

The Translation Strategies of Chinese Classical Novels into English from the Perspective of the Functional Skopos Theory

—A Case Study of *Journey to the West*

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Abstract

As a bridge of information dissemination and communication, translation plays an important role in the development of modern times, especially in the translation of classical literature. This paper takes the functional skopos theory as the theoretical framework, takes the classical literary masterpiece *Journey to the West* as an example, makes a comparative analysis of the excerpts of Yu Guofan and Arthur Waley's translations and tries to explore how to use different translation strategies from the perspective of skopos theory. Through analysis and research, it is found that the two scholars use literal translation, free translation and other translation strategies from different perspectives, and each has its own unique features. In order to follow the skopos theory principle and their own cultural value orientation, it is found that Yu Guofan's translation is more inclined to retain the cultural significance of *Journey to the West* itself. Waley tends to promote personal heroism. The comparative analysis of this paper aims to help translators adopt more appropriate translation strategies for different audiences, so as to facilitate foreign readers to feel the extensive Chinese literature and to spread Chinese culture.

Keywords

Translation, Functional Skopos Theory, Comparative Analysis

1. Introduction

Literary novels play an important role in people's life. They can not only help them to increase their knowledge and enrich their lives, but also help them to have a clearer understanding of life and enrich their social experience.

In the world of increasingly globalized economy, literary exchanges between different cultures are increasing, but Chinese literary novels have certain difficulties in communication, especially in the translation of literary novels, which is not conducive to the communication of our culture. As a pinnacle of Chinese literary novels, *Journey to the West* itself has a very high cultural connotation. Riziwanguli and Abuduwaili (2020) pointed *Journey to the West* is one of China's four great classic novels, and occupies an important position in China's literary history. But because of this, some obscure language, the use of allusions, and the description of religion are very difficult to translate. The corresponding translation strategies should also be appropriate, so as to help readers understand Chinese culture.

By 2025, China National Knowledge Infrastructure had indexed a total of 11,577 scholarly articles on the theme of *Journey to the West*, yet only 954 of these focused on its translations, further underscoring the necessity of this research.

Among them, Wu (2021) holds that translation studies should not ignore the source text and the source language culture. In the study of English translation of *Journey to the West* and even the study of English translation of Chinese classical novels, attention should be paid to the identification of translated texts, to clarify the inheritance and differences between the original versions. Furthermore, *Journey to the West* is a famous classical mythological novel in China, and such an excellent cultural work should go out of China and into the world. The book contains a variety of culture-loaded words with classical Chinese characteristics, which should be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and appropriate translation theories, strategies and methods should be adopted in translation. The English translation of culture-loaded words undertakes the great mission of spreading Chinese traditional cultural thoughts and is an important link and necessary means for Chinese culture to go out. Shi (2021) believes that this technique is particularly important in the translation process due to the differences between the two languages in terms of meaning expression, grammatical functions, rhetorical features, usage habits and other aspects. In the process of translation, most translators complete their works by cutting words, making the translation more flexible and vivid.

Reviewing the existing studies, there are various studies on The *Journey to the West*, but the two more influential scholars are Yu Guofan and Arthur Waley. Among them, the most prestigious one is *Monkey King* which is a selected translation of *Journey to the West* by Arthur Waley since its first publication in 1943. And now, the world's first complete translation of the 100-chapter novel *Journey to the West* has been done by Yu Guofan.

Arthur Waley's *Monkey King* has entertained a broad readership because of its first appearance in 1940s, but it includes only one fourth of the original text. Waley has aroused the interest of numerous people in knowing more about Hsuan-tsang's fictionalized adventures. In 1977, Yu Guofan, Professor of religious and English language and literature at the University of Chicago, published his first

volume of the four-volume translation of *Journey to the West*. The second, the third and the last volumes were published in 1978, 1980, and 1983 respectively, which brought this enormous project to an end. He derived his strong motivation to make a complete rendition of the *Journey to the West* from his intense wish to let western readers truly understand this masterpiece of Chinese literature.

