Brigham Young University

BYU ScholarsArchive

2020-12-09

Translating Greek Mythology in Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction

Emily Olive Moore
Brigham Young University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Translating Greek Mythology in Contemporary

Chinese Science Fiction

Emily Olive Moore

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

Marlene Hansen Esplin, Chair
Steven L. Riep
Dale J. Pratt

Department of Comparative Arts and Letters

Brigham Young University

ABSTRACT

Translating Greek Mythology in Contemporary
Chinese Science Fiction

Emily Olive Moore
Department of Comparative Arts and Letters, BYU
Master of Arts

Given its early connection to western science fiction, it is not entirely surprising that contemporary Chinese science fiction (csf) frequently references the "west" in general and Greek mythology in particular. The three works that I analyze in this paper are Xia Jia's "Psychology Game," Gu Shi's "Chimera," and Egoyan Zheng's *The Dream Devourer*. These three texts utilize Greek mythology in different ways, to different degrees, and with different purposes, and yet they all use Greek mythology to visually disrupt their respective texts. Xia Jia ends "Psychology Game" with a direct Greek-language quotation. Throughout "Chimera," Gu Shi quotes Chinese translations of Greek texts. Finally, in *The Dream Devourer,* Egoyan Zheng's references to Greek myth are more playful and extensive. Although Zheng names certain significant characters in his novel after figures in Greek mythology, the connections to those figures are rarely explicit and are often twisted or inverted. By analyzing these three texts together we can more clearly see the overarching connection that Greek mythology has to contemporary csf. Although multilingual references are not new to Chinese literature, the Greek references commonly found in csf are likely foreign not only to their Chinese-language audience, but to their Anglophone audience as well. As such, there is a very distinct visual divide between the Chinese-language references and the Greek or Roman script in these texts. Though each script remains clearly discernable, they are connected by the interweaving of the languages and by the text itself, the final result being a literary "cyborg" that unites supposedly binary aspects of "East" and "West." As Donna Haraway claims in her "Cyborg Manifesto," the cyborg represents the rejection of rigid binaries and two-word definitions. She claims, "We are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality" (50). By combining Greek, Roman, and Chinese scripts these authors simultaneously represent and complicate the dichotomy of "East" and "West," acknowledging how these supposedly distinct cultures have blended.

Keywords: Chinese science fiction, Taiwan, Greek mythology, translation theory

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

There are several articles and essays with some variation of the title: "what is Chinese science fiction," and with each additional take, we get closer to a holistic understanding of the genre. However, these various approaches to the question don't necessarily describe characteristics that are unique to csf. Yan Wu—science fiction scholar—said that csf is concerned with "the resistance to oppressive systems and the influence of foreign cultures" (2). However, such could be said for sf in general. Furthermore, the political criticisms found in csf are for the most part easily understood outside of a Chinese political context.[1] In his essay "Variations on Utopia in Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction," Song Mingwei—prominent scholar of Chinese science fiction—names China's rise, the myth of development, and posthumanism as the three characterizing themes of csf today. He argues that social and political criticisms are intermingled with visions of China's potential.[2] Accordingly, Jia Liyuan—science fiction academic and author[3]—reads the focus of early csf as "reshaping national culture." But, perhaps more significantly, he argues that "science fiction gave hope to a people trapped in a difficult reality, strengthening their faith in the future and calling them to take concrete action to build a more advanced and prosperous new China" (104). Here Jia emphasizes not only the content of csf but also stresses that csf is for the Chinese people.

---

[1] For example, while Ma Boyong's "City of Silence" can be read as critiquing censorship in China, it is largely inspired by Orwell's *1984* and thus will resonate with anyone who has felt oppressed or silenced by their own government. Telling stories that are universally applicable could be a symptom of censorship in China that doesn't readily allow for critiques of the government.

[2] It is worth noting that the emphasis on strengthening rather than critiquing China in works of science fiction is not necessarily author-driven but in some cases is likely imposed by the government. Science fiction has undergone varied degrees of censorship, from adhering to strict regulations to being banned entirely. David Barnett touched on this in his article on Liu Cixin for *The Guardian*. Furthermore, as recent as August of 2020 the China Film Administration made an announcement with ten new rules for csf to follow, one of which saying they must show China—specifically China's technological progress—in a positive light (Ji).

[3] Jia Li Yuan's science fiction is published under the pseudonym Fei Dao.

Csf's emphasis on critiquing the past and/or present and envisioning the future makes sense given that the forerunners of csf were arguably modernist thinkers, figures like Lu Xun and Liang Qichao, who by some accounts introduced sf to China by translating works of western sf authors like Jules Verne. In the first half of the twentieth century, "modern" literature emerged in opposition to Chinese tradition and was seen as evidence of the encroaching "west." Western influence on csf continues as Chinese writers imagine the relationship between a Qing dynasty China with imperial aspirations and an imperial "west" of the future and, through this imagined future, represent assorted visions of what they imagine China to be today.

Perhaps what makes csf unique to China, is less the themes it addresses and more how csf began and continues to develop. Although science fiction was initially seen as a primarily utilitarian tool to teach actual science to kids in an engaging way,[4] csf eventually shifted to focus on imaginings of the soul of China.[5] Though several academics have to some degree or another analyzed the particularities of Chinese language sf distinctly from sf writ large and have frequently acknowledged the influence of western sf and western imperialism on China and csf, rarely, if ever, do any of these scholars, authors, and/or translators go further to address the use of "western" mythology and language in Chinese-language sf. Nathaniel Isaacson for example has done extensive research on the influence of western imperialism on Qing dynasty sf, emphasizing the threat of the "undeniable superiority of Western science" (13) and discussing how China "appropriated" western science and western ideas in csf (19). Similarly, Lydia Liu has delved into the role that transnational exchange has played in colonial modernity and cultural identity, particularly in her book *Tokens of Exchange*. These works provide a crucial foundation

---

[4] For example, Lu Xun heavily edited his translation of the Japanese translation of Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, streamlining the text to serve a more utilitarian purpose. For further research on this topic, see Qian Jiang's "Translation and the Development of Science Fiction in Twentieth-Century China."
[5] This trajectory might sound familiar to anyone aware of Lu Xun's career.

for researching the influence of western literature on csf overall. I extend the work of these scholars by analyzing the frequent and explicit references to Greek mythology in contemporary csf. The purpose of this paper is not to westernize csf, but rather to acknowledge and understand how and why csf uses Greek mythology.

Given its early connection to western science fiction, it is not entirely surprising that contemporary Chinese science fiction (csf) frequently references the "west" in general and Greek mythology in particular. The three works that I analyze in this paper are Xia Jia's "Psychology Game," Gu Shi's "Chimera," and Egoyan Zheng's *The Dream Devourer*. These three texts utilize Greek mythology in different ways, to different degrees, and with different purposes, and yet they all use Greek mythology to visually disrupt their respective texts. Xia Jia ends "Psychology Game" with a direct Greek-language quotation. Throughout "Chimera," Gu Shi quotes Chinese translations of Greek texts. Finally, in *The Dream Devourer,* Egoyan Zheng's references to Greek myth are more playful and extensive. Although Zheng names certain significant characters in his novel after figures in Greek mythology, the connections to those figures are rarely explicit and are often twisted or inverted. By analyzing these three texts together we can more clearly see the overarching connection that Greek mythology has to contemporary csf. Although multilingual references are not new to Chinese literature, the Greek references commonly found in csf are likely foreign not only to their Chinese-language audience, but to their Anglophone audience as well. As such, there is a very distinct visual divide between the Chinese-language references and the Greek or Roman script in these texts. Though each script remains clearly discernable, they are connected by the interweaving of the languages and by the text itself, the final result being a literary "cyborg" that unites supposedly binary aspects of "East" and "West." As Donna Haraway claims in her "Cyborg Manifesto," the cyborg

represents the rejection of rigid binaries and two-word definitions. She claims, "We are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality" (50). By combining Greek, Roman, and Chinese scripts these authors simultaneously represent and complicate the dichotomy of "East" and "West," acknowledging how these supposedly distinct cultures have blended.

While Xia Jia and Gu Shi are both from the PRC, Egoyan Zheng is from Taiwan. By examining texts from both of these complex national identities, we gain a multifaceted view of how Chinese-language sf writers incorporate different linguistic and cultural traditions in their own work. I want to further understand the friction in these works between needing to "imitate and reference the subjects and forms of Western science fiction" (Xia Jia) and telling a more distinctly "Chinese" story. I examine how classical Greek references mark the intersection between East and West and how that proposed intersection is disrupted in these various texts. While the themes introduced or replicated by these Greek references are not inherently disruptive, these three authors –Xia Jia, Gu Shi, and Egoyan Zheng—all employ references to Greco-Roman language and culture in order to interrupt their respective texts.

The dance between the global or western gestures in csf and the national inclinations of the texts constitute the vital thrust of the growing genre. This inclination to focus on the various national allegories in csf is broadly voiced by Fredric Jameson, who classically claimed that, "the story of the private individual's destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society" (69). However, in his blog post "Invisible Planets/Invisible Frameworks" Ken Liu—prominent translator of PRC sf—criticizes interpretations of csf that are "narrowly political." While these political messages are often intentional—which csf authors will themselves claim—as csf was built on a tradition of using sf

to voice criticisms of Chinese politics, reading them exclusively as national allegory is inherently limiting. In her essay "Madmen and Iron Houses: Lu Xun, Information Degradation, and Generic Hybridity in Contemporary Chinese SF," Cara Healey, csf translator and scholar, adds, "such a simplistic reading also neglects the authors' artistic contributions by reducing their stories to mere ciphers for contemporary China for readers to decode" (522). Yet, the progenitors of csf were interested in sf as a political tool rather than a literary one. As such, it is important to analyze csf texts holistically. Acknowledging csf not as literature written exclusively in Chinese, nor as indicative of the supposed dichotomy between east and west, allows one to instead ask how multilingual and multicultural references to other classical traditions in Chinese-language literature reflects Chinese-language communities or, perhaps more accurately, middle-class Chinese-language communities. These multilingual references shift from evidence that the author is anticipating or preparing for the eventuality of translation, to the author employing the tools of translation to tell their specific story for their specific audience. Xia Jia, Gu Shi, and Egoyan Zheng all incorporate Greek mythology into their stories in order to represent the multifaceted nature of their respective source audiences.

