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# Cultural translation in the context of Lotman's cultural semiotics: a case study of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*

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**Abstract:** *Six Records of a Floating Life* is a collection of autobiographical essays written by Shen Fu, a scholar in the Qing Dynasty. Its writing is ancient and elegant, and it is rich and profound in connotation. The German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life* by German sinologist Rainer Schwarz presents the spirit of the original in detail and is of high cultural value and research significance. Based on Lotman's theory of cultural semiotics, this paper examines the interpretive value of Lotman's view of "text" for translation research in three dimensions: information transmission, information generation, and information memory, with a view to elucidating the cultural value of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, innovating the theoretical integration of cultural semiotics and translation research, and expanding the application of semiotic theory in the field of cultural translation.

**Keywords:** Chinese prose; disciplinary integration; German translation; Rainer Schwarz; Shen Fu

## 1 Introduction

*Six Records of a Floating Life* is an autobiographical prose work written by Shen Fu in the thirteenth year of the Jiaqing Dynasty. The essays cover marriage and love, details of life, and travels in the landscape. With its elegant and simple text and straightforward and spontaneous writing, the work occupies an important position in the literature of the Qing Dynasty. In addition, *Six Records of a Floating Life* has been translated into many foreign languages and published overseas in English, German, French, Japanese, Danish, Swedish, and other languages. The large number

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of cultural symbols contained in the translations has provided readers with a unique perspective for understanding Chinese culture and has become an important topic for cultural semiotics research. The theory of cultural semiotics constructed by Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman, the representative of the Tartu–Moscow school of semiotics, has made a great contribution to semiotics with its uniqueness and creativity (Kang 2005a: 41). Lotman’s theory of cultural semiotics has a clear logical thread: symbol–text–culture–semiosphere (Kang 2006: 100). Text is not only the linkage between symbol and culture, but also the core concept of Lotman’s cultural semiotics theory. This paper will compare the original *Six Records of a Floating Life* (浮生六记) with the translation by Rainer Schwarz (*Sechs Aufzeichnungen über ein unstetes Leben*) from the perspective of Lotman’s theory of cultural semiotics. From both textual and paratextual dimensions, this paper will study the translation of Chinese cultural symbols in the German version in order to enrich the research perspective of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, to expound the semiotic principles of literary translation, and to innovate the theoretical integration of cultural semiotics and translation research.

## 2 New perspective on cultural translation studies

Each language is rooted in its own unique culture, and its culture provides a rich foundation for the creation and development of the language. Since language is not only a reflection of culture, but also a carrier of culture, the translation activity between two languages should be regarded as an intercultural activity (Nord 2001: 23). Cultural translation has become an increasingly important research topic in China. Scholars have researched cultural translation from different perspectives in order to seek effective paths to promote the modernization of classical culture and the internationalization of Chinese culture.

A review of the current research on cultural translation reveals that, in terms of language, a large number of studies on cultural translation focus on English, and the number of studies on other non-general languages such as German is relatively small. Taking China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) as an example, the author searched the keyword “cultural translation in English” and obtained hits for a total of 3088 related documents, while the keyword “cultural translation in German” only returned 33 documents.<sup>1</sup> In terms of research methods, current cultural translation research is mainly based on Bassnett’s cultural translation theory (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990). For example Lu (2021: 22–25) compared four English translations of *Shu Dao Nan* under the guidance of Bassnett’s cultural translation

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<sup>1</sup> Search conducted 21 March 2023.

theory, and studied the translation of allusions in *Shu Dao Nan*. Based on Basnett's cultural translation theory, Zhang and Zheng (2023: 76–81) studied the translation strategies of familiar language in the Japanese translation of *Journey to the West* by Miyoko Nakano. In addition, there are also a number of cultural translation studies based on translation theories such as eco-translatology and skopos theory. In general, contemporary scholarship in this area mainly discusses cultural translation from the perspective of translation theory and lacks investigation of cultural translation from the semiotic perspective. Therefore, based on Lotman's cultural semiotics theory, this paper studies the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, which is conducive to expanding the application scenarios of cultural semiotics, enriching the research paradigm of cultural translation, and promoting the theoretical integration of semiotics and translation studies.

