



# The Translation Strategy of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio: An Analysis of Domestication and Foreignization in the East and the West

Mian Wei<sup>a,b</sup> , Zainor Izat Zainal<sup>c</sup> , Lingyann Wong<sup>d\*</sup> 

<sup>a</sup> PhD Candidate, Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, UPM Serdang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia. Email: [gs60518@student.upm.edu.my](mailto:gs60518@student.upm.edu.my)

<sup>b</sup> Associate Professor, School of Culture and Communication, Shenyang City University, Shenyang, 110179, China

<sup>c</sup> Dr., Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, UPM Serdang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia. Email: [zainor@upm.edu.my](mailto:zainor@upm.edu.my)

<sup>d</sup> Dr., Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, UPM Serdang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia. Email: [wonglynn@upm.edu.my](mailto:wonglynn@upm.edu.my)

Received: 18 March 2024 | Received: in Revised Form 19 April 2024 | Accepted 13 May 2024

## APA Citation:

Wei, M., Zainal, Z. I., Wong, L. (2024). The Translation Strategy of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio: An Analysis of Domestication and Foreignization in the East and the West. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 70-82.  
Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.10207>

## Abstract

"Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio," a renowned classical literary work by Pu Songling from the Qing Dynasty, has been translated into English by Herbert Giles (1842) and John Minford (2006), both retaining the same title. This study examines and compares these two English translations, analysing their respective translation strategies, which can be broadly categorized into domestication and foreignization. The analysis is framed within Lawrence Venuti's theoretical framework, providing the basis for examining the strategies employed in each version. The study focuses on two primary aspects: the strategies and methods used in translating cultural terms, and the characteristics of the translations concerning type-token ratios, word length, and sentence length. The comparative analysis reveals that Giles predominantly employs a domestication approach, while Minford favours a foreignization strategy. However, these findings represent tendencies rather than rigid principles, highlighting the necessity for adaptable approaches to achieve effective translation outcomes.

© 2024 EJAL & the Authors. Published by Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics (EJAL). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY-NC-ND) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

**Keywords:** Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio, Cultural Terms, Foreignization, Domestication.

## Introduction

The English translation of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* in Figure 1 (Pu & Zhang, 2011) has a notable historical trajectory, beginning in 1842 when Samuel Williams and Karl Gutzlaff each translated selected stories from the collection into English. Subsequently, American scholar Sidney L. Sondergard completed a full translation of *Strange Tales from Liaozhai* in 2014, thus finalizing the English translation of the collection. Despite scholarly interest both domestically and internationally in the English translation and its annotations, there remains a lack of systematic and comprehensive analysis, indicating a need for further detailed exploration. In the mid-1970s, translation studies emerged as an independent discipline, evolving from earlier language- and text-focused approaches to embrace a broader cultural perspective. By the late

\* Corresponding Author

Email: [wonglynn@upm.edu.my](mailto:wonglynn@upm.edu.my)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.10207>

1980s, there was a significant shift towards cultural research within translation studies, emphasizing the cultural origins of translated texts and analysing their political, economic, social, and ideological contexts. This shift reflects the understanding that language is an integral part of culture and that literary texts function as tools for aesthetic communication. Consequently, the expansion of translation studies has been closely associated with the growth of literature (Zhang & Su, 2023).

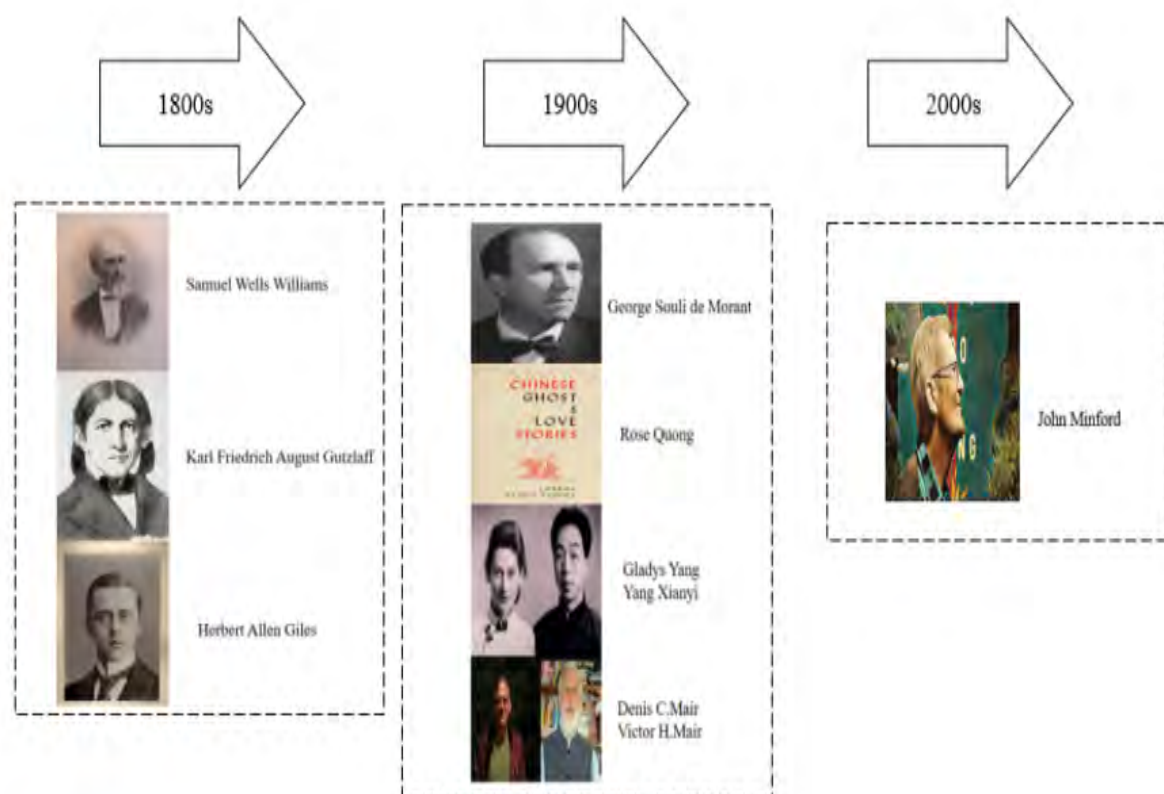


Figure 1: The Cover of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* by Pu Songling.

