



Multi-dimensional Reception Research on Allan H. Barr's Translations of Contemporary Chinese Literature: Integrating R Sentiment Mining, Library Holdings and Critical Book Reviews

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Abstract

This paper examines the dissemination and reception of Barr's translations from multiple aspects such as book reviews in foreign journals and newspapers, online comments from overseas readers, the number of library collections, reader sentiment analysis and its influencing factors. The conclusion shows that professional readers generally hold an approving attitude towards Barr's translations. His English translations of *The Seventh Day*, *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China* and *China in Ten Words* are widely spread overseas. Among them, overseas readers give the highest scores to *China in Ten Words*. Overseas readers show strong positive emotions towards all of Barr's English translations. Thus, it can be seen that his translations have been widely recognized by overseas readers. At the same time, this paper also deeply analyzes the reasons for the wide dissemination and acceptance of Barr's translations, including Yu Hua's symbolic capital, the poetic charm of his works, the translator's positive evaluations in paratexts, the support of publishers and editors, and Yu Hua's personal participation in overseas promotions. These factors jointly promote the dissemination and reception of Barr's English translations of Yu Hua's works overseas.

Keywords: Barr's translations, Yu Hua's works, Overseas dissemination, Influencing factors

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, contemporary Chinese literature has attracted growing international attention, with sinologists playing a key role in its cross cultural dissemination. Among these scholars, Allan H. Barr stands out as both a distinguished researcher and a prolific translator. Born in Canada in 1954 and raised in the United Kingdom, Barr graduated in Chinese Studies from the University of Cambridge and subsequently completed his Doctor of Philosophy in Ming-Qing literature at the University of Oxford. He is now Professor and Chair of the Department of Chinese at Pomona College, California. His scholarly interests range widely, including *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (《聊斋志异》), Chinese literature of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, and modern Chinese fiction.

Since 2000, Barr has undertaken the translation of contemporary Chinese literature into English, rendering multiple works by Yu Hua, as well as selected pieces by Han Han and Kong Yalei. His translations have opened a

window onto contemporary Chinese literature for readers in the English-speaking world and have received considerable acclaim (Zhu *et al.* 2017, pp. 76-77) ^[53]. His English version of *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China* was ranked first among the most influential translations of contemporary Chinese literature in 2014 (He 2014) ^[14]. Despite this recognition, however, systematic investigation into the reception and dissemination of his translated works in English-speaking world remains conspicuously scarce.

Existing studies on the dissemination of Barr's English translations of Yu Hua's fiction fall broadly into two categories: studies examining the reception of Yu Hua's individual works (Li 2014; Wang 2015; Liu 2020; Zhang 2020; Zhou and He 2024) ^[23, 34, 25, 51, 52], and those investigating the overall reception of all English translations of Yu Hua's works (Yang 2019; Fu and Wu 2021; Shao and Zhou 2022) ^[36, 8, 52]. Methodologically, the majority adopt qualitative textual analysis to assess translation effects (Wang 2015; Yang 2019; Liu 2020; Zhang 2020; Shao and Zhou 2022) ^[34, 36, 25, 51, 52], with a few adopting corpus-based

approaches (Fu and Wu 2021) ^[8] and Python-facilitated sentiment analysis of reader comments (Zhou and He 2024) ^[52]. Systematic quantitative investigations integrating R-based sentiment mining techniques remain, however, conspicuously rare. Examining the reception and dissemination of Barr’s translations not only sheds light on the global circulation of contemporary Chinese writing, but also offers practical insights for literary translation and cross cultural exchange. Accordingly, this study investigates the reception and dissemination of Barr’s translations from multiple perspectives including book reviews in overseas journals and newspapers, online reader ratings and comments, library holdings, reader sentiment analysis via R-based mining techniques, and influencing factors with a view to providing a comprehensive picture of their reception in the English-speaking world and to offering new perspectives and practical approaches for the international dissemination of Chinese literature.