Lotman is the main representative and leader of the Tartu–Moscow school, and his theory of cultural semiotics constitutes the basic content of the school (Zhao 2006: 23). His theory of cultural semiotics has a clear logical thread: symbol–text–culture–semiosphere. As the core concept of Lotman's cultural semiotics, “text” has the central position of bridging “symbol” and “culture” and is an important aspect of exploring the interconnection between the two. In a broad sense, all cultures are textual, and culture is the sum of complexly interwoven texts (Kang 2005b: 32). Literary works contain the unique cultural connotations of a nation and have distinctive “textual” features. Literary translation as a process of creative production also exhibits the unique function of Lotman's “text.” Thus, Lotman's cultural semiotics theory has important implications for translation research, which can provide effective theoretical guidance for cultural translation and a unique semiotic perspective for building a new paradigm of cultural translation research.

In literary works, the text and the paratext complement and rely on each other, having a mutually enriching and promoting relationship, constituting the organic whole of translated literature and jointly constructing the cultural space of the translation. The text is the core content of the translation, which can reproduce the artistic value of the original, convey the rich connotation of the work, and express the translator's translation style. It not only provides a carrier for the paratext and a context for convergence, but is also the main way to present the strategies and methods of cultural translation of translated works. The paratext is also an integral part of the work, providing a literary atmosphere for the work, providing guidance for the reader, and participating in the generation and establishment of the meaning of the text (Xiao 2011: 17). The paratext not only enriches the text and promotes the reader's understanding of the text, but also expresses the translator's spirit of translation and the value orientation of cultural translation. The text and the paratext are closely related and complementary and constitute an organic whole. A comprehensive study of the text and the paratext of the German translation of

*Six Records of a Floating Life* enables us to grasp the spirit of the translator as a whole, provide a comprehensive portrayal of the translation, and profoundly explain the semiotic principles of cultural translation.

This study innovatively introduces semiotic theory into translation research, focusing on the translator's writing process based on the linkage between text and paratext. While interpreting the contents of the translated text such as traditions, values, and behaviors, it focuses on analyzing the translation strategies adopted by Rainer Schwarz so as to provide a comprehensive explanation of the principles, processes, and effects of cultural translation. Since the current cultural translation field has not yet paid enough attention to the study of German translation of Chinese classics and semiotics, this paper applies Lotman's theory of cultural semiotics to the study of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, which is innovative in terms of text selection, theoretical application, and research paradigm, in order to provide new research approaches for the theoretical integration of semiotics and translation studies.

### **3 Study of cultural translation in the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life***

Lotman defines "text" as "the bearer of complete meaning and complete function" (our translation) and it can be regarded as the first element or the foundation of culture (Lotman et al. 2001: 505, 507). Furthermore, Lotman argues that the same text can be written in different natural languages or in different ways in that natural language, and the full novelty and vitality of culture arises from the translation between different codes (Kang 2005a: 42). Lotman's viewpoint states the essence of cultural translatability and affirms the creative element in the process of cultural translation. In particular, Lotman argues that "text" has three major functions: information transmission, information generation, and information memory. In this section, we will analyze the text and paratext of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life* on the basis of the three functions, expound the semiotic principles of the German translation by Schwarz, and build a theoretical integration of Lotman's "textual" theory and cultural translation.

#### **3.1 Information transmission: interlingual transfer of culture**

According to Lotman's cultural semiotics theory, information transmission is the most basic function of a "text," i.e., information is transmitted from the sender to the

receiver (Kong 2021: 23). Translation activities also give significant meaning to information transmission. In the *Dictionary of translation* published in 2004, Fang Mengzhi defines translation as a linguistic and cultural activity of transferring information between symbol systems with different rules according to social cognitive needs (Zhang and Wang 2018: 54). This representative definition emphasizes the high priority attached to information transmission in translation activities. In literary translation, the translator needs to transmit the cultural information of one nation to the readers of another nation, so that the readers of the translated language can obtain the same cultural information as the readers of the original language as much as possible, and to realize the interlingual transmission of cultural symbols. *Six Records of a Floating Life* involves a large amount of traditional Chinese folk culture. Schwarz adopts faithful and rigorous translation to transcribe the cultural symbols in the original text as completely and thoroughly as possible, giving full play to the function of information transmission.

