

Canonization and Variations of Shakespeare's Work in China

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Abstract: In "Canonization and Variations of Shakespeare's Work in China," Qing Yang discusses the role of cross-linguistic and inter-cultural variations with regard to William Shakespeare's intercultural travel and canonization in China. In the context of globalization, Shakespeare's texts outside Western cultures undergo cross-national, cross-linguistic and inter-cultural variations in the process of translation. From a symbol of Western powers and cultures to a bearer of Confucianism, a fighter for the survival of the nation during the anti-Japanese struggle, and to a literary master with abundant possibilities of interpretation and adaption today, Shakespeares (in the plural to indicate the multiple texts of Shakespeare) change and vary in modern and contemporary China. The inter-cultural communication of Shakespeare with clear markings of Chinese culture and history progresses through variation. Yang argues that it is the paradigm of Shunqing Cao's variation theory central to the formations of world literature(s) that has facilitated the canonization of Shakespeare's work in China.

Keywords: Shakespeare; inter-cultural communication; variation theory; canonization; world literature(s)

The canonization of Shakespeare's work in China is inseparable from its variation in terms of inter-linguistic and -cultural communication. The exploration of the canonization and variation of Shakespeare's work contributes to the observation of an internal relationship between the variation of literature and the canonization of world literature. The spread of Shakespeare's work in the Britain has witnessed a large number of textual variations related to the publication, editing, and stage adaptation, affecting the Shakespeare's continuing canonization in his home country even today. It is not surprising, then, that the spread of Shakespeare's work beyond Britain has produced more variations in cross-linguistic and -cultural travels. Shakespeare, as a symbol of the Western culture, has experienced variations upon his entry to China. While going through cross-linguistic variations in translation and inter-cultural variations in the

process of Chinese acceptance, both the symbol of Shakespeare and his plays have been merged with Chinese culture and historical contexts, gradually becoming canonized in China.

1. SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY SPREAD IN CHINA: "SHAKESPEARE" FIRST, THEN HIS PLAYS

Literary cannon in world literature is formed in constant variations, rather than a fixed concept or static phenomenon. Chinese comparatist Wang Ning (王宁) states that "there are often inter-cultural and cross-linguistic factors in the formation of literary canon" (2006, 31), in which translation, as a medium of cross-linguistic and inter-cultural communication, is one of the core factors. Such cross-linguistic variations stem from the increase, loss, and even distortion of the original meaning brought about by the language conversion. At the same time, the inter-cultural variation in the process of reception, including the misreading and cultural filtering of readers from different cultural backgrounds, can assert direct impact on variations of literature.

However, Shakespeare's early spread in China is distinctive: the name of Shakespeare comes into China more than half a century earlier than the translation of his plays. It is generally acknowledged by Chinese academia that Lin Zexu (林则徐), a politician and litterateur in the late Qing Dynasty, is the first person to introduce Shakespeare in Chinese in his translated and edited *Chronicles of Four Continents* (四洲志, 1839) (Li 2019, 3). It is in this book that Shakespeare appears as "沙士比阿" in Chinese, which later changes to "莎士比亚" (the general translation of "Shakespeare" in Chinese). The result is Shakespeare's plays have been underestimated in China for a long time, as Chinese Shakespeare study scholar Hao Liu observes that "Shakespeare's plays were under-interpreted, yet his name was over-used" (2019, 23).

The reason why the communication of Shakespeare's plays in China lags far behind that of the author's name is closely related to the historical background of literary introduction in the target country. In the 19th century, China began to intentionally learn from the Western civilization when confronting the overwhelming European powers, in order to both resist external invasions and guide internal revolutionary activities. Therefore, Lin Zexu introduces Shakespeare as "part of the Western

knowledge” to Chinese people with the aim to “preparing them to resist the European powers” (Huang 2009, 51). For such a historical reason, Shakespeare, at that time, was “frequently evoked to support or suppress specific agendas—in the writings of both missionaries and Chinese reformers—all in the name of modernity and cultural renewal” (7), or he appeared in the form of “informants’ references and an abstract panegyric” (50). No wonder American Shakespeare study scholar Alexander C. Y. Huang claims that “Shakespeare’s early presence in China was not the result of translation, teaching, performance, or any other form that would have entailed a substantial engagement with his texts” (50). In that special time, what Shakespeare wrote was not important, but the symbolic value that Shakespeare represents was of great significance to China.

