

A Study on the English Translation of the Culture-loaded Words in *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* from the Perspective of Cultural Self-confidence

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Xiaoli Zhai¹, Qiyao Hu²

^{1,2}Hunan University of Science and Engineering, Yongzhou City, Hunan Province, China; ¹PhD candidate, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Batangas City, Philippines;
zxlhnda@163.com¹, email: 503213506@qq.com²

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Abstract – *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* is one of Mo Yan's representative works. He has won a Nobel Prize in Literature and has attracted wide attention at home and abroad. The novel is full of ecological, material, social, religious, linguistic and other kinds of culture-loaded words, which show the cultural characteristics of China and cause difficulties in translation. The translator, Howard Goldblatt, uses translation strategies and methods like literal translation, explanation and transliteration to convey the form, meaning and style of the source text, embodying the heterogeneity of the source text. His translation helps foreign readers to understand the Chinese culture-loaded words better and shows his cultural consciousness of Chinese culture as well as his confidence in it.

Keywords culture-loaded words; cultural self-confidence; *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*; translation.

INTRODUCTION

Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out is a novel by Mo Yan, a Chinese writer who won the Nobel Prize in Literature. It explores the development of China in the later half of the twentieth century through the eyes of a landlord. The landlord was reincarnated six times after being executed, respectively as a donkey, an ox, a pig, a dog, a monkey, and the boy, Big-Headed Lan Qiansui. The novel has won the second Dream of the Red Chamber Award in China and the inaugural Newman Prize for Chinese Literature in the United States.

Due to the novel's background setting and the author's unique writing techniques, *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* is full of various culture-loaded words, whose translation is of great importance to the dissemination of literature, for their accuracy and fluency will greatly affect the readers' perception. Thus, the translator should ensure the fluency of the translated text on the basis of faithfulness to the original text, so that readers can make sense of the translated text and also the Chinese culture behind it. Therefore, it is necessary and significant to study the English translation of the culture-loaded words in *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* from the perspective of

cultural self-confidence for the purpose of both enriching translation theories and practices and promoting the development of cultural exchange.

Current studies on the culture-loaded words are not so abundant, mostly concentrating on the applied translation strategies or methods. For example, Yang Jing and Chen Yajie study Howard Goldblatt's version of *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, and hold that "he takes faithfulness as the first principle, using literal translation as the main translation strategy and free translation as the supplement." [1] There are some researches relating to the relationship between the culture and the translation of culture-loaded words. For example, Wang Zhuo studies Howard Goldblatt's version of culture-loaded words, explains that "the purpose of literary translation is to reproduce the connotation and artistic conception of the source culture in the target language to the greatest extent, successfully realizing cross-cultural communication." [2] Besides, there are other similar studies on the translation of culture-loaded words from different perspectives, such as the perspective of skopos theory, relevance theory, Eco-translatology, and translation aesthetics.

This paper studies the culture-loaded words in *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* from the perspective of cultural self-confidence. The significance this research paper is to promote cultural exchanges between China and other countries and shed light for the Chinese literature translation.

1 OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL SELF-CONFIDENCE

1.1 Definition of Cultural Self-confidence

“Cultural self-confidence is the full affirmation and positive practice of the cultural value of a country and a political party.” [3] It is the firm confidence in the vitality of the culture. People’s cultural self-confidence in their own country is first embodied in their deep feelings of traditional culture, which is a unity of people’s sense of belonging, identity and honour of their traditional culture. The Chinese nation has a rather long history. The cultures accumulated over the years are our precious wealth. They exert a subtle influence on everyone’s growth, and everyone’s tracks of growth in some way reflects the culture of the country. Maybe it is the clothes one wears, the food one eats, or the house one lives in, and all of these are the epitome of a nation’s culture. Secondly, it embodies in one’s understanding of his or her own national culture and their keen interests in learning and inheriting them. Chinese culture gathers the broad and profound wisdom of each generation. Learning and understanding Chinese culture is the inheritance of all those rich thought in Chinese culture. But inheritance is far from enough, in this new era of rapid development, we should also develop and carry forward Chinese traditional culture. However, being confident in one’s own culture does not mean denial of other cultures. We should analyse them in a rational way and can learn from and borrow the excellent achievements from foreign cultures.

