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The Interlingual Generation of Affective Modernity: A Review of Liu Qian's *Love in a Foreign Land: The Translation and Composition of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Romance Novels*

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Abstract: Research on the transformation of affective modernity in modern Chinese literature has long been trapped in the dual predicaments of influence studies and fidelity-based translation studies. Liu Qian's *Love in a Foreign Land: The Translation and Composition of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Romance Novels* integrate intertextuality theory with translation studies, proposing an "intertextual translation" framework that breaks down the binary opposition between translation and writing through concepts such as "creative translation," "translation-infused creation," and "literary spectrum." From the perspectives of cross-linguistic practice and international communication, this review introduces Lawrence Venuti's theory of "domesticating/foreignizing" translation as a dialogic reference to evaluate the book's theoretical construction and case studies. The key breakthrough in Liu Qian's theory lies in shifting the study of emotion from "the result of being influenced" to "the process of being generated", revealing that the affective paradigm of modern Chinese love fiction is not a simple transplantation of Western emotions but is dynamically generated through the mutual infiltration of "translation" and "writing". Unlike Venuti's critique of domesticating translation as cultural violence, Liu Qian's "creative translation" emerges as a necessary strategy for foreign emotions to take root in the Chinese context of the early twentieth century, highlighting the theory's local specificity and its value for cross-cultural dialogue.

Keywords: intertextual translation; translational writing; affective modernity; emergence

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标题: 情感现代性的跨语际生成——评刘倩《异域之爱：中国近现代爱情小说的译与撰》

摘要: 中国近现代文学情感现代性转型研究长期陷入影响研究与忠实性翻译研究的双重困境，刘倩《异域之爱：中国近现代爱情小说的译与撰》融合互文性理论与翻译研究，提出“互文性翻译”理论，以“创造性翻译”“译入性创作”“作品谱系”等概念打破翻译与创作的二元对立。本文从跨语际实践与国际传播视角出发，引入韦努蒂的“归化/异化”理论作为对话参照，评述概述的理论构建与个案分析。刘倩理论的核心突破在于将情感研究从“被影响的结果”转向“被生成的过程”，揭示了中国近现代爱情小说的情感范式并非西方情感的简单移植，而是在“译”与“撰”的相互渗透中动态生成的。与韦努蒂批判归化翻译的立场不同，刘倩的“创造性翻译”在 20 世纪初的中国语境中，恰恰是异域情感落地的必要策略，凸显了该理论的在地性与跨文化对话价值。

关键词: 互文性翻译；译撰互渗；情感现代性；生成

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Research into the transformation of emotional modernity in modern and contemporary Chinese literature has long been a hot topic. As a key arena of this transformation, the shift in the depiction of love from the “affection” of traditional Confucian ethics to the “love” of individual awakening has consistently attracted sustained academic attention. However, research in this field has long been plagued by a perplexing dilemma: on the one hand, a vast body of work has meticulously traced the influences of foreign literature, leaving no stone unturned; on the other hand, these studies rarely clarify “how emotions were actually reshaped”, as if the mere identification of sources were sufficient to ensure that influence occurred automatically. The situation for translated literature is even more precarious: it is either marginalized as a “derivative” or constrained by standards of “fidelity”, with its value as a vehicle for cross-cultural dialogue and textual re-creation long obscured. This traditional perception has directly led to its neglect in the field of “lyricism” studies within modern and contemporary literature, leaving it perpetually on the margins.

Liu Qian's *Love in a Foreign Land: The Translation and Composition of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Romance Novels* (Peking University Press, 2025) response to this predicament by focusing on Chinese modern and contemporary translated romance novels from 1899 to 1925, integrating intertextuality theory with translation studies to propose a theory of “intertextual translation.” This liberates “translation”

and “creation” from their artificial separation, placing them on the same plane of inquiry. Through the core concepts of “creative translation” and “translation-infused creation”, the book reveals that modern and contemporary Chinese romance novels are not the products of pure “translation” or mere “creation”, but rather the crystallisation of a joint process of “translation” and “creation.”

The fundamental argument of this paper is that Liu Qian’s core contribution lies in demonstrating that the emotional paradigm of modern and contemporary Chinese romance novels is not a simple transplantation of Western emotions but rather a dynamic construct emerging from the mutual interpenetration of “translation” and “composition.” Unlike Lawrence Venuti, who critiques “domestication” as a form of cultural violence in *The Translator’s Invisibility* (Routledge, 2018), Liu Qian reveals that “creative translation” in early 20th-century China was, in fact, a necessary strategy for allowing foreign emotions to “take root”—and this is precisely where the theory’s localized value lies.

