

A Textual Comparative Analysis of English Translation Methods for Names in the Two Versions of *Shanghaijing-Haineijing* from a Cultural Turn Perspective

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Abstract

The translation of *Shanghaijing* into foreign languages has become a crucial link to promote cultural exchange between China and the West. From different cultural environments, different translators will adopt completely different translation methods for the same name contained, such as names of people, places, animals, or even mineral names. This paper employs a textual comparative analysis to examine the translation of proper nouns in the *Shanghaijing-Haineijing*, compares the translations of Wang Hong and Zhao Zheng's *The Classic of Mountains and Seas: Chinese-English* with Anne Birrell's *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* from the perspective of Cultural Turn, and explores how these different translation methods affect the readability and cultural transmission of the text in English, aiming to provide new directions and practical methods for the translation of names from

Chinese to English in ancient Chinese classics.

Keywords: cultural turn theory, translation methods, place names, people names

1. Introduction

Shanhaijing contains information on products, geography, as well as extraordinary people and fantastic beasts, earning it the title of a geographical and natural history. This paper compares the translation by Wang Hong and Zhao Zheng (2010), *The Classic of Mountains and Seas: Chinese-English* (hereinafter referred to as the Wang Translation), with Anne Birrell's (1999) translation, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (hereinafter referred to as the Anne Translation). Specifically, this study employs a textual comparative analysis to examine the translation of proper nouns in the *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, focusing on the structural and formatting differences, terminological and semantic shifts, and strategic additions and omissions. The analysis is conducted from the perspective of Cultural Turn, which emphasizes the importance of cultural context and adaptation in translation. By comparing the translations of Wang Hong and Zhao Zheng with those of Anne Birrell, this study aims to uncover the underlying translation methods and their implications for cultural exchange. The insights gained from this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in translating ancient Chinese texts for a Western audience.

2. Literature Review

Shanhaijing is a monumental work that encompasses TCM (traditional Chinese medicine), biology, geology, history, mythology, folklore, literature and so on, and its research value has long surpassed the text itself. Different experts and scholars can find unique insights within it, and the key influence, apart from the original text, is the various translations that bridge the scholars' first languages with the language of the book.

This review aims to pinpoint the deficiencies in the translation research of *Shanhaijing*, especially concerning the handling of proper nouns in *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*. It reveals that existing studies, both domestic and international, generally neglect to deeply explore the translation approaches for proper nouns from a cross-cultural standpoint.

2.1 Overview of Domestic Research on *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*

As a book rich in traditional Chinese culture and the wisdom of ancient Chinese sages, the research achievements on the translation of *Shanhaijing* in China are remarkable. On March 15, 2024, Lu Mengya and Xun Pengxing (2024: 60) in their paper specifically introduced the relevant research of French Sinology to help academic dialogue by *Shanhaijing*, which served as a bridge for the communication between the study of Chinese and Western geographical thought. Liang Linxin and Wang Di (2023: 31) explored the importance of retranslation for the value of multimodal production of knowledge from the study of the process of retranslation of the *Shanhaijing* in a theoretical framework of transknowletology. Gao Ju and Yang Liu (2016: 72) combined the text and the paratext of *Shanhaijing* to study Birrell, the translator, as a mythologist and translator of myths, and made a comprehensive analysis of the translation thought of the translation of ancient Chinese myths. It can be seen

that most of the domestic studies on the *Shanhaijing* from a cross-cultural perspective have focused on the cultural aspects behind it, rather than being limited to the translation of the words themselves.

Domestic research has significantly contributed to *Shanhaijing*'s translation, emphasizing cultural aspects and theoretical frameworks. However, a gap exists in systematically analyzing translation methods for proper nouns in *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*. Detailed comparative studies on translating such nouns as animals, plants, geographical names, minerals, and personal names are lacking. While some studies have examined the retranslation process and multimodal knowledge production, there is still a need for empirical research to statistically analyze these translation methods and their cultural implications. Comprehensive studies comparing different Chinese translations of *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, focusing on various translators' strategies for proper nouns, are notably absent.