## Literature Review

### *The History of Translation about Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*

English translations of individual stories from Liaozhai Tales began early and are primarily attributed to Samuel Williams (1812-1884) and Karl Gutzlaff (1803-1851). In 1880, British Sinologist Herbert Giles published *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, an extensive English translation comprising 164 stories, which remained a prominent version for many years (Giles, 1880). Subsequent significant translations include the 1913 work by French missionary George Souli de Morant, *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisure's*, which featured 25 stories from Liaozhai Tales. In 1946, Rose Quong (1897-1972), a Chinese-American, translated and compiled 40 stories under the title *Chinese Ghost and Love Stories*. In 1981, Yang Xianyi and his wife Gladys Yang, along with other Chinese scholars, published *The Selected Tales of Liaozhai* (hereinafter referred to as Yang's translation) in *Chinese Literature Magazine*, which included 17 stories from *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*. The 1989 translation by Denis C. Mair and Victor H. Mair, *Strange Tales From Make-do Studio* (hereinafter referred to as Mair's translation), published by Beijing Foreign Languages Press, contained 53 stories. In 2004, the Foreign Languages Press reprinted 30 selected stories from this series. Finally, Minford's (2006) translation of *\*Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio\** (hereinafter referred to as Minford's translation), published by Penguin Publishing and comprising 104 stories, is now a significant reference in contemporary sinology. The history of these key translations is illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Translation History of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*.

### *Study on a Single Translation Version of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*

Academic research on individual translations of *Liaozhai Tales* primarily centres on translation strategies, with recent trends emphasizing the supportive role of annotations. For instance, Kuang Rusi's early translation of *Liaozhai Tales* includes 325 annotations, as depicted in Figure 3. Sun's (2007) study, *Commentary and Reception in the Translation of Zhai Zhai Zhi Yi*, examines the function of commentary in the Western transmission of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*. This study categorizes commentaries, summarizes their descriptions of Chinese culture, and argues that they are crucial for the reception of the text. Similarly, Qiao's (2015) paper, *Adaptation and Commentary on the English Translation of Giles' Strange Stories of Liaozhai*, analyses Giles' translation strategies from two perspectives: adaptation and annotation. This study highlights that Giles made numerous adaptations to align the translation with Victorian novel standards, while employing compensatory annotations to address the artistic nuances of the original Chinese language lost in the domestication process. Another of Qiao's works, *Cultural Identity and Translation Motivation: A Study on Giles' English Translation of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (2020), further explores Giles' annotation strategy. This research notes that Giles' translation utilizes literal translation to convey Chinese linguistic expressions and includes extensive annotations to elucidate Chinese social customs, thereby facilitating Western understanding and acceptance of Chinese culture.

Annotations have also emerged as a strategy to convey attitudes towards Chinese culture. Sun's (2016) study, *A Study of Giles' English Translation Under the Background of Feminist Translation Theory*, examines Giles' translation strategies through the lens of feminist translation theory. This study explores various techniques, including the addition of the original text, prefaces, footnotes, and editorial interventions. Footnotes are notably used to evaluate the stories and provide extensive background on Chinese culture. Ma (2018) briefly addresses the role of annotations in his paper, *A Brief Review of the English Translation of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics*, highlighting their significant role in translating Chinese cultural elements. Yang's (2019) research, *Analysis of English Translation Strategies of Allusions Without Cultural Schemata: A Case Study of Giles' English Translation of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, analyses ten strategies for translating allusions, including foreignizing and domesticating methods. Yang Lu's study identifies that "literal translation with annotation" and "transliteration with annotation" are particularly effective in expanding and reconstructing the cultural schema for target language readers (Lacedelli et al., 2023).

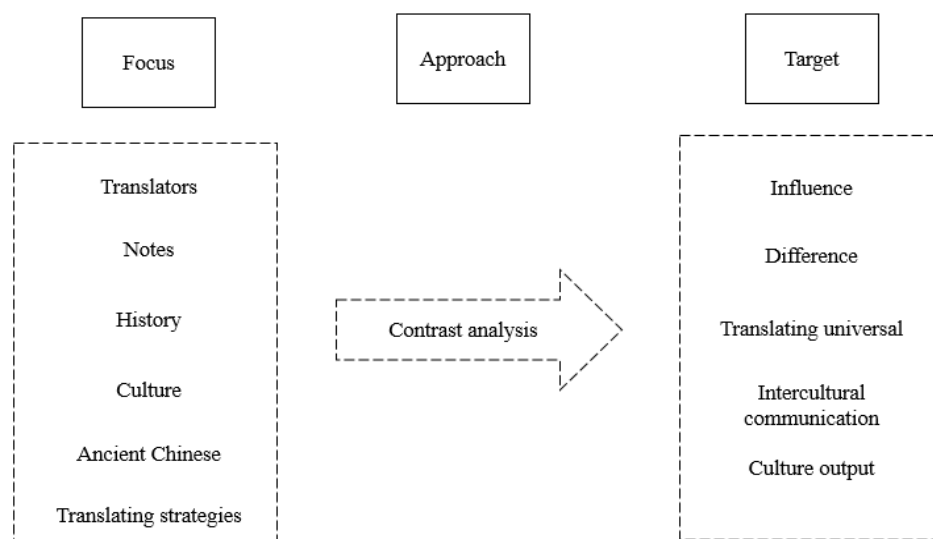
Chou Ko-chang and his Ghost	215	C O N T E N T S
A Stone from Heaven	219	
The Talking Eye-Pupils	227	
A Stream of Money	231	
Lu's Daughter and her Lover Chang	233	
Old Chu Returns for his Wife	241	
The Guardian Immortal's Sleeve	243	
Chih-cheng, Maid of the Lake	255	
Jen Shiu's Luck in Gambling	261	
The Sisters Exchange in a Marriage	267	
The Thunder God's Assistant	275	
The Little Hunting Dog	283	
The Taoist Priest of Lao-Shan	287	
The Girl in the Green Dress	293	
Chu-ching and the Man Who Changed into a Crow	297	
The Wall Painting	305	
Wang Shih-shiu Played Football	309	
Niu Cheng-chang and his Faithless Widow	315	
The Hairy Fox and the Farmer's Son	319	
Notes	325	