<u>Contextualizing Chinese Science Fiction</u>

Even the origins of sf in China are under dispute. Until recently, academics, like Wu Dingbo for example, suggested that sf was first introduced to China through translations of western sf, like those of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells in the early 20ᵗʰ century (Wu 260). However, in her essay "A Brief Introduction to Chinese Science Fiction and Fandom," Regina Kanyu Wang makes a compelling case for dating the origin of Chinese science fiction to around 450 B.C. to 375 B.C. She highlights a story from the *Liezi*—a 4ᵗʰ century Daoist text—in particular. This

story describes an advanced automaton that could be read as a sort of proto-robot.[6] And what is a robot other than a heavily programmed automaton? This example of early sf demonstrates an early Chinese interest in the genre, though it isn't until the formal introduction of western sf to China that writers began to actively write science fiction or "*kehuan wenxue.*[7]" As such, it is virtually uncontested among academics and authors alike that "the dissemination of Western science fiction in China played a very important role in the emergence and development of its Chinese counterpart" (Wu 260). In "Translation and the Development of Science Fiction in Twentieth-Century China," Qian Jiang recounts the various waves of csf throughout the twentieth century and the role that translation—primarily from other languages into Chinese—has played in establishing a csf style. From the moment that Lu Xun translated Jules Verne from Japanese, translation has been a central driver of csf. Western sf was introduced to China at a time when there was a lot of conflict between "modernity" and "tradition," and as a result, in many texts western influence represented change and consequently represented modernity. The dichotomy (real or imagined) of East and West has been a crucial element of csf from the moment it gained its footing.

Through each wave of csf production and translations of sf into Chinese, it would appear that strengthening national identity is at the core. Qian Jiang argues that "China's concentration on the buildup of national industry in the early days of the PRC made 'hard sf' popular with both publishers and readers" (121). The emphasis on "hard sf" over "soft sf"[8] is

---

[6] This story can be found in the Yan Shi of the *Liezi*.

[7] The category of science fiction initially called "*kexue xiaoshuo*" was first seen in Chinese in 1904--meaning, the sf genre was categorized and named in Chinese before it was in English, even though part of the reason for the Chinese categorization was due to western translations. Refer to *Celestial Bodies* by Nathaniel Isaacson for more information. Isaacson writes that, from its gestation, the genre has had considerable overlap with other taxonomies such as fantasy, utopias, and especially travel narratives.

[8] While the distinction between hard and soft sf might be as blurry as the distinction between sf and fantasy, it is generally agreed that hard sf is more grounded in scientific explanations while soft sf doesn't go to great lengths to explain the technology.

likely due to the emphasis on literature as a means to teach scientific principles which had been in effect since 1902. Lu Xun, renowned early 20th-century modern Chinese writer, was among the first translators of sf into Chinese. He translated Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* into Chinese from Japanese—rather than from French—in 1902. In his translation, Lu Xun heavily edited and revised Verne's story to suit his Chinese audience. Both Lu Xun and Liang Qichao "viewed their work as 'textbooks'" (Qian 119). While Western engagement was a motivating impulse for csf writers, western sf was not necessarily a means of moving away from nationalism, to the contrary, western sf texts and ideas were often actively manipulated to tell a Chinese-specific story. As such, csf authors and translators often approached science fiction from either a political or educational perspective rather than an artistic one. Still, Qian Jiang argues that despite these primary motivations, "the most significant result of their translations was the birth of a new literary form for China" (119). Thus, regardless of their nationalistic motivations, reading these texts as purely political without acknowledging their contributions to csf as a literary form would be a disservice.

References to the "west" in csf are not common enough to claim they are a generic convention, and yet they have been a part of csf since the genre was named. Csf authors themselves debate the role that western sf has played in influencing csf and what place China has in csf. Liu Cixin, a prominent voice in conversations about csf and author of the *Three Body Problem,* argues that when western sf was introduced to China, "Chinese intellectuals were entranced by and curious about Western science and technology, and thought of such knowledge as the only hope for saving the nation from poverty, weakness, and general backwardness" (363). Essentially, Chinese thinkers viewed Western science as the solution to China's issues, and consequently csf becomes more diverse and loses its "Chineseness." Xia Jia adds that to situate

csf in the world market "Chinese writers had to imitate and reference the subjects and forms of Western science fiction while constructing a position for Chinese culture in a globalizing world, and from this position participate in the imagination of humanity's shared future" (380).[9] This question of how to incorporate other literatures, other cultures, other ideas while also retaining one's "Chinese-ness" is clearly a concern to csf writers. One proposed way to combat western influence on Chinese identity is to tell distinctly Chinese stories that build exclusively off Chinese mythology and history, a certainly valuable course of action. However, that ignores the changing world we live in. Xia Jia states, "Chinese science fiction of the era dating from the 1990s to the present can be read as a national allegory in the age of globalization" (Xia Jia 381). Interestingly, both of these perspectives—that globalization dilutes the Chinese-ness from csf and that China's reaction to globalization is embedded in csf—are demonstrated in Xia Jia's short story "Psychology Game." The only detail about "Psychology Game" that is distinctly Chinese is that it is written in Chinese, and yet it speaks particularly, albeit obliquely, to the idea of Chinese identity, as it calls its readers to reexamine themselves.[10] Whereas Gu Shi's "Chimera," on the surface at least, is a blatant critique of western science, Zheng's *The Dream Devourer* references Taiwan more explicitly than the previous two reference

---

[9] However, there are examples of times when China has come into contact with other cultures and that has strengthened China's individual literary voice. For example, according to *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, it was the realization that Sanskrit didn't have tones that inspired Chinese poets to emphasize tonal rhyme in their own poetry, capitalizing on what made Chinese unique (1184).

[10] Furthermore, authors like Lu Xun and Lao She—forerunners of early modern Chinese literature—set the tone for contemporary csf. While these authors are primarily remembered for their contributions to realistic fiction—a genre that remains a giant in China to this day—they both were very interested in sf as a tool to accomplish much the same goals. Lao She's *Cat Country* is perhaps the first contemporary csf story. A thinly veiled critique of Chinese society, much like Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman," it fits right in with the modern Chinese literature movements. In addition to Lao She's *Cat Country*, there are three foundational csf authors, often referred to as "The Big Three": Liu Cixin, Han Song and Wang Jinkang (RG XVII). While these authors each have different approaches, together they form the beginning of the framework for a Chinese-language canon of sf.

China, and doesn't really present a critique of the rest, but to the contrary adopts the Greek mythology as a part of the story's own mythos. Consequently, all three of these texts do not necessarily anticipate a western audience, but rather acknowledge the role that the "west" plays in contemporary Chinese national identity.

In "Psychology Game," Xia Jia is in part paying homage to early 20th-century Chinese realist literature in the way she invokes tradition and critiques contemporary culture while also pointing to the future. A key element of early "modern Chinese literature" is how modernist authors incorporated classical Chinese with vernacular Chinese to demonstrate the shift that was happening in society away from tradition and towards innovation. There was a general fascination with modernization/globalization/the "west" and an outright skepticism towards tradition. This interplay between modernization and tradition is a huge aspect of contemporary csf as well. However, rather than depicting modernization as the answer, csf is critical of these light-speed innovations. In his essay "Invisible Planets/Invisible Frameworks," Ken Liu states, "tradition and modernity, stagnation and progress, political powerlessness and thrilling technological potential—all aspects of the same reality, a chiaroscuro of extreme contrasts in hope and terror. It is this quality of imbalance, I think, that represents the most *Chinese* aspect of these stories." Xia Jia's contemporary sf story, "Psychology Game" for example, chronicles the real history of the various advances in artificial intelligence technology. This imagined timeline leads the reader to the climax of the story, that "we must reexamine the oracle of ancient times that says *gnothi seauton* (know thyself)." While this line can be read to take on several meanings, it seems to be a reaction to early 20th-century eagerness towards modernization, as it cautions the reader to be self-aware and to understand the past rather than reject it, and to understand their own limits rather than enthusiastically accept new technology.

While early 20th-century realist literature in China was skeptical of tradition, it would

seem that contemporary csf also conveys a certain skepticism for innovation.[11]

      While Xia Jia's work doesn't freely intermingle classical Chinese culture and

Western classical culture, when you look at her work as a whole, she has certainly not

shied away from either. [12] Xia Jia draws from early *zhiguai* tales and alludes to *The*

Dream of Red Mansions in "Hundred Ghosts Parade Tonight," in which a child is found

near an abandoned amusement park filled with broken down robots powered by the souls

of the dead. As these robotic soils raise the child, he finds himself questioning if he is

real—meaning human—or robot. It is when the child, Ning, has debated with his

ghost/robot friend over whether or not Ning was human/real, whether he was a ghost put

in a metal body or alive in a human body, he says, "Pretending that the fake is real only

makes the real seem fake" (*jia zuo zhen shi zhen yi jia*). Though in English it isn't the

most common translation, in Chinese it is a direct quote of a famous line in the *Dream of*

Red Mansions: "Truth becomes fiction when the fiction's true" (*jia zuo zhen shi zhen yi*

jia). As the story unfolds, the reader learns that the park was abandoned after the

---

[11] This skepticism can also be seen in Chen Qiufan's *Waste Tide* a novel focused on China's struggles with pollution from a post-human perspective. Rather than the blessings of innovation, *Waste Tide* brings to light everything that was sacrificed for said innovations. *Waste Tide* was directly inspired by the pollution that Chen Qiufan witnessed in his hometown. While these might seem like polar opposites these critiques are centered on the ways that the ordinary people are sacrificed and failed by society whatever form it takes, much like Mao Dun's "Spring Silkworms," a story that highlights the way society's emphasis on tradition and superstition sacrificed the lives of the everyday people. *Waste Tide* demonstrates the way society's emphasis on industrialization and modernization sacrificed the lives of those living on the margins. Ma Boyong's "City of Silence," also follows in the footsteps of modern Chinese language literature as it follows an everyday character in a dystopian future "state." As the government seizes more and more control in 1984-esque levels of increasing censorship, the protagonist, an average computer programmer, Avardan, struggles to stay afloat. Ma's story critiques the way the government swallows up individuals in order to protect itself, an almost Lu Xun-ian cannibalism. Tang Fei's "Call Girl" begins by depicting a seemingly everyday girl who is sexualized and ostracized by her classmates, shifts to an almost magical realist perspective as the Call Girl "calls" stories for her clients. The beginning of the story frames the girl as an outsider, subject to all of those around her, but ends with her in complete control. This emphasis on power struggle, on individuals versus the state is not only indicative of csf but also ties csf to realist fiction.
[12] Csf, at times, explicitly references classical Chinese figures. For example, briefly in Liu Cixin's *Three Body Problem* in the "Three Body Game" King Wen is described.

development of a new robotic technology that doesn't require a human soul to run it, and Ning

has been "seven" for over fifteen years. The line in Xia Jia's short story specifically references

the question of humanity, which of the robots are "real" and what does it mean to be real? While

Dream of Red Mansions is not necessarily asking the same questions, as… the eerily similar

word choice in… immediately brings the classic to mind.[13] Xia Jia's willingness to tell stories

built from both classical western and classical Chinese stories shows that for better or for worse

the "West" is a crucial part of Chinese history.