2.2 Overview of International Research on *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*

Due to its unique literary status, the pace of research on the *Shanhaijing* by foreign scholars has never ceased. Peggy Wang (2024: 95) analyzed and summarized the artist's two distinct ways of presenting the world in the context of Qiu Anxiong's ink animation work about *Shanhaijing*. Newell Ann Van Auken (2023: 487) provided Western translation scholars with the applicability of different translation methods or translation strategies to ancient Chinese literature by comparing and contrasting four translations of the *Shanhaijing*. Patrick McDonald (2022), in the website Muhlenberg College Open Educational Resources (USA), provides Western scholars with further access to the main body of the classic. Thomas Michael (2001: 678) used the original *Shanhaijing* and Anne Birrell's translation as a medium for combining Chinese Daoism as a starting point. In foreign studies, there are those who study a whole world of *Shanhaijing* like Prof. Peggy Wang, and those who focus on the translation itself like Newell Ann Van Auken. But no matter where the focus is, the essence of foreign research on the *Shanhaijing* book or its derivatives is how to better convey the culture behind it to the target language readers.

Though international scholars have advanced the translation studies of *Shanhaijing*, current research predominantly centers on cultural transmission and translation strategies, with a dearth of analyses that integrate the cultural differences between the source and target languages in examining the translation methods for proper nouns in *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*. Moreover, there is also a lack of statistical analysis of the translation methods of proper nouns in different English versions and the effectiveness of these methods in cultural transmission.

3. Theoretical Framework

In exploring the translation of proper nouns in the *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, it is essential to delve into the complexities of culture, language, and cross-cultural communication involved in the translation process. The theoretical framework of this study is primarily based on two core theories: the Cultural Turn Theory and the theory of Translation Methods.

3.1 Presentation of Cultural Turn Theory

The concept of the “Cultural Turn” emerged in the late 1990s, first appearing in the collection of papers by André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett titled *Translation/History/Culture*. This theory had expanded the research space in the field of translation, moving away from traditional translation theories that centered solely on the original text, to acknowledging the value of all translations from the perspective of the translated text. According to the Rewriting Theory under the Cultural Turn perspective, there is no right or wrong, good or bad in translations; all existing translations have their legitimate reasons for existence (André Lefevere & Susan Bassnett, 2010). The points studied by Rewriting Theory concern why a text takes on a specific form when it is translated into another linguistic and cultural context.

This shift in perspective has profound implications for the study of proper noun translations in *Shanghaijing-Haineijing*. Proper nouns, which are often culturally specific, require translators to navigate between fidelity to the source culture and accessibility to the target culture. The Cultural Turn and Rewriting Theory provide a framework for understanding how translators make these choices, influenced by the cultural and ideological contexts of both the source and target languages. This framework is crucial for analyzing the translation methods used in different versions of *Shanghaijing-Haineijing*, as it allows for a deeper exploration of the cultural and ideological motivations behind the translators’ decisions.

3.2 Presentation of Translation Method Theory

“Translation method” is distinct from “translation strategy” and “translation technique”, and is defined as “in translation activities, the specific paths, steps, and means adopted based on a certain translation strategy to achieve specific translation purposes” (Xiong Bing, 2014). From the perspectives of the original author and the target audience, translation strategies can be divided into two categories: foreignization (or foreignizing strategy) and domestication (or domesticating strategy). Under the foreignizing strategy, there are four translation methods: “zero translation”, “transliteration”, “word-for-word translation” and “literal translation”. Under the domesticating strategy, there are also four translation methods: “liberal/free translation”, “imitation”, “variation translation” and “recreation”.

