

Intertextuality in Translating Romantic Folksong *Hua'er* Across Time and Space with English Love Poems

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ABSTRACT

Hua'er, a peculiar type of folk song in Northwest China, can be translated by referring to English love poems to recreate analogous but fundamentally different intertextual relations in English. The intertextuality perspective of translation enables the translator to see the rendition not as a product but as one of the numerous interpretive possibilities. Seen in this light, translating romantic *Hua'er* is able to open up one of many dialogues with English language and culture. By analyzing pieces of romantic *Hua'er* which the author translated, this paper aims to explore ways of representing the original intertextual relations in the English cultural context through three specific situations where the intertexts within *Hua'er* are recreated in the receiving language. The three ways are reproducing by substitution for intertexts likely to remain unrecognized in English, retaining intertexts with distinctive Chinese characteristics and constructing intertexts in a new context familiar to English readers.

INTRODUCTION

Hua'er, a peculiar type of folk song indigenous to the remote mountain areas of Northwest China, has remained relatively less popular and less renowned outside of China. Apparently the pressure and responsibility falls upon the shoulder of translators when they set out opening up a dialogue between the source and target culture. Challenges would arise all along the translating process. But first and foremost, and relevant to the study as well, is to convey across the languages and cultures the messages about love in a way that is not only intelligible to the English readers, but also capable of revealing their potential multiple references in the English cultural context.

One approach lies in the underlying intertextual elements that link not merely the English love poems with *Hua'er*, but with Chinese classic poetry as well. The dialogic quality is observed in at least three types of text. Firstly, it is the *Hua'er* texts that contain rich interplay of multiple texts from Chinese classic poetry which is themselves a repertoire of miscellaneous texts. Then the English love poems encompass abundant intertextual references to texts in not only its own language but also languages from other cultures. Of particular importance here are those numerous

links to Chinese classic poetry discovered in English love poems.

The three types of texts interrelate with each other in such a way that actually provide the translator chances to reconstruct in the receiving language those “echoes” underlying the source texts, allowing the translation of an essentially heterogeneous texts to be read with comprehension, or even better, with some pleasure, by the target language readers. It is probably safe to say here that translating *Hua'er* is after all a gain rather than a loss; it adds a new lease of life to *Hua'er* and helps *Hua'er* reach a whole new audience. Even though such an intertextual approach towards translation may inevitably lead to more linguistic and cultural differences between the two sides as they are read and interpreted in diverse ways by the receiving language readers, that’s where the value of intertextual translation lies, “Intertextuality enables and complicates translation, preventing it from being an untroubled communication and opening the translated text to interpretive possibilities that vary with cultural constituencies in the receiving situation”(Venuti, 2009, p. 172). It is in this sense that this dialogue is enabled to remain opened-up and more of the same kind can be expected.

HUA'ER

About the Name

Hua'er, Chinese pinyin for “花儿”, means flowers. According to the Intangible Culture Heritage of UNESCO, the music tradition of *Hua'er* is shared by people of nine different ethnic groups who are believers of either Islam or Vajrayana Buddhism, including *hui*, *bao an*, *dong xiang*, *yugu*, Salar, tu, zang, meng and han. Men in those areas usually refer to beautiful young ladies as *Hua'er* who catch their fancy (Zhang, 1986, p. 33). In Chinese culture, the very two characters conjure up images of a young and gorgeous female, who nevertheless is invariably depicted in Chinese classic poetry and actually the entire literary tradition as delicate, fragile and having only a fleeting youth, one of the epitomes of Chinese patriarchal thoughts.¹

Alternatively, the folk song is referred to as *Shaonian* denoting young men by some singers. Instead of highlighting the stunning beauty of a particular young girl, the use of this name places emphasis on the ceaseless passion of a man in pursuit of love at his golden age (Zhang, 1986, p. 33). Presently, scholars have agreed that the name *Hua'er* is something bordering on a nickname by a young man for the girl he is in love with and intends to pursue. These folk songs, sung by people working in the fields or in the mountains, are characterized by such a high-pitched, resounding voice that the sound can allegedly be heard miles away. Hence *Hua'er* is also at times defined as mountain songs.