However, allusions to "Western" literature, particularly English and Classical

Greek literature are as frequent in Xia Jia's work as they are in contemporary csf. As Liu

Cixin writes, "as Chinese science fiction became more diverse, it also began to lose its

distinctness as particularly "Chinese'" (363). The references range from direct quotes from

Shakespeare in English (as in Liu Cixin's *Three Body Problem* when an English officer says in

English "To be or not to be"), to brief appearances by Aristotle and Einstein in the "Three Body

Game," or more extensive references like direct quotes from Hesiod's *Theodicy* translated into

Chinese in Gu Shi's "Chimera." Though, sometimes, these allusions seem positive, it is not

always apparent whether the references are meant to be received positively or negatively, as in

the case of Xia Jia's "Psychology Game." Csf is hesitant to rely on the clear-cut message that

tradition is bad and modernization is good, and instead acknowledges the gray areas, playing

with the nuance behind these ideas. Rather than viewing the "west" as a threat or portraying the

"east" and "west" in a dichotomy, contemporary csf merges both sides of the story and invites a

---

[13] Contemporary csf also breaks new ground in the various sub-genres it contains. While the line between hard and soft sf is just as blurry in csf as it is in "Western" sf, various sf sub-genres are very clear in csf literature. Sub-genres like *daomu*—grave robbing stories in which the characters often encounter ghosts and other supernatural beings, *chuanyue*—time travel stories where a character typically goes back in time to classical Chinese era and gets into all sorts of soap-opera-esque shenanigans, and *xiuzhen*—in which the main character is seeking immortality through daoism. While these sub-genres may have equivalents in other linguistic sf traditions, they each have particular connections to Chinese history, culture, and literature.

muddiness between cultures that globalization, to some degree requires. Though, certainly, some csf takes a propagandistic stance, most csf is comfortable critiquing and praising not only the "west" but China as well. The three texts I've chosen to analyze exemplify how csf has not only utilized the styles and themes and trends of other modern and contemporary Chinese literary periods but has also brought new styles and themes to the stage, adapting and playing off of the generic conventions of both realist literature and western sf.

The distinction between speculative fiction and critical realism is, not as clear as it may be supposed. Cara Healey in her article "Madmen and Iron Houses: Lu Xun, Information Degradation, and Generic Hybridity in Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction," focuses on the overlap between realism and science fiction in csf. She argues that "Lu Xun remains as foundational to contemporary csf as he does to "mainstream" Chinese national literature" (13), thus demonstrating that realism and science fiction are not "diametrically opposed" (13) but are linked. Xia Jia adds that "works of contemporary csf maintain continuity with modern Chinese national literature while also engaging with sf as a global genre" (13). This duality is a crucial element of csf. In fact, science fiction in general has historically been a way for writers to recontextualize current events with a future timeline or alien species. By distancing their text from the "real life" issue, they are able to a certain degree more safely and honestly voice their concerns and critiques. As such, it is unsurprising that contemporary csf would be concerned both with Chinese nationalism as well as issues of globalization or the "encroaching west." What is surprising, however, is this pervasive use of Greek

mythology, to either represent the west or in some ways obscure the national identity of all three texts.

<u>Theoretical Framework</u>

When discussing these multilingual and multicultural references in csf it is useful to approach them from the viewpoint of translation studies. The texts I analyze incorporate translation in several ways: 1) translating Greek myths into Chinese; 2) calling on the reader to translate or pass through the English or Greek phrases; 3) translating the stories themselves either entirely or partially into English, 4) publishing in both simplified Chinese or traditional Chinese editions; and 5) mimicking the form of translation. Every-day discourse on translation discusses the contrast between the "original" and the "translation" and whether or not the translation is "faithful." Lawrence Venuti expounds on the myth of the "original" and related issues of translation in his essay "Hijacking Translation: How Comp Lit Continues to Suppress Translated Texts." He says, "This description boils down to a centuries-old idea of translation: it preserves the source text under a romantic concept of original integrity—the means of measuring the "deformations"—and thereby disparages translations as the destruction or contamination of that integrity, treating them as perpetual yet insufficient compromises" (198). Along the same lines, Karen Emmerich works to debunk the concept of the "original." Which original? In a world where one text will have multiple editions—hard back, print, uk/us/aus editions, electronic editions etc.—it is far too difficult to trace back to the "original" particularly when these are oftentimes simultaneous publications. Accordingly, it can be particularly difficult to access "original" publications of Chinese-language literature outside of China. While you can buy novels from third-party sellers on Amazon, you can't find kindle or nook versions for most of them, despite e-books being quite common in China, and, in some situations, the only legal

13

access for an average Chinese-language reader in America is to find the literature in translation. The myth of the original is even more complicated when looking back to classical literature—whether that be Greco-Roman, or Chinese, or Arabic etc.—in that we essentially have no access to the "original," the average lay person does not have immediate access to the papyri copies found.[14] The distorted delineation between original, translation, and adaptation, is seen most vividly in Egoyan Zheng's *Dream Devourer* a text that is inspired by the *Bladerunner* franchise[15] and adapts and translates Greek mythology for its own purposes. Consequently, *The Dream Devourer* is to some degree an adaptation, a translation, and an original.

Multilingual literature that functions as a "translation" and an "original" is in part a symptom of globalization. Rebecca Walkowitz postulates that we are in a time where literature is essentially "born translated." "Born translated" literature can be broken down to mean one (or more) of three things: first, "these works are written for translation" meaning they are anticipating their own translation, second they are "written as translations" where they are functionally or formally invoking translation as a medium, and finally they are "written from translation" (4) in that they incorporate translations of other works. The texts I

---

[14] Emmerich reframes the term "work" to refer to the collective whole, all editions, translations and so on, whereas "text" refers to the physical words on the page (28). Emmerich's aim is to break down the notion of a singular "original," and in so doing dismantle the hierarchical associations so tied to translation work. Rather than viewing a translation as subservient to or perhaps dependent on the "original," Emmerich, among other translation scholars, wants translations to be seen as "horizontal" to the texts of which they are translations. An interesting consequence of this kind of leveling is that the line between adaptation and translation is also blurred.

[15] The choice to draw from this particular franchise adds another layer of complexity as the *Bladerunner* films have very little in common with the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep,* and have surpassed the novel in popularity to the degree that new editions of the novel have the title: *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* subtitled under based on the film *Bladerunner*. To many, the films are their first introduction to this story, and in that respect are their "original." The only explicit reference to *Bladerunner* in *The Dream Devourer* is that the majority of the novel takes place in 2219 the books are set in 1992 (though later editions changed that to 2021) but the film is set in 2019. Though it clearly draws important aspects from the franchise, it never explicitly references either, despite all of the name-drops sprinkled throughout the novel, Zheng never names the author, that is unless you take the main character's name "K" as a reference to Philip K. Dick.

analyze fit these categories in some ways, however, the categorization of "born translated" is oversimplifies how globalization looks in practice and an overly prioritizes the English language. To assume that world literature anticipates translation into English mirrors the way that the dominance of English is hidden under the guise of "world literature." Or as Mufti claims, "English seeks everywhere to become the preeminent medium of cosmopolitan exchange" (146). As Venuti notes, though Walkowitz claims to be focused on translation, her primary focus is on English-language texts that play with translation as a form, that is "original compositions in English that deploy translation as theme and trope or as code-switching and shifts between dialects" (184). Venuti fairly criticizes Walkowitz of being Anglocentric, monolingual, and ignoring interlingual translation and exchange. Venuti instead advocates for "the changing hierarchies in which literatures around the world are positioned, and… challenging the notion of autonomous national traditions" (183). Although Walkowitz certainly prioritizes English-language work through the examples she studies, her theory seems to lend itself to a kind of global thinking, as these tools of translation are employed outside of English language texts. Xia Jia, Gu Shi, and Zheng all recur to multiple languages to challenge the notion of autonomous national traditions and instead demonstrate how more and more the world is made of cyborg nations.[16]

Particularly when focusing on the examples of Greek and English language in Chinese science fiction, we should be wary of centering the reception of these texts in English language. Discussing world literature means "one must also consider how the local both enters into and is traversed by the global" (Cheah 24). In *Born Translated*, Walkowitz also posits the question, "How does the multilingualism of the book change the way we understand the literary and

---

[16] Drawn from Donna Haraway's definition of a cyborg from the "Cyborg Manifesto,"

political culture to which the work belongs?" (53). By looking at Chinese literature not as literature written exclusively in Chinese but rather asking how the use of English in Chinese-language literature is a reflection of Chinese—or perhaps more accurately middle-class Chinese-language society[17]—then these multilingual references shift from evidence that the author is appealing to a potential in-translation audience to representations of the role that globalization has in the creation of Chinese national identity.

References to Greek Mythology in Xia Jia's "Psychology Game"

Xia Jia is a contemporary csf author based in the PRC. She received her bachelor's degree in atmospheric sciences and her PhD in comparative literature and world literature, both at Peking University. The title of her dissertation was *Fear and Hope in the Age of Globalization: Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction and Its Cultural Politics (1991–2012)*, perhaps explaining her fascination with csf and Chinese culture. When asked about her connection to Chinese culture and science fiction she answered, "Traditions are always changing over time. It is we, the present generation living on the frontier between tradition and modernity, present and future, who struggle for our self-affirmation, not some "tradition" that retains its own self-evident essence" (Liu, "Exploring the Frontier"). She defines her style of sf as "porridge sf," distinguishing her style from "soft" and "hard" sf, as well as marking it as softer than soft sf. This exploration of genre and culture is perhaps most evident in Xia Jia's "Psychology Game," which chronicles the history of artificial-intelligence technology while describing a futuristic "globally popular" television show by the same name.

---

[17] This certainly applies to urban modernist literature in Shanghai in the 1930s—Shi Zhecun, Liu Naou, Mu Shiying. However, rather than using English to represent the "new" and the "modern" these texts are using Greek to connect to the past and to some degree disconnect from English.