2. Examining the Dissemination of Barr’s Translations

2.1 Book Reviews in Overseas Journals and Newspapers

It has been observed that “only when a translated work receives recognition from specialists in the target culture and approval from its target readership can one speak of a certain translation impact” (Lv 2011, p. 11) ^[26], and that “peer professional evaluation plays a significant role in the reception and dissemination of translations in the target culture” (Yin 2017, p. 36) ^[37]. An examination of reviews published in journals and newspapers on Barr’s translations thus allows us to assess their dissemination and translation quality from the perspective of professional readers. Reviewers tend to be highly educated editors or scholars, and their evaluations are generally more comprehensive, objective, reliable, and academically valuable than those of the general readership. The following section analyzes these reviews individually.

A number of overseas scholars have reviewed Barr’s English translations of Yu Hua’s *Cries in the Drizzle*, *China in Ten Words*, *The Seventh Day*, *Boy in the Twilight: Stories*

of the Hidden China, and Han Han’s *This Generation: Dispatches from China’s Most Popular Literary Star*, with reviews appearing in journals and mainstream media outlets such as *Pacific Affairs*, *Publishers’ Weekly*, *Booklist*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *The New York Journal of Books*, *Newsweek*, *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* and National Public Radio. The critical responses may be classified into four categories: First, appreciation of Barr’s superb translation skill, including his elegant and fluent prose, his faithful rendering of Yu Hua’s grand themes (Venkat 2014) ^[33], his fidelity to the spirit, style, and emotional tenor of the original (Li 2008, p. 627) ^[22], and his masterful control of narrative rhythm and diction (Goodman 2021) ^[19]. Second, praise for Yu Hua’s keen insight and profound vision in treating ordinary subject matter (Haggas 2011) ^[10]; third, recognition of Yu Hua’s stylistic sharpness, lightness, and admixture of elegance and humor (Dahiya 2015) ^[7]; and fourth, the acknowledgment that, despite certain minor shortcomings, the translations are of high overall quality and make important contributions to conveying the literary value of the originals (Kalfus 2015) ^[19].

In sum, Barr’s translations have received consistently positive assessments from professional readers. On the one hand, the literary merit of the source texts is closely correlated with the favorable reception of their translations; on the other, it is undeniable that Barr’s skilful lexical and syntactic choices add a distinctive appeal to the translated works.

2.2 Online Ratings by Overseas Readers

Many readers, after finishing a book, are inclined to post ratings and comments online. Though often brief and colloquial in expression, and at times subjective in tenor, these evaluations generally reflect readers’ immediate responses and affective reactions. This study therefore extracted reader ratings and comments for Barr’s English translations from the overseas e-commerce platform Amazon (data collection completed on 30 January 2026) and conducted a statistical analysis of the relevant data, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of Reader Ratings for Barr’s English Translations on Amazon

Original Work	Translated Work	Platform	% of 5-Star Ratings	% of 4-Star Ratings	Average Score (out of 5)
《在细雨中呼喊》	<i>Cries in the Drizzle</i>	Amazon	43%	24%	3.9
《第七天》	<i>The Seventh Day</i>	Amazon	48%	30%	4.1
《黄昏里的男孩》	<i>Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China</i>	Amazon	52%	32%	4.2
《十个词汇里的 中国》	<i>China in Ten Words</i>	Amazon	62%	26%	4.4
《余华作品集》	<i>The April 3rd Incident: Stories</i>	Amazon	0%	56%	3.6
《青春》	<i>This Generation: Dispatches from China’s Most Popular Literary Star</i>	Amazon	60%	19%	4.2

Note: The maximum rating on this platform is 5.

As shown in Table 1, overseas readers expressed the highest level of satisfaction with Barr’s translation of Yu Hua’s essay collection *China in Ten Words*, with the combined proportion of 5-star and 4-star ratings reaching 88%. His translation of Yu Hua’s short novel *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China* followed closely, with a combined 5-star and 4-star proportion of 84%. Han Han’s

essay collection *This Generation: Dispatches from China’s Most Popular Literary Star* translated and edited by him and his rendering of Yu Hua’s novel *The Seventh Day* also performed well, with combined 5-star and 4-star proportions of 79% and 78%, respectively. Overall, overseas readers have generally responded favorably to Barr’s English translations.

