

# Translation of Classical Chinese Literature *Xi You Ji* From the Perspective of Postcolonial Translation Theory – Case Study on Julia Lovell's Version

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## Abstract

With the advance of "cultural turn", the cultural elements involved in translation activities have become a rising concern in translation studies. As for the translation of a literary work from an underprivileged culture into a dominant one, this type of cross-cultural communication is deeply affected by postcolonialism. In light of postcolonial theory, translation not only serves as a tool for colonization, but also a medium of resisting and interfering with colonial culture. The translation strategies adopted by the translator reveals his/her subjectivity and stance. Furthermore, the translation product can pave the way for equal and effective communication between countries. Based on the framework of postcolonial translation theory, this study sets out to determine the hybridity nature of the Julia Lovell's English version of *Xi You Ji* from three aspects: linguistic features, culture and literary norms. It finds out that Lovell's dual identity has drastically affected her employment of strategies. Lovell's version promotes the positive image of Chinese culture, more importantly, it is of great significance in dispelling cultural hegemony and spreading Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** Hybridity, Monkey, Postcolonial, Translation Strategy, *Xi You Ji*, Journey to the West

## Introduction

As an intercultural transfer, translation does happen in a continuum instead of a vacuum (Bassnett & Trivedi, 1999, p. 2). Moreover, as a highly-manipulative activity, translation is intertwined with an involvement of all kinds of powers. Regarding translation studies (TS), in particular, studies on literary translation, researchers should foreground factors such as political, economic and social backgrounds related to the source language (SL) and target language (TL), along with religious and cultural discrepancies, which can deeply affect translators' adoption of strategies and final translation products.

As a pioneering researcher in the realm, Snell-Hornby (1999) pointed out that TS is limited to a lexical or syntax level. Under Snell-Hornby's advocacy, it becomes universally acknowledged that TS should pay attention to the related cultural elements. More importantly, this cognitive advance paved the way for the "cultural turn" in TS in the 1980s. This dramatic pragmatic shift is featured with the highlight of culture, which proposes "neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational 'unit' of translation" (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990).

Given the pivotal role played by "culture" in TS, scholars are increasingly concerned about the interplay between translation activities and powers and politics. Naturally, as an integral part of cultural studies, the postcolonial theory was introduced to TS and soon garnered rich academic attention and achievements (Niranjana, 1992; Robinson, 1997; Bassnett & Trivedi, 1999). In TS, postcolonial theorists mainly concern about the issues such as the asymmetrical power distribution hidden in the translation activity and the dissolution of cultural hegemony. Specifically, translation could be beneficial to either cultural colonization or decolonization.

In the new millennium, one pertinent issue arising from the production of translated texts in a dominant language is what translation strategies does the translator employ. This paper aims to probe the issue by focusing on the translation of classical Chinese literature into English. For this purpose, this study examines *Xi You Ji* (XYJ, also known as *Journey to the West*), the representative of Chinese classic novels, together with its English abridged version by Julia Lovell, *Monkey King: Journey to the West*. XYJ is perceived as a combination of picaresque novel and folk epic, which blends satire, allegory, and history into a rollicking tale. Julia Lovell's version was published by Penguin Books in 2021 and has received numerous compliments from contemporary Anglophone readers. It can be said that Lovell's version has injected new cultural blood into the English-speaking world. As a British resident, and a prestigious sinologist and translator who has devoted herself to eliminating Westerners' misunderstanding of the Orient, the dual identity of Lovell profoundly influenced her adoption of translation strategies and the style of her work. Given the fact that Lovell's work helps dispelling the cultural hegemony of the powers, and introducing Chinese culture to the Western mass, this abridgment can serve as an excellent example and reference for the overseas promotion of classical Chinese literature. Thus, this study pays attention to the influence of the translator's identity on translation strategies and aims to advocate equal communication in intercultural exchanges.

This study seeks to answer the research questions (RQs) below.

RQ1. What translation strategies were used by Julia Lovell in the translation of Chinese fiction into English?

