

**Shakespeare in China: A Comparative Study of Zhu Shenghao's and  
Fu Guangming's Translations of *Hamlet***



By

**Chen Zhihang**

683-FLL/MSENG/F21

Supervisor

Dr. Hafiz Abid Masood

Department of English

Faculty of Languages and Literature

International Islamic University, Islamabad

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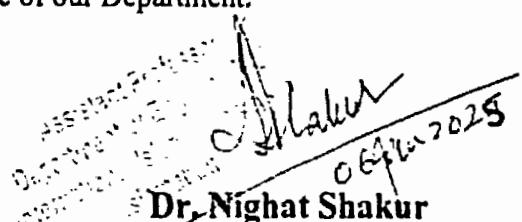
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FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE  
OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
ISLAMABAD-PAKISTAN

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## CERTIFICATE

It is certified that Mr. Chen Zhihang Registration No.683-FLL/MSENG/F21 MS scholar has successfully incorporated the changes suggested by the examiners. His dissertation title is "Shakespeare in China: A Comparative Study of Zhu Shenghao's and Fu Guangming's Translations of *Hamlet*". I have read the thesis and certify that it has been revised and improved in the light of the suggestions made by the Viva Voce Committee in its meeting held on 11 of December, 2024 and that it is according to the format and style of our Department.

  
Dr. Nighat Shakur  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English (FLL), IIUI

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## Abstract

Shakespeare's plays are considered timeless classics in world literature. The translation of his works in China has a history spanning over a century. Since the dawn of the 20th century, continued translations of his works, especially *Hamlet*, have introduced various perspectives for the in-depth study of Shakespeare's oeuvre in China. Among these translations, Bian Zhilin's rendition stands out for its poetic style, while Zhu Shenghao and Liang Shiqiu's prose translations have gained widespread popularity. Since the early 21st century, Chinese scholars such as Zeng Chongming, Gu Zhengkun, Huang Guobin, and Fu Guangming have embarked on re-translating Shakespeare's classic plays. However, comprehensive comparative studies that encompass a broad temporal scope remain limited. Despite the recent publication of Fu Guangming's translation, there is a notable lack of research focusing on his work. This dissertation, grounded in Skopos theory and the concepts of domestication and foreignization, conducts a comparative analysis of two significant translations of *Hamlet* by Zhu Shenghao (1947) and Fu Guangming (2018), spanning over half a century. It explores the historical context and practical significance of Shakespeare's translation in China, identifies key differences between the two versions, and explores the underlying logic and considerations guiding translation activities across distinct historical periods.

Key words: Chinese Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Zhu Shenghao, Fu Guangming, Skopos theory, domestication, foreignization

### **Declaration**

I, Chen Zhihang, Registration No. 683-FLL/MSENG/F21, a student of MS English at the International Islamic University Islamabad, hereby solemnly declare that this dissertation, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MS English, is my original work. All sources used have been duly acknowledged wherever applicable in the dissertation. This work has not been submitted previously, nor will it be submitted in the future, for the award of any other degree or qualification at this or any other university.



**Chen Zhihang**

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During my three-year study at the International Islamic University Islamabad, I underwent an important chapter in my life. Beyond acquiring a substantial breadth of knowledge, I cultivated invaluable life skills and wisdom that I hold dear as enduring treasures.

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However, it is imperative to acknowledge that this thesis is limited by the scarcity of available materials and my current knowledge. Therefore, addressing these constraints will be a priority in my future research endeavors.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was a renowned British playwright and poet who created an extensive body of work, including 37 plays, 154 sonnets, and two narrative poems. In his works, Shakespeare explored a variety of themes, such as the complexities of human nature, power struggles, and the entanglements of love, offering profound insights into various aspects of human society. His innovative use of language, groundbreaking structures, and character portrayals pioneered a new form of drama, profoundly influencing subsequent creations.

Shakespeare's plays started their international journey during his lifetime. British troupes traveled across the European continent and created multilingual productions. The first non-English edition of Shakespeare's complete works emerged in France between 1745 and 1746, gradually replacing earlier Dutch and German versions. These works spread to Russia and Turkey and were further disseminated through Spanish and Portuguese into South America. By the 20th century, Shakespeare's plays had been translated into Icelandic, Greek, Quebecois French, Korean, Arabic, and Zulu. The complete works are now available in over 30 languages, with certain pieces translated into more than 80 languages (Bosman 286).

The Chinese engagement with Shakespearean literature commenced relatively late compared to other countries. In 1839, Lin Zexu, a Qing Dynasty official, introduced British literature in his book *Si Zhou Zhi* (Gazetteer of the Four Continents), wherein he referenced Shakespeare and Milton, among others. The translation journey began with the adaptation of Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, and over time, Chinese translators diligently pursued the translation of Shakespeare's plays. This extensive effort culminated in the publication of the first complete collection of Shakespeare's works in China in 1978.

Over the past century, the translation of *Hamlet* has been constantly updated with the changes of the times. Of all Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* has attracted the most

Chinese translators, with no fewer than a dozen different translations into Chinese having been published since 1903. The first full-length translation of *Hamlet* into Chinese was by Tian Han in 1921, and the subsequent translators include Shao Ting (1924), Liang Shiqiu (1936), Cao Weifeng (1944), Zhu Shenghao (1947), Bian Zhilin (1956), Lin Tongji (1982), Sun Dayu (1991), Fang Ping (2000), Peng Jingxi (2001), Huang Guobin (2013), Fu Guangming (2018), etc.

From classical Chinese to vernacular Chinese, from poetic style to prose style, these translators present the unique charm of Shakespeare's plays in different times, and establish the classic status of Shakespeare's plays in the history of Chinese translated literature. Among them, Zhu Shenghao and Liang Shiqiu have published the most translations. Zhu Shenghao's translation of *Hamlet* has been published in more than 30 editions by over 20 publishers, while Liang Shiqiu's translation has been published in more than 20 editions by over 10 publishers.

Since 2012, contemporary scholar Fu Guangming began to translate the complete works of Shakespeare independently, which have been successively published by Tianjin People's Publishing House. Up to now, he has completed and published 29 of Shakespeare's plays, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV* (both parts), *Richard II*, *Henry V*, etc. It is worth noting that his translation of *Hamlet*, referred to other classic translations and provided extensive annotations, has been well received by researchers and readers since its publication in 2018.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Existing research on Shakespeare's works, particularly *Hamlet*, has predominantly focused on their reception, dissemination, and the comparative analysis of translations within relatively short time spans. However, there is a noticeable lack of studies that compare translations across a broader historical timeline. Moreover, despite the recent publication of Fu Guangming's translation, his

work has received limited academic attention. This dissertation addresses these gaps by conducting a comparative analysis of Zhu Shenghao's 1947 translation and Fu Guangming's 2018 translation, covering a span of over seventy years. It aims to identify and analyze the key differences between these two versions and investigate the rationale, historical context, and translation strategies guiding each translator's approach. By doing so, this dissertation may contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolution of Shakespearean translation in China.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. How do the translators render religious and cultural features of *Hamlet* in Chinese and why do they differ in their rendering?
2. What are the differences of the use of paratexts between these two translations and why do they differ from each other?
3. What translation strategies have been employed by the translators and what are the causes of such differences?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To examine the early reception and impact of Shakespeare in China.
2. To analyze the differences between the translations of *Hamlet* by Zhu Shenghao and Fu Guangming.
3. To explore the translation strategies employed by the translators based on theories of Hans Vermeer and Lawrence Venuti.

### **1.5 Significance**

This dissertation undertakes a comparative study of two notable translations of *Hamlet*, spanning more than half a century. By focusing on these translations, it aims to draw attention within the academic community to the achievements of contemporary translators in the 21st century. The research also seeks to provide a valuable reference for future researchers interested in studying Fu Guangming's

translations of Shakespeare. Furthermore, it addresses the current dearth of research in the translations of *Hamlet* in the modern era, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of Shakespearean studies in China.

### **1.6 Organization of the Dissertation**

The main body of the dissertation is structured into five chapters. The first chapter provides a brief introduction to the topic area, the problem statement, the research objectives and questions, the significance, and the organization of the dissertation. The second chapter examines the global and Chinese reception of Shakespeare, with a particular focus on the reception of *Hamlet* in China. It reviews several representative Chinese translations of *Hamlet*, including those by Tian Han (1921), Liang Shiqiu (1936), Zhu Shenghao (1947), Bian Zhilin (1956), and Fu Guangming (2018). The third chapter outlines the principles and standards of theories employed, including their origins, development, basic principles and translation standards. The fourth chapter conducts a comparative analysis of the two translations, focusing on religious and cultural features, paratexts, language styles, soliloquies, and other aspects. The fifth chapter presents the conclusions and findings of the research, offering comprehensive answers to the research questions.

## Chapter 2 Global and Chinese Reception of Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is a distinguished master of drama from the English Renaissance, often considered the pinnacle of English and Western theatrical history. As Britain emerged as a maritime power and embarked on overseas colonial expansion from the 17th century onward, Shakespeare's works became a source of pride for British culture and exemplars of English literature. His plays are not only significant symbols of British cultural heritage but also form the cornerstone of British theater troupes and actors on international tours. Shakespeare's dramas are celebrated for their deep characterizations, vibrant language, and expansive themes, garnering widespread acclaim and popularity among audiences worldwide.

This chapter investigates the global impact of Shakespeare's works, tracing their reception and adaptation across diverse regions, including Europe, America, Asia, Africa, and the Arab world. By examining Shakespeare's influence within specific cultural contexts—such as Germany, France, India, Japan, and the Arabic-speaking world—the chapter emphasizes how his works have been disseminated, interpreted, and performed in various societies. Particular attention is devoted to the reception of *Hamlet* in China, where Shakespeare's legacy has undergone significant evolution through multiple translations and performances. The chapter concludes with a comparative analysis of the major Chinese translations of *Hamlet*, focusing on the contributions of key translators like Tian Han, Liang Shiqiu, Zhu Shenghao, Bian Zhilin, and Fu Guangming. Through this exploration, the chapter seeks to illuminate both the global reach of Shakespeare's influence and the distinctive ways in which his works have been adapted to suit diverse cultural and historical contexts.

### 2.1 Shakespeare in Europe

Shakespeare lived in a period that coincided with the twilight of feudalism and the gradual emergence of capitalism. During this era, Europe was still deeply influenced by medieval feudalistic ideologies, which placed emphasis on a hierarchical order with divine authority at its core. Shakespeare's dramatic works

vividly depicted the cruelty and darkness of feudalism's decline, revealing the harsh constraints on human nature and the inadequate protection of human rights. Xie Sa, in her article *The Impact of Shakespeare's Plays on Europe*, concludes that "Shakespeare's portrayal of the aspirations of the emerging bourgeoisie, aiming to establish a new order based on equality among individuals, as well as the pursuit of capitalist ideologies, greatly facilitated the subsequent rise of capitalism in Britain and Europe" (Xie 139).

The following discussion will elucidate how Shakespearean drama has exerted a profound influence on the European continent by exploring its dissemination in major European countries.

### **2.1.1 Shakespeare in Germany**

In Germany, Shakespeare's name was first mentioned in 1682, yet English strolling players had already been traveling around Germany with adaptations of his plays since the late sixteenth century. The most famous among them is *Der bestrafte Brudermord* (Fratricide Punished, 1710), which is an adaptation of *Hamlet* featuring crude additions and concessions to meet popular taste. Germany scholar Roger Paulin posits that "Shakespeare becomes the most-performed dramatist on the stages of the German-speaking lands. He is declared to be the third German 'classic' along with Goethe and Schiller" (Paulin 314).

Around 1776, the renowned German actor Friedrich Ludwig Schroeder, who had served as director of the Weimar Theatre, introduced various Shakespearean plays, including *Hamlet*, to the German stage. These performances often featured adaptations, such as a version of *Hamlet* in which the protagonist does not die, and the plot is simplified. Subsequently, Shakespeare's works began to be gradually staged in other parts of Germany as well.

On April 23, 1864, the world's first Shakespeare Society was officially established in Weimar, Germany, with the support of prominent writers and theatrical figures. The society played a crucial role in translating and disseminating

Shakespeare's works. Of particular note are the German translations of Shakespeare's works published during the early years of the society. From 1797 to 1810, Wilhelm Schlegel translated 14 of Shakespeare's plays, while from 1826 onwards, Ludwig Tieck oversaw the translation of the remaining plays into German. Since the 18th century, over 250 individuals have translated Shakespeare's sonnets into German. To date, there are approximately 70 complete German translations of the sonnets, with around 160 German translations of Sonnet 18 and Sonnet 66 alone. Apart from *The Bible*, there are no other works in world literature that have as many German translations as Shakespeare's works.

The Chinese researcher Tang Mengying argues that the significant impact of Shakespeare's dramas in Germany is closely linked to the Sturm und Drang movement, a literary liberation initiative led by young members of the emerging bourgeois urban class in Germany from the late 1760s to the early 1780s. At that time, young writers "viewed Shakespeare as a pioneer in the creation of new dramatic forms, which led to a wave of admiration for his works during this literary movement" (Tang 13). They championed freedom, self-realization, and self-development, rejecting the poetic norms imposed by French classicists and rethinking literary theory, particularly in the realm of drama.

### **2.1.2 Shakespeare in France**

Compared to the research fervor in English and German-speaking countries, the dissemination and reception of Shakespeare in France proved to be a difficult and slow process. In 1708, the Royal Journal of Savants (Le journal des savants) contained only one sentence mentioning Shakespeare as "the most famous tragic poet of England," with no further interpretation or introduction. Until the early 18th century, Shakespeare remained virtually unknown and received no attention in France.

Voltaire, a prominent figure of the Enlightenment movement, was the pioneering individual responsible for introducing Shakespearean drama to France and facilitating its successful performance. Yuan Li, in her article *The 'Gilles' from England:*

*Shakespeare in France*, states, "Voltaire was deeply attracted to Shakespeare's art while simultaneously vehemently criticizing and caricaturing him." Voltaire believed that Shakespeare's explicit depiction of bloodshed and violence on stage was antithetical to the classical French tradition, which sought to refine the nation's sensibilities by transforming the audience's revulsion into a sense of pleasure. In 1730, he translated and adapted Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* into *Brutus*, a play that was subsequently staged with great success at the Théâtre Français. Furthermore, Voltaire made notable alterations to the soliloquies in *Hamlet*.

The French writer La Place (1707-1793) stands as the earliest translator of Shakespeare into French. His seminal work, *le Théâtre anglois*, debuted in Paris in 1745 with its first volume. In its preface, La Place not only introduced Shakespeare's life but also presented translations of ten Shakespearean plays alongside summaries of twenty-six others. La Place's translation of *Hamlet* was notably more faithful to the original text compared to Voltaire's, albeit presented in prose, a format that remained unconventional and peculiar within mainstream French literature of the era. Subsequently, in 1783, the first complete collection of Shakespeare's works in French, translated by Pierre le Tourneur, was published.

The ongoing publication of new translations, coupled with successful stage adaptations and performances, significantly bolstered France's burgeoning fascination with Shakespearean drama. In 1972, the University of Paul-Valéry in Montpellier established the Elizabethan Studies Series. This biannual publication highlights research on Shakespeare conducted by both French and international scholars. While many major countries had established Shakespearean study societies, France did not establish its own society until 1975.

Since 1827, Shakespeare's plays have been increasingly interpreted on French stages and have enjoyed considerable success. Renowned artists such as Delacroix drew inspiration from Shakespeare's works, producing a series of prints based on *Hamlet*. According to Dai Danni's *Brilliance and Compatibility—A Brief Analysis of Shakespearean Performances, Studies, and Dissemination in France* (2013), French

writer Victor Hugo was deeply influenced by Shakespeare, and his plays bear a distinct Shakespearean influence. An excellent example is *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) by Hugo, where both the character design and plot construction resonate strongly with Shakespearean drama. In 1864, Hugo authored *William Shakespeare*, a book in which he praised Shakespeare as a universal genius. However, it was not until the latter part of the 19th century that Shakespeare gained complete recognition and acceptance among the French public as a foremost playwright.

Shakespeare's impact on Europe was profound and multifaceted. His plays offered vivid depictions of social life, intellectual trends, and artistic innovations during the Renaissance. Translated and disseminated widely across Europe, Shakespeare's works became integral to the European culture, fueling advancements in its literature. His profound character portrayals and universal themes resonate across diverse nations and cultural landscapes, leaving an indelible mark on the development of European literature, drama, and art.

## 2.2 Shakespeare in America

The dissemination of Shakespeare's dramas in the Americas can be traced back to the colonial period. As European colonizers set foot on the American continent, they brought with them British culture and language. Shakespeare's works, recognized as masterpieces of English literature, gradually gained traction in English-speaking colonies.

In the North American colonies, Shakespeare's plays were disseminated through various mediums, including oral traditions, stage performances, and printed publications. Early American colonial communities and colleges organized Shakespearean performances, often featuring amateur actors, which were well-received by audiences.