**Figure 3:** Feitian Pattern in Dunhuang Murals.

### *A Comparative Study of the Translations of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*

He's (2004) study, *A Functional View of Giles' Translation of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, employs German functional translation theory to conduct a comparative analysis of translations by Giles, Denis C. Mair and Victor H. Mair, and the author's own translation. The study concludes that Giles' translation strategy exhibits a lack of coherence. Ren (2005) in *On the Influence of the Translator's Cultural Identity on His Translation: A Comparative Study of the Three English Versions of Liaozhai Tales* examines the impact of the translator's cultural identity on the translated text through a comparison of translations by Giles, Yang Xianyi and Dai Naiyi, and Denis C. Mair and Victor H. Mair. Zhao (2005) in *The Influence of the Heterogeneity of Ancient Chinese on the Translation and Study of Classical Literature: Taking the English Translation of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio as an Example* discusses the significant impact of ancient Chinese heterogeneity on the translation and study of classical literature. The analysis includes translations by Giles, Denis C. Mair and Victor H. Mair, Yang Xianyi, Zhang Qingnian and Zhang Ciyun, and Rose Quong. Wang (2005) in *Translator's Choice or History's Choice: A Case Study of the Translation of Liaozhai Tales* compares translations by Giles, Yang Xianyi, and Denis C. Mair and Victor H. Mair, focusing on the translation of four specific terms from Luoshan City. The study reveals that different translators employ varied strategies, illustrating how translation is influenced by historical, social, and cultural contexts. Zhu (2007) in *English Translation of Giles' Tales of Liaozhai: The Perspective of the Translator's Subjectivity* compares Giles' and Yang Xianyi's translations, arguing that Giles' version is superior due to its effective dissemination of Chinese cultural customs and ideologies while preserving its exotic appeal. Shu (2016) in *A Comparative Study of Allusion Translation in Two English Versions of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio: Based on the Intertextuality Perspective* highlights that both Giles and Minford use annotations to address the challenges of translating allusions and analyses the differences between the two versions (Shu, 2016). This study also emphasizes the significant impact of the history of Chinese literature in English on its canonization in the English-speaking world, as shown in Figure 4.

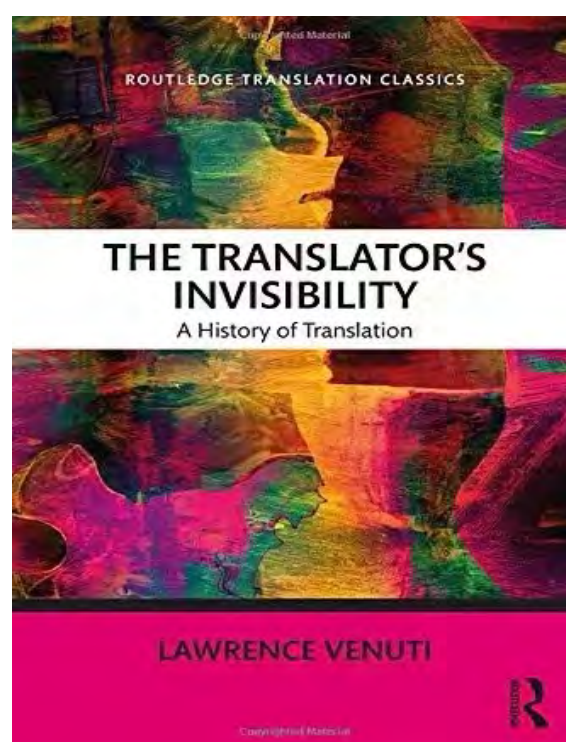




**Figure 4:** *Different Studies of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio.*

## Methodology

In his 1986 article "The Translator's Invisibility," [Venuti \(2004\)](#) introduced the concept of "resistance" in translation, which refers to a method where polysemy, neologisms, fragmented structures, and heterogeneous discourses are faithfully reproduced from the source language as a form of resistance against dominant cultural norms in the target language ([Venuti, 2004](#)). Venuti further elaborates that foreignization involves deviating from the target language norms and preserving the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of the source text. This approach is intended to challenge domestication, which he identifies as the prevailing translation strategy in Western contexts. Domestication, according to Venuti, aligns with mainstream values of the target culture, employing a conservative translation approach that assimilates the source language to fit prevailing legal, publishing, and political requirements. Venuti argues that increased domestication results in greater invisibility of the translator and makes it more difficult for readers to recognize the assimilation of the translated text (*ibid*). His opposition to domestication is explicitly articulated in his 1995 book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, as illustrated in [Figure 5](#).