In "Psychology Game," Xia Jia hypothesizes the role that machines can or should play in a human world and thus questions what it means to be human. The story culminates in the statement that "we mustn't forget to turn back and reexamine the oracle from thousands of years ago: *gnothi seauton*[18]" followed by the Chinese translation (*renshi ni ziji* [19]) in a parenthetical. Given the context of the story, "the oracle" clearly references the temple of Apollo and the Oracle of Delphi. While this reference is brief, it constitutes the central message of the story. And yet, the implications of this warning are hazy at best. Is it simply asking the reader to examine what it means to be human or is it also asking the reading to examine what it means to be Chinese? While the source text provides a translation of the Greek phrase, the English translation does not, marking only this phrase as, to some degree, untranslatable.

On the one hand, "Psychology Game" is "born translated" as Walkowitz discusses, in that it incorporates and translates multiple languages and ideas. But on the other hand, the translators, Emily Jin and Ken Liu, complicate the notion of being "born translated" as they choose not to translate the Greek phrase in any capacity, implying that the Greek resists translation, and adding a degree of inscrutability to the conclusion of the story. The connotations of this reference shift in the Chinese and English versions. In the source text the Greek aphorism invokes China's complicated relationship with Western influence and opens up a conversation about China's place in a globalized world. The reader is asked not only to reexamine the message, but to reexamine the oracle, and by consequence the source of the oracle which is decidedly not Chinese. However, in English the untranslated Greek quote reminds the Anglophone audience that these Greek classics, are in fact Greek, and consequently are adopted into the Anglophone canon rather than born of it. While it is tempting to claim the call to

---

[18] In both the Chinese and English versions, it is written in the Greek alphabet as: γνῶθι σεαυτόν.
[19] Know thyself.

"reexamine the oracle" is simply a call for an Anglophone reader to reexamine themselves, by not including any kind of translation, the translators have distanced the reader from the text— assuming the reader is unfamiliar with classical Greek. Arguably, while they are implying that their readers need no translation, there is perhaps a simultaneous and tacit understanding that their readers will google the translation if they are not already familiar with the words of the oracle.

In the Chinese-language edition, the maxim works as a sort of globalizing move. From the beginning of the story the narrator periodically reminds the reader of various advancements in AI technology. From IBM's Deep Blue who beat the chess grand-master Garry Kasporov, or Watson the computer program who beat two contestants on *Jeopardy.* These developments largely occurred in America and England. However, while IBM is an American company, the lead developer of Deep Thought the computer predecessor to Deep Blue, was Feng-hsiun Hsu: a Taiwanese American computer scientist at Carnegie Mellon University. Xia Jia could have highlighted Hsu but chose to credit IBM instead, focusing not only on the western impact but on the company over the individual, a more subversive representation of Chinese ideology. The story includes imagined developments such as iTalk, a talking toy for autistic children. The imagined developments have no connection to any nationality just that it "touched the hearts of children around the globe" ("Psychology Game"). All of these references signify that this text anticipates a global audience. In this way, the text was "written for translation from the start" (Walkowitz 3). However, as a highly philosophical text, "Psychology Game" is more geared to its initial audience, the readers of *Knowledge is Power* magazine,[20] who

---

[20] *Knowledge is Power* is a primarily philosophical magazine, as such its readers are more focused on philosophical exploration than literary.

would expect to see a story more geared towards philosophical musings than adventure per se.
Finally, by including the quote both in Greek and in Chinese, the text "approaches translation as
medium and origin rather than as afterthought… translation functions as a thematic, structural,
conceptual, and sometimes even typographical device" (3-4). Xia Jia actively chooses what to
translate and how to translate, whether it be linguistic, cultural, or historical translation.

The first explicitly "Asian" reference in this story is Huineng, the *Chan* Buddhist. While
Huineng is Chinese, Buddhism is not a religion indigenous to China but is instead a religion
from India, or the "west." Thus, Xia Jia once again subtly troubles what it means to be "Chinese"
and what it means to be the "west." Even the company that hosts the show is itself evidence of
globalization: Microsoft Research Asia and Safer Media, a company that originated in America
but has a branch in Asia. More specifically however, these company names clearly point to
westernization. The story questions the role of humanity, acknowledging that, "in an era of
technological explosion, we are forced to constantly evaluate and distinguish between the kinds
of work that absolutely require human judgment, and the kinds of work that can be performed by
machines (or are even better when performed by machines)" (Xia Jia). It concludes with the one
question that AI cannot answer: "What is human?" As such, it is humanity's responsibility to
"turn back and reexamine the oracle from thousands of years ago: γνῶθι σεαῦτον." Surprisingly,
the story does not end by encouraging the reader/humanity to reflect and reexamine oneself, but
rather to reexamine the oracle. The story subtly asks the reader to reexamine the source of the
quote, which is simultaneously the oracle and the Greco-Roman (and the subsequent "western")
tradition.

Literature has often been divided by language, and the choice to mix languages is a
striking visual representation of the already blurred cultural lines. As Walkowitz says, "Literary

19

critics have to ask how the multilingualism of the book changes the national singularity of the work" (25). While where the border lines of "Chinese" literature should be constantly debated—as the PRC's relationship with both Hong Kong and Taiwan in particular are strained—multicultural influences and multilingual references don't threaten/challenge the "nationality" of a text. For example, while Liu Cixin chose to include a Shakespearean quote in *The Three Body Problem* (in English), the reference has not affected the "Chinese-ness" of the text on a whole. In this way, Xia Jia's move to end her csf story with a Greek quote and Chinese translation signifies her representation of both globalization and her conception of PRC national identity in this story. She acknowledges western expansion while also making a case for what "Chinese" might look like in the future. Just as Anglophone societies have absorbed Greco-Roman literature as a part of their own past, perhaps Chinese-language societies can also adopt the "Western" canon and make it their own. Or, as Friedrich Schleiermarcher argued, these texts undertake a foreignizing strategy of translation or representation in the name of nationalism (62). A part of national identity is establishing the "others." Therefore, by presenting these references to Greek mythology as visually other and disruptive, these authors foreignize these translations, and thus solidify Chinese or Taiwanese national identity. Thus, while there is little that is explicitly Chinese about this text, other than the fact that it is written in Chinese, that fact alone is enough to claim this story as a Chinese-language sf story that is for a Chinese-language audience, rather than a "born translated" csf story that is written for an outside "global" audience.

Because Xia Jia incorporates so many historical facts with very little narrative arc, it is easy to forget that she is telling a science fiction story at all. In fact, Anglophone

reviewers like Robert L Turner III specifically critique the story for not having much that is "science fiction" about it, as well as lacking characterization or a plot arc. However, having vague or unidentified characters with narratives that are heavy on philosophizing is not rare in csf. Similar styles can be seen in Hao Jing Fang's "Invisible Planets" or Tang Fei's "Pepe," in both of these stories the narrator is ungendered and unnamed and the weight of the story is more anthropological in nature. In this way, "Psychology Game" both resists translation and resists the notion of World Literature as Anglophone literature that fits nicely into Anglophone genres. Julia Lovell—prize winning author and translator who specializes in China—wrote that "In many of the manifestoes of key figures of modern Chinese writing, a preoccupation with appealing to 'international' (in reality, Western) genres and readers stands out" (197).[21] These moves to incorporate Western culture and references seem to represent the "other" and the "outside" rather than evidencing an appeal to a wider in-translation audience.

While it is tempting to argue that Xia Jia's short story represents a globalized future, it primarily tells the story of a Western past, through the recounting of AI advancements, and a non-descript future of a possibly Westernized Asia. Due to the fact that the game is hosted by Microsoft Research Asia, it is clear that this story is not simply set in "America," but, even so, emphasis is placed on Microsoft Research, not on Asia. Any references to Asia or China are so subtle that truly the most Chinese thing about this text is the fact that it is written in Chinese, perhaps implying that it is Chinese not English that is the language of the future. This move, in part, decenters the "west." As csf scholar Nathaniel Isaacson puts it, "the dialectic opposition of the West as modern, scientific, and civilized and the East as traditional, unscientific and uncivilized gave rise to a world in which the Orient became the fruit of Western conquest" (93).

---

[21] See her essay for an extensive list of said manifestos as well as other academics who have also analyzed this phenomenon.

While the imperialist narrative pushed China as the past and the "west" as the future, csf rejects that notion and reclaims the future as a Chinese domain. By not establishing the location of the story, Xia Jia perhaps incidentally acknowledges the diasporic qualities of Chinese-language literature, particularly that Chinese language literature goes beyond the PRC.

References to Greek Mythology in Gu Shi's "Chimera

Greek myth is referenced overtly in Gu Shi's "Chimera," in that Gu Shi directly quotes both Hesiod's *Theogony* and Apollodorus' *Biblioteka* in Chinese translation. Gu Shi is a csf author trained in urban planning. Gu Shi is a relatively new writer as it was only in 2014 that she won the Silver Xingyun award for Best New Writer. As a writer who still has a "day job," so to speak, rather than representing the most well-known of sf writers who by fortune of popularity live primarily off of their writing, she represents the "average" sf writer. "Chimera" is the closest text to being literally "born translated," in that rather than having years between translations or editions, "Chimera" was initially published in Chinese in *Science Fiction World* magazine October 2015 and was then published in English in *Clarkesworld Magazine in* March 2016, not even a year later. "Chimera" tells the story of the development of the chimera technology—in which pigs are genetically engineered to have human organs--in order to grow and harvest donor organs. She divides this story into two different timelines, the first marked numerically and the second alphabetically. The story begins with a prologue of sorts with the same title of story "Chimera" or "*qianheti*."[22] Throughout the rest of the text "*qianheti*" is the term used to describe the Chimera technology, rather than the mythological beast. The

---

[22] *heti* is the same root word that Zheng uses to describe cyborgs, and is more technological language.

first chapter is simply titled "1. Chimera." This time the typical transliteration: *qimeila* with the English translation in a parenthetical. By using two different Chinese phrases for the one English phrase Gushi subtly points to the nuance that Chinese allows, implying English does not have the same capabilities. Furthermore, it is in the first chapter that two kinds of chimeras are introduced. Evan reunites with his wife, a scientist, to beseech her to develop the chimera technology that will save their son, Tony's, life. The unnamed mother is described as emotionally disconnected, curious—but only with regard to the scientific developments—and unconcerned with her own child's fate. In short, she is portrayed as "a selfish, abhorrent monster." This description immediately connects her to the titular monster as well as the technology she is asked to develop. The second chapter takes place in a different timeline: "A. Adam" in which the reader is slowly introduced to the consequences of the scientist's actions—though the connection between the timelines isn't clear until near the end of the story. The story keeps alternating back and forth, between the numeric storyline and the alphabetical storyline, the past and the future, Greek mythology and Christian Mythology—as seen in chapter 3, titled: "2. Echidna," and chapter 4 titled: "B. Eden." By choosing to demarcate between the Greek mythology and Christian mythology (two traditions that are generally associated with "western" and Anglophone culture), rather than pulling from Chinese or Asian mythologies, Gu ties "the west" to both abomination/monstrous destruction as well as new beginnings.

