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Translation of Humour in Literature

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Despite my best efforts to contact the copyright holders of “Café.Waiting.Love” by Giddens Ko (等一个人咖啡-九把刀) for permission to reproduce and translate their work, I received no response. I acknowledge, however, as their intellectual property the source-text extract reproduced here, for which they retain copyright.

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1. Abstract

The translation of humour has always posed a challenge to translators as they translate the various forms of humour that exist in text, as the ability to discern what is humorous in the culture of the target language would require an understanding of the said culture. With a focus on the translation of exaggeration and puns as the chosen type of humour portrayal, this paper sets out to discuss the challenges faced by translators when they are translating humour written by the author, taking into account the cultural references in the source text that is native to the society of the source language, and the strategies to be applied when translating said cultural references. The choice of strategy employed in the translation of the extract in this paper is the theory of functional equivalence, which according to Newmark (1988), is replacing a cultural word or reference in the source language with its equivalent in the target language, with the usage of transcription or “borrowing”, which according to Harvey (2000) is a reproduction or transliteration of the original term in certain cases where the cultural reference in the humour is understood by the readers of the translated text. In conclusion, the understanding of culture, whether that of the culture of the source text, or the culture that is being translated into, is important in the translation of humour. It is important for the translator to understand the culture of the society portrayed in the source text as that is the first step to recognising the humour portrayed by the author of the original text. The understanding of the culture of the society of the target reader is important as well as the translator would need to identify and have knowledge of what kind of humour is acceptable in the target reader’s society, as well as to know boundaries of what topics might be taboo or forbidden by the authorities, and to take note not to cross these boundaries.

2. Translation

No.	Source Text	Target Text
1	早上醒来，哥已经躺在床上睡得跟死猪一样。	When I wake in the morning, my brother is already lying on his bed, dead to the world.
2	哥不只要打工存一笔钱好还就学贷款，他还想买一台二手汽车练开，他说老是开朋友的不好意思，而且万一撞坏了什么又要修又要道歉的，还不如买台自己的车来得心安理得。所以周末的哥似乎跟我没有交集，想想他也是满凄惨。	He works a part time job not only to pay off his student loans, but to also buy a second hand car. He says it's because he feels embarrassed borrowing his friend's car too often, and worries about the trouble that will happen if he gets into an accident. That's why I have almost no interaction with him on weekends. Sometimes I pity him.
3	我走到楼下，妈跟爸正在客厅里做家庭手工。	Mum and Dad are in the living room when I walk downstairs.
4	“小妹，你交男朋友了吼！”爸开玩笑说。	“I see you have got yourself a boyfriend!” Dad jokes.
5	“乱讲。”我打开冰箱，将鲜奶倒在杯子里当早餐。	“Rubbish,” I reply as I open the refrigerator, pouring a glass of milk as breakfast.
6	“你自己开门看看，你的男朋友送礼物来了。”妈也笑得很奇怪。	“Open the door and look for yourself. Your boyfriend has left a present,” Mum smirks.
7	“一大早就怪怪的，又不是辛普森家庭还是阿达一族。”我拿着玻璃杯边喝边走到门口，打开。	“What's with this weirdness early in the morning? It's not as if we're the Simpsons or the Addams Family.” I walk to the door sipping from my glass, and open it.
8	我那老旧的脚踏车好端端停在家门口。	My old bicycle is parked nicely outside the door.
9	我蹲下检视，不用说，轮胎也换了新的。	I squat to examine it, and find new tyres, of course.
10	“啊？这是怎么一回事？”我随即想到阿拓，那家伙该不会精力旺盛到帮我将脚踏车修好骑回来吧？十分可疑，尤其昨晚还刻意问我家是哪栋。	“What's going on?” I suddenly think of A-Tuo. It could not be that that fellow had too much energy to repair my bicycle and ride it back, could it? He's the most suspicious, especially since he made it a point to ask about where I stay last night.
11	问题是，我上锁了耶！	But I locked my bicycle!
12	“那个咖啡店的熟客对我们家女儿有意思吼！”爸跟妈说，声音很大。	“That regular from the café has his eyes on our daughter!” Dad says very loudly to Mum.

No.	Source Text	Target Text
13	“现在的年轻人真是管不住，乱浪漫的耶。”妈回答爸，真是双簧。	“Youngsters these days are uncontrollable, how romantic,” Mum replies Dad, singing the same tune.
14	我又好气又好笑，但阿拓帮我将脚踏车骑回来还真省了我不少麻烦。	I feel both exasperated and tickled, but cannot deny that A-Tuo has saved me a lot of trouble by riding my bicycle back.
15	傍晚阿拓骑机车在 NET 接我时，我先是谢谢他，然后开始怪他怎么那么无聊。	In the evening when A-Tuo picks me up on his motorcycle, I thank him first, then start to complain about him being silly.
16	他的回答很简单，就是他刚开学闲着也是闲着，又有在睡前运动的习惯，于是昨天深夜就将脚踏车牵到认识的车店前，贴上纸条说要换新轮胎，一大早，阿拓就帮我将它骑到我家门口，然后坐公车回住处。	He simply answers that he had nothing better to do since the semester had just started, and he has a habit of exercising before bed. That was why he took my bicycle to a shop where he was familiar with in the middle of the night, and left a note to change the tyres. The next morning, he rode the bicycle to my house, and took the bus back home.
17	“认识的车店？贴个贴纸？”我不信，贴着贴纸人家就自动将车修好？	“A shop you are familiar with? Left a note?” I was incredulous. Would anybody automatically repair a bicycle just because of a note?
18	“是啊，我会开脚踏车锁也是他们教的，很简单，你想学可以教你。”	“Yes. They also taught me to pick the lock on bicycles. It’s really simple, I can teach you if you want.”
19	阿拓讲话很耿直很理所当然，但我还是觉的很奇怪。	A-Tuo says this with a straight face, as if it was the most normal thing in the world, but I still find the situation suspicious.
20	十分钟后，阿拓载着我穿过地下道、骑进一条小巷，然后又转进一条小巷中的小巷。最后停在一间半自动洗衣店外。	Ten minutes later, A-Tuo drives through a tunnel, and turns into a small alley, before turning into an even smaller alley. He finally stops at a self-service laundromat.
21	我终于知道谁是金刀婶。	I finally get to meet Mrs Gold Knife.
22	“阿拓！来洗衣服还是来吃饭！”	“A-Tuo! Are you here to do the laundry or have a meal!”
23	金刀婶的嗓门很大，模样像女子监狱里的典狱长。	Mrs Gold Knife has a loud and booming voice, the epitome of a warden in a female prison.
24	“金刀婶！今天礼拜天！你不会告诉我你不开炉吧！”	“Mrs Gold Knife! It’s Sunday! Don’t tell me you did not cook!”
25	阿拓的嗓门跟着大了起来，笑着。	A-Tuo raises his voice to match hers, smiling.
26	“亏你还记得，口福不小啊你，咦？你旁边的女生是？”	“Trust you to remember, you’re in for a treat. Who’s this girl beside you?”

No.	Source Text	Target Text
27	金刀婶露出一口金光闪闪的金牙，好奇地乱摸我的头。	Mrs Gold Knife smiles, showing off her shiny teeth, and pats my head curiously.
28	“我朋友，刚刚认识不久，叫思莹。”	“My friend, we met not long ago. Her name is Siying.”
29	阿拓用力拍拍我的肩膀，我感觉到阿拓的内力快将我震散了。	A-Tuo slaps me on the shoulder, and I feel as if my body is breaking apart from his inner strength.
30	“思念的思，萤火虫的莹。”我补充，虽然我的灵魂完全傻了。	Still reeling from the pain, I manage to mumble a greeting.
31	金刀婶是一间洗衣店的老板娘。	Mrs Gold Knife is the lady boss of a laundromat.
32	是的，很抱歉你没有听错，我们要去一间洗衣店里吃饭我简直吓坏了。	No, you are not hearing things. I'm also shocked that we are going to a laundromat for dinner.
33	“那你跟你女朋友帮我顾一下店，我那死鬼还没回来，真不给老娘面子。”金刀婶接着随口干骂了几句后就一个人走上楼，留下嗡嗡不绝于耳的立体循环洗衣机响。	“You and your girlfriend can help me watch the shop. My useless old man is not back yet, how disrespectful.” Mrs Gold Knife follows this with a string of vulgarities before walking up the stairs, leaving us with the incessant hum of the washing machines, in surround sound.
34	“阿拓？”我的表情应该很呆很呆。	“A-Tuo?” I'm dumbfounded.
35	“嗯？”阿拓的表情却像刚登陆月球的阿姆斯壮，我看他是皮在痒。	“Yes?” A-Tuo expression is that of what I imagined Neil Armstrong's to be during the first lunar landing. I feel like punching him.
36	“在洗衣店？你要请我在洗衣店吃晚饭？”我抓着阿拓的肩膀用力摇着，想把他的脑筋摇回正常人的频道。	“At a laundromat? You are treating me to dinner at a laundromat?” I grab A-Tuo's shoulders and shake him hard, hoping to shake some sense back into him.
37	我本来以为今天晚上应该可以去斗牛士或龙德罗莎之类的地方吃顿大餐，毕竟再造之恩是多么的珍贵，搞不好还有大饭店的高级料理可以享用，最差最差，至少也要有贵族世家或爸爸饿我饿我饿的达美乐吧？	I was expecting a fancy meal involving steak for dinner, seeing how as he owed me for saving his life, and of course that is very important. It should have been a treat at a big restaurant with fine dining, or at the very least a high class pizzeria.
38	“不是洗衣店！是金刀婶！”阿拓的表情不只是得意，还笑得跟拿到同花顺的周星驰一样。	“It's not a laundromat! It's Mrs Gold Knife!” A-Tuo gives a self-satisfied smirk, like a gambler who drew a winning hand.
39	“嗯，金刀婶。”我的脸上一定挂满斜线，差点没比出大拇指。	“Right, Mrs Gold Knife.” I sarcastically repeat, just stopping short of giving a thumbs up.

