e. the entire rectangular area of a film image as projected or as visible on the screen” (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012: 653).<sup>90</sup> Holmwood pays particular attention to how different elements are framed in martial arts films and postulates that the proper framing is a *sine qua non* of interesting translation. It is reasonable to deduce that she has appropriated more cinematic techniques, aside from pacing and framing, from *Once* and other martial arts films. The following part discusses the cinematic style of *Once*.

Focusing on Huang Feihong (黃飛鴻), a legendary martial artist, folk hero, and traditional physician, the *Once* series (six installments) represents a major achievement of the 1990s Hong Kong film (Williams, 2000: 4). *Once*, directed by Tsui Hark, was released in 1991 as the first installment of the series. This *kungfu* film centers around Huang’s fights against arrogant *gweilos* (Caucasian people in a derogatory sense), the corrupted Governor, and the pugnacious martial artist Iron Robe, and his budding romance with the adorable Aunt Thirteenth (十三姨). Quintessentially a *fin-de-siècle* film, it addresses xenophobia, nationalism, colonialism, multiculturalism, modernization, and Westernization, in a manner that is both overt and covert, contemporary and historical. *Once* has been enthusiastically

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<sup>90</sup> This is the PDF page number instead of the actual page number as the latter is not specified in the electronic version of the book.

received by audiences from Hong Kong, Mainland China, and other parts of the globe (8.2 on Douban and 4.1 on Rotten Tomatoes).<sup>91&92</sup> A vast array of professional comments (e.g., Holden, 1992; Yang, 2003; Liu, 2014; Havis, 2020) attest to its aesthetic and critical appeal. Morton praises it as the “rarest of hybrids: the art film that’s also massively entertaining” (2001: 77).



**Figure 21. Screenshot from *Once* (01:04:54) (the screenshot comes from the same excerpt Holmwood played in her talk)**

The screenshot in Figure 21 offers a glimpse into the spectacle of the film. Huang is besieged by a group of masked gangsters armed with spears in front of a traditional drama stage, which features a jumbo-sized red curtain embellished with golden embroidery. He slaps, punches, leaps, jumps, somersaults, and kicks, while spears are being plunged from all directions, evoking a sense of restlessness and urgency. In the backdrop, bullets (fired by foreign soldiers) are flying, and innocent drama-goers are screaming, hustling, and running for life. The fierce and instantaneous fighting is accompanied by the sounds of crack, rap, smack, jangle, and ping, and the film’s vibrant theme music *A Man Should Strengthen Himself* (男兒當自強). The fast-paced movement is interspersed by slow-motion shots depicting Huang’s

<sup>91</sup> Douban is a Chinese social networking service website (Wikipedia). Its full score of rating is 10.

<sup>92</sup> Rotten Tomatoes is an American review-aggregation website for film and television (Wikipedia). Its full score of rating is 5.



spectacular somersaults and gangsters' falling down. A flurry of medium shots and close-ups from different angles adequately capture the elaborate acrobatics and intricate weapon sequences. A wonderful amalgam of action, music, and drama, this clip manifests visual and acoustic perfection, leaving viewers amazed and breathless. Although the cinematographic devices and *mise-en-scène* bring to mind King Hu and Arika Kurosawa, two famous action film directors, the film as a whole, thanks mainly to its hyperkinetic action and intoxicating rhythm, nevertheless powerfully demonstrates a unique Tsui Hark style. Teo contends that *Once and Peking Opera Blues* (刀馬旦) (1986) have secured Tsui Hark a cult status in the West (2001: 143).

Regarding Tsui's style, Lo rightly summarizes, "[f]ast cutting, breakneck-speed narration and video-game-like cinematography are the trademarks of Tsui Hark's movies" (1993: 88). In his works, "there is no time left to play with, the present is forever slipping through your fingers, whatever has to be said must be said very quickly" (Stringer, 1995: 36). This is echoed by Teo, who argues that Tsui's films move much faster than norm films (2001: 155). Tsui's film style stands testimony to his philosophy, "[t]he masses go to feel, not to understand" (Reid & Tsui, 1995: 40).

To conclude, martial arts films have shaped Holmwood's perception of *wuxia* translation and her conceptualization of cinematic translation is an intersemiotic process. From her perspective, engaging with the visual languages of martial arts films may help her convey the flavor of *wuxia* literature to general readers. In the final analysis, in an era where probably more stories are "told" by movies, short-form videos, television, and video games than by novels, where readers increasingly read intertextually, intermedially, and intersemiotically, Anglophone readers' aesthetic and expectation for *wuxia* translation are pre-configured, if not predetermined, by martial arts films they have watched (indeed many readers chose to read the translation thanks to martial arts films, as discussed in Chapter 4). The following part examines how Holmwood has materialized various cinematic techniques in her translation and created a "cinematic experience" for readers.



### 6.3.3 Cinematic Techniques in *A Hero Born*

Whereas Holmwood's cinematic "eyes" and mind at work in the translation are palpable in a myriad of ways, space dictates that I limit this analysis to only four techniques, i.e., undercranking, fast cutting, zoom in shot, and extreme long shot. Undercranking, the most important technique she appropriates, will be analyzed with three translation examples, while each of the other techniques will be investigated with one example. Holmwood's translation will then be compared with one example from *The Deer and the Cauldron*, rendered by John Minford.

#### 6.3.3.1 Undercranking

Undercranking is "[t]o operate a camera at a slower than normal speed so that the action appears accelerated on the screen" (Katz & Nolen, 2012: 5672).<sup>93</sup> The normal speed of the shooting camera is 24 frames per second (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012: 954). Undercranking results in accelerated motion (also known as fast motion), "[a] technical effect that makes people or objects appear to be moving at a faster-than normal rate during projection" (Katz & Nolen, 2012: 33).

A distinctive feature of Jin Yong novels is the constant employment of digressions, "[m]aterial not strictly relevant to the main theme or plot" (Cuddon, 2013: 205). He inserts a plethora of interruptions in the main action of the story to explain the historical and cultural background, to describe a character's motivation, to provoke suspense, etc. Digressions are a double-edged narrative device, as they prevent routine and keep the narrative lively (Chambers, 2011: ix), but can also drag down the overall narrative pace, or, put in a cinematic term, "overcrank" the narrative. Holmwood explains her action-packed translation: "If the pace is not fast enough, the whole thing will be very slow and plodding...I have massaged the pace a little bit when the actions are down. I purposefully made it faster than Jin Yong" (2014). Indeed, Holmwood's "massaged the pace" functions like film directors' undercranking in camera

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<sup>93</sup> This is the PDF page number instead of the actual page number as the latter is not specified in the electronic version of the book.

shooting, as their common goal is to produce accelerated motion. The following three examples will exemplify how Holmwood has “made it faster than Jin Yong”, and how she has screened the action in her mind.

郭靖凝神不動，待到掌風襲到胸口，身子略偏，左手拿敵手臂，右手暴起，捏向敵腮，只要一搭上臉頰，向外急拉，對方下顎關節應手而脫，這一招朱聰給取了個滑稽名字，叫做“笑語解頤”，乃笑脫了下巴之意。這次那少年有了提防，右掌立縮，左掌橫劈。郭靖仍以分筋錯骨手對付。轉瞬間兩人已拆了十多招，那少年道士身形輕靈，掌法迅捷瀟灑，掌未到，身已轉，劇鬥中瞧不清楚他的來勢去跡 (Jin Yong, 2009: 142)。

Guo Jing did not move. He waited for another rush of air, then tilted, grabbed the man's arm and pinched his cheek with his free hand. Guo Jing tugged at the mystery assailant's jaw. Zhu Cong called this move Laugh the Jaw out of Joint. But this time, the young man defended with his right and struck with his left. Guo Jing used further manoeuvres from the Split Muscles Lock Bones technique, one after another. But the young Taoist was of nimble physique and his hands were quick. He turned and twisted so Guo Jing could not tell what was coming next (Holmwood, 2018f: 188).

This is a confrontation between Guo Jing, the male protagonist, and Harmony Yin, a minor character. Jin Yong ingeniously invents the *kungfu* move “笑語解頤”—a variant from the Chinese idiom “妙語解頤”—and explains it. This invention is natural and absorbing in Chinese but can hardly produce the same effect when rendered intact into English. On the contrary, it may distract readers' attention away from the engrossing fighting scene. In this sense, the complete English version of “笑語解頤” (the words are so funny that someone laughs the jaw out of his/her joint) would be an inopportune digression in translation. Holmwood condenses “這一招朱聰給取了個滑稽名字，叫做‘笑語解頤’，乃笑脫了下巴之意” into “Zhu Cong called this move Laugh the Jaw out of Joint”. Approximately equivalent to “解頤”, “Laugh the Jaw out of Joint” is only the result of “笑語” (literally funny words). Moreover, “轉瞬間兩人已拆了十多招” is simplified as “one after another”. The fight thus goes on nonstop. As such, Holmwood executes the fighting scene in a stylized and simplified form, increases the dramatic intensity, and generates an effect (illusion) of continuity and fast motion.