1. Theoretical Framework: From “Transplantation Theory” to “Generative Theory”

The core theoretical contribution of Liu Qian’s *Exotic Love* lies in its rejection of the binary opposition between “translation” and “intertextuality.” By integrating translation theory with intertextuality theory, she proposes a research perspective on “intertextual translation.” Rather than merely identifying literary influences in research, this approach engages in meticulous textual comparison and analysis to explore how “literary influence” actually occurs. This research theory is not a simple grafting of existing concepts but has been gradually constructed through in-depth dialogue with and critical engagement with prior scholarship.

1.1 Theoretical Origins: The Integration of Intertextuality and Translation Studies

Liu Qian has proposed a theory of intertextual translation by integrating intertextuality theory with research findings in translation studies, and has used this framework to explore the developmental trajectory of emotional paradigms in modern and contemporary Chinese romance novels. This theoretical construction demonstrates clear methodological awareness, deriving theory from the problem rather than imposing theory onto the problem. The development of the theory of intertextual translation is not a mere application of theory but rather unfolds around the specific question of “how influence occurs.”

The core value of intertextuality theory lies in its challenge to the notion of “the isolated text”, clearly revealing that the genesis and creation of any text are interrelated with other texts, thereby providing the perspective of “intertextual connections” for the construction of the theory of intertextual translation. Venuti broke through the limitations of “fidelity” in translation studies by being the first to define translation as a specific intertextual practice, proposing that translation involves three sets of intertextual relationships. This insight provided the argument that “translation is an intertextual practice” for the construction of intertextual translation theory. However, Liu Qian’s incorporation of these theoretical resources was selective; she did not fully adopt Venuti’s critical stance regarding “domestication” as cultural hegemony, but rather examined this translation strategy—which establishes a direct correspondence between the translation and the original text—

within the context of early 20th-century China, directing her theoretical perspective towards marginalized cultural groups that Venuti had failed to address. She discovered that, at a historical juncture when marginalized cultures were seeking self-renewal, domestication was not an act of violence but a necessary strategy for the localization of exotic sentiments.

It is precisely this selective adoption that has created the conditions for a “dialogue” between Liu Qian and Venuti. Venuti’s critical logic is founded on the premise of English cultural hegemony and inquiries into “how dominant cultures treat foreign texts”; whereas Liu Qian’s inquiry concerns “how marginalized cultures achieve self-renewal through translation.” Given their different cultural contexts, their evaluations of the same translation strategy naturally differ; this apparent divergence in their views on the phasing of domestication actually stems from entirely different cultural positions and consciousness of the problem. Neither issue is superior to the other, but the latter is precisely the missing link in Venuti’s theoretical framework, offering a unique perspective from the standpoint of Chinese culture.

1.2 Core Concepts: Creative Translation and Trans-creative Writing

Through an in-depth dialogue and synthesis with the two major theoretical traditions mentioned above, the book proposes its most central pair of concepts: “creative translation” and “translation-infused creation”, two textual forms produced by the two modes of text generation— “translation” and “intertextuality.” The introduction of this pair of concepts strongly affirms the agency of both the translator and the author, highlighting that neither the translator’s process of translation nor the author’s process of creation can be separated from the core stance of the cultural environment in which the creator is situated and their prior cultural accumulation.

“Creative translation” refers to textual practices in which the translator incorporates distinctively creative rewritings during the translation process, with Lin Shu’s *The Lady of the Camellias* serving as a prime example; in contrast, “translation-based creation” refers to indigenous texts that draw explicitly on foreign literary resources in their composition, with Yu Dafu’s *The Southward Migration* serving as a prime example.

The value of these concepts lies not in “distinction” but in “integration.” Their essence is not to affix fixed labels of “translation” or “original creation” to texts, but to reveal the complex interpenetration between translation and original writing. Liu Qian astutely points out that translation itself embodies the creative qualities of “composition”; while converting language, the translator is simultaneously engaged in the reconstruction of literary form and the reshaping of emotional paradigms. Traces of “translation” are also evident throughout indigenous creative works; writers’ borrowing from foreign sources is often not a simple transplantation, but rather a selective absorption and creative transformation under the influence of their own “intertextual baggage.” This stance fundamentally challenges the traditional view that translation is replication and creation is originality, shifting the focus of research from “textual attribution” to “textual generation.” In this sense, “creative translation” and “translation-infused creation” are less concepts than perspectives; they direct researchers to where they should seek answers, rather than providing them directly.

1.3 Theoretical Breakthrough: From “Transplantation Theory” to “Generation Theory”

Building upon the conceptual tools outlined above, Liu Qian constructs an intertextual translation methodological framework tailored to the study of modern and contemporary Chinese romance novels, and puts forward the book’s central thesis: “The emotional paradigm of modern and contemporary Chinese romance novels was not “transplanted” from Western literature, but rather “generated” through the mutual interpenetration of “translation” and “composition.” This proposition elevates translation from a “carrier of emotional sources” to a “midwife of emotional production”, establishing that translation no longer merely conveys existing emotions but actively participates in the creation of new emotional discourses through cross-linguistic practice.

