

Shakespearean Retellings and the Question of the Common Reader:

Tales from Shakespeare and Yinbian Yanyu

Emily Sun *

Abstract

This essay juxtaposes two texts of Shakespearean retelling from the long nineteenth century: Charles and Mary Lamb's 1806 *Tales from Shakespeare* and Lin Shu's adaptive translation into Chinese of that collection in 1904, *Yinbian Yanyu*. Each text served influentially as a primer or introduction to Shakespeare addressed primarily to English and Anglophone children, on the one hand, and Chinese adults, on the other. In so doing, each text, I argue, performs the work of imagining and making the "common reader" in different local contexts and moments of historical and cultural transformation beyond the texts' appeals to their ostensible primary addressees. I examine how each set of retellers manipulates the form of the tale collection to address and fashion an imagined "common reader," and I compare the retellings of one play, *The Tempest*, to show how the characters of Miranda and Prospero emerge as respective figures or surrogates for the common reader. In turning to a global context, I consider how the texts' mediations and interpellations participate in—as well as complicate—the processes of global textual production and circulation.

Keywords: long nineteenth century, "common reader," translation, narrative, Shakespeare

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重述莎士比亞，重塑「普通讀者」：

藍姆姊弟的《莎士比亞故事集》和林紓的《吟邊燕語》

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摘 要

這篇論文對比兩個出自漫長 19 世紀（1789-1914）重述莎士比亞戲劇的英文及中文文本：藍姆姊弟於 1806 年出版的《莎士比亞故事集》和林紓於 1904 年與魏易對譯的《吟邊燕語》。這兩個文本皆是莎士比亞不同讀者群的入門讀物：前者是針對英格蘭兒童而寫；後者則是為中文成人讀者而撰。本文以跨文化的角度來分析與細讀這兩個文本如何超越它們各自第一讀者群而來虛構與塑造不同地域背景和文化歷史現代化與大眾化過程裡的「普通讀者」。檢視這兩個文本的重述者如何運用故事集的敘述形式來呼喚理想中所謂的「普通讀者」，並特別分析這兩個文本對於《暴風雨》一劇的重述，細讀米蘭達和波斯普羅這兩個角色如何化成不同文化格局裡「普通讀者」的替身及代表。最後由全球性的角度來思考這兩個文本如何跨出「英國」與「中國」的閱讀框架而同時參與全球文本與文學的流動史。

關鍵詞：漫長十九世紀、「普通讀者」、翻譯、敘事、莎士比亞

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Tales from Shakespeare and Yinbian Yanyu

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This essay examines two texts of Shakespearean retelling in the long nineteenth century—roughly, for Eric Hobsbawm (1917-2012), 1789-1914—that participate in the emergence, in local and global contexts, of that quintessentially nineteenth-century character of literary and cultural history, the “common reader.” In 1806, at a historical juncture that saw the growing popularization of Shakespeare in various media in England, including the 1807 publication of Thomas (1754-1825) and Henrietta Bowdler’s (1750-1830) notorious, expurgated *Family Shakespeare*, there appeared the *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles (1775-1834) and Mary Lamb (1764-1847).¹ This specimen of Romantic storytelling, still in print in 2017, had the distinction of being read not only in Regency and Victorian England but widely circulated, reprinted, anthologized, and translated abroad in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.² It exercised effects beyond both British colonial and semi-colonial

¹ Stanley Wells, “Tales from Shakespeare,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 73 (1987): 125-152.

² According to Wells in his 1987 essay, there were almost “200 editions in English, and...at least forty translations extending beyond the major European languages to Burmese, Swahili, Japanese, Macedonian, Chinese..., Hungarian, and the African dialects of Ga and Ewe...1879 was a bumper year, with seven editions, three of them

contexts, beyond the semiosphere of what is termed today the Anglophone, becoming the first text of Shakespeare in any form to be translated into Chinese. It appeared in 1904 as *Yinbian Yanyu*, translated by Lin Shu (1852-1924) in collaboration with his interpreter Wei Yi (1880-1932).³ Lin was at that time, after the enormous successes of his versions of *La Dame aux camélias* in 1899 and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1901, in the process of attaining practically *auteur* status in China as translator and literary figure.⁴ Although *Yinbian Yanyu* would not enjoy the immense popularity of the novels by Alexandre Dumas, fils (1824-1895) and Stowe (1811-1896), it still went through a robust eleven printings by the 1930s, even after Lin Shu's cultural influence had waned in the aftermath of the New Culture or May Fourth Movement of 1919.

The *Tales from Shakespeare* was commissioned for the Juvenile Library, under the imprint of Thomas Hodgkins, the pseudonym for William Godwin (1756-1836) and his second wife Mary Jane (1768-1841).⁵ It consisted of adaptations of 20 plays by Shakespeare—fourteen romances and comedies by Mary and six tragedies by Charles. Upon first publication, the volume was attributed only to Charles and not to Mary—an omission not because of her femininity but because of the scandal of her history of madness and matricide.⁶

in Calcutta.” Wells, “Tales from Shakespeare,” 131.

³ Alexander Huang mentions *Xiewai Qitan* as an earlier translation that appeared in 1903 but did not make nearly the impact on readers as *Yinbian Yanyu*. See Alexander C. Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 71.

⁴ Lin would translate, over the course of his career, an estimated 180-200 Western literary works. See a list of titles of “Lin Shu’s Classic Translations,” *Renditions* 5 (Autumn 1975): 22-24.

⁵ For a critical account of the Godwins’ project, see Julie Carlson, “A Juvenile Library; or, Works of a New Species,” chap. 6 in *England’s First Family of Writers: Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Mary Shelley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

⁶ Marina Warner rehearses this well-known, bizarre episode in English literary and cultural history in her “Introduction” to *Tales from Shakespeare*. See Marina Warner,

Yinbian Yanyu, like other volumes that would eventually constitute Lin's Library of Translated Fiction 「林譯小說叢書」, was published by Shanghai Commercial Press. Lin and Wei translated all 20 of the tales but gave them new titles and re-ordered them in a new sequence. The title page attributed the tales to Shakespeare, omitting mention altogether of the Lambs as mediating authorial entities.

Lin's work as translator took place at a time of radical cultural change in China involving the accelerated assimilation of Western or new learning—an epistemic restructuring that subtended reformist movements at the end of the Qing dynasty and China's transition from empire to nation-state. The tumultuous period from the late Qing dynasty to the early decades of the Republic, saw an unprecedented surge in translation, one in which the criteria, conventions, and methods for the practice itself were undergoing re-invention, dovetailing with debates over language reform itself.⁷ It is in this context that Lin translated the *Tales*, and other Western literary works, into not vernacular but classical Chinese—and specifically *guwen* 古文, “ancient style prose” that constituted a stylistic alternative to the extant standard style for the Confucian civil service examinations that ended in 1905. Indeed, Lin's use and continued advocacy of *guwen* would account for his marginalization in the 1920s as casualty of cultural wars that favored monolithic interpretations of nationalism and a developmentally linearist understanding of modernity.⁸

introduction to *Tales from Shakespeare*, by Charles and Mary Lamb (London: Penguin, 2007), xxiv. All subsequent references to this edition of the Lambs' *Tales* will be incorporated by page number within the body of the essay.