2.3 Library Holdings

“Library holdings constitute an important yardstick for measuring the intellectual value and cultural influence of a book, as well as a key indicator of a publisher’s knowledge production capacity and reputation” (He 2012, p. 12) [13]. Accordingly, global library holdings data for Barr’s translations provide a relatively reliable standard for

evaluating their translation impact. WorldCat, maintained by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), is the world’s most comprehensive and complete bibliographic database and offers free search function. This study searched the WorldCat database using the title, author name, and translator name, extracting the worldwide holdings data for each (retrieved on 1 February 2026), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Global Library Holdings of Barr’s English Translations

Original Work	Translated Work	Year of Translation Publication	Number of Holdings
《在细雨中呼喊》作者：余华)	<i>Cries in the Drizzle</i>	2007	320
《第七天》) 作者：余华)	<i>The Seventh Day</i>	2015	552
《黄昏里的男孩》 (作者：余华)	<i>Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China</i>	2014	425
《十个词汇里的中国》 (作者：余华)	<i>China in Ten Words</i>	2012	1192
《余华作品集》 (作者：余华)	<i>The April 3rd Incident: Stories</i>	2018	316
《青春》 (作者：韩寒)	<i>This Generation : Dispatches from China’s Most Popular Literary Star</i>	2012	387

According to Table 2, Barr’s translation of Yu Hua’s essay collection *China in Ten Words* ranks first in terms of library holdings, with 1,192 institutions holding it, followed by his translation of *The Seventh Day* with 552 holdings. His translation of *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China* likewise performed well, with 425 holdings. Based on 2015 OCLC global library data, *China in Ten Words* was held by 1,152 libraries (Zhu et al. 2017, p. 77) [53]. Comparing these earlier figures with the data in the table 2, it is evident that the holdings of Barr’s translations have increased year by year, reflecting a growing influence worldwide. Objectively speaking, Barr’s translations have contributed significantly to the dissemination and cross cultural exchange of contemporary Chinese literature in the West and beyond.

3. Sentiment Analysis of Reader Comments on Barr’s English Translations

Text sentiment analysis, referred to as opinion mining, employs computational techniques to extract and analyze the subjectivity, viewpoint, and emotion expressed in textual data, thereby classifying overall sentiment orientation (Yang et al. 2013, p. 1574) [35]. The present study utilizes R-based text mining techniques to perform sentiment analysis on overseas readers’ online reviews of Barr’s translations, aiming to provide an objective and comprehensive assessment of their reception abroad. The R built-in sentiment analysis package “syuzhet,” together with the data-tidying packages dplyr and ggplot, enables sentiment value calculation at both the syntactical and lexical levels. Given that lexical level analysis ultimately depends on sentence context at the syntactical level, this study focuses primarily on syntactical level sentiment. All English reviews of Barr’s translations of *Cries in the Drizzle*, *The Seventh Day*, *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*, *China in Ten Words*, *The April 3rd Incident: Stories*, and *This Generation: Dispatches from China’s Most Popular Literary Star* were scraped from Amazon (data collection completed on 20 February 2026), returning 10, 44, 38, 164, 1, and 31 reviews respectively. After removing irrelevant and duplicate reviews, the valid counts

were 10, 42, 35, 160, 1, and 28 respectively. The valid review corpora were then subjected to a cleaning and noise-reduction process: punctuation and special characters were removed; all alphabetic characters were converted to lowercase; and stop words were eliminated, resulting in a clean text corpus for each work. Given that Barr’s translation of *The April 3rd Incident: Stories* yielded only one valid review, and this sample size was too small for statistical significance, this work was excluded from subsequent quantitative sentiment analysis. Sentiment analysis was performed using the R package syuzhet (Jockers 2015; R Core Team 2023) [17, 29]. The package provides five sentiment lexicons, of which the default “syuzhet” dictionary was developed by the Nebraska Literary Lab under the direction of Matthew L. Jockers (Jockers 2015) [17]. The lexicon’s word and emotion associations were derived from 165,000 manually coded fictional sentences drawn from a corpus of contemporary novels (Jockers and Thalken 2020; R Core Team 2023) [18, 29], rendering it particularly well suited for sentiment analysis of fictional texts. The syuzhet package offers two tokenization modes: syntactic level and lexical level. Given that lexical level analysis ultimately depends on sentence context, syntactic level tokenization was adopted for this analysis. First, the get_sentences (text_of_file) function was used, where text_of_file is the cleaned text string. This function relies on the openNLP natural language processing toolkit to identify sentence boundaries, splitting the input text into a sentence vector, with each element corresponding to a complete sentence. Next, the get_sentiment(char_v, method = “syuzhet”) function was applied, where char_v is the sentence vector generated in the previous step, and method = “syuzhet” specifies the use of the default syuzhet sentiment lexicon for sentiment scoring (R Core Team 2023) [29]. This function returns a numeric vector of the same length as the input, with each value representing the sentiment score for the corresponding sentence. For sentiment classification, a sentence with a score greater than 0 was classified as positive, less than 0 as negative, and equal to 0 as neutral (Qi and Shabrina 2023) [28]. Each

