

# Names of Non-human Characters and the Translation in Children's Literature: a Case Study of *Journey to the West* by W.J.F Jenner



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**Abstract:** This paper focuses on how the names of non-human characters in children's literature can both realize the meaning and function of proper nouns and assist children's reading. Through a case study of more than 400 such names in a renowned Chinese children's literary work, *Journey to the West*, and their English translation by William Jenner, this paper analyses the classifications and categories of these names in the context of their enormous complexity and particularity, and their conventional referential, cultural, and rhetorical meaning and function, in order to shed light on the patterns of the translated names and suitability of their translations. Besides the conventional onomastic findings, the analysis demonstrates that, seen from the broader perspective of children's literature, both the names and their translations embody the animistic quality of literature, while some function as a narrative tool. What is more, Jenner's English translation displays a special care for the target children readers, taking into account their linguistic, cultural, and cognitive context. The popularity of the source text, *Journey to the West*, among young Chinese readers and the reprintings of Jenner's full-text English translation doubly certify that poetic, animistic, and imaginary names of non-human characters, in accordance with children's psychological and cognitive development, can not only assist child readers to remember and vividly visualize non-human characters in literary works but also enhance the implications and readers' potential interpretations of the work itself.

**Keywords:** non-human character names, *Journey to the West*, translation, children's literature

## Introduction

Studies concerning character names in literature, whether original or translated, are not rare and the onomastic approach offers fruitful research results. For example, writers from different literary schools have preferences regarding characters' names for emphasizing their literary potency (Geradbi, 2017). In addition to the conventional practice of transliteration, names can be rendered in a way that conforms to the naming practices of target readers, namely, onomastic acculturation (Chen, 2016). In particular, there has been considerable research on non-human characters in children's literature. Joseph Schwarcz (1966) divides the non-human characters found in Western children's literature into the

categories 'non-human living beings' and 'animistic machines'. The former describes animate animals such as birds and mammals that behave in the same way as children, while the latter are inanimate, man-made objects, such as tools, toys, small mechanical devices, or modern machines, that exhibit magical powers or powers beyond the usual capacity of these objects. Numerous studies on Hans Christian Andersen, a world-renowned contributor of animistic non-human characters to literature, have made great attempts to discover the social and realistic significance of the non-human characters such as Pinocchio in Anderson's fairy tales (Michanczyk, 1973).

However, the names of non-human characters in

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children's literature, not to mention the translations of these names, have received inadequate attention. "Most of the non-human characters are animate; they usually have names and have the ability to think and, even more so, relate emotionally to others like themselves and to animals and human beings. They become co-protagonists or sole protagonists of the story" (Scharwarcz, 1966:82). Like human beings, their identity can be shaped by physical traits, as well as intangible traits such as inner characteristics. Usually, their names distinguish them from normal human beings; for example, Squealer, a non-human protagonist of the science-fiction anime series *From the New World*, published in 2008 by Kodansha, reflects the noise that the mole-rat character (the name bearer) produces (Lee, 2018). Similarly, and unsurprisingly, the names of Bumblebee and Optimus Prime from the Disney *Transformers* movie series of 2007 to 2017, immediately make the audience aware of their non-human identities. Therefore, surely a book with more than 400 strange and exotic non-human characters and creatures, each one of which has a unique name to highlight its identity, deserves serious academic research. A fantasy and mythologic novel in China titled *Xi You Ji* (*Journey to the West*, abbreviated to *JTTW* henceforth), is such a book.

## 2. *JTTW* and its prestige in China

*JTTW*, written more than 300 years ago (between 1550 and 1582) in China, by an author named Wu Cheng'en, is based on the historical pilgrimage to India made by a monk called Xuanzang<sup>1</sup> of the Tang Dynasty<sup>2</sup>, in search of Buddhist scriptures. Its 100 chapters imagine the joys and hardships faced by Xuanzang and his three non-human disciples during their 36,000-mile pilgrimage. They are doomed to experience 81 misadventures and ordeals in different kingdoms and realms; however, their adventures can also be seen in a positive way, testifying to their sincerity and consistency in their search for the holy scriptures. Their various experiences on the journey create a magical and fantastical world for young and old

readers, incorporating mythical characters and mythological environments within a robust Chinese value system. In the last century, as a representative of classical Chinese literature, *JTTW* has spent little time outside the spotlight in the English-speaking world. There have been many English-language adaptations and abridged translations of it, one of which, *Monkey* by Arthur Waley, has been reprinted five times in the UK and US, and has been translated from English into Spanish, German, French, Swedish, and other languages. Currently, the only non-abridged English translation of *JTTW* by a non-Chinese native speaker of English has been contributed by William John Francis Jenner. Since Jenner's four-volume translation collection of *JTTW* was first published by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing from 1982 to 1986, it has been reprinted three times.

Although not originally intended for child readers, in contemporary China, *JTTW* enjoys a prestigious and undeniable place in children's literature, namely, literary writings created for children, related to children, or widely-accepted by children. Firstly, with its hundreds of human-like characters, it caters to most young children's animistic psychological and cognitive belief that, like humans, every object in the world is a living, thinking being, with the capacity to communicate with humans as an equal. Furthermore, an excerpt from the book, titled "The Little Sage Uses His Might to Subdue the Great Sage", is printed in the official Chinese language textbook for 7<sup>th</sup>-grade pupils in Mainland China. Similarly, *China Daily*, an official and authoritative newspaper in China, places *JTTW* at the top of its must-read book list for children in grades seven to nine receiving compulsory education (Baidu Wenku/Baidu Library, 2019). Finally, the fervent cross-media adaptations of the original, such as cartoons, TV series, online games, and comics, covering every art form for children, have been widespread for many years in China.

