

# Paratexts in English Translations of Chinese Classical Novels in China Review

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**Abstract:** *This paper takes the Chinese classical novels published in the English periodical China Review as the research object and examines the paratexts in the English translations, particularly paying attention to prefaces, annotations, and other peritexts, to explore the functions and roles of these paratexts in the translation process. By studying the paratexts of Chinese classical novels in China Review, we can understand the translation of Chinese classical novels in the 19th century and their dissemination in the Western world, providing references for the translation and dissemination of Chinese literature.*

**Keywords:** China Review; English translation of Chinese classical novels; Paratext.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of “paratext” was put forward by Gérard Genette, a French literary theorist and narratologist. In the book *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, an English translation of *Seuils*, Genette given a detailed and comprehensive introduction to paratext: “A literary work consists, entirely or essentially, of a text, defined (very minimally) as a more or less long sequence of verbal statements that are more or less endowed with significance. But this text is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author’s name, a title, a preface, and illustrations. And although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case, they surround it and extend it, precisely to present it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to make present, to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book” [1]. According to Genette, paratext “includes all those the verbal or other materials added to a text that mediated among the text, the author and the reader” [1]. Genette considered paratext is a “threshold”, the literary and printerly conventions that mediate between the world of publishing and the world of the text; a “vestibule”; an “edge”; an undefined zone between the inside and the outside; a “fringe” of the printed text; a “privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy” [1].

The *China Review* or, *Notes and Queries on the Far East* is an English periodical founded by Dennys in Hong Kong in 1872, aiming to introduce and research China for English readers. The periodical began publication in July 1872 and ceased in June 1901, running for a total of 29 years with 25 volumes and 150 issues, known as “the earliest genuine sinological journal in the Western world” [2]. In its introduction to the periodical, the chief editor explained the purpose of the journal: “In undertaking the publication of the *China Review*, its projectors are animated by a desire to provide, for a constantly increasing circle of readers, a repository for papers connected with China and the Far East” [3]. According to scholars’ statistics, *China Review* published a total of 945 articles on topics including ethnology, geography, history, literature, mythology, religion, folklore, and more. The content related to Chinese literature, especially Chinese classical novels, was particularly rich. There were over seventy articles on the translation and study of Chinese novels, demonstrating the interest and attention of Westerners towards Chinese classical novels in the 19th century. The English translations of Chinese classical novels published in *China Review* included prefaces, annotations, and other paratexts to guide and assist English readers in their reading, reflecting the understanding and reading expectations of English readers regarding Chinese classical novels. The paratexts in translations “reflect the translator’s subjectivity, the publisher’s intentions, and the readers’ choices, coalescing the relationships involved in the translation process and serving a coordinating function” [4], and “not only are there paratexts surrounding literary works in monographs, but literary journals also contain similar paratexts” [5]. This paper aims to discuss the types, contents, functions, and significance of the paratexts in the English translations of Chinese classical novels published in *China Review* by examining and analyzing them, with a view to providing references for the translation and dissemination of Chinese classical novels.

## 2. PARATEXTS IN TRANSLATIONS

Genette subdivides the paratext into peritext and epitext based on the location in relation to the text. In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Genette provides a formula: “paratext= peritext + epitext” [1]. Peritexts are situated in the text within the space of the volume, which consist of the linguistic peritext and non-linguistic peritext. Linguistic peritext includes the name of the author, the titles, the please-insert, the dedications and inscriptions, the epigraphs, the preface, the intertitles and the notes, etc. The non-linguistic peritext refers to the visual support, such as the book cover, text style, page layout, etc. Epitexts are usually located outside the book and keep a distance from the book, including the public epitext, such as the interview, publication information, published memoir, etc., and the private epitext, such as the diary, the letter, etc. As for peritext, it can directly show the translator’s translation concept and influence the readers’ understanding and acceptance of the translation. In the process of translation, some peritexts are mainly determined by the translator. Different translators vary in the amount or type of peritext they deal with.