**Figure 5:** *The Cover of Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation.*

In essence, Venuti's concept of the foreignizing method requires the translator to adopt the author's original style and use expressions in the target language that align closely with those in the source language, with the goal of faithfully conveying the content of the original text. Conversely, the domesticating method involves tailoring the translation to meet the expectations of target language readers by using familiar expressions to present the content of the source text (Jiaqian, 2023). While these methods essentially represent traditional approaches to literal translation and adaptation, respectively, Venuti's notable contribution to translation theory is his explicit advocacy for foreignization over domestication. Venuti (2004) introduced the term "foreignization" to describe a translation strategy that preserves the foreignness or otherness of the source text in the target text. This approach maintains the conventions, cultural references, and inherent strangeness of the original text, irrespective of the conventions and norms of the target language culture. Venuti describes foreignization as a translation strategy that involves selecting a foreign text and employing a translation method that resists the dominant cultural values of the target language. He characterizes foreignization as "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, thereby transporting the reader to the source culture." Similarly, Mark Shuttleworth and Moira Cowie define foreignization in the Dictionary of Translation Studies as a translation approach that intentionally diverges from target language conventions by preserving elements of the original text's foreignness (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2004).

### *Cultural Adjustment*

Cultural adjustment is a process utilized when there are lexical or cultural gaps, specifically when target language readers lack familiarity with a cultural phenomenon from the source language and therefore have no corresponding lexical item. In addressing such gaps, the translator may replace the missing item with a near-synonym or alter it entirely to better fit the target language context (Larson, 1984).

### *Cultural Equivalence*

Cultural equivalence refers to the practice of substituting a fixed expression from the source language, such as idioms, proverbs, or clichés, with a target language item that conveys a similar meaning but differs significantly in wording.

### *Addition and Deletion*

Addition and deletion are considered two procedures of domestication when employed to enhance the domestic character of a translation. Addition involves including extra information or context to align the translation more closely with the target culture, while deletion involves omitting elements from the source text that may not resonate with or be understood by the target audience.

### *Euphemism*

Euphemism is an expression employed to replace offensive, socially unacceptable, or unpleasant words in the translated text, thereby softening the impact and making the language more palatable.

### *Literal Translation*

It is a procedure in which the translator selects the closest intelligible words to convey the meaning of the original text.

## **Results**

The classic novel *Tales of Liaozhai* portrays a fantastical realm that blends elements of reality and imagination. Its intricate and vivid narratives offer profound insights and stand out as rare masterpieces passed down through generations in China. The text encompasses various aspects of ancient Chinese customs, allusions, religion, and other elements, featuring numerous terms and phrases imbued with distinct Chinese characteristics. The incorporation of local idioms and expressions is central to the essence of Chinese classical literature (Giles, 2010). Translating classical literature has long been a challenging endeavour, with the goal of enabling foreigners to grasp Chinese classical literature and, by extension, appreciate the rich and profound Chinese civilization being a significant aspiration for many translators (House, 2001). In the case of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, even among Chinese readers, the text is often appreciated superficially without a deep understanding, and this challenge is even greater for foreigners from different cultural backgrounds. Translators face particular difficulty in rendering culture-loaded terms and expressions that are unique to Chinese culture (Laufer, 1926). This paper examines two notable translations of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* through the lenses of "domestication" and "foreignization," aiming to analyse their distinct strategies in addressing culture-loaded terminology.

**Table 1:** Comparative Analysis Between Cultural Terms in the Original Text of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* and Giles' and Minford's Translation Texts.

Original Text of <i>Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio</i>	Giles' Translation <i>Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio</i>	Minford's Translation <i>Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio</i>
Cultural terms	Victorian English	Commercial English translation
Translation strategies	Domestication	Foreignization
Translation standards	Moral standard	Modernization
Translation quality	Fulfil language standard and translation from the aspect of semantics	Fulfil language innovation and modern translation from the aspect of language expressions

Through his readings and personal experiences, Giles observed that many Chinese customs were often distorted by the medium of transmission, leading to ridicule and misunderstanding. He noted that much of what was practiced and believed in Chinese religious and social life was reflected in the *Tales of Liaozhai*. In his translation, Giles aimed to make *Liaozhai Tales* more accessible to European audiences, enabling Western readers to appreciate not only the narrative and thematic merits of the tales but also the virtues they extol. Giles positioned himself as a qualified observer to enhance his authority, incorporating extensive explanatory annotations to address customs and cultural elements he deemed essential. While some of these annotations extended beyond the scope of the original text, they were integral to Giles's approach. Additionally, Giles intended the translation to be suitable for a broad audience, including his own children, which led him to "purify" the text by removing or altering sections with explicit or vulgar content. Initially planning to translate the entire collection, he ultimately selected 164 stories that featured engaging plots and distinctive styles, deeming many other tales unsuitable for contemporary readers. Giles's goal was to produce a translation that would be accessible not only to students of Chinese literature but also to the general public and children, providing detailed translations and necessary notes for a broader understanding.

Minford's perspective on translation reflects several key concepts: "smooth and accessible form," "solid academic foundation," and the "literariness and artistry of translation." These terms highlight his understanding of his role as a translator and his preconceptions about his readers. Minford identifies two primary challenges in translating *Liaozhai Tales*: cultural reconstruction and story construction. He notes that Western readers face dual levels of "difference": Chinese culture itself is an "other," representing an unfamiliar universe, and the stories are further alienated by their author's unique style within this foreign context. The practical difficulties associated with these layers of "difference," combined with poetic norms that discourage extensive textual notes, drive Minford's approach to alienation as a strategy. By leveraging extensive Chinese and English cultural knowledge, alongside comprehensive Sinological research, Minford conscientiously incorporates geographical information, contextual references, and narrative hooks. This approach aims to facilitate readers' understanding, reduce cognitive load, and ensure clarity and fluency in the translation. Minford's work not only enhances English readers' enjoyment of *Liaozhai Tales* but also holds significant academic value in the field of *Liaozhai* studies.