No.	Source Text	Target Text
40	“厨艺新竹无双，二十年前号称香厨美人的金刀婶~~”阿拓大叫，差点没从口袋掏出同花打不打得过葫芦的同花顺。	“Mrs Gold Knife, known for being a beautiful chef twenty years ago, has the best cooking skills in town!” A-Tuo hollers, and I can almost see him waving his full house in my face.
41	我跟阿拓就在洗衣店里瞎顾了四十分钟的店，老实说我的脑袋一直被洗衣机震耳欲聋的嗡嗡声搞得昏头转向，但阿拓却开始跟我聊一些外星人的事，坦白说我不是相信这个世界有外星人，所以我的头只有更昏了。	We stay aimlessly in the laundromat for forty minutes, and the continuous hum of the washing machines is making me giddy. A-Tuo chooses this time to strike up a conversation about aliens. To tell you the truth, I do not believe that aliens exist, and this topic only worsens my giddiness.
42	“你相信这个世界上真的有这种事吗？我以前有个邻居整天都在说他的身边总是有各式各样的外星人走来走去，我一开始当然是不相信啦，但他还是像布谷鸟一样说个没完，长得跟麦当劳蛋卷冰淇淋一样的蛋卷星人啦，打扮得跟消防队一样的消防星人啦，喜欢送人生日礼物的西瓜星人啦，眼花缭乱，说得我头都昏了。”阿拓叹口气，但眼神可是很得意：“不过我最后还是信了。”	“Do you believe that aliens really do exist? I used to have a neighbour who always talked about aliens that lived among us. I didn’t believe him at first, but he kept at it like a parrot. There was an alien from Planet Waffle that looked like a McDonald’s ice cream cone, one that looked like a fire fighter from Planet Fire Control, and a Planet Melon alien that liked to give out birthday presents. Too many to count,” A-Tuo sighs, but his eyes tell that he is pleased. “But I believed him.”
43	“你真是善良。”我拍拍阿拓的肩膀，虽然我也很善良愿意听他瞎扯。	“You’re too kind,” I pat him on the shoulder, although I’m thinking that I am also too kind to listen to his nonsense.
44	不久后金刀婶口中的死鬼老公回来了，看到我这个新面孔似乎很高兴，爽快地关了店，吆喝着一起吃顿晚饭吧！	Not long later, Mrs Gold Knife’s useless old man of a husband returns. He seemed happy to see a new face, and readily closes up the shop, yelling for us to join in for dinner.
45	“今天就只有我跟我朋友要来吗？”阿拓想阻止金刀婶的老公拉下铁门。	“Is it only me and my friend today?” A-Tuo tries to prevent Mrs Gold Knife’s husband from pulling down the shutters.
46	“还有铁头啊，不过铁头有钥匙会自己开门啦！”金刀先生无所谓。	“Iron Head will be joining us, but he has his own set of keys and will let himself in.” Mr Gold Knife shrugs it off.
47	“谁是铁头啊？”我随口问。	“Who is Iron Head?” I ask in passing.
48	“还有哪个铁头？当然素少林寺卡拉OK那个铁头！”金刀先生嘻嘻，我投降。	“There’s only one! The Iron Head from Shaolin Karaoke!” Mr Gold Knife laughs as I surrender to his sense of humour.
49	走到洗衣店二楼，摆设跟一楼的气氛相差很多，着实让我惊异不已。	We walk to the second floor of the laundromat, and the stark difference in decoration leaves me amazed.

No.	Source Text	Target Text
50	深色实木地板，两组在墙上投射出鹅黄温暖的卤素灯，一张厚实的椭圆核桃木桌，一幅似乎是小孩子在嬉闹中涂鸦的巨画悬吊在天花板上。	The floor is made from dark solid wood, two halogen lamps emitting a warm yellow glow on the walls, a solid oval table made from walnut, and a huge painting on the ceiling that looks as if it was doodled by a child during playtime.
51	简单的摆设，简单的气氛。	Simple furnishing, simple atmosphere.
52	还有最重要的，五个闪闪发亮银色餐盘盖还有几组排放整齐的欧式餐具。	And the most important of all, five shiny silver cloches, and a few set of properly arranged European cutlery.
53	“这么讲究？”我啧啧称奇。	“So exquisite?” I am amazed.
54	“当然讲究，金刀婶一个礼拜就开这么一次炉，其他的时间都是金刀桑胡乱煮的，那东西不能吃的。”阿拓说，帮我拉开椅子，算他还有点绅士风度。	“Of course we need to be exquisite, Mrs Gold Knife only cooks once a week. Mr Gold Knife is in charge of cooking for the rest of the week, but his cooking leaves much to be desired,” A-Tuo says as he pulls out a chair for me. Can’t fault him for his chivalry.
55	“别等铁头了我们先开动，哈哈！”金刀桑嘻嘻，拿着汤匙猛敲餐盖。	“Let’s not wait for Iron Head, it’s time to eat!” Mr Gold Knife laughs as he picks up the spoon and raps impatiently on the cloche.
56	金刀婶穿着白色的围裙走出厨房，手里拿着一瓶红酒，笑得比弥勒佛还弥勒佛。	Mrs Gold Knife walks out of the kitchen with a white apron around her waist, and a bottle of red wine in her hand. She is smiling compassionately, as if she can help us attain enlightenment.
57	“等不及啦？都二十年了，还是一样等不及。”金刀婶风情万种地笑着，还神不知鬼不觉上了眼影。	“You can’t wait? Even after twenty years you are just as impatient,” Mrs Gold Knife smiles flirtatiously. She has even put on some eye shadow without us noticing.
58	“你的菜跟你的人一样，二十年的陈年佳肴，风情不减呐~”金刀桑深情款款，我全身起鸡皮疙瘩。	“Your cooking is like your person, the temptation has not reduced although twenty years have passed,” Mr Gold Knife replies passionately, and I can feel goose bumps forming on my whole body.
59	好一对恶死人不偿命的夫妻拍档！	The perfect example of a nauseating married couple.
60	“今天是什么菜！可不能让我的朋友失望啊！”阿拓拍拍手，我勉强露出很期待的表情。	“What dishes are there today? We cannot disappoint my friend!” A-Tuo claps his hands, as I try to put on my most anticipating expression.
61	“好小子，老娘的菜什么时候让你失望啦？”金刀婶哼哼怪笑，然后一一掀开罩住美食的银色锅盖。	“You little rascal. When has my cooking ever disappointed you?” Mrs Gold Knives snorts as she lifts the cloches one by one to reveal the food.