Translation Example 1	
Original	土人知余等觅地而来, 误以为堪舆, 以某处有好风水相告。鸿干曰: “但期合意, 不论风水。” (Shen 1980: 43)
Translation	Als die Dörfler erfuhren, daß wir hierher gekommen waren, weil wir nach einem Platz suchten, der uns zusagte, glaubten sie fälschlich, wir seien Geomanten, und nannten uns Stellen, wo »Wind und Wasser« günstig waren. »»Wind und Wasser« kümmern uns nicht«, sagte Honggan ihnen darauf. »Hauptsache der Platz gefällt uns.« (Shen 1989: 153, emphasis ours)

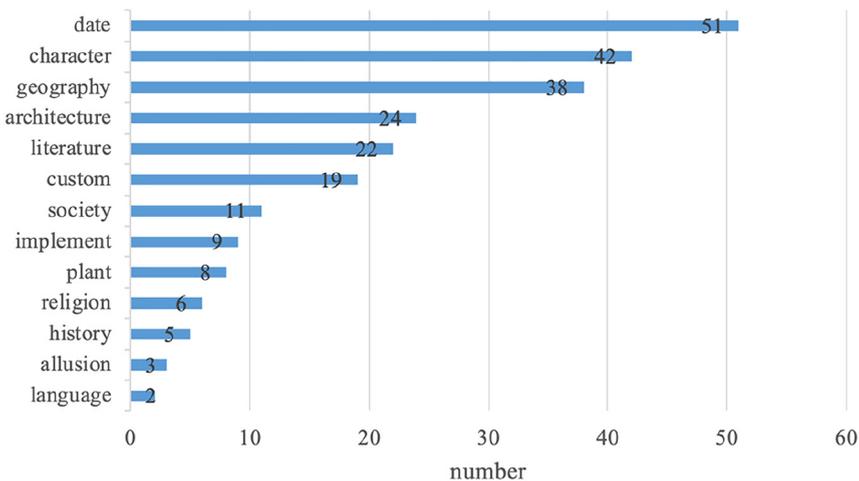
“Feng Shui” (风水) refers to the wind direction, water flow, mountains, and other situations around a home base, and it is an important cultural symbol of traditional Chinese society. The basic idea lies in humankind being a product of the universe, so the home and funeral must be arranged in harmony with the forces of nature (Feng 2010: 112). This custom is rooted in the Chinese cultural tradition of the idea “Nature and Man in One” and is widely accepted in Chinese folk society. Schwarz translates the Chinese cultural symbol “Feng Shui” as “Wind und Wasser” (wind and water), restoring the structural form of the source language, preserving the Chinese cultural elements as much as possible and avoiding the loss of cultural imagery. At the same time, Schwarz adds annotation to this cultural symbol in order to fully realize the function of information transmission: “Ein System von Vorstellungen, die bei der Wahl der Stelle für ein Haus oder ein Grab berücksichtigt werden müssen” (A system of ideas that must be taken into account when choosing a place for a house or a grave). This interpretation successfully conveys the concept of exotic

culture while assisting readers to understand the connotation of the original text, achieving the faithful transmission of the information and the intercultural reconstruction of cultural symbol.

In addition to the text, the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life* is also extensively annotated, and the translator has added as many as 240 annotations to the book of only 224 pages. These paratexts greatly enhance the richness of the text and fully realize intercultural transmission of information. Figure 1 shows the types of annotations and the corresponding number.

All the annotations in the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life* are presented as endnotes, and each endnote follows a uniform format. The annotated terms are presented in italics, followed by explanatory words and, if the term has a relevant study, then the literature is listed. For example, the annotation for the term “*Zhuangzi*” reads: “*Buch Zhuangzi*: Werk des Philosophen Zhuangzi (Zhuang Zhou, 369–286 v.u.Z.) und seiner Schüler; dt. Übersetzung von Richard Wilhelm unter dem Titel: *Dschuang Dsi, das wahre Buch vom südlichen Blütenland, Jena 1923*” (*Book of Zhuangzi*: Work of the philosopher Zhuangzi [Zhuang Zhou, 369–286 B.C.E.] and his followers; German translation by Richard Wilhelm under the title: *Dschuang Dsi, das wahre Buch vom südlichen Blütenland, Jena 1923*). The translator’s meticulous and rigorous annotation of cultural symbols is rich in connotation and serves as an important means of conveying information to the German reader.

From the perspective of annotation types, the 240 annotations cover 13 categories, including characters, literature, customs, geography, and architecture.



