From its birth in the early twenty century to the winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature, modern Chinese literature has stepped into the international arena in the space of a century. The book under review is the first volume to open the black box of how representative Chinese works have entered the Anglophone world. As stated in the introduction, the book is motivated by three goals: to explore the area-restricted studies of the greater China region in contrast to Eurocentrism; to approach the translation of Chinese literature through an interdisciplinary analysis; and to investigate the interplay of the agential powers in the translation process.

The book of 12 articles by scholars, translators, and writers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, presents an in-depth analysis of the three thematic elements of theoretical observation, empirical study, and practice. Part 1, entitled “Theoretical and Historical Reflections,” presents conceptual and archival research on literary translation. Focusing on the epitext of Allen & Unwin’s Archives in WWII, the opening chapter by the editors throws a spotlight on often-neglected “non-professional agents” who are neither trained nor paid by the publishers. Whether “solicited” or “volunteers,” these renowned translators, diplomats, writers, and even family members played a decisive role in the selection and publication of translated Chinese literature (p. 12). The authors attribute their substantial agential impact to their literary, social, cultural, and symbolic capital together with their residence in London. The evidence-based study supplements the theoretical concept of agent and provides paratextual analysis which extends textuality to sociological context.

Jonathan Stalling and Ronald Schleifer, drawing on Actor-Network Translation Studies, similarly adopt the Chinese Literature Translation Archive (CLTA) to unpack the complex system of publication which is for translated works of Chinese literature, which is highly influenced by producers such as editors and therefore individualistic. Citing two case studies of Goldblatt’s translations as examples of the interplay between the editorial and the translator’s agency/authority based on the archive, the authors suggest that the actor-network theory weaves impersonal agents (namely institutions) into the analysis. They conclude that the “radically collaborative and actor-diffused network structure” of value and economy in American literary publications demonstrates the potential impact of translation norms on readers, which may draw useful attention to the “radically individualistic, producer-oriented literary network structure” in China (p. 35).

Bonnie S. McDougall, a sinologist, scholar and translator, carries out a taxonomic analysis on multiple voice translation (MVT). She explores the origin and the process of the overlooked and taken-for-granted concept of MVT, and identifies the five most common categories—a collaboration between translators with different skills, the translation of a source text with multiple authors, team or in-house translation, educational translation, and editorial intervention. She subsequently points out problems in the collaborations, such as different assignments and unidentified contributions, the complexity of editorial intervention and censorship, and supervision in education translation. As a seasoned insider, she underscores literary creativity arising from collaboration based on her practice, particularly in the Foreign Languages Press (FLP) in the 1980s, in her collaborations with her husband, and in education translation.

Qiang Geng reviews the unsatisfactory reception of the source-oriented outbound
translation program of the Panda Book series by the FLP from 1981 to 2007. He further explores the mentality underlying givism (song qu zhuyi 送去主義), namely, superior self-perception, recipients’ difficulties in refusing, and the dissemination of local culture. The author calls into question the idea of “unilateral self-profit” coupled with latent sinocentrism, political concern (McDougall, 2011, p. 14), and the neglect of target readers which may undermine the reception of similar projects such as the Library of Chinese Classics. The retrospection leads the author to the suggestion that equal and free gift-exchange and Confucian reciprocity may change the asymmetric power between the giver and the recipient.

The following six chapters in Part 2, “Translations for the Page and Stage,” zoom in on the empirical research into theatrical and literary translation. Nicholas Jose delves into the popularity of Lady Precious Stream, an English adaptation of the traditional Chinese opera by Shih-I Hsiung, based on his rich experiences of translating Western dramas. Owing to the continued revisions and the collaboration between the translator and the cast, the acting edition is characterised by the Honourable Reader, who functions as the authorial interpreter, by “simultaneous familiarization and estrangement,” and by intertextuality with western classics such as King Lear (p. 82). The author reflects on the subversion of the superiority of Western imperialism in the “misidentification” between the two cultures at the theatrical level (p. 83).

Adopting the descriptive paradigm, Hongjuan Xin traces the trajectory of Lu Xun’s short stories into the West from the 1920s onwards. In the primarily indigenous publications of the first decade, the translators ask the writer for permission, a review of the translation, and a preface, and they apply literal translation, revealing their submissive position and admiration for the writer. 1936–1949 witnessed worldwide attention on Lu Xun thanks to the translations of overseas scholars and reprints by international presses. From 1949 to 1981, the in-house government-sponsored translation by the FLP was disseminated at home and abroad. The fourth phase is characterised by Western translators, wider acceptance by academic and popular publishers, and more liberty in translation. The author specifically cites the most influential translation in the third phase to illustrate the constraints of ideology and poetics on the translators.

In the case study of the co-translation of The Yellow Storm by the author Lao She and Ida Pruitt, Man Zhang analyses Lao She’s rewriting and the clash between the author and the translator. The author abridged and rewrote the text to highlight China’s strong cultural spirit of “fairness, justice and bravery,” which is consistent with American values (p. 106). Meanwhile, the author, in view of the readers’ limited understanding of Chinese culture, promoted thick translation whereas Pruitt insisted on “unusual translation” or literal translation to enrich new cultural meanings in the target culture. The controversy was settled by the support provided to the translator by Pearl S. Buck on behalf of the publisher. Based on the common ground of shared values between east and west, cultural diversity and otherness are well-received and disseminated.

