

Retranslation as a Social Activity: The Case of Chinese Literary Canon *Xi You Ji*

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ABSTRACT

Xi You Ji is a popular Chinese canon and has been successfully introduced to the English-speaking world. This study sets out to carry out a comparative study of XYJ's retranslations by Helen M. Hayes in 1930, Anthony C. Yu in 2006, and Julia Lovell in 2021. This study is tethered to narrative theory and paratextual analysis. By comparing the narratives encoded in the paratexts, this study aims to identify how paratexts function in reframing the narratives of XYJ. Specifically, this paper adopts the narrative framing strategies proposed by Baker (2006) to analyse the narratives elaborated in the paratexts. This paper shows that the three abridgements are all in accordance with the storyline of the source text, while there are obvious differences regarding genre and theme among these versions. Accordingly, Hayes reframed the fiction as a spiritual fable of a historical monk's journey to India with Mahayana Buddhist interpretation, Yu a serious allegory highlighting karma and redemption of Monkey and Sanzang, and Lovell a popular folklore of Monkey fused with religious, historical, and sarcastic elements. Moreover, the three versions enlarge the scope of the original narrative to the Anglophone setting by publicising the Chinese fantasy with a story of Buddhist scripture-obtaining. This study provides the theoretical basis and a new paradigm for further research on narrative reframing and hopes to offer insights into the overseas promotion of Chinese literature.

Keywords: retranslation; narrative; paratexts; frame; Xi You Ji

INTRODUCTION

RETRANSLATION BACKGROUND

Retranslation is defined as “the act of translating a work that has previously been translated into the same language, or the result of such an act, i.e., the retranslated text itself” (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2009, p. 233). Recently, researchers in translation studies (TS) have paid extensive attention regarding the types, existence of, and motives for this phenomenon (e.g. Berman, 1990; Susam-Sarajeva, 2003; Deane-Cox, 2014). Moreover, it is found that the scholarly discussion related to the retranslation of literary texts revolves around the “Retranslation Hypothesis”. The RH holds that “later translations tend to be closer to the source text” than the first translation (Chesterman, 2000, p. 23). Over the years, scholars such as Koskinen and Paloposki (2010), Bolaños-Cuéllar (2018), and Sharifpour and Sharififar (2021) have worked extensively to test the validity of the Hypothesis. To this day, the results have not been conclusive. However, the differences between the initial translation and subsequent versions are certain.

RETRANSLATION OF *XI YOU JI*

Xi You Ji (also known as *Journey to the West*, hereafter *XYJ*) is first published in China in the 16th century and is often ascribed to Wu Cheng'en. This classic Chinese fiction is loosely based on the historical accounts of Sanzang's pilgrimage to India during the Tang Dynasty. Sanzang, also known as Tripitaka, was a respected Chinese Buddhist monk. The fiction depicts his journey to India in quest of the Buddhist scriptures, accompanied by his three supernatural disciples, Sun Wukong (Monkey), Zhu Wuneng (Piggy) and Sha Wujing (Sandy). After numerous battles with demonic foes, the team obtained the sutras and brought them back to the country. *XYJ* is not merely an allegory as it "evolves into various genres, such as folklore, Chinese mythology, and Taoist and Buddhist philosophy, reflective of some Chinese religious attitudes that still exist today" (Wang et al., 2020, p. 1).

As one of the most significant components of Chinese literature, *XYJ* has enjoyed great popularity among the Anglophone reading public. It was first introduced to the West in the late 19th century. Till today, dozens of English translations of *XYJ* have been published as independent books in the English-speaking world. Classified by content, most are abridged translations. The character, Monkey, has been widely recognised as the highlight of *XYJ*. The heroism exemplified in Monkey's rebel against the malicious forces and the dignitaries echoes with the spiritual core of Western society.

Normally, the deficiencies of the first translation, such as being "somehow poor and lacking" or using "dated language", have long been considered the major cause of the appearance of retranslations (Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010, pp. 296-297). In most cases, translators of the retranslations are aware of the previous versions. It is the dissatisfaction with the predecessors' works and the "ideological, sociological, or political factors" (Kim, 2018, p. 2) that motivated the new versions. It is noteworthy that the views and stances of translators are demonstrated when they reframe the narratives with the selection of translated texts, transformation of titles and many other manipulative approaches in a conscious manner.

With a view to determining the narrative framing strategies adopted by translators in retranslation, this study selects three English translations of *XYJ*. Given its encompassingness, flexibility and practicality, this study draws on the narrative framework. The study intends to investigate the diachronic narrative reframing of the three English abridgements of *XYJ* from the early 20th century to 2021 through paratextual analysis. Specifically, with a view to identifying the significant differences on a paratextual level, this study conducts a comparative analysis of the target texts (TTs). The paratextual materials, together with the framing strategies and the contextual motivations for the retranslation, will be examined and compared. Moreover, articles and other literature that offer background information regarding the time, place, and involvement of translators will be used for reference. In general, this study seeks to answer the research questions (RQs) below:

RQ1: How do the translators reframe the fiction via paratexts?