**Figure 1:** Types and number of annotations in the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*.

Among them, the number of date-related annotations is the largest. Because *Six Records of a Floating Life* is an autobiographical essay and therefore includes a great deal of time information, the translator has converted traditional Chinese chronology, such as “the seventh month of the Qianlong Jia Yin” (乾隆甲寅七月), “the spring of the Gengxu year” (庚戌之春), and “the eighth month of the Xin Chou autumn” (辛丑秋八月) into the Gregorian calendar. By adding annotations, Schwarz modernized and popularized traditional cultural information with the view to facilitating the reception and understanding of the original information by German readers. Secondly, *Six Records of a Floating Life* mainly describes the life of traditional literati, and therefore refers to Chinese literature and characters in many places. The translator accordingly explains “Su Dongpo” (苏东坡), “Han Yu” (韩愈), “Guan Ju” (关雎), “Pipaxing” (琵琶行), etc. to help readers to understand the historical and cultural information in the text. Furthermore, Shen Fu recounts a large number of travels in his work, and many strange and unusual place names and buildings, such as “Wuyue” (五岳), “Tiaoxi” (苕溪), “Yellow Crane Tower” (黄鹤楼) and “Lion Grove” (狮子林), become heterogeneous elements in the work. The translator also adds annotations to such symbols to minimize the difficulty of reading and to enhance the readability of the text. In addition, the translator also provides detailed explanations of cultural symbols such as social customs, religious philosophy, and historical allusions, which not only fully transmits the cultural information of the original text, but also deepens the German readers' understanding of Chinese culture, realizing the interlingual transmission of cultural information in a professional and rigorous manner.

In summary, the function of information transmission of “text” in Lotman's theory has important inspiration for cultural translation. When translating cultural symbols, translators should pay great attention to the cultural information carried by the original, fully respect the language style of the source language, and strive to restore the expression of the source language so that the information in the original work can be completely and faithfully transmitted to the readers. In addition, adding extra-textual annotations and other paratext can assist readers in understanding the original text while making the transmission of information richer and deeper, so that the text and paratext can complement each other and jointly perform the important function of information transmission.

### 3.2 Information generation: creative generation of text

The second function of the “text” according to Lotman is information generation, i.e., the text can build some new information and form new meanings, and the Russian semiologist also refers to this function of the text as the “creative function”

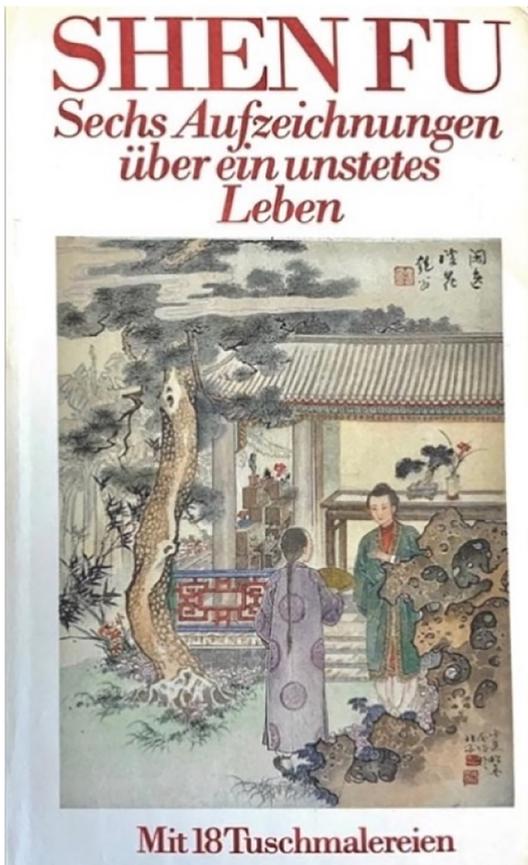
(Kang 2005a: 44). Literary translation is also a highly creative activity. Since literary language has a high aesthetic value and cultural uniqueness, and works are translated into unfamiliar cultural contexts to face a new readership, translators are required to give full play to their creativity and make new interpretations of works (Xie 2020: 60–62). In cultural translation, the translator is confronted with cultural symbols which not only have distinctive national characteristics but can also evoke deep cultural associations. Therefore, translators often need to exert their creative talents to reproduce the aesthetic function and national characteristics of the original language. *Six Records of a Floating Life* is written in an ancient and elegant style with profound connotations. The translator gives full play to his artistic creativity in order to reproduce the aesthetic value of the cultural symbols of the original.