The Chinese classical novels translated by *China Review* are published in single or serial form in the journal, and the translators are a diverse group with various occupations, including diplomats, Hong Kong government staff, customs officers, businessmen, journalists, and missionaries. Notable translators include R. W. Hurst, C. F. R. Allen, H. A. Giles, G. Taylor, and C. H. Brewitt-Taylor, among others. The paratexts of these translations possess certain particularities. As Genette states, “a paratextual element in the form of material has a location that can be situated in relation to the location of the text, whether around the text or within the same volume” [1]. Elements within the same volume like “title, prefaces, chapter titles, and notes” [1]. Therefore, this paper focuses on three kinds of peritexts, namely, chapter title, preface, and annotation, which are most closely related to the translated works.

### 2.1 Chapter Title

Due to space constraints in the periodical, the classical Chinese novels published in *China Review* are mostly in the form of abridged translations, selected translations, and summarized translations. Instead of translating some full-length novels word-for-word or chapter-by-chapter from Chinese, some translators summarize the basic storyline while ensuring the integrity of the entire plot of the novel. Some translators choose chapters as the basis for translation, selecting certain chapters, or focus on storylines, translating relatively independent stories from the novel. Alternatively, translations might center around characters, selecting content or storylines related to a particular character for serialized publication. As a result, there are no corresponding titles for the translations, and in some cases, titles and chapter titles of the translation are added by the translators.

In the first four issues of Volume I of *China Review*, there was a serialized abridged translation of *Water Margin*. H. S., the translator, added the title “The Adventures of a Chinese Giant”. The translation focuses on the character Lo Tat from *Water Margin*, selecting the plots related to Lo Tat from the third to the seventh chapter. The translation was then rearranged and adjusted into 19 chapters to form a complete and independent story, with each chapter having its own title. The specifics are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Titles Translations of The Adventures of a Chinese Giant

Chapter	Chapter Title
Chapter I	Lo Tat's First Appearance on the Page of the History
Chapter II	Old Kin and His Daughter
Chapter III	The Lodging-house and the Butcher's Shop
Chapter IV	Lo Tat Meet with Friends
Chapter V	Lo Tat Gets Shaved
Chapter VI	Shows that though Lo Tat had Changed His Name, He had not Changed His Nature
Chapter VII	More of the Same
Chapter VIII	Peach Blossom Farm
Chapter IX	Logic
Chapter X	A Logical Conclusion
Chapter XI	Deep-wit's Dislike to Meanness and Plunder
Chapter XII	The Iron Buddha, and Flying Alchemist
Chapter XIII	Deep-wit Meets an Old Acquaintance, Who Gives Him Some Help
Chapter XIV	Deep-wit at the Capital

Chapter XV	Shows that Those Who Make Snares for Other People Sometimes Fall into Them Themselves
Chapter XVI	Deep-wit Makes Another Acquaintance and Friend
Chapter XVII	Official Ruffians
Chapter XVIII	A Friend in Need
Chapter XIX	Conclusion

In 1888, the 17th volume, issues 3 and 4 of *China Review* serialized 37 selected wisdom stories translated by R. W. Hurst, titled “Budget of Historical Tales”. These 37 stories were all selected from the same section, with 16 stories from Volume I “Instances of Sagacity”, 8 stories from Volume II “Examples of Foresight”, and 13 stories from Volume III “Examples of Discrimination”. Each story was given a title summarizing its content. For an example from Volume I “Instances of Sagacity”, see Table 2.

