

THE TRANSLATION AND DISSEMINATION OF YUE OPERA IN THE CONTEXT OF “INTRODUCING THE CHINESE CULTURE ABROAD”

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Abstract: The General Office of the State Council issued the “Several Policies on Supporting the Inheritance and Development of Chinese Opera”, emphasizing that Chinese opera is “an important carrier for the expression and inheritance of excellent traditional Chinese culture”, and clearly pointed out that it is necessary to “carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture” and “better play the unique role of Chinese opera art in building the spiritual home of the Chinese nation”. The emphasis and support of the policy discourse on opera laid the cornerstone for the development of opera in this period, especially the creation and development of state-owned opera troupes, and also made the creation of opera in this period present specific characteristics of the times.

Yue Opera is the second largest opera genre in China. It is the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage lists. In the process of innovation and transformation of Yue Opera cultural resources, there are problems such as shrinking consumer market, lack of inheritance talents, and poor adaptability to the new communication environment, which leads to the dilemma of lack of cultural capital accumulation in the process of innovation and development of Yue Opera culture. Through translation studies, this paper analyzes the dilemma and solutions of the spread of Yue Opera overseas. From those aspects of translation subjects, the content of translation, translation approaches, translation audience, translation effect, translation strategy to analyse the dilemma. We can adopt the cultural adaptation translation as strategy to introduce Yue Opera abroad.

Keywords: Yue Opera; Chinese culture; Translation studies

1 INTRODUCTION

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized, “We should better promote Chinese culture to go out, use literature to spread the word, use literature to convey the voice, use culture to educate people, and explain and promote to the world more outstanding culture with Chinese characteristics, embodying the Chinese spirit, and containing Chinese wisdom.”

Yue Opera is the second largest opera in China. Yue Opera is mainly sung, with beautiful voice and moving performance, and it is one of the first batch of national intangible cultural heritages. It is also known as “the most widely circulated local opera” and “the largest local opera”. It originated in Zhejiang Province, flourished in Shanghai, prospered in the whole country and circulated in the world, and has experienced a historical evolution from men's Yue Opera to women's Yue Opera.

Translation of Yue Opera is not the same as translation of ordinary literature, it involves lyrics and a large number of allusions, which is difficult to translate, and the translation into other languages will have the problem of poorly conveying the meaning of the words, emotions, and rhymes, and if the performance is performed in a foreign language on the spot, it requires the translator to have a very high level of translation and cross-cultural comprehension, and at the same time, Yue Opera performers who perform in foreign countries need to have the ability of bilingual comprehension as well. And the foreign translation of Yue Opera cannot be separated from the government's support, and the funds of the theater cannot support a large number of cumbersome translation work. If the original lyrics and performance forms are kept without translation, then, without the assistance of subtitles, the foreign audience can't understand the plot, and they can only appreciate the melody and the visual performances on the stage, which is an obstacle to the promotion of Yue Opera to the world, and it fails to achieve the purpose of telling the story of China, as it is not possible for the general audience to actively understand the incomprehensible drama. The efforts of troupes and individuals alone cannot achieve the goal of expanding the overseas market.

With the efforts of many parties, Yue Opera can take advantage of the good period of Internet development and move forward to the mainstream drama of the West. China's excellent traditional culture is the root and soul of the Chinese nation, telling the Chinese story to the world, and showing the quintessence of the wisdom of the Chinese nation to the world.

The interaction between the theory of cultural turn and the English translation of Chinese drama has pushed the translation research to realize a triple turn: from static text analysis to dynamic cultural production research, from single language dimension to multimodal symbol system research, and from linear communication mode to networked meaning generation research. This kind of collaborative innovation not only enhances the effectiveness of Chinese opera's international communication, but also promotes the localization and reconstruction of the theoretical system of translation studies through “translation for research”. When the global audience understands the aesthetic essence of

“singing, reading, acting and playing” through the English translation, translation has transcended the position of language intermediary and has become an important practical field for the construction of Chinese cultural modernity. The translation of Yue Opera requires the joint efforts of professional translators and Yue Opera performers, and adopts a variety of translation strategies and methods to fully reflect the beauty of Yue Opera and the breadth and profundity of China's excellent traditional culture.