The earliest recorded performance of a Shakespearean play in the United States took place in 1730, when a troupe of amateur actors in New York staged *Romeo and Juliet* as part of an entertainment event. However, the first formal theatrical

performance of a Shakespearean play by professional actors took place on May 5, 1750, when actor-manager Thomas Kean premiered *Richard III* at the Nassau Street Theatre in New York. This event is often regarded by American theater historians as the beginning of a new era for Shakespearean performances in the North American colonies (Fan 167).

The harsh exploitation under British colonial rule sparked resistance and struggle among the local population. In the mid-18th century, Britain sought to strengthen its political and economic control over the North American colonies, ensuring their role as a consistent source of raw materials and markets for the British Empire. This was achieved through continuous imposition of taxes and implementation of oppressive policies. These actions provoked significant resentment and discontent among the colonists, leading to heightened conflicts with Britain and setting the stage for independence movements. The colonists opposed the autocratic rule of the British monarchy and championed inherent rights such as freedom, democracy, and equality for all.

From then on, Shakespearean drama became a potent tool wielded against British colonial rule. American scholar Kim C. Sturgess, in her book *Shakespeare and the American Nation* (2004), highlighted that during this historical period in the United States, depicting Britain as a symbol of tyranny and cruelty, while positioning oneself as a champion of resistance against tyranny and advocate for freedom and democracy, became the most significant political propaganda strategy (Sturgess 56-57).

*Richard III* serves as a compelling example for the Americans to showcase and critique the tyranny of the British monarchy. Among Shakespeare's works, it prominently portrays the arrogance, corruption, and immoral nature of British monarchs. During this period, it was the most frequently performed play on theatrical stages in North America, serving as a potent "verbal" essay against British monarchical tyranny. Shakespeare's *Richard III* inadvertently provided American propagandists with a powerful tool in their opposition to the British monarchy.

With the rise of the American independence movement, Shakespeare's works gained increasing popularity in the United States. Before the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War, Shakespearean dramas were seldom read or performed, with only excerpts from plays like *Hamlet* appearing in pamphlets or newspaper articles during debates between Loyalists and Patriots. Following the United States becoming the first independent nation in the Americas in 1783, American culture and arts underwent rapid development, and Shakespeare's works became more prominent on American stages, becoming integral to both folk and official culture.

Some renowned actors and political figures began to specialize in Shakespeare's works. American actors such as Edwin Booth and Sarah Bernhardt prominently incorporated Shakespearean dramas into their performances, thereby increasing the visibility and influence of Shakespeare among American audiences. Additionally, several founding fathers of the United States, including George Washington and John Adams, as well as President Abraham Lincoln, are known to have read and attended performances of Shakespearean plays. According to Paul F. Boller Jr.'s *The American Presidents and Shakespeare* (2011), John Adams considered Shakespeare as "the great master of nature" and the "great teacher of morality and politics," pronouncing him "that great Master of every Affection of the Heart and every Sentiment of the Mind as well as of all the Powers of Expression."

Since the 20th century, the dissemination of Shakespeare's plays in the Americas has significantly expanded, encompassing not only the United States but also countries such as Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and others. Shakespeare's works have been translated into multiple languages and presented in various forms of performances and films. Additionally, Shakespeare's works have become an integral part of school education, widely studied and taught across the Americas. Therefore, it can be said that the dissemination of Shakespeare's plays in the Americas has had a profound impact on local culture and theatrical arts, becoming an important component of global cultural exchange.

Maria DiBattista, a professor at Princeton University, asserts that "Shakespeare

occupies a real and commanding place in America's national life, serving for over two centuries as a cultural touchstone in the curriculum of both public and private schools and on the boards of theaters from Broadway to Tombstone, and as a wisdom figure almost reflexively invoked in public debates about the exceptional nature and (possibly imperiled) future of the Republic" (DiBattista 7-8). However, American appreciation for Shakespeare goes beyond mere cultural admiration; it extends to a level of reverence that surpasses conventional concepts of influence.

### 2.3 Shakespeare in Africa

The dissemination of Shakespeare's works in Africa exhibits diversity and complexity. During the colonial period, European powers introduced Shakespearean dramas to Africa, considering them as part of British culture. Consequently, Shakespeare's works became integral to English education and colonial cultural activities. However, as African countries gradually gained independence, they began to reassess their cultural identities and incorporate Shakespearean works into their indigenous cultures and contexts. In the post-colonial era, some African countries' theater groups started translating Shakespeare's works into local languages and adapting them to better resonate with the local lives and cultural experiences. Even today, Shakespeare's works remain highly active on the African continent. Many African countries include Shakespearean works as part of literature and drama education in schools, and local theaters and performance groups frequently stage Shakespearean plays, providing rich and vibrant cultural experiences for local audiences, and gaining popularity in community performances and art festivals.

During a period when cultural nationalism sentiments remained strong in Africa, Shakespeare's works were translated into a variety of African languages by African translators. For instance, Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania after independence, translated Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* into Swahili, a language widely used in East Africa, as *Juliasi Kaizari* (1963) and *The Merchant of Venice* as *Mabepari wa Venisi* (1969). These translations were published in the 1960s and have since been included in Swahili literature curricula (Mazrui 69).

In Egypt, during the early twentieth century, *Othello* underwent translation and performance by Khali l Mutran as '*Utayl*', while versions and translations of *King Lear* in Arabic emerged between 1927 and 1970. Similarly, in the 1930s, *The Comedy of Errors* and *Julius Caesar* were translated into the South African language Setswana by Solomon Tashekisho Plaatje, and *King Lear* was rendered into Afrikaans as *Koning Lear* by Uys Krige in 1971.

Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin is believed to be the only Ethiopian playwright who have translated Shakespeare into a local language. During the 1960s and 1970s, he translated and adapted several Shakespearean plays, including *Othello*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Hamlet*. While in Mauritius, Virahsawmy has translated *Julius Caesar* as *Zil Sezar* (1987), *Much Ado About Nothing* as *Enn ta Senn dan Vid* (1995), *Macbeth* as *Trazedji Makbess* (1997) and rewritten *The Tempest* as *Toufann* (1991) (Banham et al. 289).

In the 1950s and 60s, university troupes in Nigeria and Uganda utilized Pidgin, a lingua franca composed of elements from colonial and native languages, to adapt Shakespeare's plays, making their performances more appealing and understandable to their audiences. In Francophone Africa, Shakespeare's works were also translated into French, such as the *Macbeth* staged at the Théâtre Daniel Sorano in Dakar around 1965, *Macbet* performed by the Ivorian theater group Bin Kadi-So in 1993, and *Romeo and Juliet* adapted by Congolese artist Sony Labou Tansi in 1990.

Though this list is not exhaustive, Banham et al. explains, it underscores the profound resonance of Shakespeare's plays among African audiences and artists (285). The dissemination of Shakespeare in Africa reflects the influence of colonial history and the cultural transformations of the post-colonial era. In contemporary times, they continue to play a significant role across the African continent, serving as cultural heritage that transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries.

## 2.4 Shakespeare in Arabic World

The dissemination of Shakespeare's plays in the Arab world is a fascinating topic.

Despite their worldwide acclaim, the introduction and translation of Shakespeare's works in the Arab world have not been as direct or comprehensive as in Europe and America. It was not until the late 19th to early 20th centuries that some Arab writers, translators, and critics began translating and introducing Shakespeare's works to the Arabs.

Following the conclusion of World War I, many Arab nations found themselves under European colonial domination. Beginning in 1882, Britain assumed control over Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, and Iraq, while France gradually extended its colonial influence over such North African territories as Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, and Syria. In regions under British colonial rule, Arabic remained intact as an official language. Conversely, French colonizers imposed French as the universal official language, resulting in the marginalization of Arabic in North African nations such as Algeria. As highlighted by Al-Shetawi, "French continues to exert a significant influence on the cultural fabric of many North African Arab nations. However, English never struck deep roots in those Arab countries colonised by Britain" (5).

The impact of such language policies on the dissemination of Western culture in this region was profound. Unlike in other countries, Shakespeare's works made their initial entry into Arab communities indirectly through French and Russian translations. Notably, the first Arabic-language adaptation of a Shakespearean play emerged in late 19th-century Egypt, derived from a French translation by Syrian-Lebanese immigrants. Arab students studying in Europe and America during this period also played a crucial role in importing relevant books and ideas from Western literature. "Influential readings of Shakespeare came from Britain but also from France, Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Eastern Europe," Margaret Litvin noted. "This was especially true of *Hamlet* because it obsessed so much of Europe and Russia throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (8).

As Arab theater continued to evolve, the translation of Shakespeare's works became a collaborative effort. In the mid-1950s, the Cultural Committee of the Arab League commissioned a group of writers and translators to officially translate

Shakespeare's complete works. Over the course of a hundred years, Arabic saw the emergence of fourteen different translations of *Hamlet*, eight translations of *King Lear*, ten translations of *Macbeth*, and eleven translations of *Othello*. The majority of these translations saw publication in Egypt, as well as in other countries such as Kuwait, Tunisia, Sudan, and Lebanon. Khalil Mutran stands out as the most prolific translator, having rendered four Shakespeare's plays into Arabic: *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Merchant of Venice* (Hassoon 47).

In their collaborative work, *Four Arab Hamlet Plays* (2015), Martin Carlson and Margaret Litvin present early Arabic adaptations of *Hamlet*. These adaptations include *Ophelia is Not Dead* (1968) by Nabyl Lahlou, *Hamlet Wakes Up Late* (1976) by Mamduh Udwan, *A Theatre Company Found a Theatre and Theatred Hamlet* (1984) by Nader Omran, and *Forget Hamlet* (1994) by Jawad al-Assadi. According to Margaret Litvin, the presence of *Hamlet* in the Arab world was not predominantly a consequence of Britain's colonization of Egypt, nor was Shakespeare's oeuvre initially presented as a singular, colonial imposition of authoritative texts. Rather, Arab audiences encountered Shakespeare through diverse cultural channels. These included not only the British source texts but also contributions from French, Soviet, Italian, American literary, which occasionally wielded more significant influence than Britain's (Litvin 2).

When delving into the critique of Shakespeare's works, Arab scholars have embarked on two divergent paths, each offering unique perspectives and insights. Some have been captivated by the aesthetic beauty of Shakespeare's texts, others have undertaken a rigorous examination of his tragedies, notably *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, through the lens of postcolonial discourse. *Othello*, in particular, ignited fervent scholarly discussions and impassioned debates, largely due to its depiction of a Moor, which evoked associations with Arab identity (Alghaberi 10). "For Arabs," said Ferial Ghazoul, "*Othello* poses two issues in reception theory: the disturbing question of the alien Other undertaking to represent the Self, and the even more problematic question of defining the Self and redrawing its contours, since

the very perception of the Self is a function of ideological priorities, and its representation is a function of artistic choices" (Ghazoul 2). While *Hamlet* is often interpreted through a political lens, leading writers and directors in various eras to leverage the play for distinct agendas. These interpretations have evolved across "four main phases which have largely corresponded to the prevailing political moods in the region: international standards (1952-64), psychological depth (1964-67), political agitation (1970-75), and intertextual dramatic irony (1976-2002)" (Litvin 10).

With the majority of Arab countries gaining independence by the 1960s, Arab theatre began to focus on domestic corruption and dynastic rule. "Since then, the most frequently adapted plays have been *Hamlet* and *Richard III*" (Alghaberi 14). While Shakespearean dramas arrived relatively late to the Arab world and were initially disseminated indirectly through French and Russian translations, they have since garnered enduring affection from readers and audiences alike. Directors and playwrights in Arab countries have ingeniously merged Shakespeare's narratives with pertinent local political, social, and cultural matters, fashioning renditions imbued with a distinct Arab essence. This fusion not only enriches the resonance of Shakespeare's works but also fosters stronger bonds with local audiences.

## 2.5 Shakespeare in Asia

Shakespeare's works initially entered Asia through British colonizers, notably in regions like India. As British influence expanded across Asia, Shakespearean dramas were translated into local languages and staged in theaters across countries such as India, Japan, and China. They eventually became integrated into English education curricula at local universities. The following exploration will delve into the reception of Shakespeare in India and Japan, highlighting his enduring impact across Asia.

### 2.5.1 Shakespeare in India

The British rule in India was early and profound. Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the great leaders of India's independence movement, pointed out in his book *The Discovery of India* (1946) that Britain has two faces. One represented by the savage

colonial forces, and the other by literary figures like Shakespeare and Milton. Nehru's remarks reflect the Indian people's resentment towards British colonial rule, while also demonstrating their appreciation for Shakespeare.

Large-scale interaction between Britain and India commenced in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, marked by the onset of trading activities spearheaded by the British East India Company. Over time, Britain progressively extended its dominion over the entire Indian subcontinent, culminating in the establishment of formal colonial governance in 1858. British India encompassed the territories corresponding to present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. Concurrently, as Britain's overseas holdings expanded, it employed cultural imperialism tactics, actively advancing its cultural norms through language and educational policies.

The scholarly focus on Shakespeare in India predates that in China by several decades. While opinions among scholars vary regarding the earliest instances of Shakespearean plays in India, performances of Shakespeare's plays were documented as early as 1719 in the southern city of Madras. Around 1750, a theater in Calcutta staged a Shakespearean play. By the late 18th century, his dramas were included in the curriculum of English schools in India. By the 1830s, Indians were already familiar with Shakespeare and his plays.

The widespread adoption of English education in India played a important role in disseminating Shakespeare's works. During the early colonial period, the intellectual elite in the region held Western literary figures such as Shakespeare in high regard as cultural icons. This admiration laid the groundwork for continued translations, adaptations, and productions of Shakespearean dramas across the subcontinent.

According to Indian scholars, Charles was credited as the first to translate Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* into an Indian language in 1808. Subsequently, indigenous Indian scholars continued to translate Shakespeare's plays into various Indian regional languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, Kannada, and others. Among these, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* were the most popular and

have been translated and adapted in over 50 different versions.

Shakespearean drama saw a notable resurgence in post-colonial India following a period of decline. In 1964, celebrations marking the quadricentennial of Shakespeare's birth were organized worldwide. Indian engagement with Shakespeare was revitalized this year through the publication of special journals and books, along with performances directed by Utpal Dutt, "who was the perfect bridge between Shakespeare and the Indian layman in the street" (Rosa 54).

According to a document from the National Library of India, by the time of Shakespeare's quadricentennial in 1964, there were over 670 translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in the country. This included 128 in Bengali, 70 in Hindi, 48 in Urdu, and a minimum of 7 in Sanskrit. Besides, more than 90 new translations of Shakespeare's plays were emerged between 1964 and 1994 alone (Yin 8).

The evolution of Shakespeare's masterpieces in modern India continues to be inspiring. Since the 1980s, Shakespeare studies in India have mirrored global trends, blending indigenous culture with Western theoretical frameworks including psychoanalysis, new historicism, post-colonialism, feminism, and Marxism. This integration has established Shakespeare studies as a prominent academic pursuit in the region. Over time, India has established several renowned Shakespearean research journals, such as *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *Shakespeare Survey*. Indian scholars have made significant contributions to Shakespeare studies, generating rich and innovative research that has enriched the field with valuable insights.

### ***2.5.2 Shakespeare in Japan***

The history of Shakespearean drama in Japan can be traced back to the mid-19th century, and its dissemination is closely related to Japan's path toward modernization. Shakespeare's reception in Japan can be identified in three main stages:

**Early Mentions and Partial Excerpts (1840–1910):** During this period, references

to Shakespeare were limited and largely indirect, with only excerpts or brief mentions appearing in Japan. Li Yanli notes that Shakespeare's name first appeared in 1841 within Lindley Murray's *Grammar of the English Language*. In 1870, a short biography of Shakespeare, along with Polonius' speech, was introduced through Masanao Nakamura's Japanese translation of *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles. Then, in 1874, English correspondent Charles Wirgman published a loosely translated version of Hamlet's soliloquy in *The Japan Punch*, a comic magazine, marking the first Japanese translation of Shakespeare's work. (Li Yanli 244-45)

**Early Meiji Period (1868–1912):** The Meiji period brought a surge in adaptations and translations of Shakespeare's works. Notably, Japanese adaptations were mostly drawn from *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb, making Shakespeare's stories more accessible to the Japanese audience in simpler narrative forms. In 1880, Tokyo Imperial University integrated plays such as *Julius Caesar* into its curriculum, marking a significant step in Japan's academic engagement with Shakespeare. This was soon followed by the establishment of British literature as a formal course, creating a solid foundation for Japanese students to study Shakespeare and further encouraging scholarly interest in British literary works among the younger generation. According to Oshiko Kawachi, the first performance of Shakespearean drama in Japan took place in 1885. This adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, titled *Sakuradoki Zeni no Yononaka* (The Season of Cherry Blossoms: The World of Money), was written by Bunkai Udagawa (Oshiko 162). At the time, frequently staged Shakespearean plays included *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, reflecting early Japanese audiences' growing interest in Shakespeare's diverse works.