**Table 2:** Titles Translations of Budget of Historical Tales

Chapter	Chapter Title
I. Instances of Sagacity	1. Chu Ko-Liang. A weak government is a bad one
	2. Kuang Wu-Ti. The law is no respecter of persons
	3. Shi Ma-Yu. Don't cast pearls before swine
	4. Han Huang. Don't fit square pegs in round holes
	5. Chien Liao. Prince of Wu and Yueh. A judge of character
	6. Tsin K'uei. A forged despatch
	7. Wang Mang. A brave man, worth a king's ransom
	8. Wei Yuan-Chung. An illustration of the proverb 'let a thief catch a thief'
	9. Yuan Hsien of the Sung Dynasty. A little smuggling not a great enormity
	10. Yang Shih-Ch'i. A personal slight misses its mark
	11. Yen Chen. An uncommon mendicant
	12. Lin Hsian-Ju. Private animosities must be laid aside in presence of the enemy
	13. Chang Fei. Undue familiarity
	14. Tsao Pin. An excellent custodian
	15. Tou I. A good storekeeper
	16. Lu Tsung Tao. A straightforward official
	17. Lü I Chien. Surtout point de zèle
	18. Feng Huan. Kindness not thrown away

The titles added by translators in *China Review* are related to the main plot or characters of each chapter and serve as hints to the content of the text, making the storylines of the translated work clearer and facilitating readers' understanding of the novel's plot. To some extent, this reduces the unfamiliarity often associated with Chinese classical novels, making them more accessible for English readers.

## 2.2 Preface

By Genette, preface is “every type of introductory text consisting of a discourse produced on the subject of the text that follows or precedes it” [1]. In preface, the writer may address “the themes of the why”, “the themes of the how”, and “the order in which to read” [1], which is conducive to getting the book read properly.

Genette distinguishes between authorial paratext and editorial paratext based on the different producers of the paratext but does not differentiate the translator's paratext. To communicate with readers, some translators often choose to write a preface to provide necessary information about their translation. In literary translations, the translator's paratext is often richer and more valuable than the authorial and editorial paratext. It serves as “the most important interpretive document for the text, offering the most complete interpretation of both the internal and external aspects of a work” [6]. In the Chinese classical novels published in *China Review*, all the paratexts are translator's paratexts. The content mainly includes the author's biography, the social and historical background of the novel's creation, an introduction to the novel's plot, and explanations of translation strategies and methods. For instance, in the serial publication of *The Tang Kou Chih* from Volume 5 to Volume 6 in *China Review* from 1877 to 1878, the translator, E. L. Oxenham, added a preface before the translation, briefly introducing the author of *The Tang Kou Chih*, as well as the time and intention behind the novel's composition: “The author of the *Tang-hou-chi* (*Extirpation-of-Rebels' Chronicle*) was one Yu Chung-hua, who lived during the reigns of Chia-cheng

(A.D. 1796) and Tao-kwong (A.D. 1821). He was an adept in the uses of the military weapons, and military exercises; and had considerable reputation in Kwangtung and Hunan as a strategist. The *Tang hou chih* or continuation of the *Shui Hu Chuan* arose from a dream Yu had in the eleventh year of Chia-ching. In the Tingwei year of Tao-kwong (A.D. 1847) it was finished, but only in the rough, and Yu died before he could revise it. His son, with assistance of some friends, revised the manuscript, and a friendly publisher at Nanking then printed it. The editor acknowledges how inferior it is to the *Shui Hu*, and those who know that witty work will endorse this statement" [7].

