

Reframing Socialist Memory: The Transnational Mediation of China's Zhiqing Fiction in the Anglophone World

Kun Long

mindy6736@163.com

Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Article

Keywords: zhiqing fiction, English translation, cultural mediation, socialist memory, ideology

Posted Date: October 29th, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-10574164/v1>

License: © ⓘ This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

[Read Full License](#)

Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

Abstract

This article examines how the English translation of China's zhiqing fiction reshapes socialist memory as these works circulate globally. While previous scholarship has focused on social history, literary representation, and translation analysis, it has overlooked translation as a form of cultural mediation influencing the selection, framing, and reception of these narratives. Drawing on historical research and comparative readings of Chinese texts and their English translations, the study argues that English translations reframe zhiqing narratives by emphasizing individual experience and emotional subjectivity, while downplaying broader political and institutional contexts. These shifts result not from individual translators' choices but from structural conditions of selection, translation, and publication. The article highlights translation as a key site in the transnational reconfiguration of socialist memory, revealing the role of cultural mediation in reshaping historical narratives.

1. Introduction

As literary narratives circulate across linguistic and cultural boundaries, they do not simply transmit historical experience but participate in the reconfiguration of meaning within new interpretive contexts. This process is particularly significant for texts rooted in specific ideological and historical formations, where movement across cultures involves not only translation but also the reframing of memory, experience, and narrative emphasis. In this sense, the transnational circulation of literature raises a broader question central to cultural studies: how historically situated experiences are reinterpreted as they become part of global cultural exchange.

Zhiqing fiction, emerging from the "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside" Movement (1968–1978) in the People's Republic of China, provides a revealing case for examining this process. The movement, initiated by Chairman Mao Zedong, involved sending urban youth, often intellectuals, into rural areas for labor as part of a broader effort to reform the youth in the countryside. These works of fiction originated as literary responses to this specific socialist historical experience, depicting rural labor, ideological formation, and emotional dislocation. However, their meanings do not remain stable when they circulate beyond China. Since the 1970s, zhiqing fiction has entered the Anglophone world through literary journals, anthologies, and translated editions. In this process, these narratives are recontextualized within new cultural frameworks, where they are interpreted in relation to different expectations, reading practices, and literary conventions.

This circulation cannot be understood as a neutral transfer of historical experience. Many English translations are abridged, selectively framed, or accompanied by paratextual materials, including introductions, cover designs, and marketing narratives that guide readers' interpretation. These mediating practices shape not only the reception of individual works but also broader understandings of the Cultural Revolution and the educated-youth generation among Anglophone readers. Translation, in this context, operates as part of a wider process of cultural mediation through which meaning is reorganized rather than simply conveyed.

Despite substantial scholarship on zhiqing fiction in literary studies, social history, and memory studies, relatively little attention has been paid to its circulation within the English-language cultural sphere. Translation is often treated as a technical or textual process, leaving underexamined the roles of publishers, translators, institutional sponsorship, and market forces in shaping how these narratives are selected, framed, and interpreted internationally.

This article, therefore, approaches the English translation of zhiqing fiction as a form of transnational cultural mediation. It examines how specific works are selected for translation, how narrative emphasis shifts in the process, and how publishing institutions and readership expectations influence the presentation of socialist memory. Combining close textual analysis with an examination of publishing contexts and reception, the study argues that the English mediation of zhiqing fiction reflects changing relations among ideological frameworks, cultural institutions, and market dynamics. It highlights how translation participates in the ongoing reconfiguration of socialist memory within global cultural circulation.

2. Reframing Zhiqing Fiction: Cultural Mediation, Ideology, and Translation

Research on zhiqing fiction has developed across multiple fields, including social history, literary studies, memory studies, and translation studies. While these approaches have generated substantial insights into the rustication movement and its cultural afterlives, they largely remain organized along disciplinary lines. Representation, ideology, and translation are frequently treated as analytically separate domains: historical studies focus on policy formation and social impact, literary scholarship emphasizes narrative form and aesthetic practice, memory studies foreground trauma and generational experience, and translation research often concentrates on textual strategies and linguistic transfer.

This fragmentation has limited sustained engagement with a question central to cultural studies: how cultural narratives are mediated, circulated, and restructured across different sites of power when they move beyond their original context. In the case of zhiqing fiction, this means that the transformation of socialist memory in transnational circulation remains insufficiently examined. Rather than being simply transmitted, these narratives are selectively reframed through processes involving institutional authority, ideological positioning, and market-oriented cultural production.

This article addresses this gap by bringing these strands of research into a shared analytical framework. It asks how zhiqing fiction is reconstituted as a cultural narrative in transnational circulation, how socialist memory is reorganized through narrative and ideological framing, and how translation operates as a key site of cultural mediation shaped by institutional and market forces. From this perspective, translation is not external to cultural analysis but central to understanding how meaning is produced, negotiated, and circulated across contexts.

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Cultural Mediation, Global Circulation, and Translation

This article positions the translation of zhiqing fiction within a broader cultural studies framework that views cultural texts as embedded in processes of circulation, mediation, and power. Rather than reducing translation to a mere linguistic or textual operation, this study treats it as one moment in a larger dynamic through which cultural narratives are selected, reframed, and rendered meaningful in new contexts.

From a cultural studies perspective, meaning is not intrinsic to texts but is produced through processes of representation and circulation. As cultural texts move across linguistic and institutional boundaries, they are recontextualized within new interpretive frameworks shaped by media systems, publishing practices, and audience expectations. The international circulation of zhiqing fiction, in this sense, reflects what Appadurai (1996) describes as the fragmented and dynamic nature of global cultural flows, where cultural meanings are constantly rearticulated as they travel through different cultures and contexts, rather than being simply transmitted unchanged. Appadurai argues that this process is not linear or smooth, but rather shaped by discontinuities and cultural disjunctures—much like the experience of zhiqing fiction as it moves from the socialist context of China to the Anglophone world, where it is subjected to reinterpretations based on different cultural values and expectations. Similarly, Tomlinson (1999) emphasizes that globalization involves complex processes of cultural mediation, where local narratives are recontextualized and reshaped within broader global frameworks, often influenced by power dynamics and institutional agendas. Zhiqing fiction's entry into global circulation can therefore be seen as part of this complex interplay, where the text is transformed to fit new global narratives.

Within these processes, translation is not a neutral conduit between languages but a key mechanism of cultural mediation. Translation plays a central role in determining how narratives travel, which aspects are foregrounded, and how they are positioned within the target culture. This perspective shifts the focus from translation as a search for equivalence to translation as a process of selection, framing, and transformation.

Insights from translation studies provide further clarity on how this mediation operates. Lefevere's (1992) concept of translation as rewriting highlights that translation is shaped by ideological pressures, patronage systems, and dominant literary norms within the target culture. In this way, translation does not merely reproduce the source text but reshapes it in ways that align with the prevailing expectations and constraints of the receiving culture. Translation, therefore, participates in broader systems of cultural production, in which institutions such as publishers, academic networks, and funding bodies regulate the visibility and legitimacy of texts.

