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論臺灣現行譯本對納旦尼爾·韋斯特的黑色幽默翻譯：

以《寂寞芳心小姐》為例

Translating Black Humor: A Study on the Translation of Comic

Effect in Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*

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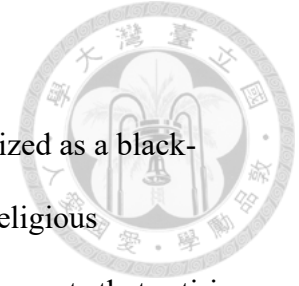
Lastly, I want to say thank you to my family, especially my parents. Your support is endless and beyond words for me. And thank you to myself, for making it to the finishing line. My time at NTU is incredible.

摘要

本論文以比較分析方式，探討臺灣現行譯本對納旦尼爾·韋斯特所著《寂寞芳心小姐》(*Miss Lonelyhearts*)之黑色幽默翻譯。韋斯特為美國二十世紀頗具開創性之荒誕派小說家，作品富有大量黑色幽默元素，時常在角色和情節上注入「怪誕」(grotesque)元素，並以黑色幽默之「反理性主義」(anti-rationalist)特質，嘲諷美國1920至1930年代的社會、宗教、大眾文化現象等。有鑑於韋斯特在美國諷刺文學具有一定地位，「翻譯」韋斯特式的幽默成為了翻譯韋斯特作品時不容忽視的一部份。因此，本論文聚焦於臺灣目前三本現行譯本對此種黑色幽默的翻譯，並以動態對等、文本對等、翻譯目的論等功能派之翻譯理論，檢視三本譯本如何處理韋斯特的黑色幽默，以及是否成功翻譯出黑色幽默的批判主題。經過文本分析，本論文發現三本譯本皆大量採用直譯方式處理黑色幽默與美國當時之文化性元素，顯示出譯者可能對於翻譯黑色幽默並無意識。此外，其中一本譯本添加了大量譯註與評論，因此本研究也援引側文本與厚實翻譯等概念，檢視此譯本譯註的功能性。研究結果發現，此譯本之譯註多數為「為註而註」，譯註中的錯誤也屢見不鮮；此外，譯者過度添加譯註、甚至直接於譯註中「分析」的行為，在某方面也本末倒置地影響到了黑色幽默的呈現，破壞了韋斯特所營造之「似笑非笑」的衝突感。

關鍵詞：《寂寞芳心小姐》、納旦尼爾·韋斯特、黑色幽默、諷刺、側文本

Abstract



Nathanael West's 1933 novella, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, is widely recognized as a black-humor work. The narrative follows an advice columnist's quest for religious transcendence during a dismal time, while intertwined with comic elements that satirize religion, mass culture, and society at large. Considering West's role as a pioneer of American black humor, it is necessary to translate these comic elements. Readers are forced into a sort of "violence" between "to laugh" and "not to laugh" in reading the novella, yet if this violence is to be translated, it poses great translation challenges. This research aims to examine the translatability of this black humor through a comparative analysis of the novella's three Traditional Chinese translations by Deng Shu-zhen, Shi Xian-rong, and Li Yi-ping. Exploring black humor's comedic functions as the point of departure, this study conducts a textual analysis and finds that the three translations all rely heavily on literal translation. Therefore, the effectiveness of black humor's translation is diluted. In addition, factors beyond translating itself also influence the rendition of these comic elements, including paratextual elements like annotation and translator comments. Among the three translations, Deng's translation includes extensive annotations and even "comments," attempting to preserve black humor in a different form. Nevertheless, the comicality of the novella is sometimes overemphasized in these paratextual elements. Thus, the comic effect of the conflict between "to laugh" and "not to laugh" may, in turn, be compromised.

Keywords: *Miss Lonelyhearts*, Nathanael West, Black Humor, Satire, Paratext

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Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Research Motivation

Translating affective text has been one of the most challenging tasks for translators. It is challenging because feelings are personal, and how a person feels about an affective text might be completely different from the others. That is to say, a translator may not share their sentiments with the readers or, at least, the reception levels of the affective text are not kept at the same level between the translator's end and the reader's end.

Paradoxically, translators are expected to translate faithfully. Whatever "faithfully" means, when people are talking about "faithfulness," they do not think that translators are allowed to have much say in translating, and importantly, when they are reading the translation, the translation is expected to be readable or even enjoyable, as if they were reading the "original." On the one hand, the translated text should be coherent, and on the other, the translation should not lose the aesthetics of the source text (ST). However, a translator knows that loss in translating is a necessary evil. Therefore, translating affective text becomes an awkward job: How much can be rendered and how much can be lost, so that the translation will be deemed by the readers as acceptable? Where is the balance?

Besides, what if the text was itself culture-motivated? Take humor¹ translation for example, the topic I will be focusing on in this research, when Taiwanese readers are reading a black humor work that is American culture-motivated, they may not only fail

¹ The novella I will be discussing, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, is generally called a "black comedy," but as defined by *A Handbook to Literature*, a comedy is "a lighter form of DRAMA which aims primarily to amuse and which ends happily." Since the word "comedy" is more often used to describe a play or a film, it proves necessary that I distinguish the subtle difference between "black humor" and "black comedy." Therefore, throughout the thesis, I will use the term "black humor" or "comic writing" to explain the comicality of *Miss Lonelyhearts*. See Holman, C. H., & Thrall, W. F. (1980). *A Handbook to Literature* (4th ed). Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Pub. p. 89.

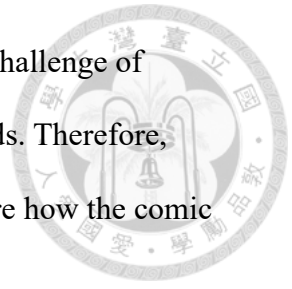
to understand the joke, but they may feel a sheer strangeness. This is when translators are expected to serve as a sort of agent to reproduce the joke, in a way that, hopefully, will make the joke more appreciated in the target culture. There are tons of jokes at hand that prove untranslatable. Consider this famous “dad joke” that says: What do you call an alligator in a vest? The answer is “investigator.” Imagine this joke randomly popping up in a source text that is waiting to be translated into a published Traditional Chinese book. How should the translator render their translation? Not to mention the extra care needed if the text is a classic work of an influential writer.

It is these concerns that accompanied my process of translating Nathanael West’s black humor novella, *Miss Lonelyhearts*. As translating this comic² work accepted as “slapstick” or “burlesque,” I found the black humor contained in the storyline hard to translate. Some comic texts meant to be laughable are almost untranslatable or, even if translated with my best effort, might lose their function of making people laugh. A vital question occupied my mind when I translated: Will my translation render an equal, or at least functionally acceptable, amount of comic effect for Taiwanese readers?

To answer these questions, I began my study into West’s work of *Miss Lonelyhearts* as a type of black humor. In my study, I discovered that West used black humor not merely to produce comic effect but, more importantly, to satirize aspects of society, religion, mass media, etc., that were of his interest during the time he wrote the novel (1930s). The incorporation of these aspects in *Miss Lonelyhearts* undoubtedly poses a great challenge in translation, and although previous studies have widely

² There is some subtle difference between the two terms, “comic” and “comical,” which I will frequently use in this thesis. Although *Cambridge Dictionary*, a dictionary I mainly consult when doing the research, defines comic as “funny and making you want to laugh” and comical as “funny in a strange or silly way,” making the two terms seemingly interchangeable, according to another dictionary, the two terms are subtly different. As defined by *Merriam-Webster*, the more often use of “comic” is “of, relating to, or marked by comedy,” while “comical” is “causing laughter especially because of a startlingly or unexpectedly humorous impact” (though it has an obsolete use of “of or relating to comedy”).

discussed West's comic writing, almost none of them addressed the challenge of translating the underlying factors hidden behind West's satirical words. Therefore, building on the discussion of previous studies, I aim to further explore how the comic elements of *Miss Lonelyhearts* are presented as a translation issue.



1.2 Nathanael West and Black Humor

Before I introduce the novella, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, it is necessary to mention its author, Nathanael West, who is referred to as one of the pioneers in American comic writing, so as to explain how his life experience in the early 20th century shaped his introduction of black humor to his works, leading us to understand the driving force of his comic writing that serves as an important translation issue.

West's relationship with comic writing, and black humor in particular, can be biographical and historical. West, though Jewish, was born in New York, the United States, in 1903. With a Jewish identity, West's early life was confronted with "uncertainties" and "utter differences between Jewish and American cultures," which might have contributed to his self-doubt about his own identity and to his later literary interest in the grotesque, as pointed out by Su Hui (蘇暉) (2013, p. 195). West had been an unruly student since high school; he would rather immerse himself in reading and skip classes, and he forged a transcript to enter Tufts University, where he was forced to withdraw eventually. After his admittance to Brown University (by appropriating a transcript), West exposed himself to modernist literature; he read works by T. S. Eliot, Franze Kafka, and James Joyce, famous modernist writers in the early 20th century and whose works were viewed as "decadent" back then. In his college life, West could be said to have begun his writing career and made acquaintances with young writers, and he also started to write poetry or essays. At this stage, the early works of West had made visible his obsession with "unusual" or "dark" writing; he once wrote an essay called

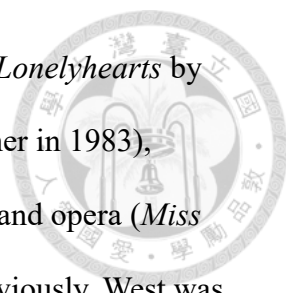
“Euripides – A Playwright” (1923) and a piece of poetry titled “Death” (1924).

After his graduation in 1924, West moved to Paris in 1926 for a sojourn with his family, where he officially began to write on a regular basis. In Paris, He worked on his first novel, *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* (1931), an experimental surrealist fantasy with many grotesque characters. However, the novel did not gain much traction, and West moved back to New York only three months after his stay in Paris.

It is this turning point that inspired West to write his two best-known novels, *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933) and *The Day of the Locust* (1939). After his return to New York, West worked as a hotel manager, and he had a chance to interact with a variety of customers. He saw people suffer serious financial problems, and as an “eccentric” himself (West once described himself as being “vicious, mean, ugly, obscene, and insane”) (West, 1971, p. 29), he started to develop a strong distaste for the capitalist society and everything behind the façade of American Dream. In the early 1930s, when the country was experiencing its worst economic downturn, West began writing the two novels, *Miss Lonelyhearts* (published in 1933) and *The Day of the Locust* (published in 1939), which were both written against the backdrop of the Great Depression. Victor Comerchero (1964) once commented on West’s achievement: “West’s brilliance as a novelist proceeds from his ability to generalize frustration” (p. 184). West’s position as a black humor writer is indeed extraordinary, yet ironically, his works are inspired by tragedy. His life is an irony, too. Not until he died in a car accident in 1940 did his satirical novels become known to people – his death is a tragedy, and his posthumous fame, like the stories he wrote, becomes a dark joke to him.

1.3 *Miss Lonelyhearts*

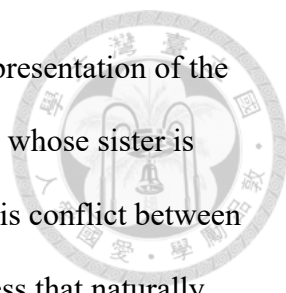
Of West’s four novels, *Miss Lonelyhearts* is perhaps the most famous one. The novella was published in 1933, and various adaptations were made for different genres,



including film (*Advice to the Lovelorn* by Alfred L. Werker in 1933, *Lonelyhearts* by Vincent J. Donehue in 1958, and *Miss Lonelyhearts* by Michael Dinner in 1983), Broadway play (*Miss Lonelyhearts* by Howard Teichmann in 1957), and opera (*Miss Lonelyhearts* by Lowell Liebermann in 2006), etc. As mentioned previously, West was motivated to write the novella during the country's most dismal time, but in addition, he came up with a more concrete idea for *Miss Lonelyhearts* when one of his friends, who was an advice columnist at *Brooklyn Eagle*, showed him the letters he received. The novella tells the story of a nameless male advice columnist who answers his readers' painful letters under the emasculated pseudonym "Miss Lonelyhearts," while Shrike, Miss Lonelyhearts' editor as well as an anti-Christian stock character³, makes fun of him for taking the unwanted job as the paper's advice columnist. Shrike jokes: "The Susan Chesters, the Beatrice Fairfaxes and the Miss Lonelyhearts are the priests of twentieth-century America" (West, 2009, p. 7). In fact, Susan Chesters was the pseudonym the columnist, Quentin Reynolds, used for writing *Brooklyn Eagle*'s advice column "Susan Chesters Heart-to-Heart Letters," while Beatrice Fairfaxes was Marie Manning's pseudonym as she wrote for *New York World*'s advice column "Dear Beatrice Fairfaxes."

In *Miss Lonelyhearts*, the letters the protagonist receives are agonized (Perhaps so are the letters Chesters and Fairfaxes receive in the real world), which eventually leads to Miss Lonelyhearts' mental breakdown. The letters are from readers in extreme agony; these people are the most unprivileged in society, and they are in so much pain that they sometimes become inarticulate in the letters. They are "Sick-of-it-all," "Desperate,"

³ According to *A Handbook to Literature*, a stock character is "Conventional character types belonging by custom to given forms of literature." See Holman, C. H., & Thrall, W. F. (1980). *A Handbook to Literature* (4th ed). Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Pub. p. 427. The function of Shrike as a stock character and its relation to black humor will be mentioned in the later part of this research.



“Disillusioned-with-tubercular-husband,” or “Broad Shoulders” – representation of the “grotesque,” such as a young and isolated girl without a nose, a child whose sister is being raped, or a cripple who does not know how to socialize. It is this conflict between the comically distorted image of these characters and their patheticness that naturally brings us to West’s introduction of black humor into the work. When we see the inarticulate speech or the seemingly supposed-to-be-laughable act of the grotesque, we are forced to examine our morality and ponder over the social problem behind the vigorously pursued American Dream. As Tseng An-kuo (曾安國) pointed out in “Good Reasons for not Laughing”: Humor as Violence in Nathanael West’s *Miss Lonelyhearts*: “As a representative text in the emergence of a ‘modern grotesque,’ *Miss Lonelyhearts* raises several interlocking problems. First, it forces us to examine laughter’s curious alliance with horror, disgust, and alarm ...” (Tseng, 1998, p. 174).

Thus, as we read the story, we are dragged into the fictional world, as if facing the column readers’ struggle together with Miss Lonelyhearts. The readers’ pain challenges the social, religious, or economic system we have relied on to survive, just like how Miss Lonelyhearts reacts to those hopeless letters: “For the first time in his life, he is forced to examine the values by which he lives [Christianity]” (West, 2009, p. 76). Through this “violence” created by the confrontation between “to laugh” and “not to laugh,” West’s unique black humor in *Miss Lonelyhearts* provides us a chance to reevaluate our relationship with the multifaceted society, especially an industrial society where everything becomes machine-like and tedious and the generation is losing their faith in humanity. This is perhaps why Stanley Hyman, an American literary critic, once compared *Miss Lonelyhearts* with *The Great Gatsby* and *The Sun Also Rises*, two of the most important novels by Earnest Hemingway that deal with the disillusionment with the American Dream and the idea of “Lost Generation,” considering these three works

“the three finest American novels of the twentieth century” (Hyman, 1962, p. 27).

