
Curricular Requirements, Critical Traditions, and Adaptation in the Paratext of Chinese and American School Editions of Robinson Crusoe

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Haifeng Hui,

"Curricular Requirements, Critical Traditions, and Adaptation in the Paratext of Chinese and American School Editions of *Robinson Crusoe*"

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Abstract: In his article "Curricular Requirements, Critical Traditions, and Adaptation in the Paratext of Chinese and American School Editions of *Robinson Crusoe*" Haifeng Hui analyses a Chinese new curricular edition and an American common core edition of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* to reveal how the paratext can be utilized to reveal different ways of understanding in different educational cultures. He argues that the paratext powerfully exerts the publisher's authority over the text and the reader, thus shaping readers' interpretation of the story in the service of fulfilling specific national curricular needs. The Chinese edition aims more at how Crusoe's story should be understood primarily as a material for drawing traditional moral lessons, whereas the American edition treats it more as a reading material to develop student's reading and writing skills. The two culturally and pedagogically different editions show how different cultures fit Defoe's world classic into their national educational systems.

Haifeng HUI

Curricular Requirements, Critical Traditions, and Adaptation in the Paratext of Chinese and American School Editions of *Robinson Crusoe*

Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has been an ever-green success since its publication and has transcended national boundaries to become a world classic for adults as well as for children. Its enduring popularity paves its way into the recommendation list for students, resulting in the thriving proliferation of different school editions of the novel, few of which are without some degrees of adaptations. It would be interesting to note how different national school editions differ in their treatment of the same novel that was written almost three hundred years ago, in a quite different historical, cultural and literary context. Yet the work of analysis could also be done in a shortcut—this is where Genette's concept of the paratext comes in handy. Instead of focusing on the numerous, complicated and sometimes heterogeneous textual adaptations and transformations, which may be constrained by the principle of faithfulness to the original, among other practical factors, and are therefore obscure to analyze, this paper delves into the supplemented question section in the school edition, where the adapter may, with greater freedom, make clear of his intention—direction of how students are supposedly to read, understand and process the novel. In this light, the paper tries to shed some light into the understanding of the relationship between the text and the paratext, and to reveal how the adapters make use of the paratext to achieve their pedagogical goals, which are found to be quite different in the Chinese and the American school editions.

Gerard Genette's concept of the paratext was first introduced in *Palimpsestes* (1982) and then elaborated in *Seuils* (1987). Since then, the concept has aroused the interest of narratologists as well as experts in the field of printing, book history, media studies and general literary studies. For convenience, the present paper uses Genette's definition of the paratext—"what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public" (Genette, *Thresholds* 1).

During the process of reading, the paratext serves as a label, similar to the label placed under an exhibited artwork in a museum, ensuring a "correct" or desirable way of understanding and interpreting the work. The label, or the paratext, plays two functions: providing explanations, clues and suggestions for understanding and at the same time limiting the possibilities or even the freedom of interpreting these works by the same act of providing a desirable interpretation. The desired interpretation gathers its authority from the author, or those connected with the author, such as the publisher, the translator, or a celebrity invited by the author to write the foreword. In this way the paratext forms a framework under which the literary work is presented and is to be consumed. This framework is often exposed, doubted, or even criticized, especially by the experienced reader or especially when the relationship between the paratext and the text is not so harmonious. But in the case of the school edition of a literary classic, readers usually unconsciously choose to subscribe to the interpretative framework of the paratext instead of challenging or questioning it, partly because of the young reader's yet uncritical reading habits, and partly because of most readers' common way of endorsing educational materials that are supposed to be written under curricular guidelines. In this sense, educational materials are one of the sites where the paratext can best fulfill its labeling potential.

The school editions of *Robinson Crusoe*, together with those of other literary classics, in China and the US, as well as in many other countries, stem out of the educational effort to better integrate and make use of literary classics in language courses. The value of literary canons in the classroom has long been recognized, but how they should be utilized to suit today's changing educational goals is being heatedly debated.