Baker's (2006) narrative approach complements this view by emphasizing the active role of translation agents in framing social meaning. Translators, editors, and publishers do not merely transmit narratives

but actively select, emphasize, and recontextualize them. Through these processes, translation reorganizes how historical events and collective memories are interpreted, enabling certain narrative configurations while marginalizing others.

These approaches conceptualize translation as a form of cultural mediation embedded within global processes of circulation and unequal power relations. This understanding also resonates with Casanova's (2004) account of world literature as a structured space marked by unequal distributions of literary capital, in which texts seek recognition through processes of translation, circulation, and institutional mediation. The movement of zhiqing fiction into the Anglophone world, therefore, can be understood as an attempt to gain visibility and recognition within a global literary field shaped by hierarchies of visibility and value.

From these perspectives, this article treats translation as a central site where cultural narratives undergo reconfiguration in transnational circulation. This framework enables us to examine how socialist memory is not merely transmitted across languages but is selectively mediated, reframed, and reorganized as zhiqing fiction enters new cultural and institutional environments.

2.2 From Social History to Cultural Representation

Early Anglophone scholarship on the rustication movement developed primarily within historical and sociological frameworks. Foundational studies examined the political rationale, administrative structures, and long-term social consequences of the movement (Bernstein 1977; Rene 2013; Honig and Zhao 2019). Other scholars focused on youth identity, family relations, and generational formation within broader sociopolitical transformations (Singer 1971; Seybolt 1977; Chan 1985; Bonnin 2013), while additional research addressed its socioeconomic implications (Gardner 1971; White 1979; Gold 1980).

This body of work provides an essential foundation for understanding the emergence of zhiqing fiction. However, these studies largely conceptualize the rustication experience as a product of state policy and social organization, paying comparatively limited attention to how these experiences are reconfigured through cultural representation. A significant shift occurred when rustication experiences began to be articulated in fictional form, moving scholarly attention from institutional analysis toward narrativization, aesthetic mediation, and retrospective interpretation.

From a cultural studies perspective, this shift marks a transition from social experience to cultural representation. Zhiqing fiction emerges not merely as historical testimony but as a discursive space in which socialist memory, identity, and subjectivity are produced and negotiated. This raises further questions about how such representations are structured, circulated, and transformed across different cultural contexts.

2.3 Narrative Form, Space, and the Construction of Memory

Subsequent literary scholarship has shown that zhiqing fiction plays an active role in reshaping historical experience through both narrative form and aesthetic strategy. Author-centered studies of writers such as Liang Xiaosheng, Han Shaogong, Wang Anyi, Shi Tiesheng, and Zhang Kangkang highlight how representations of the sent-down generation evolve across different historical moments, particularly through shifts in narrative perspective and stylistic experimentation (Jiang 2011; Huang 2014; Han 2020; Lu 2009). These studies illustrate how memories of idealism, trauma, and disillusionment are mediated and refracted through literary form.

Another significant line of inquiry focuses on spatial narration. Analyses of regions like Beidahuang, northern Shaanxi, and Inner Mongolia show that space functions not merely as a backdrop, but as a narrative structure that shapes affect, discipline, alienation, and belonging (Che 2010; Xu and Li 2013; Zheng 2021). In this sense, space becomes a key mechanism through which political and emotional experiences are rendered intelligible, providing a layered context for understanding the experiences of the sent-down youth.

Thematic and character-oriented research further explores a range of issues, including gendered narration, rural imagination, ecological discourse, emotional expression, and the shifting representations of agency (Che 2013; Huang 2007; Qin 2014; Chen 2014; Jiang 2007; Zhang 2013; Wang 2016; Liu 2017). Collectively, these studies emphasize how zhiqing fiction functions as a cultural technology that organizes representations of youth, labor, sacrifice, and remembrance, transforming these themes into significant cultural narratives.

However, much of this scholarship implicitly assumes a relatively stable national framework, leaving less attention to how these representational strategies are altered when zhiqing narratives circulate across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

2.4 Memory, Ideology, and Transnational Cultural Mediation

Building on earlier approaches, a growing body of scholarship situates zhiqing fiction within broader processes of memory construction and ideological reflection. Research introducing rustication literature to Anglophone audiences places these writings within post-Mao cultural reassessment (Cao 2003), while generational studies examine how authors reinterpret their political experiences over time (Leung 1994). Other studies explore tensions within narrative discourse, particularly the coexistence of earlier heroic frameworks and later critical reflection (King 1993; Qin 2006). Gender-oriented research further highlights how female zhiqing narratives revisit questions of authority, desire, and agency (King 2015; Chan 2015).

From the perspective of memory studies, zhiqing writing is increasingly understood as a process of retrospective reconstruction rather than direct documentation of experience. Literary memory takes shape through writing, publication, and readership, and is shaped by narrative perspective as well as

spatial imagination (Scruggs 2014; Mortensen 2011; Xu 2021). These studies demonstrate that memory and ideology are closely intertwined in the literary reworking of the rustication experience.

However, most of this scholarship remains focused on interpretation within Chinese linguistic and cultural contexts. Less attention has been paid to how these remembered pasts are transformed when zhiqing fiction circulates beyond its original context. In particular, the role of translation as a mediating process shaped by institutional structures, publishing practices, and market dynamics remains insufficiently theorized.

To address this limitation, this article adopts a transnational cultural studies perspective that understands translation as a form of cultural mediation embedded within global processes of circulation. Cultural texts do not travel as stable entities but are reconfigured as they move across different cultural and institutional environments. As Appadurai (1996: 32–35) argues, global cultural flows are disjunctive and uneven, producing shifting contexts in which meaning is continually rearticulated.

Within this framework, the transnational circulation of zhiqing fiction cannot be understood as a linear process of transmission. Instead, it involves selective translation, narrative reframing, and institutional mediation shaped by publishing practices and market-oriented cultural production. Translation operates as a key mechanism through which certain versions of socialist memory are made visible and intelligible, while others are marginalized or transformed.

This perspective also resonates with Casanova's (2004) account of world literature as a structured space of unequal cultural capital, in which texts gain visibility and legitimacy through specific institutional conditions. The circulation of zhiqing fiction in English can therefore be understood as a process of repositioning within a global literary field structured by hierarchies of value and recognition.

This transnational framework shifts the analytical focus from translation as textual transfer to translation as cultural mediation. It highlights how socialist memory is not simply transmitted but actively reorganized and rearticulated as zhiqing fiction circulates across linguistic, cultural, and institutional boundaries.

3. The Changing Translation Strategies of Zhiqing Fiction: From State Influence to Market Orientation

Rather than reflecting a linear evolution of translation strategies, the English circulation of zhiqing fiction is better understood as a series of shifts in regimes of cultural mediation. From the late 1970s onward, the selection, translation, and framing of these works have been shaped by changing configurations of institutional authority, cultural power, and market dynamics across different historical moments.