No.	Source Text	Target Text
62	第一道菜，鲜艳夺目，我感觉到我的瞳孔快速缩小的声音。	The first dish has bright and eye-catching colours, and I can almost hear the sound of my pupils shrinking rapidly.
63	七种水果依五色的五行位置摆放，剁碎的鸡肉和着马铃薯泥为底。	Seven types of fruit are arranged according to the colours corresponding to the five-element theory of Chinese philosophy, with minced chicken meat mixed with mashed potatoes as the base.
64	“五彩缤纷之七果迎鸡宾奇幻大拼盘！”阿拓兴奋地大叫。	“Splashes of Colour – Seven Fruits Welcome a Feathered Guest Fantasy Platter!” A-Tuo exclaims excitedly.
65	金刀婶跟金刀桑的双手在头顶上比了个圈，表示答对。	The Gold Knife couple raise their hands above their heads in a circle, signalling that he is correct.
66	第二道菜，香气滚滚，我的嗅觉一瞬就被征服，连手指都感到酥麻。	The second dish smells so heavenly that my sense of smell is immediately conquered, and I feel numbness in my fingertips.
67	半只鸡被肢解得死有应得，与一只同样死得其所的吴郭鱼依太极图摆放，香气饱满、如海浪般波涛汹涌。	Half a chicken expertly dismembered, arranged next to a similarly expertly prepared tilapia in a Yin-Yang symbol. The aroma crashes over me like waves on the beach.
68	“等等！居然是十香软筋散指铁鸡斗吴郭！”	“Wait a moment! That is actually Muscle-Relaxing Aromatic Iron Chicken versus Tilapia!”
69	阿拓啧啧称奇，好像有十年没吃到这道名字怪力乱神的好菜。	A-Tuo is amazed, as if he hasn't eaten this incredible dish with a mind blowing name in ten years.
70	第三道菜，浓郁厚实，光用眼睛就能品尝出藏在香浓背后层层鲜滑诱惑。	The third dish is rich and intense, as if I could taste the layers of temptation hidden behind the richness just by looking at it.
71	我看那彩色是烤羊小排或牛小排淋上绿色的酱汁，以及青蔬菜果。	Going by the colour, it looks like grilled lamb or beef short ribs with a green gravy, and green vegetables on the side.
72	“今天真是有口福，思莹，你猜猜这道菜的名字？”阿拓邀我一猜，可惜我没有瞎掰的天分。	“We're in for a treat. Siying, why don't you guess the name of this dish?” A-Tuo invites me to make a guess, and I regret my lack of wit.
73	“我瞧是青海无上师之三羊开泰。”我居然说出自以为搞笑的话。	“Looks to me like Lambs Frolicking on the Grass in Spring.” I surprise myself by saying something that even I find hilarious.
74	“很接近了，是爱情青红灯之要青不要红首部曲，羊女的一生。”	“That's close. It's The Life of the Lamb, Waiting for the Signal to Love.”
75	金刀桑嘉许我，可惜我很努力思考也想不出这两道菜名为何很接近。	Mr Gold Knife praises me, but I cannot see how the two names are even close.

No.	Source Text	Target Text
76	第四道菜，锐气千条，我光用膝盖想也清楚铁定是道武林豪宴必选之菜。	The fourth dish is full of spirit, and even I can guess that it would be the first choice for a feast for practitioners of martial arts.
77	鲜笋森然罗列，白酱行云流水，四季豆与红萝卜依天罡北斗阵护法其中。	Fresh bamboo shoots in a cloud of white sauce, green beans and carrots surrounding it, arranged in a martial arts formation.
78	“厉害，厉害，真不愧是万水千山纵横之笋人笋己。”	“Wow, formidable. That definitely lives up to its name of Shoots in the Mouth To Conquer the World.”
79	一个光头佬拍手，从楼下踏步走上来。	A bald man walks up the stairs while clapping.
80	“你越来越厉害喔！居然不用看也可以闻得出来！”	“You have improved! Now you can even guess the dish just by smell alone!”
81	阿拓看着光头佬，他一定是那个叫铁头又拥有金刀家钥匙的神秘男人。	A-Tuo looks towards the bald man. He must be the one they call Iron Head, the mysterious man who has the keys to the Gold Knife house.
82	“好说，少林寺武功一法通万法通，全身百穴都通通，鼻子也通通。”	“Once you master Shaolin martial arts, it enhances your whole body, even the nose is upgraded.”
83	铁头朗声，差点没拈花微笑。他坐在我的身边，向我友善一笑。	Iron Head says, showing his zen mode. He sits beside me and flashes me a friendly smile.
84	我也笑笑，真想推荐鼻子好的他给另外一个鼻子好的阿不思认识认识、切磋切磋。	I return the smile, and am tempted to introduce him to the A Bu-Si, the other person I know with a good sense of smell.
85	依据归纳法则，鼻子奇好的人都是拥有特异功能的奇才，例如铁头、阿不思，还有大名鼎鼎的楚留香，也许我该去薰薰或是蒸蒸我的鼻子，看看大学能不能考好点。	According to induction law, people with a keen sense of smell are geniuses with enhanced capabilities, like Iron Head, A Bu-Si. Maybe I should train my nose and see whether I get better grades in University.
86	“第五道菜，谁说得出名字，老娘今天晚上不收他的钱！”	“For the fifth dish, I will feed the person who can guess the name for free today!”
87	金刀婶自己拿起汤匙敲敲锅盖，我们做出拭目以待的表情。	Mrs Gold Knife picks up a spoon and raps on the cloche, as we look on in anticipation.
88	锅盖掀开，是一盆汤。	The cloche reveals a bowl of soup.
89	汤水极为清澈，颜色却带着一抹火红，番茄与鳗身悠闲地交缠在一起。那鳗似乎在微笑，大概很满意有番茄陪葬。	The soup is clear, but there is a tinge of red to its colour, and bits of tomatoes and eels mingle with each other. I can imagine the eels grinning, as if they were happy that the tomatoes suffered the same fate.

No.	Source Text	Target Text
90	铁头面有难色，不断摇头。阿拓沉吟不决，眼睛时大时小。	Iron Head shakes his head in dismay. A-Tuo sighs frequently as he squints at the dish.
91	“我猜猜，番茄与鳗鱼之天人永隔不伦恋？”铁头咬着手指，不伦不类的答案。	“Let me guess. The Forbidden Love of Tomatoes and Eels?” Iron Head bites at his fingers as he gives a nonsensical guess.
92	“让我试试，应该叫愤怒的番茄之鳗不讲理！”阿拓振振有辞，这是我看他最有主见的表情。	“Let me guess! It should be called Angry Tomatoes, Unreasonable Eels!” A-Tuo speaks forcefully, this is the most decisive I have ever seen him.
93	可惜我看不出番茄到底是哪里愤怒了。	Pity I cannot see how the tomatoes are angry.
94	“依我看，鳗身依旧在，几度夕阳红？”我也不甘示弱。	“Looks to me to be The H-eels Remain Despite the Passing of Time,” I try my luck as well.
95	“答对了！就是鳗身依旧在，几度夕阳红啊！”金刀婶尖叫，金刀桑拍手叫好。	“That’s right! It’s The H-eels Remain Despite the Passing of Time!” Mrs Gold Knife shrieks as Mr Gold Knife claps.
96	我却吓呆了，这一定是灵异事件！	I’m in shock, this cannot be real.
97	“大家开动吧！今天晚上的心情实在是太好了！”在金刀婶爽朗的笑声中，我们愉快地动手用餐，我更因为答对了天花乱坠的菜名而兴奋不已。	“Let’s eat! I’m really happy today!” With Mrs Gold Knife’s hearty laugh, we happily start on dinner. Compared to dinner, I’m even more thrilled that I was able to guess the name of the dish.
98	“对了，金刀婶，你怎么能做出这么棒的菜啊，简直跟大厨师没两样。”我用叉子戳了一大坨鸡肉沙拉到盘子里，开心地说。	“Mrs Gold Knife, how come you can cook so well? Your cooking is comparable to the standards of professional chefs.” I ask as I scoop a large portion of the chicken salad into my bowl with my chopsticks.
99	今天晚上到洗衣店吃饭，真是件很奇妙的事哩。	Tonight’s dinner at the laundromat is definitely one to remember.
100	“大厨师？金刀婶比大厨师还要厉害多啦！光是从菜名就知一个人创意的深浅，当厨师是很讲究灵感的！”阿拓义务讲解，帮我倒了点未成年少女不宜的开胃红酒。	“Professional chefs? Mrs Gold Knife can cook circles around them! You can tell the depth of a person’s creativity from the name of their dishes. Creativity is of utmost importance to chefs!” A-Tuo explains as he pours red wine for me despite me being underage.
101	“这是真的，我老婆是最棒的，要不是她嫁给了我这个开洗衣店的，现在不知道在哪一间五星级饭店当大厨咧！我们要吃这一顿饭，可得花上万把块不只！”金刀桑含情脉	“That’s true, my wife is the best. If it wasn’t for her marrying me, the owner of a laundromat, she would definitely be the head chef of a five star hotel! And we would have to pay through our teeth to eat this meal!” Mr Gold Knife recounts