### 3. Methodology

To uncover the patterns of the non-human character names and determine the appropriateness of their translations, the names of more than 400 non-human characters in the source text and their corresponding translations in the full-text English translation of *JTTW* by Jenner (1993) were collected and analyzed manually. It should be clarified that although most of the collected names relate to individual characters, some refer to a group of characters. Designations such as 九曜星 (the Nine Bright Shiners), 五方将 (the Generals of the Five Regions), and 五方五老 (the Five Ancients of the Five Regions) are the names of collectives linked by some kind of solidarity; although they consist of more than one character, the individuals vary and “it is the collective or the organization that is in focus” (Brylla, 2016:247). In addition, since a character may have more than one name, the number of names surpasses that of the characters.

Character names are a type of proper noun, which is “the name of a person, a place, an institution, etc. and is written with a capital letter”, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (2016:1233). Besides referring to a specific referent and distinguishing a particular individual from others, some proper nouns reflect the background, social rank, and nationality of characters (Sanaty, 2009). Likewise, Bachman (1990) explains that every language has certain proper nouns, a considerable number of which are entirely linked to the culture of that language. Furthermore, as noted in Garces (2003), proper nouns may not only have metaphorical meaning or include certain references but also have a phonetic effect (e.g., alliteration) in a text. Thus, in this analysis, the translated names are studied from the perspective of their conventional referential, cultural, and rhetorical meanings and functions as proper nouns. Besides the three perspectives discussed above, this study focuses on the standpoint of ‘child-centered’ children’s literature, which takes special care for and consideration of young readers, in order to determine whether the

translation matches the original book in its popularity gained among Chinese children.

The list of over 400 names includes almost all the non-human characters that can be identified in the text, even those mentioned only once. Great care was taken to identify all the English equivalents of the names that appear in the original Chinese version. However, those in Sanskrit (chiefly the names of Buddhist gods who are also counted as non-human) were excluded for two reasons. Firstly, this story, as a book in praise of the virtues of Buddhist culture and Buddhism that the protagonists are seeking in spite of the dangers and difficulties, employs established proper nouns for Buddhist gods, the connotations of which require greater familiarity with the complex historical background of the religion than that possessed by the author of the current paper. The second reason is that Sanskrit is not a language in which the author is proficient.

The Chinese language consists of two independent systems, namely its morphological form (composed of various strokes and complex font structures) and sound. It is not possible to get any hint of the pronunciation of a Chinese character from its morphological form. Furthermore, the current phonetic system of the Chinese language was established only 60 years ago when the Scheme of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet (the Hanyu Pinyin system), the first was officially approved in China for the sake of convenient cultural, economic, and scientific exchanges at home and abroad. Before that, without a standardized phonetic system (although more than one ancient Chinese governments tried to achieve the goal of unifying the phonetic systems, but due to underdeveloped traffic, constant wars, vast size of the territory, and some other reasons, the goal was never fulfilled) although the morphological forms of the Chinese language remained approximately the same for many years, the same Chinese character might be pronounced differently due to the considerable variation in the dialectal phonetic systems in different parts of China. Beyond doubt, the written (morphological) form of *JTTW*, which was written 300 years ago, has been better

preserved than its sound (phonetic features). Thus, the author of this paper has adopted the written form of Chinese characters instead of the sound (Hanyu Pinyin system) in the examples hereafter.

#### 4. Findings

##### 4.1 Naming convention of *JTTW* and the translation from the perspective of proper nouns

Above all, the naming convention of non-human characters in *JTTW* is highly particular. Functioning as a symbolic mark to distinguish one character from another, the names of non-human characters in the book compose a separate naming system, similar to nicknames. A nickname, also known as a moniker or additional name, differs from a person's real name and is usually bestowed by others, especially friends, acquaintances, or rivals. Nicknames are often related to a person's appearances, something this person has done, or other special features he possesses. The statement "there is always a particular feature, event, or other basis from which an individual receives a nickname (Peterson, 2018:91)" best describes the connection between these characters' names and nicknames.

Although the naming method of non-human characters in *JTTW* is very close to nicknaming, there is a subtle nuance since these non-human characters are only given a single name; this differs from the Anglo-Saxon origin of the term nickname, *ekename*, which indicates that it is an 'additional', 'secondary', or 'increased' name, or more precisely, a name that is added to an individual's first name and differs from their real name (Awedoba, 2017; Peterson, 2018). The nickname-like names for the over 400 non-human characters in the source text, with a few exceptions, fall roughly into two categories: self-evident and non-self-evident names, definitions of which are given below.

##### 4.2 Self-evident names and the translation

The complexity of the types of characters in *JTTW*, as well as of the cultural connotations of their names, is quite exceptional. Even today, no study has reached a definitive conclusion about the appropriate classification of character names in the novel.

Nonetheless, following the manual collection and analyses of these names by the author of this paper, despite the fact that the 100-chapter book comprises four interwoven worlds (the human world, the celestial world, the netherworld, and the Western Paradise, as governed, respectively, by Emperor Tang Taizong<sup>3</sup>, the Jade Emperor, Jura, and Tathagata Buddha), it can be seen that the various characters in these four worlds can be roughly divided into three categories: the four pilgrims (Master Xuanzang and his three non-human disciples), the mortal beings, and those beings who are immortal or outlive regular mortal beings, such as bodhisattvas, sages, demons, and spirits. Of these three categories, all those except the mortal beings may be considered non-human characters, accounting for the majority of the characters in the book, and offering over 400 names, excluding those in Sanskrit. It is worth noting that although Xuanzang (also called Monk Tang), a central character in the book, seems at the first glance to be a mortal, he is, in fact, non-human as he is the reincarnation of the 'Golden Cicada'—the second follower of the Tathagata Buddha, the governor of the Western Paradise (Wu, 2013: 224; Jenner, 1993:384). This explains why almost all the evil characters in the book are seeking for a piece of Xuanzang's flesh to eat, in order to realize their ambition of attaining an eternal life.

