

--> Voir l'**erratum** concernant cet article

Packaging a Chinese “Beauty Writer”: Re-reading *Shanghai Baby* in a Web Context

Bin Liu et Brian James Baer

Volume 62, numéro 2, août 2017

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1041031ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1041031ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (imprimé)

1492-1421 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Liu, B. & Baer, B. J. (2017). Packaging a Chinese “Beauty Writer”: Re-reading *Shanghai Baby* in a Web Context. *Meta*, 62(2), 415–434.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1041031ar>

Résumé de l'article

À partir d'une analyse comparative du discours de la version originale (1999) et de la traduction anglaise du roman semi-autobiographique chinois *Shanghai Baby* (2001) de l'écrivaine contemporaine Wei Hui, connue comme étant une « beauty writer », cet article cherche à démontrer comment la réception de la version anglaise de ce roman – sous forme de critiques littéraires en ligne – par les lecteurs non spécialistes est influencée par la politique de la réception des oeuvres étrangères dans le monde occidental, ainsi que par les glissements de traduction dans le texte cible. En s'appuyant sur les modèles de réception occidentaux, qui représentent les femmes chinoises comme des amantes imprudentes cherchant à s'évader du despotisme communiste, et sur le modèle sinologue du dix-neuvième siècle, qui offre une représentation stéréotypée de la sinité et de la culture chinoise, cette étude démontre que, largement soumis aux attentes stéréotypées des lecteurs occidentaux sur les femmes et la culture dans les pays en développement, les glissements renforçant dans la traduction les stéréotypes communs éclipsent l'intention originale de l'auteur d'évoquer un groupe de jeunes cherchant à explorer leur existence peu orthodoxe en Chine. Finalement, l'étude confirme l'impact social de *Shanghai Baby* sur les cultures source et cible dans une tentative de lier sa signification à un contexte mondial.

Packaging a Chinese “Beauty Writer”: Re-reading *Shanghai Baby* in a Web Context

BIN LIU

Kent State University, Kent Ohio, USA
bliu12@kent.edu

BRIAN JAMES BAER

Kent State University, Kent Ohio, USA
bbaer@kent.edu

RÉSUMÉ

À partir d'une analyse comparative du discours de la version originale (1999) et de la traduction anglaise du roman semi-autobiographique chinois *Shanghai Baby* (2001) de l'écrivaine contemporaine Wei Hui, connue comme étant une « beauty writer », cet article cherche à démontrer comment la réception de la version anglaise de ce roman – sous forme de critiques littéraires en ligne – par les lecteurs non spécialistes est influencée par la politique de la réception des œuvres étrangères dans le monde occidental, ainsi que par les glissements de traduction dans le texte cible. En s'appuyant sur les modèles de réception occidentaux, qui représentent les femmes chinoises comme des amantes imprudentes cherchant à s'évader du despotisme communiste, et sur le modèle sinologue du dix-neuvième siècle, qui offre une représentation stéréotypée de la sinité et de la culture chinoise, cette étude démontre que, largement soumis aux attentes stéréotypées des lecteurs occidentaux sur les femmes et la culture dans les pays en développement, les glissements renforçant dans la traduction les stéréotypes communs éclipsent l'intention originale de l'auteur d'évoquer un groupe de jeunes cherchant à explorer leur existence peu orthodoxe en Chine. Finalement, l'étude confirme l'impact social de *Shanghai Baby* sur les cultures source et cible dans une tentative de lier sa signification à un contexte mondial.

ABSTRACT

Based on a comparative discourse analysis of the 2001 English translation of the pioneering “beauty writer” Wei Hui’s semi-autobiographical novel *Shanghai Baby* and the original Chinese work (1999), this paper aims to demonstrate how the reception of non-specialist readers in the form of online book reviews is influenced by the politics of reception in the Western world as well as the translational shifts in the text. Building the investigation upon the nineteenth-century sinologist translation model that packages Chinese culture as clichéd Chineseness in addition to the Western reception model that packages Chinese women as reckless lovers and escapees from communist despotism, the study argues that largely subject to the stereotypical expectations of Western readers about the Third World culture and women, the shifts reinforcing the prevalent stereotypes in the translation overshadow the author’s original intention of speaking for a small tribe of young people exploring their unorthodox existence in China. Lastly, the study concludes with the affirmation of *Shanghai Baby*’s social impact on both host and source culture in an attempt to relate its significance to a global context.

RESUMEN

Basado en el análisis comparativo de la traducción al inglés en el 2001 de la obra semi autobiográfica, *Shanghai Baby*, de Wei Hui, autora y precursora de la nueva generación de escritoras chinas conocidas como “beauty writer”, y del texto original publicado en

1999, este estudio propone demostrar el efecto que ejercen las teorías occidentales de recepción lectora así como los cambios en la traducción en el texto, sobre la respuesta del lector no especializado a las reseñas bibliográficas en línea. Cimentada tanto en el modelo de traducción sinologista del siglo XIX, que resalta el elemento cursi de la cultura china, como en el modelo occidental que representa a la mujer china como amante temeraria y siempre tratando de escapar del despotismo comunista, la presente investigación argumenta que los cambios que refuerzan los estereotipos prevalentes en la traducción—dominados en su mayoría por las expectativas estereotipadas de los lectores occidentales sobre la cultura y las mujeres de países tercermundistas—tienden a eclipsar la intención original del autor al hablar en defensa de una minoría joven que explora su existencia poco ortodoxa en China. Por último, el estudio trata el tema del impacto social que ejerce *Shanghai Baby* sobre la cultura anfitriona y la de origen y la relevancia de dicho impacto en el contexto global.

MOTS-CLÉS/KEYWORDS/PALABRAS CLAVE

Shanghai Baby, traduction littéraire, analyse du discours, représentation occidentale, contexte de lecture

Shanghai Baby, literary translation, discourse analysis, western packaging, reading context

Shanghai Baby, traducción literaria, análisis del discurso, representación occidental, contexto de lectura

1. Introduction

At the turn of the twenty-first century, a new type of novel took China's literary scene by storm. Written by young female authors who throw a spotlight on topics generally regarded as taboo in China, this fictional subcategory foregrounds "a tribe of sons and daughters of the well-to-do" leading a wild and extravagant lifestyle⁽²³⁵⁾ a representative work of a pioneer beauty writer Wei Hui, was "banished to the West" soon after its publication in China in 1999 (Koetze 2012: 8). One of the reasons the translations of many such contemporary Chinese works became bestsellers in the Western world is that they were banned in their birthplace of China. As Shen (2000) argues, "These commercial writers and the censors have become strange bedfellows, forming a unique combination of authoritarianism and commercialism."

Translated into 34 different languages, *Shanghai Baby* has sold over six million copies in 45 countries (Basu 2011). In addition to its market success, another reason for selecting *Shanghai Baby* for this study is that it is the most reviewed English translation of a Chinese novel by a female writer on amazon.com,³ which suggests that it has aroused more interest among translation readers than other contemporary Chinese novels translated into English. The study attempts to shift the focus away from the marketing hype over this controversial work and to highlight the voices of common readers by analyzing reader reviews posted on the leading US-based online retailer website, amazon.com. The objective is to outline a more representative reception environment by supplementing the reading context as manifested in the scholarly literature (Koetze 2012; Liu 2011; Weber 2002) with the voices of non-specialist readers at large.