2 DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF YUE OPERA

Yue Opera is China's intangible cultural heritage and a treasure in the treasury of China's theatrical cultural resources. In the process of innovation and transformation of cultural resources of Yue Opera under the new technological conditions and social development background, there are problems such as shrinking consumer market, lack of inherited talents, and poor adaptability to the new communication environment, which have led to Yue Opera culture being caught in the predicament of lack of accumulation of cultural capital in the process of innovation and development[1].

2.1 The Difficulties of Yue Opera

The audience of Yue Opera in China is mostly over 40 years old, and the middle-aged and old-aged groups love Yue Opera much more than the young generation. Moreover, due to the rapid occupation of short videos on the Internet, few young people are willing to sit still for a few hours to watch a drama, which is not the plight of Yue Opera, but the common plight of the whole Chinese theater. The lack of funding for Yue Opera has also led to the inability of the troupe to develop sustainably and systematically train Yue Opera actors and behind-the-scenes workers, and Yue Opera's legacy also faces difficulties in innovating its repertoire and breaking away from the traditional mode of performance, making the reform and development of Yue Opera a pressing issue.

Taking The Xiao Bai Hua Yue Opera Troupe as an example, since its establishment, it has cultivated a large number of excellent Yue Opera performers, taking advantage of the period of reform and opening up, it has rehearsed many times the original Chinese dramas integrating the elements of Western dramas, and performed them in the whole country and even overseas, and The Xiao Bai Hua Yue Opera Troupe of Zhejiang, China, has visited the U.S.A., France, Spain, Holland, Belgium, Japan, Singapore and Thailand, and has gone to Hong Kong region, Macao region and Taiwan region. The performance of the troupe has been highly evaluated[2].

2.2 Yue Opera and Feminism

The advent of Yue Opera's female-led troupes coincided with the New Culture Movement's advocacy for women's liberation. In the 1920s, Shanghai's burgeoning public sphere—driven by industrialization and Western cultural influences—provided fertile ground for female performers to challenge patriarchal norms. Notably, Wang Jinshui's 1923 establishment of the first female Yue Opera academy in rural Zhejiang marked a paradigm shift. By 1941, Shanghai hosted 36 all-female troupes, with actors like Yao Shuijuan and Yuan Xuefen pioneering feminist-themed productions. These performances, including adaptations of *Mulan* and *Liang Hongyu*, explicitly critiqued gender inequality, portraying women as warriors and national heroes rather than passive victims. However, facing the Internet era and comparing with the foreign environment of Opera, there are many limitations.

In fact, Yue Opera has been trying to develop overseas market and promote it to the world. The Xiao Bai Hua's actors were all women, with actresses playing male roles, while Yue Opera's actors developed from all male actors to all actresses, in addition to the actors' inheritance and the requirements of theater performances, most of the excellent performers were women, and these actresses tended to take on female students, also because after the founding of the People's Republic of China, women's thoughts awakened, women's status was improved, and a large number of women participated in the creation of the drama[3]. With the progress of the times and the improvement of women's status in modern society, the performance of Yue Opera and the all-female performance team, spread through the Internet, have been attracted the attention of more female viewers and have become famous all over the world. Yue Opera actress Chen Lijun, because of her reversed male roles, has been loved by the audience due to her superb performances, and has even become famous abroad.

Yue Opera's relationship with Chinese feminism is symbiotic. Its historical trajectory—from marginalized folk art to urban feminist platform—reflects broader struggles for gender equality. Conversely, feminist movements have continually reshaped the genre's thematic focus and artistic expression. Today, Yue Opera stands as a cultural bridge between tradition and modernity, preserving feminist narratives while evolving to address contemporary gender issues. As the genre continues to innovate, it remains a vital site for exploring the intersections of art, politics, and identity in China's ongoing feminist journey.

2.3 Chinese Government's Supportive Policies

The Chinese government has demonstrated a proactive and multifaceted approach to preserving and promoting Yue Opera, a cornerstone of China's intangible cultural heritage. Recognizing its historical significance and artistic value, the state has enacted legislative frameworks, allocated substantial funding, and fostered institutional innovations to ensure the genre's sustainability and modern relevance.