Translation Example 2	
Original	虽全是人工, 而奇思幻想, 点缀天然, 即 <u>阆苑瑶池</u> , <u>琼楼玉宇</u> , 谅不过此。(Shen 1980: 43)
Translation	Hier ist zwar alles von Menschenhand geschaffen, aber die Planung ist so phantastisch, daß sie die Natur nur zu unterstreichen scheint. Auch <i>die Hängenden Gärten von Liangfeng, der Jadeteich im Kunlun</i> und <i>die Jadepaläste auf dem Mond</i> können wohl nicht schöner sein (Shen 1989: 155, emphasis ours).

“Lang Yuan” (阆苑) refers to the garden at the top of Langfeng, which is the name of a mountain located at the top of Kunlun Mountain said to be inhabited by immortals. Therefore “Lang Yuan” in Chinese culture represents the place where immortals live. The translator has creatively interpreted this concept as “die Hängenden Gärten von Liangfeng” (the Hanging Gardens of Langfeng Mountain), which evokes the allusion to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the greatness of the Seven Wonders of the World. The word “hängend” (hanging) indicates the geographical characteristic of its location at the top of a high mountain, while the feature of levitation gives the translation a strong romantic flavor. Moreover, the translator has appropriately chosen “Gärten” (gardens) to express its attributes, which can evoke rich associations with the “Hanging Gardens” of Babylon for Western readers and give the translation a dreamy and magnificent aesthetic character. Secondly, “Yaoshi” (瑶池) is the ancient legendary place where the Queen Mother of the West resides, located on Mount Kunlun. Confronted with this cultural symbol, the translator Schwarz created a new German concept “Jadeteich.” With the qualifier “Jade” for jade and the central word “Teich” for pond, this compound word means “jade pond.” This creative composition not only reproduces the artistic function of the original text, but also has a distinctive oriental character and high aesthetic value. Finally, “Qiong Lou Yu Yu” (琼楼玉宇)

refers to the palace in the middle of the moon and the magnificent building in the immortal world. By creatively combining the words “Jade” (jade) and “Palast” (palace) and the locative “auf dem Mond” (on the moon), Schwarz has translated the Chinese cultural symbol “Qiong Lou Yu Yu” as “die Jadedaläste auf dem Mond” (the jade palaces on the moon). The translator has a deep understanding of the Chinese connotation of this romantic image, while giving full play to the translator's creativity by creating the German word “Jadedaläste” (jade palaces), which is not only concise and clear, but also highly replicates the connotations of the original language, giving the translation a high artistic function and aesthetic value.

In addition, the cover design (see Figure 2) of the German translation has remarkable Chinese characteristics, reflecting the publisher's creative consciousness. Through inter-symbolic text generation, it creates pictorial information



**Figure 2:** Cover of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*.

that is not available in the original work, constructs a rich textual formation with illustrations and texts, presents readers with an ancient and elegant Chinese image, and constructs an intuitive and vivid reading space.

The cover design of the translation is unique, and the overall style is simple and elegant, yet full of ancient charm. The cover imitates the yellow rice paper used in Chinese painting and calligraphy. The yellowish color is used as the base color, which gives antique charm to the overall texture. The typeface is in crimson red, with a unique Chinese aesthetic, and the author's name, "SHEN FU," and the title of the book, "*Sechs Aufzeichnungen über ein unstetes Leben*" (*Six Records of a Floating Life*), are at the top of the front cover in an obvious, eye-catching position. The text at the bottom of the cover specifically states that the book features Chinese ink and wash paintings, with the aim of attracting readers to flip through and purchase. Centered on the cover is an elegant painting in which the main characters, Shen Fu and his wife Chen Yun, are talking to each other in the courtyard, with rocks in the foreground and ancient trees towering above them; in the middleground, the hall is transparent, with plants and flowers inside; in the background, auspicious clouds can be seen, and a banana forest stands close by. The illustration is taken from page 121 of the book and creates a great classical Chinese flavor. From the clothing of the characters to the interior decoration, from the natural environment to the architectural style, the illustration recreates a scene from the life of the Chinese literati in the Qing Dynasty. On the whole, the cover design of the translation fully demonstrates the creative spirit of the publisher, generating new paratextual information that is not available in the original, visually and clearly presenting the classical Chinese image while building a rich textual form with illustration and text, fully demonstrating the function of information generation.