G. C. Stent's translation of *Brief Sketches from the Life of K'ung-ming*, serialized in Volumes 5 to 8 of the *China Review* from 1877 to 1879, centers on Kung Ming and highlights episodes from the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* pertaining to him. In the preface, the translator introduces Kung Ming's life and character traits, offering English readers an introduction to Kung Ming: "No Chinese statesman or general, from ancient times till the present, has ever commanded so much admiration, or been so greatly venerated for wisdom, loyalty, bravery, and all the other attributes of a really great man, as K'ung-ming, the subject of these sketches. His name is synonymous with every virtue; he is the model for sucking statesmen of the present day; his military tactics are closely followed by those who desire to achieve a name in their country's annals; his stratagems and devices are themes for prose and verse; his deeds are depicted in innumerable plays, in which he is the sun round which revolve the lesser though famous lights of Chinese chivalry, as it is represented in the time of *The Three Kingdoms*" [8]. Stent deems Kung Ming is a "household word" amongst Chinese. Kung Ming "not only a statesman, but also a profound scholar as well as an astronomer" [8]. He "was possessed of great coolness, wisdom, and tact, the last quality, perhaps, being more required than any other, in order to keep so many conflicting elements under proper control; and that he was as brave in action as he was fertile in stratagems" [9]. On the stage, the character of Kung Ming is represented as "wearing a black gauze official cap, and a black robe on which the eight diagrams are embroidered in gold; in his hand he holds an oval-shaped fan made of white eagles' feathers; in the centre of the fan a compass is supposed to be fixed. While living K'ung-ming consulted the compass so that he could always pitch his camp without violating the rules of *fêng-shui*; it was convenient too as a means of arranging his ranks in an orthodox method" [9]. Stent evaluates Kung Ming "as much at home in the camp as he was in the court, with a talent rarely to be found in one person-of excelling both as a general and a statesman; although he probably never had a sword on in his life, he was perpetually leading his armies on to victory, and although he was rarely in a court, yet he was constantly successfully engaged in the most intricate diplomacy. K'ung-ming's being engaged in any undertaking was a sure sign of its being successful. As will also be seen, Liu-pai had no extraordinary talent being in fact rather a commonplace person, and depending entirely on the skill of K'ung-ming and the bravery of his generals for upholding the rank he had gained by their efforts" [9].

Poems from the Chinese novel *Yü Chiao Li*, titled "Rhymes from the Chinese", published in the *China Review*, specifically in the 5th issue of Volume 1 in 1873. In the preface, the translator A. Lister elucidates the strategies employed in translating poetry from Chinese classical novels. The translator of the Chinese verse is "aware that his renderings are mostly imitations of certain English poems", "the translator has simply aimed at dressing up a few Chinese verses in a form less 'insupportably uncouth' than certain pernicious canons of what is wrongly called translation have sometimes given to such; and at shewing that Chinese poetry is neither so unintelligible nor so untranslatable as is commonly believed. One merit alone is claimed-that of fidelity to the original. The only license allowed has been the occasional expansion of a proper name into a descriptive phrase, just as an English poet, instead of saying, *Jephtha's daughter*, speaks of 'her that died to save her father's vow'" [10].

In Chinese classical novels, there is a multitude of characters. Some translations also add a list of characters in the preface to provide a brief introduction to their relationships and roles within the translation. For example, in the translation of *A Chinese Planchette Seanced*, published in *China Review*, Volume 9, Issue 6 in 1881, the translator F. H. Balfour appended a list of characters at the end of the preface "for the sake of clarity" [11].

### 2.3 Annotation

Annotations are among the most commonly found paratextual elements in translated works, providing valuable cultural context to aid readers in understanding the content. Chinese classical novels vividly depict the local customs of China, incorporating names of places, people, myths, and allusions that serve as symbols of its rich history and culture. These cultural elements, however, are often unfamiliar to Western readers, posing challenges for translators. A literal translation risks losing the artistic essence of the original text and may hinder clarity for English readers. To address this, translators for *China Review* have supplemented their translations with annotations, elucidating key characters, folk customs, historical allusions, and other cultural nuances present in the

original text. These annotations, include footnotes and endnotes, cover various aspects such as Chinese history, culture, customs, allusions, myths, place names, appellations, units of measurement, and occasionally include insights into translation strategies. Footnotes are typically indicated by superscript labels within the text, while endnotes are identified at the end of the main text.