Wang and Wang (2022) believed that as an important part of Chinese culture, the translation and dissemination of Chinese classical novels is an important part of the western transmission of middle schools, which makes Chinese classical novels realize the representation of texts in foreign lands and cultural re-creation in the exchange of different cultures. Therefore, translators should be aware of the differences between language and culture and should never ignore the true meaning of Chinese idioms for the sake of formal equivalence.

According to Chang (2021), to disseminate Chinese classics, translation strategies and diversified communication channels should be chosen and adopted rationally, the needs of the translation audience should be fully considered, the expectations of Western readers should be met, and the readability of the translation should be enhanced, so as to achieve good communication effects and enhance the international influence of Chinese culture. It is not difficult to find from the above literature discussion that *Journey to the West* contains many literary elements that need to be studied and analyzed. In the exploration of its literary value, many scholars have put forward different views from various angles. But the research from the perspective of the skopos theory is still very limited. Therefore, from the perspective of the skopos theory, this paper makes a comparative analysis of the translation strategies of Arthur Waley and Yu Guofan.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The Origin and Development of the Skopos Theory

The skopos theory is derived from the German school of functional translation, which emerged in the 1970s. In 1971, Reiss put forward the model of translation criticism, which takes functional equivalence between original text and target text as the standard. Her theory provides a new direction for translation studies. In 1978, Vermeer first put forward the concept of the skopos theory. The skopos theory combines behavioral theory, the communicative theory, the cultural theory and other theories, arguing that the original text is the text produced by the author for a certain purpose and a specific recipient under the background of the source language, while the translation is the text produced by the translator for another purpose and a specific recipient under the background of the target language. After several generations of scholars' research, the theory of this school has been continuously enriched and improved.

2.2. Three Principles of Skopos Theory

1) The law of purpose. The skopos theory holds that skopos law is the primary law to be followed in translation. In the process of translation, the translation

methods and strategies adopted by translators are determined by the goals to be achieved. This is often referred to as the outcome method.

2) The law of coherence. The coherence rule of the skopos theory mainly means that the translated text should conform to the standard of intra-language coherence. The translated text can be understood by readers and has certain practical significance in the target culture. Here the coherence law mainly emphasizes the readability and communicative meaning of the translation in the target language culture.

3) The law of fidelity. The law of fidelity in the skopos theory mainly refers to the interlingual coherence between the original text and the target text. The target text should be faithful to the original text, while the skopos theory especially emphasizes that the degree and form of faithfulness between the target text and the source text are determined by the target text purpose and the translator's understanding of the source text.

These three laws do not exist in isolation, but are interrelated. Among the three laws, the law of skopos theory is the first, the law of coherence and the law of fidelity belong to the law of skopos theory, and the law of fidelity belongs to the law of coherence. These three laws are decreasing relations. From these three levels of relations, the law of skopos theory is not only the first law that determines the translation method, but also the final law that translation should follow.

2.3. Analysis of Translation Strategies of *Journey to the West* under the Skopos Theory

2.3.1. The Translation Purpose

As early as the early 20th century, there were various English translations of *Journey to the West*, but these translations were only excerpts and incomplete. Liu (2022) pointed out that as a Chinese American, Yu Guofan holds a strong ideal of faithful translation to the original work. Consequently, it is evident that the purpose of his translation is largely to convey the unique significance of the original text.

In 1983, Yu Guofan published his complete translation of *Journey to the West*, which proved immensely popular in the Western world, deepening Westerners' appreciation of Chinese literature. To present authentic Chinese culture to readers as fully as possible, Yu insisted on preserving the cultural elements of the original language throughout his translation of *Journey to the West*. Professor Yu's aim is to enable readers of *Journey to the West* to truly appreciate the original text, and for those interested in classical Chinese culture and academic researchers to gain a better understanding of it through this book.

Because Waley's translation of *Journey to the West* retains only a very small amount of the original, scholarly opinion of Waley's translation is mixed. The author believes that although Monkey King retains the original *Journey to the West's* plot, it has been transformed into a novel of individual heroism with the Monkey King as the main character through Waley's own choice of translation. The translator rewrites and retranslates *Journey to the West* according to the habits of

Western readers' understanding. The translation has been well received by Western readers and has also spread Eastern culture.