### *Type-Token Ratio*

Type refers to the number of distinct words in a text, while token counts the total occurrences of all words within the corpus. When the same word appears multiple times, it affects the token count but not the type count (Lefevere, 1977). Due to the varying volumes of different corpora, direct comparisons of lexical features can be misleading. Consequently, lexical characteristics are typically standardized using the Standard Type-Token Ratio (STTR), which is calculated based on consecutive 1,000-word chunks of text. For this thesis, the analysis also includes the Corpus of English Novels, comprising 185 original 20th-century English novels (Lefevere, 1992).

**Table 2:** The Tokens, Types and Type/Token Ratio in the Two English Versions of the Three Stories.

	Count of types	Count of tokens	Type/token ratio	Type/token ratio (standardized) (STTR)
Giles' version	2299	12719	18.18	41.39
Minford's version	2351	14181	16.58	41.61
The Three-Bod Problem	9930	122698	8.13	44.78
A Single Swallow	9549	125030	7.65	44.92
The Dark Forest	12413	193402	6.43	45.56
CEN	169394	44682912	0.379	43.60

From the data presented in Table 2, two notable characteristics emerge. Firstly, Giles' translation is significantly shorter, whereas Minford's translation exhibits a higher STTR, indicating greater lexical diversity. Secondly, the token count suggests that Giles' translation is more concise, which may be attributed

to his omission of explicit content. The STTR serves as an indicator of linguistic richness (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980). In comparison to three contemporary works currently popular on Amazon.com, the translations of \*Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio\* exhibit relatively low STTR values, with deviations ranging from 5% to 10%. This difference can be attributed to the nature of The Three-Body Problem and The Dark Forest as science fiction novels, which often introduce a higher volume of novel concepts and terminology. Furthermore, an analysis of STTR values for English novels from the 19th to 20th centuries reveals that the vocabulary richness of these historical texts is generally less extensive compared to that found in contemporary Chinese literature translations.

### Word Length and Sentence Length

As evidenced by Table 3, there is a significant disparity between the two translations regarding sentence count and length, with Minford's translation featuring sentences that are nearly twice as short as those in Giles' translation, despite similar article lengths. This data suggests that Minford's translation favours concise and impactful sentences, whereas Giles adopts a more scholarly approach, favouring longer sentences and incorporating extensive footnotes to more closely preserve the original text.

**Table 3: The Count of Sentences and the Average Length of Sentences in the Two English Versions of the Three Stories.**

	Word Length	Sentence Length
Giles' version	4.15	22.66 (558 sentences in total)
Minford's version	4.16	14.24(996 sentences in total)
The Three-Body Problem	4.63	16.74
A Single Swallow	4.30	15.64
The Dark Forest	4.61	18.98
CEN	4.27	16.33

### Word Difficulty

Giles' translation demonstrates a higher proportion of both the most frequently used one thousand and two thousand words compared to Minford's translation, as illustrated in Table 4. This indicates that Giles' vocabulary tends to be relatively straightforward, though the differences between the two translations are not particularly pronounced. Notably, the statistics for "off-list words" reveal a significant divergence. These off-list words predominantly consist of phonetic translations of Chinese terms, such as personal names and place names. This disparity suggests that Minford employs a greater number of phonetic translations, thereby reflecting a higher degree of foreignization in his translation approach (Wang, 2008). In contrast, "awl words" and "owl words," which are considered relatively difficult (Wang, 2002), are more prevalent in Giles' translation than in Minford's. The combined proportion of these challenging words is higher in Giles' translation, indicating a greater use of both easier and moderately difficult vocabulary. Consequently, Giles' translation incorporates a broader range of word difficulty levels, whereas Minford's translation exhibits a moderate level of difficulty in word choice.

**Table 4: The Count of Sentences and the Average Length of Sentences in the Two English Versions of the Three Stories.**

	Giles' version	Minford's version
The most frequent 1000 words	10723 (84.26%)	11961(83.74%)
The most frequent 1001-2000 words	705 (5.54%)	773 (5.41%)
AWL words	159 (1.25%)	169(1.18%)
UWL words	1(0.01%)	2 (0.01%)
Off-list words	1138 (8.94%)	1358 (9.51%)
Total	12726	14263

## Qualitative Analysis of Two Versions of Strange Tales from A Chinese Studio

The Minford edition features a comprehensive introduction that provides an in-depth account of the author's personal experiences and insights. This introduction covers various aspects of Chinese culture, including the unique imperial examination system, the literary significance and characteristics of Tales of Liaozhai, and the typical ghost and fox spirit imagery found within these tales. Additionally, Feng Zhenluan's reading notes are included, emphasizing the importance of not merely focusing on the surface plot but also understanding the underlying cultural phenomena and religious differences. Through this detailed preface, Minford aims to ensure that readers gain a foundational understanding of Tales of Liaozhai and Chinese culture before delving into the translation itself.






In contrast, the introduction in the first version of the translation is more succinct, offering only a brief overview of Pu Songling's life and background as supplementary context for readers. This approach



underscores the differing objectives behind the translations of *Liaozhai*. Giles' translation was primarily aimed at introducing Chinese culture to the Western audience and addressing long-standing Western prejudices against it, striving to reveal the authentic essence of Chinese culture. However, constrained by the historical context of his time, Giles' translation often reflects tendencies of missionary zeal and cultural imperialism. In comparison, Minford's translation, characterized by a “popular science” approach, is driven by purer objectives. Minford aims to provide readers with an in-depth view of Chinese culture, highlighting various aspects of folk life, traditional religion, myths, and legends. His goal is to present the unadulterated essence of Chinese culture to Western readers. As Venuti might interpret, while Giles' translation was less resistant to the dominant cultural norms of his time, Minford's approach actively engages in resistance to provide a more authentic representation of Chinese culture.