To further elaborate, translation methods are the specific implementations of translation strategies, which are influenced by the translator’s objectives and the cultural context of the target audience. For instance, foreignization strategies aim to retain the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the source text, making the translation more accessible to those familiar with the source culture. In contrast, domestication strategies focus on adapting the translation to the target culture, ensuring that the text feels natural and relatable to the target audience. This distinction is crucial in the context of *Shanghaijing-Haineijing*, where proper nouns often carry significant cultural weight and require careful consideration of translation methods to balance fidelity to the source and accessibility to the target audience.

4. Comparative Analysis of Translation Methods in Two English Versions

To address the identified research gaps, this study poses the following research question: How do different translation methods for proper nouns in *Shanghaijing-Haineijing* reflect the

cultural differences between the source and target languages, and what are the implications for cross-cultural communication?

The objective of this study is to analyze and compare the translation methods used for proper nouns in different English versions of *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, focusing on the cultural implications of these methods. This analysis aims to provide insights into how translators navigate between foreignization and domestication strategies to achieve effective cross-cultural communication.

All data involved in this thesis is the result of this research. It compiles a total of 155 place names, animal names, plant names, and mineral names from *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*. The data was statistically processed using Excel spreadsheets, listing each name's translation in both the Wang and the Anne versions along with the paragraphs where they appear. Additionally, it analyzes the different translation methods used for each name in the two versions.

4.1 Comparative Translation Methods for Place Names

In the *Shanhaijing*, the study of place names is the most fundamental aspect of research on the entire text. Through the place names mentioned in the book, one can determine the time of composition and specific locations of each chapter (Ji Yun, 2018: 2). Therefore, in the English translation of the various proper nouns in the *Shanhaijing*, the translation methods for geographical names are the primary focus of study.

In *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, a total of 57 different place names appear, with the classification details shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Categorical statistics of geographical name occurrences

Classification of Place Names and Their Frequencies		Both Editions Use the Same Method	Wang			Anne			
			A	B	Mixed	B	C	D	Mixed
Seas	4	4	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
Countries	14	0	5	0	9	0	6	0	8
Mountains	16	2	10	2	4	3	12	1	0
Rivers	8	1	0	3	5	2	4	1	1
Hills	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
Others	6	1	2	1	3	1	3	0	2
Total	58	8	27	10	21	10	25	2	21

Note: For ease of reading, in all tables within the main text of this paper, “Transliteration” is represented by the letter A, “Literal Translation” by the letter B, “Liberal Translation” by the letter C, “Recreation” by the letter D, and “Imitation” by the letter E. And the word “Mix” is used to indicate the use of two or more different translation methods within a single English translation name. Categories are sorted by the order of appearance, same below.

From Table 1, it can be observed that the Wang translation tends to translate geographical names by transliteration, and does not use literal translation at all; whereas the Anne translation frequently employs transliteration methods of liberal. The comparisons of some typical geographical name examples are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of some place name translations in the two editions

Chinese Name	Type	Wang	Method	Anne	Method
Liu Sha	River	the Quicksands	B	the Flowing Sands	C
Meng Ying	Hill	<i>Mengying</i>	A	the Mound of Chief Full	A & C
Kun Wu	Hill	<i>Kunwu</i>	A	the Mound of Offspring My	A & C

In terms of rivers, for the translation of “*Liu Sha*”, the Wang translation directly translates it as “the Quicksands” by literal translation, using plural form, capitalizing the first letter, and adding the word “the” to express this proper noun. The Anne translation, however, uses a liberal translation approach, rendering it as “the Flowing Sands”. Both translation methods are commonly seen in the translation of ancient Chinese literature. The *Classic of Mountains and Seas* by the Wang translation was published in the Library of Chinese Classics series, and in the *Journey to the West* published in the same series, the name of a river called “Liu Sha River” was translated by Jenner T.E. (2000) as “the Flowing Sand River”, which is similar in approach to the Anne translation (the original text in *Journey to the West* includes the character “He” means river, while in *Shanhaijing* the name is simply “Liu Sha” without a “River”); in the same publishing house’s Spanish translation, Carlos Trigoso Sánchez (2010) translated it as “el Río de las Arenas Movedizas”, which corresponds to “the quicksands river” in English, similar to the Wang translation’s method for “*Liu Sha*” in the *Shanhaijing*.

