

(Re)Framing Gay Literature through Translations, Reprints and Cross-Medium Retranslations: With Reference to Pai Hsien-yung's *Crystal Boys*

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Introduction

Pai Hsien-yung (白先勇) is a giant in Chinese culture in terms of his creative writing, his role in performing arts, the cinematic adaptation of his works, as well as his non-fiction. He has had an indelible impact on the cultural life of the Chinese people, both in Chinese mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and overseas. Of all the artistic media that Pai has ventured into, from *Kunqu* operas, novels, to non-fiction, he is first thought of as a preeminent stylist of fiction. Pai's most celebrated gay-themed novel is *Nie Zi* [孽子], which vividly portrays the gay subculture. A-qing, a high school student, is caught *in flagrante delicto* by a security guard in the school lab and expelled from his school and subsequently kicked out of his dysfunctional family by his screaming father. A-qing wanders into the New Park (now called 228 Park) in Taipei, where gay people and gay hustlers cruise at night. He joins them and is befriended by several gay sex workers, Little Jade, Wu Min and Mousy, who all share a similar family background and sexual orientation.

The novel was translated into English and published by Gay Sunshine Press in the U.S.A. in 1990 (Pai, *Crystal Boys*), reprinted in 1995. The novel was also made into a film in Taiwan in 1986¹, and was released the next year in the USA for the Reeling Chicago Gay Lesbian Film Festival. *The Outsider/Outcasts/Nie Zi* (1986) is considered to be the first gay-themed Taiwan film, and the blurb from *San Francisco Sentinel* introduces it as “powerfully erotic!” The novel was later made into a critically and popularly acclaimed 20-episode television serial drama by Jui Yuan Tsao in 2003. In 2014, the novel was adapted into a stage performance by Jui Yuan Tsao and the author himself. Both the TV series and the stage performance are fansubbed online.

| Year | Title | Medium | Publisher/producer/director |
|-----------|--|--|--|
| 1983 | <i>Nie Zi</i> (Chinese) | book | Horizon Publishing (Taiwan) |
| 1986 | <i>Nie Zi / The Outsiders/Outcast</i> (Chinese with English subtitles) | film | Yu Kan-ping |
| 1990/1995 | <i>Crystal Boys</i> (English) | English book translation by Howard Goldblatt | Gay Sunshine Press in U.S.A. The reprint of this translation came out in 1995. |

¹ The film was reviewed by Timothy Liu as well in 2000, and unfortunately the author of the source text and the English translation by Howard Goldblatt go entirely unmentioned in Liu's essay.

| | | | |
|------|---|--|---|
| 2003 | <i>Nie Zi</i> (Chinese; fansubbed available on www.youtube.com) | 20-episode TV series | Public Television Station (Taiwan)/ Jui Yuan Tsao |
| 2014 | <i>Nie Zi</i> (Chinese; fansubbed in English) | Stage performance | Jui Yuan Tsao |
| 2017 | <i>Crystal Boys</i> (English) | English book translation by Howard Goldblatt | The Chinese University Press (Hong Kong) |

The table shows that the Chinese literary piece was first adapted into a Chinese movie with English subtitles, which is a diagonal translation in terminology by audio-visual translation scholars (Gottlieb 101). The novel is then translated into English, which is a translation *per se*. The English translation is a success, which leads to two reprints with a time span of more than two decades. During these two decades, the literary work is adapted to TV as a series and as a theatre performance, with English subtitles for their online editions. We might ask a series of questions: What will happen to the Chinese literary piece when it is translated from a homosexuality-sensitive, if not homophobic, society into a more tolerant cultural context? Will the target text be a “gayed translation” (Harvey *Gay Community*, 158)? What are the motives behind the two reprints and what reframing strategies have been applied in the reprints? What role does the tempo-spatial context play in the reframing of these reprints? How does the literary translation influence the fansubbed English subtitles for the TV and stage adaptations? The study will look at these translations, reprints of translations, and fansubbed subtitles within the framework of retranslation.

Retranslation, Reprints and Cross-Medium Retranslation

The term “retranslation” refers to “either the act of translating a work that has previously been translated into the same language, or the result of such an act, i.e. the retranslated text itself” (Tahir Gürçağlar 233). In Almgren’s terms, retranslations are also called “new translation” or “multiple translations” (“Retranslation” 927), which refers to a text that is translated more than once into the same target language or different target languages. Retranslation has been in existence in different regions and periods in human history.