Under the pressure of a general consensus of the outdatedness of the existing curriculum and textbooks and at the same time spurred by the international trend in educational reform for more rigorous curricular standards in the UK, the US, Korea and other countries, the Ministry of Education of China conducted a large-scale education reform experiment (from grade 1 to grade 9) in several provinces from 2001-2010, and, based on the experiment, it released the New Curricular Standards in Compulsory Education (NCSCE). The new curricular standards include Chinese, Mathematics, English and Science. Compared with the previous standards of the Chinese course, the new standards attach more importance to reading and spell it out requirements in specific figures. In Appendix 2, the new standards provide suggestions concerning the reading of literary classics:

Students should have read more than four million words—characters of after-class reading materials, including books and magazines. It is suggested: "For novels, such as Wu Chengen's *Journey to the West*, Shi Naian's *The Outlaws of Marsh*, Lao She's *Luotuo Xiangzi*, Luo Guangbin and Yang Yiyang's *Hongyan*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Emily Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Maxim Gorky's *Childhood*, Nikolay Ostrovsky's *How the Steel is Tempered*." (要求学生 9 年课外阅读

总量达到 400 万字以上, 阅读材料包括适合学生阅读的各类图书和报刊。对此提出如下建议: "... 长篇文学名著, 如吴承恩《西游记》、施耐庵《水浒》、老舍《骆驼祥子》、罗广斌、杨益言《红岩》、笛福《鲁宾逊漂流记》、斯威夫特《格列佛游记》、夏洛蒂·勃朗特《简·爱》、高尔基《童年》、奥斯特洛夫斯基《钢铁是怎样炼成的》" [Ministry of Education, *Curricular Standards* [41]]

There are too many literary classics to be included in the textbook, which also has to accommodate informational texts. Therefore, it is a practical consideration to divert them into after-class reading materials, which is the origin of this recommended reading list. At the same time, it also has to balance the proportion of Chinese literary classics and western literary classics (Hui, "Appropriating *Robinson Crusoe*" 694). The fact that *Robinson Crusoe* is included in this inexhaustive list which contains only four Chinese novels and five world classics attests to the canonical role of the novel. Publishers soon detected the lucrative opportunities underlying the recommended reading list. In a short time a dozen of especially-tailored editions that conform to the new standards came out in the book market and quickly became the majority of children's editions. It is in this sense that these books are tagged as school editions.

Similarly, in the US, the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) was established in 2009 as the result of the standards-based education movement over the past twenty years. The National Governors Association convened a group of experts working on the standards. The goal of CCSSI is to "ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they live" (CCSSI, "English Language Art Standards"). In the past, education curriculum in the US have long been controlled at state and local levels, and there have been complaints of low quality of graduates for the job market and colleges, as well as their being less competitive with students from other countries (Kendall, *Understanding Common Core State Standards* 2). The most convincing evidence is the 2004 report *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*. The initiative tries to draft vigorous and state shared standards to change the situation and, under the incentive of competitive federal Race to Top grants at the early stage, now forty-two states and D.C. have adopted the standards at state level. The CCSS currently includes English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics, and it sets only the standards instead of the contents for these courses. It does not give a reading list for ELA, although it sets the distribution of literature and informational texts in the textbook, which has been criticized by Lisa Zunshine for its hidden hypothesis of the higher value of informational texts for vocabulary-building and hence for academic success. The wide adoption of Common Core State Standards provides opportunities for publishers (some publishers, such as Pearson, sponsored the drafting of the common standards and later published textbooks based on the common standards) to publish new textbooks and after-school materials that are "Common Core Aligned," which are strongly encouraged by schools under the directives of school districts at local and state levels. These books and educational materials sound more appealing to parents, as it has been widely advertised that the common core standards set more rigorous and globally competing standards that prepare students' readiness for career and colleges.

The selected school edition of *Robinson Crusoe* is published by Hebei Youth and Children's Press. It is carefully designed, profusely illustrated, and lavishly wrapped. The front cover comes with a black label that reads "New Curricular Standards in Compulsory Education: Classics Book House" (新课标名著小书坊). Below the cover picture is a text box, set in crimson in contrast with the blue and brown in the picture, and the text are three lines in white. The first line reads "Every growing boy should read the adventurous and inspirational story of the tough guy Robinson Crusoe" (每个成长中的男孩子都应该阅读硬汉鲁滨逊的冒险励志故事). In Chinese, "tough guy Robinson Crusoe" comes first, followed by "adventurous and inspirational story." These introductory adjectives direct readers' attention towards Crusoe's strong determination and adventure, and wiping out possible admiration for his skill of gaining profits that finally makes him a self-made man. It indicates a recognizable emphasis in understanding and admiring Crusoe in terms of his determination and survival skills and downplays money fetishisation apparent in Defoe's original. The second line reads "The first novel in English literary history, an ever-lasting classic in world literature treasures" (英国文学史上第一部长篇小说, 世界文学宝库中一部不朽的名著). The third line uses a much larger font size, almost twice as large, to emphasize its importance: "Recommended reading by the Ministry of Education 'New Curricular Standards in Compulsory Education'" (教育部《义务教育语文课程标准》推荐阅读), which gives the whole cover a semi-official flavor. The lines are aligned to the left, and on the left side of the bottom is the shape of a gold medal that reads "Beautifully-illustrated Library" (美绘馆).

