**Agencies in English Translations of Contemporary Chinese Women Writers:
A Contextual, Paratextual and Textual Study**

By

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Abstract

The concept of agency has been frequently applied in translation studies (TS), especially in sociology of translation, but is still ill-defined, with no agreement on what it is precisely. This research discusses agency within a combined sociological and gendered framework, seeking to offer a systematic investigation of what agency entails in TS in order to better understand the intercultural communication of female voices from a non-hegemonic culture. In doing so, it questions a simplified understanding of agency as intermediary and argues that agency, as a theoretical tool with sociological implications, is always structural, relational and dynamic.

Drawing upon ideas from Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, I first construct a field of translating contemporary Chinese women writers into English from the 1980s to the 2010s, outline the general structure that governs such translation activities and provide a diachronic analysis of how translation agents operate within different translation discourses to promote women writers. Then I refer to Bruno Latour's actor-network theory to identify two specific agencies: 1) a feminist agency that promotes the works of Zhang Jie (1937-) in the 1980s, when there was a juxtaposition of political and feminist translation discourses; and 2) a commercial agency enacted by the male director Zhang Yimou's film adaptation *The Flowers of War* (2011) operating on the translation of Yan Geling's *Thirteen Hairpins of Nanjing* (*Jinling shisan chai* 金陵十三钗), first published in 2005. In these two case studies, I trace two translation networks and investigate how their different agencies have either strengthened or weakened the female voices inscribed in the original texts. While contextualizing how agents operate in the translation process, I examine their agency through both paratextual and textual analysis, ultimately providing what I believe is a more comprehensive understanding of agency which can enhance the analytical and explanatory power of this theoretical concept in TS.

The original contribution of this research to the academic discourse is three-fold. Theoretically and methodologically, it constructs an integrative framework that combines not only sociological approaches of TS, but also feminist translation studies and feminist translation criticism. Not only does it provide a field-oriented study of how women's writing is translated and presented through different agencies, but it also uncovers strengthened feminist voices and recovers lost female voices in different translation discourses. Moreover, as a response to the ongoing intersectional and transnational turn in the study of women and translation, it goes beyond the gender-centric framework of the traditional feminist translation studies. By exploring other social and cultural specificities for Chinese women writers who enter the Anglo-American context, this research highlights the influences of political and commercial translation discourses, exposing the dilemma of translating women writers from non-hegemonic languages into English, whereby the translator or the writer either emphasizes a woman-centric perspective in the paratext or deletes references to women's concerns in order to improve readability for a Western readership. Last but not least, this research fills a gap in existing scholarship on translating women writers into English, or what is called "the outward translation studies" currently prevalent in the Chinese academia, yielding insights into the global circulation and reception of contemporary Chinese literature.

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Introduction

My interest in studying the translation of contemporary Chinese women writers into English develops out of two specific academic focuses in translation studies: China's "outward translation studies" (*yichu/waiyi yanjiu* 译出 / 外译研究)¹ and "women and translation". In both of these two research fields, the translation of Chinese women writers is arguably under-researched. In China's outward translation studies, prominent attention has been given to male writers who are comparatively more prestigious both domestically and internationally. On the other hand, the research on women and translation is largely universalized under the Western feminist translation discourse, with only a small portion of studies on how women's experiences and ideas from non-hegemonic cultures are being translated into English.²

My research takes a gender perspective towards the translation of contemporary Chinese women writers from the 1980s to the present, aiming to explore how female voices from Chinese women's writing are disseminated through translation. As is well known to students of Chinese studies, issues of sex and gender in China were erased in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), during which time literature was dominated by a revolutionary discourse that allegedly served the interest of peasants, soldiers and workers. It was not until 1978, when the ideological and political restrictions imposed on literature were lessened, that women writers emerged as a collective identity to reclaim their gender differences. The "female voices" in my discussion have two-fold manifestations: I set out with a "distant reading" at a macro level, which provides a historical overview of what titles by women writers are selected for translation and how they are presented and marketed through paratextual elements; then I engage in a "close

¹ The Chinese government's "Chinese Culture Going Global" initiative developed in 2001 heralds a reversal in the interest of translation studies in China, with the focus shifted from inward translation to outward translation. Inward translation means translating from other languages into Chinese while outward translation refers to translating from Chinese into other languages.

