

On Variations of the Classical Chinese Literary Genre **terminchinesescript** (Fu) in Literary History

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Abstract: In "On Variations of the Classical Chinese Literary Genre **terminchinesescript** (Fu) in Literary History," the authors analyze the representation of the classical Chinese literary genre Fu, or namely, rhapsode, in Chinese literary histories compiled in English. A unique classical literary genre, Fu commonly appears in classical Chinese literature as well as in aesthetics and philosophy, thus constituting an important part in Chinese literature in all periods from ancient to contemporary. However, Fu falls outside the quartered-division of modern western stylistics, so is bound to cause problems in the compilation of a literary history in the Anglophone literary culture, as is the case in Sinology. This paper argues that variations caused in the translation of the name Fu and its configuration set-up in the English context have resulted in the under exploration of its full meanings in existing relevant studies, which necessitates future research for the sake of substantially changing the peripheral status of Chinese literature in the arena of world literature.

Keywords: Literary Genre; Literary History; Cultural Variation; Translation; World Literature(s)

I. INTRODUCTION

Unable to be included in the tetralogy of poetry, fiction, prose, and drama due to "their intermediate, mixed, transitional or marginal nature" (Luo 165), some literary genres in classical Chinese literature pose great difficulty in the Chinese literary histories compiled in English. Fu is one of such genres. Many existing literary histories, despite their respective emphasis, are generally written in the framework of the above-mentioned tetralogy manner. This paper will start with an analysis of the

characteristics and related problems of representing Fu in selected English literary histories, and goes on to argue that variations caused in the translation of the name Fu and its configuration set-up in the English context have resulted in the under exploration of its full meanings in existing relevant studies, which necessitates future research for the sake of substantially changing the peripheral status of Chinese literature in the arena of world literature.

II. FU IN THE ENGLISH VERSIONS OF CHINESE LITERARY HISTORY

The version of Chinese literary history compiled around 1900s either has no mention of the genre of Fu or provides just a cursory review of the representative writers of Han Fu, a type of Fu composed in the Han Dynasty. Such is the case with H. A. Giles's *A History of Chinese Literature*, which discusses a few examples in the chapter of poetry in its second volume (Giles 97). Giles uses the word "poetry" or "verse" to refer to Fu, which obscures the distinctive properties of Fu. As a result, his review of Fu is almost non-existent, partly due to the fact that "Giles's history of Chinese literature is the earliest work on the history of Chinese literature in a Western language, but it lacks an academic nature in its analysis or research" (Knechtges 112).

The situation was much improved in the works of sinologists published in the 1950s, which started to treat Fu more comprehensively and in greater detail. In the chapter on poetry of his book *Ssu-ma Ch'ien: Great Historian of China*, Burton Watson devotes a section to "Han Fu," offering an overview of the genre in the Han Dynasty. His review highlights three aspects of this genre: the diversity of interpretations, the concealment of the writer's views, and the difficulty of translation. When talking about the function of Fu as a literary style, Watson points out that, although most writers in the later Han and Six Dynasties claimed that the main function of Fu was "description," this cannot hide the political and moral interpretations of Fu by early historians, since "we will find that when some famous scholars define Fu, they all insist that the main purpose of Fu is to preach or persuade" (263). Watson is also aware of the undeniable fact that many works in early Fu were indeed written for the purpose of preaching. He uses Song Yu's "Wind Fu" to illustrate the above point, but

his intention is not to introduce to the Western readers the external function of Fu, but rather to illustrate the reason for the openness of its meaning, i.e., the ambiguity of the writer's meaning stemming from the form of debate commonly employed in the writing of Fu. "The more we read a given work, the more uncertain we become about which of the two is the writer's true intention" (265), even though the claimed purpose of Fu is a dual function of entertainment and edification. Watson also discusses the linguistic characteristics of Fu and its translation, specifically the large number of sound words (onomatopoeia) in describing scenery. To sum up, Watson's discussion presents two obvious characteristics. Firstly, he pays special attention to the literariness in Fu. Second, his discussion on Fu is more in-depth in contrast to that of Giles.