The flip of the front cover page includes an introduction to Defoe, which ends with a commentary on Crusoe: "The protagonist, Crusoe, deeply impresses every reader with his pursuit of adventure and hard work" (书中主人公鲁滨逊身上流露出的追求冒险和个人奋斗的气质深深震撼着每一位读者). It echoes with

the first line in the text box on the front cover page and underscores the adapter's effort to guide readers to understand the novel from the perspective of Crusoe's adventure. Defoe's original novel contains multiple topics and themes. Ian Watt in his famous *The Rise of the Novel* has discussed individualism, religious issues, and the entertaining function of narrating manual work details in a society with intensive division of labor. The novel's topics produce different effects on different readers. For Defoe's contemporary adult readers, what Watt terms "myth of modern individualism" (7) made up its primary charm. But Sarah Trimmer, an early nineteenth-century English educator, warned against the potential danger of children imitating Crusoe's acts with two sad examples of children who left home against parental orders and finally died (O'Malley, "Crusoe at Home" 337). Hence the importance of choosing the "right" perspective in understanding the novel for a specific reader group is clearly shown, and it is reasonable that the Chinese school edition shows an interest in Crusoe's determination and survival skills, as demonstrated by the picture design and the commentary lines on the cover, while abandoning the theme of pursuing money. The semi-official air of being recommended by the new curricular standards further endorses and solidifies this endeavor.

The foreword written for the whole series further makes explicit the intention of the adaptation. It begins with a paragraph expounding on the importance of reading world classics, then proceeds to the publication of this series of "New Curricular Standards: World Classics Book House" (新课标名著小书坊). After giving examples of what young readers can gain from reading classics, the foreword announces in the last paragraph that "Passively accepting is not the best way to read books. Young readers should learn to read books in a more active way, that is, to taste the flavor of the classics, to acquire their essence, and finally to be able to use them" (仅仅被动地接受并不是最正确的读书方法。这里,小朋友们还应该学会更主动、更积极地读书,做到品味经典、汲取精华、感悟真谛,最终为我所用 [Foreword [2]]). What, then is this essence? This concern is the guiding principle in the adaptation of Defoe's original novel for primary school students, and should be born in mind when analyzing the designed questions.

The question section is the most prominent feature of a school edition—though it is true that some school editions do not supplement such a section. The text-story may offer entertaining reading, but the question section is unmistakably educational. It is meant to help, especially those who read the book for pure pleasure and might easily forget what the book is about. It helps readers to recall important characters, events, plots and builds them up to a pedagogical conclusion. It is especially highly valued in China, where the need to study hard in order to pass exams manifests itself in every classroom. This high regard can be demonstrated by the title of this section "Mock Exam of Required Knowledge" (135).

The question section contains three different kinds of questions: multiple choices, true or false questions and mini essay questions. The first two kinds are about details and facts, such as Crusoe's birth place, the location of his plantation, etc. The mini essay questions part, on the contrary, concerns the reader's understanding and judgment of the story and is of our major interest here. There are four questions in this part:

1. Why didn't Crusoe's parents agree on his going to sea?
2. When Crusoe came back from the island, was he poverty-stricken?
3. What did Crusoe mainly live on when he was on the island? How did he do it?
4. How did Crusoe leave the island and return to England? (132-33)

1. 鲁滨逊的父母为什么不同意他出海?
2. 鲁滨逊从荒岛回来后变得一穷二白了吗? 为什么?
3. 鲁滨逊在荒岛上主要靠什么生活? 他是怎么做的?
4. 鲁滨逊是如何离开荒岛, 回到英国的? (132-33)

