

國立臺灣大學文學院翻譯碩士學位學程

碩士論文

Graduate Program in Translation and Interpretation

College of Liberal Arts

National Taiwan University

Master's Thesis

葛浩文英譯本《殺夫》及《孽子》文化翻譯視角研究

Exploring Howard Goldblatt's Translations of *Shafu* and

Niehtzu: A Study on Cultural Translation

陳琪徨

Chi-huang Chen

指導教授：陳榮彬 博士

Advisor: Richard Rong-bin Chen, Ph.D.

中華民國 114 年 7 月

July 2025





國立臺灣大學碩士學位論文
口試委員會審定書

MASTER'S THESIS ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE
NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY

Exploring Howard Goldblatt's Translations of *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*:

A Study on Cultural Translation

葛浩文英譯本《殺夫》及《孽子》文化翻譯視角研究

本論文係陳琪徨（R12147003）在國立臺灣大學翻譯碩士學位學程完成之碩士學位論文，於民國 114 年 7 月 1 日承下列考試委員審查通過及口試及格，特此證明。

The undersigned, appointed by the Graduate Program in Translation and Interpretation on July 01, 2025, have examined a Master's Thesis entitled above presented by CHEN, CHI-HUANG (R12147003) and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

口試委員 Oral examination committee:

陳琪徨

（指導教授 Advisor）

何致和

張俐珮

Acknowledgement

The completion of this Master's thesis "Exploring Howard Goldblatt's Translations of *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*: A Study on Cultural Translation" is a significant academic breakthrough that was made thanks to the positive encouragement, altruistic assistance, and generous support of many involved. Without their care and commitment in the process, my translation study could not have yielded such impressive results that were recognized by the oral examiners other than my advisor Richard Rong-bin Chen.

First, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Szu-wen Kung, Associate Professor of the Graduate Program in Translation and Interpretation, National Taiwan University, for her dedication to my work. At the embryonic stage of my research on sexism and swearword translation in literature, which was inspired by Taiwanese novel *Shafu*, she spontaneously provided me with numerous useful academic resources and constructive suggestions. It is she that laid the groundwork for my translation study.

I am also thankful to everyone who attended the 2025 Postgraduate Symposium on Translation and Interpretation at National Taiwan University, where I officially published my Master's thesis and received valuable feedback, especially two of my fellow students, Bixuan Chan and Jacky Wei, who gave me spiritual support and practical advice before my oral presentation. Moreover, I appreciate and praise the remarkable performance of Ninian Chang, who interpreted for me during my 15-minute briefing. This proves her full preparations for the job and her responsible attitude towards the event.

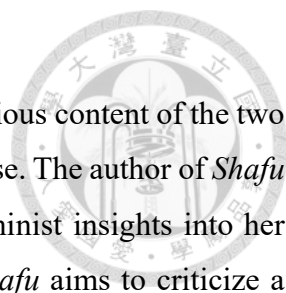
Finally, in addition to the oral examiners, Chih-he He and Li-hsuan Chang, both of whom helped refine my thesis by pointing out the drawbacks and providing clear ways to improve, I am deeply indebted to my advisor, Richard Rong-bin Chen. He is not only a respectable teacher of mine but also a good friend who offers me psychological help every time I feel frustrated. Like Dr. Kung, he selflessly shared a great number of research resources with me and spent time assessing my writing while I was conducting the cultural translation study. With his professional guidance along the way, I got on the right track and completed this Master's thesis successfully ahead of schedule. I am proud to say this research injected with my time, effort, and insight is a tribute to my advisor, marking an important milestone in my academic career.

摘要

《殺夫》及《孽子》皆於 1983 年出版，大膽前衛的題材在當時的時空背景造成轟動。兩部作品的作者分別為李昂及白先勇。前者為臺灣著名的女性文學作家，善於利用作品來探討社會負面現象，而《殺夫》這部中篇小說即是對父權社會的批判，文風大膽，內容充滿性別歧視用語及罵語；後者同為臺灣著名小說家及劇作家，《孽子》為其第一部長篇小說，講述男同志在保守父權社會下的內心掙扎與無奈及玻璃圈次文化，作品中亦不乏性別歧視語言及罵語。再者，兩部經典的臺灣小說英譯本譯者皆為美國翻譯家葛浩文，分別於 1986 及 1990 年出版。本研究之目的在於研究譯者葛浩文在面對兩部臺灣小說時，如何處理文化詞翻譯、處理性別歧視用語及罵語、誤會原文而導致譯文與原文迥異之情形，最後討論可能的原因為何。本研究分析《殺夫》及《孽子》英譯本與原文之間的差異，細述文化翻譯現象及策略。研究結果顯示，葛浩文選擇字詞上未必與臺灣文化意涵相符，如有增減略譯情況，會出現與原文不符之情形，顯示其對臺灣文化並未全面了解。除常見文化詞外，本研究進一步分析性別歧視用語及罵語的翻譯，目前針對罵語翻譯的相關研究不多，預期補足此主題翻譯研究之缺口，發掘新的翻譯議題，為罵語翻譯研究提供參考素材。

關鍵字：葛浩文、文化翻譯、文化詞、性別歧視、罵語

Abstract



Shafu and *Niehtzu* were both published in 1983. The thematically audacious content of the two Taiwanese novels caused a sensation across the country upon their release. The author of *Shafu* is Li Ang, who is a distinguished Taiwanese writer known for her feminist insights into her works and her undaunted debates over negative social phenomena. *Shafu* aims to criticize a male-dominated society in which women are subjected to objectification, victimized by public morals, and confined to men's manipulation. As for Pai Hsien-yung's *Niehtzu*, it clearly depicts the mental struggle and the glass community of homosexual youths living under inviolable patriarchy. The two classic Taiwanese novels were translated into *The Butcher's Wife* and *Crystal Boys* in 1986 and 1990 respectively by American translator Howard Goldblatt. The purpose of the research is to delve into how Howard Goldblatt dealt with CSIs, sexist words, and swearwords in the two works while translating due to cultural differences and to pinpoint and analyze mistranslated texts. It is expected that possible reasons why Goldblatt made translation mistakes can be discovered. From the perspective of cultural translation, Goldblatt's translation strategies and problems will be confirmed, categorized, and commented. Research results suggest that Goldblatt's selections of words do not necessarily dovetail with the cultural context of Taiwan. Moreover, if he employed the amplification or omission strategy while translating, he would likely misunderstand the cultural connotations of the source text, which signifies his inability to have a comprehensive understanding of Taiwanese culture. In addition to common CSI categories, sexism and swearwords in translation are explored in the research. Currently, research on swearword translation remains thin, so it is anticipated that the research gap will be shortened, and that new discoveries of translation issues will be made in the research, providing relevant reference material for translation studies in the future.

Keywords: Howard Goldblatt, cultural translation, culture-specific items, sexism, swearwords

Table of Contents

論文口試委員審定書	i
Acknowledgment	ii
摘要	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 <i>Shafu</i> and Li Ang	1
1.2 <i>Niehtzu</i> and Pai Hsien-yung	4
1.3 Howard Goldblatt and His Works	6
1.4 Research Motivation and Purposes	9
1.5 Research Questions	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
2.1 The Development of Taiwan Literature in the Global Market	13
2.2 Studies on <i>Shafu</i> (<i>The Butcher's Wife</i>) and <i>Niehtzu</i> (<i>Crystal Boys</i>)	16
2.3 A Deep Look into Cultural Translation: CSIs, Sexism, and Swearwords/Taboo words	32
Chapter 3: Research Method	43
3.1 Research Material Collected from the Source and Target Texts	43
3.2 Howard Goldblatt's Translation Principles	44
3.3 Three Central Aspects of the Textual Comparative Analysis	45
3.3.1 CSIs	47
3.3.2 Sexism	49
3.3.3 Swearwords/Taboo words	50
Chapter 4: Howard Goldblatt's Translation of Culture-specific Items	53
4.1 Ecology: Animals and Plants	53
4.2 Social Life: Occupation	55
4.3 Personal Life: Food	56
4.4 Personal Life: Housing	60
4.5 Personal Life: Transportation	61
4.6 Customs and Pursuits	63
4.7 Private Passions: Religion and Music	67

Chapter 5: Howard Goldblatt's Handling of Sexism in Fiction	72
5.1 Word Level: Women as the Marked Form	72
5.2 Word Level: Gender-free Language	73
5.3 Word Level: The Semantic Derogation of Women	74
5.4 Phrase/Sentence Level: Ready-made Phrases	75
5.5 Phrase/Sentence Level: Metaphor	76
5.6 Phrase/Sentence Level: Jokes and Humor	78
5.7 Phrase/Sentence Level: Ideology	79
5.8 Discourse Level: Fragmentation	80
5.9 Discourse Level: Focalization	81
Chapter 6: Howard Goldblatt's Interpretation of Swearwords/Taboo Words in	
Context	83
6.1 Naming and Addressing	83
6.2 The Acts of Sex and Bodily Effluvia	85
6.3 Disease, Death, Killing	92
Chapter 7: Conclusion and Suggestions	95
References	100
Appendix 1: All Foreign Language Versions of <i>Shafu</i>	107
Appendix 2: All Foreign Language Versions of <i>Niehtzu</i>	108

Chapter 1

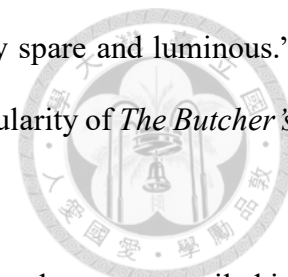
Introduction



1.1 *Shafu* and Li Ang

Shafu (殺夫[literally means the murder of one's husband in Mandarin Chinese]) was penned by Taiwanese novelist Li Ang (李昂), who is renowned for her literary works incorporated with feminist elements and her penetrating insights and criticisms about the ills and evils of Taiwanese society. The novel characterized by the explosive and controversial theme caused a stir shortly after it was published. The erotically graphic and vulgar language that betrayed male chauvinism seemed to be ahead of the times and was therefore not much accepted by those with conservative views, but the work still won the Novella Award hosted by *United Daily News* (聯合報) in 1983. The next year, the novel was adapted for a movie under the same title of the novel *Shafu* (also *The Woman of Wrath*), starring Hong Kong actress Patricia Ha (夏文汐). In 1986, it was translated into English, entitled *The Butcher's Wife*, by Howard Goldblatt (葛浩文) and Ellen Yeung, marking the beginning of the novel's international visibility. In 1987, John Minford tried translating part of the novel and had it compiled in a publication entitled *Renditions*. Since then, the feminist novel has been translated into more than ten languages, including the latest Polish version and Serbian version in 2022. It is worth mentioning that in addition to the movie adaptation, Taiwan Television Enterprise, Ltd. (TTV) produced an eponymous TV series based on the novel in 1998. *Shafu*, which clearly delineates women's inevitable obedience and submission within the narrow confines of a traditional male-dominated society, is arguably one of the most successful Taiwanese literary works at home and abroad. The book review of *New York Times*, quoted from the book cover of the 1995 English edition, says, "*The Butcher's Wife* is not pornographic, but it omits few details or four-letter words . . . Li Ang vividly evokes the landscape, routines, and rituals of the

town, and in this seamless translation, her prose is often imaginatively spare and luminous.” Surely, Li Ang gradually put her name on the map with the growing popularity of *The Butcher’s Wife* in the international literary community.



The story background of *Shafu* actually draws on a real husband murder case compiled in Chen Ting-shan (陳定山)’s book *Chunshun Chiuwen* (春申舊聞). The gruesome mariticide case (詹周氏殺夫) took place in Shanghai in 1945, and the murderer was a woman surnamed Chan Chou, who is alleged to have had an extramarital affair and committed the heinous crime with the help of an adulterer, which directly reflects a social stereotype that “there is no such murder without adultery.” In fact, this murder case had nothing to do with fornication, contrary to popular belief. Li Ang was captivated and inspired by the news coverage introduced in the book, though it had been novelized by Chen (Huang, 2014:18), and intended to create a complete fictional world along the lines of the story and instill her feminist ideas into the work. All this happened in 1977, when she visited Pai Hsien-yung at his house. Almost half a century since then, the murder case has, once again, staged a comeback in the big screen. The movie entitled *Jiangyuannong* (醬園弄, also *She’s Got No Name*), directed and co-produced by Peter Chan (陳可辛), premiered in the Cannes Film Festival on May 24, 2024.

Li Ang’s fiction is set in Lucheng (鹿城), which is modeled after her hometown Lukang (鹿港). According to what Li Ang stated in a 2024 interview, the descriptions of the historical background in the story were intentionally obscured. Her preliminary concept was a period leading up to the relocation of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) to Taiwan, namely the last few years in which the island was colonized under the Japanese rule.

In the story, the heroine Lin Shih (林市, Linshi) has a checkered life. Her mother is accused of committing adultery when found having sex with a military officer. The next morning after the incident, her whereabouts is never known. Lin Shih is later adopted by her uncle, and from

that day on, she can do nothing but resign herself to fate, falling victim to absolute patriarchy. Finally, she is subjected to an arranged marriage, compelled to become the wife of a churlish man named Chen Chiang-shui (陳江水, Chen Jiangshui), who kills pigs for a living. He is constantly torturing Lin Shih, be it verbally or physically. Regrettably, the story ends in a harrowing tragedy. After being sexually and emotionally abused for a long span of time, Lin Shih suffers a nervous breakdown and dismembers her sleeping husband into eight pieces with a pig-killing knife. Shortly afterwards, she is arrested for murder, waiting to be executed. Apparently, she fails to reverse the curse her mother was entangled with. Likewise, her act of homicide is purportedly concerned with adultery, which is nothing short of a rehash of the murder case during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai in the 1940s. In fact, it is Chen's long-standing straw of domestic violence that breaks the camel's back.

Women are doomed under the traditional doctrines of "male domination and female subordination (男尊女卑)," a concept derived from the *I Ching* (易經, also the *Classic of Changes*), even though its meaning has been distorted for centuries. The original denotation of the idiom was that men and women are born with their separate tasks to do. Only if they, representing *ying* and *yang*, do their part well will natural balance and harmony be achieved. However, regardless of the inviolability of men prevailing over women in the social hierarchy, the irony is that women themselves are trapped in the vicious cycle, believing they are inferior. This ideology is vividly recounted in the novel, especially clear when a bevy of gossipy women criticizing Lin Shih for not holding back her screams while satisfying the sexual desire of her husband (Li, 2024:225). Their mocking words strengthen woman's culpability and simultaneously extenuate men's fallibility.

As is exhibited in the two news reports placed at the beginning of the story, in a male-dominated society, women tend to be stereotyped as siren-like, immoral, and uncultured when

an illicit romantic relationship is brought to light. Infidelity in marriage is a violation of ethics and is reprehensible. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, if a man found himself a cuckold, he had the right to lynch the adulterous couple by caging them in a bamboo-woven basket and drowning them in a pond, which is called *chentang* or *chinchulung*. This means of punishment is mentioned in Chapter One of the novel (Li, 2024:115).

1.2 *Niehtzu* and Pai Hsien-yung

The other contemporary Taiwanese novel *Niehtzu* (孽子[literally means an unfilial son in Mandarin Chinese]), authored by Pai Hsien-yung (白先勇, Kenneth Pai), was equally groundbreaking in the conservative social climate during the 1980s. Starting from 1977, the first half of the story was periodically published in the Taiwanese literary journal *Xiandai Wenxue* (現代文學). The remaining half was subsequently serialized in *Nanyang Siang Pau* (南洋商報) until the whole novel concluded in 1981 (Tseng, 2021). *Niehtzu* officially hit the market in 1983. It is said that shortly after the novel was published, the whole literary world in Taiwan lapsed into dead silence. Literary critics didn't seem to be ready for this "weird" theme (Tseng, 2003:2). Discussing issues about homosexuality could be perceived as a social taboo in that historical era. The novel was adapted for the eponymous movie (also *Outcasts*) by famous Taiwanese director Yu Kan-ping (虞戡平) in 1986, starring Taiwanese actor Shao Hsin (邵昕). This movie is widely hailed as the forerunner of gay-themed films in Taiwan. In 1990 (to be exact in November, 1989), *Niehtzu* made its debut in the English-speaking market by courtesy of Howard Goldblatt (Pai, 2024:483). The novel was given a new title *Crystal Boys*, published by Gay Sunshine Press, San Francisco. Ever since, like *Shafu*, *Niehtzu* has also been translated into many different languages apart from English, including French, German, Italian, Dutch, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Polish. Furthermore, *Niehtzu* was remade into a TV series in 2003 and a stage play in 2014 respectively. It is no exaggeration to say that this novel remains one of the classic gay literary works since its publication, even in People's Republic of China. *Niehtzu*

was first introduced to China in 1987, taken charge of by the North Literature and Art Publishing House (北方文藝出版社), located in Harbin, the capital city of the Heilongjiang province. So far, it has eight versions altogether in the country. As with Taiwanese people, Chinese people were also evasive about or reportedly prohibited from talking about gay issues at that time. It was a miracle that the novel survived the strict government censorship, without any content deleted or doctored (Pai, 2024:455).

According to Pai, *Niehtzu* is about a son being banished from the family by his father. Figuratively speaking, it is as if Adam is ousted from Eden by God after he touches the forbidden fruit. Only when the son finds spiritual support can he find salvation among the waifs and strays. The story of *Niehtzu* is set in the 1970s, and the scene primarily centers around Taipei New Park, where a host of gay people who have developed a good rapport with one another, the so-called social outcasts, assemble. The title of the novel literally refers to a “sinful son” in Mandarin Chinese, implying being homosexual is nothing different from committing a crime, to be exact, a flagrant violation of traditional moral values. Men are completely in the thrall of such cultural influence, having no choice but to fulfill their family obligations to let the lineage live on. Those who fail to due to their sexual orientation of being gay are labeled “unfilial.”

Niehtzu revolves around the conflict between the protagonist Li Ching (李青, Li Qing) and his family, especially his father, who evicts him in a fit of anger after learning his illicit relationship with a school staff member. Moreover, it vividly depicts Li Ching’s mental struggle as a gay male and his emotional bond with his comrades in Taipei New Park. He is a drifter in the mainstream society. However, this young man finds solace and support after meeting an old man named Fu Chung-shan (傅崇山, Fu Chongshan/Papa Fu). To be exact, their care and attention to each other are reciprocated. This loving benefactor chooses to secretly take care of

the abandoned gay boys in Taipei New Park as a vehicle for mending his relationship with his dead son, who as a military officer caught having sex with a subordinate, failed to receive his father's spiritual help at the eleventh hour and then shot himself dead before being court-martialed.

In contrast with the stupefying ending of *Shafu*, *Niehtzu* concludes by keeping readers in suspense. Li Ching still lingers around Taipei New Park as if he were a wandering apparition, accompanied by a young new member named Luo Ping (羅平). He never reconciles himself with his father.

1.3 Howard Goldblatt and His Works

As an influential American translator in the Sinophone world, Howard Goldblatt is famed for his translations of numerous contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese literary works, fiction in particular. He is a productive translator. Since he officially made his foray into the world of translation, collaborating with Nancy Ing (殷張蘭熙) to translate *Yin Hsien Chang* (also *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*), written by Taiwanese novelist Chen Jo-hsi (陳若曦), in 1978, he has published at least fifty translated works in the English-speaking market, among which are the novels of Chinese writer Mo Yan (莫言). He is the 2012 laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature and the first Chinese-speaking writer to be conferred with the honor. Mo's first novel *Hunggaoliang Chiatsu* (紅高粱家族) was translated by Goldblatt and published under the English title of *Red Sorghum: A Novel of China* (also *Red Sorghum Clan*) in 1993. As German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin (顧彬) commented in an academic symposium held by Lingnan University, Hong Kong, in 2013, Mo would never have received the great honor if it had not been for Howard Goldblatt's phenomenal translation. In response to Kubin's harsh criticism against the Chinese writer, Goldblatt countered the argument by emphasizing it was undeniably the author's literary

competence and substance that contributed to the supreme achievement. Having said that, Goldblatt is generally credited with elevating the status of Chinese-language fiction in the international community. American novelist John Updike once compared Goldblatt's translation of contemporary Chinese literature to midwifery (Updike, 2005). There is no doubt that Goldblatt's translated works have impressed the Western world.

Howard Goldblatt established uncanny connections with Taiwan. He came to Taiwan for the first time in 1962, when he, aged 23, was a stationed commissioned officer under the U.S. Navy. During his second stay on the island a few years later, he developed a passionate interest in learning the Chinese language because he was fascinated with Taiwanese cuisine. In retrospect, he said that Taiwan was not internationalized enough at that time, so few restaurants provided English services (Goldblatt, 2015:75). When Goldblatt completed his military service, he didn't head back to the U.S. immediately but embarked on his short-term Chinese learning in the Mandarin Training Center at National Taiwan Normal University (國立臺灣師範大學). After returning to the U.S., he studied at San Francisco State University as a Chinese literature major and received his Master's degree from there in 1971. Three years later, he secured his Ph.D. from Indiana University.

Goldblatt's translation career started in 1974, when he worked for the Chinese PEN Center (中華民國筆會[now the Taipei Chinese Center]), translating some short novels to be published in *The Chinese PEN Quarterly*. After his participation in the translation program of Chen's novel, Goldblatt had created for himself more opportunities to make the acquaintance of several promising Taiwanese writers, and of course, among them were Li Ang and Pai Hsien-yung.

Speaking of how Li Ang's *Shafu* got the chance of being translated into the English version, serendipity struck when she encountered Goldblatt and conversed about the translation plan of her award-winning novel (Goldblatt, 2015:8). As it turned out, their collaboration went smoothly. Goldblatt undertook the translation task and managed to get the opportunity to

publish the work by North Point Press, an independent publisher (operational until 1991) headquartered in Berkeley, San Francisco. The English version became a resounding success with the promotion of newspapers.

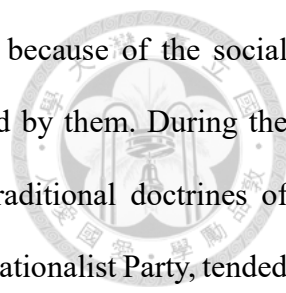
While Goldblatt was translating *Niehtzu*, he felt a subtle sense of awkwardness because no one took a dim view of his job or dissuaded him from doing so, as opposed to the experience of translating *Shafu*. In the translator's note of the English-version novel, Goldblatt expresses his heartfelt gratitude for Pai's support and assistance. He remembers that he, when confronted with difficulties in the translation process, would turn to the author for more information and instruction. They even met at a gay bar in San Francisco, engaging in "cultural exchange" with the community so that they could figure out English words and phrases that fitted the best in the target text.

Likewise, upon publication, *Crystal Boys*, the English version of *Niehtzu*, received rave reviews among its target readers. However, in Goldblatt's opinion, *Niehtzu* is more than a gay novel. Its motif transcends homosexuality. The novel, featuring prominently in the philosophical profundity of intrapersonal growth and interpersonal relationships rather than the shallow depiction of licentiousness, shouldn't have been touted as "the first modern Asian gay novel." These words are clearly printed on the cover of the 1995 English version, paired with a picture of a bare-chested young guy staring straight forward.

Finally, it is worth noting that Goldblatt's wife, Sylvia Li-chun Lin (林麗君), is Taiwanese. Not only is she his soulmate, but she is a desirable working partner. Their first collaboration was to translate Taiwanese writer Chu Tien-wen (朱天文)'s *Huangjen Shouchi* (荒人手記, also *Notes of a Desolate Man*). In 2000, they received the National Translation Award from the American Literary Translators Association for the work. In an interview held by *Taiwan Panorama* (台灣光華雜誌), they felt proud not just because their earnest effort was appreciated but because it was the first time that the prize went to a translated work of Taiwan literature.

1.4 Research Motivation and Purposes

With translation studies flourishing over the past few decades, there have been scholars researching and systemizing the translation strategies of culture-specific items (CSIs), sexism, and swearwords/taboo words. However, translation studies on sexism and swearwords/taboo words in Taiwan literature are fewer than universally considered. Li's *Shafu* and Pai's *Niehtzu* merit further investigation on the grounds that they both provide sufficient research-worthy material in relation to CSIs, sexist language, and swearwords/taboo words. In addition, the two novels make it possible for experts and scholars to conduct cross-linguistic or cross-cultural translation studies because they boast many foreign language versions and thus have plenty of multilingual sources to tap into, the foremost of which is certainly the English language. Furthermore, *The Butcher's Wife* and *Crystal Boys* are both Howard Goldblatt's translated works and to be exact his early works, so they may serve as a benchmark for his translator behavior/habit. How did he deal with the CSIs, sexist language, and swearwords/taboo words in the two novels? What skills and strategies did he employ while translating the three aspects? Did he initiate his own translation style? These fundamental questions usher me in the right direction of research and set me thinking about what can be further explored and expected of. Last but not least, a translator's cultural background and knowledge will affect how translated texts are presented. What kind of translation problems will occur due to misunderstanding? All above has kindled my interest in doing further research and kept me highly motivated to learn more. By delving deeply into Howard Goldblatt's translations of *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*, it is highly likely that I will pinpoint his translation problems with CSIs, sexism, and swearwords/taboo words in the source texts. It is anticipated that making a careful textual analysis of Howard Goldblatt's translations will break new ground and breathe new life into cultural translation studies, and that the research can give a boost and add more spice to the academic field of Taiwan literature translation.