RQ2. Are the messages in the source text distorted after translation?

RQ3. What guidance can this study provide to the translation of Chinese literature in the future?

## Literatu Rereview

### *Postcolonial Translation Theory*

There has long been a notion that the colony is perceived as "a copy or translation of the great European Original". which obviously places translation in a inferior position in the literary hierarchy (Bassnett & Trivedi, 1999). For centuries, when texts are rendered into English, the translation production is dominated by European norms to ensure that the works are not alien to the recipients. Translation is far less than a reciprocal exchange between different cultures.

The term "postcolonialism" was formally put forward by Spivak in *Post-colonial Critics* (1993). Along with the break-up of the European colonial system in the 1940s to 1960s, the counterhegemonic cultural studies is on the rise in the Western academia (Ashcroft et al., 1989; Spivak, 1993; Tymoczko, 2012). Meanwhile, inspired by Foucault's theory of discourse and power and Said's theory of orientalism (1978), the postcolonial studies emerged and tended to disempower the Eurocentrism (Lazarus, 2004). Later, the definition of "postcolonialism" has been extended to "a way of looking at intercultural power, the psychosocial transformations brought about by the intertwined dynamics of dominance and submission, geographical and linguistic displacement" (Robinson, 1997, p. 16).

Since the 1990s, driven by the "cultural turn", postcolonial theory has gradually penetrated into TS. Subsequently, numerous works on postcolonial translation studies came out. A lot of scholars from formerly-colonized countries showed scholar attention to the lingering effects of colonialism, developing a critical theory analysis of the history, culture, literature, and discourse of (usually European) imperial power (Niranjana, 1992; Robinson, 1997; Bassnett & Trivedi, 1999). For example, Cheyfitz (1991, p. 104) held that translation was "the central act of European colonization and imperialism in America". Niranjana (1992, p. 2) echoed the predecessor and pinpointed that translation not only shapes but also takes shape "within the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism". They surveyed translation activities under different historical backgrounds from the postcolonial perspective and pivoted on the cultural differentials and power conflicts reflected in translated works. Coincidentally, researchers gave special concern to the external factors that affect translation activity and examined the interrelationship between translation products and the situation that they were involved in (Wang, 2003).

Bhabha's notions of "the third space" and "hybridity" (1994), Spivak's "translationese" (1993), along with Venuti's foreignization (2004) are the highlights of postcolonial translation theory (Wu & Wang, 2020). Generally speaking, postcolonial translation theory has been gradually developed into a multicultural criticism theory that emphasizes "the ideological consequences of the translation of 'Third World' literature into English and the distortion this entails" (Munday, 2008, p. 131). The theory is featured with strong political and cultural criticism complexion, which regards the elimination of Western centralism, culture hegemony, and cultural imperialism as its historical mission. It is fair to say that postcolonial theory not only reshapes the cultural identity of people in colonies and under-developed countries but also weakens the negative impact of cultural output in colonial powers and developed countries through promoting reciprocal exchanges between the East and West. In

light of the above, postcolonial theory has made great contribution to the diversified development of world culture (Lazarus, 2004).

In summary, as an effective theoretical approach, post-colonialism is linked "with the lasting impact of colonization upon the formerly colonized and even the colonizers" (Wu & Wang, 2020). Moreover, postcolonial translation theory aims to solve the power imbalance between former colonies and empires in or through translation.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the translation strategies involved in Western postcolonial translation theory are highly influential and frequently applied in the academia worldwide, as they are capable of explaining the translation practice of literary works (Wu & Wang, 2020). Moreover, it is noteworthy that translation has become a battlefield of post-theories. Bhabha's concept of hybridity (1994), along with Campos' Cannibalism (1992) and Venuti's foreignization (2004) have been most widely adopted and most disputed terms in TS.