These questions reveal what the adapter wants the young reader to notice, to think about, and to understand. They reflect the school edition's educational purpose and priorities, and serve as a baton that draws readers' attention to the desired perspective of how they should understand and interpret the story. The first question touches upon the conflict between Crusoe and his parents on whether he could go to sea. It is the first important conflict in the story. This is where Crusoe's modern individualism begins to divert from old filial obedience. It is also the reason that Crusoe gives to his later sufferings. Although the importance of the issue was recognized long ago in the west, the moral context and justification for the necessity of obeying parental orders are quite different in China. Sarah Trimmer mainly considered the issue from its practical consequences, such as the case that children might encounter danger if they didn't listen to their parents and left home. But the very act of children's diso-

beying or challenging parental authority is itself a serious moral issue regardless of its real consequences. The Chinese people indeed hold a much higher regard for filial piety. The old Chinese proverb that "Filial piety is number one among the one hundred virtues" is widely spread in every household for thousands of years and has become a deep-rooted guiding principle. The spirit of filial duty persists well into modern China, and here the first question serves as a good illustration. It should also be pointed out that the question is posed from the perspective of Crusoe's parents. Instead of asking why Crusoe left home and went to sea against his parents' orders, the subject of the sentence reveals a subconscious attitude of the questioner in the matter of the conflict between Crusoe and his parents, that is, which party is on the right side. The adapter uses Crusoe's parents as the subject of the question and places Crusoe as the object, which implicitly conveys his endorsement of the parents' decisions. Another possible reason why Crusoe is not chosen as the subject is because that would probably arouse readers' feeling that Crusoe is doing something wrong and would easily threaten Crusoe's role as an exemplary hero. Therefore, the present way of posing the first question is a careful and subtle compromise of implicitly pointing out Crusoe's wrongdoing without ruining his positive image. The question gives an unmistakable sense of moral teaching and sets up the tone for the overall judgment of the protagonist.

The second question touches upon another important issue in the adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe* for children—money fetishisation. The two inter-related dangers in Defoe's novel for children are disobeying parental orders and money fetishisation, both of which are moral issues. The fact that both questions are raised in the paratextual question section of the Chinese school edition clearly indicates an awareness of these dangers and the priority of moral education when adapting the novel. In order to remain faithful to the original, which is a principle that the "Classics Book House," or any other school edition, has to observe (considering the fact that there are more than a dozen of different school editions that claim to conform to the NCSCE, which stipulates that primary school students should read a wide range of world classics, all such editions should remain faithful to the original works, despite different degrees of abridgements and minor textual changes, to ensure that readers of different school editions read the same story and can answer the same questions), it cannot change the ending of Defoe's original, but it employs other available devices of adaptation to meet moral considerations. On the one hand, it drastically reduces the length of the ending to only three pages. Defoe's original ending covers twenty-four pages in the Oxford World Classics edition, in which the account of his family members takes up only two paragraphs and the rest of which are all about his travelling and business activities. The ending in the Chinese school edition lengthens the account of Crusoe's family and greatly shortens other accounts. An illuminating example to show the nature of these changes is the moment when Crusoe turned pale and grew sick after he heard about his sudden fortunes from the plantation. In Defoe's original, the story goes on in this way: "Nay after that, I continu'd very ill, and was so some Hours, 'till a Physician being sent for, and something of the real Cause of my Illness being known, he order'd me to be let Blood; after which, I had Relief, and grew well" (239). In contrast, the Chinese school edition goes in this way: "I suddenly became from poverty-stricken to a man of five thousand pounds plus an annual one thousand pounds from the Brazilian plantation. This sudden joy took away my rational part and I only recovered gradually after my doctor let some blood for me" (我突然间从一个穷光蛋变成了一个拥有五千英镑的人, 另外巴西的种植园每年还会寄给我一千英镑的利润。突如其来的欣喜使我失去了理性, 后来我请医生为我放了点血, 才渐渐恢复过来 [129]). The word "rational" resolutely sets Crusoe's sudden joy in a negative tone, condemning it as irrational. In this fashion, money fetishisation in the original is cleansed in the Chinese school edition. This is exactly where the second question draws the reader's attention to, hoping them to digest the significance of the adaptation. The third and the fourth questions do not linger on the moral teaching of the story and turn to Crusoe's survival skills.

