

# Interrogating Canonical World English Literature: *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to chart how literary work of non-Western origin is incorporated into World English Literature by giving example of two Chinese Classic Novels. Among the Chinese Classic Novels, *Journey to the West* is the novel that achieves wider popularity among Western scholars and canonized while other Chinese Classic Novels are not as popular especially among Western academia. The different reception is related also with how both novels are circulated, translated, and adapted from Chinese into English. The emphasis of this paper is to compare the issue of circulation, translation, and adaptation between *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as another Chinese Classic Novel. By comparing different issues of how both novels enter the Western World, this paper hopes to have an insight regarding how these two novels have different popularity among academic scholars.

*Keywords: charting World English Literature, Chinese classics novels*

## INTRODUCTION

This paper analyzes how *Journey to the West* is considered a canonical world literature while *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is only world literature, not canonical. To argue how both *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* can be considered as world literature, this paper briefly explores several concepts of world literature. World literature is first theorized by Goethe in his concept of *Welt literature*. Through *Welt literature*, Goethe theorizes the emergence of a universal world literature.<sup>1</sup> A key point of Goethe's assertion is universal. We see that in order

to become world literature, literature should be universal. In other word, literature should not only be accepted in their home country but is able to be received anywhere globally which highlights the universality of literature. Goethe's concept is further refined by Damrosch's emphasis on the circulation of world literature. In Damrosch's assertion, world literatures "encompass all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language."<sup>2</sup> He acknowledges the issue of circulation in world literature, how literature is able to be published beyond their origin which is unexplored by Goethe's previous statement.

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<sup>1</sup> Goethe, Q. (2000). Goethe's world literature paradigm and contemporary cultural globalization. *Comparative Literature*, 52(3), 215. Retrieved on 19 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771407>

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<sup>2</sup> Damrosch, D. (2003). *What is world literature?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Regarding the study of this paper, the emphasis is more on canonical world literature. Canonical world literature is more limited in scope compared to what Damrosch previously states. World literature in the concept of canonical world literature does not merely regard the fact that it is published out of its home region but more on how certain works have become canonized either in anthologies or in usage of World Literature courses. The emphasis of this paper is to compare two Chinese Classic Novels, *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The main point of the analysis is to argue the different reception of these aforementioned works, while *Journey of the West* has been canonized, the same cannot be said regarding *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Several considerations like translation, circulation and reception also become major concerns in this paper.

Before moving into the analysis, this paper reviews the different status between Eastern and Western literary works regarding world literature. In theory, world literature should encompass the whole world yet for some time, the idea of world literature was limited only to the study of the great works of Western tradition. Damrosch acknowledges that previously “World” literature usually only meant “Western European” literature.<sup>3</sup> This point is markedly seen in how several anthologies, *The Best of the World’s Classic* (1909) and *The Harvard Classics* is loaded with literature written from Western literary tradition. Although this situation changes in the present era, by what Damrosch coins as “opening of the canon<sup>4</sup>” in which world literature does not only includes Western canon, the relationship is still unequal.

An interesting issue is addressed by Hassan on his article “World Literature in the Age of Globalization: Reflections on an Anthology.” The main focus on his argument is to explore the different reception Eastern literature received compared to the Western literary work. One example is how Norton anthology of Eastern literature *Masterpieces of the Orient* is only considered as a companion volume to the *World Masterpieces* anthology.<sup>5</sup> Hassan then concludes that the title of the anthology series *World Masterpieces* is misleading and it is better for Norton to change the title from *World Masterpieces* into *Western Literature*.<sup>6</sup> This is exemplified by how the anthology for Eastern literature still regarded as a companion volume instead of a main volume.

Concluding these two scholar’s assessment, it can be noted that the position of Eastern literature is still on a disadvantage compared to the privileged Western literature. Although recently the canon has opened, the disparity of status between Western literary tradition and the non-West still remain. This issue is explored by Moretti through his idea of “one and unequal.<sup>7</sup>” The center of literature world remains the West while non-West literature is only considered as the periphery, not all of the non-West literary works can be included.