In terms of hills, for the translation of the sentences containing “*Mengying*” and “*Kunwu*”. The original text reads: “有九丘，以水络之：名曰陶唐之丘、有叔得之丘、孟盈之丘、昆吾之丘、黑白之丘、赤望之丘、参卫之丘、武夫之丘、神民之丘。” The Wang translation is “There are nine hills surrounded by water, which are called *Taotang*, *Shude*, *Mengying*, *Kunwu*, *Heibai*, *Chiwang*, *Canwei*, *Wufu*, and *Shenmin*.” The Wang translation first indicates that the following are the names of the hills, then transliterates them directly as “*Mengying*” and “*Kunwu*”, with italics. The Anne translation, however, uses both literal and liberal translation methods as “the Mound of ...” for all of the nine above. In traditional Chinese culture, there is a way of ranking brothers using the characters “Meng”, “Zhong”, “Shu” and “Ji”, so here “*Mengying*” is translated as “the Mound of Chief Full”, where “Meng” is translated as “Chief” for a similar reason; while “Kun” can indicate later in time or order, specifically referring to descendants, “*Kunwu*” is translated as “the Mound of Offspring My”.

Lin Yuanbiao (2017: 86) argues that “proper nouns should be transliterated, while common nouns should be liberal translated”, and in geographical encyclopedias like the *Shanhaijing*, the vast majority of place names that appear are proper nouns in the history of Chinese culture. This is why in the 57 place names from *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, the Wang translation uses transliteration for more than half of the names. However, the Anne translation adopts liberal translation also for more than half of the names, because in the translation of place names, domesticating translation can “reduce the foreignness of the text to the lowest degree and make the translation style transparent and smooth” (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2004). In the perspective of Cultural Turn, a translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text - the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the “original” (Lawrence Venuti, 2004: 1).

4.2 Comparative Translation Methods for People Names

In the *Shanhaijing*, the translation of people names is crucial for readers in English-speaking contexts to understand the stories. Since the narratives are driven by the interactions of various characters, a proper translations of these names can significantly enhance readers’ comprehension of the relationships between characters and the overall narrative.

In *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, a total of 67 different people names appear, with the classification details shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Categorical statistics of people name occurrences

Classification of Place Names and Their Frequencies		Both Editions Use the Same Method	Wang					Anne				
			A	Mixed	B	E	C	A	B	C	Mixed	D
Human	55	2	45	7	1	1	1	1	4	43	6	1
Races	6	1	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	5	1	0
Gods	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
Nations	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Surname	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	66	4	52	9	1	1	3	1	5	51	8	1

From Table 3, it can be seen that the Wang translation prefers to transliterate character names by transliteration directly, rarely employing literal or liberal translation methods; whereas the Anne translation extensively uses liberal translation methods, seldom resorting to transliteration or literal translation. A comparison of some typical character name examples is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of some people name translations in the two editions

Chinese Name	Type	Wang	Method	Anne	Method
Houji	Human	Houji	A	Sovereign Millet/ the divine Millet	C
<i>Xuanqiumin</i>	Race	<i>Xuanqiumin</i>	A	the Darkmound Folk	C
Chijingmin	Race	<i>Chijingmin</i>	A	the Scarletlegs Folk	C
Houtu	Human	Houtu	A	Sovereign Earth	C