sentence was assigned a score and categorized accordingly. Subsequently, for each work, the author calculated the count and proportion of positive, negative, and neutral sentences, as well as the average sentiment score, to enable a quantitative comparison of affective reception across different works among readers in the English-speaking world. The results of the statistical analysis are presented below.

```
> syuzhet_vector
[1] 0.60 0.00 -1.10 -0.70 1.85 1.85 1.25 0.00 0.80 0.25 0.40 0.90
[13] 0.25 2.20 1.65 0.00 0.80 0.00 1.65 -0.35 0.80 -0.40 0.50 -0.25
[25] 1.25 0.60 2.85 -0.40 1.45 1.40 -0.35 -0.50 0.00 1.20 -1.65 0.40
[37] 0.50 0.25 0.00 -1.15 0.65 -1.90 -0.35 -0.05 1.80 0.00 0.00 1.70
[49] 1.60 1.85 0.10 -0.20 0.85 1.35 0.00 -1.00 -0.15 0.00 -1.35 0.80
[61] 0.80 2.15 0.15 1.75 1.25 0.00 1.45 2.20 0.40 0.25 1.50 0.65
[73] 1.25 0.10 0.00 1.65 0.10 2.50 -1.00 -1.25 -0.60 0.60 0.25 0.00
[85] 1.40 0.00 -1.25 -1.00 0.80 -1.00 -1.25 1.25
> sum(syuzhet_vector)
[1] 39.6
```

Fig 1: Sentiment Scores of Overseas Readers' Online Comments on the English Translation of *Cries in the Drizzle*

```
> syuzhet_vector
[1] 1.60 0.00 1.50 0.50 0.40 1.45 1.50 2.85 -0.10 -0.10 -0.90 1.15 1.35 0.25 -0.75 0.25 2.05 0.85
[26] 1.00 -0.25 0.15 0.00 0.75 1.25 1.80 0.70 0.00 0.25 0.20 3.30 0.50 0.50 0.60 1.85 0.60 0.90
[51] 1.15 2.55 0.60 1.40 1.25 1.50 0.00 -0.65 -1.45 -7.40 -0.50 -0.25 -1.25 -0.90 -5.95 -1.00 0.75 -1.10
[76] -3.80 0.50 0.65 -2.10 -1.00 -1.65 -2.50 -1.55 -2.50 1.00 0.55 1.15 1.15 -0.25 1.20 0.80 1.45 1.10
> sum(syuzhet_vector)
[1] 25.4
```

Fig 2: Sentiment Scores of Overseas Readers' Online Comments on the English Translation of *The Seventh Day*

```
> syuzhet_vector
[1] 1.00 1.75 0.50 0.50 -0.25 0.50 -1.00 1.80 0.00 -1.50 0.75 0.55
[13] 0.80 -2.85 -1.00 -1.60 -2.25 0.80 -0.25 -2.15 0.50 0.25 -0.25 1.70
[25] 1.00 1.35 0.00 0.50 0.15 0.00 1.30 0.85 0.25 2.10 -1.50 0.60
[37] 0.60 1.95 -0.25 0.80 0.50 1.30 0.00 1.00 -1.60 -0.90 -0.75 0.65
[49] 0.00 -1.40 -0.60 -0.75 0.30 0.65 -1.00 0.10 -1.50 0.50 -1.50 0.60
[61] 1.25 -0.75 -0.75 0.00 -3.65 0.50 3.35 2.05
> sum(syuzhet_vector)
[1] 6.6
```