⁷ Lydia Liu provides an important and useful analysis of this process in *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁸ On the fate of Lin's advocacy of *guwen* in the 1920s, see Ying Hu, “Transplanting the Lady of the Camellias,” chap. 2 in *Tales of Translation: Composing the New Woman in China, 1899-1918* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000) and Michael Gibbs

My basic claim is simple: these two texts of Shakespearean retelling constitute efforts to imagine and fashion a “common reader” in heterogeneous, asynchronous, but connected scenes of global literary modernity. But what is a “common reader?” Let us turn to a few sources for a provisional definition. In his pathbreaking, now-classic study *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, Robert Altick (1915-2008) approaches the term, the “common reader,” interchangeably with the notion of the “reading public.” The latter is “composed of what the Victorians were fond of calling ‘the million.’ It is *not*,” he writes, “the relatively small, intellectually and socially superior audience for which most of the great nineteenth-century authors wrote...Here we are concerned primarily with the experience of that overwhelmingly more numerous portion of the English people who became day-by-day readers for the first time in this period, as literacy spread and printed matter became cheaper. The ‘common reader’ studied in these pages may be a member of the working class, or he may belong to the ever expanding bourgeoisie.”⁹ In his sociological approach to the rise of print culture in England, Altick defines the common reader in quantitative terms: the common reader is one of the many, “the million,” units of which became enfranchised not just year by year, but measurably in the increment of day by day over the course of the nineteenth century. Within the parameters of the long nineteenth century itself, in his 1903 essay on Robert Browning (1812-1889), G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936) implicitly situates the abstraction of the English “common reader” among “a race of young men like Keats [John Keats, 1795-1821], members of a not highly cultivated middle class, and even

Hill, *Lin Shu, Inc. Translation and the Making of Modern Chinese Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁹ Robert Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 6-7.

of classes lower, who felt in a hundred ways this obscure alliance with eternal things against temporal and practical ones.”¹⁰ The period following the French Revolution saw “the first beginning of the aesthetic stir in the middle classes which expressed itself in the combination of so many poetic lives with so many prosaic livelihoods. It was,” Chesterton writes, “the age of inspired office-boys.”¹¹ Chesterton’s remarks here underline the extent to which numbers among those who would be designated “great nineteenth-century authors” (he enumerates Ruskin [John Ruskin 1819-1900], Carlyle [Thomas Carlyle 1795-1881], Keats, Dickens, and Browning as examples) themselves began as “common readers,” had their starts in relation to the image of the new median captured in the phrase, “inspired office-boys.”

Let us spin the globe—or swipe the screen—and turn the clock ahead. In a 1963 essay, Qian Zhongshu (錢鍾書, 1910-1998) offers his recollection of first reading Lin Shu’s translations in the 1920s as a boy in Wuxi County, Jiangsu:

The two boxfuls of *Lin’s Library of Translated Fiction* were a great discovery to me at age twelve; they led me into a new world [*xintiandi*], a world [*shijie*] other than that of *The Water Margin*, *The Journey to the West*, and *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*. Prior to this I had read such works as *Fifteen Little Heroes*, translated by Liang Qichao, and the detective stories translated by Zhou Guisheng, and invariably had been bored by them. It was not until I came into contact with Lin Shu’s translations that I realized how captivating Western fiction could be. I tirelessly perused the works of

¹⁰ G. K. Chesterton, *Robert Browning* (Urbana, IL: Project Gutenberg, 2004), accessed March 31, 2017, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13342/13342-h/13342-h.htm>.

¹¹ Chesterton, *Robert Browning*.

Haggard, Washington Irving, Scott, [Dickens, and Swift,] in the Lin translations. If I was in any way self-consciously motivated toward learning English, it was so that one day I could gorge myself on the adventure stories of Haggard and company without hindrance.

Forty years ago, in the small county that was my hometown, we rarely had the chance to see moving pictures [; we could only see travelling performers put on monkey shows or travelling salesmen hawking potions with a limping camel in tow.] The kind of recreation children of later days enjoyed in watching animal movies, or in a visit to the zoo, I was able to seek only from adventure stories.¹²

Qian's sketch here of boyhood in a provincial county town in early Republican China offers a different, decidedly non-metropolitan, non-office-space backdrop for the emergence of a Chinese common reader, not unlike himself, that Lin's *Library of Translated Fiction* was instrumental in helping fashion. Before easy access to a new technology of entertainment such as moving pictures and a global form of municipal recreation as the zoo, adventure stories served as entertainment and diversion. Lin's translations provided stories different from yet strikingly mentioned in contiguity with the stories of heroes and bandits, exotic sights and adventures, and occurrences of the supernatural in *The Water Margin*, *Journey to the West*, and *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*: they revealed, on multiple levels, worlds beyond both

¹² I use here the translation by George Kao of Qian Zhongshu's "The Translations of Lin Shu". See George Kao trans., "Qian Zhongshu: The 'The Translations of Lin Shu,'" in *Twentieth-Century Chinese Translation Theory*, ed. Leo Tak-hung Chan (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), 106. I indicate in brackets my clarification of the terms Qian uses for "world" and my re-insertion of a segment of Qian's text that Kao chooses to skip in translation. Qian's text in Chinese can be found in Xiang Wen and Hong Li ed., *Qianzhongshu Yangjiang Sanwen* (Beijing: China Broadcasting Service Press, 1997), 172-212.

the actual world of everyday Wuxi in the 1920s as well as the worlds disclosed in these well-known works of vernacular and classical Chinese fiction. What the Jacobean translator of Homer George Chapman (1559-1634) was to John Keats in London in 1816, Lin was to Qian in Wuxi in 1922. Chesterton's demographic of "inspired office boys" have their counterparts in the growing formation of middle-class readers and "petty urbanites" or *xiao shimin* 小市民 of early twentieth-century China.

The English common reader and the Chinese common reader have heterogeneous, asynchronous, and yet connected histories. Part of what makes each "common" requires a numerical explanation: Altick's social historical approach from the 1950s presupposes what historians and philosophers of science such as Lorraine Daston and Ian Hacking have explicitly theorized more recently, namely, that the modern subject is socially and politically organized as a statistical subject.¹³ This subject's condition of being one—singular and individual—necessitates being counted as equal as *anyone* among the many that together constitute the democratic masses, however conceived and collectivized. As demographic quantities, the English common reader and the Chinese common reader are inscribed, however, in different linguistic and cultural systems and histories, ordered within different regimes of typicality and normativity as well as fields of contestation. As such, they are alike in being subject to number as a condition of their modernity, but the structure of their subjection—and subjectivity—is culturally and historically distinct.

The Lambs were most active in the first decades of the nineteenth century; Lin Shu was most active as a translator at the cusp of the late imperial and

¹³ See Lorraine Daston, *Classical Probability in the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), and *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

modern periods in China. The Lambs wrote in advance of the Victorian period, which was demarcated by the Reform Act of 1832 (which extended the power to vote from one adult male in ten to one in five) and was marked by the gradual implementation of compulsory public education in the 1830s and beyond. The “common reader” the Lambs imagined and addressed in the Regency period, with its burgeoning popular press, was proleptic insofar as it would acquire new content with the extended enfranchisements of the later, Victorian period. In early twentieth-century China, the reading public grew alongside the burgeoning of the press, the circulation of popular fiction, and the widening of elementary and middle school education.¹⁴ Lin Shu’s translations both anticipated as well as were situated within this process of accelerated enfranchisement of readers, exerting proleptic influence on the emergence of a new popular audience.