The lower priority given to Eastern literature compared to literature written by Western writers makes the selection to determine what should be considered World Literature from eastern tradition is harder, especially on the issue of canonization. As previously explored, more portion is still allocated towards the Western Canon,

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<sup>3</sup> Damrosch, D. (2000). World literature today: From the old world to the whole world. *Symplokē*, 8. Retrieved on 19 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40550471>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p, 7

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<sup>5</sup> Hassan, W. S. (2000). World Literature in the age of globalization: Reflections on an Anthology. *College English*, 63(1). Retrieved on 19 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/379030>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid p. 45

<sup>7</sup> Moretti, Franco. “Conjectures on World Literature.” *Debating World Literature*. Ed. Christopher Prendergast. (London, Verso, 2004) p, 150.

hence the non-West literary works scramble to fill out the smaller allocation of canonization. Canonization mainly involved whether a literary work is anthologized and become a regular in World Literature courses or not. Damrosch mentions several canonized Eastern Classic literary works such as *Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Tale of Genji*, and *Journey to the West*.<sup>8</sup>

The focus of this paper is mainly regarding the incorporation of *Journey to the West* into canonical World Literature. The canonical status of *Journey to the West* can be seen in how it is included in several World Literature anthologies and courses. *Journey to the West* is anthologized in *Longman Dictionary of World Literature*, *The Norton Anthology*, *Bedford Anthology* and as source material in Annenberg Learning<sup>9</sup> and Columbia University<sup>10</sup>. As *Journey to the West* is already established as a canonical world literature based on its inclusion in several anthologies, another Chinese Classic Novels, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not yet included. While both novels are popular in the East<sup>11</sup>, *Journey to the West* is more popular than *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in the West and is accepted as one of the canonical classic literature. In this paper's view, this differing status is related with how different the circulation, translation, and adaptation of the aforementioned novels are. These issues lead to different popularity of *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

<sup>8</sup> Damrosch, D. (2009). *How to read world literature*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

<sup>9</sup> Annenberg Learning, Invitation to World Literature. Web. 19 October 2015.

<sup>10</sup> "Teaching Journey to the West in World Literature Courses." Web, 19 October 2015. <<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/exeas/resources/pdf/teaching-journeytowest-worldlit.pdf>>

<sup>11</sup> Hargett, J. M. (1978). Review *World Literature Today*. 52(2). Retrieved on 16 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40132975>

## COMPARING THE CANONICAL STATUS OF *JOURNEY TO THE WEST* AND *ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS*

In this section, this paper compares the differing canonical status of *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The analysis highlights the issues of circulation, translation, and adaptation of both novels. Furthermore, this paper also explores the main theme of the aforementioned novels. The discussions will be divided into two main sections. First section compares the translation of *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Second section gives more emphasis on the circulation, adaptation, and the reception of the selected novels.

### Translation of *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

The first aspect in this paper is the issue of translation of *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Firstly, this paper explores how *Journey to the West* has been translated into English several times. The original version of *Journey to the West*, written in vernacular Chinese was believed to be written by Wu Cheng'en around 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The first English translation was done by Arthur Waley in 1943. There are several critiques regarding this first English translation. Lai criticizes how Waley translated the title as *Monkey*. In his view this is not quite proper, as the focus is not just on the Monkey King but more on the journey of the monk Tripitaka and his demon companions.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, *Monkey* by Waley does not quite capture the spirit or the real essence of this classic tale.