Fig 3: Sentiment Scores of Overseas Readers' Online Comments on the English Translation of *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*.

```
[277] 1.50 0.00 1.70 1.40 0.25 1.95 0.00 1.00 0.00 0.50 1.00 -0.50
[289] 1.35 1.00 0.60 0.00 1.10 -0.30 -0.50 2.20 0.90 0.75 1.80 0.00
[301] 0.35 0.00 2.70 1.10 2.25 0.00 0.50 0.75 -0.20 1.40 2.05 1.30
[313] -1.00 0.75 0.75 0.00 0.00 1.00 0.50 0.10 1.00 1.50 1.60 0.30
[325] 0.50 1.90 1.75 0.50 1.60 1.60 0.80 0.00 1.15 1.60 1.00 2.10
[337] 0.50 0.25 0.80 0.30 0.30 -0.50 1.95 1.60 5.40 1.25 0.50 0.00
[349] 0.50 0.25 1.75 0.50 0.00 0.00 0.90 0.50 0.75 0.75 1.55 1.90
[361] 1.75 1.75 0.80 0.80 1.10 1.10 0.00 0.60 1.55 -0.40 -0.40 0.50
[373] 1.30 0.75 0.00 0.00 1.25 0.00 0.50 1.60 1.25 -0.15 -0.25 0.80
[385] 0.75 -0.80 -0.80 0.60 0.90 0.95 1.40 0.00 -1.00 -1.00 -0.35 -1.65
[397] -0.25 0.00 0.50 0.35 0.50 0.00 1.65 0.00 0.00 -0.10 -0.25 1.15
[409] -0.35 1.20 -0.50 0.75 2.25 -1.00 0.30 0.50 1.10 1.80 0.75 1.00
[421] 2.50 0.00 1.40 1.40 1.75 2.40 -2.35 -0.85 -0.15 0.25 -0.30 0.00
[433] -0.90 0.10 -0.75 0.75 1.40 0.00 -3.20 0.40 -1.15 0.00
> sum(syuzhet_vector)
[1] 280.8
```

Note: Due to the large volume of the corpus, only the final calculation results are shown.

Fig 4: Sentiment Scores of Overseas Readers' Online Comments on the English Translation of *China in Ten Words*

```
> syuzhet_vector
[1] 0.75 -1.15 -1.00 -0.50 -1.60 0.75 0.80 -1.00 3.20 0.25 0.00 0.00
[13] 1.95 1.35 -0.20 0.60 2.80 0.75 0.85 -0.20 2.50 0.75 0.55 0.25
[25] 1.00 0.25 2.30 1.35 2.90 0.55 0.00 -0.55 -0.30 -1.35 3.15 1.85
[37] 3.10 -0.90 0.55 1.80 0.50 0.70 0.80 0.50 -0.25 0.60 0.35 -0.30
[49] 1.75 -2.35 0.40 0.30 -0.80 0.60 2.30 1.00 0.70 -0.80 0.80 0.00
[61] -1.65 1.80 0.10 -1.30 0.55 0.75 1.80 2.20 0.00 -0.85 -0.20 0.00
[73] 0.00 0.50 4.25 -0.15 1.90 0.80 2.50 0.80 1.20 0.90 -0.25 -0.20
[85] 0.75 0.50 0.50 2.65 -1.80 1.25 0.75 0.50 1.90 0.00 -0.75 0.15
[97] 0.40 1.40 0.85 0.80 4.20 -2.60 1.00 1.55 0.50 0.10 0.10 -0.75
[109] -0.25 0.60 1.60 0.25 1.60 0.00 0.00 1.30 -0.75 -1.75 1.50 -1.75
[121] 0.60 -2.00 -0.15 1.00 0.00
> sum(syuzhet_vector)
[1] 64.15
```

Fig 5: Sentiment Scores of Overseas Readers' Online Comments on the English Translation of *This Generation: Dispatches from China's Most Popular Literary Star*.