Initially, hybridity is a terminology in horticulture, which refers to the cross-breeding of two species via grafting or cross-pollination to form a "hybrid" species. Later, the term was introduced to TS by Bhabha. Bhabha argued that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space called the "Third Space of enunciation" (1994, p. 37). He stressed the mutuality of cultures in the colonial and post-colonial process are reflected in expressions of syncreticity, cultural synergy and transculturation. Additionally, cultural identity always appears in this kind of contradictory and ambivalent space. Bhabha (1994) held that through the translation into the language of strong colonial cultures, weak cultures can integrate into heterogeneous ones. The rewriting in colonial cultures results in the weakening of cultural hegemony and ultimately achieves equality among different cultures. It can be viewed as cultural resistance to the colonizer. On grounds of the above, the concept of "hybridity" is employed by this study.

### ***Xi You Ji* and the English Translation**

*XYJ* went out in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during China's Ming Dynasty. It vividly narrates the legendary pilgrimage of the Tang monk, Xuanzang, and his disciples: Sun Wukong (Monkey), Zhu Wuneng (Piggy) and Sha Wujing (Sandy). The team made their way to the "Western Regions" (now also known as Central Asia and India) in the quest of Buddhist scriptures. After innumerable trials, obstacles and fights with spirits, demons, monsters, they successfully brought the scriptures back to mainland China. Till this day, *XYJ* is widely recognized as the most enduringly popular book in the Orient. Given its high status in Chinese culture and literature, *XYJ* "has been canonized in the Chinese literary tradition" (Ping & Wang, 2024). At the meantime, this canonic novel is considered as an epitome of existing Chinese religious attitudes and philosophical doctrines.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the fiction was first introduced to the Anglophone world. Till now, there have been dozens of English versions of *XYJ*. In 2021, Julia Lovell's English version of *XYJ* was published by the world-renowned Penguin Books and is well-acclaimed among the Western readers ever since the release.

As for the previous studies on the English translations of *XYJ*, the majority is on a micro linguistic level within the text. Issues such as "faithfulness", "accuracy", "translation" and "untranslatability" related to this fiction have been frequently discussed (Quan, 2017; Hao, 2021). In particular, researchers examined the strategies adopted by different translators from a textual level based on a selection of several parallel pairs. Furthermore, with the "cultural turn" in TS, the research perspective has shifted to the translation of culture-specific items (Song, 2022; Zhang, 2023). In general, the existing studies display the diversification in the employment of translation theories. The research methods have been further developed.

However, there are only a few studies carried out from a postcolonial perspective (Yan & Liao, 2020; Chang, 2020). The prior studies used Arthur Waley's version in 1942 and Anthony C. Yu 1977 for case study. Moreover, Bhabha's concepts of "the third space" and "hybridity" (Mukeya, 2021) were frequently employed, which are illuminating. Up to now, there has been a scarcity of research focusing on the editions of *XYJ* released in the new millennium from a postcolonial perspective.

To fill the paucity in the realm, this study is tethered by the framework of postcolonialism and aims to take a closer look at the translation strategies adopted in Julia Lovell's version. This study intends to develop a further discussion regarding the effects resulting from the employed strategies and the impact of power differentials. The next section outlines the theoretical framework of this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is under the guidance of Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994). It is the fusion of foreignization and domestication. Only by fully utilizing hybrid methods can translators showcase their own value and stance in translation activities, and can their subjectivity be highlighted in the process. From the perspective of postcolonialism, translation strategy is never just a matter of language or translation skills, whereas it is a subversive political and cultural strategy per se.

Additionally, besides Bhabha, a great many scholars have paid attention to the hybridity in TS. The prominent Chinese scholar, Han Ziman dedicated to the "hybridity in translated texts" and stated in his work that "hybridity in translated texts" is generally reflected in three aspects: literary norms, linguistic features, and culture (2005, p. 57-61). The hybridity generated by translation aligns with the "otherness" to the target culture proposed by Schäeffler and many other scholars, which is not due to the translators' lack of translation skills, but rather their intentional actions (Han, 2002, p. 55).