In its early phase, translation operated within a state-centered system of cultural production, in which literary works were mobilized to project a coherent and affirmative representation of socialist China. As

zhiqing fiction entered Anglophone academic and commercial circuits, this centralized framework gradually gave way to more diversified forms of mediation involving overseas scholars, independent translators, and global publishing networks. These shifts were accompanied by changes in narrative framing, as representations of the sent-down youth moved from collective experience and ideological coherence toward individualized memory, emotional depth, and aesthetic experimentation.

From a cultural studies perspective, these transformations do not simply reflect changes in translation practice. Rather, they point to broader processes through which socialist memory is selectively mediated and rearticulated within transnational cultural circulation. Translation functions here as a key mechanism through which particular versions of the past are made visible, intelligible, and culturally legible within specific regimes of power.

3.1 Revolutionary Romanticism as State-Guided Cultural Representation

Revolutionary-romantic zhiqing fiction entered the Anglophone world within a specific regime of cultural production in which translation was closely aligned with state cultural policy. Unlike scar literature and later reflective narratives that circulated more visibly within commercial literary markets, these early translations were largely produced within China's official publishing system, most notably by the Foreign Languages Press. Text selection was therefore not simply editorial but institutionally structured, privileging works that conformed to dominant cultural narratives and supported the broader project of representing socialist China in a constructive and affirmative light.

From a cultural studies perspective, translation in this context operates not merely as literary transfer but as a form of state-mediated cultural representation. Both the selection of texts and their rendering in English contribute to the production of a particular narrative of the rustication experience, one that foregrounds perseverance, collective commitment, and moral idealism. Elements such as personal doubt, disillusionment, or psychological rupture are systematically minimized, resulting in a discursive framing in which the sent-down movement appears purposeful, coherent, and ideologically meaningful rather than conflicted or unstable.

The institutional conditions of the Foreign Languages Press also shaped the textual form of translation. Many translations were produced by in-house or commissioned translators, often without clear individual attribution, which contributed to the relative invisibility of the translator as an interpretive agent. The use of smooth and standardized English further reinforced this effect, ensuring accessibility for foreign readers while simultaneously stabilizing narrative voice and ideological tone. In this sense, translation participates in what can be understood as a controlled regime of representation, where narrative consistency and political legibility are prioritized.

Rather than viewing these translations as neutral representations of socialist experience, they can be understood as part of a broader apparatus of cultural mediation through which specific versions of

socialist memory are produced and circulated internationally. Translation here functions as an extension of institutional discourse, shaping not only how zhiqing fiction is read abroad but also how socialist history itself becomes intelligible within global cultural contexts.

3.2 Scar Narratives as Transnationally Mediated Cultural Reframing

Where revolutionary-romantic zhiqing fiction circulated through state-organized channels, scar-themed narratives entered the Anglophone world under a different configuration of cultural mediation shaped by overseas academic institutions and commercial publishing systems. This shift marks a transformation not only in translation practice but also in the broader regimes through which cultural meaning is produced and authorized. Scar narratives are no longer positioned as officially sanctioned memory, but as texts open to critical interpretation, foregrounding trauma, and victimhood.

Within Anglophone cultural contexts, post-Mao Chinese literature has often been interpreted through frameworks that prioritize political trauma and social suffering. As a result, processes of selection and translation tend to privilege works that highlight physical deprivation, psychological rupture, and experiences of displacement. Texts such as *The Gathering*, *The Road of Life*, *The Sobbing Lancang River*, and *Blood Red Sunset* gain visibility not only for their literary qualities but also because they resonate with interpretive expectations already established within Western narratives of modern Chinese history.

This shift can be understood in terms of what Mona Baker (2006) describes as narrative positioning, in which translation actively situates events and characters within frameworks that render them meaningful to target audiences. In this context, scar narratives are reframed within a transnational discourse that constructs China as a site of trauma and post-Mao reassessment rather than collective socialist idealism. The visibility of suffering becomes a key criterion of selection, with recurring emphasis on bodily vulnerability, restricted mobility, and emotional damage. Such narrative patterns align with broader global circuits of representing political violence and historical trauma.

At the same time, the role of translators becomes more visible as part of the cultural mediation process. Unlike the relatively anonymous translators associated with state publishing institutions, overseas translators such as Richard King, Howard Goldblatt, Helen F. Siu, Mark Caltonhill, and Daniel Bryant operate as identifiable cultural intermediaries. Their dual roles as translators, scholars, and editors enable them to actively shape how zhiqing narratives are framed, interpreted, and circulated. Translation here becomes an interpretive practice, in which individual agency intersects with institutional expectations and market considerations.

Publishing institutions further consolidate this reframing. Academic and commercial presses such as Oxford University Press, Routledge, M. E. Sharpe, and Viking Penguin function as gatekeepers within the Anglophone literary field, determining which texts gain visibility and how they are positioned. Through editorial strategies such as inclusion in anthologies of “post-Mao literature” or presentation as sociopolitical testimony, these institutions situate zhiqing fiction within a broader discourse of historical

suffering and political critique. Market dynamics reinforce this tendency, as narratives of trauma attract sustained scholarly attention as well as wider cultural interest.

Taken together, the translation of scar-themed zhiqing fiction can be understood as a process of transnational cultural reframing. Rather than simply transmitting historical experience, translation reorganizes socialist memory within new interpretive frameworks shaped by institutional authority, cultural expectations, and market logics. What emerges is not a direct representation of the past, but a mediated narrative in which certain forms of experience are amplified while others are marginalized.

3.3 Reflective Fiction as Market-Driven Subjectivity and Cultural Mediation

Reflective zhiqing fiction marks a significant transformation in the cultural mediation of the rustication experience, shifting the focus from external suffering to the formation of subjectivity. Whereas scar narratives foreground collective trauma and historical rupture, reflective works turn to the moral and psychological dimensions of post-rustication life, exploring how individuals reconstruct meaning, negotiate responsibility, and live with the enduring consequences of past experience. What is at stake in this shift is not simply a change in thematic emphasis, but a reorientation in how socialist memory is articulated through forms of interiority, affect, and ethical self-reflection.

In the context of English translation, this inward turn becomes further intensified. The emphasis moves away from documenting what happened during the rustication movement toward examining how former zhiqing interpret and inhabit those experiences over time. Translation thus participates in reconfiguring these narratives as stories of subject formation, in which memory is not a fixed record of the past but an ongoing process of self-negotiation shaped by changing cultural contexts.

The selection of works such as *White Poppies*, *The Invisible Companion*, *Cruelty*, *Sandstorm*, and *Wages of Sin* reflects this shift. These texts are not primarily valued as historical testimony, but for their exploration of moral ambiguity, emotional conflict, and fractured subjectivity. In translation, zhiqing figures are no longer positioned mainly as victims of political campaigns. Instead, they emerge as individuals grappling with guilt, desire, compromised agency, and unresolved interpersonal relationships. The narrative focus moves from the exposure of trauma to the everyday negotiation of its aftermath, foregrounding the ethical and affective dimensions of lived experience.