The results indicate that the sentence sentiment values for these corpora are contained in the `syuzhet_vector` vector. The sentiment scores for overseas reader comments on Barr's translations of *Cries in the Drizzle*, *The Seventh Day*, *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*, *China in Ten Words* and *This Generation: Dispatches from China's Most Popular Literary Star* were 39.6, 25.4, 6.6, 280.8, and 64.15, respectively (see Figures 1-5). Overall, these figures indicate a strongly positive affective response. A comparison of the data reveals that comments can be classified into negative, neutral, and positive categories, with positive reviews considerably outnumbering the other two categories, followed by neutral and then negative reviews. This clearly indicates that overseas readers have largely endorsed these translations. Among the works, *China in Ten Words* recorded the highest overall sentiment score (280.8), followed by *This Generation: Dispatches from China's Most Popular Literary Star*, *Cries in the Drizzle*, *The Seventh Day*, and *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*. To supplement this quantitative analysis with qualitative assessment, individual reader comments were examined in detail, and many were found to offer favorable assessments of Barr's translations. For example, a reader identified as Joan MacLean remarked that, although she had not read the Chinese original, the translation read as though it had been written by a native speaker, praising Yu Hua's narrative style and the translator's success in rendering the characters' emotions with natural intensity. Another reader, identified as Margaret P., noted her unfamiliarity with Chinese and her consequent inability to judge translation accuracy, but observed that the English text was well suited to the story's tone and that the depictions of dialogue, characters' thoughts and feelings, and surroundings were precise and highly logical. Notwithstanding the appreciation and affection expressed by many readers, a minority offered negative critiques, citing losses of cultural information, awkward diction, and failures to reproduce ironic effects. Nevertheless, the majority of readers considered the translations to be concise, fluent, and natural, and judged the overall translation to be successful.

4. Analysis of the Dissemination of Barr's Translations

The successful introduction of a translated work into the cultural field of the target language is typically the result of multiple interacting factors. The symbolic capital of the original author, the poetic features of the source text, the translator's intervention strategies, and the promotional efforts of publishers and editors all constitute critical parts in the translation's dissemination network; their interrelations directly or indirectly shape the work's reception. Since Barr's translations consist predominantly of works by Yu Hua, and since the reviews and reader feedback collected in this study also focus mainly on Yu Hua, the analysis of contributing factors in this section will center primarily on Yu Hua and his works.

4.1 The Symbolic Capital of Yu Hua and Its Influence

Bourdieu (1986, pp. 241-258) [4] distinguishes among social, economic, cultural, and symbolic capital, defining symbolic capital as a form of capital that is recognized and socially legitimized (Bourdieu 1989, p.25) [4], embodied in such

intangible resources as prestige, reputation, and renown. In Yu Hua's case, his international literary awards, favorable assessments by prominent critics, and film adaptations of his works, as well as his own active participation in international promotional activities, have collectively built up his symbolic capital in the western cultural field.

International literary awards constitute an important form of symbolic capital for an author entering a foreign literary field. Yu Hua is one of the contemporary Chinese writers who have received the most international literary awards. His works such as *To Live*, *Cries in the Drizzle*, *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*, *Brothers*, and *The Seventh Day* have received major western literary prizes, including Italy's Premio Grinzane Cavour, Australia's Literary Prize for Suspensive Sentences, France's Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, the United States' Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Award, France's Prix Courier International, and Italy's Bottari Lattes Grinzane. These awards, conferred by authoritative literary institutions, represent not only official recognition of the literary merit of Yu Hua's work but also markers of its progressive incorporation into the western literary canon, thereby substantially enhancing his symbolic capital in the western field.

Positive assessments by prominent Western critics have further strengthened Yu Hua's symbolic capital. For instance, Maureen Corrigan, a distinguished American critic, praised *Brothers* on NPR's book review program, describing it as startling in its narrative craft, style, and historical range (Corrigan 2009)^[6]. American author Emily Carter has described *To Live* as concise and elegantly written works, possessed of philosophical depth (Lan 2004, p. 34)^[20]. Sinologists such as Sabina Knight and Anne Wedell-Wedellsborg have also offered positive appraisals of Yu Hua's fiction. Such critical endorsements not only guide the reading choices of general audiences but also expand Yu Hua's readership in the English-speaking world, continuously reinforcing his symbolic capital.