Dominant Features of *Hua'er*

The form and the oral formula

Resembling Chinese classic poetry, most *Hua'er* (here refers specifically to those short ones known as “*duange*”) extend from four to six lines. Each line contains basically the same number of characters ranging from six to nine, depending on the type of *Hua'er*.² Like the Chinese metrical verse, they all look neat and ordered with diverse rhyming forms. The main difference is that while the former were composed in refined language by literati in Chinese traditional society such as *Tang* Dynasty (AD 618-907), the latter are essentially impromptu filled with vernacular or everyday words easy to be passed on and remembered by ordinary people, especially farmers.

As with most oral tradition, the improvisation of a *Hua'er* requires some oral-formulaic patterns. The most salient and significant ones include formulaic “*bi-xing*” which normally falls into the category of figure of speech. The Chinese character “*bi*” comes very close to metaphor. The Chinese scholar *Zhu Xi* of *Song* Dynasty (AD 1131-1200) defined it more accurately as “talking about something by comparing it to something else”, for example, peony is a frequently used “*bi-xing*” formula for reference to a beautiful lady. And “*xing*” was explained as “start by talking about something else so as to induce the point one really intends to make”.

In order to improvise a *Hua'er* song, singers usually draw on surrounding objects and activities inscribed with regional and/or religious colors as singing material. More often than

not it needs taking some time and effort to learn about local customs and daily life before one can appropriately understand the song. More significantly, far from being merely a literary technique, “*bi-xing*” is also a thinking pattern for most Chinese people. Very similar to Chinese classic poetry, the aesthetic appeal of *Hua'er* lies in “*bi*” and the denotative as well as the connotative meaning reside in “*xing*”, which pose huge challenges for the translator. The difficulties are two-fold: to decipher the underlying relation between the surface text and the subtext; and to work out a way to recreate that relation which very likely contains an intertextual link in the receiving language.

The content

While poetry is customarily employed by Chinese people as a vehicle for one's talents and ambition, the variety of human feelings finds their expression in songs. As a form of folk song, the theme of *Hua'er* centers around everyday life of ordinary people, ranging from farm work, house chores, personal emotions, seasonal and festival activities to local anecdotes and events as well as advice on marriage and life in general. *Hua'er* reflects the history and reality of these ethnic minority groups in such a truthful way that it can be credited as an encyclopedia of folk customs, history and culture of Northwest China (Wu, 2008, p. 339). But overwhelming majority of them falls into the category of love songs or romantic *Hua'er*.

As has been surveyed, 90 percent of the traditional *Hua'er* songs collected in Northwest China are love songs (Wu, 2008, p. 153). Similar to the development of a romantic relationship, these songs can be further divided into songs of making acquaintance, songs of falling in love, songs of unrequited love, and songs of the distressed longing of a woman or man, covering basically every stage of emotional experience one could have in a relationship.

INTERTEXTUALITY AND TRANSLATION

Intertextuality

Nothing under the sun is truly new. As if to annotate these words, T. S. Eliot wrote in his essay “Tradition and the individual Talent” back in 1920, “No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists” (Eliot, 1920). The similar idea was shared among writers, poets and scholars across different cultures and languages, and to which different terms had been assigned until Kristeva referred to it as “intertextuality” in her literary study. To Kristeva, “every text is constructed as a mosaic of citations”, “an absorption and transformation of other texts” (Kristeva, 1969, p. 146).

Just as misleading as it is to understand Eliot's tradition as merely borrowing or quoting the words or meanings from previous artists, it would fundamentally mar the notion of intertextuality to see an intertext as mere inclusion of quotations, allusions and parodies. And just as crucial as it is for one to always view the tradition in a linear progress, we

should look on an intertext as a link in a chain with neither beginning nor ending, a link which help open up continuous dialogues with numerous other texts. That means, diachronically it is certainly both an heir of the texts preceding itself and one preceding the other texts to be produced in the future; synchronically it is linked to any text being produced in the present (Farahzad, 2009, p. 126). It follows that any intertext is connected to three time sequences or can experience triple lives-it came from the past, lives in the present and will be reincarnated in the future. And it is this third life that we shall in this article attach most value to and will demonstrate to what extent it can gain a new lease of life not through the imitations in the same linguistic system, but through the journey to another entirely different language.