1.4 Research Questions

Now that *Miss Lonelyhearts* has achieved its importance in 20th-century American literature, and is labeled as a “black-humor” novella, “translating” the black humor becomes an unignorable task. Nevertheless, translating affective text is itself challenging, and if the comic elements of *Miss Lonelyhearts* are motivated by the 1920s and 1930s American culture, while meant to raise some sort of humanitarian concern among its readers, then the rendition of these comic effects certainly will cause difficulties for translators. Therefore, the aim of this research is to look into the comicality of West’s novella, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, and explore the possibility of translating the black humor; if possible, then how the black humor can be translated. How different translators cope with the tricky comic effects that are intertwined with culture-specific items? Taking that into consideration, I will first touch upon the nature of the various comic elements, including the identification of the text with West’s obvious intention to make people laugh, what kind of humor they are, and how they function or whether or not they entail any underlying meaning.

A better grasp of these comic elements will bring us to the discussion of their translations. In my discussion, I will incorporate three Traditional Chinese translations of *Miss Lonelyhearts* to conduct comparative research – meanwhile presenting my alternative translation when necessary – hoping to provide a chance for us to organize possible strategies that can translate West’s black humor. We will see how the three translators translate the comic effects differently, or whether they translate at all, and if they have their own agendas for translating the aesthetics. Extra care is needed in coping with the culture-, history-, or religion-motivated comic text, and there might various translation strategies used by translators to make up for the loss of translating

the culture-specific items. In the meanwhile, the translator's linguistic style itself, which varies between individuals, will determine if they successfully deliver the comic effect or influence the extent to which they deliver it.

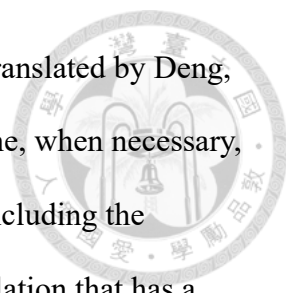


1.5 The Target Texts

Despite *Miss Lonelyhearts*' literary profundity and its pioneering position in American black-humor literature, it seems not to have achieved an equal amount of popularity in Taiwan. Perhaps due to the obscure and dark nature of the novella, or because of some realistic concerns, there have been only three translations of *Miss Lonelyhearts* (寂寞芳心小姐) in Taiwan, one published by *Tianxing Chuban* (天星出版) in 2001 and translated by Deng Shu-zhen (鄧樹楨), another published by *Yifang Chuban* (一方出版) in 2003 and translated by Shi Xian-rong (施咸榮)⁴, and the other published by *Maitien Chuban* (麥田出版) [Rye Field Publishing] in 2010 and translated by Li Yi-ping (李宜屏), all published more than a decade ago. However, it is worth mentioning that, a bit oddly, Li's translation was later reprinted, with a different cover, in 2017 by a different publisher in Mainland China called *Zhongguo Jiliang Chubanshe* (中國計量出版社), a Chinese publishing house that mainly publishes metrology books. In China, there is also another translation published by *Nanjing Daxue Chubanshe* (南京大學出版社) [Nanjing University Press] in 2019 and translated by Xia Wen-yun (夏雯韻). In 2023, about one year before the writing of this thesis, I was also commissioned by *Shuangxi Chuban* (雙囍出版) [Grand 4 Happiness]⁵ to translate the novella, but the translation has not yet been published. In the textual analysis section, I

⁴ It should be noted that this version, though titled 寂寞芳心小姐, also includes some of West's short stories.

⁵ The English name of the publisher is from its Facebook fan page:
https://www.facebook.com/Grand4Happiness/?locale=zh_TW



will select the three translations published in Taiwan, namely those translated by Deng, Shi, and Li, to discuss the translation of black humor; at the same time, when necessary, I will provide my own translation for reference. The reason for not including the translation by Xia in my discussion is that it may not serve as a translation that has a direct influence over the “poetics,” as defined by André Lefevere⁶, that Taiwanese readers, critics, or scholars hold when it comes to the translation of *Miss Lonelyhearts*. Thus, in my later discussion, I will try to analyze the comicality translated by the three translators in question, and apart from the translations themselves, the aspects beyond translation itself – for example, paratextual elements like annotations or translator’s comments – will also be discussed to see how textual and non-textual factors influence the rendition of black humor.

⁶ “A poetics can be said to consist of two components: one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole.” See Lefevere, A. (2016). *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1st ed.). London: Routledge. p. 26.

Chapter II: Literature Review

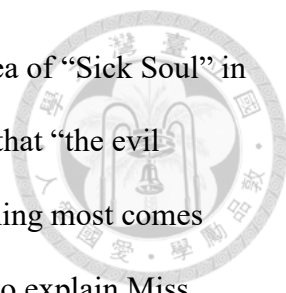


In this chapter, I will introduce some studies to contextualize the translation issues we might meet when we reach the later part of this research. The chapter will be divided into two sections: I will start with the previous studies on *Miss Lonelyhearts*, including its themes and its comicality; the second section will cover some relevant studies on comic writing and black humor. As one of the most influential works in American literature, *Miss Lonelyhearts* has indeed been discussed from many different angles, but there is still some academic inadequacy when it comes to this masterpiece of Nathanael West, especially that of translation. A diversion to some studies on comedy and black humor proves necessary, for it will provide a better chance for us to understand how, from an academic angle, the novella can be seen as a black-humor work, and what comedic elements may be at play when we discuss *Miss Lonelyhearts* as a comic work.

2.1 Studies on *Miss Lonelyhearts*

2.1.1 Religion

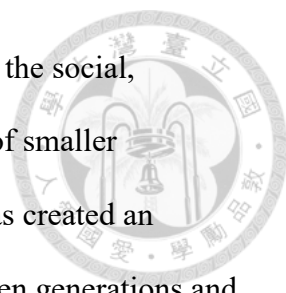
It would never be an overstatement to say that religion serves as the major issue of *Miss Lonelyhearts*. The story is generally considered to be about an advice columnist's quest for religious transcendence – although this viewpoint is debatable for some people. In the article, "Religion Experience in *Miss Lonelyhearts*," Marcus Smith (1968) discusses the nature of the "religious" character, Miss Lonelyheart, and tries to answer the question of whether Miss Lonelyhearts is a "tragic saint" or just a "psychotic fool" (p. 172). In the article, Smith builds his viewpoint upon the idea of William James, a famous American philosopher, and argues that the two roles are coexistent. "On the one hand Miss Lonelyhearts is 'a priest of our time,' and at the same time he suffers from 'maladjustment ... deadness and disorder ... self-torture by conscious sinning.'"



as pointed out by Smith (p. 173). Smith's argument rests upon the idea of "Sick Soul" in James' famous work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, namely that "the evil aspects of our life are of its very essence" and that "the world's meaning most comes home to us when we lay them most to hearts" (James, 1929, p.128), to explain Miss Lonelyhearts' lingering sickness that accompanies his quest for religious transcendence. Although Smith argues that Miss Lonelyhearts' religious experience is a false one (he wants to seek salvation, yet is only led to his own destruction), he acknowledges the protagonist's religious experience and his search for redemption (p. 188). To put it more straightforwardly, Smith thinks that what matters is Miss Lonelyhearts' process of redemption. He thinks that Miss Lonelyhearts is indeed tempted to have wrongdoings (for example, brutally killing a lamb, beating an old man, or committing adultery with a married woman), but his immorality (his sickness, in James' language) is caused by "the situation in this world" (p. 188), and that is why he tries to acquire a religious solution. Hence, Smith believes that the two conditions of having a religious quest and having a mental sickness are coexistent, and just like West himself once pointed out, though Miss Lonelyhearts is having maladjustment, he is "a priest of our time who has a religious experience" (1968, p. 173). That is also the reason why, when we see the character's misery, we have sympathy for him.

2.1.2 Mass Culture

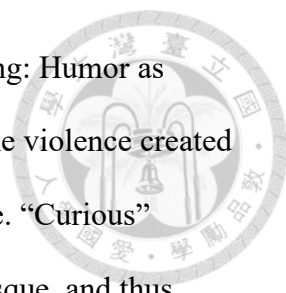
Another, if not major, important theme of the novella is mass culture. Rita Barnard's article "The Storyteller, the Novelist, and the Advice Columnist: Narrative and Mass Culture in *Miss Lonelyhearts*" first deals with the problem of mass culture in the 1920s and 1930s. Comparing *Miss Lonelyhearts* with Walter Benjamin's 1936 essay "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Work of Nikolai Leskov," Barnard makes a reference to Roland Marchand and, citing his words, points out the inadequacy of a



suitable narrative to provide “advice” and to give people support, for the social, economic, and demographic changes that are related to “the demise of smaller communities under the impact of a consolidating national market” has created an “advice vacuum” (Marchand, 1985, p. 342). The discontinuity between generations and the isolation between families and communities have broken the “shared form” of knowledge, disrupting the “informal, intrafamilial and intracommunity channel of advice” (Marchand, 1985, p. 342). Barnard’s viewpoint is also supported by Tyler Joseph Efir in his master’s thesis, “Modernity, Historical Trauma, and the Crisis of Ethics: Reading Nathanael West’s *Miss Lonelyhearts* After Levinas.” Efir introduces his viewpoint from a metafictional angle. Although dealing with *Miss Lonelyhearts*’ ethical crisis, he argues that the protagonist’s crisis can result from the mass culture in the 1920s and 1930s. Efir describes twentieth-century America as “[experiencing] deterioration of fully-integrated, organic community” (2009, p. 23), and thinks that this deterioration has failed to provide emotional or spiritual support for people. He then goes on to say that, within this deterioration, mass-marketing continues to profit “from this severing of individuals from traditional forms of advice by offering consumers commodified versions of wholesome, down-home wisdom and knowledge” (p. 23). He also mentions that the discovery is shared by Barnard, who thinks that the new form of advice can be found in such things as comic books, consumer goods, and the newspaper advice column.

2.1.3 Comicality

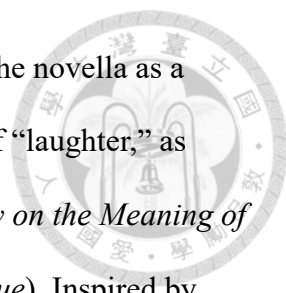
In addition to the novella’s themes, a major focus of many studies is the novella’s comicality. Accordingly, although I will introduce some studies on the comicality of literary works in general, it is inevitable that I should point out the comicality of *Miss Lonelyhearts* here first. In Taiwan, there is a relevant study that I have mentioned



earlier, that is Tseng An-Kuo's article, "Good Reason for not Laughing: Humor as Violence in Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*." Tseng discusses the violence created by the "curious alliance" (p. 174) between laughter and the grotesque. "Curious" because laughter is usually not associated with elements of the grotesque, and thus, West's intention to force the readers into the awkward alliance between laughter and the grotesque creates a sort of violence. This violence in the novella challenges the readers' morality when they detect something seemingly supposed to be funny, yet only to find it too dark to laugh. Taking this into the job of translating, it is this curious alliance that serves as a problematic issue: if translators are expected to reproduce this "awkwardness/violence" that West created, how to strike the subtle balance between "to laugh" and "not to laugh" becomes a challenge.

Studies abroad are even more abundant. Justus Nieland's essay, "West's Deadpan: Affect, Slapstick, and Publicity in *Miss Lonelyhearts*," also deals with how West's deadpan and slapstick manner of comic writing blurs the line between feeling laughableness and horror. Nieland (2004) points out that this "lack of sureties" is West's departure from traditional slapstick comedy (p. 58), and it serves to lead us to understand that, if we laugh, it means that we feel a trueness of the characters' physical suffering and material reality. In short, Nieland sees West's novel comic writing as an anti-sentimental sense of humor that gives readers a sort of emotional uncertainty, through which West, he thinks, describes the failure of the public to explore sentimentality in that era. He also thinks that West's "comic anti-sentimentalism" is an "alternative," which perhaps will bring forth "more ethical modes of public experience" (p. 77).

Some studies also examine the novella's comicality from a social and philosophical angle. In his master's thesis, "The Heart-shaped Cookie Knife: *Miss Lonelyhearts* as



Accelerated Bergsonian Comedy,” Mark Sheridan (2015) discusses the novella as a “Bergsonian comedy” by building his viewpoint upon the function of “laughter,” as described in Henri Bergson’s 1911 famous work, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (original title: *Le Rire. Essai sur la signification du comique*). Inspired by Bergson’s idea that “Laughter must answer to certain requirements of life in common. It must have a SOCIAL signification” (Bergson, p. 5), Sheridan argues that *Miss Lonelyhearts*, a work of significance for post-industrial American literature, “seems connected with a strange kind of *mechanization* in his characters” (p. 1) – that is, the characters possess a sort of “machine-like rigidity” (p. 2), with this mechanizedness being motivated by the repetition and dullness of the capitalist society. In short, Sheridan applies Bergson’s idea of mechanization to dissect the comicality of the novella, and the mechanization presented as a sort of black humor might prove to be a translation problem.

2.2 Studies on Comedy and Black Humor

Now that I have introduced how some studies on *Miss Lonelyhearts* themselves examine the novella as a comic work, it is time for us to introduce some studies on comedy and comic writing to see how, in turn from the angle of comedy, a black-humor work is called “black humor,” and what comic parameters this work – be it a novel, a play, or a film – should possess so that it qualifies as a black-humor work, and also, what grotesque really is.

Let us begin with “grotesque.” According to *A Handbook to Literature*, a reference guide to literary terms, the word “grotesque” can be used in sculpture, painting, and architecture, and it is associated with “human and animal forms often combined into formal distortions of the natural to the point of comic absurdity, ridiculous ugliness, or ludicrous CARICATURE” (Holman, 1980, p. 206). Holme also puts the word’s

meaning forward to literature, mentioning that in a literary sense, grotesque also refers to “special types of writing,” “kinds of fictional CHARACTERS,” and to “subject matters,” but importantly, it serves to point out human frustration (p. 206). Therefore, in literature, grotesque is a sort of distortedness intertwined with comic elements, while this ridiculousness and confrontation between the comic and the horror is presented in a way that reflect a sort of social phenomenon.

In Taiwan, some research has also touched upon grotesque’s concept. The master’s thesis written by Liu Zhi-yun (劉芷芸), “Grotesque Elements and Description in Liao Zhai Zhi Yi” (《聊齋誌異》的怪誕元素與敘寫), has conducted in-depth research on its meaning. In the thesis, the word “grotesque” is discussed as a sort of “aesthetics” (審美形態) rather than just the oddness or awkwardness in a behavioral sense, so grotesque can refer to the abnormality that one thing reflects when it is compared against the reality, or it can refer to the distortedness or supernaturalness that one thing presents. However, the author (2016) also argues that although the grotesque produces horror, the ridiculousness of its comic nature creates a conflict at the emotional level (p. 11). This viewpoint is also validated by some scholars. Citing Ernst Gombrich, an art historian, Liu mentions that the grotesque has its own “double feelings” (雙重感覺), namely the horror and laughableness (p. 12). The author also mentions that the idea is shared by Victor Hugo, who once said: “Grotesque is everywhere. On the one hand, it creates distortion and horror, on the other, it creates laughableness and ridiculousness.”⁷

The word “black humor” has its subtlety, too. According to Holman, black humor is “the use of the morbid and THE ABSURD for darkly comic purposes in modern

⁷ The original words of Victor Hugo is: “d’une part, il crée le difforme et l’horrible; de l’autre, le comique et le bouffon.” The text first appeared in Hugo’s preface to his 1827 play, *Cromwell*.