Another critique by Hargett also considers Arthur Waley's translation as flawed and

<sup>12</sup> Lai, W. (1994). From Protean ape to handsome saint: The monkey king. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 53(1), 29-65. Retrieved on 19 May 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1178559>

inadequate. He mentions how in Waley's translation many of the poems and even several chapters of the story are omitted.<sup>13</sup> More than 750 poems and one third of the original 100 chapters are not included in his translation. This is quite a notable reduction from the Chinese version. Furthermore, the omission of so many poems diminishes the beauty and the aesthetic impact of the Chinese text. Many of Classic Chinese novels include poem which is appropriate for a certain story, to better portray the mood during a particular scene. For example, there should be a lamentation poem depicting the sorrow of the Monkey King's failure to capture heaven during his fall from heaven. By omitting this particular poem, the reader will be unable to fully experience the tragic event of the Monkey King's downfall.

Moving into the second translation of *Journey to the West*, it was done by Anthony C. Yu in 1977. Compared to Waley's translation, Anthony's translation is more positively received. In his review Plaks compares two different translations by Waley and Anthony and comes to a conclusion that Waley's *Monkey* is a delightful book, but it is not the same book as the Chinese masterwork which Anthony Yu has set out to translate.<sup>14</sup> In other word, Waley's translation has eliminated certain elements unique to the story with his removal of poems and certain chapters. Therefore, Plaks believes that there is too much difference between the original text and Waley's *Monkey* so that they can be considered two separate texts.

In this paper's opinion, Anthony's translation is preferable to Waley's translation. Addressing the title, *Journey to the West* as translated by Anthony is more accurate compared to Waley's *Monkey* as it is really

a tale about a journey to the West. Furthermore, although Monkey is a main character, the story is not only concerning his redemption but also other characters such as Tripitaka, Zhu Bajie and Sha Wujing which all undergo a metaphorical journey to change their behavior, attitude in order to receive enlightenment as Buddhas. The second aspect is that Anthony's has a more complete translation. He does not only include the original poems and the missing chapters in Waley's version but he also includes a lengthy discussion about the work as a whole, with its historical and religious background. Hence, the reader will find Anthony's version easier to understand with all this additional information and also able to read the translated Chinese classical poems.

Moving into the issue of translation in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, this novel faced similar problem: the first translation was criticized while further translations were better received. The original version of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, written by Luo Guanzhong and edited by Mao Zonggang in 17<sup>th</sup> century was first translated to English by C.H Brewitt Taylor in 1925. West criticizes the fact that even though Taylor translated the whole text in full, many of Taylor's translation is too literal, and hence it is hard to understand.<sup>15</sup> This issue shows the difficulties in translating text especially from Chinese since Chinese has many difficult vocabularies and terminologies. Taylor chooses word by word translation, and he is criticized for his too literal translation. On the other hand, another translation by Moss Roberts is praised for his accuracy, and criticized for his abridged version. Unlike Taylor, Roberts does not translate *Romance of the Three Kingdom* words by words but by contextualization. His translation is praised for being accurate and

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<sup>13</sup> Hargett, James M. "Review" *World Literature Today*. P, 340.

<sup>14</sup> Plaks, A. H. (1977). Review. *MLN*, 92(5), 1116-1118. Retrieved on 16 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771407>

<sup>15</sup> West, A. C. (1995). Review. *Chinese Literature: Essay, articles, reviews (CLEAR)*, 17(-). Retrieved on 28 September 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/495562>

close to the original version, yet at the expense of removing many of the chapters and events.

The weaknesses of both translations in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* lead to the need of a better translation. Moss Roberts revised his translation in 1995 with the publication of *Three Kingdom: A Historical Novel*. Roberts acknowledges his mistake of omitting several chapters and in this version he includes the whole 120 chapters. What this writer prefers most in his revised translation is his afterword, “*About Three Kingdoms*”, which depicts the historical condition of that time. It tells how the Ming Dynasty tries to learn from the fall of the Han Dynasty as portrayed in this novel.<sup>16</sup> It also includes a list of characters and chronology of events, a must as this novel’s timeline spans more than 80 years with abundance of characters. Roberts’ annotations are also helpful to illustrate the difference between *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as a historical fiction and real historical event in *Record of the Three Kingdoms*. To sum up, not only the translation is accurate and flowing but also the additional information given by Roberts is helpful for readers to have better understanding of this story.