Rather than directly quote Greek mythology in Greek as Xia Jia did, Gu Shi cites Chinese translations primarily from Hesiod's *Theogony* and Apollodorus's *Biblioteka*. These quotes are used to signify not only a change in point of view, but that we are in the present/past. By choosing to begin these sections with quotations that describe specifically western monsters, Gu

is connecting monstrosity not only with this scientist's work[23] but also with the ambiguous "west" at large. The characters' names Tony (*Tuoni*) and Evan (*Yiwen*) for examples are Anglophone names transliterated into Chinese characters, which implies that the "present day" is set in an Anglophone country and the future is set in space where all of the characters, except for one AI, have Chinese names. However, Evan's sir name is Lee (*li*), so perhaps they are Chinese American, but then there are small details like the "Chinese parasol trees" (*wutong*)—a tree native to Asia—that make their location unclear. The final reveal is that the supposed villain who developed the chimera technology has been "reincarnated" into a woman with a Chinese name, who is described as motherlier than her previous self (though that is debatable). Despite the mixed messaging, the "future" is distinctly more Chinese than the "past," perhaps implying that the west is the past and China is the future, but perhaps it is also implying that these cultures are to some degree interchangeable. By refusing to locate this story, Gu purposefully refuses to separate Chinese and Western cultures, thus displacing her story in an imagined future where Chinese culture is intermingled with Anglophone and Greco-Roman mythology.

<u>References to Greek Mythology in Egoyan Zheng's *The Dream Devourer*</u>

While PRC csf largely focuses on strengthening national identity and fortifying against western imperial advances, imagining itself as an imperial force, Taiwanese literature occupies a complicated position. As such, references to "the west" will necessarily resonate differently in Taiwan. Rather than representing the colonizer, they represent, in part, separation from the colonizer. Zheng is not the only Taiwanese writer to combine multiple cultural influences in order to portray a distinct Taiwanese identity in literature. Yun Fang Lo

---

[23] There is a definite similarity to Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* here, particularly the emphasis on the innocence of the monster the mother creates, the notion that the scientist is herself a monster, and the violence that un-cared for creations will inflict in the name of self-preservation and retaliation.

says the following about Wang Cheng-ho's writing in particular, "His style of writing showed his vision of how Taiwan was influenced by different cultures and how Taiwanese people were gradually developing a distinctive local identity" (71). Egoyan Zheng does something similar in *The Dream Devourer* by setting the majority of the plot in Taiwan and also referencing key cultures that have influenced Taiwanese society. Tang Xiaobing wrote in 1999 that "For the nativist vision affirms the native literary tradition as of both regional and national significance, and the aspiration of Taiwan literature, at least for some polemicists, is to distinguish itself as the consciousness of a nation in formation" (380). As said previously, reading literature as purely national allegory is inherently limiting, therefore Taiwanese literature is not simply national allegory, these literary traditions also represent the distinct culture and values of the Taiwanese people. It is through multilingual and multicultural references that Egoyan Zheng not only appeals to a global audience but represents an encompassing contemporary Taiwanese sociocultural identity.

The Dream Devourer by Egoyan Zheng is not currently available in English translation in its entirety. There are only two separate editions: one published in Taiwan in traditional Chinese, and one published in Shanghai, in simplified Chinese. Necessarily, the simplified edition takes into consideration specifically a Chinese-language audience with roots in the PRC rather than an exclusively Taiwanese audience, including those who read Chinese as a second language who may only read simplified Chinese. I was not able to acquire the traditional edition, only the simplified. When I interviewed Egoyan Zheng he said, "there are no significant changes" between these two editions—yet the primary changes include a slimming down of superfluous information, reducing the novel by about 20,000 characters, as well as brief and minor political

censorship that had no bearing on the overall story![24] Due to availability and access, I am, currently, unable to verify the significance of these changes, but I suspect an analysis of the difference between the Taiwanese and PRC editions would be fruitful for further research. Given the likely syntactical changes, censorship and/or revisions made it is necessary that this simplified edition be read in part as a translation, despite still technically being in the same language. Also, perhaps more importantly, the simplified edition targets an immediately more diverse audience, not only is it published in China and geared to a Chinese audience, but the simplified edition of *The Dream Devourer* is globally easier to acquire the simplified edition and therefore will reach a wider Chinese-language audience than the Taiwanese publication has.

The Dream Devourer takes place primarily in the year 2219; however, through the use of footnotes, flashbacks and a false copyright page, the novel actually covers from around the industrial revolution to 2297. In Zheng's future, biosynthetics—similar to Philip K. Dick's androids from *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* later adapted to film in the *Blade Runner* franchise— are in conflict with humans. The protagonist K however, is a different kind of biosynthetic, an "abandoned biosynthetic" (11). Furthermore, the ongoing conflict between biosynthetics and humans stems from the biosynthetics' ability to evolve to the point of passing the "are you human" tests, despite the various restrictions placed on them. The novel primarily follows K's journey of self-discovery as he learns about his past and what he has the potential to become. The specific tools of translation that Zheng utilizes include: writing the majority of his characters names using the Roman alphabet, using an in-text copyright page, parenthetical glossaries that translate his invented technology into

---

[24] This is perhaps a bit too facile an explanation and may be an evidence of self-censorship in order to keep his PRC readership and to continue publishing in the PRC.

English, translingual translation (rephrasing different terms or concepts without providing an English translation), and finally using extensive footnotes providing supplementary context. These footnotes provide cultural context for an in-translation audience. Zheng uses the guise of pseudo-translation, that is the para-textual apparatus, to represent K's own multicultural/manifold origins.

Zheng centers the importance of names early on in his novel. Chapter 1 begins with Eros—a biosynthetic porn star and spy—introducing herself, and her interviewer asking her to expound on her name saying "you said you're called Eros?…Eros, doesn't that that mean 'god of love?' and isn't that a male god of love[25]?" (你说你叫Eros？。。。Eros 不是"爱神"的意思吗？而且还是个男爱神?). As shown in the previous quote, names are predominantly written using the Roman alphabet, with an Anglophone order, that is, using a given name then surname rather than surname first. Zheng's characters rarely have full names, or even Chinese names. Eros confirms that it is the same "god of love" (*ai shen)* and goes on to fully spell her name out to the interviewer "E-R-O-S" further emphasizing the roman alphabet. She details how she got her name, and then the interviewer repeats her name three times before continuing on with the interview, asking her how she got into the profession and if she's ever been in love. Egoyan Zheng initially takes great pains to draw the reader's attention to these names and then, throughout the rest of the novel, doesn't address the names of any of the other characters, despite the fact that a great number of them continue to have names tied to classical Greek mythology— names like Cassandra, Iris, Eros, and Daedalus, focusing the Greek names primarily—and except for Daedalus—exclusively on his female characters. Though it isn't as simple as to say that all of

---

[25] All translations are my own unless otherwise stated

his female characters have ancient Greek names. I asked Egoyan Zheng why he chose these names, and he said the answer was two-fold "because I hope that readers won't have a way to determine the nationality or ethnicity of a character, judging from the name. I sometimes mix the sources of the names. Besides, I also like those myths, such as Eurydice and Orpheus, this myth I particularly like, so I use the myth in my fiction, as well as the myth's morals" (因為

我有時候會希望大家沒有辦法從姓名判斷出這個角色的族裔或國籍 所以我有時候就把

各種來源的名字都混在一起使用 此外，我很喜歡那些神話 比如Eurydice，Orpheus這個

神話我就很喜歡 而且用在小說裡就確實有些寓意. 我也很喜歡Daedalus的那個神話. 所

以裡面也有角色叫做Daedalus) (Zheng Interview, translation is my own). While the history

and meaning behind these characters' names does play a role in understanding the characters' purposes and motivations, according to the author, first and foremost, their names are used in a way to obscure the ethnicities of the characters. This obfuscation of ethnicity and nationality could serve to neutralize the individual focus on Taiwanese sociocultural identity. Thus, rather than "globalize" the story through these globalized names, the lost nationalities of the characters are mirrored by Taiwan's own search for a national identity.

Some historical names in the text are transliterated, like Freud, whose name is written as *Fu luo yi de* (弗洛伊德), followed by the parenthetical gloss "Freud the Creator" (415) in

English. or *A xi mo fu* for Asimov. Asimov's names is one of the few names which is in no way connected to English. The names that are transliterated are only the historical figures that are referenced rather than actual characters in the novel. For example Asimov is only referenced in order to acknowledge his "fictional three laws of robots and psychological

28

history" (虚构的机器人学三大定律和心理史学)（416). Every single character's name however—excluding the names that are historical references—is written in the Roman alphabet. While Egoyan Zheng makes several references to other languages and cultures, his primary focus seems to be on the Chinese and English languages; it is almost as if the two languages go hand in hand. He specifically chooses the Greek names over their Roman counterparts but chooses to write them using the Roman alphabet and the more commonly accepted Latinized spelling over the Greek spelling, or their Chinese transliterations. This use of language is perhaps a tool of imagining not only the hybridization of Chinese and English in Taiwan today but how global linguistic hybridization will look in "the future" so to speak. The emphasis on anglicized names is perhaps an extension of the fact that today Chinese-language speakers will often have both a Chinese name and an English name. A fascination with linguistic evolution is a recurring theme in sf as well as a prominent concern with regards to national identity.

Language is one of the first points of attack when colonizing a place, and generally reclaiming language is one of the primary foundations for establishing a culture. However, rather than building a Chinese-language centered world, Zheng chooses to incorporate these names not as a threat to his Taiwanese story but as a crucial element. By choosing these specific names from Greek mythology, Zheng engages in a multilayered act of translation. Not only is he incorporating the Roman alphabet, but he is translating these characters to his Taiwanese audience, and explicitly not using the names of their Roman counterparts, even when the Roman counterparts are more widely known as in the case of Eros as opposed to Cupid. Giving preference to obscure references that the average Greek scholar would be familiar with, but perhaps not the average Anglophone or Chinese-language reader, Zheng adds to the relative

untranslatability of his novel as the reader is almost expected to look up the significance of these references.