RQ2: In a time span of almost a century, what is the diachronic narrative reframing of the three abridgements?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the previous studies of *XYJ* pivot on the narrative, translator's subjectivity and socio-cultural contexts related to the fiction. Some researchers have taken advantage of narratology to examine the general characterisation of Chinese classics regarding narratives (Plaks, 1996). Some have demonstrated the stance of the translators by analysing the translation strategies on a textual level (Hao, 2016; Quan, 2017). Some have examined the translation procedures of character names and puns (Wang et al., 2023). Some have identified the effects of different agents participating in the translation activity (Luo & Zheng, 2017) and socio-cultural elements that contribute to the canonisation of the fiction (Wang et al., 2020). More recently, some researchers have pivoted the paratexts of the English versions; for example, Tao and Gu (2020) performed a diachronic analysis of the paratextual elements of an array of editions. The narrative reframing of *XYJ*'s English translations remains a relatively underexplored topic.

Narrative theory can be applied in TS in a deliberate manner. Previous studies in this realm found that scholars were much more intrigued by the differences between the retranslated versions rather than the similarities, for instance, the different reader's interpretations of literary works caused by different depictions of the characters (Zeven & Dorst, 2021), and the socio-cultural factors that lead to different narratives (Cardoso, 2021).

Furthermore, it is noticeable that the scholar's attention to TS is shown in the effects of paratexts on narratives. Since "every act of translation involves an interpretation" (Baker, 2008, p. 10), the scholars tacitly found out that aside from textual elements, paratexts, as an indispensable presentation of translated work, can drastically impact readers' perception of retranslation (Amirdabbaghian & Shunmugam, 2019; Hijjo & Kaur, 2017; Raffi, 2022). Qi (2016) conducted a paratextual analysis of the network of agents who took part in the English translation of *Jin Ping Mei*. Kim (2018) innovatively examined paratext in the narrative reframing of three Korean translations of *The Rape of Nanking* and concluded that the translations are paratextually framed and temporally positioned. That is to say, paratext is designed to promote particular narratives. Kim's study is inspiring since it confirmed the paratext's function as a crucial participant in reframing the narratives in translated works. Amirdabbaghian and Shunmugam (2019), as well as Yalsharzeh, Barati and Hesabi (2019), echoed Kim in their comparative analysis of paratexts and found that differences in paratexts result from ideologies and can be manipulated by institutional participants.

The previous studies strongly prove how paratextual materials can be used as an illuminating point of entry into retranslation. The studies mentioned above mostly adopted the narrative theory and the framing strategies proposed by Baker (2006) as the theoretical framework. The focus of the prior studies is on the narratological analysis of the paratexts. The investigation of the linkage between paratext and narrative is quite instructive for further studies, that is, the distinctions in paratexts can be construed as an effective way to control and measure readers' understanding of the retranslations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To answer the research questions, this study is conducted along the lines of the study by Kim (2018) to some extent. This study adopts Baker's elaboration on the concept of narrative (2006). It also draws upon the framing strategies proposed by Baker (2006) and Genette's study of paratext

(1997). This study aims to provide theoretical basis and new research paradigm for the research on narrative reframing.

NARRATIVE THEORY

This study adopts the concept of narrative proposed by Mona Baker (2006), which conforms to the notion adopted by Fisher (1987), Bruner (1991) and Somers and Gibson (1994). The narrative is “public and personal ‘stories’ that we subscribe to and that guide our behaviour” (Baker, 2006, p.19).

In TS, translation is viewed as “social acts that function as mechanisms of social control and resistance” (Kim, 2018, p. 3). Accordingly, agents involved in the translation activity, especially translators with different historical backgrounds and stances, may result in different interpretations of ST in the target language, which can be considered as the result of social practice. This is the pivot that narrative theory pays close attention to. Narrative theory advocates further research to go beyond the confines of source text (ST) and target text (TT), that is, to take an overall view and to review the entire process.

FRAMING STRATEGIES

Furthermore, this study draws upon the core concept of narrative theory in translation—reframing (Baker, 2008). Frame refers to an interpretive lens in line with the translator’s beliefs that can “double up as narratives in their own right” (Baker, 2008, p. 23). It serves as a complimentary tool in the narrative analysis model, and it is appropriate to demonstrate “how the ‘same’ narrative can be framed in many different ways by different narrators” (Baker, 2010, p. 353).

This study employs Baker’s (2006) framing strategies for narratives, which are presented in the following:

1. Temporal and spatial framing: “involves selecting a particular text and embedding it in a temporal and spatial context” that induces people to associate it with the current narrative” (Baker, 2006, p. 112).
2. Selective appropriation of textual material is to “suppress, accentuate, or elaborate particular aspects of a narrative” through “omission and addition” (Baker, 2006, p. 114).
3. Labelling stands for “any discursive strategy that involves using a lexical item, term or phrase to identify a person, place, group, event or any other key element in a narrative” (Baker, 2006, p. 122).
4. Repositioning of participants means participants in a narrative “can be repositioned in relation to each other and to the reader” via paratextual elements or shifts in the expressions on a textual level (Baker, 2006, p. 132).

PARATEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Paratext is what accompanies the literary text and makes it a book (Genette, 1997). Paratexts can be broadly divided into two categories according to their location in the text: peritext and epitext. The former is physically surrounding the text, such as the cover and preface; the latter is extratextually situated, such as interviews and reviews. Given the manipulative nature of the paratext, it can be taken as a participant in the narrative reframing of the story. The classification

of paratext reflects agents, the interpretation of the text by different agents involved in a book's translation and spread, such as the author, translator, publisher, and press.