Feng (71) attempts to describe assumptions about the retranslation of literary works from three perspectives, “the necessity of retranslation,” “motives for retranslation,” and “the relation between the first or initial translation and the ‘new’ translation(s).” As for motives for retranslation, translation scholars have recognized various reasons. Brownlie (150) suggests that “changing social context and the evolution of translation norms” contribute greatly to the motives for retranslation; when discussing the surge of retranslation in Turkey since the 2000s, Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar argue that the phenomenon is “connected to ideological, economic, and marketing-related reasons, as well as institutional intervention (in the form of government-issued recommended readings lists), and legal and copy-right related developments” (*Perspectives on Retranslation* 225). Translation might involve the same translator or different translators over a short time span or an appalling long period. Given that, the social and cultural context in which these retranslations are produced matters a lot.

Outi Paloposki and Kaisa Koskinen take issue with the reductionist “binary categorization into first and retranlations” and “the categorization into revision and retranlations”, and they point out that “It is more a question of a continuum where different versions seamlessly slide together or even coalesce” (Paloposki and Koskinen, “Reprocessing Texts” 47). They pay attention to the study of reprints for the reprints “seemed the obvious first alternative for retranlation” (Paloposki and Koskinen, “A Thousand and One Tranlations”). Reprints, for them, can be “interpreted, not negatively as a lack of the will to retranlate, but positively as a desire to keep a stock of works available for the readers” (Paloposki and Koskinen, “Reprocessing Texts” 34).

Meanwhile, out of Pai’s cultural influence and the importance of his literary piece, the TV and stage adaptations of *Crystal Boys* are gaining popularity with Chinese audience. With the modern technology and international interest in this gay-themed Chinese classic, fansubbers manage to provide English subtitles online for these adaptations. These adaptations keep most of the lines from the literary piece, and the translation into English can be considered as cross-medium retranlation since they translate the same lines that have been previously been translated into English. Bogucki (52) pinpoints the specificity of cross-medium translation as “having to go from the spoken of the original to the written of the translation”. I will elaborate on this with ample textual evidence in the following discussion. However, before we move on to the textual analysis, I would like to give some background information about translating gay literature and the (re)framing theory by Mona Baker.

Translating Gay Literature and (Re)Framing Theory

Homosexuality has been a sensitive topic, sometimes a taboo, in many parts of the world, and gay literature has accordingly been marginalized as a peripheral literary genre. In Fone’s terms, gay literature is the “writing that represents, interprets, and constructs the experience of love, friendship, intimacy, desire and sex between men, that is, what most readers would call gay male literature” (Fone xxvii). McCallum and Tuhkanen suggest the chapters in their edited book, *The Cambridge History of Gay and Lesbian Literature*, aim to “focus on the works of identifiably gay or lesbian authors (Christopher Marlowe, Audre Lorde, Constantine Cavafy) and on works featuring same-sex eroticism no matter what the orientation of the author” (4). Brian James Baer points out, “I am using ‘gay’ here as an umbrella term to refer to the marketing of literary works and authors to an LGBTQ audience. Gay literature may be authored by individuals who are not openly gay, such as Walt Whitman, or who lived in a time before the emergence of a totalizing ‘gay’ identity, such as Sappho or Michelangelo, but who are packaged for a contemporary gay-identified audience” (139). In the Chinese context, similar notions to the abovementioned definitions can be observed (Chi; Chu).

Though translation of gay literature has gained increasing academic attention in the West (Baer and Kaindl; Baer; Baker, *In Other Words*; Harvey, “Describing Camp Talk”, “Gay Community”, *Intercultural Movements*; Linder; Mazzei; Mira), the Chinese academia has neglected this issue, intentionally or not. Translation never happens in a vacuum. Ideology, the invisible hand, plays its role now and then during the whole translation process: the choice of the source text, the translation strategies adopted, the marketing strategies, etc. Keith Harvey “explores the multiple

intersections of the notion ‘gay community’ and ‘gay identity’ with the problematic of translation” (Harvey, “Gay Community” 164) and he also “uses literary examples from English-language and French-language post-war fiction to elaborate a descriptive framework for representations of camp talk” (Harvey, “Describing Camp Talk” 240). Daniel Linder studies the Spanish translations of *The Maltese Falcon* by the US hard-boiled author Dashiell Hammett with the focus on the terms used by homosexuals like *queer*, *fairy*, *gunsel* and *gooseberry lay*, and how they are handled in the target texts spanning over half a century when the social attitude toward homosexuality changes over time (337-360).² Actually, Linder’s study is an interesting case of retranslation of gay literature with the change of political and cultural contexts.