No.	Source Text	Target Text
	脉地看着一旁的金刀婶，开始说着恶心的往事。	their romantic past as he stares at Mrs Gold Knife lovingly.
102	原来金刀婶二十多年前可是新竹美食界响叮当的人物，手艺无双，容貌也号称无双，在知名的国宾大饭店里当厨师，饭店还打算出资送她去日本进修学料理。	Actually Mrs Gold Knife was well known in the culinary world twenty years ago. She had incomparable skills, as well as incomparable beauty, and was a chef in a well-known hotel. The hotel was even planning to pay for her to improve her cooking skills in Japan.
103	但金刀桑，原本是个送瓦斯的临时工，每星期总要跑三次饭店厨房，早爱慕她已久，却苦苦没有表达的机会。	But Mr Gold Knife used to be a temporary worker delivering gas. He had to deliver gas to the hotel kitchen three times a week, and already had a crush on her, but was unable to find the right opportunity to let her know.
104	有一天，金刀桑又送瓦斯到饭店厨房，看见她剁菜忙不过来，一回想，好像她常因为剁菜花了不少辛苦时间。于是金刀桑回去后，邮购买了把金门出产的绝世好刀苦练飞快剁菜的技巧，等待大显身手的关键时刻。	One day, as Mr Gold Knife was making the gas delivery, he saw her very busy chopping the ingredients. He recalled that she always spent a lot of time and effort chopping and preparing the ingredients. When he left, Mr Gold Knife purchased the best knife in the market and honed his chopping skills, to wait for the perfect time to show off his talent.
105	天可怜见，终于金刀桑等到了这天，她在厨房忙得焦头烂额，于是他义无反顾将肩上瓦斯桶放下，亮出家伙在厨房里快刀斩乱麻秋风扫落叶，什么菜都给他摆平了。	The heavens took mercy on him, and Mr Gold Knife finally got his opportunity when he once again saw her swamped with preparation work. Without another word, he put down the gas cylinder on his shoulders, and started chopping the ingredients.
106	“我的名字，为了你，从今天起叫金刀。”	“My name, for your sake, from today will henceforth be known as Gold Knife.”
107	“金刀？好杀气的名字。”	“Gold Knife? What a vicious sounding name.”
108	“是的，为了你，我再多一点杀气也甘之如饴。”	“Yes, for you, I am willing to be as vicious as needed.”
109	“刀，吃过我做的菜吗？”	“Knife, have you tried my cooking?”
110	“我穷，吃不起，但总有一天我会存够钱，等我。”	“I’m poor and cannot afford to, but I will save up enough one day. Wait for me.”
111	“不必等，我去你家做给你吃。” 从那天起，她的名字就叫金刀婶。	“No need to wait, I’ll cook for you at your house.” From that day, she was known as Mrs Gold Knife.
112	她挥别大饭店，走进一名瓦斯工人的小厨房，几年后，瓦斯工人开了	She left behind the big hotel, to walk into the small kitchen of a gas delivery man. Years later, the gas delivery man opened

No.	Source Text	Target Text
	间洗衣店，她则升格当了老板娘，还有两个孩子的妈。	a laundromat, and she became a lady boss, as well as the mother of two children.
113	真够浪漫，真够扯。	So romantic, so ridiculous.
114	“其实我受够了大饭店的油烟，哎，你们都不知道每天要煮菜的痛苦，一点都不享受做菜的乐趣，呛都呛死了，人老得多快！青春比什么都重要喔——”金刀婶慢条斯理为吴郭鱼挑刺，说：“更重要的是，那些付钱请我做菜的人总以为他们的回报就是钱，却不肯让老娘自己取名字？妈啦！老娘为什么不可以替自己的儿子女儿取名字？没道理嘛！就这么跳槽到这死鬼的厨房来啦！”	“Actually, I had had enough of the oily smoke in the hotel. You can never imagine the pain of having to cook every day. There is no more joy in cooking. You choke on the smoke, and you age quickly. Youth is the most important thing in the world...” Mrs Gold Knife picks at the bones of the tilapia slowly and says, “The most important thing was those people that paid me to cook thought paying me with money is enough, and never let me come up with names for my own dishes. Shit! How can they not allow me to name my own babies? It just didn’t make sense! So I jumped ship to cook in this old man’s kitchen!”
115	“嘻嘻，所以我都马让我的亲亲老婆取菜名，然后再一个一个背起来。”金刀桑怪里怪气地笑着。	“That’s why I always let my darling wife come up with the names for her dishes, and I make sure to remember them,” Mr Gold Knife laughs strangely.
116	我也哈哈大笑，真是有趣的故事。	I go along with the laughter. It’s an amusing story.
117	金刀婶喜欢料理美食，又怕油烟，所以一星期只开一次炉，其他的时间不是叫外卖就是由金刀桑随便下个面，而金刀婶的厨艺享名少数几个饕客兼洗衣客之中，例如铁头。不分贫富贵贱，只要熟客付个三百块基本的食材费，就可以搭上一周一次、在洗衣店楼上秘密举行的豪华飨宴。	Mrs Gold Knife loves to cook, but hates the smoke, so she only cooks once a week. The rest of the time, they get take out, or Mr Gold Knife simply cooks some noodles. Mrs Gold Knife’s culinary skills are well known among the handful of customers of the laundromat who are also foodies, like Iron Head. Regardless of status or wealth, regular customers only have to pay for the basic ingredient cost to join in the weekly secret banquet held on the second floor of the laundromat.
118	“很好吃耶，好吃到我都快流下赞叹的眼泪了。”	“This is so good, so good that I am about to be moved to tears.”
119	我竖起大拇指，然后猛嗑佳肴。	I give a thumbs up before continuing my attack on the delicious food.
120	“好吃就多吃点啊！阿拓，帮人家夹菜啊！”	“Eat more if it’s delicious! A-Tuo, help her get more food!”

No.	Source Text	Target Text
121	金刀桑用汤匙敲阿拓的头，阿拓赶紧帮我夹一块羊小排。	Mr Gold Knife raps A-Tuo's head with his spoon, and A-Tuo hurriedly puts a piece of lamb short ribs into my bowl.
122	“这次居然能尝到前所未有的新菜色，真是好口福。”	“We're very lucky to be able to taste this new dish.”
123	铁头露出一口菜渣卡得到处都是的牙齿，幸福地笑着。	Iron head smiles contentedly, showing a mouthful of food stuck between his teeth.
124	吃吃喝喝，再配上乱七八糟的谈话，这顿神奇的晚餐大概吃了一个小时半才结束，从聊天中我知道了金刀婶的两个儿子在两年前都到外地念书，一个去高雄餐饮学校接受磨练，一个则在台大念书，都是令两老相当骄傲的家伙。	Eating and drinking, as well as a lot of random conversation, we took around an hour and a half to finish this amazing dinner. From our conversation, I learnt that Mrs Gold Knife's both sons had left the town to study abroad, one was at a culinary school honing his skills, and another was studying at a top university. Two sons to be proud of.
125	我也知道了阿拓为什么知道这里的原因。	I also found out the reason A-Tuo knew about this place.
126	“阿拓啊，他是个热心过头的家伙，平常他来洗衣服的时候就会跟我抬杠啦，哎哎有一天他拿了件羽毛衣来洗，楼下的电视正好坏掉，他看见我在那里乱拍乱搞的，阿拓就很阿莎力说这种小东西交给他行了，果然他把电视抱走后，隔天再抱回来就好啦，就这样熟了起来。”金刀桑说起阿拓时，表情可是称赞到极点。	“A-Tuo, he's a guy who is sometimes too enthusiastic. Normally when he comes to do his laundry he likes to talk to me, and one day when he brought a down jacket to wash, the television on the first floor was not working. When he saw me messing around with it, he said that he could manage such a small issue. He took away the television, and it was working again when he brought it back the next day.” Mr Gold Knife is full of praises for A-Tuo, and his face shows it.
127	“阿拓你会修电器哦？”我随口问问。	“A-Tuo, you can repair electronics?” I ask offhandedly.
128	“不会啊，那是开租书店的两撇修的，他什么都马会修，超厉害。”阿拓说，听得我一愣一愣的。	“I can't, it was repaired by the boss of the book rental shop. He can repair anything, he's amazing.” A-Tuo's reply surprises me.
129	“阿拓你才厉害，有谁会知道一个开漫书店的老板很会修电器？”金刀婶帮阿拓夹了一块鲜笋。	“A-Tuo you are the amazing one. Who would guess that the boss of a book rental shop can repair electronics?” Mrs Gold Knife serves A-Tuo a piece of bamboo shoot.
130	是的，阿拓最厉害，谁会知道洗衣店楼上会有这样的美食。	Yes, A-Tuo is the best. Who would have guessed that the upper floor of a laundromat would have such good food?

No.	Source Text	Target Text
131	吃饭的过程里让我最高兴的是，老板娘并没有因为煮了精致丰盛的大餐而定下许多繁文缛节，例如应该先吃什么菜还是红酒应该什么时候喝等，一切都让我们吃得随兴自由，愉快得很。	The best thing about the whole meal was that despite cooking such a scrumptious feast, the lady boss did not set any rules like the order in which the dishes should be eaten, or when the time to sip the red wine was. Everything was casual and left to us to decide, and that made the meal enjoyable.

3. Introduction

According to the Cambridge dictionary, the definition of humour¹ is the ability to find things funny, the way in which people see that some things are funny, or the quality of being funny. However, different people have different notions of what they find funny, and this is especially so when the people are from different cultures. Even when speaking the same language, people of different cultures react differently to humour. This poses a challenge to translators as they translate the various forms of humour that exist in text, as the consideration of what is humorous in the culture of the target language would require an understanding of the said culture.