郭靖接過弓箭，右膝跪地，左手穩穩托住鐵弓，更無絲毫顫動，右手運勁，將一張二百來斤的硬弓拉了開來。他跟江南六怪練了十年武藝，上乘武功雖未

窺堂奧，但雙臂之勁，眼力之准，卻已非比尋常，眼見兩頭黑雕比翼從左首飛過，左臂微挪，瞄準了黑雕項頸，右手五指急松，正是：弓彎有若滿月，箭去恰如流星。黑雕待要閃避，箭杆已從項頸對穿而過。這一箭勁力未衰，恰好又射進了第二頭黑雕腹內，利箭貫著雙雕，自空急墮。眾人齊聲喝彩。餘下的黑雕再也不敢停留，四散高飛而逃 (Jin Yong, 2009: 148)。

Guo Jing obeyed. He held the weighty bow in his left hand and drew back the arrow. Two black condors were flying wing to wing. He took aim and shot.

The bow bent like the moon, the arrow flashed like a meteor.

It pierced through the first condor's neck and lodged itself into the abdomen of the second. Together, the birds fell to the ground. A roar came from the crowd and, frightened, the remaining birds dispersed (Holmwood, 2018f: 197).

The Chinese passage above is about Guo Jing shooting condors—the very scene where the name of the novel series *Legends of the Condor Heroes* stems from. It is noted that the Chinese passage as such is cinematic. The translation is, however, even more so. The translator breaks the text into three short paragraphs: paragraph one-before shooting condors, paragraph two-in shooting, and paragraph three-after shooting. Next, each sentence/clause depicts a scene or an action (for instance, “He held the weighty bow in his left hand and drew back the arrow”). The whole passage is extravagant in the use of verbs and adjectives but sparing with conjunctions and prepositions. Every word counts and superfluous content (他跟江南六怪…卻已非比尋常, the explanation of Guo Jing's *kungfu* training) is cut off. The story plot advances through, and only through spectacle. In this way, the translation creates a chain of quick and fleeting images, intensifies the sense of urgency and tension contained in the Chinese, and strengthens the surreal quality of Jin Yong *wuxia*.

梅超風顧不得追擊韓寶駒，急退避過，頃刻間，只見四面都是敵人，一個手拿點穴鐵扇的書生與一個使劍的妙齡女郎從右攻到，一個長大胖子握著屠牛尖刀，一個瘦小漢子拿著一件怪樣兵刃從左搶至，正面掄動扁擔的是個鄉農模樣的壯漢，身後腳步聲響，料想便是那個使軟鞭的矮胖子，這些人都不相識，然而看來個個武功不弱 (Jin Yong, 2009: 121)。

Mei lurched back, but within moments was surrounded. From the right came a scholar holding a metal fan and a young girl clutching a sword. From the left, two men, one sturdy with a butcher's knife and another gaunt and carrying some strange military weapon. Before her, a muscular peasant wielding the shoulder pole. And yet more footsteps. The man with the whip. She had no idea who they were, but there was no doubt they were of the *wulin* (Holmwood, 2018f: 161).

If Holmwood achieves accelerated motion through omissions and rewritings in the above two examples, she does so with inverted structures and sentence fragments in this example.

The three inverted structures “From the right...”, “From the left...”, and “Before her...” put direction before action, spatiality over temporality. This, paradoxically, does not slow down the pace, but quickens it, since the “camera” shifts instantaneously and restlessly, producing an effect that the young girl, two men, the peasant, and the man are surrounding Mei both consecutively and simultaneously. The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth sentences in the translation are all verbless, adding a sense of chaos and immediacy.

As the three translation examples above showcase, Holmwood’s tools to “undercrank” the narrative, that is, to make the translation faster than the Chinese original, are to choose specific words and sentence structures, to use short paragraphs, and to condense or delete digressions.

### 6.3.3.2 Fast Cutting

In film studies, cutting (editing) is defined as “[t]he assembly of separate pieces of film” (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012: 572). Although fast cutting is frequently employed, it has no academic definition. Evans (2021) broadly defines it in his semi-academic blog “Film and Editing Techniques”: “a film editing technique which refers to several consecutive shot[sic] of a brief duration (e.g. 3 seconds or less). It can be used to convey a lot of information very quickly, or to imply either energy or chaos”. Despite the fact that both undercranking and fast cutting secure the film a greater dose of action, they are different techniques. Fast cutting involves a series of consecutive and immediate shots. It is regarded as one type of montage (Joyce, 2011: 451). In writing, this effect is achieved through the use of short words, sentences, and paragraphs (Lakin, 2014: 70). Holmwood has a strong penchant for short sentences and paragraphs (as discussed in 6.1). For instance,

眾人驚呼喝止，已經不及。兩頭獵豹本已蓄勢待發，忽見有人過來，同時吼叫，猛地躍起。眾人齊聲驚叫 (Jin Yong, 2009: 135-136)。

A gasp rose from the crowd  
But it was too late  
The leopards roared  
The crowd cried out (Holmwood, 2018f: 179).

In this passage, Khojin, a four-year-old Mongolian girl, is about to pat the head of a feral leopard, too tight for any possible rescue. The English translation consists of four extreme short paragraphs/sentences, each resembling a film shot. As the “shot” proceeds, the tension heightens. This special arrangement accords the text an aura of action films. The abruptness of this fast cutting montage strengthens the dramatic effect and accelerates the narrative pace.

As indicated in 6.3.2, both undercranking and fast cutting are frequently applied by Tsui Hark in his martial arts films. The above analysis reveals that Holmwood has adequately exploited the two techniques, to make her translation “faster” than Jin Yong’s original, and to interweave a “cinematic thread” into the fabric of *wuxia* translation. The translation thus demonstrates close structural and aesthetic links with Tsui Hark’s films. As these translation examples showcase, reading pleasure is orchestrated by being directed towards foregrounding actions. The translator omits a large number of digressions. Most of these omissions quicken the narrative pace and intensify the character image. Spectacle triumphs over plot. To some degree, Holmwood’s dense and economical translation resembles the “direction” part of film scripts, which is concise, clear, and figurative speech-free, and which sets out the action in the scene (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012: 938).

To avoid hasty generalization, I will now analyze how Minford has treated similar fighting scenes in *The Deer and the Cauldron*, the English translation of *Luding Ji*. Take the following translation for instance,

史松一聲長嘯，黑龍鞭出手，跟著縱身下馬。他雙足尚未落地，鞭梢已向茅十八卷去。茅十八使開“五虎斷門刀”刀法，見招拆招，史松的軟鞭一連七八招厲害招數，都給他單刀擋了回來。但聽得吳大鵬長聲吆喝，一人飛了出去，拍噠一響，掉在地下，軍官中又少了一人。這邊王潭以一敵三，卻漸漸落了下風，左腿上被鋸齒刀拉了一條口子，鮮血急噴。他一跛一拐，浴血苦鬥。圍著吳大鵬急鬥的三人武功均頗不弱，雙刀一劍，在他身邊轉來轉去，吳大鵬的摩雲掌力一時擊不到他們身上 (Jin Yong, 2006: 67-68)

The Captain now let out a high-pitched screech, and brandished the Black Dragon in the air. He vaulted from his horse and before his feet had even touched the ground the tip of the Black Dragon was coiling its way through the air towards Whiskers. Eight times he cracked the whip, and eight times Whiskers countered with

the sword riposte for which he was so famous, known as Five Tigers Breaking the Door. Meanwhile a great cry issued from Goatee and one more trooper flew through the air and landed with a thud on the ground. Baldy was holding off three men, and slowly getting the worst of it. He had received a nasty gash on his right leg from a sword with a saw-blade edge to it, and was losing blood fast and hobbling badly. Goatee was also up against three opponents—two wielding short-swords, one a double-edged long-sword—and not bad swordsmen either. They harried him persistently, and even his Cloud Scraper acrobatics were of no avail. He failed repeatedly to land a punch anywhere near them (Minford 1997, 75-76).

As a prolific and erudite translator, Minford takes a more cautious approach and translates the above fighting scene in a literary and faithful fashion. Compared with Holmwood's translation, Minford's rendition is characterized by: (1) Frequent use of phrasal verbs and verb phrases. “一聲長嘯” (roared) is rendered into “let out a high-pitched screech”; “長聲吆喝” (cried out loudly) into “a great cry issued from”; “鮮血急噴” (blood gushed out) into “was losing blood fast”. Holmwood might have translated “一聲長嘯” simply into “screech”. (2) Frequent use of verb-adverb combinations such as “slowly getting”, “harried him persistently”, and “failed repeatedly”. Holmwood will probably use “stronger” verbs to replace these combinations. (3) Formal expressions. “harried” and “of no avail” may not be used by Holmwood to describe fighting scenes. (4) Frequent use of em dashes (Though there are only two in this example). By contrast, Holmwood seldom uses them in her translation. To sum up, Minford's treatment of fighting scenes is more sophisticated but less energetic. His syntactic structures, lexical choices, and punctuation marks may slow down the overall narrative pace—which is determined by the length of the scene and the speed of the action—and increase the cognitive loads for general readers.

The above comparative analysis is by no means a criticism of Minford's rendition. Rather, it only aims to illustrate that Holmwood's translation of fighting scenes is more cinematic and fast-paced. The next example concerns zoom in shot.

### **6.3.3.3 Zoom in Shot**

A shot is the raw narrative unit of film medium (Murphet, 2006 :48). Zoom shot is “[a] shot taken with a zoom (varifocal, or variable focal length) lens in which focal length is

changed from wide-angle to telephoto, or vice versa, in the course of recording the shot” (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012: 1090). It is used interchangeably with “tracking shot” and “dolly shot” (Katz & Nolen, 2012: 6174). Zoom in is the effect of the camera moving towards the subject, when there is no actual camera movement. It is useful in directing viewers’ attention to a particular scene or detail (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012: 1091).