In *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832*, Jon Klancher describes this period in England as “a particularly poignant moment of cultural transformation” because “perhaps for the last time, it was still possible to conceive the writer’s relation to an audience in terms of a personal compact.”¹⁵ Following the watershed year of 1832, Klancher implies, the writer’s conception of the reader in terms of a personal compact faces mounting pressure to subjection to the power of number. Perhaps, instead of the irreversible finality Klancher finds, what literary texts perform in the context

¹⁴ See the chapter, “Authors and Readers,” in Perry Link, “Authors and Readers,” in *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 156-95, and Leo Ou Fan Lee and Andrew J. Nathan, “The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction in the Late Ch’ing and Beyond,” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 360-95.

¹⁵ Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 14.

of the global rise of quantitative determinations of common readers in various parts of the world are reconfigurations of traditionally conceived relations of kinship and friendship and cultural logics of subjection. It is my wager that considering the *Tales from Shakespeare* and *Yinbian Yanyu* alongside one another may shed light on the logic of each text's enactment of the question of the common reader.

I. Shakespeare for Beginners

Simply put, the *Tales from Shakespeare* and *Yinbian Yanyu* are texts for beginners. Each imagines and addresses the "common reader" as a beginner. Let us unfold the subtle and intricate implications of this basic, seemingly obvious observation.

The *Tales from Shakespeare* was addressed primarily to English children. It positions this category of readers in front rows behind which adults are implicitly situated as onlookers and overhearers. *Yinbian Yanyu* was addressed primarily to Chinese adults interested in the distant and the foreign, here specifically in the work of a foreign writer reputed to be England's national bard, the equivalent of Du Fu (杜甫 · 712-770) in the West, as Lin takes care to note in his translator's preface. The texts in question thus function fundamentally as introductions or primers, retelling Shakespeare to readers conceived of as beginners. How does each text perform this task?

To retell Shakespeare for children, the Lambs chose the form of the tale collection, a form long associated in various traditions with oral storytelling and popular entertainment. Around the time of the Lambs' redaction, the tale collection was linked with European translations of the *Arabian Nights* and

volumes of regional folklore such as the Grimms' (Jacob Grimm, 1785-1863; Wilhelm Grimm, 1786-1859) *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, which would appear in Germany in 1811, a few years after the *Tales*' publication.¹⁶ Each tale is relatively short and presents to a newcomer the story of a play in a form that lends itself readily to retelling and re-transmission. As the Lambs explain in their Preface, they aim in their abridgement to initiate the young reader to Shakespeare to prepare him or her for future reading of the plays themselves.

In converting the plays into narrative form, the Lambs simplified the multiple plot structure of Shakespeare's plays, focusing on the main plots. Certain minor characters and subplots disappear: Caliban's conspiracy with Sebastian and Trinculo gets omitted from Mary's version of *The Tempest*, Malvolio altogether from *Twelfth Night*, and the scene with the gravediggers from Charles' retelling of *Hamlet*. The Lambs simplified and updated Shakespeare's language by trimming, though not eliminating, Elizabethan diction and using more straightforward syntax in transforming Shakespeare's verse into prose. Selected passages in Shakespeare get quoted and modified as dialogue in both direct and indirect speech. Significantly, the Lambs chose to retell a selection of 20 of the plays rather than to aim at comprehensiveness and retell all of them. They chose fourteen comedies, six romances, and six tragedies, omitting the histories and Roman plays altogether. What results, then, is a remarkably unheroic collection: a version of Shakespeare from which English national history is curiously absent, in which Britain as explicit dramatic setting features only in "King Lear" and "Macbeth." In terms of sequencing, the Lambs do not follow the chronology of Shakespearean

¹⁶ On the popularity of translations of the *Arabian Nights* and other foreign tale collections in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, see Marina Warner, introduction to *Tales from Shakespeare*. Ros Ballaster treats an earlier period in her lively and path-breaking *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

composition and performance nor group the tales according to dramatic genre. Instead, they present the *Tales* in an order that begins with “The Tempest” and ends with “Pericles,” interspersing comedies, romances, and tragedies in between.

The storytelling voice in the *Tales* is that of an unidentified omniscient narrator of avuncular or aunt-like disposition. This voice is heard first in the Preface commenting on the aims and methods of the collection for young readers before it shifts from referring to such readers in the third person to addressing them directly in the second. At the end of the Preface, the narrator states directly how he or she hopes the *Tales* will delight and instruct as “enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honourable thoughts and actions, to teach you courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity: for of examples, teaching these virtues, [Shakespeare’s] pages are full.” (5) The didactic persona of this narrator is maintained throughout the collection, though not obtrusively, appearing usually at the end of a tale to offer moral commentary on the lesson learned.¹⁷ For instance, this narrator comments at the end of “The Winter’s Tale”—“Thus have we seen the patient virtues of the long-suffering Hermione rewarded. That excellent lady lived many years with her Leontes and her Perdita, the happiest of mothers and of queens” (40)—and at the end of “Romeo and Juliet”—“So did these poor old lords, when it was too late, strive to outgo each other in mutual courtesies: while so deadly had been their rage and enmity in past times, that nothing but the fearful overthrow of their children (poor sacrifices to their quarrels and dissensions) could remove the rooted hates and

¹⁷ Huang focuses in the chapter “Rescripting Moral Criticism” in *Chinese Shakespeares* on moral didacticism in the *Tales* and *Yinbian Yanyu*. While benefiting and learning from Huang’s work, I am interested in how the texts go beyond message-driven moralism to open up perspectives beyond simple reproduction of dogmatic orthodoxies.

jealousies of the noble families.” (226) Strikingly, the narrator’s voice loses its externality and fuses with the world of the Shakespearean text—specifically, Puck’s epilogue—at the end of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” playing with the very liminality between waking and dreaming at the heart of that play: “And now, if any are offended with this story of fairies and their pranks, as judging it incredible and strange, they have only to think that they have been asleep and dreaming, and that all these adventures were visions which they saw in their sleep: and I hope none of my readers will be so unreasonable as to be offended with a pretty harmless Midsummer Night’s Dream.” (29)

In keeping with the declared intention in the Lambs’ Preface that “[f]or young ladies...it has been my intention chiefly to write,” the *Tales* give heightened attention to female characters in their retelling of Shakespeare. The very preponderance of comedies and romances among the tales ensures the preponderance of heroines—and heroines who operate within the ensemble constraints of comedic convention—as the absence of the history plays ensures the paucity of rousing stories of bands of brothers. Beginning with “The Tempest” and ending with “Pericles,” the *Tales* opens by spotlighting the character of a daughter, Miranda, who listens to her father’s story of who she is and how she came to the island, and concludes by giving emphatic attention to another, Marina, who tells her long-lost father her story of who she is.

Implicit in this sequencing is a movement from the daughter as listener to the daughter as storyteller. The avuncular or aunt-like voice of the narrator chaperones this development, which may be seen to parallel and mirror the desired development of the young reader, whose accession to storytelling is predicated on her attentive listening to stories herself. The sequencing of the *Tales* may be said to simulate the arc of a typical female *Bildungsroman* in which the Lambs present a variation by substituting a concatenation of linked

heroines for one individual heroine.

