

## Displacing African-American Culture in Taiwan: The Translator's Ethnic Awareness and Positions

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### Abstract

As an intermediary between cultures, a translator plays an essential role in the re-presentation of other cultures. The strategies adopted by the translator can at times highlight either the source or target culture by signaling differences between the two. At the same time, her/his translation may reveal her/his viewpoint or ideologies toward the culture. The novel *The Color Purple*, published in 1982, won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for Fiction and attracted considerable attention all over the world. The study investigates how African-American culture and African American English vernacular in the novel were represented by three translators in Taiwan paying special attention to the peculiarities of each translator's awareness of African American culture.

**Keywords:** *The color purple; African-American culture; African American English vernacular; Taiwan translations; ethnic awareness*

The novel *The Color Purple* is a historical novel, but its relationship to history cannot be established clearly.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly true for the period, in which the novel is set, from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s, and the setting, in which it is located, a Southern community in the United States. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, African-Americans accounted for one-third of the population in the South.<sup>2</sup> Most African-Americans lived a poor life and were treated poorly by Caucasians. Approximately 90% of African-Americans in the United States lived in the South, where they were denied most of the rights they had expected to enjoy after slavery was abolished in 1865. Nonetheless, Southern African-Americans had learned how to manage in a system based on unwritten rules after years of living with Caucasians. Similar to Alphoso, the protagonist Celie's stepfather, who knew how to conduct business successfully by sharing his profits with Caucasians, young African-Americans learned from their parents, from observation, or from experience, to survive in the community. In contrast to Alphoso's cooperation with Caucasians, Sophia, Celie's daughter-in-law, refused to accede to her racist oppressors by refusing the white mayor's wife's 'patronizing' offer of a job as a domestic helper. She responds to the mayor's scolding slap of her face with her own powerful punch. Her resistance was regarded as a serious threat to the social order,<sup>3</sup> and therefore, she was required to face the legal system,

<sup>1</sup> Maria Lauret, *Alice Walker* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 84.

<sup>2</sup> Joyce Mose and George Wilson, *Literature and Its Times Vol.5* (New York: Gale, 1997), 320.

<sup>3</sup> Wu-nan Zhong, "Purple Redeemed in *The Color Purple*" (MA Thesis, Chinese Culture University, 2004).

which overpowered her and forced her into submission.

The protagonist Celie's sister Nettie, escaped from her stepfather and traveled to Africa to preach with a missionary couple, witnessed the richness of African-American culture when she arrived in New York City during the period of the Harlem Renaissance<sup>4</sup>. In her later letters she expanded on the background story in Africa, thus calling her readers' attention to the issue of European colonialism.

When Caucasians occupied the village of Olingka under the guise of road construction, the villagers' vulnerability and lack of arms suggested a sharp contrast between peace-loving Africans and violent Caucasians. The later formation of the mbeles group indicated an emerging Pan-Africanism in Africa, and a nascent African-American identity. The practice of female initiation in the group is elevated as a symbol of the fight against white invasion.<sup>5</sup> Through Nettie's journalistic reports the mbele group, which consists of men and women from dozens of African tribes under threat of colonization; actively gather themselves up to resist Caucasians. In addition to resistance, the genital mutilation and scarring of female villagers was regarded by the group members as the only traditional method of retaining their tribal heritage that the colonizers could not eliminate.

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When interacting with cultures, translators, as intermediaries between two cultures, have essential roles in the representation of other cultures. Ideologies organize the identity, actions, aims, norms, values, and resources within a specific group of people who share fundamental beliefs. It is their shared social beliefs that enable discourse, communication, and mutual understanding, as group members presume on shared knowledge.<sup>6</sup> Applying this notion of ideologies proposed by van Dijk to translation studies suggests that translators' use of language is partially based on the shared beliefs and knowledge acquired from the prevailing ideologies of a social group, and consequently, controls their discourse behavior. Each translated version partially offers an important site of study of a translator's potential ideological considerations, particularly at the language level. Through examination of these items, traces of ideological considerations preserved, added, or omitted at various points, may be identified.

The greatly domesticated translation of *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* indicates that the translator, Fitzgerald, adapted his translation to the receiving culture<sup>7</sup> at the expense of Persian culture, and added British values by using a 'hijacking' strategy.<sup>8</sup> According

<sup>4</sup> The Harlem Renaissance, also known as the African-American Literary Renaissance and the New Negro Movement, refers to the developing African-American cultural and intellectual life during the 1920s and 1930s. Starting from the African-American neighborhood in Harlem, the movement had an impact on urban centers throughout the United States. In the movement, many African-American artists and intellectuals refused to imitate the European and Caucasian American styles and instead celebrated African-American dignity and creativity (Carroll, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Colin Mackerras, "China's Minority Cultures: Identities and Integration Since 1912" (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, "Ideology and Discourse Analysis," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11/2 (2006): 115-140.

<sup>7</sup> Adnan K. Abdulla, "Aspects of ideology in Translating Literature," *Babel* 45/1 (1999): 1-16.

<sup>8</sup> Luise V. Flotow, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997), 78.

to Abdulla,<sup>9</sup> the translator's prioritizing of domestic anticipation of foreign cultures prompted the reshaping of Persian culture in the translation. Similarly, a study by Polezzi<sup>10</sup> reported that three Italian travel writers modified their writing in accordance with domestic ideologies, which also occurred in their English translations, in favor of attractive, exotic, mythical stereotypes that they created for Tibet. Furthermore, over 60 translated works of Australian fiction published in France between the 1950s and the early 2000s were inaccurately presented to be readable, accessible and transparent through a series of normative strategies.<sup>11</sup> The tendency to adapt to the receptor culture is frequently addressed in translation scholarship. However, in certain cases<sup>12</sup> translators bring their audience closer to the source culture, distinguishing the foreign culture from the domestic one. Venuti<sup>13</sup> regards Megan Backus' English version of Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen* as a successful translation project mainly in as much as "deviates [itself] from domestic norms to signal the foreignness of the foreign text."