In terms of human names, the Wang translation predominantly directly uses transliteration, while the Anne translation often employs liberal translation, especially for people with a certain cultural background. For example, the Wang translation directly renders it as “Houji”, whereas the Anne translation translates it as “Sovereign Millet”. “Houji”, also known as the ancestor of the Zhou dynasty, is revered as the King of Millet, the God of Millet, the God of Agriculture, the God of Plowing, and the God of Grain, among other titles. The Anne translation leverages this character’s background to translate his identity as “a ruler in charge of millet crops”, rather than a literal translation like “back millet”, even though the character “Hou” means “back”. When this name appears for the second time in the 32nd paragraph of the original text of *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, it is simply represented by the character “Ji”, and the Anne translation adds “the divine Millet”. Although there is no record in the text that “Houji” and the subsequent character “Houtu” have a direct familial relationship, according to Chinese naming conventions and rules, they can be understood to share the same surname “Hou”. Therefore, “Houtu” in this volume is translated as “Sovereign Earth”, while the Wang translation continues to use transliteration as “Houtu”.

In terms of racial names, “*Xuanqiumin*” is named after the darker skin pigmentation of people in this ethnic group, who once lived in the Khan Khentii mountain range at the border of the People’s Republic of Mongolia and the Soviet Union; “*Chijingmin*” is named because the skin below the knees of people in this ethnic group is red, and they once lived in the Khan Khentii mountains and the middle and upper reaches of the Heilongjiang River (Li Deshan, 1989). The Wang translation uses transliteration for racial names, but not entirely, such as the

aforementioned two ethnic groups being translated as “*Xuanqiumin*” and “*Chijingmin*”, without translating the character “Zhi” from the original text, intending to specify the two ethnic groups “*Xuanqiumin*” and “*Chijingmin*” (by comparing similar types of names throughout this edition version of *Shanhaijing*, the absence of italics of “*Chijingmin*” is just a typographical error). The Anne translation involves liberal translation, handling the names of the aforementioned two ethnic groups as “the Darkmound Folk” and “the Scarletlegs Folk”, allowing English-speaking readers to intuitively understand the characteristics of these two ethnic groups through the combination of words and roots.

From the perspective of Cultural Turn, when translating names with cultural characteristics of the source language, a descriptive and explanatory approach is more effective in clearly conveying the original meaning of the source text author to the reader (Lai Yulin & Lai Wenyi, 2024: 224). The translation of proper nouns needs to take into account both cultural and literary contexts. However, due to cultural and linguistic differences, translators often adopt transliteration or transliteration methods. Yet, in order to reproduce the literary function of proper noun metaphors, liberal translation is the preferred strategy (Xiao Jiayan, 2007: 199). From the perspective of the Cultural Turn, when translating such “untranslatable” words, poems, or names, what a translator can do is to reveal their underlying logic and their cultural background. Therefore, equivalence in translation, then, should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL, version (Susan, 1980: 36).

4.3 Comparative Translation Methods for Mineral, Animal and Plant Names

In the *Shanhaijing*, the translation of names of minerals, animals, plants and other things is also crucial for presenting the background of the text. The animals, plants, and minerals in the *Shanhaijing* do not all exist in the world as we know it today; most are associated with mythological contexts or specific cultural characteristics. Therefore, translating these names requires in-depth research.

In *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, a total of 5 mineral names, 14 animal names, 7 plant names and a special-thing-name appear, with the classification details all been shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Categorical statistics of other name occurrences

Classification of Place Names and Their Frequencies		Both Editions Use the Same Method	Wang					Anne			
			B	C	Mixed	A	C	E	B	Mixed	A
Minerals	5	3	3	2	0	0	2	1	2	0	0
Animals	14	8	2	6	1	5	9	0	3	1	1
Plants	7	4	0	4	1	2	6	0	0	1	0
Thing	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	27	16	6	12	2	7	18	1	5	2	1

From Table 5, it can be observed that both the Wang translation and the Anne translation tend to use liberal translation for the names of minerals, animals, plants and so on. A comparison of some of these names is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Comparison of some people name translations in the two editions

Chinese Name	Type	Wang	Method	Anne	Method
Yin	Mineral	silver	B	(SAME as the Wang Translation)	B
Gao Shu	Plant	rich millet	C	(SAME as the Wang Translation)	C
Nuan Bird	Animal	wonder bird	C	the Wonderbird	C
Feng Niao	Animal	phoenix	C	the Divine Wind bird	B
Xi Rang	Thing	the divine soil	C	the divine soil/ the breathing-soil	C