七怪凝神戒備。這時寒風刺骨，月亮已被烏雲遮去了大半，月色慘澹，各人都感到陰氣森森。只見梅超風右手握鞭不動，左手垂在身側，五根尖尖的指甲上映出灰白光芒。她全身宛似一座石像，更不絲毫動彈，一條長長的銀色蟒鞭盤在她身前，宛似一條蟒蛇一般，這本該是一件很厲害的兵刃，但她似乎未曾練熟，竟未發出威力。疾風自她身後吹來，將她一頭長髮刮得在額前挺出 (Jin Yong, 2009: 123)。

The moon had almost disappeared behind the clouds and the light that remained was dim and almost cold to the touch. They all felt it. Mei was still, as if turned to stone, whip in one hand, the other limp by her side. A grey light glinted from her long, sharp nails. A long, silver Python whip was coiled up like a snake on the ground before her. It was a powerful weapon, but she was yet to master it. It was her Nine Yin Skeleton Claw they feared. The wind beat at her hair so that it stood like spikes from her forehead (Holmwood, 2018f: 165).

In the above example, the atrocious Cyclone Mei engages the Seven Freaks of the South in a fierce battle. Holmwood changes the sequence of objects. In the Chinese original, the sequence is: “七怪”→“月亮”→“烏雲”→“右手”→“鞭”→“左手”→“指甲”→“(全身)石像”→“鞭”→“長髮”→“額”. These objects appear, or are “shot”, in an arbitrary order (neither zoom in nor zoom out). However, in the English translation, the sequence is: “the moon”→“clouds”→“they (the Seven Freaks and Mei)”→“stone (Mei’s whole body)”→“whip”→“hand”→“nails”→“hair”→“forehead”. The changes are mild, but the impact significant. The translation reads as if there is a camera gradually and steadily zooming in. The camera focus (not the camera) moves from large objects (“the moon”, “clouds”, etc.) to medium objects (“they”, “stone”, etc.), and finally to small objects (“nails”, “hair”, etc.). As the environmental objects fade out, Mei, the main character in the scene, and her body parts, come into view. The sequence change foregrounds what should be foregrounded, speaking volumes of Holmwood’s keen sense of *mise-en-scène*. Reading the translation implicates the physics of sight and the persistence of vision.



#### 6.3.3.4 Extreme Long Shot

The extreme long shot is usually applied as an establishing shot to construct the location for the scene, its frame being a landscape or a setting (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012: 954). The following example, which concerns scenic description, demonstrates Holmwood's application of this technique.

這醉仙樓正在南湖之旁，湖面輕煙薄霧，幾艘小舟蕩漾其間，半湖水面都浮著碧油油的菱葉，他放眼觀賞，登覺心曠神怡。這嘉興是古越名城，所產李子甜香如美酒，因此春秋時這地方稱為槁李。當年越王勾踐曾在此大破吳王闔閭，正是吳越間的來往必經之地。當地南湖中又有一項名產，是綠色的沒角菱，菱肉鮮甜嫩滑，清香爽脆，為天下之冠。湖中菱葉特多，其時正當春深，碧水翠葉，宛若一泓碧琉璃上鋪滿了一片片翡翠 (Jin Yong, 2009: 46-47)。

The Garden of the Eight Drunken Immortals sat on the banks of South Lake. It was late spring and the water was clear like a sheet of blue-green jade. A light mist clung to the water's surface, which trembled as leisure boats scored ripples across it. The lake too was scattered with the emerald leaves of the water chestnut. South Lake produced the sweetest, most tender water chestnuts for miles around, crisp and refreshing (Holmwood, 2018f: 58).

In the Chinese, the landscape arrangement of South Lake is unordered and arbitrary: “菱葉” and “沒角菱” appear separately, which is unnatural (shouldn't leaves and fruits be connected?); “碧” appears thrice and “翠” appears twice, which overcolor the scene; the intrusion of “他放眼觀賞...” muddles the narrative perspective. More importantly, the scenic description is interrupted by a digression of historical background—the story of 越王勾踐 (King of the Kingdom Yue). In the translation, the landscape is spatially rearranged, and the historical information is altogether omitted. The whole passage proceeds as an extreme long shot. The “aerial camera” moves unidirectionally yet steadily, directing readers' attention to “The Garden”, “water”, “light”, “boats”, and “water chestnut”, in a consecutive and smooth manner. The omission of digression is also a tool for the translator to manipulate reading duration. Moreover, “他放眼觀賞...” is deleted. The readers are thus enabled to “see” South Lake directly rather than from the perspective of “他” (Wanyan Honglie, a character in the novel). As such, this passage evinces cinematic qualities in both content and form, and demonstrates Holmwood's shrewd sense of camera duration and order, the programing of which affects the viewer's experience (Bordwell: 1985: 74).



### 6.3.4 Discussion and Summary

The above textual analysis may evoke close resonance with many Amazon customers who comment on the cinematic quality of *Hero*. The following are some examples (C stands for customer, date in the bracket refers to the date on which a particular comment was posted in Amazon):

C1 (April 11, 2020):

Excellent series that reads like a classic Chinese movie. This is an excellent translation. It flows well.

C2 (December 11, 2019):

I think a must-read read for *Kung fu* movie fans. While I was reading, I felt like I was in a movie theater.

C3 (October 11, 2019):

All things I enjoy in Chinese film and dramas to a degree are there and the beautiful illustrations were a huge bonus.

C4 (October 4, 2019):

The story plays out just like the movies and I could actually picture each and every scene in my mind's eye.

C5 (September 30, 2019):

I also think that this would adapt to film really well and I would enjoy watching it.

C6 (September 29, 2019):

If ever Hollywood decide to make a movie out of this, the action scenes are almost scripted for the director and stunt coordinator.

C7 (September 18, 2019):

The fight reads exactly like a scene from the movies, with the monk arriving with an enormous censor of wine and managing to balance the vessel throughout and use it in the fight.

C8 (September 17, 2019):

Escapist Yet Fun, Reads Like a Good *Kung Fu* Movie. The book would be a good fit for teenage boys craving action and adventure, and is reminiscent of martial arts movies.

C9 (September 17, 2019):

The translation is cinematic and accessible.

C10 (May 6, 2018):

It's the best *Kung-Fu* (or *Wuxia*) movie, except as a book. Also very happy with the translation.

As the above examples showcase, a large number of readers believe that *Hero* is reminiscent of martial arts movies. It is thus reasonable to conclude that Holmwood's cinematic translation has produced desirable results among general readers.

Any account of cinematic translation must confront the tension between spectacle and narrative. Does Holmwood's appropriation of cinematic techniques and imageries indicate that

spectacle is foregrounded at the expense of a finely tuned narrative? Or action at the expense of character complexity and narrative nuance? Partly an emulation of films, Holmwood's cinematic translation may attract the same criticism as many martial arts films have done. Klein contends that martial arts films usually lack integration between narrative and action, and that in these films fighting scenes tend to bring the narrative to a halt (2004: 31). By highlighting fighting scenes and omitting a large amount of historical and cultural digressions, the translator accentuates *wu* (martial qualities) while downplaying *xia* (knighthood and heroism), and the concept of nation-state. By appropriating a range of cinematic techniques in her translation, she aspires to create a visual instead of textual *rasa*. When spectacle eclipses storytelling, narrative nuance is sacrificed, and the story is in danger of dissolving. For instance, a large number of rewritings and omissions produce incoherent story plots (pages 90, 166, etc.), which, in turn, serve mainly as the linkage between fighting scenes. Consequently, the whole passage lacks dramatic unity. Chen (2018) accuses that Holmwood's omission of cultural and historical digressions leads to the loss of the soul of *Legends*. The obfuscation of *wuxia* narrative is probably the result of Holmwood's "insufficient cultural knowledge" (Li, 2019), but, more importantly, it is also the result of the translator's practical considerations and decisions.

Besides a literary translator, Holmwood is an experienced literary agent. As discussed in Chapter 5, her professional habitus as a literary agent predisposes her intuition, perceptions, mentality, and stances, which, in turn, shape her approach to *wuxia* translation. Arguably, she is well aware of the influences of digital narrative on literature reading and writing, readers' craving for action and excitement, and the trans-semiotic interdependence and intertextuality between *wuxia* novels and films. Moreover, her husband Mardy Lin (林家緯)—once a film director and producer from Taiwan—could have facilitated her cinematic approach to *wuxia* translation.<sup>94</sup>

Holmwood understands that cinematic translation, though potentially detrimental to *wuxia* narrative, will probably appeal to fans of *wuxia* and *kungfu* films, and promote the sales

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<sup>94</sup> Mardy Lin has directed “消散” (*Vanishing*) (2007), “態度” (*Attitude*) (2008), and *100BASKETBALL* (2009), and “褪色” (*Fading*) (2014). He is now running a YouTube channel “A Man in his Cave” (我是小馬) <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXFouXddePcN1Yu7KPZ5OkQ>

volume of the translated book. Accordingly, she has adopted a pragmatic translation approach. She has purposefully drawn inspiration from Tsui Hark martial arts films and appropriated a polyphony of cinematic techniques in her translation, which confer a cinematic aura to *Hero*. The translation is a single sign system while the cinema “consists of heterogeneous material, that is, several sign systems are involved simultaneously” (Torop, 2013: 243). Holmwood’s techniques represent her strategic appropriation of cinematic sign systems, that is, her reconfiguration and transmutation of various cinematic elements (shots, scenes, montages, etc.). These intersemiotic appropriations turn *Hero* into the “afterlife” of martial arts films. The materiality of the text, i.e., its visual perception (Gordon, 1997) and image configuration (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and are expressively revealed and amplified. The excitement and tenseness are synesthetically communicated, as *neili* (inner energy) is transmitted from one to another. A translation pastiche of martial arts films is thus created. In harnessing these intersemiotic resources, Holmwood circumvents sluggish storytelling in the original, injects new vitality into *wuxia* narrative, invokes a sense of *déjà vu* among readers (especially fans of martial arts films), activates close reader engagement, and elicits emotional reciprocity and mutuality in readers as films do for viewers. Her translation constitutes “an interliminal discursive space wherein readers participate in literary experiences with their bodies and senses” (Lee, 2014: 348). As such, the translator becomes an off-screen/external narrator who constantly moulds *wuxia* text with her stylistic preferences and narrative tactics.