This paper will discuss the challenges of translating humour written by the author to allow the target audience to react in the same way as when readers of the source language when reading the original text. It will take into account the cultural references in the source text that is native to the society of the source language, and the strategies to be applied when translating said cultural references. At the same time, the paper will also discuss whether the culture of the readers of the translated text is relevant to their understanding and appreciation of the humour in the translated text, and whether similar cultural references should be used to replace the ones that exist in the source text to adequately portray the humour in the translation.

As a basis for the above discussion, an extract from “Café.Waiting.Love” by Giddens Ko (等一个人咖啡-九把刀) has been translated, and examples from this translation will be used in bringing to attention the cultural differences of the target audience of the translation that have to be taken into account as compared to readers of the original work, and the attempts to integrate these cultural differences into the translation that will be accepted and deemed as funny by the readers of the English translated text.

¹ Humour. In *dictionary.cambridge.org*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/humour>

4. Literature Review

Humour is a concept of the tendency of particular cognitive experiences to induce laughter and deliver amusement. According to Chiaro (2010), the term humour is derived from a medical term used by the ancient Greeks, which taught that the balance of fluids in the human body, known as humours (which means body fluids in Latin), is controlled by human health and emotion.

People all respond to humour. Most people are able to experience humour, by being amused, or to smile and laugh at something funny. This is what is known as having a sense of humour. The extent of which a person finds something humorous depends on many factors, which include geographical location, culture, maturity, level of education, intelligence, and context.

According to Rothbart (1973), the response to humour is derived from the mere presence of incongruity. Katz (1993) developed a connectionist model of humour, which states that the response to humour is a presence of combination of incongruities and the personal relevance of the material, meaning the culture of the person that is exposed to said humour. Material that is found humorous must have something unexpected, illogical, or inappropriate, followed by a justification or reinterpretation of that incongruity.

Because there is a great number of different types of humour, for easy referencing, this paper will refer to a table presented in Berger's book "An Anatomy of Humor" (1998). In his book, Berger distinguishes four categories of humour, and classifies each technique of humour according to four groups: 1. *Language*. The humour is verbal. 2. *Logic*. The humour is ideational. 3. *Identity*. The humour is existential. 4. *Action*. The humour is physical or nonverbal.

Humour is well known as a challenge to translators. It is often deemed to be "untranslatable." According to Diot (1989) and Chiaro (2010), both come to the conclusion that translation of humour is equivalent, or even more difficult than the translation of poetry and song. This

untranslatability is generally related to cultural and linguistic aspects of humour in the source text.

According to Vandaele (2010), “The particular problem with humor translation is that humor relies on implicit knowledge. Moreover, groups may have different agreements on what or whom can be targeted in social play. In other words, humor depends on implicit cultural schemes (to be breached for incongruous purposes; to be known for the purpose of comical “solution”) and has its rules and taboos for targeting (telling what or whom may be laughed at)”. The cultural problem would thus be one that might be ethical or political, the translator might find humour that is assumed to be culturally unacceptable, or certain types of humour that might be censored or forbidden by the institution or authorities.

Humour is very discernible due to the physiological and physical correlations attributed to it, laughter, smiling, and arousal. This would mean that any translation failure would be therefore, very obvious and visible, because if no one laughs at the translated humour, it would mean that the translation, and therefore the translator has failed.

Bearing the cultural implications of translation of humour in mind, this paper will explore and explain the translation strategies used in a translation, from Chinese to English, of an extract of text full of humour in the form of exaggeration, and puns and wordplay.

5. About the Source Text

In this paper, the extract that has been chosen to be translated is from Chapter 6 of “Café.Waiting.Love” by Giddens Ko, pen name Jiubadao, which literally means nine knives (等一个人咖啡-九把刀).

5.1 About the Author

Giddens Ko Jing Teng was born 25 August in Changhua County, Taiwan. He started writing fictional stories when he realised his love for writing as he wrote a story as part of his university admission. Giddens Ko started his career as a writer by posting his works online. In the 17 years since he posted his first story in 2000, he has written an extensive number of books and stories, upwards of 70. He has written books in numerous genres, but is well known for horror, science fiction, and romance. He writes 5000 words daily, and at his peak writing pace published one book per month for 14 consecutive months. This led to his rise of popularity in the Taiwan online literary scene. Many of his books have been adapted into movies, television series, stage plays, and online games, with him doubling as the director of some of the movies as well. Giddens Ko is well known for his humour, engaging stories and interesting characters, mostly which are set in Taiwan itself, with many references in his works to the culture and practices of the people living in Taiwan. Although his works are famous, there have been no English translations as of yet.

5.2 About “Café.Waiting.Love”

The book “Café.Waiting.Love” was originally uploaded online chapter by chapter as a web novel. It was published in book form in 2004, with a re-release including movie stills and photos of the actors in 2010 to coincide with the movie adaptation with the same name. However, the movie was criticised by critics and the public alike, with them saying that the adaptation did not stay true to the stories and situations from the original book. A particular point of criticism was the extract of which the translation is discussed in the book, with an article on The Taipei Times² mentioning that “the subplots involving (...) Auntie Jindao (...) appear not fully integrated into the story, rending the film less focused and structured”, as well as a criticism of the humour portrayed in the movie adaptation, “jokes and characters are sometimes more stereotypical than organic”, bringing across the point of how important the interpretation and presentation of humour is in any adaptation, including translation.

² Yi, Ho (2014, August 15). *Movie Review: Café.Waiting.Love*. Retrieved from <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2014/08/15/2003597436>

The story of “Café.Waiting.Love” revolves around the main characters who are students in a university. The main protagonist Siying, the point of view of this character is of which the story is told, is a university freshman who works part time at a café. One of the characters she meets in the café is a professional barista with superb sense of smell who can make any type of coffee according to a customer’s order, A Bu-Si. This character is briefly mentioned in the extract that that translation has been done for, where Siying mentions A Bu-Si as one of the people who has a keen sense of smell and Siying looks up to as a genius.

The main male character A-Tuo is a well-known senior at the university where Siying studies at. When A-Tuo coincidentally visits the café with his friends, it transpires that the barista A Bu-Si is a lesbian who wooed his girlfriend away from him, leading to much mocking and teasing from his friends. Siying, who has a strong sense of justice, stands up for him and helps him out of the difficult situation, and the two of them eventually become friends after several encounters.

“Café.Waiting.Love” is included in the “Love” series of Giddens Ko’s writings, and it tells about the love story that occurs between the two leads, Siying and A-Tuo, and the other characters and situations that they encounter along the way to realise their mutual feelings for each other.

5.3 About the Extract

In the extract that has been translated as a basis for discussion in this paper, A-Tuo brings Siying to a laundromat to give her a dinner treat as a thank you for saving his life. At the laundromat, they meet characters Mr and Mrs Gold Knife, and Iron Head, who all have exaggerated characters and actions that bring about laughter and portray humour in the sense of absurdity. Exaggeration is a type of humour that is relative to the reader, facilitating the discussion of how culture has to be taken into consideration by the translator when translating this type of humour. Also, in the extract, there is an amazing usage of puns in the introduction of the dishes that have

been cooked, which brings about the challenge met by the translator during translation and facilitates the discussion on the theories that are used in the translation of puns and word play.

Given the above, this extract was chosen for translation as it would be a good example of discussion of the practical application of some of the theories of translation of humour that has been explored in the previous chapters. In addition, “Café.Waiting.Love” has only been translated into Korean and Malay, but has had an English name for promotion of the movie which was released in August 2014.

6. Translation Strategy

The strategy employed in the translation of this extract is the theory of functional equivalence, which according to Newmark (1988), is replacing a cultural word or reference in the source language with its equivalent in the target language. This takes into consideration previous discussions by Nida (1964) with regards to the theory of dynamic equivalence, which aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his own culture; it does not insist that he understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message.

Also, taken into consideration for the translation strategy are points raised by Vandaele (2010), where he states that “The appreciation of humour varies individually”, and that “the comprehension and appreciation of humour and humour production are two distinct skills; translators may experience its compelling effect on themselves and others, but feel unable to reproduce it”. In this vein, it must be noted that the understanding of the culture in which the humour is portrayed is of utmost importance to be able to translate it such that the same humour is able to be experienced by readers of the translated text, hence much research is conducted into the cultural references that are mentioned in the source text, to ensure that there is a deeper understanding of the cultural implications that affect the portrayal of humour before the actual translation is done.

The story is told from the point of view of the main female protagonist in the story who is a university student, hence a lot of the language used is simple, and used commonly in daily conversation. As a general rule when translating the chapter, because the original text used simple language to bring across the message, the strategy used was to try to keep to uncomplicated English grammar and word usage as well as to use language that is frequently used in daily conversation, to keep the feeling of reading the text the same. Examples of this include simple statements such as “Mum and Dad are in the living room when I walk downstairs”, which set the tone of the passage throughout.