None of Shakespeare’s plays, neither their Chinese translations nor theatrical performances, circulated in China until Shanghai Dawen News Agency published Shakespeare’s first Chinese version entitled *Xiewai Qitan* (海外奇谭) with ten Shakespearean stories in 1903. The translation was in Classical Chinese (文言文), and the English source texts were based on Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807). In 1904, Chinese modern litterateurs Lin Shu (林纾) and Wei Yi (魏易) published *The English Poet Yinbian Yanyu* (英国诗人吟边燕语) with twenty Shakespearean stories in Classical Chinese. These two abridged translations marked the beginning of the spread of Shakespeare’s plays in China. In 1920, *Guangzhao Weekly* published a translation of *History of Europe* by Lin Shu and Chen Jialin (陈家麟), which was regarded as the earliest Chinese translation of Shakespeare’s story *Coriolanus* (An 2009, p. 141). It was not until 1921 that the first complete translation of Shakespeare’s plays in vernacular Chinese came into being, that is, 哈孟雷德 (*Hamlet*) translated by modern Chinese dramatist Tian Han (田汉).

Other than adopting Classical Chinese to meet Chinese readers’ reading habits, another significant change in *The English Poet Yinbian Yanyu* is that Lin Shu re-named each play with two stylistic Chinese characters: re-named *Hamlet* as 鬼诏 which literally means “Ghost Edict,” *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as 仙狻 which literally means “Immortal Cunning Beast,” and *The Merchant of Venice* as 肉卷 which literally means *A Volume of Flesh*. These Chinese titles evoke the style of *Strange Stories from A Chinese Studio* (聊斋), which is also called *Biography of Ghost and Fox*, a collection of short stories written by litterateur Pu Songling (蒲松龄) in Qing Dynasty.

This is partly because Lin Shu regarded Shakespeare's plays as "fantasy novels" (神怪小说) (Sun 1992, 390) or "Mystery novels" (志怪小说), which is a genre of Chinese classical novel featuring the narration of stories or legends about spirits and ghosts. It is hard to say that Lin's translation is faithful to Shakespeare's plays because he merely summarizes each story and highlight factors of spirits and ghosts in his re-named Chinese title, but his translation is clearly an example of cross-linguistic and inter-cultural variation.

2. LIN SHU AND TIAN HAN'S TRANSLATIONS AND THE VARIATION OF *HAMLET*

When Shakespeare's work traveled to China, variations happened due to the factors of translation, reception, and cultural filtering, all being caused by heterogeneous cultural practices and traditions. As Chinese Shakespeare study scholar Liu Hao claims, "there has been a strong bond or subtle tension between Shakespeare and the Chinese tradition" (2019, 23). Such tension causes cultural dislocation for understanding, and variations in cross-linguistic and inter-cultural acceptance. The term "variation" refers to the changes of literary phenomena in different countries, and the heterogeneity and variability of different literary experiences in the same subject field during and after the dissemination of literature to heterogeneous civilizations (Cao 2013, xxxii).

Among Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* plays an important role in modern China due to such translation and variations. As Chinese translator Zhou Zhuangping put it in the preface to the translation of *Hamlet* (1938), "...the main meaning of the play is to point out the justice of politics and the purity of family. In our age with both evil and justice mixed together, this play has its own value." (1938, 2) And the image of Hamlet in translations is marked by some Chinese characteristics, such as lofty benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, and faith of the Confucian etiquette.

In 鬼诏 *Ghost Edict* (*Hamlet*), Lin Shu diminishes the typical characteristics of Hamlet's torn between "to be" and "not to be," as well as all of his confusion and melancholy about being a human by deleting all the monologues. Instead, Lin Shu portrays Hamlet as a filial son who bears moral virtues modelled after Confucianism at the very beginning of *Ghost Edict*. Comparing the first monologue in *Hamlet* and *Ghost Edict*.