To sum up, Holmwood has utilized martial arts films to her advantage both aesthetically and technically in *wuxia* translation. Filmic temporality and spatiality are incarnated in words, sentences, and paragraphs in *Hero*. Working on the conceptual and perceptual levels of Holmwood’s translation practice and participating in the overall construction of meaning of *Hero*, martial arts films nourish and become the fount of *wuxia* translation.

In an era where readers increasingly read intertextually, intermedially, and intersemiotically, it is salient to develop a theoretical linchpin with both epistemological credibility and real-world significance, which enables us to unravel the interaction between literary translation and films from a trans-semiotic perspective. The concept of cinematic translation is one such tool. It offers us a vantage point from which to penetrate how films influence literary translation epistemologically, aesthetically, and technically, and opens up a

research venue in which translation studies and film studies can illuminate each other.

Holmwood's *wuxia* translation, which demonstrates the potential for translation to be cinematized, serves as an interesting case of intersemiotic appropriation. Applying cinematic translation as a theoretical prism, this section has analyzed the influences of martial arts films on Holmwood's *wuxia* translation through the twin lenses of film analysis and narrative analysis. Her cinematic translation—usually achieved through subtle but significant rewritings and omissions—is redolent of Tsui Hark martial arts films, and has arguably satisfied general readers' craving for visualized storytelling and fast-paced action, hence catering to and perpetuating a renewed passion for *wuxia* literature and films.

## 6.4 Summary

This chapter is mainly devoted to textual analysis. The common thread of this chapter is the influence of literary agenting on translation practice. It has adopted various corpus tools (AntConc, WordSmith, L2SCA, MAT, ProWritingAid, and Analyze My Writing) to examine the stylistic features of *Hero* and *Bond*. The insights gained through the use of exploratory techniques in this chapter point to fruitful future research. The notion of “cinematic translation” (translating *wuxia* through a filmic prism) has been put forward and developed based on a cross-tabulated analysis of translation texts and Holmwood's relevant discourses. Capitalizing on Holmwood's speeches and my interviews of Holmwood and Chang, I have demonstrated that Holmwood's reader-oriented translation is significantly shaped by her literary agenting experience.

## CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

As this dissertation draws to its close, the last volume of *Legends* (American version) is soon to be published, and the English translation of *Shendiao Xialü* (the second part of the *Condor Trilogy*) is underway. As a “keyhole” to peer into literary agenting of translated literature, this dissertation has explored Holmwood’s multiple roles in the translation project of *Legends* and her “fingerprints” on the “tone”, “pitch”, and “pace” of the translated texts. It lays bare that as the principal translator and co-literary agent, Holmwood has figured prominently in the translation selection, contract-signing, pitching, co-translator designation, and promotion of the project, and has strategically produced a translation that is readable, fluent, dynamic, fast-paced, and cinematic. Literary translation, contends Wilson, “is an active process, transforming what it transfers, creating something new, reinventing literature and keeping it alive” (2013: 88). Holmwood’s creative translation has arguably reinvented Jin Yong *wuxia*, a traditional Chinese genre, and carved out a position for it in the Anglophone world. The rest of this concluding chapter recaps the major findings, research significance, limitations, unresolved issues, and directions for future research.

### 7.1 Major Findings

Based on a thorough examination of first-hand materials and a corpus-assisted analysis of the translated texts, this dissertation has yielded the following major findings. Firstly, literary agenting is a market practice as well as a cultural phenomenon with multifarious aspects. Originated in the UK in the 1880s, literary agents have evolved from “amateur agents” to “double agents”, and finally “author’s agents”. The representation of translation rights is homologous with that of non-translation rights, inasmuch as literary agents assume similar basic duties—preparing book synopsis, selling the rights to appropriate publishers, dealing with legal matters, suggesting changes to manuscript (translation) samples, monitoring the

publishing process, discouraging ill-conceived projects, etc. However, it is distinct in the following manners: (1) It charges higher commission fees, usually 20%-30% of the whole royalty. (2) It requires a better bilingual or multilingual competence of literary agents as different languages are involved. (3) It is more complex and time-consuming, not the least because translators are brought in and various political and cultural jurisdictions are entailed.

Secondly, as the first commercialized English translation of Jin Yong's fiction, *Legends* has been better received than previous *wuxia* translations. Holmwood has contributed significantly to the reception by collaborating with Buckman in selling the translation rights of *Shediao* to MacLehose Press and St. Martin's Press, two trade publishers, which are in an advantageous position in marketing, compared with academic publishers. The possibilities of good "matchmaking" rest primarily upon Holmwood's knowledge of the international literary market at large.

Thirdly, consciousness plays an essential role in the generation and operationalization of Holmwood's professional habitus as a literary agent. Her feel for the game of literary agenting is acquired not only through her mechanical imitation of agenting practice in various agencies over time, but also through her conscious adjustments and calibration of her practices in the deeply interactive and profoundly complicated social process of literary production. This professional habitus empowers her to act as the initiator (at the pre-translation stage)—as demonstrated in translation selection, contract-signing, and pitching—and the coordinator (at the pre-translation and the in-translation stages)—as demonstrated in designating co-translators, and establishing and strengthening the connections between various actors. In these processes, Holmwood's economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital has considerably increased.

Fourthly, Holmwood strategically coins the tagline "A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*" to draw the attention of the news media and readers to her translation, and to pioneer an inroad of Jin Yong *wuxia* into Western popular culture. Although controversial, the tagline is an innovative attention getter and buzz-building device, which could potentially lead to *succès de scandale*. Her considerations behind it are practical and commercial, instead of academic and aesthetical. Her public discourses concerning Jin Yong *wuxia* are usually oratorical, rhetorical, and motivational. While accentuating the merits and charismas of Jin Yong's fiction,

she avoids and disguises its unattractive elements (e.g., plethoric violence and bloodshed, clichéd story plots, and Han Chinese nationalism) and “inconvenient” facts (e.g., Jin Yong is an outspoken critic of the Cultural Revolution, and his novels are rich in political allegories).

Fifthly, Holmwood identifies *Legends* as a popular novel instead of a literary novel and envisages young adults as the target readers of her translation, and she seems to contend that historical backgrounds and cultural traditions in Jin Yong’s novels should take a backseat to character developments and story plots. Accordingly, she accentuates readability and comprehensibility, and produces a reader-oriented translation by omitting a large amount of background knowledge, employing a considerable number of short sentences, and reducing passive constructions and nominalizations. Compared with *Legends*, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* and *The Deer and the Cauldron* are directed more towards specialist readers.

Sixthly, Holmwood has put her “fingerprints” on Chang’s translation by advising on and editing it, thus considerably smoothing out the stylistic divergences of their translated texts. In their ongoing and constructive discussions, consensus on various translation strategies and decisions has been reached. Moreover, Paul Engles, the copy editor, also makes his efforts to maintain style consistency. As a result, *Hero* and *Bond* are homogenized to a considerable degree and at various syntactic and lexico-grammatical levels. The two translators’ public discourses concerning the translation are also essentially identical. In doing so, they have tactically co-projected an image of Jin Yong *wuxia*, which is cosmopolitan, multicultural, apolitical, and entertaining.

Finally, by drawing inspiration from Tsui Hark’s *wuxia* films and appropriating various cinematic techniques such as undercranking, fast cutting, zoom in shot, and extreme long shot, Holmwood has accelerated the narrative pace of, and conferred a cinematic aura to her translation. The potential pictorial and visual elements in *Shediao* are expressively revealed and amplified. A translation pastiche of *wuxia* films is created. In so doing, she circumvents sluggish storytelling in the Chinese original, injects new vitality into *wuxia* narrative, invokes a sense of *déjà vu* among readers, and elicits emotional reciprocity and mutuality in readers as films do for viewers. Holmwood thus becomes an “off-screen narrator” who constantly moulds *wuxia* text with her stylistic preferences and narrative tactics. Her intersemiotic appropriations have arguably catered to and perpetuated a renewed passion for *wuxia* literature and films.

## 7.2 Research Significance

By focusing on literary agenting of translation, this dissertation represents a valuable case study for a research field which promises to be of increasing interest to translation and publishing scholars. Its significance lies in the under-explored topic, its first-hand materials (documents, email exchanges, speech videos, etc.) from various actors (translators, primary literary agent, co-literary agent, and publishers) of the translation project, and its innovative and triangulating methods. There are several areas where this dissertation might make contributions.