**Prolific Translation Era (1910–mid-1970s):** This period was pivotal in Japan, as increased access to original texts fueled a surge in Shakespearean translations. In 1929, Japanese playwright and novelist Tsubouchi Shoyo completed the first Japanese translation of Shakespeare's complete works in an impressive 40-volume series, predating the first Chinese full translation by 38 years. A noteworthy postwar

development was the rise of female translators contributing to the field. Toshiko Oyama, for example, translated over ten of Shakespeare's plays during the 1960s and 1970s, while Kazuko Matsuoka undertook the ambitious goal of translating Shakespeare's entire corpus into Japanese, further enriching the diversity and accessibility of Shakespearean literature in Japan.

Since the 1970s, both the academic and performance communities in Japan have engaged in a deeper exploration of Shakespeare's works, examining various translation versions and interpretative styles. Concurrently, Japanese film, television, and stage productions have increasingly incorporated elements and narratives from Shakespearean dramas. In 1985, the renowned Japanese director Akira Kurosawa adapted Shakespeare's *King Lear* into the film *Ran*. To cater to Japanese audience preferences, he integrated Japan's unique bushido spirit and traditional kimono into the film, achieving a perfect blend of localization and modernization of Shakespeare's work. This emphasis on national cultural characteristics in the adaptation earned his film widespread acclaim in Japan and internationally.

Overall, the dissemination of Shakespearean drama in Japan has transformed from initial exposure and translation to broader promotion and in-depth study of his work. This progression illustrates the fusion and evolution of Shakespeare's works within Japanese culture, underscoring the enduring global impact and widespread popularity of Western drama and literature. As Oshiko concluded, Shakespeare is no longer solely the possession of the West; it has also become a treasure of the East. There exists a rich diversity of local productions of Shakespeare across Asia, with Japan, India, Korea, and China each cultivating their own unique interpretations of the Bard (Oshiko 171).

## 2.6 Shakespeare in China

### 2.6.1 *The Reception of Shakespeare in China*

Shakespeare is universally recognized as a prestigious western classical writer. Since the middle and late 19th century, many countries have translated his complete

works into their own languages, and his works have become a veritable literature of the world.

In modern China, the acceptance of this western classic writer has undergone a complex and challenging process. Shakespeare's name was first mentioned as early as 1839 in the Chinese book *Sizhou Zhi* (Gazetteer of the Four Continents), but it was not until 1978 that the first complete works of Shakespeare were published in China. In fact, Shakespeare did not immediately have a profound impact upon his translation into Chinese, nor was he a writer whose influence was short-lived. Instead, he is one of those writers whose impact has grown gradually and has remained significant for centuries.

Alexander Huang, in his book *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, has noted that "the ideas of Shakespeare and China have been put to work in unexpected places. Every year, hundreds of works emerge in Mandarin and a wide range of Chinese dialects, performing styles, and genres, including fiction, theater, cinema, and popular culture" (Huang 2). In *A Study of Shakespeare's Transmission Routes and Reception in China*, Shakespearean scholar Wei Cece observes that engaging with Shakespeare's works goes beyond understanding Western civilization and culture; it also establishes a foundation for meaningful dialogue between Chinese scholars and the international academic community.

Moreover, in the study of Shakespeare, Chinese literature has continuously developed while reflecting on itself through the lens of others, and Shakespeare's presence in China contributes to the construction of Chinese literary subjectivity. As a quintessential figure of Western civilization, Shakespeare has opened doors for dialogue with Chinese civilization and initiated a profound exchange.

#### **2.6.1.1 The Dissemination of Shakespeare in China**

The early 20th century was a time of great change in Chinese history. The failure in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) brought a huge shock to the whole country, the intellectuals in particular. The signing of the Boxer Protocol in 1901 reduced China to

a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. This treaty was signed by the Chinese Qing government and eleven countries, including the United States, Britain, and Japan. It is regarded as the most unequal treaty in China's modern history, leading to the most significant loss of power and further strengthening the imperialists' overall control and exploitation of China. At the critical moment of the country and nation's survival, there emerged a group of intellectuals who were among the first to wake up and realize the need to study foreign ideas and cultures and carry out reforms.

In order to oppose the foreign powers' aggression and strive for national independence, the bourgeois reformists carried out a vigorous reform campaign which also led to a reform of traditional Chinese drama. Liang Qichao, Chen Duxiu and others advocated the reform of traditional drama, which they believed were "stale in content and rigid in form" and could not reflect social reality of the times. Under their advocacy, the reform movement that aims to "emphasize the social function of traditional Chinese drama and call for criticism of the old ideas and culture, promotion of democracy, change of customs and inspiration of the national spirit" spread widely throughout the country (Ge 87).

With the development of the movement, the drama circle began to introduce "new plays", which were mainly translations or adaptations of western classics. It was precisely within this broader context that Shakespearean plays were introduced to China due to their profound humanistic ideas and were subsequently embraced by the Chinese academic community for the purpose of ideological propaganda.

The plays of Shakespeare first spread to China in the early 20th century and became the most performed foreign plays at that time. As early as 1839, Lin Zexu, a minister of the Qing Dynasty, mentioned Shakespeare in his book *Sizhou Zhi*. Lin Shu, a latter-day writer and translator, exerted the greatest influence in the early popularization of Shakespeare in China. Guo Songtao, the Chinese envoy in Britain at the time, recorded in his diary on August 11, 1877, after visiting an exhibition of printing machines, that "The most celebrated of these engravings was Shakespeare, who composed plays in England two hundred years ago." Subsequently, following his

attendance at a performance of *Hamlet*, he lauded Shakespeare's plays for their skillful plot construction.

According to Zhou Huanling, the humanistic ideas reflected in Shakespeare's works aligned with the struggle against imperialism and feudalism, as well as the propagation of advanced Western values during that era (162). The early dissemination of Shakespeare's plays in China was highly significant and influential, not only bridging Chinese and Western cultures but also fostering the development of Chinese bourgeois reforms and reforms in traditional Chinese drama. As contemporary scholar Li Weifang has noted, "The introduction of Shakespeare's name into China was initially accidental, coinciding with the publication of *Si Zhouzhi*. However, this introduction from the outset demonstrates the Chinese people's strong desire to understand the world and revitalize the country" (151). In the mid- to late-19th century, Western missionaries began arriving in China and referencing Shakespeare and his dramatic accomplishments in their translated works.

The acceptance of Shakespeare has undergone a tortuous process of change, which is quite different from many other foreign writers, thus forming the uniqueness of Shakespeare being accepted in modern China. Some later famous figures in the late Qing Dynasty, such as Zeng Jize, Yan Fu and Liang Qichao, also mentioned Shakespeare in their works. In 1903, Shanghai Dawen Press translated and published *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) written by the siblings Charles and Mary Lamb. Ten of the stories were selected and translated in Classical Chinese, and for the first time Shakespeare's plays were introduced to the Chinese readers.

In 1921, Tian Han published his translation of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* in the Youth China, marking the first time that China had a complete theatrical translation of Shakespeare's works in vernacular Chinese. The modern Chinese translations of the *Complete Works of Shakespeare* were primarily carried out by scholars such as Cao Weifeng, Zhu Shenghao, Bian Zhilin, and Liang Shiqiu.

In 1924, the Translation Committee of Shakespeare's Complete Works was established in Beijing. Under the leadership of Hu Shi, Liang Shiqiu translated eight Shakespeare's plays in the 1930s. Cao Weifeng was the first translator in China who worked on the complete works of Shakespeare. Between 1935 and 1944 he translated and published 11 of Shakespeare's plays, including *The Tempest*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Later on, Cao translated and published three new translations of Shakespeare's plays, including *Twelfth Night* (1955), *Othello* (1958) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1959). In 1978, China's first complete works of Shakespeare was published.

#### **2.6.1.2 The Performance of Shakespeare in China**

Initially, Shakespeare's works were first performed by the students who were learning English at schools. Their performances contained only excerpts from Shakespeare's works and all the recitals were in English. Later, Shakespeare's works were performed by professional troupes with the contents mostly in Chinese translation, and the performances were on a grander scale and with a broader social impact.

In 1896, students of St. John's University in Shanghai publicly performed excerpts from the *Merchant of Venice* in English, which marked the first performance of Shakespeare's play on the Chinese stage. In the early 20th century, the *Merchant of Venice* was the most performed Shakespeare's plays in China. From January 7 to February 5, 1913, Wu Chuanxuan and other female students of Shanghai Chengdong Girl's School performed a new play *The Lady Lawyer* which was adapted from *Merchant of Venice* and became the first Shakespearean play ever performed in Mandarin.

In December 1921, the Youth Association of Yenching University (the predecessor of Peking University) organized students to perform *Twelfth Night* for two consecutive days and all the actors were female students. According to the

“Curriculum Supplementary Report of Yenching University Girl’s School”, from 1920 to 1924, the Girl’s School of Yenching University rehearsed Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*. The acting roles were all played by girls. In 1924, graduates of the Xinxue School, a missionary school in Tianjin, performed the *Merchant of Venice* in English.

In May 1930, the Tianjin Sino-Western Girls’ School organized the graduates to perform Shakespeare’s famous comedy *As You Like It*. This was a novel, unique and difficult performance as it was directed by foreign teachers, all the roles were played by girls, and all the recitals were in English. The performance was a great success and received wide acclaim.

The early performances of Shakespeare’s plays by Chinese professional troupes began in July 1913 when the Xinmin Association led by Zheng Zhengqiu publicly performed the play *Meat Coupon*, a translation of *Merchant of Venice* by Lin Shu and Wei Yi. The play introduced screen plot format and warmly welcomed by the audience, especially the citizens, marking the first public performance of Shakespeare’s plays by a professional troupe in China. Since then, many troupes have repeatedly performed the play under different translations, such as *The Lady Lawyer*, *A Pound of Flesh*, and *Debt Cuts*. *The Merchant of Venice* had a great influence on the development of Chinese crude stage play, burlesque and the later modern drama.

In May 1930, the Shanghai Opera Association organized four performances of *Merchant of Venice* in the Central Great Hall, which marked China’s first official performance of Shakespeare’s play in line with the requirements of modern drama. In the 1990s, Lin Zhaohua, a Beijing-based dramatist, combined Shakespeare’s plays with avant-garde experimental plays, bringing profound literary and artistic thought to the new Shakespeare plays. During the 2012 London Olympics, *Richard III* was performed at the Chinese National Grand Theatre, which once again boosted the popularity of Shakespeare in China.

#### 2.6.1.3 *The Study of Shakespeare in China*

Although Shakespeare was among the earliest Western writers introduced to the Chinese audience, his works did not immediately capture widespread attention upon entering China. Beginning in the 1920s, the World Literature Journal, founded by Lu Xun, started to feature Russian articles on Shakespeare, including Marxist interpretations of his works.

During this period, the publication of essays and articles critiquing Shakespeare gradually increased. As Meng Xianqiang highlights in his book *A Brief History of Chinese Shakespeare Studies* (1994), more than 70 commentaries on Shakespeare were published from the 1920s to the mid-1930s, assessing the achievements and artistic merit of his plays (11). On one hand, the translation and dissemination of Soviet Shakespeare criticism began to influence China. On the other hand, scholars who had studied in Britain, the United States, and Japan introduced diverse Western approaches to Shakespearean criticism to Chinese audiences.

In the early 1930s, Mao Dun's commentaries on Shakespeare held significant influence. In his book *An Introduction to Western Literature* (1930), Mao Dun asserted that Shakespeare, rather than belonging to classicism, pioneered romantic literature. Furthermore, in 1934, Mao Dun published an article titled *Shakespeare and Realism* in Wensi Magazine, aligning with the views of S. Dinamov, a Soviet critic, who argued that Marx and Engels regarded Shakespeare as a great realist. The renowned Chinese translator Liang Shiqiu also published numerous commentaries on Shakespeare, establishing himself as the most prolific scholar in this field during that period. His writings predominantly centered on elucidating the content of Shakespeare's plays and presenting the insights of Western scholars on Shakespearean themes. Liang Shiqiu particularly highlighted significant works such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *the Merchant of Venice*.

After the 1950s, Shakespearean studies developed better in China, but were seriously affected by ideology and focused on the Soviet Union's Marxist Shakespearean studies. During the ten-year Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, Shakespeare's works were deemed unsuitable for reading because they shaped and

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promoted the nobility and elegance of emperors, generals, and intellectuals, and vilified and smeared the image of working class. Zhang Qiuyang articulated that the Cultural Revolution enhanced his appreciation of Shakespeare, particularly Hamlet. He contemplated Hamlet's inner turmoil, hesitations, and profound reflections, viewing them not merely as responses to Claudius but also as reactions to a society marked by corruption, deception, injustice, and inequality. Zhang underscores the significance of literary study in exploring varied human experiences from history and deriving insights that enrich our comprehension of contemporary life (29).

The 1980s represented a pivotal era for Shakespeare in China, coinciding with the country's liberation from ideological constraints and cultural isolation. Following the publication of the first Chinese edition of the *Complete Works of Shakespeare* in 1978, China entered a new era of extensive engagement with the global community. This period fostered a flourishing appreciation and deeper exploration of Shakespeare's works within Chinese literary and cultural spheres. Some scholars likened this period to the Renaissance in Europe and began incorporating Western literary and artistic theories into Shakespeare studies, drawing from disciplines such as psychology, hermeneutics, modernism, postmodernism, and others. In 1986, China's inaugural Shakespeare Drama Festival was held simultaneously in Beijing and Shanghai, featuring 25 plays of diverse genres and styles.

Since the 1990s, as China's reforms have progressed and the country has shifted from a planned to a market economy, there has been a subtle evolution in China's cultural and artistic landscape. Contrary to the "Shakespeare fever" observed in the 1980s, contemporary audiences have developed a more nuanced appreciation of Shakespeare's works. They now prioritize artistic merit over ideological categorizations, reflecting a more rational and mature engagement with Shakespearean literature.

### **2.6.2 The Reception of Hamlet in China**

The earliest exposure of Chinese people to Shakespeare began with *Hamlet*, and

its translation and dissemination in China have spanned over a century. Among all of Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* has been the most frequently translated. However, "the acceptance of *Hamlet* by Chinese readers was not straightforward; rather, it underwent a complex historical process over hundreds of years, influenced by changes in both the times and ideologies" (Ma 15). In *A Study of the Hundred-Year Chinese Translation History of Hamlet* (2022), Professor Wu Ying of Anhui Normal University, categorizes the Chinese translation history of *Hamlet* into five distinct periods, based on factors such as translation purposes, translators' backgrounds, translation strategies, and forms. These periods are: the initial period (1839–1904), the development period (1905–1930), the revival period (1931–1948), the prosperity period (1949–1977), and the peak period (1978 to the present) (Wu 5).

Zeng Jize, the Chinese envoy to Britain, is regarded as the first Chinese individual to encounter Shakespearean drama. In 1879, during the fifth year of the Guangxu Emperor's reign, Zeng observed a performance in London that portrayed "a Danish king who murders his brother and marries his sister-in-law, with the prince seeking revenge" (Qiu 29). Following this exposure, adaptations of Shakespeare's plays gradually appeared in China. However, it was not until 1921 that the first complete Chinese translation of a Shakespearean play was published.

Since the introduction of Shakespeare's plays in China, there have been a total of 17 Chinese translations of *Hamlet*. These versions include:

1. In 1903, Shanghai Dawen Press published an anonymous book titled *解外奇譚* (*Xie Wai Qi Tan*), translated from Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare*, with *Hamlet* featured in its tenth chapter.
2. In 1904, Shanghai Commercial Press published *吟边燕语* (*Yinbian yanyu*), translated by Lin Shu and Wei Yi, also based on Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare*. This edition comprises 20 stories, with *Hamlet* appearing in the chapter titled *鬼詔* (*Gui Zhao*).
3. In 1921, Tian Han translated *哈孟雷特* (*Hamlet*), which was published by

Zhonghua Book Company the following year. This version is recognized as the first complete translation of a Shakespearean play in Chinese history.

4. In 1924, Shao Ting published a classical Chinese translation of *Hamlet* titled 天仇記 (*Tianchouji*). The current edition was reissued by Shanghai Commercial Press in 1930.
5. In 1936, Liang Shiqiu's translation, titled 丹麥王子哈姆雷特之悲劇 (*The Tragedy of Hamlet*), was published by Shanghai Commercial Press. Liang went on to complete translations of all 37 of Shakespeare's plays, culminating in the first Chinese edition of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* in 1967.
6. In 1938, Zhou Ping translated *Hamlet* as 哈夢雷特, published by Kai Ming Bookstore. In the preface, Zhou discusses Shakespeare's timeline and the various versions of his works, as well as his own translation strategies.
7. In 1944, Cao Weifeng completed translations of 11 Shakespearean plays, including *Hamlet*, which were published by Guiyang Wentong Shuju.
8. In 1947, Zhu Shenghao's translations of 27 Shakespearean plays, including *Hamlet*, were published by the World Book Company in Shanghai. Despite some shortcomings, his translations gained widespread recognition and acceptance among readers for an extended period.
9. In 1956, Bian Zhilin's translation of *Hamlet* was published by People's Literature Publishing House. In 1988, Bian released a new edition of *Four Tragedies* by Shakespeare, in which he made significant revisions to his earlier translation of *Hamlet*.
10. In 1982, China Drama Press released Lin Tongji's translation of *Hamlet*. This translation was completed in the late 1970s and published posthumously.
11. In 1991, Sun Dayu's Chinese translation of *Hamlet* was published by Shanghai Translation Publishing House. This edition includes a detailed 16-page preface that explains the source of the original story, its performance context, and the

challenges the translator faced during the translation and publishing process. The preface provides insights into the story's origins and performance history, along with the translator's arduous journey to bring the work to publication.