To conclude, the essay questions in the paratext are well-arranged and balanced. The first two questions deal with the most important moral problems inherent in Defoe's original novel: disobedience of parental orders and money fetishisation. Through careful design of the questions and alluding to those episodes that have been especially adapted by the school edition, they aim at directing the reader's attention to the moral teachings of the story, which is a perfect echo with the purpose stated in the foreword that readers should "find out their essence and make the best use of it" (感悟真谛, 最终为我所用 [Foreword [2]]). The other two questions deal with the theme of survival. Here, the moral teachings are undoubtedly the "essence."

For the Common Core edition of the novel, this paper selects an edition published by Stone Arch Books in 2015, titled *Robinson Crusoe*, one of its *Graphic Revolve* series. The series includes more than twenty titles, which cover "high" world literary classics (as its Chinese counterpart does) such as

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, *Two Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, as well as more popular classics, such as *Dracula*, and retold epics, such as *Perseus and Medusa*. Titles in the series share a similar front cover design, with almost the upper half of the front cover occupied by the title in bold letters, and four illustrations from the story on the lower cover page. The cover page is considerably succinct compared with the Chinese one. The flip of the front cover gives a note that the back matter (the supplemented question section) is written by Dr. Katie Monnin, an associate professor of literacy at the University of North Florida. Dr. Monnin is an expert in literacy and the graphic novel, and has written several monographs in the area. The back cover of her book *Teaching Early Reader Comics and Graphic Novels* advertises her familiarity in dealing with national standards and the reading list: "Engage even the youngest readers with Dr. Monnin's standards-based lessons and strategic approach to teaching comics and graphic novels to early readers! Examples ... including multicultural models and recommended reading lists ..." (back cover).

The question section is divided into two parts. Part I is "Common Core Aligned: Reading Questions," and Part II is "Common Core Aligned: Writing Questions." The title "Common Core Aligned" works in a way similar to its Chinese counterpart and gives the section an air of authority. Part I has three questions:

1. What does Robinson Crusoe do before he boards the ship that ultimately sinks in a storm? (*"Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it: cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text."*)

2. Describe the storm that ultimately destroys the ship. And, moreover, how Crusoe manages to survive. (*"Interpret words and phrases..."*)

3. How does Robinson Crusoe change over the years he spent on the deserted island? Find five examples of change in his appearance, personality, or perspective. (*"Analyze how and why..."*) (68, italics and quotation marks original)

These questions are drastically different from those in the Chinese school edition in focus and perspective. The questions in the Chinese school edition divide the story structurally and thematically into three parts according to Crusoe's landing/leaving of the island. The island experience is sorted out in this way and becomes the focal part. It is on the island that Crusoe exhibits amazing survival skills, and it is also the lonely and difficult struggling years on the island that are regarded as the punishment for his previous wrongdoing of disobeying parental orders. The island serves as a convenient organizing clue for Chinese readers to make sense of the story. In contrast, the Common Core edition provides an alternative of understanding and using the same story by centering on the storm instead. Here, the three questions are about Crusoe's pre-storm activities, the storm disaster, and after-storm years. They lead students to construct the story according to this tripartite structure. This way of organizing the story weakens the ethical link between Crusoe's disobedience and later suffering on the island, and it focuses on the dramatic difficulty of surviving the storm. Instead, the result of this different organization is not simply a series of questions on the details of the novel, but a different perspective to organize, understand and conceptualize the meanings of these details, especially those of Crusoe's behaviors. Thus, American elementary school students are not directed towards the moral lessons as the Chinese students are, and the effect of this different treatment is further enhanced by instructions bracketed at the end of each question. Take the instruction for the first question as an example. Different from the content-based questions in the Chinese school edition, the instruction here is methodologically-based and indicates a distinctive literacy-teaching orientation. It asks the reader to read, determine the meaning, infer, cite and conclude. In this way, literacy training has taken the place which moral understanding and instillation occupy in the Chinese school edition, which by contrast highly values the reader's personal understanding or evaluation of the protagonist. It demonstrates Dr. Monnin's specialty in and adherence to literacy teaching and standard-informed procedures. It also echoes with the Common Core guidelines that "the first anchor standard for reading revolves around the reader making inferences from the text" (Wadham and Ostenson, *Integrating Young Adult Literature* 195). The emphatic italics and quotation marks draw attention to the instruction itself and give it an air of immediacy as if it were spoken by a teacher in the classroom, as well as extra authority. The third question goes beyond the details of the story and asks readers to make gradual conclusion from the most concrete aspect of Crusoe (e.g. his appearance) to more abstract aspect of his personality and finally to the overall summary of his worldview. It is a continuance of the previous two questions. Again, in terms of moral education, which the Chinese school edition apparently takes as an important mission, the Common Core edition turns out to be more neutral in its instance, almost to the degree of being disinterested. Even so, the very act of mentioning that there is a change in Crusoe's world view still demonstrates an implicit awareness in Dr. Monnin's mind that Crusoe has undergone a series of thorough changes, of which the most important one is ideological, if