Before jumping into the analysis of online reviews, it is important to note that most overseas readers and critics depend solely on the translation in their native languages to form their opinions about *Shanghai Baby* and never refer back to the

original Chinese version. As a result, most readers tend to accept all the rewriting, obliteration and abridgment of the translator as if these shifts were "originally" there. By examining meaningful shifts in Bruce Humes' 2001 English translation of *Shanghai Baby*, this study explores the possibility of integrating St. André's (2010) conception of translation as cross-identity performance with Kahf's (2010) analysis of the packaging of U.S. feminism in translations of works by third-world women to better account for the transfiguration of a semiautobiographical novel "from one reading context to another" (Kahf 2010: 28). The readers' feedback can then be compared against the understanding acquired from the discourse analysis of *Shanghai Baby* and of published interviews with the translator to study "the balance between the environment of reception and the translator's individual role" (Kahf 2010: 29) in generating one-sided representations of the Chinese world.

1.1 Packaging Chinese Culture: Cross-identity Performance and "Chineseness"

Shanghai Baby, written in the first person, revolves around the everyday life of a young woman, Coco, living in Shanghai. Coco writes about her life ambitions, thought-provoking social encounters, and "most importantly, about the city itself" (Koetze 2012: 8). She writes about the city's artistic scene where she meets artists and journalists, as well as the trendy parties where she meets young people living a life no less unorthodox than her own. Overall, this is the story of a woman searching for her own identity, caught in a web of traditionally-held Chinese norms and newly-emerging Western influences.

Self-discovery, as with feminine identification, is deeply rooted in culture. How do target readers, then, respond to Chinese culture translated into English as depicted in a Westernized "sex, drug and rock n' roll" novel like *Shanghai Baby*? This case study is further inspired by St. André's question of whether all translation activities can fit into the various models of passing he proposes (St. André 2006: 258). According to St. André, the concept of passing, as it has been developed in African-American studies and queer theory, usually involves members of a minority/oppressed group in society learning to mimic the looks, speech and behavior of the dominant majority or *vice versa*. In St. André's theorization of the nineteenth-century sinological translation (St. André 2006: 255), passing is commonly embodied by "a concentration and exaggeration of certain linguistic features for effect" to establish a stereotyped "Chineseness" that keeps the Western readers at a comfortable distance, allowing them to enjoy the exotic "oriental tales." In a later work (St. André 2010: 276), he further organizes the relevant metaphors for translation under one umbrella term – cross-identity performance, which both challenges and reinforces stereotypical social identities and established power relationships. Slumming is defined in this work as members of a dominant class in society learning to mimic those of the dominated class, while passing is redefined as mimicry in the opposite direction. The current study thus explores in what way *Shanghai Baby* as a translation illustrates St. André's taxonomy of cross-identity performance.

By mapping the "Chineseness" contrivances found in a more recent literary work, *Shanghai Baby*, onto one or more forms of crossing-identity performance through analysis of both the translation product and target reader reviews, this study strives

to achieve a more balanced and coherent understanding of translational shifts influenced both by the translator's individual choice and by the reception environment.

1.2 Packaging Chinese Women in the Receiving Culture

As Coco gains more success as a writer, her love life starts to unravel into a racy story of a 25-year-old waitress and aspiring writer who finds herself torn between her beloved boyfriend, impotent, drug-abusing Chinese artist Tian Tian, and her secret boyfriend, virile German expatriate Mark (Fang 2013). Although politics is completely absent from the narrative,⁴ the quasi-autobiography of a Chinese woman leading an erotically-charged life can hardly escape a feminist interpretation.

According to Kahf (2010: 31), Third World women have been packaged in the United States reception environment within one or more of the three categories-victim, escapee or pawn. Moreover, when discussing the stereotyping of women in erotic writing, Flotow argues that a female character "has hitherto been described in terms of the stereotypes of 'the lover ('whore')', the devoted and unsexed mother, or the untouchable Holy Virgin'" (1997: 17). The following sections will show that the translated work under discussion does not escape these two dimensions of stereotyping. *Shanghai Baby*, a work known for erotically-charged scenes set against the backdrop of a conservative China, was projected onto the feminist expectations of the Western receiving culture the moment it entered the English-speaking market, as indicated by the Amazon editorial review of *Shanghai Baby*: "Coco's forays into in the territory of love and lust cross the borders between two cultures – awakening her guilt and fears of discovery, yet stimulating her emerging sexual self."⁵

Following Kahf's approach involving comparative discourse analysis of the English translation and original Arabic version of Huda Sha'rawi's memoir (2010), the authors intend to locate similar reception-oriented shifts in the English translation of *Shanghai Baby*. Furthermore, the study explores whether the translator⁶ takes an active part in addressing these stereotypes and how the translator's agency in this regard influences translation readers.

1.3 An Overview of Reader Reviews Posted on Amazon.com

Our online query over the U.S.-based online retail website Amazon.com, conducted on February 10, 2016, returned 91 book reviews for *Shanghai Baby*, 27 of which were positive and 64 negative, as indicated by Amazon's five-star rating system (a rating of 3 or more stars corresponds to a positive review while a rating of 2.5 or fewer stars corresponds to a negative one). In other words, almost 70 percent of the commenting readers had a low opinion of the book as a whole. While it is tempting to apply the majority rule in a one-sided match like this, a closer look into the minority pool of positive reviews generates some interesting findings, which shed light on alternative interpretive possibilities.

Of all the positive reviews, 92 percent claimed surprise or even shock at the overall low rating this book received. This means that most of the positive reviews were given in full awareness of the overwhelmingly negative feedback. In addition, 74 percent reported some familiarity with China or Chinese culture before reading

this book, such as travelling or reading experiences, in contrast to 36 percent in the pool of negative reviews, which may, to some extent, testify to the reliability of the positive reviews. The authors thus identified the major counter-arguments in the positive reviews against the negative reviews and discuss in the following section in what way the translation may have affected the recurring criticism of *Shanghai Baby*.

2. Comparing 上海宝贝 to *Shanghai Baby*

As the translator's first attempt at literary translation, *Shanghai Baby*, the English translation of 上海宝贝, became a bestseller in Hong Kong and Singapore soon after its publication. The Chinese original was then translated into several other languages, including French, German, Italian and Japanese. The translator of *Shanghai Baby* is an American, though greatly influenced by European culture, as he admitted in an interview (Fang 2013) and, as the market success of the English translation has to a great extent motivated the translation into other languages, it should be a good starting point for a study of the voices of those non-specialist English readers who were interested enough to post online reviews.

The existing comparative studies of *Shanghai Baby* and its original text are based on the theoretical model of orientalism (Liu 2011); the translational shifts are cited to illustrate that the translator, with an orientalist agenda, intentionally manipulates the text to reinforce the binary opposition of the West as the progressive, cultured dominator and the Orient as the underdeveloped, unenlightened dominated, such that Western colonization (in the narrow sense in the colonial age, and as cultural and economic hegemon in the postcolonial age) can be justified to educate or “civilize” the Orient. While previous studies have looked at the role of editorial reviews in promoting east-versus-west stereotypes, the current study is built upon the theoretical models of translation as cross-identity performance and feminist packaging in hopes of adding greater nuance to the discourse analysis. In addition, it turns to the reviews of non-specialist readers and observes their responses to relevant stereotyping contrivances and the role played by the translator (deliberately or not) in reinforcing or diluting the packaging of Chinese culture and women.