There is limited scholarship on the theme of translation and homosexuality in the Chinese context. Sun Xiaoya studies the translation of homosexuality with reference to the Chinese renditions of *The Color Purple* by American author Alice Walker. Her research findings show that “while most readers of the original book consider the two women in a homosexual relationship, those of the Chinese versions mostly talk about them as sisters”, and that “under the influence of both translators’ subjectivity and social and cultural factors which translators are not able to control, homosexuality has to be adapted to Chinese context” (Sun v-vi). Yu Jing and Zhou Yunni examine the Chinese translation of *Brokeback Mountain* in 2006, and their study reveals “a mixture of conflicting translation strategies which accentuate, suppress and interfere with different homosexual elements in the novel” (1).

From the above-mentioned analysis, it is easy to understand that the translation of gay-themed literature between different cultures indispensably involves the handling of ideological and cultural difference, conflict to be more specific. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the experience of the first modern Chinese gay-themed fiction translated into a less hetero-normative cultural environment. What happens to the reprints in the USA and Hong Kong when the temporal and spatial contexts change? What happens when the fansubbers volunteer to provide English subtitles for the cinematic, TV and stage productions adapted from the literary piece? Translation is a rewriting process, and for Mona Baker, “framing narratives in translation are expected”. Baker points out that “The same set of events can be framed in different ways to promote competing narratives, with important implications for different parties to the conflict; this often results in frame ambiguity” (Baker, *Translation and Conflict* 107). Baker points out that “translators and interpreters – in collaboration with publishers, editors and other agents involved in the interaction – accentuate, undermine or modify aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance” (*Translation and Conflict* 5). In terms of practice, Baker suggests,

Processes of (re)framing can draw on practically any linguistic or non-linguistic resources, from paralinguistic devices such as intonation and typography to visual resources such as colour and image, to numerous linguistic devices such as tense shifts, deixis, code switching, use of euphemisms, and many more. (*Translation and Conflict* 5)

² For more discussion about the translation of gay literature, please refer to Mazzei; Alvstad; Santaemilia; Baer; Baer and Kaindl.

She further proposes four major strategies, namely “temporal and spatial framing”, “selective appropriation of textual material”, “framing by labelling”, and “repositioning of participants” (*Translation and Conflict* 112-140). By labelling, Baker refers to “any discursive process that involves using a lexical item, term or phrase to identify a person, place, group, event or any other key element in narrative” (*Translation and Conflict* 122). This approach can be widely used and identified in translation of book titles, movie titles and many other names of things. The realization of (re)framing can be done through repositioning in paratextual commentary, “Introductions, prefaces, footnotes, glossaries and—to a lesser extent, since translators do not normally control these—cover design and blurbs are among the numerous sites available to translators for repositioning themselves, their readers and other participants in time and space” (*Translation and Conflict* 133). Against this background, this paper aims to study the translation of a founding work of modern gay literature, *Nie Zi* [孽子] (Crystal Boys). The English translation of the first modern Chinese gay novel *Nie Zi* will be discussed against the theoretical framework proposed by Mona Baker, namely the reframing narratives. The subtitle translation for the cinematic and stage adaptations of this literary piece will also be studied to reveal the influence of the book translation on the subtitle translation when the literary piece is canonized in the source language and in the English target language respectively.

The English Book Translation and Its Reprints

Western academia has long been interested in homosexuality and gay literature in China (Hirsch; Vitiello). In the past two to three decades, the reading market has witnessed increasing publication of gay-themed literary works. As Shi Ye points out, “Taiwanese writer Pai Hsien-yung pioneered modern Chinese gay literature, and his masterpiece, *Nie Zi*, is the founding work of gay-themed literary works” (7). Scholarship witnesses increasing interest in the novel from different perspectives, such as national allegory and gender relationship. (Huang, “From Glass Clique to Tongzhi Nation”, *Queer Asia*; Martin; Zeng). This novel was translated into English under the title of *Crystal Boys* by Howard Goldblatt in the USA in 1990. There has been some scholarship on the English translation (Yin et al; Xie). The following paragraphs study the English translation from the perspective of narrative reframing. Mona Baker suggests using all resources accessible to the translators and editors in one’s analysis of reframing in narratives, for example “visual resources such as colour and image” (Baker, *Translation and Conflict* 5), which I will consider in the following discussion.