In accordance with the fact that hybridity is a product of cultural exchange, every and each translated text enjoys varying degrees of hybridity. Furthermore, there is an intimate correspondence among hybridity, foreignization, and domestication. Specifically, if a translator mainly adopts domestication, the degree of hybridity in translation will be relatively low. On the contrary, if a translator mainly adopts foreignization, the degree of hybridity in translation will be relatively high (Han, 2005, p. 151). It is noteworthy that no matter how low the degree is, the translation will introduce the linguistic and cultural values of different

ethnic groups into the target culture, and no matter how high the degree is, it is difficult to completely destroy the national identity of the target culture.

### **Methodology**

This section elucidates how the study is carried out step by step. As a qualitative research, this study intends to determine the level of hybridity of the translation by examining the strategies privileged by the translator in the translation of *XYJ*. Moreover, the study aims to affirm whether the messages in the source text remained in the translated version and to sum up the lessons learned from this translation activity.

#### *Data Collection*

The source text of this study is *XYJ*, by Wu Cheng'en. The target text is the abridged version translated by Julia Lovell. The translator retained the main plots of the story and adopted an idiomatic and snappy contemporary vibe, which makes the work reader-friendly to the Western readers. Lovell's edition can serve as a reference for the translation of Chinese classics in the future.

#### *Data Analysis*

In order to identify the hybridity level in the translation, this study examines the presence of hybridity in the translated version from the following aspects: linguistic features, cultures and literary norms (Han, 2005). After the analysis, the translator's inclination can be revealed. Next, the effectiveness of strategies is discussed to determine whether the meanings of the source text is distorted. Finally, this study concludes with the experience in resisting cultural hegemony and promoting Chinese culture and identity.

### **Discussion**

Julia Lovell, who was born in 1975, is now working with University of London as a professor of Modern Chinese History and Literature. As a seasoned British sinologist and literary translator, Lovell is equipped with high level of bilingual proficiency. Before the translation of *XYJ*, Lovell has formerly translated loads of works by Chinese authors, such as Lu Xun, Han Shaogong, Eileen Chang and Zhu Wen. Additionally, she has published her own works *The Great Wall: China Against the World 1000 BC- AD 2000* by Atlantic Books in 2006 and *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China* by Picador in 2011.

As an enthusiast of Chinese culture, Lovell has devoted much effort to present Chinese politics, society and religion to the Westerners. With an aim to eliminate the stereotype of China such as being backward and rigid in the Anglophone world, Lovell strove to make her translations readable and accessible to the target readers. Lovell's retranslation of *XYJ* is motivated by the following two factors, language changes and readers' demand for an abridgment (Wu, 2021). Specifically, on one hand, the most recent complete version by W. J. F. Jenner was published more than three decades ago and the sheer length of three volumes make the edition not that appealing to general Anglophone readers. On the other hand, although Arthur Waley's abridged version enjoys great charm and dynamics till today, it cut out so many episodes (Van Fleet, 2021).

Given the dual identity of the translator and the motivation for retranslation, this version was to communicate to "contemporary English readers the dynamism, imagination, philosophy, and comedy of the original" (Wu, 2021, p. xxxix). Therefore, the translator needed to strike a balance between the original work and the target readers. Needless to say, bridging the temporal and spatial gaps between the 16<sup>th</sup> century China and 21<sup>st</sup> century Anglophone world seemed quite challenging.

### Hybridity in Linguistic Features

In this translation product, in order to make the target readers get the gist of the story in an efficient manner, the translator preferred to reduce and compress individual chapters. The original 100 chapters have been adapted into 36 chapters, which turns to be compact. Additionally, the recapitulating elements and descriptive poems involving situations, landscapes, and battles were left.

Plus, although the loads of Chinese wordplay can make the source text intriguing, they are difficult to convey without explanatory footnotes that problematically intervene the presence of the humorous effect. In Lovell's view, if the translated text is not fluent enough, readers would question the writing of the original work, and this cannot be considered a "faithful" translation. To ensure the fluency of translation, the puns were omitted, as shown in Example 1.