The two Taiwanese novels were deemed thematically audacious because of the social issues they were discussing, and this is why I am completely intrigued by them. During the 1970s and 1980s, Taiwanese people, immensely influenced by the traditional doctrines of Confucianism and ideologically confined under the rule of the Chinese Nationalist Party, tended to subject women and homosexuals to unequal treatment. They were the disadvantaged social groups in those days. Therefore, I would like to examine the linguistic details of both novels from the perspective of translation studies, making endeavors to investigate how Howard Goldblatt addressed sexist content. Even though both novels deal with taboos, they have broken social and political barriers, allowing the public to reconsider the social status of women and LGBTQ⁺ communities in Taiwan. The two novels serve as the reminders of how entrenched traditional ideas impeded the development of women's rights and the social acceptance of gays in the past, denying them access to speaking up for themselves. It is expected that the English translations of the two Taiwanese novels can convey what the authors aim to get across to target readers. The existence of taboos is to educate people about the ways to survive in this unfair, prejudiced society and the need to eradicate bias and discrimination. Thus, feminist literature and gay literature should continue to exert their influence and embody their societal and educational value.

1.5 Research Questions

Apart from CSIs, *Shafu* and *Niehtzu* are characterized by their sexist language and swearwords/taboo words as the stories progress on. Moreover, the two novels were Howard Goldblatt's translations. Through the textual analysis of the English translations of the two novels, the translator's norms are likely to be discovered and explained. Certain translation phenomena will surface on closer inspections, enabling me to deepen my understanding of how the translator addressed the culturally-based texts. As a male and heterosexual translator, is it possible for Howard Goldblatt to have translated feminist literature and gay literature with a

jaundiced eye? Moreover, although his wife is Taiwanese, he might have interpreted the texts in an American way to be amenable to the needs of English readers. All these assumptions remain to be confirmed by means of extensive investigation into and comparative analysis of the two translated works.

For starters, different translation strategies adopted in the target texts will be discovered and discussed. Another key point is that mistranslation/misunderstanding due to cultural barriers is to be verified. Finally, through a meticulous textual analysis, it is much hoped that new findings will emerge on the strength of the cited translation theories and research methods.

To have fresh but valuable insights into the translation strategies of sexism in Taiwan literature, I will explore the research results from other studies and journals in reference to sexism/swearword/taboo word translation in literature, acquainting myself with profound knowledge of translation studies and incisive analysis that will foster momentum for further investigation. The following are the three questions that highlight the gist and streamline the research process of my thesis in anticipation of a logical and fruitful conclusion:

1. How did Howard Goldblatt deal with culture-specific items, sexist language, and swearwords/taboo words that are entrenched in Taiwanese culture according to different scenarios?
2. How did Howard Goldblatt over-interpret/misinterpret culturally-based or culturally exclusive situations and make translation decisions that might be disputable?
3. What are possible contributing factors to his decisions, be it arbitrary or deliberate?

To answer the research questions with persuasion, I will first glean as much information about the evolution of Taiwan literature as possible, keeping myself posted on how Taiwan literature gains traction in the realm of world literature. By doing so, I can have a deeper

understanding of the situation where and the reason why some Taiwanese fiction could be noticed by the Western world and translated into foreign languages. After a close acquaintance with the background knowledge of Taiwan literature, I will continue to pore over a series of translation studies on the English translations of the two classic Taiwanese novels, namely Li Ang's *Shafu* and Pai Hsien-yung's *Niehtzu*, and probe into the translation theories mainly discussed in these studies, recapitulating their valuable perspectives on Howard Goldblatt's translations. Finally, I will comprehensively and systematically illustrate the three central aspects of this translation study: CSIs, sexism, and swearwords/taboo words by researching the concepts and definitions proposed by numerous distinguished linguists and translators in the academic world. Through the full exploration of their translation theories, I will determine whose theory works to the advantage of my research on Howard Goldblatt's translations of *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

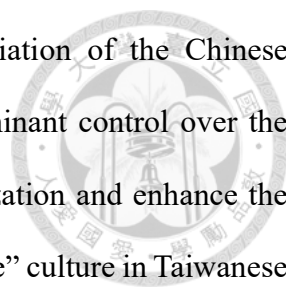


2.1 The Development of Taiwan Literature in the Global Market

Finally, it is of great significance to talk about the visibility of Taiwan literature in the global market. According to a recent publication by Chiu Kuei-fen (邱貴芬), Professor Emeritus of Taiwan Literature and Transnational Cultural Studies at National Chung Hsing University in Taiwan, world literature is a channel through which Taiwan literature can be discovered. The translation of Taiwan literature into dominant languages, for example English, is a kind of cultural output, a soft power that can enhance Taiwan's status in the international community (Chiu, 2023:6).

Taiwan is blessed with an immersive environment of diverse cultures and languages due to the co-existence of many ethnic groups, which is the fertilizer that nurtures the development of Taiwan literature. However, before the light at the end of the tunnel, literature in the name of Taiwanese awareness once stagnated, going through gloomy periods and meeting with enormous challenges. Historically speaking, since the end of the 19th century, Taiwan has witnessed dynastic changes from the Qing government's jurisdiction and the Japanese colonial rule to the takeover of the Chinese Nationalist Party. While Taiwan was colonized under the control of the Japanese Empire, literature could serve as a means of military propaganda. In those days, due to the implementation of the assimilation policy and the Kominka movement (皇民化運動), Taiwanese intellectuals had a good command of Japanese and had unrestricted access to world literature translations, but their writings would be strictly censored if they were redolent of vernacular elements.

After the defeat of Japan in the Second World War and the departure of the imperial



government, Taiwan sank into a state of anarchy until the appropriation of the Chinese Nationalist Party. During this period, the government wielded its dominant control over the island, making ambitious attempts to eradicate any vestiges of Japanization and enhance the values of Sinicization. Consequently, literature was affiliated to “Chinese” culture in Taiwanese social contexts. The advocacy of Taiwan literature was a voice in the wilderness under the ruling party’s cultural hegemony, especially under martial law due to the government’s tenet of anti-communism. However, the turning point of Taiwan literature occurred when local writers started to be noticed as regionalists during the 1960s and the 1970s, during which translations of Chinese literature from Taiwan debuted in the international market thanks to the dedication of expatriates and local professionals alike. In the 1980s, the seed of Taiwan literature seemed to take root and gradually sprout with the democratization of the island. The key was the year 1987, when the late president Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) declared the lifting of martial law, putting an end to the KMT’s authoritarian rule that lasted for 38 years.

As of the 1990s, Taiwan faced another wave of political impacts: the rise of the Chinese Communist Party. The subjectivity of Taiwan literature was crippled by China’s claim Taiwan’s inseparability from the mainland. Taiwan, to be exact, the Republic of China, not only had to surmount the trials and tribulations of China’s oppression but also needed to seek acknowledgement on the global stage. The concept of Taiwan literature gradually took shape at the turn of the 21th century (Chiu, 2023:46). Before this, it was mostly known as a branch of Chinese literature.

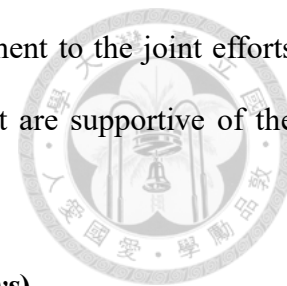
To be separated from the domain of Chinese literature, Taiwan literature should blaze a trail, and life finds a way, as Dr. Ian says in the 1993 Hollywood movie *Jurassic Park*. It can be redefined as or incorporated into the framework of Sinophone literature and world literature (Chiu, 2023:21). The concept of the Sinophone, proposed by Shih Shu-mei (史書美), functions

as a critique against China's cultural hegemony, a dominant ideology that labels marginalized regions within China and Sinitic language communities outside of China all as "Chinese" without exception (Shih, 2011:710). In other words, the Sinophone is a brand-new platform for writers in these Sinitic language communities outside of China, Taiwan included, allowing them to recategorize their literary works without the intervention and suppression of China-centrism.

The other path that Taiwan literature can go on is world literature. According to David Damrosch, professor of Harvard University renowned for his world literature studies, by definition, world literature doesn't refer to all literatures in the world but literature that can find its niche in the international market. As Damrosch put it in his 2003 publication *What Is World Literature?*, it is a mode of circulation and a model of reading. However, not all Taiwanese literary works appeal to readers in the Western world. Whether a work is translation-worthy and marketable is determined by its theme, because there is no accounting for tastes. We can't expect a popular novel in Taiwan to be equally sought-after in other literary systems. To engage the attention of Western readers, the novel must deal with a theme that can resonate with them, and two of the riveting themes are feminism and LGBTQ⁺ issues. Small wonder that *Shafu* and *Niehtzu* can make a splash worldwide.

There is no denying that the growing visibility of Taiwan literature in Europe is credited to sinologists from around the world and scholars who show undying enthusiasm for literature translation. The National Museum of Taiwan Literature (國立臺灣文學館, NMTL) has been committed to promoting local literature translation and fostering international collaboration since the Taiwan Literature Translation Center was established in 2012. Moreover, its online platform "Taiwan Literature in Translation Repository (臺灣文學外譯房)" systematically collects and compiles translation resources and achievements that facilitate future research. The success of *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*, both of which boast multiple language versions and receive

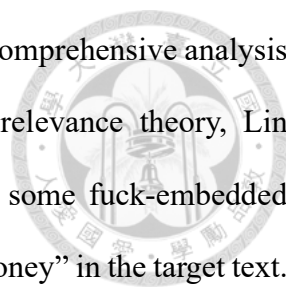
publishing opportunities from non-university organizations, is a testament to the joint efforts by Taiwanese writers, experts, scholars, and government officials that are supportive of the program.



2.2 Studies on *Shafu* (*The Butcher's Wife*) and *Niehtzu* (*Crystal Boys*)

At present, quite a few studies on *Shafu* can be found in the academic world of Taiwan, most of which focus mainly on females' gender roles in socio-linguistic context or investigate the delineation of the female characters in the novel from the perspective of feminism. Only a couple of studies on this Taiwanese novel are conducted under translation-related topics. In 2009, Lin Chih-hsun (林志勳) published his translation research on Howard Goldblatt's translated work *The Butcher's Wife* in which cultural translation problems could be identified. Through the application of the relevance theory, he focused his research on culture-specific items, including customs, religious beliefs, ballads, dialects, and most importantly sexist language. The meaning of "fuck" varies with context. To be specific, its connotation can only be grasped through the way the word is expressed and the tone it is given (Lin, 2009:67). At times, "fuck," in either Taiwanese or American culture, is nothing more than a pet phrase, a filler, or an interjection. It is not used to hurl abuse at someone. Through a textual analysis, a distinction can be drawn between the abusive "fuck" and the casual "fuck."

The relevance theory was put forward by Sperber and Wilson in 1986. The theory, in terms of its conceptual substance, is derived from Herbert Paul Grice's Cooperative Principle, which emphasizes the importance of people's willingness to cooperate in a conversation. Otherwise, no effective communication can be achieved. In the scenario of reading a translation, to communicate without restriction, target readers will depend on their cognitive environment and try to identify the cognitive environment of the translator, who is also required to make out what the author aims at and attempts to convey with the story progressing on. In other words, context



plays a significant role in the understanding of the text. Having made a comprehensive analysis of the source text that contains sexist language depending on the relevance theory, Lin concluded that readers tend to feel confused about the translation of some fuck-embedded expressions and can't understand "opening night (popping the cherry) money" in the target text. In the face of cultural challenges, Goldblatt didn't seem to effectively convey the real social context based on the original and cause unintelligibility in readers. As Peter Newmark put it, a good translator should make sure that his translation "reads naturally" (Newmark, 1988:24). A good translation makes sense and does not sound like a translation. In the final analysis, the translator's invisibility, a concept initiated by Lawrence Venuti (Venuti, 1995:1-2), is still hard to achieve even with the assistance of the domestication strategy. Howard Goldblatt's voice is perceivable in the English text.

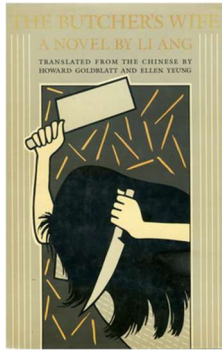
Another translation study, "Translation of Swear Words in Taiwan Literature: A Case Study on the Japanese Translation of *The Butcher's Wife* by Li Ang," was published by Wakako Sato (佐藤可和子) in 2018. It covers issues like sex discrimination and cultural taboos and will be a perfect reference for any research on swearword translation. The Japanese version of *Shafu* was translated by Fujii Shozo (藤井省三) in 1993. The renowned Japanese scholar of Chinese literature is a proponent of Lawrence Venuti's foreignization approach (Sato, 2018). Foreignization, by definition, refers to keeping the essence of the source text and letting readers know it is a lexical gap in their own language and can appreciate its cultural distinction. However, in Sato's research, she discovered that the translator did not necessarily apply the foreignization approach owing to cultural constraints. Relevant translation studies on *Shafu* remain thin. There is still more to uncover from this signature Taiwanese feminist novel in different language versions. Uncharted territories of sexist language/swearword/taboo word translation on a cultural path are awaiting more exploration and exploitation.

In the same year, Chen Yi-fang (陳怡方), postgraduate of National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology, published her thesis “A Study of Translations of Cultural References in Two Taiwan Nativist Novels: The Impact of Ideology, Patronage and Poetics.” In her thesis, she illustrated a great number of cultural translation examples in *Shafu*, along with her analytical and comparative results demonstrated in table charts. Her analysis of the source and target texts was made according to six different translation strategies: literal translation, transference, addition, neutralization, cultural equivalent, and couplet. In addition, she quantified the results clearly shown in bar charts, concluding that approximately 53.33% of the culture-specific items in *Shafu* were translated by means of the domestication strategy (Chen, 2018:64).

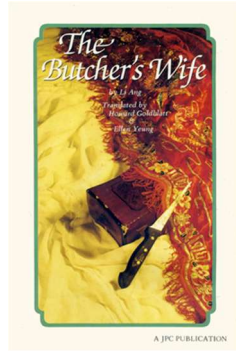
There is still another translation study on *Shafu* published in 2019. It is a piece of research on readers’ response to the translation of the novel. Wu Ang-chih (吳昂芝), postgraduate of National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology, exhibited her research results that were obtained from the adoption of Alexander Fraser Tytler’s Principles of Translation, which suggests that a good translation is based on three general rules as criteria: idea, style and manner, and ease. The three rules are detailed in the British writer and historian’s *Essay on the Principles of Translation*. Competent translators are expected to show faithfulness to the knowledge of the original work and their acquaintance with the theme. They must think about the price to pay for increasing or reducing the ideas of the source text. Moreover, according to Tytler, the style and manner of writing in a translation should be consistent with that of the original. As for the third rule, Tytler says it is the most difficult to observe. From his point of view, a translation should have all the ease of the original composition (Tytler, 1907:112), which means that translators must follow the rules of the source text without detracting from its literary value. How can translators do to effectively transfuse the sentiments of the source text without being a copycat? How can they produce the same force and effect as the original while not using the same way

of interpretation? To confirm readers' evaluations of Howard Goldblatt's translation, Wu designed a questionnaire in which there were selected excerpts from the novel, some of which contained sexist language. Both traditional Chinese and English versions were provided. According to the overall assessment of interviewees, Goldblatt seemed to tone down sexist terms deliberately or accidentally. In addition, he didn't properly visualize the image of the female characters in context but employed the translation strategies that he believed fitted the bill instead.

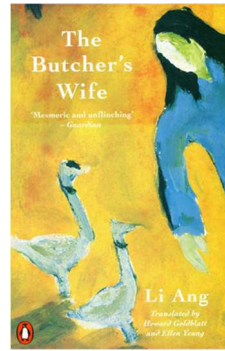
The abovementioned four studies on Howard Goldblatt's English translation of *Shafu* are monumental and instrumental in further translation research in years to come, ensuring the prospects of more fresh insights into sexist language/swearword/taboo word translation strategies. However, in addition to the discussion surrounding Goldblatt's translation problems and strategies, there are other aspects of the novel worthy of further examination. In fact, paratextual messages such as the design of book covers, the title, fonts, illustrations, blurbs, etc., are valid research material for translation studies. Since *The Butcher's Wife*, the first foreign language version, was published in 1986, a series of foreign language versions have been springing up in the literature market. Currently, there are twenty different foreign language versions of *Shafu* in total, including five different English versions. Notably, the book covers of all these versions present the imagery of the Taiwanese novel in utterly different ways, affecting how target readers view the novel at first glance. First impressions are everlasting. Publishers, no doubt, will manage to grab readers' attention and stimulate consumption by leveraging their design personnel. Every book cover design tells a story, and it is one of the keys to attracting prospective buyers. Judging from the book cover designs below, it is confirmed that some Western countries have stereotypes about Taiwanese culture, and perhaps it is these stereotypical presentations that raise the novel's visibility and allow it to gain more popularity than it used to in the international market.



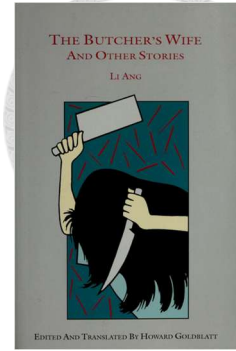
English 1986



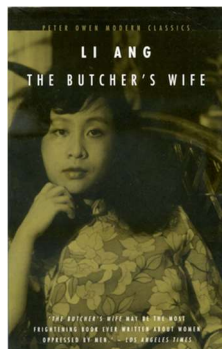
English 1990



English 1991



English 1995



English 2002



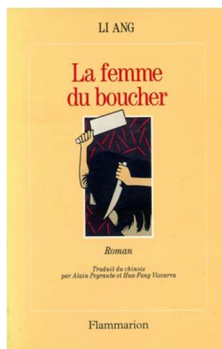
German 1987



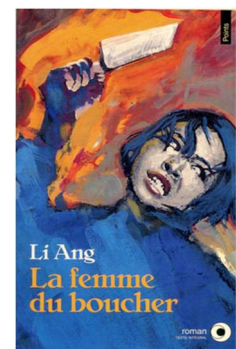
German 1990



Korean 1991



French 1992



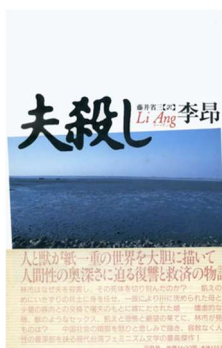
French 1994



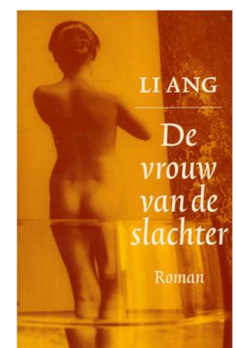
French 2004



Swedish 1992



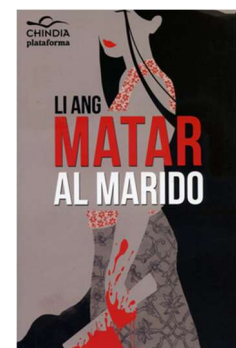
Japanese 1993



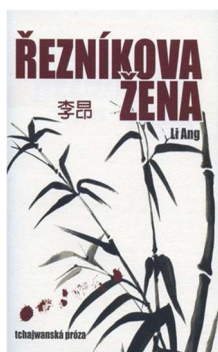
Dutch 1995



Italian 2007



Spanish 2012



Czech 2013



Catalan 2021



Polish 2022



Serbian 2022

Pictures from the additional pages at the beginning of Li Ang's *Shafu* (2024)

According to the titles of all the versions, apparently the English version has a direct influence on the translation results of its counterparts in other languages. The titles of the original two French versions, the Swedish version, and the Dutch version, along with the Italian, Czech, Polish, and Serbian versions all refer to “the butcher’s wife or the wife of a butcher.” On the other hand, versions in German, Korean, Japanese, Spanish, and Catalan show their linguistic loyalty to the original *Shafu*, having the titles that literally mean “killing the husband.”

It is easy to find from the illustrations on the book covers that most versions show the knife, the red-color blood, and the female figure in connection with the title, except for the Japanese one, which presents a picture of the blue sea, standing in stark contrast to the other many versions. It is likely that the picture is to introduce readers to where the story begins, Lucheng, or that Japanese publishers must abide by strict regulations by the government. They are prohibited from placing any messages on the book cover that may cause discomfort owing to the mores and culture of Japanese people. As for the book cover of the Czech version, though printed with some blood stains and the words tchajwanská próza (Taiwanese prose), it primarily shows the image of bamboo trees. This design is not that relevant compared with the banyan trees at the heart of Chencuo. Probably from the perspective of the Czechs, bamboo trees can be a representation of Taiwan, but it requires more evidence to back up the argument. The illustration of the second German version is equally problematic. The plant on the book cover

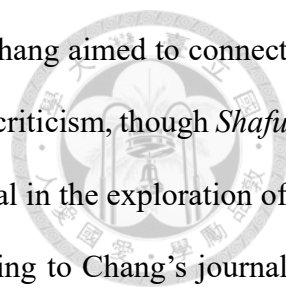
is neither banyan trees nor reeds, both of which appear frequently in the story. As a result, it will likely give readers a distorted impression of the environment. Furthermore, if the image of women is mistakenly created, it may intervene with readers' imagination. Take the Swedish and Catalan versions for example. The female figures on the book covers are obvious the products of stereotypes. The girl in braids and the veiled bride dressed in a traditional wedding costume are by no means associated with the female protagonist Lin Shih. Instead, both are more of a demonstration of Chinese culture, the element of which is subtly different from that of Taiwan.

Besides the book covers of all foreign language versions of *Shafu*, another paratextual message that is up for discussion is the two pieces of news coverage provided before the story goes on. They function as an attention getter. Li Ang employed the technique of reverse chronology, informing readers of the tragic ending of the story first. Then, the story jumps back to the very beginning. This is a narrative structure commonly used in storytelling. According to "On Discourse Function of Paratext in Li Ang's *Sha Fu* and Its Implication for Literary Translation," a thesis published by Wu Yi-ping (吳怡萍) in 2018, the two news clips imply a kind of narrative style that may well sway readers' reactions to the sexist innuendo and information deeply rooted in the novel. Basically, the translated version of a literary work is researched more at a lexical and semantic level than at a discursual level. Therefore, Wu was motivated to fill the research gap by analyzing the paratexts of *Shafu*, namely the two news reports placed ahead of where the plot begins, and the translated texts by Goldblatt. She cited Jean-Jacques Weber's discourse stylistics to investigate how readers' attitudes towards a certain concept can be steered off the course through the journalists' ideological stances concealed in their words.

According to Weber's theory, discourse stylistics is classified into three disparate narrative aspects: semiotic, cognitive, and linguistic. In the first aspect, the narrative modes in fiction can

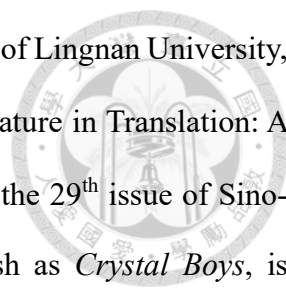
be interpreted through the alethic, axiological, deontic, and epistemic systems, a logical classification approach proposed by Czech literary theorist Lubomír Doležel (Doležel, 1976:5-14). The fictional characters live in the worlds that are created through the imposition of the four systematic branches of concepts: (1) being possible, impossible, and necessary, (2) being good, bad, and indifferent, (3) being permitted, prohibited, and obligated, and (4) being known, unknown, and believed. As for the second aspect, Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory is adopted. The reason why human communication is effectively achieved is that humans understand by using codes (languages) and making inferences. It is a psychological process. The last aspect is substantiated by the reminder that language can be a vehicle for political and ideological propaganda, so it should not be taken literally. There could be a hidden motive and purpose designed by language providers, and of course, the translator is part of them. Through her discourse stylistic analysis, Wu concluded that Goldblatt seemed to have strengthened the illocutionary force of the journalist's narrative and thus directed readers to the dominant ideology of the fictional world in which sexism prevails.