This proposition represents a significant theoretical breakthrough; traditional research has either been content to trace “sources” or become entangled in debates over “fidelity”, consistently leaving the core question of “how emotions are reshaped” unresolved. By placing “generation” at the center of her analysis, Liu Qian offers a powerful correction to existing research paradigms; the greatest contribution of the “generative theory” lies not in providing definitive answers but in posing a more productive question: not “who influenced whom”, but “how is new emotional discourse produced?” This shift in the nature of inquiry constitutes a significant methodological contribution.

2. Conceptual Elaboration: The Theoretical Potential of “Creative Translation” and “Trans-creative Writing”

The concepts of “creative translation,” “translation-infused creation,” and “literary spectrum.” proposed by Liu Qian constitute the three conceptual pillars of the theory of intertextual translation. The first two define the two basic forms of mutual permeation between translation and authorship, while the latter integrates them into a unified analytical framework. The efficacy of a set of theoretical concepts depends on both its penetrating insight into core phenomena and the scope for further reflection that it opens up.

2.1 Creative Translation: A Re-evaluation of Domestication within the Chinese Context

Liu Qian’s concept of “creative translation” refers to the textual practice whereby the translator incorporates distinctively creative rewriting into the translation process; Lin’s translation of *The Last Days of a Parisian Courtesan* serves as a prime example. The most theoretically significant aspect of Liu Qian’s exposition of “creative translation” lies in her revaluation of the cultural-political implications of “domestication.” While Venuti, in *The Invisibility of the Translator*, criticizes domestication as a violent expansion of English culture, Liu Qian demonstrates that in early 20th-century China, domestication was, in fact, a necessary strategy for the localization of foreign sensibilities. This judgement holds true because it does not affirm domestication in the abstract, but rather examines it within a specific historical context: at that time, China was in a position of cultural weakness, and translation bore not the task of cultural expansion but the mission of self-renewal. This constitutes a powerful supplement to Venuti’s theory: the cultural-political implications of translation strategies depend on specific historical contexts and cultural positions; there is no correct translation strategy that exists in a vacuum.

However, one must ask: Are there limits to the “creativity” of “creative translation”? In her book, Liu Qian demonstrates how Lin Shu, through stylistic substitution, adjustments to character relationships and the transformation of emotional categories, rewrote Alexandre Dumas fils’ *La Dame aux Camélias* into a narrative of “tragic love” that Chinese readers could understand. The persuasiveness of this case lies in the fact that, although Lin Shu’s rewriting was extensive, the emotional core of the original work—love and sacrifice—was not dissolved; rather, it achieved a new emotional resonance through localised expression. However, if the degree of creative adaptation is so extreme that the emotional structure of the original work is completely replaced—for example, turning a tragedy into a happy ending or transforming individual awakening into ethical discipline—what remains of “translation”? The crux of the matter does not lie in establishing a universal standard for “creativity”, but rather in acknowledging that any theory centered on “creativity” must grapple with the ongoing tension between creativity and fidelity. Articulating and theorizing this tension might help establish clearer conditions of validity for “creative translation”, thereby further unlocking the interpretative potential of the concept.

2.2 Translation-based creation: the mechanism of writing through translation

“Trans-creative writing” refers to indigenous texts that clearly draw upon foreign literary resources; Yu Dafu’s incorporation of Goethe’s “Mignon” character into *The Southward Migration* is a classic example which effectively bridges the grey area between “translation” and “creation.” Its value lies in transforming “intertextuality” from an abstract theory into an analyzable textual practice; rather than merely stating that “there are connections between texts”, it specifically examines how foreign resources are borrowed, transformed, and embedded within local creative works, thereby providing a traceable and discernible empirical pathway for influences that were previously perceptible only to the most discerning.

The analytical approach opened up by “translational creation” holds significant potential for further exploration. Yu Dafu’s appropriation of Goethe’s “Mimi” character in *Southward Migration* constitutes a systematic, structural transformation; this case clearly demonstrates how foreign literary resources are transformed from cited material into constitutive elements of a new emotional subject. Further refinement along these lines can lead to a more precise identification of the scope of “translational creation.” Furthermore, Chinese classical literature has long upheld a tradition of “allusion” (yongdian). Yu Dafu’s appropriation of foreign resources shares operational parallels with classical writers’ adaptation of poetry from preceding generations. However, while classical allusion maintains the continuity of tradition, cross-cultural appropriation introduces a rupture and renewal within it. It is precisely this distinction that highlights the unique value of “trans-creative writing” as an independent analytical category.