We have provided examples of misrepresentation of original cultures using different approaches. From these examples we can perhaps infer the ideological concerns influencing translators; nonetheless, we believe that other variables exist since other aspects, apart from ideology, may have influenced the translators in the course of their activity. In the following section we discuss how translators handle language varieties.

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A language variety is a form of a language used by the speakers of that language, which shares basic linguistic units, such as lexicon, phonology, syntax, and morphology, or the speech used in particular situations. Four types of language varieties have been identified: standard language, sociolects, regional speech varieties (regional dialects), and functional speech varieties (or registers). African American English vernacular is, therefore, categorized as a regional dialect, used by a group as a unique linguistic mark of ethnic identity in the community.

Translating language varieties often challenges translators; numerous studies have shown that the challenge lies in achieving equivalence between two language systems. Numerous commentators claim that it is often difficult to replace non-standard language with an exact equivalent because of differences in social, ethnic, and geographic divisions between the two.<sup>14</sup> This is because the replaced variety often conveys more

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<sup>9</sup> Please refer to Footnote 7.

<sup>10</sup> Loredana Polezzi, "Rewriting Tibet: Italian Travelers in English Translation," *The Translator* 4/2 (1998): 321-342.

<sup>11</sup> Helen Frank, "Discovering Australia through Fiction: French Translators as Adventurers," *Meta* 51/3 (2006): 482-503.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Judith Inggs, "From Harry to Garri: Strategies for the Transfer of Culture and Ideology in Russian Translations of Two English Fantasy stories," *Meta* 48/1 (2003): 285-297.

<sup>13</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998), 87.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Maria T. Sánchez, "Translation as a(n) (Im)possible Task: Dialect in Literature," *Babel* 45/4 (1999): 301-310; Clifford E Landers, *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), 117; Simo K. Määttä, "Dialect and Point of View: The ideology of Translation in *The Sound and the Fury* in French," *Target* 16/2 (2004): 319-339; Valentina Stog, "Reflections on the Problem of Dialect's Translation," *Lecturi Filologice* 3(2006): 81-85; Kathryn Woodham, "From Congolese fisherman to British Butler: Francophone African Voices in English Translation," in *Translating Voices, Translating Regions*, ed. Nigel Armstrong and Federico M. Federici. (UK: St. Jerome Press, 2006),

than a single meaning and is laden with connotations differing from those of the source variety of the wider and individual speaker and audience in the target culture. Another possible difficulty is that the target language communities may have difficulties in reading or accepting written variants.<sup>15</sup> Hence, the use of a target variant often results in a loss of the original meaning and connotations and is deemed unsatisfactory, or may generate criticism in the target society. For this reason, Leighton<sup>16</sup> and Berman<sup>17</sup> proposed that failure must be the inevitable result of any attempt to convey colloquial speech in its entirety.

Lacking workable solutions in language varieties in translation, certain translators choose to use the standard target language because it is the easiest amongst the available options.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the use of standard language in the target text can be favored and readily accepted<sup>19</sup> for the convenience of transferring information, and fulfilling commercial concerns. Sánchez<sup>20</sup> has shown that the translator can add an explanatory note to inform the audience that language variety has been used in the original text. Furthermore, Leppihalme<sup>21</sup> notes that standardization is not necessarily negative because the audience may be more interested in the story and other aspects of the text than the linguistic identity the author is attempting to stress. Although the richness of regional variety is hidden by this process, she argues that only if the circumstances permit and it is worthwhile, should a translator use a language variety.

Standardization, however, echoes Toury's<sup>22</sup> argument, "In translation, textual relations obtained in the original are often modified, sometimes to the point of being totally ignored, in favor of habitual options offered by a target repertoire." In addition, it risks undervaluing important and distinctive linguistic markers, which are applied by the source character or ethnic group, and the role the variant has in the text. In addition, it cautions that users in the standard language have positions of power within the wider society.<sup>23</sup> Certain translation scholars, therefore, have expressed views opposing standardizing source varieties in translations.<sup>24</sup> For example, Bonaffini<sup>25</sup> claimed that translators should attempt to represent the source variety by capturing its eccentricity, its function, and its deviation from the standard. Määttä<sup>26</sup> supports distinguishing dialects and standard languages in translation, and argues strongly for the necessity of signaling in translations of varieties, dialects, and sociolects. In her study, she noted that standardization reduced the dialectal representations of the black characters in a translation of Faulkner's use of the vernacular in French, causing the diminishment and

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401-418; Antoine Berman, "Translation and the Trial of the Foreign," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, trans and ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 1985/2000), 285-297.

<sup>15</sup> Määttä, "Dialect and Point of View," 319-339.

<sup>16</sup> Lauren G. Leighton, *Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 207.

<sup>17</sup> Berman, "Translation and the Trial of the Foreign," 285-297.

<sup>18</sup> Sánchez, "Translation as a(n) (Im)possible Task," 301-310.

<sup>19</sup> Please refer to Footnote 18.

<sup>20</sup> Please refer to Footnote 18.

<sup>21</sup> Ritva Leppihalme, "The Two Faces of Standardization: On the Translation of Regionalisms in Literary Dialogue," *The Translator* 6/2 (2000): 247-269.

<sup>22</sup> Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1995), 268.

<sup>23</sup> Please refer to Footnote 18.

<sup>24</sup> Luigi Bonaffini, "Translating Dialect Literature," *World Literature Today* 51/2 (1997): 279-288; Määttä, "Dialect and point of view," 319-339.