Finally, *Shafu* can also be analyzed from the perspective of ecocriticism. The concept originated from Joseph Meeker's book *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* in 1972. Six years later, William Rueckert coined the term in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An experiment in Ecocriticism." Ecocriticism deals with the relationship between human beings and the environment they are in, and animal imagery appearing in literature plays an essential part in ecocritical thinking. In 2013, Kathryn Yalan Chang (張雅蘭), Professor of the Department of English, National Taitung University, published her research findings based on Taiwanese ecocriticism, and she took Li Ang's *Shafu* as the research subject. With the steady advancement of ecocriticism over the past decades, it has diverged into two contrasting insights. One is bioregionalism (the local), and the other ecocosmopolitanism (the global). However, for scholars who advocate feminist views, they have difficulty finding the middle ground between



the dichotomous ecocritical ideas (Chang, 2013:165-166). Therefore, Chang aimed to connect the dots and obtain the correlation between feminism and Taiwanese ecocriticism, though *Shafu* is not regarded as a typical text of Taiwan ecoliterature. It is instrumental in the exploration of new critical aspects such as ecophobia, sexism, and speciesism according to Chang's journal article. In the novel, environment-wise, Lucheng is a place fettered by the patriarchal ideology, so female characters like Lin Shih and prostitutes are objectified and marginalized as if they were pigs at the mercy of the male chauvinist Chen Chiang-shui. The insuperable power of men results in Lin Shih's fear and hatred of the natural world she is confined to. Like women, animals that appear in *Shafu* are brutally treated as well, not just slaughtered for human consumption. It can be explained that Li Ang intended to stir up painful emotions in readers, deepening their association between sex discrimination and animal abuse. It is an irony that at the end of the story, Lin Shih kills Chen Chiang-shui in a cruel way just as he slaughters pigs. *Shafu* can be categorized into the genre of Taiwan ecoliterature because it fully showcases the inextricable connections between humans and the environment and the impact of the male-dominated environment on the mentality of women.

Throughout history and within many cultures, being part of the LGBTQ⁺ communities or anything about homosexuality has been a sensitive topic to talk about in public places and on formal occasions. The composition and circulation of gay literature are against the traditional values and cultural ideologies. Taiwanese culture is no exception. Due to the conservative social climate and the living environment under martial law, literary critics and ordinary readers didn't seem to brace themselves up for the theme that was far ahead of the zeitgeist. Thus, *Niehtzu* naturally met with criticism under homophobic conditions. Some feared that the novel would stoke moral depravity in society. However, this pioneering novel tided over the tough times and became widely discussed in the academic world thanks to the emergence of gay literary criticism and queer narratives in the 1990s.

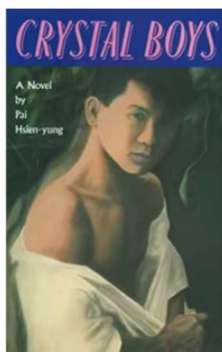


Regarding the studies on *Niehtzu*, Li Po (李波), Associate Professor of Lingnan University, Hong Kong, published his study “The Narrative Structure of Gay Literature in Translation: A Study of the English Translation of Pai Hsien-yung’s *Crystal Boys*” in the 29th issue of *Sino-Humanitas* (人文中國學報) in 2020. *Niehtzu*, translated into English as *Crystal Boys*, is tentatively researched through Mona Baker’s reframing narrative. According to Mona Baker, the narrative can be reframed through any linguistic or non-linguistic sources in the translation process (Baker, 2006). In addition, by changing the name/the novel title in the translation process (i.e., Baker’s framing by labeling), the narrative is also reframed (Li, 2020:288). A case in point is that Howard Goldblatt didn’t literally translate the title of the novel as *A sinful/unfilial son* but rendered it *Crystal Boys*. He made this decision because in the 1960s to 1970s, LGBTQ⁺ communities were called “glass” communities in Taiwan. Consequently, using the imagery, or rather the language gay people can relate to, may cleverly reduce the derogatory connotation, preventing the provocation of discontent. After all, in traditional Taiwanese culture, being unfilial is never a cherished virtue. Any act of showing disrespect to parents or elders is socially unacceptable and morally punishable. Goldblatt’s translation choice is a clear example of reframing.

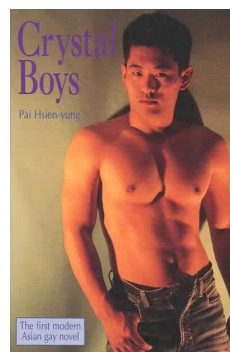
Gay literature translation has received considerable attention in the international academic community. Having said that, it isn’t highly prized in the Chinese-speaking world, which mainly refers to China. As one of the most important works of contemporary gay literature, Pai’s *Niehtzu* has been extensively researched from different perspectives, but how Goldblatt reframed the source text and presented his translation to target readers is an interesting topic to investigate and elaborate on. Moreover, like *Shafu*, *Niehtzu* is equally researchable through its paratexts. According to Baker’s narrative concept of repositioning in paratextual commentary, paratexts such as introductions, prefaces, footnotes, and glossaries are channels through which the information in the source text can be reframed by translators (Baker, 2006:133).

In Li's study, the much-appreciated English version of *Niehtzu* is a good piece of material for the analysis of visual resources like cover designs and introductions. When it comes to the book cover design of the original *Niehtzu* in 1983, it shows an illustration that expresses the abstract image of a male body, and so does the version published in 1990. In addition, Taiwan was under martial law at that time, so the homosexual element that established the backbone of the novel was not blatantly emphasized when it was brought to the public. Instead, book critics chose to be evasive about the theme. They chiefly discussed father-son relationships vividly portrayed in the novel, which even figuratively alluded to the ambivalent cross-strait relations between the Republic of China in Taiwan and the People's Republic on the Chinese mainland (Martin, 2003:57).

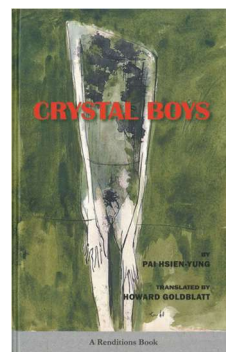
Since the publication of *Niehtzu* in 1983, there have been eleven foreign language versions in the literary market, three English versions and two French ones included.



English 1990



English 1995



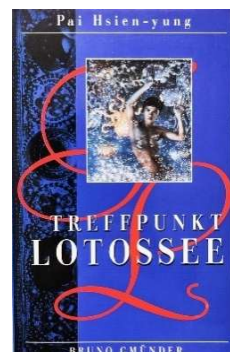
English 2017



French 1995



French 2003



German 1995



Italian 2005



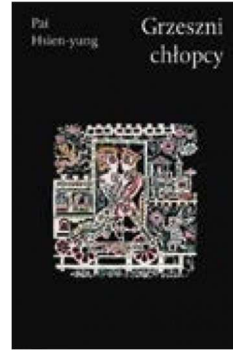
Japanese 2006



Dutch 2006



Vietnamese 2018



Polish 2024



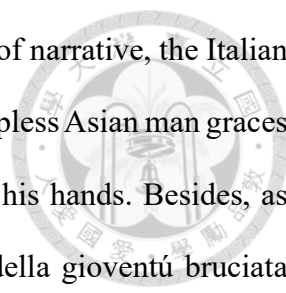
Information about all the foreign language versions is from Pai Hsien-yung's *Niehtzu* (2024). Pictures from the website at <https://www.goodreads.com/work/editions/842595-niehtzu?page=1>

According to the title of the two French versions, “Garçons de cristal” is linguistically equivalent to “Crystal boys.” As for the Dutch “Jongens van glas,” it is influenced by the concept of “glass” communities mentioned in Goldblatt’s translator’s note in the English version of the novel. However, the title of the German version “Treffpunkt Lotossee” means “Meeting Place: Lotus Lake,” which reminds readers of Li Ching’s stomping ground in Taipei New Park. This title is an obvious manipulation of narrative. It transfers the original Mandarin Chinese one that implies the protagonist’s ruptured relationship with his biological father to the one that introduces the “nest” where the socially abandoned find belonging and solidarity. This strategy allows readers to bring the theme of homosexuality into focus. Moreover, the theme is reinforced with a picture of a nude man in the water. Like crystal and glass, water is transparent, suggesting that externally and internally, gay people are nothing different from ordinary people. They are as pure as water. However, the flip side of water is that it drowns people. The picture may also suggest that the voice of gay people is drowned out under the conservative patriarchal system. Interestingly, the Dutch version also shows an image of a young Asian man. The highlight is that the man holds a lotus flower in the downpour as if he finds personal salvation. Similarly, the picture implies the story will begin in a place filled with lotus plants, namely the pond in Taipei New Park. In addition, printed on the book cover is a Dutch-language sentence

that means “Pai Hsien-yung’s portrayal of fictional characters is tremendously impressive.” This introductory line of words acts as an eye-catcher for potential target readers. By the way, this picture on the book cover is the very promotional photo of the 2003 TV series. The young man in the rain with a lotus flower held in his both hands is a character named A-feng (阿鳳), played by Taiwanese actor Ma Chih-hsiang (馬志翔). It can be concluded that the launch of novels preceded by the release of movies/TV dramas is a publicity stunt that captures the attention of target readers and incentivizes purchase. This marketing strategy will be reintroduced in Chen Lu (陳璐)’s research in the next few paragraphs. As for the second French version, a close-up headshot of a young Asian man comes right into sight, letting readers know what the novel is mainly about, but if eyed more carefully, the young man is endowed with single eyelids, a salient physical characteristic that fits the stereotype of Chinese people visualized in the minds of Westerners, as is the case with Disney’s classic animated film *Mulan*.

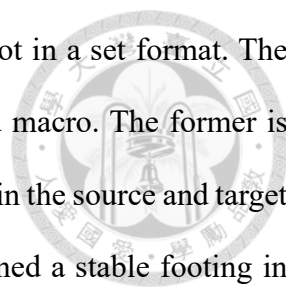
Richard Rong-bin Chen (陳榮彬), Associate Professor of the Graduate Program in Translation and Interpretation, National Taiwan University, said that translation is a kind of rewriting, and in the process of rewriting, the hidden themes are likely to be detached from the original just because the title of the novel has transported readers to a brand-new fictional world (Chen, 2021:205-206). To emphasize the point, “Translation as Rewriting: From *Niezi* to *Crystal Boys*,” a master’s thesis published by Liu Yi-fang (劉議方) in 2018, provides a complete repertoire of Howard Goldblatt’s translation strategies applied to the interpretation of gay identity, unconventional family relationships, and religious imagery in the Taiwanese novel. How he re-created/reframed a homosexual world for target readers is systematically explored.

Although Howard Goldblatt only made a slight adjustment to the title in the translation process, making it not far from the original, the theme appears to have been oriented to gay identity instead of father-son relationships. Therefore, it is a paradox that Goldblatt said *Niehtzu*



shouldn't have belonged to gay literature. Similarly, through the switch of narrative, the Italian version of *Niehtzu* has been fashioned into a gay-themed novel. A sexy topless Asian man graces the book cover with his soliciting eye through the opening formed by his hands. Besides, as with the Dutch version, on the cover is a line of words “Il romanzo della gioventù bruciata cinese,” which means “a Chinese novel about wasted youth.” Young gay characters in the novel are redefined as having an image of being “rebellious.” Furthermore, the title “Il maestro della notte” refers to “the master of the night.” It appears to have enhanced the eroticism of the novel. To summarize, the narrative style of the Italian version has been reframed through paratextual messages. The thematic profundity of the original seems to have disappeared, as witnessed by the English version in 1995. Finally, it is observable that the title of the Vietnamese version is consistent with the original, without any modifications made. Moreover, this version is simpler in design in comparison with the other versions in European languages. Despite having two mirrored images of a young male figure on the cover that create a sense of inner conflict, the grayish color tone adds to the solemn and melancholy quality of the novel, as opposed to its Western counterparts. On top of that, the color design on the latest Polish version cover is similar to that of the Vietnamese one. The black color gives readers an impression that the novel is not going to buoy up the mood, seemingly matching the title “Grzeszni chłopcy (sinful boys).”

Aside from visual resources, “camp talk,” which means the dialogue between gay people, is one of the difficulties a translator will encounter while working on the translation of a gay literary work. According to the *Oxford Learners' Dictionary*, “camp” is an adjective that means deliberately behaving in an exaggerated way that someone people think is typical of a gay man. This usage is derived from the French phrase “se camper,” which means “in a manner of exaggeration and affectation.” Keith Harvey said in his study “Translating Camp Talk—Gay Identities and Cultural Transfer” that while translators are aware of camp resources in both source and target cultures and can make comparisons, they may be ignorant about the fact that



the functions of camp talk can vary in a wide range of contexts. It is not in a set format. The functions of camp talk are divided into two distinct aspects: micro and macro. The former is about whether the appearance of camp talk is positively evaluated or not in the source and target cultures, while the latter is about whether homosexual identity has gained a stable footing in (sub)cultures and developed its own meanings and values that can subvert the conventional morality and survive the heterosexual environment in fiction (Harvey, 1998:295-296). From this perspective, how Goldblatt addressed camp talk while translating *Niehtzu* from Taiwanese cultural values into American ones became a key part of the research. Li provided two examples of camp talk in the novel and concluded that translation is not a mere process of linguistic exchange. The translator's cultural awareness may come into play and reframe the narrative of the original.

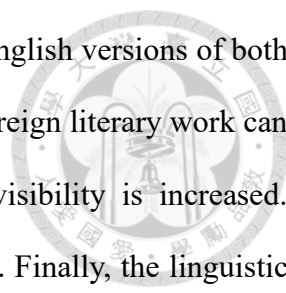
In 2013, Lee Ming-che (李明哲) published his doctoral dissertation “‘Worlding’ Queer Literature from Taiwan: A Study on World Literature and English Translation.” In his research, *Niehtzu* is explored as a graphic illustration of queer literature. In addition to the novel title *Crystal Boys*, *jenyao* (人妖), an offensive term used to denigrate male individuals that behave in a feminine manner or dress like women, was translated as “fairy” by Goldblatt, which echoes with Baker's framing by labeling. The recreated imagery becomes utterly different from the original. The term “jenyao” is used by the gay characters in the novel to create an effect of self-deprecation. Like “butch queen” and “sugar daddy,” it is linguistically functional in their conversations called camp talk, the concept of which has been mentioned in the previous paragraph. Judging from these examples, Howard Goldblatt performed remarkably in camp talk translation, earning international accolades and the author's recognition. While translating the novel, Goldblatt would consult him for more details and even patronize a gay bar in person with him to engage in practical conversations with gay people. Not only did he know more about their culture, but he also acquired their valuable opinions and translation suggestions (Goldblatt,

2015:176).

Chen Lu's "A Study on the Behavior of Translator as a Gatekeeper in the English Translation of *Crystal Boys*," published in 2024, deals with how the translator acts as a gatekeeper in the translation process. The Gatekeeping Theory was proposed by Kurt Lewin in 1947. It is more of a concept used in the field of mass communication. Gatekeeping refers to the process through which information can be filtered by a mediator before it is finally disseminated to the audience. He first used the term in his essay *Forces Behind Food Habits and Methods of Change*. According to Lewin, food does not move by its own impetus. Entering or not entering a channel and moving from one section of a channel to another is affected by a gatekeeper (Lewin, 1943:37). Likewise, translation is a means of communication, and it crosses the boundaries of cultures. Before the meaning of the sourcing culture is transmitted to the targeting culture, gatekeepers such as authors, sponsors, publishers, and most importantly translators will likely intervene and influence it due to certain subjective or objective factors.

In the research, she found that as the English translator of *Niehtzu*, Howard Goldblatt is target-oriented. In terms of objective factors, whether the work caters to the needs of the target market is of great significance. In other words, it is no use promoting a foreign literary work that can barely interest English-speaking readers. Translated literature only accounts for a fairly small percentage of the total publications in the Western market, compounded by the fact that Chinese literature is unengaging to Western readers unless it has a thematic potential.

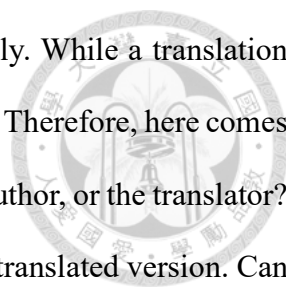
According to Goldblatt, a work he finds worth translating is the one the subject matter of which is pertinent to the seamy side of social life. Therefore, in his opinion, novels involving sex, politics, and suspense are what Western readers gravitate towards, and they may well be on the waiting list of his translating. It is no wonder that Li Ang's *Shafu* and Pai Hsien-yung's *Niehtzu* could find their niches in the international market. Moreover, the timing a work is



introduced to the market should also be taken into consideration. The English versions of both novels were translated and published after their movie adaptations. A foreign literary work can be indirectly advertised through the promotion of films, since its visibility is increased. Goldblatt might have noticed this and followed the commercial pattern. Finally, the linguistic style of a translation also plays a crucial role in the acceptance of a foreign literary work. According to “Paratext, an Alternative in Boundary Crossing,” a translation study conducted by Kung Szu-wen (孔思文), Associate Professor of the Graduate Program in Translation and Interpretation, National Taiwan University, in 2013, American readers expect a translated work to be readable and fluent (Kung, 2013:56). Therefore, readability and fluency can be used to analyze Howard Goldblatt’s translations, confirming whether he conformed to the general rules. In Chen’s conclusion, Goldblatt is attuned to the needs of the market and the expectations of target readers.

2.3 A Deep Look into Cultural Translation: CSIs, Sexism, and Swearwords/Taboo words

With the evolution of translation theories, a lot of scholars have discovered that culture is a hard nut to crack in the translation process, since from the perspective of anthropology, a culture represents a specific way of life shaped by the native inhabitants within a geographic area. Several factors affect translation results, and one of them is culture. Translators have to cudgel their brains to find a proper way out, taking a path that comes at the lowest cost but creates the greatest equivalent effect. As Peter Newmark put it, culture can be perceived as the biggest obstacle to accurate and decent translation (Newmark, 2010:172-173). There must be lexical gaps, in linguistic sense, between two different cultures, hence the need to employ translation strategies to grapple with them, as evidenced by Larson’s statement that translators get to know that there is no exact equivalent between two different languages (Larson, 1984:45). Moreover, according to Vermeer, good translators are defined by their extent of cultural knowledge, whether they are bilingual or multilingual (Vermeer, 1986:39). In terms of literary



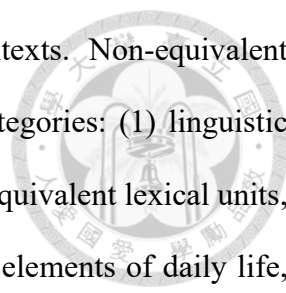
translation, the norms of two language systems must be treated carefully. While a translation acts as a bridge between two different cultures, it is not the original at all. Therefore, here comes a question. Who takes the credit for the success of a literary work? The author, or the translator? For target readers, they understand the value of the original through the translated version. Can it be said that the translated text is a good literary work? The norms of two language systems can be inconsistent and incompatible, so translators must take account of four basic aspects while translating literature (Aixelá, 1996:53). First, achieving absolute linguistic equivalence is an impossibility. Language is a code for communication, but the arbitrariness of words, phrases, and idioms is never the same in two different languages. Second, once reading behavior occurs, there is no way that the meaning of the text in question can be interpreted in an identical way. Third, in each social context, different types of speech will be expressed according to certain conventions. Finally, cultural factors count. Culture-specific items are expressed in a text by means of objects, systems, opinions, and habits that are limited to the source culture. For the reason, it is a formidable task to achieve the aesthetic, informative, and emotional essence of the source text if it is translated at linguistic or pragmatic levels.

Peter Newmark proposed his initial theory that could classify and define culture-specific items in 1988, when CSIs were divided into five categories: (1) ecology, (2) material life, (3) social culture, (4) gestures and habits, and (5) organizations, customs, and ideas (Newmark, 1988:97-103). In fact, classification of culturally loaded words had been discussed among scholars earlier on, one of whom was Eugene Nida, who classified CSIs into five categories in ecological, material, social, religious, and linguistic aspects in *Toward a Science of Translating* (Nida, 1964). Newmark altered Nida's version and updated his original way of categorizing CSIs. In his 2010 version, CSIs come in six distinct types: (1) ecology, (2) public life, (3) social life, (4) personal life, (5) customs and pursuits, and (6) private passions (Newmark, 2010:175). "Ecology" refers to words related to geology, geography, and the natural environment. These

words must have rich local features rather than the ones that are universally known to the world. For example, the names of the flora and fauna unique to Taiwan are CSIs. “Public life” refers to political and legal expressions, while “social life” covers economy, occupation, health, and education. “Personal life” is associated with food, clothing, housing, and transportation, all of which is part of material life. “Customs and pursuits” are about cultural behavior and forms of entertainment like dance moves and sports. As for the last type, it involves religious, musical, artistic, and literary terms. The completeness of Newmark’s classification system contributes to a methodical study on cultural translation.

Javier Franco Aixelá, a senior lecturer and scholar at the Department of Translation and Interpreting of the Universidad de Alicante, Spain, also provided valuable arguments on cultural translation. In his 1996 essay “Culture-specific Items in Translation,” he stated that scholars need a suitably devised tool for analyzing the cultural aspects of translation efficiently and effectively (Aixelá, 1996:56). However, the difficulty is that language itself is culturally produced. In other words, cultural influence can’t be ignored when it comes to the creation, communication, and conversion of language. Truly, Newmark devised a complete classificatory system to define CSIs, but in the translation process, identifying CSIs is never enough. There may be cultural scenarios that go beyond lexical, phrasal, and idiomatic levels, complicating the translation process. Therefore, more textual analysis of literature should be done to discover new translation phenomena.

Russian Linguist Vilen Naumovich Komissarov once said that non-equivalent vocabulary is a treasure trove of knowledge peculiar to a certain culture (Komissarov, 2001:116-135). Non-equivalent words are words that have no same meaning due to cultural influence. In the translation process, their appearance in the source text will give a feeling of foreignness to the receiving culture. Their uniqueness is accentuated by their definitions, usages, and most notably



connotations that carry symbolic meaning in specific cultural contexts. Non-equivalent vocabulary is distinguishable by lexical units, which fall into four categories: (1) linguistic realias, (2) temporally non-equivalent lexical units, (3) accidental non-equivalent lexical units, and (4) exoticisms. Linguistic realias refer to the words that name the elements of daily life, historical periods, and social systems. They present the irreplaceable features of a certain country or human race. As for temporally non-equivalent lexical units, they are the words that used to be untranslatable foreign words but are gradually understood and used in daily life. For example, “sashimi” was borrowed from the Japanese language in 1879 according to the information provided by online Merriam-Webster Dictionary. It is uncooked fish in meaning, but when English-speaking people express this type of dish, they will use sashimi rather than sliced raw fish that might be used to explain the food by the people living before 1879. A classic example of accidental non-equivalent lexical units is “petrichor.” In English, it means the scent of the soil produced after the rain. However, when this word is translated into Mandarin Chinese, there is no equivalent to use. Accordingly, translators are advised to convey the phenomenon in other ways. Finally, exoticisms are defined as words that refer to the culturally restricted experience of a country. For instance, “sung jou tsung (送肉粽),” is a traditional religious ritual in Taiwan held to rid a place of the grudge from those who have killed themselves by hanging. It can’t be properly translated into any language in just a word or phrase because this life experience is of cultural exclusivity.

According to Ivanov, non-equivalent words, by definition, are lexical units of a foreign language that are never explicable in any vocabulary of the recipient language (Ivanov, 2006:36). This Russian linguist divided all non-equivalent vocabulary into three primary groups: (1) referentially-non-equivalents, (2) pragmatically-non-equivalents, and (3) alternatively-non-equivalents. Neologisms and semantic lacunas belong to the first group, while abbreviations, interjections, and onomatopoeic expressions (e.g. ‘ouch’) are pragmatically-non-equivalents.

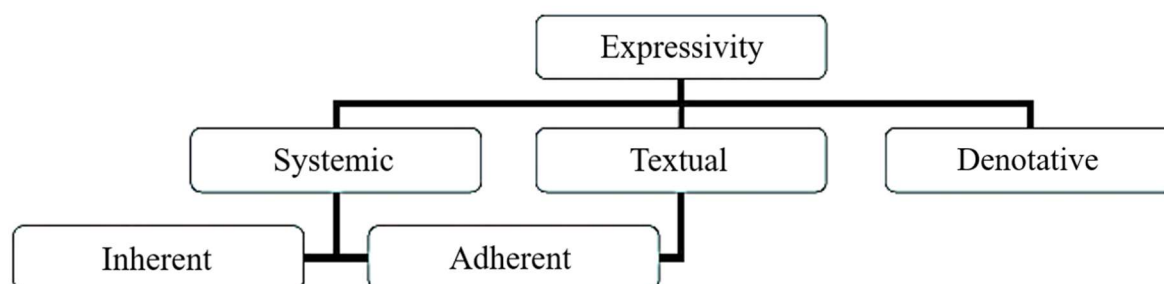
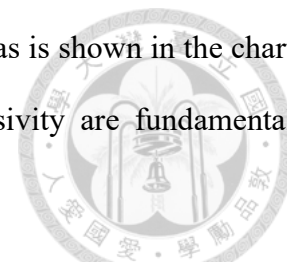
Proper names are classified as alternatively-non-equivalents.