Viewpoints on Translation

When it comes to the discussion of translation, people invariably tend to focus on degrees of closeness to the “original” or the source text or how much is lost due to translation. Seldom, if any, would people divert their attention to the positive side of translation to see how much is gained from translation.

This tendency, for one, has much to do with the comparative methodology mostly taken in studying translations. As Emer O’Sullivan has pointed out, we read the source text and its translation, then we set about hunting for “errors of translation”, fixating on those parts in translation that represent problems or mistakes (1998, p. 186). For another, this inclination is almost the natural result of all the discussions over years about those rooted concepts in translation studies-of equivalence, of original as well as a number of metaphors concerning the superiority of source text and the author over receiving text and the translator.

The traditional viewpoints on translation not only put restraints on the translator in process of ensuring a certain meaning in a receiving language, but dismiss the role of readers as active interpreters and constructors as well. As a different approach to translation studies, the concept of intertextuality undermines the authority of source texts, regarding the source text and its translation as a particular type of intertextual relation. From an intertextual point of view, no text is claimed to be completely original and becomes the source of another, because a text always depends on the “prior existence not only of clearly identifiable texts” but also of “general conditions of appropriateness that may, for example, govern entire genres” (Hatim & Mason, 1990, pp. 124-125).

Perhaps the most favorable result the concept of intertextuality brought up in translation studies is acknowledging the role of both the translators and the readers of receiving language as active agent of interpretation. As they incorporate their own cultural backgrounds, previous reading experience and knowledge structure into the reading process, it follows that multiple renderings of the same text should be expected, which undermines further the traditional idea of equivalence (Farahzad, 2009, p. 126). With this critical turn of mind, any version of translation is only one interpretation of the same source text.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN ROMANTIC HUA’ER AND ENGLISH LOVE POEMS

There are a few clarifications that need to be made that are important for understanding the particularity of the dialogue, i.e. why this has to be a dialogue between *Hua’er*, a representative of a fundamentally heterogeneous folk culture of a certain locale in China and a distant transatlantic literary genre.

Why English Love Poems

Even though the notion of intertextuality freed the translator to some extent from pursuing a self-contained version which is expected to bear the closest resemblance possible to the source text with a single meaning, it by no means suggests that the translator can take liberties with the source text. It is still one of the inescapable responsibilities of the translator to explore fully the intertextual relations explicitly or implicitly included in the source text, though more often than not, the possibility of discovering, let alone translating, all the intertextual relations is so limited.

In translating the romantic *Hua’er*, the approach of putting intertextual links in a straightforward way in the receiving language is impractical because of the specificity of the source culture and language, moreover, it would hinder rather than facilitate the cultural communication and fundamentally hazard the signification of those rich intertextual signifiers in the source culture altogether. Considering the richness and culture-boundedness of *Hua’er* intertexts, the translator can replace them with “analogous but ultimately different intertextual relations in the receiving language”; in this case, i.e. English love poems (Venuti, 2009, p. 172).

Receiver-based Way

This replacement or substitution approach aims at producing a version that not only does justice to the abundance and openness of the source text, but can also facilitate the comprehension, and better still, favorable reception of romantic *Hua’er*.

It is at this juncture necessary to make clear for the sake of accuracy that the romantic *Hua’er* we have been discussing so far refers specifically to those *Hua’er* texts in the sense of literary genre, not as songs with scores. We believe that translating folk songs is a bit more complicated than that of, for example, poems or novels, because a lot more questions need to be taken into account, such as how to make the translation go with the tunes or beats of songs.