Waley's *Monkey King* rewrites the original *Journey to the West*, and the abridged *Monkey King* forms a relatively independent story under the translator's own ideological manipulation. This manipulation of the text by the translator reminds us of the relationship between the translation and the original, and that the translation, as a unique form of textual interpretation, can form a unique interaction with the original, with the new story colliding with the "old" text, stimulating the "potential" life of the original and expressing it in another form. This is perhaps the most important aspect of the study of ancient Chinese literature. Wang and Li (2018) believed that the verse related to the heroic image of Sun Wukong is greatly presented in the translation, which is also the embodiment of Waley's superb translation. The translation of the poem in the novel is an effective echo of the protagonist Monkey King, who successfully creates a growing and heroic image of Monkey King in a different way. It also shows that he chooses to translate Chinese novels with a distinct subjective color.

2.3.2. Coherence: The Communicative Meaning of the Target Culture

The *Journey to the West* presents readers with a fantasy world beyond reality. It has a wide audience, from children to adults, who can learn something from the four adventures. Reasonable handling of translation strategies is not only helpful for English speaking readers to understand *Journey to the West*, but also enable them to acquire some social principles or experiences imperceptitiously while enjoying the pleasure of reading. Yan and Li (2019) pointed out that *Journey to the West* was a great work of intellectual and artistic excellence among the ancient Chinese novels, and the most outstanding among many Chinese novels about gods and demons. Yu Guofan devoted himself to the study of Sinology in the field of comparative literature, actively introduced the achievements of traditional Chinese culture into the western world, faithfully and completely conveyed the allegorical meanings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism and the ideological and cultural connotations contained in his works, and reproduced the charm of classical Chinese culture. Li and Xie (2022) pointed out that in translation, how to deal with the transition between different cultures is an important issue that translators have to think carefully. Arthur Waley's cultural capital is mainly reflected in his solid English and Chinese language skills and literacy, as well as his excellent understanding and writing skills. However, when Waley translated *Journey to the West*, he cut a large number of chapters and left a large number of poems untranslated because he understood the reading style and literary aesthetic of Chinese readers. On this basis, he chose the appropriate translation strategy. After the publication of *Monkey King*, his translation was very popular in the UK and spread the classical literature of China.

2.3.3. Fidelity Processing of Translation

Under the guidance of the skopos theory, translators should accurately under-

stand the cultural connotations embodied in the original text, so as to achieve the purpose of translation activities. At the same time, considering the existence of cultural differences between China and foreign countries, translators should flexibly choose translation methods, such as literal translation and free translation, so that the target text can be integrated into the cultural background of the target recipient group. And the different translation methods embodied in Yu Guofan's translation help to achieve this purpose. However, Waley's translation is from another perspective, mainly aiming to highlight the individualism of Sun Wukong. Although some original meaning may be missing, he wrote a translation from the perspective of readers, which is easy for readers to understand. Han (2020) argued that there should be interlingual coherence between the original and the translation, that is faithful to the original, loyal degree and form is the purpose of the translation and the translator's understanding of the original decision.

According to the skopos theory, the purpose of translation behavior determines the whole process of translation behavior, namely, the result determines the method. The criterion for evaluating a translation is no longer the single principle of equivalence, but whether the translation achieves the translation purpose. As for the translation of *Journey to the West*, it aims to spread traditional Chinese culture to the outside world, attract foreign friends to pay attention to Chinese culture, and promote cultural exchanges around the world. Therefore, the author believes that Waley's Monkey King has also achieved the core purpose of disseminating the work *Journey to the West* from another perspective.

3. Translation Strategies in Case Analysis

To ensure the representativeness and comparability of the examples, this paper selects multiple chapters from the novel based on criteria such as cultural load, strategy comparison, narrative significance, and theoretical relevance. The aim is to comprehensively demonstrate the strategic differences between the two translators across varying contexts and content types.

