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A Comparative Study of Two Major English Translations of *The Journey to the West: Monkey* and *The Monkey and the Monk*

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Abstract

As two major English translations of a famous sixteenth-century Chinese novel *The Journey to the West, Monkey* by Arthur Waley and *The Monkey and the Monk* by Anthony Yu differ in many respects due to the translators' different concerns and translation strategies. Whereas Waley's translation omits many episodes and significantly changes textual features of the original novel, Yu's translation is more literal and faithful to the original. Through a comparison of the different approaches in these two translations, this paper aims to delineate important differences in textual features and images of protagonists and demonstrate how such differences, especially the changing representation of Tripitaka, might affect English-language readers' understanding of religious references and themes in the story. It also seeks to help us reconsider the relationship between translations and the original text in the age of world literature through a case study of English translations of *The Journey to the West*.

Keywords

comparison – *Monkey* – *The Monkey and the Monk* – translation – *Xiyou ji*

An immensely popular novel in China and East Asia, *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*The Journey to the West*), often attributed to Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (ca. 1500-1582), is loosely based on the pilgrimage of the historical figure Xuanzang 玄奘

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(596?-664 CE), who traveled to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures.[1] Unlike the historical accounts, the novel incorporates many fantastic elements into its narrative and highlights how Tripitaka's (i.e., Xuanzang's) disciples use their magic powers to help him overcome numerous obstacles and accomplish his task. Several translations of *The Journey to the West* have been published since the novel was first introduced to the Anglophone world as early as the nineteenth century. Among these translations, *Monkey: Folk Novel of China* (hereafter, *Monkey*), by Arthur Waley (1889-1966), and *The Monkey and the Monk: An Abridgment of* The Journey to the West (hereafter, *The Monkey and the Monk*), by Anthony Yu (1938-2015), have become the two major translations used by general readers of English. Both of them are abridged forms of the original novel, whose immense length and copious religious jargon present a significant challenge for general readers in the English-speaking world. Due to the translators' different concerns and translation strategies, these two translations differ in many respects. Through a comparative study of them, this paper aims to delineate important differences in textual features and images of protagonists and demonstrate how such differences, especially the changing representation of Tripitaka, might affect English-language readers' understanding of religious connotations in the story. It also seeks to help us reconsider the relationship between translations and the original text in the age of world literature through a case study of English translations of *The Journey to the West*.

The Actions of Translators: Different Journeys in Translation

The juxtaposition of Waley's *Monkey* and Yu's *The Monkey and the Monk* immediately reveals many major textual differences that strongly resonate with the constant debates in the history of translation theory over domestication versus "foreignization". To a large extent, the different features in English translations are closely associated with strategies adopted by each translator.

In general, Waley's translation can be considered a kind of domestication and seeks to bring the original novel closer to the English-speaking audience. As a well-known translator in the twentieth century, Waley produced many English translations of Chinese literary works—including *The Journey to the West*, one of the Four Masterworks of the Ming novel. *Monkey* has three parts, which to some extent echo the main structure of the original novel. The first part tells the story of the Monkey, including his origin, his acquisition of

1 Wu Cheng'en, *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*Journey to the West*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2009).

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magic powers, the battle between him and the forces of heaven, and his later imprisonment by the Buddha. The second part describes the birth and youth of Tripitaka, his vengeance on his father's murderers, and the origin of his mission to India. The third part describes how Tripitaka's disciples Monkey, Pigsy, and Sandy join the quest to fetch the scriptures, as well as numerous adventures the pilgrims have while on their journey, and ends with the completion of their quest. Waley only selected three adventures (or four, if the last calamity caused by the turtle is included), namely, the Kingdom of Crow-Cock, the Cart-Slow Kingdom, and the River That Leads to Heaven. Waley clearly articulated his translation strategy in his preface to *Monkey*:

> The original book is indeed of immense length, and is usually read in abridged forms. The method adopted in these abridgements is to leave the original number of separate episodes, but drastically reduce them in length, particularly by cutting out dialogue. I have for the most part adopted the opposite principle, omitting many episodes, but translating those that are retained almost in full, leaving out, however, most of the incidental passages in verse, which go very badly into English.[2]

Through his selection of specific episodes from the original novel and especially his deletion of "most of the incidental passages in verse which go very badly into English," Waley reproduced an English version of *The Journey to the West* that moves smoothly for native English speakers.

Waley's selective translation foregrounds the Monkey as the central character in the story, which can be perceived from its title as well as the structure of *Monkey*.[3] Unlike the third part, which significantly deviates from the original novel, the first two parts in Waley's translation largely follow the first twelve chapters in *The Journey to the West*. As Hu Shi indicates in his introduction to the American edition of *Monkey*: "Mr. Waley's version in thirty chapters has translated Part I and Part II almost entirely, his chapter divisions corresponding exactly to the first twelve chapters in the original."[4] In the first two parts,

2 Arthur Waley, *Monkey: Folk Novel of China* (New York: Grove Press), 1984, 7.

3 Such a change can be seen as one aspect of Waley's effort to recreate the original Chinese novel through his translation. For a detailed discussion on Waley's re-creative translation of *The Journey to the West*, see Hao Ji, "Zaizao xiyou: yase weili dui xiyouji de zaichuangxing fanyi," *Ming Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu*, no. 4 (2014): 216-232.