<sup>25</sup> Bonaffini, "Translating Dialect Literature," 279-288.

<sup>26</sup> Määttä, "Dialect and Point of View," 319-339.

neutralization of the racial ideology and intensity in the characters' speech.

When choosing the methods of translating language varieties, some translation scholars suggest that the focus should be placed on the functions of language variety in literary translations.<sup>27</sup> In their opinion, the replacement is not required to be an exactly similar variety. Newmark<sup>28</sup> advised that the translator might indicate the social class differences and local cultural features of the source variety instead of seeking the optimal corresponding variant for translation. Sánchez<sup>29</sup> proposed that translators should, at minimum, search for a variety in the target language system whose connotation is similar to the source variety, or use standard language with colloquial elements. Similarly, Woodham<sup>30</sup> suggested that translators should search for methods to create similar effects in the source that is not standard in translation, or categorize the effects that they think are significant.

This discussion on representing language varieties does not appear to provide clear, unambiguous solutions. Lane-Mercier<sup>31</sup> provided a new perspective on the transfer of non-standard language by shifting the focus to the role of the translators and their performance in translation. She stated that the translators' ethical positioning, that is their standpoint toward ethical issues, the responsibility and engagement in the source text, and the decisions they form in translations may all be determining while handling the language variety. This argument returns to the role translators play in translation, rather than the approaches or strategies they should apply, which is the focus of this study.

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This section will now proceed to the text analysis of the three Chinese versions of the novel *The Color Purple* published in Taiwan concerning race relations between Caucasian and African-American people in both America and Africa. Three translators, two females whose surname are Zhang and Shih, and one male surnamed Lan, are all from Taiwan. The examples selected in this chapter will enable us to explore each translator's attitudes to and understanding of the racial issues from the versions they created. Some possible influences on their decisions are also suggested. In addition, these examples bring together three different viewpoints concerning racial issues as experienced in the African-American community. Through examining these examples we shall gather information about each translator's level of understanding and awareness, and what may have been their ideological stance regarding racial issues.

The first example is narrated by the protagonist Celie, who say that she hopes her sister Nettie will succeed in her studies rather than wasting her talents: “[i]t nearly kill me to think she might marry somebody like Mr—or wind up in some Caucasian lady

<sup>27</sup> For example, Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *The Translator as Communicator* (London: Routledge, 1997), 97-109; Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall International, 1987), 195; Kathryn Woodham, “From Congolese Fisherman to British Butler: Francophone African Voices in English Translation,” in *Translating Voices, Translating Regions*, ed. Nigel Armstrong and Federico M. Federici. (UK: St. Jerome Press, 2006), 401-418.

<sup>28</sup> Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*, 195.

<sup>29</sup> Please refer to Footnote 18.

<sup>30</sup> Woodham, “From Congolese Fisherman to British Butler,” 401-418.

<sup>31</sup> Gillian Lane-Mercier “Translating the Untranslatable: The translator's Aesthetic, Ideological and Political Responsibility,” *Target* 9/1(1997): 43-68.

kitchen.”<sup>32</sup> Celie’s anxieties are about the subordination of African-American women, not merely to men but to Caucasian women, working as their cooks or maids.

(1a)一想到她也許會嫁給xx先生這種人，或者在白人的廚房裡燒飯，我就好難過。<sup>33</sup>

(On thinking she might marry somebody such as Mr—or cook in Caucasian people’s kitchen, I feel very sad.)

(1b)想到她也許會嫁像xx先生這樣的人或去白人家做廚婦便令我痛心。<sup>34</sup>

(Thinking she might marry someone like Mr—or go to Caucasian people’s house to be a cook I feel pain in my heart)

(1c)我想到她差點就嫁給「先生」這種人或者這輩子就在白人家幫傭度過，我心裡就發毛。<sup>35</sup>

(I think she almost marries someone like “Mr.” or ends up being a maid in Caucasian people’s house all her life, it makes my hair stand on end)

In this example, we investigate the term used in Celie’s statement that something ‘kill[s] me’ when thinking of her sister as a sad wife or a cook for Caucasian people. All three target versions seem to have toned down the strong phrase used by Celie. Zhang and Shih translate the term as “難過” (nanguo), and “痛心” (tongxin), both meaning sadness or pain in the heart. Lan gives a different version. He has translated the term as “發毛” (famao), indicating ‘my hair stands on end.’ Here there is a mutative shift in Lan’s version, as the source and target term bear no relationship to one another. While Zhang and Shih thought of this term as meaning sad, pitiful, or distressing emotions, Lan came up with a term indicating fright and fear. In this way Lan, here, has pointed out that it could be dreadful for African-American females to work under Caucasian control, an important signal for target readers who would perhaps have little awareness of racial conflict existing between African-American and Caucasian. In this regard Lan, more than the other two translators, may have led his readers to a different picture of racial issues in the rest of the novel; his version seems to have a subtext suggesting that something horrific could happen in such oppressive circumstances. However, we shall require more examples to support this suggestion.

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Refusing the invitation of the Caucasian couple to be their maid, the protagonist Celie’s daughter-in-law, Sophia dares to fight back verbally and physically. In response she is violently attacked, brutalized, subdued and put in jail with cuts and bruises all over her body. In a conversation with Celie she shows her anger against the Caucasians, but at the same time she points out the low status that African-Americans have in comparison to Caucasians in that “[n]othing less than sliding on your belly with your tongue on their boots can even git they attention<sup>36</sup>.”

(2a)除非你趴下來用舌頭舔他們的靴子，否則他們根本不會注意。<sup>37</sup>

(Unless you lie down and lick their boots with your tongue, they never pay attention)

<sup>32</sup> Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (UK: Phoenix, 1982), 18.

<sup>33</sup> Hui-chien Zhang, trans., *The Color Purple* (Taiwan: Crown Publishing, 1986), 31.