12. In 2000, Hebei Education Press published Fang Ping's translation titled *The New Complete Works of Shakespeare*. In the preface of *Hamlet*, the translator offers a modernist interpretation of the original play, with a particular focus on the character of the protagonist and his quest for revenge.
13. In 2003, a Chinese translation of *Hamlet* by Bei Ta was published and later recommended by the Chinese Ministry of Education as extracurricular reading for primary and secondary school students.
14. In 2012, Wang Hongyin's translation of *Hamlet* was published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. In the translator's preface, Wang provides a reinterpretation of Shakespeare's play and outlines his translation principles and strategies.
15. In 2013, Tsinghua University Press published Huang Guobin's *Interpreting Hamlet: Chinese Translation and Detailed Annotations of Shakespeare's Original Work*. This comprehensive work includes over 2,800 annotations.
16. In 2015, the *Complete Works of Shakespeare: English-Chinese Bilingual Edition* edited by Gu Zhengkun was published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. This edition features *Hamlet* translated by Gu Zhengkun.
17. In 2017, Fu Guangming's translation of *Hamlet* was published by Tianjin People's Publishing House and has gained widespread recognition among Chinese scholars and readers.

Wu Ying, a professor at Anhui Normal University, argues that, despite significant achievements in the translation of *Hamlet*, the research outcomes remain insufficient. Early studies often integrated broader analyses of Shakespearean translation, encompassing translator profiles, translation experiences, and linguistic style studies.

Over time, this evolved into independent research specifically focused on *Hamlet* itself (Wu 5).

In examining the reception history, Chinese studies of *Hamlet* can be categorized into four stages:

The First Stage (1903 to 1949): During this period, research on the Chinese translation of *Hamlet* primarily focused on general and subjective evaluations. Translators of early adaptations often provided explanations in their prefaces regarding their motivations for translating Shakespeare's plays, as well as their translation skills and objectives.

The Second Stage (1950 to 1977): Significant progress was made in the study of Chinese translations of Hamlet, focusing primarily on various translated versions. Researchers analyzed aspects such as language features, rhetoric, and artistic style.

The Third Stage (1978 to 2000): During this period, two complete works of Shakespeare were translated by Liang Shiqiu and Fang Ping, respectively. Chinese scholars began to investigate the history of the translation of *Hamlet*. For instance, Zhou Zhaoxiang employed the theory of equivalence in his work *A Study of Chinese Translation of Hamlet (1981)* to analyze six important translations. Meanwhile, Meng Xianqiang provided a chronological overview of Shakespeare studies in China in his book *A Brief History of Chinese Shakespeare Studies (1994)*, offering valuable insights for subsequent researchers.

The Fourth Stage (2001 to Present): Researchers began drawing on Western Shakespeare studies and applying Western theories to conduct more diverse and comprehensive research. Since 2012, Fu Guangming has undertaken the task of independently translating the complete works of Shakespeare, aiming to present the "authentic flavor of Shakespeare" to contemporary readers.

The journey of *Hamlet* in China spans over a century and has nurtured many remarkable translators. Through continuous retranslations and scholarly studies, *Hamlet* continually renews its vitality, enriching interpretations of the play. This

enduring engagement reflects both the vibrancy and lasting impact of Shakespeare's works within the Chinese cultural context.

### **2.6.3 Representative Chinese Translations of *Hamlet***

The Chinese translations of *Hamlet* hold a significant place in Chinese literary history, showcasing the evolution of translation styles and the cultural reinterpretation of Western classics. Over the decades, various scholars and translators have crafted distinct versions, each offering unique perspectives and cultural nuances. Among the most influential translations are those by Tian Han, Liang Shiqiu, Bian Zhilin, Zhu Shenghao, and Fu Guangming, whose contributions have shaped the reception and interpretation of *Hamlet* in China.

#### **2.6.3.1 Tian Han and *Hamlet***

Tian Han (1898 - 1968), born in Hunan, China, was a distinguished playwright and a key figure among the three founders of modern Chinese drama. Throughout his life, he played a pivotal role in advancing and reforming Chinese drama and the arts, leaving a lasting impact on China's cultural landscape.

In the 1920s, Tian Han founded the Creation Society, the Southern Film Drama Society, and the Southern Academy of Arts, which nurtured a new generation of theatrical talent and laid a foundation for modern Chinese drama. During the 1930s, he joined the League of Left-Wing Writers and collaborated with composers like Nie Er and Xian Xinghai, creating numerous revolutionary songs. His composition "March of the Volunteers," initially the theme for the film *Children of Troubled Times*, eventually became the national anthem of the People's Republic of China. Tian Han was also a pioneering reformer in Chinese theater, with his "Theory of Three Reformations" serving as a visionary blueprint for advancing Chinese drama and defining its future development.

While studying in Japan, Tian Han immersed himself in drama and literature, gaining substantial exposure to Western cultural influences. Upon returning to China, he took on the ambitious task of translating *Hamlet* into Chinese, marking one of the

earliest introductions of Shakespeare's works to Chinese audiences. This translation provided Chinese readers and theater practitioners with a groundbreaking literary and dramatic experience.

It is noteworthy that in 2016, the Shanghai Theatre Academy held an exhibition commemorating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. A notable highlight was a volume featuring Tian Han's translation of *Hamlet*. The exhibition notes revealed that this translation was first published by Shanghai Zhonghua Book Company in November 1922, representing a significant milestone as it marked the first complete translation of a Shakespearean play into Chinese. Tian Han's work not only introduced *Hamlet* to Chinese readers but also laid the foundation for future translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in China, profoundly influencing the landscape of modern Chinese drama.

#### **2.6.3.2 Liang Shiqiu and *Hamlet***

Liang Shiqiu (1903–1987), born in Beijing, was a prominent Chinese literary figure, translator, and essayist. He grew up in a scholarly family that fostered his intellectual development. His educational journey in the United States exposed him to Western literature and culture, significantly influencing his subsequent literary creations and translation endeavors. Upon returning to China, Liang Shiqiu taught English and literature at esteemed institutions such as Peking University and Tsinghua University, where he devoted himself to fostering cultural exchange between China and the West.

He translated a substantial body of foreign literary works, with a particular emphasis on the plays of Shakespeare, and is widely recognized as a key contributor to the dissemination of Shakespeare's works in China. In December 1930, Hu Shi, a member of the Translation Committee of the China Education Foundation, initiated a project to translate world classics. He gathered a group of distinguished scholars, including Liang Shiqiu and Xu Zhimo, with the aim of translating the complete works of Shakespeare. Tragically, Xu Zhimo died in a plane crash after completing only part

of the translation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Nevertheless, Liang Shiqiu persevered and successfully translated eight of Shakespeare's plays during the 1930s. These included *Macbeth* (first published in June 1936), *King Lear* (first published in July 1936), *Hamlet* (first published in July 1936), *Othello* (first published in November 1936), *The Merchant of Venice* (first published in June 1936), *As You Like It* (first published in July 1936), *Twelfth Night* (first published in September 1939), and *The Tempest* (first published in May 1937).

Following the "Marco Polo Bridge Incident" in 1937, the Japanese army launched a full-scale invasion of China, necessitating the cessation of the translation project. Hu Shih, who had concurrently assumed the role of Ambassador to the United States, became heavily engaged in overseas propaganda and diplomatic efforts to resist Japanese aggression, leaving him unable to continue the initiative. After the war's conclusion, Liang Shiqiu returned to Beijing; however, he was forced to flee to Taiwan in 1946 due to the onset of the Chinese Civil War.

After 37 years of dedicated effort, Liang Shiqiu completed his translation of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* in 1967, marking a significant milestone as the first individual in China to achieve this feat. In his work, he extensively referenced the abundant annotations provided by numerous Shakespearean scholars. Liang's translations, primarily rendered in prose, aimed to preserve the authenticity of the original texts, ensuring fidelity to Shakespeare's language and intent..

Liang Shiqiu formulated five guiding principles for his translations: (1) He employed a vernacular prose style for the translated texts while maintaining the original rhyme scheme to distinguish the rhymed sections and interludes; (2) He provided annotations when faced with difficulties in selecting among various translations; (3) He included explanatory notes for puns and allusions that could not be directly translated; (4) He preserved the original meaning of obscenities; and (5) He maintained the original punctuation marks (Liang, preface). These principles not only reflect Liang's meticulous approach to translation but also highlight his profound understanding of Shakespearean plays and the practical application of his research

insights.

While acknowledging the significance of blank verse in Shakespearean plays, Liang Shiqiu underscored the challenges of fully transplanting its rhythm into another language. He emphasized that blank verse encompasses more than merely dividing prose into lines. As Wang Rui notes, Liang's translation of *Hamlet* features a meticulously crafted preface that provides an extensive introduction to various Shakespearean research findings. This includes discussions on the story's sources, the timeline of its composition, historical versions and stagings, as well as the enigmatic "Hamlet problem." Additionally, his translation is complemented by 101 annotations that explore semantics, pragmatics, rhetoric, cultural references, emendations, and other critical aspects of the text (Wang Rui 95).

Interestingly, Liang Shiqiu's translations of Shakespeare, published in Taiwan, did not receive significant attention due to particular ideological factors and historical circumstances. Instead, the collection translated by Zhu Shenghao and released by People's Literature Publishing House in 1978 was initially celebrated as the premier Chinese translation of Shakespeare's complete works. Today, these translations play a vital role in fostering renewed appreciation and reinterpretation of Shakespeare's oeuvre among Chinese scholars.

Liang Shiqiu acknowledged the profound moral depth and authentic literary essence present in Shakespeare's works. Through the lens of the traditional Chinese cultural concept of the Doctrine of the Mean, he engaged with Shakespeare's texts, experiencing their emotional intensity alongside their calls for reason and their quest for truth. Moreover, Liang emphasized the moral foundations of literary works, rejecting the reductionist perspective that views literature merely as instruments of class struggle.

#### **2.6.3.3 Zhu Shenghao and *Hamlet***

Zhu Shenghao (1912–1944), born in Zhejiang, was a well-known Chinese translator celebrated for his fervent dedication to translating Western literary classics,

particularly the works of William Shakespeare, into Chinese. His translations are widely acknowledged for their exceptional quality and distinctive style, earning him significant recognition from scholars of Shakespeare both in China and abroad.

In 1929, Zhu Shenghao enrolled at Zhejiang University, where he pursued studies in Chinese literature and English. This academic background provided him with a robust foundation in both literary analysis and the English language. Before the onset of the Japanese invasion, Zhu worked as an editor at a publishing house in Shanghai, where his primary responsibilities included compiling English-Chinese dictionaries and producing annotated editions of English literature.

Following the release of Tian Han's translations of Shakespeare's works, a surge of scholarly interest and translation initiatives in Shakespearean plays emerged, positioning Zhu Shenghao as a key figure in this movement. Over a remarkable span of just eight years, from 1936 to 1944, he diligently translated 31 Shakespearean plays, a collection that continues to be celebrated as a classic in Chinese literature. Tragically, Zhu Shenghao passed away in 1944 at the young age of 32 due to a lung disease attributed to overwork.

In 1964, People's Literature Publishing House planned to publish Zhu Shenghao's translation of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. However, the edition underwent extensive revisions and additions by various scholars and translators, which delayed its release to readers until 1978. This comprehensive edition encompasses all 37 plays and poetry by Shakespeare, representing the first complete collection of a foreign writer's works in the history of Chinese literature.

Zhu Shenghao's translation philosophy prioritizes the needs of the target language readers and audience, aiming for clarity, comprehensibility, and idiomatic Chinese. Rather than rigidly adhering to formal equivalence, he seeks to close the gap between the source texts and the Chinese readers, ensuring his translations resonate deeply within their cultural context. His approach aimed to capture the aesthetic

beauty of the original works, while meticulously preserving the performative elements vital for staging, thereby enriching both their readability and theatrical resonance.

Zhu Shenghao's translations marked the beginning of an era in which Chinese scholars undertook an in-depth exploration of various dimensions of Shakespearean studies. This encompassed "a wide array of research topics related to Shakespeare and his literary works, including his biography, the historical context of his works, the dates of their creation and publication, the sources of his material, textual revisions, annotations, linguistic style, the history of criticism, and performance records, among others" (Chen 25).

Zhu's translation of *Hamlet* is characterized by its concise nature, featuring only limited annotations. These annotations primarily serve to clarify cultural references and proper nouns, aimed at aiding Chinese readers in comprehending the text more easily. This approach marks a significant departure from earlier translations, imbuing Zhu's rendition with heightened importance. Unlike his predecessors, Zhu's translation philosophy moves beyond mere transmission of content or plot. Instead, he strives to capture the essence underlying the original work, enriching readers' understanding of the text.

#### **2.6.3.4 *Bian Zhilin and Hamlet***

Bian Zhilin (1910–2000), born in Jiangsu, was a distinguished Chinese poet, translator, and scholar of foreign literature, best known for his translations of Shakespeare's four major tragedies and various poetic works.

In the 1920s, even as a junior high school student, Bian Zhilin developed a strong affinity for Shakespeare's plays. Coming from a family of merchants, he was encouraged by his mother to study English, aiming to prepare him for a promising career in foreign-managed fields like postal services or customs. His English education introduced him to *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb, the standard textbook in junior high schools at the time. After graduating, Bian moved to Shanghai, a hub of Western culture, where he pursued courses on Shakespearean

drama at the esteemed Pudong Middle School, allowing him to engage deeply with Shakespeare's original works.

In the 1950s, Bian embarked on a comprehensive exploration of Shakespearean drama, undertaking the task of translating the tragedy *Hamlet* into Chinese in a poetic style. At that time, this translation carried immense significance within the realm of Shakespearean drama and poetry translation in China.

Later, in 1985, during his twilight years, he accomplished the translation of the remaining three Shakespearean tragedies, namely *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*. Subsequently, in 1988, Bian Zhilin's translations of these four major Shakespearean tragedies were compiled and published under the title *Four Tragedies by Shakespeare*. This compilation marked a monumental achievement in the translation of Shakespearean drama in China, serving as a shining example of success in the poetic translation of Shakespearean works.

Bian's approach involved the utilization of Chinese free verse poetry to mirror the poetic structure of Shakespearean plays, thus accentuating the rhythmic and formal beauty of the original text. In 1988, People's Literature Publishing House released his translated volume titled *Selected Shakespearean Sonnets*. In 1983, Bian Zhilin's anthology *Selected English Poetry* was published, featuring 74 masterpieces from British poets ranging from Shakespeare to modernist poet Wystan Hugh Auden. The anthology meticulously categorized the poems by era, providing readers with a comprehensive overview of English poetry.

Bian Zhilin's translation of *Hamlet*, finalized in 1954 and first published in 1956, offers valuable insights into his translation process. The "Translator's Note" included in the 1988 edition sheds light on his engagement with the original text, reference translations, and strategies for addressing specific challenges, including the translation of poetry within Shakespearean plays. Furthermore, the "Translator's Preface" features a critical analysis of the play itself. According to Wang Rui, these discussions are complemented by 167 footnotes that meticulously address linguistic intricacies,

versional nuances, and cultural allusions found within the text (96).

Bian Zhilin advocated for the fusion of two or three Chinese characters into a single "phonetic unit" in Chinese translations. Each line, mirroring the "five phonetic steps" of blank verse, should consist of five such units. He avoided incorporating rhyme schemes in blank verse and aimed for lines with around ten to fifteen characters each. In poetic sections, a literal translation approach was preferred, striving for consistent line lengths whenever possible (Bian 4-5). The approach showcases his commitment not only to fidelity in conveying meaning but also to the exploration and restoration of the nuanced aesthetic experiences inherent in different literary genres and styles within the play. Such dedication serves as both a testament to his loyalty to the original author and a mark of respect for the Chinese readers.

#### **2.6.3.5 *Fu Guangming and Hamlet***

Fu Guangming (1965–present) is a contemporary Chinese author and translator, currently serving as a professor at the School of Foreign Languages, Capital Normal University in China. After completing his academic studies, he spent a significant period working at the Museum of Modern Chinese Literature, where he focused his early research on the works of Lao She, a prominent figure in modern Chinese literature.

In 2012, Fu Guangming was invited by the Library of Congress to deliver an academic lecture in the United States. During this visit, he met American author Han Xiu, which ignited interest in Fu Guangming's early translation efforts of *Tales from Shakespeare*.