FICTION and DRAMA” (p. 55). Furthermore, the tone should be based on anger and bitterness. In another master’s thesis written by a Taiwanese scholar, “The Research of Black Humor in Contemporary Taiwan Novel (1979-1999)” (當代臺灣小說 (1979-1999) 的黑色幽默研究), written by Hsiao Shang-yen (蕭上晏), the author (2016) also points out the same thing. Hsiao breaks down the word into two ideas: “black” and the “humor” of black humor, to offer a clearer landscape for us to see what black humor really is. Hsiao cites Su Hui, arguing that (American) black-humor novels are “based on dissatisfaction and disappointment of the social reality” (p. 45), so “black,” as an atmosphere of a literary work, means that the work’s focus should be tragic, or at least not comical. Another feature of “black,” Hsiao points out, is the theme of the work, which can decide the connection between the black and the social reality (p. 48).

The author goes on to explain the even trickier nature of the word “humor,” especially that of “black humor.” Hsiao argues that it is necessary to redefine the humor of black humor, which contains two natures: its “anti-rationalist” nature and the fact that it “reflects and satirizes the contemporary era.” Hsiao thinks that the humor of black humor is essentially different from traditional humor because, first of all, the former serves as the “criticism” of traditional humor, which is based on “rationalism,” for, by reason, it functions to point out the shortcomings of humans (p. 52). Thus, the fact that the humor of black humor is a sort of “criticism” of traditional humor leads us to say that black humor is “anti-rationalist,” and it functions to mock the shortcomings of the rationalist world, which traditional humor attempts to construct. The humor of black humor compromises traditional humor’s tragic effect, challenging traditional humor’s comic value (p. 52). If traditional humor serves to ridicule rationalist thinking, then black humor serves to ridicule traditional humor (p. 53).

Secondly, another nature that distinguishes the humor of black humor from traditional humor is, Hsiao argues, its criticism of the reality of the contemporary era. In other words, the humor of black humor is connected with the historical moment in which a literary work is created.

After the introduction of these studies that equip us with a more comprehensive view of what grotesque and black humor really is, we know that black humor, instead of just providing laughableness, also functions as a mirror of the social reality of the era it satirizes. Therefore, I would like to introduce one last study that explains the dynamic behind this mirror, namely “how” black humor reflects and is connected with social realities, for these nuances also serve as the metalanguage West used to present black humor in *Miss Lonelyhearts*, and they inevitably become a significant translation issue, as we will see in later chapters.

In fact, I have mentioned this study earlier, that is Henri Bergson’s *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. A famous French philosopher in the 20th century, Bergson (1911) explains the social and philosophical functions of laughter in these collected essays. He does not only provide a general idea of comedy, but more importantly, he points out that laughter can be society-motivated; that is to say, when we laugh, there is a societal reason behind the act of laughing that motivates us to laugh. Let me quote again this sentence that I have mentioned earlier when introducing Sheridan’s master thesis: “Laughter must answer to certain requirements of life in common. It must have a SOCIAL signification” (Bergson, p. 5). For Bergson, laughter is much like a social semiosis that represents the relationship between humans and society in the act of laughing. It is on this basis that Bergson develops his idea of “mechanization,” as described earlier, which refers to human beings’ machine-like rigidity in an industrial age where machines’ repetition and dullness come to influence

human behaviors. Therefore, when we laugh at a person for their unnatural and inelastic behavior, we are, in fact, laughing at their ridiculousness of losing their human characteristic and, by extension, laughing at their deviation from the social orthodoxy. It is this phenomenon of mechanization that serves as the material in part of the comic writing in *Miss Lonelyhearts*; nevertheless, I will stop my introduction of mechanization for now and revisit it in the later chapters when we discuss how this mechanization's comic parameter falls within the concern of translation.

2.3 Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to equip us with some preliminary knowledge of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, including its important themes and its comicality, and of the nature of comedy itself, such as what grotesque is and what the features of black humor are. I select two studies that discuss the religious and mass culture aspects of the novella, for these aspects are generally viewed as the novella's major themes, and importantly, they are the main subjects that West intends to satirize. Apart from the two studies, I have also introduced a few studies that specifically focus on the comicality of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, in order to point out how West performs his comic writing, such as through the violence of a conflict between “to laugh” and “not to laugh,” or through the “mechanization” of characters.

It is worth mentioning – and clarifying – again that I, after introducing these studies that explore *Miss Lonelyhearts*' comicality, go further to introduce some comedy-related studies because, in addition to providing a preliminary idea of the novella's comicality, we still need to know why a comedy/comic writing is a comedy/comic writing, and how comic elements are presented in a literary work. For example: What is grotesque? What is black humor? What features do they possess? Asking these questions will save us from examining the novella's comicality only

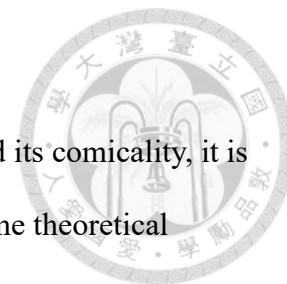
through the lens of the general public, thus avoiding some arbitrariness and vagueness. Instead, we need to understand the mechanism of comic writing, for this mechanism, as we will see, also serves as the motivation for West's black humor, and accordingly poses great translation challenges.

Nonetheless, despite all the knowledge that these studies can provide, we are still left with a big question: How to translate such comic elements/features of the grotesque, conflicts between "to laugh" and "not to laugh", or the so-called mechanization? Some research has tried to answer this question. For example, Pavel Denis Popovici's 2022 master's thesis, "Challenges in Translating Humor and Culture: Comparative Case Study based on *Catch-22*," points out the biggest challenge of translating humor. When translating humor (or black humor specifically), translators are forced to strike a balance between being faithful to the ST, which in most cases refers to linguistically approximating the author's words, and translating the comic effect, which may be unfortunately compromised in translating (p. 17). Moreover, citing Patrick Zabalbeascoa, Popovici mentions that "it is important for translators to note whether humor is a part of the authors' intention or if it is caused by other reasons (e.g., the translator/reader is interpreting humor where is not meant to exist or in different ways than the author intended)" (p. 17). Our sense of humor is itself subjective, which makes our interpreting/translating of a comical text subjective, too. Hence, to translate humor/black humor is to find the very balance between being faithful and being comical. "Where is this balance" is indeed an open-ended question, and I do not think that there is a spot where we can call a translation of black humor is as comic as the original, as if the comic effect did not lose its essence after our translating. Still, in the later chapters of this thesis, I attempt to answer this question by building my argument upon some relevant translation studies, therefore conducting a comparative textual

analysis to find out the possibility of translating *Miss Lonelyhearts*' comic elements and black humor.



Chapter III Methodology



After gaining a more thorough understanding of the novella and its comicality, it is now time for us to switch to a translational aspect, and introduce some theoretical concepts that will be of use in my textual analysis. This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section will include some functional theories of translation, for, when I consider the features of my ST and target text (TT), these functional theories will be useful as a theoretical framework that defines the parameters in the source/target end. They can explain how we opt for a particular translation strategy, and what factors on the source/target end might be at play so that they justify the decision we make – that is to say, on what standard we decide how to translate? Some important translation studies/theories of this functional approach will be introduced, such as equivalence theory, skopos theory, etc. The second section, which hopefully will bring us to conduct a more three-dimensional analysis, will include some theories that look into the factors beyond translation that may influence the delivery of the original (black humor), for example, paratextual elements like annotations and translator's comments.

3.1 Functional Theories of Translation

3.1.1 Dynamic Equivalence

The idea of “Dynamic Equivalence” can be traced back to 1964. In his famous work, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*, Eugene Nida first proposes this idea that has changed the landscape of translation study ever since. “Dynamic” because the equivalence Nida explains is essentially different from the kind of equivalence that had been applied to previous practice and study of translation, namely the equivalence of “message” itself – for instance, form and content. Traditional translation studies had always focused on how we should translate the word-level or sentence-level elements of

a text. Nida (1964) uses a straightforward example to identify this phenomenon that exists in the discussion of traditional translation studies; as we translate poetry, we feel obliged to consider the formal elements (such as rhyme or foot), usually by sacrificing the content (such as the usage of a particular word that conveys a particular feeling). It is this process of considering and sacrificing the linguistic elements that plays the main part of traditional translation studies' discussion.

Nida defines this seeking of linguistic-level correspondence as “formal equivalence,” which is widely known as one of his “two basic orientations in translating” (p. 129). However, he is not denying such discussion as achieving “poetry to poetry,” “sentence to sentence,” and “concept to concept” equivalence. Instead, he is trying to point out that, apart from this type of equivalence, there is one other basic orientation of “dynamic equivalence.” By “dynamic,” Nida means that the focus of this type of equivalence is “the response of receptor,” whose nature is dynamic because, in translating, adaptability is needed to create a similar response in the target-language audience – that is to say, as the target-language readers read the text, they are supposed to experience a feeling that is similar to how the source-language readers feel when they read the source text. As Nida himself argues:

In such a translation one is not so concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source-language message, but with the dynamic relationship, that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message (p. 129).

Thus, the focus of equivalence has shifted from “message” to “response.” The discussion of equivalence is no longer restricted only to “how to reproduce the form and content,” but rather, is put forward to “how to reproduce the feeling owned by the source language audience.” To quote Nida's words, it is about how to make a

bilingual/bicultural person, if they see the translation, says, “That is just the way we would say it” (p. 136).

Nida also points out the most important thing that we must achieve in order to produce dynamic equivalence: naturalness. He describes dynamic equivalence translation as “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message” (p. 136). He argues that there are three essential terms when it comes to such translation of dynamic equivalence: equivalent, natural, and closest. By equivalent, he means that one should consider the possibility of being equivalent to the source-language message; natural, the attempt to make translation readable when delivering the receptor message; closest, the relationship between the source-language and receptor message should be “on the basis of the highest degree of approximation” (p. 136). Among these three essential terms, Nida especially places emphasis on what “natural” truly is. In his view, a natural rendering must fit three things: the receptor language and culture as a whole, the context of the particular message, and the receptor-language audience (p. 136). The consideration of receptor language and culture is straightforward; it means that if we want to render a natural translation, we must take the grammatical and lexical adaptation into account, by, for example, rearranging word or sentence order and making appropriate word choices, meanwhile making up for the loss caused by cultural discrepancies, by using footnotes, for instance. Secondly, the rendering of a natural translation also necessitates the consideration of one particular message’s context. It means that the translated message is not restricted to the rendering of grammatical or lexical features; rather, it must retain the elements in the source-language context, in order to “provide the proper emotional tone for the discourse” (p. 139); as a result, elements like onomatopoeic expression, slang, sarcasm should be considered. Lastly, receptor-language audience refers to the fact that, in addition to considering context, one

should also consider the response of the receptor-language “audience.” We have to stand in the audience’s shoes by thinking about how they will react to the translation (Nida points out three principal areas: special literary forms, semantically exocentric expressions, and intraorganismic meanings, but it is not my intention to go into the details of these areas).

In 1986, Nida proposed “functional equivalence” in *From One Language to Another* for the first time to make his idea of dynamic equivalence more complete. His main idea is essentially the same – when translating, we should consider not only the word-level or sentence-level correspondence but the equivalent of response on the target end. This, in fact, has provided us with a preliminary knowledge of skopos theory, whose idea will be introduced later, but before going into the details of skopos theory, I would like to introduce another theory about equivalence first, for this theory is generally referred to as the foundation for skopos theory, and it will also give us a more comprehensive understanding of equivalence as a relationship between the source-language message/culture and the target-language message/culture.

3.1.2 Katharina Reiß’s View on Equivalence

If Nida’s idea of dynamic equivalence can be seen as a first step that provides a different landscape of equivalence/translation theories, we may refer to Katharina Reiß’s view on equivalence as another step to further this landscape. In 1971, Reiß presented her “text-typological” approach for the first time, which emphasizes the attempt to achieve “text-level” equivalence rather than merely focusing on word-level and sentence-level equivalence. This might sound similar to Nida’s dynamic equivalence, and in fact, it is, but Reiß’s idea offers a more detailed explanation of equivalence by exploring the relationship between the source and the target. In *Toward a General Theory of Translation Action (Grundlegung einer allgemeinen*

Translationstheorie), co-authored by Reiß herself and Hans Vermeer, Reiß redefines the act of translating's being just a "linguistic code," arguing that the definition that sees translation as a linguistic code cannot be described as a general translation theory. For her, equivalence is not restricted to this sort of linguistic level; instead, it should also be examined on a textual level. As she (2013) points out:

... equivalence includes both the relationship between the individual linguistic signs of a text pair and the relationship between whole texts. The existence of an equivalence relation between individual elements of a text pair does not automatically imply equivalence at the text level and vice versa: the existence of textual equivalence does not mean that the segments or elements of the two texts are equivalent at other levels. Moreover, in our opinion, textual equivalence is not limited to linguistic aspects: it also includes cultural equivalence (p. 121).

Reiß does not see translation as an act of merely pairing linguistic code; she sees it as "information about an offer of information" (p. 123) – when we consider our translation, we must also consider what function "the whole text" serves. In this sense, if translation is an act of offering information, then the offer can be partial. Translators may not (be able or be aware that they have to) achieve the exact same function for their translation, especially when the source text's information is almost impossible to offer (for example, ancient texts' information is hard to reproduce fully for modern recipients); if that is the case, then the source text and the target text can not be described as being "of equal value" (p. 123). In this way, what we deem as seeking equivalence in the past is, in fact, seeking "adequacy," and equivalence has become a result. By "adequacy" (or an "adequate" translation), Reiß means that "A translation is adequate if the choice made of target-language signs is consistently in line with the requirements of the translation purpose" (p. 127). If I may, Reiß's view on the

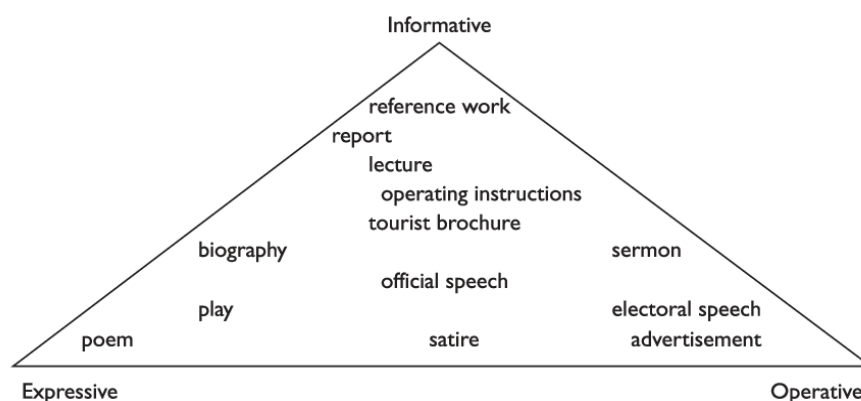
translating process can be like this: We examine the function or purpose of the source text first, and then – to reproduce the function or purpose in our target text – we translate (seeking adequacy) by looking for suitable linguistic pairs and textual approximation. By doing all this, we may end up achieving an “adequate translation;” if the degree of adequacy is so high, to the extent that the text we produce has “achieved the same communicative function at the same level in the two cultures involved” (p.128), then we may say the text is “equivalent” to the source text.

We can observe that different from Nida, who only focuses on the importance of achieving a receptor-oriented and response-level equivalence, Reiß intends to explain “how” we can achieve this: by considering the textual elements. This ultimately brings us to Reiß’s well-known “three basic communicative types” of text: the informative text type, the expressive text type, and the operative text type. We may take the elements of these different text types into consideration, and then produce a translation that belongs to a certain type. For the informative, which Reiß defines as “the information offer will be primarily geared towards conveying information” (p. 137), we may be more cautious about the authenticity (for example, texts like a report or manual). For the expressive, which is like “a work of art” (p. 137), we may exercise extra care to render the aesthetics (for example, texts like a poem or theatrical play). For the operative, whose purpose is to “persuade the audience of something” (p. 137), we may use adaptive methods that can urge the target audience to have the expected behavior (for example, texts like an advertisement or electoral speech).⁸

⁸ It is worth mentioning that Reiß also suggests a fourth text type: the “multimedial text type,” which can “serve as a framework for the composition of the other three types” (p. 137). In other words, this type of text involves the use of audio or visual elements to supplement the conveying of meanings, such as film scripts or subtitles.