The self-evident names are those that explicitly point to which world the name-bearers belong to or come from, and often include a racial or species attribute (relating to their animal or insect nature) to describe the characters. For example, 'Great Sage Overturning the Sea', 'Manjusri's Lion King', and 'Single-horned Devil Kings' are typical examples of these names; the first two indicate that the characters are from the celestial world, while the last one is from the world of ghosts, demons, spirits, and elves. Altogether, about 380 self-evident names were collected, some of which are presented as examples below.

##### 4.2.1 Superior characters in the celestial world

Both in the source text and Jenner's translation, it is clearly noted that "the Buddhas, the Immortals

and the Sages are free from the Wheel of Reincarnation; They are not born and they do not die; They are as eternal as Heaven and Earth, as the mountains and the rivers” (Wu, 2013: 5; Jenner, 1993:11). Due to this, the non-human characters from the celestial world are marked as superior to the characters of other worlds, and the original text confers upon them benevolent nickname-like names and established Sanskrit religious names, which are excluded from this study. In the celestial world, which is governed by the Jade Emperor, around 140 emperors, kings, generals, marshals, gods, teachers, fairies, and officials of different ranks, are mentioned in the source text, such as 托塔李天王 (The Pagoda-bearing Heavenly King Li Jing), 玉帝 (Jade Emperor), 布雾郎君 (Young Lord Mistspreader), 哪吒太子 (Prince Nezha), 二郎神 (God Erlang), 镇元大仙 (Great Immortal Zhen Yuan), and 灵宝道君 (Precious Pure One). Similar to the nicknames that express positive connotations such as respect, admiration, and intimacy, the names given to the characters in this world are characterized by superiority.

Taking his cue from this, Jenner's approach to these names was to adopt a corresponding Western system of social titles, such as Lord, God, King, Heavenly Teacher, and other commendatory titles, to indicate the characters' identities. Jenner's translation not only retains the commendatory official ranks and titles for these characters but also bestows titles on characters whose ranks are not explicitly indicated in the source text, such as 城隍 (the City God), 土地 (the Local Tutelary God), and 黄河水伯 (the Earl of the Yellow River).

The poetic and imaginary names for various dragons in this world are also worthy of note. According to the collected data, a dozen dragon names without any commentary titles, such as 小骊龙 (the Little Black Dragon), 稳兽龙 (Guardian Dragon), and 赤髯龙 (the Red-whiskered Dragon), are mentioned. In contrast to Western culture, in both ancient and modern China, dragons are regarded as members of the celestial world because in traditional Chinese culture, dragons are born with superpowers

and are symbolic of nobility, glory, and power. It is for this reason that, in the very first chapters of the book, the dragon kings, namely 东海龙王敖广 (Ao Guang, the Old Dragon King of the Eastern Sea), 北海龙王敖顺 (Ao Shun, the Dragon King of the Northern Sea), 南海龙王敖钦 (Ao Qin, the Dragon King of the Southern Sea), and 西海龙王敖闰 (Ao Run, the Dragon King of the Western Sea), are introduced to readers. Furthermore, in the following chapters, they are expected to play an occasional role, helping the protagonists overcome the challenges and hardships on their journey.

#### 4.2.2 Inferior characters in the world of ghosts, demons, spirits, and elves

Opposite to the celestial world exists that of ghosts, demons, spirits, and elves, in which non-human characters are doomed to inferiority because many of them have lost their fights against the scripture-seeking protagonists or those in the celestial world. These characters co-exist with mortals in the human world and play the role of obstacles, serving as a foil for the bravery and consistency of the protagonists. Although they can cultivate and elevate themselves to a higher level of ability than that with which they were born, and may become immortal like the gods and fairies of the celestial world, they are not on the righteous track because the doctrines and religions they pursue are in opposition to those advocated by mainstream Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

In contrast to the characters of the celestial world, who usually receive the benevolent nicknames described above, the naming system for ghosts, demons, spirits, and elves is much simpler. Their names are composed of two parts: their species attributes (usually relating to animals or insects) and a word identifying their level of cultivation and demonic category, such as ghost, demon, or elf. Although not as pleasing as the benevolent ones, these names, such as 黄狮精 (Tawny Lion Spirit), 青面鬼 (Blue-faced Monster), 牛魔王 (the Bull Demon King), 牛头鬼 (Bull-headed Demon), 马面鬼 (Horse-faced Devils), 白骨精 (the Corpse Fiend), and 铁背苍狼怪 (Iron-backed Grey Wolf

Ogre), are by nature neutral; they are not malicious nicknames that are insulting, disrespectful, derogatory, or violate the personal dignity of the name bearers.