4 Waley, *Monkey*, 4. Hu Shi divided the original novel into three parts: Part I (the story of the Monkey, chapters 1-7), Part II (the story of Xuanzang and the origin of the mission to India, chapters 8-12), and Part III (the pilgrimage to India, chapters 13-100).

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seven chapters are devoted to the Monkey, including his origin, his acquisition of magic powers, his battles against the forces of heaven, and his imprisonment by the Buddha under the Mountain of Five Elements. The central position of the Monkey is further established by the highly selective nature (i.e., the third part) of Waley's translation. The episodes selected by Waley all highlight the Monkey as a hero who plays a vital role in using his own power or strategies to subdue demons and help the pilgrims successfully complete their mission. Waley's reduction of *The Journey to the West* from one hundred chapters to thirty chapters makes an important change to the original story: to a large extent, the journey becomes the Monkey's journey of self-development, whose growth and heroic behavior overshadow Tripitaka, the original protagonist.

Not only does this strategy help Waley conveniently organize the narrative structure of the story, but it also responds to Waley's contemporary situation. *Monkey* was completed during World War II, while Waley worked at the Ministry of Information in London. His wife, Alison Waley, recounted a story regarding Waley and his work *Monkey* in a vivid way:

> Arthur Waley was a scholar-poet who translated Wu Cheng-en's story in London 400 years later when almost the entire world was at war. During this war, his task as a war-time civil servant was to decode messages from the Far East. But when the Air Raid warnings sounded, he alone remained in his room on the sixth floor of the Ministry of Information, snatched open his private drawer and got to work translating from the ancient Chinese of Wu Cheng-en.[5]

Monkey can be viewed as an intellectual escape from the wartime reality in which Waley was trapped. The fantastic world in *Monkey* forms a sharp contrast with his real world at that time. The poet Edith Sitwell wrote in one of her letters to Waley, "How strange it is to come back from *Monkey* and realize how hideous people are making the world."[6] Waley's creative translation of the novel depicts the evolution of the Monkey and his final promotion to Buddha Victorious in Strife, which can be read as Waley's personal struggle against adversity in World War II and his wish for peace—a successful completion of the journey both for his country and for himself after numerous ordeals in the brutal real world.

5 Arthur Waley, trans., *Dear Monkey* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), 17.

6 Edith Sitwell, "Extract from *Some English Eccentrics*," in *Madly Singing in the Mountains: An Appreciation and Anthology of Arthur Waley*, ed. Ivan Morris (New York: Walker, 1970), 97.

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Waley's domestication of *The Journey to the West* helped *Monkey* gain wide popularity among English-language readers for its readability, but this readability was questioned by Anthony Yu as a crucial criterion for gauging the success of a literary translation:

> Until only recent years, many Western and Chinese translators seem to have been dominated by excessive concern, if not "contempt," for their contemporary audiences. They have been more than willing and forthright in deciding what would be appropriate or appealing for readerly consumption. This notion of a rather ill-defined and unexamined cultural essentialism could thus become a powerful criterion for determining what to translate and how to translate, always clouded by the rather myopic assumption that certain practices, concepts, or expressions of one culture can never be understood or appreciated by another.[7]

Yu was further shocked at *Monkey*'s notable departure from the original novel:

> Not only was Waley's version drastically abridged, but there were also radical revisions of language and vast omissions of terms, episodes, recurrent poetic passages—all features the removal of which could vitally affect both textual integrity and meaning.[8]

In contrast to Waley's domestication, Yu's *The Monkey and the Monk* adopts different translation strategies, which lean toward "foreignization." As a scholar of religion and literature, Yu was dedicated to a dynamic dialogue between these two disciplines, which was exemplified in his research on *The Journey to the West* and his translations of it. Yu clearly states that one of the major aims of his translation is "to rectify the acclaimed but distorted picture provided by Arthur Waley's justly popular abridgment."[9] *The Monkey and the Monk* is an abridgment of Yu's complete translation of *The Journey to the West* and aims to provide "as fully as possible all the textual features of the selected episodes."[10] Whereas Waley's domestication operates at the levels of the target culture and historical particularities (World War II), Yu's foreignization demonstrates

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7 Anthony Yu, "Readability: Religion and the Reception of Translation," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (CLEAR), 20 (December 1998): 94.

8 Ibid.

9 Anthony Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk: A Revised Abridgment of* The Journey to the West (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), xiii.

10 Ibid., xiv.

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more scholarly concerns through its preservation of major textual features left out by Waley.