2.3 From Binary Opposition to the Spectrum of Literary Works: Advances in Theoretical Construction and Uncharted Frontiers

Drawing on the conceptual tools outlined above, Liu Qian breaks down the binary opposition between “translation” and “creation” and proposes the concept of the “literary spectrum.” Liu Qian points out that traditional literary studies, which classify works using the fixed framework of “translation” and “creation”, “actually oversimplify the issue” (Liu Qian, 2025, p. 46), failing to encompass the complexity and richness of

the Chinese literary scene in the early 20th century. To this end, she regards all texts as produced through two modes of textual generation: “translation” and “intertextuality”. The two extremes of the spectrum are, in a theoretical hypothetical scenario, the “pseudo-creation”—a translated text that claims to be a creation—and the “pseudo-translation”—a created text that claims to be a translation. In reality, the vast majority of texts occupy the middle ground of the spectrum: “creative translation” is primarily produced through the translation mode, while “translation-inspired creation” is primarily produced through the intertextual mode; together, these two constitute the main body of the literary spectrum.

This concept liberates the researcher’s attention from the classificatory anxiety of determining which category a text belongs to, redirecting it towards a dynamic analysis of how the text is generated. It places “translation” and “creation” on the same analytical plane, together constituting the core dimensions for understanding textual generation. It fundamentally breaks through the traditional notion that the significance of translated literature is inferior to that of indigenous literature; if all texts exist within a single spectrum, the value hierarchy of original versus derivative works loses its footing. Liu Qian’s case study demonstrates a compelling mastery of close textual analysis, fully vindicating the operational viability of this conceptual framework in critical practice.

2.4 Theoretical Extensions

The preceding discussion addressed the conceptual framework and logic underpinning its construction. Building upon this foundation, situating the theory of intertextual translation against the backdrop of contemporary literal translation practices serves to highlight its explanatory power.

The period from 1899 to 1925, the focus of Liu Qian’s research, coincides with a pivotal phase in the transition of Chinese from the classical to the modern era. The institutional distinction between translation and original creation had not yet been clearly established, and practices such as “free translation” and “translated narration”—which blended translation and original writing—were indeed the predominant modes of production for romance novels at the time. The principle of “translation within composition, and composition within translation” indeed constituted the fundamental model for the generation of emotional narratives in romance novels of this period. Liu Qian’s case studies are, without exception, successful exemplars of the mutual permeation of translation and composition; their dissemination impact and influence on literary history at the time demonstrate that “creative translation” was the predominant pathway for the localization of foreign emotional narratives. (Liu Qian, 2025, pp. 1–3, pp. 268–273)

At the same time, practices pursuing “faithful literal translation” also existed during this phase. The *Collection of Overseas Novels*, a collaborative translation by Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren in 1909, was renowned for its strategy of “word-for-word fidelity”, forming a stark contrast to Lin Shu’s style of “translation-narration.” The very existence of *A Collection of Overseas Novels* demonstrates that “faithful translation” in the classical sense was not absent at the time, although it had not yet gained widespread recognition. This point of reference corroborates the core tenet of Liu Qian’s theory from a dissemination perspective: the first

edition of *A Collection of Overseas Novels* sold only a few dozen copies (Lu Xun, 2005, p. 172), while Lin Shu's translation of *La Dame aux Camélias* was a sensation. This stark contrast in reception precisely illustrates that, within the early 20th-century Chinese context, it was not literal translation but creative translation that served to ground foreign sentiments.

3. Case Study: Testing the Theory in Practice

The value of a theory must ultimately be demonstrated by interpreting of specific texts. Liu Qian's theory of intertextual translation is not a vague methodological declaration; rather, through in-depth analysis of specific case studies, it demonstrates its interpretative efficacy and profoundly illustrates how "translation" and "composition" interpenetrate in practice, emphasising the necessity of translation strategies.

3.1 Lin Shu: The Exemplary Significance of "Creative Translation"

The classic significance of Lin Shu's translation of *The Last Days of a Parisian Courtesan* lies precisely in its "unfaithful" rewriting strategy. Through meticulous textual comparison, Liu Qian reveals how "creative translation" employs multilayered localization strategies to produce an emotional structure that Chinese readers can understand and resonate with. On a stylistic level, Lin Shu replaced the original work's modern narrative style with the tone of traditional classical prose, creating a local aesthetic atmosphere of poignant and tragic beauty familiar to Chinese readers; regarding character relationships, Lin Shu edited out a significant amount of dialogue reflecting "female supremacy and male subordination", digesting foreign gender relations through traditional ethical logic to make character portrayals more in line with local ethical expectations; In the realm of emotion, Lin Shu employed selection, omission and emphasis to shape emotional archetypes such as "obsession", "resentment", "chastity" and "martyrdom"—categories comprehensible to Chinese readers. These rewritings were not arbitrary "misinterpretations", but rather a systematic practice of emotional localization; through multi-layered creative rewriting, Western romance was transformed into a Chinese-style "melancholic love", thereby achieving the localization of cross-cultural emotion. This allowed Chinese readers, within a familiar lexical framework, to encounter for the first time a conception of love distinct from traditional "romantic love", demonstrating how "creative translation" produces foreign emotional structures that are acceptable to the local context. If Lin Shu's creative translation clearly demonstrated the mechanisms of emotional localization inherent in the translation process, then Zhou Shoujuan's translation and creative practice took the exploration of the interpenetration of translation and authorship a step further, revealing the specific pathways by which the two mutually shape one another in the production of integrated texts.