#### Example 1

Source text : 老者道:"你虽是个唐人, 那个恶的, 却非唐人。"悟空厉声高呼道:"你这个老儿全没眼色!唐人是师父, 我是他徒弟!我也不是甚'糖人, 蜜人', 我是齐天大圣。(Wu, 1954, p. 157)

Translation: "That eyesore of a disciple of yours doesn't look very Chinese to me," said the old man doubtfully. "I'm the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, you dim geriatric," scolded Monkey. (Wu, 2021, p. 125)

The example is extracted from the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of the source text, where Xuanzang and Monkey stayed overnight at an old man's house on their pilgrimage. The old man referred to the monk as a "Tang person" as he heard that Xuanzang came from the Tang Dynasty. Due to the homophonic pronunciation of "Tang" and "sugar" in Chinese, "Tang person" forms a pun with the "sugar man" mentioned by Monkey in the following dialogue, resulting in a humorous effect. Lovell skipped "sugar man" and paraphrased "Tang" into "Chinese". The way Lovell dealt with the puns guaranteed the fluency of translation with the sacrifice of the entertaining elements. This hybridity in linguistic features enables the TL readers to enjoy the equivalent reading experience as the SL readers do.

As a compensation to the omission of wordplay, Lovell enhanced the humor of other parts of the narrative or dialogue. This, this edition "might read as a reworking as well as a translation" (Van Fleet, 2021). In order to conform to the overall tone of a text, Lovell preferred to sacrifice technical and linguistic fidelity. Furthermore, the research finds out that parody is a frequently used manner by Lovell to enhance the humorous effect. Parody is accomplished via the transformation of the original, either appropriation or rewriting, which

takes a distorted form in most cases (Zhu & Luo, 2022). Additionally, parody is regarded as a form of intertextuality, as shown in Example 2 and 3.

### Example 2

**Source text:** 行者掣出棒来，自忖思道："若要不打他，显得他倒弄个风儿；若要打他，又怕师父念那话儿咒语"。(Wu, 1954, p. 312)

**Translation:** He now mulled his options: *To smash or not to smash, he pondered. That is the question. If I don't smash her, she'll carry on with her tricks. If I do smash her, Master will recite that headache sutra again.* (Wu, 2021, p. 167)

### Example 3

**Source text:** 龙王慌了道："上仙，切莫动手！切莫动手！待我看舍弟处可有，当送一副。"悟空道："令弟何在？"龙王道："舍弟乃南海龙王敖钦、北海龙王敖顺、西海龙王敖闰是也。"悟空道："我老孙不去！不去！俗语谓三不敌见二，只望你随高就低的送一副便了。" (Wu, 1954, p. 27)

**Translation:** "Desist, I beg you!" yelled the dragon king. "Perhaps my brothers Aoqin in the Southern Ocean, Aoshun in the Northern Ocean, and Aorun in the Western Ocean could dig something up."

"Too far!" Monkey declared. As the saying goes: "a dragon king in the hand is worth three in the bush". (Wu, 2021, p. 29)

The source text in Example 2 is selected from Chapter 27 of *XYJ*, depicting Monkey's psychological state between "to smash" and "not to smash" when he encountered the White Bone Demon for the third time. The translator adopted italicized typesetting to highlight the psychological activities and added "*To smash or not to smash. That is the question.*". This addition is borrowed from "To be or not to be, that is the question" in *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare.

As the vast majority of readers in the Anglophone world are quite familiar with this classic line and its scenario, the translator harnessed an intertextuality between the translated text and Shakespeare's play through humorous parodies. In this way, Monkey's dilemma between ensuring the safety of Xuanzang and concerning about being misunderstood by his master is explicitly demonstrated to the readers. When reading the lines, readers will naturally associate Monkey with Hamlet and build up the heroic figure of the protagonist.

As for Example 3, it is selected from Chapter 3 of *XYJ*, where Monkey negotiated with the dragon king, asking for a cloak. Lovell omitted "悟空道：'令弟何在？'" and "只望你随高就低的送一副便了" in her translation. "三不敌见二" is a typical Chinese proverb. The translator adopted domestication and appropriated the English idiom "a bird in the hand is worth three in the bush" in the translation. In this case, the parody appears based on the specific context. The "bird" in the original idiom is replaced with "dragon king". The transformation of the idiom help portray Monkey's rebellious personality. Moreover, it will surely make readers cannot help laughing.