In his observation of *Monkey*'s notable departures from the original novel, Yu indicates three major textual features omitted in Waley's translation, namely, terms, episodes, and recurrent poetic passages. A comparison of the four pilgrims' adventure in Cart Slow Kingdom will quickly draw our attention to the differences between these two translations, one of which is in the translation of chapter titles. For example, the original title of the first chapter in this adventure is 法身元運逢車力，心正妖邪度脊關, which is translated by Yu as "The Dharma-Body in Primary Cycle Meets the Force of the Cart / The Mind, Righting Monstrous Deviates, Crosses the Spine-Ridge Pass."[11] Waley does not translate the chapter title and only uses roman numerals to demarcate each chapter in *Monkey*. There might be a few reasons for such a strategy. First, the title of each chapter often consists of a parallel couplet, which, as Waley puts it, might go badly into English. Second, the titles contain religious terms that might remain obscure to readers of English. Third, translating the titles with religious jargon might clash with Waley's view of the novel as a folk novel (this point is further discussed in the next section). By contrast, Yu provides a faithful translation of the chapter title as well as all the poetic passages in that chapter, which gives the readers an opportunity to observe the major textual features of the original novel. Nevertheless, Yu's accurate and faithful translation goes beyond mere restoration of those textual features and strongly resonates with his concerns over previous scholarly studies on the novel.

Although one major textual feature of many traditional Chinese stories is the combination of prose and verse, verses—poetic passages—are often dismissed in early English-language translations and studies due to the lack of poetic significance or narrative significance. In the case of *The Journey to the West*, different attitudes toward poetry might lead to different understandings of the novel as a whole. For example, although Waley's removal of many poetic passages from the novel increased the fluency of the English translation, his doing so also shows his assumption that those verses are not essential to the narrative. In Waley's eyes, dialogue rather than verse plays a vital role in the development of the story. This can be further corroborated by Alison Waley's foreword to her abridgment of *Monkey*: "Arthur Waley considered dialogue—'things said'—to be of the utmost importance since it tells us better than any descriptions about people and their true thoughts."[12] Yu strongly objects to Waley's removal of verses, and he does not agree with Jaroslav Průšek's

11 Ibid., 305.
12 Waley, *Dear Monkey*, 18.

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(1906-1980, a Czech sinologist and a student of Bernhard Karlgren) view of the poetic insertions as "interludes" or "interruptions."[13] Yu believes that the verses, which might be dismissed for lack of poetic value in the traditional sense, play an integral role in the narrative:

> Indeed, if judged by some of the traditional norms of Chinese lyric poetry, most of the poems of *The Journey to the West* might be considered inferior products because of their graphic and, occasionally, unadorned diction.... What is scorned by tradition, however, may turn out to be a poetic trait of special merit in the *Hsi-yu chi* (*Xiyou ji*). For what the author has sought to express in these poems is hardly the kind of lyricism suffused with symbolic imageries so characteristic of the earlier poetry of reclusion, nor is he attempting to achieve the subtle fusion of human emotion and nature which has been the constant aim of many of the T'ang and Sung poets. Most of all, he is not trying to enlist the service of the lyrical tradition to realize the ancient ideal of "expressing serious intent" (*shih yen chih* 詩言志), and that is why none of these descriptive poems can be said to be the bearer of profound moral ideas or weighty philosophical substances. Rather, what the author of the *Hsi-yu chi* seeks to convey to us seems to be the overpowering immediacy of nature, with all its fullness and richly contrasting variety, as it is often experienced by the main characters in the narrative.[14]

According to Yu, the lack of poetic value in those poems does not undermine their significance. Paradoxically, their simplicity reinforces the role of the verses in the narrative since they "do not invite attention to themselves as poetic entities in their own right, but rather, are called upon constantly to strengthen the élan and verve of the story itself."[15]

As Yu goes on to say in his study of the novel, the significance of verse goes beyond what has been mentioned above. In 1972, Yu indicated two main purposes of the poems in the original novel: "that of presenting dramatic dialogues and that of describing scenery, battles, and living beings both human and non-human."[16] Five years later, Yu added another important function of the poems—"that of providing commentary on the action and the

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13 Anthony Yu, "Heroic Verse and Heroic Mission: Dimensions of the Epic in the Hsi-yu chi," *Journal of Asian Studies* 31, no. 4 (August 1972): 887.

14 Anthony Yu, *The Journey to the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 1: 25-26.

15 Yu, "Heroic Verse and Heroic Mission," 888.

16 Ibid., 884.

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characters"—and highlights the connection between poems and religion due to the fact that those poems "make frequent use of religious themes and rhetoric as well as allegorical devices."[17] In fact, religious allegory in *The Journey to the West* constitutes one of the most significant parts of Yu's translation, which again reflects his scholarly concern with how to understand the novel as a whole.

Folk Novel vs. Religious Allegory

A brief examination of different English-language translations of *The Journey to the West* in the twentieth century reveals a changing picture of the novel in its English reception.