What kind of reader does this retelling of Shakespeare imagine, address, and promote? What kind of reading practice does it encourage? As a collection, it presents a multiplicity of characters, extending the *dramatis personae* of each play across 20 plays, redacting a Shakespeare world on the feminine bias. The serialization of heroines in permutations of predicaments encourages readers to discern doublings, patterns, and types, as if inviting Proppian morphological readings *avant la lettre*. While the shift towards femininity highlights the interest in the complexities of femininity in Shakespearean texts themselves, in the context of Regency England, it betokens a shift for which “femininity” does not just designate biologically women readers but functions synecdochally to mark a fundamental cultural-historical shift. Nancy Armstrong has argued influentially that this shift is symptomatic of modern Western culture and bespeaks the emergence in the West since the end of the eighteenth century of a new form of political power that “emerged with the rise of the domestic woman and established its hold over British culture through her dominance over all those objects and practices we associate with private life.”¹⁸ The reader the *Tales from Shakespeare* imagines, addresses, and promotes seems to be one whose space of action was being redefined by a shift from public to private life as quasi-dioramic locus of distributed power.

In his ingenious book, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity: The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism*, Paul Fleming traces in eighteenth-century European debates about the aesthetic-pedagogical function of the theater in public life, the emergence of compassion over pity and admiration as privileged affect in the education and improvement of average and common persons.

¹⁸ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 3.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) is a key spokesperson for the value of compassion in what Fleming precisely terms “a democratic-majoritarian aesthetic project premised on a mimetic relationship not to ‘what is’ but more decidedly to ‘what is the majority.’”¹⁹ Pity and admiration depend on social hierarchy and, as responses to heroic greatness, can only inspire improvement via emulation. “Compassion, on the other hand,” writes Lessing in a letter to his friends Nicolai and Mendelssohn, “improves immediately; it improves without us having to add anything to the process; it improves the man of reason as well as the idiot.”²⁰ In an age when statistical normativity mediates the very mimetic project of Western representation, compassion promotes an egalitarianism among types that is oriented by the average; and it does so more effectively than admiration, which promotes rather a heroism resituated in relation to the law of the average as extreme or exception.

The common reader that the *Tales from Shakespeare* addresses is an unheroic or postheroic subject. She may be considered the sister of the “inspired office-boy.” In relation to the character-system presented in the collection, she is prompted to find likeness between and with the contiguous and mutually auxiliary heroines showcased in different predicaments in the tales. As a “young reader,” she is cued to recognize and read positions within a structure that orders locuses of power and action.

It is this decidedly non-heroic or postheroic version of Shakespeare that reaches Lin in its nineteenth-century global itinerary and that Lin, in turn, retells in translation as an introduction to Shakespeare for adult Chinese

¹⁹ Paul Fleming, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity: The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 51.

²⁰ Fleming, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity*, 59. Fleming cites and translates Lessing from *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*. Wilfried Barner and Klaus Bohnen, eds, *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden IV* (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 175.

readers. Let us now consider general linguistic and formal features of Lin's retelling.

In using the *Tales* to introduce Chinese readers to Shakespeare, Lin uses *guwen* instead of vernacular Chinese as the language of retelling. Indeed, he would use *guwen* for all 180-200 of his translations of works of Western literature, beginning with his breakthrough 1899 version of *La Dame aux caméllias* 《巴黎茶花女遺事》. For a collection such as the *Tales*, specifically, the use of *guwen* befits Lin's transposition of the Western text into the traditional Chinese form of the *chuanqi* 傳奇, literally "transmission of the strange" or "marvellous." As a generic term, *chuanqi* sustains a curious generic duality, designating both a genre of narrative fiction since the Tang Dynasty as well as drama of the Ming-Qing period.²¹ Indeed, many Chinese traditional operas or musical dramas, including Ming-Qing *chuanqi*, derived from stories in earlier tale collections. Lin's choice of style and manipulation of form work together to produce a text that would appear oddly familiar and evocative to contemporary Chinese readers. As Michael Gibbs Hill analyzes in *Lin Shu, Inc.*, Lin's use of *guwen* is not "pure" but includes neologisms and loan-words from the recent surge in Japanese and Chinese translations of Western texts.²² The use of the term *ziyou* 自由, for instance, for Ariel's liberation at the end of *The Tempest* derives from this wave of translanguaging in East Asia. Lin's *guwen* carries kernels of cultural hybridity, traces of the foreign within an otherwise ostensibly traditional Chinese medium.

²¹ See Xiaohuan Zhao, *Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction: A Morphological History* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2005). For *chuanqi* as a form of Ming-Qing drama, see Wilt Idema, "Traditional Dramatic Literature," in *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, ed. Victor Mair (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 785-847.

²² Hill, "The Name is Changed, but the Tale is Told of You," chap. 3 in *Lin Shu, Inc.: Translation and the Making of Modern Chinese Culture*.

Significantly, Lin arranges the tales in a new sequence in *Yinbian Yanyu*. He begins with *The Merchant of Venice* and ends with *The Tempest*, and he renames the titles of the plays (which the Lambs used directly as titles for their tales) altogether. Each of Lin's retold tales receives a two-character title naming a knot or conflict in the plot (e.g., *Rou Quan* 肉券 or "A Bond of Flesh" for *The Merchant of Venice*, *Nü Bian* 女變 or "Daughters' Mutiny" for *King Lear*), an object that serves as plot device (e.g., *Huan Zheng* 環證 or "Ring Evidence" for *Cymbeline*), or a pivotal scene or situation (e.g., *Lin Ji* 林集 or "A Gathering in the Woods" for *As You Like It*).²³ The use of two characters as titles has significant precedent in Ming *chuanqi*, with a work like *The Peony Pavilion* 《牡丹亭》 divided into acts with two-character titles such as *Yuyuan* 遊園 ("Wandering in the Garden") and *Jingmeng* 驚夢 ("The Interruption of a Dream") that designate situations and plot developments. Lin repackages the *Tales* in a form that effectively created for the Shakespearean corpus a Chinese counterpart in *chuanqi* literature.

In this repackaging—be it entirely Lin and Wei's doing or a project involving the intervention of Shanghai Commercial Press—Shakespeare's name acquires a prominence on the title pages of all editions, with the Lambs elided altogether as intermediaries. Lin was credited as translator, with Wei acknowledged in different ways in the paratextual matter for his assistance, with both emerging as the substitute for the Lambs in retelling Shakespeare to Chinese readers. For the Lambs' Preface Lin substitutes, in most but not all editions, his translator's Preface. The avuncular or aunt-like narrator of the Lambs' *Tales* disappears from this Preface, replaced by Lin's voice addressing *in propria persona* adult Chinese readers in an effort to articulate Shakespeare's significance for them. If the Lambs' narrator re-appears throughout the *Tales*, in *Yinbian Yanyu*, the narratorial voice withdraws beyond the translator's Preface

²³ I use here the translations by Alexander C.Y. Huang in *Chinese Shakespeares*, 80.

to a reticent third-person perspective throughout.