Furthermore, Mohammad Ibrahim Qani, Associate Professor of Faryab University, mentioned in his “Problems of Non-equivalent Words in Technical Translation” that non-equivalent vocabulary can be classified through its generic traits into eight categories: (1) neologism, (2) names of items and phenomena, (3) historicism, (4) phraseological units, (5) folklore words, (6) slang words, (7) social-political vocabulary, and (8) reduced, colloquial vocabulary. No matter what classification system scholars adopt to help with the textual analysis, it is important to get down to the nitty-gritty of cultural translation. Cultures create a variability factor that poses technical challenges to translators.

Issues about sexism have been fiercely debated and exhaustively researched since the 1960s. Over the years, feminist writers have been interested in creating works that aim to raise more public awareness of suppressed women’s rights and subvert the established value of male dominance. In doing so, the role of women can stand a chance of social changes, shortening the distance of gender inequality. Unquestionably, language is a vehicle for disseminating ideology, and so is translation. By analyzing sexist language translation strategies, we have opportunities to better comprehend how this sort of language is expressed in different cultural contexts. A lot of factors should be taken into consideration if we try to unravel the mysteries of why translators deal with taboo words in one way but not in another. It is essential that relevant theoretical foundations and conceptual descriptions of sexism in translation be studied in anticipation of new discoveries.

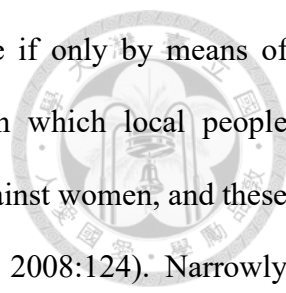
To begin with, expressivity, a linguistic concept proposed by Oldřich Uličný, can account for sexism in translation. As Uličný put it, in verbal communication, expressivity can be realized by behavior, clothing, and gestures (Uličný, 1988). To put it differently, every human language possesses a built-in linguistic mechanism through which non-expressive utterances can be

transformed into expressive ones. Expressivity comes in various ways as is shown in the chart below (Golán, 2006:14). Inherent expressivity and adherent expressivity are fundamental concepts.



Inherent expressivity refers to the unit being expressive in essence, for example, a vulgar one. Adherent expressivity, on the other hand, means the unit is essentially unexpressive but will pack a punch if used in a conspicuous manner or in abnormal quantities. As for denotative expressivity, it highlights the markedness of the denoted object deemed to be indecent (e.g. sexual organs). Additionally, expressivity can be carried by language devices that connote semantic qualities of emotions: aesthetic, intensifying, associative, evocative, and figurative attributes (Uličný, 1988:339). With the assistance of the principle, sexist language can be systematically differentiated. Expressivity is a linguistic attribute featuring conspicuousness, exhibiting the subjectivity of the language user. Language in all levels is observable from a single lexical unit to the whole book. It can be influenced by the language user's origin, social status, gender, age, and so on (Golán, 2006:17-18). Therefore, more research should be done to know how translators interpret the expressivity of the sexist language in the original and convey it to readers of the target culture.

As is expounded in British linguist Sara Mills' specialized book *Language and Sexism*, sexism can be categorized into two types: overt sexism and indirect sexism (Mills, 2008:10-12). Overt sexism is defined as behavior of using discriminatory language that signals women are



inferior to men. On the other hand, indirect sexism is hard to define if only by means of linguistic features. It is determined by the socio-cultural context in which local people subconsciously establish an unwritten set of stereotypes or prejudice against women, and these words and phrases are meaningful only in specific contexts (Mills, 2008:124). Narrowly defined, sexism in texts can be discussed in a more detailed fashion, as evidenced by Mills' theory of sexist language use in her 1995 publication *Feminist Stylistics*. Sexism can be analyzed from three different angles: the word, the phrase/sentence, and the discourse. At the word level, among gender-specific terms used in pairs of the both sexes, the female ones tend to have disparaging connotations. For example, "mistress," "lady," and "spinster" as opposed to the male version "mister," "lord," and "bachelor" (Mills, 1995:110-111) are pronouncedly given hidden sexist meanings. Another classic example is the generic noun with "man." In order to neutralize the effect of sexism, such word will be replaced with the one with "person." However, the reform, for some, backfires because it is self-evident that people who would like to use words with "person" as the suffix are women. At the phrase/sentence level, idioms and proverbs may convey underlying sexist messages. In many Asian cultures, people have the stereotype that "men are breadwinners; women are housekeepers (男主外, 女主内)." Similarly, phrases like "Behind every successful man there stands a woman" and "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach" can be misused to patronize women, emphasizing that they are only men's supporters and servant-like roles that provide them with foods to eat. Finally, a discursal analysis of sexist language can be conducted through the concepts of fragmentation and focalization as auxiliary tools so that more can be known about how a character is created in fiction. The former is a technique that deliberately shows fragmented parts of a female body. In this way, the female character is depersonalized, reduced to a consequence of objectification. Her body is like a work of art for appreciation. The device is widely taken advantage of in pornographic literature (Kappler, 1986). As for the latter, it is a perspective of narrative. By

simple definition, characters can be internally or externally focalized, namely whether they are described through the perception of the first person or through that of the third person. However, the point is whether the narrative has been manipulated by means of gendering, lopsided against female or feminine characters during the focalization.

Sexist language is often classified as a taboo because it may vividly involve organs, acts of sex, and phrases that are grossly offensive. Some translators resort to self-censorship in order not to produce a pornographic text. Self-censorship is a dangerous thing because it can result in betrayal of the source text. The long list of infidelities throughout the history of translation is shared by both institutional censorships and endless self-censorships that are executed on a daily basis. Human behavior, be it individual or collective, has always been governed by some kind of entrenched moral values (Santaemilia, 2008:223). It is likely that self-censorships include imaginable forms of elimination and distortion. In the process of translation, there may be a certain pattern in the elimination of sexually explicit sentences, which suggests self-imposed control while translating, as evidenced by the Spanish translation of Marian Keyes' *Angels* (2002). What is the problem with it? In fact, a long 1006-word passage has been omitted by the translator, and the consequence of this decision is that the author's intentions to create irony go up in smoke.

Eliminating, attenuating, or intensifying sex-related language speaks volumes for the translator's personal morality and at the same time reveals the social fabric of a specific community. Terminologies such as euphemism, orthophemism, and dysphemism can be used as a framework to explain the translation strategies of sex-related language. Allan and Burridge argued in their publication *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language* (Allan and Burridge, 2006:29-54) that euphemism, orthophemism, and dysphemism are inextricably linked. They are succinctly defined as sweet talking, straight talking, and talking offensively,

respectively. Applying euphemism is to tone down vulgarity with a view to increasing acceptability, while the use of dysphemism is just the opposite. Translators boldly show harsh language or even taboo words with no strings attached. As for orthophemism, a term coined by Allan and Burridge, it refers to a direct and definite expression like “nipple.” It is. It As previously mentioned, Oldřich Uličný said in his article “Expresivita a překlad umělecké prózy” that language use can be explained with the concept of expressivity. From his point of view, expressivity is fundamentally divided as inherent expressivity and adherent expressivity. The latter is comparable to orthophemism by definition because it is frequently and prominently used. Dysphemism is more like Uličný’s inherent expressivity.

In addition, according to Keith Allan and Kate Burridge, taboo words are segmented into (1) naming and addressing, (2) sex and bodily effluvia, (3) food and smell, and (4) disease, death, and killing (Allan and Burridge, 2006). First, on historical and cultural grounds, some names and forms of address must be avoided for fear of impoliteness, prejudice, and discrimination. It is likely that we offend a clan, tribe, nation, or religious community without our knowledge when making evaluations. Therefore, translators must be cautious while trying to decipher these words in the source text. Sex words connected with masturbation, oral sex, orgasm, homosexuality, rape, incest, and pedophilia, together with bodily effluvia such as feces, urine, semen, spittle, menstrual blood, pubic hair, and the like, belong to the second category (Allan and Burridge, 2006:161). As far as food is concerned, what should be considered is that eating habits vary from country to country. One man’s meat can be another man’s poison due to different religious beliefs, local customs, superstitions, or meanings behind certain animals. For example, Westerners basically don’t eat animal offal. In addition, according to the book, gastronomic xenophobia is also a factor. Names of food in one culinary culture can whip up a feeling of abomination in another, and some comestibles can be associated with sex. As for smell, Allan and Burridge mentioned that there is a lack of adjectives in English that can be

used to describe odors. This is an interesting piece of knowledge because this linguistic phenomenon poses a problem when translators deal with a target culture that features a compilation of olfaction-related words, no matter what context it is. Finally, translators should pay attention to words referring to sexually transmitted diseases and killing lest mental discomfort be aroused in readers. In literature, death from rape or murder can be controversial because of the brutality it creates in the minds of readers, so it needs to be weakened, adapted, or even deleted in the translation process.

It is an established fact that despite the continuous evolution of translation studies, for translators, translating any text faithfully and accurately is an impossibility. Before a translation work is finalized and published, a host of factors come into play, and one of them is censorship. A mechanism of censorship can be regarded as the suppression or prohibition of speech or writing (Allan and Burridge, 2006:13). It gives rise to an external socio-cultural constraint that detracts from the content of the source text. However, the bottom line is that throughout history, translators have been caught in an inner ethical dilemma between their individual choices of translation strategies and the contextual essence of the text. They voluntarily censor their translated texts to make sure the rewritings not only meet public expectations but also live up to the level of their self-fulfillment.

How foul language is presented and expressed is activated by the culture it belongs to. This type of language, in a sense, is a cultural product, differing substantially from one culture to another. Therefore, when it is translated from the sourcing culture into the version of the receiving one, it can scarcely follow the same ideology and must be modified to reach semantic naturalness. According to a translation study on vulgar terms in literature published by Yu Yao-rong (余耀戎) in 2018, swearwords in Mandarin Chinese tend to be kinship-oriented, especially the mother, while their English counterparts are aimed straight at individuals, without

implicating unrelated others. Moreover, because their cultural environment is deeply influenced by and inextricably linked with the rigorous doctrines of Christianity, English speakers feel the emotional strength of words about religious beliefs, physical organs, and biological mechanisms.

By contrast, in the Sinophone world, swearwords/taboo words are seemingly more sexist if quantified, as underpinned by what Liao Shih-wen (廖詩文) said in her 2024 journal article. According to the research findings of Hashamdar and Rafi, who investigated the connection between social identity and taboo words used by males and females who vent their spleen, men use foul language significantly more frequently than women do (Liao, 2024:42-43). There exists a complicated cross-interaction of social identities, gender stereotypes, and contexts between men and their use of profanities. These expressions fan the flames of bias and discrimination under the patriarchal system.

Chapter 3

Research Method



3.1 Research Material Collected from the Source and Target Texts

As has been mentioned in the previous chapters, *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*, characterized by their culturally-loaded words, not least sexist and profane language, and controversy surrounding the male-dominated and homophobic socio-cultural climate, make ideal material for translation research. A comprehensive textual analysis of English-version *Shafu* and *Niehtzu* will be carried out by focusing on three central aspects: CSIs, sexism, and swearwords/taboo words. According to the background knowledge introduced in the first chapter, *Shafu* and *Niehtzu* were translated from Mandarin Chinese into English by Howard Goldblatt. The first English version of *Shafu*, entitled *The Butcher's Wife*, was published in 1986. Though a collectively translated work, it is still selected as the source of research material. As for *Niehtzu*, the 1990 English version entitled *Crystal Boys* by Howard Goldblatt is used for detailed investigation into the above-mentioned three key elements regarding cultural translation. Through the complete information gleaned from the paperback novels, the textual analysis will be made easier in anticipation of valuable results and new discoveries.

Moreover, based on the information provided in the collected specialized books, journals, and relevant thesis on cultural translation, an array of translation theories and terminologies will be organized into a useful set of criteria that streamline the textual analysis of certain translation phenomena, translation strategies, and translation errors in the target texts. The overall textual analysis is categorized into three central aspects: culture-specific items, sexism, and swearwords/taboo words, with all prime examples clearly presented in tables, carefully analyzed, and concisely explained according to cultural translation theories and terminologies.

3.2 Howard Goldblatt's Translation Principles

Howard Goldblatt's translation career started in the 1970s. Since then, he has produced numerous translated works of contemporary Chinese and Taiwan literature that earned critical acclaim in the Western world. As a translator, he might have cultivated special translation habits and established principles he must stick to. In other words, he is expected to have his own likes and dislikes or dos and don'ts. To know more about his translation norms and perspectives, I have collected some information from his personal accounts and some interviews involved with him.

In his autobiography (Goldblatt, 2015), he mentions that as a translator, he is not obsessive about others' comments on his translations, be they positive or negative. However, it doesn't follow that he is a man of indifference. In fact, he expects that critics can assess his works from a macrocosmic view, adopting a criterion of fidelity to judge whether his work is a success. For example, the tone, the word choice, the clarity, and the expressiveness should be taken into consideration during evaluation. When it comes to translating Mandarin Chinese into English, the work is open to many interpretations. Therefore, in his opinion, instead of employing literal translation, creativity is sometimes required.

Interestingly, he also shares his goal to be attained in the self-interview part of the book (Goldblatt, 2015:222). He always asks himself if he manages to make target readers gain the same reading experience as source readers do, if he appropriately and effectively introduces target readers to the motif the author wants to convey through his translations, and most importantly, if he can inform target readers of the cultural, social, and historical knowledge representing the source culture as well as the authentic emotions felt in the source text. Furthermore, he says that in the process of translation, basically, he will have a couple of fitting words in mind to fill in the blanks, but for the artistry of the translated work, he cannot be

constrained by the words and sentence structures of the original. As he replied after Mo Yan was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, “There is no literal translation, sense-for-sense translation, or anything else. There is only Goldblatt-style translation.” (Li, 2015) He must believe in himself, attracting the attention of target readers in the first place.

In the eyes of the Americans, if a literary work has no market potential, they will not be interested in reading, and as a translator, he will also reject the job. In an interview held in 2014, when Jonathan Stalling, Professor of the University of Oklahoma, asked Goldblatt a question about cross-cultural difficulties and the distance between English and Mandarin Chinese (Stalling, 2014:9), he answered, “I need to do things to the texts to make them more palatable without dumbing them down. I mean, again, how am I supposed to know what an English reader, an American reader expects, wants, needs from a book? But I think I have a broad sense of what they don’t need, and what they don’t need is to be force fed a text that would be easily swallowed by Chinese and would stick in the throat of an American or an Englishman or Singapore Chinese, who doesn’t read Chinese.” Judging from his response, Howard Goldblatt is a translator who caters to the needs of target readers.

Understanding Goldblatt’s translation habits and perspectives surely facilitates my cultural translation study on *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*. They reinforce my arguments while evaluating his translations of the two novels, double-checking whether his principles dovetail with his translation results. Most notably, whether he created a brand-new vision and scenario set apart from the source texts is to be discovered.

3.3 Three Central Aspects of the Textual Comparative Analysis

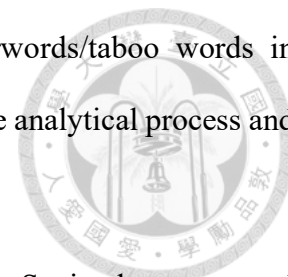
The research centers on the comparison and contrast between the source texts and the target texts from the perspective of cultural translation. First and foremost, the translator’s cultural background is pronouncedly different from that of the authors. Howard Goldblatt is a

distinguished American translator, while Li Ang and Pai Hsien-yung were born and bred in Taiwan. Therefore, certain translation phenomena due to cultural differences and under the influence of the social environment are expected to be perceived and further investigated. To optimize the research process, Peter Newmark's cultural categories listed in his publication *A Textbook of Translation* is utilized as a vehicle for the classification and compilation of CSIs, ensuring all research material in the source and target texts can be systematically arranged and analyzed. Basically, it is the new 2010 version of the cultural categories that is adopted because in doing so, the research proves academically and chronologically relevant to the development of translation studies. What counts is the necessity of catching up with the times.

By the same token, the issue surrounding sexism cuts cross cultures. No matter what cultural background people are in, sexism always exists, despite the emergence of feminist ideas over the past few decades. Overall, if compared with men, women, irrespective of age, race, and occupation, are perceptibly placed at a disadvantage in society. They tend to be victims under social and cultural pressure. In this research, British linguist Sara Mills' theory is applied to the conceptual classification of sexist language or sexist messages in the source and target texts. According to her representative publication *Feminist Stylistics*, sexism takes on different patterns and speaks volumes for itself in numerous socio-cultural situations. It can be presented conspicuously with the employment of different linguistic strategies, be they lexical, syntactic, or semantic. Key concepts of sexism covered in Mills' specialized book will be listed in detail in the following paragraphs.

Finally, the terminological framework of forbidden words proposed by Australian linguists Keith Allan and Kate Burridge is adopted for a deeper and closer look at the profanities appearing in the source and target texts and as reference so that how Goldblatt addressed the sexist language and swearwords/taboo words in context while translating can be adequately

explained. Currently, several relevant studies on sexism and swearwords/taboo words in translation have been conducted, and the studies will surely facilitate the analytical process and can back up new findings.



In *Shafu*, the plot is awash with sexual bias and stereotypes. Sexist language and swearwords/taboo words are used with high frequency, and it is the salient feature that makes the novel a productive research subject on sexism and swearwords/taboo words in translation. The language being discussed reads graphically discriminatory and sounds excruciatingly revolting, reinforcing the fact of male dominance in the traditional Taiwanese cultural context, even though it is a fictional historical setting according to Li Ang's personal descriptions in an interview. Tradition has it that females must behave in a submissive or unassertive manner. They tend to be treated unfairly and reduced to objectification, becoming, so to speak, toys with which males satisfy their high libido.

Similarly, *Niehtzu* deals with a Taiwanese taboo topic in the historical setting of the 1970s. In the novel, the portrayal of the then society reflects the homophobic vibe. In traditional Taiwanese culture, being gay is tantamount to an offense against filial piety. It is socially and morally unacceptable. This community becomes a victim of widespread discrimination, negatively labeled as rebellious misfits that subvert the law of nature. *Crystal Boys* is therefore a translated work worthy of translation research on queer literature, and most importantly, on sexism and swearword/taboo words translation in literature, a branch of cultural translation that should be extensively investigated in order to fill the research gap.

3.3.1 CSIs

As has been explored in the Chapter 2, it is impossible for translators to decode a literary work without any consideration of culture influence. Translation is not a process of achieving word-for-word equivalence. Every culture develops its distinctive words and phrases whose

connotations can hardly be found in another, as corroborated in the conceptualized classification systems established by several linguists such as Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark, Vilen Naumovich Komissarov, and A. O. Ivanov. Take Taiwanese culture as an example. It is a cultural repository of plentiful language and literature resources that have accumulated throughout history. In addition to the cultural input from Mandarin Chinese, dialects like Taiwanese Hokkien and Taiwanese Hakka, along with the native languages of indigenous peoples have a profound influence on the language use in everyday conversations and written works. Therefore, translating a Taiwanese literary work into English can be challenging, since translators should make sure their cultural knowledge is adequate to grapple with a great number of cultural messages that may be foreign to them.

In the first part of the research on Howard Goldblatt's translations of the CSIs featured in *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*, a comprehensive textual analysis is made according to Peter Newmark's cultural categories published in 2010, which is clearly demonstrated in the table below. It is classified into primarily six separate types: (1) ecology, (2) public life, (3) social life, (4) personal life, (5) customs and pursuits, and (6) private passions. With the help of this theoretical framework, the key examples in both source texts are provided in an explicit way, and the overall textual analysis is made easier.

Textual Analysis of Culture-specific Items	
Ecology	● Geology ● Geography ● The natural environment: animals and plants
Public life	● Politics ● Law ● The government
Social life	● Economy ● Occupation ● Health



	● Education
Personal life	● Food ● Clothing ● Housing ● Transportation
Customs and pursuits	● Social habit ● Tradition ● Leisure activity: dance, sports, and gambling
Private passions	● Religion ● Music ● Art ● Literature

3.3.2 Sexism

Indeed, sexist language falls into the realm of culture-specific items, but because the theme and content of the covered source texts are foundationally concerned with sexism, it is thus detached from CSIs as an independent vehicle for the textual comparative analysis. As is mentioned above, the use of sexist language in texts bears witness to male dominance throughout history. With the emergence and evolution of feminism, more exploration of sexism in translated texts has been carried out over the past few decades. Consequently, by courtesy of the relevant translation theories on sexist language use, the research is expected to yield productive results.

According to Sara Mills, sexism, if simplistically defined, is dichotomously divided into overt sexism and indirect sexism. The former refers to terms that obviously convey discriminatory messages against women, while the latter holds water only depending on social contexts, precisely social interaction between language users in a specific cultural environment. The comparative analysis is focused on the word, sentence, and discourse level of sexist language use in the source and target texts. Of course, compared with the superficially linguistic-level investigation of translation phenomena, the conversations in the source texts

serve as suitable material for how sexist messages are tackled while being translated from Mandarin Chinese/dialects into English.

Sexism is naturally constructed during conversation and appears to be embedded with hidden connotations in the minds of people who are talking. It is a social phenomenon that goes beyond cultural boundaries. It remains to be seen how the translator interprets the issue embodied in both source texts. Did he carry out self-censorship, show allegiance to the originals so that the theme would not be distorted, or create a new narrative for certain reasons? In Mills' publication *Feminist Stylistics*, there are many different concepts illustrated with practical examples, such as generic nouns, metaphor, jokes and humor, presupposition and inference, transitivity choices, and fragmentation, and so forth (Mill, 1995:66-197). All these concepts are taken advantage of as a set of criteria by which sexism in the source and target texts is scrutinized for further elaboration.

Textual Analysis of Sexism	
Word Level	● Women as the marked form ● Gender-free language ● The Semantic derogation of women
Phrase/Sentence Level	● Ready-made phrases ● Presupposition and inference ● Metaphor ● Jokes and humor ● Transitivity choices ● Ideology
Discourse Level	● Fragmentation ● Focalization

3.3.3 Swearwords/Taboo words

Similarly, swearwords/taboo words, which belong to taboo language and are mostly associated with the organ and sexual intercourse, can also be tricky in the translation process.

If not properly handled, translation will be indecent and inaccurate. Thus, as sexist language is separated from CSIs, swearwords/taboo words are independently taken as a tool for translation analysis. According to Keith Allan and Kate Burridge, taboo words are categorized into four groups: (1) sex and bodily effluvia, (2) naming, addressing, touching, and viewing people, sacred beings, objects, and places, (3) food and smell, and (4) disease, death, and killing, all of which are instrumental in a full and detailed investigation of swearwords/taboo words in the source and target texts.

Textual Analysis of Swearwords/Taboo words	
1.	● Naming ● Addressing
2.	● The acts of sex ● Bodily effluvia: words about defecation, micturition, ejaculation, bleeding, etc.
3.	● Food ● Smell
4.	● Disease ● Death ● Killing

Moreover, according to their linguistic features, swearwords/taboo words can be interpreted in ways of euphemism, orthophemism, and dysphemism. Euphemism, in layman's terms, is sugar-coated talking, making profane language less severe and more acceptable. Orthophemism, on the other hand, refers to talking in a straightforward manner, without any airbrushing. As for dysphemism, it is offensive talking by using words that reach taboo level, adding to theatrical intensity in the texts.

Through the aforementioned three central aspects of the textual comparative analysis, how Howard Goldblatt approached the language use in *Shafu* and *Niehtzu* will be comprehensively explored in the translation research from the perspective of cultural translation. How Howard

Goldblatt dealt with the CSIs, sexism, and swearwords/taboo words will be uncovered, with his employed strategies and problems explained. If overinterpretation or mistranslation is discovered in Goldblatt's translations, possible contributing factors will be deduced and described. Above all, suppose he encountered difficulties with the cultural exclusivity of the source texts while translating, what would he do? It is anticipated that the research will yield impressive and valuable results.

Chapter 4



Howard Goldblatt's Translation of Culture-specific Items

Shafu and *Niehtzu* are two classic Taiwanese novels characterized by their frequent use of culture-specific items, sexist language, and swearwords/taboo words. First and foremost, the outcomes of a thorough textual comparative analysis are arranged in the tables below according to Peter Newmark's classification system of CSIs, all of which indicate how Howard Goldblatt handled culture-specific items in his translation process of the two literary works.