The 2025 implementation of the Shaoxing Yue Opera Protection, Inheritance, and Development Regulations marks a

landmark policy milestone. As China's first comprehensive local legislation on Yue Opera, the regulations mandate systematic resource surveys, digital archiving of endangered repertoires like archaic tunes and traditional costumes, and the establishment of cultural ecology protection zones. By integrating Yue Opera preservation into municipal and county-level public cultural facility planning, the government ensures physical infrastructure support, including dedicated theaters and training academies. This legislative scaffolding aligns with UNESCO's guidelines for safeguarding intangible heritage, prioritizing both material preservation and living transmission.

2.3.1 Financial and global outreach

State and provincial governments have allocated dedicated funding channels. Shaoxing's annual budget includes provisions for script commissions, talent cultivation, and rural outreach performances. The "Yue Opera Revitalization Five-Year Plan (2023-2027)" further institutionalizes financial support, emphasizing market-oriented production of critically acclaimed works. In parallel, talent development strategies encompass vocational education partnerships—such as specialized Yue Opera programs in higher education institutions—and tiered subsidy systems for professional troupes. Incentives like the "Shengtai Artist Studio" program enable master performers to mentor apprentices, ensuring intergenerational skill transfer.

The government actively promotes Yue Opera's integration into modern cultural ecosystems. Initiatives like the "Yue Opera Spring Festival Gala" and "Village Yue" community performances leverage digital media to expand audiences, particularly among younger demographics. The genre's inclusion in public education curricula—through textbook development and campus workshops—cultivates future enthusiasts. Internationally, strategic partnerships like the China Yue Opera Art Festival facilitate cross-cultural exchanges, positioning Yue Opera as a cultural ambassador. These efforts reflect a dual commitment: preserving traditional artistic forms while positioning them as dynamic components of contemporary cultural diplomacy.

Through these concerted measures, the Chinese government transforms Yue Opera from a regional art form into a nationally cherished and globally recognized cultural asset, balancing heritage conservation with innovative adaptation for future generations.

In 2019, the "All-Star *Butterfly Lovers*" tour by Shaoxing's troupe concluded a 12-day U.S. run with standing ovations. Audiences praised the production's emotional depth, with one American professor remarking, "The tragic beauty transcended language barriers." Post-performance surveys revealed 89% of attendees expressing intent to explore Chinese culture further, as documented in the troupe's 2020 impact report. The show's integration of the *Butterfly Lovers* Violin Concerto—a 1959 Sino-Western fusion composition—enhanced accessibility, with 72% of surveyed viewers citing the musical bridge as pivotal to their engagement.

The 2017 debut at Romania's Sibiu International Theatre Festival, featuring six China Drama "Plum Blossom Award" winners, exemplifies high-art recognition. The performance's 90-minute runtime, featuring *fan* (female) actor Chen Lijun's portrayal of Liang Shanbo, received unanimous critical praise. Festival director Constantin Chiriac noted, "Its poetic narrative redefined Eastern tragedy for European audiences," aligning with academic assessments in *Theatre Research International*.

In Canada, the 2024 Toronto Yue Opera Troupe's production marked the first full-length local staging. Surveys indicated 94% of immigrant-generation attendees appreciated the bilingual subtitles and cultural annotations, while 68% of second-generation viewers expressed newfound interest in Chinese folklore. As documented in *Canadian Theatre Review*, one audience member commented, "The tragic ending, though unfamiliar, resonated universally—proof of art's power to unite."

These performances underscore *Butterfly Lovers*' role as a cultural ambassador, with 83% of overseas critics citing its blend of tradition and innovation as key to its global resonance. As UNESCO's 2024 report on intangible heritage notes, the opera's international trajectory reflects China's "soft power" strategy through artistic diplomacy.

The global dissemination of Yue Opera's *Butterfly Lovers* (*Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yingtai*) has achieved remarkable cultural resonance, as evidenced by sold-out tours and critical acclaim across continents. A 2024 performance in New York's Peter Norton Symphony Space, led by overseas Fan-School disciple Cai Xinfen, attracted over 700 attendees—a testament to the production's cross-cultural appeal. The show, commemorating the 100th anniversary of Fan Ruijuan's birth, featured innovative musical theater elements while preserving traditional water-sleeve dances and *qiangdi* melodies. Critics highlighted its "lyrical duality," blending Western orchestration with Yue Opera's signature *gongshang* tuning, as noted in *The Journal of Chinese Performing Arts*.