In conclusion, cultural self-confidence is not the blind confidence in a country’s culture, but the firm belief in the country’s culture, which should be based on the understanding and inheritance of culture.

1.2 The Importance of Cultural Self-confidence

The world is in a period of great development, change and adjustment. Culture plays a more prominent role in the competition of comprehensive national strength. The task of safeguarding national cultural security is even more arduous. With the advancement of globalization, the interconnection between countries in the world has been strengthened. Global cultural exchanges, collisions and integration are more frequent than ever. Western cultural values continue to permeate. Cultural self-confidence is the

strong spiritual support to cope with the impact of Western culture and safeguard national cultural security. Only by strengthening cultural self-confidence can we not lose our way in the face of other cultural shocks. What’s more, if China wants to become a powerful country in science and technology in the middle of the 21st century, the construction of scientific culture will play a very important role in this historical process. In this respect, it is also necessary to enhance our cultural self-confidence, which is not only reflected in the recognition of our own cultural values, but also in having the confidence and determination to Chinese culture, because it will make the long-standing Chinese culture glow with new vigour and vitality, and make the dream of becoming a cultural powerful country come true.

1.3 The Foreign Translators’ View of Chinese Culture

Both Chinese and foreign translators have their own advantages and disadvantages in translating Chinese literary works. Foreign translators have a better understanding of the needs of foreign readers and Chinese translators the culture behind the works. In order to improve each group’s translation level, Chinese translators can study the strategies commonly used in the translations of the foreign translators, so as to translate other works into a more acceptable version for foreign readers. Likewise, foreign translators need to understand the Chinese culture contained in the works from the Chinese translators’ translations so as to translate other works into a better version that helps to disseminate the extensive and profound Chinese culture.

Therefore, during the process of external translation, which means translation for the foreign readers, foreign translators’ view on Chinese culture is particularly important. Each culture has its merits and relatively demerits. Whether foreign translators can understand Chinese culture correctly will affect the presentation of the translated text. Translators should neither accept Chinese culture without thinking, nor criticize it blindly and holistically. Either of these attitudes will make their work untrue to the Chinese culture. Translators should understand Chinese culture in a respectful manner. In the spirit of promoting cultural exchanges between China and other countries, translators should disseminate Chinese culture and absorb the essence of Chinese culture.

Howard Goldblatt, the translator of the novel, is a famous American sinologist. He has translated large number of Chinese literary works and is known as “the chief Chinese literature translator in the West”. Mo Yan

once said, “Professor Howard Goldblatt often consults repeatedly with me about a word or a thing in my novel that he is not familiar with...” [4] It can be interpreted that Howard Goldblatt’s attitude towards literary works is very rigorous and active. He is willing to spend his time on anything that he does not understand and explore the cultural background of it. He thinks that how translators deal with translation problems and complex intercultural communication activities are the issues that they should reflect on. In his book *On Chinese Literature*, he points out that “The Chinese and the Chinese nation are excellent and have their own personality. Therefore, they should not make a fool of themselves or have a sense of inferiority shown in modern literary works.” [5] It is outspokenly clear that Howard Goldblatt loves and believes in Chinese culture. He believes that Chinese and American cultures have their own characteristics. In the process of translation, he firmly retains the characteristics of Chinese culture and sometimes even unconsciously supports Chinese culture.

2 CULTURE-LOADED WORDS IN *LIFE AND DEATH ARE WEARING ME OUT*

2.1 Definition and Classification of Culture-loaded Words

Language is the carrier and true portrayal of a nation’s culture, a very important part. There are many differences in the ecological environment, material culture, social background and religious beliefs of different countries. These differences inevitably reflect on their languages, especially in the lexical form. These words contain a nation’s culture. Therefore, it is almost impossible for the translator to find their exact equivalents in any other languages, resulting in semantic vacancies and translation difficulties. These words are called culture-loaded words.