Footnotes in the translated text serve to explain the corresponding units of measurement mentioned in the original text. For instance, in *The Young Prodigy*, a footnote clarifies “night watch” as “About 6 P.M. in the winter” [12]. The annotations in *The Adventures of a Chinese Giant* give an account of ancient Chinese currency: “A tael of silver is about 1. oz. The Chinese have never been able to establish a silver coinage. The precious metal has continually to be tested and weighed” [13]. In *Scraps from Chinese Mythology*, the annotation for “li,” a unit of distance in China, is: “A li is about a third of an English mile” [14]. The translator elucidates unfamiliar terms for English readers and facilitates the conversion between measurement units in Chinese and English cultures, ensuring a clear understanding of the original text's measurement units for English readers.

Since the fact that many of the Chinese classical novels published in the *China Review* are selected and abridged translations, sometimes the context and plot may lack coherence. Consequently, translators often supplement incomplete storylines or omitted characters with annotations according to the context, facilitating readers' comprehension. For instance, in the translation of *Muh-Tien-Tsze Chuen*, Volume 17, Issue 4 of 1889, the last sentence reads: “On a lucky day (specially selected), viz. on Ting-yiu (GG1st day), the Son of Heaven entered Nan-ch'ing (district city)” [15]. In the accompanying annotation, the translator provides an explanation of the sentence based on the original text's content, clarifying: “The subsequent sections close with the words, the Son of Heaven entered Nanching. Hence it seems that on the expeditions detailed in Sections V and VI, the King started from Nan-ching, where he built the palace of Chi in B.C. 961” [15], aiming to enhance readers' understanding of the translated text. In *Brief Sketches from the Life of Kung Ming*, the translator adds an explanation for the plot where Kung Ming beheads Ma Su, enhancing and clarifying significant plot points in the novel: “In the play, which bears the same title as this chapter, the scene between K'ung-ming and Ma Su is peculiarly affecting; and the sentence of death, uttered as it is by K'ung-ming, invariably ‘brings down the house.’ This sentence consists of but one word, Chan, ‘behead,’ yet even a foreigner is struck with the indescribable amount of expression conveyed in the tone in which that word is uttered, embodying as it does, disgust, friendship, sorrow, yet determination to do his duty in spite of everything” [16]. The translator of *Rhymes from the Chinese* explains to the reader in a footnote why the word leather does not appear in either version: “though in the Chinese, the character representing it duly heads the 7th line, it is used in an entirely secondary or punning sense, conserving the sound and form, but discarding the meaning. Thus in the first piece it helps to make up a phrase for ‘pity,’ in the second it means ‘to forsake.’ Just as if an English poet, in a like extremity, should introduce the word wood by using it in its old meaning of mad; ‘And here am I, and rood within this wood’ - *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II., 1, 192” [17].

As mentioned earlier, some translators elaborate on their translation strategies and methods in the preface. Additionally, it's noticeable that annotations often include brief discussions and explanations regarding these strategies. In *The Flower-Fairies*, for instance, the translator F. H. Balfour delves into the translation of puns within the text, explaining: “it is impossible to reproduce in English the expressive double-entendres of the original, in which the words t'ao, li, shih, feng, etc., that stand for peach, plum, pomegranate, and wind, are at first cunningly represented by other characters having the same sound; the object being to mislead and puzzle the reader until the dénouement is arrived at” [18]. Another example is E. J. Eitel, the translator of *Muh-Tien-Tsze Chuen*, who notes in the annotations: “I have collated several editions to ascertain the best reading in each case of difficulty. The division of the paragraphs is my own, and merely intended to serve convenience of reference. I have not attempted to fill up the many lacunae in the text, except where the context plainly indicates the missing words. The text is here, at the very beginning, deficient. Some paragraphs are evidently missing” [19].