Unlike place names and people names, the plants and minerals recorded in the *Shanhaijing* mostly exist widely in contemporary society or have highly similar counterparts, hence it is easier for translators who are native speakers of both Chinese and English to reach a

consensus on the translation of such names. For example, both editions directly translate the mineral “Yin” as “silver”. And for plants like “Gao Shu”, which do not have a direct counterpart in contemporary society but are highly related to millet, both translations free translate it as “rich millet”. The Anne translation here can also create a connection with the previously mentioned personal name “Houji” or “Sovereign Millet”, both of which are related to millet crops.

Regarding animals or colloquially known as “Fantastic Beasts in *Shanhaijing*”, since the vast majority are important roles in traditional Chinese culture, most animals already have corresponding English names. However, there are a few exceptions. For instance, the “Nuan Bird”, due to its skin got a special color called “Qing” in Chinese, is often referred to as “Qing Bird” in Chinese mythology, a category of the Chinese Phoenix, and its popularity is secondary to creatures like “Chinese Phoenix” and “loong (widely known as the Chinese dragon)”. In literary works, when not specifically mentioned, some translators may choose the liberal translation or even omit the translation. For example, in the first chapter of *Creation of the Gods*, published by the same publishing house as *Classic of Mountains and Seas* of the Wang translation, the original text mentions “且言女娲娘娘降诞，……，下得青鸾，坐于宝殿”。Although the “Qing Bird” is explicitly mentioned, but because it does not significantly advance the plot, the translator Gu Zhizhong (2000) handles the translation as “On her birthday, She then returned to her temple, seated herself in the main hall, ...”, and directly omitting the specific name of this divine mount. However, in the ninety-seventh chapter of the *Creation of the Gods*, where the original text describes “当中一位娘娘，跨青鸾而来，乃是女娲娘娘驾至”，the same version of the book translates this as “A fairy, attended by her lasses, rode forward on a green phoenix”, expressing it as a “green phoenix” (the story of *Creation of the Gods* took place during the Shang Dynasty, and the unearthed artifacts from the Shang Dynasty mainly feature blue-green colors, refers to the color “Qing” might be green or blue in that period). Apart from the green color, the “Nuan Bird” also symbolizes beauty and loyalty (Xu Ran, 2024), so when there is no need to connect it from the phoenix, especially the “Chinese Phoenix” is indeed got nothing to do with the phoenix in the western culture, the “Nuan Bird” in the two English editions of *Shanhaijing* is liberal translated as a combination of the words “wonder” and “bird”. The difference is that the Wang translation expresses it as two separate words to convey “a very good bird”, while the Anne translation combines them into one word, capitalizes it, and adds the definite article to express this proper noun.

There’s only one mythological item name appears in the entire volume of *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, which is “Xi Rang”. As a mythological item that has no corresponding item in contemporary society, both translations use liberal translation to explain its definition in the original text, rendering it as “the divine soil”, meaning “a piece of soil bestowed by Gods”. Besides retains “the divine soil” as a liberal translation from the background of the item, the Anne translation adds “the breathing-soil” to further express the literal meaning of the item’s name in the original text, by separately translating the Chinese characters “Xi” and “Rang”.