Lai Ming's history discuss Fu mainly in Chapter 5 "Han Dynasty Poetry", which are divided into three sections. The first section, "The Genealogy of Fu," introduces the origin of Fu. The second section introduces the life of Sima Xiangru, a prestigious Fu writer, without discussing his literary activities. The third section focuses on the works of Sima Xiangru and other representative writers. In addition, Lai also discusses the changes of Fu in the Tang and Song Dynasties. That is, Fu was still mainly poetry in the North and South Dynasties, but it referred more to the meaning of rhythmic Fu or unrhymed prose in the Tang and Song Dynasties. Lai's history focuses more on the exploration of the origin of Fu and the influence of external factors (such as imperial support). He attributes the reasons for Fu's popularity by to the personal role of Emperor Wu, whose life story was given as much attention as that of Sima Xiangru. Yet Sima Xiangru's literary achievement was measurably greater.

What's more, Lai's discussion of the literariness in Fu is quite superficial because he rarely explores the interpretation and translation of individual work of Fu. Since all works represented in the English histories of Chinese literature are translations, the linguistic characteristics of Fu internal to its aesthetics should be part of the discourse, but apparently not so in Lai's book. The translations of Fu are essentially Lai's own, but variation in the translation process is a non-issue for him. Watson is both a sinologist and a translator, while Lai is only a sinologist and approaches the analysis of Fu more from the context of the source language.

Liu Wuji's history discusses Fu in three places. The first one is in Chapter 3 that outlines Xunzi's Five Fu and excerpts from the Silkworm Fu. Secondly, under Chapter 4, he focuses on Han Fu, and attributes its popularity to three factors: "the influence of poetry from the Chu region, a long period of peaceful prosperity, and the emperor's encouragement of this literary form" (51). The last place is in Chapter 9, where Liu points out the changes of Fu during this period, i.e., its tendency to be more prose-oriented, and the efforts made by the two writers in this regard, as well as excerpts from the translations of Autumn Sounds Fu and Red Cliff Fu. He concludes with the following summary: "the above works clearly show that Fu, which was mainly a finely described prose poem, underwent important changes in the Song Dynasty and, except for the occasional use of rhyme, has become almost indistinguishable from ordinary prose" (140). Liu's exposition of Fu centers on the genre itself and the factors behind its popularity. He also discusses the origin and development of Fu and its changes in later generations, but does not engage in analyzing individual Fu work even though he lists quite a lot of them.

Chen Shouyi's history is the most detailed compared with other histories compiled in the 1950s. First, he discusses the origin and meaning of the term Fu, which is the title of Chapter 8 in his book. He writes "in fact, Han Dynasty writers and scholars grouped Qu Yuan's *Chuci* and Xunzi's rhyming Fu together under the umbrella term 'Fu' " (113), and then presents the reasons for its popularity. Second, in Chapter 12, "The Age of Division," Chen discusses in detail the changes in attitude toward Fu in the Western and Eastern Han Dynasties. As for the implications of this change, Chen explains: "Fu writers of the Western Han regarded themselves as high-class court entertainers who saw themselves as aiming primarily at pleasing the emperor and his generals while the Eastern Han Fu writers use Fu to please their patrons and thus created Fu with more individuality" (222). Chen then briefly introduces Jiang Yan and Yu Xin and their works, and also the latter's contribution to the formation of rhythmic Fu.

Chen's take on Fu in his literary history presents the following features. For the first time, the compiler names the chapters after the term Fu, rather than classifying it under poetry or prose like other compilers. Secondly, Chen focuses on the comparison between various Fu writers, and the resulting transformation from Saoti Fu (a unique Fu sub-genre in

imitation of Quan Yuan) and Han Fu. In addition, Chen provides the first detailed review of the characteristics of the rhythmic Fu. Finally, while Chen reviews the major writers of Han Fu, he also focuses on highlighting writers of other eras and various types of Fu, so that readers can have a more comprehensive understanding of this genre. A slight shortcoming of this history is that, with the exception of the Hanpeng Fu of the Tang Dynasty, there are few selections of specific works, and more emphasis is placed on the characteristics of the genre itself and its developmental lineage.