2.1 It All Starts with the Paratext

Quite a few readers (34% of all reviews) report that the intriguing cover of *Shanghai Baby* is what first captures their attention. The front cover of the English translation features the author's airbrushed half-portrait showing her naked left shoulder on which the tattoo-like characters “Wei Hui” are inscribed, while that of the Chinese version is simply Wei Hui's headshot. This graphic shift in the English translation highlights the mystery and eroticism of Chinese women.

Even more eye-catching to the English readers is the book's blurb that reads “a story of love, sex and self-discovery – banned in China.” As one reader puts it, “Is it the fact that it has been banned by a government widely held to be whimsical and oppressive, and that by buying and promoting it we feel that in some small way we are striking a blow for freedom?”⁷ For the purpose of the current study, rather than exploring why the Chinese government banned a book highlighting “drug, sex and

rock n' roll" deemed commonplace in the West, we are more interested in the statement right before "banned in China" as it prepares the reader to expect a story and *nothing else*. Although it seems undeniable that a work of fiction always tells a story, this semi-autographical novel presents itself as a story of self-identification, as the author declares, "I'm looking for a voice for my generation."⁸ In contrast, according to one interview (Fang 2013), the translator chose this novel to introduce to the West because "it's sexy... it's in your face," which means that the storyline of this Sex and the City wannabe and the provocative writing style constitute the main selling points of the novel. Therefore, the translation undergoes corresponding shifts that appear to serve the sole purpose of highlighting love and sex, more often than not at the expense of self-reflexive exploration. These shifts contribute to the stereotyped packaging of an exotic and erotic Chinese woman into the expected "comfort zone" of the English translation's reception environment.

For a final note on paratextual analysis, the emphasis on a story-oriented construction is also reflected in the "pocketbook" composition of the published translation: the Tables of Content are all omitted in this series of pocketbooks published by Smith & Schuster, Inc., and *Shanghai Baby* is no exception. This approach promotes a prescriptive categorization of these fictional writings into run-of-the-mill airport or train station reading where readers simply journey straight through to enjoy a story and no part of the writing is insightful enough to return to for re-reading. Accordingly, the translation accommodates the demands of this market by cleansing the text of those elements that might "sabotage" the development of the story, as illustrated and discussed in the following sections.

2.2 Packaging Chinese Culture in Translation

Shanghai Baby serves as an excellent example for studying translation as cross-identity performance from different perspectives. To begin with, the original Chinese novel depicts a small "circle" of young people attracted to and influenced by a Western lifestyle; they attend wild parties and hang out in bars and cafés. The Chinese group within the dominated culture mimicking Western conduct is in itself a form of cross-identity performance, or passing. Second, the American translator disguises himself as a member of the Chinese community in his translation, stating as his purpose to introduce "the lower class" to the dominant culture (slumming and yellowface, another two forms of cross-identity performance). Finally, a male translator impersonates a female writer to recount a woman's journey of self-discovery (the drag show, yet another form of cross-identity performance that shows the constructed nature of gender roles (St. André 2010: 276-79)). Cross-identity performance "functioned as a delineation of boundaries by crossing those bounds of social construction, in which language was always an important element" (Itzkovitz 2001: 39).

One case in point to illustrate the ways in which *Shanghai Baby* embodies cross-identity performance occurs during a contentious conversation between Coco, her friend Madonna, and an elderly American lady. The lady asked them to stop partying on the lawn near her house, but the young women did not take her words seriously at first since they believed the lawn was open to the public. After the lady threatens to report them to the authorities, the young people give in, saying rather provocatively before leaving "See you later" in English. The translation renders this

part of this passage in the following way: “Madonna, to prove her street savvy, feigned a smile but got her English wrong. ‘Okay,’ she said. ‘We’ll be leaving. See you late.’” By intentionally adding “got her English wrong” and giving a grammatically incorrect sentence as simple as “see you later” (the original text actually uses the correct “see you later”), the translator presents Madonna’s spoken English as laughable (an awkward mimicking of the dominating culture), which undermines her “street savvy.”

Furthermore, the stereotypical Chineseness characterized by overloaded figurative speech, maxims and proverbs (St. André 2006: 244) is accentuated by word-for-word translation widely applied in *Shanghai Baby* for many idioms and similes unique to Chinese culture. In the source context, the presence of these rhetorical devices is essential to enlivening the text. However, too many idioms and similes in unidiomatic English render the translated text redundant and nonsensical, thus entertaining the English-speaking readers with an illusion of linguistic superiority. Examples for this abound in *Shanghai Baby*: idioms associated with praise and admiration were rendered as denigrating, while those associated with irony and criticism were neutralized as bland, negligible comments; creative metaphors invented by the writer that underlie the poetics of this work were reduced by verbatim translation to ambiguous, trivial descriptions in the English reading context (see Appendix 1 for example-specific analyses). Since modern English tends to avoid the use of idioms and clichés, as identified by Crystal (2012: 182), Chineseness thus constructed in English translation reinforces the comforting boundary between the Chinese culture and the one in which the Western readers live.

2.3 Packaging Chinese Women in Translation

Contrary to the author’s well-intentioned attempt to speak out for her generation, most readers of the English translation (78% of negative reviews) are critical of the protagonist’s monologues delivered at parties, bars and cafés: a “boring and clichéd” description of materialistic life by name-dropping appears both “superficial” and “pseudo-intellectual.” On the one hand, the high-consumption lifestyle underlying *Shanghai Baby*, while unprecedented and thus mind-blowing to the contemporary Chinese readers at the time of the book’s publication, is commonplace for the coeval English readers. On the other hand, the self-reflective scenes that translation readers find unbearably frequent have to do with the tradition of unrestrained self-praise in twentieth-century Chinese novels (McDougall 2003: 104), which appears in sharp contrast to contemporary U.S. fiction, which is largely influenced by a long tradition of anti-intellectualism (McDougall 2003: 37, 109). Therefore, not surprisingly, some readers of the English translation detect a lack of “any sense of humor” (or sarcasm) in the self-narrative of *Shanghai Baby*. In reality, the innovativeness of *Shanghai Baby* lies in the fact that the narrator’s self-obsessiveness is directed toward an end quite different from that of mainstream Chinese fiction of the past century. While the narcissism in most Chinese novels “leads not to a cultivation of an autonomous individual self but to a justification of intellectuals as a group and the confirmation of their moral worth” (McDougall 2003: 108), *Shanghai Baby* is one of the few contemporary novels in which the author “feels detached enough to explore the non-sociocentric self” (McDougall 2003: 110). And the protagonist Coco, as depicted in

Shanghai Baby, revolutionizes the image of Chinese writers in the early twentieth century by achieving the transformation “from an intellectual, the conscience of society, the architect of the soul, to a celebrity in a consumer economy at best, a self-styled outsider at worst” (Lu 2008: 178). Therefore, the uniqueness of *Shanghai Baby*’s narcissism lies in its purpose of exploring the Chinese individual self within the context of east-west cultural collision and blending.

The translator, on the other hand, has interpreted this as self-indulgence in *Shanghai Baby*, and so takes some countermeasures to tone down the autobiographical nature of the novel by removing a few Chinese cultural images unfamiliar to English-speaking readers along with some of Coco’s self-reflections that seem irrelevant to the unfolding of the plot. Although the resultant shifts tone down Coco’s self-obsessiveness to advance the agenda of storyline development, they end up situating the voice of the Chinese female protagonist within a Westernized context that English readers unsurprisingly find hackneyed.