On top of that, even though the genre of *Hua’er* texts bears striking resemblance to that of Chinese classic poetry, translating *Hua’er* is destined to be different from translating Chinese poetry which is always deemed as a supreme form of literary art, the latter is ultimately representative of an oral tradition. The focus of translating the former, as is always the case, is put on the semantic aspect; while the latter prioritizes communicativeness. That means, the translator of *Hua’er* texts should serve as mediator between the two cultures involved, trying his/her best to pass on the idea of the source

text in a way both intelligible to and meaningful enough to arouse the intrigue of some degree of the receiving side. From the intertextuality perspective, the mediator “guarantees this tuning in of his audience by reconstructing the kind of text that corresponds most closely to the communicative situation, i.e. he interprets or translates in a receiver-based way” (Beaugrande, 1980, p. 292). This makes all the more sense in translating *Hua'er* which is inscribed with such an abundant amount of culture-bound values and significance, there should be no shirking of responsibility on the part of the translator as mediator, to guard against any “otherization” in the translation (Da'an, 2000, pp. 59-60).

TRANSLATION ANALYSIS

In this section, I compare and analyze three pieces of romantic *Hua'er* (hereafter P1, P2, P3 and P4) and their English translations (hereafter T1, T2, T3 and T4) to demonstrate how texts are interlocked. Most importantly, I expound how the intertextual relations in *Hua'er* are recreated in the receiving language by making use of analogous ones in English love poems. I translated the three pieces together with many others in part as practice of my translation ideas concerning intertextuality, but also for the fact that no valid translation can be used for the study. The only published English version found presently is in effect a collection of pieces by different translators with no consistent translation strategy or method whatsoever involved.

Recreating Multiple Intertexts by Replacement

P1 below exemplifies the most common type of *Hua'er* in which men eulogize the stunning looks of women. The smooth rendering of these romantic *Hua'er* depends to a great extent on capturing the images frequently used for women which actually mirror the typical Chinese aesthetical standard of beauty. Therefore a beautiful woman is usually characterized as having a round face (“脸如银盆”), arched eyebrows, black sparkling eyes (“大眼睛赛灯盏”), a small mouth with rosy lips (“嘴是樱桃一点红”) and white tender skin (“手如雪”).

The hallmarks in Table 1 are especially salient in Chinese classic poetry. To anyone who reads extensively about Chinese classic poetry and prose these portrayals could immediately bring to his/her mind various texts ranging from *shijing* (The Book of Songs), to *yuefu* (folk songs and ballads of Han Dynasty), to the rhymed prose by *Song Yu*, to *Cao Zhi's*

famous *luoshenfu* (Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River) and to numerous poems of *Tang* (AD 618-907) and *Song* Dynasties (AD 960-1279).

Having recognized these intertextual relations, I realize that the analogous texts could be found in many English love poems well-known among English readers for the obvious fact that certain ideals about beauty are shared by both cultures and human emotions are equally aroused in these realms. Since P1 left me with such deep impression that I could match it almost right away, among many others, with Chinese lines from *shijing* “手如柔荑，肤如凝脂，领如蝤蛴，齿如瓠犀，螭首蛾眉，巧笑倩兮，美目盼兮”， it would only be fair that similar intertextual links recreated in my translation are to be detected in the same effortless manner. For this reason, instead of rendering “黑头发” as the equivalent black hair, I consider the use of these words “Your hyacinth hair” would bring to the readers’ minds such oft-quoted and widely loved lines by Edgar Allan Poe, “The hyacinth hair, thy classic face...To the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome” (Cheng, 2000, p. 196). In the same way that multiple intertextual relations within P1 can be potentially evoked, these words are capable of further inspiring a well-read English reader to recall such lines as “Of selfsame color is her hair whether unfolded, or in twines: Heigh ho, fair Rosalynde!” by Thomas Lodge, and “Like twilight’s, too, her dusky hair” by William Wordsworth (Cheng, 2000, p. 32; Wordsworth, 2005, p. 90). While “大眼睛赛灯盏” calls forth poetic lines like “眼明正似琉璃瓶，心荡秋水横波清”， or “巧笑倩两犀，美目扬双蛾” relatively easily, the words “twilight stars” are hopefully capable of alluding to “Her eyes as stars of twilight fair” without much difficulty. Rendering in this vein, all the underlined words in T1 are potentially able to establish intertextual relations similar to those of Chinese ones.