Comparing both translation of *Journey of the Three Kingdoms* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, this paper argues that *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* was disadvantaged by the fact that it took a long time to publish the single correct translation. This view is echoed also by West which stated that *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* lacked a complete and authoritative English translation before the publication of Roberts’ revised translation.<sup>17</sup> The single authoritative English translation

was only published in 1995. On the other hand English readers have been exposed to the complete version of *Journey of the West* as early as 1977. The almost-twenty-year gap between the publishing of the authoritative English translations of the two stories can lead to different reception, especially among academia and scholars since academia and scholars prefer to read the correct and complete translation of a non-English work.

As stated by Damrosch, scholars believe that most scholarly and literal translations of a text which are completed with notes make it easier to understand a culture and religion.<sup>18</sup> As literature is the mirror or the *mimesis* of the culture of production, having an authoritative translation is must to perfectly transmit the essence of a work. It is to make sure that the theme, message, and values from a given text are not lost in the translated text. The fact that complete translation of *Journey to the West* (1977) is published earlier than *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (1995) makes sure that Western academia have more time to be familiarized towards *Journey to the West*, which can influence their preference for canonization. This issue will be addressed in the next section.

### **Circulation, Reception, and Canonization of *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms***

After reviewing how both texts have been translated several times by different translator, the second aspect analyzed here is the issue of circulation and reception of these two texts. Concerning *Journey to the West*, several reviews have acknowledged the impact of the translation of this novel into the realm of world literature. Placks noted that

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<sup>16</sup> Moss, R. (1995). Afterword to the abridged version: About three kingdoms - Three kingdoms, a historical novel. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>17</sup> West, A. C. (1995). Review. *Chinese Literature: Essay, articles, reviews (CLEAR)*, 17(-). Retrieved on 28 September 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/495562>

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<sup>18</sup> Damrosch, D. (-). Annenberg Learning, Invitation to World Literature. Retrieved on 19 October 2015 from <https://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/art-of-translation/index.html>

the appearance of Waley's *Monkey* in 1943 is an event of great importance in World Literature, in that it brought to the attention of the English-speaking world one of the finest documents of the human spirit ever set down in paper<sup>19</sup>

It can be seen that from the first publication of the translated version, scholars have admitted that *Journey to the West* is a significant world literature novel. Through translation, people from Western tradition can read literature coming from the other part of the world such as China. The aforementioned passages praise that *Journey to the West* is "one of the finest documents of the human spirit", which illustrates the positive reception towards Waley's *Monkey* as the translated version.

The popularity of *Journey to the West* is also acknowledged by Hargett who states that, "few works of Chinese fiction have enjoyed more popularity with Chinese and Occident readers than *The Journey to the West*."<sup>20</sup> His assertion that *The Journey to the West* is popular not only among Chinese readers but also in Occident readers illustrates also how this novel has been considered a world literature since the first publication of Waley's *Monkey*. Moving into the second translation of *Journey to the West* by Anthony C Yu, Plack states how it "supersedes the best existing version, without having to do injustice to the prior work's value in its own right."<sup>21</sup> In other word, Anthony C Yu version is considered the definite complete version, but Waley's *Monkey* is still appreciated in line of his pioneering attempt to bring Classical Chinese novel into Western consciousness.

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<sup>19</sup> Plaks, A. H. (1977). Review. *MLN*, 92(5), 1116-1118. Retrieved on 16 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771407> p. 1116.

<sup>20</sup> Hargett, J. M. (1978). Review *World Literature Today*. 52(2). Retrieved on 16 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40132975> p. 342

<sup>21</sup> Plaks, A. H. (1977). Review. *MLN*, 92(5), 1116-1118. Retrieved on 16 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771407> p. 1117.