For readers in the English-speaking world, they are not equipped with the same background knowledge as the SL readers. Therefore, translators need to construct a bridge to compensate for the cultural losses between the source text and the translated text. In this sense, the bridge is an intertextual context with explanatory power. The use of parody of allusions not only enhances the sense of humor in the translation by constructing a familiar intertextual context for the readers, but also promotes readers' understanding of the text by leveraging the cultural background knowledge that the target readers already have.

Overall, Lovell did not try to translate untranslatable jokes. Instead, she chose to present the humor of the original by replacing the jokes with idioms. Lovell's translation sparkles with a uniquely British wit. As for this example, the lines of dialogue drip with sarcasm, snappy one-liners, and humorous observations for Monkey, which contribute to the fun, frantic and fantasy rewriting of the Chinese classic.

In conclusion, the extensive comedic elements in Lovell's works fully taps the comic potential of English. Based on the above examples, the domestication adopted by the translator reflects her voice and stance, and entirely in the spirit of the original. With its attentive reworkings of language and details, Lovell's version has joined this time-honored tradition of reshaping and refreshing the old tale for a new audience.

### Hybridity in Cultures

As Lovell stated in the introduction of the 2021 edition, *XYJ* "is a cornerstone text of Chinese fiction, and an index to early modern Chinese culture, thought, and history; its stature in East Asian literature may be compared with that of *The Canterbury Tales* or *Don Quixote* in European letters" (Wu, 2021, p. xiii). The fiction is deeply-rooted in traditional oriental culture.

When the literary works from the weak culture are introduced to the strong culture, cultural differences are one of the core issues that translators need to address, and resolving cultural conflicts is the key to promote readers' understanding of the translated text. Lovell consciously adopted a combination of domestication and foreignization to highlight the hybrid characteristics of her translation, so that the translations can retain and convey foreign cultural characteristics while being easily accepted by the Anglophone readers.

When translating the names of immortals and demons in *XYJ*, Lovell employed domestication. For example, "玉皇大帝" is monarch of the Taoist Heaven, "王母" is the leader of all female immortals in the Taoist immortal system, "嫦娥" is the deity in ancient Chinese mythology who governs the Moon Palace. Lovell translated "玉皇大帝" as "Jade Emperor", "瑶池王母" as "Queen Mother of the Jade Pool" and "嫦娥" as "the Moon Goddess", which undoubtedly assimilated Chinese culture into Western culture. "金角大王" is a demon with gold horn and governed other little demons, while "牛魔王" is a powerful demon transformed from a bull. These items were translated as "The Great King Gold Horn" and "Bull Monster King", respectively.

Additionally, as for geographical names in the source text, Lovell also adopted domestication in the translation process. For instance, "土地廟" was translated into "Temple of Local Spirit". In Chinese culture, this temple is built for the deity of a specific land. Normally

it could be literally translated as "Earth Temple", however, this translation is not related to the original meaning. The word "Local Spirit" was added to deliver the meaning and cultural information involved in it. Another instance of domestication can be seen in the translation of "高老庄" as "Mr. Gao Village", in which the title of address was to discern the gender of the owner of the estate.

However, for the translation of time, Lovell adopted foreignization. In ancient China, there was a special way of expressing time. It divided a day into twelve hours. One hour is equivalent to two hours today, and each hour is named after the twelve earthly branches. As for time such as "辰时", "巳时" and "未时", Lovell translated them into corresponding zodiac animals, such as "the hour of the Dragon", "the hour of the Serpent", and "the hour of the Sheep". Although this creation may seem alien to Western readers, it can be explained in depth through annotations, thereby maximizing the presentation of traditional Chinese culture to Western readers and bringing the two different cultures closer together.