² Most of the theories and methodologies in studying "women and translation" are derived from a Western discourse. I intended to observe from a global scale how women's writing from China and other non-hegemonic cultures were translated into Western languages, but due to language barriers, I can only focus on the field of translating Chinese women's writing into English.

reading” at a micro level, analyzing the translation process of works by two women writers, Zhang Jie 张洁 (1937-) and Yan Geling 严歌苓 (1958-). I will investigate how the female voices inscribed in their works are either strengthened or weakened through different translational agencies. As women’s concerns are usually marginalized in a predominantly political or commercial translation discourse, my goal is to unveil the translation mechanisms that influence the intercultural communication of female voices. In particular, my objective is to examine the agencies in translating women writers based on theoretical and methodological considerations of the sociological paradigm in translation studies, which conceives translation as a social phenomenon involving multiple agents. While relying on Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory and Bruno Latour’s actor-network theory (ANT) to conceptualize agency, my central focus is to explore the translation agents’ discursive presence and imprint in translated texts and paratexts.

The cases of Zhang Jie and Yan Geling are chosen for two reasons. Firstly, Zhang is one of China’s first contributors to feminist fiction and is also the most translated woman writer in the 1980s; Yan is well-known for a diverse range of works on female experience and has four woman-centered works published in English translation. Investigation into the translation of such representative women writers can yield fruitful insights into the intercultural communication of woman-focused thoughts and experiences in literature. Secondly, the two translation networks of their works are worth discussing. The translation of Zhang’s *Leaden Wings* (1987) was initiated by personal academic connections in a feminist context, while the translation of Yan’s *The Flowers of War* (2012) was initiated by its film adaptation in a commercial discourse. By looking into these two case studies, I hope to open the closed doors behind the translation process and reveal how the agency of translators, scholars, publishers, film directors and editors can influence the textual and paratextual representation of any translation. In so doing, I wish to draw critical attention to a simplified linear thinking which regards translation as a neutral and untroubled process from the source text to the target text.

My first and second chapters draw on insights from Sameh Hanna's recent work *Bourdieu in Translation Studies* (2016) and adopt relevant analytical concepts from Bourdieu's field theory to investigate the duality between agents and structure in translating contemporary Chinese women writers. My third and fourth chapters build upon Bruno Latour's ANT to identify two respective networks that prompted the translation of Zhang Jie's works and Yan Geling's *The Flowers of War*. I will analyze how their agencies influence the dissemination of female voices within the framework of feminist translation theory and feminist translation criticism. I argue that a woman's perspective applied to the sociological concept "agency" can debunk static generalizations about translating women from non-hegemonic cultures; complement the cultural approach that conceives translation as a medium to enhance the orientalist stereotyping of Third World women writers; and reveal more nuanced ideological, political, social, historical and cultural dynamics amidst the translations of Chinese women writers.

1. Defining agency in translation

Although the concept of "agency" has often been mentioned and extensively discussed in translation studies, it is still "ill-defined" (Munday and Blakesley, 2016: 5) and appears to be a "slippery" one (Khalifa, 2014: 13). The complex and dynamic nature of agency has been acknowledged by translation scholars in their attempts to define this concept. Tuija Kinnunen and Kaisa Koskinen (2010: 6) explained how agency was understood slightly differently in various approaches and therefore they did not aim to create a static and unified definition of the term. Faith Wallis and Robert Wisnovsky (2016: 2) also believe that it seems impossible to arrive at a definition of agency that is both clear and specifically applicable to translation. Accordingly, they claim, "our aim is modest: to assemble a provisional tool-kit of concepts and models of agency that would help us to understand something (if not everything) about processes taking place in different cultural settings" (ibid: 3). Likewise, I also pursue a modest goal in my

application of agency: built on existing scholarship on translation studies, this study aims to contribute a gender perspective to its operation and effect so as to deepen our understanding of how contemporary Chinese women writers are translated into English.