The criteria guiding this process differ markedly from those that shaped earlier scar-themed translations. Rather than privileging scenes of deprivation or violence, editors and translators favor narratives structured around family tensions, generational dislocation, and emotional estrangement. Such themes resonate within Anglophone literary culture, where interiority and moral inquiry constitute central narrative values. Zhang Kangkang's fiction exemplifies this tendency: *White Poppies* exposes complicity and moral vulnerability among the zhiqing, while *The Invisible Companion* constructs a divided and introspective subject through psychological narration. Similarly, Ye Xin's *Wages of Sin* reframes the rustication experience through domestic conflict and intergenerational tension. In these cases, what

becomes culturally legible in translation is not the historical specificity of the movement itself, but the ethical unease embedded in intimate and everyday life.

From a cultural studies perspective, this shift can be understood in relation to broader transformations in the global cultural economy. As Casanova (2004) suggests, texts gain recognition within world literature through processes of selection and legitimation shaped by unequal distributions of cultural capital. Reflective zhiqing fiction, with its emphasis on interiority and moral complexity, is more readily positioned within these circuits as literary fiction rather than as political documentation. Its circulation is therefore conditioned not only by literary value but also by its compatibility with dominant aesthetic and cultural expectations in the Anglophone field.

Translator agency plays a crucial mediating role within this process. Reflective zhiqing fiction is often translated by overseas scholars or collaborative teams, including Karen Gernant, Chen Zeping, Richard King, Brundell White, and Han Jing, whose work extends beyond linguistic transfer to encompass interpretive framing. Decisions regarding tone, pacing, and narrative emphasis shape how subjectivity is rendered and how emotional experience becomes intelligible to new audiences. Translation here functions as a site of cultural negotiation, where individual agency intersects with institutional conditions and market demands.

At the same time, market dynamics further structure this mode of mediation. The publication of reflective zhiqing fiction by presses such as Cornell University Press, Giramondo, and New World Press situates these works within a global literary marketplace that privileges narratives of interiority, ethical reflection, and affective depth. Within this context, zhiqing fiction is increasingly framed as part of world literature, valued not for its direct representation of socialist history, but for its engagement with broader questions of memory, responsibility, and human frailty.

The translation of reflective zhiqing fiction reveals a shift from state-guided representation and trauma-centered narratives toward a mode of cultural mediation centered on subjectivity and affect. Translation no longer operates primarily as a vehicle for transmitting historical experience, but as a mechanism through which socialist memory is rearticulated as a form of ethical and emotional inquiry within transnational cultural circulation.

3.5 Root-Seeking, Absurd, and Love Narratives as Commercially Curated Cultural Translation

Root-seeking, absurd, and love-themed zhiqing fiction represents a further transformation in the transnational mediation of socialist memory, marking a shift toward the aestheticization and commodification of the zhiqing experience within global literary circulation. Unlike scar narratives or reflective fiction, which foreground trauma or ethical self-examination, these works are no longer primarily framed as historical testimony or moral reckoning. Instead, they are positioned as aesthetically distinctive and emotionally engaging texts that can circulate as part of contemporary world literature.

In this process, the historical specificity of the rustication movement becomes less central, while philosophical reflection, stylistic experimentation, and romantic narrative structures are foregrounded. Translation thus participates in reconfiguring zhiqing fiction as a set of culturally legible literary forms aligned with global reading practices. What is privileged is not the political context of socialist youth, but the extent to which these texts can be integrated into recognizable aesthetic regimes within the Anglophone literary field.

The repeated selection of works such as *The Chess Master*, *River of the North*, *The Golden Age*, and *Under the Hawthorn Tree* reflects this shift in criteria. These texts are not chosen primarily for their direct engagement with rustication policy, but because they resonate with established literary modes such as allegory, philosophical fiction, absurdist narrative, and romantic storytelling. Through translation, zhiqing fiction is repositioned from a historically grounded account of socialist experience into narratives that align with global expectations of literary value and readability. Political context remains present, but it is no longer the dominant interpretive frame through which these works are introduced or circulated.

Within Anglophone editions, the figure of the educated youth undergoes a significant transformation. Rather than functioning as a collective political subject, the zhiqing is reconstituted as an individualized figure, appearing as a solitary thinker, ironic observer, or romantic subject. *The Chess Master*, for instance, is frequently framed as a minimalist allegory concerned with discipline, fate, and cultural introspection. *River of the North* is read as a meditative exploration of landscape and identity, while *The Golden Age* mobilizes absurdity and erotic irony in ways that resonate with postmodern literary sensibilities. *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, in turn, circulates predominantly as a cross-cultural romance, in which the rustication background operates as an affective setting rather than a political condition.

Commercial publishing structures play a decisive role in organizing this process. Presses such as Penguin, Virago, New Directions, and Collins Harvill position these works alongside international literary fiction rather than within a specialized political or historical category. Paratextual elements, including cover design, blurbs, and marketing discourse, further reinforce this framing by foregrounding aesthetic appeal and affective engagement. The existence of multiple retranslations of works such as *The Chess Master* and *The Golden Age* indicates that zhiqing fiction has entered a competitive field of cultural production, where branding, audience segmentation, and the accumulation of symbolic capital are central to circulation.

In this phase, translation functions less as a vehicle for transmitting socialist memory and more as a mechanism of cultural repositioning. Zhiqing history is not entirely erased, but it is selectively recontextualized within narratives shaped by aesthetic preference and market strategy. The result is a form of mediation in which political specificity is moderated and rearticulated as part of a broader cultural logic of global literary consumption.

Taken together, this stage reveals how the transnational circulation of zhiqing fiction is increasingly governed by the dynamics of cultural economy and aesthetic valuation. Translation becomes a key site where socialist memory is transformed into a flexible cultural resource, capable of being integrated into

diverse narrative forms while simultaneously losing some of its original historical and political specificity.

4. Textual Rewriting and Ideological Mediation in the Translation of Zhijing Fiction

4.1 Textual Omission as Cultural Mediation in Revolutionary Romantic Zhiqing Fiction

Before turning to *A Land of Wonder and Mystery*, it is necessary to situate its English version within a broader framework of cultural mediation. From a cultural studies perspective, the movement of texts across linguistic and institutional boundaries is not a process of neutral transmission but one of selective recontextualization. As discussed above, global cultural circulation involves uneven processes of mediation shaped by institutional authority, publishing practices, and audience expectations (Appadurai 1996; Tomlinson 1999). Within such processes, textual modification is not merely a technical matter but a means through which meaning is reorganized.

In this sense, the English version of *A Land of Wonder and Mystery*, produced under the auspices of the Foreign Languages Press and first published in Chinese Literature, can be understood as part of a state-mediated regime of cultural representation. While the original text by Liang Xiaosheng constructs a dense experiential world combining environmental extremity, emotional intensity, and ideological reflection, the English version exhibits a pattern of systematic omission and selective simplification. These textual adjustments do not simply reduce detail; they reconfigure how socialist experience is made legible to Anglophone readers. Narrative progression is foregrounded, while experiential density and ideological intensity are moderated, resulting in a more streamlined and controlled representation.