The recent work (2012) by Sabina Knight discusses Fu in Chapter 2, "Poetry and Poetics," under the subsection "Elegance," in which she uses the literary style of Fu to illustrate the elegant style of Chinese poetry. The compiler argues that the origin of Fu can be traced back to Qu Yuan's *Lisao*, and analyzes the structure and meaning of the genre, using Nei Heng's "Parrot Fu" and Cao Zhi's "Luoshen Fu." The focus here is on the elegant style of poetry, and Fu is only an example to illustrate this style, so it does not cover lyrical and rhythmic Fu. Compared with other versions, the introduction of Fu is generally brief, which has something to do with the design of the book.

Each chapter of Knight's book published under the Cambridge literary history series covers Fu to varying degrees, focusing not only on the characteristics of Fu under each period, but also on its changes within one certain period, so that Western readers can understand Fu as a literary genre, both from the diachronic and synchronic perspectives.

Section 11 in Chapter 1 reviews the origin, meaning, status, form, and content characteristics of Fu. The compiler of this chapter begins by noting that, although the inscriptions of the Qin dynasty and the hymns of the Han dynasty were important to their newly established regime, the predominant type of poetry in the Han dynasty was Fu, a genre regarded as a kind of rhapsody in the Western Han Dynasty (Chang and Owen, vol1 88). The compiler then points out the threefold intersections of the word "Fu" in ancient China, which can mean rap, a rhetoric in *Shijing*, and a specific genre of the Han Dynasty, which attempts to define to some extent its indefinable character in terms of form and content. But it is also noted that "in Western Han, these distinctions about the meaning of Fu were not obvious at the time; strictly speaking, the concept of literary categories only began to appear in the second and third centuries... Thus,

with the exception of the short songs associated with the southern tradition, the term 'Fu' in the Western Han period covered all poetic forms and topics" (ibid 89). In addition, this part introduces Fu writers such as Mei Cheng and Sima Xiangru, reviews the low status of Fu writers at the time, and uses Liu Xin as an example to outline the degradation of Fu from the poetic scriptures, giving examples from Qu Yuan's *Chuci* to Han Fu. It also briefly reviews the court culture of Emperor Wu of the Western Han Dynasty as part of the development of Fu.

Another place where Fu is mentioned is section one in Chapter 2, "Eastern Han Literature," which briefly introduces the creation of Fu in this period. The fourth section of this part, "Western Jin Literature," includes writers such as Pan Yue. Knight points out the tendency of Fu in this period: "Fu in this period was not only interested in the natural world, but also in the human one" (ibid 194).

Furthermore, the part of "Other Topics in Poetry and Fu" in section one of Chapter 3 mentions the expansion of topics in Fu composition. The first subsection of the second section in this chapter points out the popularity of short Fu in this period. The second subsection, "Writing and Social Life," focuses on the creation of Fu that emphasizes the social life and public functions. The second subsection of the fourth section, "Literature of the Northern Dynasties in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries," includes Gao Yun's "Daidu Fu" and You Ya's "Taihua Duan Fu." Chapter 4, "Literature of Dunhuang," includes Hanpeng Fu as a representative of the folklore. Finally, section six of Chapter 7 introduces the development of rhythmic Fu and ancient Fu in the Yuan Dynasty, the influence of the emergence of literary collections on the creation of Fu, and the literary theory on Fu.

The chapters in the second volume of this literary history dealing with Fu begin with subsection 3 of section 1 in Chapter 1, "The Poetry of the Terrace Pavilion," which introduces the revival of Fu in this period, mainly with the creation of Fu that celebrates the capital at this time. The first subsection of the second section deals with the important changes in Fu after 1450, mainly in three aspects: "the more expressive imagery in Fu of the mid-Ming period, the description of foreign journeys in Fu, and the influence of the diary style on Fu" (Sun and Owen, vol 2 19).