3.1. Foreignization and Domestication

Domestication translation requires the translator to be closer to the target language readers, enabling them to understand the original content more clearly; On the other hand, foreignization is more faithful to the original text, preserving its linguistic and cultural features, thus allowing the readers to be closer to the original author during the reading process. In the translation process, both Yu Guofan and Waley adopted both domestication and foreignization translation strategies, but they placed different emphases when choosing to use them.

Case 1: 《西游记》

Yu's translation: *Journey to the West*

About the translation of the title. Yu Guofan translated it into *Journey to the West* and presented the original title to English readers in an alienated way. Journey is defined as a noun in the Oxford Dictionary, the act of traveling from one

place to another, especially when they are far apart. It means a long journey. Considering the long journey of four masters and apprentices in *Journey to the West* for nearly 20 years, the translated title is more in line with the original work.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Yu Guofan's translation aims to present the meaning expressed in the original work to the greatest extent, and uses the foreignizing translation strategy to translate the title in order to make readers understand that the novel unfolds in the form of a journey. Then, from the perspective of communicative meaning of the target culture, the word journey not only enables readers to understand the meaning of the title, but also attracts readers to think about the reason for journey, thus triggering their association of life and contributing to the promotion of cultural exchanges. Finally, from the perspective of the fidelity of translation, Yu Guofan's translation of the title, after careful consideration of the Chinese culture, retains the meaning of the original text to a great extent, and the fidelity of the original text is very good.

Waley's translation: Monkey King

Arthur Waley uses a naturalized translation. Reading through the entire novel, readers will find that the stone Monkey King was born in the beginning and was banished to the Wu Zhi Mountain after the scourge. Later, the four masters and apprentices went through many hardships and finally got the true Sutra. In this process, the author intentionally highlights the image of Sun Wukong and expresses a spirit of resistance with the help of the growing process of Sun Wukong.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Arthur Waley's translation aims to highlight the role of Sun Wukong in the novel. Combining with the worship of individualism in Western culture, he refined and sublimated the image of Sun Wukong. In fact, the title of Monkey King adopts the method of naturalization, which is also in line with his translation purpose. This kind of title translation makes it easier for the people in the target language country to understand the content and main ideas of the original text, so that the people in the target language country can accept it. It helps the readers to communicate with different cultures and conforms to the communicative meaning principle of the target culture. Ding (2021) believes that domestication and foreignization are unified rather than opposed, and translators cannot follow only one principle. The translation is neither entirely the source nor the target language. The process of translation is dynamic, so translators should choose and optimize translation strategies according to the characteristics of the original text. However, the author believes that the fidelity of the original text is not very good. The translation of *The Monkey King* only focuses on the character of Sun Wukong and cannot cover the entire novel.

Case 2: 唐三藏, 孙悟空, 猪悟能, 沙悟净

In classical Chinese literature, the determination of titles is not an arbitrary label, but part of the artistic creation, which is closely related to the identity, image, character or social experience of the character, and also contains part of the author's creative intent.

Yu: Tripitaka (Tang San-tsang), Sun Wu-kung (Aware-of-Vacuity), Zhu Wu-

neng (Pig Awakened to Power), Sha Wu-jing (Awakened to Purity)

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Yu Guofan adopted the dual strategy of domestication and foreignization for the names of characters. The notes provided by Yu complement the translation in order to clearly convey its original culture. The word “kong” has an extremely important meaning in Buddhism, and involves the realization of one’s own nature. Kong is existence and existence is emptiness, so the word Wu Kong means that after a series of practices, one finally reaches the state of divinity. If the word Wu Kong is translated word for word as Wu Kong, it is inappropriate and cannot reflect the connotation of the title of deity. The translator therefore uses the strategy of naturalization, making the comment Aware-to-Vacuity. This combination of naturalization and This combination of naturalization and dissimilation allows the connotation of the title to be more clearly explained without causing a loss of information. The mixture of the two translation strategies allowed him to achieve his translation objectives.