Thematically, this is a systematic study reporting how translation rights are acquired and represented by literary agents. Based on the analysis of various extratextual activities of Holmwood and Buckman, this study recounts the process in which *Legends* comes into being, and offers some insights into the mechanism of literary agenting *vis-à-vis* the initiation, production, and promotion of translated literature. It also sheds new light on co-literary translation by delving into the dynamics of collaboration between Holmwood and Chang.

Theoretically, this dissertation has developed the notion of “professional habitus” by spelling out its nature and its key differences with generalized habitus. I contend that if professional habitus is applied without clarification, which it usually is, its theoretical value will be undermined. The dissertation proposes that professional habitus should be interpreted as social actors’ dispositions in certain social practices and mental schemata, systematically engendered by and accumulated in enduring professional involvements in specialized contexts. It is a mediating apparatus between individual practices and profession-generated social structures. It then unravels how Holmwood’s professional habitus as a literary agent is prototyped, developed, and operationalized, demonstrating that habitus is a system of both habitual/unconscious and purposeful/conscious dispositions. This theoretical proposition is motivated by the agenda to transcend the consciousness-unconsciousness dichotomy. Moreover, this dissertation queries the nature of “reader-oriented translation” and showcases how “reader-orientedness” is conceptualized and realized by Holmwood before and during her



translation. In addition, it puts forward the concept of “cinematic translation” and demonstrates its theoretical and empirical sustainability with translation examples in examining the interaction between *wuxia* translation and *wuxia* films from a trans-semiotic perspective. My definition of “cinematic translation” is: translations that utilize various translation strategies to incorporate a range of cinematic allusions and techniques, which represent constant attempts to create cinema-mimetic translated texts and to arouse cinema-provoked synaesthetic sensations among readers. This conceptual apparatus provides us with a useful tool to unravel the increasingly intertextual, intermedial, and intersemiotic consumption of translated literature, and will hopefully open up a research venue in which translation studies and film studies can illuminate each other.

Another possible strength of this dissertation lies in methodology. To begin with, Chapter 4 presents an NVivo-assisted study of translation reception. Showcasing the effectiveness and efficiency of NVivo in thematic analysis, it serves as a base for future mixed-methods research in translation studies. Secondly, by concentrating on TSLR, sentence length distribution, passive construction frequency, and nominalization frequency, which do not hinge on source texts, 6.1 has offered a solution to the methodological impasse posed by the scarcity of retranslations in translation style analysis. Finally, in investigating the stylistic convergences and divergences between *Hero* and *Bond*, 6.2 breaks with traditions by systematically probing into the syntactic and genre features with L2SCA and MDA, designed initially for second language writing research and genre analysis. The corpus methodology proposed in this dissertation can be widely applied in translation studies. L2SCA and MDA might also be useful in the quality control of co-literary translation.

### **7.3 Limitations and Unresolved Issues**

Several inadequacies of this dissertation need to be acknowledged. The main weakness is my lack of industry expertise in literary agenting. To mend this, I emailed around fifty real-life literary agents around the world between May, 2019 and February, 2020, hoping to gain fresh insights and thus deepen my understanding of the fundamental laws, institutionalized

norms, and taken-for-granted realities of this business. Unfortunately, however, only two literary agents replied to me. I also planned to take part in The London Book Fair of 2020 to communicate with literary agents and publishers face-to-face, but this plan was thwarted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, my analysis of literary agenting, though largely based on existing literature, might sometimes be biased and over-simplified. Secondly, as literary agents and translators are foregrounded, publishers and editors are somewhat sidelined in this study. To make sense of the publication of a translation by describing only the roles of literary agents and translators can be like describing an elephant by describing only its trunk. After all, the translation project of *Legends* is the result of the collective endeavors and shared sensibilities, interests, and enthusiasm of all the involved actors. Another potential problem lies in the data collection of reception indexes in Chapter 4. Data from the three online platforms are fluctuant, and data from other sources are ruled out. Therefore, the results yielded need to be interpreted with caution. Next, due to time constraints, texts (especially *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* and *The Deer and the Cauldron*) for corpus analysis are not perfectly cleaned, which may produce “noises” in the analysis, thus somewhat skewing the corpus results and hence my interpretations. To sum up, this dissertation would be more substantial had the above issues been properly addressed.

Due to the limited scale of this dissertation, several questions remain unanswered at present. For instance, do Holmwood’s market-oriented translation and her labeling *Shediao* as popular literature compromise Jin Yong’s historical reflection and literary representation of an imagined China, and thus shortchange the author culturally? As indicated in Chapter 6, the position occupied by Jin Yong’s works is unique. While being quintessentially *wuxia* fiction, they also carry various elements (e.g., broad scope, focus on characters instead of plots, thorough exploration into human nature and the meaning of life, etc.) that may enable them to transcend *wuxia*, and, more broadly, popular literature. Are cultural exceptionalism and chauvinism inherent in Jin Yong *wuxia* suppressed in Holmwood’s translation? How did Holmwood and Chang resolve conflicts in their collaboration? How did Buckman sell the translation rights of *Shediao* to publishers in countries other than the UK and US? How do the identities (gender, occupation, financial status, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, etc.) of readers affect their reception of the translation? These questions will hopefully be answered in

my follow-up research.

## 7.4 Future Research

I envision this dissertation as a prequel to more research on literary agenting of translation and *wuxia* translation. Future research may concentrate on the following topics.

It is worthwhile to investigate how literary agenting is operated and integrated into the fabric of translation publishing and literary culture in non-Anglophone countries. Literary agenting has developed quite unevenly around the world, and agents in different regions work in dissimilar manners. In Mainland China, literary agenting “is still a fairly new concept” (Juszczakiewicz, 2015), and there are few literary agents/agencies, though the publishing industry is prosperous. Agenting services are usually provided by publishers, editors, cultural development companies, or authors’ relatives.<sup>95</sup> This might be attributed to the incomplete marketization of the publishing industry (most publishers are state-run), low income of writers, and strict censoring and licensing system. Moreover, the publishing culture in China is different from that of the West. For instance, it is a sign of success to have several publishers and representatives for one writer in China, whereas continuity and loyalty are valued by writers in the West (Eady, 2007). That said, literary agencies in the modern sense have emerged in China recently. For example, Peony Literary Agency, based in Hong Kong and Beijing, was founded in 2009 and has, in collaboration with Tender Leaves Translation, a collective of translators and editors, introduced such writers as John Chan, Su Tong, Han Han, Annie Baobei, and Duncan Jepson to the West. It might be interesting to explore how this agency and others establish the template of translation rights representation and contribute to the professionalization of authorship in China, and represent the diversity of contemporary Chinese literature.

There is also abundant room for research on co-literary translation. How the nature and modes of collaboration affect translation style is a worthwhile avenue. Co-translation is usually

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<sup>95</sup> For instance, Mo Yan’s representative is his daughter Guan Xiaoxiao. *China News*, February 17, 2013. <http://www.chinanews.com/cul/2013/02-17/4567730.shtml>

interpreted as the human-to-human collaboration. However, it can also involve human-to-machine cooperation (O'Brien, 2011: 17). This sort of cooperation is prevalent in literary translation in Mainland China, though it has not drawn much scholarly attention.

One issue that has been touched upon and can be further pursued concerns how literary translators pursue and maximize capital of all forms. Literary translation is an underpaid and highly competitive field. How translators survive and/or prosper by taking advantage of various social sources—social network (which consists of translators, literary agents, publishers, scholars, etc.), professional bodies (e.g., International Federation of Translators, Paper Republic, etc.), and translation awards (e.g., Man Asian Literary Prize, The National Translation Award, Fu Lei Translation and Publishing Award, etc.), etc.—need to be analyzed and interpreted.

Another interesting area is fan translations of Jin Yong's fiction in particular and *wuxia/xianxia* fiction in general,<sup>96</sup> which have thus far drawn little academic attention. What are the cultural identities and motivations of these translators? How are these translations produced, disseminated, consumed, and received? Answering these interlocking questions necessitates large amounts of data, well-designed ethnographic methods, and a set of theoretical concepts of volunteer translation and crowdsourced translation.

Finally, the translation of Jin Yong *wuxia* could be further analyzed from the perspectives of post-colonialism, diaspora, onomastics, imagology, geopolitics, world literature, gender studies, animal studies, intercultural communication, and international relation. As we enter the post-Jin Yong era, more translations of his works and research thereof are expected.