First monologue in *Hamlet*:

Ham. O! that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew;
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His cannon' against self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, state, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world.
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this! (Craig 1905, 873)

Lin's translation:

而前王有子以孝行称于国人,王薨,靡日不哀,又耻其母之失节,居恒怏怏...太子之心,亦非有恋于大宝,盖自念先王盛德,乃不能得于其母,冒新丧而嫁,而又越礼,即使不安于室,亦宜有所择,不应耦此金壬。(My translation: The former king's son is known to the people of the country for his filial piety. Yet the king is dead now. The prince feels depressed all day. The reason why the prince is so world-weary is not because he is infatuated with the throne but shamed of his mother's lack of the dead king's grand moral virtues, as well as his mother's new marriage to his uncle during the morning of the dead king, which is a shameful behavior that oversteps the etiquette system.) (Lin 1981, 50)

Apparently, Lin Shu's translation does not correspond to the original text, for most of these translated lines are rewritten based on his own understanding.

Lin Shu did not know much about English or any other foreign language; he merely relied on other people's oral retelling of the source text for his translation. There is no doubt, however, that Lin Shu is much good at narrating stories in Chinese language. He portrays Hamlet with distinct Chinese traditional ethical thoughts. Thus, Hamlet in Lin Shu's translation is very much an embodiment of Chinese traditional ethical principles, which makes his translation as "reframed in China as a text intended for the male elite class that operated according to moralizing principles" (Huang 2009, 7).

Translation, as a channel for inter-cultural communications, is bound to bring variation or distortion of language forms. This is because translator always has a certain value position, which is an ideology that can not be rid of, as the translation theorist Lefevere elaborates, "translations are not

made in a vacuum. Translators function in a given culture at a given time. The way they understand themselves and their culture is one of the factors that may influence the way in which they translate” (1992, 14). Lin Shu translated the blank verse in Shakespeare’s plays into Classical Chinese because he believed Classical Chinese was the only acceptable language of literature for Chinese readers; he also replaced the form of dialogue in Shakespeare’s plays with summaries of the story outline, causing the variation of text structure. The purpose of Lin’s translation of Shakespeare is mainly to introduce the excellent literary achievements of Western civilization for the benefit the domestic readers. It is such recreation that achieves the popularity and easier acceptance of the Shakespearean play in China. Therefore, translation has become a tool for the mission entrusted to it by the demand of a particular era, which is to meet the “realistic purpose and modern quality” of modern China (Zha 2016, 855).

In 1921, Tian Han published a complete translation of *Hamlet* in the journal *Young China*, which was republished by Shanghai Zhonghua Book Company a year later. Tian Han’s translation deleted some lines that violate traditional Chinese ethics. For example, several lines in the Second Scene, Act Three in the original play are missing in Tian Han’s translation. The original text is as the following:

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?
[Lying down at OPHELIA’s feet.]
Oph. No, my lord.
Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?
Oph. Ay, my lord.
Ham. Do you think I meant country matters?
Oph. I think noting, my lord.
Ham. That’s a fair thought to lie between maids’ legs.
Oph. What is, my lord?
Ham. Nothing (Craig 1905, 888).

These lines in the original text indicates the flirting between Hamlet and Ophelia. Tian Han deleted the dialogue completely, and only kept the description of Hamlet lying at the foot of Ophelia, skipping from “Pol. [to the king.] O ho! Do you mark that?” to “OPH. You are merry, my Lord” (Tian 1922, 83). This is a deliberate choice by Tian Han, causing by his view of Chinese traditional morality and his consideration of the

acceptance of Chinese readers. Thus, cultural filtering, which occurs in the process of “selection, transplantation, transformation, and reconstruction of communicating information by receivers according to their cultural tradition, realistic context, value standard, and aesthetic habits” (Cao 2018, 134), plays an important role in inter-cultural communications.

In 1930, *Shanghai Commercial Press* published another Chinese version of *Hamlet* named *Records of Heavenly Hatred* (天仇记) translated by Chinese translator Shao Ting(绍挺). Similar to Lin’s and Tian’s translations, Shao’s translation is also in Classical Chinese. Yet the most obvious difference between Shao’s translation and the former two is that Shao keeps the dialogue form of the original text and he comments on the play when translating at the same time, which makes the translator maximize his participation in the re-creation of the text. *Records of Heavenly Hatred* has the following characteristics: the original script is abridged and merged; there is a large number of idioms and allusions; comments on characters and plots that reveal the translator’s feelings and his methods; translator interprets Western customs, myths and religions; translator criticizes or praises the behavior and language of the characters in the play with the reference to Chinese historical events and classical Chinese poetry (Li 2008, 35-42). Although Shao Ting retains the structural form of the original text, he mainly uses the method of domestication to integrate the translation into Chinese culture.