The present tense is used primarily when translating the chapter. Chinese does not have grammatical markers of tense, and the time at which the action is conceived as taking place can be indicated by expressions of time or may simply be inferred from the context. As the translator, to me, when I was reading the book, I felt that the actions and situations were unfolding in front of my eyes, and sometimes, the narrator was directly talking to me, therefore the conscious choice to use present tense when translating the chapter to English language. The present tense indicates that an action is present, now, relative to the writer, or reader, and this was done to bring across the same feeling to the readers of the English translation.

In general, for the translation, whenever a reference is made that will only be known to Taiwanese readers living in the same environment of the setting of the story, or having the same cultural values, the text has been translated such that these references have been left out of the translation or replace with a similar reference in the target language, so that the reader of the translated text will be able to understand without the need for further explanation. There is also another alternative of using notes at the bottom of the page to explain the translation if the cultural reference is retained in the translated text, which Newmark (1988) defines as “additional information in the translation”. However, there have been many theoreticians of translation that regard it as something that should be avoided. I too am of the same view that there is no point of explaining something that is supposed to be humorous to someone who does not understand and thus does not find it humorous, therefore it is to be noted that the translation avoided the usage of annotations and additional notes. Some examples of such omissions in the translated text and their explanations as follows.

Original text: 我走到楼下，妈跟爸正在客厅里做家庭手工。

Translation: Mum and Dad are in the living room when I walk downstairs.

家庭手工 [household handicrafts] refers to simple odd jobs that can be done at home for a small fee, hence many housewives or older people in Taiwan do this to earn some extra spending money for the household. A check on one of the websites listing such available jobs in Taiwan (<https://tw.indeed.com/家庭手工-jobs>) shows that examples of these jobs include the stringing of beads for accessories, sewing, or decorating packages. If the original sentence is to be translated faithfully, it would then be translated to “Mum and Dad are in the living room working on household handicrafts to earn extra spending money when I walk downstairs”. However, this sentence would not bring across the essence of 家庭手工, and would just bring about confusion to the reader. Also, there is no other reference made to it in the rest of the chapter, showing that it does not significantly alter the plot, hence this has been left out in the translation.

Original Text: “现在的年轻人真是管不住，乱浪漫的耶。”妈回答爸，真是双簧。

Translation: “Youngsters these days are uncontrollable, how romantic,” Mum replies Dad, singing the same tune.

双簧 (shuang1 huang2) is a kind of art form that originated in Beijing, with the actor in front performing with actions, and the person hidden at the back speaking or singing. With the perfect coordination between the two, it would seem as if the whole act, including the speaking or the singing, was being performed by the actor in front. When translating the extract, instead of attempting to explain what 双簧 is, the art form is substituted with an English saying with a similar meaning – singing to the same tune – which means that people are saying the same thing with coordination, in this context, it means that the parents are in perfect synchronisation when teasing Siying about her love life.

Original Text: 我本来以为今天晚上应该可以去斗牛士或龙德罗莎之类的地方吃顿大餐，毕竟再造之恩是多么的珍贵，搞不好还有大饭店的高级料理可以享用，最差最差，至少也要有贵族世家或爸爸饿我饿我饿的达美乐吧？

Translation: I was expecting a fancy meal involving steak for dinner, seeing how as he owed me for saving his life, and of course that is very important. It should have been a treat at a big restaurant with fine dining, or at the very least a high class pizzeria.

The humour in this sentence is the incongruity of the statement, in which Siying is expecting an expensive treat in exchange for saving A-Tuo's life, but is instead brought to a nondescript laundromat in a small alley, where nobody would even think that there would be anything to eat there. 斗牛士, 龙德罗莎, 贵族世家, 爸爸饿我饿我饿的达美乐 are names of restaurants in Taiwan. By writing in this way, the author is assuming that the reader of the book would be able to tell what kind of cuisine is served in the mentioned restaurants, and the price range of the food served there, therefore leading to the perceived value of the treat that Siying is receiving. This would work well in Taiwan, as these are large chain restaurants with many outlets throughout Taiwan, hence the chance of the reader understanding that Siying is complaining about how she thought A-Tuo was not repaying her enough for her saving his life as he did not take her to partake in a better meal. A search online shows that the first two restaurants are of the more expensive range serving steak, a meal that is often equated to a high class meal, and the other two restaurants serve Italian pizza, but is still of the higher range. In the translation, instead of substituting these restaurant names with other restaurant names that might be more familiar to the readers of English, as English speaking readers may come from many different countries and the restaurants in each of these countries would obviously be different, in the translation, the cuisine served in the restaurants is mentioned, hence eliminating the need to worry about which restaurants will be most relevant to the reader, as they would be able to make the connection themselves.

Original Text: “不是洗衣店！是金刀婶！”阿拓的表情不只是得意，还笑得跟拿到同花顺的周星驰一样。

Translation: “It's not a laundromat! It's Mrs Gold Knife!” A-Tuo gives a self-satisfied smirk, like a gambler who drew a winning hand.

The cultural reference here 笑得跟拿到同花顺的周星驰一样 is made to popular actor Steven Chow, who often acts in comedies which depict gambling. His gambling characters, when they have drawn or have been dealt with a winning hand, have an overly self-satisfied expression that has become iconic in Chinese movies. Stephen Chow has starred in four such comedic

movies related to gambling to date. As these movies are famous in the Chinese speaking world, reading this sentence would immediately bring to mind the expression that the author is referring to. However, when translated to English to be read by an English speaking audience, the chances of them having watched the movies are very low, especially since the movies were released in the 1990s. Hence in the translation, even though a literal translation of the original text would be “laughing like Stephen Chow who has gotten a straight flush”, the text has been translated to include the gambler as the person who has the expression, which is not mentioned in the original sentence, and the context that he has gotten a winning hand, so that the English readers can at least imagine the triumphant self-satisfied expression that the author is referring to.

Original Text: 金刀婶穿着白色的围裙走出厨房，手里拿着一瓶红酒，笑得比弥勒佛还弥勒佛。

Translation: Mrs Gold Knife walks out of the kitchen with a white apron around her waist, and a bottle of red wine in her hand. She is smiling compassionately, as if she can help us attain enlightenment.

弥勒佛 is known as Maitreya according to Buddhist tradition, and is a bodhisattva who is believed that will appear on earth in the future. He will attain complete enlightenment and will teach other humans in the world the pure dharma. According to scriptures, he will be a successor to the present Buddha. The name Maitreya means “Compassionate One”, and is a metaphor for compassion, as each person in the world can embody the character of Maitreya. So in the original text, when the author makes a reference to Mrs Gold Knife smiling as if she was more Maitreya than even Maitreya himself, he is saying that she was smiling compassionately at her impatient husband who could not wait to start eating, and at the same time knowing that her cooking is so good that it would be able to help the people eating attain enlightenment. This exaggerated portrayal of Mrs Gold Knife is the point of humour in this sentence. The author assumes that the reader of the text would be able to understand the above explanation just by reading the sentence, as Buddhism is the prevalent religion in Taiwan. However, when this is translated, to the English readers, Buddhism might be a foreign concept, and expecting them to know about one of the gods of the many in that religion will be a stretch, much less expecting them to understand what characteristics the said god embodies. Hence, when while doing the translation, the metaphor has been removed, and the translation is instead chosen to be done by explaining the metaphor

and describing the intended expression that the author envisions Mrs Gold Knife to have while she is walking out of the kitchen, keeping the exaggerated statement as the point of humour.

Original Text: 铁头朗声，差点没拈花微笑。他坐在我的身边，向我友善一笑。

Translation: Iron Head says, showing his zen mode. He sits beside me and flashes me a friendly smile.

There is a reference to Buddhism here in this sentence again, with the phrase 拈花微笑. This actually refers to holding a flower and smiling, which is depicted in many drawings and pictures of the various gods and deities. There are two levels of meaning to this phrase, one of which means that the person has a complete understanding of zen, and the second is used when there is total understanding and a deeper connection between two people, usually referring to a teacher and his disciple. In this sentence, the translation is according to the first level of meaning, as both Iron Head and Siying have just met each other, but as he was explaining about his mastering of his superb sense of smell in the previous sentence, it makes sense that by almost showing the gesture, he is showing off his enlightenment and understand of zen. Zen as a concept of a total state of focus that incorporates a total togetherness of body and mind is widely understood and acceptable by the English speaking public, hence the inclusion in the translated text to bring across the humour in the sentence.

Original Text: 依据归纳法则，鼻子奇好的人都是拥有特异功能的奇才，例如铁头、阿不思，还有大名鼎鼎的楚留香，也许我该去薰薰或是蒸蒸我的鼻子，看看大学能不能考好一点。

Translation: According to induction law, people with a keen sense of smell are geniuses with enhanced capabilities, like Iron Head, A Bu-Si. Maybe I should train my nose and see whether I get better grades in University.