Of course, a certain does not necessarily fall within one specific text type; it can take an in-between position among the three types. Here we may refer to Jeremy Munday's triangular diagram (translated from Reiß's idea and visualized by Andrew Chesterman in 1989) in his work, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*:

Figure 3.1 Munday's diagram (2001) of Reiß's three text types



In conclusion, we know from Reiß's view that the so-called "equivalence" is not just about seeking correspondence as narrow as word or sentence; it is also about "text." We can see from Figure 3.1 that "satire" occupies a place between the expressive and operative, which I suggest that we bear in mind in preparation for the textual analysis chapter. Only when we understand the function and purpose of the source text/culture first can we produce a translation that, if deemed to be "adequate" enough, achieves equivalence of function and reaction.

3.1.3 Skopos Theory

It is widely regarded that Reiß's emphasis on the function of the source text has paved the way for Vermeer to expand the functionalist idea into the broader concept of *skopos*. In the book mentioned above, *Toward a General Theory of Translation Action*, Vermeer (2013) precedes his explanation about the "skopos" in translational action with a remark that introduces what "skopos" is from the angle of behavioral sciences. The

word *skopos* comes from the Greek word *skopós*, which, according to Vermeer, means “purpose” or “aim,” and he sees such terms as purpose, aim, function, and *skopos* as synonymous (p. 86). He opens his remark by saying “An action is always preceded by (conscious or unconscious) expectations about a future situation in comparison to how the current situation has been assessed” (p. 85); also, “[A] person then acts in such a way that his action can be justified by his assessment of the situation” (p. 85). This is because we accept a set of norms controlled by conventions, so the fact that we have a particular act (acting) in a particular situation is, in fact, a sort of “re-acting” that serves to provide appropriateness in this situation (it is assumed that everyone wants to act appropriately). In brief, we imitate the behavior of others that is deemed to be appropriate. With this in mind, Vermeer goes further to point out:

Acting is “intentional” or “purposeful” in two ways: it is intended to be appropriate to the situation and it is intended to achieve an aim in a given situation, e.g. to adjust oneself to a situation or to change a situation to mould it to one’s own purpose (p. 87).

That is to say, in the assessing process before acting, we bear two things in mind: the fact that we have to be appropriate to the situation, and the aim that we want to achieve by being appropriate. For example, during a meeting, a person may behave in such a way that (1) he will be considered to be decent (like being polite or making the attendees feel comfortable), and (2) it is convenient for this person to satisfy their objective (like persuading the attendees of something or creating a good personal image).

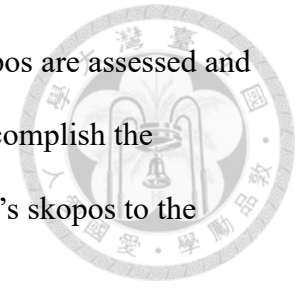
However, the most important thing is that, in achieving the “aim,” there is a discrepancy of interpretation between “the producer” (the person who acts) and “the recipient” (the interaction partner). Vermeer clarifies that “An action is successful if it

can be interpreted as adequate or reasonable with regard to the situation. As we have already stated, this interpretation is first required of the agent (producer) himself: he must state what his ‘intention’ was” (p. 88). In other words, the real achievement of one’s aim happens only when the producer’s anticipation coincides with the interpretation of the recipient. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily happen – as described by Vermeer, “An action can be considered (completely) successful (for both parties) if the values assigned to it by the sender and the recipient are within the permissible value parameters set for each case so that neither of the two ‘protests’” (p. 89).

Vermeer then applies his idea of *skopos* to translational action. Since “translational action is a specific form of interaction” (p. 89), the reasoning in behavioral sciences is applicable in translation: The idea of “purpose determining whether, how, and what is done,” if put into the service of translational action, then becomes the idea that translational purpose determined how the translation process is done, as defined by Vermeer: “The highest rule of a theory of translational action is the ‘*skopos* rule’: any action is determined by its purpose, i.e. it is a function of its purpose or *skopos* (p. 90).

Vermeer goes on to argue that in translators’ decision-making, there are three phases of work that prove necessary. First, translators need to make sure that they can “assess” the target audience in order to understand the *skopos*. Second, “redefining the relevance of certain aspects of the source text according to the *skopos* set” (p. 91) is also necessary; Vermeer explains this by saying, for example, that if a cultural history, written by a Latin American author in Spanish and is intended to reach a Central European audience, then it must go through “rewriting,” where the adaptation can be made during the pre-translation process of consulting specialists, made by inviting a translator who has a relevant specialty, or made during the post-translation process of

asking specialists to examine the work (p. 91). Finally, after the skopos are assessed and redefined, translators may transfer the source text functionally to accomplish the skopos; this requires translators' competence to carry the source text's skopos to the target text.



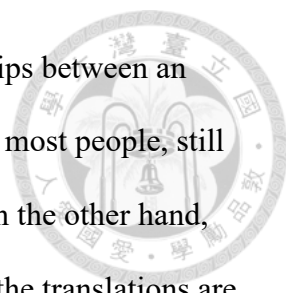
Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, there is a discrepancy of interpretation between “the producer” and “the recipient;” in a similar sense, a translator's skopos may still not align with that of the target audience. Vermeer argues that the discrepancy lies in three facts. Firstly, “Translating/interpreting is an action which differs fundamentally from producing a source text” (p.92); to put it straightforwardly, the inherent differences between the source and the target may be too large for the translator to retain the skopos of the source text. Secondly, since translational action is an offer of information to interest the recipient, the translation may be tailored; therefore, the “novelty” in this translation can make the skopos of the target different from that of the source. Thirdly, the transfer itself makes it impossible to retain the completely same skopos, because, both linguistically and culturally, “the value of an element of one system that is transferred into another system is bound to change because it is now related to the elements of the new system” (p. 93).

If I may, Vermeer's concept of skopos in translational action probably can be summarized like this: As translators, we assess the skopos of the target audience first, and then we tailor the text to the target text's purpose by skillfully transferring the skopos. However, given all this, the skopos will still shift, since there are inherent differences between the source and the target, and our tailoring inevitably makes the skopos change, and the transfer involved in two different cultural or linguistic systems makes it impossible to retain the same skopos, either. Vermeer concludes his remark by saying that “if the result is bound to be a ‘different’ text, we can only demand that it be

as close as possible to the source text. This may even be achieved precisely through a change of function” (p. 93). Hence, the functional changes happening in translation seem to be an inevitable thing if we want to fulfill the source text’s skopos as fully as possible.

3.1.4 “Function Plus Loyalty”

Skopos theory, target audience-oriented, seems to give translators some valid reasons to tailor the text, thus making them less caught in the straitjacket of source text and acquire more autonomy to interpret. Still, it is questionable to what extent translators are allowed to “tailor,” in order to reach the final goal of satisfying the target audience’s needs. In 1997, Christiane Nord discussed this question in her essay, “Function plus Loyalty” (Funktionsgerechtigkeit und Loyalität). Though not directly denying the idea of skopos theory, Nord (2007) calls into question the autonomy acquired by translators in the use of skopos theory’s functionalist idea. She points out that some people criticize functionalist translators for “losing sight of ‘the’ source text” just because of the intention to “take the needs and expectations of their target audience into account” (p. 1). This all results from Vermeer’s concept that sees text as an “offer of information,” as mentioned previously, for translators’ tailoring will inevitably change the source text. Nonetheless, Nord makes another point that is central to her essay: These critics of translation’s functionalism also “reproach functionalism for producing ‘mercenary experts, able to fight under the flag of any purpose able to pay them’” (p. 1). Therefore, not so much a linguistic as an ethical problem arises: Is translators’ autonomy to tailor the text unlimited? Of course, the answer is negative. Nord argues that “translator has to anticipate any misunderstanding or communicative conflict that may occur due to different translational concepts and find a way to avoid them” (p. 2). This is because, in spite of skopos theory’s idea that prioritizes the target audience,



people still have different opinions about the concepts and relationships between an original text and its translation. For instance, some people, or in fact, most people, still expect translators to fully reproduce the essence of the source text; on the other hand, some people may permit translators to adjust the original, as long as the translations are comprehensible or readable. Nord thinks that considering all these different views of the target audience, translators have a responsibility to avoid conflicts caused by these different views, thus being held accountable by their “partners” (such as their client, target audience, and the source-text author) (p. 2). This ethical responsibility is what Nord calls “loyalty.” Here, we may refer to her original definition:

It was argued that translators, in their role as mediators between two cultures, have a special responsibility both with regard to their partners, i.e. the source-text author, the client or commissioner of the translation, and the target-text receivers, and towards themselves, precisely in those cases where there are differing views as to what a ‘good’ translation is or should be (p. 3).

It should be noted that this “loyalty” is different from the linguistic sense of “faithfulness,” which, according to Nord, refers to the “traditional intertextual relationship” and a “linguistic or stylistic similarity between the source and the target texts” (p. 3).

By being “loyal” to the source text, translators may, in turn, be granted a sort of “consent,” or more freedom, by their partners to make necessary changes and adaptations when translating; besides, the target audience will be more willing to accept the received text’s difference (p. 3). Nord thinks that accordingly, the idea of loyalty adds two important qualities to such a functional approach as skopos theory: It “turns skopos theory into an anti-universalist model” and “reduces the perspective of ‘radical’ functionalism” (p. 3). To put it more simply, Nord’s loyalty ensures that translators do

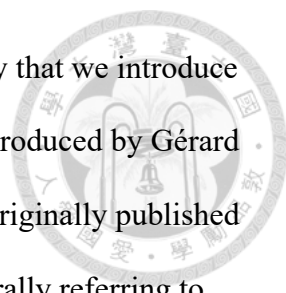
not see skopos theory as a general rule to translate, meanwhile preventing translators from showing disregard for the source text.

It is worth emphasizing again that Nord is not opposing functional theories like skopos theory; instead, her translation approach is built upon two points: functionalism and her own idea of loyalty (p. 12). In conclusion, skopos theory explains from a linguistic point of view the relationship between the source text and the target text, such as how translators should prioritize their target audience and produce a text that satisfies the target audience's needs; however, Nord's viewpoint is ethical, serving to further skopos theory and avoid it from sliding into the trap of over-reliance on the target end. Nord's "function plus loyalty" allows translators to have a certain degree of autonomy, while not overlooking the importance of the source text.

3.2 Factors Beyond Translation

In the section above, we have introduced the functional theories that mainly delve into the act of translating itself. Nevertheless, in translational action, especially in book translation, there is one other factor that we must take into account if we want to develop a thorough discussion: the paratextual elements. Such elements as footnotes, annotations, and translator's comments all have their own functions, and importantly, they may alter the way the main text is received. The very reason for introducing the idea here is because, as we shall see, one of the discussed translations is noticeable for the translator's extensive use of annotations and comments, and they have, to some extent, changed the delivery of black humor. In this section, concepts like Gérard Genette's "paratext" and Kwame Anthony Appiah's as well as Theo Hermans' "thick translation" will be introduced, and hopefully, these concepts will equip us with a clearer landscape to examine the three translations as we reach Textual Analysis.

3.2.1 Paratext



Although our focus will be placed on annotations, it is necessary that we introduce the idea of paratext and its function first. The term “paratext” was introduced by Gérard Genette in his 1997 work, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Originally published in French as *Seuils* in 1987). When Genette uses the term, he is generally referring to the elements that accompany literary works, or specifically, books. He (1997) defines paratext as “what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally to the public” (p. 1). In this way, we may say that paratext includes such elements as footnotes, annotations, comments, forewords, or even the book’s title, cover, illustrations, etc. Genette then gives us his definition of paratext and explains its function; he does not see paratext as a mere “boundary” but a “threshold” or “vestibule” (p. 2). In other words, Genette’s paratext is less a border that separates the paratextual elements and the main text than an entryway for readers to, as Jorge Luis Borges puts it, “step inside” or remain outside. Thus, paratext is like an “undefined zone” that is neither fully part of the main text nor fully irrelevant to the main text. Quoting Philippe Lejeune, Genette thinks that it is this nature of paratext that influences readers’ reading experience of the text. The undefined zone is authorial, and is a zone “between text and off-text,” a zone “not only of *transition* but also of *transaction*: ...” (p. 2). What Genette means is that the zone (paratext) is leaned toward the author, and it carries the agenda of the author; furthermore, it does not only enable readers to access the main text (transition) but is also the space where the author exchanges the paratextual elements’ influence with readers (transaction). The influence might be accepted by the readers, or it might not, but we cannot deny the fact that the author uses paratext for “a better reception” to begin with (p. 2).

In *Translation and Paratexts*, Kathryn Batchelor brings Genette’s concept of paratext into translation studies and gives it a more comprehensive picture. However,

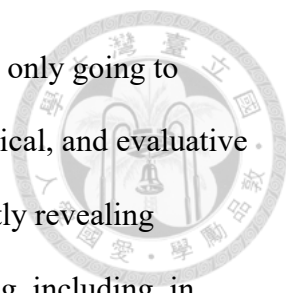
she is not the first scholar to connect Genette's paratext with translation studies. She (2018) thinks that the first ones that do so are Theo Hermans and Urpo Kovala, yet critiquing that those who apply Genette's concept of paratext to translation studies make it too narrow and simple, and refer to the term without considering its nuances (p. 142).

To provide a general term that puts paratext under a broader picture, she redefines paratext as "a consciously crafted threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way(s) in which the text is received" (p. 142). Batchelor's purpose is to discuss paratext in a broader sense, incorporating different types of "paratexts" that vary in terms of different factors, such as paratexts' timing, placement, creators, etc.

Although Batchelor's observation is valuable, here, we are not going to introduce one by one how she explains how these factors influence paratexts, for that will digress from my focus. What I want to focus on here is the "function," namely how paratext(s) may influence the reception of a text.

Of course, the paratext(s) I want to discuss is that of a translated text, but it should also be noted that when Batchelor uses the term "paratext(s)," what she refers to can be the paratext(s) of "any text," which, she thinks, is "[those] denoting any written or spoken words forming a connected piece of work" (p. 142). Thus, paratexts can include those of an original text and those of a translated text itself; in other words, Batchelor's view of translation (and its paratexts) does not see translation as subordinate to the original text.

In any case, Batchelor provides a list of what she thinks is the "function" of paratexts and will be of use in translation studies. Citing Annika Rockenberger, she argues that paratexts' function can be referential, self-referential, ornamental, generic, meta-communicative, informative, hermeneutical, ideological, evaluative, commercial, legal, pedagogical, instructive and operational, and personalization (pp. 160-161).



Again, we are not going to examine every one of these functions, but only going to mention the ones that I think are of concern: the informative, ideological, and evaluative functions. Batchelor explains the informative function as “... explicitly revealing intentions, removing epistemic obstacles to the reader’s understanding, including, in translation contexts, clarifying culture-specific references for a new audience; referring to other helpful information or services” (p. 160), i.e., the informative nature that makes up for the loss that caused by translation’s culture crossing. In terms of the ideological function, Batchelor explains by saying that “[the function of] promoting a certain viewpoint; taking distance from the ideological stance of the text or, particularly in translation situations, of the author or source culture” (p. 160). That is to say, whether a paratext is added to “promote” something or “take distance” from a viewpoint, the paratext’s sender, be it a translator, a publisher, or a third party, is inevitably involved with the process of intervention, and it is through this intervention that the addressee’s way of receiving the text might be altered or influenced. As for paratexts’ evaluative function, Batchelor defines it as “claiming or demanding value and cultural significance” (p. 160), which means that paratexts can serve as an indicator that makes visible the cultural importance of certain elements.