Upon his return to China, his translation of *Tales from Shakespeare* quickly reached publication. Concurrently, he received an offer from the Taiwan Commercial Press to undertake the ambitious project of translating Shakespeare's complete works. Acknowledging the scale of this endeavor, Fu approached it with a mix of enthusiasm and apprehension. Within two weeks, he presented initial concepts, proposed translation methodologies, and outlined a comprehensive timeline for a ten-year

project aimed at meticulously translating all of Shakespeare's plays. His vision included modernizing the language of each play, incorporating explanatory annotations, and providing thorough introductory articles to enhance readers' understanding and appreciation of the texts.

Since 2012, Fu Guangming has undertaken the ambitious project of translating Shakespeare's complete works as an individual endeavor. To date, he has progressively translated and published 29 of Shakespeare's plays, including celebrated works such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry IV* (both parts), *Richard II*, and *Henry V*. Especially noteworthy is his translation of *Hamlet*, which not only drew inspiration from esteemed predecessors but also included comprehensive annotations that enhance the reader's understanding of the text. Since its release in 2018, this rendition has garnered enthusiastic praise from both scholars and readers alike, reflecting its significance in the ongoing dialogue surrounding Shakespeare's works within the Chinese literary context.

In addition to the aforementioned translations, Fu Guangming authored a collection of introductory guides for Shakespeare's Five Tragedies titled *Tiandi Yi Shaweng*, and a collection for the Four Comedies titled *Ximeng Yi Shaweng*. He also penned *The Dark History of Shakespearean Drama*, which explores the origins of Shakespearean narratives. Through these works, Fu introduces his innovative translation approach, aiming to present contemporary Chinese readers with an authentic essence of Shakespeare's plays while facilitating a deeper engagement with the original texts.

The journey of translating *Hamlet* into Chinese exemplifies how Shakespeare's works inspire new interpretations across different historical contexts. Over the course of a century, the translations of *Hamlet* have traversed a transformative path, transitioning from Classical Chinese to prose, and subsequently to poetic style and research-oriented editions. Moving forward, these achievements will provide essential theoretical groundwork for future re-translations of Shakespearean plays, offering

strong support for translation efforts in the contemporary era.

In conclusion, Shakespeare's works, particularly *Hamlet*, have traversed a remarkable global journey, leaving a profound impact on literary traditions across Europe, America, Asia, Africa, and the Arab world. The varied interpretations, performances, and translations of his plays reflect not only the universal resonance of his themes but also the unique cultural specificities of each region. In China, the journey of translating *Hamlet* into Chinese exemplifies how Shakespeare's works inspire new interpretations across varying historical contexts. Over the course of a century, the translations of *Hamlet* have undergone a transformative evolution, transitioning from Classical Chinese to prose, and subsequently to poetic styles and research-oriented editions. Influential figures such as Zhu Shenghao and contemporary scholar Fu Guangming have played pivotal roles in the localization of Shakespeare's plays. These translations, representing distinct historical periods, illustrate the evolving engagement with Shakespeare's works within Chinese literary and theatrical contexts. By examining both global and Chinese receptions, this chapter establishes a foundation for the comparative analysis of *Hamlet* translations that will follow in subsequent chapter, paving the way for a deeper investigation into the translation strategies employed and the factors that shaped them.

## Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

In this dissertation, the two translations of *Hamlet* will be analyzed under the guidance of Skopos theory, domestication and foreignization.

### 3.1 Skopos Theory

Functional translation theory emerged in the 1970s in Germany, with Katharina Reiss, Hans Vermeer, and Christiane Nord as its leading figures. Its inception significantly influenced traditional translation theories, particularly in challenging the notion of equivalence as the sole measure of translation quality, and introduced a fresh perspective through the concept of translation purpose.

In 1971, Reiss first addressed issues related to functionalism in her work *The Possibilities and Limits of Translation Criticism*, suggesting that text type theory could assist translators in determining appropriate degrees of equivalence required for translation purposes. Building upon this foundation, she linked language functions, text types, and translation methods, thereby proposing translation principles and evaluation criteria for various texts, laying the groundwork for the formation of functionalist translation theory.

In 1978, Hans Vermeer built upon the functionalist theories pioneered by his teacher Reiss and first proposed the Skopos Theory in his book *Framework for a General Translation Theory*, which further advanced functionalism. Vermeer contends that "the translator is the expert in translational action," and thus holds the responsibility for "deciding whether, when, how, etc., a translation can be realized" (229).

From the translator's perspective, the specified translation skopos defines the commission, wherein the source text serves as a key element. It forms the foundation for all hierarchically ordered relevant factors that ultimately shape the translation. According to Vermeer, "The skopos of a translation is therefore the goal or purpose, defined by the commission and if necessary adjusted by the translator. In order for the

skopos to be defined precisely, the commission must thus be as specific as possible" (230).

Emerging as a response to the limitations of traditional translation theories, Skopos Theory shifts the focus from strict fidelity to the source text, characteristic of equivalence-based approaches. Developed by Hans Vermeer and Katharina Reiss, this theory emphasizes the function and purpose of the target text within its cultural context. This represents a significant departure from the conventional "one-size-fits-all" approach to translation, introducing a more flexible and context-dependent methodology that accounts for the diverse needs and expectations of target audiences.

According to Hans Vermeer and other experts in translation studies, Skopos Theory is grounded in three basic principles: the Skopos Rule, the Coherence Rule, and the Fidelity Rule.

Derived from the Greek word for "aim" or "purpose", Skopos Rule is regarded as the paramount guideline in translation. According to Reiss and Vermeer, this rule asserts that translation decisions should be grounded in the intended purpose or aim of the translation, reflecting the idea that "the end justifies the means." Vermeer consistently emphasizes the universal applicability of the Skopos Rule, stating that translation strategies and methodologies must be tailored to the specific purpose and intended function of the target text. This principle encourages translators to consider the context and audience for whom the translation is intended, ensuring that their choices align with the overarching goals of the translation process.

The Coherence Rule, as outlined by Vermeer in 1984, asserts that the translated text should be understandable and coherent to the intended audience in their specific context. Essentially, this means that the translation should make sense to the target audience based on their circumstances and understanding. Under this principle, the source text loses its absolute authority and becomes just one aspect of the translator's considerations. Instead, it serves as information for the translator to select what they

deem relevant and meaningful to the target audience's situation.

The Fidelity Rule pertains to how closely a translated text matches the original, influenced by the purpose of translation and the translator's interpretation of the source material. Inter-textual coherence between the translated and original texts is essential under this principle. The extent and form of fidelity in translation are shaped by the translator's comprehension of the source text and can differ based on the translation's intended purpose.

To sum up, Skopos Theory revolutionized the field of translation studies by shifting the focus from a rigid equivalence-based approach to a dynamic and function-driven methodology. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the purpose of the translation and adapting the translation strategy accordingly, all while taking into account the cultural and contextual factors of the target audience.

### **3.2 Domestication and Foreignization**

Translation is a crucial tool for cross-cultural communication, and cultural differences are inevitable in the translation process. Addressing the impact of these differences has long been a widely debated topic in the field of translation. Due to these inherent cultural disparities, translators often face significant challenges and must decide whether to localize foreign concepts to make them more accessible for readers or to remain faithful to the original meaning, enabling readers to appreciate the unique charm of a different culture.

In his 1813 lecture, German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher delineated two distinct translation methods: "Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him" (49). Schleiermacher starkly emphasized the fundamental divergence between these two methods, asserting that the translator must rigorously adhere to one or the other; otherwise, harmonization between the author and the reader becomes unattainable.

Drawing from these strategies, Schleiermacher introduced the concepts of

author-centered translation and reader-centered translation, transcending the conventional dichotomy of literal and free translation. This theoretical framework not only left a profound impact on subsequent scholars but also served as a wellspring of inspiration.

Building upon Schleiermacher's groundwork, Lawrence Venuti introduced the concepts of domestication and foreignization in his seminal work *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, published in 1995. He criticized the prevailing translation practices that often aimed for fluency and invisibility, arguing that this approach neglected the cultural and linguistic differences between source and target texts. Venuti's concepts have a significant impact on translation studies, contributing to a broader understanding of the complexities of translation. However, whereas Schleiermacher's theory originated from German hermeneutics, Venuti ingeniously situated the ideas of his predecessor within a postcolonial framework.

Domesticating translation is a method that prioritizes the context of the target language. Venuti defines domestication as a process that "may conform to values currently dominating the target-language culture, taking a conservative and openly assimilationist approach to the foreign text, appropriating it to support domestic canons, publishing trends, and political alignments" (240). In this approach, translators emphasize the use of familiar expressions and linguistic norms within the target culture to ensure a smooth and natural translation, while also reducing the unfamiliarity of target language readers with the original text.

Domestication translation entails that translators, across various linguistic levels including vocabulary, grammar, and semantics, do not rigidly adhere to the form of the original text. Instead, they aim to maintain the essence of the original content while expressing it through the closest and most natural equivalent language in the translation. By modifying cultural references, idiomatic expressions, and linguistic structures to match those of the target language, this approach aims to make the translation flow smoothly and fosters a sense of familiarity and intimacy for readers, facilitating their acceptance of the translation.

Foreignizing translation, on the other hand, seeks to preserve the foreign and distinctive elements of the source text in the translation. Instead of adapting the text to fit the target culture's norms, foreignization maintains linguistic and cultural features that might initially seem unfamiliar or "foreign" to the target audience. This approach may lead to a more challenging and thought-provoking reading experience, encouraging readers to engage with the source culture.

According to Venuti, "foreignizing translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language." He further argues that foreignizing translation aims to "restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation". In today's global context, it serves as a valuable strategic cultural intervention, challenging the dominance of "English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others" (20).

The nature and purpose of foreignizing translation ensure that the translation will inevitably carry strong characteristics of the foreign culture, creating a new style of language expression and additional cultural charm distinct from the target language. By retaining the linguistic and cultural style of the source language as much as possible, the approach allows readers to experience the allure of an exotic culture, enriching their cultural perspective and highlighting the nuances of the target language's expressions. This, in turn, fosters exchange and communication between different linguistic cultures.

In contrast, an alternative perspective argues that differences in historical cultures, values, religious beliefs, ways of thinking, and customs suggest that the cultural connotations and emotional significance of the same concept can vary significantly across contexts. As a result, translators often need to add annotations to aid reader comprehension, which may increase the reader's burden and potentially lead to reading difficulties and misunderstandings. Over time, these challenges may diminish readers' interest in and engagement with the translated text (Xu 163).

Venuti's concepts of domestication and foreignization provide a framework for translators to make deliberate choices during the translation process. However, he does not advocate for strict adherence to either approach. Instead, he encourages translators to consider the purpose of the translation and the intended audience. Translators employing domestication should prioritize cultural relevance and readability in the target language, ensuring that translations are easily understood and relatable to the target audience's cultural background. Conversely, translators using foreignization should strive to retain cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and linguistic quirks from the source text. This approach challenges readers to engage with cultural differences and unfamiliar elements.

The two opposing yet complementary translation methods are widely utilized across various translation endeavors. However, ongoing debate and discussion within the field revolve around the relative merits of each approach.

Some scholars advocate for foreignization. In his *Literary Translation in China: From Domestication to Foreignization*, Sun Jingli emphasizes the significance of foreignization and anticipates its increased adoption in Chinese literary translation during the 21st century, considering it a pivotal step in enhancing the standard of literary translation. However, he also underscores the importance of exercising caution and achieving balance. There are instances where it becomes imperative to complement foreignization with domestication to achieve a harmonious and effective integration of both methods (Sun 342).

Some scholars advocate for domestication. Wang Dongfeng, in his article *Domestication and Foreignization: The Confrontation of Spear and Shield*, believes that this debate, framed as a confrontation between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, weaker cultures and dominant cultures, or Orientalism and Western-centrism, transcends mere language and culture. He asserts that it is intricately linked to broader factors, including social and historical contexts, as well as political and economic backgrounds (26).

In contrast to earlier approaches, an increasing number of advocates now support a balanced integration of both domestication and foreignization strategies. Zhu Anbo, the director of the Translation Studies Center at Capital University of Economics and Business, emphasizes in his book *Domestication and Foreignization: A Century of Change in Chinese Literary Translation Studies* (2009) that a dialectical perspective should be adopted when addressing the debate between domestication and foreignization. According to Zhu Anbo, effective application of domestication and foreignization requires a thorough analysis of elements such as the author's intent, translation purpose, text type, and target audience. He argues that translators should develop a deep cultural awareness, considering both shared traits and distinct differences between the source and target cultures. Rather than fully adopting the source culture, translators should make thoughtful adjustments to meet the cultural expectations of the target audience, ensuring the translation resonates meaningfully within its new context (32-33).

As noted previously, Lawrence Venuti's theory proposes the possibility of achieving equilibrium between domestication and foreignization. This balance depends on the translator's assessment of both the source and target cultures, the intended objectives of the translation, and its anticipated impact on the reader. The concepts of domestication and foreignization provide a nuanced perspective on translation by addressing the tension between adapting a text to the target culture and preserving its uniqueness from the source culture. Translators can leverage these concepts as guiding principles to make informed decisions about handling linguistic and cultural elements throughout the translation process.

### **3.2.1 Annotation in Translation Studies**

In translation studies, annotation — a critical form of paratext — refers to explanatory notes or comments that accompany a translated text. These notes are added to clarify meanings, cultural references, or linguistic nuances that might otherwise be obscure or unfamiliar to the target audience. Annotations serve several important purposes, especially in translations of complex literary works, where

cultural, historical, and philosophical elements are deeply embedded in the source text.

Annotations are particularly valuable in bridging the gap between the source and target cultures, providing readers with the necessary context to understand references, idioms, or customs that do not have direct equivalents in the target language. For instance, a Shakespearean reference to a specific Christian tradition might be unfamiliar to Chinese readers. In such cases, annotations can offer essential explanations to help the target audience grasp the intended meaning. Additionally, annotations can clarify linguistic challenges, especially where certain words or phrases are untranslatable or demand further interpretation due to their cultural or historical specificity.

Fu Guangming's translations of Shakespeare's plays feature extensive annotations. According to Zhu Anbo and Feng Yanqin in their article *Interpretation of Paratexts in Fu Guangming's Version of Shakespeare's Plays*, the first series of Fu's Shakespeare translations includes "272 annotations for *Hamlet*, 330 for *Romeo and Juliet*, 401 for *The Merchant of Venice*, and 589 for *Othello*." (5-6) These detailed annotations address puns, biblical references, sexual innuendos, interpretations from previous scholars, and the translator's own approaches to complex content, all of which significantly enhance Chinese readers' understanding of Shakespeare's works.

### ***3.2.2 Language Style in Translation***

Language style in translation refers to the translator's linguistic choices that shape tone, mood, and meaning. In literary translation, it encompasses elements like word choice, sentence structure, tone, and rhetorical devices, which together create the stylistic landscape of the translated text. A translator's language style must often balance preserving the nuances of the original work with ensuring accessibility and relatability for target readers.

Understanding language style is essential in translation studies, as it directly affects how a translated work is received by its audience. Language style serves as a

bridge between cultures, enabling the translator to convey not only the literal meaning of the source text but also its emotional and aesthetic layers. By carefully considering language style, translators enhance the readability of the work, ensuring it resonates authentically with the target audience.

In translating a literary classic like *Hamlet*, language style plays a critical role in capturing the play's emotional depth and Shakespeare's distinctive voice. The stylistic choices made by different translators, for example, reflect not only their respective historical and cultural contexts but also shape how modern Chinese readers interpret Shakespeare's themes, characters, and underlying messages. Choices surrounding idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and cultural references are particularly impactful, as they define how themes such as betrayal, madness, and morality are conveyed. Consequently, each translator's unique style introduces variations in character and plot interpretations, which ultimately shape readers' understanding of the essence of the play.

### 3.3 Selection Criteria

*Hamlet* is one of Shakespeare's earliest and most popular plays in China, having a profound and lasting impact on Chinese literary and cultural discourse. Its complex themes of existentialism, morality, and power resonate deeply with Chinese audiences, making it a focal point of scholarly interest. The play's introduction to China marked a significant cultural exchange, and its subsequent influence on Chinese literature and theater makes it an ideal subject for a comparative study of translation approaches.

This study selects Zhu Shenghao's 1947 translation and Fu Guangming's 2018 translation due to the noticeable gap in comparative research spanning a broad historical timeline. Zhu's translation was instrumental in bringing Shakespeare to mid-20th century Chinese readers, while Fu's recent translation has yet to receive significant academic attention despite its fresh publication. Through a comparative analysis of these two translations, this dissertation seeks to examine how contemporary Chinese scholars handle the cultural and religious dimensions in

Shakespeare's plays, adapting them to resonate with the expectations of modern readers.

### **3.4 Theoretical Framework**

This dissertation is grounded in two main theoretical approaches: Skopos Theory and the concepts of domestication and foreignization in translation studies. Skopos Theory provides a lens through which the differing aims of Zhu Shenghao's and Fu Guangming's translations can be evaluated, offering insight into how each translator approached *Hamlet* based on their specific goals and audience considerations. In addition to Skopos Theory, the dissertation draws on domestication and foreignization, terms popularized by Lawrence Venuti. These strategies refer to the extent to which a translation either adapts the source text to the target culture or preserves the foreign elements of the source language and culture.