The reference to Chinese culture here is mentioning that Chu Liuxiang has a keen sense of smell. Chu Liuxiang is a fictional character created by Gu Long, a protagonist of a wuxia novel series. He robs the rich to help the poor, and upholds justice in the community. He is observant, kind and compassionate, and very skilled in martial arts. In this sentence, however, it is just a passing reference to Chu Liuxiang as an example that people with a keen sense of smell are geniuses

with enhanced capabilities, so as it is just a passing mention and does not affect the story due to the mention of actual characters in this book who are described in the mentioned way, the name Chu Liuxiang has been omitted in the translation of this sentence, since two examples would be enough to express the humour in highlighting the lapse in the logic that Siying has as it is a very small sample size, not enough to draw such a conclusion.

Original Text: 于是金刀桑回去后，邮购买了把金门出产的绝世好刀苦练飞快剁菜的技巧，等待大显身手的关键时刻。

Translation: When he left, Mr Gold Knife purchased the best knife in the market and honed his chopping skills, to wait for the perfect time to show off his talent.

The Kinmen knife is a knife made exclusively in the Kinmen County. The knives were once made from the remains of artillery shells fired by the United States and allies in World War II, and by mainland China between 1958 and 1978. Since the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, Kinmen has become famous for its production of knives and cleavers made from PRC artillery shells. As many of these shells were propaganda shells, stuffed with leaflets instead of explosives, and thus remained intact upon impact on the island. These shells have become a resource of steel for the locals, and in general, sixty such knives can be made from one artillery shell. In the interpretation of the text while doing the translation, it was decided that saying that Mr Gold Knife went and bought a good knife to practise his slicing skills would be enough without the mentioning that it was a Kinmen knife, as long as the reader is able to understand that he did it so that he could help Mrs Gold Knife in the kitchen. Hence in the translation, it is not translated that the knife that he ordered through the mail was a Kinmen knife, it was just mentioned that he bought the best knife in the market, to also show his sincerity, and also to exaggerate the seriousness of the situation to bring across the humour.

Original Text: 不分贫富贵贱，只要熟客付个三百块基本的食材费，就可以搭上一周一次、在洗衣店楼上秘密举行的豪华飨宴。

Translation: Regardless of status or wealth, regular customers only have to pay for the basic ingredient cost to join in the weekly secret banquet held on the second floor of the laundromat.

The currency of the three hundred dollar basic ingredient cost mentioned in the original text is New Taiwan Dollars, which converts to approximately fourteen Singapore dollars, or ten United States dollars. Due to the wide spread nature of English speakers, they can come from many different countries each with their own currency, the translation has opted to not include the value of the ingredient cost, so that it is relevant to each of the English readers who would be reading it in their own countries. Thus, the humour induced by this incongruence between the cheap cost (by mentioning basic ingredient cost) of the high class and expensive banquet like food would be able to be understood by readers without putting an explicit value to it.

Original Text: 从聊天中我知道了金刀婶的两个儿子在两年前都到外地念书，一个去高雄餐饮学校接受磨练，一个则在台大念书，都是令两老相当骄傲的家伙。

Translation: From our conversation, I learnt that Mrs Gold Knife's both sons had left the town to study abroad, one was at a culinary school honing his skills, and another was studying at a top university. Two sons to be proud of.

Kaohsiung is a massive port city in southern Taiwan. It is by area the largest municipality, with a population of approximately 2.77 million people. As the story is set in Taipei, the author is trying to portray that the son has left his home for somewhere far away to a culinary skill to learn cooking, and he takes after his mother. 台大 of course refers to the National Taiwan University, and is considered to be the most prestigious university in Taiwan, and ranks among the top 150 universities in the world on most surveys. The purpose of this mention by the author would be to show that Mrs Gold Knife's other son is very good in his studies, and is studying at a prestigious university. Again, taking into consideration that English readers reside in different countries in the world, and each country would have their own notion of prestigious and top universities, this has been left open to the reader's interpretation in the translation. This again is humour induced by incongruence, that the sons of the owner of a laundromat would be able to rise above the others in terms of studies, which is very important in Chinese culture, despite their relatively humble background.

Conversely, if the reference is made to icons that are well known throughout the world enough that it is reasonable to assume that most English speaking readers will have at least heard of it before, the reference has been translated and left in the translated text, even if the reference is

made to something that is part of the Chinese or Taiwanese culture. With this, the chosen translation strategy to be used is transcription or “borrowing”, which according to Harvey (2000) is a reproduction or transliteration of the original term. This is called “transference” by Newmark, who defines it as the process of transferring a word from the source language to the target text.

Original Text: “一大早就怪怪的，又不是辛普森家庭还是阿达一族。”我拿着玻璃杯边喝边走到门口，打开。

Translation: “What’s with this weirdness early in the morning? It’s not as if we’re the Simpsons or the Addams Family.” I walk to the door sipping from my glass, and open it.

The Simpsons is an American animated sitcom which parodies American culture, society and television through the use of a working-class family made up of parents and their three children. The show was created in 1989 with 610 episodes broadcast to date. The Addams Family is an American cartoon about a 20th century American family who are eccentric and wealthy, who have fascination with the macabre, and do not care about what other people outside the family think about them. The cartoon started in a newspaper in 1938, and has since been adapted to television series (both animated and live), books, soundtracks, films, video games and a musical. The common theme of both of these cartoons is that they both depict families who are often part of ridiculous situations that bring about laughter to the consumer. The author has referenced to this in his writing in jest to show that Siying thinks that her parents are being ridiculous and overtly comical, and since both of these cartoons originate from America and already have a long broadcast history, this reference has been retained in the translation as it is assumed that English speaking readers would understand the parallels that are being drawn, as the same assumption is being made of the readers of the original text, even though the cartoons being referenced are not in the same language originally.

Original Text: “谁是铁头啊？”我随口问。“还有哪个铁头？当然素少林寺卡拉 OK 那个铁头！”金刀先生嘻嘻，我投降。

Translation: “Who is Iron Head?” I ask in passing. “There’s only one! The Iron Head from Shaolin Karaoke!” Mr Gold Knife laughs as I surrender to his sense of humour.

The author is making a joke through the character, Mr Gold Knife, in this statement. As the iron head skill, the art training the head such that it can break through hard objects like a stone tablet, is a skill unique to Shaolin martial arts, when the reader expects that the reply would be one that might be about how Iron Head is a practitioner of Shaolin martial arts, the author amazes by linking it to Shaolin, but not in the way that was expected. In this case, the Shaolin reference has been left in the translation, as there have been many movies released in the English speaking world that depict Shaolin martial arts and the different types of skills that is associated with it. These movies include Shaolin Temple (1976), The 36th Chamber of Shaolin (1978), Shaolin Soccer (2001), and even in recent years, Shaolin (2011), leading to the conclusion that as this topic has been portrayed in movies throughout the years, the reader of the English text would have at least heard of Shaolin, and in the same vein, Tietou Gong (铁头功 - iron head skill), which is one of the more well-known skills of Shaolin martial arts.

There are of course, exceptions to this self-imposed guideline for translation of cultural related icons.

Original Text: 七种水果依五色的五行位置摆放，剁碎的鸡肉和着马铃薯泥为底。

Translation: Seven types of fruit are arranged according to the colours corresponding to the five-element theory of Chinese philosophy - Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water - with minced chicken meat mixed with mashed potatoes as the base.

Original Text: 半只鸡被肢解得死有应得，与一只同样死得其所的吴郭鱼依太极图摆放，香气饱满、如海浪般波涛汹涌。

Translation: Half a chicken expertly dismembered, arranged next to a similarly expertly prepared tilapia in a Yin-Yang symbol. The aroma crashes over me like waves on the beach.

Original Text: 鲜笋森然罗列，白酱行云流水，四季豆与红萝卜依天罡北斗阵护法其中。

Translation: Fresh bamboo shoots in a cloud of white sauce, green beans and carrots surrounding it, arranged in a martial arts formation.

As these are descriptions of how the cooked dishes look, it has been decided to keep these references in so that the text retains its original flavour, as there is a lot of martial arts and Chinese cultural reference in these descriptions. However, minor changes to the descriptions

have been made to the strategy used in the translation depending on the probability of the English reader getting the reference. In regards to 七种水果依五色的五行位置摆放, the translation has been done such that it explains what the five colours mentioned refer to – the five element theory of Chinese philosophy, Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. With 太极图, instead of translating it to Taiji symbol, it has been translated to its other name, Yin-Yang symbol. In this translation example, there has not been any explanation included as this symbol has more exposure in the English speaking culture. Lastly, 天罡北斗阵护法 is a martial arts formation where seven people surround the enemy, and there is no way of escape unless one of the seven falls. Thus it has been translated to say that the fresh bamboo shoots are arranged to be surrounded by the white sauce, green beans and carrots, which brings across the similar imagery, but have decided against translation the name of the martial arts formation, which will not make a difference to the English reader as there is a high chance that they will not recognise it. The detailed description of the dishes and the attention paid to the plating in this case is the point of humour as it is unexpected that so much care would be given to them as it is revealed, so much so that the protagonist in the story is also caught off guard. The translation would therefore have to pay as much attention to the description as the source text in this case to accurately translate the humour.