The concept of agency has its origin in sociology and gains more visibility when sociological approaches are being integrated into translation studies. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, “the term agency is usually juxtaposed to structure and is often no more than a synonym for action, emphasizing implicitly the undetermined nature of human action, as opposed to the alleged determinism of structural theories” (Marshall, 1994: 7). Agency is thus commonly discussed in connection with its twin concept “structure”. They are mutually constitutive: agency maintains structure while structure in turn constrains agency, as I will demonstrate with recourse to a field-oriented analysis. Such a mutually influencing relationship reminds us of the concept of “embeddedness” discussed by some translation scholars. Mona Baker (2006a) argues that translators and interpreters are firmly embedded both within conflicts and within global networks of resistance, and their agency is exhibited through active resistance. Kinnunen and Koskinen interpret the “embeddedness” of agency in the way that “agency is less a property than a relational effect of social interaction” (2010: 9) and “translator’s agency only becomes a meaningful concept when employed in relation to a particular material context and community” (ibid). In addition to the social context, temporality is another dimension to consider for agency-oriented inquiries. The incorporation of temporality into the understanding of human agency is essential for the philosophy of action (Giddens, 1979: 54). More specifically, agency is “a temporally embedded process of social engagement” (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 962). Based on this consideration, my research will give an overview of four translation periods within the context of translation of literary texts by women from Chinese into English, each characterized by different interactions between the agents and the macro-level political, social and economic structure.

The term agency endows the individual, the “agent”, with the power and capacity for creativity (Giddens, 1984). This means that the agent’s willed action can make a difference to the social outcome. Kinnunen and Koskinen neatly define agency as the “willingness and ability to act” (2010: 6). They argue that this definition is quite successful because it encapsulates a number of key issues: “willingness” denotes the agent’s consciousness and intentionality, while “ability” relates the concept of agency to constraints and issues of power or powerlessness and the agent’s “acting” can exert “an influence in the life-world” (ibid: 6-7). As such, the translation agents, especially translators and interpreters who are often perceived as playing a secondary role, are empowered in their profession.

Agents of translation are perceived as “social actors who are heavily involved in the dynamics of translation production and the power interplay arising at every stage throughout the translation process” (Khalifa, 2014: 11) and they include writers, translators, editors and publishers, among others. This definition of agents is widely accepted in translation studies (Milton and Bandia, 2009; Gouanvic and Schultz, 2010; Munday, 2013). However, agent is often reduced to the study of translators and their habitus alone (Munday and Blakesley, 2016). This inclination has been criticized for its exclusive focus on agency from an individualistic perspective (Buzelin, 2005; Abdallah and Koskinen, 2007; Bogic, 2010; Moghaddam, 2011). Though agency has been considered of primary importance in the endeavor to make descriptive translation studies more “agent-aware”, much attention has been given to translators and interpreters (Angelelli, 2014), without adequate consideration to other translation agents such as publishers, editors, literary agents and scholars who also influence the translation process. For example, in contributing a section on sociological approaches to *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, Moira Inghilleri only mentioned the translator’s agency when introducing relevant research questions (2009: 279); in her work on Bourdieu-inspired thinking in translation studies, she again only emphasized the agency of translators and interpreters (2005: 142). The dismissal of other agents in the translation process is viewed by some scholars as a deficiency of Bourdieusian

approaches to translation studies because they “do not have the strength to examine an agency consisting of multiple different kinds of actors” (Kung, 2009: 126).

In response to such criticism, Bruno Latour’s ANT provides a useful tool to examine the heterogeneous set of entities that configure cultural transfers. ANT reminds us that “the translation process involves a multiplicity of mediators” (Buzelin, 2005: 212) and that such a complex and nonlinear process has a “hybrid, collective and ‘networky’ character of the translating agent” (ibid: 216). Besides, ANT also endows agency to non-human actors, such as institutions and organizations. In summary, ANT, as a process-oriented kind of research, can account for different agents involved in the circulation of translations and open the closed doors of some translational agencies that might remain invisible outside of Bourdieu’s framework.