Both Waley and Yu mentioned two earlier English "translations" of *The Journey to the West*. One was *A Mission to Heaven: A Great Chinese Epic and Allegory*, translated by the Baptist missionary Timothy Richard in 1913, and the other was *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress*, translated by Helen M. Hayes in 1930. Richard considered Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (1148-1227) the author of the novel. In the introduction to his translation, Richard gave a short biography of Qiu Chuji and highlighted "three religions as one" in the case of Qiu:

> The author, Chiu Chang Chun, was originally a Taoist, but he represents the God of the Confucianists, and the God of the Buddhists, as well as his own, as great rulers in Heaven, whether as sages (sheng), the equals of Heaven, as Confucianists call them, or genii (shen), the recipients and dispensers of the elixir of immortality, and magic power, as the Taoist call them, or Buddhas (fo), the perfected saints, as the Buddhists call them, while the wicked, whether Confucianist, Taoist or Buddhist, are all equally blamed, and sent to the lower regions if they do not conform to the righteous law of the Universe, which he regards as the foundation of all true religion.[18]

Under the influence of scholars such as Hu Shi, Hayes disagreed with Richard's view that Qiu Chuji was the author and attributed it instead to Wu Cheng'en. However, like Richard, Hayes also pointed out the importance of religious allegory in the novel:

17 Yu, *The Journey to the West*, 1: 24.

18 Timothy Richard, *A Mission to Heaven: A Great Chinese Epic and Allegory* (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society's Depot, 1913), viii-ix.

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> So far as I know, no book had ever been written before in China with the aim of drawing the "common people," let us say even the rabble, into the range of religious interest and adventure. The author—a scholar and gentleman—had realized that the heights of Buddhist philosophy must be made available for the many, and that it could only be achieved by interesting and amusing them and in these ways stooping to their level.[19]

According to Hayes, the journey of the pilgrims in the novel symbolizes a religious journey from the Buddha-nature to Buddhahood:

> Its first object was to demonstrate the Buddha-nature in every man, and the fact that, whether he will or not, his ultimate destiny is Buddhahood. In this way the author leads us through the various forms of Buddhism, through Hinayana, through the two great branches of the Mahayana school to the perfect enlightenment of his pilgrims in the cosmic Buddhahood of the Universe.[20]

Although their discussions touch on the religious allegory in the novel, neither Richard nor Hayes was able to capture the subtleties of such an allegory in their translations. In fact, as Yu indicates, these two early translations are "no more than brief paraphrases and adaptations."[21]

Waley's *Monkey* can be viewed as a response to his predecessors' works in two ways: first, it provides a literary translation (though highly selective) of the novel, rather than "paraphrases and adaptations"; second, it represents a shift in the understanding of the novel from religious allegory to folk novel. The preface of Waley's translation begins with the introduction of Wu Cheng'en as the author of the novel:

> This story was written by Wu Ch'eng-en, of Huai-an in Kiangsu. . . . He had some reputation as a poet, and a few of his rather commonplace verses survive in an anthology of Ming poetry and in a local gazetteer.[22]

Waley's assertion of Wu as the author is closely associated with Hu Shi's studies on the novel. Through his evidential examination of *The Journey to the West*,

19 Helen M. Hayes, *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1930), 7.

20 Ibid., 17.

21 Anthony Yu, *The Journey to the West*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), xiii.

22 Waley, *Monkey*, 7.

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Hu established Wu as the author of the novel based on several local gazetteers. In those local gazetteers, Wu was described as a person who excelled at humorous and satirical writings. Such descriptions drew Hu's attention and were used by him to dismiss previous allegorical readings of the novel. His introduction to *Monkey* also echoes such a judgment:

> Free from all kinds of allegorical interpretations by Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucianist commentators, *Monkey* is simply a book of good humor, profound nonsense, good-natured satire and delightful entertainment.[23]

Waley largely accepted Hu Shi's judgment and argued that "*Monkey* is unique in its combination of beauty with absurdity, of profundity with nonsense."[24]

Waley's understanding of the novel as a folk novel would explain his omission of the parts of the novel that demonstrate close affinities with religion. Waley's omission of many poems in his translation also hints at this bias. Before Waley, Richard had already noticed the connection between poems and religion in the novel:

> The exposition of Buddhist philosophy in a way that would attract the simple minds and hearty appetites of the multitude was the direct purpose of this book....
>
> It is for this purpose that poems are frequently introduced as comments into the text, and in them the great Buddhist conceptions are enumerated side by side with their application in the more simple and amusing adventures of the pilgrims.[25]

Richard correctly observed that, in many cases, the poems might serve as "comments into the text" that are intimately associated with religious connotations. Nevertheless, he failed to see the influence of Daoism in many of those poems due to his assumption of the novel as Buddhist allegory and his probable lack of sufficient knowledge concerning Daoism. As Yu indicates:

> Although the story of *The Journey to the West* is based upon the historical pilgrimage of Hsuan-tsang (Xuanzang), it is quite remarkable how extensively the themes and rhetoric of Taoism appear in every part of the work.... Taoist elements serve, not merely as a means of providing choric commentary on incidents and characters in the narrative, but frequently

23 Ibid., 5.

24 Ibid., 7.

25 Hayes, *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress*, 17.

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> as an aid to reveal to the reader the true nature of the fellow pilgrims, to help define their essential relationships, and to advance the action of the narrative itself.[26]