4.1 Ecology: Animals and Plants

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	那海埔空地應該是延伸向海，但在遠處為一叢叢蘆葦（ <i>Phragmites australis</i> ）與幾棵小樹遮掉視線……	These mudflats actually extended all the way to the sea, but Lin Shi's view was blocked by patches of <i>reeds</i> and a few short trees . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	近水處，卻是一大片狗尾草（ <i>Setaria viridis</i> ），一叢叢都在吐著大蓬的絮子，迎風搖曳，在烈日下，白得發亮。	The white powdery tips of <i>reeds</i> on the banks swayed in the wind and glared white under the boiling sun.
<i>Shafu</i>	「等下個月烏魚來，如來許多，再來幫挑烏魚……」	“Wait till next month, when <i>the squid</i> come. If there's a lot, you can help pick and sort them . . .”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	……到處掛滿了魷魚、烏賊，以及滑膩膩豬頭肉的夜市中。	. . . surrounded by racks of dried <i>squid</i> , <i>octopus</i> , and greasy pig's heads.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	烤花枝，涼拌九孔—美麗多多！	Barbecued <i>squid</i> , <i>abalone</i> with hot dressing—delicious!
<i>Shafu</i>	……卻看到阿清拎著一條近兩呎長的鱷仔魚朝著走來。	. . . she was rewarded by the sight of Ah-qing walking toward her with <i>a fish</i> at least two feet long in his arms.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「鯽魚、鯉魚、鯪魚，統統有。」	“ <i>Gold carp</i> , plain carp, <i>silver carp</i> , all kinds.”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	……松鼠黃魚……	. . . squirrel <i>croaker</i> . . .

In *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*, the function of animals and plants that appear is to inform readers of what the environment involving the characters looks like, and of course they show the features of a particular area in the story. As is demonstrated in the table above, the plant that grows vivaciously near the water in *Shafu* is different from that in *Niehtzu*. However, Goldblatt translated them both as “reeds.” This plant tends to grow in the coastal areas like Lucheng, where the story of *Shafu* unfolds. On the other hand, 狗尾草 is often seen near the river, as shown in the scene where the young gay men take Buddy to the Xindian River for a swim. The translation results suggest that Goldblatt overlooked the details of the geographical environment in the novels, or he knew little about the plants and chose to generalize. In fact, reeds don’t have powdery tips as in Goldblatt’s translations. Therefore, it can cause confusion if the two plants are translated as the same. Of course, another possibility is that Goldblatt was target-oriented. He avoided using the professional term so that the reading flow would not be interrupted.

The other examples listed reveal how Goldblatt translated the fish and mollusks appearing in both source texts. Obviously, translated errors were made. First of all, he might mistake 烏魚 for 烏賊. The fish 烏魚 should be translated as “grey mullet.” However, “squid” is 魷魚, and 烏賊 is “cuttlefish,” not “octopus.” Besides, biologically speaking, 花枝 and “cuttlefish” are the same species. Therefore, here is another possible example of Goldblatt’s mistranslation.

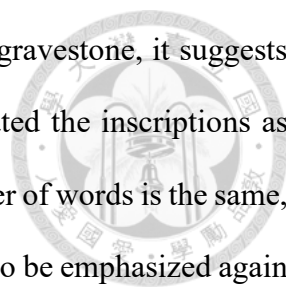
When Goldblatt addressed 鯷仔魚 in *Shafu*, he employed a simplification strategy, without referring to the real name of the fish (round herring), but in the cases of the three boldfaced fish species in *Niehtzu*, the strategy was the other way around. He gave them their authentic names. In my opinion, the latter is better, because by doing so, he made the messages of the original accessible to target readers. From these examples, it is clear to see Goldblatt became more thoughtful while translating. He seemed to follow the source text more closely and spread the cultural information in moderation, even though a clear standard was not set up.

4.2 Social Life: Occupation

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	……倒是查某們不知輪換過幾回， 老娼頭 是否還在，都還很難說呢！	. . . He wondered how much turnover there had been among the women during that period and whether <i>the old madam</i> was still around. Well, he'd know soon enough.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	聚賭的人，各家妓女戶的 老鴇 、保鑣都有，還有一些熟嫖客。	<i>Madams</i> from all whorehouses, bouncers, even some of the regular Johns were involved.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	有一次，兩個 少尉 軍官為她爭風吃醋，動起武來……	On one occasion, two <i>second lieutenants</i> fought over her . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	緊接著旁邊有一個舊墳，外殼石頭變黑了，可是墳上草木卻修剪得很整齊。我走近去，墓碑上赫然題著「 陸軍少尉 傅衛之墓」，日期是「中華民國二十一年生中華民國四十七年歿」。	Next to it was an older, occupied grave, whose stone was dark and discolored. The grass above it had been neatly trimmed. I walked over to read the marker, it said: <i>Army Lieutenant</i> Fu Wei 1932-1958

Prostitution is an element that pervades both novels. In Mandarin Chinese, **老娼頭** and **老鴇** are the same in meaning, referring to a woman that runs a brothel or a female procurer who profits from arranging sex transactions and exploiting prostitutes. Goldblatt translated them both as “madam,” which shows consistency, even though the concept appears in two different novels. However, using the word “madam” detracts from the animal imagery of the second term. In traditional Chinese culture, **鴇** is a kind of bird that gets around mainly by walking instead of flying. This bird symbolizes lewdness. Therefore, it is clear that “madam” is non-equivalent to **老鴇** due to its loss of the cultural message in the source language.

As for the translation of military titles, the two examples prove that Goldblatt was not consistent in the handling of the terms. Through the comparative analysis, the first one is correct and accurate, but the other one is not. It should be “second lieutenant” as well. Moreover,



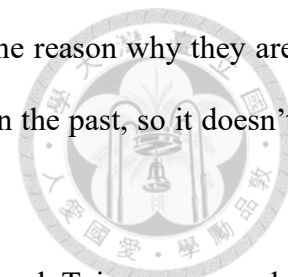
judging from Goldblatt's translation strategy of the inscriptions on the gravestone, it suggests that cultural and linguistic habits are not interchangeable. If he translated the inscriptions as "The Grave of Army Second Lieutenant Fu Wei," even though the number of words is the same, it appears stupid to English speakers. A grave is a grave; it doesn't have to be emphasized again on the tombstone. In addition, the way the time is presented differs culturally. In the novel, the setting is not American, so it is impossible that his gravestone is designed in this style. From the angle of target readers, they may not find the problem, but they are provided with a wrong piece of cultural knowledge that Taiwanese people adopt the Common Era system on the gravestone. In fact, the birth year and the death year are shown in a way of the nation name with the year calculated based on the year the Republic of China was established.

4.3 Personal Life: Food

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	她實在餓了，幾天來只吃番薯籤和豬菜，那軍服男子拿兩個白飯糰給她……	... how hungry she had been, how for the last few days she had eaten nothing but <i>sweet-potato mash</i> and <i>pig slop</i> , how the soldier had offered her two rice balls ...
<i>Shafu</i>	「……我們家一碗番薯稀飯吃是有的。」	"... at least a bowl of <i>rice gruel mixed with sweet potatoes</i> at home."
<i>Shafu</i>	趕早的賣麵茶老人……	The elderly <i>porridge</i> vendor who catered to the early crowd ...
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「快去吧，早上做的稀飯都發餿啦。」	"The <i>rice porridge</i> I made this morning has probably spoiled by now."
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「……我那裡還有糯米糕，綠豆稀飯……」	"... I've got some rice cake and <i>green-bean porridge</i> there ..."

The examples excerpted from the two Taiwanese novels show that when Howard Goldblatt encountered the names of Taiwanese food that have all the hallmarks of cultural exclusivity, he mainly adopted the literal translation strategy. However, this doesn't work at all. For instance, in *Shafu*, 番薯籤 is not a sort of mashed food but sweet potato cut in strips. Moreover, 豬菜,

if strictly defined, is not liquid slop. It refers to sweet potato leaves. The reason why they are called “pig vegetables” is that they were commonly used to feed pigs in the past, so it doesn’t follow that pig slop can be an equivalent for 豬菜.



As for 麵茶, Goldblatt substituted “porridge” for this traditional Taiwanese snack. Apparently, his word choice is friendly to target readers because of their familiarity with the oat-made food in American culture. However, in Taiwanese culture, 麵茶 is primarily made of baked flour, sugar, white sesames, and peanut oil. This translation result will likely convey insufficient or rather incorrect cultural meaning of this food to target readers. Speaking of 稀飯, it should be translated as “congee,” which is better than “rice gruel” or “rice porridge.” Indeed, it is readily accessible to target readers, but the cultural difference is compromised. Moreover, 綠豆稀飯 is not green-bean porridge in Taiwanese sense. It should be “mung-bean congee.”

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	走上前來從立於牆的竹櫃子 拿出一瓶「白鹿」清酒……	Walking over to the bamboo cupboard against the wall, he took down a bottle of <i>White Deer wine</i> . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	他們說，冬天夜裡，公園裡冷 了，大家擠到桃源春去，暖一 壺紹興酒，來兩碟滷菜。	On cold winter nights, they recall, everyone, squeezed into Taoyuan Spring for <i>a carafe of heated rice wine</i> and <i>some snacks</i> to go with it.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	去的時候，總是拎著一瓶紅露 酒……	. . . had gone over to . . . with a bottle of <i>cheap wine</i> . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	宵夜酒菜，我們只列四味：滷 肫肝、鴨翅膀、白切肚、五香 牛肉	. . . late-night snacks. Altogether we had four kinds: <i>salted pork liver</i> , buffalo wings, sliced pork stomach, and spicy beef strips.

Similarly, in *Shafu*, 清酒 is a kind of white liquor made of rice. Strictly speaking, if it is translated into English as “wine,” target readers will surely think of it as an alcoholic drink made of grapes or other fruits. When Goldblatt approached culinary content in *Niehtzu*, he

employed similar strategies to do the translation. In addition to food, containers for them also give language users a kind of impression, which can be utterly different in terms of culture. For example, 一壺紹興酒, in the minds of Taiwanese people, looks like a ceramic bottle into which there are brown-color rice liquor, whereas Goldblatt translated it as “a carafe of heated rice wine.” His rewriting might have caused Taiwanese culture to take on a new characteristic, not to mention 紅露酒 became “cheap wine.” It refers to a liquor brewed with red fermented rice bran. When it comes to 滷菜, it should be any food that is braised with soybean sauce. Goldblatt seemed to have intentionally made it generalized as “snacks” for the sake of target readers or had difficulty with the term due to its cultural exclusivity. Compared with the English language, Mandarin Chinese is richer in the vocabulary for cooking techniques. It doesn’t make much sense that Goldblatt chose the word “salted” in expression of this special local food, since it is marinated and braised with soybean sauce so that it will become brown and taste of the sauce.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	陳江水扒幾口飯，看眼桌上只有盤空心菜與魚乾……	Chen Jiangshui shoveled some rice into his mouth. Looking down at the table, where there was only some <i>spinach</i> and some dried fish . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	長年都塞滿了腐爛的菜頭……	. . . were repositories of rotting <i>vegetables</i> . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	晚上我到他攤子去，他總給我盛一大碗牛肉湯，熱騰騰的，又是牛筋，又是瘦肉，還有香菜……	At night, I’d go to his stall, where he’d give me a bowl of steaming beef soup, filled with meat and <i>vegetables</i> .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	每一次出來，他跟在楊教頭身後，手裡總是大包小包拎著：陳皮梅、加應子、花生酥……	We never saw him except in the company of Chief Yang, following along with an armload of food— <i>dried plums, dried apricots, peanut brittle</i> . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「把你們的陳年紹興酒熱	“Heat up some of your best aged rice

	來，」楊教頭命令道，「加酸梅！」	wine,” Chief Yang told her, “and put in some <i>dried sour plums</i> .”
--	------------------	---

While translating vegetables or snacks, Goldblatt is found to have seemingly employed the domestication strategy. First, 空心菜 is not just “spinach”, and 香菜 has its name. They should be rendered “water spinach” and “coriander” respectively. At least he didn’t translate the vegetables by means of literal translation. Translations like “empty heart vegetable” and “fragrant vegetable” don’t make any sense and cannot authentically introduce target readers to the foods. Similarly, 菜頭 is not just a vegetable. It should be “white radish.” It appears that Goldblatt didn’t grasp the meaning of the source text.

Taiwanese snacks such as 陳皮梅, 加應子, and 花生酥, after the employment of the domestication strategy, are given new looks that English-speaking readers can relate to culturally. However, from the perspective of source readers, the cultural denotation of dried tangerine skin is lost. Moreover, apricots are not common ingredients for making fruit preserves in Taiwan. “Peanut brittle” is also no equivalent for the Taiwanese-style peanut finger food, which doesn’t contain peanut kernels at first glance. In my opinion, “peanut crunchy” is a better translation. Finally, 酸梅 was translated as “dried sour plums,” which might be misleading. This translation result deprives target readers of an opportunity to distinguish between 陳皮梅 and 酸梅. The cultural images of the two snacks are thus discarded.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	「……妳回去讓阿清準備一份豬腳麵線……」	“... you’re to ask Ah-qing to prepare a portion of <i>pig’s feet and noodles</i> ...”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「父親也愛吃麵條，我們常吃擔擔麵……」	“ <i>Noodles</i> was his favorite, too, so we had them a lot...”

Another classic example is about the difference between 麵線 and 麵. The former is thinner than the latter. Therefore, the image of 豬腳麵線 is never the same as that of beef noodles. Goldblatt’s translation needs some refinement. For me, it is better to translate the food

as “braised pig’s feet on rice vermicelli” so that its cultural image will not be erased.

In the case of 擔擔麵 in *Niehtzu*, Goldblatt chose to be evasive, just translating it as “noodles.” I personally agree with his strategy because this food is too hard to deal with on cultural grounds. The noodles originated from the Sichuan province, and they were peddled here and there on the street with two loads carried by a long wooden pole. This is where the noodles got the name. Target readers may not be interested in the complex cultural connotation hidden in this food, so Goldblatt didn’t foreignize it by adopting transliteration. If it had been meticulously translated, it might have interrupted reading experience.

4.4 Personal Life: Housing

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	……一幢破爛的合院	... a rundown building
<i>Shafu</i>	……才發現土墘屋沒有屋樑，除了門楣，竟真是無處掛繩子。	... had attached the rope to the lintel, but then she looked up and realized that the mud house had no beams—that was the only place she could have tied it.
<i>Shafu</i>	只不遠處一幢突出於四周土墘厝的磚造三合院，合院裡已隱隱有了燈光。	But not far off there was light coming from a brick-walled compound that stood in contrast to the mud huts around it.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	在池中央起了一座八角形的亭閣，池子的四周，也築了幾棟紅柱綠瓦的涼亭……	... build an octagonal pavilion in the middle of the pond; small gazebos with red posts and green roof tiles were built around the pond.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	我走進去，穿過一道磚砌的甬堂……	I went in, walked down a corridor with a brick floor ...

When it comes to traditional Taiwanese architecture, words referring to particular housing styles are barely translatable due to their rich cultural features. Take 合院 for example. It is a typical history-steeped residence that is primarily built of red bricks. The two examples listed in the table show that Goldblatt’s translations were not consistent. For me, it should be

translated by using transliteration first and then adding a few explanatory words like “*sanheyuan*, a U-shaped red-brick-built compound.” As for the translation of 土埭屋, “mud house/hut” is satisfactory, but it can be improved by emphasizing its roof feature. Therefore, it should be translated as “thatched mud house.” However, Goldblatt’s handlings of 亭閣 and 涼亭 are quite remarkable. While “pavilion” and “gazebo” are similar in meaning, the separate use of them enables readers to know they are two different kinds of constructions. The last example is 衡堂, which is a common architectural structure in Shanghai. The term has an untranslatability factor. Goldblatt translated it as “corridor,” which changes the housing style, failing to convey the cultural meaning to target readers. I prefer to translate it as “lane.”

4.5 Personal Life: Transportation

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	鹿城	<i>Lucheng</i>
<i>Shafu</i>	陳厝	<i>Chencuo</i>
<i>Shafu</i>	北角頭	<i>Beijiaotou</i>
<i>Shafu</i>	安平	<i>Anping</i>
<i>Shafu</i>	東石	<i>Eastrock</i>

The table above indicates how Goldblatt translated the names of place that appear in the novel *Shafu*. He adopted the strategies of transliteration and literal translation. It is apparent that his translation of 東石 may spark off controversy because of its inconsistency with the other examples. From my point of view, it must be translated as “Dongshi” instead of “Eastrock.” If not, 鹿城 can actually be “Deertown,” and 北角頭 is “Northhornhead.” These translations will increase the awkwardness of the target text.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Niehtzu</i>	三水街	<i>Three Rivers Street</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	龍江街	<i>Longjiang Street</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	長春路	<i>Changchun Road</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	信義路	<i>Xinyi Road</i>

<i>Niehtzu</i>	中山北路	<i>Sun Yat-sen North Road</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	八德路	<i>Eight Virtues Road</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	仁愛路	<i>Ren'ai Road</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	忠孝西路	<i>Royalty West Road</i>

As for the examples in *Niehtzu*, likewise, Howard Goldblatt should have double-checked whether his translation strategies used for the names of roads and streets would cause confusion among target readers. All of these are, in my opinion, a complete mess. I am wondering what Goldblatt's principles were while translating these CSIs. It is hardly deductible from the examples listed above.

Why is 龍江街 not “Dragon River Street” if “Three Rivers Street” holds water? If 八德路 is “Eight Virtues Road” and 忠孝西路 is “Royalty West Road, how about 信義路 and 仁愛路? Logically, they must be translated with the same literal translation strategy as “Integrity Road” and “Benevolence Road.” By the same token, 長春路 must be “Longevity Road.” In this way, consistency is achieved. Obviously, Goldblatt didn't formulate a standard for the translation of road names. He seemed to have done this part in a haphazard manner. According to his personal accounts in the autobiography and his interviews, he might have had an urge to be creative but result in inconsistency. Of course, there might be extenuating circumstances in his translation process. It is likely that he was pressed for time, so doublechecking became an impossibility. Another reason is that he didn't understand the meaning of the phrase combined with two Chinese characters. A prime example is 長春, which means a long life in Mandarin Chinese. As for his translation of 中山北路, it piques my curiosity whether he would have translated 中正路 as “Chiang Kai-shek Road” if he had followed this translation pattern. Finally, why 忠孝西路 was translated as “Royalty West Road” might be that from Goldblatt's understanding of the novel's theme, royalty to partners is of more importance than filial piety to parents. He let the ending of the novel culminate in this concept.

4.6 Customs and Pursuits

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	林市感到五月天裡牡蠣才剛插枝，又已然是中元普渡	It seemed like only yesterday that the oysters had been planted during the fifth month, and here it was already time for <i>the Dead Souls' Festival</i> .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	……今天竟是七月十五，中元節了。	. . . was the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month, <i>Ghost Festival day</i> .
<i>Shafu</i>	「……他大孫滿月，送來的油飯裡，一粒蔥頭、一片肉都沒有。」	“. . . Well, when their first grandson <i>was a month old</i> , all they sent over was some <i>sticky rice</i> —not even a small piece of <i>green union</i> or a slice of meat.”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	自從那年母親出走後，我們家裡便沒有過過中秋。從前母親在家時，每逢中秋，她都要拜月娘的……我跟弟娃就去抓供桌上掬水軒的五仁月餅來吃。	We hadn't celebrated <i>the Mid-Autumn Festival</i> at home since the year Mother left. Before that, it had been one of the big events of the year, a time when Mother paid reverence to <i>the Moon Goddess</i> . . . While her attention was diverted, Buddy and I would snatch <i>mooncakes</i> off the devotional table and start eating them.
<i>Shafu</i>	「……他那死爸爸，海邊抓魚，走出去橫著回來，身軀脹得壽衣都穿不下。」	“. . . His father—that damned old man—went out fishing one day and came back in a box. He was so bloated we couldn't even <i>get a shroud on</i> him.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	那家裁縫店專門包製孝服壽衣。	The shop, which specialized in <i>mourning clothes</i> , . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	我們披麻戴孝，穿著停當，便圍著傅老爺子的靈柩團團坐下……	Once we'd <i>put on our robes and head coverings</i> we gathered around Papa Fu's bier and sat down . . .

In both source texts, important customs, rituals, and festivals in Taiwanese culture are introduced. However, according to the first two examples, Goldblatt made the same error again: inconsistency. I doubt that he established his personal translation glossary. *Shafu* was published

earlier than *Niehtzu*. If he had the translation experience, why did he not notice and make the mistake? According to Taiwanese tradition, people send 油飯 in celebration of an infant turning one month old after birth. It is a culture-specific item hard to deal with. Goldblatt translated it as “sticky rice.” It should be offered slightly more details so that its cultural legacy remains untainted. In my opinion, it can be translated as “steamed oil sticky rice” in Taiwanese cultural context. The food, in fact, contains no green union, which is an obvious mistranslation by Goldblatt. “Green union” should be replaced with “shallot” to reach authenticity.

Another mistake Goldblatt made is that he translated 月娘 as the “Moon Goddess.” In fact, in Taiwanese Hokkien, it is nothing different from the moon. As for 掬水軒五仁月餅, Goldblatt chose not to be explicit, translating it merely as “mooncakes” probably to ease the burden of understanding much cultural information on target readers. When Goldblatt dealt with the food brands Taiwanese people are familiar with, such as 小美冰淇淋, 味全鮮奶, and 克寧奶粉, all of which appear in the plot of *Niehtzu*, he would generalize or omit them, without providing other details he thought to be unnecessary.

How 壽衣 should be translated is another problem to be discussed. By definition, 壽衣 is a suit of clothes worn by the deceased. In *Shafu*, Goldblatt used “shroud” to represent the concept, but it wasn’t faithful to the original. In the target text, a shroud here is more of a piece of cloth used to cover the dead instead of the clothes the dead person is dressed in. On the other hand, when Goldblatt faced the same problem while translating *Niehtzu*, he left it unrendered. Apparently, the definitions of 壽衣 differ culturally. For Goldblatt, he would rather employ the domestication or omission strategies. Maybe a safe answer to 壽衣 is “clothes for the departed or burial garments.” The concept of 披麻戴孝 is equally challenging for English translators. Here, Goldblatt didn’t paraphrase 戴孝 in English. It seems that when he ran into “filial piety,” a virtue the importance of which is dinned into Taiwanese people, he would

interpret it in different ways such as “unfilial (不孝)” and “show filial respect to someone (孝敬).” After all, this concept is foreign to most Westerners and varies with context. If 披麻戴孝 is to be translated into English, my suggestion is “wearing and bearing hemp.” The connotation of 孝 can be left unsaid in this situation, for the virtue becomes self-evident at a traditional Taiwanese funeral. The focus should be on the clothes and the accessory.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	來春閣	<i>Springtime House</i>
<i>Shafu</i>	風月樓	<i>the House of Moonlight Pleasures</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	晚香玉	<i>the House of Fragrant Jade</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	東雲閣	<i>Eastern Clouds</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	安樂鄉	<i>the Cozy Nest</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「我那家桃源春麼，就是個世外桃源！」	“That <i>Taoyuan Spring</i> of mine was <i>a real heaven from the outside world!</i> . . .”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	……幾疑置身世外「桃」源	. . . as though he had been transported to a new “ <i>Peach Blossom Spring.</i> ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	新南陽	<i>the New South Seas Theater</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	大世紀	<i>the Great World</i>

Leisure activity is another branch of the category. All the examples enumerated in the table are all public entertainment venues. The first five places, if judged by their names, imply that they provide customers with sensual experiences. However, Howard Goldblatt might not penetrate the cultural connotations of a few names. By way of illustration, Chinese characters such as 春 and 桃 are associated with sex and love. Therefore 來春閣 is more than Goldblatt’s translation as “Springtime House.” Literal translation doesn’t work in this situation. The name has given readers a hint that this place is for sexual indulgence. This can explain why Taiwanese people say 買「春」 when someone pays money for sex services. This is the same for the word 桃. According to the news report that shows 世外「桃」源, why does the journalist emphasize the word with a quotation mark? For source-culture readers, this is an easy question

to answer, but for people outside of the Sinophone world, it can be incomprehensible. It appears that Howard Goldblatt is one of them. Judging from all the examples about 桃源, he couldn't comply with the principle of consistency or effectively communicate the cultural messages to target readers. All the translations were presented in a disorganized way. To be honest, the two examples are culturally untranslatable. In the translation process, the cultural meaning can scarcely be directly introduced to target readers unless Goldblatt provided footnotes, but this strategy might interfere with reading experience.