In TS, by framing the core text in a certain way, paratexts can help deliver a literary work to the reader with the potential to manipulate its reception. Given the manipulative nature of the paratext, it can be taken as a participant in the narrative reframing of the story. Specifically, the cover, the outermost feature of a book, “functions as a frame in that it anticipates and anchors our interpretation of the narrative elaborated in the book” (Baker, 2010, p. 353). The title is endowed with four distinct functions, “designating or identifying; description of the work (content and genre); connotative value and temptation” (Genette, 1997, p. 93). As a way of narrative reframing, the title can imply the subject or the theme of the text, and the subtitle can hint at the genre of the text. The chapter's intertitles may offer readers the framework of the narrative by presenting the gist of the entire text. Additionally, the preface is informative and serves as a compelling source to investigate the translators' adoption of translation strategies (Genette, 1997). As such, paratext is more than just supporting material to the translation—it constitutes a narrative in and of itself. Accordingly, when examining the translated works, it is of paramount significance to analyse how the narratives are reframed via paratexts.

METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

With the research questions in mind and considering the space limitations of this paper, this study focuses on *Xi You Ji*, written by Chinese author Wu Cheng'en and its three English abridgements. The criteria for selecting *XYJ*'s English translations are as follows: (1) the works can be found in digital or physical forms; (2) the works should be representative (high popularity); (3) the works were translated by different translators and different publishers; (4) the publication of the works covers a long time span.

The English abridgements by Helen M. Hayes (Wu, 1930), Anthony C. Yu (Wu, 2006) and Julia Lovell (Wu, 2021) are influential in the Anglophone world in terms of translation style, fidelity and readability. Hayes's version plays a conducive role in popularising Chinese fiction in English-speaking world (Wu, 2019). Yu's version was abridged from *XYJ*'s first-ever complete translation, which has been widely acclaimed for its faithfulness to the original. The translation project of Lovell's 2021 version was initiated by Penguin Books, one of the most reputable English books and classic books publishers in the West. The 2021 edition has become an instant bestseller on Amazon after its release. The versions selected by this study are labelled as RT₁, RT₂ and RT₃, respectively.

DATA ANALYSIS

This paper intends to identify the significant differences between the three selected versions on a paratextual level and determine how the paratexts affect the narrative reframing of the literary work.

To this end, this article will investigate the narrative devices adopted in those three abridgements on the basis of paratextual materials, namely, labelling, selective appropriation, repositioning of figures, and temporal and spatial framing. It requires figuring out every paratextual element in each version and mapping the element to the other two translations. It is

through this mapping that the study is able to uncover where and how the three translations differ. Based on the framing strategies employed in the three abridgements, this study will attempt to demonstrate the dynamic narrative reframing of *XYJ*'s abridgements.

DISCUSSION

The paratextual materials of the selected versions have been illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Peritexts of the English abridgments of *XYJ*

Version	RT ₁	RT ₂	RT ₃
Title	<i>The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress</i>	<i>The Monkey and the Monk</i>	<i>Monkey King</i>
Subtitle	<i>The Records of the Journey to the Western Paradise.</i>	An Abridgment of the <i>Journey to the West</i>	<i>Journey to the West</i>
Publication year	1930	2006	2021
Chapter	6 chapters	31 chapters	36 chapters
Intertitle	Self-named headings by the translator	Poetic couplets in line with that of ST	Numbered headings
Press	John Murray	The University of Chicago Press	Penguin Books

According to Table 1, the three versions vary a lot in terms of peritextual materials. It can be said that each retranslation reframes its own narrative accordingly. The framing strategies employed in those three abridgments will be examined on the basis of peritextual elements.

SPATIAL/TEMPORAL FRAMING

Hayes heavily abridged *XYJ* at the beginning of the 20th century when China suffered greatly from Western invasion. Yu and Lovell retranslated the novel in the 21st century. Hence, the three versions serve as a reflex of the spatial/temporal framing of the translators.

Since narratives are temporally and spatially embedded, messages are hidden in the temporal moment and physical site of narratives (Baker, 2006). The selected versions were published in the UK and America. The cultural and national power differences between China and the West are quite huge. Given that the most salient feature of *XYJ* is the rich Oriental religious colour, along with the long history of Christian worship in the Anglophone world, the translation of *XYJ* is not merely a linguistic transformation. Translators need to carefully deal with the relationship between China's polytheistic beliefs and Western monotheistic beliefs represented by Christianity.

After forcing China to open up to the world in the early 20th century, Western invaders intended to evangelise the Chinese people. Timothy Richard, a China-based British missionary and the translator of *XYJ*'s first English version in the form of an independent book, distorted the original by extensively blending Christian doctrine into his 1913 version. In comparison, Hayes clearly demonstrated an inclination to worshipping Buddhism via retranslation. Her employment of spatial/ temporal framing in RT₁ can be found in the blurb and introduction, where the translator aimed to build up a connection between the translated narratives and narratives in reality.