Speaking *in propria persona* and signing, dating, and locating his writing of the Preface, Lin situates for his readers his translation and retelling of Shakespeare in the context of late-Qing debates concerning cultural and scientific reform. It is in this reformist historical context and with polemical intent that Lin presents *Yinbian Yanyu* as a version of Shakespeare for adult Chinese beginners. Lin's quarrel is with young reformers (*xinxuejia* 新學家), who subscribe to a linear model of enlightened historical progress that entails the obsolescence of folk superstition and interest in the supernatural, literally "gods and spirits" (*shenguai* 神怪).²⁴ The drive towards newness necessitated a vilification and abandonment of the old and past as superannuated. For "our country," (*wuguo* 吾國) a category increasingly imbued with an aspirationist nationalism, the attainment of such newness involves programmatic emulation of and catching up with the "advanced civilization" of the "great Western nations," whose very own modernity, it is supposed, depended on an eradication of the supernatural in their own pasts. Against such a simplistic understanding of time and progress, as a linear movement from old to new, enchantment to disenchanting rationality, Lin points out the preponderance of "gods and spirits" in Shakespeare's works.

In resonance with received ideas concerning Shakespeare's reputation as national and, by 1904, even "world" poet, Lin compares Shakespeare for his readers to Du Fu in terms of equivalence in national prestige: 「莎氏之詩直抗吾國之杜甫」。However, *Yinbian Yanyu* fashions, in effect, a Shakespeare that warrants comparison less with Du Fu and more with a Gan Bao (干寶, 286-

²⁴ Shu Lin and Yi Wei, *Yinbian Yanyu* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1904). The pages of the Preface are not numbered. All further references to this text will be incorporated by page number, where relevant, in the body of the essay.

336) or a Pu Songling (蒲松齡, 1640-1715) as transmitters of the strange in their tale collections or a Tang Xianzu (湯顯祖, 1550-1616) in dramatic form. In a classificatory gesture hardly imaginable outside of the context of late Qing and early Republican China, Lin joins Shakespeare and Rider Haggard in apposition—「哈氏莎氏」—as writers whose incorporation of varieties of the “strange” in their texts shows that an interest in the mysterious and supernatural is not incompatible with national strength and civilizational sophistication.

In *Yinbian Yanyu*, Lin produces, like the Lambs, a prose text that unfolds a multitude of characters within the covers of one book. Changing the Lambs’ sequence, he begins with *The Merchant of Venice* and ends with *The Tempest*, with Prospero giving up his magic books and returning from the unnamed enchanted island to the identifiable site of Naples, as if he were a version of a literatus hermit-scholar leaving a site of retreat for return to worldly administration. What is lost in this resequencing is the Lambs’ emphasis on female characters. What is maintained—and fascinatingly assimilated to a traditional Chinese typology—is a multiplicity of characters among whom readers are prompted to discern doublings, patterns, and other morphological resemblances. The focus shifts away from the strategies and struggles of Rosalind and Celia, Hermia and Helena, and other heroines to the marvellous encounters of Macbeth, Hamlet, Prospero, and others who resemble ambitious generals or hapless scholars who reckon with temptations and dangers in the form of witches, ghosts, or animal spirits as they take transformative detours from a normal or normative order.

In his Preface, Lin uses multiple generic terms to designate Shakespeare’s writings, including *shi* 詩 (poetry), *biji* 筆記 (random jottings), and *jishi* 紀事 (records or chronicles). Significantly, he also gestures towards drama: after remarking that Shakespeare’s verses are recited household to household in

England, he states that such verses form the basis of “scripts” (*yuanben* 院本) for the “theater” (*liyuan* 梨園) and conjures up the striking image of “gentlewomen” (*shinü* 仕女) moved to tears while sitting in audiences joined sleeve to sleeve next to each other—「聯襟而聽，歔歔感涕」。Lin effectively describes Shakespeare as what would today be termed a “transmedial” author. What might this position of Shakespeare at the nexus of genres and media show us?

Insofar as many Chinese traditional operas or musical dramas derived from earlier narrative *chuanqi*, Lin’s positioning of Shakespeare between poetry, prose, and theater suggests his intuition of a cultural doubling. If classical Chinese tales of the marvellous have served effectively as a transmedial cultural repertoire, then the retelling of Shakespeare in *Yinbian Yanyu* intimates to adult Chinese readers that comparable operations may be at work in relation to the Shakespearean corpus. Lin’s intuition brackets out, of course, Shakespeare’s own sources in Ovid, Greek and Roman drama, and Italian *novelle*, among other texts. In retelling the Lambs’ retelling of Shakespeare, he introduces, wittingly or unwittingly, a Shakespeare not so much in the key of a poet-sage like Du Fu, the source of lofty thoughts about conditions of national scope and epic sentiments conveyed in a lyrical vein; rather, he transmits a Shakespeare whose cultural function and register of expression is closer to the key of writers of marvellous tales or plays exploring the uncanniness of the ordinary on the smaller stages of private life.

This version of Shakespeare, like the text it retells in translation, is a nonheroic or postheroic one, from which English sovereigns and English national history are absent. As I have proposed earlier, the Lambs’ *Tales* addresses its imagined reader as an average and common reader and promotes in her the capacity to discern morphological likenesses between characters and situations and how these characters are defined and act in relation to others

within an intelligible shared social order. The Tales appeal to her intellectual capacity to discern likeness and her emotional capacity for compassion. *Yinbian Yanyu* finds for the Tales analogies in traditional Chinese literature. How might it, in doing so, imagine and address for its time a “Chinese common reader?”

What is its time? According to the terms of Lin’s Preface itself, this time is perched between “new” (*xin* 新) and “old” (*jiu* 舊), and it is a time when what is Chinese is undergoing redefinition in an expanded sense of the world and in relation primarily to the West. Against contemporaries who embrace the new as a rejection of the Chinese past, Lin seems effectively to approach the new as a particular and selective renewal of elements of the Chinese past in correlation, if not direct conversation, with Western culture. In his enactment of such a recursive newness becomes perceptible what Jonathan Hay has dubbed as a useful heuristic an “otherly modernity,” one that has heterogeneous antecedents and distinct cultural traits and that is not simply a belated version of a standardized Euro-American model.²⁵ *Yinbian Yanyu* can be said to serve as the curious site of encounter between two modernities that operate according to distinct cultural logics.

This site serves as the site for the remaking of a Chinese common reader. This making may be said to be a remaking insofar as it harks back to tales and plays of the strange as antecedents. *Yinbian Yanyu* introduces Shakespeare to readers capable of recognizing the stock characters that populate classical *chuanqi* and musical dramas and, through the mediation of such recognition, be open to the wonder and surprise of the strange. The Shakespeare it fashions from the Lambs is the poet of a system of stylized roles that constitute a shared

²⁵ Jonathan Hay, “Double Modernity, Para-Modernity,” in *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, ed. Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 113-32.

world, one whose “aesthetic project,” to tweak Paul Fleming’s formulation, “is premised on a mimetic relationship not to ‘what is’” but to a socio-cultural order that, while undergoing transformation, nevertheless serves to scaffold and mediate social relations and interactions.

II. Figures of the Common Reader: Miranda and Prospero

In the Lambs’ and Lin’s respective retellings of Shakespeare, *The Tempest* enjoys a prominent position. The Lambs begin with the play; Lin ends his collection with his rendition of the Lambs’ tale, renamed *Ju Yin* 颶弓 or “Storm Ruse.” In her redaction of the romance, Mary Lamb subtly but unmistakably shifts the weight of attention to the character of Miranda. In his retelling of Mary’s tale, Lin re-allocates attention to Prospero. In these respective allocations may be discerned differing conceptions of the common reader. The respective characters may be seen to function as figures or surrogates for a common reader that each collection aims to address, imagine, and fashion.