Finally, on closer inspections, the last two examples are mistranslations. Howard Goldblatt misunderstood the meanings of 陽 and 世紀. The former is unlikely to carry a meaning of “sea,” while the latter should be translated as “century,” not “world.” In Mandarin Chinese, the characters that refer to the sea can be 海 or 洋, it comes as a surprise that Goldblatt made the semantic errors. The same problems took place when he translated 吴暖玉 as “Wu Aiyu” and 潘經理 as “Manager Fan.”

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	「……去藏在蘆葦裡與討海人賭博，聽說四色牌每賭都贏……」	“... to hide in the reeds and gamble [*] with some of the fishermen. I heard that he wins just about every hand ...”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	可是他好賭如命，喜歡賭台灣人的四色牌，把金條輸光了，便幹起販毒的勾當來。	... he bought some gold bars with him in Taiwan, but he was such a compulsive gambler he lost them all in <i>local games</i> , and turned to dealing in heroin.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	原來裡面在賭牌九	They were playing <i>pai gow</i> .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「至尊寶，三丁配老猴，通吃！」	“ <i>A supreme</i> , that beats you all!”

As for the content that involves gambling, Howard Goldblatt adopted different translation strategies. In both source texts, 四色牌, a poker-like game that features four different suits distinguished by color, is introduced. Interestingly, neither of them was translated. Goldblatt

omitted the same information appearing in the two originals, keeping target readers in ignorance of a piece of cultural knowledge.

However, in the case of 牌九, he employed transliteration. He chose to keep the cultural element. He even did research on the rules of the game, or he knew how to play the game. I appreciate his performance here because he translated the text not only in jargon but in a way that readers can understand immediately.

4.7 Private Passions: Religion and Music

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	除每個月固定的拜拜外，逢七月十五日的普渡和打醮，更有大規模的祭祀。	In addition to the required <i>monthly ceremonies</i> , <i>sacrificial rites</i> were conducted on a grand scale each year on <i>the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the day of prayer and worship for the deliverance of all souls</i> .
<i>Shafu</i>	於是，在七月裡，每個地區的人們……	So during <i>the seventh lunar month</i> , the inhabitants of each district . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	一個小沙彌引我去見寺裡的住持，他是一位七十左右的老和尚……身上那件黑袈裟	A <i>young Buddhist novice</i> led me in to see <i>the abbot</i> , an old monk in his seventies . . . whose <i>cassock</i> hung on his frame
<i>Niehtzu</i>	殿門上端懸著一塊烏木橫匾，「苦海慈航」四個大字金漆已經剝落……蓮座也缺裂了。供台上供著香燭果品……	. . . above which hung a dark wood sign with the words, “ <i>Merciful Boat in the Sea of Bitterness</i> ” engraved in gold that was chipped and peeling . . . even <i>the pedestal</i> was cracked and broken. Pieces of fruit and <i>devotional candles</i> were laid out on the offerings stand . . .

In addition to the CSIs about social life, religious elements falling into the category of private passions can also be discovered in the two novels. Different from Westerners, Taiwanese people are mostly followers of Buddhism and Daoism. Therefore, as an American, Howard

Goldblatt might have employed certain strategies to deal with religious content.

According to the table above, four practical examples in reference to religious beliefs in *Shafu* and *Niehtzu* are given for further translation analysis. Judging from these examples, it is not hard to discover that when Goldblatt dealt with the source text of *Shafu*, most religious elements representing Taiwanese culture were skillfully translated into English. Instead of adopting the domestication strategy, he seemed to keep the essence of the source text and faithfully communicate the religious messages to target readers. However, religious ceremonies that take place periodically in Taiwanese culture should follow the lunar calendar. Goldblatt didn't highlight the special system at first, even though the correct information is shown in the second example, which might be too late and thus puzzle target readers. They will likely think the fifteenth day of the seventh month to be July 15 under the system of the Gregorian calendar.

By contrast, when Goldblatt translated Buddhist information in *Niehtzu*, he apparently employed the domestication strategy, as evidenced by 住持, a Buddhist monk in charge of the temple. Goldblatt translated the old monk as the “abbot,” which is not that off the mark, but the point is that he is clad in a “cassock.” Goldblatt's selection of words contributed to a Buddhist setting under the veneer of Christianity. Moreover, “devotional candles” are also associated with Christianity. Compared with red candles in Buddhist temples, devotional candles are mostly white-colored.

In addition, source-language readers can understand from the context of the source text and key words like 苦海慈航 and 蓮座 that the idol worshipped in the temple is Guanyin. Goldblatt didn't seem to grasp the semantic details, and therefore his translated texts were somewhat lacking in coherence. After all, 蓮座 should have been translated as the “lotus pedestal,” but Goldblatt ignored or overlooked the key message. Furthermore, in the last example, the translator's voice is inevitably brought to light, since in a Buddhist temple, it is

practically impossible for people to see a plaque with English words on it. From here, it dawns on readers that the work is a translation. According to the source text, there are only four words on the wooden sign, but after translation, it becomes one that has seven words. How could Goldblatt do to compensate for inconsistency? As it turned out, he deleted the number. This example demonstrates that Mandarin Chinese can speak more with less, as evidenced by signature four-character idioms. However, English can't produce the same effect due to its grammatical limitations.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	八仙桌上一個大竹盤上，放著一對肥大的豬腳……	She was greeted by the sight of a large baboo tray, which had been placed on <i>the Eight-Immortals table</i> . On top of it were two blackened pig's feet . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	……又擠到那張大理石面的八仙桌邊……	. . . on the marble-topped <i>octagonal table</i> . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「八仙、八仙」的猜起拳來。	“ <i>Eight fairies, eight fairies</i> ,” she shouted as she held up the sign for eight.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	做了幾道聚寶盆的招牌菜：一道雪花雞、一道荷葉粉蒸鴨、一道大烏參嵌肉。盧司務還特別作了一道應景菜八仙上壽……	. . . to cook some of the restaurant's specialties: snowflake chicken, battered duck in lotus leaves, and stuffed sea cucumber. Chef Lu also volunteered to make his famous <i>Eight Immortals</i> birthday cake.

In traditional Daoist culture, 八仙 refers to eight immortals: He Hsien-ku (何仙姑), Tsao Kuo-chiu (曹國舅), Li Tieh-kuai (李鐵拐), Lan Tsai-he (藍采和), Lu Tung-pin (呂洞賓), Han Hsiang-tzu (韓湘子), Chang Kuo-lao (張果老), and Han Chung-li (漢鍾離). These eight God-like figures as a whole have become a religious and cultural symbol etched in the minds of Taiwanese people. Its cultural meaning is hardly translatable to non-native translators. For me, Goldblatt's translations of this specific term were below par. Even though he adopted the

foreignization strategy, or rather literal translation, the results didn't work wonders. Moreover, he made a translation mistake here. In the second example, he must have misunderstood the meaning of the source text and translated 八仙桌, which is actually a square table, as one with eight sides rather than the Eight-Immortals table he did in *Shafu*. For native Mandarin Chinese speakers, all the examples of 八仙 denote the same cultural concept in the figurative sense, but for Goldblatt, they seemed to be different ideas. He even transformed 八仙上壽 as a birthday cake. I think this juxtaposition of both domestication and foreignization in the same sentence has created a new cultural context neither fish nor fowl, full of awkwardness. If he had omitted the message or obscured the name of the food, the effect might have been better.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	二更更鼓月照庭 牽娘的手入繡廳 咱今相好天注定 別人言語不可聽	As the second watch sounds, the moon lights up the <i>courtyard</i> ; I lead my darling girl into her <i>chamber</i> . We are fated to be lovers <i>tonight</i> ; Pay no heed to what others <i>say</i> .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	白鷺鷥 3 車糞箕 3 車到溪仔坑 5	<i>Egret 2</i> Honey bucket <i>cart 5</i> Dump it at Xizai <i>Pit 6</i>
*At the end of each line is the number of syllables.		
<i>Niehtzu</i>	一邊用著幼稚園的歌〈兩隻老虎〉的調子唱道： 四個人妖 4 四個人妖 4 一般高 3 一般高 3 一個沒有卵椒 6 一個沒有卵泡 6 真奇妙 3 真奇妙 3	. . . and sang the children's song "Two Little Tigers" with new words: Four little <i>fairies 5</i> Four little <i>fairies 5</i> All the same <i>height 4</i> All the same <i>height 4</i> This one has no <i>pecker 6</i> This one has no <i>nuts 5</i> Isn't that <i>weird 4</i> Isn't that <i>weird 4</i>

Aside from religious elements in both source texts, the infusion of music equally adds more vitality to the novels. The first example is a song sung by Chen Chiang-shui while he is

drinking alone. According to the source text, the last character in every line rhymes with each other, increasing the prosody of the song. However, in Goldblatt's translation, the rhyme disappeared. From this result, we realize that when the lyrics of a song are translated into the target language, the original grammatical rules and syntactic structures may change radically. Due to the application of different translation strategies, the literariness and artistry of the source text can be lost as well. Inability to rhyme can also be found in Goldblatt's translations of the two songs from *Niehtzu*, especially 〈白鷺鷥〉, whose rhyming can be found if sung in Taiwanese Hokkien.

Singability should also be considered, and the flow of melodies is closely related to the number of syllables. Obviously, the English version of 〈白鷺鷥〉, a classic Taiwanese ballad, is against the rule. In Mandarin Chinese, each character stands for a note, so the tune of 白鷺鷥 is formed by three musical notes. However, in English, there is only one disyllabic word “egret” in the line, making the singability of this tune an impossibility. Moreover, Goldblatt changed the meaning of the song; he was not faithful to the original. Where the inspiration of the translation “honey bucket cart” came from is unknown to this day, and his understanding of the verb 車 was incorrect. The verb means “pushing” instead of “dumping.” In a nutshell, translators should not just convey the meaning of a song while translating it. It is a shame that Goldblatt didn't give the important detail much thought at that time while dealing with the songs. It would have been fascinating if he had considered injecting a sense of rhythm into his translations.

Chapter 5

Howard Goldblatt's Handling of Sexism in Fiction



Taiwanese novels *Shafu* and *Niehtzu* discuss highly avant-garde issues—the former is concerned with mariticide, and the latter homosexuality—and are filled with words that are sexually vulgar and thus offensive to the disadvantaged or marginalized groups in society, which manifests Taiwanese people, in that historical context, lived in a society that was ideologically dominated by male chauvinism and conservative Confucianism. Anyone who defied tradition would be pigeonholed as an immoral outcast.

Sexism is conspicuous in both source texts. These words used in conversations act as a medium making sexually discriminatory messages sent to the target characters but in fact indirectly to readers as well. Whether the sexist information embedded in *Shafu* and *Niehtzu* is faithfully conveyed by Howard Goldblatt is clearly demonstrated in the following tables according to Sara Mills' demarcation of concepts detailed in her 1995 publication *Feminist Stylistics*.

5.1 Word Level: Women as the Marked Form

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	林市母親如有羞恥，應該不惜一切抵抗成為一個烈女……	And if Lin Shi's mother had had any honor at all, she would have resisted to the end and died a chaste woman .
<i>Shafu</i>	不論菊娘如何顯靈，看到的人總形容她是個哀怨的美麗女鬼……	But no matter how she appeared to them, everyone described her as a melancholic but beautiful spirit . . .
<i>Shafu</i>	她們或以藝待人，賣笑不賣身，被喚名為藝旦。	. . . entertaining with their artistic talents, selling their smiles but not their bodies—and were called artistes .
<i>Shafu</i>	眾多妓女靠坐在這美人靠上，	. . . these chairs would have been filled

	頻頻向下面的恩客非眼風……	with <i>prostitutes</i> casting enticing glances toward the would-be clients passing below.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	在第一軍團軍營附近一家下等茶室，當起女招待來。	. . . where she became <i>a hostess</i> in a low-class teahouse near the military base housing the First Army.

The five examples listed in the table represent the concept of women as the marked form, which means that a word regarding “woman” is deliberately used to emphasize the gender image. However, sexist messages speak for themselves all the same. In Taiwanese culture, terms like 烈女, 女鬼, 藝旦, and 妓女 are the embodiment of gender stereotypes. Pragmatically, these terms are designed exclusively for women. Their male counterparts basically don’t exist in the linguistic system under the influence of male dominance. In the first example, Goldblatt translated 烈女 as “chaste woman,” which I think is a successful translation, especially the verb “died.” He did understand the cultural meaning of the term. Only women who kill themselves or die fighting in order to maintain their image of chastity and tenacity can be called 烈女. Goldblatt’s addressing of 女鬼 showed the linguistic feature of English because he blotted out the female element of the term. According to context, that the ghost is a woman is a fact, and this doesn’t have to be stressed again, as is the case with 藝旦. The word “artiste” is gender-free. Another linguistic feature of English is that the concept of women can be expressed with the suffix -ess. Therefore, this is why 女招待 was translated as “hostess.” However, here, Goldblatt showed fidelity to the original. He didn’t use “host” to make it politically correct.

5.2 Word Level: Gender-free Language

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	林市叔叔以未亡人一定會改嫁為由……	Sooner or later <i>the widow</i> would remarry, reasoned one of Lin Shi’s uncles . . .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「那個騷東西麼？」	“You mean <i>that butch queen</i> ?”

What is discussed in this category is gender-free language, which means the word stays

neutral, without tilting toward either gender. However, the definition is not necessarily tenable due to cultural influence. In the case of 未亡人, which literally means the living, to be exact, the living spouse of a couple, it can only refer to the female one in Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, for Goldblatt, he could only translate it as “widow.” Of course, he could deduce the meaning through context.

The other example is about camp talk, a dialogue between two gay people. As has mentioned in Chapter 2, Goldblatt’s translations of camp talk have been appreciated by many. Here, the sexist message in the conversation can still be felt. Literally, 騷東西 can be male or female, but if explained by a stricter criterion, it conveys an intrinsic sexist message. Goldblatt translated it as “butch queen,” a person who possesses masculine and feminine qualities. Of course, the usage sounds reasonable in camp talk, but it may not gain acceptance if used in daily conversations in which some people hold conservative views.

5.3 Word Level: The Semantic Derogation of Women

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	「來，臭賤查某，陪我喝酒。」	“Come on, <i>you slut!</i> Join me!”
<i>Shafu</i>	是一名叫菊娘的丫鬟在此投井自殺。	. . . <i>a servant girl</i> named Chrysanthemum, who had thrown herself down the well.
<i>Shafu</i>	那是她們當中來一、兩個愛排事理的上年紀女人……	. . . with the arrival of one or two of the <i>older women</i> —the resident moralists.
<i>Shafu</i>	因而，和其他候車路女人一樣，她們也被鹿城人叫做「攢食查某」	And so, like all the other Backstreet women, they were referred to by the Lucheng townspeople as “ <i>professional women.</i> ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「麗月那個婊子怎麼啦，天天還跟那些美國郎混麼？」小玉母親問道。	“How’s <i>that little whore</i> Moon Beauty? Still hanging around the G.I.s?”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	幾個瘋婆子一邊啃西瓜，一邊咕咕呱呱……	<i>The crazy boards</i> sat around nibbling melon seeds and chatting.

In a male-dominated society, women tend to be subjected to social injustice and face the challenge of gender inequality. The terms organized in the table above are all semantically discriminatory against women. Overall, they appear in conversations, so Goldblatt used slang words such as “slut,” “whore,” “board,” and so on to translate the source text. This strategy seems to strengthen the emotional force of the conversation.

However, here comes cultural influence again. A lot of sexist appellations in *Shafu* are uttered in Taiwanese Hokkien; therefore, if 查某 is translated simply as “woman,” its sexist connotation cannot be manifested in the target text. One of the common examples is 老查某, which means an old woman, but the meaning is more than that literally. In fact, for Taiwanese Hokkien speakers, it sounds rude and should be avoided. If a woman is told that she is 上年紀 in Taiwanese socio-cultural context, she is being treated with contempt. Therefore, the translation “older women” makes sense but what spices up the translation is that Goldblatt supplemented the concept with “moralists,” emphasizing the annoyance of their constantly gossiping about the rights and wrongs of being a woman. As for the translation of 攞食查某, I don’t think “professional women” is semantically fitting. From my standpoint, it should be translated as “soliciting women,” “hookers,” or “working girls,” all of which fit well in the context without the repetition of “prostitutes.”

5.4 Phrase/Sentence Level: Ready-made Phrases

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	……藉機編排說林市母親畢竟是被迫，不比一般奸夫淫婦，罪不該至此。	. . . saying that since she had been forced to do what she did, she should not be judged as <i>a common adulteress</i> .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「你這幾天猛灌龍王爺得迷魂湯，把老龍迷得昏陶陶的，我看你甚麼招數都使出來，就還差沒去舔他的卵泡！」	“These last few days <i>you’ve really been pouring it on thick with</i> the Dragon King, and now <i>you’ve got him eating out of your hand</i> . This time you’ve really let out all the stops. The only

		thing you haven't done is lick his balls!"
Niehtzu	「你這麼個金枝玉葉的人兒，船上那種苦是你吃得了的？我看上船就讓那些爛水手姦掉了！」	“How's <i>a dainty little thing like you</i> going to handle all the rigors of shipboard life? The only thing you'll get from going aboard ship is gang raped by all those sailors”

When it comes to ready-made phrases or idioms that suggest sexism, here are three examples: 奸夫淫婦, 灌迷魂湯, and 金枝玉葉. In my opinion, Goldblatt's translation performance in his category is professional. First, 奸夫淫婦 should have been translated as “an adulterous couple” according to the source text, but Goldblatt read between the lines and chose to divert all attention to her rather than the soldier. The attempted rapist is not emphasized here, which adds to the misery of Lin Shih's mother instead. It implies that men will not be socially blamed the slightest under illicit circumstances.

Judging from the other two excerpts from *Niehtzu*, I think Goldblatt successfully livened up the personality of the character, Little Jade (小玉), who is known for his sweet tongue and foxy persona while serving his sugar daddies, through his translations. Although phrases like “pour it on thick with someone” and “get someone eating out of one's hand” are not equivalent in meaning to the idiomatic expressions in the source text, they complement each other perfectly. Using the adjective “dainty” to portray this fictional character also does the trick. This is another example that attests to Goldblatt's incredible translation of camp talk.

5.5 Phrase/Sentence Level: Metaphor

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	陳江水一到，每每把女人整治得殺豬般尖叫。	. . . whenever Chen paid a visit, he would make the woman he selected scream <i>like a pig being slaughtered</i> .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	新娘子是個超級胖婆，像條航	He told me the bride was <i>a real tub, big</i>

	空母艦，屁股上可以打得下一桌麻將……	<i>as an aircraft carrier</i> , and you could <i>play a game of mahjong on her butt</i> .
Niehtzu	「你那些花花悄悄的言語舉動，只有去哄哄盛公那個老花蝴蝶兒……」	“Save your silver tongue and cute moves for <i>that old butterfly</i> Lord Sheng . . .”
Niehtzu	王瑛是育德有名的羅剎女……有一次，她出了一題鴨嘴獸，把學生都考倒了，所以大家叫她「鴨嘴獸」……	Wang Ying was acknowledged to be <i>the strictest teacher</i> in Yude School . . . Once she had a question about the duckbilled platypus that no one could answer. That’s where she <i>got her nickname</i> .
Niehtzu	這兒沒有三頭六臂的吃人妖怪，有的倒是一群玉面朱唇巧笑倩兮的「人妖」。	Don’t be afraid, there are no three-headed, six-handed cannibal spirits. No, here you will find only <i>a group of pretty-faced, scarlet-lipped, giggling “fairies.”</i>
Niehtzu	「小玉那個狐狸精，在東京混得怎麼樣了？」	“How about <i>that fox fairy</i> , Little Jade? How’s he getting along in Tokyo?”

Metaphor is a rhetorical device frequently used to objectify women or feminine men. They can be animals, objects, or even notorious mythological/religious figures. Overall, in the face of metaphorical expressions, Goldblatt tended to be faithful to the original instead of domesticating the animal imagery that represents foreign culture. Judging from the last two examples, I need to belabor the point that Goldblatt was skilled in the translation of camp talk. In fact, the term 人妖 is first mentioned in the news report placed in the third part of the novel. The journalist intentionally describes the major characters working for the Cozy Nest in a sarcastic and contemptuous tone to cause a commotion in society. It is he that dubs the gay people “fairies,” but the mastermind behind this is Howard Goldblatt. I personally like his handling of the sentences in a parallel structure here. The theatrical effect of the news coverage is magnified. The application of “fairy” stands in stark contrast to the conception of “spirit,” which in Mandarin Chinese has a negative denotation, mainly referring to a monster-like being. Calling Little Jade “foxy fairy” rather than “foxy spirit” burnishes his image as a homosexual.

5.6 Phrase/Sentence Level: Jokes and Humor

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	……如此他們甚至會願意替她蓋一座貞節牌坊。 不知什麼緣故，一夥人聽到貞節牌坊，竟齊聲轟笑了起來。	Who knows, <i>they might even have erected a memorial arch in her honor</i> . Inexplicably, when the others heard the words “memorial arch,” they burst out laughing.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	……小玉笑嘻嘻回嘴道，「有些老妓無毒，早就免疫了呢！」	“But some old whores have been around so long <i>they must be immune to V.D.!</i> ”

A sexist idea can materialize through telling jokes and leveraging humor. In a fictional scenario where a group of men talk about a woman in jest, sexism is silently and stealthily instilled into the minds of target readers. Goldblatt translated the boldfaced sentence in the subjunctive mood, implying women’s irrevocable vulnerability to male supremacy. In theory, they may do so, but no action is taken in reality. The translation works well for communicating the sarcasm of the source text.

The humorous effect can also be produced through self-deprecation. From my perspective, this is the strongest sexist language ever. The speaker himself is socially abandoned, but he still makes fun of the group he belongs to. This shows that in the recesses of his mind, he never feels secure, even though staying in the glass communities. A smile is disguised in a cry of anguish. The grammar used in Goldblatt’s translation of the conversation successfully sends the message of the original over to target readers. The sentence reads hilariously because readers can feel the funny and lively personality of the character, and this is exactly what the author anticipated. It appears that Goldblatt’s translation results faithfully present what the character should behave. Little Jade was not refashioned into one with a new personality. Finally, Goldblatt didn’t literally translate the sentence 老妓無毒，早就免疫了呢. He reorganized the information and applied paraphrasing, which in my opinion communicates more effectively.

5.7 Phrase/Sentence Level: Ideology

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	「……我們做女人，凡事要忍，要知夫與天齊，那可一點點小痛疼，就胡亂叫，再來敗壞查埔人的名聲。」	“... <i>As women, we're supposed to be tolerant and put our husbands above everything else.</i> Who ever heard of anyone raising such a stink over a little pain once in a while! Then, to top it off, she tries to ruin his good name!”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「你是零號嗎？」胖警官揪著吳敏頗帶興味的問道，旁邊的兩個警官抿著嘴在笑。	“ <i>You must be the fuckee, not the fucker,</i> ” he commented. The two guards snickered.

According to the two examples provided in the table, we can understand the ideology of the characters in the source texts, since they reveal it in a dialogue rather than in a narrative. Through this writing style, how women and gay people are unfairly treated in a traditional patriarchal society is vividly demonstrated, arousing sympathy and indignation among readers. In the first example, while Goldblatt managed to convey the meaning of the original to target readers, without deleting any information or using much creativity, he didn't deal with the concept of 夫與天齊. He chose to explain the information in a different way, stressing an ugly fact that it is a wife's duty to satisfy the physical needs of her husband. On the other hand, in the example of *Niehtzu*, he adopted the amplification strategy, which skillfully increases the dramatic effect of the sentence and tells readers that when gay people have sexual intercourse, one is the fucker, and the other, the fuckee. The suffix *-ee* is used to show a person receives an action (e.g. 'employee'). Goldblatt did a fantastic job here. Yet, the key to the sentence is that the speaker is a policeman who grills a gay in a mocking manner. Through this supporting character in the novel, how the crystal boys are discriminated against and emotionally blackmailed with traditional family and educational values reflects the brutal reality they have to face and the rampancy of social evils that remains unsolved. Once an ideology is developed, it will die hard. Those who subscribe to it will use it as a yardstick to make moral judgements.