Hayes once worked as the private secretary of Lily Adams Beck, a prominent British author. Hayes accompanied Beck to Japan to study Buddhism in 1926 and then visited China several times

(Wu, 2019, pp. 57-62). Deeply immersed in Buddhism-themed works and the oriental culture in her twenties, Hayes explicitly stated in the introduction that there are no “traces of Christian doctrines” in *XYJ* and criticised Richard’s groundless association between *XYJ* and “Nestorian Christianity” (Wu, 1930, p. 16). Meanwhile, during China’s New Culture Movement in 1919, some notable Chinese scholars, including Hu Shih, advocated downplaying the religious elements in *XYJ* and shaping this classic into a satire for entertainment. However, with Buddhist doctrine in mind, Hayes insisted on spreading the core view of Mahayana Buddhism embedded in *XYJ*. As such, in order to help readers grasp the gist of her work, Hayes added a blurb on the book jacket stressing that “it is a drama of spiritual evolution, from stone monkey to Buddhahood” (Wu, 1930, blurb). Moreover, taking the theme of the fiction as “a spiritual parable” of the famous journey of Sanzang to India (Wu, 1930, p. 19), the translator demonstrated the primary purpose in *XYJ* as bringing “the heights of Buddhist philosophy” to the masses by “interesting and amusing them” (Wu, 1930, p. 9). RT₁ was included in “The Wisdom of the East Series” and published by John Murray in 1930, a London-based and time-honoured publishing house. The initiation of this “Series” went along with the “Chinoiserie” dating back to the 1820s. Moreover, based on the editorial note, this study found that Cranmer-Byny, the editor-in-chief of the “Series” at that time, noticed the soaring demand for self-education among the British public, then he accordingly put out the series to introduce Eastern religious and philosophical classics to the West (Wu, 1930). The successful inclusion of RT₁ was mainly thanks to Hayes’ emphasis on Buddhist philosophy within the fiction, which perfectly aligned with the preference of the publisher.

Under the influence of his immigrant family, Anthony C. Yu became familiar with Chinese classics when he was little and gained unique insights into Chinese culture. As a professor of religion and literature, both East Asian and Western, at the University of Chicago, Yu accomplished the full translation of *XYJ*. Although the four-volume translation was fully-recognised in the academia, the sales were weak due to “the unwieldy length and impractical size” (Wu, 2006, p. xiv). In 2006, considering the reading habits and educational level of Western general readers, Yu distilled the most exciting and meaningful episodes from his lengthy version and integrated them into a deftly streamlined version, entitled *The Monkey and the Monk*. The reader-friendly abridgement was published by the University of Chicago Press, which is one of the largest and oldest university presses in the US and a distinguished publisher of the highest standard academic and serious works. Undoubtedly, the press serves as a credible endorsement of this version to a large extent. As demonstrated in the preface of RT₂, Yu attempted to provide “as fully as possible all the textual features of the selected episodes” so that the readers can read “the world’s most finely wrought allegories” (Wu, 2006, p. xiv). The genre of the novel is taken as allegory and religious syncretism. You perceived the theme of the fiction as closely related to redemption, which is very similar to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

Lovell’s version, *Monkey King*, came out in 2021; before that, she was well-known as an award-winning translator of Chinese modern fiction and a professor at the University of London specialising in Chinese culture and modern Chinese nation-building. Lovell has been dedicated to eliminating cultural barriers between the East and the West. She opined that *XYJ* is replete with a myriad of themes, including humour, adventure, spiritual pursuit and so forth. As noted in the introduction, *XYJ* is “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 analogy made Western readers realise the value of *XYJ* in a direct manner. As most Westerners have read or heard of *The Canterbury Tales* or *Don Quixote* when they were young, the statement can naturally intrigue people to read *XYJ*, the counterparts

to the Western classics (Yu, 2006, p. 345). Another motivation to translate this canon is due to the fact that it can “kick against lazy clichés about Chinese culture” that people still encounter in the West, such as “Chinese culture worshipping hierarchy and authority” and China “being isolated from the world outside its borders” (China Institute in America, 2021). Plus, considering the required linguistic updating, Lovell anticipated producing a new version based on her apprehension. Thus, the retranslation project proceeded smoothly after Lovell got the invitation for John Siciliano, executive editor of Penguin Classics.

In order to expand the readership, Lovell not only infused contemporary English dialogue and vocabulary into the story but also injected it with so much colour, wit and humour. RT₃ garnered rave reviews after release. Lovell took *XYJ* as a folk tale. Her *Monkey King* is accessible enough for young children to read. As Leland Cheuk wrote in a review:

“[This] is a breezy, action-packed narrative that never pauses to surface the novel’s Buddhist themes and is peppered with Western colloquialisms like ‘Back in a jiffy!’ to replace any wordplay that would have required footnotes.”

(Cheuk, 2021)

SELECTIVE APPROPRIATION OF TEXTUAL MATERIAL

The ST of *XYJ* can be roughly divided into three parts. Part 1 (Chapters 1 and 7) is mainly about the origin of Monkey and the havoc he caused in heaven. Part 2 (chapters 8-12) covers the biography of Sanzang and the cause for scripture-searching. Part 3 (chapter 13-100) recounts the odysseys experienced by the team, which is the highlight of the entire fiction. The ordeals encountered by the team are mainly due to the demons’ lust for Sanzang’s flesh to be immortal and the conflicts involving religious beliefs or mutual trust.

The translators have all made major adjustments regarding the narratives in the ST, which can be deduced from the quantities of the chapters shown in Table 1. Although the retranslations were abridged from the same fiction, readers might perceive the differences in the contents due to the translators’ respective selective appropriation. The choice of the chapters helps reframe narratives as reflected in the paratextual materials, such as the intertitles.