The most common and numerous annotations are those that explain aspects of Chinese culture. Translators utilize annotations to supplement the cultural information present in the original text, thereby helping English readers overcome reading obstacles and difficulties. This not only enhances the readability of Chinese classical novels but also enriches readers' perception and understanding of Chinese culture. Given the numerous characters and high information density in Chinese classical novels, they present challenges for both readers and translators alike. For example, in *Brief Sketches from the Life of Kung Ming*, the translator provides explanations and introductions for characters such as Tsao-tsao, Kuan Yü, Chang Fei, Chou Yü, Lu Su, Tsai Mao, Pang Tung, and other characters to assist readers in understanding the novel's plot. In the scene where Hsi Lin pays her parents the first visit after her marriage in *Tales from the Liao Chai Chih Yi*, the translator explains the Chinese custom to readers through an annotation “The Visit of Returning Happiness” [20]. Similarly, in another novel, *The Young Prodigy*, there is also

an annotation explaining “the visit of returning happiness” as the term applied to “the first visit of the bride to her own parents” [21]. Another instance occurs in Pao-sye: The Cleopatra of China, where the annotation for “cold palace” reads: “King Yu appears to have been the first monarch recorded in Chinese history to have repudiated his queen. The troubles which this divorce brought about, and the misfortunes which it drew upon the King himself, by the revolt of the feudatory princes, affords sufficient proof that it was regarded as an outrage against common law. When the wife or concubine of an Emperor is put away, she is relegated to the Leng Kung or Cold Palace” [22]. Since the term “cold palace” may be unfamiliar to English readers, the translator provides a literal translation accompanied by annotation to elucidate its meaning while also clarifying implicit information in the novel’s plot. In Chinese Folklore, an overview of some stories related to Sun Wu Kung in Record of Wanderings in the West is provided, with translator G. Taylor introducing the Jade Emperor to readers in the annotations. Taylor writes, “the Jade Emperor dwells in the firmament and presides over the celestial powers, receiving homage from various kings of pixies, doves, goblins, and other terrestrial sprites, who are all considered tributary to him” [23]. This introduces images of immortals from Chinese traditional culture to Western readers. In The Flower-Fairies, the translator annotates “Tao” as: “the Doctrine or Tao-it of the Hidden Principle of Nature, rendered ‘Reason’ by the majority of sinologists. Tao primarily means a road; hence, a doctrine; and thus, the Way of Nature” [24], providing Western readers with a brief introduction to Chinese Tao culture. The story of “The Fairy Kung” in Tales from the Liao Chai Chih Yi mentions a Chinese allusion, “The marquis’ door is as a sea which bears no track” [25]. In the annotation, the translator explains the story of Hsiao to the readers: “Hsiao was in love with a girl who was carried off by a Marquis, and so Hsiao lost her for a time. but for all this he succeeded in getting into the Marquis harem and carrying her away” [25]. In Scraps from Chinese Mythology, Si She, a beauty in traditional Chinese culture, is introduced by the translator in the annotation as: “the ne plus ultra of loveliness in Chinese tradition. She was, it is narrated, the daughter of humble parents in the Kingdom of Yüeh, during the 5th century B.C., and gained her livelihood in washing silk, or, according to another account, in selling firewood; but, a report of her consummate beauty having reached the ears of the Prince of Yüeh, he saw in this circumstance a hope of achieving the destruction of his victorious rival the Prince of Wu and causing Si She to be trained in all the accomplishments of her sex and dressed in gorgeous apparel, he sent the fatal beauty as a gift to the Prince whom he desired to ruin. His stratagem was successful, and Fu Ch’a (Prince of Wu) ‘abandoned himself to lustful dalliance, and was ere long defeated and crushed by his wily neighbor” [26]. This enables readers to understand the storyline while deepening their understanding of Chinese culture.

