

China Research Seminar Series

*On Translation, Rewriting, and the Dynamics of
Yanyi (演義): A Perspective from Yu Xuelun's Xixiang ji
yanyi (喻血輪著《西廂記演義》) (1918)*



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On-line seminar

Register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEtc-yhrj0jGtHKT3ZrZ3RIQfj-CddTSDOX>

Abstract

Xixiang ji yanyi (1918) by Yu Xuelun is a modern narrative retelling of the love story between scholar Zhang and Cui Yingying, first celebrated in the Tang dynasty tale *Yingying zhuan* (or *Huizhen ji*) by Yuan Zhen and later immortalized in the theatrical adaptation *Xixiang ji* by Wang Shifu. Written in a lively literary Chinese, the novel creatively combines elements derived from its primary literary sources mediated via the commentary on *Xixiang ji* written by Jin Shengtan in the seventeenth century. Two terms in the paratextual apparatus concur to define the process of intertextual mediation informing the narrative retelling. The first one is *yanyi* (lit. elaboration of the meaning), which appears in the title. The second one is *yi* (translation), which repeatedly features in the prefatory and concluding remarks at the beginning and end of the novel. In this talk, I will explore how these practices of textual manipulation combine in the reconfiguration of the story of Zhang and Yingying. I will examine the strategies the author adopted at the macro- and microstructural level to produce his creative retelling and consider what this novel may reveal about the dynamics between *yanyi* and translation in the Chinese literary system and the history of translation in China.

Speaker

Barbara Bisetto holds a Ph. D. in Asian Studies from the University Ca' Foscari Venice and is currently Associate Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at the University of Verona. Her research interests focus on practices of metaliterary communication in the premodern period, particularly the role of commentary, anthologies, and miscellaneous collections in organizing and transmitting knowledge in the premodern textual culture. She is currently working on a project on the category of *yanyi* from the perspective of translation practices and textual genres.