One key site of such mediation lies in the treatment of landscape, particularly the depiction of Beidahuang and the so-called “Mangai Wilderness” (茫海). In the Chinese original, the natural environment functions as an ideological space in which hardship and moral resolve are placed in sharp contrast. Extended descriptions of danger, myth, and uncertainty construct the educated youth as subjects who confront and overcome an almost hostile world. However, these layers are largely absent from the English version. The following passage, which recounts the “Ghost Swamp” (鬼沼) and the disappearance of earlier exploration teams, is entirely omitted:

Example 1

(Chinese original):

國語標準音的發音，與普通話的發音……有相當大的差別。例如“國語”的發音，與普通話的發音，就有很大的差別。普通話的發音，是根據北方話的發音而來的。而國語標準音的發音，則是根據南方話的發音而來的。因此，國語標準音的發音，與普通話的發音，有很大的差別。

Proposed English rendering (not reproduced in the published translation):

It was said that a colonel of the Japanese Kwantung Army once took an interest in that fertile land and personally led a survey team across the “Ghost Swamp” in winter. They vanished like clay oxen sinking into the sea and never returned. Old people in Beidahuang said some were eaten by wolves, some froze to death in temperatures below minus forty degrees, some starved for lack of supplies, some were killed by the Oroqen people, and others were swallowed by the swamp with their vehicles when spring came. The Oroqen called that vast land the “Mangai Wilderness.”

The omission of this passage significantly reduces the experiential weight of environmental danger. More importantly, it transforms the ideological function of landscape. Rather than appearing as a space that produces heroic subjectivity through confrontation with extremity, the environment in the English version becomes comparatively neutral. In cultural terms, this can be understood as a process of recontextualization in which excessive or unfamiliar forms of suffering are moderated in order to maintain narrative accessibility and coherence for target audiences.

A similar pattern can be observed in the treatment of psychological and ideological reflection. The Chinese text frequently pauses to register how revolutionary belief is internalized as emotion, responsibility, and collective identification. These moments are crucial for constructing the zhiqing not merely as participants in a historical movement but as subjects shaped by ideological affect. Yet several such passages are removed in the English version. When Deputy Instructor Li Xiaoyan insists on continuing into the Mangai Wilderness, the narrator articulates a collective emotional response:

Example 2

(Chinese original):

啊！同志们！

同志们！同志们！

同志们！同志们！(李, 2010:165)

Proposed English rendering (not reproduced in the published translation):

Oh, we young people!

How dearly we cherish a sense of responsibility!

How easily we are stirred and moved!

The absence of this passage weakens the articulation of collective idealism and removes a key moment in which ideology is expressed as shared affect. The narrative voice becomes more neutral, and the zhiqing appear less as emotionally charged collective subjects.

This reduction is further evident in the omission of the narrator's inner monologue during the journey to the Ghost Swamp:

Example 3

(Chinese original):

「『おれは、おれが』」と、おれは、おれが.....おれは、おれが(おれ, 2010:165)

Proposed English rendering (not reproduced in the published translation):

I sat on an overturned, battered washbasin, holding open a copy of The History of the Hongnan Campaign between my knees... quietly moved by the destinies of their characters.

In the original, ideological commitment is intertwined with literary imagination and emotional reflection. By removing this passage, the English version suppresses the process through which subjects actively interpret and internalize ideological narratives. The zhiqing are thus repositioned as agents of action rather than subjects of reflection.

A further dimension of mediation concerns emotional intensity at the level of narrative rhythm. Liang's original frequently employs exclamatory expressions and embodied reactions to convey urgency and immediacy. In translation, these affective markers are often softened:

Example 4

(Chinese and English):

Chinese:

XXXXXXXXXX

□□□□□□!‘□□□’, □□□□

“!”!!!!!!!!!!!!(!!!, 2010:178)

English:

What do you want?

"Moor is out ploughing, but the tractor has stopped!" (Liang, 2014:45–46)

The removal of exclamations and embodied gestures reduces emotional intensity and moderates narrative tension. From a cultural studies perspective, such adjustments can be understood as part of a broader process in which affect is regulated to fit dominant norms of readability and narrative restraint within Anglophone literary culture.

These patterns of omission are neither incidental nor purely stylistic. They form part of a systematic process of cultural mediation shaped by institutional production and anticipated readership. In line with Lefevere's notion of rewriting (1992) and Baker's concept of narrative framing (2006), the English version reorganizes not only what is told but how it becomes meaningful.

More broadly, this process reflects the dynamics described by Appadurai (1996) and Tomlinson (1999), in which cultural texts are rearticulated as they circulate across uneven global contexts. The English *A Land of Wonder and Mystery* does not simply transmit socialist memory; it reconstructs it within a different regime of intelligibility. Heroism becomes less monumental, suffering less extreme, and ideological commitment less affectively charged.

In this sense, textual omission operates as a form of cultural and ideological mediation. It reshapes the representation of zhiqing subjectivity, transforming a highly charged revolutionary narrative into a more moderated and accessible account suited to transnational circulation.

4.2 Rewriting Political and Suffering Narratives

4.2.1 Backgrounding the Political Context in *Blood, Red, Sunset*

As a novel centered on the sent-down youth experience during the Cultural Revolution, *Blood, Red, Sunset* participates in the broader tradition of scar literature and educated youth narratives that emerged in post-Mao China. Works in this tradition foreground traumatic memory, institutional violence, and moral disillusionment, embedding individual suffering within dense political critique. The Chinese source text of *Blood, Red, Sunset* exemplifies this tendency: it presents not only the narrator's personal experiences in the Inner Mongolia Production Corps but also sustained depictions of political movements and ideological campaigns.

In the English translation, however, this politically charged narrative texture is mediated in ways that foreground individual experience over collective political engagement. Most immediately, the translation reduces the prominence of political discourse by omitting extended passages that deal explicitly with institutional tensions and factional struggles.

Several chapters in the source text, *Xu Zuo Goes Mad*, *Fifteen Hundred Bricks*, *The Rainy Autumn*, *The End of 1974*, *In Beijing, There Are Still Good People*, *The Thief in the Diuofu Style*, and *Meeting on a Narrow Road*—explicitly portray inquiries involving sent-down youth, movements of public criticism and rectification, and the influence of radical ideological trends. Together, these chapters construct a social and political atmosphere characterized by scrutiny, ideological mobilization, and intense interpersonal pressure. Their complete omission in the English version reduces the structural visibility of these tensions, thereby backgrounding the broader historical and institutional framework that shapes personal hardship.