On the whole, the information generation function of the "text" in Lotman's theory has unique implications for cultural translation. When translating cultural symbols, the translators should give their creativity full play on the basis of a correct understanding of the cultural connotations, and adopt methods such as creating new words to reproduce the original concepts flexibly. The translators' creative translations not only reflect the dialogue and exchange between two cultures, but also bring exotic cultural symbols to the target culture, input new literary contents, and enrich the expression of national literature. In addition, the generation of image paratext is also important for cultural translation. They can be used to build a visual and clear reading space for readers by means of additional features such as cover design and illustrations which match the text. The creation of a textual form that combines images and text assists the reader in better understanding the content of the text.

### 3.3 Information memory: intercultural reconstruction of memory

The third function of “text” is information memory, i.e., the text is not only a generator of meaning, but also possesses a cultural memory mechanism, and the text has the ability to preserve its own past contexts (Kang 2005a: 44). A certain cultural memory is often shared within a national community, and specific literary symbols can awaken the collective memory of internal members and construct a common literary imagination. Cultural translation is highly similar to Lotman's concept of “text” and is also deeply involved in the intercultural reconstruction of national memory. Cultural translation requires the translator not only to deliver the literal information of the text, but also to reconstruct the deep memories behind the cultural symbols, so that the readers of the target language can understand the national cultural connotations and obtain a reading experience similar to that of the readers of the original language. There are a large number of cultural symbols in *Six Records of a Floating Life* which were gradually formed during the development of the Chinese nation and can evoke the rich and profound cultural memory of the readers of the original language. This requires translators to adopt appropriate translation strategies to promote the “appearance” of the hidden cultural memory and realize the “presence” of cultural memory in the translated context.

Translation Example 3	
Original	鸿案相庄廿有三年, 年愈久而情愈密。(Shen 1980: 5)
Translation	Dreiundzwanzig Jahre lang <i>begegneten wir einander achtungsvoll wie Liang Hong und Meng Guang</i> , und unsere Gefühle füreinander wurden mit den Jahren nur immer inniger (Shen 1989: 22, emphasis ours).

“Hon Gan Xiang Zhuang” (鸿案相庄) is an allusion to the Chinese *Book of the Later Han*. Liang Hong's wife, Meng Guang, was reputedly so virtuous that she raised the tray as high as her eyebrows every time she served food to her husband as a sign of respect. And later the phrase “Hong An Xiang Zhuang” was used to express the couple's harmony and respect. This cultural symbol is widely accepted in the Chinese cultural community, and the brief text can outline a vivid scene, and evoke the cultural memory of Chinese readers about the respect between husband and wife. However, German readers do not have the corresponding information memory, so a literal hard translation may lead to difficulties in understanding. The translator adopts here a combination of intra-textual interpretation and extra-textual annotation and succeeds in the intercultural reconstruction of cultural memory. Schwarz first explains the connotation of this cultural symbol in the text: “begegneten wir einander achtungsvoll wie Liang Hong und Meng Guang” (we met each other

respectfully like Liang Hong and Meng Guang). This intra-textual interpretation not only successfully conveys the cultural connotation of the allusion, but also accurately refers to the loving story of the Liang-Meng couple. In addition, Schwarz explains the concept of “Liang Hong and Meng Guang” in the form of an endnote: “Ehepaar aus der Östlichen Han-Zeit, das als Muster ehelicher Eintracht galt” (couple from the Eastern Han period regarded as a model of marital harmony). Through the extra-textual annotation, Schwarz adds to the background of the allusion on the one hand, and further clarifies the connotation of the cultural imagery on the other, which successfully reproduces the cultural memory of the couple’s harmony in the German translation. The intra-textual interpretation and extra-textual annotation complement each other, so that the German readers can, through this allusion, successfully understand the loving and harmonious relationship between Shen Fu and his wife Chen Yun. At the same time, new cultural symbols are introduced into the translated language context, so that German readers can gain an exotic reading experience.