Now, I would like to draw attention back to annotation itself. Suppose we combine Genette’s and Batchelor’s concepts of paratexts’ functions and consider annotation as a sort of paratext. In that case, we can probably explain the functions of annotation like this: Annotations serve as a space where the addressees can access the main text, a space where the way that they receive the main text may be altered, for better or for worse, because of the annotations’ informative, ideological, and evaluative functions.

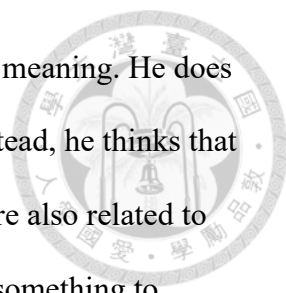
So far, we have mostly touched upon the textual or linguistic aspects of paratexts, yet the discussion of paratexts is also cultural. The evaluative function of paratexts –

“claiming or demanding value and cultural significance” – has let us know that paratexts can be an indicator of some elements’ cultural importance, but it is also necessary that we add to this point by introducing more relevant theories, and it is here that I want to go further to mention the famous concept of “Thick Translation.”

3.2.2 Thick Translation

It is widely known that the term “thick translation” was coined by Kwame Anthony Appiah, but in fact, it comes from an earlier idea of “thick description.” The concept was mentioned for the first time by philosopher Gilbert Ryle in 1968. The term is discussed in a philosophical sense, and it is used to explain the context and underlying meaning behind men’s actions or behaviors. Later, in 1973, cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz applied the term to cultural anthropology in “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” the first chapter of his iconic work *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Two decades later, in 1993, Appiah went further to borrow the idea and applied it to translation studies, where thick description became what we now know as “thick translation.”

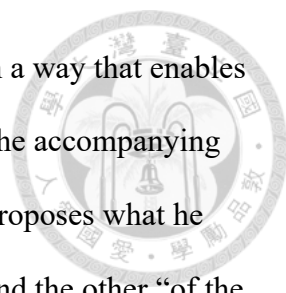
The core of these scholars’ concepts can be said to be essentially the same, but to grasp the essence, I would like to briefly introduce the evolution of thick description or thick translation first. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Ryle’s thick description originally deals with the mental and intentional aspects of human behavior. For example, if there is a man “contracting the eyelid of their right eye,” the contracting might be caused by an “involuntary twitch,” namely a mere physiological response (Geertz, 1973, p. 2); however, the contracting might also be intentional and serve as a “conspiratorial signal,” meaning that the person deliberately “winks” at someone to signal something (p. 2).



Geertz broadens the term's scope and contextualizes its cultural meaning. He does not restrict the concept of thick description to a behavioral sense; instead, he thinks that human behaviors, though indeed involved with intentional aspects, are also related to cultural contexts. Indeed, a “wink” denotes the purpose of signaling something to someone. Nonetheless, how is it so? How should we distinguish a wink from a twitch? By what standard do we define a contracting of the eyelid as a “wink” and those otherwise as a “twitch” (p. 8)? These gestures as well as their functions are all related to our social system.

It is quite obvious that the concept of thickness, whether used in a philosophical sense or an anthropological sense, emphasizes the importance of contextualization. In this regard, Appiah (1993) proposes “thick translation” and defines it as “translation that seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context, is eminently worth doing” (p. 817). Although annotation is certainly my focus, here, what we should pay attention to is Appiah's mention of “a rich cultural and linguistic context.” He thinks that we should consider the cultural and contextual richness of a text; in translation, this means that we should not only convey the text's literal meaning, but we should also carry the richness contained in the original text and transfer it into the target culture or context – one way to achieve this is the adding of annotations or “accompanying glosses.”

Finally, when it comes to thick translation, it is necessary that we introduce Theo Hermans' thick translation as well. In his 2003 essay, “Cross-Cultural Translation Studies as Thick Translation,” he provides his own view of thick translation and explains thick translation from a rather different angle. If Appiah's thick translation is meant to be technical or pedagogical, provided to “teach” us the importance of considering cultural richness and using annotations to preserve the richness, then we



perhaps can say that Hermans' thick translation is epistemological, in a way that enables us to understand translation as a cross-cultural behavior, along with the accompanying phenomena caused by this behavior. For example, Hermans (2003) proposes what he calls "double dislocation," one "of the foreign terms and concepts" and the other "of the describer's own terminology" (p. 386). Basically, this means that in the process of translating, the text in question goes through two phases of displacement: The first phase removes the text from the source language/culture's norms; the second phase then fits the text into the target language/culture. When a text is about to go from the first phase to the second phase, it is the interpreting necessitated in between that makes thick translation come into play. This interpreting manifests the nuances accompanying the cross-cultural action of translating, as Hermans (2003) argues:

To the extent, moreover, that thick translation revels in the minutiae of individual cases and histories, it seeks to avoid the imposition of categories deriving from one particular paradigm or tradition. It is only a mild exaggeration to claim that thick translation contains within it both the acknowledgement of the impossibility of total translation and an unwillingness to appropriate the other through translation even as translation is taking place (pp. 386-387).

Hermans concludes his essay by listing some "advantages" of thick translation, among which, I think, the one that concerns us the most in this research is perhaps the fact that thick translation "flaunts the translator's subject position" (p. 387). In other words, thick translation enables translators to have their say in translating, and it is this autonomy that translators gain that may, in turn, influence how the text is received in the target culture.

However, although thick translation certainly is a way that can make translation "thick," sometimes, if it is employed improperly, the result may turn out to be self-

defeating. In the journal article, “Yi de fengshi houzhong? Yi de bendun yongzhong? Fanyi yu wenhuazaixian de jidian sikao” (〈譯得豐實厚重？譯得笨鈍臃腫？翻譯與文化再現的幾點思考〉) [Thick Translation or Stupid Translation? Some Reflections on Translation and Cultural Reproduction], the author Zhang Pei-yao (張佩瑤) (2007) points out the negative effect of an excessive amount of thick translation. She argues that excessive footnotes may contribute to the “overload” of messages and burden the readers (p. 75). Thick translation itself is in fact a risky attempt that may compromise the translation and make translation laughable (p. 76). To use her own words, the Chinese word for “thick” is “厚” (*hou*), yet semantically, the word “厚” also connotes “stupid” (笨, *ben*); when a translator’s employment of footnotes is improper or excessive, thick translation can still be an unsuccessful translation strategy.

3.3 Summary

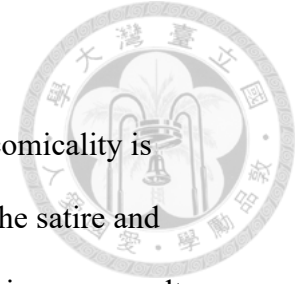
For now, I reckon that we have acquired quite enough theoretical knowledge; as for how it is presented in actual translation, we probably will have a clearer idea when we reach Textual Analysis. Here, I would like to briefly summarize the translation theories that I have introduced, and point out their connection with my following textual analysis.

As mentioned in the first chapter, this research aims to analyze the three translators’ renditions of black humor. It is quite clear that when we say so, we are implying that there is a sort of black humor that is expected to be translated properly in order to achieve a certain degree of satisfaction among the target-language/culture readers. This obviously corresponds to skopos theory’s principle that “an action is determined by its purpose;” we assume that we have to deliver some sort of comic effect in the translation of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, so we opt for a certain strategy to

translate. Translating by, for example, considering the function of the text first (Reiß's equivalence; in my case, the function is expressive and operative, as shown in Figure 3.1), we aim to produce among the target audience a reaction (laughing) that is similar to that of the source audience (dynamic equivalence). This is not just because we are obliged to be a professional linguist who can skillfully reproduce the comic effect, but is also because we have to be "loyal" to our partners (function plus loyalty).

Furthermore, when we consider our translation, paratextual elements are also at play. Since annotation is a sort of paratext, and it is a space for readers to access the main text (Genette's concept of paratext), and it has informative, ideological, and evaluative functions (Batchelor's concept of paratext), when examining the translations of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, we must also take into account those paratextual elements/annotations. This is not only because they entail cultural richness that we should carry and transfer into the target text (Appiah's thick translation), but is also because the metalanguage of these paratextual elements entails certain translational phenomena (Hermans' thick translation), such as the flaunting of translators' subject position.

Chapter IV: Textual Analysis



As mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, *Miss Lonelyhearts*' comicality is difficult to translate because it entails great thematic depth, namely the satire and implicit criticism of various aspects of life in the 1930s, such as religion, mass culture, and the whole society at large. Meanwhile, the narrative is sometimes intertwined with culture-specific items, which makes translating the comic effect even more challenging. It might be necessary to adopt certain translation strategies to reproduce West's black humor, or at least not sacrifice too much of it.

Here, I would like to precede the textual analysis with a brief summary of my findings, so that along the way of textual analysis, we can be more aware of the three translations' problems. In the following textual analysis, extra attention should be paid to the importance of translating West's black humor in connection to the thematic depth, and more importantly, how the delivery of black humor may be compromised when translators do not opt for a proper translation strategy, if any.

The first finding of my research is that the three discussed translators, Deng, Shi, and Li, all rely heavily on literal translation. As suggested by the theoretical framework of dynamic equivalence, text-typological approach, and skopos theory, a translator must first consider the purpose of the to-be-translated text in the target language/culture, thus producing a translation that can effectively convey the textual meaning and create an equivalent of feeling in the target-language audience. Nevertheless, the three translators' use of literal translation suggests that they may overlook the importance of considering their translation's purpose: to enable Taiwanese readers to feel "naturalness" as reading the translation, while not losing the essence of West's satirical tone and the novella's thematic depth. Accordingly, the literal translations suggest their tendency to prioritize linguistic accuracy over cultural richness, yet they only fail to translate the novella's

expressiveness and operativeness.

The second finding is concerned with Deng's translation, which includes extensive use of paratextual elements like annotations and translator's comments, suggesting his attempt to make his translation "thick." This aligns with Appiah's idea of making translation culturally rich and with Hermans' view of annotations' functions. Deng's strong intention to annotate also conforms with Hermans' mention of "translators' subject positions." Deng sometimes makes his own "comments" within these paratextual elements, intending to analyze the cultural meaning for his readers. However, this, though informative and indeed "thick," may in turn risk altering the reception of the text's black humor while Deng's intervention to annotate becomes too active to keep the delicate balance between "to laugh" and "not to laugh."

In this vein, this chapter is divided into two sections: The first section draws attention to the three translators' translations, examining their literal translations and how black humor may be compromised by such a translation technique; the second section will single out Deng's translation, focusing on his annotations and comments to explore the functions of these paratextual elements, for example, if they are effective/helpful or erroneous/problematic.

4.1 *Miss Lonelyhearts*' Translations

The three translators' preference for literal technique, or merely their disregard for the need to translate the black humor properly, can be widely seen throughout their translations of *Miss Lonelyhearts*. Thus, let me classify their literal translations according to the novella's theme so that we can see how their literal translations affect/compromise the delivery of black humor that serves to satirize different aspects. These aspects include West's description of the grotesque and the narrative that is meant to satirize religion and mass culture.

4.1.1 The Grotesque

I have mentioned that West's black humor is built upon a sort of violence, or the confrontation between "to laugh" or "not to laugh." Tseng's article, which I have introduced in Literature Review, also validates the existence of this violence in *Miss Lonelyhearts*. This violence can be observed from West's description of the grotesque characters in a most naked way. These characters, despite possessing an image that is meant to arouse our pity or sympathy, speak or behave laughably (or they may have a distorted physical appearance), thus making us troubled by their comically distorted image and forced into a moral reflection. Hence, linguistically, the translators of *Miss Lonelyhearts* must deliver a high degree of expressiveness, i.e., increasing the readability, in order to arouse emotions and thus reproduce the comically distorted image. Nevertheless, Deng's, Shi's, and Li's translations fail to do this by employing a literal translation strategy; let us consider this example:

The cripple had a very strange face. His eyes failed to balance; his mouth was not under his nose; his forehead was square and bony; and his round chin was like a forehead in miniature. He looked like one of those composite photographs used by screen magazines in guessing contests (West, 2009, p. 109).

The three translators' translations:

Deng	Shi	Li
癩子擁有一幅很奇怪的臉孔，他的兩眼並不平衡，他的嘴巴不是在鼻子的下面，他的額頭是方形和多骨的，他的圓形下巴	癩子長著一張非常奇特的臉。他的兩隻眼睛不平衡；他的嘴不在鼻子底下；他的前額方而瘦；而他的圓下巴卻像個小型	跛子的臉非常奇怪，眼睛一高一低，嘴巴不在鼻子正下方，額頭又方又鼓，圓圓的下巴像是另一個

像是一個小型的額頭。他 看來像是那種組合起來 的相片，被電影雜誌用來 作為猜謎的比賽。 p. 136	的前額。他看上去很像電 影雜誌上作為猜謎遊戲 的合成照片。 p. 95	額頭，看起來像電影雜誌 上猜謎遊戲的合成照片。 p. 118
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Let us pay attention to the last sentence of the text, where West's black humor can be identified instantly. When dealing with such a culture-specific item as "composite photographs used by screen magazines in guessing contests," the three translators all translate "guessing contests" as "猜謎" or "猜謎遊戲" [puzzle], while they do not specify what puzzle they are referring to. In fact, the original text refers to a kind of puzzle popular during the mid-20th century, where magazines would combine different celebrities' features into a "composite photograph." By failing to specify this American culture-specific item, the three translators compromise the presentation of the cripple's comically distorted image and, by extension, the effect of the whole passage's black humor. Addition might be necessary when translating this text, and here is my translation for reference:

The cripple had a very strange face. His eyes failed to balance; his mouth was not under his nose; his forehead was square and bony; and his round chin was like a forehead in miniature. He looked like one of those composite photographs used by screen magazines in guessing contests.	道爾的外表有些其貌不揚。他的眼睛並不對稱、嘴巴不在鼻子正下方、額頭方正而消瘦、下巴圓圓的像個小小的額頭。他的長相，就像是電影雜誌裡頭，猜名人遊戲用的各種不同名人照片所合成出的。
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When West goes on to describe the cripple's "comic" image of lacking social skills, the three translators, again, slide into the trap of seeking word-level correspondence:

When the cripple finally labored into speech, Miss Lonelyhearts was unable to understand him. He listened hard for a few minutes and realized that Doyle was making no attempt to be understood. He was giving birth to groups of words that lived inside of him as things, a jumble of the retorts he had meant to make when insulted and the private curses against fate that experience had taught him to swallow (p. 110).