Except for translator’s purposeful rewriting contributes to a formation of a Chinese Hamlet, Hamlet, at the beginning of the 20th century of China, is not a figure with a spirit of humanism at all, but a figure similar to that of Don Quixote. Such misreading makes this play more acceptable in its early communication in China. Chinese scholars at that time frequently describe Hamlet as an image with “intelligent, neurotic, lofty, sinister, and arrogant, and poor-spirited” characteristics, which project him “to represent intelligent, romantic, sinister, and indecisive character” (Fan 1920, 1). Thus, Hamlet’s thoughts on life and death become neurotic and romantic, his hatred of the world seems lofty and arrogant, and the delay of revenge shows a lack of courage. Tian Han even claims that the soliloquy “To be or not To be: that is a question” in *Hamlet* is similar to the lines in Qu Yuan’s *The Lament* (离骚), a long poem in the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.) about the poet’s recounting of his own life, experience, and aspirations.

In that case, Hamlet in Chinese scholars at that time has no humanistic breath in the Renaissance; and the helplessness of his humanistic spirit against feudalism and religion cannot present at all. Rather, Hamlet is shaped by Shakespeare to be an arrogant poet who is bothered by human evil in Chinese scholar Fan Demin's view. Fan Demin even borrows the textual research of Johannes Jensen, a Danish writer, to trace the origin of Hamlet story, claiming that "Hamlet and the fairy tales of Cinderella are the products of the same motivation, both of which are about characters who are lagging behind in the lower class getting an excessive victory and rising to the upper class of the society in a wonderful way" (1). Thus, the story of Hamlet becomes "the wishful thinking and expression of the oppressed class who intend to get rid of their own class's pain" (1). Obviously, the spirit represented by Hamlet becomes a fight for justice, which is exactly the spirit in demand for the domestic environment and Chinese expectations at that time.

3. THE ADAPTATION, REWRITING AND CANONIZATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORK

Except for translation, other cultural media also contribute to the canonization of Shakespeare's work in China. For instance, Jiao Juyin's *Hamlet*, a stage play released in 1942, is a typical varied text. From the perspective of narrative space, the performance of the play happens in a Confucian Temple (太庙), a cultural space symbolizing Confucianism in China. The combination of the Danish setting in the original *Hamlet* with the Confucius Temple highlighted a dialogue between the West and China. The fact that Jiao Juyin staged this play in 1942, a time of Anti-Japanese War, added the spirit of nationalism to the performance. In addition, the performed play also thrives for the acceptance by Chinese audience by conforming to the traditional Chinese culture. As Alexander C. Y. Huang comments, "Jiao insisted on the primacy of his locality, and the performance created a communal experience during the war intended to stir patriotic spirit in Confucian, moral terms" (2009, 3). Thus, Shakespeare's play was made "live" in China by becoming a concrete manifestation of Confucianism and a political tool to serve the national cause at the same time.

If judging by the criteria of literary canon, such as owning “literary market,” attracting “literary critics,” and becoming “University literary textbooks” (Wang 2006, 32), Shakespeare’s canonization has already been completed in China in the first half of the 20th century. However, the adaptation and rewriting of Shakespeare’s plays have never stopped, which continuously forms its canonization in return, as Chinese scholar Huang Dahong says “Literary canon, to a great extent, is created by the continuous rewriting, that is, the continuous aesthetic interpretation and aesthetic recreation” (2006, 93). The adaptation and rewriting of Shakespeare’s plays continue to promote the in-depth dissemination of Shakespeare in China in the 21st century, which brings about a new round of the canonization of Shakespeare in cultural productions such as film or TV series.

There are many adaptations of *Hamlet* in the West, each of which has its own interpretations and representations. It is not surprising, then, that *Hamlet* has multiplied ever further when it travels to heterogeneous cultures. The movie *The Banquet* (夜宴), directed by Chinese director Feng Xiaogang (冯小刚) in 2006, is a Chinese palace tragedy adapted from *Hamlet*. This adaptation transplants the main elements in *Hamlet*, such as the imperial court (now in the Five Dynasties and Ten States in China in *The Banquet*), and the ghost (now in the form of the armor belonging to the dead emperor). In addition, Feng adds many elaborate and gorgeous fighting scenes, which feature typical Kung Fu styles to make the film more in line with the popular Chinese Kung Fu cinema.