3.2 Yu Dafu: The Practical Form of "Translation-Infused Creation"

If Lin Shu exemplified "composition within translation", then Yu Dafu's literary creation typifies "translation within composition", which serves as a vivid case study of Liu Qian's "translation-infused creation." In *The Southward Migration*, Yu Dafu directly incorporated Goethe's "Mignon" character, and the sentimental tone of his writing formed a distinct intertextual relationship with that of German Romantic literature. Yu Dafu never shied away from acknowledging the connection between his own work and foreign literature; his literary

creation, from the appropriation of character archetypes to the transplantation of emotional vocabulary, displayed a profound intertwining of “translation” and “original composition.”

This “translational creativity” is not mere imitation or transplantation, but rather the generation of emotional modes of expression unique to modern Chinese literature, built upon the absorption of foreign literary resources. The early 20th century coincided with a transitional period in writing between vernacular and classical Chinese. Classical lyrical expression was regarded as an outdated form, while vernacular lyricism was still in its infancy, lacking a mature lyrical paradigm. Consequently, writers of the time turned to foreign literature, seeking to create an emotional expression paradigm suitable for Chinese romance novels by studying foreign literary techniques. It is worth noting that Chinese classical literature itself possesses a lyrical tradition of “quotation” and “allusion.” Yu Dafu inherited this tradition yet shifted the objects of his quotations from classical Chinese poetry and prose to works of foreign literature. This fundamental shift transformed foreign emotional resources into the very fabric of indigenous creation, ultimately giving rise to a modern emotional subject characterized by anguish, sentimentality and self-awareness.

3.3 Zhou Shoujuan: The Standard Model of Translation and Composition as One

If Lin Shu exemplified “composition within translation” and Yu Dafu demonstrated “translation within composition”, then Zhou Shoujuan’s practice further reveals how “translation” and “composition” interpenetrate one another in an integrated process of textual production. The concept of “dramatic lyricism” proposed by Liu Qian in Chapter Five uses Zhou Shoujuan as a typical case study to elucidate the specific mechanisms underlying the unity of translation and composition.

Zhou Shou-chuan’s “dramatic translation” remains faithful to the plot of the original work while demonstrating great creativity in the rendering of emotions. He frequently departs from the plain narrative of the source text, making extensive use of traditional Chinese novelistic vocabulary such as “low-hanging hair and dark brows” and “her jade-like hands covering her fair face” to portray characters, while retaining Western imagery such as “heavenly angels”, thereby forging a lyrical style that blends Eastern and Western elements. This translation practice essentially involves translating Western novels by integrating local literary vocabulary and aesthetic paradigms. While this strategy may appear, in parts, to be unfaithful to the original text, when viewed holistically and in terms of its essence, it is, in fact, faithful and achieves a “dynamic equilibrium” in the translation.

Zhou Shoujuan’s translation practice exemplifies the characteristic of “translation and creation as one” particularly well. A close examination of the intertextual relationship between his translation *The Son’s Prohibition* and his original work *Ten Years of Widowhood* reveals that the two are highly similar in narrative structure, narrative time and central theme, yet they have undergone a creative transformation that incorporates the realities and national characteristics of his own country. (Liu Qian, 2025, p.149) This demonstrates that Zhou Shoujuan did not merely transplant Western stories; rather, he transformed his translation practice into an “emotional training ground.” In his translations, he sought to borrow the plot frameworks of Western stories while infusing them with local emotional vocabulary. Through this process of practice, he gradually developed a mode of emotional writing capable of accommodating both “foreign” and “local” elements. Zhou Shoujuan’s

translation and creative writing were not two separate activities, but rather a continuum of emotional experimentation. The Western melodramas he introduced broke away from the conventions of traditional “talented scholar and beautiful maiden” novels in terms of theme, plot design, and scene arrangement; through translation strategies such as abridgement, rewriting, and the refinement of character traits, he constructed a unique melodramatic discourse. These translated texts fused the Western novel’s romantic portrayal of love and death with the lyrical aesthetics of Chinese literature, creating a highly captivating and aesthetically pleasing world for readers.