Beyond the deletion of entire chapters, overtly political discourse within retained sections is selectively softened. In Chapter Six, Taming a Fierce Horse, the source text observes that a particular historical period elevated certain rural military personnel to a highly privileged social position. They were entrusted with broad administrative authority and leadership responsibilities, which in turn shaped their attitudes toward educated youth (Lao Gui, 1990: 68). The chapter also references a well-known local incident, emphasizing the decisive role of a regional motorcycle unit (Lao Gui, 1990: 68). These passages foreground shifts in authority and the legitimization of coercive practices. Their omission in translation removes explicit markers of power consolidation and factional enforcement, subtly reframing the narrative as more individual-centered.

A comparable pattern appears in Chapter Ten, Rectifying the Party after Opening the Door. The original text outlines grassroots procedures:

Example 5

(Chinese original):

“Every branch must be reorganized among the masses; the process must pass through the masses. Not only Party members, but also non-Party participants are required to attend meetings and take part in evaluations.” (Lao Gui, 1990: 96)

In the English version, this procedural detail is largely absent. Such omissions illustrate how translation can mediate ideological and organizational frameworks, shaping Anglophone readers’ perception of historical experience. The Cultural Revolution is thus rendered less as a structured, collective phenomenon and more as a background against which personal stories unfold.

4.2.2 Amplifying Individual Suffering in The Path of Life

If the first translational tendency in scar-themed zhiqing fiction involves backgrounding institutional and political structures, a second pattern involves the foregrounding of personal suffering. The broader social context recedes, while moments of emotional crisis stand out more vividly, presenting hardship as individualized experience.

This tendency is visible in the English translation of Zhu Lin’s *The Path of Life*, which depicts both educated youth and rural peasants within everyday production routines. Compared with the Chinese original, the translation places less emphasis on relational and material context and more on visible expressions of grief and emotional intensity.

For example, in Chapter Thirteen, “倾盆大雨” (“Downpour on a Leaky Roof”), Louwa’s family experiences the loss of relief funds, followed by the accidental drowning of their child, Shuhai. These events not only devastate the family but also cast a shadow over the educated youth Juanjuan, responsible for distributing the subsidy.

Example 6

(Chinese original):

“我”，我，我，我：“.....”

“XXXXXXXXXX”XXXXXXXXXXXX

□□□□, □□, □□□□□□□□

□□□□, □□□□□□

☐ , ☐☐☐☐☐

“我”曰，曰： “我， 曰： ”(Zhu Lin, 2019: 141)

Proposed English rendering:

At the mention of “relief money,” Louwa’s eyes almost bulged out. He looked at Shuhai’s mother and muttered hesitantly, “Didn’t... didn’t get it.”

"How come you didn't get it?" she asked in surprise.

They say the relief money is lost.

Lost? Then are they still going to hand it out?

What kind of question is that? If it's lost, how could they still issue it?

So that means they won't give it out.

Mm. They won't.

With a sudden cry, Shuhai's mother burst into tears: "Heavens, how is our whole family supposed to live?"

Published English Translation:

Louwa's eyes darkened. He glared at her and rasped, "I didn't... didn't get any at all."

"Why didn't you?" she asked in amazement.

They said the relief money's been lost.

Lost? Are they still going to give it out?

If it's lost, how can they still give it to us?

So there won't be any relief money?

No, there won't.

Shuhai's mother gave a cry of anguish. "How in heaven's name can our family survive?" (Zhu, 1985: 32–33)

The comparison shows a clear tonal shift. In the Chinese original, Louwa hesitates, and Shuhai's mother expresses sorrow with restraint, signaling relationally embedded suffering. In the English translation, expressions such as "glared and rasped" and "gave a cry of anguish" intensify emotional exposure, making suffering appear more individualized and immediate.

4.2.3 Cultural Mediation in Scar-Themed Translations

Together, these examples demonstrate a consistent pattern: political and institutional elements in *Blood, Red Sunset* are backgrounded, while emotional suffering in *The Path of Life* is foregrounded. The broader historical framework recedes, and characters' feelings are emphasized. From a cultural studies perspective, this shows how translation mediates both ideology and affect, framing historical experience through a lens that foregrounds universalized emotional response rather than context-specific political structures. Anglophone readers encounter not the organized mechanisms producing hardship, but the lived and felt intensity of suffering itself.

4.3 Gendered Mediation in the Translation of Reflective Zhiqing Fiction: A Case Study of *Wages of Sin*

With the rise of reflective zhiqing fiction, the focus of these narratives gradually shifts. Earlier scar literature emphasizes institutional violence and collective trauma, while later works turn inward to explore delayed responsibility, family rupture, emotional consequences, and moral ambiguity. From a cultural studies perspective, this transition can be understood as a movement from macro-political narration to the micro-politics of everyday life, where subjectivity, affect, and interpersonal relations become key sites of meaning-making.

This shift is also closely linked to the commercialization of zhiqing fiction and its circulation within global literary markets. As publishing channels expand and centralized ideological control loosens, translation is no longer governed by a singular state discourse. Instead, it becomes embedded in what can be described as a decentralized field of cultural production, where translators, publishers, and readers all participate in shaping meaning. In this context, translators' individual sensibilities—and their positionalities—become increasingly visible, not as neutral linguistic mediators but as active agents in the cultural re-articulation of gender, emotion, and subjectivity.

Ye Xin's *Wages of Sin* can be read as a representative work within this reflective mode. The novel centers on the long-delayed consequences of the sent-down youth movement within the intimate space of the family. Significantly, it has been translated twice into English: one version by Chang Yi'an, and another by Han Jing. A comparison of the two versions illustrates how, in the later stage of zhiqing fiction's

international circulation, translators’ perspectives—shaped in part by gendered experience and interpretive frameworks—can influence emotional emphasis and character construction.

Rather than producing overtly gendered language, the two translators diverge mainly in how they shape emotional tone and narrative focus. Chang’s version tends to remain close to the source text’s balance of vulnerability and restraint. Han’s translation, by contrast, often adjusts that balance, strengthening female agency while reducing elements of helplessness. These differences can be understood not simply as stylistic variation, but as forms of gendered mediation, through which the female subject is re-positioned within different regimes of intelligibility.

These differences become particularly clear in the portrayal of Shanshan, the wife of Liang Mancheng. After Liang Sifan arrives in Shanghai in search of his biological father, Shanshan discovers her husband’s long-concealed past. The original text presents her reaction as a mixture of shock, confusion, and emotional fragility.

Example 7

Source Text (Chinese original):

“你，你，你，你……”她突然眼睛一亮，突然眼睛一亮，突然眼睛一亮，突然眼睛一亮，突然眼睛一亮……”(Ye, 1995: 79)

Chang’s translation:

“Oh, Mancheng! What are we going to do?” Her big, radiant eyes filled suddenly with glistening tears. “No wonder you went out of your way to pick me up tonight, no wonder you forgot Yunyun’s homework... the only thing on your mind right now is your son.” (Ye, 1998: 111)

Han’s translation:

“She grimaced, her eyes filled with tears. ‘No wonder you came to pick me up tonight. No wonder you forgot to check Siyun’s homework. No wonder... you’ve been thinking about your son!’ She eyed him with an anger he’d never seen in her before.” (Ye, 2016: 92)

In the above example, Shanshan repeatedly asks, “What are we going to do?” The repetition conveys panic and disorientation. Chang preserves this questioning tone. Han, however, removes the repeated interrogative and adds the sentence: “She eyed him with an anger he’d never seen in her before.” This addition shifts the emotional center of the scene. Instead of appearing overwhelmed, Shanshan now confronts her husband more directly. The emphasis moves from helplessness to anger.