5.8 Discourse Level: Fragmentation

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	而作母親的仍持留原先的姿勢躺在那裡，褲子退至膝蓋，上身衣服高高拉起，嘴裡仍不停的咀嚼著。	At this time, Lin Shi's mother lay in the same position, <u>her underpants</u> pulled down to her knees, her shirt <u>hoisted all the way up</u> , <u>her mouth</u> still chewing greedily.
<i>Shafu</i>	陳江水看到因雙手拉門，一件大袍衫只斜斜披在肩背上的女體，胸前一對豐大、向肚臍處下垂的乳房，使他立即辨認出是金花。	He saw the figure of a woman with a shirt draped loosely around <u>her shoulders</u> . Since she had to use both hands to open the door, <u>her full, pendulous breasts</u> were exposed. Although it was very dark, he recognized her at once.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	那些妓女都在睡午覺，一間間幽暗的黑洞，有些連簾幔也沒有放下，隱隱約約看得到裡面床上，躺著一堆堆黃黃白白的肉。天氣熱，那些妓女都把外衣卸了，只穿著奶罩及三角褲，透出來一陣陣濃濁的脂粉香及人肉味。	The prostitutes who worked in the House of Fragrant Jade were taking midday naps in their dark, gloomy dens; some of them hadn't even bothered to lower their door curtains, as I walked by I could see <u>mounds of yellow and white flesh</u> piled up on the beds. In hot weather like this, the prostitutes <u>shed their clothes and slept in bras and panties</u> , and there was a strong odor of cosmetics and female bodies.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	老周剛離開，麗月卻香噴噴的闖了進來，她穿了一襲鏤空的黑紗裙，透著一身的肉色。	Old Zhou had barely left when Moon Beauty came walking in, reeking of perfume. She was wearing a <u>slinky</u> black dress that showed lots of <u>her skin</u> .

Fragmentation is a common technique writers use to stimulate readers' sensual nerves. They show only some part of a woman's body in their descriptions, emptying out more space for imagination. This skill is employed in both source texts to produce this titillating effect. Judging from his translations in this category, Howard Goldblatt was a good storyteller because he altered the sentence structures, making them easier to read. Moreover, he managed to create

a vivid moving picture by using felicitous words and phrases such as “hoisted,” “chewing greedily,” “pendulous,” “reeking of,” and “slinky.” These verbs and adjectives are suitably used in Goldblatt’s translations, making the story more enchanting. Of course, we should bear in mind that the fragmented portrayal of a woman’s body is a means of objectification. It is used by the author to introduce a female character in a sexist way. Overall, the narrative remains unchanged in the translation process. Goldblatt didn’t seem to consider dealing with the text at discursal level while translating. He only conveyed the linguistic meaning of the original to target readers.

5.9 Discourse Level: Focalization

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	「像我，就敢用死來表明心志，人若真有志氣，什麼事情作不到。」接著話音轉為鄙夷。「那裡要每回唉唉大聲叫，騙人不知以為有多爽，這種查某，敗壞我們女人的名聲，說伊還浪費我的嘴舌。」	“Take me, for instance. I was prepared to kill myself if that’s what it took to show I had the courage of my convictions. That’s all a person needs to get by in this world.” The tone of her voice became contemptuous: “A person doesn’t have to moan and groan all the time to try to make people believe she’s having a good time. It’s people like that who give all women a bad name. But I guess I’m just wasting my breath talking about her.”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「你們這一群，年紀輕輕，不自愛，不向上，竟然幹這些墮落無恥的勾當！你們的父兄師長，養育了你們一場，知道了，難不難過？痛不痛心？你們這群社會的垃圾，人類的渣滓，我們有責任清除、掃蕩——」	“The whole lot of you , young as you are, have no self-respect and no drive to better yourselves ,” he said in his booming voice. “Instead you get involved in the cheap, shameful activities! How would your parents and teachers, who worked so hard to educate you , feel if they knew what you were doing? Sad? Pained? You’re society’s garbage, the dregs of

		humanity, and it's our responsibility to rid society of <i>you</i> , to put <i>you</i> away . . .”
--	--	--

In the field of literature, focalization, simply put, means introducing a character in a first-person narrative or a third-person narrative. This concept was established by French narratologist Gérard Genette in his 1972 publication *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. If the narrator expresses emotions and experiences mood swings during interaction with a character so that this character is introduced to readers, then this is called internal focalization. If all the information is objectively provided through the outside views, the character is externally focalized, which means the character's mental state and attitude shift remain imperceptible (Genette, 1980:189-194).

The character shown in the first example is internally focalized. During the conversation, Auntie A-wang (阿岡官) exhibits her contempt for Lin Shih, the heroine of *Shafu*. Judging from this shift in her attitude, readers immediately understand this female character's relationship with the one she is talking about. She voices her dissatisfaction with Lin Shih, criticizing her as an incompetent wife. Moreover, it appears that Auntie A-wang is devoured by jealousy because Lin Shih has a man to sleep with. This is what we call sour grapes.

The other one quoted from *Niehtzu* is also an example of internal focalization. From this quoted conversation, readers immediately feel the criticizing tone of a police officer who is lecturing the arrested young outcasts on their shamelessness growing out of moral decay and pigeonholing them as the dregs of society. Readers are kept informed of the dire situation the crystal boys are in through the policeman's first-person narrative.

It is apparent that Goldblatt translated the two narratives in a way of more emotional intensity than the source texts because he used more pronouns. It is a kind of reframing, through which public indifference and social injustice inflicted on the disadvantaged groups like woman and homosexuals are graphically highlighted.

Chapter 6



Howard Goldblatt's Interpretation of Swearwords/Taboo

Words in Context

Swearwords/taboo words are used by speakers in the conversation to curse at someone they are talking to, to express an emotion, or just as meaningless interjections. Like sexist language, they are ubiquitous in *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*. Such profane language in the source language is not necessarily correctly or directly translated into the target language. Whether the meaning can be loyally conveyed is determined by how translators digest the content and use their own words to recreate a scenario that target readers can relate to. The following are numerous tables that systematically illustrate the way Howard Goldblatt coped with swearwords/taboo words while translating. The framework of the examples provided is based on the classification system of forbidden words mapped out by Keith Allan and Kate Burridge.

6.1 Naming and Addressing

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	「妳這瘋××、破××，千人騎、萬人幹的破××，幹妳老母的××，妳這不知見笑的臭××……」	“You crazy <i>cunt</i> ! Used-up <i>cunt</i> ! An old <i>cunt</i> used up by a thousand—no, ten thousand—men! Up your old lady’s <i>cunt</i> ! You shameless, stinking <i>cunt</i> !”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「你他媽狗娘養的……」	“ <i>You fucking bitch. . .</i> ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「他娘的，一百八！」 「你媽的，這種下作東西！」	“ <i>God damn it</i> , it was one-eighty!” “ <i>God damn you!</i> ” he railed. “ <i>You piece of shit. . .</i> ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「不要臉的賤貨！」	“You shameless <i>piece of shit</i> !”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「真是塊賤料子，我那裡讓你白住，你不安分……」	“A real <i>piece of trash</i> ! I offered you a place to live for free, but you didn’t know what was good for you . . .”

According to the first example in the table, Goldblatt didn’t follow the writing pattern of

the source text: beeping the taboo words that refer to clitoris. Instead, he directly exposed the word by using the English slang that is functionally equivalent to the one in Taiwanese Hokkein. By cleverly not imitating the way the source text is presented, Goldblatt minimized the chance of confusion among target readers. If he had followed the source text, target readers might not have appreciated the power of swearwords/taboo words in the conversation. For source-language readers, beeping the words won't affect reading comprehension, but for readers of the targeting side, the same strategy may not work like magic.

As for the other examples in *Niehtzu*, it can be discovered that Goldblatt seemed to follow a translation pattern he designed, since similar swearwords/taboo words in the source text were presented in similar versions in the target one, which is substantiated by the last three examples demonstrated in the table. Yet, mistranslation might occur in Goldblatt's translation process. For instance, 你他媽狗娘養的 should be "You fucking son of a bitch" rather than Goldblatt's version "You fucking bitch." He might either have overlooked some message in this swearword or have been his strategy for translating camp talk, emphasizing the character is a gay.

Overall, in traditional Taiwanese culture, people swear at others by addressing females like mothers as part of the expression. However, Goldblatt erased the mother element in the target text. He replaced it with a religious one. As for swearwords like 下作東西, and 賤貨, they are used to objectify others when the speaker is furious. Obviously, Goldblatt's versions are stronger in tone because they are presented in words like "shit," and "garbage." This is a clear display of cultural difference in the use of swearwords for naming and addressing.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	「真三八！」	"What <i>a fool!</i> "
<i>Niehtzu</i>	畜生！	You <i>Scum!</i>
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「呸！我把你這個不孝的畜生！」	"Hmph! I'll show you, you unfilial <i>little swine!</i> "
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「你這個小畜生又在作怪」	"Up to your old tricks again, you <i>little</i>

	了？……」	<i>scum!</i> . . .”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「……賴帳的是龜孫子。」	“. . . Anyone who does that is <i>a bastard’s grandson!</i> ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「小兔崽子，快給我過來！」	“Hey, <i>you little queer</i> , get over here!”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「屁精！屁精！」	“ <i>Fag! Fag!</i> ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「……叫他鯉魚精吧！」 「我看你才是狐狸精呢？」	“. . . How about <i>a carp fairy!</i> ” “I think you’re <i>a fox fairy!</i> ”

In addition to calling someone “names” or “objects,” Taiwanese people use swearwords with numbers and animal imagery. According to the first example in *Shafu*, Goldblatt seemed to misread the source text, since 三八, in Taiwanese Hokkein, is used to say a female is not serious enough, acting in an affected way. However, Goldblatt interpreted the term as “a fool,” which completely changes the original meaning and can be regarded as mistranslated. Of course, this term is culturally exclusive, so Goldblatt might have avoided translating it directly according to the source text. The number doesn’t make any sense in the targeting culture and should be converted into one that readers can understand immediately.

Animal-related swearwords like 畜生 show the cultural features of the Sinophone world, but when they are translated into English, the imagery may be lost. Judging from Goldblatt’s translations in this category, he seemed to be inconsistent again, as proved in the third example. The word that should have been “scum” became “swine.” As for the interpretation of 兔崽子 and terms with the element of 精, Goldblatt tended to be creative according to context, attempting to produce the theatrical effect of camp talk. This is why his translation results are different from the expressions in the source text.

6.2 The Acts of Sex and Bodily Effluvia

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	陳江水笑罵聲幹，不曾言語， 接過麵茶，蹲在地上很快唏哩 呼嚕的喝完兩碗	Chen Jiangshui just sort of chuckled and <i>muttered under his breath</i> . Taking the porridge, he squatted down on the ground and noisily wolfed down two

		bowlfuls.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	幾乎異口同聲，桌上的男男女女都罵了一聲幹！	Everyone at the table cried out “ Shit! ” almost in unison.
<i>Shafu</i>	……有些不能輕易原諒自己大意的嘴裡輕念著，笨，幹，真笨，幹。	He couldn’t forgive himself for being so careless. “Stupid!” he mumbled. “ Fuck! How stupid can you be! Fuck! ”
<i>Shafu</i>	這時除了大聲張揚林市同她阿母一樣等不及要讓人幹外，也趕著替林市物色人家。	Now, proclaiming loudly that, like her mother before her, she was in a tearing hurry to get laid , he began to look around anxiously for someone to marry her off to.
<i>Shafu</i>	「我幹死妳，我幹死妳那臭××……」	“I’ll fuck the life right out of you! I’ll fuck the life right out of that stinking cunt of yours! . . .”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「幹你娘！」我忍不住一拳豁了過去。	“ Fuck you! ” I threw a punch his way.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「幹！幹你娘！幹你老祖公！」	“Fuck! Fuck you! Fuck your ancestors! ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「幹伊娘！」老鼠自言自語咒罵道……	“ Damn her,” he mumbled angrily . . .
<i>Shafu</i>	「我幹妳老母的××，我跟妳說話妳還敢回嘴。」	“ Fuck your old mother! How dare you talk back to me!”
<i>Shafu</i>	「幹伊娘，我還沒死……」	“ Screw your mother! . . . before I’m even dead . . .”

The use of 幹 has been part of Taiwanese swearword culture. The character is chiefly defined in three distinct ways. It can be a filler, a verb that shows the act of sex, or a cursing word.

From the first example of using “fuck,” it can be discovered that Goldblatt chose to adopt omission. Goldblatt’s word choice seems to be improper. It is baffling that he used “muttered” to depict the situation. Chen Chiang-shui doesn’t say “fuck” to complain about something or swear at someone. “Fuck” in this context is a filler. However, according to the example of the same concept in *Niehtzu*, Goldblatt didn’t follow suit. He used the word “shit” instead, which

for me, is a kind of reframing. After all, Taiwanese people rarely say this to express a feeling of annoyance. The “fuck” in the third example is apparently a meaningless filler.

As for the verb 幹, as in the expression 讓人幹, Goldblatt seemingly carried out self-censorship because the language in the source text is too vulgar to put up with. He used the idiomatic expression “get laid” to make the target text euphemistically presented and tone down the vulgarity. However, in the case of 我幹死妳, he translated the phrase in a dysphemistic manner as “fuck the life out of someone.” In this way, the cruelty of Chen Chiang-shui hits home, leaving an indelible impression on readers.

Finally, when 幹 is used to hurl abuse at someone in Taiwanese culture, a member of the family clan, basically the mother, will be mentioned to intensify the vulgarity. From Howard Goldblatt’s translations in the two novels, it can be found that he changed the strategy from foreignization to domestication. He made this swearword more native-like in *Crystal Boys*, deleting the mother element. However, to be consistent, Goldblatt should have translated “fuck your ancestors” as “fuck your Jesus Christ.” Maybe this will sound stronger as a blasphemous remark.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	叔叔看他身上全無武器，踹起一腳，猛踢向他下部，那長身的軍服男子摀住那地方，霎時間垮倒下去。	Once Lin Shi’s uncle had assumed himself that the man was unarmed, he drove his knee into the soldier’s groin . The man clutched himself in pain and crumpled to the ground.
<i>Shafu</i>	……有個住陳厝莊附近的老鄰人，一拳往陳江水下體搗去，笑著大聲問： 「說來聽聽，你女人如何？」	. . . and one old man who lived near Chencuo even aimed a punch at Chen’s groin , calling out in a raucous, laughing voice: “So, tell us. What’s your woman like?”
<i>Shafu</i>	「當然又小又緊，很爽啦，不比『來春閣』金花那個破布袋，	“Small and tight, of course. A real good screw ,” one of the meat vendors said,

	進去後空空，底都不知在哪裡。」一個肉攤販子，故意擺了個極正經的臉色，評理似的說。	assuming the solemn tones of a judge delivering his verdict. “Not like that old hag Golden Flower over at Springtime House. You can <i>stick it in her and never touch a thing. It’s a bottomless pit!</i> ”
Niehtzu	「這起屎養的……」	“You <i>cunt</i> -brats! . . .”
Niehtzu	「……吃的老娘屎乾毛盡！」	“I’d better check to see if my <i>crotch</i> is still there!”
Niehtzu	「……回頭搞光了，我買根狗屌給你吃！」	“When it’s all gone I’ll buy <i>a dog’s dick</i> for you to gnaw on!”
Niehtzu	「噯，阿雄仔，你這件新衣裳好帥，是老龜頭送給你的吧？」	“Hey, A-xiong, that’s quite a shirt you’ve got. A present from <i>Old Dick Head</i> ?”
Niehtzu	「阿青，你老實招來吧，昨晚你釣到大魚沒有？是條青花還是條老泥鰍？」	“A-qing, tell me the truth, did you land a big one last night? <i>Was it an edible fish or a loach?</i> ”
Niehtzu	麗月無可奈何的嘆道：「美國鳥，是很有良心的麼？」	Moon Beauty gave an exasperated sigh: “ <i>Those American birds</i> who wing their way over there, what do they do for a conscience?”
Niehtzu	「卵椒！」小玉笑了起來，	“ <i>Balls!</i> ” He laughed.
Niehtzu	「師傅剛才到處找你，要拿你去閹掉。他說：『剝掉他那根棒子，看他還鳥不鳥？』……」	“He said when he found you he was going to castrate you. He said, ‘We’ll see what kind of a bird he makes without <i>that pecker</i> of his!’ . . .”
Niehtzu	「這隻老鼠的嘴巴還要尖，還會偷雞巴呢！」	“This little mouse’s mouth is even pointier, he steals <i>pee-pees!</i> ”

As can be seen in the first two example in *Shafu*, 下部 and 下體 in the source text refer to the male sexual organ. Howard Goldblatt translated the term with the word “groin,” which is the application of denotative expressivity according to Uličný’s categorization. From Allan and Burridge’s point of view, the concept is orthophemism. It appears that Goldblatt didn’t think the male sexual organ was something to be evasive about in the context where the characters involved are both male and chose to use the word in a straightforward way. According to the

first two examples taken from *Niehtzu*, 屌 and 龜頭 are both male sexual organs graphically shown in the source text. Likewise, Goldblatt expressed no misgivings about adopting literal translation because the characters engaging in the conversation are both men.

However, when Goldblatt dealt with the female counterpart, i.e. the vagina, he didn't employ the same strategy unless the word was used as a swearword or by a female character herself, as is shown in the example of 屌乾毛盡. Otherwise, he would avoid using "cunt," "vagina," or "crotch" blatantly. To be exact, he was faithful to the source text by translating the female sexual organ in a figurative fashion. Goldblatt translated 破布袋 into "old hag," obviously a metonymy. It is worth noting that he translated 底都不知在哪裡 as a bottomless "pit," which refers to the female character Golden Flower's vagina.

Moreover, 很爽啦 in Mandarin Chinese means the feeling of satisfaction during the intercourse. However, Goldblatt applied dysphemism, using the offensive term "screw," which means the act of sex. This translation strategy is remarkably employed because the word effectively expresses the character image of the speaker, who can be perceived as uncultured through context.

Due to cultural barriers, Goldblatt might have made translation errors or otherwise applied explicitation in translation. He interpreted 踹起一腳，猛踢向他下部 in a way that conflicts with the Taiwanese concept. He might have thought that Lin Shih's uncle "drove his knee" into the man's groin, but the cinematic moment is not a common sight in Taiwanese culture. Probably Goldblatt pictured the scene in an American way of thinking, though out of place for source readers, to cater to target readers.

Futhermore, judging from the two examples that show 青花, 老泥鰍, and 美國鳥 in *Niehtzu*, Goldblatt didn't penetrate the hidden meaning of the source text. The animals mentioned, as a matter of fact, allude to men's genitals, but Goldblatt chose to employ the literal

translation strategy, which doesn't work well for the conveyance of their connotations and even humor. Besides, target readers might think the conversation doesn't make any sense. Using the adjective "edible" can be misleading. Does that mean a loach is not eatable? However, in the other examples, he interpreted male genitals quite creatively (e.g. "balls," "pecker," and "pee-pee") according to different contexts so that the effect of camp talk would be discernible, adding to the novelty and amusement of the dialogues between the gay characters.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	……就是因為來潮的太晚。	. . . because her <i>menstrual period</i> had started too late.
<i>Shafu</i>	……搶過一件沾染經血的衣褲	. . . snatched a pair of pants stained with <i>menstrual blood</i>
<i>Shafu</i>	「跟他講這個月妳月經來……」	"Tell him you're having an unusually long <i>period</i> this month . . ."
<i>Shafu</i>	「我那個來了！」	"I'm having my <i>you-know-what!</i> "
<i>Shafu</i>	當最後那一剎那終得來臨，陳江水知覺並沒有多少東西噴灑出來……	He knew when he came inside her that it was <i>a light ejaculation</i> . . .
<i>Shafu</i>	就像在高速衝擊的速度下，將體內奔流的一股熱流，化作白色的濃稠黏液，噴灑入女性陰暗的最深處……那飛爆出來的血液和精子…原具有幾近相同的快感作用。	It was as though the hot stream coursing through his body was converted into <i>a thick, sticky white fluid</i> spurting into the shadowy depths of a woman at the climax of a series of high-speed thrusts . . . the spurting of blood and <i>the ejaculation of semen</i> had the same orgasmic effect.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	在黎明前的一刻，拖著我們流乾精液的身體，放肆而又虛脫……	. . . in the pre-dawn hours, we dragged out <i>spent</i> bodies through the streets, feeling wanton and near collapse . . .

Bodily effluvia are in the domain of taboo words. Therefore, they may be self-censored in the translation process and later go through a more rigorous censorship before publication. The examples listed above illustrate how Goldblatt dealt with forbidden words regarding bodily effluvia. First, 來潮, a synonym for 月經, is an euphemistic expression that refers to women's

menstruation in Mandarin Chinese. However, it has no equivalent in English. Goldblatt had no other alternative to select while translating. Basically, the term could only be translated as “(menstrual) period,” unless he followed the pattern of the source text by beating around the bush as Lin Shih says “you-know-what.”

On the other hand, when it comes to the concept of 射精, there is a relatively small vocabulary in English. It seems that only “ejaculation” can be used, as is discovered in Goldblatt’s translations. If cross-referenced, the source text is pronouncedly more descriptive, which specifies the limitation of the English language. However, when Goldblatt faced orthophemistic terms like 精子 or 精液, he didn’t always employ the same strategy. 流乾精液 could be clearly and concisely expressed in a word “spent,” which, from my point of view, is a good translation. However, it would have been better if the word had been translated as “drained.”

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「吃屎不知香臭的兔崽子們！」	“. . . You bunch of <i>shit</i> -eating fairies!”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	……提到烏鴉便嚇得屁滾尿流……	. . . when Raven’s name was mentioned, I thought you’d <i>shit your pants</i> .
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「你這該死的賤東西……」	“You worthless <i>piece of shit</i> . . .”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「昨晚我是在公園路口碰見這個傻東西的……原來他光著屁股在撒尿呢！」	“I found this little loony at the entrance of the park last night . . . He had his pants down around his knees and was <i>taking a piss!</i> ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	誰知道他在床上站了起來，撈起小雞雞叫道：「噓噓。」	And would you believe it, he stood up in bed, grabbed his pee-pee and said, “ <i>Wee-wee.</i> ”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「小鬼頭，你懂啥？你李爺爺就是濟公活佛，吃了你李爺爺的汗，長生不老呢！」	“What does a little twerp like you know? Old Li here’s a Living Buddha, and anybody that drinks his <i>sweat</i> lives forever!”

Other examples of bodily effluvia such as 屎, 尿, and 汗 can also be found in the novel

Niehtzu. Take 屁滾尿流 for example. Howard Goldblatt translated it as “shit one’s pants,” which is a practical example of Lawrence Venuti’s functional equivalence. If Goldblatt had imitated the way the source text is written, it would have not made any sense to target readers. Therefore, it is a good translation here. As for urination-related words, Goldblatt’s creativity based on context can be detected, especially the “wee-wee” one. He used the baby talk version in order to fit the image of the character who says the word. In the novel, this teenage character is mentally challenged, so Goldblatt selected this word to make the boy sound more adorable. Again, this is a well-executed translation. Finally, the way Goldblatt translated 吃汗 creates a better yuck effect than the original does. He used “drink” rather than “eat,” which I believe disgusts readers in their mental pictures even more intensely.

6.3 Disease, Death, Killing

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Shafu</i>	「……我也只是聽來的，不是我說的，要不雷公會打死……」	“... If I did, may <i>lightning strike me dead</i> ...”
<i>Shafu</i>	「……也不怕雷公打死……」	“... not giving a damn if <i>the God of Thunder struck her dead</i> right on the spot...”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「死郎，沒長眼睛麼！」	“ <i>You zombie</i> , you blind or something?”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「死郎，你嚇我們玉仔做甚麼？」……「莫怕，玉仔……他又不是閻王……」	“ <i>Little brat</i> , what’s the idea of scaring my Jade?” ... “Don’t be afraid, Jade ... He’s not <i>the king of the underworld</i> or anything.”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	第一課他教我，日文的打炮叫做「塞股死、塞股死」。	The first thing he taught me how to say was get laid. It’s “ <i>saigusu</i> , saigusu.”

Both in Taiwanese and American culture, anger can be couched in death-related expressions. For example, 去死 can be interpreted as “go to hell” in English. According to the first two examples in the table above, they show the inconsistency of Goldblatt’s translations in *Shafu*. When it comes to the God of Thunder, his image in Taiwanese culture is different from

that in the Western world because they belong to two distinct mythology systems. At first glance, the translation is nothing wrong, but after further deliberation, I think it would have been better if Goldblatt had obscured the concept through the imagery of “lightning” as a source of heavenly punishment as he did in the first example.

As for his translation of 死郎 as “You zombie,” it may be fun, but this domestication strategy could pose a problem, creating a new scenario in the minds of target readers. After all, it is not a common colloquial expression for Taiwanese people. I guess it is a figment of imagination transcreated by Goldblatt just to produce a humorous effect. Moreover, from the other example of 死郎, it is clear that inconsistency occurs once again. According to the context of the source language, 死郎 is semantically coherent with 閻王. However, the detail is lost in Goldblatt’s translation. The connection between “little brat” and “the king of the underworld” is not closer than that shown in the source language.