For such names, Jenner adhered to the translation principle of faithfulness to the source text, retaining in his translation the words indicating demonic identity, such as fiend, monster, or spirit. The basic structure of the translations of the names listed above is species attribute (mostly relating to animals) in addition to a word denoting demonic identity. For example, about 26 names involving the word 精 are found in the source text and Jenner mostly adopted the word 'spirit' to translate such names; for example, 蜈蚣精 (Centipede Spirit), 蛟精 (Lesser Dragon Spirit), and 黄狮精 (Tawny Lion Spirit). Furthermore, Jenner frequently used the word 'spirit' to translate the Chinese character 怪, which literally means 'non-humanoid, monster-like'; for instance, 熊罴怪 (Bear Spirit), 黑熊怪 (Black Bear Spirit), 白花蛇怪 (White-patterned Snake Spirit), and 鲇鱼怪 (Catfish Spirit). In some cases, Jenner's translation more clearly conveys the demonic characteristics of the characters than in the source text. For example, the name 伶俐虫 would be literally translated as 'Skillful Bug'. Instead, Jenner rendered it as 'Skillful Beast', in which the word 'beast' undoubtedly better reflects the attributes of the ghost character, having the size bigger than a normal human being and running errands skillfully for his monster king, than the word 'bug'.

The above names for both superior and inferior characters are in accordance with children's dichotomous perceptions of the world as good or bad, as demonstrated in the third stage (the impulsive stage) of the ego development "when children experience the world in egocentric terms, in terms of how things are affecting me, if something or someone meets my needs, it is good; if something or someone frustrates my needs, it is bad, thus their thinking is very simplistic and dichotomous" (Loevinger, 1998:89). It should be noted that this dichotomy is not a moral judgment, but rather a value judgment. Names with positive and commendatory

titles help children recognize that the characters are good, while those that contain a word denoting a demonic identity put children on the alert and focus their attention on the incoming trouble and disaster that these characters might bring to the protagonists, thus facilitating their understanding of the subsequent stories. As a result, the names of these non-human characters intuitively and vividly convey the information about the characters to young readers and are full of simple child-pleasing fun.

By adopting the translation strategy of foreignization, Jenner preserved both the form and meaning of the self-evident names in the original, which chiefly convey and realize referential and cultural meaning. Personal names refer to a specific referent, that is to say, "these names serve to distinguish a particular individual from others" (Quirk 1985:76-77). In terms of referential meaning, these self-evident names clearly elucidate the particular feature, event, or other basis upon which the name bearer receives such a name, just as the definition of nicknames describes. For example, some names arise from the name bearers' physical traits, alluding to physical characteristics (Brylla, 2016), such as the color of their hair, horn, or nose, among which 猪刚鬣 (Iron-Haired pig), 金角大王 (the Senior King Gold Horn), and 青毛狮子怪 (Blue-haired Lion Monster) are typical examples. When child readers encounter these names in the book, very often, they will create images of these characters in their minds in line with their cognition level. 猪刚鬣 (Iron-Haired pig), who is called Pig on most occasions in the book, presents the specific and vivid image of a hog with rough hair to young readers. 青毛狮子怪 (Blue-haired Lion Monster) achieves the same effect by not only presenting readers with the vivid image of a blue-haired lion but also by catering to the audience's reading and cognition levels by the use of simple words. The vividness of the images and simplicity of the vocabulary alleviate the difficulty of reading and help young readers remember hundreds of the characters that come and go throughout the story, enhancing the readability of the translation.

Similarly, there are names arising from social

function, denoting occupation, rank, or position (Brylla, 2016). Typical examples of these names, although some, such as 鯪少卿 (mandarin-fish ministers), 鲤太宰 (carp premier), and 鲟军师 (shad generals), are rendered as general nouns, are translated as proper nouns by capitalizing the initial letter, including 鲤元帅 (Marshal Carp), 鲭太尉 (Colonel Mackerel), 鲑枢密 (Brigadier Croaker), and 鲈外郎 (Secretary Catfish). In either general nouns or proper nouns, they do not fail to highlight to the readers the military positions of these underwater army men.

One thing worth mentioning in this regard is that a considerable number of these names, such as 增长天王, 多闻天王, and 李天王, resemble Buddha names, in line with the characters' identities in the Western Paradise governed by Tathagata Buddha; however, they are actually gods in the celestial world governed by the Jade Emperor. If they were rendered as the established proper names of Buddhas in Sanskrit, they would be unfamiliar and obscure to children, thereby posing great difficulties for both spelling and reading. Consequently, young readers may either get tired of reading, have only a vague understanding of these names, or skip them entirely, none of which would be conducive to children's continued engagement in reading. The non-Sanskrit or half-English-half-Sanskrit translations of these names in Jenner's version, ('the Heavenly Guardian Virudhaka', 'Heavenly King Vaisravana', 'Heavenly King Li'), both explain that these characters are not Buddhas following orders from Tathagata Buddha, but rather gods performing duties in the celestial world, at the same time reduce the difficulty of understanding and reading aloud the adventure stories for children, who have comparatively lower cognitive and language development than adults.

#### 4.3 Non-self-evident names and the translation

Non-self-evident names are those that either do not explicitly indicate which world the name bearer belongs to, even if they often include the race or species of the characters, or that do not give any suggestion of the name bearer's identity at all. 房日兔 (the Sun Hare of the Chamber), 耳听怒

(Ear-hearing Anger), and 六丁六甲 (The Dings and Jias) are typical examples of these names; the first clearly describes an animal attribute, while the latter two do not convey anything about the name bearer. There are approximately 50 such names in *JTTW* and these are unhelpful for young readers trying to evaluate the name bearers' identity.