The translator preferred to replace the items specific in Chinese culture with similar ones in the target culture, while for the items with overly complex cultural backgrounds, the translator was inclined to omit them, as it shown in Example 4 and 5.

#### Example 4

Source text: 即命阿傩、迦叶，取出"锦澜袈裟"一领，"九环锡杖"一根，对菩萨言回；"这袈裟、锡杖。可与那取经人亲用"。(Wu, 1954, p. 81)

Translation: Two of his disciples brought out an embroidered robe and a nine-ringed monk's staff. "You can give these two items to the pilgrim for his personal use." (Wu, 2021, p. 74)

"阿傩"and"迦叶"are both names from Sanskrit, referring to the two disciples of the Buddha. As they are not the main characters in fiction and their translated names are hard to understand, they were generalized as "two of his disciples" in the translation. In addition, "袈裟" and "锡杖" are Sanskrit Buddhist terminology. "袈裟" stands for clothes made from low-quality cloth for monks and nuns. "锡杖" means a tool used by monks when they walk or beg, and it can make sounds and be used to knock on the door, occasionally as a defense against attacks from cows, dogs, etc. Lovell generalized the items to "robe" and "monk's staff", respectively, weakening religious connotation and reducing cultural unfamiliarity to a certain extent.

When translating the highly dense cultural information in the source text, Lovell chose to let go of the items or contents that are not directly related to the plot of the work. Specifically, when faced with the barriers caused by cultural differences between the West and the Orient, Lovell was not inclined to excessively interpret the cultural connotations of the source text via translation, nor was she very obsessive about fully foreignizing the cultural background in the source text. The translator flexibly took advantage of the hybridity and leveraged the interconnectivity between the two cultures. The translator promoted readers' understanding of foreign cultures to varying degrees by generalizing the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures.

Once again, based on the evidence listed above, it can be seen that the cultural characteristics reflected in *XYJ* are also reflected in Lovell's translation, allowing readers in the

Anglophone culture to experience the diversity and profoundness of traditional Chinese culture.

### Hybridity in Literary Norms

In order to identify the hybridity level in the translation, this study examines the presentation of literary norms. As a Chinese traditional serial novel, *XYJ* involves loads of interpolated verse of many varieties (Wu, 2006, p. xii). The verse is similar to couplets or heroic couplets in English novels.

When it comes to the verse in the source text, Lovell retained and translated some of the information in the verse. Moreover, she tended to incorporate a loose combination of prose and verse, as it is shown in Example 5 and 6.

#### Example 5

Source text: 却又欠身上桥头，再走再看，却似有人家住处一般，真个好所在。但见那：翠藓堆蓝，白云浮玉，玉摇片片烟霞.....石座石床真可爱，食盆食碗更堪夸..... (Wu, 1954, p. 4)

Translation: From the bridge, he could see into a beautiful cave residence: cushioned with moss, hung with stalactites, furnished with carved benches and beds, and equipped with pans and stoves. (Wu, 2021, p. 2-3)

#### Example 6

Source text: 行够多时，又值早春天气，但见：三阳转运，万物生辉.....道旁杨柳舒青眼，膏雨滋生万象春。师徒们在路上游观景色，缓马而行..... (Wu, 1954, p. 505)

Translation: Soon spring came again, and as the pilgrims were proceeding along a road fringed with willows and blossom trees... (Wu, 2021, p. 228)

Example 5 is extracted from Chapter 1 of *XYJ*. It shows the environment of Flower-Fruit Mountain, the birthplace of Monkey. We can divide the source text in the above example into two parts. The first part is prose, narrating how the monkeys found the location of the Flower-Fruit Mountain. The second part underlines a description of the place which is characterized by neat parallelism and rhyme at the end of the sentence, thus belonging to the category of verse. Lovell used a colon to link the following descriptive phrases, which is concise. The translator flexibly blended the verse and prose in a smooth manner. Specifically, the translator employed the structure: "a past participle verb + with" to create parallelism and showcase the image of moss, stalactites, along with other utensils in the place. As for the phrases, "白云浮玉" was omitted.