Let us turn first to Mary Lamb’s redaction of *The Tempest*. Simplifying the plot, she foregrounds the story of Miranda’s formation, aligning other characters in relation to this central concern. Prospero figures prominently insofar as the father-daughter relationship serves as vehicle for Miranda’s growth. Ariel, as instrument of Prospero’s orders, plays an important role in the tale. And Ferdinand receives attention as love match for the heroine. While Prospero’s reconciliation with Antonio and Naples forms part of the tale’s happy ending, that story retreats to the background, with Gonzalo playing a much lesser role in the tale than he does in Shakespeare’s play. Caliban is likewise diminished as a character, with Sebastian and Trinculo omitted altogether.

How is Miranda recast as heroine of *The Tempest*? Remarkably, Mary Lamb repositions Miranda as heroine by making her not so much principal actor in the story but principal listener, spectator, and thereby actor in the play-within-the-play “directed” by Prospero. The liminal position she had already occupied in this most meta-theatrical of Shakespeare’s plays gets amplified in transposition to the medium of narrative. She is portrayed, on the one hand, listening to her father’s stories and, on the other, looking at, commenting on, and becoming absorbed in the spectacles Prospero stages with the aid of Ariel, his stage manager, who remains invisible to her throughout. Insofar as this spectacle is directed towards multiple ends, including Miranda’s marriage with Ferdinand and Prospero’s restoration as Duke of Milan, Mary Lamb places the emphasis on the achievement of the former, spotlighting the process of Miranda’s coming-into-the-world and leaving the home of her childhood. Miranda’s progress is here predicated on her being a listener and spectator, and thereby an actor—a subject who becomes a subject through engagement with illusion.

In a letter to his childhood friend and schoolmate Samuel Taylor Coleridge dated October 23, 1802, several years before the writing of the *Tales*, Charles Lamb writes of a visit with Mary to a London bookshop, Newberry’s, where he saw that Anna Letitia Barbauld’s books for children had “banished all the old classics of the nursery.”²⁶ “Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs. Barbauld’s books convey,” he continues,

must come to a child in the *shape of knowledge*; and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learnt that a horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a horse, and such

²⁶ Charles Lamb, *The Complete Works and Letters* (New York: Modern Library, 1935), 727.

like; instead of that beautiful interest in wild tales, which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to poetry no less than in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if, instead of being fed with tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history!²⁷

In contrast to the “powers” that positive knowledge can give a child, Charles affirms the alternative power that “wild tales” may impart in feeding the imagination of a child. A diet of wild tales makes the child what is not yet but could and would be, i.e., “a man,” opening up a difference between “what is” and what could or would be through the mediation of the “as if.” If science teaches knowledge of “what is,” poetry opens up futures and possibilities by teaching through the dimension of the “as if.” Such teaching is “wild” insofar as the future it opens up cannot be known in advance in tame conformity with the laws of “what is.”

Miranda figures in Mary's retelling of *The Tempest* as such a child made woman through the mediation of wild tales. Let us consider more closely how Mary's interpretive retelling of Shakespeare's play shows this mediation at work.

The first paragraph of the tale introduces the setting and Prospero and Miranda as the two main characters. The first sentence mentions Prospero first, introducing Miranda in relation to him and elaborating in the final clause on her attributes:

There was a certain island in the sea, the only inhabitants of which

²⁷ Lamb, *The Complete Works and Letters*, 727.

were an old man, whose name was Prospero, and his daughter Miranda, a very beautiful young lady. She came to this island so young, that she had no memory of having seen any other human face than her father's. (7)

Miranda emerges as grammatical subject of the second sentence from her subordinate position at the end of the first, where she is positioned within a larger structure and given attributes. The island will serve as the setting and stage of her development. Mary Lamb elaborates in the next few paragraphs on the setting of the island, introducing Ariel and Caliban (notably and problematically omitted in the first sentence from the count of the inhabitants of the island), and referring to Sycorax and the history of the island before Prospero's arrival. This exposition ends with the mention of the violent storm that Prospero conjures up with the aid of his spirits. This storm is the catalyst of the actions that will unfold in the rest of the tale. And this storm is presented to Miranda as spectacle for her to behold: Prospero "showed his daughter a fine large ship, which he told her was full of living beings like themselves." In response to this sight Miranda speaks for the first time in the tale:

"O my dear father... if by your art you have raised this dreadful storm, have pity on their sad distress. See! the vessel will be dashed to pieces. Poor souls! they will all perish. If I had power, I would sink the sea beneath the earth, rather than the good ship should be destroyed, with all the precious souls within her." (8)

She speaks here in the capacity of spectator, responding to the distress of the souls on the ship with compassion while soliciting from her father the affect of pity, which implies his holding a position of power in relation to the wretches he is making toss and turn on the waters.

Assuring Miranda that “no person in the ship shall receive any hurt,” Prospero proceeds to tell Miranda for the first time of their past. He prefaces his story with questions: “Can you remember a time before you came to this cell?...Tell me what you can remember, my child.” To this demand Miranda answers, “It seems to me like the recollection of a dream. But had I not once four or five women who attended upon me?”(8) More than that she does not remember, but dream-like recollection functions in the listener like innate knowledge that gets awakened and activated in this occasion of storytelling.

In the process of Miranda’s education through storytelling and spectacle, she is variously—or ambiguously—active and passive. Prospero and Ariel conspire to present Ferdinand to her gaze as wondrous spectacle. Through indirect speech, Mary Lamb reports Miranda’s feelings about this wondrous sight—“Miranda, who thought all men had grave faces and grey beards like her father, was delighted with the appearance of this beautiful young prince” and continues to describe Ferdinand’s reciprocal response to Miranda’s attractions. After the young couple fall instantly in love, Prospero is portrayed shifting to the position of spectator, testing Ferdinand’s honesty and spying on Miranda’s shift in loyalties. From spectator, Miranda in turn becomes actor in the scenario her father has initiated and set in motion.

Ironically, Miranda’s acting in what is, in effect, Prospero’s play entails her disobedience of her father’s strictures. She takes the side of Ferdinand as he is submitted to the test of hard labor by Prospero, showing her love for the former by forgetting to heed the latter’s commands. Miranda begins to depart from his script and to speak her own lines. Mary Lamb portrays Prospero taking pleasure as hidden spectator of his child’s disobedience. Overhearing Miranda tell Ferdinand her name “against her father’s express command,” Prospero “smiled at this first instance of his daughter’s disobedience...he was

not angry that she showed her love by forgetting to obey his commands.” (13) Hearing her then say, “I fear I talk to you too freely, and my father’s precepts I forget,” Mary Lamb’s Prospero “smiled, and nodded his head, as much as to say, ‘This goes on exactly as I could wish; my girl will be queen of Naples.’” (14) Prospero’s pleasure at signs of his daughter’s dawning independence and display of a separate identity is not made explicit in Shakespeare’s play. Mary Lamb accentuates this possibility in her interpretive retelling.

It would seem, then, that Prospero’s play-within-the-play functions in Mary’s retelling as a jointly improvised script. The story of Miranda’s formation depends on a tacit and delicate collaboration between father and daughter, a collusion, so to speak, contingent upon the actor’s willing participation in the co-illusion that the dramaturge/director creates and shapes in relation to unfolding circumstances. Miranda’s independence is portrayed here not in terms of an absolute, sovereign individualism but as one constrained by interaction with interdependent others. Miranda forms thus the first in the distribution of heroines in the tales to follow whose progress involves receptivity to stories and illusions that mediate their own actions and interactions with others.