The Cambridge history series present the following features in its review of Fu. Firstly, the analysis of Fu is closely integrated with specific

works. Secondly, there are more comments on Fu itself. Furthermore, there is an introduction to the development and characteristics of Fu in Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties, the time periods that are rarely mentioned in earlier works of Chinese literary histories in terms of Fu coverage. Furthermore, this history emphasizes the analysis of the genre from a socio-cultural perspective, such as the use of Fu in the imperial examinations in the late Jin and early Qing dynasties, and the influence of the emergence of Fu collections on the creation of Fu due to the development of the printing culture. Thus, the Cambridge version presents Fu not only in terms of its own characteristics and evolution, but also from the point of the influence of external material factors on the genre. As such, it presents a more balanced discussion of the internal and external aspects of Fu.

The Columbia version of Chinese literary history has a focused discussion on Fu in Chapter 12 under its poetry section, which are divided into seven sections. In the first section, Victor Mair points out that the traditional Western classification of literary genres is not applicable to ancient Chinese literature, because the concept of genres at that time is different from our current understandings.

In the second section, “Primitive Fugue and Suo Poetry,” he points out that the boundary between ancient Fu and the genre Sao (a genre in classical Chinese literature, originated in the Chu Kingdom with long lines, and more free in forms, usually end with the word “xi”) was not very clear. The former had a broader meaning before the Han Dynasty, as it could refer to works in the Warring States period as well as to the Five Fu composed by Xunzi. The third section discusses the development and richness of Fu in the Han Dynasty, focusing on Fu as a court style of writing during the reign of Emperor Wu.

Mair combines the exposition of Fu with that of pianwen (a genre in classical Chinese literature, originated in Wei, Jin and Six Dynasties that features a preference for form, rhetorical allusions, and strict requirements for rhymes) from the fourth to the seventh sections. His conclusion is that Fu at this time is closer to prose. The fourth section covers Fu writers such as Lu Ji and Pan Yue. The fifth section analyzes Tang and Song rhythmic Fu. The sixth section focuses on another form of Tang and Song Fu -- prose Fu. The seventh section is about Fu in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and its influence on the formation of the Bagu (known as eight-

legged essay that was practiced in the imperial examinations, with high requirement for form and rhyme, usually in eight sections in a composition) essay.

In addition, Chapter 14 "Tang Poetry," deals with major 'Tang poets' Fu compositions, and discusses Fu primarily from the perspective of poetry. The second section on the form of Tang poetry discusses the predominance of the four-six-character styles of Fu and the changes in length and content during this period. The important part of this section is the introduction of the emergence of rhythmic Fu, folklore Fu, and literary Fu, and the staging of Fu based on the development of rhythmic Fu. The third section focuses on the anthologies of Fu. Sections four to six discuss the Fu compositions of the major literary figures of the Tang Dynasty from the seventh to the ninth centuries.

The coverage of Fu in the Columbia version of literary history impresses with its commentary-oriented feature. For the first time, the compiler mentions the staging of Fu, the three types of Fu (rhythmic Fu, folklore Fu, and literary Fu), and the anthology of Fu. Moreover, he divides the discussion of Fu into relevant chapters, and places the composition of Fu in Chapter 12 while Fu works closer to poetry are classified under Tang poetry in Chapter 14. Furthermore, the compiler pays special attention to the creation of Fu by major poets such as Li Bai, whereas the previous literary histories focus mainly on the creation of poetry, thus demonstrating that the genre of Fu was not as marginal as having been commonly believed. The emergence or disappearance of a genre is a long process, and today's literary history focuses on poetry and rhythmic Fu, but in fact, other forms of Fu were also composed during the Tang Dynasty, as evidenced by the works of representative Tang Dynasty poets.