When the novel was first published in 1983, the social attitude towards homosexuality in the Chinese context was still quite conservative, and accordingly, the novel did not highlight the gay-theme. Martin points out, instead,

[I]n martial-law-period (pre-1987) literary criticism of the novel in Taiwan, *Crystal Boys* was in fact not usually interpreted as primarily a “homosexual novel” in the way Le Mu described it in 1986. The readings that I consider here instead see the novel either as centrally concerned with father-son-relationships, or as a political allegory for the relations between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People’s Republic on the Chinese mainland. (Martin 57)

While the story is mainly about the male sex workers in the New Park in Taipei, earlier literary reviews focused on the patriarchal relationship between the father and the son instead, or the allegorical relationship between the Mainland and the Taiwan island. However, the first edition and the first revised edition used the following painting for the front cover, and the back-cover blurbs mentioned nothing about homosexuality (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

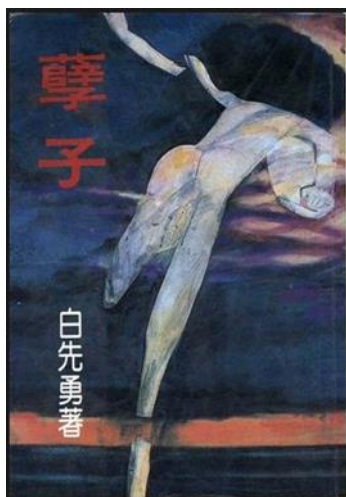


Figure 1: Chinese ST 1983
(Taipei)

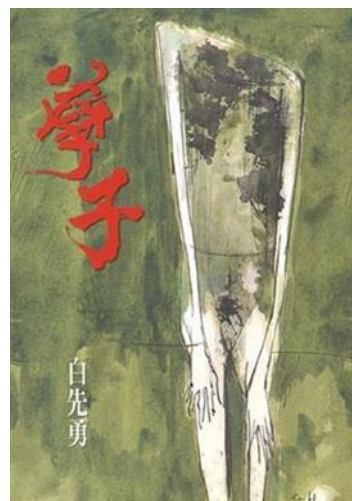


Figure 2: Chinese ST 1990
(Taipei)

Goldblatt's translation was published by the American Gay Sunshine Press, a publisher exclusively devoted to gay-themed literature. Gay men are assumed to have attributes stereotypically associated with the other gender, and the book cover design for the first edition (See Figure 3) is an obvious testimony to such an assumption. The feminine posture of the man in the portrait stereotypes Chinese gay men to a large extent. However, in the book review by Charles Solomon for Los Angeles Times the author associates the work by Pai with John Rechy's *City of Night*, a gay-themed novel. The English translation, *Crystal Boys*, was very popular with the readers, and the publisher produced the new edition, the reprint, five years later. This time, the biggest change took place in the cover design. On the front cover, there is a half-naked Asian young man with his jeans unzipped. Apart from the book title and the author's name, there is a line at the bottom of the front cover, which reads "The first modern Asian gay novel" (See Figure 4).

Secondly, the blurbs from *World Literature Today* on the back cover also changed in the new edition. While the first edition in 1990 reads "Pai Hsien-yung is arguably the most accomplished contemporary writer in Chinese" (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 1990 back-cover), the reprint in 1995 shifted onto the translator and the gay-theme of this novel,

Howard Goldblatt's translation [of *Crystal Boys*] is excellent, managing to capture the bittersweet tone, the uneven bursts of poetic and prosaic narrative, and the pervasive imagery of the original. The first modern Chinese novel on the lives of homosexuals is often moving and always thought-provoking. The English translation is most welcome in light of the continued homophobia in our societies. (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 1995 back-cover)

McCormack points out that “Although gains were made by LGBT activists in the 1960s and 1970s, and identity politics continued to be used to context homophobic oppression, homophobia greatly increased in US and UK cultures in the 1980s” (58), and Anderson argues that the AIDS epidemic was the primary reason for the spike in homophobia (93-104). This blurb quotation is deleted in the new edition of the translation published by the Centre for Translation at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2017. The Hong Kong edition also changed the front cover design from the half-naked young man back to the cover paint chosen by Pai Hsien-yung, the author, for the Chinese version in 1990 (See Figure 5). This painting was by the gay artist Ku Fu-sheng, who is remotely related to Pai.