In his retelling of Mary Lamb’s tale as *Ju Yin* or “Storm Ruse,” Lin allocates attention back to Prospero.²⁸ Lin takes obvious delight in embellishing the character of Prospero. Where Mary Lamb describes Prospero simply in her first sentence as “an old man,” Lin adds details: 「髮禿齒危，一衰翁也」 (148). In Lin’s retelling, Prospero becomes a wobbly grebeard who is losing his hair and his teeth and a variation of a scholar-hermit whose move to the island is termed 「大隱」 (148). Lin accentuates the account of Prospero’s book-lined study in

²⁸ After citing Huang’s translations of other titles, I note here that my translation of *Ju Yin* as “Storm Ruse” differs from Huang’s preference of “A Tempestuous Cause.”

Lamb's exposition and has Miranda tell Ferdinand that her father studies "Daoist texts" (*daojing* 道經). Prospero gains color and details as a Daoist or magician in Lin's text. The kind of power Prospero wields is clearly heterodox to the power operative in the normal order of things from which he has gone into exile and retreat.

The very title, "Ju Yin," foregrounds the element of artifice or illusion. Yin can be translated as "ruse," "trap," "lure," "ploy," or "stratagem." Prospero operates in collusion with Ariel, cast as *guiding* 鬼董, in managing by the indirect means of ruse changes in the status of characters and in the relations between them. Prospero delights in watching as spectator the processes initiated by the ruse of the storm. Lin translates the pleasure Mary Lamb attributes to him in watching and overhearing his daughter disobey his precepts. Besides arranging for the marriage of his daughter, Prospero hears from Ariel as a consequence of their ruse the penitence of Antonio and Naples, which leads to the reconciliation of the estranged brothers and harmony among the soon-to-be fathers-in-law. Whereas Mary Lamb spotlighted the story of Miranda's coming-of-age, Lin distributes interest to the other storylines—besides that involving Antonio, Naples, and Gonzalo, most notably that leading up to the emancipation of Ariel. If Mary Lamb's tale culminates with the setting-free of Ariel, followed by a quotation of Ariel's song, "Where the bee sucks," and a summarizing coda, Lin twists this conclusion by giving more weight to the scene of emancipation. In Lamb, Prospero's role as father has clear priority over the other roles he plays in a nexus of relationships. In Lin, the role of father takes its place alongside his roles as "brother" and "master." Indeed, Lin may even be said to emphasize the master/servant relationship over the other relationships in which changes are effected and relations modified by means of the storm ruse.

In the coda, Mary Lamb tells of how Prospero buried his books and

wand and renounced his magical arts. The penultimate sentence summarizes the conclusion and reaches an expansive crescendo in the description of the marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand, and the last sentence directs the reader to Naples as setting for the wedding:

And having thus overcome his enemies, and being reconciled to his brother and the king of Naples, nothing now remained to complete his happiness, but to revisit his native land, to take possession of his dukedom, and to witness the happy nuptials of his daughter Miranda and prince Ferdinand, which the king said should be instantly celebrated with great splendour on their return to Naples. At which place, under the safe convoy of the spirit Ariel, they after a pleasant voyage soon arrived. (17)

Instead of translating this coda faithfully, Lin condenses it, after mentioning Prospero's renunciation of his magical arts, to simply:

迨及國，即行婚禮，明日果一帆風順，抵奈百而司矣。（156）

Once they reached land, the nuptials would be held. Indeed, there was smooth sailing on the morrow as all arrived in Naples.

The brevity of this conclusion shifts attention back to the final scene of Ariel's emancipation. Mary Lamb, taking license and departing from Shakespeare, parses Ariel's freedom thus: "to wander uncontrolled in the air, like a wild bird, under green trees, among pleasant fruits, and sweet-smelling flowers" (17). Lin dispenses with this idyllic embellishment altogether and gives Ariel a speech found neither in Lamb nor Shakespeare:

愛里而感翁次骨，因曰：「吾雖以忠為職，然愛其自由實重於愛主人。主人恩重，聽我自由，我無以報貺。明日群作一程，風送

主人歸舟」。且言曰：「今得自由，自由之樂，安有極者。」

With deep gratitude towards the old man, Ariel said, “Although loyalty is the virtue attached to my position, my love of freedom outweighs my love of the master. For the master to give, with profound grace, hearing to my freedom, I have nothing to give in requital. For the journey tomorrow, I will accompany the winds to provide safe convoy.” And then he added, “Today, I receive freedom. Is there a joy greater than the joy of freedom?”

Lin introduces in this passage the notion of a love of freedom that outweighs his love of his master and consequently the specific kind of loyalty that attends the latter category of love. Lin retells the “safe convoy” Ariel provides the crew to Naples in terms specifically of *bao* 報 or requitement, which, as Patrick Hanan points out, serves as “the moral grammar of interactions among men or between men and gods.”²⁹

In Lin’s retelling, Prospero is shown occupying a nexus of roles and negotiating via illusion a nexus of relationships, including father/child, older brother/younger brother, master/servant. If these relationships belong to the domain of the human and constitute variations on recognizable Confucian bonds, the human/spirit relationship—indeed partnership—operative throughout the text serves as supplement to the normative human models. The human/spirit relationship exists outside of the social domain but works to occasion changes within this domain. The human/spirit relationship may thus be seen as the means whereby the dimension of the “as if” estranges and opens

²⁹ Patrick Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 26. See also Lien-Sheng Yang, “The Concept of *Pao* as a Basis for Social Relations in China,” in *Excursions in Sinology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 3-23.

up the workings of the “what is.”

If Miranda functions as a figure or surrogate of the reader in the Lambs’ retelling of Shakespeare for children as beginners, Prospero can be seen to perform that function as an adult making a new beginning through the mediations of the “strange”—in the senses of both the foreign as well as the supernatural—in Lin’s retelling of Shakespeare to Chinese adults as re-beginners at a transitional period for Chinese history and culture. The crux of strangeness at which the foreign and the supernatural converge is, precisely, freedom. *Ziyou* is in *Ju Yin* or “Storm Lure” a neologism like other terms, e.g., *gongli* 公理, that Lin had used in his previous 1901 translation of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.³⁰ As both linguistic and narrative event, freedom takes place on the ground of the supernatural as inhuman site of potential transformation of the very terms of human community.

Miranda and Prospero may be taken as figures or surrogates of the common reader that the Lambs’ and Lin’s respective retellings of Shakespeare address, imagine, and fashion. The *Tales from Shakespeare* addresses the reader as one capable of growing through receptivity to stories and complicity in illusions that mediate their own actions and interactions with others. The text positions this reader among others like her in the collection of tales that teach a grammar of social interaction. *Yinbian Yanyu* addresses the reader as one capable of recognizing and negotiating a repertoire of cultural roles that scaffolds social interactions and that remains open to change and renewal through the mediating effect of illusion. Indeed, in Lin’s retelling of Shakespeare, there emerges a model of change that takes place through mechanisms within—rather than simply against—traditional structures, tested for tensile resilience, and that entails a more gradual and gradualist pace. The

³⁰ See Hill, “The Name is Changed, but the Tale is Told of You,” 50-96.