Hu Wenzhong wrote in his book *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication*, “Cultural vocabulary refers to the vocabulary of a specific cultural category, which is a direct or indirect reflection of national culture on language vocabulary.” [6] Lexical meaning includes denotation and connotation. The definitions in the dictionary are normally the denotative meanings of words. The connotative meaning of vocabulary is the extended meaning of the denotative meaning. The connotative meaning varies according to times, cultures and countries. For example, in China “龙” (dragon) was a symbol of imperial power in ancient times, and then evolved into a cultural symbol of the Chinese nation, so the connotative meaning of “龙” is power. In America, “dragon” is a symbol of greed, evil and

cruelty. It is a frightening existence in fairy tales and literary works. People who slaughter dragons are usually seen as warriors or heroes. It is not difficult to observe that “龙” and “dragons” represent two totally different things, so it is wrong to ignore the cultural connotation behind the denotative meaning and directly equate these two things in translation. There are other words and expressions like “龙” and “dragon” that contain the culture of a country and a nation. Such words that carries national culture are culture-loaded words.

Eugene Nida is an eminent translation theorist. He divides linguistic and cultural features into five main categories: ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture and linguistic culture.[7] According to this classification, culture-loaded words can also be divided into five main types. They are respectively ecological, material, social, religious and linguistic ones.

Synoptic and environmental differences in different regions have resulted in the diversity of ecological culture, that is, countries and ethnic groups in different regions have their own unique ecological culture, mainly including plants, animals, geographical situation, environment, weather and so on. These unique ecological cultures are embodied in the language as ecological culture-loaded words. For example, plum blossom symbolizes lofty and unyielding character, and orchids symbolizes chastity and nobility, etc. Material products created by human beings, including food, clothing, architecture, transportation and so on, are material culture. The material culture of each country has its own characteristics, thus forming large number of material culture-loaded words, such as “Bloody Mary” and “Burberry” in English, “Hanfu” and “chi-pao” in Chinese. Social culture is the general term for all kinds of cultural phenomena and activities. Therefore, social culture-loaded words include values, customs, traditional concepts and interpersonal relationships, such as “LGBTQ”, “individualism”, “合巹”, “磕头” and so on. Different historical periods, regions and nationalities in the world have different religious beliefs. In the long course of history, religious ideas and other ideas blend and permeate each other, gradually forming their own religious culture. For example, most Americans are Christian. In China, more people believe in Taoism and Buddhism than in other religions, so the most commonly used religious culture-loaded words are related to Taoism and Buddhism, such as “抱佛脚”, “面壁” and “一弹指”.

While in America, these two religions are not so popular. Therefore, many religious culture-loaded words which do not concern them, such as “baptism” and “Jesus Christ”. Each language has its own linguistic characteristics. The words that embody these characteristics are linguistic culture-loaded words. They include some rhetorical devices such as alliteration, oxymoron in English, anadiplosis and synaesthesia in Chinese.

2.2 Culture-loaded Words in *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*

Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out is a novel written by Mo Yan, a Chinese writer who has won a Nobel Prize in literature. The novel has won the second Dream of the Red Chamber Award in China and the inaugural Newman Prize for Chinese Literature in the United States. The protagonist of *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* is a landlord who was executed in the period of land reform. He thinks that although he is wealthy, he has never done evil, so he keeps calling for justice in the nether world. Finally, Lord Yama agrees to let him go back to the living world. After that, he went through transmigration six times respectively as a donkey, an ox, a pig, a dog, a monkey, and the boy, Big-Headed Lan Qiansui, who was born with incurable diseases. He never left his home nor the land in these six reincarnations. When he was reincarnated as a donkey, he was born in his hired farmhand Lan Lian's house. Lan Lian was an orphan that he saved unintentionally and took in as a foster son. When he was reincarnated as an ox, he was bought by Lan Lian in the marketplace. When he was reincarnated as a pig, he was born in a Ximen Village pigpen and became piglet sixteen. When he was reincarnated as a dog, he was born again in Lan Lian's family as puppy four. When he was reincarnated as a human being, he was Big-Headed Lan Qiansui, who is the son of Kaifang and Fenghuang and tells the story of his strange feelings that he experienced as those animals, and the long-lasting sad and happy stories of the landlord Ximen's family and the peasant Lan Jiefang's family. Through the eyes of various animals, the novel presents the absurdity and chaos of Chinese rural society during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In the novel, Mo Yan integrate magic realism with Chinese folk stories, history and society, using the large number of culture-loaded words, vividly describing the social changes of that time, which means that a high level of cultural knowledge is required of the translator.