It would seem that while Egoyan Zheng purposefully names his characters after their Greek counterparts he is not too concerned with mirroring their lives. In some cases, these characters are, in fact, playful inversions of their namesakes. Eros[26] for example is a female porn star, and, perhaps similar to Eros the god of love, her profession is centered around bringing "love" or rather "sexual arousal" to others while her experience is to some degree irrelevant. Early on in the book, three men begin to debate whether or not a biosynthetic like Eros can orgasm in the same way that a human can. As they press her to explain and divulge her sexual experiences, she repeatedly says "I don't know" (*wo bu zhidao*) (33), until she finally recounts a specific experience she had with a human male co-star, and the humans listening to her interrogate her on the experience and the feelings she had. While, yes, this episode is about love or arousal, the emphasis is primarily on her experience, or perhaps lack of experience, rather than the "love" she causes others to feel. Furthermore, her more significant role in the plot is as a spy, not as a matchmaker, and being a sex worker is just her cover, whereas the name Eros implies that love would be her primary directive. While initially this debate seems gratuitous at best, it is in fact a subtle introduction to one of the main conflicts of the novel, that is, the limited emotional capabilities of biosynthetics and this conflict is explored further through K's characterization in particular. Eurydice, K's love interest, is the reason he finds any answers, he doesn't actually save her—or even fail to save her—from death or any kind of danger. If anything, in the very end, she tries to save him

---

[26] Eros (Ἔρος- meaning erotic love) is the Greek God of love, his more well-known counterpart is Cupid, often portrayed as a cherub. Eros is often the troublemaker of the story and takes is seen in such works as the Apollonius' *Argonautica* in which Eros shoots Medea with an arrow to make her fall in love with Jason.

from his lack of emotions, whether or not she is successful is left unanswered. She, too, is a kind of inversion. Cassandra,[27] Eurydice's mother, and in part K's mother as well, doesn't have any prophetic abilities nor is her advice ever ignored. Rather, she is the one who acts out at the last minute and oversteps by stealing K and attempting to complete the process of making him into a "third kind of biosynthetic" turning herself into a male biosynthetic in the process. However, according to the suffix, "andra" is likely the genitive form of the root word "ἄνηρ" meaning man. Cassandra is the only character that shifts from a human woman to a biosynthetic man which gives her and then his connection to the name new meaning. While sex changes and species changes are not all that rare in Greek mythology, they are not typically a recurring theme in csf. The prefix "Cass" likely comes from the perfect indicative form "κεκασμαι" of "καινυμεναι" meaning to shine or excel, which doesn't as clearly fit Cassandra's character or role in the novel. Her character arc is more in line with Icarus's in that she excels to a certain degree, but hubris gets in the way and leads to her eventual and self-proclaimed failure.

Daedalus[28] Zheng is perhaps the character who most directly follows the path left by his namesake. Daedalus, Latinized from the Greek Daidalos, from the root δαιδάλλω meaning to work cunningly/skillfully. In Greek mythology Daedalus is, most notably, the designer of the labyrinth that traps the minotaur. In *the Dream Devourer*, Daedalus Zheng is the inventor of the dream implantation technology (58). Technology that is used to keep biosynthetics subordinate and make sure they are identifiable. It is Daedalus Zheng who warns against the use of the dream implantation technology, explicitly not from a humanistic point of view but from the standpoint

---

[27] Cassandra or Kassandra (Κασσάνδρη) the daughter of Priam and Hecuba was a priestess of Apollo. In trying to woo her Apollo gave her the gift of foresight, and when she either went back on her word or simply did not return his affections he added to the gift a curse that no one would believe her true prophecies

[28] Daedalus is the Latinized from of Daidalos or Δαίδαλος derived from the Greek word δαιδάλλω which means to work cunningly. Daedalus is the Athenian inventor banished to Crete where he designs the labyrinth that traps the Minotaur for King Minos. He is eventually imprisoned in the labyrinth with his son Icarus. They fashion wings and Daedalus warns Icarus not to fly to close to the sun or the ocean, a warning which Icarus ignores.

that stunting the emotional growth of biosynthetics will have unforeseen consequences against their productivity. As Daedalus of Greek mythology was imprisoned and isolated from society in order to keep the secrets of the labyrinth from spreading, Daedalus of *The Dream Devourer* isolates himself from society when his technology was used in a way he didn't approve. While Daedalus Zheng is not a perfect carbon copy for the Greek Daedalus, by only having one character that is clearly and distinctly aligned with his namesake in significant ways, Zheng places particular emphasis on that character. Furthermore, by giving that character the same last name as himself Egoyan Zheng emphasizes that he is not only the inventor of the dream technology but the inventor of this labyrinthine book itself, thus subtly implying that these choices were purposeful. Zheng actively reinterprets the source context to suit his own needs. As such, while these references are necessarily evidence that this text is "born translated," they do not necessarily imply that the text was born *for* translation. Instead, these elements read perhaps like appropriation for an inside local audience rather than appealing to an outside global audience.

Certain similarities between Zheng's characters and their namesakes seem to be on the part of superficial borrowing—particularly since none of these names really have anything in common with each other and are quite isolated from their heritage. Eros doesn't have an Aphrodite, Eurydice has K rather than Orpheus, Daedalus doesn't have an Icarus. However, the fake copyright page not only contributes to the construction of Zheng's world—in that he has set the copyright date to 2297, almost 80 years after the novel takes place—but Zheng goes so far as to name the editor in chief: Orpheus Singer. Thus, demonstrating that these names were carefully and purposefully chosen. Why Orpheus is not Eurydice's love interest is still unclear, but by naming the editor in chief Orpheus Singer he

is demonstrating not only an understanding of Greek mythology[29] but also that naming his main protagonist "K" rather than "Orpheus" was a calculated choice. He chose to take these various characters and isolate them from their source material, reconfiguring their stories and their meaning to suit his own narrative. Independent of the author's intention by shifting the reception of these characters, they turn in part into demented "refractions" per André Lefevere. Some of their source meaning is retained but by the same token their individual meaning and purpose shift. Each of these elements contribute to *The Dream Devourer's* "born translated-ness" in that due to these multilinguistic and multicultural elements, "translation functions as a thematic, structural, conceptual and …even typographical device" (Walkowitz 4). While it is difficult to surmise whether or not this text is "*written for translation*" (3), it without a doubt "approaches translation as a medium" (3). Xia Jia and Gu Shi both treat translation as a medium to some extent, but their language usage is far more visually and thematically disruptive where Zheng weaves his references throughout the text. At first, the mix of Roman alphabet and Chinese characters is jarring, but after the first few chapters it feels like the languages are comfortably integrated. Zheng aptly demonstrates the hybridization of language and culture. These references are a complex mixture of not only the Anglophone and Hellenistic traditions, but the international csf tradition as well.

When it comes to formally—and playfully—displaying "its own multilingual start," Zheng does this first through the use of the mock copyright page briefly mentioned above. This copyright page—as opposed to the actual copyright page at the end of the book—merges English and Chinese just as the rest of the novel does. For example the mock copyright claims that the publishing company is "Dark Nebula," written first in Chinese with a parenthetical gloss. The

---

[29] Orpheus was most famous for being an exceptionally talented musician and singer.

fake copyright page is on the first page of the novel, just after the dedication and just beneath

a letter from the author. The letter is as follows:

> Reading Directions: The annotations of this novel add up to nearly 30 pages.
>
> It acts as one part of the novel; even though you have to wade through the storyline of the
> novel, but if you jump over and don't read it, it will not go so far as to impair concerning
> your understanding. The reader can choose of oneself whether or not to read. The
> suggested method: the first time reading through the book, if you wish to preserve a
> relatively stable even reading rhythm, or want to consider the annotations for the time
> being to be omitted and don't read. (the translation is my own).

While the real copyright page is on the very last page of the book.[30] However, even in this

fabricated world, Egoyan Zheng names himself the author. Perhaps by citing himself as the

author in his mock copyright he is implying that he is one of Daedalus Zheng's descendants and

gives the novel a kind of imagined validity.[31] By including a fake copyright page, Zheng not

only contributes to the projected historicity of his imagined future, but he contributes to the

feeling that this novel is itself—although currently only available in its entirety in either

simplified or traditional Chinese—a translation. Perhaps all science fiction is a translation as it is

translating the author's vision of a perhaps possible future onto the page, but Zheng takes this

one step further, not only with the additional copyright page but also through the use of extensive

footnotes.

Parenthetical glossaries—another strategy of active translingual and cultural translation—

are used sporadically throughout the novel. One of our first introductions to biosynthetics is

---

[30] After perusing my own collection of Chinese-language books, both simplified and traditional, published in China and in Taiwan, there seems to be no consensus on the placement of the copyright page, so this is either a choice from the publisher or the author.
[31] Csicsery-Ronay Jr. calls this "future histories" in his book *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction.*

the various regulations surrounding biosynthetics. In establishing the circumstances of the

protagonist, the evolution of science from robots to biosynthetics, and their relation to

humans, is summarized:

Since then, compared to other non-human "humanoid species"-including the older Robot"

(*jiqiren*), the current mainstream human species "biochemical human" (bio-synthetics, or

sheng fuzhi ren), or, the relatively rare, "Cyborg" (or biocombined person, *hetiren*), etc.

"Basic Law on Ethical Purification" clearly guarantees the right of human beings as the only

priority species system. And to ensure that the law is up to date, the Basic Law is also limited

to a certain extent. Granted internally to the federal government, it may be necessary to

regulate legal differences between humans and other "humanoid species." (my translation)

(自此，相对于其他非人类之"类人物种"—包括较为古老的 "机器人" （Robot),目前主

流人物种 "生化人" （或称生复制人，Bio-synthetics), 以及), 较为少见的 "合体人" (或

称生合体人，Cyborg) 等等 "种性净化基本法"明确保障了人类做为唯一优先物种制权

利。且为确保法律与时具进，基本法亦于一定限度内授权予联邦政府，得视情形弹规

范人类与其他"类人物种"间之法定差异. (Zheng 16)

It is in this brief report that Zheng translates, rephrases, and redefines these various sf terms

establishing his new term "biosynthetics" amongst the extant oeuvre of humanoid machines.