Appendix 2 lists a selection of the relevant texts removed in the English translation and explains the integral role they play in the original. This approach to rhetorically challenging texts echoes the one identified by Schaffer and Song (2006) in the English translation of Chen Ran’s *A Private Life*. Their study found that the omission of several paragraphs limits the access of the translation readers to important stylistic elements present in the original text, including “the fusion of Western concepts and philosophical perspectives with indigenous Chinese myth and traditions” (Schaffer and Song 2006: 8). Deprived of the figurative speeches that transform Coco’s materialistic pursuits into spiritual self-exploration, *Shanghai Baby* is flattened out as a prosaic ad for Western pop culture with the “other” perspective missing. In addition, Coco’s monologue, which acknowledges and justifies the unorthodox lifestyle of her friends and herself, as well as her subversive reflection on prevailing feminist initiatives, goes missing in the translation, thus divesting *Shanghai Baby* of the distinctive cultural context that allows Coco’s life to be interpreted from a Chinese woman’s standpoint. Furthermore, Coco’s wise reflections and poetic introspection are abridged, which puts more attention on her fondness for brand names, symbolizing her materialism.

On top of the removal and abridgment of the protagonist’s monologue of self-identification and discovery, another possible explanation for the unanimous criticism among translation readers of *Shanghai Baby*’s self-obsessiveness and egocentricity is that the translation portrays the protagonist as a lust-driven woman by playing down the presence of other female characters and by explicitly rendering erotic scenes.

When asked if he had learned anything new about Chinese women from this work, the translator replied, “my experience of Chinese females is already much richer than the two-dimensional portraits that dominate in the book” (Fang 2013). Therefore, it is understandable that the translation has reinforced this impression of “fragile” supporting characters. Appendix 3 illustrates the strategies applied in foregrounding the main storyline at the expense of supporting characters: text omission as well as paragraph merging or splitting. Through these different means of text manipulation, the weakened interactions between Coco and her parents and Coco and her friends contribute to creating an image of a self-obsessed protagonist detached from her Generation X peers⁹ and from other social contexts.

While Coco's social presence is undermined in the English translation, her sexual self is given greater prominence. Hidden beneath Coco's sexy look and unrestrained behavior in the Chinese source text is an irresistible urge to explore and discover her true self. Coco rebels against the traditional moral system and social conventions for women and pursues love, happiness, and ultimately self-identity in the rapidly evolving city of Shanghai, which is struggling with the conflict between East and West, old traditions and new values. Within this context, erotic scenes are not merely meant for titillating entertainment – it is sex with a message. In “Never This Wild: Sexing the Cultural Revolution,” Larson (1999) discusses sexuality in post-Mao literature and film, arguing that a “discourse of desire” was a way of suppressing the socialist cultural theory to become part of a cultural movement that uses sexual expression as a way to process China's past, present and future, and to place Chinese culture within a global context (Larson 1999: 423).

Nevertheless, such a conception of sex is largely silenced in the English translation in order to create an image of undisrupted eroticism in *Shanghai Baby*. As a result of the strategy of explicitation applied in the translation of all the erotic scenes, the protagonist is transformed into a debauched woman who can easily separate love from sex and have multiple sexual partners with no guilt, thus reinforcing the brazen narcissism the translation readers find “disgusting.” See Appendix 4 for a relevant example-specific analysis of use of explicitation.

As a final touch to the construction of a gendered self in *Shanghai Baby*, it is interesting to note a consistent translational shift in 女孩 (*girl*) in Coco's monologue (no similar shift can be found for all the other female characters). 女孩 within the context of Coco's self-reflection is either translated into “woman” or simply omitted whereas its translation “girl” is consistently retained in other contexts such as those referring to others, conversations with other characters, or conversations among members of the older generation (see Appendix 5 for example-specific analysis). The translator may find the “university-educated” 25-year-old protagonist too sophisticated to be called a “girl,” but this stereotypical shift defies the complexity of humanity as illustrated in the Chinese idiom: “there is a little girl (boy) in every woman (man)'s heart.” Moreover, there is actually more to 女孩 in contemporary Chinese than age and marital status. The transition from girl to woman typically occurs after one graduates from school to take a job, live independently and socialize with others. During the protagonist's exposure of her inner self, her self-declaration as a “girl” engenders the assurance that her cherished values and dreams have been kept intact over time. Furthermore, as an implied metaphor of Shanghai subculture, the protagonist is “also bordering between girl and womanhood, between being Chinese and becoming Westernized” (Koetze 2012: 19). One important reason why the English readers are intolerant of *Shanghai Baby*'s monologue is that they fail to see the mix of sophistication and innocence in the female protagonist due to the translator's interventions.

To summarize the packaging of Chinese women in *Shanghai Baby*, the translator, for the sake of storyline development, either curtails or manipulates the “trivial” characters (Chinese women in particular) and other details that serve to add a self-exploratory dimension to the characters. Erotic scenes are explicitly described with such thick and heavy colors that some English readers report “overtones of sex.” Coco, the Chinese female protagonist in *Shanghai Baby*, is thus rendered lust-driven,

superficial, and egocentric. However, few readers of the translation get trapped into generalizing the protagonist as an image of Chinese women at large; instead, most criticize the author for her atypical characterization. Whether a good novel has to reflect a larger picture of social life with representative characters is beyond the scope of the current study, but what has to be acknowledged here is that the textual intervention of the translator flattens the protagonist by packaging her as a frivolous, lustful Chinese woman, an image that fits into the Western feminist model of a reckless escapee from Communist despotism, as well as the erotic model of a shameless “lover (whore).” Had the poetic lyrical passages of self-exploration been retained for the receiving culture, the author’s “talent for using the simile and metaphor to create a mood and describe situations” (quoting an observant reader) might have been granted an opportunity to shine.

2.4 Contrasting the Western Character with “the Other”

Coupled with clichéd characterizations, single-minded Western worship may also be responsible for the criticism directed by Anglophone readers at the protagonist Coco in *Shanghai Baby*, focusing first and foremost on her “biased” stance in the tug-of-war between her “reclusive, impotent, occasional drug-using” Chinese boyfriend, Tian Tian, and her “powerful, virile and competitive” German lover, Mark, showing a clear preference for the latter. Coco is accordingly labeled as a heartless decadent woman who chooses sex over love. The comparison of the translation and the original, however, reveals significant shifts that serve to sharpen the contrast between the two male leading characters. Specifically, Coco’s platonic interactions with Tian Tian, which she found fulfilling and delightful, were abridged while her non-sexual encounters with Mark were curtailed; and sentences were relocated to contrast the two male leading characters (see Appendix 6 for example-specific analyses). Again, these shifts may be intended to fortify the storyline, but they essentially downplay the protagonist’s perplexity in pursuing both physical and spiritual satisfaction.

3. Concluding Remarks: Reopening *Shanghai Baby*

In spite of painstaking efforts made by the translator to lend prominence to the main storyline, most English readers complain about the simplicity and platitudes of the novel’s erotically-charged love triangle and suspect that *Shanghai Baby* should attribute its success in “the free world” to its having been banned by a conservative government rather than to its literary merits. Admittedly, the one-sided advocacy of a Western lifestyle alone can never become a selling point when imported into the West. However, the author’s mastery of Chinese rhetorical elements and her incisive observations in her uniquely poetic narrative, which constitute the work’s indispensable competitive edge in China, are silenced or inhibited for the sake of highlighting the love-and-sex theme in the translation, thus overshadowing the ultimate agenda of feminist self-discovery in the original text.