This paper studies 15 sentences in *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, which involves the English

translation of a total amount of 16 culture-loaded words, listed as follows.

Ecological Culture-loaded Words	
攀高枝	on one's way up to a higher limb
风餐露宿	dine on the wind and sleep in the dew
借坡下驴	like a man climbing off his donkey to walk downhill
Material Culture-loaded Words	
苦胆	gallbladder, the seat of courage
白绫	white silk
金银细软	gold, silver, and other valuables
Social Culture-loaded Words	
薄皮棺材	a meager coffin
陪嫁丫头	a maidservant
金龙	Jinlong, or Golden Dragon
宝凤	Baofeng, precious Phoenix
Religious Culture-loaded Words	
救人一命， 胜造七级浮屠	saving a life is better than building a seven-story pagoda
积德	earn credit from the act of charity
纸钱	spirit money
Linguistic Culture-loaded Words	
西门闹	Ximen Nao, whose name means West Gate Riot
一挑子，两 萝筐	a basketball of
聪明猴儿， 顺着竿儿往 上爬	a smart little pole-shinnying monkey

3 ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF CULTURE-LOADED WORDS IN *LIFE AND DEATH ARE WEARING ME OUT* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL SELF-CONFIDENCE OF CULTURAL SELF-CONFIDENCE

Keeping cultural self-confidence requires translators to absorb the excellence of source-language cultures and turn it into or transfer it into a target-

language culture with Chinese characteristics based on inheriting the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Translators cannot and should not domesticate, negate or misinterpret foreign cultures. The translator should translate after understanding adequately the cultural background of the source language. In the process of translation, the translator should exert his creativity and show his or her confidence in Chinese culture as much as possible, but this does not mean that the translator should indiscriminately imitate Chinese. Instead, one should integrate Chinese characteristics with the target language.

3.1 Translation of Ecological Culture-loaded Words in Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out

1) 这样做算不算背叛主人、另攀高枝? [8]⁸⁷ Could this be considered an act of betrayal to my master on my way up to a higher limb? [9]⁹⁷ “高枝” meaning higher branches (of a tree), is usually used to describe a person of high status or position in Chinese. “攀高枝” refers to making friends with or marry people who are in higher social status or position. There is no such a connotative meaning of branch or limb in English. Still, to be close to the original text, the translation method that Howard Goldblatt applies is literal translation combined with free translation. Chinese author tends to use four-character words, while in English the writing system is totally different. It would be rather difficult for the translator to express the author's intention using the same structure. Although the structure of the translated text is different from that of the original text, the Chinese tone of expression is retained, and the value of Chinese culture is shown, reflecting Howard's recognition of Chinese culture.

(2) 我们一路上风餐露宿……[8]⁸⁹ Along the way we dined on the wind and slept in the dew.[9]⁹⁹

“风餐露宿” means eating in the wind and sleeping in the open air, describing the hardship of a journey or the field work. Chinese authors love to use ecological images to express their feelings so that the readers can feel the emotions more vividly and clearly. Howard Goldblatt obviously appreciates Chinese culture and agrees to the way of expressing through the symbolic meaning of an image, so he used literal translation for this ecological culture-loaded words, which really puts forward the image of a hard journey through the word “wind” and “dew”.