Waley: Tripitaka (Hsuan Tsang), Monkey King (Aware-of-Vacuity), Pigsy, Sandy

Many Westerners are unfamiliar with Chinese culture and are unaware of the complexity of the Chinese appellation system, which can be confusing to Western readers if they are all translated as they are. In Western culture, it is customary to end nicknames with the letter “y”, so Waley uniformly employs the strategy of naturalization in his translations, often by adding a letter “y” to the end of each name as a translation of the missing Chinese character “wu”. It is clear that in the English translation of the names of the four teachers and disciples, Waley blends his own vision with that of the target audience, making the versions more accessible to the readers of his time. Such a translation strategy makes it easier for the reader to grasp the meaning and connotation of these titles in general.

Case 3: 肯不弃鄙贱，收纳小人，亦得效犬马之劳(出自第四回)

Yu: we shall serve you as dogs or as horses

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Yu Guofan’s purpose is to spread the traditional Chinese cultural connotation of *Journey to the West* itself, and he uses alienation techniques. In fact, this kind of translation is completely in line with Chinese thinking. It may be difficult for the target readers to understand the emotions expressed by such services as dogs and horses. It may be a little difficult for cultural communication, but it is also good for its translation purposes and fidelity processing of the original text.

Waley: we are ready to perform the most menial of tasks

Instead, Waley simplified the metaphor. Due to the difference of cultural background, it is difficult for Westerners to understand the true meaning of Chinese idioms and idioms, especially the meaning of many words in the ancient and modern meanings, metaphors and other rhetorical devices, so how to express the meaning of these words in translation is very important. Comparatively speaking, Yu Guofan’s translation is faithful to the original text, but not conducive to understanding, while Arthur Waley’s translation is more effective in terms of reader

receptivity. This domestication-oriented translation is easier to be understood by the target language recipient, which greatly improves the readability and appreciation of the novel, but weakens the literary image of the novel. Quan (2017) believes that Waley conveys the heterogeneity of Chinese language and culture through defamiliarization on the one hand; On the other hand, he also adopts a goal-oriented approach to some extent, enabling English readers to read familiar things from time to time while enjoying the elegance of foreign languages and cultures.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Wiley hopes that readers can easily understand the meaning here, and choose translation strategies from the perspective of readers, so that readers can clearly understand the cultural significance of *Journey to the West*, which is in line with the principle of cultural communicative meaning in the Skopos theory. At the same time, here describes the intention of the visitor to serve the Monkey King, highlighting the Monkey King's identity as a leader from the side, in line with his translation purpose. Yang (2020) believes that British translator Waley, on the one hand, seeks to fit the text and write fluently; on the other hand, he wants his works to be closer to readers' reading and easier for readers to understand. And domestication is the main, foreignization is auxiliary. The author believes that a large part of Waley's translation of *Journey to the West* is for the purpose of cultural communication, that is, it hopes that the target English readers can understand the translation, understand the plot of *Journey to the West* and know some Chinese culture. Yu Guofan mainly uses foreignization as the main method and domestication as the auxiliary method to completely retain the main idea of the original work and reduce the understanding obstacles caused by translation. Meanwhile, the translation has high artistic and cultural value.

3.2. Literal and Free Translation

Literal translation refers to a translation method that retains both the original content and rhetorical features while conforming to the language norms of the target language. Free translation refers to translating one language into another while retaining the idiomatic usages of the original sentence as much as possible, so that the translated sentence retains the sentence structure, structure and tone of the original sentence, making the meaning of the original sentence clear and understandable and the expression more accurate.

Case 1: 常言道，拿贼拿赃。那怪物做了三年皇帝，又不曾走了马脚，漏了风声。(第三十八回)

Yu: If you arrest a thief, you must seize him with the stolen goods.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Yu Guofan adopts the literal translation strategy for this sentence, so as to reproduce the characteristics of the source language to the readers, so that the readers can understand the source language culture while obtaining the text information, and achieve the real purpose of translation activities. Then, Yu Guofan explained the sentence stolen goods in de-

tail, explaining that the thief should pay attention to taking what he stole. The advantage of such translation is that it is easier for readers to understand, especially for such complex Chinese sentences, to achieve cultural communication. Moreover, such detailed understanding conforms to the meaning of the original text and achieves the fidelity processing of the original text.