Regarding *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, West believes that it is the most well-known and the most popular novel in China.<sup>22</sup> Foo aptly summarizes this phenomenon:

Anyone familiar with Chinese society will find it virtually impossible to avoid hearing this phrase. *San Guo*, often referred to in western literature as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms (RTK)*. Take a flight to Beijing or Shanghai for a board of directors meeting on corporate strategy and you will find name such as "Cao Cao", "Liu Bei" or "Kong Ming" mentioned, with much more frequency than you will find any mention of "Shakespeare" in board meetings in London.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is the first Chinese novel translated into European language. The French translation by Theodore Pavié is entitled *Histoire des Trois Royaumes* (1845-1851). The first English translation by Taylor enables Western people to read this novel which has deep impact in Chinese culture, politics, society, and even military aspect.<sup>24</sup> Taylor's pioneering translation was refined by the availability of newer translation by Roberts with more additional information related to the historical condition and the significance of this novel in Chinese society.

Based on these two facts, we can say that both *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* can be categorized as World Literature, based on how it is being received outside their country of origin. Yet in this paper's perspective, there is a

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<sup>22</sup> West, A. C. (1995). Review. *Chinese Literature: Essay, articles, reviews (CLEAR)*, 17(-). Retrieved on 28 September 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/495562> p. 157

<sup>23</sup> Foo, C. (2008). Cognitive strategy from the romance of the three kingdoms. *Chinese Management Studies*, 2(3).

<sup>24</sup> West, A. C. (1995). Review. *Chinese Literature: Essay, articles, reviews (CLEAR)*, 17(-). Retrieved on 28 September 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/495562> p. 159

distinction among these two novels. *Journey to the West* is classified as canon, which to say it is included in curriculum and anthologies while *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not canonized. As the matter of canonization is related to the Western academia's opinion, this paper believes that the different status of two works is related on how it is being received and adapted in Western society.

This paper asserts that while *Journey to the West* is canonized, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not. The canonization of *Journey to the West* can be seen on how this novel is included in Damrosch's selection on world literature<sup>25</sup> and how it is considered required reading material in several universities such as Columbia University. On the other hand, few Western scholars analyze *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. This phenomena is addressed by McLaren, "the novel *Three Kingdoms* is one of the most famous of the classic narratives of Chinese culture, but also one of the least studied in the West."<sup>26</sup> McLaren's statement aptly exemplifies *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*' contrasting receptions from its original country, China, and the West. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not quite often analyzed academically in the West. As *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* attract less attention academically, it is hard for academia to include it in canonical World Literature. In this paper's perspective, the unpopularity of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is caused also by the adaptation of this work. The adaptation into movie or video mainly focuses on the war aspect and neglecting other important classical Confucianism values which are actually attributed in this novel.

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<sup>25</sup> Damrosch, D. (-). Annenberg Learning, Invitation to World Literature. Retrieved on 19 October 2015 from <http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/journey-to-the-west/watch>

<sup>26</sup> McLaren, A. (2008). Reviewed Work: *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture* by Kimberly Besio, Constantine Tung. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 71(2), 383-385. Retrieved on 20 October 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40378786>

While *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is rather unknown among academia and scholars, actually *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has many famous adaptations in popular culture. It has been adapted into several movies and the danger is that the movie adaptation is surpassing the original novel in popularity. Adaptation being one problem of literature nowadays is that it is being neglected in favor of movie adaptation. John Woo's acclaimed two-part movie *Red Cliff* (2008-2009) is one of the more popular adaptation. Joint produced by Taiwan and Hollywood, this movie depicts one of the chapters of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* where Wei Kingdom battles Sun-Liu coalition. One review by The Guardian acknowledges it as, "the classiest and most fabulous blockbuster of the summer."<sup>27</sup> The constant warfare between the three rival kingdoms and heroes who rise in each side make this novel easy to be adapted into media. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is also adapted into TV serial, most recent is *Three Kingdoms* (2010) which has 95 episodes.