(3) 我看到洪泰岳满脸僵硬的线条顿时和缓起来, 他借坡下驴地说: [8]²⁴

I saw the tautness in Hong Taiyue's face fall away. Like a man climbing off his donkey to walk downhill, in other words, using her arrival as a way forward, he said:[9]²⁶

“借坡下驴” means getting down from a donkey in favourable terrain. It is often used as a metaphor for acting according to favourable conditions. In the source text, the expression is used to show Hong Taiyue's attempt to relax the intense atmosphere by using the excuses given by Yingchun. Howard Goldblatt's love and confidence for Chinese culture make him want to disseminate it to the greatest extent. Therefore, the translation method that he uses is annotations within text, that is, translating the literal meaning of the expression, followed by its implied meaning. In this way the target reader will know about the customary expression of Chinese and the situation to use it.

3.2 Translation of Material Culture-loaded Words in Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out

(4) 他还写了一个孝顺的儿子, 从刚被枪毙的人身上挖出苦胆, 拿回家去给母亲治疗眼睛。[8]⁸ He wrote about a filial son who cut the gallbladder, the seat of courage, out of an executed man, took it home, and made a tonic for his blind mother.[9]⁸

There are two cultural meanings of the material culture-loaded word *gallbladder*. First, it is people's old-fashioned view about it that one's gut is related to his gallbladder. You lose it, then you lose your courage as well. It is probably because of the same character they share in Chinese, which is “胆” meaning ball in English. Another cultural meaning about gallbladder which is that bear gallbladder is a traditional folk remedy for poor sight. Howard Goldblatt uses amplification to translate it with an appositive phrase explaining its first cultural meaning which is not related to the context and maybe seen as unnecessary. But from the perspective of cultural self-confidence, we can understand that Howard is actively disseminate Chinese culture, presenting the distinctive colour of Chinese material culture.

(5) 你应该立即去死, 我赐你一丈白绫……[8]¹⁶ You should do away with yourself at once. I'll give you the white silk to do it... [9]¹⁷

“白绫” is white silk, a kind of cloth. It is often used in ancient times when the Emperor bestow on the guilty minister to commit suicide. It is often mentioned as three-Chi white silk, and later as one-Zhang white silk. Chi and Zhang are the Chinese scale unit, and both three Chi and one Zhang refer to the length, but in real cases it is not necessarily exactly that long. It is just a figure of speech for the kind of cloth that used to hang

oneself to death. Howard Goldblatt makes effort to carry forward Chinese traditional culture in the west by not letting go of every single detail of them that he sees fit, so he uses literal translation here.

(6) ……我们家那八十亩良田的地契和我们家全部的金银细软。[8]¹⁰

the deeds to more than eighty acres of farmland and the family's gold, silver, and other valuables... [9]¹⁰

“金银” refers to gold and silver, the hard currency in ancient China. “细软” originally means delicate and soft items. Later its meaning extends to those light and portable valuables stuff. The author uses the phrase here to express the money and the precious objects in the house. Because silver was never the hard currency that was commonly used in the West, putting it in a parallel position as gold would help the target reader understand the value of silver as the currency of that time. Howard Goldblatt's confidence in Chinese culture is clearly shown in his thoughtful translation.

3.3 Translation of Social Culture-loaded Words in Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out

(7) 买一副薄皮棺材将他掩埋……[8]¹¹

I'd pay for a meagre coffin to bury him... [9]¹²

There are two kinds of funeral, an elaborate one or a frugal one. A frugal funeral refers to a funeral that is held in a simple way, which means coffin and the ceremony are kept simple and frugal. Life and death have always been the two most important things in China. Naturally, funeral becomes an indispensable part of Chinese social culture, which expresses Chinese people's attitudes towards life. In the novel Lan Lian is an abandoned child, so there are no relatives to hold an elaborate funeral for him, implying how life can be so worthless in a hard time. That is why it is a good deed for Ximen Nao to willingly pay for the baby's funeral even though they are totally unrelated strangers. The character “薄” here reflects the social culture of the time and should not be omitted. Howard Goldblatt respect the culture and choose to be faithful to the original text and use literal translation. The word “meager” is very suitable for indicating the poor quality of the coffin. And here Chinese value is conveyed unconsciously.