Hayes presented a relatively integral process of Sanzang’s journey from the perspective of an epitome of “the Epic Pilgrimage of Man from the Actual to the Ideal” (Wu, 1930, p. 19). Instead of retaining the structure of the original, the translator compressed 100 chapters into six chapters, totalling about 100 pages. Though the length of RT₁ has been largely shortened from the original, it still basically follows the storyline of the ST. Hayes covered the highlight of the journey in the last three chapters, encapsulating intertitles such as “The Master Pilgrims”, “The Pilgrim’s Progress”, and “The Crown of Buddhahood” (Wu, 1930, p. 5). In line with the theme of *XYJ* indicated in the introduction, the translator positioned Sanzang as the central character of the retranslation. As such, Hayes added a fair amount of Sanzang’s deeds of his real journey to India. Specifically, as for the part regarding the monk’s growth and the cause for scripture-acquiring, Hayes extracted two-page length from the historical biography, *Si-yu-ki, Buddhist Records of the Western World* (Beal, 1884) and *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang* (Beal, 1911). Moreover, as for the 81 calamities recorded in the original, Hayes selected 19 of them; some were translated in a detailed way, while the rest only lasted a few lines (Wu, 2019). On the whole, the selectivity, especially the addition of the historical records of Sanzang’s experience, echoed the translator’s understanding of the fiction, as well as her admiration for Sanzang (Wu, 1930). In RT₁, the image of the Monkey is toned down. More importantly, Sanzang is no longer the weak and cowardly monk in the original

but a pious and adventurous religious personality as recorded in historical records, which further explains why his portrait is placed on the cover of Hayes' version. Featured with the integration of fiction and reality, RT₁ is reframed as a monk's historical journey to India, along with his fighting with demons (Wu, 2019).

Unlike Hayes, Yu perceived *XYJ* as "a serious allegory built on intricate religious syncretism" (Wu, 2006, p. x). Given the predecessors' misleading and "distorted" interpretation of the original and the obscurity of the fiction's religious significance, Yu decided to present the karma between Monkey and Sanzang in his retranslation (Wu, 2006, p. xiii). Thus, Yu's selective appropriation is more concerned with redemption, self-discipline, and religious themes. In RT₂, episodes such as Cart Slow Kingdom, Child-and-Mother River, and The True and False Monkeys are selected to unveil the two protagonists' redemption after their misconduct. "The theme of self-discipline in the case of" Sanzang "is strongly associated with his ability to reject sexual temptation", which has been omitted in the previous versions (Hao, 2016). Yu selected three adventures to display Sanzang's rejection of the demons' allure: the Four Sages test, the Woman Nation, and the Scorpion at the Cave of the Lute (Wu, 2006). Accordingly, through a perilous journey full of temptations and trials, *XYJ* has been reframed as an allegory of redemption and enlightenment. Furthermore, Yu highly appreciated the thick religious presence in *XYJ*. For example, two seemingly repetitive episodes of Monkey's killing of six robbers have been intentionally preserved in chapters 14 and 26. In chapter 14, "Mind Monkey Returns to the Right/The Six Robbers Vanish from Sight" (心猿歸正, 六賊無蹤), after Monkey is saved by Sanzang from the Five-Phrases Mountain, he kills the six bandits (Wu, 2006). In the note, Yu further explained the Buddhist metaphor embedded in the six robbers as "the six senses of the body, which impede enlightenment: hence they appear in this chapter's allegory as bandits" (Wu, 2006, p. 217). Later, in chapter 26, Yu reiterates this incident again to illustrate Monkey's Buddhist enlightenment journey.

In contrast to Hayes and Yu, Lovell attempted to highlight the heroic image of Monkey in RT₃. Moreover, Lovell intended to narrow the temporal and spatial gap between the 21st century Western readers and the 16th century China and to deliver "the dynamism, imagination, philosophy, and comedy of the original" via her translation (Wu, 2021, p. 35). Therefore, RT₃ is more like a rewriting. All of the factors mentioned above contribute to a constant reaffirming of expected perspectives on the fiction through paratexts. Lovell drastically reduced the length. Only 48 chapters of the original were retained. However, she almost entirely translated the opening and concluding chapters (Wu, 2021). The first 18 chapters are in the same order as the ST. Then, to keep the abridgement compact and brief, the translator "omitted outright some of the episodes describing parts of the pilgrims' journey", most of which are irrelevant to narrative threads in the last 18 chapters (Wu, 2021, p. 33). Some of the fantastical and significant episodes that could not be fitted in the threads have been deleted, including the Buddha's scheme to tempt Pigsy by a household of beautiful women, double monkeys, a monastery of larcenous monks, a den of soccer-playing spider fiends (Wu, 2021). Unlike Yu's selectivity in RT₂, Lovell reduced the repetitive episodes in the ST, along with many descriptive poems regarding situations, landscapes, battles and puns that require explanatory footnotes. Only poems related to the plot were retained and incorporated into the surrounding prose. With her selective appropriation, Lovell reframed a coherent theme of religious conflict via the intriguing story of Monkey.