Uganda Sze Pui Kwan examines the two rounds of self-translation of Atlas by the bilingual Hong Kong writer Dung Kai Cheung. Unlike the first abridgment by the author, the second self-collaborative translation with the experienced translators Bonnie S. McDougall and Anders Hansson entails international recognition and the author’s reflection on his language, historical truth, and the style of the original version. Moreover, the translation manifests “a new model” which preserves the author’s sentiments and textual form like self-translation and also incorporates the reflection and perfection of collaboration.

In the following essay, Lu Shao investigates the translator’s re-narration from the cognitive narratological perspective in the
English translation of Mo Yan’s *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*. Drawing on the diegetic analysis by Genette, Shao examines the transfer in metalepsis, the shift from an omnipresent third-person to a first-person point of view, the omission of paralipsis, and the reinforcement of pseudo-diegetic in not only eponymous narrator but also intertextuality, which are conducive to literary fuzziness and mystery in aesthetics. The intersection between translation and narratology can inspire narrative reconstruction in literary translation.

Narrational self-reflexivity is the central theme of Will Gatherer’s essay probing into the translations of metafiction by the avant-garde movement writers Ge Fei, Yu Hua, and Ma Yuan. The self-reflexive function through which the writers express “political and philosophical implications” has been decreased in favor of the parodic function in the intertextuality of *One Kind of Reality* (p. 147), a paratextually explicit rendering in *The Past and the Punishments*, and extensive omission and intervention in the restructuring of different narrators in Ma Yuan’s novels. Gatherer closes the article by remarking that self-reflexivity in general has been attenuated to reduce ambiguity, which highlights the visibility and manipulation of the translators.

The two final essays in Part 3, “Voices of Translators,” shift to the first-hand reflections of two renowned translators of contemporary literature. Carlos Rojas, who has been shortlisted for the Man Asian Prize and the Pen Translation Prize many times, approaches the hybridity of intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic translation which may be essential in structure and leitmotif. He underscores the importance of the shift in the linguistic register in *Diary of a Madman* and the protagonist’s improving linguistic capacity in *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*, both of which were neglected in the translations. He subsequently elaborates on how he coins the terms for Yan Lianke’s local dialects, negotiates the shift of typefaces in Dung Kai-Cheung’s Cantonese, and preserves the complicated hybridity of foreign languages and even “non-linguistic symbols” in the work of the Chinese Malaysian-born author Ng Kim Chew. This scrutinization of his praxis reveals the translator’s creativity and compensation when dealing with linguistic nuances.

Allan H. Barr traces his encounter with the translations of five works by Yu Hua, a writer who strikes him most with his humour, temperance, and conciseness in storytelling, which conform to the expectations of Western readers. The translator employs his contextualization of the author’s simple but forceful words, the reduction of repetition to increase the impact, the preservation of tempo, and the adoption of rhyme. Moreover, he also applies a shift of typeface to distinguish the third-person narrative and a stream of consciousness inspired by the genre of Faulknerian novels. The linguistic innovation and multimodal translation help preserve the idiosyncratic style of the writer.

To sum up, one distinguishing feature of the book is the way it embeds translation in a broader sociohistorical context. The archival research reveals the untapped primary sources, which throws the overlooked agents into relief and helps “initiate the new epoch of materialist sociology in Chinese literature translation studies” (p. 28). In addition, the volume allows us to examine “event”-oriented research, which unravels the overall translation process and the interplay among the constellation of authors, translators, editors, and publishers (Toury, 2012, pp. 67–68). By presenting the polyphony of agents, it clarifies the agency of the parties at play. The intervention of the editors, together with the empowered agency of translators as revisors or even co-writers with multiple roles and various models of collaboration challenges and blurs the epistemological concepts of authority and original as exemplified in the cases of *The Garlic Ballads* and *The Atlas*.
Another feature is the examination of literary translation from diverse angles. The interdisciplinary approaches, ranging from sociology to cognitive narratology, offer us a new view of translation. The multiple identities of the contributors, who include sinologists, translators, curators, and scholars, facilitate an investigation of mediation and intervention in linguistics, poetics, and narration by the agents involved from an insiders’ viewpoint.

Thirdly, the book has practical implications for the asymmetry of power relations in the international frame. From the side of the non-hegemonic communities, the investigation into the agential network in publication and reception may entail self-reflection and consciousness of the dominant poetics, which may inspire them to promote their peripheral status and national identity in the host culture. On the other hand, the research, which has been conducted in tandem with the out-bound translation of non-Anglophone culture, manifests Chinese cultural specificity and facilitates heterogeneity and pluralism in world literature or “the writing that gains in translation” (Damrosch, 2018, p. 281).

Although it explores modern Chinese literature on the micro- and macro-levels, the book is not free from limitations. The exploration of publication and reception concentrates primarily on translators, authors, and editors, but this focus may be expanded to encompass reviewers, critics, and readers and possible influences on the target culture. This aside, this book is valuable for researchers, translators, teachers, and students of translation studies and sinology for its holistic and profound research on modern Chinese literature through a sociohistorical and cultural prism.

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REFERENCES