not moral. The way Dr. Monnin arranges these changes, that is, by putting Crusoe's change in worldview as the last in a sequence that is clearly ordered from the more concrete and less important to the more abstract and more significant, shows Dr. Monnin's opinion that this change in perspective is the most important and that its full meaning and importance should not be missed by the young and possibly inexperienced reader. Therefore, though what exactly is the kind of worldview change it is not revealed (even by the tone), its very mentioning in the third question is undoubtedly a confirmation of the existence of moral education, both in the question designer's mind who seems to be preoccupied only by literacy training and in the young reader's mind who will be subtly influenced by the question.

Part II "Common Core Aligned: Writing Prompts" also contains three prompts:

1. What are some ways someone could survive on a deserted island? Consult multiple resources (the Internet, texts from the library, or teachers). Then write about how you would survive on a deserted island.

2. Write a list of activities you would do if you and Friday were friends and stranded on the deserted island in this book.

3. In a couple of paragraphs, explain what you think Robinson's most challenging experience is on the island (69, instructions omitted here).

These questions contrast sharply with those in Part I in terms of the required skills and focus. The reading questions are strictly limited to textual analysis and therefore emphasize evidence, textual support and logical deduction. On the contrary, the writing prompts require the young reader to make use of their imagination and to conduct creative writing, though it is still based on the information given in the story. The larger space given to imagination can be demonstrated in the move from the first prompt, which is about survival skill on the deserted island, to the second prompt, which is more open to imagination since it is about how to pass the lonely years without having to consider basic survival questions. The last prompt, again, like the third question in Part I, goes beyond the particulars to the more abstract level of summarization.

On the whole, the reading questions in the Common Core edition stresses textual analysis skill, including paying attention to details, telling diction and tone, identifying logic, making inference, citing and supporting arguments, while the writing prompts stresses drawing on multiple sources, research, imagination, and arranging details and structure in compositions. The two parts conform well to the Common Core requirements on reading and writing. Their focus is primarily placed on language skills and carefully avoids moral teachings. There is no notable trace of heroicizing the protagonist, nor any effort to suggest to the reader mimicking Crusoe's exemplary acts. The stance is well kept on the neutral position.

The Chinese school edition and the American Common Core edition of *Robinson Crusoe* are similar in nature. Both are adapted to meet specific curricular standards of their countries. Both remain faithful to Defoe's original, though some details have been deleted or modified. Yet they differ fundamentally in their use of the same original novel. The above analysis shows that the Chinese school edition prioritizes "correct" evaluation of the protagonist and inspirations derived from reading the story (the "essence"). The issue of how to interpret Crusoe's character is central to all the questions in the appended material. The Common Core edition, on the contrary, takes a more neutral stance in terms of the understanding of the story and emphasizes making inference and citing details to support the reader's argument. It is more pedagogy-informed and instructs students to analyze diction, tone, structure and theme.

These differences in the paratext are not contingent—they reflect specific curricular requirements in China and the US. The NCSCE stipulate: "For narrative works, students should know the basic plots, be able to describe the most impressive scene, character and detail, tell their feelings of like, dislike, admiration, sympathy, etc. after reading the text" (阅读叙事性作品, 了解事件梗概, 能简单描述自己印象最深的场景、人物、细节, 说出自己的喜爱、憎恶、崇敬、向往、同情等感受 [13]). It is apparent that the NCSCE stress the reader's response and understanding during the reading process, with an ultimate goal of absorbing the essence, which in most cases is a desirable characteristic of an exemplary figure, an inspirational ideal, or a moral lesson. Its primary nature is moral, which is stated in its goals. According to the new standards, the Chinese course has ten goals, the first one of which is "to foster patriotism, collectivism, socialist morals and healthy aesthetic standards" (培养爱国主义、集体主义、社会主义思想道德和健康的审美情趣 [6]). Literacy is ranked as the third goal. In this light, it is understandable that it does not pay as much attention to the "technical" details as the American counterpart does:

1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

3. Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution (CCSSI, *Common Core State Standards* 36).