Example 8

Source Text (Chinese original):

中国农村改革, 中国农村.....中国农村改革, 中国农村改革(王, 1995: 81)

Chang's translation:

"Mancheng shrunk back to his side, too afraid and dejected to utter another sound... Silently she cried... But she didn't dare let out a sound... She even restrained her shoulders from heaving with her sobs... Right now, she felt nothing for him but loathing." (Ye, 1998: 113)

Han's translation:

“He withdrew to his side of the bed. She knew he wouldn’t be able to sleep and turned her back to her husband, silently crying. She couldn’t sob, because Mancheng would try to comfort her and she couldn’t stand his touch. It might wake her daughter and the neighbours would hear too.” (Ye, 2016: 94)

In the source text, Shanshan suppresses her sobbing because she “doesn’t dare,” suggesting emotional vulnerability and fear of further conflict. Chang retains this tone of restraint. Han modifies it into “she couldn’t sob,” which implies not fear but self-control. Moreover, Han introduces the detail that she “couldn’t stand his touch,” intensifying her rejection at a bodily level. The result is a Shanshan who appears more resolute and emotionally self-protective than the fragile figure presented in the original.

Example 9

Source Text (Chinese original):

....., (, 1995: 92)

Chang's translation:

“All that could be said for now was that Sifan was a mature and well-behaved lad, and that Shanshan, in the face of this huge emotional challenge, had handled the arrival of an unexpected guest with compassion, reason and understanding.” (Ye, 1998: 123)

Han's translation:

“So far, he knew Sifan was sensible and obedient, and Shanshan had seemed understanding. She had been amazingly calm and rational preparing for this unexpected visitor.” (Ye, 2016: 103)

In this example, the difference is more subtle but equally meaningful. The source text presents Shanshan as “understanding” and “considerate,” foregrounding her emotional accommodation within the family structure. Chang retains this moral positioning. Han, however, introduces the modal “seemed,” which subtly destabilizes the authenticity of Shanshan’s composure.

From the perspective of narrative positioning, this shift creates a distance between outward behavior and inner state. At the same time, Han foregrounds rationality while attenuating or more plainly, reducing the emphasis on compassion. The portrayal thus moves from a morally accommodating wife toward a

subject who is consciously managing her emotional performance. In this sense, emotional restraint is no longer read as virtue but as strategic self-regulation.

These differences reflect more than individual stylistic choices. In reflective zhiqing fiction, where emotional complexity replaces overt political critique, translation becomes a key site for the reconstruction of gendered subjectivity. Chang largely preserves the original emotional balance between male regret and female endurance, thereby maintaining a relational framework rooted in mutual dependence. Han, by contrast, redistributes this balance by foregrounding Shanshan's autonomy and reducing her emotional dependence, while also diminishing the narrative weight of the father-son relationship.

From a cultural studies perspective, what we observe here is not simply the influence of gender ideology, but a process of discursive reconfiguration shaped by the interaction between translator subjectivity, market expectations, and evolving norms of gender representation. Translation, in this context, operates as a form of cultural mediation through which certain models of femininity become more legible, and more acceptable to Anglophone readers.

In this later phase of zhiqing fiction's international circulation, translation does not simply transmit a narrative of historical reckoning. It participates in redefining the emotional and ethical terms of that reckoning. And it is precisely in this space where political discourse recedes and intimate life becomes central that the translator's subject position becomes most perceptible.

The three strands discussed above, revolutionary romanticism, scar fiction, and reflective narratives demonstrate that the translation of zhiqing fiction has been shaped by shifting configurations of power, rather than purely literary considerations. In the revolutionary romantic phase, translation functioned within a state-centered system of ideological representation. In scar fiction, overseas academic and publishing institutions reframed zhiqing experience through narratives of trauma. In reflective fiction, the expansion of commercial publishing created conditions in which translator agency and interpretive variation became more visible.

If we extend this observation to later thematic developments such as root-seeking, absurdist, and romance-oriented zhiqing works, the influence of market forces becomes even more pronounced. As centralized ideological control weakens and commercial presses assume a larger role, both text selection and translation strategies become increasingly responsive to readership expectations. Within this environment, translators and publishers exercise greater discretion, foregrounding aesthetic experimentation, psychological depth, and intimate relationships while further marginalizing overt political framing.

What emerges across these thematic variations is not a simple pattern of distortion or simplification, but a gradual rebalancing of cultural authority. As political patronage recedes and market mechanisms expand, translator subjectivity and editorial preference become structurally embedded in the production of meaning. The shaping of zhiqing memory in English thus reflects not only changing literary trends in

China, but also the evolving global conditions under which these narratives are selected, mediated, and made intelligible.

5. Conclusion

This study has argued that the English translation of zhiqing fiction is best understood not as a linear process of literary transfer, but as a form of cultural mediation embedded in shifting regimes of representation. Across different historical moments, distinct strands of zhiqing writing enter the Anglophone world under changing conditions of production, circulation, and reception. What emerges is therefore not a stable or unified image of the sent-down youth experience, but a series of selectively constructed narratives shaped by specific institutional, ideological, and market forces.

In the revolutionary romantic phase, translation functioned within a state-centered system of cultural production, where the representation of zhiqing experience was closely aligned with official discourse. Emphasis on collective dedication, moral clarity, and revolutionary optimism reflects not simply textual preference, but a broader effort to stabilize socialist subjectivity for external audiences. In this context, translation operates as a form of discursive alignment, reinforcing a coherent and affirmative narrative of socialist modernity.

By contrast, the translation of scar fiction marks a shift toward transnational mediation. Circulating through overseas academic and publishing networks, these works are reframed within interpretive paradigms that privilege trauma, institutional critique, and moral reckoning. This process corresponds to what can be understood as a repositioning of narrative authority, in which zhiqing memory becomes legible through frameworks familiar to Anglophone readers. Translation here does not merely transmit historical experience; it actively reorganizes it within a global discourse of suffering and post-authoritarian reflection.

With the emergence of reflective zhiqing fiction in a more market-oriented environment, the site of mediation shifts again. Emotional interiority, family relations, and ethical ambiguity become central, while overt political discourse recedes. Within this decentralized field, translators exercise greater interpretive agency, and their subject positions—shaped by cultural background, gender, and literary sensibility—become more visible in the shaping of narrative tone and characterization. Translation thus becomes a key site for the rearticulation of subjectivity, where gendered experience, emotional expression, and moral perspective are subtly reconfigured for new readerships.