(8) 她原是我太太白氏陪嫁过来的丫头[8]¹³

Yingchun, brought into the family as a maidservant by my wife.. [9]¹⁴

“陪嫁” means the property brought to the husband's house by the wife from her side of the family when they get married, and in the old days it also refers to the young maidservant sent with the wife as part of the dowry. It is an obsolete custom and is no longer exist

nowadays. From the perspective of cultural self-confidence, being confident about the vitality of a culture does not mean one should blindly take in every bit of the culture even though it is the dross of it. It means one carefully learn about the culture and carry forward the essence of it, that is what Howard Goldblatt does. He uses reduction here, omitting the social connotation that a maidservant is materialized as a dowry.

(9) 男名西门金龙, 女名西门宝凤……[8]¹³

So, we named the boy Ximen Jinlong, or Golden Dragon, and the girl Ximen Baofeng, Precious Phoenix... [9]¹⁴

In Chinese feudal society, “龙” was regarded as the symbol of the emperor while “凤” the queen. A saying related to the two words from ancient times is “望子成龙, 望女成凤”, which bears every sincere parent's hope for their children to become something one day. However, the “dragon” and “phoenix” in Western culture are very different from the traditional Chinese “Dragon” (龙) and “phoenix” (凤). In China the phoenix is the king of birds in ancient legends, being used to symbolize auspicious, and phoenix is the image of a dead bird that can live for hundreds of years and then regenerate itself as an ash. In the novel, the twins are given the names containing that meaning, showing Ximen Nao's high expectations and hopes on his descendants [10]. Considering that the English translation of “Dragon and Phoenix” does not conform to Chinese culture, in order to avoid readers' misunderstanding of Chinese culture, Howard Goldblatt adopts transliteration and explanation for the two words so that the characteristics of the names and the meaning of them are preserved at the same time.

3.4 Translation of Religious Culture-loaded Words in Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out

(10) 常说救人一命, 胜造七级浮屠……[8]¹²

Everyone says that saving a life is better than building a seven-story pagoda... [9]¹²

“浮屠” is a form of Buddhist architecture, which is often called the pagoda by the people. This kind of building was originally used to worship the relics of Buddha, and later used to worship Buddha statues and collect scriptures. This idiom comes from Buddhism, meaning that the merit of saving one's life is much more admirable than that of building a seven-story Buddhist pagoda. Through literal translation, Howard Goldblatts retains the Chinese religious cultural characteristics, refreshing the target readers and playing a positive role in the dissemination of the Chinese religious culture.

(11) 但如果咱们贪了这点财，前边积的德就没了对不对？ [8]⁷⁰

But if I covet something like this, I'll give up the credits I earned from that act of charity, won't I? [9]⁷⁸

“积德” refers to doing good deeds for the sake of blessing. Most of the ancients were superstitious, believing that there was karma, and that you reap what you sow. Therefore, if one does good deeds in this life, he will be blessed by Buddha and reincarnated into a good family in the next life. Howard Goldblatt's literal translation “earn the credits” reflects the utilitarian nature of Lan Lian's good deeds. It fits well with the connotation that Mo Yan wants to express. The Chinese culture along with the connotation passes on to the target reader.

(12) 她挎着的筐子里，用野菜遮盖着一叠纸钱，我猜到她是偷偷地给你烧纸钱来了。 [8]⁷⁹

A pack of spirit money was hidden under the wild greens in her basket and I guessed that she had brought it to burn at your grave. [9]⁸⁷

“烧纸钱” refers to burning paper money to worship Buddha and God. It is one of the Chinese folk customs. The origin of paper money is said to have been influenced by Indian or Central Asian customs. Indians or Central Asians believe that sacrificial offerings can be transmitted to ghosts and gods by fire. One well-accepted translation version of “纸钱” is joss paper. Howard Goldblatt's translation is spirit money, adopting free translation. The word “Spirit” shows the state of the money's owner. His translation is more readily comprehensible. The culture of the words is presented literally.