### *Methods and Strategies of Translations in Two Versions*

**Table 5:** *Methods and Strategies of Translations Used by Giles and Minford in Translating Cultural Terms of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio.*

Type of Cultural Term	Original Text	Giles' Translation	Minford's Translation
Proper Nouns	Chenhuang	Guardian Angel Translation Method: Free Translation Translation Strategy: Domestication	City God Translation Method: Literal translation Translation Strategy: Foreignization
Utensils	Din 	Translation Method: Omission (Lexical gap) Translation Strategy: Lexical Gap	Translation Method: Omission (Lexical gap) Translation Strategy: Lexical Gap
	Huo 	Cauldron 	Cauldron 
		Translation Method: Substitution (Lexical gap) Translation Strategy: Domestication	Translation Method: Substitution (Lexical gap) Translation Strategy: Domestication
Costume & Ornament	Ji 	High Top-Knot Translation Method: Addition Translation Strategy: Foreignization	With Hair Now Piles High Translation Method: Addition Translation Strategy: Foreignization
Title of a Person	Xiao Lian Recommend People Noted for their Filial Piety and Moral Records	A. (Master of Arts) Translation Method: free translation Translation Strategy: Domestication	Provincial Graduate Translation Method: Free Translation Translation Strategy: Foreignization
Figure of Speech	Jiao bo liu hui Metaphor	Beautiful Eyes with a Very Intelligent Expression in Them Translation Method: Free Translation Translation Strategy: Domestication	With a Bright Sparkle in Her Eyes Translation Method: Free Translation Translation Strategy: Foreignization
Allusion	Cao qiu	Maecenas Translation Method: Cultural Adjustment Translation Strategy: Domestication	Patron Translation Method: istranslation Translation Strategy: Domestication
Images of Poetry	Ceng jing cang hai nan wei shui Chu que wu shan bu shi yun	Speak not of lakes and streams to him who once has seen the sea; The clouds that circle Wu's peak are the only clouds for me. Translation Method: Literal Translation using Metaphor Translation Strategy: Foreignization	Speak not of lakes and streams to one who knows the splendour of the sea; The clouds around the magic peaks of Wu are the only clouds for me. Translation Method: Literal Translation using Metaphor, Addition Translation Strategy: Foreignization

Through comparative analysis, it becomes evident that Giles predominantly employs the “domestication” approach, while Minford frequently utilizes the “foreignization” strategy. This divergence in translation methods is largely influenced by the temporal and cultural context in which each translator operated. Giles, a colonial official in 19th-century China, produced translations that align with Western tastes and perspectives, reflecting a subjective approach shaped by the colonial era's biases. Conversely, Minford, with his extensive experience in China, fluency in Chinese, and deep appreciation for classical Chinese culture, adopts a “foreignization” strategy that emphasizes the preservation of the original text's cultural and linguistic peculiarities. Despite these predominant tendencies, as illustrated in Table 5, both translators demonstrate a flexible approach to their

translation strategies. They adapt their methods to the specific demands of each translation task, achieving effective translations that reflect their contextual and personal influences.

Giles's translation occurred at a time when Western perceptions of China were largely shaped by political and cultural biases of the late 19th century. During this period, China was often viewed as backward, barbaric, and primitive, leading to a general lack of interest in Chinese culture. Consequently, Giles's approach reflected this prevailing attitude, and his translation efforts were influenced by the prevalent belief that Chinese culture was of little worth. In contrast, by the time Minford undertook his translation, Western attitudes towards Chinese culture had undergone significant transformation. The continuous efforts of scholars and increased interest in Sinology had led to a greater appreciation of Chinese culture as an integral component of global cultural heritage. To facilitate Western readers' understanding and acceptance of Chinese culture, Minford's translation aimed to minimize comprehension barriers. He employed a naturalized translation approach, making the text more accessible by aligning it with the cultural and linguistic norms of the target audience, thereby enhancing readability and cultural integration.

Minford's approach to translation demonstrated a more objective handling of diverse cultures, reflecting a more balanced and informed perspective compared to earlier practices. With advancements in Sinology and an increased familiarity with Chinese culture among Western readers, there is a greater capacity to overcome cultural barriers and a heightened eagerness to understand foreign cultures. As a result, Minford's use of foreignization strategies, which preserve the original cultural elements and exoticism, tends to be more readily accepted and appreciated by contemporary readers. Unlike Minford, Giles's translation, which was influenced by the cultural and social norms of his time, provided valuable insights into Chinese culture from a Western viewpoint. Both translators worked in different historical contexts, and their contributions reflect their unique cultural backgrounds and openness. Therefore, while direct comparisons of their strategies may not be straightforward, each translation plays a crucial role: Giles's work offers an initial gateway to Sinology, and Minford's translation facilitates a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. Both contributions are significant in their own right.

### *Titles and Contents of Two Versions*

**Table 6:** Content analysis on Titles and Contents of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* of Giles' and Minford's English Translation Texts.

Title of original text	Title of Giles' translation	Title of Minford's translation
Hu jia nu	THE MAGGRAGE OF FOX'S DAUGHTER Translation Method: Literal Translation Translation Strategy: Foreignization	THE GOLDEN GOBLET Translation Method: Free Translation Translation Strategy: Domestication
<b>Content Analysis</b>		
Tian guan	President of the Board of Civil Office Translation Method: Explanation (footnote) Translation Strategy: Domestication	President of the Board of Civil Office Translation Method: Cultural Adjustment Translation Strategy: Domestication
Ju	Carousing	Drinking
Pool Money to Drink	Translation Method: Mistranslation (Lexical Gap) Translation Strategy: Lexical Gap	Translation Method: Mistranslation (lexical gap) Translation Strategy: Lexical Gap
Jia li	Present	gift
Wedding Ceremony	Translation Method: Explanation (footnote) Translation Strategy: Domestication	Translation Method: Free translation Translation Strategy: Domestication
Xiong sha	Noxious Influences	Noxious Influences
"Ferocious and Malevolent Spirits" or "Evil and Malevolent Deities."	Translation Method: Free Translation Translation Strategy: Domestication	Translation Method: Free translation Translation Strategy: Domestication
Bin	Translation Method: Omission	Master of Ceremonies
It refers to a person who represents the host in welcoming and guiding guests.	Translation Strategy: Domestication	Translation Method: Free translation Translation Strategy: Domestication