Many poems in the novel contain Daoist terminologies and frequently refer to the alchemical process. One example should suffice to show the difference between Waley and Yu regarding how a poem might affect the reader's understanding of the novel. In the story of Pigsy's conversion to being a pilgrim, Pigsy surrendered himself to Monkey as soon as he knew that Monkey was a disciple of Tripitaka. In the original novel, a poem immediately follows Pigsy's surrender:

Strong is metal's nature to vanquish wood:	金性剛強能克木,
Mind Monkey has the Wood Dragon subdued.	心猿降得木龍歸.
With metal and wood both obedient as one,	金從木順皆為一,
All their love and virtue will grow and show.	木戀金仁總發揮.
One guest and one host there's nothing between;	一主一賓無間隔,
Three matings, three unions—there's great mystery!	三交三合有玄微.
Nature and feelings gladly fuses as Last and First.	性情並喜貞元聚,
Both will surely be enlightened in the West.[27]	同證西方話不違.

The significance of the poem lies in the very fact that it depicts the relationship between Monkey (metal) and Pigsy (wood) through the appropriation of the terms of the Five Elements and reference to Daoist alchemy, which offers a different lens on the pilgrims and their journey as a process of religious self-cultivation intimately associated with alchemical lore. Waley omitted the poem in his translation and seeks to undermine religious connotations by reinterpreting the allegory in the novel:

> As regards the allegory, it is clear that Tripitaka stands for the ordinary man, blundering anxiously through the difficulties of life, while Monkey stands for the restless instability of genius. Pigsy, again, obviously symbolizes the physical appetites, brute strength, and a kind of cumbrous patience. The commentators say that he represents *ch'eng*, which is usually translated "sincerity," but means something more like "whole-heartedness."[28]

26 Yu, *The Journey to the West*, 1: 31.
27 Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk*, 267.
28 Waley, *Monkey*, 8.

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Due to Waley's removal of the poem (and other similar poems and passages throughout the novel), an English-language reader might agree with Waley's interpretation of the allegory regarding the pilgrims and follow his understanding of *The Journey to the West* as merely a folk novel. Interestingly, when it comes to Sandy, Waley deliberately selected certain commentators' explanations that fit with his interpretation of the allegory in the novel. Nevertheless, like Monkey and Pigsy, Sandy in the original novel is also associated with the earth in the Five Elements. The following poem regarding Tripitaka's pregnancy in the Woman Nation included in Yu's translation depicts the symbolic relationship among the pilgrims, which clearly points to internal alchemy and religious allegory:

You need true water to smelt true lead;	真鉛若煉需真水,
With dried mercury true water mixes well.	真水調和真汞干.
True mercury and lead have no maternal breath;	真汞真鉛無母氣,
Elixir is divine drug and cinnabar.	靈砂靈藥是仙丹.
In vain the child conceived attains a form	嬰兒枉結成胎象,
Earth Mother has achieved merit with ease.	土母施功不費難.
Heresy pushed down, right faith's affirmed;	推到旁門宗正教,
The lord of the mind, all smiles, now goes back.[29]	心君得意笑容還.

Throughout the novel, Monkey is associated with metal or gold as well as mind (here, "the lord of the mind"; more discussion on this metaphor is in the next section). The lead in the poem, which serves as an important ingredient in alchemy, refers to Monkey in the novel, since true lead is also called the Lord of Gold. Mercury refers to Pigsy, since Wood Mother (another reference to Pigsy) is used in alchemy terminology to designate mercury. Earth Mother stands for Sandy, and its symbolic achievement in alchemy translates into Sandy's success in carrying water back to "dissolve the perverse pregnancy" (based on Yu's translation of the chapter title) in the narrative.

In contrast to Waley, who omits the poem, Yu offers a more faithful translation and highlights its religious connotations through four footnotes that

29 Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk*, 368. The English translation is modified in Yu's revised edition. Although Yu doesn't directly explain religious connotations in this particular poem, he discusses how the three disciples of Tripitaka connect to Five Elements and internal alchemy in his introduction to the revised edition of his complete translation of *The Journey to the West*. See Yu, *The Journey to the West* (2012), 1: 82-83. My reading of the poem here is based on his discussion.

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explain how the poem connects pilgrims such as Monkey and Pigsy to the Five Elements and alchemical theories. Yu argues:

> Structures throughout the long tale, the ubiquitous but unobtrusive voice of the narrator in fact provide a running, reflexive commentary—usually through interpolated verse of many varieties and the brief prose introductions to new episodes—and gently reminds the reader of allegory's possible presence even within the fun-filled and lively depictions of cosmic battles, fantastic beings, bizarre experiences, and extraordinary feats of mental and physical bravura.[30]

The allegory Yu mentions here largely refers to religious allegory, which is intended to challenge the understanding of the work simply as a folk novel. This challenge also points to Hu Shi's argument on the nature of the novel with which Waley's translation strongly resonates. In fact, in addition to rectifying Waley's misrepresentation of the original novel, another motivation of Yu's translation is

> to redress an imbalance of criticism championed by Dr. Hu Shi, the Chinese scholar-diplomat who supplied the British translator with an influential preface.... My own encounter with this marvelous work since childhood, ... had long convinced me that this narrative was nothing if not one of the world's most finely wrought allegories.... The distantly collaborative result of our studies has made it clear that religion is not only crucial to the novel's conception and formation, but also that its nearly unique embodiment in this work need not clash with "good humor, profound nonsense, good-natured satire, and delightful entertainment."[31]

According to Yu, Hu Shi's argument is not necessarily wrong. The real problem Yu finds in Hu's argument is that Hu ignored the strong presence of religious allegory in the novel and thus reduced the richness of the novel to a single dimension.