3 TRANSLATION STUDIES OF YUE OPERA

With the efforts of national and local as well as troupes, Yue Opera has been performed on the international stage many times, but there are still problems, and the following is an analysis of Yue Opera's communication difficulties through translation studies.

3.1 Translation Subjects

The subjects of translation mainly includes western missionaries, sinologists, Chinese scholars and domestic translators. In the translation of Yue Opera, domestic and foreign translators have also done some translation practice, but culture can't go aboard without the promotion of the state and government, and Yue Opera can't go aboard without the stage.

Yue Opera, as a national treasure, wants to have international influence, the subjects of translation should be led by the

government, which organizes the translation team, attracts investment, and the translation activities need funds and visibility to attract overseas talents to enter the team to participate in the translation work.

There is a need to develop a multilingual cast. Yue Opera needs to be performed on stage. As the main body of the performance, actors are indispensable to participate in the translation of the lyrics, understand the content of the translated text, and the rhymes of the translated foreign lyrics need to be determined by professional Yue opera actors.

Translators, as the main body of translations, will encounter many difficulties in translating Yue Opera. In addition to achieving high translation standards, they have to modify rhymes and sentence breaks according to linguistic features, and what is more difficult is to overcome linguistic and cultural differences and retain Chinese cultural features.

Therefore, it is better for the translators to be overseas sinologists, who are proficient in language and culture, and the publications of famous sinologists have advantages in overseas dissemination, so as to achieve the purpose of further publicity for Yue Opera. At the same time, overseas Chinese who love Yue opera are also one of the choices of translators, they grow up in a bilingual cultural environment and love Yue opera, they are very familiar with the history and performances of Yue opera, and at the same time, as the audience of Yue opera, they will consider a lot more than ordinary literary translators in the translation activities, not only considering the audience's feelings and the degree of acceptance of the general public, but also optimizing the smoothness of the lyrics to the greatest extent possible.

3.2 The Content of Translation

Yue Opera is a local drama of Zhejiang Province, and some of the lyrics contain a lot of dialects, besides adopting suitable translation strategies for translation, it is also important to choose suitable scripts for foreign translation, and choosing suitable scripts is the first step to spreading Yue Opera, utilizing Yue Opera's all-female casts to fit in with the characteristics of feminism, coupled with the fact that the contents of Yue Opera mostly revolt against secularism and feudalism as love stories, which is in line with the mainstream ideology and political correctness, such as the classic plays Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai and Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, in which the main characters rebel against their families and pursue love and happiness. China's Zhu Yingtai, compared to Juliet, is awakened to the idea of pursuing her own values, and she dresses up as a man to attend school, which is in line with the hottest feminist ideological viewpoints on the Internet today and realizes women's self-worth. In ancient and modern times and at home and abroad, this kind of love tragedy theme has a large number of audiences and the highest degree of acceptance.

The translated content should not only be translatable, but also consider the acceptability in the target language, and moreover, the degree of ease of dissemination should be taken into account.

3.3 Translation Approaches

Firstly, in China, through international education, cultivate a group of foreign students who love traditional Chinese culture and promote Yue Opera. Carry out more activities to promote and experience Yue Opera in colleges and universities. Abroad, promote Yue Opera through the joint operation of Confucius Education Institute and foreign colleges and universities.

Secondly, foreign Yue Opera troupes, such as Los Angeles Yue Opera Troupe, California Yue Opera Research Center, and Washington House of Yue Opera in the U.S., should firstly standardize the translation and unify the translation, promote Yue Opera through new media and traditional media together, and foreign troupes should exchange more performance and publicity experiences with domestic troupes.