Retaining Intertexts with Distinctive Chinese Characteristics

When rendering *Hua'er* texts, the translator is constantly confronted with this question, i.e. to discard certain descriptions or substitute them with others in the receiving language or retain them. The situation is even more disturbing when intertextual relations are involved. In my effort of bridging the gaps of romantic *Hua'er* and English culture, I found myself invariably resort to the first two means to tackle the problem, while keeping an eye out for any chances that certain parts of romantic *Hua'er* could actually be retained in English. It turned out that some indigenous texts can enter the receiving language without causing any cognitive problem. On the one hand, their renderings are as comprehensible as they are in Chinese; on the other hand, these renderings are equally capable of establishing links with other texts in English. Moreover, as I have discussed earlier, the translator as mediator aims at communicating an idea in the most effective way. This however, does not rule out adopting expressions of the source language. As has been repeatedly verified by numerous translations over the past decades, the receiving language and culture can always benefit from such renderings.

Table 1. Romantic *Hua'er* P1 and the rendering T1

P1: 黑头发赛丝线呢	T1
脸如银盆手如雪， 黑头发赛丝线呢； 嘴是樱桃一点红， 大眼睛赛灯盏呢 (Xue, 1997, p. 207)	With a full-moon face and soft <u>fair hands</u> , <u>Your hyacinth hair</u> even smoother than silk. Tempting as <u>red cherries</u> are your little lips, And sparkling eyes <u>twilight stars</u> surpass.

As shown in Table 2, the first three lines of P2 describe a scenario using the Chinese technique *bi-xing* so that the latter part can be drawn forth where the main idea truly lies. T2 retains basically all the descriptions of P2 along with the same contrastive effect a Chinese reader could get. Close rendering of the specific images not only creates semantic correspondence but also reproduces the similar intertextual relation. The last three lines of P2 immediately connect with one Chinese *yuefu* folksong named “*shang ye*” that also presents a couple of extremely impossible situations where the bond between two lovers could be severed.³ Most importantly, the situation described in P2 is deeply rooted in Chinese culture with the concept of “三九天”(the coldest days of winter) and the most favorable flower image peony. In spite of the culture specificity, the close rendering of these words is equally functional in calling forth intertexts in English language. The most popular of them is these lines by Robert Burns “And I will love thee still, my dear, till a’ the seas gang dry...And the rocks melt wi’ the sun; ...While the sands o’ life shall run” (Cheng, 2000, p. 122).

Re-contextualizing the Intertext

But it is of paramount importance at the same time that the translator is equally aware of the contexts where the intertextual relations are situated. As I have discussed above, the folk song *Hua'er* is saturated with Chinese traditional poetic technique *bi-xing*. The challenge is that images adopted in *bi-xing* are inscribed with local linguistic and cultural forms, no equivalents or even similar substitutions are available in receiving language. And the problem is exacerbated, as is often the case that the surface texts of *Hua'er* which invariably contain intertexts are incomprehensible for lack of obvious relevance to the themes. That means the translator has to first of all decipher the subtext where the true meaning usually lies and then construct in the receiving language a whole new context where the true meaning as well as analogous intertexts shall be incorporated not only intelligible but also culturally acceptable for the receiving readers. For the intertext which is to be rendered into the receiving language, it will go through being de-contextualized, divorced

from its own context and replaced in a new socio-historical context, which inevitably results in losing parts if not all of its intertextual properties and being assigned new ones “by relating it to the discursive practices of the society it enters” (Farahzad, 2009, p. 127).