The cross media dissemination of literary works through film adaptations can significantly enhance their international visibility. For instance, the film adaptation of Yu Hua's novel *To Live*, directed by the renowned Chinese filmmaker Zhang Yimou, won awards at international festivals and subsequently generated considerable overseas interest in the source novel. In South Korea, for example, the film's popularity led to sales of over 400,000 copies and helped place the novel on bestseller lists (Zhang 2013, p. 130)^[50]. As a mass medium with greater audio-visual impact, cinema helped Yu Hua reach beyond literary readerships, thereby augmenting his symbolic capital among both western literary circles and general audiences.

4.2 The Poetic Qualities of the Source Texts

Aristotle defines poetics as the sum total of the themes, stylistic features, and creative techniques of a literary system (Aristotle 1990)^[2]. Poetics thus includes thematic expression, portrayal of characters, descriptive techniques, and stylistic features in a literary work. The thematic and narrative characteristics of Yu Hua's fiction constitute the intrinsic foundation for its cross cultural transmission. Moreover, Yu Hua's thematic range, encompassing good and evil in human nature, the experience of suffering, the philosophy of death, and social critique, manifests a

profound engagement with ethical and existential questions (Chang and Ye 2001, p. 96; Lv 2013, p. 137; Yu 2014, pp.166-167)^[5, 46, 47]. This concern with shared human experiences resonates with many principles of western humanism, reducing cultural distance and rendering his work appealing not only to Chinese readers but also to an extensive international audience. Furthermore, Yu Hua has acknowledged the influence of western and Japanese modernists, including Franz Kafka, William Faulkner and Yasunari Kawabata, on his writing (Yu 1995b, p.294)^[39]. His appropriation of narrative techniques from western modernism, such as Faulkner's method of infusing tales of suffering with warmth and Kawabata's delicacy in portraying character and environment (Liu 2019, p. 92)^[24], produces a hybrid style that appears to English readers at once familiar in its modernist heritage and intriguingly distinctive in its Chinese context, thereby gaining resonance in both academic and popular reading contexts.

4.3 The Translator's Active Participation in Paratexts

Gérard Genette defines paratexts, such as titles, prefaces, and notes, as complementary and framing devices for the main text, and as crucial links connecting authors, translators, publishers, and readers (Genette 2001, pp. 1-2)^[3]. This theoretical framework is particularly useful for examining the role of translators in shaping the reception of foreign literature. In the paratexts of his translations, Barr actively constructed interpretive frameworks for Yu Hua's work. Taking the English edition of *The April 3rd Incident: Stories* as an example, Barr's translator's preface first situated the stories in the post-Mao era, noting that Chinese writers at the time were able to explore previously forbidden subjects, thereby stimulating English readers' interest in contemporary Chinese realities (Yu 2018, p.vii)^[49]. He then highlighted Yu Hua's engagement with western literary influences, analyzed his linguistic style and narrative strategies, and employed intertextual references to bridge the gap with target readers (Yu 2018, pp. Vii-viii)^[49]. In addition, Barr emphasized the works' focus on individual psychology, positioning them as not overtly political, while observing that their narratives remain embedded in the broader context of Chinese history (Yu 2018, p. viii)^[49]. Such paratexts, combining scholarly insight with reader guidance (Jin 2012, p. 177)^[16], not only situate the main text within a broader interpretive framework but also contribute to Yu Hua's reception within the Western literary field.

4.4 The Patronage Role of Publishers and Editors

André Lefevere pointed out that translation was shaped by three constraints: ideology, poetics, and patron. Patrons, including government agencies and publishing houses may either facilitate or impede the reading, writing, and rewriting of literary works (Lefevere 1992)^[21]. Translation publishers, as patrons, exert considerable influence over translation activities, either promoting or hindering their dissemination. Authoritative publishers have also played a crucial role in the overseas transmission of Yu Hua's works, facilitating their integration into target literary systems and enhancing their recognition in the western literary world. The publication of Yu Hua's works in English has largely been undertaken by major American publishers. Pantheon

Books, for instance, has published *The April 3rd Incident: Stories and China in Ten Words*, while Anchor Books has issued *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China, Cries in the Drizzle*, and *The Seventh Day*. Both publishers belong to the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a large publishing corporation with extensive distribution and marketing networks. Their decision to publish Yu Hua's works is itself a recognition of the author's literary value and market potential, helping to attract reader attention and elevate the status of his works within the western literary system.