As the author’s first published full-length novel and as a piece of experimental female writing, *Shanghai Baby*’s clever and artful use of the Chinese language with a distinctively feminine touch is noteworthy, though this may not be as impressive as the boldness and courage in “setting a precedent for female writers to write about

sex (traditionally an exclusively male domain) as they experience it, or as they imagine it, from the woman's point of view" (Fang 2013). More importantly, the novel's unprecedented success should be accounted for within a specific context: a time when sex was considered taboo in China since it "expressed individualism, which was believed to harm the wellbeing of the greater collective" (Koetze 2012: 16). Therefore, the novel's depiction of sexual experience "cannot only be understood as a release of sexual freedom, but also as a counter-reaction to China's modern past" (Koetze 2012: 16). At any rate, there is no denying that the shifts introduced in *Shanghai Baby* by the translator sustain the prevailing stereotypes held in the Western world about Third World culture and women, the former identified by St. André (2010) while the latter by Kahf (2010) and Flotow (1997), even though all the Chinese women depicted in this novel lead a modern Westernized life.¹⁰ The labels stay the same: a lust-driven lover and a West-worshipping escapee from the culture of Chineseness. It seems that the translator has implemented the aforementioned shifts to promote in vain the atypical existence of a Chinese woman speaking from an "in-group" perspective for the Generation X deemed "non-mainstream" in their home country.

In spite of the foregoing discussion of translational distortions and manipulations, we should warn against the danger of "emphasizing the metaphorical dimension of translation – involving an analytics of replacement and substitution – at the expense of a metonymic dimension which would prioritize, instead, contexts and connections" (Tymoczko 1999: 55). According to Tymoczko's conception of a translation as a metonym of its source – that is, as "a form of representation in which parts or aspects of the source text come to stand for the whole" (Tymoczko 1999: 55), translations need to be rethought not so much as falling short of their sources but as productively falling elsewhere in relation to their sources (Harvey 2003: 5). Also, it is worth noting that pleasing all is a "mission impossible" in creative writing. If a character is unique, some readers maintain that it is unrepresentative of the society at large and renders the writing superficial; if the character is representative enough, some others may argue that it is lacking distinction and boring. Therefore, it seems that what stands out in the long run is writing for one's own voice to be heard, in other words, the individualized use of language or writing style. This puts the translator under a seemingly insurmountable obligation: How can a translation render an authorial style that has made a resounding impact on the source culture in a way that evokes similar (divergent) reactions in target readers, thus replicating the market success or buzz in the target culture? *Shanghai Baby*, after all, "did prevail in every way; it affects people. It provokes, disappoints, angers, hurts, surprises, shocks, amuses or bemuses them – but does not leave them untouched" (Koetze 2012: 31). In this regard, *Shanghai Baby* may have received its success as a translation, since it evoked the "garbage-or-gem" reviews from the English readers that are no less polarized and heated than those from its Chinese readers.

Hopefully, the approach taken by the current study of reviewing the voices of non-specialist readers in the form of online book reviews can shed new light on the promotion of Chinese literary works to the rest of the world; these comments can be triangulated with the editorial and academic reviews for a comprehensive view of the literary and aesthetic devices at work. For follow-up studies, online reader reviews along with professional book reviews of *Shanghai Baby* from English-speaking

regions other than the USA need to be incorporated for a fuller picture of the Anglophone reception environment. Moreover, the analytical framework the current study follows may undergo further adaptation and application in the reception studies of other literary translations, including but not limited to the language pair of Chinese and English.

NOTES

1. WEI, Hui (2001): *Shanghai Baby*. (Translated from Chinese to English by Bruce Humes). New York: Washington Square Press.
2. WEI, Hui (1999): 上海宝贝 [Shanghai Baby]. Visited Sep 2014, <<http://www.oklink.net/00/0323/index.htm>>.
3. We searched for the English translation of Chinese fiction on amazon.com on February 10, 2016 and sorted the results by average customer reviews. Of all the works we located, Shanghai Baby received the most customer reviews (92 reviews); the second most reviewed (74 reviews) translated work was Red Sorghum: A Novel of China, written by the Nobel Prize-awarded author Mo Yan.
4. Except for a scene of an argument at a party between an American student and a Serbian student concerning the U.S. bombing of Belgrade.
5. Refer to <<http://www.amazon.com/Shanghai-Baby-Novel-Wei-Hui/dp/0743421574>> (Visited on Sep 2014).
6. The translation was actually completed by a team in which Humes played a leading role. He described the whole work procedure in an interview (Fang 2013): "(I first) had a native Chinese read the chapter aloud to me, which immediately resolved some of the original questions I had, because some of my original questions had been due to incorrect reading on my part; Finished draft and sent to a couple (she Shanghainese, he American) for proofing and polishing. Their approach: She rarely looked at my English. A professional conference interpreter, she preferred to do a running interpretation of the original, with her English-speaking husband noting differences between her version and mine on his computer. He would then discuss these areas with her, and having checked both versions against the Chinese original again, then change the English accordingly. This worked well because he was younger than I and less fluent in Chinese, and thus a better writer of contemporary English, particularly conversational English." For the conciseness of discussion, the "translator" hereinafter refers to the team and all the other relevant parties that may influence the published edition of Shanghai Baby.
7. Refer to http://www.amazon.com/Shanghai-Baby-Novel-WeiHui/productreviews/0743421574/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_paging_btm_4?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=recent&pageNumber=4 (Visited on Sep 2014)
8. Refer to http://www.lijiazhang.com/downloads/files/China_girls.pdf (Visited on Sep 2014).
9. This refers to the generation born after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), which did not experience Mao's rule. Although the PRC officially remained a communist nation, society was quickly turning capitalistic. The consequences of this binary system affected the young people that were growing up during this period. "On the one hand, they took on the individualistic lifestyle that came with the growing consumer society, on the other hand, they were still supposed to behave according to the collectivistic standards their parents grew up with" (Weber 2002: 347).
10. Furthermore, the Chinese cultural elements have undergone a further deduction in the translation, as illustrated in Appendix 1.

REFERENCES

- BASU, Chitralekha (2011). The slim years. China Daily. Visited June 2017, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2011-07/15/content_12907491.htm>.
- FANG, Fang (2013): Interview with the translator Bruce Humes [transcript] on April 8, 2013. Visited June 2017, < <http://bruce-humes.com/archives/759> >.
- CRYSTAL, David (2012): *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- FLOTOW, Luise (von) (1997): *Translation and Gender: Translating in the "Era of Feminism."* Manchester: St. Jerome.
- HARVEY, Keith (2003): *Intercultural Movements: American Gay in French Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