Typical examples of names that either do not explicitly indicate the name bearer's world include 箕水豹 (Water Leopard of the Winnower), 斗木獬 (Wooden Unicorn of the Dipper), 危月燕 (Moon Swallow of the Roof), 牛金牛 (Metal Bull of the Ox), and 娄金狗 (Metal Dog of the Harvester). Although some of these characters have an animal nature, they are members of the celestial world, which cannot be inferred from their names. When dealing with these nicknames, Jenner merely presented the animal attributes of these characters as depicted in the source text. According to the stages of cognitive development, "children develop their empathy by watching and imitating things, and interacting with them" (Hoffman, 1987:47). Animals, especially tamed ones, are things with which children can develop empathy. Partially it is for this reason that children, regardless of gender, can be seen to have a keen interest in animals. Moreover, their perception of animals is highly intuitive and vivid. Thus, Jenner's adherence to the original text is effective as it aids the visualization of these characters and precisely replicates the pleasure that animals can bring to children as the original text.

The second category of non-self-evident names is those that offer no indication of identity and includes 眼看喜 (Eye-seeing Happiness), 鼻嗅爱 (Nose-smelling Love), 意见欲 (Body-based Sorrow), 兴烘掀 (Burly-Hurly), and 急如火 (Quick-as-Fire). In the source text, the above names are short in form, vivid in sight, offers rich imagery, and make a lively sound when spoken aloud. These qualities instantly catch children's attention and maintain their interest until the end of the story. The translations of these names, though literal translations, not only conform to the refined nominal form of proper nouns, making them easy for readers

to identify, but also minimize grammatical subordination and logical complexity, making them suitable for young readers' level of comprehension and memory.

Besides realizing the referential meaning, the second category of non-self-evident character names places a great focus on the rhetorical meaning and function of proper nouns. Rhetorical devices such as pun, exaggeration, and personification are commonly seen in literary works for children and are important symbols of literature. As a key means of creating child-pleasing fun, they are intended both to demonstrate linguistic structure and form to realize interlingual meaning, and also to exert a literary and rhetorical effect and appeal.

Inner characteristics, including personalities, dispositions, and other internal qualities, also serve as a reason for naming (Brylla, 2016). They offer a basis for naming and names denoting inner characteristics often portray characters' unusual talents, capacities, and other inner qualities. Furthermore, rhetorical devices are frequently seen employed in these names; for instance, 顺风耳 is a fiend who is able to hear far and clearly. Jenner's translation of the fiend's name, 'Wind-accompanying Ear', conveys the rhetorical effect of exaggeration and personification in the name, perfectly explaining the unusual hearing ability of this non-human character and pleasing young readers with the wild imagination it provokes. Similarly, 急如火 (Quick-as-Fire) and 快如风 (Swift-as-Wind) not only exactly embody the rhetorical device of simile in the original, which vividly describes the extraordinary swiftness of the two errand-running ghosts, but also caters to young children's cognitive level by not rendering them as metaphors such as "wind-swift" or "fire-quick", as this would require a higher cognitive capacity to understand the logic between the tenor and vehicle of the rhetorical figure. In addition to the linguistic form and structure of the rhetorical device, literary function and effect are fully realized in most of Jenner's name translations of this sort.

There are names denoting special situations,

occurrences, habits and expressions (Brylla, 2016). Some names in *JTTW* are no exception. It is not always possible to trace the origin of the form of some of these names in the original text, and the origin of many names is obscure. Although it is difficult to determine the reasons behind names such as 兴烘掀 (Burly-Hurly), 掀烘兴 (Hurly-Burly), 云里雾 (Cloud-in-Fog), and 雾里云 (Fog-in-Cloud), they are enjoyable to read for the unusual morphological and rhythmic effects that the combination of the pairs of names produce. Moreover, the repeated syllable 'urly' in 'burly' and 'hurly', and the vibration of the two consonantal phonemes 'b' and 'h' evoke both an active rebounding pleasure in the mouth and the pleasure of repetition in the ear when pronounced. These are examples of rhetorical devices making use of phonological and phonetic effects, which enhance the readability of language for children. As Lathey stated "such effects make it easy for children to chant and read aloud, which is a strategy for preserving the beauty of the rhyme and rhythm of literary works for children"(2015:246).

### 5. Limitations of the translations

Although these names do help distinguish one character from another, hence fulfilling the referential function of proper nouns, it must be admitted that there are certain flaws with some of the translated names if they are studied merely from the perspective of personal nouns or proper nouns.

First, in terms of cultural meaning, some of the name translations, although not many, inadequately convey cultural information or fail to capture the essence of cultural connotations. For example, the 三坛 in 三坛海会大神 is a religious term in Taoism that refers to the three altar boundaries (Heaven, Earth, and Water), while 海会 is a religious term in Buddhism referring to the gatherings of eminent monks; 大神 means 'great gods'. Altogether, the phrase refers to "the great gods having the same powers as the eminent monks at the religious gatherings of the three worlds (Heaven, Earth, and Water)". The original book aims to

describe the superpower and eminent status of Prince Nezha, a god from the celestial world. While Jenner's translation of this ("God of the Third Alter, the Seas") corresponds to the literal sense of the name, it deviates from the meaning of the original by ignoring the other two worlds: Heaven and Earth.

The second limitation with the translated names is that, in terms of rhetorical meaning and function, it is evident that some names fail to achieve the intended rhetorical function of the original. For example, 唐大官儿 (Tang the Eldest), 孙二官儿 (Sun the Second), 朱三官儿 (Hogg the Third), and 沙四官儿 (Sand the Fourth) are names for the four protagonists, invented by Monkey, the first disciple of Master Xuanzang, in order to help them avoid disasters, and disguised in civilian clothes and with these four ordinary human names. In cultural terms, 官儿 and 官人 are respectful forms of address for males in the Tang Dynasty, denoting that they come from certain respectable or non-poverty-stricken families. Rhetorically, the sound 官儿 is repeated four times in these names, causing the front part of the tongue to be tilted upward to produce the 'er' sound. The phonetic effect of the repeated retroflex of this 'er' sound in the original is lost in the translation, resulting in the loss of the musical and rhythmic sense of repeating the same sound. Likewise, in the translated names 巴山虎 (Mountain Tiger) and 倚海龙 (Ocean Dragon), the rhetorical device of personification is not present because 巴 and 倚 describe the actions of 'pawing the mountain' and 'lolling the sea' by animate beings.