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<sup>96</sup> *Xianxia* (仙侠, literally means "Immortal Heroes") are fictional stories featuring magic, demons, ghosts, immortals, and a great deal of Chinese folklore/mythology. Protagonists (usually) attempt to cultivate to Immortality, seeking eternal life and the pinnacle of strength. This definition is provided by WuxiaWorld. Retrieved on May 20, 2021, from <https://www.wuxiaworld.com/page/general-glossary-of-terms>

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. Detailed Information of Media Reports of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

Title	Source	Date
The ‘Lord of the Rings’ of Chinese literature is finally being translated into English	<i>Quartz</i>	November 7, 2017
UK publisher working on English edition of Jin Yong’s ‘Legends of the Condor Heroes’	<i>Global Times</i>	November 9, 2017
Louis Cha’s acclaimed trilogy to be translated into English	<i>China Daily</i>	November 10, 2017
A hero reborn: ‘China’s Tolkien’ aims to conquer western readers: The world’s most popular <i>kungfu</i> fantasy series is finally set to become a UK bestseller	<i>The Guardian</i>	November 26, 2017
Popular <i>kungfu</i> novels to be translated into English for first time: ‘Legends of the Condor Heroes’ will be hitting UK readers February next year	<i>Taiwan News</i>	November 27, 2017
<i>Legends of the Condor Heroes</i> : a tale of loyalty and betrayal	<i>The Telegraph</i>	December 4, 2017
Scottish translator Anna Holmwood translates the Chinese writer’s <i>Legends of The Condor Heroes</i> series	<i>The Straitstimes</i>	February 13, 2018
Feature: Jin Yong’s Chinese martial arts novel published in English for first time	<i>Xinhua</i>	February 22, 2018
The dragons of salvation: A martial-arts mega-hit finally arrives in English: Jin Yong offers fantasy, fighting, philosophy and subtle reflections on China	<i>The Economist</i>	February 22, 2018
Chinese Classic ‘Condor Heroes’ Takes Wing in English	<i>NPR</i>	March 4, 2018
Translator Anna Holmwood is the hero of Jin Yong’s <i>wuxia</i>	<i>Global Times</i>	March 4, 2018
The gripping world of <i>kungfu</i> chivalry	<i>The Guardian</i>	March 16, 2018
The Gripping Stories, and Political Allegories, of China’s Best-Selling Author	<i>The New Yorker</i>	April 18, 2018
A Legend Is Born	<i>Beijing Review</i>	June 21, 2018
Fantastic Novels	<i>Beijing Review</i>	November 15, 2018

The Legend of Jin Yong	<i>Newsweek Global</i>	November 16, 2018
Louis Cha 'Jin Yong' novel <i>Legends of the Condor Heroes</i> Book Two is out in English, and it's thrilling	<i>Post Magazine</i>	January 30, 2019
Jin Yong's Fantastical Wuxia Epic— <i>Legends of the Condor Heroes</i> —is Finally Coming to the U.S.	<i>Tor.com</i>	February 21, 2019
英譯本《射鵰英雄傳》九陰白骨爪、打狗棒法怎麼翻？	<i>自由時報</i>	October 29, 2017
九陰白骨爪、懶驢打滾 這些招式英文怎麼說？	<i>BBC 中文</i>	November 24, 2017
把金庸介紹給英語世界的大眾讀者，這件事始於她對世界的探索欲	<i>好奇心日報</i>	January 18, 2018
六年磨一劍，西方有緣得識郭黃戀.	<i>北京青年報</i>	February 4, 2018
郝玉青：將《射雕英雄傳》引入西方世界的瑞典姑娘	<i>中國日報網</i>	February 4, 2018
如何用英語闡釋中國大俠郭靖	<i>文彙報</i>	February 28, 2018
《射雕英雄傳》出英譯本啦	<i>新浪網</i>	March 3, 2018
《射雕英雄傳》“飛”向英語世界	<i>深圳商報</i>	March 8, 2018
英譯版《射雕》讓人哭笑不得：王重陽成“double sun”	<i>騰訊網</i>	March 26, 2018
《射雕英雄傳》譯為英文版後，外國讀者如何評價？	<i>鳳凰網資訊</i>	March 27, 2018
黃蓉為什麼被我譯成 Lotus Huang？	<i>端傳媒</i>	March 28, 2018
《射鵰》英譯本在英出版	<i>澳門力報</i>	April 13, 2018
郝玉青：讀英文版的金庸也要有同樣的樂趣	<i>文藝報</i>	June 11, 2018
郝玉青：心懷謙卑譯《射雕》	<i>國際出版週報</i>	June 11, 2018
《射鵰》英文版為何遲到 60 年？	<i>FT 中文網</i>	June 21, 2018
海外金庸熱：譯者要大膽去翻譯	<i>每日頭條</i>	July 4, 2018
這個中國洋媳婦把金庸作品推向全世界	<i>每日頭條</i>	August 2, 2018

## Appendix 2. Detailed Information of Book Reviews of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

Reviewer	Source	Publication date	Type
Valerie Loh	<i>The Historical Novels Review</i>	February 2018	Academic Journals
Astrid Møller-Olsen	<i>Asian Review of Books</i>	March 19, 2018	Academic Journals
Aaron Fox-Lerner	<i>Los Angeles Review of Books</i>	April 9, 2018	Academic Journals
Scott Crawford	<i>Bookish Asia</i>	May 31, 2018	Academic Journals
David Hull	<i>Modern Chinese</i>	August 25, 2018	Academic Journals

	<i>Literature and Culture</i>		
M.A.Orthofer	<i>The Complete Review</i>	August 26, 2019	Academic Journals
Ruoji Tang	<i>Strange Horizon</i>	February 4, 2019.	Trade Journals/ Magazines
Charles Packer	<i>Review Graveyard</i>	February 7, 2019	Trade Journals/ Magazines
Jo-Ann Chiu	<i>Ricepaper Magazine</i>	February 12, 2019	Trade Journals/ Magazines
Will Harris February	<i>Books and Bao</i>	February 25, 2019	Trade Journals/ Magazines
TNN	<i>Entertainment Times</i>	April 20, 2019	Trade Journals/ Magazines
unknown author	<i>Publishers Weekly</i>	May 17, 2019	Trade Journals/ Magazines
Kristi Chadwick	<i>Library Journal</i>	July 1, 2019	Trade Journals/ Magazines
unknown author	<i>Kirkus Reviews Magazine</i>	July 15, 2019	Trade Journals/ Magazines
Marie Brennan	<i>New York Journal of Books</i>	unspecified date	Trade Journals/ Magazines
Bedrock	<i>Drama Panda</i>	February 02, 2018	Personal Websites
Matt	<i>Run along the Shelves</i>	March 17, 2018	Personal Websites
Enricocioni	<i>Strange Bookfellows</i>	April 2, 2018	Personal Websites
Daminik	<i>Wordpress</i>	February 9, 2019	Personal Websites
Madame Writer	<i>Madame Writer Blog</i>	April 13, 2019	Personal Websites
John Walsh	<i>RMIT Vietnam</i>	May, 2019	Personal Websites
Keikii	<i>Keikii Eats Books</i>	August 30, 2019	Personal Websites
Kim	<i>Traveling in Books</i>	September 3, 2019	Personal Websites
NIA	<i>The Most Sublime Book Review</i>	September 11, 2019	Personal Websites
Marilyn Rondeau	<i>Colormeread</i>	September 16, 2019	Personal Websites
unknown author	<i>The Lily Cafe</i>	September 17, 2019	Personal Websites
Qiouyi Lu	<i>B&amp;N SCI-FI&amp;FANTASY Blog</i>	September 17, 2019	Personal Websites
Unknown	<i>The Oddness of Moving Things</i>	September 24, 2019	Personal Websites
unknown author	<i>Amanda's Book Review</i>	September 26, 2019	Personal Websites
Mari Davis	<i>Marienela</i>	September 28, 2019	Personal Websites
etvolare	<i>etvolare's scribblings</i>	October 4, 2019	Personal Websites
Zohar	<i>Man of la Book</i>	October 23, 2019	Personal Websites
djlemarr	<i>D. J. LeMarr Blog</i>	November 30, 2019	Personal Websites
Jay	<i>Fountaindale Public Library District Blog</i>	December 3, 2019	Personal Websites

Kester Long	<i>Lost in Storyland</i>	December 23, 2019	Personal Websites
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### Appendix 3. Jin Yong's Fiction<sup>97</sup>

Chinese title	English title	Date of publication	Newspaper & Magazine
書劍恩仇錄	<i>The Book and the Sword</i>	8 February 1955—5 September 1956	<i>New Evening Post</i>
碧血劍	<i>Sword Stained with Royal Blood</i>	2 January 1956—31 December 1956	<i>Hong Kong Commercial Daily</i>
射雕英雄傳	<i>Legend of the Condor Heroes</i>	1 January 1957—19 May 1959	<i>Hong Kong Commercial Daily</i>
雪山飛狐	<i>Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain</i>	9 February 1959—18 June 1959	<i>New Evening Post</i>
神雕俠侶	<i>The Return of the Condor Heroes</i>	6 June 1959—8 July 1961	<i>Ming Pao</i>
飛狐外傳	<i>The Sword of Many Lovers</i>	11 January 1960—6 April 1962	<i>Wuxia and History</i>
白馬嘯西風	<i>Swordswoman Riding West on White Horse</i>	16 October 1961—10 January 1962	<i>Ming Pao</i>
鴛鴦刀	<i>Blade-dance of the Two Lovers</i>	1 May 1961—31 May 1961	<i>Ming Pao</i>
倚天屠龍記	<i>Heaven Sword, Dragon Saber</i>	6 July 1961—2 September 1963	<i>Ming Pao</i>
連城訣	<i>A Deadly Secret</i>	1963 (exact date unknown)	<i>Southeast Asia Weekly</i>
天龍八部	<i>Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils</i>	3 September 1963—27 May 1966	<i>Ming Pao</i>
俠客行	<i>Ode to Gallantry</i>	11 June 1965—19 April 1967	<i>Ming Pao</i>
笑傲江湖	<i>The Smiling, Proud Wanderer</i>	20 April 1967—12 October 1969	<i>Ming Pao</i>
鹿鼎記	<i>The Deer and the Cauldron</i>	26 October 1969—23 September 1972	<i>Ming Pao</i>
越女劍	<i>Sword of the Yue Maiden</i>	1 January 1970—31 January 1970	<i>Ming Pao Evening Supplement</i>

### Appendix 4. Code of Practice of the AAA<sup>98</sup>

<sup>97</sup> This appendix is based on Appendix 1 of 《金庸卷，香港當代作家作品選集》，p. 644-646; the English titles are based on existing printed translations, TV series names, and fan translations.