- ITZKOVITZ, David (2001): Passing Like Me: Jewish Chameleonism and the Politics of Race. In: María Carla SÁNCHEZ and Linda SCHLOSSBERG, eds. *Passing: Identity and Interpretation in Sexuality, Race, and Religion*. New York: New York University Press, 38-63.
- KAHF, Mohja (2010): Packaging "Huda": Sha'Rawi's Memoirs in the United States Reception Environment. In: BAKER, Mona ed. *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*. London/New York: Routledge, 29-45.
- KOETZE, Manya (2012): Shanghai Baby: Beyond China- A Chinese Novel Banished to the West. Visited Sep 2014, <<http://goo.gl/o44k4I>>.
- LARSON, Wendy (1999): Never This Wild: Sexing the Cultural Revolution. *Modern China* 25(4): 423-450.
- LIU, Fangjia (2011): 论女性主义掩饰下的东方主义——对《上海宝贝》的翻译批评 [On Orientalism with the Disguise of Feminism: Critique on the Translation of Shanghai Baby]. Visited Sep 2014, <www.cnki.com>.
- LU, Sheldon H. (2008): Popular Culture and Body Politics: Beauty Writers in Contemporary China. *Modern Language Quarterly*. 69(1):167-185.
- MCDUGALL, Bonnie S. (2003): Fictional Authors, Imaginary Audiences: Modern Chinese Literature in the Twentieth Century. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- SCHAFFER, Kay and SONG, Xianlin (2006): Writing Beyond the Wall: Translation, Cross-cultural Exchange, and Chen Ran's "A Private Life." *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*. 3(2):1-20.
- SHEN, Shuang (2000): A Fine Line in Shanghai (letter to the editor). *The New York Times*. May, 18.
- ST. ANDRE, James (2006): "Long Time No See, Coolie": Passing as Chinese through Translation. In: Georges L. BASTIN and Paul F. BANDIA (eds.) (2006). *Charting the Future of Translation History*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press: 243-261.
- ST. ANDRE, James (2010): Translation as Cross-identity Performance. In: James ST. ANDRE, ed. *Thinking Through Translation with Metaphors*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 275-294.
- TYMOCZKO, Maria (1999): *Translation in a Postcolonial Context: Early Irish Literature in English Translation*. Manchester: St Jerome.
- WEBER, Ian (2002): Shanghai Baby: Negotiating Youth Self-Identity in Urban China. *Social Identities* 8(2):347-68.
- YANG, Puxi (2009): 汉英翻译实践中的翻译腔研究 [A Study of Translationese in Chinese-English Translation Practice]. Visited Sep 2014, <www.cnki.com>.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Verbatim Translation to Fortify Chineseness (partial listing)

Original	Translation	Notes on text manipulation
… 文曲星照在我头顶，墨水充满了我的肚子，她说我终将出人头地。(17)	With a literary star shining down on me and a belly full of ink, she said I would make my mark one day. (19)	Derived from a Chinese idiom, the expression in bold implies that she is endowed with literary talent, and will eventually become an outstanding writer in the literary world. This part consists of some unique rhetorical elements in Chinese culture that do not exist in the Western culture. Consequently, the word-for-word translation turns the commendatory tone in the original text into derogatory tone in the translation.
他闭上眼睛，像鱼一样打了一个长长的呵欠。(6)	Tian Tian’s eyes were closed, and he gave a long yawn, like a fish. (6)	The expression in bold is poetic and needs reinterpretation in translation.
我点点头，表现得从容不迫的样子，心里却升起一个惊叹号。(10)	I nodded, outwardly calm while an exclamation mark popped up in my mind. (12)	The metaphorical expression, common in Chinese, indicates that someone is taken by surprise. Translation readers may find such a literal translation incomprehensible.
我一直都像吮吸玉浆琼露一样吸着这种看不见的氛围，以使自己丢掉年轻人特有的愤世嫉俗，让自己真正钻进这城市心腹之地，像蛀虫钻进一只大大的苹果那样。(13)	I am forever absorbing that atmosphere, as if it were a magic potion of jade or rubies that would rid me of the contempt the young have for convention and help me get deep into the guts of the city, like an insect boring into an apple. (15)	This metaphor perfectly depicts the narrator’s dilemma in the journey of self-discovery. On the one hand, she strives to join in the mainstream to make herself conventional, like the majority of people; on the other hand, she is cynical toward the mainstream since they are like deleterious insects boring into an apple, stagnating the city culture without making any contribution.

APPENDIX 2

Omission of Monologues and Chinese Cultural Images (partial listing)

	Removed Text (our translation is provided for the underlined text that has been omitted)	Intended Effects
Monologues	<p>Original: 是他们, 这些无形地藏匿在城市各角落的新人类, 将对我的小说喝彩或扔臭鸡蛋, 他们无拘无束, 无法无天, 是所有而想标新立异的小说家理想的盟友。(66-67)</p> <p>Translation: <u>As a Generation X insidiously hidden in all corners, they are the people I expect to applause or hiss my novel. Fetterless and lawless, they are the ideal ally of all novelists attempting to attract attention by novelty.</u></p>	The author specifically describes the generation she likes to speak for in monologues like this one. They are unconventional and definitely cannot represent the Chinese younger generation at large. Unfortunately, this kind of omission misleads readers into believing that the Westernized lifestyle prevalent in the novel is commonplace for young people in China, which understandably led to a questioning of the novel's veracity.
	<p>Original: [...] 而事实上她们中相当一部分是各类跨国公司的白领, 大部分是受过高等教育的良家妇女有些还留过洋, 有私家车, 做着某个外资公司的首席代表(简称“首代”)... (71-72)</p> <p>Translation: [...] but in fact a good many of them worked for multinationals. Most were college graduates from good families, some had studied abroad and owned their own cars <u>and they worked for certain foreign-owned companies as chief representatives (called 'chief reps' for short)....</u> (71)</p>	Maybe the translator omitted this sentence because he found it a repetition to “they worked for multinationals” in the previous sentence. However, the omitted sentence shows that these women frequenting the bars hold important positions in the international companies. Without this sentence, they are just flat and simple female characters from well-to-do families who single-mindedly worship Western culture.
	<p>Original: 最后他让我相信, 我是个比许多女人都幸福的女人。因为据资料统计, 约百分之七十的中国女人在性上存在着这样那样的问题, 百分之十的女人一辈子一次高潮也没有。这是一个让人惊讶不已的数字, 也是推动每个时代的妇女解放运动蓬勃发展、持久不衰的内在动力之一。老弗洛伊德在100年前就说, 力必多无处发泄时, 它就会转变为各种社会政治行为、战争、阴谋、运动等等。(69)</p> <p>Translation: In the end, he made me believe that I'm luckier than many women. The statistics say some seventy percent of Chinese women have some sort of problem with sex, and ten percent never had an orgasm. <u>These very figures are among the internal motivations of the thriving, persistent feminism movements of all ages. As Freud said over a century ago, the accumulation of libido with no proper outlet for discharging can transform into all kinds of social and political actions, wars, conspiracies and movements.</u> (69)</p>	An important difference between Chinese and English is that the former tend to put the important ideas at the end while the latter at the beginning (Yang 2009: 35). In this case, the omitted part expresses a subversive view of feminism, which actually distances the author from the conventional feminist camp. With the absence of the underlined part, the reader instead encounters a flat, sex-driven female character.
	<p>Original: 毒品、性、金钱、恐惧、心理医生、功名诱惑、方向迷失, 等等组成了 199ii 年的城市迎接新世纪曙光的一杯喜庆鸡尾酒。而对于我这样一个年轻女孩而言, 诗意的抒情永远是赖以生存的最后一道意象... 抓住上帝的尾巴, 一直向上, 向上。(177-178)</p> <p>Translation: <u>Drug, sex, money, fear, psychiatrists, seductive fame and position, disorientation...they constitute one festive glass of cocktail for the city of 199ii to embrace the new century. For a young girl like me, poetic lyric is always the last haven for earthly survival...I'll cling to the ridge of God's robe and try to reach out higher and higher.</u> (177)</p>	The protagonist's self-reflection serves as a memorable personal statement for confessing her intention of writing and her experiment with poetic language.