Yu's restoration of religious allegory in his translation should be viewed in a broader academic context than a mere criticism of Hu Shi. It also responds to scholarly discussions of *The Journey to the West* since the early twentieth century, when strong resistance to religious allegory arose in the understanding of the novel. In Yu's eyes, one cannot simply ignore the presence of religious

30 Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk*, xi-xii.

31 Ibid., xiii-xiv.

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allegory throughout the novel and label the novel as a work either of playfulness or of political allegory. Unlike commentators in the Ming and Qing dynasties who read the novel as religious allegory, Yu draws on modern scholarship, especially on Daoist texts, to highlight the intertextual relationship between *The Journey to the West* and religious sources and demonstrates that "the vast complex of alchemical, *yin-yang, wu-hsing* [five elements], and Buddhist terminologies in this text bear some organic relation to the action and characters of the story."[32]

In a cross-cultural context, Yu's discussion of the use of religious allegory in *The Journey to the West* also serves as a different voice against popular understandings of traditional Chinese literature in general. For example, David Hawkes once argued that one prominent difference between Chinese literature and its Western counterpart is "the absence of religious inspiration" in the former.[33] On the contrary, Yu points out the presence of religious inspiration in Chinese literary tradition, and *The Journey to the West* again lends strong support to his argument:

> What I want to suggest, rather, is the intriguing paradox this narrative displays: namely, that its deviation from formal details of history acknowledged to be parts of a most celebrated chapter of Chinese religious history actually constitutes that very inventive design of the author in investigating his work with a more intricate network of religious significance.[34]

The Monk in Motion

The representation of Tripitaka constitutes another important difference between Waley and Yu in their translations of *The Journey to the West*. Along with its removal of religious allegory, *Monkey* significantly reduces the role of Tripitaka in the journey and depicts him as a weak mortal who lacks wisdom and power. More importantly, if we contrast it with the original novel, Tripitaka in *Monkey* becomes a genderless character, since his sexuality is largely omitted

32 Yu, *The Journey to the West* (1977), 1: 36.

33 David Hawkes, "Chinese Literature: An Introductory Note," in *Classical, Modern and Humane: Essays in Chinese Literature*, ed. John Minford and Sui-kit Wong (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1989), 74.

34 Anthony Yu, "Religion and Literature in China: The 'Obscure Way' of *The Journey to the West*," in *Tradition and Creativity: Essays on East Asian Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987), 196.

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due to Waley's selection of episodes. Although this change helps foreground the role of the Monkey, it presents English-language readers with a distorted image of Tripitaka and obscures its religious significance.

The journey of the pilgrims can also be viewed as a journey of redemption and self-discipline. All the pilgrims in the original novel are punished for their inappropriate conduct before the journey: Tripitaka failed to pay attention to Buddha's teachings; the Monkey caused havoc in heaven; Pigsy misbehaved with the Goddess of the Moon; Sandy broke a crystal dish; the Dragon Horse accidentally burned the Pearls of Wisdom. The theme of self-discipline in the case of Tripitaka is strongly associated with his ability to reject sexual temptation. Unlike Waley's translation, which involves no sexual temptation in the pilgrims' journey, Yu's translation deals with the sexuality of Tripitaka in three selected adventures: the test given by the Four Sages who transformed themselves into women (chapter 19), the Woman Nation (chapters 23 and 24), and the Scorpion at the Cave of the Lute (chapter 25). During his encounters with various women, Tripitaka demonstrates strong self-discipline and determination. He chooses to act on his religious beliefs and eventually reject all sexual temptations. For example, when the Scorpion transformed itself into a sensual woman and tried to seduce him, Tripitaka was depicted thusly:

> His eyes saw no evil form
> His ears heard no lustful sound;
> He regarded as dirt and dung this coy, silken face,
> This pearl-like beauty as ashes and dust,
> His one love in life was to practice Chan,
> Unwilling to step once beyond Buddha-land.
> How could he show affection and pity
> When all he knew was religion and truth?[35]

Feminine sexual allure plays an important role in *The Journey to the West* (and many traditional Chinese fantastic stories as well, e.g., *Liaozhai zhiyi* [*Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*]) and often serves as a test due to its deceptive power to lead men astray (in both the moral and religious sense). Waley's translation completely omits those tests, which renders Tripitaka's presence in the journey unimportant, since he cannot cope with any challenges without aid of his disciples and made no significant contribution to the progress of the journey. Nevertheless, Tripitaka's strong rejection of such temptations is crucial to the completion of the journey, which can be perceived from one