Later thematic developments, including root-seeking, absurdist, and romance-oriented narratives, further extend this trajectory. As zhiqing fiction is increasingly integrated into global literary markets, its selection and presentation are shaped by commercial logics and aesthetic positioning. In this phase, translation participates in the recontextualization of zhiqing writing as world literature, where historical specificity is not erased but selectively foregrounded or backgrounded in order to align with broader reading conventions and expectations.

From a cultural studies perspective, these shifts indicate that translating zhiqing fiction is simultaneously a process of producing and negotiating socialist memory across cultural boundaries. Rather than preserving a fixed historical narrative, translation repeatedly reorganizes the relationship between collective structures and individual experience, between political history and emotional life. The figure of the educated youth is thus transformed—from a representative socialist subject embedded in collective ideology into a more individualized and affectively complex figure capable of circulating within global cultural imaginaries.

In this sense, the Anglophone afterlife of zhiqing fiction can be understood as an ongoing process of discursive reconstruction. Translation does not simply carry texts across languages; it participates in shaping how the past is narrated, interpreted, and made meaningful in new contexts. The resulting representations are neither direct reflections of the Chinese originals nor wholly detached reinterpretations. Rather, they emerge from a continuous negotiation among state agendas, academic frameworks, and market forces, through which socialist memory is selectively reconfigured and re-signified within global cultural circulation.

Declarations

Data Availability Statement: Data sharing is not applicable to this research as no data were generated or analysed.

Author Contribution Statement: Kun Long solely conceived and designed the study, conducted the literature review, developed the theoretical framework, interpreted the findings derived from literature synthesis, and wrote and revised the manuscript. Kun Long has read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Funding Informaton: 2026 Research Project of the Key Research Base of Humanities and Social Sciences in Higher Education Institutions, Sichuan Provincial Department of Education, China.

Funding No.: RCMTIC2614

References

1. Appadurai A (1996) *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN
2. Baker M (2006) *Translation and conflict: A narrative account*. Routledge, London
3. Bonnin M (2013) *The lost generation: The rustication of China's educated youth (1968–1980)* (K. Horko, Trans). Chinese University, Hong Kong
4. Cao Z (2003) *Out of the crucible: Literary works about the rusticated youth*. Lexington Books, Lanham, MD

5. Chan A (1985) *Children of Mao: Personality development and political activism in the Red Guard generation*. Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC
6. Chan S (2015) Biography of Zhu Lin. In: Lee LXH, Stefanowska AD (eds) *Biographical dictionary of Chinese women: The twentieth century, 1912–2000*. Routledge, pp 682–684
7. Che HM (2010) *Beidahuang zhiqing wenxue yanjiu* [A study of Beidahuang sent-down youth literature] (Master's thesis, Jilin University)
8. Che HM (2013) Liang Xiaosheng Beidahuang zhiqing xiaoshuo de lixiang zhuyi xushi [Idealistic narrative in Liang Xiaosheng's Beidahuang sent-down youth novels]. *Qiusuo*, pp 147–149. 01
9. Casanova P (2004) *The world republic of letters*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA
10. Gardner J (1971) Educated youth and rural-urban inequities, 1958–1966. In: Lewis JW (ed) *The city in Communist China*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp 235–286
11. Gernant K Introduction. In K. Zhang, *White poppies and other stories* (, Gernant K, Chen Z (2011) Trans., pp. IX–2). Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series
12. Jiang JQ (2007) Jianzheng wuhui de qingchun—Liang Xiaosheng bi xia nüxing xingxiang saomiao zhi yi [Witnessing a regretless youth—A survey of female images in Liang Xiaosheng's works (I)]. *Dianying Wenxue*, (18), 74–75
13. Jiang Y, Ashley D (2000) *Mao's Children in the New China: Voices from the Red Guard Generation*. Routledge, London/New York
14. King R (1993) In the translator's eye: On the significance of Zhu Lin. In: Barlow TE (ed) *Gender politics in modern China: Writing and feminism*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC, pp 209–214
15. King R (2015) Biography of Zhu Lin. In: Lee LXH, Stefanowska AD (eds) *Biographical dictionary of Chinese women: The twentieth century, 1912–2000*. Routledge, pp 723–724
16. Leung L (1994) *Morning sun: Interviews with Chinese writers of the lost generation*. Routledge, London, UK & New York, NY
17. Lefevere A (1992) *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*. Routledge, London
18. Liang X (2010) *Zhe shi yi pian shenqi de tudi* [This is a magical land]. Xinhua Publishing House, Beijing
19. Liang X, Liu T (2014) *Beijing: Foreign Languages*
20. Liu C (2017) Liang Xiaosheng xiaoshuo zhong de zhiqing xingxiang yanjiu [A study on the image of sent-down youth in Liang Xiaosheng's novels]. *Qingnian Wenxuejia*, (35), 30–31
21. Lu H (2009) *Zhiqing jiyi de butong shuxie* [Different narratives of sent-down youth memory] (Master's thesis, Jilin University)
22. Mortensen D (2011) *Cultural revolution narratives: Rethinking history through the prism of post-Mao literature* (Doctoral dissertation). University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
23. Qin L (2006) The sublime and the profane: A comparative analysis of two fictional narratives about sent-down youth. In: Esherick J, Pickowicz PG, Walder AG (eds) *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*. Stanford University Press, pp 240–266

24. Qin ZH (2014) Dangdai zhiqing wenxue zhong de aiqing xushi [Love narrative in contemporary sent-down youth literature] (Master's thesis). Yan'an University, Yan'an, China
25. Scruggs B (2014) Landscapes and sublime memories: Revisiting Liang Xiaosheng's A land of wonder and mystery. *Front Literary Stud China* 8(4):513–531
26. Singer M (2020) *Educated Youth and the Cultural Revolution in China*. University of Michigan Press, Michigan
27. Seybolt PJ (1977) *The Rustication of Urban Youth in China: A Social Experiment*. M. E. Sharpe, New York
28. Tomlinson J (1999) *Globalization and culture*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL
29. White LT (1979) The road to Urumqi: Approved institutions in search of attainable goals during pre-1968 rustication from Shanghai. *China Q*, (79), 481–510
30. Xu B (2021) *Chairman Mao's children generation and the politics of memory*. Cambridge University Press
31. Xu XJ, Li BH, Zhang HB (2013) Cong Yinxing banlǔ kan Beidahuang zhiqing wenxue de neisheng yishi [On the introspective consciousness of Beidahuang sent-down youth literature through Invisible Literature]
32. Zheng XH, Xu XY, Huang BT, Zhang RC (2021) Neimenggu zhiqing wenxue de leixing yu yanjin [Types and evolution of Inner Mongolia sent-down youth literature]. *Zhongguo Minzu Bolan*, (15), 190–192
33. Zhu L (1985) Downpour on a leaky roof. In: Duke MS (ed) *Contemporary Chinese literature: An anthology of post-Mao fiction and poetry*. M. E. Sharpe, New York, pp 30–34. Trans. R. King
34. Zhu Lin (2019) *Shenghuo de lu* [The road of life]. China Youth Publishing, Beijing