P3 starts with a *bi-xing* which describes the broken state of a Chinese traditional millstone in order to put the targeted female in juxtaposition with it later. The underlying meaning is that the female will eventually get as old as the broken millstone, but the fundamental difference lies in that the former can be grinded to function as well as before, there exists no way for the female to return to her youth again and she will be left all alone in the end. The theme of P3 is the familiar “carpe diem”, which a Chinese reader should have no difficulty recalling the famous poem “*jin lv yi*” of Tang Dynasty.⁴ But the entire context is built upon the local rural life of Northwest China. Close renderings of these specific images will only widen the gap between *Hua'er* and English culture. Therefore I moved from this culture-bound context and tried to establish a new and familiar one for the receiving readers. Having noticed that some images appear frequently in the English “carpe diem” poems including sunrise and sunset images, flower images (esp. rose) and spring image, I settled upon the last one to make it serve the contrastive function of the millstone in P3. Then the question remains how to reconstruct the intertext within the translation. The underlined parts of T3 therefore, I consider, are much more relevant to P3 in theme and most easily comprehensible to English readers so as to relate to Robert Herrick’s “Gather ye rose buds while ye may”, a classic poem as Chinese “*jin lv yi*”, or many other ones, for example, Edmund Spenser’s “Fresh Spring” and Andrew Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress”⁵ (Table 3).

P4 represents another common type of *Hua'er*, which I refer to as *gui yuan Hua'er* (boudoir-plaint *Hua'er*) in the study. They are very close in theme to *gui yuan* poetry, a particular type of Chinese poetry which centers around the sorrows, lovesickness or missing feelings of either a deserted wife or a longing-afflicted wife left behind all alone at her chamber or boudoir. By the same token *gui yuan Hua'er* is characterized by numerous descriptions of females who are yearning to reunite with their lovers or husbands and are distressed in such a way that they are not even able to eat, drink and sleep properly.

P4 can easily remind a Chinese reader of plenty of texts bearing the same emotional tone of *gui yuan* poetry. But an English poem would rarely communicate such a feeling. It is more typical for an English poem to express the desire for his/her love in a vigorous way devoid of self-pity and

Table 2. Romantic *Hua'er* P2 and the rendering T2

P2: 把你新鲜几年哩	T2
大石头根里的药泉水， 担子担 桦木的勺勺儿舀干； 要得我俩的婚姻散， 三九天， 青冰上开一朵牡丹。（Xue, 1997, p.329）	Underneath the big rock a pool of spring runs. The water will eventually dry up, if you Keep bailing the water with a birch spoon; To separate us and break up our marriage, <u>You shall make a peony flower bloom.</u> <u>Right in the ice during the coldest days of winter.</u>

Table 3. Romantic *Hua'er* P3 and the rendering T3

P3: 把你新鲜几年哩	T3
老鸦飞在磨沿里， 把你新鲜几年哩， 磨子老了可碓哩， 把你老了谁缠哩。 (Xue, 1997, p. 97)	While spring goes this year, It's always back the next. <u>Having lost but your prime.</u> <u>You may forever tarry.</u>

Table 4. Romantic *Hua'er* P4 and the rendering T4

P4: 想你不是那么那么想	T4
天气降下浓霜了， 心里多了愁肠了； 想你不是这么那么想， 七斤油只照了三晚上。 (Xue, 1997, p. 122)	The Heaven sent the heavy frost to descend. The feeling of melancholy added to my heart. <u>The thought of you is like my shadow in the sun.</u> That kept me wide awake for three nights on end.

resentment common in Chinese poetry, as exemplified by John Keats's "Bright Star" or Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Indian Serenade". When I translated P4, therefore, I discarded the descriptions typical of *gui yuan Hua'er* in favor of those which provoke a distinctly different, yet more familiar and acceptable emotion among English readers.

The underlined part of T4 is related to the poem "On Monsieur's Departure" by Queen Elizabeth where she expresses her yearning for a man in an undisguised manner that is virtually unthinkable in Chinese traditional culture.⁶ The intertextual property is obviously not the same as that in P4, however, the rendering is more likely to activate more interpretive possibilities in the receiving situation and open endless connections to other texts (Table 4).