While this novel is clearly inspired by Dick's novella and the subsequent *Blade Runner* film, he

purposefully does not name his own androids, either android or replicants, nor does he even

address the terms as a possibility consequently setting his own creations apart. By naming his

creations both in Chinese and English, he perhaps anticipates the possibility of English

translation and takes the translators' choice from them, as he names them in Chinese and English.[32] Consequently, this act of translation almost removes the opportunity for translation to occur, for when authors translate their own works the status of "translation" is complicated. Though Walkowitz hints at author translations or self-translation she does not analyze the implications in depth. A crucial element of "born translated" literature is the role the author plays in the act of translation. For, when authors translate their own work, the question of fidelity is almost moot, for it is much easier to claim the texts are siblings and as such one need not be faithful to the other.[33]

Zheng uses intralingual translations, that is rephrasing certain terms in Chinese, throughout text. As in the example above, when discussing what bio-synthetics are, frequently the narrator will use a Chinese term, rephrase it in Chinese and provide an English gloss. Zheng uses intralingual translation most often when referring to K's feelings. The third person narrator often translates their own explanations, saying K feels one way and then correcting, or greater specifying their own language. Often, these instances where the narrator rephrases something has to do primarily with nuance. Intralingual translations not only build on the sense that we are in a dream but also demonstrate the act of translation. These moments of self-translation generally coincide with some sort of revelation for the character, for example "K realized he had returned back to the appearance of a child. No, he definitely did not 'realize.' He just knew" (5) ("K发现自己回到了少年时的模样。不，他

---

[32] And yet English language plot summaries frequently refer to Zheng's bio-synthetics as cyborgs or clones even though he specifically says bio-synthetics are different from cyborgs and clones and robots in significant ways.

[33] Zheng takes on the role of translator at several points as parenthetical glosses and short English phrases are sprinkled throughout the text, most often when the narrator introduces new scientific language that is either unique to his world (i.e. the dream technology) or as seen above when referring to terms that are exclusive to science fiction writ large.

并未 "发现"。他只是知道。此刻他正身处于一仅有四壁，余皆空无一物之简陋旧公寓房

间). It is at this point in the story that K starts to confront his bio-synthetic nature, most

importantly the fact that any memories he has of being a child, are fabricated. K's lack of a

childhood is emphasized when later on the narrator writes, "No, incorrect. He's remembering

wrong. He did not have a childhood. So… that is not his own childhood. That is not how he

learned it, is it someone else's memory? (不，不对。他记错了。他根本没有童年。那

么。。。那不是他自己的童年。）(15). M also engage in this sort of self-translation "No, at

first, I didn't 'run into' Cassandra. I just 'saw' her" (不，最初，我没有'遇见' Cassandra。 我

只是'看见'她) (341). Characters sporadically engage in this sort of self-translation or

rephrasing, choosing more particular language without leaving the Chinese language. This sort of

visible act of translation within one language is largely ignored by Walkowitz as an aspect of

"born translated" literature. Her definition of "translation" remains fairly strict, despite her

analysis of Anglophone works that masquerade as translations. Yet this kind of self-translation

is, while not often represented in literature, a common aspect of everyday communication.

Repeatedly refining their own language or correcting one another's memories not only

contributes to the realism of the novel but simultaneously strengthens the dream-like sense of the

novel, mimicking the way that dreams are hazy and clear as you try and remember them the next

day.

Moreover, while footnotes are not exclusive to translation they are a significant tool of

translation that allows the translator room to take on an editorial role and provide extra

contextual information that would be readily available to the source audience but not necessarily

the target audience.[34] According to prominent cultural theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah, the purpose of a translation with para-textual apparatus, a "thick translation," is to essentially bring the text closer to the author—it is pedagogical, much of the information you need is provided, specifically cultural and historical context. Footnotes play a similar role in the formulation of Egoyan Zheng's story. While the novel still makes sense without the footnotes, it is through these footnotes that the narrator provides "historical" context, often going in depth revealing crucial information for the plot. These footnotes are so extensive that they often take over the primary text extending over several pages serves to complicate the eventuality of its translation. As publishers often disapprove of footnotes as a tool for translation in that they distract from the primary text, the fact that Zheng uses—perhaps overuses—footnotes makes it that much more difficult for any translator—like Cara Healey—to utilize footnotes to bring clarity to the target audience. These footnotes are almost satirical as they take over the primary text sometimes covering multiple full pages. On the very first page, there is a note from the author that says there are three ways to read this text and he recommends you try all three.

While authors can rarely be trusted when discussing their own literature how they value or understand, translation can help decipher the use of translation as a medium in their own work. In 2007 Zheng was on the longlist for the Man Booker prize for his first novel *Fleeting Light*. Similar to Lu Xun, Egoyan Zheng turned away from medicine to pursue writing. In a 2007 interview with Ian Bartholomew, Zheng recounts his motivation not only for writing but also for personally seeking out and paying for a translation of his first novel. "Most

---

[34] There are a handful of times when Zheng writes something in English without providing any contextualization in Chinese, and those primarily occur in footnotes. For example, a footnote refers to Daedalus Zheng's memoir with only the English title provided: "Daedalus Zheng: A *Melancholy Prophet*" (60).

Westerners, if they want to read (East) Asian literature, will think of China or Japan; they don't know that Taiwan has works of equal caliber…The publishing industry (for literature) in Taiwan is too small; it cannot afford to bear the costs of translation. So how do you make your work known abroad? One way or another, you have to get it translated. The publishers won't do it, so the only thing to do is pay for it myself" (*Taipei Times)*. While, at this time, he had not yet published any sf, he did have plans to write sf, and this remains to be a fair concern for csf anthologies rarely include works by authors from Hong Kong or Taiwan, instead prioritizing PRC authors. Further, by 2010—the time of the novel's initial publication—science fiction is gaining traction in mainland China and to so carefully not reference any PRC sf authors or texts or even classical Chinese works and instead allude to Ancient Greek characters along with a slew of other—primarily Western—postmodern references, is certainly purposeful. While Zheng doesn't explain his cultural identity in depth, he does seem to have a degree of pride in Taiwanese writers, and as such it is reasonable to assume that he would set out to write not only a story for a global audience but also a story for his local audience, or perhaps a story for his local audience as a global audience, including the larger body of Taiwanese peoples living in diaspora as well.

Clearly Zheng was focused on gaining international acclaim, as such it makes sense that he would gear his work towards an international audience, all of which supports Walkowitz's claim with regard to "born translated" literature. However, intent is not everything. In talking with one of the translators, it is clear that the extensive footnotes and multicultural references did not make the text easier to translate. Cara Healey, who has translated a few chapters of *The Dream Devourer* for the anthology *The Reincarnated Giant*, highlights Zheng's style, technical diction, the plot's complexity, and the texts interdisciplinary references as elements that made *The*

Dream Devourer particularly challenging to translate. Therefore, while these tools make this text "born translated" on the one hand, they are in part the very tools that made the text itself difficult to translate. Yet, Healey adds that there was an element of fun or excitement that came with the challenge. The fact that a text resists translation does not necessarily mean that the translator is reticent to translate the text. Walkowitz's *Born Translated* largely ignores the role of publishers and translators in birthing such "born translated" texts.

With regard to languages that span multiple countries like English and Chinese, it's difficult to tie them to any specific culture. Therefore, the inclusion of multiple languages is not enough to discredit *The Dream Devourer* as a Taiwanese novel for a Taiwanese audience. Furthermore, the fact that the novel takes place in multiple different countries is also not enough to discredit *the Dream Devourer* as a Taiwanese novel for a Taiwanese audience. In fact, despite the very few explicit mentions of Taiwan in the text, several scholars and reviewers have commented that the novel is indicative of Taiwanese literature. Or in other words, that the conflict between humans and biosynthetics is indicative of the conflict between China and Taiwan but can also be expanded to symbolize more generic global conflicts,[35] even though this connection is never explicitly made in the text. The setting jumps from the USA, to New Delhi, to Taiwan, with the majority of the action taking place in Taiwan. Notably, the characters never go to China or Japan. Furthermore, as stated previously, Chinese literature is completely ignored, and Japanese literature is only mentioned once. Given Taiwan's complicated and sometimes violent history with both China and Japan, these references, or lack of references, cannot go ignored. It is when K learns of the thirteen death experiences—that Cassandra and M programmed him with as a part of his

---

[35] Song Mingwei goes into more detail on the connection between *The Dream Devourer's* plot and the conflict between Taiwan and China in his introduction to the anthology *Reincarnated Giant*.

creation—that we learn that some of his "death experiences" or perhaps "implanted dreams" come from the deaths of Chinese people and Japanese people (350). This detail alone gives weight to the notion that K is a symbol for Taiwan. It is these references, both geographical and cultural, that demonstrate an understanding of the globalized world we live in. Due to the advent of the internet, it is very difficult for any nation or community to be exclusively insular, and this text mimics that, bouncing from one community to the next, sometimes mixing communities with each other to a point where the division is indecipherable. Each shift in setting is akin to a dream, which gives the text a general sense of being adrift, connected with the world rather than any one place, a sensation more and more people resonate with as individuals interact more and more outside of their own cultural circles.

Regardless of setting or context, Wei Huangdan—contemporary Chinese literature scholar—highlights Egoyan Zheng as one of the writers who is writing the "New Native Taiwanese Novel." In "The Disobedience and Opposition of the Patriarchal Ethics in Taiwan's New Native Novels" (台湾新乡土小说对宗法伦理的悖离与反悖离), Wei Huangdan highlights elements of the new native Taiwanese novel as deviations from patriarchal ethics that are "constructed by tradition." Additionally, "the form integrates time and space jumping, absurd narrative, innocuous narrative, magic, back design, etc." (融合时空跳跃、荒 诞叙事、无伤叙事、魔 幻、后设等表现手法。这种"悖离" 的姿态被不少评论者批评为"怪异""、轻质"、"伪乡土" 等等" (90). While *the Dream Devourer* may not include every element of the "new native Taiwanese novel," it certainly has elements of space and time jumping and absurd narrative, elements I've touched on previously. One of the most important elements that Wei Huangdan describes is that the new native novel writing "allows people who are now suffering from

physical and mental torture in the collapse of patriarchal ethics to comfort each other with the suffering people in the novel and revive the final dignity of the soul, give comfort, and set oneself at ease" (my translation). (无论如何，台湾新乡土小说"正言若反"的书写方式，让 如今在宗法伦理崩溃中遭受身心折磨的人，能与小说中 的苦难人物相互安慰，重拾 心灵那最后的尊严、慰藉与 自在自适 91). In an interview with the *Taipei Times*, Zheng builds on this perspective on suffering, he says, "To tell a good story is fine, but in terms of Modernism, can you convey an understanding of a deeply complex dilemma? We (Taiwan's best authors) try to achieve a level of philosophical complexity" (*Taipei Times*). At the heart of *The Dream Devourer* is that despite K's emotional disconnect he is to some degree suffering; he is battling with this deep psychological and philosophical conflict—what is he? Though K is constantly referred to as a failed experiment, the ending is not so opaque. Perhaps Zheng is telling the story of Taiwan's past attempts to become a sovereign nation, and by ending the story without a clear statement as to whether K was ever saved or "fixed" he is leaving it open for Taiwan to find sovereignty.