In addition to preserving and transmitting the information memory of cultural symbols in the text, translators can also provide readers with a broad cultural field through paratext such as foreword and afterword, constructing a historical context about the text and realizing the important function of information memory. The foreword and afterword are important for the composition of the translation, as they facilitate the reader’s understanding of the work and enable them to better comprehend it (Genette 1997: 197). The foreword of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, written by the Chinese literary historian Qiyong Feng, introduces the artistic characteristics, literary value and translation of the book. Feng praises *Six Records of a Floating Life* as one of the most beautiful prose works in Chinese literature, which he considered to be superior because of the sincerity and frankness of the writing, as well as its flavor of normal life and sincere emotions. Feng believes that after the English, French, Italian, Czech, and Russian translations, the publication of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life* will be a great blessing for the author, Shen Fu, and for German readers in general. The afterword of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, written by the translator Schwarz, is rigorous and informative, which can be regarded as a professional document introducing the research results of the book. The 17-page afterword first describes the reasons for the book’s title “Six Records,” of which, however, only four remain, and the discovery and publication of the manuscript. With a rigorous academic attitude, Schwarz thoroughly and meticulously discusses the origin and content of “Zhong Shan Ji Li” (《中山记历》) and “Yang Sheng Ji Xiao” (《养生记遣》) and demonstrates that these two records were actually forgeries, which were pieced together by later generations based on Li Dingyuan’s *Record of the Mission to the Ryukyus* and Zeng Guofan’s diary, and combined the actual life experiences of the author Shen Fu with the poems of his friends and documentary archives, among other things. Next, Schwarz argues that *Six Records of a Floating Life*

is more widely accepted among the older generation of Chinese intellectuals, and cites Yang Jiang's *Six Records of Cadre School* as an example to demonstrate its literary value and exemplary significance. Finally, Schwarz collates the results of the translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, outlining the chronology of the publication of the book in its English, Czech, Italian, French, and Russian translations. The foreword and afterword of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life* are rich, informative, and logical, forming important parts of the cultural translation, which can add important cultural memories for readers, construct the historical context in which the work was produced, and depict its unique value in the history of Chinese literature, enabling readers to deeply understand the connotations of the work and comprehensively appreciate its value in the context of the historical memory of Chinese society and the history of Chinese literature.

To sum up, the information memory function of the "text" in Lotman's theory has distinctive significance for cultural translation. Cultural symbols are formed gradually in the process of national cultural development, and therefore often refer to the unique cultural memory of a nation. These rich and profound cultural associations require the translator not only to be proficient in the language of original, but also to have extensive cultural knowledge to fully explicate the information memory of cultural symbols in literary translation. Translators can make the implicit cultural memories "appear" through intra-textual interpretation and extra-textual annotation to ensure the "presence" of information memories and fully realize the intercultural reconstruction of cultural memories. In addition, they can also give full play to the cultural memory function of paratext in forms such as foreword and afterword, in order to supplement key information such as historical background and literary values that the target language readers do not have and to give readers an information platform and memory space for the interpretation of the original text.

## 4 Conclusions

"Text" is the core concept of Lotman's cultural semiotics theory, and his view of "text" is not only an important achievement in the field of semiotics, but also has important theoretical significance and distinctive reference value for the study of cultural translation. Based on Lotman's theory of cultural semiotics, this paper constructs a theoretical integration of semiotics and cultural translation, arguing that cultural translation is essentially an intercultural transmission of text, and therefore the information transmission, information generation, and information memory functions should be highly valued.

In terms of the text, this paper argues that translators should attach great importance to the cultural information of the original and strive to fully and

completely convey the information to readers, while giving full play to the translator's creativity and flexibility in conceiving the expressions to reproduce the original concepts, and finally, they should have extensive knowledge of the culture of the translated language, explicate the cultural memory contained in the cultural symbols, and realize the cross-national expression of the cultural images. In addition, paratext is also an important part of cultural translation. Appropriate annotations can convey rich information and deepen readers' understanding of the content of the work; covers and illustrations can provide readers with an intuitive and clear reading experience through the inter-symbolic text generation; finally, foreword and afterword can construct a historical context about the text and provide readers with a unique information memory space for reading the work.

This paper examined the text and paratext of the German translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, aiming to investigate the theoretical compatibility between the three functions of "text" and cultural translation, to expound the theoretical value of Lotman's theory for cultural translation, and to demonstrate that cultural semiotics and translation studies not only have the potential for extensive ideas exchange but also offer the theoretical space for disciplinary integration.

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