Other adaptations of *Romance of Three Kingdoms* as video games are also quite popular among American youth. Perhaps the most famous gaming adaptation of this novel comes from Japanese publisher KOEI with the title "Dynasty Warriors." KOEI acknowledges the potential of American market and manages the franchise to remain strong after its eighth installation by translating the dialogues of Dynasty Warriors from Japanese into English to attract Western gamers. While "Dynasty Warriors" emphasizes on the heroism of individual heroes, there are also adaptations into strategic war games such as "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" where the player controls the entire nation

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<sup>27</sup> Solomons, J. Red Cliff-Review. *The Guardian*. Retrieved on 30 September 2015 from <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/jun/14/red-cliff-john-woo>

instead of individual units. Based on how *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has been adapted across multiple media, it can create misleading perspective that this novel is an example of popular culture instead of “high genre” literature. Especially as the adaptation neglects important values such as piety, brotherhood, and Confucianism in favor of only simplistically focuses on the battles, wars, and conflicts.

Regarding the issue of canonization, it is undeniable that the theme and central message of a story is also considered as a factor to canonize a work or not. This paper reviews what make *Journey to the West* to be canonized in the West by quoting several statements by prominent scholars. Firstly, Damrosch acknowledges the Buddhist influences in this novel and how the theme in this story is to be redeemed and become Buddha.<sup>28</sup> From his statement we can see that scholars believes that there is significant religious influence found in *Journey to the West* and they are interested to explore it more by analyzing the novel and also to teach it in their academic occupation. Another scholar, Adams from Columbia University, believes that “given the accessibility of the text, *Journey to the West* works well in courses in world literature, world novel, and Asian studies.”<sup>29</sup> This is related not only to the translated version but on how this novel can be found in many anthologies which make the circulation of this novel for academic purpose is easier. Adams also believes that the idea of community, fellowship, love, or respect is pivotal in *Journey to the West*.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Damrosch, D. (-). Annenberg Learning, Invitation to World Literature. Retrieved on 19 October 2015 from <http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/journey-to-the-west/watch>

<sup>29</sup> Adams, R. E. "Teaches *Journey to the West* in World Literature Courses." Retrieved on 20 October 2015 from <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/exeas/resources/pdf/teaching-journeytowest-worldlit.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Adams, R. E. "Teaches *Journey to the West* in World Literature Courses." Retrieved on 20 October 2015 from <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/exeas/resources/pdf/teaching-journeytowest-worldlit.pdf>

Several aspects mentioned as the main theme in *Journey to the West* such as religion, fellowship, and respect actually can also be found in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Regarding religious influence, while Buddhism due to the time frame depicted in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not dominant, Confucian values such as filial piety and honor are prevalent themes. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is disadvantaged by the fact that the most well-known source is not the novel itself but the adaptation, and none of its adaptations focuses on these particular themes. Hence, it can lead to misleading and simplistic perception that *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is only a story about war among the Three Kingdoms. Yet in truth, this work is a complex representation of traditional Chinese virtues and values. It is only that *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is disadvantaged compared to *Journey to the West* in term of translation, circulation, and adaptation that this work does not receive wider acclaim from the academic world.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up this paper, this paper asserts that both *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* can be classified as World Literature based on Goethe and Damrosch’s concept. Both novels are accepted not just in their home culture but also in Western world. The different aspect regarding these two novels is *Journey to the West* is canonized while *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not. This paper states that the lack of single authoritative translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* until the publication of Moss Robert’s version in 1995 causes this work to be less prominent among academia.

*Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is also disadvantaged in several other aspects be-

side translation. The fact that *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is not being anthologized makes the circulation of this novel is limited, while *Journey to the West* which has been anthologized makes it is easier to be used in curriculum. Another important aspect is how the popular adaptations of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* which eliminates much of its religious issue and central themes make it is being disregarded only as a war or martial arts movie or games. On the other hand, scholars admit that *Journey to the West* has diverse themes and religious background which also make it more appropriate to be taught as canonical work.

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