LABELING

Labelling helps narrative reframing via various means. Specifically, the title, which is usually brief and appealing, may suggest the subject of the novel. The subtitle might indicate the genre and other important information about the text. Heading can briefly display the framework of narrative, presenting the main idea of a book. As for Chinese classics, such as *XYJ*, the headings are poetic couplets, which can provide the outline of each chapter in a straightforward manner. The naming system may indicate the writer's view and his implied information. Hayes employed the labelling with an explicit Buddhist connotation. Yu restored the religious connotations in the names of the protagonists. Lovell's labelling explicitly positioned Monkey as the central character.

LABELING BY TITLES, SUBTITLES AND HEADINGS

The title of RT₁, *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress* (see FIGURE 1), indicates Hayes' Buddhist interpretation, and it might remind the readers of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. Since Bunyan's work depicts the pilgrimage of a Christian to Heaven, Hayes clearly intended to exploit the popularity of this classic Christian allegory to inspire the Anglophone readership's curiosity about its parallel in Chinese literary narrative. In addition, as claimed in the introduction, Hayes emphasised the thread of *XYJ* as "the Buddha nature is in everyone" (Wu, 1930, p. 17). With the use of the word "Buddhist", the recreated title suggests that *XYJ* is reframed as a record of a Buddhist expedition. The front cover of the 1930 edition accordingly places the portrait of Sanzang in the centre, highlighting his position in the book. Moreover, the headings are self-named by the translator using names and phrases, which conforms to the naming conventions of English novels. The headings of the first two chapters employ the same keyword, "Monkey", while the latter highlights "pilgrim" and "progress". In this way, the readers are able to grasp the framework and main characters of the fiction at a glance at the headings.

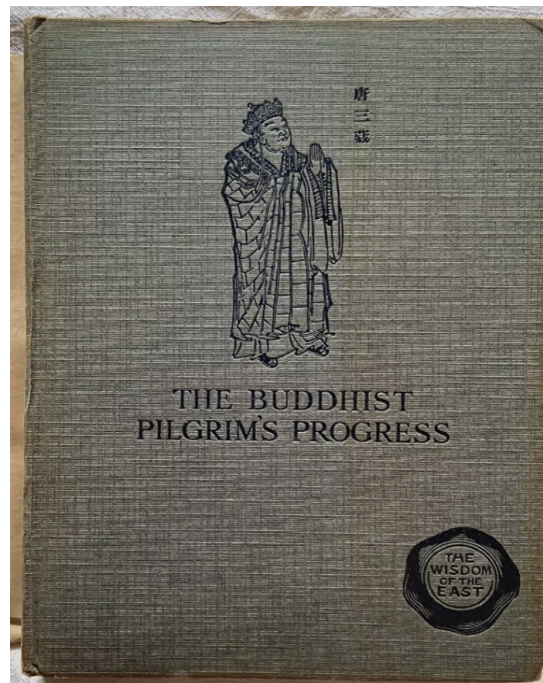


FIGURE 1. The front cover of *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress*

As indicated by the title, *The Monkey and the Monk: An Abridgment of the Journey to the West*, Yu positioned the Monkey and the monk as the protagonists (see FIGURE 2). In contrast to Hayes, Yu underlined the status and importance of Sanzang by directly placing his name in the title. The title also demonstrates that this book is more involved with the bond between the two protagonists. Additionally, the subtitle introduced *XYJ*, suggesting Yu's appreciation for the original. As a sinologist, Yu tried to make his version faithful to the ST and stressed the concepts of "redemption" and "self-disciple" to the readers. As for the headings, Yu applied poetic couplets in each chapter. The rhyming headings maintain the features of Chinese classics, helping display the fantastic plots of the book to potential readers. Suffice it to say that Yu attempted to reframe the narratives in his retranslation as faithful to the ST as possible by stressing the karma and struggles between Monkey and Sanzang along the journey.



FIGURE 2. The front cover of *The Monkey and the Monk: An Abridgment of the Journey to the West*

Lovell retitled the book *Monkey King: Journey to the West*, indicating a light-hearted popular fiction (see FIGURE 3). The title clearly shows Lovell's reframing of Monkey as the protagonist rather than Sanzang, or Monkey and the monk. In the introduction, Lovell expressed her willingness to highlight Monkey's personality, such as the pursuit of freedom, rebellion against power, and admiration of individualism in her work (Wu, 2021). Correspondingly, the publisher made the heroic image of the Monkey stand out on the cover, magnifying its status in the fiction. Similar to Yu's work, the name *XYJ* appears in the subtitle, indicating the relationship between the original and this abridged work. The chapters are numbered, letting go of the headings. As Lovell usually combined 2-3 chapters of the original into one chapter in her version, she skipped the headings to speed up the narratives.