6.1 Translation of Exaggeration

The author uses a lot of hyperboles in his writing to bring across the ridiculousness of the situation, hence bringing across the humour that is intended. To make sure that the reader understands and acknowledges that existence of said humour, Giddens Ko uses one hyperbole after another, even in the extract of the text that has been chosen for translation. A hyperbole is the use of exaggeration as a rhetorical device or figure of speech. It is there to create emphasis, or comedic effect. According to the Oxford Dictionary³, a hyperbole as a statement should not be taken literally by the reader. By using hyperboles consecutively, the author plays up on the aspect of ridiculousness, where everything is taken out of proportion and perspective, to create an atmosphere that should be interpreted as hilarious. Keeping this in mind, during the

³ Hyperbole. In *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hyperbole>

translation of the source text, there has been a conscious choice to keep in the exaggerated sentences and situations that the author has written so that the readers of the translated text would be able to sense the ridiculousness of the story, and understand that it has been written in that way on purpose.

Most of the characters introduced in this extract of text that has been chosen for translation are examples of exaggerated characters, from the way that they are introduced, to the actions that they do. Below, the choice of translation of the character names in the way that was done will be discussed, and the reasoning will be given behind the choices.

The Gold Knife husband and wife are both introduced in a comical manner, with Mrs Gold Knife being introduced as “the epitome of a warden in a female prison”, and Mr Gold Knife as the “useless old man of a husband”. Given that their first introductions are of these descriptions, along with their exaggerated reactions throughout the extract, examples include “Mr Gold Knife laughs as he picks up the spoon and raps impatiently on the cloche,” and “The Gold Knife couple raise their hands above their heads in a circle, signalling that he is correct,” the decision was made that it was alright to literally translate their names from 金刀 to Gold Knife. Also, later on in the story, as quoted, there is the back story of how Mr Gold Knife got his name. It was not his given name but rather, his nickname that was introduced, thus lending further evidence that the direct translation of the name is one that is acceptable. 金刀婶 has been translated to Mrs Gold Knife instead of Aunt Gold Knife, as it was deemed to be more culturally acceptable in English speaking readers, as they would not understand as they do not have this practice of calling people aunts or uncles in their culture. At the same time, the salutation would be enough to show a difference in hierarchy, and the respect that the young characters show to her. The 桑 in 金刀桑 is a Chinese adaptation of the Japanese prefix –san, which is typically added behind a person’s name to show respect, and it also means Mr or Ms, hence his name has been translated as Mr Gold Knife. The author also acknowledges that the characters and their back story is exaggerated through the main character who is narrating the story as she says, “真够浪漫，真够扯” which has been translated to become “So romantic, so ridiculous.” The literal translation of the couple’s name to Golden Knife was also considered, however it was later eliminated as a

choice despite being more grammatically correct as the longer adjective would create a mouthful for the reader, and inadvertently dilute the intended humour.

Similarly, as previously explained, the name of the character 铁头 has been translated to Iron Head, to fit in with the Shaolin martial arts reference. This character is also a gag character, not only is his introduction made as a joke by another character, he also has many exaggerated actions that the author writes. For example “铁头露出一口菜渣卡得到处都是的牙齿，幸福地笑着” which has been translated to become “Iron head smiles contentedly, showing a mouthful of food stuck between his teeth.”

There are many examples of hyperboles and exaggeration used to portray humour throughout the extract of text, many of which have been discussed in the previous section.

6.2 Translation of Puns, Word Play

Pun is a form of word play that suggests two or more meanings, by exploiting multiple meanings of words, or of similar-sounding words, for an intended humorous or rhetorical effect. He (2010) suggests five methods to approach the translation of puns – 1. Punning Correspondence, which consists of Homophonic Correspondence – where the homophones in the source text can be transplanted in the target text without sacrifice of the original meaning, Polysemous Correspondence – happens when different meanings of a punning word overlap in the cognitive environment of the source writer and the target reader, and Allusive Correspondence, when connotations of the pun under specific contexts correspond with each other in both the source text and target text. 2. Separate Explanation, where the translator explains separately both the literal meaning and connotative meanings of the pun. 3. Change of Image, where the translator abandons the original image to find another whose double meanings are understood by the target reader. 4. Sacrifice Secondary Information, which is as what it means, however, the translator has to resort to other creative means to compensate for the loss of the effect. 5. Editorial Means, in which the pun is explained in footnotes, endnotes, translator’s comments in the foreword or

afterword, or explanations in parentheses. Below, an explanation will be given regarding the choice of translation of the puns that are found in the extract of the source text.

It should be noted that the following are all names of the dishes that the author has described in the scene, hence the short and snappy translation in the English.

Source Text: 青海无上师之三羊开泰

Translation: Lambs Frolicking on the Grass in Spring

青海无上师 is a word play on 清海无上师, Supreme Master Ching Hai from Vietnam, who is the spiritual teacher of the Quan Yin Method with an estimated 20,000 followers worldwide. With the change of the first word to green, the phrase literally means “no teacher on a sea of green.” 三羊开泰 is a word play on 三阳开泰, which actually means that spring and good fortune will befall upon you, but the pun on the word lamb includes the main ingredient of lamb that the dish is made of. In the translation, the word grass has been included to represent the “sea of green”, but however, the translation has been forced to sacrifice the first meaning that of the Supreme Master Ching Hai. However, the decision to make this omission is reasonable as there would be few in the English speaking culture who would know about this Supreme Master.

Source Text: 爱情青红灯之要青不要红首部曲，羊女的一生

Translation: The Life of the Lamb, Waiting for the Signal to Love

The pun here is that 羊女 [lamb girl] is used instead of 养女 [adopted girl], who is waiting for the stop light to turn green so that she can finally find love. In the translation, there is word play on the word lamb, where the first meaning is obviously the ingredient lamb that the dish is made of, and secondly as “passive person, usually a woman, who unreflectively acquiesces at ones request”, according to Urban Dictionary⁴, as well as the word signal, where it can mean a sign

⁴ Lamb. In *Urban Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Lamb&defid=1982835>

to go ahead, or signal lights, another word for traffic lights, which acts to bring in the beginning part of the dish name, where the girl is wishing for green at the traffic lights of love.

Source Text: 万水千山纵横之笋人笋己

Translation: Shoots in the Mouth to Conquer the World

The word play is done on the phrase 笋人笋己, with the similar sounding 笋, because it is the main ingredient used in this dish, used to replace the word 损, where 损人损己 would mean to destroy others at the expense of oneself. 笋 refers to bamboos shoots, hence the play on the word shoots, where it could mean literal bamboo shoots in the mouth while eating, or shoots in the mouth using a bullet from a gun.

Source Text: 愤怒的番茄之鳗不讲理

Translation: Angry Tomatoes, Unreasonable Eels

鳗 (eels), again the main ingredient in this dish, is used to replace the word 蛮 in the chengyu 蛮不讲理, which means that the person is being unreasonable. The Chinese dish name would be that the tomatoes are angry at the eels being unreasonable, and thus the translation, giving it a rhythmic and poetic feel to the dish as well.

Source Text: 鳗身依旧在，几度夕阳红

Translation: The H-eels Remain Despite the Passing of Time

The original Chinese phrase of this would be 青山依旧在，几度夕阳红, which means that the hills remain standing in the same place despite the numerous counts of the sun rising and setting. The author has replaced 青山 with 鳗身, which of course is again referring to the eels used in the dish. Due to the similar sounds of the words hills and eels, in the translation, a decision was made to combine the two words to form the word “H-eels”, punning on the word as well.

7. Conclusion

The understanding of culture, whether that of the culture of the source text, or the culture that is being translated into, is important in the translation of humour. It is important for the translator to understand the culture of the society portrayed in the source text as that is the first step to recognising the humour portrayed by the author of the original text. The understanding of the culture of the society of the target reader is important as well as the translator would need to identify and have knowledge of what kind of humour is acceptable in the target reader's society, as well as to know boundaries of what topics might be taboo or forbidden by the authorities, and to take note not to cross these boundaries. In this paper, the "untranslatability" of humour has been discussed and tackled in the example translation by using theories of equivalence, as well as punning correspondence, while also taking into consideration the difference in cultures of the Chinese original source text readers and the English target text readers.

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9. Declaration of Authorship

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