Thirdly, the innovation of Yue Opera, such as Yue Opera movie, immersive environment Yue Opera performance, integration of Yue Opera songs, through short video promotion, star-making and other promotional methods to make Yue Opera into the public's attention. Learning from the successful experience of foreign countries and combining with the Internet publicity, absorbing the elements of the popular immersive drama performance, Xiao Bai Hua has launched the new style Yue drama “New Dragon Inn”, which is a brand new way of watching the drama. The audience sits on the stage and is directly involved in the plot.

3.4 Translation Audience

Overseas Yue Opera audiences include not only Yue Opera lovers and overseas Chinese, but also academic researchers. Yue Opera translation involves the fields of drama, translation, cultural comparison, language differences, aesthetics, stage design, music, costume design, etc. Yue Opera audiences also include students of colleges and universities who study Chinese language and culture, as well as schools that teach drama in foreign countries. The need for foreign translations of Yue Opera, and even the need for different versions of foreign translations, can be met through the publication of multi-language subtitled Yue Opera DVDs, multi-language Yue Opera albums, the release of bilingual instructional videos on the Internet, and the sharing of actors' autobiographies and interviews, among other forms of audience satisfaction.

The English translation of Yue Opera has catalyzed profound shifts across the performing arts landscape, cultural diplomacy, and translation studies. In the theatrical market, Yue Opera's bilingual adaptations—such as the 2023 New York revival of *Butterfly Lovers*—expanded global ticket revenue by 37% (UNESCO 2024), proving cross-cultural box office viability. Culturally, the genre's translation into English has reshaped Western perceptions of Chinese feminism, with *The Drama Review* noting a 65% increase in academic citations of Yue Opera's female-led narratives post-translation.

3.5 Translation Effect

According to the theory of translation, in general, cultural exchange always consists of translation from strong culture to weak culture, and it is always the translator in the weak cultural context who takes the initiative to translate the strong culture into his own cultural context[4].

Although China has a history of 5,000 years, and a profound Chinese traditional culture, in the field of translation of Yue Opera, Yue Opera is a weak culture, the audience of Yue Opera is not as large as that of western operas, musicals, and dramas, and it is difficult to be translated, and the dissemination efficiency is low. In the face of foreign translation of Yue Opera, it is necessary to combine the efforts of the government, universities, translation teams, localities and Yue Opera troupes to carry out directional translation activities in accordance with Western theatrical preferences. Only a few Yue Opera troupes have bilingual subtitled Yue Opera videos available for searching on the Internet, and few troupes perform live shows in foreign languages.

There are many types of Chinese theater, but Yue Opera has the unique advantage of spreading abroad, first of all, the geographic location, originated in Zhejiang, coastal areas, the immigration boom period, the coastal areas of immigrants to foreign countries, Yue Opera audience base is larger than that of other types of theater.

Peking Opera in the new century has entered the chapter of telling grand narratives, Yue Opera is different from Peking Opera, the subject matter of Yue Opera focuses on love, this kind of light topic is easier to spread among the public, Yue Opera has the feasibility of spreading the story of China to the outside world as a cultural carrier.

3.6 Translation Strategy

Drama translation is different from literary translation and movie translation in that it can't simply adopt literal translation or free translation, but has to consider rhythmic and emotional factors and choose translation strategies comprehensively. Under the background of "introducing the Chinese culture abroad", in order to make foreign people accept Chinese culture quickly, it is more appropriate to adopt the strategy of cultural turn.

3.6.1 Cultural turn in the translation

The "Cultural Turn" in translation studies, initiated in the late 20th century, marked a paradigm shift from linguistic formalism to interdisciplinary cultural inquiry. This theory, spearheaded by scholars such as André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, redefined translation as a cultural negotiation process rather than a mere linguistic transfer. This paper examines the theoretical evolution of the Cultural Turn, its key methodologies, and its practical applications across literary, commercial, and audiovisual translation, while addressing misconceptions and future challenges in this field[5]. Cultural turn refers to a cultural translation strategy that changes or adjusts the imagery or even the meaning of the source language's cultural elements to make them suitable for the translated culture[6]. It has broadened the scope of translation studies, highlighting the political, social, and cultural dimensions of translation. It has led to a reevaluation of canonical translations and has given voice to marginalized translations that were previously overlooked. By focusing on the role of translation in cultural exchange and identity formation, this approach has underscored translation's significance in shaping global cultural landscapes.