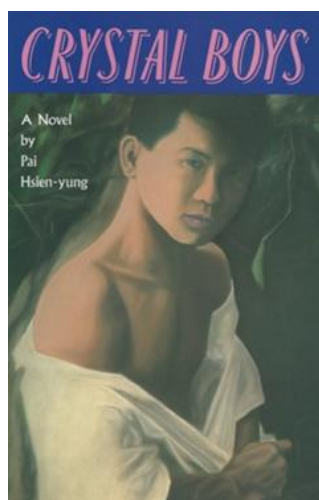


Figure 3: English 1990
(USA)

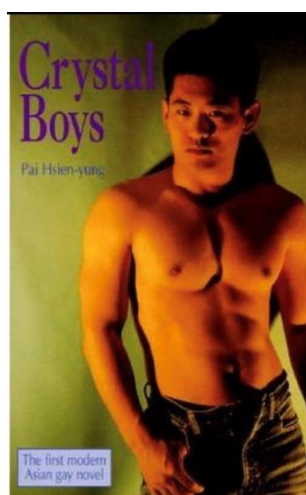


Figure 4: English 1995
(USA)

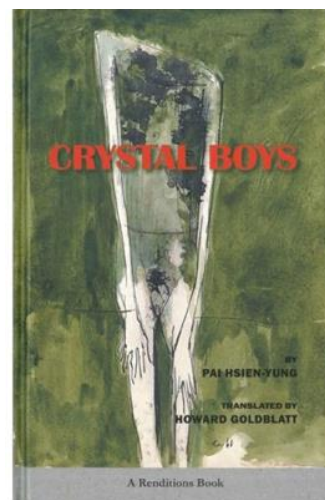


Figure 5: English 2017
(Hong Kong)

The back-cover blurbs for the 2017 edition reiterates that the novel is “widely known as the first gay novel in the twentieth-century literature written in Chinese”, and the 1995 blurb about homophobia is not included. Instead, the Hong Kong edition quotes *Encyclopaedia of Modern Literature in the 20th Century* to highlight that the novel “presents vividly the oppressive power of the Chinese patriarchy and its torturous effects on its sons” (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 2017 back-cover).

Apart from visual resources, Baker elaborates on framing by labelling (Baker, *Translation and Conflict* 122), and this strategy is frequently used in translating titles of movies and books. The translation of the title of this first Asian gay novel serves as case in point for Baker’s labelling strategy. In Chinese, the title is *Nie Zi*, literally translated as unfilial sons with negative associations and a criticism of homosexuality. The English title for the 1986 cinematic adaptation with the same Chinese title *Nie Zi* [孽子] is *The Outsiders/Outcasts*. This English title highlights the social identity of this group of youngsters, who are expelled from their families because of their sexual orientations. Actually, Howard Goldblatt acknowledged the cinematic adaptation of this literary piece in 1986 and mentioned this in his notes in the 1990/1995 book translation. Pai, the author, was involved in both the film production in 1986 and in the book translation by Goldblatt, which was mentioned by Goldblatt at the seminar at Hong Kong Baptist University on December 19, 2005. That is to say, the author himself acknowledged the change from *The Outsiders/Outcasts* into *Crystal Boys*.

Howard Goldblatt translated the title as *Crystal Boys* in English, for “In Taiwan, the gay community is known as the *boliqian*, literally ‘glass community,’ while the individuals are referred to as ‘glass boys’” (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 1995 7). The English title evokes more positive associations connected with glass as pure and strong, while boys clearly designate gay men and acknowledges the presence of a minority group in Chinese society. This relabelling also serves as a form of reframing and reconstructs the whole narrative from a different perspective than the original, in which the Chinese author was suppressed by the social attitude towards homosexuality and could not create positive identification. Since the English translation of *Nie Zi* was such a success, with a second edition published in 1995, the English title *Crystal Boys* has become the established translation for this literary piece, and the 20-episode TV series in 2003 and the theatre play in 2014 both use *Crystal Boys* as the English title for the two Chinese adaptations. The TV series *Crystal Boys* was debuted in 2003, and the TV series made ground-breaking impact on the social attitude when they reached all living rooms in Taiwan. Since then, there have been literary pieces and films on homosexuality in Taiwan, Ta-wei Chi (紀大偉), Tien-wen Chu (朱天文), Ang Lee (李安), Ming-liang Tsai (蔡明亮) to name a few³. Homosexuality is no longer a social taboo in Taiwan entering the 2010s and same-sex marriage is legalized there in 2019.