The two translators employed four distinct methods for translating the title of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*: transliteration, literal translation, paraphrase, and substitution, each reflecting their individual interpretative approaches (Gentzler, 2002). Transliteration and literal translation align with Venuti's concept of foreignization, which aims to retain the original's distinctiveness and exoticism in the target language. Conversely, paraphrase and substitution are representative of domestication strategies, which seek to adapt the foreign text to the language and cultural conventions of the target audience, thereby reducing the perceived foreignness. This

distinction between foreignization and domestication is a fundamental aspect of translation theory as outlined by Lawrence Venuti in *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. The methods used by the translators illustrate these theoretical principles, as detailed in [Table 6](#).

The preceding analysis reveals that Giles' translation approach, characterized by the omission of sexual content and extensive footnotes on Chinese culture, aligned with the conservative social norms of his time and the ruling class's eagerness to quickly acquire knowledge about Chinese culture for profit. Conversely, Minford's translation, notable for its brevity and engaging presentation of Chinese culture, reflects contemporary priorities emphasizing accessibility and reader engagement. This divergence in translation strategies underscores how each translator's unique social, cultural, and economic influences shaped their work. This phenomenon is consistent with Bourdieu's social translation theory, which posits that translation practices are influenced by the translator's social background and the specific cultural and historical context. Thus, Bourdieu's theory manifests differently depending on the context in which translation occurs.

### *Stories Overlapping Between Two Versions*

It is important to note that both Giles and Minford have not provided comprehensive translations of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, but have instead translated selections based on their individual preferences. Specifically, Giles translated 164 out of the 491 stories, while Minford translated 104 of the same stories, with 31 stories overlapping between their translations, as illustrated in [Table 7](#).

**Table 7:** *Stories Overlapping Between Two English Translations.*

No.	Source Text	Giles' Translation	Minford's Translation
1	Kao cheng huang	EXAMINATION FOR THE POST OF GUARDIAN ANGEL	ANOTHER-WORLDDLY EXAMINATION
2	Shi bian	THE RESUSCITATED CORPSE	LIVING DEAD
3	Tong ren yu	THE TALKING PUPILS	TALKING PUPILS
4	Hua bi	THE PAINTED WALL	THE PAINTED WALL
5	Tou tao	THEFT OF THE PEACH	STEALING A PEACH
6	Zhong li	PLANTING A PEAR-TREE	GROWING PEARS
7	Lao shan dao shi	THE TAOIST PRIEST OF LAO-SHAN	THE TAOIST PRIEST OF MOUNT LAO
8	Chang qing seng	THE BUDDDDHIST PRIEST OF CHANGCHING	THE MONK OF CHANGQING
9	Hu jia nu	THE MAGGRAGE OF FOX'S DAUGHTER	THE GOLDEN GOBLET
10	Jiao nuo	MISS CHIAO-NO	GRACE AND PINE
11	Seng nie	THE PRIEST'S WARNING	A MOST EXEMPLARY MONK
12	Yao shu	MAGICAL ARATS	MAGICAL ARTS
13	San sheng	THE THREE STATES OF EXISTENCE	PAST LIVES
14	Si shi qian	THE FORTY STRINGS OF CASH	KARMIC DEBTS
15	Hua pi	THE PAINTED SKIN	THE PAINTED SKIN
16	Jia er	THE TRADER'S SON	THE MERCHANT'S SON
17	Ying ning	MISS YING-NING, OR THE LAUGHING GIRL	THE LAUGHING GIRL
18	Nie xiao qian	THE MAGIC SWORD	THE MAGIC SWORD AND THE MAGIC BAG
19	Di zhen	AN EARTHQUAKE	AN EARTHQUAKE
20	Hai gong zi	KILLING A SERPENT	SNAKE ISLAND
21	Zao cu	MAKING ANIMALS	MAKING ANIMALS
22	Zhu weng	MR. CHU, THE CONSIDERATE HUSBAND	DYING TOGETHER
23	Mou gong	SAVING LIFE	SHEEPSKIN
24	Lian xiang	MISS LIEN-HSIANG	LOTUS FRAGRANCE
25	Zhu cheng mouj ia	DEATH BY LAUGHING	A FATAL JOKE
26	Wa qu	THE SINGING FROGS	FROG CHORUS
27	Shu xi	THE PERFORMING MICE	PERFORMING MICE
28	Xiao ren	A DWARF	DWARF
29	Han yue fu qu	TAOIST MIRACLES	FLOWERS OF ILLUSION
30	Lian hua gong zhu	THE PRINCESS LILY	PRINCESS LOTUS
31	Xi yi	PLAYING AT HANGING	A PRANK

## **Domestication and Foreignization**

With the increasing global interest in the Chinese language, there has been a growing focus among scholars

on the translation and study of Chinese classical literature. Such works are replete with cultural elements unique to China, which can be challenging for speakers of other languages to comprehend fully. Therefore, accurately conveying these cultural factors is crucial for promoting Chinese culture and fostering exchanges between China and the Western world. Naturalized translation, grounded in the target culture, aligns with the reading preferences and cultural aesthetics of the target language audience, ensuring a smooth and natural reading experience. However, excessive domestication can result in a departure from the original intent, potentially distorting both the translation and cultural exchange. In contrast, foreignization adheres closely to the author's original thoughts and employs expressions akin to those in the source language, thereby prioritizing the preservation of the original text. Although this method often sacrifices some readability compared to domestication, it retains significant cultural information from the source text, introducing new expressions and cultural insights into the target language. Language, as a cultural medium, cannot be entirely isolated from other languages and cultures; instead, it functions as a dynamic, open system with a capacity for integrating external information. As cross-cultural communication deepens, languages worldwide are increasingly enriched, with the "alienation" translation method playing a pivotal role in this process.