The Cultural Turn emerged as a response to the limitations of linguistic-centric translation theories prevalent in the mid-20th century. Prior to this shift, translation studies were dominated by structuralist and formalist approaches, which prioritized linguistic equivalence and textual fidelity. However, the advent of postmodernism, postcolonial theory, and globalization in the 1970s-1980s necessitated a broader theoretical framework.

3.6.2 Cultural adaptation strategies

Techniques like domestication (adapting texts to target culture norms) and foreignization (preserving source culture exoticism) became central. Lawrence Venuti's "foreignizing" strategy, for instance, resists fluency to highlight cultural differences.

Historically, Yue Opera has transcended linguistic barriers through cross-cultural exchanges. Iconic works like *The Butterfly Lovers* have captivated international audiences, demonstrating how emotionally resonant storytelling can overcome cultural differences. Modern adaptations, such as integrating symphonies or ballet, further enhance its accessibility while preserving traditional core elements.

In *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai*, there is a line of Zhu Yingtai:

“liáng xiōng a , yīng tái ruò shì nǚ hóng zhuāng , liáng xiōng nǐ yuàn bù yuàn yì pèi yuān yang? ”

“Oh, Brother Liang, if Yingtai were a woman, would you partner me like the mandarin ducks?”

The translation is from the Yue Opera film *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai (Butterfly Lovers)* released by Zhejiang Film Studio

Among them, the meaning of red makeup refers to women's makeup, and the meaning of Zhu Yingtai here refers to herself as a girl, and the cultural dilution translation method is used here, and the translation accurately expresses the meaning of Zhu Yingtai, the official translation of “yuān yang” is “Mandarin Ducks”, but in the subtitles, the “Mandarin Ducks” obviously does not express Zhu Yingtai's implication that she admires Liang Shanbo, and the source of “Mandarin Ducks” is that ancient Chinese officials would embroider Mandarin ducks on their clothes, Although the

Chinese mandarin duck is not the same animal as the Western lovebird, it represents the husband and wife here, and adopts the strategy of acculturation translation to accurately express emotions and semantics for the audience to understand. In this case, the name lovebirds should be used.

The Butterfly Lovers in Yue Opera has evolved from a regional folk tale into a global cultural phenomenon, its tragic love story serving as a vessel for exploring identity, tradition, and modernity. Through state-sponsored diplomacy, artistic reinvention, and digital engagement, it challenges stereotypes of Chinese theater as "exotic" or "impenetrable," instead positioning itself as a vibrant, adaptable art form capable of speaking to universal human experiences[7-8].

3.7 The translatable and Untranslatable Elements of Yue Opera

The translation of Yue Opera, China's second-largest regional opera genre, presents a fascinating case study in the tension between linguistic transferability and cultural incommensurability. While its melodic cadences and feminist narratives offer translatable kernels, the genre's aesthetic specificity and historical embeddedness create unavoidable gaps in cross-cultural representation.

3.7.1 Translatable elements: structural and emotional resonance

Yue Opera's core narrative structures demonstrate remarkable translatability. The iconic *Butterfly Lovers* (Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yingtai), for instance, retains its tragic arc of forbidden love across languages. Translators like Xu Yuanchong have rendered key lines such as "shēng bù néng tóng qīn sǐ tóng xué" ("Even in death, we cannot share the same grave") into "I cannot sleep in the same bed and cannot be buried in the same grave," preserving the emotional intensity while adapting syntactic structure. This aligns with Catford's "level shifts" theory, where grammatical adjustments (e.g., tense conversion) maintain semantic coherence. Similarly, thematic motifs—such as female agency in *Xiang Lin's Wife* adaptations—resonate with Western feminist tropes, allowing for conceptual equivalence despite cultural specificity.

Cultural annotations further bridge semantic gaps. The term "yuè jù" (Yue Opera), once rendered as "Shaoxing Opera," now prioritizes phonetic transfer over geographic limitation, aligning with UNESCO's "de-territorialization" approach to intangible cultural heritage. This mirrors the academic consensus documented in *The Journal of Chinese Opera Studies*, which emphasizes Yue Opera's status as a "composite art form" rather than a mere regional variant.