But an obvious defect in this history is that in Chapter 12, the discussion of Fu and pianwen is grouped together in one section. Sometimes the compiler considers Fu as a type of pianwen, such as in section 4, where he argues that "Fu is only one of the many types of pianwen in the Six Dynasties" (Mair 238), but other times he contradicts himself by placing them side by side as two literary genres. This paper holds that, since the title of this chapter is "Sao, Fu, Pianwen and Other Genres," these three literary genres should be treated as independent genres, even if they can

be discussed together in some aspects such as the context of their similarities in versification.

III. THE PROBLEMS OF REPRESENTING FU IN THE LITERARY HISTORY

The representation of Fu in literary histories compiled in English has, on the whole, been getting better and deeper as times progressed, but not free of problems. First, the English translations of Fu and its categorization. In the selected versions discussed above, there are four kinds of translations. First, the English translation is not mentioned at all, and Fu is simply subsumed under poetry, as in the case of Giles's history. Secondly, they are translated as "prose-poems," "ballad," or "poetic-prose" respectively, terms that highlights its poetic or prose characteristics. "Rhyme-prose" and "poetic exposition" are actually distinguished by whether the specific works have rhyme or not. Third, Fu is analogized to "rhapsody" in the Western poetics; and finally, it is directly translated as "Fu." Of course, there are also cases of mixed-using those translations. "In Chinese literature, Fu is one of the strangest genres. Apparently, it is not poetry and prose, but there is both poetry and prose concerning its content. Whether judging from its form or nature, Fu is a mixture of poetry and prose" (Liu 74). The translation of the term already shows this.

The above translations vary from direct transliteration in order to preserve the characteristics of the source language, to translations in favor of prose or poetry in order to highlight its feature, so it is difficult to fully unify them in all cases. One of the more distinctive ones is the translation of Fu as "rhapsody." In his monograph "The Han Rhapsody: A Study of the Fu of Yang Hsiung (1976)," David R. Knechtges also chooses this term.

There are indeed certain similarities between the two in their intrinsic characteristics. Knechtges's translation of "rhapsode" reflects, to some extent, the influence of Aristotle's poetic conceptions. The latter mentioned in *Poetics* that "if the same medium is used to imitate the same object, one can either use narrative techniques, as Homer does, and sometimes call the characters to appear (or incarnate as characters), or one can always remain the same and use one's own tone to narrate, and make the imitators imitate with actions" (Aristotle 22). Thus, his choice of "rhapsode" corresponds to the narrative epic that resembles Homer's

narrative. The word "rhapsode" highlights the narrative character of Fu, but as an ancient style, Fu also has the characteristics of description and lyricism, so "rhapsode" cannot cover other types of Fu completely, such as lyrical Fu and rhythmic Fu.

Therefore, for the sake of understanding, Fu can be tentatively translated as "rhapsode," but in the long run, it is necessary to unify its translation name, since comparing Fu to the Western epic is to understand the Chinese literary genre in the context of Western poetics, which cannot reflect the characteristics of the source text and thus fails to reflect the equality of cross-cultural communications.

The translation of a literary term not only reflects its unique literary attributes, but also serves as the basis for people's understanding of it. However, the translation of literary terms in ancient Chinese literature often faces great difficulties due to its different discourse categories from the Western literature. "A tradition of literary thought in many ways consists of a set of words, or a set of terms. These terms possess their own developmental processes, complex involvements (resonance) and penetrating forces (force). They do not constitute a series of automatic vehicles of meaning, but are part of a mutually defined system. This system gradually develops and relates to the conceptual vocabulary of other human domains" (Owen 2). Many literary genres in ancient literature were gradually formed over a considerable period of time, usually having closer ties with other literary genres. And as it developed over time, it moved closer to prose in the modern sense. The ancient concept of Fu was not defined and discussed in one place, but scattered in other works such as history books. This seemingly diffuse literary knowledge system was natural to the ancient Chinese writers and became the basis for appreciating literary genres, but to modern readers, it is more or less confusing or even baffling.