<sup>98</sup> This is from the official website of AAA. <http://www.agentsassoc.co.uk/about/code-of-practice/>



The Association of Authors' Agents (the "Association") seeks to promote the interests of the authors' agency industry in the UK and the Republic of Ireland and to advise its members on best practice. All Association members ("Member Agencies" or "Member Agency") must conduct their business lawfully. Member Agencies are reminded that an agent has a fiduciary duty to put their clients' interests first at all times.

Member Agencies are encouraged to act in such a way that the reputation of the industry and the Association is protected and enhanced, and to observe the Code of Practice set out in the following paragraphs. Member Agencies should pay due heed to such other non-mandatory standards and guidelines to good practice as may be proposed by the Committee from time to time.

The Association believes that all Member Agencies should seek to abide by the following best practice principles in order to provide fair terms and good service to authors.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS

Member Agencies should have and operate under appropriate and professional terms of business. Agencies should notify clients in writing of details of their terms of business. A client agreement, or client care letter signed by both the Member Agency and client is strongly recommended by the Association to illustrate compliance with this Association membership requirement.

In promotion of good business practice, it is recommended that any amendments to the Member Agencies' terms of business with the client, including, but not limited to, amendments to commission and other commercial arrangements, should be notified to the client before their implementation and, where possible, the client's prior written consent to any such changes should be obtained and documented in an addendum to the agreement the Member Agency has with the client.

Member Agencies should establish for their clients' monies a bank account separate from their own business and personal accounts and only transfer commission to their business accounts when clients are paid. Under no circumstances should Member Agencies use the money in their respective client accounts for the running of their own businesses.

Member Agencies should at all times account faithfully to their clients and use best efforts to transfer all sums due to the client within 10 days of clients' monies being cleared in the member's client account (but no more than 21 days in exceptional circumstances), unless otherwise agreed or instructed by their clients in writing. Member Agencies should act honestly in their business practice and in such a manner that neither clients nor third parties are misled. Member Agencies should not knowingly or recklessly disseminate false or misleading information.

Member Agencies should promote and protect their clients' best interests and maintain reasonable regular contact as required to keep them informed as to work undertaken on their behalf. Member Agencies should keep their clients apprised of relevant information and offers that they receive for clients' work.

Member Agencies should not use or communicate to others including, but not limited to, other Agencies, information relating to a client's affairs which are given confidentially to the Member Agency, except as required by law or otherwise agreed with their client.

Member Agencies should furnish promptly to their clients any information and material which the client may reasonably request in connection with the client's business. Member Agencies should allow their clients at all reasonable times the right to verify and authenticate any statement

of account concerning that client and shall submit promptly and regularly to the client full details of any transaction it has negotiated.

If agreed with the client in writing, a Member Agency may reimburse itself from money collected from third parties on its client's behalf for money properly spent for such expenses as the photocopying of manuscripts or proposals and/or for the purchase of proofs or books for submission, for bank charges in relation to overseas payments, or for other exceptional postage and/or courier expenses.

If a Member Agency requires an author to commit to representation by the agency for a fixed period of time, which is not considered to be standard practice, the agency should recommend that the author take independent advice from a lawyer or from the Society of Authors before agreeing to such a commitment.

Member Agencies should not seek to prevent or discourage a client from seeking advice from lawyers or the Society of Authors on client agreements, arrangements or contracts.

#### CHANGE OF REPRESENTATION

Member Agencies should not attempt to restrain a client from leaving the agency, either verbally or in writing.

In the event of an author resigning from a Member Agency, the agency should, on request, return to the author all documents and property originally lodged with the agency by the author and copies of legal documents prepared by the agency on the instruction of the author, although the agency should retain copies of contracts they negotiated on the author's behalf. The Member Agency should also provide the author with details of current submissions at the time of notice if required to do so by the author.

If a client leaves a Member Agency, the agency should, unless otherwise agreed, release to the client all unsold rights and any rights that subsequently revert from licensees.

When taking over client representation, Member Agencies shall recognise the continuing rights of prior agency representation, including, but not limited to, any continuing right the former agency or agent has to receive commission on contracts they have negotiated on clients' behalf or that they are otherwise entitled to receive, whether or not the former agency or agent is a member of the Association. In respect of negotiations begun and carried out on a client's behalf which are consequently concluded by the client or a new agent, the Association recommends that parties seek to negotiate a fair and equitable remuneration for the former agent where appropriate.

No Member Agency should act for a client after the client's authorisation to do so has terminated, except as agreed with the client in writing, for example, to represent the client in a specified area.

#### OTHER

No Member Agency should knowingly, recklessly or maliciously injure the professional reputation or practice of the Association or another agency, regardless of whether the agency is a member of the Association.

All Member Agencies should hold adequate provision for professional indemnity insurance to a minimum level adequate to the requirement of the relevant agency's trading. The Association has a group scheme available through PIMS-SCA ([www.pims-sca.com](http://www.pims-sca.com)).

Member Agencies shall make adequate legal provision for the protection and disbursement of

clients' monies in the event of a sole practitioner or owner agent's resignation, retirement, incapacity or death.

In the event of complaints about or disputes between Member Agencies over a matter of professional practice, including as set out in this Code, the Committee may, if reasonably requested by the parties, offer advice, but if further action is required the agencies accept that they will need to seek independent legal advice, arbitration and resolution.

The Committee shall be responsible for investigating and withdrawing membership from any Member Agency whose conduct is unlawful or brings the Association into disrepute.

## COMPETITION LAW

Member Agencies are reminded of the importance of competition law and the obligations the Association places on Member Agencies to ensure their and the Association's compliance with competition law. Member Agencies acknowledge and accept that as the Association itself can be liable for breaches of competition law, and that a breach can have both financial and reputational consequences for the Association, the obligations on the Member Agencies further to this section are fundamental to the Association and their membership of the Association.

In particular, Member Agencies must refrain from discussing, or exchanging, competitively sensitive business secrets with each other, which includes but is not limited to, information which is not readily obtainable in the public sphere that relates to an agency's commercial policies, pricing, plans and pricing strategies or agreeing the prices that they charge or will charge.

If a Member Agency has any doubts about compliance with the competition rules, while conducting Association business, they should suspend the relevant discussion and seek the advice of the President, who will seek legal advice, if necessary.

## BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES

Certain specific best practice guidelines e.g. on self-publishing assistance will be made available to member agencies.

Member Agencies which provide additional services beyond agenting representation, including but not limited to paid editorial services, creative writing teaching, publishing, self-publishing assistance, manuscript competitions, event management, and speaking engagements should make the terms of these services completely transparent to clients in writing, secure clients' agreement in writing to particular terms, and avoid conflict of interest, also by keeping specific services separate as appropriate.

It is the responsibility of Member Agencies to ensure that any additional services they offer are covered by their own professional indemnity insurance policies.

Member Agencies should not charge a reading, editorial or other fee to a client beyond the specific agreed commission rates without the client's or prospective client's prior consent in writing.

If a Member Agency offers paid editorial, creative writing or publishing services, then the terms of such business should be clearly set out and distinguished from the agency's services as a literary agent. If no guarantee of agency representation is offered to an author choosing to use an agency's editorial service or attending a writing course run by an agency, then this should be made clear to the author at the point at which such editorial services or courses are offered.

A Member Agency should not, without informing its client in writing in advance, represent in

any transaction both its client, as vendor of the client's services or copyright material, and any other interest as purchaser and/or representative of a purchaser of such services or material. The agency should declare to the client in writing any proprietary or profitable interest in any contract that goes beyond that of the agreed agency commission.

Member Agencies should not receive payments from third-party companies in recompense for introducing authors to those companies and recommending their services. Such practice raises a conflict of interest and is unlikely to be in the best interests of the author. If a Member Agency does receive such payment, which is strongly discouraged, it should disclose that fact, and details of the amount payable, to the author in advance of the introduction so that the author can choose the best path of action.

If a Member Agency engages the services of a client – for example as a writer-for-hire or a co-writer or co-owner of Intellectual Property or copyright – or licenses rights from a client, without declaring to the client in writing any proprietary or profitable interest that the agency will receive stemming from such an arrangement, the agency should suggest that the client take independent legal advice prior to making any such formal agreement with the agency. If the agency will have a profitable interest in a contract beyond commission arrangements as set out in the client agreement, then it is good practice for the agency not to charge commission on the client's share of the earnings from such a contract.

In advance of assisting any client with self-publishing (e.g. with Amazon/Kindle White Glove and any other relevant platforms or retailers), it is good practice for agencies to make it clear in writing to the client which costs will be borne by the agency, the retailer and the client respectively.

When Member Agencies assist authors to self-publish, fair terms for such arrangements would include provision for the author to regain control over all aspects of their self-publishing in the event of the author resigning from the agency. In the interests of fairness to the author, this should include provision, if the author asks for their work to be 'un-published' from a retail platform, for the agency to serve notice to that effect on the retailer without delay, subject to expiry of any exclusivity period entered into with a third party with the author's original consent.

Members who are confident that they meet the standards of the Association's Code of Practice are encouraged to say so on their websites e.g. XYZ Agency is proud to be a member of the Association of Authors' Agents and endorses the principles of best practice in the Association's Code of Practice.