3.4 Pseudo-translation: The Extreme Manifestation of Mutual Interpenetration between Translation and Original Composition

Zhou Shoujuan’s practice of integrating translation and original writing represents the standard mode of literary creation characterised by the interpenetration of translation and composition; the phenomenon of “pseudo-translation” explored by Liu Qian in Chapter Six, however, pushes this interpenetration to its extreme, providing the most radical demonstration of the core tenets of intertextual translation theory.” Pseudo-translation” refers to texts that, while ostensibly presented as translations, are in fact original works; it constitutes an extreme form of “creative translation” and “translation-based creation”, powerfully revealing that modern Chinese notions of love are not “transplanted” ready-made constructs, but rather cultural constructs produced through the intertextuality of “translation” and “composition.”

Liu Qian points out that the prevalence of pseudo-translations during the late Qing and early Republican periods had its own profound cultural logic. During this period, translation was endowed with the symbolic capital of “new knowledge” and “new learning”, bearing the progressive significance of enlightenment and reforming. When writers sought to introduce emotional concepts that were not yet fully accepted locally, invoking the guise of “translation” became an effective strategy for legitimization. They packaged these new emotions as “Western models of romance”, using translation as a cover for their creative work, thereby enabling romantic imaginings that ran counter to traditional ethics to enter the field of vision of Chinese readers in a “legitimate” manner. Those love stories accepted as “translations” may in fact be the original creations of Chinese writers; those emotional concepts regarded as “foreign” may in fact be projections of local needs. The phenomenon of pseudo-translation most powerfully demonstrates that modern Chinese notions of love are largely “translated” – not pre-existing entities “transplanted” from elsewhere, but cultural constructs “translated” through cross-cultural writing. Those emotional concepts regarded as “foreign” may in fact be projections of local needs; those love stories accepted as “translations” may essentially be the original creations of Chinese writers. The existence of pseudo-translation not only renders the binary boundary between “translation” and “creation” utterly obsolete, but also exposes the cross-cultural essence of emotional formation to the academic gaze. As Liu Qian notes in her book, research into pseudo-translation faces the unique dilemma of difficulties in falsification and even greater challenges in interpretation following falsification; yet it is precisely by revealing the cultural logic of pseudo-translation that researchers are able to penetrate the superficial descriptions of “influence/reception” and enter the deeper mechanisms of affective generation. (Liu Qian, 2025, p.171)

The phenomenon of pseudo-translation pushes Venuti's concept of "translator invisibility" to an extreme. In Venuti's critique, "invisibility" refers to the concealment of the translator's labor in fluent translation, representing a state in which the translator is suppressed and overlooked. In the pseudo-translations of the late Qing and early Republican periods, however, "invisibility" was a strategy actively chosen by the translators—they deliberately concealed their "authorial" identity, using the title of "translator" to gain cultural legitimacy, thereby enabling emotional concepts that ran counter to traditional ethics to enter the field of vision of Chinese readers in a "legitimate" manner. This discovery broadens the interpretative scope of the concept of "translator invisibility", demonstrating that it can be both a consequence of cultural hegemony and a primary strategy for agents within marginalized cultures. In this sense, Liu Qian's research on pseudo-translation offers an important supplement to Venuti's theory from a non-Western context.

4. The Academic Value and Scope for Expansion of Intertextual Translation Theory

The fundamental contribution of the theory of intertextual translation lies in shifting the study of emotions in modern and contemporary Chinese romance novels from a "transplantation theory" to a "genesis theory." Traditional research has either been content to trace foreign influences or has been constrained by standards of "fidelity", consistently failing to answer the core question of "how emotions are actually generated." Through conceptual tools such as "creative translation", Liu Qian reveals that the emotional paradigm is not a simple transplantation of Western notions of love but is dynamically generated through the interpenetration of "translation" and "composition." Furthermore, the theory of intertextual translation—which emerged from the need to study the context of early 20th-century Chinese romance novels—offers a space for dialogue with Venuti's translation theory, which is grounded in the English-language context, thereby providing insights and inspiration for its refinement.

4.1 The Value of Methodological Dialogue: From "Strategic Choice" to "Generative Mechanisms"

The methodological innovation of intertextual translation theory lies at its core in shifting the focus of research from "how translation should be done" to "how emotion is generated in the process of translation." This shift engages in a profound dialogue with Venuti's translation studies and highlights the differing contextual applications of these two methodologies.

In *The Invisibility of the Translator*, Venuti criticizes the Anglo-American publishing industry—which occupies a position of cultural dominance—for using "fluent translation" to erase cultural differences and assert its cultural hegemony; he thus advocates that translators adopt a strategy of "defamiliarisation" as a form of resistance (Venuti, 2018, pp.12–16). Consequently, Venuti's methodology is suited to analyzing how dominant cultures treat foreign texts, with resistance at its core, and it is methodology that we apply to the analysis of the translation of the term mukbang.