<sup>34</sup> Ji-ching Shih, trans., *The Color Purple* (Taiwan: Da Di Publishing, 1986), 23.

<sup>35</sup> Zhu-wei Lan, trans., *The Color Purple* (Taiwan: Cosmic Light Publishing, 1986), 20.

<sup>36</sup> A. Walker, *The Color Purple*, 84.

<sup>37</sup> Zhang, *The Color Purple*, 107.

(2b) 只要是你的舌頭是壓在他們的靴子下面，你休想得到注意。<sup>38</sup>

(As long as your tongue is stepped under their boots, don't even think they will notice you.)

(2c) 你只有趴在地上，用舌頭舔他們的靴子才能吸引他們的注意。<sup>39</sup>

(Only you lie on the ground, licking their boots with your tongue can you get their attention.)

The three versions again read somewhat differently, but one version is distinct from the others. Zhang and Lan have followed the source in a fairly literal way, indicating that Caucasians would never pay any attention to African-Americans unless the African-Americans were 'to lie on the ground and lick their boots'. Target readers may easily catch the idiomatic meaning in these two versions and infer African-Americans' servility to Caucasians. However, Shih's version reads rather differently, especially the underlined part which she has translated as, "只要是你的舌頭是壓在他們的靴子下面" (zhiyaoshi nide zhetou shi yazai tamende xuezi xiamian), meaning, "[a]s long as your tongue is stepped under their boots." While Zhang and Lan seem to imply that African-Americans could only get attention if they were willing to be servile or humiliate themselves before Caucasian people, the subtext of Shih's version is that Caucasians will look down on African-Americans forever since the latter will always be subjugated and under their control. In this regard, Shih's version exacerbates the original image in the story to the extent that the status of African-American people is thus even lower in her version. In addition, her version carries the implication of a call to protest: as long as 'your tongue is under their boots', the African-Americans should revolt. However, the image of the original 'sliding on your belly' is lost in her version, which does to some extent weaken the image of African-Americans' subordination as seen in the original.

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In the story Walker also indicates Caucasian dominance by showing the protagonist Celie's stepfather, Alphoso, collaborating with the Caucasians. Alphoso's account not merely shows his adeptness at dealing with Caucasian people by means of bribery, but also gives more evidence of the inferior status of African-American people in that society.<sup>40</sup> Alphoso is actually imitating the behavior and customs of Caucasians in order to survive in the Caucasian-dominated society, as he says, "[t]ake me, he say, I know how they is. The key to all of 'em is money. The trouble with our people is as soon as they got out of slavery they didn't want to give the Caucasian man nothing else. But the fact is, you got to give 'em something. Either your money, your land, your woman or your ass. So what I did was just right off offer to give 'em money. Before I plant a seed, I made sure this one and that one knowed one seed out of three was planted for him. Before I ground a grain of wheat/, the same thing. And when I opened up your daddy's old store in town, I bought me my own Caucasian boy to run it. And what make it so good, he say, I bought him with Caucasian folk's money."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Shih, *The Color Purple*, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Lan, *The Color Purple*, 103.

<sup>40</sup> Melissa Walker, "Shifting Boundaries: Race relations in the Rural Jim Crow South," in *African American Life in the Rural South 1900-1950*, ed. R. D. Hurt, (London: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 81-97.

<sup>41</sup> A. Walker, *The Color Purple*, 164-5.

(3a) 就拿我來說，他說，我了解他們。跟他們往來的唯一途徑是金錢。我們黑人的唯一毛病是一脫離奴隸身份，就再也不想跟白人有任何關係。但是實際上，你必須給他們一點東西。不是你的錢、土地、女人，就是你自己。所以我把錢給他們是最恰當的。我在播下一顆種子前，一定會讓他們知道這粒種子的三分之一是為他們種的。我在磨麥子之前也是這樣。當我重開你爸爸在鎮上的老店時，收買了一個白種孩子去經營。結果非常好，我讓他賺到了白人的錢，他說。<sup>42</sup>

(Taking me as an example, he says, I understand them. The only way to deal with them is money. The only problem of our African-American people is once we get out of the slave status, we never want to have anything to do with Caucasian people. But in fact, you have to give them something. Either your money, land, woman, or yourself. So that I give money to them is the most appropriate. Before I plant a seed I must let them know one third of the seed is sowed for them. I do so before grinding the wheat. When I reopened your father's old store in town, I bought a Caucasian child to operate the store. The result is very good, I let him earn Caucasian people's money, he says.)

(3b) 我知道他們是怎樣的人，他說他們只重視錢。我們的人問題出在他們一旦不做奴隸後，什麼都不願給白人。但你得給他們一點東西。不是錢就是地，女人或你的屁股。所以我給他們錢。... 當我重新開張你父親在城裡的店時，我雇了一個白人男孩來經營，我用白人的錢來買他，他說。<sup>43</sup>

(I know what kind of people they are. He says they only take money seriously. The problem of our people is that once they stop being slaves they don't give anything to Caucasian people. But you have to give them some things. Either money or land, women, or your bottom. So I give them money. [...]. When I reopened your father's store in town, I hired a Caucasian boy to operate. I use Caucasian people's money to buy him, he says.)