	Removed Text (our translation is provided for the underlined text that has been omitted)	Intended Effects
Chinese Cultural Images	<p>Original: “它可以实现。”我说，对她的笑不以为然，臭不可闻的文坛就像金庸笔下的武林，有正道与邪道之分，而不少正道人士就爱做道貌岸然，口诛笔伐的事情。“去实现它只是需要金钱和智慧。” (70)</p> <p>Translation: “But it’s doable,” I said, taking exception to her laugh. <u>The literary world stinks just like Jin Yong’s fictional world of martial arts and warriors, featuring the confrontation of the good with the evil, and many so-called righteous people love putting on solemn airs to attack others in either speeches or writings.</u> “All we need to make it happen is the cash and the brains.” (70)</p>	<p>The reference to the works of an influential Chinese martial arts novelist vividly illustrates the author’s penetrating sarcasm toward the literary world she herself belongs to, and the omission misleads the readers into thinking that the novel is overwhelmingly narcissistic with no meaningful self-reflection. In contrast, the author’s sarcastic remark about the relationship between professor and protégés is retained in the translation (Page 131, translated by Humes) since it contains no Chinese-specific cultural image. However, the non-specialist reader may not find the remark as resonant since academia may be less familiar to them than the literary world.</p>
	<p>Original: 涂紫色唇膏和紫色眼影，配上豹纹手袋，西方60年代的嬉皮复古装束，正在上海<u>某些场所</u>兴起。</p> <p>Translation: I chose the 1960s retro look from the West – purple lips and eye shadow, along with my leopard-spotted handbag – very chic in <u>some places</u> of Shanghai just then. (71)</p>	<p>“Some places” in Chinese is a slightly sarcastic euphemism for clubs and resorts possibly involved in erotic entertainment services. So the author is again exhibiting self-mockery, which is unfortunately omitted in the translation.</p>
	<p>Original: 一个上海女孩嘴唇黑黑地走在嘴唇银灰的同伴旁，她们在吃“珍宝果”牌棒棒糖（<u>大小孩子们人手举一根棒棒糖，一度成为上海的时尚形象的一部分</u>）... (88)</p> <p>Translation: A Shanghainese girl with black lips strolled next to her silver-lipped companion, licking Fruit Treasure lollipops. (For young people and children, holding a lollipop was once part of trendy looks in Shanghai)... (88)</p>	<p>Throughout <i>Shanghai Baby</i>, the translator translates most texts inside the brackets (Most of the time the translation removes the brackets and incorporates the explanatory text into the main text) and this example is one of the few instances of complete omission. This sentence depicts a Shanghai subculture populated by “carefree” and “young-acting” people.</p>

APPENDIX 3

Strategies for Foregrounding the Main Storyline at the Expense of Supporting Characters (partial listing)

Text Manipulation		Notes
Omissions	<p>Original: 那个女人我经常在电视的谈心节目上看到, 一年365天她有364天作张爱玲式哀怨才女打扮,在其他不少派对上也能时常碰上她。马当娜告诉我, 此女子有过三打以上的洋情人, 绰号叫“小旗袍”。(183)</p> <p>Our translation: I can often see this woman hosting interview programs on TV; all year round she dresses like a wistful talented woman from Eileen Chang's works. ... I also encountered her at many other parties. According to Madonna, she has had over three dozens of foreign lovers, thus the nickname “Little Cheongsam Dress.”</p>	<p>This supporting character's appearance is intended to introduce young people from yet another arena--entertainment--to enrich the readers' understanding of China's Generation X, highlighted by <i>Shanghai Baby</i>. And the author's euphemistic description invites readers to reflect on a popular TV hosting style at that time. The omission of this character denies the readers access to a broader understanding of China's Generation X.</p>
	<p>Original: “等爸爸学校放了假, 就可以去外地看看风景散散心。”人生最美妙的时光可能就在中年以后, 能看清脚下的路, 也能参透很多道理。(46)</p> <p>Our translation: “After dad had a school break, you can travel around to relax.” The best moment of life is probably beyond middle age, by which time people can see clearly their life path and way of living.</p>	<p>The interaction between the parents and child is omitted, along with the protagonist's mixed feeling about the older generation: she cares about her parents and envies their deep understanding of life while feeling helpless about the generation gap.</p>
Paragraph Merging	<p>(All the page numbers are cited from Footnote i)</p> <p>Eva (the wife of the leading male German character Mark) (137)</p> <p>Madonna (Coco's similarly reckless friend met through Tian Tian) (217)</p> <p>Shamir (a female German director who has a homosexual affection towards Coco) (208); a separate section to start the description of their first encounter is demoted into a separate paragraph in the translation.</p> <p>Zhu Sha (Coco's cousin sister) (139)</p>	<p>When listed as a separate paragraph, the activities of the supporting characters are assigned greater autonomy and their stories can be seen to undergo individual developments in parallel with the main storyline of Coco. Whereas merged into other paragraphs in the translation, these characters can at best serve as lifeless props for the leading love-triangle.</p>
Main Paragraph Splitting	<p>Separation of the protagonist from the supporting characters (156, 221)</p> <p>Highlighting the scene with the protagonist (46, 49)</p>	<p>The translation draws attention to the protagonist by separating her part from the scenes of her interacting with the supporting characters, including the description of Coco and her friends' different views toward topics of interest to women.</p>

APPENDIX 4

Explicitation of Erotic Scenes (partial listing)

Example	Notes on text manipulation
<p>Original: 他用蘸着酒的舌头挑逗我的乳头, 然后慢慢向下...酒精凉丝丝的感觉和他温热的舌混在一起, 使人要昏厥 ... (60)</p> <p>Translation: The tip of his rum-soaked tongue teased my nipples, and then moved slowly downwards. He penetrated my protective labia with deadly accuracy, and located my budding clitoris. The cool taste of the rum mingled with his warm tongue, and made me feel faint. ... (71)</p>	<p>This example is a description of one sexual scene during which Coco was making love with Mark, her German lover, for the first time. The protagonist describes in details how Mark seduces her and provokes her sexual desire as well as how she feels physically when making love with Mark. In the original text, the author does not specify how Mark entered her body, but the translator adds a sentence to spell out the process of sexual intercourse. “He penetrated my protective labia with deadly accuracy, and located my budding clitoris.” In this added sentence, the translator adopts many specific words of female reproductive organs, such as “labia” and “clitoris,” which are inappropriate in English conversation and not present at all in the Chinese.</p>
<p>The euphemism “那东西 (that thing)” and “秽物 (filthy stuff)” is replaced with their referent “semen.” (101)</p> <p>The translator adds the clear description of the penis where the protagonist only describes the feeling. (101)</p>	<p>The explicitation boosts the readers’ impression that the protagonist is a thoughtless, sex-driven woman.</p>
<p>When the original text describes the women’s view of sex experience from a historical perspective, and end with “是这样的吗? (Is it so?)” to show the narrator’s bewilderment, the question gets translated into “Isn’t that Perfect?” to indicate a confirmative tone. (169)</p>	<p>The translation depicts a woman longing for sex, rather than someone engaged in self-reflection and self-exploration.</p>