Waley: Take robber, take loot.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Waley's translation of this sentence also adopts the literal translation strategy. Compared with Yu Guofan's translation, Waley adopts the double-verb-object structure of the imperative sentence, which is consistent with the original text and has a concise aesthetic feeling. This concise translation not only achieves the translation purpose of mainly reflecting the character characteristics of the Monkey King, but also enables the readers to understand the meaning of the sentence more simply and conveniently, and to understand the meaning of the original text. At the same time, it ensures the fidelity processing corresponding to the original text, and avoids the possibility of ambiguity caused by excessive explanation.

Case 2: 八戒闻言，走近前，就摸了一把，笑道：这妖精真个是糟鼻子不吃酒——枉担其名了！（第三十九回）

Yu: This monster-spirit is truly a red nose who doesn't drink! He bears his name in vain!

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Yu Guofan translated the bad nose into red nose. Bad nose called rosacea in medicine, commonly known as the red nose. It is commonly believed that alcoholism is a necessary factor in rosacea, but in reality, infection with trichomonas is an important factor in the development of the disease. Both East and West believe that red nose is a symbol of alcoholism, so Yu Guofan's translation is based on the comprehensive understanding of two different cultures, and achieves his goal of faithful translation. If you have a red nose, you are considered an alcoholic, which is really a shame worth mentioning. Bad Nose does not eat wine—it is an allegorical sentence that does not live up to its name. The first half of the sentence can be regarded as a metaphor and the second half as an explanation of the sentence. It can be seen that Yu Guofan has handled the fidelity of the original novel well, and this explanation is also convenient for readers to understand and understand the connotation of the original text.

Waley: This is a blotchy nose that never sniffed wine; a bad name and nothing to show for it.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Waley's translation preserves the allegorical structure of the original text, namely the expression structure of the original text, which reflects his high fidelity to the structure of the original text and achieves the principle of faithful translation. Moreover, this ironic meaning is mainly reflected in the original text. Waley's translation can make readers fully realize the charm of the original text, achieve the communicative meaning, conform to the principle of coherence, depict the characters in the novel, and achieve his translation purpose of spreading his own individualism. Waley's treatment

proves that more detail is not always better when translating allusions. Sometimes, under the premise of human cognition and recognition, literal translation does not hinder the understanding of the original text, but can express the beauty of the form and structure of the source language. Yu and Liu (2018) believe that literal translation can maximize the retention of the original information. If the idiom is concise and easy to understand, and does not use rhetorical devices, he can try literal translation. However, literal translation often shows its limitations due to its focus on literal meaning.

Case 3: 石猿端坐上面道：列位呵，人而无信，不知其可。（第一回）

Yu: If a man lacks trust worthiness, it is difficult to know what he can accomplish!

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Yu Guofan uses the most comprehensible sentence to translate, simplifying the complex sentence in the novel for readers to understand, achieving the translation purpose of letting readers understand the connotation of the original text and promoting cultural exchange. When the stone Monkey King bravely jumped into the waterfall and found the hole in the water curtain, he lost no time in reminding the Monkey Kings that without trust, one does not know. This sentence comes from the Analects of Confucius·Wei Zheng, which means that if one does not keep one's word, there is nothing one can do. The stone Monkey King quotes the Analects of Confucius, which is apt. This sentence has no cultural background and is easy to translate. Yu Guofan explains the original text very well, retains the meaning of the original text, achieves the principle of fidelity and coherence in translation, and promotes cultural exchange.

Waley: With one whose word cannot be trusted there is nothing to be done!

Looking at Waley's translation from the perspective of the skopos theory, he chose a literal translation, as opposed to Yu Guofan's version, which uses the phrase "with a... This is...", it's concise, clear, and true, without losing the original meaning that he doesn't know what else he can do. This translation highlights the Monkey King's brave character, achieves his translation purpose, and explains the meaning of the original text very directly. The authenticity of the original text is handled very well.

3.3. Omission

In the process of translation, different sentence structure and lexical arrangement will also affect the expression of ideas, so it is very useful to use the strategy of saving translation properly.