In 2006, another Chinese director Hu Xuehua (胡雪桦) directed a Tibetan version of *Hamlet* named *Prince of Himalaya* (喜马拉雅王子). Hu changes the story background from Denmark to a country called Jiabo on the western plateau in ancient China. The film is a display of Tibetan culture, integrating opera, customs, costumes, and other Tibetan cultural elements. In contrast to the tragic ending of *Hamlet*, the theme of revenge is weakened in *Prince of Himalaya*, but the noble spirit of tolerance and redemption is highlighted, which is consistent with the Chinese cultural expectations of happy ending and moral virtues in films. Some may criticize the deletion of original dialogue and lyrics in the film, but others can defend the film’s bold adaptation as a kind of “creative treason,” which “fully respects the performance characteristics of the film and completely separates it from the original play” (Cao 2018, 204).

Such adaptation phenomenon has long been noticed by Western Shakespeare scholars, and different concepts and terms are used to express the adaptation phenomenon of Shakespeare drama: Jonathan Bate and Jonathan Miller call adaptation the “afterlife” of drama, Ruby Cohn calls it “offshoots,” Michael Scott calls it “feedoff,” Charles Marowitz calls it “transmutations,” Martha Rozett calls it “transformations,” Alan Sinfield calls it “reconstitutions,” Michael D. Bristol calls it “vernacular Shakespeare” and “crossover Shakespeare”, and some critics use terms such as ‘adaptation,’ “spin off,” “Parody,” “appropriation,” and “variation” and so on (Hulbert et al 2009, 11-12). No matter what kind of expression it is, its essence focuses on the relationship between the original texts and the new works generated from the original one. However, if the discussion on the adaptation of Shakespeare's work only confines to such relationship, ignoring the cultural value and significance brought by the adaptation, and the interaction between the adaptation and the formation of world literature, such research will become superficial.

Even though the amount of variation will differ, literary work itself in the target culture will no longer be the same as it is in the source culture, as aptly demonstrated by Chinese comparatist Yan Shaodang (严绍盪):

The basic form of cultural transmission is as the following: the original discourse becomes a cultural variant after the deconstruction and synthesis of the intermediate media, and the cultural variant is no longer the original discourse. The reason why there occurs new cultural (or new literary) texts is not to repeat the original discourse, but to meet the needs of target culture. ...for the mode of literary genesis, almost all forms of cultural communication as its internal “heterogeneous cultural context” are carried out in the logic of incorrect understanding (2005, 134-135).

The cross-linguistic, cross-national, and inter-cultural travels of literature tend to trigger new cultural and literary ideas and inspirations. Chinese comparatist Yue Daiyun argues that “the interaction of globalization and diversification does not result in ‘convergence’ or even ‘confusion,’ but in the creation of new qualities and differences on a new basis” (2016, 12). Such “new quality” and “new difference” are inevitable results of the domestic appropriation of literature, which is a deeper way of literary variation when cultural rules and discourses embedded in the original text have been changed and assimilated by the target culture and become a part of the target culture (Cao 2018, 139-140). As argued by

Edward W. Said in his article “Traveling Theory,” literature or theory must go through the stages of resistance, acceptance, integration, and transformation in the process from generation to transmission to another time and space, among which transformation, in other words, means that literature is transformed in a new space and time by its new use and state after transplanting, traveling, partially or completely adapting or integrating (1983, 226-227). Said’s view about the fourth stage “transformation” is similar with Cao Shunqing’s view about “domestic appropriation” of literature, both of which emphasizing transforming to another cultural context.

Variation tends to produce new quality of literature; in turn, new quality is beneficial to the construction of literature. Especially when literary work moves into the sphere of world literature, it is “far from inevitably suffering a loss of authenticity or essence” but “gain in many ways” (Damrosch 2003, 6). Such “gain” may add new connotations and meanings to the original text, thus stimulating cultural and literary innovation, and broadening the meaning of world literature. It can be said that the variation of world literature and the world literature formed by variation are complementary to each other.