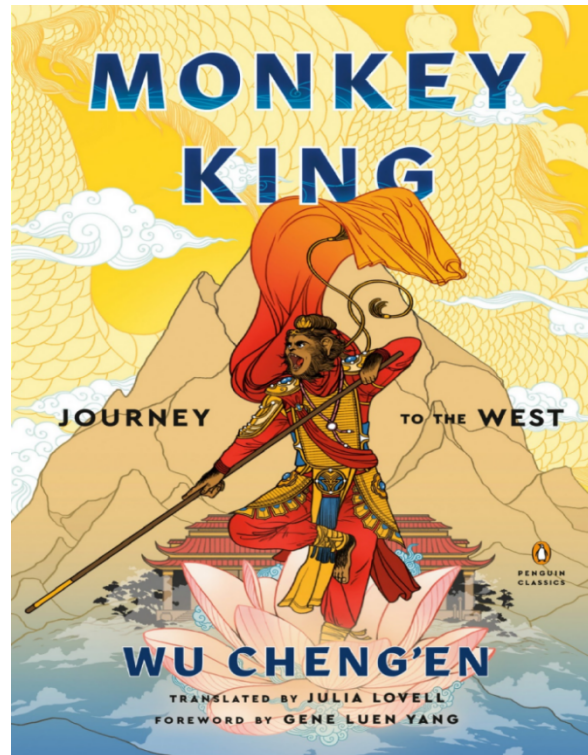


FIGURE 3. The front cover of *Monkey King: Journey to the West*

LABELING BY NAMES

When translating Chinese names into English, translators would refer to the corresponding Chinese Pinyin, equivalent to transliteration. *XYJ* involves a load of (imagined) places, immortals, demons and spirits labelled with a naming system full of wordplay and religious connotations. Thus, the translation of names can give a hint of the implied meanings of the theme. Due to limited space, this section only discusses the translation of the main characters.

The protagonists, 唐三藏 (Tang Sanzang) and 孙悟空 (Sun Wukong), are often mentioned as Master and Monkey in the abridgements. However, the religious connotations in the names have been neglected to some extent. Sanzang, with the literal meaning of “Three Baskets”, refers to “the collections of three main categories of the texts of the Mahayana sutras: the Sutta Pitaka, the Vinaya Pitaka and the Abhidhamma Pitaka” (Tao & Gu, 2020, p. 32). As for the Buddhist Dharma name of Monkey, the literal meanings of “Wu” and “Kong” are “comprehension” and “awareness-of-emptiness” separately. The name symbolises a noble spiritual realm in Mahayana Buddhism. More importantly, it implies Monkey’s expectation for self-cultivation.

Yu is the only one among the three translators who elucidated the religious interrelationship between the names of the protagonists. The monk is referred to as Tripitaka, the Sanskrit name for the sutras that the team is looking for. Wukong is explained as “Wake-to-Vacuity” (Wu, 2006, p. 18). The religious name is similar to the notions of Yogacara school, a branch of Mahayana to which Tripitaka converts. In *RT₂*, when Wukong said his religious name out loud, Tripitaka immediately replied, “It exactly fits the emphasis of our denomination” (Wu, 2006, p. 220). It can be inferred that Tripitaka became fully aware of the Buddhist connotation and the connection between himself and Monkey. Furthermore, given the strong Taoism vibe in *XYJ*, Yu related the Five Phases of Taoism to the characters in the poems and notes of his retranslation. The monk is

recognised as water since his nickname is “River Float” (Wu, 2006, p. 134). Monkey, identified as gold or metal, is alluded to as “the squire of gold” or “metal squire” in the verses (Wu, 2006, p. 279). Piggy is “wood mother” (Wu, 2006, p. 279), while Sandy is “Yellow hag”, which refers to the earth, specifically “the secretion of the spleen in internal alchemy” (Wu, 2006, p. 289). The five phases of water, gold, wood, earth and fire in Taoism can form a generative cycle and a destructive cycle on the basis of mutual constraint and influence. Yu stressed the work’s Taoist implication via the association.

Hayes and Lovell failed to unveil the Buddhist connotation in the names. Hayes named the main characters in sequence: Hsueh Tsiang, Sun the Monkey, the Pig Chu, and Sand the Monk. Hayes intended to reiterate the theme of the fiction via the labelling of names. In the introduction, she further explained the symbolic nature of the naming system. For example, Monkey represents “the Mind”, Piggy “the sensual part of man” —desires, Sandy “Temperament”, and Sanzang “Principle” (Wu, 1930, p. 18).

In contrast to the other two translators, Lovell’s naming system is reframed in a more approachable and popular way. She named the main characters as Tripitaka, Monkey, Piggy and Sandy, which is quite catchy and easy to remember. This simplified naming system can help popularise her work. Whereas it is worth mentioning that, although Lovell did refer to Monkey as “Sun-who-has-awoken-to-emptiness”, she did not further elaborate on its connotation (Wu, 2021, p. 44).

REPOSITIONING OF PARTICIPANTS

As for “positioning”, Baker means “the way in which participants in any interaction are positioned, or position themselves, in relation to each other and to those outside the immediate event” (2006, p. 132). This strategy is adopted in the paratext and main text as a device to present the positions of characters. In the original, Sanzang is a human who cannot identify tricky demons, while Monkey is portrayed as an invincible hero with superpowers.

Hayes regarded *XYJ* as a “spiritual parable” of a Buddhist monk’s real journey to India (Wu, 1930, p. 19). Hayes portrayed Sanzang as “resolute and intelligent” in youth (Wu, 1930, p. 100) and “solitary man plodding wearily through the deserts of the Way [...] until he realises his oneness with and dependence upon all other forms of life and accepts in the spirit of his long-ago prototype all help offered to him on the way” (Wu, 1930, p. 18). Secondly, Hayes stressed the monk’s admiration for and contribution to Mahayana Buddhism (Wu, 1930). Hayes confirmed that the spirits of the historical monk could evoke “the Buddha-nature in every man” (Wu, 1930, p. 17).