Liu Qian's theory of intertextual translation, however, stems from a completely different historical context. In early 20th-century China, translated literature did not undertake the task of cultural expansion, but rather the mission of constructing emotional modernity. Lin Shu's "creative translation" allowed Western notions of love to take root in China through localization, while Yu Dafu's "translational creation" made

foreign literary resources an organic part of indigenous emotional expression. These phenomena cannot be fully elucidated by the “domestication/foreignisation” framework, as domestication here was not an act of violence but a necessary strategy. Neither of these methodological approaches is superior to the other; rather, each is suited to different cultural contexts. Liu Qian’s contribution lies not only in providing new analytical tools for the study of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, but also in offering a methodological reference point for translation studies from a non-Western, non-dominant cultural perspective.

4.2 Reconstructing Literary History: Translation is not a “Prelude” but a “Symbiosis”

At the level of literary history, the application of intertextual translation theory has effectively dismantled the binary opposition between May Fourth literature and popular literature, presenting a more authentic picture of modern and contemporary literary scenes. Adopting a research stance grounded in intertextual translation theory, the book places long-marginalized translators such as Lin Shu and Zhou Shoujuan alongside May Fourth writers like Yu Dafu on the same analytical plane for comparative examination. Through an in-depth analysis of the translation activities of the “Mandarin Duck and Butterfly” school, Liu Qian reveals that popular culture and the “New Culture” movement were not in a state of absolute opposition; rather, both drew upon shared resources from overseas translations, each taking what suited them and mutually influencing one another. This discovery dispels the notion that translated literature served merely as a “prelude” to May Fourth literature, re-establishing its status as an organic component that, alongside indigenous creative works, jointly constructed the literary ecosystem of modern and contemporary China.

This reconfiguration of the literary landscape demonstrates that the emotional paradigms of modern and contemporary Chinese romance novels emerged from both translation and original creation. Lin Shu’s translation of *La Dame aux Camélias* is not a Chinese replica of French romance, but rather the birthplace of Chinese “melancholic love”; the intertextual relationship between Zhou Shoujuan’s translation and his original writing is not one of imitation and being imitated, but rather a continuum of the same emotional experiment. Unlike Venuti, who focuses on the marginalisation of translation in the English-speaking world, Liu Qian reveals the intrinsic symbiotic relationship between translation and original creation in modern and contemporary Chinese literature. While Venuti’s critical perspective stems from the scarcity of translation and the violence of domestication within English-speaking culture, Liu Qian’s research demonstrates that, in non-English-speaking contexts, translation may well occupy a central position in the genesis of literature. This discovery provides a significant non-English-speaking world reference point for the issue of translation marginalization that Venuti addressed.

4.3 Contributions to the History of Emotions: Two Historical Contexts of Domestication

From the perspective of the history of emotions, the theory of intertextual translation reveals the underlying mechanisms by which the modern transformation of “emotion” is produced through the act of translation. This book is not merely a work of translation studies, but a major contribution to the history of emotions. Liu Qian consistently addresses the core question posed by Liang Qichao: “How can Chinese literature open up new emotional horizons?” (Liang Qichao, 1989, p.3927) Through an analysis of translators and authors such as Lin Shu, Zhou Shoujuan and Yu Dafu, she clearly traces the complex process by which “emotion” gradually

evolved from an appendage of ritual and ethical norms to acquire a modern, individual-centred significance. In this narrative, translation is not merely a linguistic conversion, but rather an encoding of emotions, a cultural rewriting and a literary re-creation; it does not “transplant” Western emotions into the Chinese literary sphere, but rather, through the mutual permeation of “translation” and “composition”, produces new vocabulary, new grammar and new paradigms for modern Chinese people to understand “love.” This interpretation elevates the book’s academic value beyond the scope of translation studies, establishing it as a major work of emotional history that combines theoretical depth and textual richness.

The comparison with Venuti is particularly crucial. Venuti criticizes domestication as a form of cultural violence, arguing that it erases foreign differences through the target culture, thereby serving the imperial expansion of the English culture. However, Liu Qian’s analysis of Lin Shu’s “creative translation” demonstrates that, in early 20th-century China, domestication was not a tool of cultural hegemony, but rather the necessary pathway for foreign emotions to enter the local context. Lin Shu’s rewriting of the Western concept of “love” as the Chinese “grief-love” was not a betrayal of the original text, but rather a necessary strategy to introduce Chinese readers to modern emotional discourse for the first time. This contrast reveals an important theoretical insight: the cultural-political implications of translation strategies depend on specific historical contexts and cultural positions. While Venuti’s critique serves to deconstruct the centre in the English-speaking world, Liu Qian’s affirmation functions to construct modern affect in the Chinese context. The juxtaposition of these two positions offers a cross-cultural reflection on translation ethics.