In terms of Shakespeare’s encounter with China, his canonization and variation directly stimulate the creation of Chinese literature, film, television, and opera works. In return, the variation and re-creations of Shakespeare’s work in China bring the continuous modernity of Shakespeare, as Chinese scholar Zha Mingjian observes “the modernity of Shakespeare’s plays, such as translation, adaptation, localization, film and television works and participation in contemporary topics, are the important reasons for the growth of Shakespeare’s modernity” (2016, 856). This mutual modernization has happened repeatedly during each and every instance of elucidating Shakespeare in China: the performance of *Hamlet* launched by Jiao Juyin in the wartime, the movie *The Banquet* directed by Feng Xiaogang, the Tibetan version of *Hamlet*, *Prince of Himalayas* directed by Hu Xuehua, *The Female Lawyer* adapted from Tian Xiao (天笑) based on *The Merchant of Venice* in 1911, *The Thief of China*, a satire on the warlord Yuan Shikai, adapted by Zheng Zhengqiu (郑正秋) based on *Macbeth*, *Three Rich Young Ladies* re-created by Gu Zhongyi (顾仲彝) based on *King Lear*, Jiao Juyin’s Peking Opera *Casting Love* based on

Romeo and Juliet in 1948, and Chinese drama *Wang Deming* adapted by Li Jianwu (李健吾) based on *Macbeth*, and so on (Li 2012, 11-57).

In addition, Shakespeare's plays have influenced many Chinese writers, especially the early translation of Shakespeare's plays by Lin Shu. Although Lin's translation treated Shakespeare's plays as fantasy novels, and his bold deletion and abbreviation caused many criticisms, "Lin's translation of Shakespeare's plays had a great influence on the early writers of Chinese new literature, such as Lu Xun (鲁迅), Guo Moruo (郭沫若), and Ba Jin (巴金)" (Sun 1992, 400). It can be said that it is the cross-linguistic and inter-cultural variations that help the acceptance of Shakespeare by Chinese readers. It is through this process of Sinicization, Shakespeare from Britain has become a Chinese Shakespeare.

4. CONCLUSION: WHO WILL SHAKESPEARE BECOME?

The canonization of literature and the formation of world literature are inseparable from the positive function of literary variations. When national literature crosses national, regional, and cultural boundaries in its spread to foreign civilizations, it would inevitably produce different degrees of variation through different cultural media. It is the variation that facilitates the source text to be accepted by the target culture, to be widely disseminated, and even to produce new literary or cultural factors, which promotes the formation of world literature.

Shakespeare's worldwide transmission path has distinct national characteristics and locality based on the academic research data analysis. According to the data of Shakespeare's academic communication from the perspective of digital humanities,

scholars in England mainly focus on the stage performances and edition studies of Shakespeare; scholars in the United States mainly focus on the spirit of equality and Digital Humanities; scholars in Australia mainly focus on the education study; scholars in China mainly focus on the ethical and moral studies; scholars in South Africa and mainly focus on the racism and racial equality studies. (Ran et al 2018, 46)

Shakespeare's spread and transformation in China has been marked with distinctive Chinese features from the very beginning. As long as cross-linguistic and inter-cultural activities continue, the interaction between Shakespeare and China will keep generating new energy and

inspirations. This is because “Just as China does not remain the same every time it encounters Shakespeare, ‘Shakespeare’ signifies anew its attendant values each time it encounters China” (Huang 2009, 40). This is as what Said implies as well, “Each age.....re-interprets Shakespeare...” (1985, 92). Since we exercise performances of Shakespeare and re-interpret his work, “we have been reinventing him ever since” (Tayler 1989, 4). For a long time, the study of Shakespeare focuses on the authenticity of authorship, which inquires the question of “who was Shakespeare” to reconstruct his life stories. In modern times, the Shakespeare enthusiasts worldwide have been focusing the question of “who is Shakespeare” to present many different figures of Shakespeare on stage and in writing. Now inspired by the theory of variation, the intercultural study of Shakespeare is asking the question of “who will Shakespeare become” to explore the abundant possibilities of interpretations in the context of world literature. It is in this light that we continue to study the subject of Shakespeare in China.

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Biography

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