The research methodology for this dissertation centers on a comparative analysis of the two Chinese translations of *Hamlet* by Zhu Shenghao and Fu Guangming. This approach focuses on examining critical elements, including religious and cultural features, paratexts, language styles, and soliloquies. Through this analysis, the dissertation aims to identify and analyze the key differences between the two translations, as well as to investigate the historical context and translation strategies that shaped each translator's approach.

## Chapter 4 Comparative Analysis of the Two Translations

This chapter offers a detailed comparative analysis of the two Chinese translations of *Hamlet* by Zhu Shenghao and Fu Guangming, highlighting key elements that distinguish their work. The analysis begins by examining the religious and cultural dimensions within both translations, investigating how each translator navigates Shakespeare's profound engagement with these themes. It then turns to the paratextual materials, such as introductory articles and annotations, which offer insights into each translator's interpretive framework. Additionally, the chapter scrutinizes the distinct linguistic styles adopted by Zhu and Fu, emphasizing their strategies in rendering Shakespeare's dramatic voice into Chinese. Lastly, the translation of soliloquies—a central feature of *Hamlet*—receives particular focus to reveal how each version captures the introspective depth of the protagonist. This comparative study aims to elucidate the translators' underlying approaches and the features that shaped their works.

### 4.1 Religious and Cultural Features

In Western households, two books are considered essential: the Holy Bible and *the Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Renowned British Shakespearean scholars, such as Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, have asserted that the Bible served as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Shakespeare, suggesting that his works might not have existed without it.

During the Elizabethan era, when Shakespeare was active, England emerged as one of the most powerful and affluent nations in Europe. English culture, particularly drama and poetry, reached its zenith during this period. By the time Shakespeare began writing plays in 1589, after several rounds of religious reform, ordinary English people were well-acquainted with various versions of the Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Psalms, the Bible, and religious rituals. They frequently referenced biblical stories and interpretations in their daily lives.

Inspired by the ideas of the European Reformation, Shakespeare created *Hamlet*,

reflecting the profound shifts occurring in the religious landscape of Europe. He extensively incorporated allusions from ancient Greek and Roman mythology, as well as the Bible, into his works, which can be challenging to comprehend without annotations. The Bible indeed serves as a key to interpreting and understanding Shakespeare's works, offering a delicate and dynamic window into his inner world.

Contemporary scholar Fu Guangming has expressed a similar view in his translation of Shakespeare's plays. He believes that Shakespeare's familiarity with the Bible reached such a level that, to us today, it appears effortless, seamless, and masterful. Fu notes that nearly all of Shakespeare's plays contain biblical quotations, allusions, or interpretations. He suggests that translators should strive to uncover and appreciate how Shakespeare subtly infused his artistic inspiration from the Bible into the plots and characters of his works. Without recognizing the omnipresence of the Bible in Shakespeare's works, one inevitably detracts from understanding Shakespeare. In Fu Guangming's translations, "*Romeo and Juliet* includes 34 Bible-related annotations, *Hamlet* has 64, and both *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* contain 60 each" (Zhu and Feng 6). These annotations reflect Fu's profound understanding and deliberate engagement with the religious and cultural context of the original texts. By incorporating these references, Fu aims to assist Chinese readers, who may be less familiar with Western religious and cultural knowledge, in better understanding the backdrop of the play's era.

For example, in Act II, Scene II, as Hamlet feigns madness, the courtier Polonius busily maneuvers to ingratiate himself with King Claudius, who is perceived as treacherous, while also spying on Hamlet's simulated insanity. In this context, Hamlet warns Polonius by recounting the tale of Jephthah's Daughter, a narrative that Fu Guangming annotates as follows:

Jephthah was a judge or leader of ancient Israel who, with God's help, defeated the Ammonites who were attacking Israel. To fulfill a vow he had made, he sacrificed his daughter as a burnt offering. In Judges 11:34-40, it describes how Jephthah returned to Mizpah after his victory, and his only daughter came out to

meet him with timbrels and dancing. ... She died as a virgin. Later, a custom arose in Israel where the women would mourn for Jephthah and his daughter for four days each year. (Fu 84)

Through the annotations provided in Fu Guangming's translation, readers gain a clearer understanding of Shakespeare's subtle use of allusion in this context. Shakespeare seeks to illustrate how Polonius, in his attempts to ingratiate himself with King Claudius, inadvertently undermines the love between his daughter Ophelia and Hamlet. This ultimately leads to Ophelia's madness and tragic drowning, echoing the narrative of Jephthah sacrificing his own daughter. Furthermore, this allusion serves as a veiled expression of Hamlet's disdain for Polonius. By referencing Jephthah, Shakespeare underscores the tragic fate of Ophelia, infusing the narrative with profound symbolic significance. Shakespeare's masterful use of allusion not only enriches the characterization of Hamlet and Polonius but also invites the audience to contemplate the broader moral questions posed by the play. Through Fu Guangming's annotations, contemporary readers can discern the subtleties of these cultural references, thereby enhancing their appreciation of the intricate layers of meaning embedded within Shakespeare's text.

Similarly, in Act V, Scene I, during Hamlet's conversation with the Clown, where he references the allegory of Cain's murder of his brother, Fu Guangming provides following detailed annotations:

Cain, the eldest son of Adam, who murdered his brother Abel. This story is recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible, Genesis 4:8: Adam had sexual relations with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, "With the Lord's help, I have given birth to a son." She named him Cain. Later, she gave birth to another son and named him Abel. Abel became a shepherd, while Cain was a farmer. ... The Lord favored Abel and accepted his offering, but he did not favor Cain and rejected his offering. This made Cain very angry. ... Later, Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother and killed him. (Fu 201)

In the Bible, fratricide is depicted as a grievous sin that incurs God's severe displeasure. By referencing the allegory of Cain's murder of his brother, Fu Guangming offers readers essential cultural and biblical background, enriching their comprehension of Hamlet's profound animosity towards Claudius, who has murdered his brother. This contextual framing helps bridge cultural and religious divides that might otherwise obscure Hamlet's motivations for contemporary Chinese audience. Cain's transgression symbolizes the ultimate familial betrayal—a theme that powerfully echoes Hamlet's own abhorrence of Claudius, who, like Cain, has committed the unforgivable act of killing a close family member for selfish gain. For Chinese readers unfamiliar with Western religions and culture, supplementary information beyond the translated text is essential. Without it, they might struggle to fully grasp Hamlet's fervent desire for revenge and the underlying biblical allusions woven into Shakespeare's play.

Furthermore, in Act V, Scene I of *Hamlet*, when the Priest addresses Laertes, saying, "And but that great command o'ersways the order, She should in ground unsanctified have lodged, Till the last trumpet," Fu Guangming delves into the biblical sources of this line and offers the following annotations:

The reference to "the last trumpet" originates from the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: "We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." and from the New Testament, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." ( Fu 210)

Fu Guangming's annotations on "the last trumpet" bring attention to this biblical phrase's weight and cultural resonance in Hamlet. The phrase refers to the Christian belief in the Day of Judgment, when, according to scripture, the dead will rise at the

sound of "the last trumpet." In Shakespeare's setting, this imagery amplifies the gravity of Ophelia's burial and highlights the conflict between religious doctrine and personal loyalty, particularly given the ambiguity surrounding Ophelia's possible suicide. Through the Priest's words to Laertes, Shakespeare underscores the restrictive religious regulations that dictate burial rites, reflecting societal values that influence perceptions of death, judgment, and the afterlife. Fu's annotations offer more than a straightforward explanation; they immerse Chinese readers in the religious norms of Elizabethan society, where suicide was regarded as a serious sin, often barring the deceased from receiving a Christian burial. By unpacking the significance of "the last trumpet" and its implications, Fu enables readers to appreciate the deep moral weight embedded in Shakespeare's words. His approach not only enhances the reading experience but also bridges the cultural and religious gap, illustrating how Shakespeare enriches his works through skillful use of biblical texts.

In certain instances, however, Fu Guangming's extensive references to biblical sources may feel somewhat forced or excessive. For example, in Act I, Scene I of *Hamlet*, as he interprets the signs of impending disaster, Fu cites numerous descriptions from different biblical versions. While this meticulous approach highlights the translator's commitment to providing readers with rich insights into religious culture, it may also risk redundancy, potentially interrupting the narrative flow and detracting from the immersive experience. Balancing these cultural explanations with narrative coherence is essential to ensure that the annotations enhance rather than overshadow the dramatic effect.

Similarly, in Act I, Scene III, Fu Guangming's translation of *Hamlet* includes notable annotations linking Polonius's advice to Laertes with specific biblical teachings. For instance, Polonius's counsel to "give thy thoughts no tongue, nor any unproportioned thought his act" is paired with James 1:19 from the New Testament: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Further annotations highlight Polonius's advice on attire, with Sirach 19:30 from the Old Testament: "Attire and attire, laughter and gait, show what a man is,"

underscoring how appearance reflects character. Additionally, Polonius's warning about the dangers of lending is reinforced with Sirach 8:12-13: "Do not loan to one more powerful than yourself; and if you do lend, count it as lost. Do not guarantee a loan beyond your ability; and if you do guarantee, be prepared to pay."

Through these annotations, Fu Guangming contextualizes Polonius's pragmatic advice with scriptural principles, offering Chinese readers insights into values common to both the biblical and Shakespearean worlds. However, these references mentioned above are common-sense aspects of life that are easily understandable even by ordinary readers. Therefore, there seems to be little necessity to quote from the Bible to further explain them. Such excessive citations may appear cumbersome and obscure, potentially adding to the reader's burden rather than enhancing their understanding.

According to the Skopos theory, translation activities should serve a specific purpose. Fu Guangming, when explaining his intention behind translating Shakespeare's plays, stated that he is dedicated to providing authentic Shakespearean dramas to contemporary readers. In translating *Hamlet*, Fu's goal is to help Chinese readers, who lack a Western cultural background, better understand Shakespeare's works. This objective shaped his translation strategy, which involves not only conveying the content of the original text but also helping readers comprehend its cultural and religious context.

To achieve this purpose, Fu Guangming retained a significant number of religious and cultural elements in his translation and included as many as 64 references to images, allusions, and metaphors derived from the Bible. This approach helps readers better understand the religious and cultural background and deeper meanings within Shakespeare's works, aiming to provide a reading experience akin to that of the original audience. These additional explanations and clarifications effectively bridge the gap for Chinese readers who may lack a Western cultural background, enabling them to fully grasp the rich connotations of Shakespeare's works. This strategy is ideal for readers who wish to gain a deep understanding of the

original work's cultural context and enhances both the depth and accuracy of the translation.

In contrast, Zhu Shenghao's 1947 translation aimed primarily to introduce Shakespeare's literary works to Chinese readers of the mid-20th century, exposing them to classics of world literature. Given the constraints of the era and limited familiarity with the Bible and Western religious culture, Zhu Shenghao included few annotations regarding religious and cultural backgrounds in his translation of *Hamlet*. His strategy focused more on textual conversion rather than conveying cultural context. This approach was well-suited for readers encountering Shakespeare's works for the first time, enabling them to swiftly grasp the fundamental content of the original. However, the absence of thorough explanations regarding the religious and cultural contexts of the original work may hinder readers from fully comprehending certain images and metaphors, thereby limiting their overall appreciation and understanding.

Overall, the contrasting translation strategies of Fu Guangming and Zhu Shenghao underscore their differing views on the roles of translation and reader needs. Fu Guangming's approach is ideal for readers seeking a deeper understanding of the original cultural context, thereby enriching the translation's depth and accuracy. Conversely, Zhu Shenghao's method is better suited for readers new to Shakespeare's works, facilitating a swift grasp of the fundamental content. Each strategy has its merits and fits specific contexts, illustrating how translation purposes significantly shape the choice of translation strategies.

## 4.2 Paratexts

Paratext refers to the elements or features that surround a primary text, providing additional context, interpretation, or framing. These elements can include things like titles, subtitles, prefaces, introductions, footnotes, epigraphs, illustrations, covers, and so on. Paratextual elements play a crucial role in shaping readers' perceptions of the primary text and thus to influence how the text is perceived, understood, and engaged

with by readers.

The paratext, as stated by Zhu Anbo and Feng Yanqin, not only reveals the origins, intentions, processes, publication, and dissemination of Fu Guangming's translations of Shakespeare, but also plays an irreplaceable role in exploring the translator's purpose and motivation hidden behind the main text. The paratext effectively facilitates communication between the author, translator, and readers, providing richer perspectives and interpretative possibilities for understanding Fu's translations of Shakespeare's plays (2).

The most valuable aspects of Fu Guangming's new translation of the complete works of Shakespeare lie in two aspects. Firstly, each work is accompanied by a detailed and comprehensive introductory article, providing readers with in-depth insights. Secondly, the translator has included extensive annotations throughout the translation, aiding readers in understanding the implicit meanings and historical contexts of the works.

Zhu Shenghao was constrained by the objective historical conditions of his time, with limited access to Shakespearean literature and auxiliary materials. During his translation process, he could only refer to the 1914 Oxford Edition of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* and paper dictionaries (Qu 35). Consequently, he lacked a comprehensive understanding of the religious and cultural background and inevitably overlooked many allusions, metaphors, and puns in Shakespeare's plays, with his translation of *Hamlet* containing only 13 annotations and no introductory article.

In contrast, today's diverse and open cultural context provides translators with greater flexibility in their approaches. They can draw from a broad spectrum of previous translations to study similarities and differences, explore unique interpretations, and develop new perspectives on Shakespeare's works as reflected across various versions. Fu Guangming, for example, based his translation on multiple authoritative editions, including those from Oxford, Royal, New Cambridge, and

David Bevington, while incorporating a wealth of the latest research findings in Shakespeare studies.

Fu Guangming extensively consulted both domestic and international Shakespearean scholarship, producing hundreds of thousands of words in introductory articles to enhance readers' understanding. For *Hamlet* alone, he provided 272 annotations and a comprehensive introductory article to assist readers unfamiliar with English language and Western culture (Qu 40). Additionally, he included several pages of plot summaries before the main text, giving readers an overview of the play's key content and guiding them through the reading experience. This approach not only contextualizes the text but also makes it more accessible to a broad readership.

#### **4.2.1 Introductory Article**

In the introductory article to his *Hamlet* translation, Fu Guangming shares his research findings, creative inspirations during the translation process, and his unique interpretations of the play. He delves into the play's sources, various textual versions, and religious and cultural contexts. Through these discussions, Fu seeks to make *Hamlet* more accessible to the readers.

In the first part of his introductory article, Fu Guangming explores possible sources that may have inspired Shakespeare in crafting *Hamlet*. His research traces the story's roots to the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus, whose *Historiae Danicae* (Danish History), written around 1200 in Latin, contains numerous details closely mirroring elements found in Shakespeare's play. This work is a foundational document of pre-Medieval Denmark, compiling ancient heroic epics and documenting folk legends and ballads. Another theory on the source material of *Hamlet* suggests that Shakespeare may have directly drawn from English translations of Matteo Bandello's Italian tales, specifically the versions titled *Hamlet* published in *The Palace of Pleasure* (1566) by William Painter and *Certaine Tragical Discourses* (1567) by Geoffrey Fenton. These renditions, derived from Saxo's original story, introduce a crucial plot element absent from earlier versions: Hamlet's mother's

adulterous relationship with his uncle prior to the murder of his father.

In addition to the theories involving Saxo Grammaticus and Matteo Bandello's tales, Fu Guangming highlights a third perspective: some scholars believe that *Hamlet* was directly adapted from an earlier play also titled *Hamlet*, performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men at Newington Butts Theatre on June 11, 1594. This earlier work is thought to have served as a prototype for Shakespeare's version. Unfortunately, the script has been lost to history, and the identity of its author remains unknown. Fu Guangming concludes that Shakespeare, in fact, never created original scripts but always drew inspiration from ancient stories, and *Hamlet* is no exception. Regardless of the source of his creative inspiration, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is undoubtedly a masterpiece of genius.

Fu Guangming further scrutinizes, in the second part, the publication history of different versions of Shakespeare's works. In 1623, Shakespeare's colleagues John Heminges and Henry Condell published the first collection of William Shakespeare's plays, known as the "First Folio", which included 36 of Shakespeare's works. Subsequently, there were several editions published, including the "First Quarto" and the "Second Quarto," as well as the first modern edition of Shakespeare's complete works published by Nicholas Rowe in 1709. However, Fu Guangming points out that even today, perhaps no publishing house dares to claim that their edition of Shakespeare is the most authoritative or perfect. This, in itself, is a testament to the eternal artistic charm of Shakespeare.