My aim is to provide a sophisticated framework of the translational agencies where not only individuals and networks, but also social spaces that contextualize the translation, serve as agents that shape the dissemination of female voices into another culture. Maria Tymoczko (2002) observes that in translation studies, the internal textual analysis and the external socio-cultural studies are becoming disconnected with each other. This study also tries to address this issue by combining the sociological inquiry of agency with not only textual analysis but also paratextual analysis. My research approach is modelled on Lova Meister’s mixed methods and Edoardo Crisafulli’s three interconnected levels for translation studies. According to Meister, borrowing, combining and adapting theories as well as methods from different research traditions is common practice for translation studies because translation is a complex phenomenon with many interconnected aspects (2018: 72-75). Also aiming to explore the multifarious aspects of translation, Crisafulli argues that “translation studies as a whole should operate at three interconnected levels: theory (which includes the hermeneutics of translation), analysis (by which I mean textual analysis) and history (translation scholars should strive to maintain a historical orientation)” (2002: 41). My research perceives translation as a historically, socially and culturally situated activity

and aims for an agency-oriented, diachronic investigation based on contextual, paratextual and textual interpretations.

2. Feminist translation studies: an overview

Women and translation have traditionally been perceived as metaphorically similar because of their shared inferiority and second-place role to either men or the source text. A well-known phrase that brings women and translation together is “les belles infidèles” coined by Gilles Ménage in the 17th century when the idea of a “faithful” translation was profoundly significant. This expression means “translations are like women: if they are beautiful, they are not faithful; if they are faithful, they are not beautiful” (Kao, 2001: 394). This misogynistic metaphor reinforced the notion of a secondary and potentially treacherous nature of both women and translation while at the same time established an interesting connection between these two domains of research in the field of translation studies.

In particular, the concurrent development of translation studies and feminist theories in the 1970s opened alternative avenues to theorize women and translation. Both feminist scholars and translation scholars began to question and contest the binary oppositions that had dominated their fields, such as male/female, masculine/feminine and the original text/the translated text (Bassnett, 1992). Consequently, the traditional thinking that relegates women and translation to inferior and subservient positions was rendered meaningless. Feminist scholars chose to work with the idea of an androgynous or even bi-sexual in-between space in which they can negotiate between the masculine pole and the feminine pole (ibid). In the meantime, translation studies witnessed a cultural turn which conceptualized translation as a rewriting practice embedded in social and cultural contexts. As a result, the “fidelity” principle was no longer upheld as the supreme yardstick in translation. The cultural turn in translation studies brought the influences of ideology to the fore, which prepared “the terrain for a fruitful encounter with feminist thought” (Simon, 1996: 8).

Gender issues and identity politics, as essential facets to understanding a culture, exert strong influences on cultural transfer. The dialogue between the cultural turn in translation studies and feminist translation theory is mutually enriching. The Cultural School³ perceives translation not as a neutral linguistic activity, but as a cultural practice with specific agendas. It proposes that the meaning of the original text is not fixed, but rather it is constantly negotiated and recreated. In this sense, translation can provide an ideal setting to mediate, contest or even subvert normative gender identities. With the rallying call of “women’s liberation must first be a liberation of/from language” (Simon, 1996: 7), feminist scholars have come to consider language “as a site of contested meanings, as an arena in which subjects test and prove themselves” (ibid). Theories of the Cultural School have foregrounded the active role of translators and validated feminist translators’ transgressive and aggressive practices. The liberation of translation from the constraints of being faithful to the original affords feminist translators considerable freedom to assert their feminist agendas by devising their own experimental linguistic strategies. In turn, a feminist perspective that highlights gender issues in translation has nourished the renewal of scholarly interest in translation since the 1990s and given fresh impetus to the “cultural turn” of translation studies (Yu, 2015).