(3c) 我太了解白人了。只要肯花錢，白人也一樣可以擺得平的。黑人的毛病就是一旦不作奴隸了，他們就什麼東西也不肯給白人了。但是事實上，妳就是得給他們一些東西，不管是錢、土地或者女人。而我就是肯花錢，我要種一顆種子之前，我一定會找兩個白人，告訴他們這顆種子的收成，將來要分三等分，種下去大家都有好處嘛，而且不管種什麼都一樣。後來，我又在鎮上重開了妳爸爸的店，但是我花錢買了一個白人小孩來管那個店，所以現在生意好得很呢，他說。而且，我是用白人的錢買下他的。<sup>44</sup>

(I understand Caucasian people very much. As long as you are willing to spend money, Caucasian people can also be easily dealt with. The problem of African-American people is that once they stop being slaves, they don't give anything to Caucasian people. But in fact, you have to give them some things, either money, land or women. And I am willing to spend money, before I plant a seed, I must find two Caucasian people, telling them the crops will be divided into three parts in the future. Everyone gets benefits by planting the seed, right? And no matter what is to be planted it's the same case. Later, I reopened your father's store in town, but I spent money buying a Caucasian child to operate that store, so now the business is very good, he says. And, I use Caucasian people's money buy him.)

Of the three versions Shih's version is much shorter than the others. Shih has deleted the second underlined sentence that describes how Alphoso bribes Caucasians with money or crops. Perhaps Shih might have made a translation error, missing a sentence here; if so it would appear to be the second time she has made such an error, an earlier instance being noted in the example concerning Albert's physical violence. Her version weakens the underlying point about the bribery by Alphoso, and thus dilutes the image of racial inequality. Meanwhile, her decision has transgressed her stated principle of following the original very closely during the translation process. Now we shall move on to consider the other versions, to see if there are any omissions there.

<sup>42</sup> Zhang, *The Color Purple*, 198.

<sup>43</sup> Shih, *The Color Purple*, 179.

<sup>44</sup> Lan, *The Color Purple*, 204.

The underlined sentence deleted by Shih has not merely been closely translated in Lan's version, but is preceded by a substituted phrase. Lan here makes a mutative shift in semantics to insert an item, specifying how Alphoso persuades the Caucasians to allow him to continue in business. Corresponding to the source text, "[b]efore I ground a grain of wheat, the same thing," his version reads, "種下去大家都有好處嘛, 而且不管種什麼都一樣" (zhongxiaqu dajia douyou haochuma, erqie buguan zhongshemo douyiyang), meaning "[e]veryone gets benefits by planting the seed, right? And no matter what to be planted is the same case.' Comparing his with Zhang's version '我在磨麥子之前也是這樣' (wo zai momaizi zhiqian yeshi zheyang), meaning "I do so before grinding the wheat," which more closely follows the original, Lan's version gives the reader more explanation of the context. More importantly his version reads colloquially, reflecting the original, conveying the idea that Alphoso is accustomed to using bribery when dealing with Caucasians. Of the three, it seems that Lan's version may have been an attempt to engage the readers with Alphoso's principles for survival in a segregated society. In this way Lan's awareness of racial issues is revealed, as he has also expanded the semantics of the other underlined sentence in the beginning of the narration. The original sentence, "[t]he key to all of 'em is money," means that African-Americans can use money to deal with the Caucasians, according to Alphoso. Lan's version, "只要肯花錢, 白人也一樣可以擺得平的" (zhiyao kenhuaqian bairen ye yiyang keyi baidepingde), means "[a]s long as you are willing spend money, Caucasian people can also be easily dealt with," and this reads differently to the other two which are relatively literal versions. Here Lan has used explicitation, especially for the second phrase in his version where he clearly points out that "Caucasian people" may be a problem for African-Americans in business. Lan's version thus reinforces the notion of racial confrontation for his readers.

Apart from the two sentences we have also selected two lexical terms from this passage, "our people" and "bought," for analysis. The first term "our people" is translated by Zhang and Shih as "我們黑人" (women heiren), and "我們的人" (womende ren), meaning "our African-American people" and "our people" respectively. Zhang's version has been shifted semantically by the use of explicitation, while Shih's literally re-presents the original. Here Lan's version "黑人" (heiren), meaning "African-American people" has somewhat different implications. By removing the sense of "we" Lan has mitigated Alphoso's self-identification as a African-American, to an extent detaching him from other African-Americans and reinforcing Alphoso's mimicry of the Caucasians.

The second term to be discussed is "bought" in Alphoso's narration, where he describes how he has made use of a Caucasian boy to run the business for him in order not to be targeted by Caucasian people. Zhang and Lan translated the term as "收買" (shoumai) and "花錢買" (huaqianmai), in their versions meaning "to buy" and "to spend money buying [the boy]," describing the way in which Alphoso has actually turned the tables on the Caucasian people. However, Shih's choice of the term "雇" (gu), meaning "hire," neutralizes that idea in her version.

\* \* \*

While staying in England for a few days, the protagonist Celie's sister, Nettie and her fellow missionaries visit a huge collection of ethnic treasures gathered by the English from other countries. In her letters to Celie she particularly mentions those from Africa. In this passage Nettie's narrative describes her first experience of imperialism; her disbelief foreshadows the forceful exploitation of the African village Olinka by Caucasian colonists in the following, "From Africa they have *thousands* of vases, jars, masks, bowls, baskets, statues - and they are all so beautiful it is hard to imagine that the people who made them don't still exist. And yet the English assure us they do not. 'Hard times' is a phrase the English love to use, when speaking of Africa. And it is easy to forget that Africa's 'hard times' were made harder by them."<sup>45</sup>

(4a)還有來自非洲的瓶瓶罐罐、面具、碗、籃子、雕像—全都美麗絕倫，令人不敢相信這些製造者已經不在人世。可是英國人像<sup>46</sup>我們保證他們已經死亡，英國人很喜歡在提到非洲時用『艱苦時期』這個字眼。他們忘了非洲的艱苦時期因為他們而更加重一層。<sup>47</sup>

(And bottles and jars, masks, bowls, baskets, statues from Africa—all are very beautiful and glorious, making people hard to believe the producers are dead. But the English people assure they already died like [sic] us, the English people like to use 'hard times' when it comes to Africa. They forget Africa's hard times become worse because of them.)