The Common Core standards show a more analytical way of understanding the text, while at the same time stress being objective, which is described in the second point. The third point, about the characters and their relationship to the plot, adopts the Aristotelian way of analyzing a literary text, which has been repeated in the CCSS throughout, in Grade 2 "understanding of its characters, setting, or plot" (11), in Grade 3 "compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters" (12). However, there is hardly any similar requirement on the analytical thinking of the text in the NCSCE; instead, they focus on rhetorical devices, imageries, characters, and ideals.

The sharp differences in the curricular requirements are, if we trace them still deeper and try to locate their source in a more fundamental framework, are in fact guided by traditional Chinese and American literary aesthetics. The traditional Chinese literary principle is "writing for conveying truths." Truths here can be understood as ordinary truths, but they can also mean what Zongqi Cai terms "the Ultimate Reality" (107). Writing (the original meaning of "literature") is never regarded as an end in itself or being appreciated merely for its own intrinsic values, but is always viewed as an expression or means to some object external to the sphere of language, which are finally all part of the "harmonizing process" (Zongqi, *Configurations of Comparative Poetics* 107). Zongqi Cai argues that, different from the western critical tradition which takes shift in its four dimensions (cosmos, author, reader, the work), the Chinese critical tradition does not take shift to rearrange antithetical paradigms but rather adjusts and modifies understanding of the relationship within the non-dualistic harmonizing process (107). In this light, what the Chinese curricular editions concern about is in fact how those novels manifest the Ultimate Reality. Moral cultivation has always been an integral or even indispensable part of the study of literature. It is for this reason that moral education has been foregrounded and kept as a guiding principle in the studying of literature, and there is no wonder that the modern school edition emphasizes that extracting the essence (often in the form of an aphorism, a moral lesson, or a desirable characteristic), instead of passively reading through the pages, is the "right" way to read books. In many cases, the essence involves moral education. It should also be noted that the overwhelming majority of editors are graduates from the Chinese Departments in universities, whose training makes them conversant with traditional Chinese literary aesthetics, thus continuing the literary tradition into today's school editions.

Likewise, the American Common Core standards' emphasis on how students should read the story can be described as stemming from the Aristotelian tradition of the study of literary forms. Moreover, New Criticism's notion of literary works as self-contained prioritizes formal analysis. It values the intrinsic linguistic and aesthetic value of a literary work, which perfectly suits the pedagogical aim of the Common Core standards at literacy education. Literary and intellectual movements after the New Criticism, especially structuralism and deconstructionism, lay as much emphasis on formal analysis and the parsing of the literary language. The current enthusiasm in exploring social and political implications of literary works in the academe remains largely outside of standards designers' community, which is dominated by the tradition of literacy training and aims at an objective more practical and more appealing to parents' goal, to: "build a foundation for college and career readiness in language" (CCSSI, *Common Core State Standards* 10). Here is an interesting shift of practicality of literature and moral education. The Chinese literary tradition is practical in the sense that it often regards literature more as a practical tool for conveying truths (moral lessons), which are often deemed "lofty" (not so practical) in the present commercial society. The American literary tradition tends to regard literature as works of art, but the importance attached to formal analysis nowadays is in fact motivated by practical benefits for the reader's qualifications in the job market. Anyway, no matter how practicality twists and turns in different cultures or between tradition and present practices, it lies undoubtedly and unmistakably there behind the school editions.

The supplemented question section is peculiar to school editions among all editions. It derives its momentum from the curriculum, and conducts a transaction where the adapter (author)-reader relationship more often than not encourages acquiesces instead of challenges. Situated in this site, the paratext has become an effective tool for the publisher and the adapter to secretly influence or even remodel and reshape the reader's interpretation of the story. This rhetoric function of the paratext reveals different strategies utilizing the novel that are in turn determined by different national and critical traditions.

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