## Appendix 5. Revision Suggestions of Coding by the Second Coder

1. “Anna Holmwood”裏參考點 4, 8, 似乎也和讀者偏好沒有關係, 只是在敘述譯者資訊, 看有沒有必要把這兩個的 node 取消掉。
2. 我在思考有關成吉思汗的 nodes 的意義, 把 node 命名成“故事背景”或者“故事情節”, 然後把其他涉及到故事背景和情節的內容 (可能主要是“genre”這個 node 下的一些, 例如參考點 15, 16) 和這些編碼到一起, 似乎可以和 reader's perception 的關係更緊密。當然我對射雕不是特別瞭解, 不知道是不是成吉思汗有獨特的 connotations?
3. 還是“genre”這個 node。裏面有一些把射雕和別的作品進行比較的評論 (比如最後幾條), 有沒有必要把這些內容和“advertisement comment”這個 node 合併一下, 命名成

- “comparison between the book and other works”之類的呢。
4. “Movies and TV series”裏的參考點 10, 14 等一些比較射雕和比如臥虎藏龍之類的電影的評論，好像也應該屬於“comparison between the book and other works”。感覺要讓各個 nodes 做到 mutually exclusive 好難啊。
  5. “Overall assessment”裏面有很多涉及到 story 和 character 的，感覺可以提出來單獨建立一個“story and character”的 node；餘下的單純表示很喜歡這部作品的，比如參考點 14 “I loved this book”這種就保留下來。
  6. 還是這個 node 裏，有一些和“reading experience”這個 node 重合的內容，比如參考點 6, 9, 17 等，要不要修改一下。
  7. “reading experience”裏的參考點 3 是不是應該放在“future volume”裏呢
  8. “reading experience”裏的參考點 7 放在“overall assessment”裏？
  9. “reading experience”裏的參考點 30 感覺也是和 character 有關的。
  10. “thematic evaluation”裏參考點 4, 6, 9 等好像和 character 更貼近。
  11. “thematic evaluation”裏面有些是和劇情有關的，如參考點 12, 42；有些和 fight scene 有關，如 15, 23, 44。要不要乾脆把這個 node 更具體化，命名為“plot”，“fight scene”之類的。

我個人覺得就是中間有一些評論存在一些編碼不恰當的小問題，大致集中在成吉思汗，overall assessment, reading experience 和 thematic evaluation 這幾個 nodes 下麵。或許可以看看建幾個新 node，比如 plot/story, character, fight scene，看能不能把評論進行更好的歸類。我覺得其他的編碼，尤其是涉及到翻譯的，都沒有問題的。僅供參考哈：)

## Appendix 6. UCREL CLAWS7 Tagset<sup>99</sup>

APPGE	possessive pronoun, pre-nominal (e.g. my, your, our)
AT	article (e.g. the, no)
AT1	singular article (e.g. a, an, every)
BCL	before-clause marker (e.g. in order (that), in order (to))
CC	coordinating conjunction (e.g. and, or)
CCB	adversative coordinating conjunction (but)
CS	subordinating conjunction (e.g. if, because, unless, so, for)
CSA	as (as conjunction)
CSN	than (as conjunction)
CST	that (as conjunction)
CSW	whether (as conjunction)
DA	after-determiner or post-determiner capable of pronominal function (e.g. such, former, same)
DA1	singular after-determiner (e.g. little, much)
DA2	plural after-determiner (e.g. few, several, many)
DAR	comparative after-determiner (e.g. more, less, fewer)

<sup>99</sup> Retrieve from: <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws7tags.html>

DAT	superlative after-determiner (e.g. most, least, fewest)
DB	before determiner or pre-determiner capable of pronominal function (all, half)
DB2	plural before-determiner (both)
DD	determiner (capable of pronominal function) (e.g. any, some)
DD1	singular determiner (e.g. this, that, another)
DD2	plural determiner ( these, those)
DDQ	wh-determiner (which, what)
DDQGE	wh-determiner, genitive (whose)
DDQV	wh-ever determiner, (whichever, whatever)
EX	existential there
FO	formula
FU	unclassified word
FW	foreign word
GE	germanic genitive marker - ('or's)
IF	for (as preposition)
II	general preposition
IO	of (as preposition)
IW	with, without (as prepositions)
JJ	general adjective
JJR	general comparative adjective (e.g. older, better, stronger)
JJT	general superlative adjective (e.g. oldest, best, strongest)
JK	catenative adjective (able in be able to, willing in be willing to)
MC	cardinal number,neutral for number (two, three...)
MC1	singular cardinal number (one)
MC2	plural cardinal number (e.g. sixes, sevens)
MCGE	genitive cardinal number, neutral for number (two's, 100's)
MCMC	hyphenated number (40-50, 1770-1827)
MD	ordinal number (e.g. first, second, next, last)
MF	fraction,neutral for number (e.g. quarters, two-thirds)
ND1	singular noun of direction (e.g. north, southeast)
NN	common noun, neutral for number (e.g. sheep, cod, headquarters)
NN1	singular common noun (e.g. book, girl)
NN2	plural common noun (e.g. books, girls)
NNA	following noun of title (e.g. M.A.)
NNB	preceding noun of title (e.g. Mr., Prof.)
NNL1	singular locative noun (e.g. Island, Street)
NNL2	plural locative noun (e.g. Islands, Streets)
NNO	numeral noun, neutral for number (e.g. dozen, hundred)
NNO2	numeral noun, plural (e.g. hundreds, thousands)
NNT1	temporal noun, singular (e.g. day, week, year)
NNT2	temporal noun, plural (e.g. days, weeks, years)
NNU	unit of measurement, neutral for number (e.g. in, cc)
NNU1	singular unit of measurement (e.g. inch, centimetre)
NNU2	plural unit of measurement (e.g. ins., feet)

NP	proper noun, neutral for number (e.g. IBM, Andes)
NP1	singular proper noun (e.g. London, Jane, Frederick)
NP2	plural proper noun (e.g. Browns, Reagans, Koreas)
NPD1	singular weekday noun (e.g. Sunday)
NPD2	plural weekday noun (e.g. Sundays)
NPM1	singular month noun (e.g. October)
NPM2	plural month noun (e.g. Octobers)
PN	indefinite pronoun, neutral for number (none)
PN1	indefinite pronoun, singular (e.g. anyone, everything, nobody, one)
PNQO	objective wh-pronoun (whom)
PNQS	subjective wh-pronoun (who)
PNQV	wh-ever pronoun (whoever)
PNX1	reflexive indefinite pronoun (oneself)
PPGE	nominal possessive personal pronoun (e.g. mine, yours)
PPH1	3rd person sing. neuter personal pronoun (it)
PPHO1	3rd person sing. objective personal pronoun (him, her)
PPHO2	3rd person plural objective personal pronoun (them)
PPHS1	3rd person sing. subjective personal pronoun (he, she)
PPHS2	3rd person plural subjective personal pronoun (they)
PPIO1	1st person sing. objective personal pronoun (me)
PPIO2	1st person plural objective personal pronoun (us)
PPIS1	1st person sing. subjective personal pronoun (I)
PPIS2	1st person plural subjective personal pronoun (we)
PPX1	singular reflexive personal pronoun (e.g. yourself, itself)
PPX2	plural reflexive personal pronoun (e.g. yourselves, themselves)
PPY	2nd person personal pronoun (you)
RA	adverb, after nominal head (e.g. else, galore)
REX	adverb introducing appositional constructions (namely, e.g.)
RG	degree adverb (very, so, too)
RGQ	wh- degree adverb (how)
RGQV	wh-ever degree adverb (however)
RGR	comparative degree adverb (more, less)
RGT	superlative degree adverb (most, least)
RL	locative adverb (e.g. alongside, forward)
RP	prep. adverb, particle (e.g. about, in)
RPK	prep. adv., catenative (about in be about to)
RR	general adverb
RRQ	wh- general adverb (where, when, why, how)
RRQV	wh-ever general adverb (wherever, whenever)
RRR	comparative general adverb (e.g. better, longer)
RRT	superlative general adverb (e.g. best, longest)
RT	quasi-nominal adverb of time (e.g. now, tomorrow)
TO	infinitive marker (to)
UH	interjection (e.g. oh, yes, um)



VB0	be, base form (finite i.e. imperative, subjunctive)
VBDR	were
VBDZ	was
VBG	being
VBI	be, infinitive (To be or not... It will be...)
VBM	am
VCN	been
VBR	are
VBZ	is
VD0	do, base form (finite)
VDD	did
VDG	doing
VDI	do, infinitive (I may do... To do...)
VDN	done
VDZ	does
VH0	have, base form (finite)
VHD	had (past tense)
VHG	having
VHI	have, infinitive
VHN	had (past participle)
VHZ	has
VM	modal auxiliary (can, will, would, etc.)
VMK	modal catenative (ought, used)
VV0	base form of lexical verb (e.g. give, work)
VVD	past tense of lexical verb (e.g. gave, worked)
VVG	-ing participle of lexical verb (e.g. giving, working)
VVGK	-ing participle catenative (going in be going to)
VVI	infinitive (e.g. to give... It will work...)
VVN	past participle of lexical verb (e.g. given, worked)
VVNK	past participle catenative (e.g. bound in be bound to)
VVZ	-s form of lexical verb (e.g. gives, works)
XX	not, n't
ZZ1	singular letter of the alphabet (e.g. A,b)
ZZ2	plural letter of the alphabet (e.g. A's, b's)



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