4.4 Unresolved Questions: From the Generation of Emotion to Linguistic Form

Through rigorous case studies and an original theoretical framework, this book opens up new avenues for research on modern and contemporary Chinese translation literature. No academic work of originality can possibly exhaust all questions; indeed, it is precisely the space for discussion that it opens up that best demonstrates the work’s academic vitality.

Intertextual translation theory focuses on the generative mechanisms of emotion as a cultural construct, rather than the material linguistic vehicles upon which emotional expression relies. However, as readers, we clearly perceive that the most direct source of the author’s and characters’ emotions is often language itself. Emotion is never an abstract entity suspended above language; it must be carried by linguistic forms—such as phonetics, vocabulary, and syntax—to be solidified and transmitted. Consequently, the transformation of the emotional paradigm inevitably leaves a profound imprint at the linguistic level.

When we regard emotion as a “process of generation”, further research compels us to ask what medium this generative process actually takes place. The cases mentioned above have already pointed us in the direction of the answer: specific linguistic forms are themselves a form of emotional encoding. Lin Shu’s “creative translation” of *La Dame aux Camélias* rewrites the text using classical Chinese stylistic conventions; the embodiment of emotional expression in this translation process relies not only on the adaptation of the plot, but even more so on the “melancholic” atmosphere created by the unique rhythm, metre and sentence structures of classical Chinese; Zhou Shou-chuan’s “scenic lyricism” was able to forge a “fusion of East and West” in its lyrical style precisely because of his conscious invocation of the vocabulary of classical Chinese

fiction and Western imagery to create an intra-sentential blend; this linguistic collage is, in fact, the necessary process through which Western emotional expression takes root in the Chinese context; A defining feature of the literary works of the May Fourth writers is their Europeanised language; the emergence of a sentimental tone in Yu Dafu's "translation-inspired creation" is likewise inseparable from the intervention of Europeanised syntax. Grammatical forms such as long sentences and parenthetical phrases disrupt the balanced rhythm of classical prose, creating a lyrical subject that serves as the linguistic foundation of "modern emotion." If we acknowledge that the transformation of the emotional paradigm is "translated" into being, then the translation of language is the first step in generating that paradigm.

Intertextual translation theory provides a methodological framework for understanding this process; if we focus our attention further on the micro-level connections between linguistic form and emotional expression, we may come closer to that emotional world that has been translated and rewritten. Venuti, in *The Invisibility of the Translator*, emphasizes that the cultural hegemony of "domestication" is realized precisely through its use of the target language's standard of "fluency" to smooth over cultural differences, while fluency itself is defined by specific linguistic forms. This insight suggests that the transformation of emotion through translation ultimately manifests in the selection and reconstruction of linguistic form. (Venuti, 2018, p.16)

Consequently, extending the research perspective of intertextual translation theory from "emotional history" to "linguistic history" is worthy of further exploration. Micro-analysis at the linguistic level will help transform the proposition that "emotional history is translated" from a theoretical assertion into an empirically verifiable topic, which may become a significant point of development for intertextual translation theory in the future.

5. Conclusion

Liu Qian's *Love in a Foreign Land: The Translation and Composition of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Romance Novels* take intertextual translation as its core theoretical framework, precisely addressing the academic challenges in the study of the transformation of emotional writing in modern and contemporary Chinese literature, and providing a new methodological approach and research perspective for this field. The introduction of a series of conceptual tools—such as "creative translation", "trans-creative writing" and "textual genealogy"—has established an operational analytical pathway for interpreting modern and contemporary romance texts, while revealing how emotional paradigms are dynamically generated through the mutual interpenetration of "translation" and "composition." The significance of this theoretical breakthrough lies not only in elevating translated literature from a "derivative" to a core constructive force of emotional modernity, but also in providing a methodological reference point for comparative literature and translation studies from the perspective of non-dominant and non-Western cultures, through a dialogue with Venuti's translation theory. Unlike Venuti's critique of "domestication" as cultural violence, Liu Qian demonstrates through case studies that "creative translation" was a necessary strategy for the localization of foreign emotions within the Chinese context of the early 20th century. This dialogue reminds us that the

cultural-political implications of translation strategies must be considered within specific historical and cultural contexts.

Particularly valuable is the book's placement of long-marginalized translators and May Fourth New Literature writers on the same research plane, breaking down the binary opposition between popular literature and New Literature, and presenting a more authentic and complex picture of the modern and contemporary literary scene. In this sense, *Love from Afar* is not only a major work of translation studies but also a model of emotional history writing; translation has never been a mere appendage of literature, but rather the midwife of emotional modernity. Those foreign love stories that were domesticated, rewritten, and "misread" were precisely the birthplace of new vocabulary, new grammar, and new paradigms through which modern Chinese people came to understand "love."

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