It is worth mentioning that although both translations did not use “phoenix” in the translation

of “Nuan” (the creature highly related to “Feng”), they had completely different translation methods for the creature “Feng” itself. In the entire *Shanhaijing*, the character “Feng” appears 30 times. The Wang translation used liberal translation, with the translated name “phoenix” appearing 14 times in total; the Anne translation, however, used literal translation, with the translated name “Divine Wind” appearing 17 times in total. In fact, the “Feng” and “phoenix” are not equivalent in terms of image, origin, life characteristics, yin and yang attributes, and symbolic meanings. They are two different things existing in different cultures (Wu Jianfu, 2012: 101). In addition to Chinese scholars holding this view, many in the Western academic community also believe that the “Feng” and the “phoenix” are entirely different creatures. For instance, Richard E. Strassberg (2002: 193) had stated, “though almost universally mistranslated in the West as the ‘phoenix’, with which it has little in common.” Therefore, translating “Feng” as “phoenix” is a mistranslation, or rather, a “loan translation”. In contrast, the Anne translation’s literal translation seems to allow Western readers who are unfamiliar with the fantastic beast “Feng” to understand its true mythological identity. In the consciousness of ancient Chinese people, natural wind itself has great divinity, and “风” was originally a composite of natural wind and divinity. For example, in oracle bone script, the meaning of the character “Feng” (which means “wind” in English) was expressed through the character “Feng” (Guo Changbao, 1998: 39). During the *Shanhaijing* period, ancient Chinese people used bird shapes to indicate the intangible and divine wind, which was in line with the thinking ability of the people at that time. When the character “Feng” gradually became a purely divine bird, what it represented was precisely the “a kind of divine bird in charge of the wind”, that is, the “Divine Wind” or “the Divine Wind bird” translated by the Anne translation based on its original meaning. Just like what Anne Birrell wrote in page 213 of her translation of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*: “Sometimes the Chinese names for these birds are translated as ‘phoenix’, but this gives entirely the wrong connotation, both in mythological and cultural terms.” Therefore, when neither transliteration nor zero translation is chosen, the translator needs to delve deeply into the cultural and historical background behind these names in order to convey the most authentic original meaning to readers in another context and avoid misinterpretations. Since the “Feng” has become a specific cultural symbol in Chinese culture, much like the mythological status of the “Phoenix” in Western culture, the translation of “Feng” as “Divine Wind” or “the Divine Wind bird” is essentially a “Rewriting”. Generally speaking, translators must make appropriate adjustments and rewritings to the original work to some extent, in order to align it with the ideology and poetics of the time, thereby achieving the goal of making the translated work acceptable to as many readers as possible (Liu Junping, 2019: 464). The rewriting of “Feng” as “Divine Wind” or “the Divine Wind bird” is a very typical example of conveying background knowledge to readers who are unfamiliar with its context.

5. Conclusion

By comparing the original text with the two translations, this dissertation explores how the theory of Cultural Turn influences the process of translation. In addition, this thesis also analyzed the translation choices and adaptations for the elements of ancient Chinese and the characteristics of Chinese language. This dissertation successfully compares and analyzes the

specific elements of the Cultural Turn embodied in the two translated editions of *Shanhaijing*.

From the perspective of the cultural turn, when dealing with texts such as the *Shanhaijing-Haineijing*, this paper has three main findings through comparative research. First, when translating the names of places and people with special significance or backgrounds, Chinese native translators tend to retain their original pronunciation and choose transliteration; foreign language native translators prefer to describe their background knowledge in the translated names, thus adopting liberation translation methods. Second, when translating the names of minerals, plants and animals that are commonly present in today's society, translators from different cultural contexts tend to choose names that readers are already very familiar with in their daily lives for one-to-one correspondence. Third, in the process of translating ancient Chinese classics into foreign languages, people in Chinese culture tends to output the authentic Chinese traditional culture to foreign language readers, while Western readers prefer to understand the content itself through the meaning of the names.

In summary, different translation methods, such as literal translation or liberal translation, are applied by translators to address the cultural and content conveyance needs of their target audience. For ancient Chinese classics that involve a large amount of traditional cultural knowledge, studying the translation methods of various names involved helps to convey the literary wisdom of ancient Chinese sages, tell the ancient traditional culture stories of the Chinese civilization, and share the Chinese readers' first-person perspective on such classics with scholars around the world, thereby promoting cultural exchange between the East and the West.

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Authors contributions

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