Despite taking place across the globe, drawing from multiple traditions, particularly western sf rather than Chinese or Taiwanese history, Zheng's novel has a particular sense of "Taiwan" about it. By utilizing translation as a form and incorporating English in his text, Zheng is not simply anticipating the eventuality of his work being read by an Anglophone audience. Instead, he acknowledges his Taiwanese audience as multilingual and multicultural. In this respect, the Taiwanese audience is itself a global audience, and his work is perhaps "born bilingual" rather than "born translated." In discussing the place of English in the discussion of World Literature, Mufti contends that "English is the preeminent cultural

system for the assimilation of the world's languages" (146). Zheng acknowledges the influence that English has on world literature and sf in particular, without letting English own the novel. While Zheng does include a parenthetical gloss here and there with an English translation, and while all of the characters' names are written in English, those English names often make multidirectional references, rather than allow the Anglophone (or western) narrative to take precedent. As Mufti claims, "A serious consideration of this historical process is obstructed by the ubiquitous persistence of nation-thinking, which naturalizes the historically contingent contemporary situation into a landscape of peoples in possession of their 'own' languages and literary traditions" (149). Consequently, Taiwanese national identity is not about excluding all outside influences but rather embracing or cannibalizing them in a new context. Tang Xiaobing emphasizes Taiwan's ambiguity as integral to Taiwan's identity when discussing the possibility of "Taiwan Literature." He writes, "Efforts to make Taiwan literature pure, singular, and definite would only pose limits on its legitimate possibilities and reaches. The irrepressible vitality of Taiwan literature already makes it an ever more compelling case that by 'Chinese literature,' we understand… a vast literature written in Chinese and interacting with long and uneven literary and cultural traditions" (415). Establishing who the Taiwanese audience is leads to establishing what a Taiwanese national identity might look like. Kwok-Kan Tam—scholar of transcultural issues in literature—argues in his paper "A Dilemma for the Translator: Bicultural Elements in Bilingual Texts" that "cultural hybridization is not just a colonial product, but also an effect of globalization" (90). As such, "cultural in-betweenness" (96) is more of a necessary part of configuring national identities. While the hybridization of culture and language and identity is of particular concern to a Taiwanese audience, it is also an issue of global importance. As

globalization becomes more a part of many individual identities, it becomes more difficult to pretend that national identities are autonomous and are not at all influenced by "other" cultures.

Conclusion

All of these texts that I discuss in this project are "born translated" to some degree, however the label of "born translated" is only the start, as societies become more and more globalized and by consequence are increasingly multilingual (as opposed to increasingly anglicized.) Rather than incorporating multilingual and multicultural references to simply appeal to some outside Anglophone audience, these authors wield these references to suit their particular messages for their immediate audiences. Rather than writing for a global "outside" audience, these writers are writing for their local audience, recognizing that the local is increasingly globalized. Though Egoyan Zheng most explicitly uses the cyborg or bio-synthetic to represent a complicated national identity, Xia Jia's "Psychology Game," Gu Shi's "Chimera" and Egoyan Zheng's *The Dream Devourer* all, to different degrees, illustrate what national identities might look like in a globalized world. As Donna Haraway explains, the cyborg is the classic sf symbol for combined binaries, human and machine, bio and synthetic. And yet these binaries are not as clear-cut as we would like to believe. Just as the line between human and machine is mostly gray, so is that classic divide between "east" and "west." Rather than autonomous, pure, national mythologies, nations of the future are perhaps more "cyborg," built of supposedly opposing parts that blur the line between inside and outside and, by so doing, create a new kind of entity: a cyborg nation.

Works Cited

Barnett, David. "'People Hope My Book Will Be China's Star Wars': Liu Cixin on China's

      Exploding Sci-Fi Scene." *The Guardian*. 14, Dec. 016.

      https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/dec/14/liu-cixin-chinese-sci-fi-universal-the-

      three-body-problem

Bartholomew, Ian. "The proof of the pudding ...Taiwanese writer Egoyan Zheng wants the world

      to see that Taiwan has some top-class literary talent and is a match for its giant neighbor

      in terms of quality." Nov. 2007.

      http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2007/11/04/2003386252

Cheah, Pheng. *What is a World?* Duke University Press, Durham; London, 2016. Print.

Csicsery-Ronay, Istvan, Jr., and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay. *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*,

      Wesleyan University Press, 2008. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

      https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=776852.

Emmerich, Karen. *Literary Translation and the Making of Originals*. Bloomsbury Academic,

      New York, NY, 2017. Print.

Gu Shi. "Chimera" translated by S. Qiuyi Liu and Ken Liu. *Clarkesworld Magazine.* Vol. 114.

      March 2016. *http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/gu_03_16/*

Gu Shi. "Chimera" (*Qian Heti*). *Science Fiction World,* October 2015.

Haraway, Donna. 1991 (1984). "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-

      Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." In Donna Haraway, ed., *Simians, Cyborgs,*

      and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York: Routledge, 149–181.

Healey, Cara. Personal Interview. June 22, 2020.

Healey, Cara. "Madmen and Iron Houses: Lu Xun, Information Degradation, and Generic Hybridity

in Contemporary Chinese SF." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2019, pp. 511–

524. *JSTOR*,

Isaacson, Nathaniel. *Celestial Empire: The Emergence of Chinese Science Fiction*. Wesleyan

University Press. 2017.

Jameson, Fredric. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." Social Text

15 (Aut. 1986): 65-88.

Ji, Zhengping. "Several Opinions on Promoting the Development of Science Fiction Films"《关

于促进科幻电影发展的若干意见》*China Film Administration.* April 2020.

http://www.chinafilm.gov.cn/chinafilm/contents/141/2533.shtml

Lefevere, Andre. "Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of

Literature." *Modern Language Studies*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1982, pp. 3–20.,

www.jstor.org/stable/3194526.

Liu, Cixin. *The Dark Forest*. Ed. Joel Martinsen. First edition. ed. Tor, A Tom Doherty

Associates Book, New York, 2015. Print. Hei an Sen Lin. English.

Liu, Cixin. "The Worst of All Possible Universes and the Best of All Possible Earths: *Three*

Body and Chinese Science Fiction." *Invisible Planets*. Ed. Ken Liu. First edition. ed. Tor,

New York, 2016. 359-365.

Liu, Ken. "Exploring the Frontier: A Conversation with Xia Jia." *Clarkesworld Magazine.* Issue

100. January 2015. http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/xia_interview/

Lovell, Julie. "Chinese Literature in the Global Canon: The Quest for Recognition." *Global*

Chinese Literature: Critical Essays, edited by Jing Tsu, and David Der-wei Wang,

BRILL, 2010. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, pp. 197-218.

Lydia He Liu. ed. *Tokens of Exchange*. Duke University Press, Durham, 1999.

Mufti, Aamir. *Forget English!*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2016.

Qian Jiang. "Translation and the Development of Science Fiction in Twentieth-Century

China." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2013, pp. 116–132. *JSTOR*,

www.jstor.org/stable/10.5621/sciefictstud.40.1.0116.

Tang, Xiaobing. "On the Concept of Taiwan Literature." *Modern China*, vol. 25, no. 4, 1999, pp.

379–422. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/189445.

Tam, Kwok-kan. "A Dilemma for the Translator: Bicultural Elements in Bilingual Texts."

Culture in Translation: Reception of Chinese Literature in Comparative Perspective.

Edited by Kwok-kan Tam and Kelly Kar-yue Chan. Open University of Hong Kong

Press. 2012.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich. "On the Different Methods of Translating." trans. Susan Bernofsky.

The Translation Studies Reader. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. 3rd ed. ed. Routledge, London;

New York, 2012. p. 43-63.

Song, Mingwei. "Variations on Utopia in Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction." *Science

Fiction Studies*. vol. 40, No. 1, Chinese Science Fiction (March 2013). pp. 86-102.

The Reincarnated Giant. Eds. Mingwei Song and Theodore Huters. Columbia University Press,

New York, 2018. Print.

Venuti, Lawrence. Hijacking Translation: How Comp Lit Continues to Suppress Translated

Texts. *boundary 2* 1 May 2016; 43 (2): 179–204.

Walkowitz, Rebecca L. *Born Translated*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2015. Web.

Wu Dingbo. "Chinese Science Fiction." *Handbook of Chinese Popular Culture*. Ed. Wu Dingbo

and Patrick D. Murphy. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994. 257-77.

Xia Jia. "What Makes Chinese Science Fiction Chinese?" *Invisible Planets: Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction in Translation*. Tor Books. 2016.

Xia Jia. "Psychology Game." (X*inli Youxi*). *Knowledge is Power*. volume 9. September 2015

Xia Jia. "Psychology Game." transl. Emily Jin and Ken Liu. *Clarkesworld Maga*zine. Issue 133, October 2017.

Yan, Wu. (2013). "Great Wall Planet: introducing Chinese science fiction." Translated by Wang Pengfei and Ryan Nichols. *Science Fiction Studies. 40(1), 1-14.*

Yun Fang-lo. "Translating Culture: (Re)constructing Regionalism in English Translations of Taiwan's Regional Prose Literature." In *Culture in Translation: Reception of Chinese Literature in Comparative Perspective*. edited by Kwok-kan Tam, and Kelly Kar-yue Chan. Open University of Hong Kong Press. 2015. *69-89.*

Zheng, Egoyan. *The Dream Devourer* (*Shi Meng Ren*). Shanghai Ren Min Chu Ban She, 2017.

Zheng, Egoyan. "The Dream Devourer" excerpt. trans. Cara Healey. *The Reincarnated Giant*. Eds. Mingwei Song and Theodore Huters. Columbia University Press, New York, 2018. Print.

Zheng, Egoyan. Personal Interview. July 3, 2020.