Case 1: 悟空挺身在旁，且不朝礼，但侧耳以听金星启奏。（第四回）

Yu: While the Star prostrated himself, Wukong stood erect by him. Showing no respect, he cocked his ear only to listen to the report of the Gold Star.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, the two scholars in the above example have adopted different translation methods. Although they all translated according to the normal word order, Yu Guofan divided one sentence into two sen-

tences and translated the description of the original one by one, reflecting the processing of the fidelity of the original text and achieving the fidelity principle in the purpose theory. However, as a result, the character of Sun Wukong is weakened, readers may not be able to experience the charm in the original text, and the communication of the target language culture is not very good. Compared with Waley's translation, there are less role descriptions.

Waley: The Planet immediately prostrated himself, but Monkey King stood erect by his side, not showing any sign of respect, but only pricking his ears to hear what the Planet would say.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Waley changed the last part of the sentence into two clauses. “No... But only... And...” It accords with a series of modal performance of Sun Wukong in the original work, and more in line with the principle of loyalty. First, Waley employs “but” to connect the two clauses, creating a stark behavioral contrast between “the Planet prostrated” and “Wukong standing upright,” highlighting Sun Wukong's rebellious defiance of etiquette. Second, in “not showing any sign of respect,” the word “any” intensifies the complete negation, emphasizing Sun Wukong's utter disregard for authority—far exceeding mere discourtesy—and revealing his inherently rebellious nature. Finally, “pricking his ears” employs a verb phrase with animalistic alertness, vividly portraying Sun Wukong's instinctive, non-ritualistic listening posture akin to a beast. This resonates with his “monkey-like cunning” nature, highlighting his unrestrained, wild rebelliousness. In this way, the translation conforms to the logical relation of the original text, and expresses the rebellious character of Sun WuKong incisively and vividly. It is smoother and more conducive to readers' reading, and achieves the principle of the translation purpose. Yang (2020) believes that Waley, on the one hand, seeks to fit the text and write fluently; on the other hand, he wants his works to be closer to readers and easier for them to understand.

Case 2: 佛祖听言，呵呵冷笑道：“你那厮乃是个猴子成精，焉敢欺心，要夺玉皇上帝尊位？”（第七回）

Yu: when the Buddhist patriarch heard these words, he laughed aloud in scorn.

From the skopos theory, in the above example Yu Guofan translated the “scorn” according to the original order of translation, “he he leng xiao” is meant to be contemptuous, which is a strong feeling that somebody or something is stupid or not good enough, usually shown by the way you speaking. This sentence mainly wants to show the Buddha's facial features for readers, Yu Guofan has a reasonable grasp of this, and uses scorn to show the original intention, scorn to achieve the principle of fidelity. According to the original scorn, the treatment in the order of the original text reflects the fidelity of the original text treatment is very good, so as to achieve the translation purpose.

Waley: So Monkey King recited; at which Buddha burst out laughing.

From the perspective of the skopos theory, Waley adopted the translation in order, in which the subject of the first clause is Monkey King, and Monkey King is the sender of the action. Such word order arrangement makes the language

smoother and easier to understand, thus realizing his purpose of highlighting the Monkey King in translation. From the perspective of sentence components, Waley's understanding of the emotional tendency of the whole sentence is wrong or the translator deliberately. In particular, the depiction of Buddha with burst out laughing is too exaggerated and does not conform to the principle of faithfulness of the skopos theory.

Case 3: 众菩萨献毕，因请如来明示根本，指解源流。那如来微开善口，敷演大法，宣扬正果，讲的是三乘妙典，五蕴得严……如来讲罢，对众言回……(第八回)

This example describes the scene in which the Tathagata returns to the Lei Yin Treasure Hall to teach the dharma to the Buddhas. It appears in the first part of the eighth circle. Most of the poems in the front are loaded with religious culture.

Yu: After the bodhisattvas had presented their poems, they invited Tathagata to disclose the origin and elucidate the source. Tathagata gently opened his benevolent mouth to expound the great dharma and to proclaim the truth. He lectured on the wondrous doctrines of the three vehicles, the five skandhas, and the Si-rangama Sitra... When Tathagata had finished his lecture, he said to the congregation...