Editors, as important patrons in the publication process, likewise hold a dominant position in the power relations surrounding literary translation and publication (Hu 2013, p. 93) ^[15], influencing content selection and translation standards. Editors often propose revisions based on the poetic norms and reader expectations of the target market. Barr has noted that his editor suggested trimming certain passages that, in the western narrative tradition, might be considered redundant. In Yu Hua's short novel *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*, for instance, the editor made judicious abridgments in stories such as "The Skipping-and-Stepping Game" and "Victory" which contained excessive descriptive details that, while contributing to the texture of the original, risked interrupting narrative momentum for English readers. The resulting lacunae create narrative gaps that stimulate readers' imagination and enhance, to a certain extent, the artistic tension of the texts. Such adjustments, while preserving the core thematic intentions of the originals, bring the translations more into line with English narrative conventions, thereby facilitating their reception and dissemination. Publishers have also enhanced the appeal of Barr's translations through paratextual design. For instance, the cover design of *China in Ten Words* foregrounded color and visual symbolism (Barr 2012, pp. 44-45) ^[12]. Similarly, many of Yu Hua's English editions include press reviews, author biographies, and award citations on the back covers or front matter. These paratextual features, taken together, increase the works' scholarly credibility and market appeal, thereby indirectly promoting their circulation in the English-speaking world.

4.5 The Author's Overseas Engagements

An author's direct participation in overseas promotional activities constitutes an effective means of enhancing their international visibility. A case in point is Yu Hua, who has made multiple visits to the United States for literary events. His first United States tour took place in 1999. In 2009, he gave lecture tours at more than thirty universities, including Harvard, Yale, and Stanford (Liu 2019, p. 93) ^[24]. He also made promotional appearances for *China in Ten Words* in 2011 and participated in literary engagements in Italy in 2018. These face-to-face interactions have bridged the distance between the author and his overseas readership, heightening readers' curiosity and sense of connection to his works, and directly boosting the worldwide circulation of his writings. Judging by the incorporation of Yu Hua's works into American university curricula, library holdings, and online reader feedback, the author's overseas presence has exerted a visible and positive impact on the international reception of his works.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the reception of Barr's translations from multiple perspectives including professional book reviews, online reader ratings and comments, library holdings, sentiment analysis, and contributing factors. The findings indicate that professional readers view Barr's translations favorably, that his renderings of *The Seventh Day*, *Boy in the Twilight: Stories of the Hidden China*, and *China in Ten Words* have achieved broad dissemination overseas (with the latter two receiving particularly high reader scores), and that overseas readers manifest a strongly positive affective response across all his translated works. These findings collectively suggest that Barr's translations have gained wide acceptance among target readers in the English-speaking world.

The success of these translations, however, cannot be attributed to any single factor. Rather, it is the outcome of multiple interacting forces. Yu Hua's symbolic capital lends moral and cultural authority to his works. The poetic and existential depth of his narratives invites readers into a space of shared human concern. Barr's strategic interventions in paratexts frame the works for receptive engagement. The institutional support of publishers and editors enables wide circulation. Yu Hua's own overseas presence enables the encounter between author and reader. These factors are not merely additive but interwoven and mutually reinforcing, together enabling Barr's translations to function as vehicles for cross cultural spiritual communication.

The implications for the international dissemination of Chinese literature are threefold. First, writers should attend to both the universal resonance and the cultural specificity of their works. Second, translators, as cultural mediators, should attend to both the linguistic and stylistic choices within the text and the paratextual strategies that frame its reception including prefaces, annotations, and other interpretive aids so as to guide readers across cultural and interpretive boundaries. Third, publishers and authors alike should recognize that effective dissemination requires not only institutional infrastructure but also sustained personal engagement with target audiences.

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