(4b)他們從非洲帶來許多的花瓶、罐子、面具、碗、籃子、雕像，是這麼的美麗，讓人很難想像做這些東西的人都不在了。不過英國人告訴我們他們都不在了。「苦難的時代」是英國人談到非洲時愛用的句子，很容易讓人忘記非洲的苦難時代是被他們搞得更苦難。<sup>48</sup>

(They have brought many vases, bottles, masks, bowls, baskets, statues, and they are so beautiful, making people hard to imagine people producing these things no longer exist. But the English people tell us they are all gone. 'Hard times' is a phrase favored by the English people when they talk about Africa, and it is easy for people to forget Africa's hard time was made worse by them.)

(4c)他們從非洲帶回來了上千個瓶子、罐子、面具、碗、籃子和木偶，都漂亮得不得了，真難想像會做出這麼美麗的器物的人，竟然已經絕種了。但是英國人向我們保證，不是他們造成這個結果的！「艱苦歲月」一詞是英國人提到非洲時最愛用的，但是他們也很容易就忘記非洲的「艱苦歲月」其實是他們造成的。<sup>49</sup>

(They have brought back thousands of bottles, jars, masks, bowls, baskets and wooden puppies from Africa, and they are all very beautiful, making people hard to imagine people making these things were extinct. But the English people assured us that it was not them to make the result! 'Hard times' is the phrase favoured by the English people when mentioning Africa, but it is very easy for them to forget Africa's 'hard times' are actually made by them.)

In this case, we choose the two underlined sentences for investigation. The analysis of these again supports our assumption that Lan may have been especially sensitive regarding racial issues and ethnic awareness. The first sentence in the original text describes how Nettie admires some beautiful handicrafts made in Africa, but she

<sup>45</sup> Walker, *The Color Purple*, 124; italics in original.

<sup>46</sup> Here the translator has misused a character '像'. The correct one should be the homonym '向,' meaning 'toward.'

<sup>47</sup> Zhang, *The Color Purple*, 157.

<sup>48</sup> Shih, *The Color Purple*, 139.

<sup>49</sup> Lan, *The Color Purple*, 155.

learns that the people who produced them no longer exist. Nettie gets an interesting response from the museum staff, '[a]nd yet the English assure us they do not.' Among the three versions, Lan's again seems to demonstrate much more ethnic awareness. Both Zhang and Shih have followed the original closely, showing the English efforts to stress that those who made the handicrafts are now dead. Lan offers a different version, “但是英國人向我們保證，不是他們造成這個結果的！” (danshi yingguoren xiangwomen baozheng bushi tamen zaocheng zhege jieguode!), meaning “[b]ut the English people assured us that it was not them making the result!” Compared with the other versions, Lan's version makes more sense in Chinese, mainly because he has actually explicitated the original semantics. His version implies that the English are trying to shirk off their responsibility for looting these treasures from Africa. Lan's version also stresses the responsibility the English should take by means of supplementation; his attempt to explain the undertones in the original for the reader again suggests a different ideological stance from those of the other translators.

The other underlined sentence for analysis is the last one in Nettie's narrative, where she indicates that the English are fond of using the phrase 'hard times' to describe circumstances in Africa, “[a]nd it is easy to forget that Africa's 'hard times' were made harder by them.” In contrast to Zhang's and Shih's literal versions, Lan's translation again reflects his view of the world. While the original does not point out the root cause of these 'hard times' in Africa, Lan's version, “但是他們也很容易就忘記非洲的「艱苦歲月」其實是他們造成的” (danshi tamen ye henrongyi jiuwongji feizhoude 「jianku sui Yue」 qishi shitamen zaochengde), meaning “but it is very easy for them to forget Africa's 'hard times' were actually made by them,” states clearly that the English were the source of the Africans' misery.

\* \* \*

From this example on, racial issues are discussed in the context of the Olinkan village in Africa as described in Nettie's letters, recording her life as a missionary with this ethnic group. The Olinka treat Caucasians in a friendly way. However, it turns out that the Caucasian people actually intend to build a road and to demolish all the Olinkan houses on the way. Sadly, the Olinka are powerless against Caucasian men's guns and can only wait for the fate that has been determined for them: “Well, the morning after the road was 'finished' as far as the Olinka were concerned (after all, it had reached their village), what should we discover but that the roadbuilders were back at work. [...] It was pitiful, Celie. The people felt so betrayed! They stood by helplessly—they really don't know how to fight, and rarely think of it since the old days of tribal wars—as their crops and then their very homes were destroyed.”<sup>50</sup>

(5a)在歐林卡人認為道路『完工』的那天早晨(畢竟，它已經鋪到他們的村莊)，他們卻發現鋪路工人又開始工作了。[...] 情況好慘。人們都覺得被出賣了！他們無可奈何的站在一旁——他們其實並不懂得反抗，自從早年的部落之戰後，便很少想到打仗的事——眼見他們的農作和家園被毀。<sup>51</sup>  
(On that morning when the Olinka thought the road 'was completed,' after all, it had reached to their

<sup>50</sup> A. Walker, *The Color Purple*, 152-3.

<sup>51</sup> Zhang, *The Color Purple*, 185-6.

village), they found the roadworkers started working again. [...] It is pitiful. People thought they were betrayed! They could do nothing but stood aside—they actually did not know how to fight back. Since the early tribal wars they had seldom thought about fighting—they watched their crops and home destroyed.)