According to his translation purpose, Yu Guofan translated the whole paragraph with almost no major omission of the original text. For example, the "five skandhas", with a note explaining that they are the five substances possessed by wise beings such as human beings.

Waley: One day when Buddha had been preaching to the Bod-hisattvas and Arhats, he said at the end of his sermon...

Waley's version uses the method of omission cuts out all the preceding verse, so the sentence in this example is the beginning of the chapter. It can be seen that Waley gave full play to the subjectivity of the translator and made a large number of cuts. Even the final translation only has one sentence. Most of the terms above have been deleted, which can only be seen from the Buddhist terms such as buddha.

In general, Yu Guofan's translation adopts the translation method of language conversion according to the original thoughts, which preserves the emotional tendency of the original text and the main ideas of the works to the greatest extent. Waley cut a lot of plots in the translation process, adding his own subjective ideas, and combined with the spirit of individual heroism in Western culture, making it easier for readers to accept and understand *Journey to the West*. From the perspective of the skopos theory, Yu Guofan's translation is more in line with the theory of three principles of purpose, especially the principle of fidelity. Due to the large amount of deletion and translation of the original text, Waley's translation does not quite meet the basic requirements of skopos theory. Although it achieves the purpose of translation, it violates the fidelity of the original text.

4. Conclusion

Through the analysis from the perspective of the skopos theory, it is found that

Yu Guofan's translation is better than Waley's in terms of domestication and alienation. In particular, Yu Guofan mixed the two translation strategies and deeply thought about the cultural connotation behind them, such as when translating the character name Wu kong. For the sake of fluency and ease of understanding, Waley does not delve into the important cultural connotations behind these terms. However, in literal translation and free translation. As a British translator, Waley is able to fully understand the religious and cultural information in the text. For the Buddhist information, Waley will judge the specific driving effect of the story scene to decide whether to omit it or not. If the paragraph is simply described, it is likely to be omitted, while if the judgment is closely related to the context, it will be kept completely.

In short, the reasons why Waley and Yu Guofan adopt various translation strategies and use diverse ways to exert their subjective initiative are also rooted in their different translation purposes as translators. The most important consideration for Waley is the acceptability of the target language readers, so he rewrites the source text and drastically removes the religious and cultural content that is not closely related to the plot development. Yu Guofan was well aware of the religious content in *Journey to the West*, and consciously retained these features and spent a lot of time explaining them, which was in line with his translation purpose. In the process of translating Chinese literary works abroad, Chinese translators should pay attention to their own initiative as translators, attach importance to cultural identity and the necessity of conveying Chinese culture, consider the acceptance degree of foreign readers, and clarify the main purpose of the translated text. Instead of sticking to a single translation strategy, find a compromise balance.

5. Discussion

Chinese classical literary novels possess their unique linguistic charm and cultural background, which pose certain challenges for translation work. This requires translators to strike a balance between understanding the original text and achieving readability for readers, thereby achieving their translation goals. Case studies show that by applying different translation strategies to the same text, translators can not only disseminate the culture contained in Chinese novels, but also conform to the cognitive habits of English readers, while achieving their own translation goals. This dynamic balance embodies the core value of the functional purpose theory.

Due to the limitation of the length of this paper, only a limited number of cases are selected for analysis. Therefore, the cases in this paper cannot cover all aspects of the translation of Yu Guofan and Arthur Waley, which will be of limited help to people engaged in relevant work. For those interested in the translation of *Journey to the West*, there is still more to explore. In addition, although this paper is guided by functional skopos theory, due to the limitations of the author's ability and relevant professional knowledge, some contents and opinions in this paper may not be objective. If there are deficiencies, please correct them.

Future research can attempt to combine functional teleology with other translation theories to form a more comprehensive analytical framework. For instance, explore the manifestation of the translator's subjectivity under the functional teleology, or analyze the communication effect of the translation from the perspective of reader acceptance. It is possible to establish a parallel corpus of multiple translations of literary novels and analyze the strategic preferences of translators through data mining. And for different target readers (such as scholars, teenagers, and general readers), research on how to adjust translation strategies. This will further promote the "living" dissemination of China's fine traditional culture in the global context.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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