The three translators' translations:

Deng	Shi	Li
當這位瘸子終於說出話時，「寂寞芳心小姐」卻不能了解他，他努力的聆聽了幾分鐘，他體認到「多亦爾」並沒有意圖要讓別人了解他的話。 <u>多亦爾說出了一組一組的字，它們是以東西的形式存在於他的心中，他擁有一堆反駁的字眼，是用於被侮辱攻擊的時候，也有一</u>	最後瘸子非常吃力地講起話來，寂寞芳心小姐卻一句也聽不懂。他仔細聽了一會兒，就明白道伊爾並不想要人聽懂。 <u>他只是把許多鬱積在心中的話傾吐出來，它們是受侮辱時早就想說出口的反駁，是在經驗的勸阻下隱而未發的對命運的悄悄詛咒。</u>	跛子終於勉強說起話來，寂寞芳心小姐卻聽不懂他在說什麼。他集中注意力聽了幾分鐘，發現杜爾根本沒有要讓人了解他的意思。 <u>他咕嚕著一團團的字眼，好像嘴裡含著東西似地吐出一堆他準備在被汗辱時拿來回嘴的話，還有從教訓中學到必</u>

<u>些私自個人的咒語，他是</u> <u>用於對付命運，這種命運</u> <u>是經驗教導他要能容忍。</u> p. 136 My underscore.	pp. 95-96 My underscore.	<u>須往肚裡吞的對命運的</u> <u>詛咒。</u> pp. 118-119 My underscore.
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Let us imagine this case: The three translations are presented to people who have not even heard of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, yet these people are not informed that the texts are translated. In this case, these people can probably still tell that the texts are translated instead of written originally in Chinese. The underlined sentences all sound unnatural and translated with heavy translationese. Linguistically, this reduces the translations' readability; meanwhile, in terms of the expressive and operative functions, as suggested by Reiß and Munday, the translations do not effectively arouse readers' emotions (sympathy and the urge to laugh) and motivate them to begin a moral reflection.

Nevertheless, in Li's translation, one thing is worth our notice. The linguistic "unnaturalness," if coped with properly, may turn out to be effective when we take into account the "reproduction" of the cripple's comical image. When mimicking the cripple's idiosyncrasy and gibberish, West intentionally writes a long sentence, as if the character was uttering without a pause (He was giving birth to groups of words that lived inside of him as things, a jumble of the retorts he had meant to make when insulted and the private curses against fate that experience had taught him to swallow). Li's translation quite effectively reproduces the comic image, while my translation, considering the purpose of producing "naturalness," does not adopt such a strategy.

My translation:

When the cripple finally labored into speech, Miss Lonelyhearts was unable to understand him. He listened hard for a few minutes and realized that Doyle was making no attempt to be understood. He was giving birth to groups of words that lived inside of him as things, a jumble of the retorts he had meant to make when insulted and the private curses against fate that experience had taught him to swallow.	道爾終於打破沉默說了些話，但寂寞芳心小姐卻沒能聽懂。他專心聽了好一會兒，卻發現道爾只是兀自地說著，沒有顧慮到他並聽不懂。道爾說話時，總是會直接讓一些存在於內心的事物脫口而出，就好像被冒犯時，急於反駁而變得語無倫次似地；也彷彿他過往吞下太多的不堪，想咒罵命運，因此便直接將內心的不滿抒發出來。
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4.1.2 Religion

Certainly, West's black humor of the grotesque characters is revealed in a naked way, but the writing of these comically distorted characters is not the only and chief reason that makes *Miss Lonelyhearts* "black." In Literature Review, I have introduced some studies that explain the humor of "black humor;" here, I would like to re-quote Hsiao. He (2016) thinks that the humor of black humor is "anti-rationalist," or it "reflects and satirizes the contemporary era (p. 52). In other words, the humor of black humor engages in one specific historical moment and satirizes the elements prevalent at this moment, or in Hisao's words, the rationalism prevalent during a specific period. For West, one of these very elements that he satirizes in *Miss Lonelyhearts* is religion – or we may say that for *Miss Lonelyhearts*, Christianity is his rationalism. However, it is also because of black humor's engagement in one specific historical context that

translators' task to reproduce black humor becomes even more challenging. When translators of *Miss Lonelyhearts* are dealing with the novella's religious elements, they are, in fact, also translating some concepts of the corresponding history/period (the 1930s). Of course, this is difficult, but the three translators' literal translations again fail to translate West's black humor along with this historical specificity.

Let us consider this example:

ADDING MACHINE USED IN RITUAL OF WESTERN SECT...Figures Will be Used for Prayers for Condemned Slayer of Aged Recluse...DENVER, COLO., Feb. 2 (A. P.) Frank H. Rice, Supreme Pontiff of the Liberal Church of America has announced he will carry out his plan for a 'goat and adding machine' ritual for William Moya, condemned slayer, despite objection to his program by a Cardinal of the sect. Rice declared the goat would be used as part of a 'sack cloth and ashes' service shortly before and after Moya's execution, set for the week of June 20. Prayers for the condemned man's soul will be offered on an adding machine (pp. 14-15).

The three translators' translations:

Deng	Shi	Li
『「加法機器」被用於西方教派的儀式……，數字將被應用於為一位死刑犯的祈禱，……。科羅拉多州，丹佛市』，二月二日。(美聯社)	西部某教派宗教儀式中使用加法計算機……將用數字替殺害老隱士的死囚祈禱……科羅拉多州丹佛市美聯社二月二日訊：美國自由派教會的	「計算機現身西方教派宗教儀式中……以數字為殺害隱居老人的兇手祈禱……科羅拉多州，丹佛市，二月二日(美聯社)美國自由派教會總會長

「美國自由主義教會」的教皇法蘭克・萊斯公開宣布，他將會執行他的計劃，不顧該教派一位主教的反對，他將為已經定罪的殺人犯「威廉・毛亞」舉行一項「山羊與加法機器」(goat and adding machine)的宗教儀式。萊斯宣稱，這隻山羊將被使用於一項「懺悔服與灰燼」的儀式[註 22]，時間是在毛亞被處決不久之前與之後，日期是設定在六月廿日。<u>為此死刑犯所提供的祈禱詞將會被應用於一具「加法機器」</u>，…… [註 22] 「sack cloth and ashes」(懺悔服與灰燼)，表示懺悔之義。 p. 70	大主教弗蘭克・H・拉斯宣稱，他將按照原定計劃，替已判死刑的殺人犯威廉・摩耶舉行「山羊和加法計算機」的宗教儀式，儘管這一計劃遭到教派中一個紅衣主教的反對。拉斯說，山羊將在六月廿日死刑執行前後作為「哀悔」儀式的一部分。<u>替死者靈魂的祈禱將在加法計算機上進行。</u>…… p. 35 My underscore.	法蘭克・萊斯不顧該教派主教的反對，宣布將為殺人犯威廉・摩亞進行『代罪羔羊與計算機』計劃。萊斯說，摩亞在六月二十日被處死後將舉行『披麻蒙塵』禮拜，那隻羔羊會在禮拜中獻上。<u>他們將用計算機為兇手靈魂獻上禱告。</u>……」 pp. 31-32 My underscore.
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My underscore.		
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It would be hard to find a passage with a stronger satirical tone than this one. The passage, a clipping from a newspaper – the prevailing form of the spread of information during the industrial period – satirizes not only Christianity but the whole industrial society at large. In 1930s America, as people experienced the country’s worst economic downturn and were filled with dismay, they sought the salvation brought by Christianity. Nevertheless, such a human thing as religious salvation becomes the biggest joke when it is embraced in an industrial period, where machines have technologically replaced humans. In this passage, the prayer, instead of being delivered by a human being, is told by “the clatter” of an adding machine; this is West’s black humor that satirizes modern society, which has reduced a religious and spiritual ritual to a repetitive and mechanical practice. In Bergson’s words, the phenomenon is a sheer “mechanization,” in which such human behavior as a religious ritual becomes inelastic, as if “mechanized.”

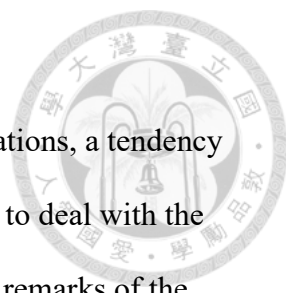
This sort of black humor is characteristic of West’s writing in *Miss Lonelyhearts*. Nonetheless, the three translators, again, do not effectively deliver this black humor to create a confrontation between “to laugh” and “not to laugh,” for their literal translations and lack of linguistic naturalness compromise the comic effect. Paying attention to the underlined sentences, we can find that they do not specify what it means by “祈禱詞將會被應用於一具「加法機器」” [the prayer will be delivered by an “adding machine”], “替死者靈魂的祈禱將在加法計算機上進行” [the prayer ritual for condemned man’s soul will be delivered by an adding machine], and “他們將用計算機為兇手靈魂獻上禱告” [they will use an adding machine to deliver the prayer for the

condemned man's soul].⁹ Anyone who speaks Chinese as a native language perhaps will wonder: How to use an adding machine to deliver/offer a prayer? Therefore, it may be necessary to employ addition or to use onomatopoeic words to specify that it is the adding machine's "clattering" that replaces a priest's mumbling prayer.

Here is my translation:

ADDING MACHINE USED IN RITUAL OF WESTERN SECT...Figures Will be Used for Prayers for Condemned Slayer of Aged Recluse...DENVER, COLO., Feb. 2 (A. P.) Frank H. Rice, Supreme Pontiff of the Liberal Church of America has announced he will carry out his plan for a 'goat and adding machine' ritual for William Moya, condemned slayer, despite objection to his program by a Cardinal of the sect. Rice declared the goat would be used as part of a 'sack cloth and ashes' service shortly before and after Moya's execution, set for the week of June 20. Prayers for the condemned man's soul will be offered on an adding machine. ...	「西方教派將於宗教儀式中使用機械 計算機……（科羅拉多州丹佛市）殺 害隱居老人嫌犯之祈禱儀式將以機械 計算機進行……（美聯社二月二日報 導）。美國自由派教會最高教宗法蘭 克・萊斯不顧教派主教反對，宣布將 以『羔羊』作為祭品，並使用『機械 計算機』替殺人犯威廉・摩亞進行祈 禱儀式。萊斯教宗表示，六月二十日 當週，在摩亞處決前後的『懺悔時 間』會獻上羔羊當作祭品，並以機械 計算機敲打的聲響來取代唸禱 詞。……」
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⁹ The texts inside square brackets are translated back to English literally by me to show the (negative) effect of literal translations.



There are more examples available. Throughout the three translations, a tendency is revealed that the translators all adopt a literal translation technique to deal with the black humor that satirizes religion. Besides this passage, the satirical remarks of the anti-Christian character, Shrike, are also part of the elements that serve to thematically satirize religion, yet they are translated by the three translators in a way that might linguistically reduce the translations' naturalness and expressiveness, thus compromising the delivery of black humor.

4.1.3 Mass Culture

Another thing that West intends to satirize is the mass culture of 1920s and 1930s America. In fact, the protagonist's job as an "advice columnist" is itself a satire on the mass culture of the time. As the American people were undergoing a difficult time and were in need of "advice" that could help them get through the hardship, newspapers and publishers served as an "advice system" while continuing to benefit from capitalism. Thus, Miss Lonelyhearts, despite being an advice columnist, becomes a victim of this system as well when he reads those depressing letters and is asked to "give advice." Metafictionally, the job of advice columnist is made more ironic when even the protagonist himself is aware of the job's uselessness and ridiculousness, as we can see from this passage:

Perhaps I can make you understand. Let's start from the beginning. A man is hired to give advice to the readers of a newspaper. The job is a circulation stunt and the whole staff considers it a joke. He welcomes the job, for it might lead to a gossip column, and anyway he's tired of being a leg man. He too considers the job a joke, but after several months at it, the joke begins to escape him. He sees that the majority of the letters are profoundly humble pleas for moral and spiritual advice,

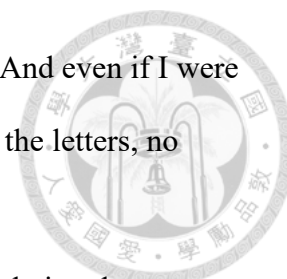
that they are inarticulate expressions of genuine suffering. He also discovers that his correspondents take him seriously. For the first time in his life, he is forced to examine the values by which he lives. This examination shows him that he is the victim of the joke and not its perpetrator (West, 2009, p. 76).

The job as an advice columnist and the pen name “Miss Lonelyhearts,” assigned to the protagonist to fill the readers’ loneliness, is a sheer irony to the protagonist. Meanwhile, the irony becomes heavier as the protagonist experiences a mental breakdown in reading those letters, while still trying to give advice and help his readers. In the following passage, we can see that he is struggling to help his readers, yet he fails to sympathize with them:

... What had happened to his great understanding heart? ... He had learned not to laugh at the advertisements offering to teach writing, cartooning, engineering, to add inches to the biceps and to develop the bust. He should therefore realize that the people who came to El Gaucho were the same as those who wanted to write and live the life of an artist, wanted to be an engineer and wear leather puttees, wanted to develop a grip that would impress the boss, wanted to cushion Raoul’s head on their swollen breasts. They were the same people as those who wrote to Miss Lonelyhearts for help (p.52).

Apart from satirizing the “advice column” as part of the mass culture of the time, West clearly also satirizes the whole advertising industry in this passage. For West, it is perhaps a bit laughable that people, while not realizing the reality of their desires, all crave success without putting in much effort, and the advertisements that teach people how to achieve success become the biggest irony. When Betty, Miss Lonelyhearts’ fiancée and a character naïve to his spiritual and religious crises, tells the ailing Miss Lonelyhearts to quit his job and recover from his illness by working at an advertising

agency, he also responds: “You don’t understand, Betty, I can’t quit. And even if I were to quit, it wouldn’t make any difference. I wouldn’t be able to forget the letters, no matter what I did” (p. 76).



Back to translation, translators of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, when translating the passage above, perhaps will all scratch their heads in dealing with culture-specific items like “wear leather puttees” and “wanted to cushion Raoul’s head on their swollen breasts.” Apparently, if translators deal with these phrases by translating them literally, the translations will sound awkward and make no sense, at least in Chinese; as we can see from the three translations:

Deng	Shi	Li
……他富於同情體諒的一顆心發生了什麼事？……他曾經學習知道，對於教導如何寫作、如何漫畫、如何增加手臂肌肉的寬度與如何擴大胸部的一些廣告，一個人是不應該發出笑聲。因此他也應該知道，來到「耶爾·高酋」的這些人，與那些想要寫作並且成為藝術家的人， <u>與那些穿著皮革綁腿想要成為工程</u>	他這顆偉大的諒解的心究竟怎麼啦？……他早已學會不去譏笑那些待聘廣告：教寫作，教漫畫，教工程學，幫你增強二頭肌和擴大胸圍。因此他應該明白，來到埃爾高契的人也就是學習寫作，過藝術家生活的人， <u>要當工程師穿皮裹腿的人，要學會本領贏得老闆青睞的人，要把羅爾¹⁰的頭枕在自已腫起的胸脯上的人。他</u>	……他那善解人意的心到哪兒去了？……他已學會不去嘲笑那些廣告；教人如何寫作、畫漫畫、成為工程師、擁有健美的肌肉以及讓胸部更豐滿。他早該知道來這舞廳的人，以及那些想成為作家、藝術家、 <u>穿著皮靴的工程師、想以強而有力的握手讓上司另眼相看的</u> 人，還有想讓帥哥把她們 <u>雄偉的胸部當枕頭躺的</u>

師的人，與那些設法想要 使老闆刮目相看的人，他 們這些人都是一樣的。他 們與那些寫信給「寂寞芳 心小姐」求助的人也都是 一樣的。 pp. 98-99 My underscore.	們也就是寫信向寂寞芳 心小姐求助的人。 10 似指法國可以吟唱的 史詩裏因爭采邑而被殺 的封建主羅爾父子。 p. 59 My underscore.	女人，和那些來信向寂寞 芳心小姐求救的人沒有 兩樣。 p. 68 My underscore.
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For some unknown reason, Deng omits the phrase “wanted to cushion Raoul’s head on their swollen breasts;” importantly, the source text of the underlined sentences carries a high-density message, yet the three translators all cope with it without specifying the sentences’ central meaning, namely the ridiculousness of people’s desire to achieve success with a minimum of effort. Shi adds a footnote and tries to bridge the cultural gap caused by “Raoul’s head,” but it does not seem to be of help, either.