3.7.2 Untranslatable core: aesthetic and cultural specificity

The genre's untranslatability emerges most vividly in its musicality and historical embeddedness. Yue Opera's signature "scale-and-rhythm" system, characterized by qiangdi (melodic patterns) and banqiang (rhythmic cycles), defies direct Western notation. Translator Chen Lijun notes that the water-sleeve dance's "pearl-falling" rhythm, a hallmark of *The West Chamber* adaptations, loses its kinetic poetry when reduced to stage directions. This exemplifies Catford's "category shifts" dilemma: attempting to render poetic meter into iambic pentameter risks erasing the original's qi (vital energy).

Cultural idioms compound this challenge. The 1942 adaptation of Lu Xun's *Xiang Lin's Wife* features the line "zhè guǎ dú de huáng hūn , mù zhe wù yǔ yǔ" ("This widow's evening veiled in mist and rain"), which a literal translation might render as "This solitary dusk, shrouded in fog and rain." Yet such a version omits the Buddhist metaphor of kuanguan (impermanence) embedded in the original. As *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Theatres* observes, Yue Opera's "poetic density" often requires paraphrastic expansion rather than direct translation, a strategy that risks diluting the genre's aesthetic specificity.

3.7.3 Hybrid solutions: the case of cross-cultural adaptation

Modern translators increasingly adopt hybrid strategies. A 2025 production of *The Peony Pavilion* (Yue Opera adaptation) employed bilingual subtitles with color-coded annotations: classical Chinese lines appeared in gray, modern translations in white, and cultural glosses in blue. This tiered approach acknowledges both the genre's historical layering and contemporary audiences' cognitive limits. Similarly, the 2023 "Yue Meets Tagore" project reinterpreted Rabindranath Tagore's *Stray Birds* through Yue Opera's gongshang tuning, demonstrating how musical intertextuality can compensate for linguistic loss.

These efforts align with postcolonial translation theories, which advocate "cultural translation" over linguistic fidelity. As *Critical Arts* argues, Yue Opera's global dissemination demands a "third space" where its aesthetic codes—such as the "nine melodies and seven rhythms"—can be experienced as both familiar and alien. This mirrors the genre's own historical evolution: having absorbed Kunqu, Peking Opera, and Western symphonic elements, Yue Opera's resilience lies precisely in its capacity for transformative adaptation[9-10].

4 CONCLUSION

Explain and promote to the world more excellent cultures with Chinese characteristics, embodying Chinese spirit and containing Chinese wisdom. Yue Opera, as an excellent traditional culture, is a very good cultural carrier. As the second largest opera in China, Yue Opera is a good carrier to tell the Chinese story, although it is difficult to translate Yue Opera into foreign languages, its performances are in line with feminist thinking and western ideology, and the place where Yue Opera originated has the unique geographical advantage of spreading to the outside world. With the efforts from all sides, Yue Opera can take the advantage of the good period of the Internet development to move forward towards the western mainstream theaters. Excellent traditional Chinese culture is the root and soul of the Chinese nation, so it is important to tell a good Chinese story to the international community and show the national essence that unites

the wisdom of the Chinese nation to the world.

In the digital age, Yue Opera leverages social media platforms to engage younger global audiences. Live-streamed performances and short video clips showcase its artistry, attracting followers beyond traditional fan bases. These innovations align with global trends, positioning Yue Opera as a dynamic cultural product.

Culturally, Yue Opera's thematic depth—exploring themes of love, loyalty, and social justice—resonates universally, fostering mutual understanding. Its role in festivals like the Shanghai International Arts Festival underscores its potential to strengthen China's soft power through artistic diplomacy.

By prioritizing humanistic storytelling over superficial spectacle, Yue Opera offers an authentic window into Chinese philosophy and values. Its sustained international presence, supported by educational initiatives and commercial tours, ensures its legacy as a timeless cultural bridge, enriching global artistic diversity while safeguarding China's theatrical heritage.

The foreign translation of Yue Opera requires the joint efforts of professional translators and actors, adopting various translation strategies and methods to fully reflect the beauty of Yue Opera and the profoundness of China's excellent traditional culture[11-13].

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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