### **Discussions of the name translations from the perspective of children literature**

Nonetheless, if considered from the broader perspective of children's literature rather than the conventional onomastic approach of the referential, cultural, and rhetoric meaning of proper nouns, the translation of the names of these characters in Jenner's full-length translation offers a few unexpected discoveries.

### **Embodiments of animism**

If the names of the non-human characters in the original text suggest an animistic quality, the same is

true of the names in Jenner's translation. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, the word animism is "the belief that plants, objects and natural things such as the weather have a living soul or a belief in a power that organizes and controls the universe" (2016:52). Jelani and Muhammad (2018) state that animism refers to the belief that the natural world demonstrates humanlike thoughts and actions; this applies to plants and animals, inanimate objects, geographical features, and natural phenomena. All these things are seen to possess a spirit (or soul) or spiritual elements. Piaget (1929:159) concludes that between the ages of 2 and 12, children show signs of animistic thinking to various degrees in their cognitive development, from not being able to discern the difference between animate and inanimate beings and attributing life and consciousness to everything, to only attributing life to animals, or to animals and plants.

The definition of animism encompasses two processes: the projection of the characteristics of human beings onto an inanimate object and the projection of these characteristics onto a non-human living being. First, with respect to projecting human characteristics on inanimate objects, in the original text, the natural phenomena of thunder, lightning, wind, and clouds are given the titles of family members—respectively 'grandpa', 'mother', 'uncle', and 'boy'. The importance of family in this context is that it associates these titles with admirable traits, connoting intimacy. Therefore, these titles are used not only within a family context but also in many other social situations, conveying positive and pleasant associations by the invocation of family roles. In Jenner's translation, 雷公 (Grandpa Thunder), 电母 (Mother Lightning), 风伯 (Uncle Wind), and 云童 (the Cloud Boys) faithfully preserve this animistic feature, allowing child readers to feel the familial intimacy of these characters.

Similarly, in terms of projecting human characteristics on living things, both the source text and Jenner's translation vividly assign human sociality to non-human characters. For example, Wu

Cheng'en, the author of the book, constructed the imaginary world of the Eastern Sea under the jurisdiction of 老龙王 (the Old Dragon King). This is a small society in which shrimps, crabs, and mussels are dressed in soldiers' uniforms, standing guard and patrolling their community. The characters in the Eastern Sea Army include 编提督 (Provincial Commander Bream), 鲤总兵 (Garrison Commander Carp), 鱗力士 (Guard Commander Eel), 鲷太尉 (Colonel Mackerel), and 鳧都司 (Commander Perch), among others. Jenner's translation adopts the corresponding, modern Western military title system in place of the official Chinese title system of the Ming Dynasty<sup>4</sup>. Thus, instead of seeing the soldiers being dressed in ancient Chinese robes as described in the original text, Western child readers see soldiers dressed in Western military uniforms in their minds. Young readers can hear these small creatures of the underwater world crying out military chants, and visualize their solemn expressions as they salute like soldiers protecting their society, with the social characteristics of human beings projected on them.

Animism in modern children's literature is not merely a form of cognition but also a method and technique of literary creation. The animistic, non-human characters are the representations of the author's thoughts and intentions, and help the author realize ambitions too challenging to meet in real life. For example, in the chaotic world of demons and ghosts depicted in the book, it is desirable to have great powers and abilities, as is evident in the naming of elves and ghosts. Names, such as 千里眼 (Thousand-mile Eye), 大力鬼神 (Strong-arm Devil King), 刁钻古怪 (Wily Freak), 古怪刁钻 (Freaky Wile), 急如火 (Fast-as-fire), 精细鬼 (Dexterous Ghost), and 有来有去 (Gocome), arising from the characters' capabilities, acquaint young readers with a variety of powerful and grotesque creatures. Their names reflect the ambitions of the author, and perhaps of the whole of humanity, to have superpowers. Thanks to their animistic names, these characters are made vivid and easy to remember. In this way, character names form an organic part of the aesthetic and artistic literary whole, enhancing the

meaning and space for interpretation of the work.

It is worth mentioning in this context that the translation of the central protagonist's name, 美猴王 (Handsome Monkey King), is appropriate. Although Handsome Monkey King is depicted as "a yellow-haired monkey with protruding teeth and a long pointed mouth" (Wu, 2013:30), his exceptional looks and ability among monkeys, and his wonderful nature has won him fame. The word 'handsome', from his name, has a total of five entries in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary; the first of these is "(of men) attractive: He's the most handsome man I've ever met" (2016:711). Handsome Monkey King's heroic and intelligent deeds in the novel erase the ugliness of his appearance in his young admirers' minds and they identify deeply with him. Jenner openly displayed his appreciation and love for this character by using the adjective 'handsome', describing the monkey king as having a good-looking male appearance and a kind and devoted heart, and thus the characteristics of a human male, highlighting the positive and spiritual power of the character for young readers. Furthermore, the use of the word 'handsome' in this translation corresponds to young children's peculiarly animistic thinking, which sees everything in the world as having its own life, thoughts, feelings, and agency, and the world as full of life, with a soul that can be communicated with, whether it resides in a rock or a monkey.