Furthermore, as have been pointed out, "in contrast to Western literary terminology, which is conceptually clear and easy to apply, Chinese literary terminology is particularly concerned with the non-verbal meaning, that is 'meaning beyond words,' and the subtlety of understanding, a major problem that has deeply troubled Western scholarship and, at the same time, an area that Western scholars are interested in exploring" (Wang 88). Since Western scholars have to overcome not only the distance in time, but also the cultural differences in their understanding, their analogy of

such terms to Western literary terms has a certain positive role for understanding, but it may be counterproductive to the Western readers when they are presented with this analogous translation of the other's literature. "Since they (terms) derive their meaning from their usage in various specific contexts and their set of relations to other terms, it is impossible to find an exact Chinese equivalent in the terminology of Western poetics" (Owen 15). However, to directly equate them with Western literary terms would obscure the rich cultural connotations of the terms themselves, which cannot and do not correspond to each other, whether in terms of their systems of action or ways of speech.

Despite the availability of dictionaries such as *The World Dictionary of Poetics* and *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Chinese Literary Terms*, the standardization of the translation of the term Fu is still unsatisfactory. This paper holds that the translation of Fu should start from its own cultural system, of which transliteration can best preserve its cultural characteristics. As David R. Knechtges argues, since no equivalent can be found, it should be directly translated as "Fu": "In English and other languages, there is no name corresponding to the genre Fu If the vocabulary of Chinese literature can enter the Western literary vocabulary and become part of it, scholars who study Chinese literature need not be uneasy about using the original Chinese name" (Gong 26). However, in order to facilitate specific exposition, certain qualifiers can be added to concretize the term, such as "poetic Fu" in order to highlight the types of Fu created in different periods.

Furthermore, the issue of placing Fu in relation to the translated name and the discussion focus. This paper is not merely discussing whether the genre of Fu should be discussed under the chapters of prose, poetry, or other genres, but rather pointing out that in literary histories, the compiler's translation of Fu should be at least consistent with the content he is discussing, which are not obvious in the selected histories that I have discussed. The arrangement of Fu in literary history should be consistent in three aspects, i.e., the translation of the term Fu, the focus of the chapter, and the characteristics of the selected literary works. For example, for the Tang Dynasty rhythmic Fu, it can be translated as "poetic-Fu" or "regulated Fu" under the subject of Tang Dynasty poetry. Another characteristic is the unbalanced focus on Fu in terms of the period, authors, and types. Although each literary history has its own focus on

"Fu," either in terms of the interpretation of textual diversity (Watson's edition) or the introduction to the life and works of writers (Lai Ming's edition), in general, the reviews are mostly concentrated on a certain era, writer, and type of Fu.

First of all, in the choice of dynasties, the focus of the selected literary histories is basically on Han Dynasty, with no or little mention of Fu in other dynasties. Although it facilitates highlighting the representative features of Han literature and the characteristics of the Han Fu, it is impossible to give a complete picture of this genre from a "historical" perspective. A literary genre does not appear or die out in a short time, but has its own long development process. Fu develops from Saoti Fu, Han Fu, lyrical Fu, pianfu, rhymic fu to wenfu. Regardless of whether the origin of Fu being from poetry or prose, it often demonstrates a tendency of increasing literariness in its general trajectory.

Therefore, a review focusing only on the Han Fu will not present the historical development of this genre. "Fu is changing and improving day by day. Works of the present times are just as qualified as those composed in ancient times" (Yuan 515). Fu creation after Han Dynasty is excellent, either in terms of quality and quantity. The classic theoretical work on Fu *Gufu Bianti* (On Style of Classical Fu) appeared in the Yuan Dynasty. "Scholars in Yuan Dynasty opposed rhythmic Fu and wenfu, and put forward slogans such as 'taking *Chuci* and Han Fu as the paragon', so as to carry on the classical lineage of Fu. Such awareness constitutes one of the most influential theories on Fu in Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties. Therefore, the literary creation of Fu and the theories in this regard in Yuan Dynasty are crucial in the history of Fu with its unique aesthetic style and a large number of excellent works" (Li 122). However, in the selected histories, they basically focus on opera and prose, with less mention of other types of literary genres, not to mention the status of Fu at this time in the analysis of literature in the Yuan Dynasty.