Different from the 1990/1995 editions, the translator used the past tense in the 2017 reprint in Hong Kong instead of the present tense in the previous editions. “In Taiwan, the gay community **was** known as the *boliqian*, literally “glass community”; while the individuals **were** referred to as “glass boys.” (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 2017) This is a typical case of temporal reframing. *Boliqian* is a derogatory term for the gay community in the 1970s and 1980s. However, since the 1990s, the gay right movement has been active, leading to the legislation of same-sex marriage in the island in 2019. It must have seemed inappropriate to use the present tense to frame the general perception of the gay community 30 years after the publication of the first edition of the English translation in the early 1990s. This is what Mona Baker has categorized as “temporal framing” ((Baker, *Translation and Conflict* 112).

In *Nie Zi*, there is a dialogue between the male sex workers:

「那個騷東西嗎？」
楊教頭用扇子遙點了紅衣少年一下，歪過頭去，湊到盛公耳下，報告了一段少年的履歷：華國寶，人都叫他華騷包，一天到晚愛亮出他身上那幾斤健身房練出來的肌肉來……
(Pai, *Nie Zi* 107)

The term “騷包” (Sao Bao, literally means slut) is used between male sex workers in the New Park. This discourse creates a challenge for the translator(s), as mentioned by Howard Goldblatt during his seminar talk at the Baptist University of Hong Kong in 2005. Goldblatt and Pai Hsien-yung went to a gay bar in New York and they observed how gay people communicated

³ For more information about queer writing in Taiwan, please refer to Martin and Chi; for more information about gay and lesbian films in Taiwan, please refer to Lee 163-169.

with each other there. All of a sudden, he overheard the phrase “butch queen” in the bar and asked the author about this term for translating “騷包”. Pai nodded and agreed, and here goes the translation:

「You mean that **butch queen**?」

Chief Yang pointed to the boy in red with his fan, then leaned over and gave Lord a whispered account of his history: Hua Guobao, but everybody calls him the **butch queen**. All he ever does is prance around showing off his muscles...

(Pai, *Crystal Boys* 1990/1995 100)

Butch is defined as “A lesbian whose appearance and behaviour are seen as traditionally masculine” in the Oxford dictionary⁴; However, the word “queen” was added by the translator to imply that Hua Guobao is homosexual. By this domesticated rendering, the translation serves as another supporting case of what Baker terms “labelling” for reframing the narrative.

From the above analysis, it is easy to observe that, through non-linguistic resources of visual images and labelling strategies, the first modern Asian gay novel was reframed to address the assumed expectations of the target readership in the English world.

TV and Stage Adaptations and Cross-Medium Retranslations

Although the English title for the 1986 cinematic adaptation, *Outcast*, did not establish itself as a canonized label, the blurbs introduce the film as “powerfully erotic”, and the half-naked men on the cover have drawn great attention to the movie from the audience. Definitely, the story itself was found attractive, which facilitated the translation of this novel for the American market. There is no immediate evidence to support the influence of Howard Goldblatt’s translation on the subtitle translations for the TV and stage adaptations. The lines in the TV and stage adaptation, either monologues or dialogues, match the literary piece to a large extent; therefore, it is safe to assume it is a retranslation, though it is marked by cross-medium characteristics. Be it Gottlieb’s “diagonal translation” or Bogucki’s “cross-medium translation”, the specificity of adaptation between literary pieces and other mediums of artistic production like films, TV programmes or stage performances has been expounded by researchers, Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan (1999), Timothy Corrigan (2012), Phyllis Zatlin (2005), to name a few.

The “corrected and new” translation was released by the Chinese University Press in Hong Kong in 2017. To a large extent, Howard Goldblatt’s *Crystal Boys* has acquired the status of a “classic”. The French version is titled as *Garçons de Cristal*, which can be easily interpreted as the impact of the English translation. The influence of Goldblatt’s translation can be found in the subtitles made available for the 20-episode TV series by Taiwan Public Broadcasting Station. When the TV series was first released, there were no English subtitles. However, the TV series is now available on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) with English subtitles by fansubbers. Compared to the movie adaptation in 1986, the 2003 production presents the full original work. Of course, the screen writer has had

⁴ <https://www.lexico.com/definition/butch> last retrieved on 28 May 2020.