## 6. Special care for children

When children and teenagers read this 100-chapter novel, they no doubt feel much closer to the four protagonists (Master Xuanzang and his three disciples) who appear in most of the chapters, than to the other characters. In the original text, however, although the monkey king is certainly the central protagonist, he is not particularly memorable because he is given quite a few names and titles, such as 孙悟空 (Monkey Awakened to Emptiness), 美猴王 (Handsome Monkey King), and 大圣孙悟空 (the Great Sage Sun Wukong). The monkey king's names, which are often used on public occasions, in fact,

outnumber the abovementioned. For example, in Chapter 14, when Master Xuanzang and the monkey king first meet and agree on their master-disciple relationship, Master Xuanzang says, “you look like a young Buddhist monk; I will give you a nickname Sun the Novice” (Wu, 2013:113) and when Master Xuanzang reprimands the monkey king, he uses the nickname 猴头 (Baboon).

In Jenner’s translation, however, from Chapter 15, in which Master Xuanzang and the monkey king set off together on their pilgrimage to the west, in most instances, only one name, ‘Monkey’, is used for the monkey king, rather than the various names that appear in the original text. Capitalizing the ‘M’ in the word ‘Monkey’ renders it a proper noun. Occasionally, Jenner uses the name and title ‘Great Sage’ in his translation to express his approval of the monkey king’s behavior. Consequently, for Western readers, the name of the central character becomes more recognizable and memorable than the complicated names that appear in the original text, which are overly rich in Chinese cultural connotations, especially for children with limited literacy and cognitive abilities. Jenner’s special care and consideration of young readers in this regard convey a strong warmth towards them.

Similarly, the second disciple, another key non-human character, has a variety of names, such as 猪刚鬣 (Iron-haired Pig), 天蓬元帅 (Marshal Tian Peng—his rank name used when he is an officer in the celestial world), 猪悟能 (Pig Awakened to Power), and 猪八戒 (Eight Prohibitions Pig), which is used by his master Xuanzang in the hope that he will not eat the five malodourous foods and the three forbidden meats (wild goose, dog and snakehead) as Buddhist monks are forbidden from eating these. Fortunately, in Jenner’s translation, the name of this character can be remembered with little effort because Jenner uses the name ‘Pig’ from the point at which he sets out on the pilgrimage with his master. The treatment of this name achieves the same confusion-reducing effect as the simplified name of the central protagonist, ‘Monkey’.

Western readers, and especially children, would

expect the third disciple to have a name as recognizable and memorable as those of the first two because they encounter these three important non-human characters in most chapters. From the point at which the third disciple joins the pilgrimage in Chapter 22, the source text refers to him as 沙悟净 (Sand Awakened to Purity), as named by a Bodhisattva. Before he is banished from the celestial world for his misdeeds, he is called 卷帘大将 (Great Curtain-lifting General). After he is officially accepted as the third disciple, his master, Xuanzang, comments, “When you salute, you do it like a real monk. I will call you Monk Sha” (Wu, 2013:188). In this name, the surname *Sha* (Sand) comes from the Flowing Sands River, where the character lived before beginning the pilgrimage. However, in the chapters following Chapter 22 when he joins the pilgrimage, Jenner consistently refers to this character as ‘Friar Sand’, despite the various names used in the source text. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary’s definition of the word “friar” is “a member of one of several Roman Catholic religious communities of men who in the past travelled around teaching people about Christianity and lived by asking other people for food” (2016:628). This clearly describes the job the third disciple is assigned with—asking other people for food-- in their journey to seek the buddhism scriptures. Indeed, it is undeniable that it would be more reasonable and appropriate to use the word ‘monk’ in this instance, due to the religious context of the source text. The choice of ‘Friar’ instead of ‘monk’ demonstrates Jenner’s special consideration for Western readers’ religious background, as well as his intention to facilitate their understanding of this character, by creating of a warm and easy-to-understand quality in his translation.

In short, Jenner’s renditions of the names of these three core characters, responding to the revival principle in literary translation that entails regarding the original text as raw material, indicate that Jenner, the translator, offered his own uncommon interpretation of the original, though the aforementioned literary name translations were also

the translator's own interpretation of the source text. Jenner's English translation displays a child-friendlier atmosphere not evoked in the original work.

### 7. A witty narrative tool

Besides contributing to a referential, cultural, and rhetorical meaning in their presentation of the characters, some of the names of characters in *JTTW* play an important role in developing the plot and connecting the storylines in different chapters. The names of the first disciple, 'Monkey', are such a case. At the beginning of the book, he is a carefree monkey spirit enjoying a paradise-like life with his monkey followers in a territory under his control. He is named 美猴王 (Handsome Monkey King) by his followers and admirers, whereas he is simultaneously called 混世魔王 (the Demon King of Confusion) by the officials in the celestial world for the annoying trouble and chaos he creates. Later, he is subdued by the Jade Emperor and assigned the job of taking care of the horses in the celestial world, under the official name 弼马温 (Protector of the Horses). Mocked by some mischievous fellow officials for being a groom, he abandons his job, vandalizing the heavenly palace to vent his rage at being belittled, and returns to his former monkey kingdom on earth, granting himself the name 齐天大圣 (Great Sage Equaling Heaven) to indicate that his power is equal to that of the Jade Emperor, the supreme ruler of the celestial world. After he is saved by Master Xuanzang from the mountain-burying (a punishment for his disobedience and the chaos he creates in the celestial world) and agrees to join the pilgrimage for the scriptures, he is given a religious name, 孙行者 (Novice Sun). On their 36,000-mile journey, he is addressed as 悟空 (Monkey Awakened to Emptiness) in the source text by his master, and 大师兄 (Brother Monkey) by his fellow disciples in most instances. In the end, after the master and disciples successfully bring back the scriptures as planned following their misadventures and ordeals, Monkey is granted the title 斗战胜佛 (Victorious Fighting Buddha) and is promoted to a Buddha, upon whom is bestowed sacred authority