APPENDIX 5

“女孩 (Girl)” Missing in Self-reflection (partial listing)

Omissions	<p>1. Original: 这种优越感时时刻刻刺激着像我这般敏感骄傲的女孩, 我对之既爱又恨。(1) Translation: This hint of smugness affects me: I both love it and hate it. (1) Our translation: This hint of smugness affects me, a girl of sensitivity and pride. I both love it and hate it.</p> <p>2. Original: 这个离奇的故事一下子攫住了我, 我天生就是那种容易被悲剧和阴谋打动的<u>女孩</u>。(3) Translation: His strange story grabbed me immediately, because I'm drawn to tragedy and intrigue. (3) Our translation: His strange story grabbed me immediately, because I'm a girl drawn to tragedy and intrigue.)</p> <p>3. Original: 他用小海豚般善良而挚爱的天性吸住了狂野女孩的心。(3) Translation: He was kind, loving, and trusting as a dolphin. His temperament was what captured my wild heart. (5) Our translation: It is his temperament that captured the heart of a wild girl like me.</p> <p>4. Original: 我和天天的生活充满了太多小小的无法由我们自身来弥合的缝隙, 一定会有外力会趁机介入。而我, 可能真的不是好<u>女孩</u>。(3) Translation: My life with Tian Tian had too many fine cracks that we couldn't mend on our own, so there was always the threat that an external force would make its way inside. (5) Our translation for the omitted last sentence: And I might not be a good girl after all.)</p> <p>5. Original: 女主人公是一个与我一样不想寻求平常生活的<u>女孩</u>, 她有野心有两个男人, 内心从未平静过。(92) Translation: Like me, the heroine did not want to lead an ordinary life. She is ambitious, has two men, and lives on an emotional roller coaster. (92) Our translation: Like me, the heroine is a girl who did not want to lead an ordinary life. She is ambitious, has two men, and lives on an emotional roller coaster.</p>
From “女孩” to “woman” in translation	<p>1. Original: 男孩目眩神迷地坐在栏杆下, 半怀着悲哀, 半怀着感激, 看<u>女孩</u>在月光下跳舞, 她的身体有天鹅绒的光滑, 也有豹子般使人震惊的力量, 每一种模仿猫科动物的蹲伏、跳跃。(15) Translation: The man sat entranced against the railing, sad but grateful, watching the <u>woman</u> dance in the moonlight. Her body was smooth as a swan's yet powerful as a leopard's. (15)</p> <p>2. Original: 而在我自己眼里, 我是个很不怎么样的<u>女孩子</u>, 尽管有朝一日可能会推也推不掉地成为名女人。(18) Translation: But in my own eyes, I'm just a prosaic <u>woman</u>, even if I become famous one of these days. (18)</p> <p>3. Original: 我, 可能就是这样一种骨头发痒的<u>女孩</u>... 想着想着突然觉得很烦, 他居然明目张胆地勾引一个有男友的<u>女孩</u>, 而且他知道她和她的男友如水乳交融不可分离。(38) Translation: And maybe I'm the kind of <u>woman</u> who, deep down, is itching for that to happen. ... I thought and thought and suddenly felt very irritated. He was flagrantly attempting to seduce a <u>woman</u> who already had a boyfriend, knowing she wouldn't leave that boyfriend. (38)</p>

APPENDIX 6

Examples of Contrasting the Competitive Western Character with the Inferior “Other” (partial listing)

Effect	Example	Notes on text manipulation
Weakening the presence of Tian Tian	<p>1. Original: 从这一夜起, 我就发誓永远不会让他知道马克其人其事的存在。一丁点儿都不能, <u>我不想让他死在我手上, 死在我的艳遇上。</u> (77)</p> <p>Translation: From that night on, I swore to myself that I wouldn't reveal anything about Mark or our affair to Tian Tian. Not one bit of it. (77)</p> <p>Our translation for the omitted sentence in italics: <i>I don't want him to die because of me or my love affair.</i></p> <p>2. “Tian Tian just couldn't handle sex.” was arranged in a separate section and “He” in the original text was replaced with “Tian Tian” for explicitation.(5)</p> <p>3. In an erotic scene between Coco and Tian Tian, “I don't think I'd ever kissed anyone so madly. I simply wasn't thinking about what I was doing.” is relocated in the translation from the ending sentence in a paragraph to the first sentence in the following paragraph, right before “I only knew he was the joy I had lost and found once again. He was the fire of my life...” (197)</p> <p>4. When Coco met Tian Tian again after he returned from travel, the sentence “我们拥抱着一起, 吻在嘴唇上, 吻出血。(We hugged tightly and kissed on the lips until they bled)” was omitted from the translation.</p>	<p>1. The omitted sentence shows the protagonist's love and care for Tian Tian and her dilemma in search of spiritual and physical satisfaction. The omission only emphasizes that the protagonist intends to withhold her affair with Mark from Tian Tian.</p> <p>2. The impotence of Tian Tian is the key feature that renders the Chinese culture he represents inferior to the Western culture, and this is accentuated by the translation.</p> <p>3. Sentence relocations like this change the focus of a paragraph. While the original paragraph emphasizes how important Tian Tian is to Coco in fulfilling her life's purpose, the translation highlights that Coco is thoughtlessly and mindlessly driven by physical pleasure.</p> <p>4. By omitting the physical contact between Coco and Tian Tian, the translator emphasizes their sexless relationship by leaving out their physical contact.</p>
	<p>5. Another interesting phenomenon is the paragraph arrangement for the scenes involving both Coco and Tian Tian. Whenever Coco initiates some activity with Tian Tian, the paragraphs depicting Tian Tian are merged into the paragraph starting with Coco in the translation, e.g. p. 75 and p. 205; whereas when Tian Tian becomes the initiator, the part of the paragraph depicting Coco's responses are split into an independent paragraph, e.g., p. 98 and p. 246. Whether this is coincidence or not, no similar manipulation can be found in the paragraphs that depict the interaction between Coco and Mark.</p>	
Strengthening the presence of Mark	<p>1. Original: 我被他的笑激起了好奇心, “很 <u>funny</u> 吗?” 我问。” (29)</p> <p>Translation: His smile aroused my curiosity. “Do you find that <u>droll</u>?” I asked, using the French word. (33)</p> <p>2. Original: 所以那又不太老实的眼睛仿佛成了全身中心, 所有的能量从那儿一泻而(28)</p> <p>Translation: Those eyes of his seemed like the epicenter of his body, and all his energy emanated from there. (30)</p> <p>3. All the sex scenes of Coco and Mark as well as their first phone conversation leading to the first sex are arranged in a separate section (37, 62, 73), but not so in the original text (37, 62, 73).</p>	<p>1. By adopting a different word, the original tone of Coco is totally changed. In the original, when Mark smiled, Coco was curious about why he smiled, and she was a little annoyed by his smile, because she felt his contempt toward Tian Tian. However, by using “droll” and adding the explanation, the translator renders Coco's tone more moderate, even with a little humor. In this way, Coco's hostility toward Mark at their first encounter disappears in the translation and is replaced with flirtation.</p> <p>2. The hostile part of the Western male character is omitted. (the adjective modifier of Mark's eyes; our translation: cunning)</p> <p>3. Since Mark is deemed in the love triangle as the competitive side that stands for the sex Coco desperately desires, the sex scenes are given the utmost spotlight in the translation.</p>