Two main reasons are responsible for this. One is the deep influence of the concept of "each generation has its own representative literary genre." Following this habitual thinking, compilers usually choose one genre to represent a certain period, and in doing so, they neglect the continuity of such genre in the development of the whole literary history, as if the literary activity of the Han Dynasty was mainly Fu, and the creation of Fu was no longer active with future generations.

The ancients in China had always cherished the concept of the present being inferior to the past, as evidenced by the several classical literary movements in the Chinese literary history. Under such influence, they often regarded the creation of Han Fu as "authentic," a view that influences the selection of works in Fu anthologies, which is one of the main ways of preserving ancient documents with a key role in the canonization of works. As a result, later generations of writers and scholars gradually formed the notion of Han Fu as the authentic one under the filter of this "classicization." This notion has further influenced the writing of literary history by present-day scholars.

Another result of the focus on the prosperity of Han Fu is that, while almost all literary histories mention that Emperor Wu's esteem for Fu as the reason for its popularity, they do not elaborate on the reason for the decline of Han Fu and its transition to lyrical Fu, and even less on its later development and transmutation, thus failing to elaborate on the process of development and decline of this literary genre. This imbalance is reflected in their choice of Fu writers. The selected histories focus more on Han Fu writers such as Sima Xiangru. What's more, the Fu compositions of literary scholars from other dynasties are rarely touched upon.

Furthermore, in the selection of Fu types, the focus is on "elegant Fu," to the neglect of "folklore Fu," and even if the latter is mentioned, it is only with a brief introduction, usually focusing on "Hanpeng Fu," without any comment on the form and content of the work. However, this is not entirely due to the subjective interest of the compiler, but also has other reasons. First of all, due to the influence of the traditional literary orthodoxy, folk literature and popular literature have been in a marginalized position compared with poetry and prose, so much so that they are less valued and rarely included in anthologies over the ages. Secondly, the form of transmitting popular literature is generally oral, especially before the widespread use of printing and paper, so that its works are less stable and textually certain.

Additionally, due to its own language and content, popular literature is generally more colloquial, close to life, and seemingly not in the grand scheme. "The 'popular literature' is the literature of the common people, the literature of the people, that is, the literature of the masses. In other words, the so-called popular literature is not in the hall of elegance, not valued by the learned scholars and scholars, but popular in the folk, that

becomes the public hobby, and the delight of things" (Zheng 1). Therefore, the vernacular nature of popular literature determines its low status among the ancient literati.

However, it would be too simplistic to assume popular literature has had no influence on the so-called "elegant" literature. In fact, many popular literatures gradually enter into the line of canons. Due to the introduction of modern Western literary concepts, novels and operas, once disdained in ancient times, are gradually included into the canons. This is also the case for folklore Fu. As one Chinese scholar argues, "not only has popular literature become a major part of Chinese literary history, but also the center of Chinese literary history. In many works or genres that are considered orthodox literature today, many of them were originally folkloric and were elevated, so we can say that the center of Chinese literary history is 'popular literature' " (ibid). The ancients did not distinguish as much as we have believed between elegant and popular concepts of literature, because many forms of folk literature were used by the literati, giving rise to new genres that move forward on their own trajectories of growth and change. This is certainly true in the case of Fu. "While the literati borrowed the form of the folk Fu and gradually aristocratized it, it continued to develop and influence the creation of the literati Fu, thus having the two threads of the 'elegant' and 'popular' Fu in literary history" (Fu 124). The modern distinction between elegance and vulgarity is more for the purpose of distinguishing styles, rather than for the purpose of defining their place and role in literary history. The advance in new archaeological discoveries is gradually recognizing the characteristics of the vulgar Fu and its rightful place in literary history.

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