Example 6 is extracted from Chapter 25 and the translation enjoys high informational density. The first part is prose, accounting the route of the team and the season of that time. Since the semantic overlap, idioms, such as "三阳转运，万物生辉" were omitted by the translator. Although "杨", "柳", "雨" and "万象春" are all included in the scenery, the translator used "willows and blossom trees" to symbolize the vigor in spring in the second part.

As an important form of verse, *XYJ* contains quantities of poems in the Chinese version. In the previous English versions, most of the translators preferred to retain a small proportion

of the poems, only Anthony C. Yu translated all of the poems in his full length translation in 1977.

#### Example 7

Source text: 一头红焰发蓬松，两只眼睛亮似灯。

不黑不青蓝靛脸，如雷如鼓老龙声。

身披一领鹅黄氅，腰束双攒露白藤。

项下骷髅悬九个，手持宝杖甚峥嵘。(Wu, 1954, p. 245-246)

Translation: ... [an appallingly ugly monster] – wild red hair, burning eyes, bluish face, thunderclap roar, and a truly intimidating staff... (Wu, 2021, p. 152-153)

One of the functions of verse therein is to provide the depiction of scenery, fights, seasons and (non)human beings (Wu, 2012, p. 34). Example 7 is selected from Chapter 18. The poem depicts the appearance of Sandy, one of the pilgrims. Lovell primarily adopted noun phrases, that is, a noun with a premodifier. In this manner, she synthesized the descriptive poem in the main narrative and accelerated the narrative pace. Thus, her translation as a whole has an aura of brevity.

As a sinologist, Lovell realized that most Anglophone readers know little about the Orient. In order to familiarize the Westerners with more knowledge about Chinese culture, Lovell did her best to convey information as much as possible through her translation.

#### Conclusion

Postcolonial translation theory plays a pivotal role in promoting the research on the English translations of Chinese literary works. The hybridity theory emphasizes the objective existence of differences in various languages and cultures. Thus, hybridity in the translated text is an inevitable result in the translation process, and "hybridity" is a universal feature of translation.

At present, how to fully tap into the overseas markets for the translation and publication of Chinese classics, and produce translations that meet the reading habits of the overseas readers is an urgent problem that needs to be solved in the new era. In the English translation history of *XYJ*, the translators are mainly Western missionaries and sinologists with Western educational background. Due to the influence of colonial ideology, they extensively rewrote or distorted the original work, and mainly adopted domestication as their translation strategy. To some extent, they prioritized the readability of the translated versions rather than the promotion of Chinese culture.

As a representative of *XYJ*'s translated versions, *Monkey King: Journey to the West* successfully reproduces the essence of the original story with limited length and has received widespread acclaim from the Anglophone readers. It is regarded as a typical case of hybridity. In other words, the "hybridity" characteristics of translation takes much credit to the success of Lovell's translation. As a British sinologist, Lovell is passionate to let the world know the real China and eliminate misunderstandings. Lovell's dual identity determined that her translation strategy, which pivoted foreignization, can retain the heterogeneity of the original work and

result in a high degree of hybridity in the translation. Lovell not only maintained the discourse power of Chinese culture, but also paid attention to the acceptance of the Western readers.

Moreover, this case study has positive significance in promoting interaction and exchange between different cultures, and can be seen as a reference for the translation of Chinese classics, especially for the "Chinese Culture Going Global" campaign initiated by the Chinese government, that is, firstly excellent translators are the main force in promoting the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. Translators should not only be equipped with bilingual proficiency but also be familiar with the cultures. Secondly, literary translators should not overly adhere to a single translation strategy of foreignization or domestication. A diverse and mixed translation approach is more beneficial to the spread of Chinese culture. To be precise, if foreignization takes a bigger part in hybridity, it is conducive to resisting nationalism and dispelling cultural imperialism. However, this does not mean that we should pursue foreignization without considering the acceptance of the TL readers. Only by engaging in equal negotiation and dialogue in the third space, can we avoid being trapped in nationalism and self centeredness.

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