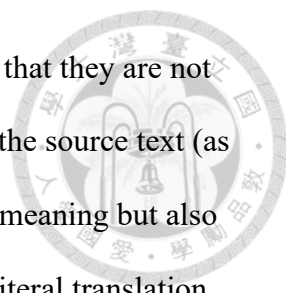
My translation:

... What had happened to his great understanding heart? He had learned not to laugh at the advertisements offering to teach writing, cartooning, engineering, to add inches to the biceps and to develop the bust. He should therefore realize that the people who	……他想著自己那顆善解人意的心究竟到哪去了？……況且，他知道自己不該嘲笑任何人，就好比那各式各樣的廣告，有教人寫作的、畫諷刺圖畫的、學習工程的、增強體魄的、豐胸的。他理應知道，會來到這個地方的，就如同那些人想學寫作、想成為藝術家、想
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came to El Gaucho were the same as those who wanted to write and live the life of an artist, wanted to be an engineer and wear leather puttees, wanted to develop a grip that would impress the boss, wanted to cushion Raoul's head on their swollen breasts. They were the same people as those who wrote to Miss Lonelyhearts for help.	當工程師、想讓體格稱得起那硬挺的皮靴、想依憑強而有力的一次握手就能擄獲老闆芳心、想要讓自己把男人的頭壓向胸前時，能夠充滿自信。這些人，與那些寫信到他專欄求助的人並無異。
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I do not reckon that my translation is fully equivalent to the original and to the cultural essence carried by the messages of the source text. Also, there is a culture-specific item for which I could not come up with a better translation at the time of translating this work: In fact, the name “Raoul” is a common name of Spanish males who possess a “fascinating,” “hot,” and “spicy” image. In this vein, my rendering of “Raoul,” namely “男人” [men], is a bit under-translated, while Li’s “帥哥” [good-looking men] is perhaps a better translation. Still, by specifying the meaning of the source text, I try to employ some translation strategies to make my translation more readable and sound more natural, in the meantime making up for the loss caused by the moving of the text from one culture to another. For instance, when dealing with “wear leather puttees,” I employ addition and translate it as “想讓體格稱得起那硬挺的皮靴.” In doing all this, I hope that West’s black humor (here, people’s superficial ambitions and Miss Lonelyhearts’ impulse to laugh at them) will be reproduced better.

4.2 Deng’s Annotations

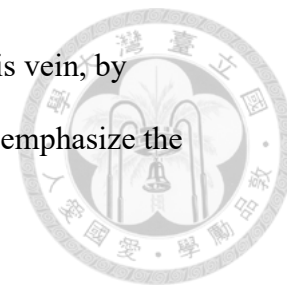


If translators rely on literal translation techniques, we may infer that they are not aware of, or not able to take on, their responsibility of being loyal to the source text (as pointed out by Christiane Nord) and translating not just its linguistic meaning but also the cultural meaning. However, even though Deng relies heavily on literal translation techniques, the translation includes extensive use of annotations and translator's comments, suggesting his intention to bridge the cultural gap and make his translation thick. In the 100 translated pages, 72 annotations/comments are added. That is to say, he is aware of the necessity of translating the text and its cultural richness. Nevertheless, it is in this translating that Deng's thick translation, in turn, poses some problems that are related to our discussion of black humor. Although his annotations and translator's comments sometimes prove to be effective, most of them are involved with his strong intervention to "analyze." Sometimes, he even "explains" the black humor in detail for his readers. I reckon that this intervention may turn out to compromise the delivery of black humor by disturbing the balance between "to laugh" and "not to laugh," thus affecting the translation of black humor. In the following part, I will start with the effective annotations/comments added by Deng, which will then be followed by the annotations/comments that I consider problematic or even erroneous, and that, importantly, influence the translation of black humor.

4.2.1 Effective Annotations/Comments

In explaining the benefits of thick translation, Hermans (2003) argues that "it [thick translation] highlights the constructed, non-essentialist nature of the similarities and differences it established" (p. 387); in other words, this means that by employing such a thick translation approach as adding footnotes or comments, translators' interpreting within the thick translation makes visible the differences between cultures. Every annotation is a kind of interpreting, but some of them are able to effectively

“mark” the cultural differences, whereas some of them are not. In this vein, by “effective,” I refer to the annotations added by Deng that are able to emphasize the differences between the source text and his translation.



Let us consider this example:

Goldsmith laughed, and Shrike, in order to keep him laughing, used an old trick; he appeared to be offended. “Goldsmith, you are the nasty product of this unbelieving age. You cannot believe, you can only laugh. You take everything with a bag of salt and forget that salt is the enemy of fire as well as of ice. Be warned, the salt you use is not Attic salt, it is coarse butcher’s salt. It doesn’t preserve; it kills.” pp. 106-107	「哥德史密斯」笑了出來，史帥克為了要使他繼續發笑，他使用了一個老技倆。史帥克表現出有些不高興，『哥德史密斯，你是這個「懷疑年代」（unbelieving age）[註 65]中危險不良的產物，你不能夠「相信」，你只能夠發笑。你對每一件事情都是十分的懷疑，你忘記了「鹽」是火和冰的敵人。要記住，你所使用的「鹽」不是「雅典的鹽」[註 66]，它是粗糙的屠夫用鹽，它不具保存力，它具有殺傷力。』 [註 65] 「懷疑的年代」（unbelieving age），或可稱為「無信仰的年代」、「非信仰的年代」。 [註 66] 「雅典的鹽」（Attic salt），又指「文雅的雋語」。「鹽」字在此段話中被一字兩用，一語雙關。「take it with a
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	 grain of salt」這句俚語是指值得懷疑， 持保留的態度。 p. 134
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It is no exaggeration that every translator, when translating the word “salt,” will be frustrated by the word’s metaphorical meaning. If a translator simply translates “鹽是火和冰的敵人,” or “你所使用的鹽不是雅典的鹽,” without employing addition to specify the word’s meaning (here, “disbelief”) or adding any annotations to explain its meaning, then the translation will not make any sense in Chinese. This passage, again, is a sheer satire. Here, Shrike, as an anti-Christian stock character, is criticizing Goldsmith, Miss Lonelyhearts’ colleague, for his disbelief in Christianity (“You take everything with a bag of salt”), and considering Goldsmith’s skepticism inelegant (“not Attic salt”). Therefore, “salt,” here, on the one hand, is “skepticism” in general (as “salt” means in the phrase “take everything with a grain/bag of salt”); on the other hand, it refers to Goldsmith’s disbelief in Christianity as a religion.

In other words, the word “salt” entails linguistic and cultural richness, and if it is to be translated, then translators must employ certain translation strategies. By annotating the text and explaining that “「鹽」字在此段話中被一字兩用，一語雙關。「take it with a grain of salt」這句俚語是指值得懷疑，持保留的態度” [the word “salt,” in this passage, has double meanings and serves as a pun. The idiom “take it with a grain of salt” means being skeptical about something and keeping a conservative attitude], Deng effectively helps his readers understand the dissimilarities between English and Chinese.

Still, Deng slides into the trap of literal translation again when coping with the phrase “salt is the enemy of fire as well as of ice.” He does not specify salt’s tricky relationship with “fire” and “ice” by adding a footnote or employing addition, leaving his translation “鹽是火和冰的敵人” awkward and confusing. In fact, the phrase is intertwined with salt’s physical properties; salt can extinguish fire, and it can also accelerate the melting of ice. Thus, salt symbolizes the extinguishing and melting of belief. Again, here I provide my own translation for reference:

Goldsmith laughed, and Shrike, in order to keep him laughing, used an old trick; he appeared to be offended. “Goldsmith, you are the nasty product of this unbelieving age. You cannot believe, you can only laugh. You take everything with a bag of salt and forget that salt is the enemy of fire as well as of ice. Be warned, the salt you use is not Attic salt, it is coarse butcher’s salt. It doesn’t preserve; it kills.” p. 106-107	戈德史密斯聽見這番話笑了出來，史萊克見狀，又一如往常地故意裝作被冒犯的樣子，繼續逗樂戈德史密斯。 「戈德史密斯，在這樣一個沒有信仰的時代，你這種人就是最糟糕的。你只會笑，卻沒有信仰。你對任何事總是充滿猜忌，卻忘了猜忌是我們的敵人，它熄滅信仰烈火，使信仰冰雪消融。你要知道，你那套沒有信仰的信仰，是沒有任何智慧的，只不過是種粗俗的信仰，不能長久，更會害人。」
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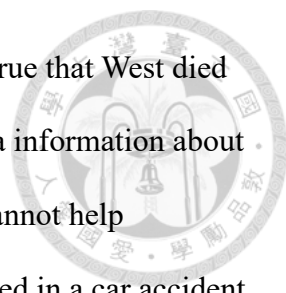
4.2.2 Problematic Annotations/Comments

Although Deng’s annotations/comments prove to be effective sometimes, for the most part, they are redundant, erroneous, or problematic in a way that might, in turn,

compromise the translation of black humor. Since my focus is black humor, here I would like to place my emphasis on the problematic annotations/comments that affect the delivery of black humor, but still, let us start with some redundant and erroneous annotations that Deng makes to see how thick translation “flaunts” Deng’s subjective position as a translator, to the extent that this flaunting has contributed to an overly strong presence.

Let us first consider this redundant annotation:

She borrowed an old Ford touring car from a friend. They loaded it with food and equipment and started out early one morning. As soon as they reached the outskirts of the city, Betty began to act like an excited child, greeting the trees and grass with delight. p. 86	她向朋友借了一輛老型的福特旅行車 [註 60]，他們在車上裝載了食物和器材，在一個清晨出發前往。當他們到達都市邊緣地區時，貝蒂開始表現得像是一個興奮的孩子，她向樹木和草地快樂地問好。 [註 60] 作者威斯特的駕駛技術不高明，1940 年 12 月他在南加州因車禍死亡，當時他所駕駛的也是一輛福特廂形旅行車，他因為忽略了一個停車標誌而撞上右方的來車，他的妻子也一起出事死亡。 p. 122
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Apparently, this annotation is irrelevant to the source text. It is true that West died in a car accident in 1940, and perhaps Deng intended to provide extra information about West's biography, but as readers see this annotation, they probably cannot help wondering: Is this footnote necessary? Knowing the fact that West died in a car accident in 1940 does not help readers understand the source text, and in fact, I do not reckon the source text to be culturally rich, to the extent that an annotation is needed, either. Thus, this annotation merely serves as a proof that Deng wants to take advantage of his subjective position, yet only to make himself overly subjective in his thick translation. This point is also very clear when he says “作者威斯特的駕駛技術不高明” [The author, West, does not have a good driving skill].

Moreover, Deng's annotation sometimes can even be erroneous or misleading; let us consider this example:

“<i>Soul of Miss L, glorify me.</i> <i>Body of Miss L, nourish me</i> <i>Blood of Miss L, intoxicate me.</i> <i>Tears of Miss L, wash me.</i> <i>Oh good Miss L, excuse my plea,</i> <i>And hide me in your heart,</i> <i>And defend me from mine enemies.</i> <i>Help me, Miss L, help me, help me.</i> <i>In saecula saeculorum. Amen.”</i> p. 1	『寂寞芳心小姐的靈魂，歌頌榮耀我。 寂寞芳心小姐的身體，滋養支持我。 寂寞芳心小姐的血液，麻醉興奮我。 寂寞芳心小姐的眼淚，洗濯清潔我。 啊，善良的寂寞芳心小姐，請諒解我的懇求， 把我隱藏在妳的心中，在我的敵人前保護我。 幫助我，寂寞芳心小姐，幫助我，幫助我， 永遠永遠地。阿門。』 [註 7]
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	 [註 7] 『寂寞芳心小姐的靈魂，歌頌榮耀我。』這首祈禱詩是模仿「聖徒羅耀拉」(St. Ignatius Loyola, 1491-1556)所寫「Spiritual Exercise」中《基督的靈魂》(Soul of Christ)而改寫的，作者用「寂寞芳心小姐」取代了「基督」，具有揶揄的用意。羅耀拉是十六世紀來自西班牙的一位軍人、天主教教士。 pp. 58-59
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The passage is a prayer recited by Shrike to mock Miss Lonelyhearts, and in fact, it is a parody of a real prayer titled “Soul of Christ.” Deng attempts to provide extra information concerning the prayer and its writer in his annotation, yet there is more than one error in his annotation. First of all, the writer of this prayer, St. Ignatius Loyola, is an important figure in the Catholic tradition, who founded the Society of Jesus and became its first Superior General. However, Deng, for some unknown reason, mistranslated his venerated title. In the Catholic tradition, Loyola’s name is usually translated as “聖依納爵羅耀拉,” which opts for transliteration, but the translator does not adopt the existing translation and merely translates it as “聖徒.”

The second error is punctuational. The prayer is from Loyola’s work, *Spiritual Exercises*, which is a collected work of Loyola’s Christian meditations, contemplations,

and prayers, and the original title of this very prayer is “Soul of Christ.” By putting “Spiritual Exercises” inside Chinese quotation marks (「」) and “Soul of Christ” inside quilletmet marks (《》), which are used in Chinese to indicate book titles, Deng’s annotation may mislead readers to confuse the book’s name with the prayer’s title.

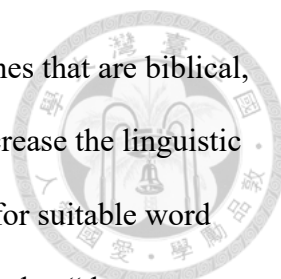
Now, let me switch back to the larger concern of this section, namely the annotations that compromise or affect the delivery of black humor. Let us consider this example first:

“My friend, I know of course that neither the soil, nor the South Seas, nor Hedonism, nor art, nor suicide, nor drugs, can mean anything to us. We are not men who swallow camels only to strain at stools. God alone is our escape. The church is our only hope, the First Church of Christ Dentist, where He is worshiped as Preventer of Decay. The church whose symbol is the trinity new-style: Father, Son and Wirehaired Fox Terrier. ...” pp. 82-83	『我的朋友，我當然知道並不是這土壤、不是那「南方海域」、不是「享樂主義」、不是藝術、不是自殺、也不是藥物能夠對我們有任何的意義。我們不是「吞下駱駝」而在馬桶上用力的那種人，唯有「上帝是我們的解脫，教會是我們的唯一希望，例如這個「基督牙醫第一教會」，在那裏「他」被崇拜為「腐朽蛀牙的防止者」。這個教會的標誌象徵是新式的「三位一體」(trinity)：上帝、兒子、硬毛的獵狐小狗[註59]……。」 [註 59] 此段話具有揶揄玩笑之義。基督教所謂的「三位一體」(trinity)原是
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	指「聖父」、「聖子」、和「聖靈」，小說作者在此使用「硬毛的獵狐小狗」（Wirehaired Fox Terrier）取代了「聖靈」。教會名稱被改成「基督牙醫第一教會」（First Church of Christ Dentist），「上帝」被崇拜為「腐朽蛀牙的防止者」。 p. 119
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Again, the source text is satirical. Miss Lonelyhearts, in a “dismal swamp” (the title of the chapter where the passage in question is located), is struggling to find a way out of his “Christ complex.” Accordingly, Shrike advises that he should live by the South Seas, believe in Hedonism, produce artwork, or even commit suicide and take drugs to get out of this “dismal swamp.” Nonetheless, Shrike suddenly speaks in a different tone, saying that none of the things he mentioned means everything; instead, only God and church can be Miss Lonelyhearts’ escape – the Preventer of Decay, and the First Church of Christ Dentist.