Lambs' and Lin's retellings of Shakespeare each presents a dioramic vision of social life and may be said curiously to double one another by situating characters and readers—and characters as reader/spectators—on a distinctly unheroic, indeed middling plane as agents of a decentralized, distributed power.

Finally, as a coda, let us turn to paratextual matter—passages in the Prefaces—to consider how these texts are inscribed in processes of global production and circulation that subtend their distributions to culturally distinct, local readerships. The very existence of these texts is predicated on the late eighteenth-century European notion of aesthetic education that received content and currency throughout the long nineteenth century through an array of institutional practices and textual technologies. It is through such practices and technologies that Shakespeare emerged in the course of that century as global canonical figure. The Prefaces to *Tales from Shakespeare* and *Yinbian Yanyu* allegorize the texts' own participation in this process.

In their co-written Preface, the Lambs compare their own tales to “small and valueless coins...pretending to no other merit than as faint and imperfect stamps of Shakespeare's matchless image” (3). The metaphor connects Shakespeare specifically to the site of the market, conceiving of Shakespeare as a form of cultural capital with which young readers may gain access to a cultural economy. Notably, the form it takes here seems to be the small change of what today has been formalized as “micro-financing.” Fascinatingly, the following passage develops the Lambs' story of textual production and mediation, telling of a “minting process,” as it were:

For young ladies too it has been my intention chiefly to write, because boys are generally permitted the use of their fathers' libraries at a much earlier age than girls are, they frequently having the best scenes of Shakespeare by heart, before their sisters are permitted to look into

this manly book; and therefore, instead of recommending these Tales to the perusal of young gentlemen who can read them so much better in the originals, I must rather beg their kind assistance in explaining to their sisters such parts as are hardest for them to understand; and when they have helped them to get over the difficulties, then perhaps they will read to them (carefully selecting what is proper for a young sister's ear) some passage which has pleased them in one of these stories, in the very words of the scene from which it is taken; and I trust they will find that the beautiful extracts, the select passages, they may choose to give their sisters in this way, will be much better relished and understood from their having some notion of the general story from one of these imperfect abridgements: —which if they be fortunately so done as to prove delightful to any of you, my young readers, I hope will have no worse effect upon you, than to make you wish yourselves a little older, that you may be allowed to read the Plays at full length (such a wish will be neither peevish nor irrational). (4)

Remarkably, this one long sentence is itself the result of labor jointly undertaken by the Lambs as brother-and-sister collaborators: Mary begins the sentence, and Charles picks up, as he relates to William Wordsworth in a letter, after the dash “—” with the words, “which if they be fortunately so done...”³¹ The collaboration on this sentence reproduces the story of collaborative reading narrated by the sentence itself. In its first leg, the sentence situates the *mise-en-scène* of reading in the private, domestic unit of the household with its evocation of “their fathers’ libraries.” After the first semi-colon, the second leg asks the brother to serve as more experienced guide in providing selection and

³¹ “Letter of 29 January 1807,” *Complete Works and Letters*, 763.

annotation; the third section recommends reading aloud as an occasion for the transmission of choice passages; the last two sections anticipate the effects of such a collaborative reading. The sentence describes a process of reproduction of what the *Tales from Shakespeare* itself performs and, to an extent, the reproduction process that the Lambs themselves performed in retelling Shakespeare. The text inserts itself, then, as a medium in a chain of mediations, in which brother-sister matrices function as agents for the production and reception of Shakespearean retellings. This lengthy sentence would seem to link together, then, stages of a production process of Shakespearean retelling itself. In assuming authority over and in their fathers' libraries, the brother-sister matrices turn the library unit into a decentralized workshop of retelling.

Turning now to Lin Shu's Preface to *Yinbian Yanyu*, we see that, in Lin's recounting of the translation process, he seems unwittingly to participate in aspects of the very production process of Shakespearean retelling the Lambs allegorize. In the second half of the Preface, Lin turns to the topic of the occasion and production of *Yinbian Yanyu* itself. Instead of a brother-sister matrix, the reader-retellers are a pair of friends from two generations. Lin calls Wei Yi "dear friend" (摯友) and "the honorable younger brother Wei." (魏君春叔) The principle of friendship promotes an equality that works across the generational divide. It is Wei that occupies here the position of the brother in Lamb: it is Wei who—"young and learned, steeped in Western languages" (年少英博, 淹通西文)—can read the Shakespearean text "in the original" and offer his "kind assistance" in explaining to Lin Shu "those parts that are hardest to understand." Wei and Lin collaborated on this, as on other texts, using the method of *duiyi* 對弈, or face-to-face translation: "The honorable Wei would interpret, while I would commit it to narrative prose." (魏君口譯, 余則敘致為文章) The two of them had already translated three or four different kinds of texts, with the "grandest" (最

鉅本) being John Gibson Lockhart's *History of Napoleon Buonaparte* 《拿破崙本紀》. Significantly, it is during idling breaks at night from the grand labor of translating this heroic and monumental biography that Lin would hear Wei speak about Shakespeare's continued appeal, in spite of his use of the supernatural, among contemporary social and political reformers in England.

If the father's library turns into a workshop for textual production and reproduction for the Lambs, this library finds its counterpart on the other side of the globe in a kind of literatus studio turned workshop in Lin. The very title *Yinbian Yanyu* 吟邊燕語—"Recitations Heard from Afar"—that Lin chooses, with its connotations of literati leisure, seems to situate the very occasion of the text in a locus of receptive hearing, a locus that serves also as the site of writing. When the Lambs' text travels to China, it passes from the father's library to the literatus studio as workshop for retelling and transmission, for exchange into another currency and passage through another distribution system for the potential micro-financing of middling imaginative readers, connecting "inspired office boys" and their sisters to dreaming *xiao shimin*.

Undoubtedly, such processes of global circulation and connection exert homogenizing effects, appealing to writers and readers in their capacities as producers and consumers in elevating markets as sites of exchange and workshops as sites of production over court, church, temple, and halls of learning as sources of authority.³² The elevation of markets and workshops is symptomatic of the ascendance in the nineteenth century of the political economic as dominant culture of global modernity. In varying modalities of local opposition to this homogenizing dimension of modern life, residual and

³² See Michel Foucault's argument on the market as site of veridiction of governmental practices in the modern age of political economy in *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979* (New York: Picador, 2010), 27-50.

emergent cultures interact dynamically with currents of standardization. Lin's retelling of the Lambs' retelling of Shakespeare turns to what was already in the process of becoming in China at the time a residual culture and makes it staging grounds for the emergence of the new. According to Raymond Williams, who coined the very term of "emergent culture," that term is, strictly speaking, a misnomer, for "what we have to observe is in effect a *pre-emergence*, active and pressing but not yet fully articulated, rather than the evident emergence which could be more confidently named."³³ This condition of pre-emergence, whose very dynamism resists conceptual solidification, Williams famously theorizes as "structures of feeling," which he defines precisely as "social experiences in solution, as distinct from other social semantic formations," e.g. world-views or ideologies, "which have been precipitated and are more evidently and more immediately available."³⁴ The linguistic and narrative event of freedom in Lin's retelling of *The Tempest*, as it emerges between Prospero and Ariel, marks the potential articulation of a new social bond within a given yet pliable system of social relations. Such an event opens up, without fully naming, the promise of new passions, new feelings, and ways of being among others.

³³ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 126.

³⁴ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 123-4.

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