Yu elevated Sanzang’s status by using his name in the title. He reframed Sanzang as a self-disciplined, dedicated and merciful mentor along the journey. Sanzang’s strong resistance to such challenges and trials took a fair part in the translation as it is crucial to the completion of the journey. Plus, in contrast to his disciples and other powerful demons, Sanzang displays fragility as an ordinary human. Thus, the completion of the arduous journey can firmly verify Sanzang’s superior religious conviction and moral strength.

By contrast, Lovell portrayed Sanzang as a pious Buddhist with weaknesses, such as timorousness, while Monkey is described as an omnipotent and charismatic genius. As the title indicates, Lovell viewed Monkey as the protagonist. In the introduction, she held that “it is the handsome, educated Tripitaka who is the weakest link, trembling and weeping at the least trial, failing to recognise demons, and punishing Monkey for his hypervigilance” (Wu, 2021, p. 20).

DYNAMIC NARRATIVE REFRAMING OF THE THREE ABRIDGMENTS

According to the paratextual analysis, the narratives reframed in the three abridgements turn out to be dynamic in different historical periods. Specifically, in order to spread the Buddhist doctrine, Hayes reframed *XYJ* as a parable with Mahayana Buddhism interpretation with the title and the naming system. She intended to awaken the Buddha nature in each man. In contrast to Hayes, Yu viewed *XYJ* as a serious Buddhist and Taoist allegory and attempted to present a work closer to the original with regard to the interrelationship between the protagonists and the Taoist connotations. By using the new title and depicting Sanzang's reaction after hearing Monkey's religious name, Yu revealed the protagonists belonging to the same denomination of Mahayana. To deliver the Taoist interpretation, Yu associated the characters with the Five Phases of Taoism. Among the three abridgements, the twofold religious features of Buddhism and Taoism in the original have been retained to the maximum in RT₂. With the help of a simpler title and naming system and fewer footnotes, Lovell tried to construct a popular novel emphasising Monkey's humour, optimism and superpower. Reframed as a humorous and entertaining folklore of the imaged Monkey, RT₃ contributes to the popularisation of the *XYJ*.

In the case of *XYJ*, the dynamic in narrative reframing of *XYJ* do not fully comply with the "Retranslation Hypothesis". It is not in the nature of first translations to be more assimilating to the target setting in order to reduce the otherness, nor that of the subsequent translations to be closer to the ST.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the ways in which the narratives in the ST are reframed by the various translators involved in retranslations in order to promote alternative narratives. In general, China's literature tends to be peripheral in the Anglophone market. *XYJ*, a hundred-chaptered Chinese literary canon loaded with Chinese religious elements, has been quite a challenge to Western readership. Given the fact that paratext plays a key role in the narrative reframing process, this study took advantage of narrative theory and paratextual analysis to conduct a comparative analysis of *XYJ*'s three English retranslations.

This study provided the theoretical basis and a new research paradigm for the research on narrative reframing. It also enriched the application of paratext in TS. As demonstrated in the analysis, there are considerable differences in the way in which retranslations are paratextually presented. The findings provided solid evidence that the translators have reframed the fiction via different temporal and spatial backgrounds, selective appropriation, labelling systems, and repositioning of the figures. According to the paratextual analysis, *XYJ* was reframed as a spiritual fable of a historical monk's journey to India with Mahayana Buddhist interpretation by Hayes in the early 20th century. At the beginning of the 21st century, Yu presented the fiction as a serious allegory highlighting the karma and redemption of Monkey and Sanzang. Then, the reframing was a popular folklore of Monkey fused with religious, historical, and sarcastic elements in Lovell's 2021 version. Consequently, in the case of *XYJ*, the narrative has been reframed using different paratextual elements. Additionally, as shown in the study, the roles of the translators in the retranslating projects are crucial since such an endeavour is a socially and temporally engaged activity. Meanwhile, by discussing the dynamics in narrative reframing, this study did not provide conclusive evidence that can fully support the Hypothesis. Moreover, this study found out that the

retranslations are inextricably connected to the major agents and events that enhance a particular narrative.

This study has practical implications. Given that *XYJ* is an essential element of Chinese literature, the experience and lessons drawn from its overseas spread hope to offer insights into how to promote Chinese cultural products in the future. As illustrated in the study, the three retranslations help popularise Chinese mythology, religion, and culture in the English-speaking world through a story of Buddhist scripture-obtaining. The narrative accrual of a religious allegory was built in the Anglophone world, which is beneficial in elevating the status of Chinese literature. As such, the Chinese government should encourage and provide substantial support to the retranslating projects of Chinese literary works, especially classics. The stereoscopic reading can help satisfy the various reading preferences of the prospective readers.

Due to space limitations, this study failed to carry out a detailed examination of the ST in order to identify what type of linguistic changes occurred at the textual level. Hopefully, this could be the object and direction of future research. Particularly, a closer and more detailed qualitative analysis can be carried out on the linguistic and cultural levels to explore the individual reframing of the novel in terms of ideology and story construction, as well as the translators' strategies. Moreover, future research might also explore the difference between retranslation and rewriting or retranslation and re-edition, which this study did not delve into. Lastly, the current research can be expanded by studying the reception of each text and by conducting interviews with translators and publishers or by analysing readers' reviews posted on online platforms. This may shed light on some underexplored topics, such as the dialogical relationship between the retranslations.

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