## Conclusion

The tendencies of Giles' domestication and Minford's foreignization should be viewed as overarching themes rather than rigid principles. A nuanced and context-dependent understanding of translation strategies is crucial for achieving a balanced perspective. Different stages of cultural communication entail varying reader expectations and translator responsibilities. Respecting cultural diversity allows translators to employ diverse strategies, yielding distinct outcomes. Initially, readers require a broad understanding of the foreign culture, necessitating a domestication strategy to quickly expand cultural horizons. As cultural communication progresses, readers' expectations shift from general knowledge to a deeper understanding of cultural specifics. At this stage, the foreignization strategy is often more effective in preserving the cultural essence and maintaining global cultural diversity.

## References

- Bassnett-McGuire, S. (1980). *Translation Studies*. Routledge, New York.
- Gentzler, E. (2002). *Contemporary Translation Theories*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd. Retrieved from <https://www.multilingual-matters.com/page/detail/?k=9781847695628>
- Giles, H. (1880). *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*. London: Thosde la Rue & Co.
- Giles, H. (2010). *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*. Hong Kong: Tuttle Publishing. Retrieved from <https://www.tuttlepublishing.com/china/strange-ales-from-a-chinese-studio-9780804849081>
- He, J. (2004). *A Functional Perspective on the translation of Giles' Liaozhai Tales*. Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.
- House, J. (2001). Translation quality assessment: Linguistic description versus social evaluation. *Meta*, 46(2), 243-257. doi: <https://doi.org/10.7202/003141ar>
- Jiaqian, Z. (2023). On Subtitle Translation of Documentary Seasons of China—from the Perspective of Skopos Theory. *Academic Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, 6(4), 66-72. doi: <https://doi.org/10.25236/AJHSS.2023.060413>
- Lacedelli, S. Z., Fazzi, F., Zanetti, C., & Pompanin, G. (2023). From “exhibition” to “laboratory”: rethinking curatorial practices through a digital experimental project. The case study of# DolomitesMuseum-Laboratory of Stories. *Herança*, 6(1), 158-183. doi: <https://doi.org/10.52152/heranca.v6i1.680>
- Larson, M. L. (1984). *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence*. Lanham and New York: University Press of America, Inc. Retrieved from <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9780761809715>
- Laufer, B. (1926). Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 36(151), 86-90. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/534975>
- Lefevere, A. (1977). *Translating Literature: The German Tradition from Luther to Rosenzweig*. Assen: Van Gorcum. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401200295>
- Lefevere, A. (1992). *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook*. London: Routledge. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203417607>
- Ma, R. (2018). *A Brief Review of Zhai's English Translation of Liaozhai's Tales from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics*. Overseas English.
- Minford, J. (2006). *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio, Pu Songling, trans.* John Minford, London: Penguin Books Ltd. Retrieved from <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/35322>
- Pu, S., & Zhang, Y. (2011). *Commentary on the School Meeting of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio Association*. Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House.
- Qiao, Y. (2015). *Adaptation and Commentary on the English Translation of Giles' Stories of Liaozhai*. Oriental Translation.
- Qiao, Y. (2020). *Cultural Identity and Translation Motivation: A Study on Giles' English Translation of Stories of Liaozhai*. Fudan Foreign Language and Literature Collection.
- Ren, Q.-H. (2005). *On the Influence of Translators' Cultural Identity on Their Translation: A Comparative*



- Study of Three English Versions of Liaozhayi*. Zhengzhou University.
- Shu, H.-Y. (2016). *A Comparative Study on the Translation of Allusions in Two English Versions: From the Perspective of Intertextuality*. Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.
- Shuttleworth, M., & Cowie, M. (2004). *Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Sun, C. (2016). *A Study on the English Translation of Giles' Liao Zha Zhi Yi Under the Supervision of Feminist Translation Theory*. Southwest Jiaotong University.
- Sun, Y. (2007). *The Annotation and Acceptance of the Translation of Giles' Strange Selections of Liaozhai*. Studies of Ming and Qing Novels.
- Venuti, L. (2004). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (2nd ed.). Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315098746>
- Wang, D.-F. (2002). Domestication and Foreignization: Conflict between Spear and Shield? *Chinese Journal of Translation*, 5, 24-26. Retrieved from <https://qikan.cqvip.com/Qikan/Article/Detail?id=11180397>
- Wang, D.-F. (2008). Venuti's and Lu Xun's Conception of Foreignizing Translation: A Comparison. *Chinese Translation Journal*, (2), 5-10.
- Wang, Y.-H. (2005). Translator's Choice or History's Choice: A Case Study of the Translation of Liaozhayi. *Journal of Chengdu University of Education*, 19(10), 100-101.
- Yang, L. (2019). *An Analysis of English Translation Strategies of Allusions in the Absence of Cultural Schemata: A Case Study of the English Translation of Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio by Giles*. Xihua University.
- Zhang, F., & Su, Y. (2023). Crossing the border: Cultural identity and historical integration of national music and popular music. *Herança*, 6(1), 8-21. doi: <https://doi.org/10.52152/heranca.v6i1.770>
- Zhao, C.-Y. (2005). *The Influence of the Heterogeneity of Ancient Chinese on the Translation and Study of Classical Literature: A Case Study of the English translation of Liao Zha Zhi Yi*. Zhejiang University.
- Zhu, R.-J. (2007). *Tales of Liaozhai* translated by Gellis from English: *The Perspective of Translator's Subjectivity*. Hefei University of Technology.