to rewrite some of the original story into dialogues, and there are lines which are not in the novel. However, most of the conversations in the literary piece have found their way in the TV production. The fansubber(s) also acknowledged the English book translation by Howard Goldblatt, though not for the beginning instalment. “A big thanks to Howard Goldblatt's translation of this novel! That helped me a lot!”⁵ The help from the book translation can be easily discerned in the subtitles. For instance, Chapter 25 starts with the newspaper report on the reporter's visit to the new gay bar, Cozy Nest, and the whole report is adapted into lines by A-qing, Little Jade and Wu Min. They take turns to read the report from the newspaper. The subtitle translation makes full reference to the book translation, while there are still some minor revisions and changes. In the Chinese original, Cozy Nest is called the “男色大本營” (Pai, *Nie Zi* 341), and Howard Goldblatt renders it into “the watering hole of our fair city's boys of the night” (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 2017, 303), while the subtitle in English is “the watering hole of Taipei's gay men”⁶. In the Chinese report, it reads “來這裏吃禁果（分桃）的人”，and there is an intertextual reference to homosexuals by the term “分桃”. The book translation misses this reference in “the people who gather here to taste the forbidden fruit...” (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 2017, 304). However, for the 2014 stage performance, the Chinese line goes as “到這裏分桃吃禁果的”，and the English subtitle by a fansubber is “It's said that homosexuals come here to taste the forbidden fruit”⁷. The English subtitles for the TV series and the stage performance accentuate the gay identity of these sexual minorities.

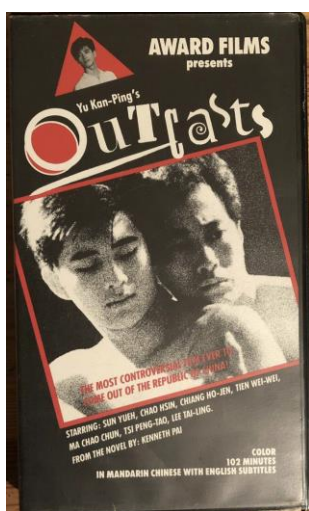


Figure 6 Film 1986

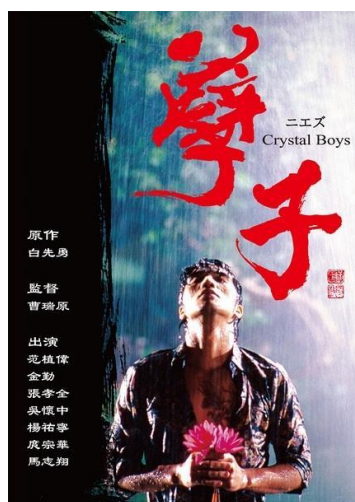


Figure 7 TV Series 2003



Figure 8 Stage Performance 2014

While the influence of Howard Goldblatt's translation can be seen through the fansubbed subtitles in English, the fansubbers' hesitation can be detected from the textual evidence. In the Chinese story, the gay hustlers are taken to the police station for interrogation. A chubby police officer asks Wu Min: “你是〇號麼？” (Pai, *Nie Zi* 221). Literally, this means “Are you number zero?” In the gay community, number zero is referred to as the passive one in gay sex, while number one the active one. This binary categorization leans too heavily on heteronormativity, since it can

⁵ https://subcrystalboys.fandom.com/wiki/Episode_13#WikiaArticleComments last retrieved on 18Feb. 2020.

⁶ https://subcrystalboys.fandom.com/wiki/Episode_18#WikiaArticleComments last retrieved on Feb 18, 2020.

⁷ https://subcrystalboys.fandom.com/wiki/The_Play_Part_2 last retrieved on Feb 18, 2020.