3.5 Translation of Linguistic Culture-loaded Words in Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out

(13) 西门闹，你还闹吗？ [8]¹

Ximen Nao, whose name means West Gate Riot, is more rioting in your plans? [9]¹

Ximen Nao is the protagonist in Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out a landlord in Ximen Village, Dongbei Township, Gaomi County. After his death, he goes through lots of tortures in hell, but still cries for justice. Like the name given to him by the author, Ximen Nao was not a person who accepts his fate quietly. The character “闹” embodies the restless part of his nature. In his translation, Howard Goldblatts retains the characteristics of Chinese names, that is, the given name comes after the family name, and explains the Chinese pun of the name in the text. The method is transliteration and explanation. His translation shows the Chinese naming culture and the linguistic use of character. From his translation, the target readers can

easily understand the humorous effect of the protagonist's name.

(14) 后来黄天发送来一挑子能用秤钩子挂起来的老豆腐，赔情的话说了两萝筐.....^{[8]¹¹}

He brought over a basketball of tofu so dense you could hang the pieces from hooks, along with a basketball of apologies ... [9]¹¹

“一挑子” refers to a pole and the items it carries at both ends. “萝筐” refers to a basket made of bamboo or wicker, which is used to hold grain, vegetables, etc. In this sentence, Mo Yan uses a rhetorical device, transferred epithet, which refers to the action that one consciously transfers the words describing A to B. In the novel, the baskets containing tofu are used to describe the quantity of Huang Tianfa's apologies. Howard Goldblatt uses the exact same linguistic technique in English, maintaining the vivid description of Chinese. The broadness and profoundness of the Chinese culture is presented in his translation.

(15) 这小子聪明猴儿，顺着竿儿往上爬。 [8]¹²

He was a smart little pole-shinnying monkey. ^{[9]¹³}

“顺着竿儿往上爬” means climbing up a pole. It is a commonly used proverb to describe a person who is clever in speaking and doing things, who can follow the trend. The proverb is slightly derogatory. In the novel, Lan Lian take it as an opportunity that Ximen Nao takes him in to call him his foster father. This proverb vividly depicts Lan Lian's cleverness. Although in the West monkeys are mischievous images and are usually used to describe naughty children, they are often considered vivid and intelligent creatures in China, such as the Monkey King, a well-known figure in Record of a Journey to the West. Therefore, literal translation as a matter of fact helps to depict the cleverness of the character.

From the perspective of cultural self-confidence, this paper studies some culture-loaded words in Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out. It does not only enrich translation theories and practices, but also plays an important role in promoting the development of cultural soft power. This paper divides these culture-loaded words into five categories, and analyses the translation methods of these words, as well as the expression of the translator's confidence in Chinese culture.

CONCLUSION

Through analysis, it is found that the key to translating culture-loaded words is to understand the culture behind these words. These cultures endow these

words with new meanings, which go beyond their original meanings and embody the culture of a nation. The choice of translation methods will affect the dissemination of culture. In his translation of the novel, Howard Goldblatt uses translation strategies and methods like literal translation, explanation and transliteration to preserve Chinese cultural characteristics, but he also let go some culture-loaded words. In general, Howard Goldblatt's translation version reflects his confidence in the vitality of Chinese culture and his love for them. He consciously retains the essence of Chinese culture and discards the dross of that. It can be said that the success of this novel abroad is partly owed to the excellent translation of Howard Goldblatt. If a country's cultural works were spread to the other parts of world, their own culture must be preserved. If they cater to the culture of other countries, then they will lose its core attraction. Therefore, in order to inherit and promote Chinese culture, the translator must firmly retain the cultural core of the work. And only when the translator is confident about the culture, will it naturally be blended in the translation.

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