(5b)在路完成的那個早上，我們發現築路工人又回去工作了[...]。上面只是他們要再鋪三十哩！而這條路的路線是貫穿村子裏。[...] 這些人覺得被騙了，他們無助地站在那兒，他們不知道如何打仗，自從古老的部落之戰，一如他們的收成和他們的家一樣被摧毀後，他們很少想到它。<sup>52</sup>

(On the morning when the road was completed, we found roadworkers going back to work. [...]) Their boss wanted them to pave thirty miles more! And the road ran through the village. [...] These people thought they were cheated. They stood there helplessly. They didn't know how to fight, since old tribal wars which destroyed their crops and homes in the same way, and they seldom thought of it.)

(5c)這條馬路「完工」後的第二天（歐林卡人對這條路特別關心，因為畢竟這條馬路已經通到村子邊了），我們發現這批工人又回去工作了。[...] 真可憐喲，塞莉！他們覺得被出賣了，他們無助地站在那兒—自從許久以前的種族戰爭之後，他們已經很少想過打仗的事，他們真的不知道該如何做戰—他們只有無助地站在那兒，眼睜睜地看著他們的農作和房屋被人摧毀。<sup>53</sup>

(On the day after the road 'was constructed,' (the Olinka especially cared about this road because this road went through the side of the village after all.), we found these roadworkers went back to work. [...]) It is a great pity, Celie! They thought they were betrayed. They helplessly stood there—since tribal wars long time ago, they have seldom thought about fighting, and they really don't know how to fight—they just stood there helplessly watching their crops and houses being destroyed.)

For this example we have two sentences to investigate, in particular the versions by Shih and Lan. The first appears in brackets in the original narration by Nettie, giving Celie some background information concerning the progress of the road: “(after all, it had reached their village).” Zhang has made no semantic shift from the original, faithfully translating the note in brackets as “（畢竟，它已經鋪到他們的村莊）” (bijing, tayijing pudaο tamende cunzhong), meaning “(after all, it had reached to their village).” Shih has again deleted the explanatory note, once more showing her tendency to reduce parts she believes irrelevant or unnecessary. Lan has again used supplementation to enhance the information given in the brackets, adding a phrase at the beginning of the note “歐林卡人對這條路特別關心” (olinkaren dui zhetiaolu tebie guanxin), meaning “[t]he Olinka especially cared about this road.” His supplement provides additional background information for the reader, and is based on his understanding of the Olinka.

The second item for analysis is a sentence that describes the Olinka's predicament, which reads, “[t]hey stood by helplessly.” Zhang and Shih have presented this by following the original; Lan has again taken a specification approach to emphasize the Olinka's vulnerability by repeating the sentence in his version which is underlined. This repetition reinforces the idea that the Olinka are helpless and vulnerable, in contrast to the Caucasian people.

\* \* \*

In order to maintain their cultural property, in the story the group members ask their women to undergo genital mutilation and tattooing. Nettie, who as a missionary is

<sup>52</sup> Shih, *The Color Purple*, 209.

<sup>53</sup> Lan, *The Color Purple*, 188-9.

trying to help the Olinka, has slowly become aware that the village is being oppressed by the Caucasian colonists. The missionaries have been trying to stop the practices of scarring and female initiation in the village. Nevertheless Tashi, a female member of the group, insists on experiencing the practice as a way to show her ethnic identity, saying, “[o]ne of the things we thought we’d helped stop was the scarring or cutting the tribal marks on the faces of young women. It is the way the Olinka can show they still have their own ways, said Olivia, even though the Caucasian man has taken everything else.”<sup>54</sup>

(6a) 我還以為我們已經遏止了年輕婦女在臉上留疤或切割部落標記的習俗。雖然白人奪走了一切，這正顯示出歐林卡人仍然我行我素，奧莉維雅說。<sup>55</sup>

(I thought we had curbed the custom that young women have scars on their faces or cut tribal marks. Although Caucasian people rob us of everything, this exactly shows that the Olinka still stick to their old ways, Olivia said.)

(6b) 這是我們一直想阻止的事，阻止他們再在年輕女人的臉上刺上部落的標幟。這是歐林卡人表示他們還維持他們生活方式的方法，奧莉薇說，即使白人把一切都拿走了。<sup>56</sup>

(This is what we long wanted to stop, stopping those tattooed tribal marks on young women's faces again. This is how the Olinka show they still maintain their way of life, Olivia said, even if Caucasian people take everything away.)

(6c) 原來我們都以為我們已經幫助他們改掉在年輕女人臉上刺青紋面的習慣了。奧莉維亞說：歐林卡人認為白人雖然搶走了他們所有的東西，而刺青紋面正是可以顯示他們特色的唯一作法。<sup>57</sup>

(It turned out that we thought we have helped them give up the habit of tattooing on young women's faces. Olivia said: the Olinka think although Caucasian people have robbed everything of theirs, tattooing is the only way to show their distinctive characteristics.)

In this case, two items have been selected for analysis. The first appears in the narrative: Nettie and her fellow missionaries ‘help stop’ the practice of tattooing, for fear of infections<sup>58</sup>. The original term ‘help stop’ is made up of two verbs with different meanings, but is translated with different nuances in the three versions. Zhang and Shih have translated the term as “遏止” (ezhi), and “阻止” (zuzhi), referring to “curb” and “stop” respectively. Both Zhang and Shih have chosen to present only the term “stop,” omitting the meaning of ‘help.’ Lan, on the other hand, has followed the original to indicate both verbs at the same time as “幫忙他們改掉” (bangmang tamen gaidiao), meaning “help them give up,” which implies that the missionaries are offering suggestions about the practice as friends rather than as superiors. In contrast the two female translators’ versions carry the implication that the missionaries are adopting a superior position in relation to the Olinka, as their practices should be ‘stopped.’ The implied image of the group as inferior is thus re-created in their versions, and this may be seen as confirming the idea that Africans are inferior and powerless and that they need to be taught to be more civilized by the colonists. In this way, the choice by both the female translators could be seen as reinforcing the colonists’ attitudes towards Africans.