Indeed, the satirical tone and black humor of this passage are performed in a direct way, which, if translators translate it properly and avoid literal translation, perhaps do not need an annotation to “tell” readers that the passage is satirical and serves as a sort of black humor. By telling his readers that “此段話具有揶揄玩笑之義” [this passage is satirical], Deng might, in turn, disturb the delicate balance between “to laugh” and “not to laugh,” affecting the way West’s black humor is presented (much like revealing the punchline of a joke). It is true that the text might still warrant the adding of a footnote



when it comes to the phrases that are culturally rich, especially the ones that are biblical, but I think that the optimal way to make black humor visible is to increase the linguistic expressiveness, for example by creating a better reading flow or opt for suitable word choices, rather than sacrificing readability and directly telling readers that “the passage is satirical.” Here, I provide my own translation for reference:

“My friend, I know of course that neither the soil, nor the South Seas, nor Hedonism, nor art, nor suicide, nor drugs, can mean anything to us. We are not men who swallow camels only to strain at stools. God alone is our escape. The church is our only hope, the First Church of Christ Dentist, where He is worshiped as Preventer of Decay. The church whose symbol is the trinity new-style: Father, Son and Wirehaired Fox Terrier. ...” pp. 82-83	「朋友，事實上我也知道，無論是逃到農村，還是某個南方的海邊，或是投奔於享樂主義和藝術，甚至自殺、吸毒，這些方法都毫無意義。我們都不是會濾了蠔蟲，卻吞下整匹駱駝¹⁰，為了眼前的方便而忘記上帝的人。上帝本身就是我們的解脫方式。只有逃到教堂，才能帶給我們希望。哪怕我們患了齲齒，上帝也會像個醫治我們的神一樣，在教會給予我們救贖。所以，教會的三位一體再也不需要是聖父、聖子、聖靈，只需要聖父、聖子、和一隻狗就足夠……。」 ¹⁰ 馬太福音 23:24：「你們這瞎眼領路的，蠔蟲你們就濾出來，駱駝你們倒吞下去。」
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More examples are available. Let us consider this rather complicated passage:

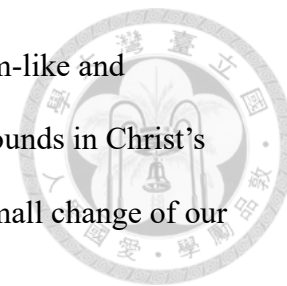
“I am a great saint,” Shrike cried, “I can walk on my own water. Haven’t you ever heard of Shrike’s Passion in the Luncheonette, or the Agony in the Soda Fountain? Then I compared the wounds in Christ’s body to the mouths of a miraculous purse in which we deposit the small change of our sins. It is indeed an excellent conceit. But now let us consider the holes in our own bodies and into what these congenital wounds open. Under the skin of man is a wondrous jungle where veins like lush tropical growths hang along overripe organs and weed-like entrails writhe in squirming tangles of red and yellow. In this jungle, flitting from rock-gray lungs to golden intestines, from liver to lights and back to liver again, lives a bird called the soul. The Catholic hunts this bird with bread and wine, the Hebrew with a golden ruler, the Protestant on leaden feet with leaden words, the Buddhist	史帥克叫嚷道：『我是一位偉大的聖徒（saint），我能夠在我自己的水面上行走，難道你未曾聽過「史帥克在小餐館內的熱情」？或是「汽水飲料基內的痛苦掙扎」嗎？而且我曾經比較過「基督身體的傷口」與「神奇皮包的開口」[註23]，這個皮包開口是用於投入我們罪過（sins）的零錢，這實在是一個極好的觀念，但是現在讓我們來考慮一下我們自己身體內的一些「開口」，以及考慮一下這些「天生的傷口」是通往何處。在人類皮膚下面是一個神奇的叢林，在那裏血管就像是茂盛熱帶植物的成長，懸掛著過熟的器官與雜草般的內臟，它們在紅黃色的纏結中蠕動扭曲。在這個叢林中，從石灰色的肺臟到金黃色的腸子，由肝臟到肺臟，然後又回到肝臟，這中間居住著一隻鳥兒名叫「靈魂」（soul）。「天主教」（Catholic）使用麵包和酒要來捕捉這隻鳥，「希伯來教」（Hebrew）則使用一
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with gestures, the Negro with blood. I spit on them all. Phoooh! And I call upon you to spit. Phoooh! Do you stuff birds? No, my dears, taxidermy is not religion. No! A thousand times no. Better, I say unto you, better a live bird in the jungle of the body than two stuffed birds on the library table.” pp. 16-17	把金尺，「基督新教」(Protestant)則運用緩慢沈重的步伐和憂鬱沈悶的文字，「佛教」則使用姿勢表情，「黑人教」則使用鮮血，我對他們則全部都表示唾棄[註 24]。哼！我要求你們也唾棄它。哼！你會裝填製作鳥兒標本嗎？不對，我親愛的朋友，「動物標本製作術」並不是宗教，不是，一千次的不是。讓我告訴你們，人體叢林中的一隻活鳥是比圖書館桌上的兩隻死鳥標本要來得好[註 25]。』 [註 23] 「神奇皮包的開口」(the mouths of a miraculous purse)，作者在此暗示著金錢與教會的關係。作者採用抽象的描述筆法，把這個「神奇皮包的開口」與「基督身體的傷口」及「人體的一些天然開口」作出暗示性的對照比喻。這些是作者所作的「宗教性諷刺文」(religious parodies)。 [註 24] 『我對他們則全部都表示唾
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	棄』，這整段話是在模仿湯姆斯・佩恩（Thomas Paine）所著《理性的時代》中的一段話，原文結尾是『我對他們則全部都不相信』（I disbelieve them all.），作者改寫成（I spit on them all.）。 [註 25] 「人體叢林中的一隻活鳥是比圖書館桌上的兩隻死鳥標本要來得好」，作者暗示宗教界的「來生」其想像遠景可能是美好的，但是不如活在「今世」來得更好更真實。這篇小說中提到的許多事務都與威斯特個人經驗有關，此處他突然提到「動物標本製作術」，在 1931 年他與一位朋友外出打獵，他打中一隻老鷹後曾立即開車去找一位動物標本製作人，把老鷹製成標本。 pp. 71-72
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Obviously, this passage is another satire where Shrike shows his contempt for religion. By saying “I can walk on my own water” to ridicule Jesus’ walking on water, reducing God’s passion and agony to such mundane settings as “Shrike’s Passion in the Luncheonette” and “the Agony in the Soda Fountain,” Shrike’s remark is blasphemous

yet comically distorted. He even criticizes religion for its materialism-like and transactional system of sin and forgiveness (Then I compared the wounds in Christ's body to the mouths of a miraculous purse in which we deposit the small change of our sins).



In terms of this comically distorted passage, Deng's translation is, again, rather literal, and he chooses to explain the black humor and elaborate on the source text's cultural richness in his annotation, where he directly says “這些是作者所作的「宗教性諷刺文」(religious parodies)” [these are the author's religious parodies]. He tells his readers: “作者採用抽象的描述筆法，把這個「神奇皮包的開口」與「基督身體的傷口」及「人體的一些天然開口」作出暗示性的對照比喻” [The author uses an abstract skill to compare “the mouths of a miraculous purse” to “the wounds in Christ's body” and “the holes in our own bodies,” which is implicit in a figurative sense]. This comment overtly reveals the comic nature of the source text, and this, to some extent, has compromised the delivery of black humor. The source text in question is obviously grotesque, since it gives us “double feelings” (Shrike's blasphemous remark is unsettling yet comic), as defined by the study I have introduced in Chapter 2. Therefore, as readers read the text, they probably feel a subtle balance between horror and laughableness. Thus, to “tell” the readers that “the whole text is the author's parodies” is to disturb this balance.

Reproducing this balance while coping with the culture-specific items is indeed difficult, and again, here is my translation for reference:

“I am a great saint,” Shrike cried, “I can walk on my own water. Haven't you ever heard of Shrike's Passion in the	「我可是個賢者。」史萊克大聲喊道。 「我就像耶穌一樣，能在水上行走。難
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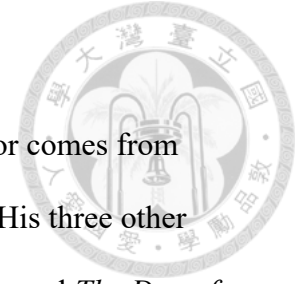
Luncheonette, or the Agony in the Soda Fountain? Then I compared the wounds in Christ's body to the mouths of a miraculous purse in which we deposit the small change of our sins. It is indeed an excellent conceit. But now let us consider the holes in our own bodies and into what these congenital wounds open. Under the skin of man is a wondrous jungle where veins like lush tropical growths hang along overripe organs and weed-like entrails writhe in squirming tangles of red and yellow. In this jungle, flitting from rock-gray lungs to golden intestines, from liver to lights and back to liver again, lives a bird called the soul. The Catholic hunts this bird with bread and wine, the Hebrew with a golden ruler, the Protestant on leaden feet with leaden words, the Buddhist with gestures, the Negro with blood. I spit on them all. Phoooh! And I call upon you to spit. Phoooh! Do you stuff birds? No, my dears, taxidermy is not religion.	道你們沒聽過本大爺在館子和吧檯說過的一番道理嗎？之前，我把耶穌基督的傷口比喻成一個神奇的袋子，我們人，就像是投入零錢一樣，將自己的罪孽丟入其中。這個比喻簡直巧妙極了。不過，現在讓我們來想想自己身上的傷口，這些天生烙印在身上的傷口，裡面究竟是什麼？我告訴你們，人的皮膚底下，有座奇妙的叢林，血管就像濃密的熱帶植物一樣，爬滿濕滑黏軟的器官；野草蔓延般的臟器扭曲纏繞，有黃有紅。而這樣的一座叢林內，還住著一隻鳥，這隻鳥就名叫靈魂：牠從石灰色的肺臟，飛向油黃色的腸道，或是在我們的肝與肺間來回穿梭。但是，有許多人，卻想要獵殺這隻靈魂之鳥，看看那用教條約束的天主教、恪守金科玉律的猶太教、充滿莊重規範的新教、講求舉止端莊的佛教、還有想藉混血來洗淨非裔血統的黑人。這些人，我通通都唾棄！呸！我勸你們也一起唾棄
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No! A thousand times no. Better, I say unto you, better a live bird in the jungle of the body than two stuffed birds on the library table.” pp. 16-17	這些人！呸！不過，難道我們就該把 這隻靈魂之鳥製成標本嗎？不！那樣 就不是我的信仰。不！絕對不該那 樣！這隻鳥，應該要在我們體內的叢 林自由翱翔，而不是變成標本，毫無生 氣地躺在桌上。」
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Furthermore, whether what Deng says about “the mouths of a miraculous purse” is true, this is totally his interpretation, and although every annotation is indeed a kind of interpretation, we must consider: To what extent we are allowed to interpret in our annotations? Nevertheless, I do not think that Deng has considered this question in his annotating, which can be justified in his next two annotations (24 and 25).

It may or may not be true that Shrike’s remark is a parody of Thomas Paine’s *The Age of Reason* (1794) and that West mentions taxidermy in connection to his life experience; nonetheless, is it necessary to include these in annotations? If the information is unnecessary, it is perhaps added by Deng only to make visible his presence as a translator, without knowing that his subject position sometimes, in turn, affects the translation of black humor.

Chapter V: Conclusion



The reason for extra attention in translating West's black humor comes from West's own position as a pioneer in American black-humor writing. His three other novels, *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* (1931), *A Cool Million* (1934), and *The Day of the Locust* (1939), are also black-humor works that serve to satirize contemporary American society. West's narrative is distinguished for its "black" or tragic atmosphere that paradoxically contains comic elements: In *Miss Lonelyhearts*, these elements include characters in extreme agony yet being inarticulate, illiterate, unsociable, or some speeches that seem funny or ridiculous but imply unpleasant social realities. One character that I have mentioned repeatedly, Shrike, is such a character. He is shaped by West to speak or act ridiculously, sometimes deliberately saying something that seems to praise Christianity, but in fact, the words that come out of his mouth are outright irony that mocks religion.

It is this anti-rationalist nature of West's black humor, or black humor in general, that makes translating *Miss Lonelyhearts* or any other black-humor work challenging. When translating *Miss Lonelyhearts*, translators are not only addressing the linguistic elements uniquely introduced by West, but they are also translating the cultural, social, religious, and element of various aspects that West intends to include and satirize, such as Christianity, mass culture, the industrialization of America in the 1920s and 1930s.

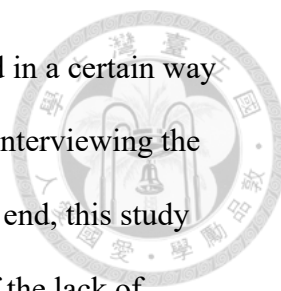
Thus, if West's comedic position is so important that we must not overlook it, and if *Miss Lonelyhearts*'s comic elements are intertwined with various aspects of Depression-era America that serve as the themes, translators have a loyalty to translate the novella as a comic work. Meanwhile, since translators are bound to face translation challenges (as mentioned in the previous paragraph), some translation issues will certainly come to the surface. In this vein, this study attempts to examine Taiwan's

existing translations of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, finding out how different translators deal with the novella's comic elements and black humor.

This study has two main findings. First, the three translators in question, Deng, Shi, and Lee, all heavily rely on literal translation techniques. Nevertheless, function-wise, the approach of literally translating the comic elements and black humor does not prove to be an effective way to achieve textual equivalence, namely expressively arousing the target audience's certain emotions as well as operatively urging readers to begin a moral reflection. This study's second finding is concerned with thick translation. Among the three translations, Deng's especially catches our eye for its extensive use of paratextual elements like annotations or comments. Although his annotations/comments are effective sometimes, they are mostly problematic. They are redundant, erroneous, or presented in a way that might, in turn, compromise the delivery of black humor. Nonetheless, whether Deng's annotations are redundant, erroneous, or otherwise problematic, they are all added with the translator's strong intention to "have a say" in thick translation. However, this subject position merely puts Deng at risk of over-interpreting and disturbing the subtle balance between "horror" and "laughableness" that is unique in West's writing.

Still, research on *Miss Lonelyhearts*' translation or the translation of West's black humor can be made more complete. This study merely focuses on the linguistic side of translation; however, the study on *Miss Lonelyhearts*' Traditional Chinese translation will become deeper and more comprehensive if future research can engage in the external factors that might come into play when it comes to translating this 20th-century black-humor masterpiece. For example, do these translators have any translator's agency, or do they have any agenda, that makes them adopt certain translation techniques? How do the roles of editors, reviewers, or publishers function in the process

of translating and publishing, so that West's black humor is presented in a certain way that enhances or diminishes the comic effect? These can be done by interviewing the translators, editors, or reviewers. In addition, in terms of the reader's end, this study does not conduct a survey on readers' reactions due to the concern of the lack of respondents. Nevertheless, if future research can develop a well-planned survey to investigate how readers or the public respond to the existing Traditional Chinese translations of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, the result perhaps will be more objective and more aligned with Taiwanese readers' reactions.



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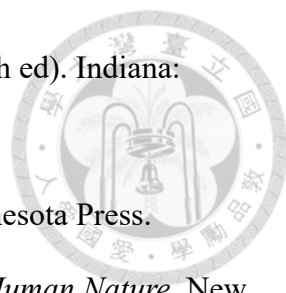
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