In the third part, the translator analyzes several "Hamlet questions" from the perspective of complex human nature: Why doesn't Hamlet seek revenge? Is he truly mad or just pretending? Does Hamlet truly love Ophelia? If so, why is he so cold to her? Fu Guangming writes: "The greatness of Shakespeare lies precisely in his transformation of the old Hamlet from a revenge hero with Nordic pirate or medieval colors into a new Renaissance-era refined, noble humanist. The brilliance of rationality and enlightenment reflected in him still shines brightly today."(2018: 252)

The fourth part examines the religious reform background and social cultural atmosphere of Shakespeare's era, analyzing the relationship between the characters and plot of *Hamlet* and the Bible. It also attempts to interpret the core question of Hamlet from the perspective of a Christian: why doesn't he immediately seek revenge?

The fifth part discusses the different interpretations of the play by various readers. Due to its profound and multi-layered content, complex character relationships, and plot developments, each person's reading and interpretation may be influenced by personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, emotional states, and other factors. Indeed, this diversity in interpretation and emotional response to *Hamlet* among different individuals is what gives rise to the saying that there are a thousand Hamlets for a thousand readers.

In the final part of the introductory article, Fu Guangming raises several enigmatic questions left behind by Shakespeare. For instance, many of Shakespeare's stories take place abroad, but did he ever travel abroad? What was the exact date of Shakespeare's birth? How old should Hamlet be for his age to make sense?

Through his extensive introduction and discussion, Fu Guangming delves into the original story of *Hamlet*, examining Shakespeare's personal experiences alongside the historical context of the Elizabethan era. He further analyzes the interplay between character personalities, religious elements, and dramatic expression within the play, with particular emphasis on Hamlet's character, offering unique insights. This approach bridges the gap between readers and Shakespeare, demystifying the playwright and making him more relatable. Qu Yangming, in *Retranslation of Shakespeare's Plays from the Perspective of Discourse Interaction*, notes that the introductory article not only showcases Fu Guangming's in-depth research and profound interpretation of Shakespeare's work but also reveal his re-evaluation of academic questions within the original text from a fresh perspective (40).

#### 4.2.2 Annotations

Shakespeare often embedded profound meanings within his lines to engage his audience. These meanings were fully comprehensible only to individuals living during that era, as they were deeply rooted in the understanding of Western traditional culture. "As time has elapsed, the theatrical ambiance of Shakespeare's era has faded, leaving us to approach his intentions solely through the text," wrote Wang Mian in *Fu Guangming: Ten Years for the Re-Translation of Shakespeare*, "It is important to remember that Shakespeare originally crafted these plays for stage performance, not for the modern readers like us."

Fu Guangming asserted that contemporary non-native English readers cannot fully appreciate Shakespeare without the aid of annotations. Consequently, through extensive reading, he has gleaned rich information about Shakespeare's era from various texts. Each of his translated works is accompanied by two to three hundred annotations, drawn from English references and continually updated research findings. Through these efforts, he hopes that modern readers can gain a true understanding of Shakespeare's works, recognizing that deciphering Shakespeare is by no means an easy task.

In his annotations, Fu Guangming excels at referencing and contrasting the achievements of his predecessors while offering his own insights based on modern aesthetic demands. For example, in Act II, Scene II, when King Claudius sends the courtier Polonius to investigate Hamlet's sudden madness, Hamlet cautions him, saying, "Pregnancy is indeed a blessing from God, but it's not the same when your daughter is pregnant. Beware, my friend." Here Fu Guangming provides the following annotation:

The source text in English is "Conception is a blessing, but not as your daughter may conceive". Here, "conception" can also mean "imagination". Zhu Shenghao translates it as "Having wisdom in one's belly is fortunate, but it's not the kind of wisdom that your daughter will have." Liang Shiqiu

translates it as: "Conception is indeed a blessing, but don't let your daughter conceive." Sun Dayu translates it as: "Pregnancy is a divine blessing; but it's not the case when your daughter is pregnant." Hamlet's implicit meaning seems to be "The joy of a pure woman's pregnancy is a gift from God, but if your daughter bears my child, as I am about to avenge my father and face uncertain fate, it might not be a blessing but a curse." (Fu 71)

Fu Guangming's commentary not only sheds light on Hamlet's mockery of Polonius but also navigates the cultural nuances that might otherwise be overlooked. He recognizes that Hamlet's remark reflects Polonius's overprotectiveness toward Ophelia and alludes to her potential indiscretions. By exploring the layers of humor and irony within this exchange, Fu enriches the reader's understanding. In his annotations, he presents the original English text alongside translations by Zhu Shenghao, Liang Shiqiu, and Sun Dayu, showcasing the variations among them. Ultimately, Fu Guangming presents his own interpretation as the most fitting, synthesizing elements from previous translations while incorporating his own insights. His version effectively captures Hamlet's tone, skillfully balancing mock seriousness with subtle caution.

Additionally, Fu Guangming offers extensive annotations on Western religious culture and the sexual puns present in the text, particularly in Act I, Scene V.

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house

Fu Guangming referenced the interpretation of "prison-house" in the Bible here and offered the following annotation:

Catholics believe that after death, evil souls go straight to hell, while holy souls ascend directly to heaven. However, most believers who are neither purely good nor purely evil, but a mix of both, enter prison-house. It is a vast

underground prison where souls undergo punishment until they have repaid their debts from their time on earth and their souls are cleansed of impurities. Although souls in prison-house will eventually be saved and ascend to heaven, they must endure torment similar to that of hell before leaving. Moreover, such torment is often depicted as extremely horrifying in church murals and by Catholic priests, who often remind believers that the agony of sinful souls in prison-house exceeds the suffering of the greatest hardships in this world." (Fu 43)

Shakespeare deepened the emotional and spiritual dimensions of his characters through rich imagery, thereby exploring themes of human struggle and redemption in his works. The translator's annotations not only clarify the religious and cultural contexts within Shakespeare's plays but also reveal how he infused deeper significance by reinterpreting biblical imagery. Specifically, the annotation on "prison-house" is crucial for Chinese readers as it helps them grasp the injustice and bitterness in the soul of Hamlet's father and the oppressive nature of his current state. Moreover, without understanding the religious connotations of this term, readers would miss a crucial aspect necessary for fully comprehending the play's themes.

Similarly, Fu Guangming offered meticulous annotations on the sexual innuendos present in Shakespeare's plays, exemplifying this with Act 3, Scene 2.

Hamlet: I mean, my head upon your lap?

Ophelia: Ay, my lord.

Hamlet: Do you think I meant country matters?

Ophelia: I think nothing, my lord.

The translator elucidates the meanings of "country matter" and "nothing." He explains: "Country" and "cunt" are puns, suggesting sexual matters. "Nothing" signifies "no thing" (vagina), indicating that Ophelia is subconsciously contemplating the vagina (Fu 117). These annotations are essential for readers to grasp the pun

behind seemingly mundane language, thereby capturing the true essence of Shakespeare's play.

According to Skopos theory, translation strategy and outcome are directly influenced by the translation purpose. Fu Guangming referenced numerous versions and extensive research findings during the translation process. Each of his translated piece is accompanied by a lengthy introductory article and meticulous annotations. His goal is to enable contemporary Chinese readers to better understand the implicit meanings and creative ideas behind Shakespeare's works. To achieve this, he conducted extensive research drawing on texts from Shakespeare's era and included numerous annotations to aid readers in navigating the complex references, metaphors, and puns inherent in the original texts. Additionally, he analyzes the plot and character traits through a Christian lens, aiming to bridge cultural gaps between readers and Shakespeare. This translation strategy aligns closely with Skopos theory, which emphasizes that translation activities should serve a specific purpose.

In contrast, Zhu Shenghao faced significant constraints in his examination of Shakespeare. His research was hindered by the absence of insights from earlier scholars and limited access to comprehensive reference materials, which constrained his capacity to fully leverage the extensive research findings of both domestic and international academics. Zhu Shenghao predominantly utilized the 1914 unannotated edition of Shakespeare's complete works and paper dictionaries for his research. While these resources represented the pinnacle of available materials at the time, they were overshadowed by the expansive resources provided by electronic databases and international scholarly journals that emerged in later years.

These constraints inevitably led him to overlook some of the intricate references, metaphors, and puns in Shakespeare's works during the translation process. Furthermore, Zhu Shenghao's grasp of the creation background and religious and cultural elements underpinning Shakespeare's plays was incomplete, further limiting his ability to faithfully convey these nuanced aspects in his translations. His principal objective in translating Shakespeare was to introduce his works to a wider Chinese

audience. Notwithstanding these constraints, Zhu Shenghao's translation of Shakespeare remains profoundly significant both in his own era and in contemporary contexts.

In summary, the differing translation strategies of Fu Guangming and Zhu Shenghao exemplify how their respective outcomes were shaped by distinct objectives. Fu Guangming pursued a strategy aimed at offering comprehensive insights into Shakespeare's works through detailed annotations and introductions, thereby fostering a profound understanding of cultural nuances and deep meanings. In contrast, Zhu Shenghao's approach, constrained by historical limitations, prioritized the direct transmission of Shakespeare's texts to introduce them to Chinese readers, with less emphasis on extensive cultural interpretation.

#### **4.3 Language Style**

The differences between Chinese and English introduce additional complexity to the translation process. The numerous disparities in linguistic, social, and religious cultures between the two languages can create significant comprehension barriers for readers if the original content and form are directly preserved. Consequently, when translating between English and Chinese, the translators must not only focus on the literal meaning of words but also deeply grasp their cultural connotations. By employing flexible translation strategies, translators can bridge the gaps between the two languages and cultures, thereby ensuring both the readability and accuracy of their translations.

In his translation process, Zhu Shenghao eschewed a word-for-word approach in favor of a domestication strategy. By integrating Chinese culture and context, he conveyed the original content in ways that were familiar to the target language readers, resulting in translations rich in literary style and artistic expression. Zhu's translations are renowned for their fluency, elegance, naturalness, and ease of understanding, which enhances both the readability and appreciation of the translated texts. Additionally, by emphasizing the rhythm and cadence of his translations, Zhu

Shenghao's approach strives to conveyed the poetic beauty and musicality inherent in the original texts.

Fu Guangming's translation endeavors, however, aim to capture the "authentic flavor of Shakespeare" distinct from highbrow literature, infused with worldly charm and vitality. His translations offer a fresh perspective on Shakespeare's works for contemporary readers, challenging the perception of Shakespearean plays as exclusively highbrow art that has undergone a lengthy process of canonization in China. Fu Guangming holds a contrasting perspective and questions whether beauty, elegance, and nobility in language always equate to the utmost fidelity to the original text. He argues that Shakespeare, on average, completed a play in less than six months, motivated primarily by the need to generate income from performances attended predominantly by lower-class audiences.

In discussing his pursuit of a new translation of Shakespeare, Fu Guangming once gave an example to illustrate his approach: "To fully appreciate the authentic essence of Shakespeare, one should strive to convey the Elizabethan context using today's modern language." Therefore, he considers two key aspects in his translations: emphasizing the spirit and style of Shakespeare's plays while prioritizing the modernity and fluency of the translated language (Wang Xiulu 21).

In handling sex-related language, particularly, the two translators demonstrated radically different approaches. Zhu Shenghao's translations can typically be described as "purified versions," wherein he rendered coarse and sexually explicit elements into more elegant expressions, often omitting them entirely. In contrast, Fu Guangming meticulously researched the religious and cultural elements embedded in the texts and did not shy away from vulgar or sexual content. He boldly retained these elements to preserve the original language style and flavor as much as possible, believing that this approach was necessary for readers to fully appreciate the richness and complexity of Shakespeare's works. Professor Xiong Hui of Sichuan University observes that, in contrast to previous translations of Shakespeare, Fu Guangming's recent work is distinguished by its comprehensive rendering and detailed explanation of the sexual

undertones present in the original texts. Drawing on annotated English editions and extensive Shakespearean research, Fu introduced these elements to Chinese readers in their 'authentic form' for the first time, thus moving beyond the 'sanitized Shakespeare' of earlier translations. This represents a historic advancement in the history of Shakespeare translation in China (Xiong 22). Fu Guangming does not shy away from subtle sexual depictions, and in some cases, he even includes annotations to draw readers' attention to these nuances.

For instance, in Act I, Scene V, the ghost reveals to Hamlet the betrayal of his uncle Claudius and the queen.

So to seduce! won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.

.....

So lust, though to radiant angel link'd

Will sate itself in a celestial bed,

And prey garbage.

*(Zhu's translation)*

诱惑了我的外表上似乎非常贞淑的王后, 满足他的无耻的兽欲……一个淫妇虽然和光明的天使为偶, 也会在一天厌倦于天上的唱随之乐, 而宁愿搂抱人间的朽骨。(25)

*(Fu's translation)*

引诱我那看起来最为贞洁却充满性欲的王后, 去满足他淫荡的肉欲……一个淫妇, 即使嫁给光明的天使, 她在迟早会厌倦天床上的鱼水之情, 而要去污秽里偷欢。(44-45)

In this dialogue, the ghost of Hamlet's father reveals to Hamlet the grim truth of his untimely death, accusing his treacherous brother Claudius and the seemingly virtuous queen of engaging in incestuous adultery. When translating the sexually

related words in the original text, Zhu Shenghao incorporates Chinese culture and context by rendering "seeming-virtuous" as "外表贞淑", "celestial bed" as "唱随之乐", and "prey garbage" as "搂抱人间的朽骨". These euphemistic expressions convey the literary value and artistic charm of Shakespeare's drama while maintaining cultural sensitivity and resonance with Chinese readers. On the other hand, Fu Guangming opts for more direct language in his translation, rendering these words as "贞洁却充满性欲", "鱼水之情", and "污秽里偷欢". This straightforward depiction of sexual matters aligns closely with the original context and emotions. Through explicit rebuke, the ghost exposes deep-seated hatred towards his brother and wife, thereby compelling Hamlet to seek revenge.

Similarly, in Act III, Scene II, when the King sends Ophelia to test whether Hamlet is truly mad, their dialogue unfolds as follows:

Hamlet: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

Ophelia: No, my lord.

Hamlet: I mean, my head upon your lap?

Ophelia: Ay, my lord.

Hamlet: Do you think I meant country matters?

Ophelia: I think nothing, my lord.

*(Zhu's translation)*

哈姆雷特：小姐，我可以睡在您的怀里吗？

奥菲利亚：不，殿下。

哈姆雷特：我的意思是说，我可以把我的头枕在您的膝上吗？

奥菲利亚：嗯，殿下。

哈姆雷特：您以为我在转着下流的念头吗？

奥菲利亚：我没有想到，殿下。（66-67）

(Fu's translation)

哈姆雷特：小姐，我可以睡您裤裆里吗？

奥菲利亚：不，殿下。

哈姆雷特：我是问，可以把头枕在您的大腿上吗？

奥菲利亚：可以，殿下。

哈姆雷特：您以为我脑子里在想跟妓女干的下流事？

奥菲利亚：没那么想，殿下。（117）

In Zhu Shenghao's translation, "lap" is rendered as "怀里" (in one's arms), and "country matters" is translated as "下流的念头" (vulgar thought). These choices demonstrate an implicit and indirect approach, which cleanses or omits explicit content, aligning with the aesthetic and expectations of the translator's era.

In contrast, Fu Guangming's translation boldly embraces the vulgarity and sexually related elements by rendering them directly as "裤裆" (crotch) and "跟妓女干的下流事" (obscenity with whores), thereby faithfully reproducing the emotional and linguistic style of the source texts. Furthermore, he skillfully conducts research and references previous translations, interpreting "Shall I lie in your lap?" as "Can I have sex with you?", and highlighting the pun between "country" and "cunt," which alludes to sexual matters. Moreover, during Elizabethan times, "Nothing" was used as slang for "vagina," likely derived from the pun suggesting that a woman has "nothing" between her legs. In his annotation, Fu explicitly states, "'Nothing' refers to 'vagina', indicating that Ophelia's subconscious is fixated on this aspect." This direct use of sexual language aligns closely with the narrative, where Hamlet feigns madness by employing vulgar language to deflect the king's inquiries. Without Fu Guangming's annotations, readers might struggle to grasp these underlying sexual nuances, thereby missing out on the true essence of Shakespeare's works.

Furthermore, in Act IV, Scene V of *Hamlet*, Ophelia's speech becomes nonsensical and disjointed after she experiences mental disturbance.

Then up he rose and donn'd his clo'es

And dupp'd the chamber door,

Let in the maid, that out a maid

Never departed more.

The meanings expressed by the two versions do not differ significantly. However, Fu Guangming provides a note citing Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen's edition of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*: "As homophonic puns, 'dupp'd' and 'tupped' refer to mating between a ram and a ewe, and to sexual intercourse in slang. Ophelia here makes a veiled reference to sexual matters." By supplementing the text with annotations, readers can better understand the hidden British slang and sex-related puns in the source texts, thus approaching a more authentic Shakespearean experience. In contrast, Zhu Shenghao's translation chose to overlook these elements in pursuit of what he deemed an elegant style.

Apart from their differing treatment of sexual references, the two translations also exhibit distinct linguistic characteristics reflective of their respective eras. Zhu Shenghao's translation mirrors the language habits and aesthetic preferences of his time, while Fu Guangming's translation aligns more closely with the language style and comprehension of modern readers.