and power, by Tathagata Buddha, the supreme ruler of the Western Paradise, for his bravery, consistency on the journey, and uncountable contributions to its success. Thus, the names for this core protagonist contribute to advancing the storyline and, accordingly, are strengthened with the stories, vividly creating the intelligent, lively, naughty, authority-defying, and evil-fighting character of Monkey King.

Likewise, the second and third disciples are portrayed from different perspectives thanks to their various names, as described above, which are used on various occasions and for different reasons. This demonstrates that these non-human character names and nicknames share the quality of being bestowed due to a particular feature, event, or other basis. The various name translations of the same character, most of which are consistent with those in the source text when they first appear, although afterwards they are simplified into "Monkey" "Pig" "Priar Sand", are thus cleverly used in children's literature, making it easy to remember both the characters and the stories in which they feature.

### 8. Conclusions

As one of the classic animistic literary works in China, *JTTW*, making full use of the poetic, animistic, and imaginary names of non-human characters, though not originally intended for child readers, is in accordance with children's psychological and cognitive development, thereby assisting child readers in remembering and vividly visualizing the many non-human characters encountered over the course of the 100-chapter novel, as well as enhancing the implications and readers' potential interpretations of the work itself.

In spite of his English background, Jenner avoided the previously popular translation trend of adapting and abridging in order to accommodate the foreign text for Western ideological and poetical norms, instead translating the book in its entirety. Besides leaving on display the cultural, stylistic, linguistic, and philosophical differences between the West and China, *Journey to the West*, Jenner's

English translation of *Xi You Ji*, accomplishes much the same goals as the source text, when considered from the perspective of a literary work for children. One factor in this success is that, besides rendering the appropriate referential, cultural, and rhetorical meaning of proper nouns in the target language, Jenner successfully highlights the animistic quality and child-pleasing fun of the names of the non-human characters, demonstrating his special consideration for young readers. By presenting these non-human characters in an animistic and vivid way, Jenner's translation not only provides an exciting reading experience for exploring and discovering Chinese culture for curious young Western readers but also nourishes them subliminally with positive and healthy emotions and optimistic perspectives on life.

Non-human characters in children's literature are endowed with the characteristics of living things, especially of human beings, demonstrating an animistic tendency in the literature for young readers. In the animistic world of children's literature, writers project their thoughts and ideological ambitions on non-human characters primarily through their names, which can help make the characters memorable for young readers when they first make their entrance in the text. Jenner's translations of the character names in *JTTW* offer a successful model to follow since it has been proved that name translation is not merely a matter of linguistic and cultural considerations but also relates to other factors, such as the characteristics of the target readers, whose cognitive, mental, and linguistic abilities should not be disregarded.

#### Notes

1. Xuanzang (602-664), also named Tang Monk in some films and literary works, was ordained as a monk at the age of 19 or so. In 629, he started his journey to India in search of Buddhist scriptures, visiting a lot of Asian countries on his way. After his return to home 19 years later, he devoted his time and life translating some 74 Buddhist texts in Sanskrit (1330 fascicles of scriptures) that he brought back

with him into Chinese, drawing many disciples and collaborators from all over East Asia to him and his translation cause. Among his translations, *Heart Sutra* (心经) is the basis for all Chinese commentaries on the sutra, and recitations of Buddha believers throughout China, Korea and Japan. His book *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions* (大唐西域记), completed in 646, has become one of the primary sources for the study of medieval Central Asia and India.

2. The Tang Dynasty (618-907), founded by the Li family, with its capital city at Chang'an (present-day Xi'an), was the most populous city in the world at that time. It is regarded as the peak of Chinese civilization by historians in terms of its development of territory, economy, politics and education. It is in this period of Chinese history that Xuanzang travelled to India in pursuit of the buddhist scriptures.

3. Tang Taizong (599-649), Emperor Taizong of Tang, was the second emperor of the Tang Dynasty of China, ruling from 626 to 649. He is typically considered one of the greatest, if not the greatest, emperor in all of Chinese history. Throughout the rest of Chinese history, Emperor Taizong's reign was regarded as the exemplary model against which all other emperors were measured, and his "Reign of Zhen'guan" (贞观之治) was considered a golden age of Chinese history and required study for future crown princes. During his reign, Tang China flourished economically and militarily. For more than a century after his death, Tang China enjoyed peace and prosperity. It was in his reign that Xuanzang travelled to India for the buddhist scriptures. Tang Taizong and his government officials gave Xuanzang a formal greeting ceremony on his arrival in the capital city after the trip. He held an official talk with Xuanzang, asking about his experiences in his journey and about the neighbouring countries.

4. The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), founded by the Zhu family, saw its unprecedented prosperity of shipping industry and seafaring. Chinese merchants explored most areas of the Indian Ocean, reaching Africa with the voyages of an

emperor-designated seafarer named Zheng He. A vast navy was then built, including 4 masted ships displacing 1500 tons. It was in this a period of ancient China that the novelist, Wu Cheng'en, completed his book, *Xi You Ji (Journey to the West)*, in which an imaginary world of underwater sea life armymen was created.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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