CONCLUSION

The discovery that Chinese classic poetry is intertextually related with both *Hua'er* and English love poems offers ideas on strategies of translating romantic *Hua'er*. With Chinese classic poems serving as stepping stone and by referring to English love poems for analogous texts, the translator is able to construct intertextual relations within the renderings of romantic *Hua'er*. Through first-hand translation practice this study finds that: (1) those multiple intertexts contained in romantic *Hua'er* can be reproduced by substitution with similar ones in English, though the general local rural atmosphere is mostly lost in favor of familiar English cultural backdrop; (2) In spite of this loss, the translator should always watch out for any possibilities of retaining those intertexts with distinctive Chinese characteristics. And it turns out that the translator can achieve it without sacrifice on either side on some occasions. Despite that the renderings are carried out in the receiver-based way which means either cutting out or replacing the parts considered too foreign to be comprehended by the receiving readers, it is the translator's inescapable responsibility to allow the receiving readers chances to get access to new linguistic and cultural forms; and (3) certain situations require that the translator recontextualize the text in the receiving culture, followed by inevitable loss of not only the overall cultural atmosphere but also the prior intertextual properties during translation.

Translation is a frustrating activity if we look at the target text as a product, inadequacies and losses seem easily to be hunted and criticized against the source text. But we are also reminded of another outlook for translation that views

the target text as process, not "a self-contained object" to be judged under gauge of equivalence (Farahzad, 2009, p. 126). With the intertextuality perspective, there exist multiple interpretations of the same text and numerous possibilities of opening up dialogues with miscellaneous other texts. While the intertextual ties built between the romantic *Hua'er* and English love poems opens up a dialogue across time and space, it might be safe to assume that many other dialogues could be held as well by relating to other types of texts in English. It is in this sense that translation is, at last, a gain rather than a loss, for the source text gains a new lease of life and a new dimension of meaning every time it gets translated. This study explores only one possibility of establishing such dialogues between *Hua'er* and English language and culture. It is hoped that the study will attract further academic efforts in these unexplored areas.

END NOTES

1. The best example for the associative meaning of *Hua'er* is *A Dream of Red Mansions*. All major female characters represent certain types of flowers among whom are twelve remarkable ladies in *Jinling* (the old name for Nanjing), widely known as *Jinlingshier chai*. Each of them is represented by a particular flower. For instance, hibiscus is symbolic of *Lin Daiyu*; peony is symbolic of *Xue Baochai* and poppy are symbolic of *Wang Xifeng*. The flower images have been endowed with significant meanings in the book because they signify both the delicacy and stunning beauty of these females, as well as their inescapable fate of fleeting life, like that of flowers, then being forgotten in a feudal patriarchal society.
2. There still is no unanimous opinion as to the taxonomy of *Hua'er*. Presently, there exist schemes of classification on the basis of the regions, the ethnic minority groups, the artistic styles and musical features. One of the widely accepted one is two-type classification—"he huang *Hua'er*" and "tao min *Hua'er*". The former refers to *Hua'er* circulating along the Yellow River and *Huangshui* Valley, specifically provinces of *Gansu*, *Ningxia* and *Qinghai*. The latter mainly covers the *Tao-min* region of *Gansu* province.
3. The complete text of the folk song and its English rendition read as follows (Wang, 2008, p.10):

上邪！
我欲与君相知，
长命无绝衰！
山无陵，
江水为竭，
冬雷阵阵，
夏雨雪，
天地合，
乃敢与君绝。
Oh heaven above!
I'll shower you with my love.
Let it endure despite the fates above.
When the mountains do not raise high,
Or the rivers run dry,

Or winter thunders come by,
Or summer snows fly,
Or the earth meets the sky,
Only then shall I abandon my love!

4. The complete poem and its English translation are as follows (Bynner, 1994, p. 282):
劝君莫惜金缕衣，劝君惜取少年时。
花开堪折直须折，莫待无花空折枝。
Cover not a gold-threaded robe,
Cherish only your young days!
If a bud opens, gather it-
Lest you but wait for an empty bough.
5. The most directly related lines in Edmund Spenser's "Fresh Spring" are:
Make haste therefore, sweet love, whilst it is prime,
From none can call again in the passed time.
And the most directly related lines in Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" are as follows:
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor in thy marble vault shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust.
6. An excerpt of this poem is taken as follows:
My care is like my shadow in the sun,
Follows my flying, flies when pursue it,
Stands and lies by me, doth what I have done.
His too familiar care doth make me rue it.
No means I find to rid him from my breast,
Till by the end of things it be suppressed.

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