<sup>54</sup> A. Walker, *The Color Purple*, 202.

<sup>55</sup> Zhang, *The Color Purple*, 255.

<sup>56</sup> Shih, *The Color Purple*, 233.

<sup>57</sup> Lan, *The Color Purple*, 275.

<sup>58</sup> A. Walker, *The Color Purple*, 216.

Another phrase to be examined is underlined at the end of the passage where Celie's daughter Olivia defends the Olinkan practice as, "[i]t is the way the Olinka can show they still have their own ways." The practice of scarring shows the Olinka maintaining their identity in the face of Western colonization. Here Zhang's version deserves particular attention, giving the sentence as, "歐林卡人仍然我行我素" (olinkaren rengran woxingwosu), meaning, "the Olinka still stick to their old ways." Shih and Lan both follow the original more closely. Zhang may have had to make a very hasty decision, given that the deadline was tight.<sup>59</sup> Yet her version carries a relatively negative connotation in Chinese, suggesting that the Olinkans are to some extent obstinate enough to maintain out-dated practices and that they should have accepted the Caucasians' help, or even followed their guidance.

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We have examined race issues, and chosen examples concerned with the racial conflict between African-Americans and Caucasians in the American South and in Africa. We have selected certain examples for analysis in order to argue the relevance of each of the translators' personal concern with racial issues. The examples selected for analysis were handled by each of the translators through subtle and nuanced techniques which reflect their own philosophy and understanding of relations between race and ethnic awareness. Apart from the three versions of the racial conflict in this section, we have also discussed the translators' approach to African-American English vernacular.

Zhang's position on race is less obvious as in her version there are fewer semantic shifts in the representation of these issues. From the examples discussed in the text analysis, in her version we found that the references to European colonialism have been weakened. However, because she followed the original more faithfully, we do not have sufficient evidence to draw any conclusions on her attitude toward race issues.

Shih's ideas on race were connected with a tendency to delete irrelevant descriptions, as shown in the text analysis. This tendency may indicate a lighter concern with the question of racial confrontation and for that reason she may have rushed through this part of the narrative. If this is true, then Shih subdued<sup>60</sup> the racial conflict in the original narrative. This could be because the translator personally believed that these topics were irrelevant to people's lives in Taiwan, and the places where the racial conflicts occurred were too remote for them to care. Reports on Taiwanese people's perceptions of racial conflict between African-Americans and Caucasians, particularly during the 1980s, are uninformed. The dearth of literature in this area of study may signal its marginality. Hence Shih's version is shorter than that of the other two translators because she may have followed the general perspective towards African-American culture, and omitted detailed descriptions for her audience. As in the findings of Feral,<sup>61</sup> where British "otherness" was moderated by French translators, Shih's version softens the Caucasian supremacy in the original narrative, and distances her audience from the world that the author created.

<sup>59</sup> Personal email correspondence with Zhang, April 2007.

<sup>60</sup> Venuti, *The Scandal of Translation*, 5.

<sup>61</sup> Anne-Lise Feral, "The translator's 'Magic' wand: Harry Potter's journey from English into French," *Meta* 51/3 (2006): 459-481.

Lan's perceptions on race appear to have been in opposition to Shih's. To reinforce the image of racial inequality he created a text that is different from both of the other translators' versions, and from the original. Moreover, his efforts to avoid creating a misleading image of the Olinka under their violent Caucasian colonizers does display his sympathy toward those who were colonized. Compared with the general idea of racial conflict that we may assume most people in Taiwanese society would have held at that time, Lan appears to have had his own perspective. Perhaps his background as an English major and journalist in a news agency, enhanced his awareness of racial conflicts between African-Americans and Caucasians. Hence, Lan appears to have used his understanding of this subject, and did not attempt to limit the narratives for the audience by using the approach that the translator took in the study noted by Inggs (2003). His representation of racial issues in the novel appears to be neither constraining nor foreignizing. This treatment aids understanding of translators' ethical positions,<sup>62</sup> and his performance when engaging with the black culture in the process of translation reveals his awareness of ethnic issues.

All three translators employed the strategy of standardization when translating the African-American vernacular English used in the novel. The use of standard language may be justified because it was the simplest option available to translators<sup>63</sup> particularly since they were all working under time pressures. Yet, since at the time in Taiwan the authoritarian government was eager to promote the use of Mandarin over Taiwanese we can argue that translators were also under the political pressure and, thus, felt compelled to avoid non-standard varieties in the target language. Certainly, in the discussed translations the connotations established in the original through the alternative uses between dialect and standard language of the original is removed<sup>64</sup>. However, the effects may not be entirely negative since, as has been discussed<sup>65</sup>, readers may eventually be challenged to enhance their understanding of cultural narratives in translation through textual aspects beyond the purely linguistic ones.

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<sup>62</sup> Please refer to Footnote 31.

<sup>63</sup> Please refer to Footnote 20.

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## **Înlocuirea culturii africano-americane în Taiwan: conștientizarea etnicului și poziția traducătorului față de acesta**

În calitate de intermediar între culturi, traducătorul joacă un rol esențial în re-prezentarea altor culturi. Strategiile adoptate de traducător pot uneori să pună în evidență fie cultura sursă, fie cultura țintă prin semnalarea diferențelor dintre cele două. În același timp, traducerea poate revela punctul de vedere al traducătorului sau ideologiile acestuia în legătură cu respectiva cultură. Romanul *Culoarea purpurie*, publicat în 1982, a câștigat Premiul Pulitzer și Premiul American de Carte de Ficțiune și a atras atenția în mod considerabil în întreaga lume. Studiul investighează cum sunt reprezentate cultura africano-americană și argoul american african de către trei traducători din Taiwan; o atenție specială este acordată particularităților prin care traducătorii conștientizează cultura africano-americană.