Despite influential figures like Chen Duxiu and Hu Shih initiating the New Culture Movement in 1919, advocating for vernacular Chinese and the inclusion of colloquial language, many Chinese translators, including Zhu Shenghao, have prioritized textual elegance and refinement to underscore the canonical status of Shakespearean works. This approach has resulted in language that feels archaic and obscure, making it less accessible to modern readers.

Fu Guangming aims to convey the Elizabethan context in clear, easily understandable modern language, thereby providing readers with an authentic Shakespearean experience suited to contemporary times. "Every translator has their

own Shakespeare in mind, and every era calls for its new translators," he said when discussing his intention behind translating Shakespeare's works.

The differences in language choice between the two translations can be illustrated by the following examples.

Original text	Zhu's translation	Fu's translation
Give these mourning duties to your father	孝思不匮 (11)	恪守孝道 (20)
Importunity	渎求 (18)	纠缠 (30)
Vulgar	狎昵 (19)	粗俗 (31)
Sterile promontory	荒岬 (45)	贫瘠荒芜的海角 (78)
Stood challenger on mount of all the age	睥睨古今 (107)	举世无双 (186)

The above comparison demonstrates that both translators effectively employed language reflective of their respective eras while accurately conveying the original text's meaning. Zhu Shenghao incorporated numerous idiomatic expressions with unique Chinese cultural contexts such as "孝思不匮" and "睥睨古今" in his translation, thereby enriching his translation with high aesthetic value. When encountering sentences that did not align with Chinese readers' aesthetic preferences, Zhu typically modified the translation to better suit their needs. Moreover, he utilized elegant yet obscure language, incorporating words like "渎求" and "狎昵" that have become unfamiliar to contemporary Chinese readers. This choice of vocabulary may necessitate assistance from the internet or a dictionary for comprehension, thus impeding reading fluency and accessibility for the readers.

Comparatively, Fu Guangming employed accessible and vivid modern language

in his translation, using terms like "恪守孝道", "举世无双", "纠缠", "粗俗", which align with the reading and aesthetic preferences of contemporary readers. These terms also reflect the authentic theatrical language of the Elizabethan era, enhancing the relevance and accessibility of Shakespeare's works to modern audiences.

The comparative analysis above illustrates how Zhu Shenghao and Fu Guangming, driven by different translation purposes, adopted contrasting strategies in their translations. Zhu Shenghao favored a domestication approach, tailoring his translations to meet the cultural and linguistic expectations of mid-20th century Chinese readers. His 1947 translation of *Hamlet*, influenced by historical context and reader preferences, aimed primarily to popularize Shakespeare's works in China. Zhu purified the text by removing vulgar and sexual references to various extents, using refined language that aligned with contemporary Chinese aesthetic sensibilities. This domestication strategy aimed to minimize cultural barriers and enhance reader accessibility, reflecting Zhu's commitment to adapting Shakespeare for Chinese audience encountering them for the first time.

In contrast, Fu Guangming pursued a foreignization strategy characterized by a deep engagement with the original text and extensive research. His translation aimed to preserve the cultural and linguistic nuances of Shakespeare's works while making them accessible to contemporary Chinese readers. Fu emphasized the importance of fluent, direct, and vivid modern language in conveying the essence of Shakespeare's plays authentically. By integrating modern Chinese expressions, Fu sought to maintain the original style and cultural context while ensuring readability and enjoyment for his audience.

According to Skopos theory, which considers translation as serving a specific purpose, Zhu Shenghao and Fu Guangming's approaches reflect their distinct goals and methodological choices in translating *Hamlet*. Zhu's domestication strategy aligned with the cultural expectations of his time, facilitating the widespread acceptance of Shakespeare in China. In contrast, Fu's foreignization approach aimed to preserve the integrity and charm of Shakespeare's dramas, offering contemporary

Chinese readers a more direct engagement with the original text's richness and complexity.

#### 4.4 Rendering Soliloquies

Hamlet's soliloquies are undoubtedly among the most captivating passages in Shakespeare's works. These introspective monologues are not only classic lines in literature but also profound reflections of inner turmoil and philosophical contemplation. Through these soliloquies, we glimpse the myriad contradictions, struggles, and emotions within the complex character of Hamlet. They inspire deep reflections on life, death, and the complexities of human nature.

The following analysis compares the characteristics and translation techniques of two translators by examining their treatment of Hamlet's famous soliloquies. This comparison will illuminate how these translators approached the linguistic, cultural, and emotional complexities inherent in Shakespeare's text, offering insights into their unique interpretations and translation strategies.

*(Original text)*

To be, or not to be, that is the question.

*(Zhu's translation)*

生存还是毁灭，这是一个值得考虑的问题。 (59)

*(Fu's translation)*

是活着，还是死去，我的问题就出在这儿。 (102)

This soliloquy, renowned for its profound emotional expression and philosophical depth, has transcended its textual context to become a widely quoted aphorism. It occurs when Hamlet learns of his mother and uncle's conspiracy to murder his father and their illicit relationship before his father's death. In this moment of torment and doubt, Hamlet deeply reflects on life and wrestles with the decision of whether to seek revenge. This pivotal scene captures Hamlet's inner turmoil and

existential crisis, making it a compelling subject for analysis and translation comparison.

The original meaning of the text is quite ambiguous due to the multifaceted nature of the copular verb "be" in English, which, despite its high frequency, carries several meanings, making it challenging to interpret. One of the most iconic Chinese translations of this line is by Zhu Shenghao, who transformed the copular verb "be" into the verb "生存" (live or exist) and added "值得考虑的" (worthy of consideration) before "question," rendering it as "这是一个值得考虑的问题" (This is a question worthy of consideration). Here, Zhu Shenghao abandoned the literal translation approach commonly used in translating foreign literature during his time. Instead, he combined plot and context to showcase the translator's subjectivity and creativity, thereby enhancing the literary and aesthetic qualities of the translation.

In his annotation of this line, Fu Guangming referenced translations by many famous translators. He believed that the translations by Liang Shiqiu and Sun Dayu were highly accurate, effectively capturing Hamlet's complex emotions of hesitation and conflict between suicide and revenge in the plot. However, when discussing Zhu Shenghao, Fu Guangming believed that despite its elegance, Zhu's translation was not entirely accurate because Zhu added content that was not present in the original text. This gave the impression that Hamlet was engaged in serious consideration of a metaphysical philosophical question concerning humanity's existence or destruction, rather than solely his own life and death.

According to Fu Guangming's research, the original line in the first quarto of 1603 reads: "To be or not to be, I there's the point." He suggests that "I there's the point" was likely part of Shakespeare's original text from the earliest performances, possibly spoken by actors as an improvisation. In contrast, "that is the question" appears to be a later modification that became the enduring version in subsequent editions. Therefore, based on his investigation and comparison, Fu proposes that translating this line as “是活着，还是死去，我的问题就出在这儿” would be more accurate.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
 Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles

*(Zhu's translation)*

默然忍受命运的暴虐的毒箭，或是挺身反抗人世的无涯的苦难，通过斗争把它们扫清，这两种行为，哪一种更高贵？（59）

*(Fu's translation)*

面对无边的苦难，是忍受强暴肆虐的命运的矢石、箭雨，还是拿起武器通过战斗将它们打败，在人的内心里哪种行为更高贵些？（103）

Zhu Shenghao translated "in the mind" as "默然" (in silence), which clearly deviates from the original meaning. However, his choice of words is elegant and refined, effectively conveying the sense of enduring suffering without resistance. In contrast, Fu Guangming translated it as "在人的内心里" (In one's heart), which is more faithful to the original meaning and makes the language straightforward and easily understandable.

Besides, "The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" was translated as "命运的暴虐的毒箭" by Zhu Shenghao. In this translation, "the slings and arrows" are metaphorically interpreted as "毒箭" (poisoned arrow), with the translator deliberately omitting the mention of "slings" to achieve a smoother and more elegant target text. This translation approach, aimed at enhancing readability for the audience, contributed to the widespread dissemination and acceptance of Shakespeare's works in the social context of the time. In contrast, Fu Guangming translated "slings" as "矢石" and "arrows" as "箭雨," opting for a direct and faithful approach to the original text.

But that the dread of something after death,  
 The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn

No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
 Than fly to others that we know not of.

*(Zhu's translation)*

倘不是因为惧怕不可知的死后,惧怕那从来不曾有一个旅人回来过的神秘之国,是它迷惑了我们的意志,使我们宁愿忍受目前的折磨,不敢向我们所不知道的痛苦飞去? (59)

*(Fu's translation)*

因为凡是到死亡之乡去的旅客无一生还, 正是这种对未经发现的神秘国度的恐惧, 迷惑了我们的意志, 使我们宁愿忍受眼前的不幸, 也不敢飞向我们所不知的痛苦。 (104)

In Zhu Shenghao's translation of these lines, he employs rhetorical questions in a distinctive manner, effectively heightening Hamlet's inner hesitation and doubts about death. This approach imbues the soliloquy with a stronger tone and more vivid emotional color compared to straightforward declarative sentences.

On the other hand, Fu Guangming uses direct modern language such as "因为" (because) and "正是" (exactly; no other than) in his translation to clarify why "his will puzzles" at this moment. In addition, he translates "No traveller returns" as "无人生还" (no one returns alive), explicitly indicating the challenging choice between life and death, which is more straightforward than the original meaning. He also incorporates a reference to the Bible in this context, citing a passage from the Book of Wisdom 2:1: "They reasoned unsoundly, saying to themselves, 'Life is short and sorrowful, and there is no remedy when a life comes to an end, and no one has been known to return from Hades.'" These supplementary explanations assist Chinese readers without religious knowledge in better understanding Shakespeare's original work.

The comparison of Zhu Shenghao's and Fu Guangming's translations of Hamlet's soliloquy highlights distinct strategies shaped by their respective translation goals,

leading to unique styles and characteristics. Zhu Shenghao aimed to adapt Shakespeare's work to fit the aesthetic expectations and cultural context of mid-20th century Chinese readers. Employing a reader-centered approach with liberal translation techniques, he prioritized fluency over strict adherence to the original text's literal meaning. This approach, known as domestication, focused on using classical and elegant language to create a familiar cultural atmosphere in his translations. Zhu's strategy resonated well with Chinese audiences of his time, contributing to the widespread acceptance and popularity of Shakespeare's works in 20th century China.

In contrast, Fu Guangming aimed to provide contemporary readers with an authentic Shakespearean experience by prioritizing fidelity to the original text. His translation approach, categorized as foreignization, emphasized preserving the linguistic characteristics and cultural nuances of Shakespeare's era. When translating Hamlet's soliloquy, Fu remained faithful to the original style and meaning, integrating British humor and slang to uphold authenticity. While potentially challenging for some readers, this method aimed to offer a genuine and immersive reading experience, catering to diverse modern audience preferences.

In summary, this chapter has provided a comprehensive comparative analysis of Zhu Shenghao's and Fu Guangming's translations of *Hamlet*, revealing significant differences in their approaches and the historical contexts that shaped their work. Through an examination of their translation purposes and strategies, particularly the use of domestication versus foreignization, it becomes clear that Zhu and Fu adopted methods aligned with their specific goals. Zhu Shenghao's domestication strategy adapted Shakespeare's work to resonate with contemporary Chinese culture, making the text more accessible to readers of his time. In contrast, Fu Guangming employed a foreignization approach, striving to preserve the authenticity of Shakespeare's linguistic and cultural milieu, offering modern readers a more faithful representation of the original text.

The religious and cultural features embedded in both translations, as well as their

distinct language styles and interpretations of soliloquies, further reflect these differing approaches. Paratextual materials, including introductory articles and annotations, also provided insight into their respective translation frameworks. These choices not only influenced how *Hamlet* was received in China but also showcase the broader impacts of translation strategies on the dissemination and understanding of Shakespeare's works across different historical and cultural contexts.

By comparing these two translations, this chapter underscores the diverse impacts that translation methods can have on literary reception, illustrating how Zhu Shenghao and Fu Guangming's decisions shaped the Chinese interpretation of *Hamlet* across more than half a century.

## Conclusion

This dissertation conducts a comparative analysis of the translations of *Hamlet* by Zhu Shenghao and Fu Guangming, spanning over half a century, with a focus on their religious and cultural elements, language style, paratexts, and treatment of soliloquies. The following key findings were drawn from this analysis:

1. The reception of Shakespeare in China was relatively late compared to his introduction in many other countries, such as Japan and India. Shakespeare's name first emerged in Chinese literary discussions in the early 20th century, but it wasn't until 1978 that the first complete works of Shakespeare were published in China. Among his plays, *Hamlet* has been one of the earliest and most popular introductions, resulting in a total of 17 Chinese translations to date. This remarkable number reflects not only the play's enduring appeal but also the growing interest in Western literature and cultural exchange in China over the past century.
2. Fu Guangming's translation of *Hamlet* places a strong emphasis on preserving the religious and cultural nuances found in the original text by incorporating numerous biblical references. This approach significantly enhances the reader's understanding of the play's narrative and its Western cultural context, allowing for a deeper appreciation of the themes and characters. However, there are instances where this excessive reliance on biblical allusions may appear unnecessary and overly detailed, potentially overwhelming readers who are not familiar with these references. In contrast, Zhu Shenghao's translation reflects the constraints of his time, as he lacked access to comprehensive research materials on the Bible and Western religious culture. Consequently, his work features fewer annotations and explanations regarding these elements. While this may simplify the reading experience for some, it also limits the depth of cultural and religious understanding that modern readers might seek. The differing approaches of Fu and Zhu highlight how access to resources and cultural context can shape

translation practices and the overall reader experience.

3. Fu Guangming's translation was characterized by the meticulous integration of the latest research findings from both domestic and international Shakespeare studies. His extensive work included the creation of tens of thousands of words in introductory articles and annotations for *Hamlet*, addressing various aspects such as the play's sources, publication history, the 'Hamlet problem,' and its religious and cultural context. This comprehensive approach was intended to bring readers closer to Shakespeare's world, allowing them to appreciate the implicit meanings and creative nuances embedded in his works. In contrast, Zhu Shenghao, constrained by the historical conditions of his time, had limited access to Shakespearean literature and related resources. As a result, his translation of *Hamlet* lacked the supplementary introductory article that could have provided readers with a deeper understanding of the play's background and its religious and cultural dimensions.
4. Fu Guangming's translation approach underscores the universality of appreciation by boldly retaining vulgar and sexually explicit content, aiming to restore the full human experience portrayed in Shakespearean drama. He strives to convey the contextual language of the Elizabethan era in modern, accessible, and vivid terms, enabling readers to engage with the authentic cultural essence of Shakespeare's works. In contrast, Zhu Shenghao integrates Chinese culture and context into his translations, rendering the original content in a way that resonates with target readers. His translations are celebrated for their literary and artistic quality, marked by fluent language, elegant prose, and natural comprehensibility, which enhance readability and aesthetic enjoyment. However, his choice of words tends to be subtle and indirect, and he often sanitizes or omits vulgar and sexually explicit content, reflecting the reading aesthetics and expectations of his time.

The divergent strategies adopted by the two translators highlight their distinct translation purposes and methodological approaches. Zhu Shenghao employed a domestication strategy, with the primary aim of introducing Shakespeare's literary

works to Chinese readers, thereby making classic world literature more accessible. His translation aligns with Chinese cultural norms and readers' habits, reducing the comprehension barriers posed by cultural differences. This approach is particularly suitable for readers encountering Shakespeare for the first time, enabling them to quickly grasp the basic content of the original work. Despite the lack of depth and thoroughness, Zhu Shenghao's translation efforts were highly significant in his time, making an indelible contribution to the dissemination of Shakespeare in China. In contrast, Fu Guangming adopted a foreignization strategy, staying closer to the original language and providing extensive introductions and numerous annotations. He aimed to recreate the linguistic features and cultural background of the original work. His translation allows contemporary readers to experience the true essence of Shakespeare's plays more directly. By preserving the religious nuances and vulgar content of the source text, Fu Guangming's version offers a more authentic and unfiltered reading experience, catering to the diverse needs of modern readers.

These two translations each have their strengths and are suited to different contexts, contributing significantly to the dissemination and reception of Shakespeare's works in China. Zhu Shenghao's translation successfully introduced Shakespeare's works to Chinese readers in the mid-20th century, providing them with access to Western classical literature. On the other hand, Fu Guangming's translation offers a more authentic and faithful reading experience, meeting the modern readers' demand for a deeper understanding of literary works and cultural backgrounds. This approach has garnered broader recognition and appreciation for Shakespeare's works among contemporary Chinese readers.

This research highlights that translation choices are not merely linguistic decisions but are also influenced by broader cultural and temporal dynamics. Future translators should carefully consider the cultural context in which they operate, balancing faithfulness to the source text with the expectations of their audience. Building on this study, future research could expand the comparative framework to include additional translations of *Hamlet* or other Shakespearean works in Chinese or

other languages. Furthermore, exploring the reception of these translations by different generations of readers could provide deeper insights into the evolving relationship between Shakespeare and Chinese literary culture.

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