### 3. THE FUNCTION OF PARATEXT IN TRANSLATIONS

When discussing the functionality of paratext, Genette claims that “if the text without its paratext is sometimes like an elephant without a mahout, a power disabled, the paratext without its text is a mahout without an elephant, a silly show” [1]. Meanwhile, Genette also emphasizes the importance of paratext, suggesting that it should not be isolated from the text itself. Consequently, while paratext is appended to the main text, it significantly contributes to the generation of textual meaning and plays a constructive role in shaping the meaning of the translated text. In the 19th century, most Chinese classical novels were relatively unknown to Western readers, and their publication in English periodicals often marked their first introduction to English readers. Originating from a cultural background distinctly different from that of English culture, these Chinese classical novels, published in China Review, present significant cultural differences and aesthetic distances between them and English readers. Within China Review, the paratext accompanying the English translations of Chinese classical novels serves to elucidate and supplement the text. To a large extent, it guides the reading process and influences readers’ interpretation and acceptance of the translated works. As an essential form of paratext, the translator’s preface serves as the most comprehensive introductory text about the translated work. The preface, added by the translator, deepens readers’ understanding of Chinese classical novels and stimulates their interest in reading. Moreover, to assist English readers in comprehending the novels, the translator provides detailed explanations and interpretations through annotations on characters, customs, allusions, and other elements mentioned in the novels, thereby reducing barriers to readers’ comprehension. The paratext, through prefaces, annotations, and other forms, to a certain extent, bridges the cultural gap in reading. It expands English readers’ understanding and perspective of Chinese literature and culture, generating anticipation for further reading.

The function of paratext is to assist English readers in reading and understanding Chinese classical novels, while also introducing Chinese culture to them, thereby providing valuable references for understanding the real Chinese society and culture. Batchelor contends that “a paratext is a consciously crafted threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way in which the text is received” [27]. The English translations of Chinese classical novels published in China Review are widely disseminated with the assistance of paratext, contributing to the spread of Chinese culture. Chinese classical novels serve not only as recreational reading but also demonstrate

their literary and socio-historical value, allowing Western readers to gain insights into the authentic landscape of Chinese society and advancing Chinese classical novels into broader horizons. The *China Review*, along with other English-language journals of the nineteenth century, translated a large number of Chinese classical novels, and many of them thus initiated the process of classicization in the West, in which paratext played an indispensable role.

As Genette pointed out, the content of paratext serves as an important source of historical material. Paratext not only assists translated works in adapting to new environments and provides a visible space for translators but also serves as a site for tracing the translation theories of a particular era. Through the paratextual content in the English translations of Chinese classical novels in *China Review*, one can explore the thoughts and sociocultural motivations of translators. Similarly, in *China Review*, the translation and modification of titles reflect 19th-century Western perceptions of Chinese classical novels. This showcases the translation principles and objectives of 19th-century Western translators of Chinese classical novels, as well as their evaluations and attitudes towards Chinese classical novels and Chinese culture. The paratexts in the English translations of Chinese classical novels in *China Review* present the overall context of 19th-century translations of Chinese classical novels and offer valuable historical materials for understanding the translation of Chinese classical novels in English publications, as well as the literary communication between China and the West in the 19th century.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Paratext is an essential component of translated works, serving as an extension and supplement to the translated text. It assists readers in interpreting the original text, understanding the social and cultural context in which the original text was produced, and achieves effects that the main text alone may find difficult to accomplish. Based on the analysis of the contents and functions of three types of paratexts, namely, chapter titles, prefaces, and annotations, in the English translations of Chinese classical novels published in *China Review*, this paper aims to reveal the enlightenment of paratexts to the translation and dissemination of Chinese classical novels. The research in this paper shows, firstly, that paratexts play an important role in the translation of Chinese classical novels. The addition of chapter titles, background introductions in prefaces, and annotations in translations facilitate Western readers' comprehension of Chinese classical novels. Moreover, they provide valuable material for us to further understand the translation production environment of the 19th century. Secondly, the abundant paratexts in the translations offer a Western perspective on Chinese classical novels, interpreting Chinese and Western literature and culture from a cross-cultural perspective. This not only elevates Chinese classical novels beyond recreational reading materials but also highlights their literary and socio-historical value. It promotes the acceptance and dissemination of Chinese classical novels in the English-speaking world, which is of reference significance for the future translation practice of Chinese classical novels and Chinese culture.

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