be seen in terms of number zero being “the woman” and number one being “the man”. These sexual roles are most readily associated with gay men, and such categorization is rooted in notions of gender, masculinity and femininity that are really outdated. Actually, for the police officer, number zero has become a sneering synonym for “camp” or “femme-presenting”, and even among the gay community, they feel like being zero makes you the submissive or “the woman”. Instead of using bottom, the term for the submissive party in gay sex, Howard Goldblatt translates “〇号” into “the fuckee” (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 2017, 202). This abusive and aggressive rendition lays bare that the relationship between these sex hustlers with their patrons is based on sex only. To make it worse, the English translation accentuates the sexual intercourse by adding one phrase there: “‘You must be the fuckee, not the fucker,’ he commented. The two guards snickered.” (Pai, *Crystal Boys* 2017, 202) In the Chinese original, it is a question by the police officer, while in the English translation, the police officer just comments. He seems to be very sure about his conclusion. Wu Min is a very sensitive young man, and he even commits suicide after being kicked out by his ex-patron. The translator immediately associates this character with the femme figure in a gay relationship. In the TV series, the playwright changes Wu Min to A-qing in the interrogation, for the TV series is more centered on A-qing as the narrator. The police officer asks A-qing, “〇號還是一號?” (literally as number zero or number one). In the English subtitle, the fansubbers render it as “Number zero or number one?” However, a line in bracket is added afterwards, “[The fuckee or the fucker?]”⁸. For the stage performance in 2014, the English subtitle for this line goes as “You... look like a number zero [The fuckee]. Aren't you?”⁹ It seems that the fansubbers for the TV series and for the stage performance make reference to Goldblatt’s translation; meanwhile, they want to present the local flavor of this labelling culture for different roles played by gay members in sex.

It can be easily seen that Goldblatt’s English translation of the literary piece shed light on the subtitle translations for the TV and stage adaptation of this story. With the time and space constraints marking audio-visual translation, the English subtitle production can be safely considered as cross-medium retranslation. The motives behind such retranslation are definitely different from retranslation in the traditional sense. The translators make reference to the previous, in this case, the established translation while producing the English subtitles for the Chinese artistic adaptations by incorporating the existing translation in their translation. Meanwhile, they also make use of the limited screen space to express their disagreement with the previous translation. In this case, the translation of culturally loaded camp terms serves as a good example.

Concluding Remarks

Through textual analysis, we can find out that paratextual devices like cover design, blurbs, translator’s notes and footnotes facilitate the translator’s “repositioning themselves, their readers and other participants in time and space” (Baker, *Translation and Conflict* 133). It is easy to see that translation is beyond linguistic transference. The mainstream ideology will show its influence on the translation, and translators, as well as other subjects involved in the production and

⁸ https://subcrystalboys.fandom.com/wiki/Episode_13#WikiaArticleComments last retrieved on 8 March 2020.

⁹ https://subcrystalboys.fandom.com/wiki/The_Play_Part_2 last retrieved on 8March 2020.

consumption of translation works, all play their roles in this publication, revising, reprint and cross-medium retranslation process. The translation of gay literature between Chinese and English serves as a good example, and the above analysis against Mona Baker's "reframing narrative" approach reveals the complexity of translation, reprints and cross-medium retranslation of gay-themed novels.

The filmic adaptation was accentuated as "powerfully erotic", though the literary piece is a clean one. The change of cover design for the first translation and the subsequent reprints in the USA and Hong Kong is in accordance with the positioning of the literary piece in different social and cultural contexts. The blurbs vary between the reprints for the social attitude towards homosexuality is evolving diachronically. The translation of the title from *The Outsiders/ Outcasts* to *Crystal Boys*, a labelling framing strategy by Mona Baker, shows how the sexual minority is defined and conceived in a different social space. The canonization of *Crystal Boys* sees its impact on subsequent artistic adaptation of the literary work into a TV series and a stage performance. The fansubbed subtitles from the TV and stage adaptation of this literary master piece also manifest the influence of the book translation by the first English translator, Howard Goldblatt, though their hesitation and attempt to challenge the established translation can be discerned in the textual traces. Through the English translation, the reprints in two cultural spaces, and the cyber fansubbing of the subtitles for the cross-medium adaptations, it can be summarized as "gayed translation" by Harvey (*Gay Community*, 158). As the above textual analysis reveals, the TV and the stage adaptations of the literary piece fully follow the lines in the original Chinese story. While the book translation by Howard Goldblatt is a full and to some extent gayed translation, the English subtitles for the two cross-medium productions can be safely assumed as retranslations. The subtitle translators acknowledge Goldblatt's work. On the one hand, they attempt to explicate cultural references, despite the time and space constraints imposed by subtitling, and accentuate the gay identities of the group of young people near the New Park. On the other hand, the influence of the book translation can be seen when the fansubbers keep Goldblatt's rendition in brackets while offering their interpretation and version in the English subtitles. The current case study offers a perspective on the tempo-spatial change as revealed by the reprints of the book translation and cross-medium retranslations as demonstrated by the subtitle translations for TV and stage adaptations.

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