Although the development of translation studies through the 1970s closely parallels the development of feminist theory, there was no full-length study that explored in depth the intersection between these two fields until the publication of two seminal works: *Gender in Translation: Culture Identity and the Politics of Translation* (1996) and *Translation and Gender: Translating in the Era of Feminism* (1997), respectively by Sherry Simon and Luise von Flotow, two forerunners of the Canadian School of

³ The Cultural School advocates target-oriented, functional and descriptive approaches to translation, which have emancipated translation studies from the traditional source-oriented, equivalence-seeking and prescriptive approaches and led to its establishment as an independent discipline. The cultural turn is generally dated back to the 1970s, which saw its culmination in two volumes edited by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, *Translation, History and Culture* (1990) and *Constructing Cultures* (1998).

feminist translation studies (FTS). The Canadian feminist translation practice originated in the 1970s when Quebec women writers produced experimental writing to re-inscribe femininity in language and deconstruct the dominant patriarchal discourse. Their woman-centric manipulation of language placed a high demand on their translators. A group of feminist translators (among others, Luise von Flotow, Barbara Godard, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, Howard Scott) colluded purposefully with feminist writers to create politicized translations based on deep gender awareness to oppose the patriarchal language. The Canadian feminist translation school thrived as a direct spin-off from the experimental works by Quebec women writers.

Simon (1996) elucidates different issues pertaining to the study of translation through a gender lens and introduces the translation practices of several feminist translators in history. She focuses particularly on translating French feminism into the Anglo-American context and the feminist translation of the Bible. Von Flotow (1997) gives a more systematic account of the connection between feminist politics and translation, starting from the historical background of FTS, to the theories and practices that constitute FTS, and concluding with the criticism and future perspectives of FTS. She also discusses the feminist revision and retranslation of the Bible, explaining how the Bible can be reinterpreted and retranslated from a feminist perspective to reflect new understandings of women's positions in society. These two seminal publications are the most visible achievements of the Canadian feminist translation school and have become the major references within FTS worldwide.

Another important figure of the Canadian feminist translation school was Barbara Godard who proposed the widely known concept "womanhandling" in FTS (1989: 50). She underscores the agency of a feminist discourse to subvert the monologism of the dominant discourse and unleash the power of language through a radical interrogation of meaning (ibid: 45). She identified translation as "a topos in feminist discourse used by women writers to evoke the difficulty of breaking out of silence in order to communicate new insights into women's experiences and their relation to language"

(ibid: 45). In combination with feminist textual theory, Godard emphasized the polyphony of the translated text and widened the concept of translation to include imitation, adaption, quotation, pastiche, parody and other modes of re-writing. Such an expanded definition of translation has been one of the central focuses in translation studies to this day, which proves again the fruitful cross-pollination between feminist theories and translation studies. Godard's "womanhandling" is usually mentioned in tandem with von Flotow's "hijacking"⁴ (1991: 78) as symbolic of the radical Canadian feminist translation approaches, both emphasizing the active role of translators in the creation of meaning and their assertiveness in flaunting the signs of their manipulation of the text.

The radical Canadian feminist approaches have met with criticism from both within and outside feminist discourse, with the most indignant reaction coming from Rosemary Arrojo. Arrojo questions the double standard of feminist translation scholars, challenging the viewpoint that "womanhandling texts is objectively positive while manhandling them is to be despised" (1994: 157). She argues that feminist translators apply hypocritical and contradictory ethics and take authorial pleasure in manipulating the translation only for their own circumstances and perspectives (Arrojo, 1995). Moreover, she observes a theoretical incoherence in feminist translators' claim to recreate a new meaning for the original text when their practices are actually built upon Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist idea that "no meaning can ever be 'reproduced or 'recovered' but is always already created, or recreated, anew" (Arrojo, 1994: 158). Despite such criticism, the Canadian School's proposals have proved to be very productive in their specific contexts. The Canadian School of FTS has been considered by mainstream translation studies today as "the universal paradigm of feminist translation and, by extension, as the paradigm of the interaction between feminisms and translation" (Castro, 2009: 2).