Finally, wordplay in context is a big challenge for a translator. Due to cultural exclusivity, it can be untranslatable, as witnessed in the last example, 塞股死, a transliteration from the Japanese language, but the author turned it into a homonymous wordplay that literally means tucking the penis in the ass for carnal pleasures. Goldblatt didn’t address the humor and only showed the transliteration of the term.

Title of Novel	Source Text	Target Text
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「玻璃鬼！……」	“ <i>Crystal ghost!</i> . . .”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	我看見他那個鴉片鬼的模樣，心裡就發寒。	Every time I see <i>that opium-addict</i> look of his it breaks my heart.
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「好吃鬼！」	“ <i>Greedy pig!</i> Let’s get you cleaned up.”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	「邋遢鬼，我帶你去沖涼。」	“ <i>You’re filthy!</i> . . .”
<i>Niehtzu</i>	……貪心鬼，採了三個還不夠……	. . . and three pods weren’t enough for <i>the greedy guy</i> . . .

As has mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Chinese character 精 is often used as a

linguistic base for creating more relevant swearwords, and so is the word 鬼. They have become morphological rules in Mandarin Chinese. As can be seen in the table, all the examples in the source text are presented in the same linguistic pattern, but after Goldblatt's translation, they take on a series of different forms. It is understandable that he had to re-interpret all these phrases because the English language itself doesn't have this build-in swearword mechanism. Consequently, Howard Goldblatt couldn't imitate the way on the basis of the source language except for the first one "crystal ghost," which sounds slightly awkward. It is true that the phrase is faithful to the original, but due to linguistic-cultural differences, the cultural meaning of the source language doesn't seem to be adequately introduced to target readers.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Suggestions



After a complete and comprehensive textual comparative analysis of *The Butcher's Wife* and *Crystal Boys* in cross-reference to Li Ang's *Shafu* and Pai Hsien-yung's *Niehtzu*, how American translator Howard Goldblatt interpreted CSIs, sexism, and swearwords/taboo words in both Taiwanese literary works has been confirmed.

To begin with, Goldblatt didn't handle cultural problems perfectly. He tended to be faithful to the source text without taking cultural meaning into consideration. Consequently, mistranslation might arise, with the target text awkwardly presented, failing to convey correct connotations of CSIs. He had difficulty overcoming cultural barriers, getting Taiwanese culture across to English-speaking readers. Of course, another possibility is that he might just want to cater to target readers by employing the domestication strategy or through his personal perception of the terms regarding Taiwanese culture without further investigation. To satisfy readers' sensory experience of the fictional world, especially *Crystal Boys*, he would transcreate a new narrative in order to accentuate the dramatics of conversations between the gay characters, namely camp talk.

In addition, inconsistency is another disadvantage of Howard Goldblatt's translations. Whether a name of place should be translated through transliteration, literal translation, or a combination of both, he didn't seem to initiate a standardized system. Many practical examples of this translation problem can be discovered in *Crystal Boys*. The names of roads and streets are demonstrated in a disorganized manner. Furthermore, some words and phrases he had encountered in *Shafu* (*The Butcher's Wife*) were seemingly not accumulated and arranged into a personal glossary that could facilitate his future translation process and most importantly

minimize the risk of inconsistency while translating *Niehtzu* into *Crystal Boys*, especially when he approached the words and phrases that are culture-specific items. If he had established a glossary system that functioned as a corpus of cultural knowledge, he might sharpen his cultural perception in the translation process and would not keep making similar translation errors even nowadays. Of course, his linguistic knowledge leaves something to be desired. Many of his mistranslations might result from his misunderstanding of some Chinese characters. He was probably not acquainted with the denotations and pronunciations of them.

When it comes to Goldblatt's addressing of sexist messages in the source texts *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*, likewise, he would put fidelity first. However, to create a lively atmosphere of the glass communities in the novel *Niehtzu*, Goldblatt would select a series of captivating words instrumental in exaggerating the way the fictional characters talk and behave. In this way, the theme of homosexuality is emphasized and thus appeals to more LGBTQ⁺ readers that can relate to the language they are used to in daily conversations. However, due to a lack of cultural knowledge, Goldblatt might not sense a trace of sex-related language embedded in both source texts, as evidenced by his translations of the names of brothels and inns in which sexual messages are manifest. Moreover, he would delete the female element of the source-language term. The English language features logical relationships between sentences. If a message can be realized through context, then the same concept doesn't need to be repeated. With this habit of using logical thinking, Howard Goldblatt consciously or involuntarily neutralized the sexist language in the source texts. Finally, his vivid descriptions and flexible sentence structures work for the discourse. The fragmented female body and the focalized fictional characters are injected with more energy through his translations.

From the perspective of swearwords/taboo words, Goldblatt tended to employ a direct approach in dealing with sexual organs while translating men's genitals. However, when faced

with their female counterparts, he chose not to make it graphically shown. He would translate female sex organs by using euphemistic expressions or employing figures of speech. As for discriminatory terms against women, he mostly applied dysphemism, selecting offensive words (e.g. “cunt”). While translating the word “fuck,” if it is a filler in the conversation, Goldblatt would pragmatically use it without any modifications. If “fuck” is used as a verb in context, Goldblatt might tone down the word by paraphrasing the concept, making it reader-friendly or rather socially acceptable. As for the other kind of “fuck” used to curse, Goldblatt would domesticate it without mentioning the mother element, which sounds more natural to target readers. Finally, swearwords/taboo words that are nourished with cultural fertilizers are hardly possible to translate into the target language. Therefore, Goldblatt would take the domestication strategy so that his translations would not provoke a feeling of awkwardness in the minds of target readers.

Shafu and *Niehtzu* are two classic Taiwanese novels characterized by their sufficient cultural knowledge, sexist messages, and profanities. This research “Exploring Howard Goldblatt’s Translations of *Shafu* and *Niehtzu*: A Study on Cultural Translation” serves as a standard and reminder for those who are passionately interested in relevant cultural translation studies. Aside from the domain of cultural translation, more topical aspects that focus on the two novels are expected to be explored in the future. For example, in addition to the textual analysis at linguistic level, the discourse in the novels and the paratextual messages can be good points of departure for future translation research. As Wu Yi-ping stated in her study, translation studies on the discursal analysis based on *Shafu* remain thin. More research on this subject can be done to narrow down the gap.

Moreover, as has been mentioned, the two novels are available in at least seven foreign language versions. The English version of *Shafu* by Howard Goldblatt has been investigated

many times, suggesting that other language versions are uncharted territories in which more treasures are awaiting further exploration and excavation, especially the latest language versions published over the last decade. For instance, the Czech version of *Shafu* was published in 2013, and the Polish version 2022. Both languages are linguistically classified into the Slavic system, so there must be a lot of similarities and differences between the two translations that are worth delving deeply into. What's more, the French version of *Niehtzu* serves as useful research material for camp talk translation studies. Since the concept of “camp” originated from the language, it must possess an abundance of relevant information for scholars to make the best of. Italian is also part of the Latin language family, so it can be chosen as a control group against the French version.

The two Taiwanese novels have created more opportunities for cultural translation studies. Except for Chinese-English translation studies on the two novels, more cross-cultural and cross-linguistic input should be introduced to gather momentum on this topic. It is hoped that the research gap will be shortened and further investigations into different language versions will be conducted so that their academic values can be embodied in the field of translation not only domestically but also across the globe.

All things considered, for those who dream of becoming professional translators, full and necessary preparations must be made, apart from having an advanced level of proficiency in both the source language and the target one. Extending cultural knowledge and expanding culturally-based vocabulary are of paramount importance. An increased perception of cultural information in the target language makes for a better application of translation strategies. Moreover, translators should pay particular attention to the motif of the work that the author aims to disseminate to readers lest the translated version be diverted to a different route or given a new flavor. Changing the narrative on a whim is risky. Translators are not real authors, so

injecting creativity and personal insight into the translated work is not desirable. Fidelity to the original should always be prioritized over anything else. Furthermore, showing meticulousness while processing the information between sentences or paragraphs is highly recommended, since there may be hidden meaning or semantic logic embedded in the words. Certain linguistic effects may remain concealed if the details are not carefully addressed.

On the other hand, it is advisable that personal translation principles be established so that translation problems growing out of bad translation habits may have room for improvement. Translation errors due to misunderstanding can also be kept to a minimum. A solution to the problem is to develop a personal glossary system that avoids repeated information searching and inconsistent translation results. Putting CAT tools to good use is a good idea, since they help establish translation memory and term base that refine the translation process. Moreover, readability and fluency are two key factors to be considered. If the translated text is hard to read, and the sentence structure is too complex to digest, it may not receive a wider readership. Translators should remind themselves at any time to put themselves in target readers' shoes, finding a way that leads to a win-win situation.

References



Mandarin Chinese Book

- Goldblatt, H. 葛浩文 (2015)。從美國軍官到華文翻譯家——葛浩文的半世紀臺灣情。九歌出版社。
- Chiu, K.-f. 邱貴芬 (2023)。臺灣文學的世界之路。政大出版社。
- Ke, C.-m. 柯慶明 (2013)。臺灣現當代作家研究資料彙編 43 白先勇。國立台灣文學館。
- Li, A. 李昂 (1983)。殺夫。聯經出版社。
- Li, A. 李昂 (2024)。殺夫。聯經出版社。
- Pai, H.-y. 白先勇 (1983)。孽子。遠景出版社。
- Pai, H.-y. 白先勇 (2024)。孽子。允辰出版社。
- Tseng, H.-p. 曾秀萍 (2003)。孤臣・孽子・臺北人：白先勇同志小說論。爾雅出版社。

Mandarin Chinese Journal Article

- Huang, H.-t. 黃心村 (2014)。舊聞新語話春申：陳定山的上海與台北。台灣文學學報第二十四期，1-30。
- Chang, H.-h. 張小虹 (2000)。不肖文學妖孽史——以《孽子》為例。性別論述與台灣小說，209-277。麥田出版社。
- Chen, R. R.-b. 陳榮彬 (2021)。白先勇西遊記——如何翻譯？怎樣重寫？。台灣文學研究學報第三十三期，181-210。
- Liao, S.-w. 廖詩文 (2024)。罵詈語和冒辱語的翻譯挑戰與策略：以《臺北人》和《藍彩霞的春天》日譯本為研究對象。編譯論叢第十七卷第二期，39-70。

Mandarin Chinese Research Paper/Master's Thesis/Doctoral Dissertation

- Lin, C.-h. 林志勳 (2009)。以關聯理論探究《殺夫》英譯本之文化翻譯問題。長榮大學。
- Yu, Y.-r. 余曜戎 (2018)。禁語的迴聲：《臺北人》中英日文版中粗俗表現及其他文學翻譯問題之研究。文藻外語大學。

Mandarin Chinese Online Resource



Chang, C.-f. 張瓊方 (2000)。譯介典範—葛浩文、林麗君。台灣光華雜誌。

[https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/zh/Articles/Details?Guid=c43eac70-3946-4456-](https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/zh/Articles/Details?Guid=c43eac70-3946-4456-b133-0287cdc9471f&langId=1&CatId=10&postname=%E8%AD%AF%E4%BB%8B%E5%85%B8%E7%AF%84%E2%94%80%E2%94%80%E8%91%9B%E6%B5%A9%E6%96%87%E3%80%81%E6%9E%97%E9%BA%97%E5%90%9B)

[b133-](https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/zh/Articles/Details?Guid=c43eac70-3946-4456-b133-0287cdc9471f&langId=1&CatId=10&postname=%E8%AD%AF%E4%BB%8B%E5%85%B8%E7%AF%84%E2%94%80%E2%94%80%E8%91%9B%E6%B5%A9%E6%96%87%E3%80%81%E6%9E%97%E9%BA%97%E5%90%9B)

[0287cdc9471f&langId=1&CatId=10&postname=%E8%AD%AF%E4%BB%8B%E5](https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/zh/Articles/Details?Guid=c43eac70-3946-4456-b133-0287cdc9471f&langId=1&CatId=10&postname=%E8%AD%AF%E4%BB%8B%E5%85%B8%E7%AF%84%E2%94%80%E2%94%80%E8%91%9B%E6%B5%A9%E6%96%87%E3%80%81%E6%9E%97%E9%BA%97%E5%90%9B)

[%85%B8%E7%AF%84%E2%94%80%E2%94%80%E8%91%9B%E6%B5%A9%E6](https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/zh/Articles/Details?Guid=c43eac70-3946-4456-b133-0287cdc9471f&langId=1&CatId=10&postname=%E8%AD%AF%E4%BB%8B%E5%85%B8%E7%AF%84%E2%94%80%E2%94%80%E8%91%9B%E6%B5%A9%E6%96%87%E3%80%81%E6%9E%97%E9%BA%97%E5%90%9B)

[%96%87%E3%80%81%E6%9E%97%E9%BA%97%E5%90%9B">%](https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/zh/Articles/Details?Guid=c43eac70-3946-4456-b133-0287cdc9471f&langId=1&CatId=10&postname=%E8%AD%AF%E4%BB%8B%E5%85%B8%E7%AF%84%E2%94%80%E2%94%80%E8%91%9B%E6%B5%A9%E6%96%87%E3%80%81%E6%9E%97%E9%BA%97%E5%90%9B)

Chen, L. 陳璐 (2024)。《孽子》英譯本中譯者的把關行為探析。漢斯中文開源期刊學術

交流平臺。 <https://www.hanspub.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=81352>

Chen, R. R.-b. 陳榮彬 (2018)。譯者與作者的隔世情緣——情路坎坷莫過蕭紅，最是癡

情葛浩文。 <https://okapi.books.com.tw/article/10993>

Chen, R. R.-b. 陳榮彬 (2023)。淺論李昂的國際文學聲譽：透過翻譯走向世界。

<https://www.unitas.me/archives/44031>

Ivy—人海邊的離島 (2024)。性，飢餓，與利刃的復仇——漫談李昂《殺夫》與改編電

影。 <https://vocus.cc/article/666d862dfd897800018686b4>

Li, Y.-y. 李怡芸 (2015)。莫言諾獎推手，葛浩文情牽兩岸。中時新聞網。

<https://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20151213000731-260301?chdtv>

Tseng, H.-p. 曾秀萍 (2021)。性別選書—同志平權先聲：白先勇《孽子》漂浪妖嬈的前

世今生。 <https://womany.net/read/article/28026>

English Book

Allan, K. and BurrIDGE, K. (2006) *Foreign Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language*.

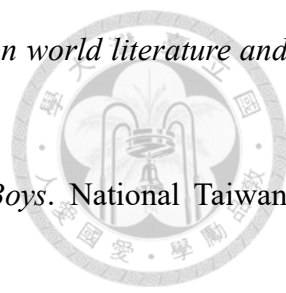
Cambridge University Press.

Baker, M. (2006). *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account*. London: Routledge.

Damrosch, D. (2003). *What Is World Literature?* Princeton University Press.

Genette, G. (1980). *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Cornell University Press.

- 
- Golán, J. (2006). *Swearwords in Translation*. Masarykova univerzita v Brně.
- Goldblatt, H. (1990). *Crystal Boys*. Gay Sunshine Press, San Francisco.
- Goldblatt, H. (1995). *The Butcher's Wife and Other Stories*. Cheng & Tsui Company.
- Goldblatt, H. and Yeung, E. (1986). *The Butcher's Wife*. North Point Press, San Francisco.
- Ivanov, A. O. (2006). *Bezekvivalentna leksyka* (Non-equivalent vocabulary). Sankt-Peterburh: Izdatelstvo SPNU.
- Kappler, S. (1986). *The Pornography of Representation*. Cambridge: Policy Press.
- Komissarov, V. N. (2001). *Современное переводоведение* (Modern translation studies). Moscow: ETS Publishing House.
- Kung, S.-w. (2021). *Translation of Contemporary Taiwan Literature in a Cross-Cultural Context*. London: Routledge.
- Larson, M. L. (1984). *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence*. University Press of America.
- Martin, F. (2003). *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film and Public Cultures*. Hong Kong University Press.
- Mills, S. (1995). *Feminist Stylistics*. London: Routledge.
- Mills, S. (2008). *Language and Sexism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Nida, E. (1964). *Toward A Science of Translating*. Brill, Leiden.
- Tytler, A. F. (1907). *Essay on the Principles of Translation*. New York, E. P. Dutton & co.
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge.
- English Research Paper/Master's Thesis/Doctoral Dissertation**
- Chen, Y.-f. (2018). *A study of translations of cultural references in two Taiwan nativist novels: The impact of ideology, patronage and poetics*. National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology.

- 
- Lee, M.-c. (2023). *“Worlding” queer literature from Taiwan: A study on world literature and English translation*. National Taiwan Normal University.
- Liu, Y.-f. (2018). *Translation as rewriting: From Niezi to Crystal Boys*. National Taiwan University.
- Morell, P. Q. (2021). *Swearing adaptation in the translation of English monologues into Spanish: The usage of fuck*. Universitat de les Illes Balears.
- Oey, V. V. (2016). *The translation procedures of cultural expressions applied in “A Game of Thrones.”* Dian Nuswantoro University.
- Qani, M. I. (2022). *Problems of non-equivalent words in technical translation*. Faryab University.
- Sato, W. (2018). *Translation of swear words in Taiwan literature: A case study on the Japanese translation of The Butcher’s Wife by Li Ang*. Fu Jen Catholic University.
- Wu, A.-c. (2019). *An analysis on reader’s responses of the translation of The Butcher’s Wife (Shafu): From the perspective of Tytler’s principles of translation*. National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology.

English Journal Article

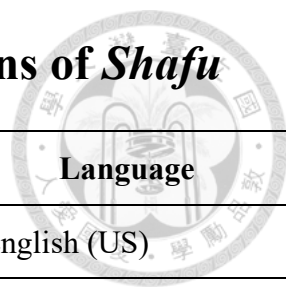
- Aixelá, J. F. (1996). Culture-specific items in translation. In Alvarez, R. and Vidal, M. C.-A. (Eds.), *Translation Power Subversion*, 52-78. Multilingual Matters.
- Apandi, A., Afiah, D. S. S. (2019). An analysis of translation procedure in translating cultural word. In *International Conference on Agriculture, Social Sciences, Education, Technology and Health (ICASSETH 2019), Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, Vol. 429*, 71-74. Atlantis Press.
- Chang, K. Y. (2013). Ang Li’s *The Butcher’s Wife (Shafu)* and Taiwanese ecocriticism. *East Asian Ecocriticisms—A Critical Reader*, 165-184. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Chiu, K.-f. (2023). Taiwanese literature in two transnational context: Sinophone literature and world literature. In Lin Pei-yin and Li Wen-chi (2023), *Taiwanese Literature as World Literature*, 19-34. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc.
- Dilisayana, Y., et al. (2023). Translation techniques of cultural words applied in the novel *The Hunger Games*. *Intensive Journal*, April 2023, Vol. 6, No.1, 35-52. Universitas Lambung Mangkurat.
- Doležel, L. (1976). Narrative modalities. *Journal of Literary Semantics* 5, 5-14. De Gruyter Brill.
- Dong, Y. (2024). Reconstructing the gendered subaltern subject: Chinese rural migrant women in literary translation. *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, 32:4, 621-635. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Harvey, K. (1998). Translating camp talk—gay identities and cultural transfer. *The Translator*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 295-320. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Hashamdar, M., & Rafi, F. (2018). Social identity and use of taboo words in angry mood: A gender study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8(6), 623-628. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0806.11>
- Hsu, S.-c. (2023). Translation matters: The case of *The Butcher's Wife* in English. In Lin Pei-yin and Li Wen-chi (2023), *Taiwanese Literature as World Literature*, 189-204. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc.
- Khikmatova, Sh. U. (2024). Classification of non-equivalent words reflecting national culture. *Scientific Aspects and Trends in the Field of Scientific Research*, Vol. 2, No. 17, 268-271.
- Kung, S.-w. (2013). Paratext, an alternative in boundary crossing. In Valerie Pellatt, *Text, Extratext, Metatext and Paratext in Translation*, 49-68. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Lewin, K. (1943). Forces behind food habits and methods of change. In *The Problem of*

- Changing Food Habits: Report of the Committee on Food Habits 1941-1943*, 35-65. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- Li, P. (2020). The narrative structure of gay literature in translation: A study of the English translation of Pai Hsien-yung's *Crystal Boys*. *Sino-Humanitas*, Issue 29, 277-295. Hong Kong Baptist University.
- Li, Q. (2024). Translators' subversion of gender-biased expressions: A study of the English translation of *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy. *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, 32:4, 604-620.
- Lin, P.-y. and Li, W.-c. (2023). Introduction: Framing Taiwanese literature as world literature. *Taiwanese Literature as World Literature*, 1-15. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc.
- Liu, X. (2023). A brief introduction of relevance theory used in translation process. *Frontiers in Educational Research*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, 87-93. Francis Academic Press.
- Meng, L. (2020). Translating gender from Chinese into English: A case study of *Leaden Wings* from feminist perspective. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, Vol. 7. Cogent OA. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1853894>
- Newmark, P. (2010). Translation and culture. In B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and M. Thelen (Eds.), *Łódź studies in language: Meaning in Translation*, 171-182. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Niu, C., et al. (2024). Translation strategies of Chinese-English culture-specific items: The case of translation test from CET4 and CET6. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 58-72.
- Putranti, S. D., et al (2017). Euphemism, orthophemism, and dysphemism in the translation of sexual languages. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR)*, Vol. 158, 709-717.

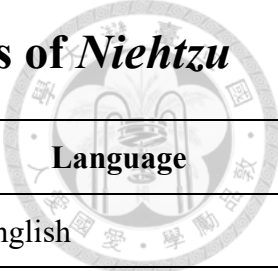
- Santaemilia, J. (2008). The translation of sex-related language: The danger(s) of self-censorship(s). *TTR (Traduction, terminologie, rédaction)*, Vol. 21, No 2, 221-252. Association canadienne de traductologie.
- Shi, X. and Tian, J. (2019). On translation strategies of culture-specific items in game localization. *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 231-235.
- Shih, S.-m. (2011). The concept of Sinophone. *PMLA*, Vol. 126, No. 3, 709-718. Cambridge University Press.
- Stalling, J. (2014). The voice of the translator: An interview with Howard Goldblatt. *Translation Review*, Vol.88, Issue 1, 1-12.
- Uličný, O. (1988). Expresivita a překlad umělecké prózy (Expressivity and translation of literary prose). *Slavica Pragensia* 32, 329-354. Charles University in Prague.
- Updike, J. (2005). Bitter bamboo: Two novels from China. *The New Yorker*, Vol. 5, 84-87. Advance Publications, Inc.
- Vermeer, H. (1986). Übersetzen als kultureller transfer. Translated by Mary Snell-Hornby (1990) as Linguistic transcoding or cultural transfer: A critique of translation theory in Germany. In Bassnett, S. and Lefevere, A. (Eds.), *Translation, History, and Culture*, 79-85. UNKNO.
- Wati, A. (2017). Cultural filtering in language translation. *Wiralodra English Journal*, Vol. 1, No.1, 21-26.
- Wu, Y.-p. (2018). On discourse function of paratext in Li Ang's *Sha Fu* and its implication for literary translation. 翻譯學研究集刊，第二十二輯，155-166。
- Zho, Y., et al (2023). Strategies for translating culture-specific items from Chinese into English. *World Journal of English Language*, Vol. 13, No. 7, 27-34.

Appendix 1: All Foreign Language Versions of *Shafu*



Year	Title of Novel	Language
1986	The Butcher's Wife	English (US)
1987	Gattenmord	German
1990	The Butcher's Wife	English (Hong Kong)
1990	Gattenmord	German
1991	The Butcher's Wife	English (UK)
1991	살부	Korean
1992	La femme du boucher	French
1992	SLAKTARENS HUSTRU	Swedish
1993	夫殺し	Japanese
1994	La femme du boucher	French
1995	THE BUTCHER'S WIFE AND OTHER STORIES	English
1995	De vrouw van de slachter	Dutch
2002	THE BUTCHER'S WIFE	English (UK)
2004	Tuer son mari	French
2007	LA MOGLIE DEL MACELLAIO	Italian
2012	MATAR AL MARIDO	Spanish
2013	ŘEZNÍKOVA ŽENA	Czech
2021	Matar el marit	Catalan
2022	Žena jednog kasapina	Serbian
2022	Żona rzeźnika	Polish

Appendix 2: All Foreign Language Versions of *Niehtzu*



Year	Title of Novel	Language
1990	Crystal Boys	English
1995	Garçons de cristal	French
1995	TREFFPUNKT LOTOSSEE	German
1995	Crystal Boys	English
2003	GARÇONS DE CRISTAL	French
2005	IL MAESTRO DELLA NOTTE	Italian
2006	孽子	Japanese
2006	Jongens van glas	Dutch
2017	Crystal Boys	English
2018	NGHIỆT TỬ	Vietnamese
2024	Grzeszni chłopcy	Polish