35 Yu, *The Monkey and the Monk*, 392.

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adventure in particular included in Yu's translation. After Tripitaka was captured by the Scorpion, his disciples soon found the Scorpion's cave, and the Scorpion stabbed the Monkey's head during the fight. After a night of rest, the Monkey recovered from his wound and led Pigsy to fight the Scorpion again. After they arrived at the Scorpion's cave, the Monkey told Pigsy about his fears of what might happen to Tripitaka during the night:

> If Master truly lost his primary *yang* and his virtue because of her deception, then all of us could scatter. If he has not been confounded and if his Chan mind has remained unmoved, then we could in all diligence fight to the end, slaughter the monster-spirit, and rescue Master to go to the West.[36]

The fact that Tripitaka could resist sexual temptation saves the pilgrims from falling apart as a team and contributes significantly to the journey, not only as physical travel but also as a spiritual/religious progression. Waley considers Tripitaka "the ordinary man, blundering anxiously through the difficulties of life."[37] Nevertheless, in contrast to his disciples and other powerful demons they encounter throughout the journey, Tripitaka's fragility as a mortal person further demonstrates his superior religious conviction and moral strength.

In addition to the sexuality of Tripitaka, the religious significance is also undermined by the misrepresented relationship between the Monkey and Tripitaka in Waley's *Monkey*. The role of Tripitaka is significantly downplayed in Waley's translation, and at the same time the relationship between the Monkey and Tripitaka is also reduced to one between protector and protectee. In the original novel, the concept of *xinyuan* 心猿 (the monkey of the mind) and its discipline is vividly represented in the anecdote where the Monkey was controlled by the Tight-Fillet spell. Unlike Waley, who omitted the chapter title, Yu includes it, translated as "Mind Monkey Returns to the Right / The Six Robbers Vanish from Sight" (心猿歸正, 六賊無蹤), which indicates the religious connotations of this anecdote as well as the complexities of the relationship between Tripitaka and the Monkey. As Yu mentions later,

> Moreover, Monkey's own experience as the Tang Monk's disciple mirrors his master's experience, one constituted by a series of imprisonment and release, harmonious integration and disastrous dissolution, epitomized in the idiom, "to subdue or release the Monkey of the Mind"

36 Ibid., 394.
37 Waley, *Monkey*, 8.

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> [收放心猿], . . . Both the metaphoric name itself [i.e., *xinyuan*, the Monkey of the Mind] and the need to control the mind have filled the discourse of both Buddhism and Quanzhen Daoism.[38]

The religious connotations of the Monkey of the Mind reveal the complex relationship between Tripitaka and the Monkey in the novel. On the one hand, Tripitaka needs protection from the Monkey, and he also frequently serves as his teacher for the cultivation of the mind. On the other hand, the Monkey needs to be controlled, and sometimes dismissed, by Tripitaka, which reminds readers of "the difficult paradox of consulting and disregarding the power of *xin*, the heart-and-mind generating the nearly irresistible drives of emotion and intellect."[39] Yu's translation stresses the significance of *xin* (heart/mind): not only does it mention the Monkey of the Mind in some chapter titles (e.g., chapters 7, 14, 22, and 24), but it also includes the episodes of Tripitaka's learning of the Heart Sutra and the battle between the two minds (i.e., the Monkey King and his double, "the Sixth-Ear Macaque"), which helps English-language readers examine the complex relationship between the Monkey and the monk through the lens of *xin*.

Conclusion

A comparative study of two English translations of *The Journey to the West* reminds us that translation is a hermeneutic act that can be complicated by various factors. Waley's translation highlights the Monkey's heroism and creates a fluent narrative of a hero's growth at the cost of the religious significance of the original novel. The literary quality, or "readability," is only part of Waley's concern in his translation, since his recreated story of the Monkey also resonates with the situation he was facing, in particular World War II. At the same time that the tale of the heroic Monkey is elevated as the main thread of the narrative, the role of Tripitaka and religious allegory are significantly downgraded, and *The Journey to the West* is translated/transformed by Waley into a folk novel, which echoes Hu Shi's judgment of the novel as a work free of religious interpretations.

Anthony Yu's translation can be seen as a new hermeneutic development that is inseparable from the progression of scholarship on *The Journey to the West*. Yu's emphasis upon religious allegory in the translation is closely

38 Yu, *The Journey to the West* (2012), 1: 73.

39 Ibid., 74.

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associated with his scholarly understanding of the intimate relationship between religion and literature, especially in the case of *The Journey to the West*. His *The Monkey and the Monk* goes beyond a simple restoration of the major textual features removed by Waley. Beyond his textual restoration (or correction of Waley's distortions at the textual level), Yu pays homage to the strong religious presence in the original novel through the elevation of Tripitaka and his complex relationship with the Monkey as well as the preservation of concepts and terminologies of religious significance in the verses and chapter titles. The significance of the monk to Yu is further revealed in the following comparison by Eric Ziolkowski:

> For Yu, the *Journey* must have had the added attraction of mirroring his own two primary vocations in the person of the central human protagonist. Tripitaka, in journeying through exotic lands and strange societies, becomes ipso facto a *comparatist*, observing constantly the differing ways of life and practices of the peoples he and his companions encounter.... By the same token, as if his portaging the scrolls of sutras and sastras from India to China at the end of the novel did not suffice to affirm his role as a translator in the etymological sense of someone who "bears (something) across," Xuanzang spent the remaining nineteen years of his life translating those texts into Chinese.[40]

The changes in translation largely reflect Yu's scholarly concerns as he consciously locates his study and translation within the relevant academic tradition (both in China and the West) in order to "appreciate the novel as a work of full-blown fiction."[41]

In addition, the study of these two different translations of *The Journey to the West* also creates an interesting dialogue between the original Chinese literary work and its translations in the age of world literature. As David Damrosch argues, "world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike."[42] Translation plays a pivotal role in this mode

40 Eric Ziolkowski, "The Contrapuntal Venture of Anthony C. Yu: The Comparative Study of Literature and Religion," in *Literature, Religion, and East/West Comparison*, ed. Eric Ziolkowski (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 6.

41 Yu, *The Journey to the West* (2012), 1: 53.

42 David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5.

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of circulation and of reading in the global context. In the case of *The Journey to the West*, its translations (by Waley and Yu) go beyond a mere introduction of a masterpiece in the history of traditional Chinese literature to readers of English. They have launched a meaningful dialogue with the original novel through the act of translating (each with a strong interpretive dimension). In his examination of the poetry of the well-known modern Chinese poet Bei Dao, Damrosch indicates: "works of world literature take on a new life as they move into the world at large, and to understand this new life we need to look closely at the ways the work becomes reframed in its translations and in its new cultural contexts."[43] However, not only does the journey of certain literary works from their indigenous cultural tradition into the world at large help them take on new life or enjoy a special kind of afterlife beyond the traditional domain, but such a migration also contributes to a better understanding of the original works through various translations.

As we have seen earlier, the process of translating *The Journey to the West* and the two translators' interpretations of the original novel go hand in hand. If we follow the categories of translation outlined by Roman Jakobson in his influential essay "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," we can consider that the interlingual translation (e.g., Waley's and Yu's translation) also serves as a special means of actualizing the potential of a literary work such as *The Journey to the West*, and this actualization resembles intralingual translation, such as that of various commentaries on literary works in traditional China.[44] Umberto Eco once made a distinction between the Model Reader and the empirical reader: "a text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures" and "the empirical reader is only an actor who makes conjectures about the kind of Model Reader postulated by the text."[45] In this sense, both Waley and Yu can be considered empirical readers who have made their own conjectures through translation about the original novel that theoretically possesses infinite possibilities. While participating in the conversation with each other as well as other English translations of *The Journey to the West*, Waley's translations of the novel as a folk novel and Yu's emphasis on religious connotations correspond to different facets of the original novel. This is not to deny the problems that Yu

43 Ibid., 24.

44 The three categories of translation are intra-lingual translation, inter-lingual translation and inter-semiotic translation. See Roman Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2004), 139.

45 Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 59.

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indicates in Waley's translation of the novel. However, it might be worthwhile for us to shift our perspective to one of positive dialogue with *The Journey to the West*, rather than to simply dismiss Waley's translation on the basis of whether it is "faithful" to the original novel. For example, Yu's translation draws readers' attention to the issue of gender and sexuality (e.g., the sexuality of Tripitaka) in the novel through his restoration of the religious allegory, which is absent in Waley's translation. Waley's translation, though operating under a different understanding of the novel, also alludes to this issue from a different perspective—that is, the issue of female chastity. Waley selects the episode of the Kingdom of Crow-Cock (excluded from Yu's translation), in which a demon transformed into the king and ruled the kingdom for three years after he murdered the real king. After the demon was subdued, its identity as a male lion was also revealed. Then the novel raises a problem regarding the chastity of the king's concubines in the inner palace, and the problem is immediately solved by Pigsy's discovery that the lion was gelded. In Waley's translation, the issue of chastity is subtly addressed not only through the resonance between this episode and an earlier episode, in which Tripitaka's mother was also forced to live with a bandit who killed her husband, but also through a compact structure in the translation—the episode of the Kingdom of Crow-Cock is the first of four adventures, and, compared to the episode that tells the experience of Tripitaka's mother in the original novel, it is much closer to this episode in terms of structure. It is in this sense that translations by Waley and Yu, despite their differences or, in some cases, even conflicts in translation strategies and agenda, collaborate in illuminating the aspect of gender and sexuality in the original novel from different angles.

In conclusion, I would like to recall Damrosch's comments in his discussion of world literature: "All works cease to be the exclusive products of their original culture once they are translated; all become works that only 'began' in their original language."[46] Translation makes a significant contribution to the new life of literary works by taking them away from the original culture, and yet, at the same time, it also looks back to the original culture, in which the life of those works began and constantly seeks meaningful dialogue with them to provide new insights.

46 Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* 22.

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