⁴ Hijacking means that the feminist translator appropriates the source text to reflect her own political intentions. The translator intervenes and writes on her own right to make the feminine seen and heard in the translation (von Flotow, 1991: 78-80).

With the advent of gay activism and queer theory in the late 1980s and the 1990s, “woman” as a definitive category for analyzing translation has been challenged. The definition of woman has been destabilized and would not hold within one culture or across different cultures. Gender is no longer essentialized as possessing intrinsic or fixed characteristics, but considered as a fluid performance. The overdeterminations of male supremacy and essentialist formulations of womanhood are henceforth problematic. As Linda Alcoff reminds us, “if we define the subject in terms of gender, articulating female subjectivity in a space clearly distinct from male subjectivity, then we become caught up in an oppositional dichotomy controlled by a misogynist discourse” (1988: 423). Since there is no neat binary opposition between “men” and “women”, the central concept of “translation as a rewriting in the feminine” (Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991) to subvert the patriarchal system in traditional FTS is no longer tenable. In light of this shift, von Flotow (1999, 2007) maps out two paradigms to study the interface of translation studies and gender studies. The first is the “conventional” assumption that there are groups of people in each society/culture that can be identified as women or men. This paradigm focuses on liberating women from the patriarchal system by construing gender as a linguistic category in translation. The second paradigm questions the validity of identifying anyone as either male or female when the diversity of sexual orientation and gender, class distinction, ethnicity, race and other socio-political factors is taken into consideration. While the first paradigm conceptualizes women as a special minority group culturally and linguistically subjugated to men within patriarchal society, the second paradigm calls into question traditional ideas about two genders and aligns gender issues with gay and lesbian identities and interests.

Carol Maier was among the first to question the legitimacy to indiscreetly adopt a “woman” perspective and to apply the notion of “gender instability” in translation. Together with Françoise Massardier-Kenney, she proposed that “the extent to which gender definitions are neither universal nor absolute manifestations of inherent

differences but relatively local, constantly changing constructions is contingent on multiple historical and cultural factors” (1996: 230). They regard translation as the only possible medium that can fully reveal gender instability. Maier advocates a “woman-interrogated” approach, explained as

an endeavor to work less from confidently held definitions than from a will to participate in re-definitions, to counter the restrictions of a gender-based identity by questioning gender as the most effective or the most appropriate point of departure for a translator’s practice (Maier, 1998: 102).

While contesting the presupposition of fixed gender binaries in translation, Maier also clarifies that although gender issues have been unidentifiable or even insignificant, this contingency need not lead to a feeling of impotence (ibid: 103). The development of the two paradigms in translation studies is compatible. Von Flotow also observes that “the first paradigm is still generating insightful and valuable critical analyses of women’s writing in translation, its history and its reception, studies of the contemporary rewritings of certain authors and texts, and the contributions of women translators” (1999: 284-285). The objective of my research is precisely to contribute fresh insights into the first paradigm by focusing on Chinese women writers in English translation through a sociological lens.

Despite their different notions of gender, both paradigms allow for translation agents (translators, publishers and editors) to “choose to take assertive activist positions, rendering gender aspects and their own interventions deliberately visible, choosing to translate only those authors/texts that suit their politics, or deliberately intervening to make a text fit their particular mindset” (von Flotow, 2007: 104). Nevertheless, my research questions the presumption that translation agents with a woman-centric focus will invariably take activist positions when they are bringing women writers to other cultures. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish “feminist translation” from “women and translation”. According to Olga Castro and Emek Ergun (2018a), the political term

feminism emphasizes activism to dismantle power relations and change the world; however, studies looking at women and translation are not necessarily from a political, liberatory and critical stance even if they prioritize woman-centered knowledge. Since not all studies on women and translation adopt a political activist position, Maier stresses her preference for “woman-identified” translators over “feminist” translators in an interview:

A woman-identified translator would first of all identify him or herself affirmatively with woman in some way and that she would make many of her decisions as translator on the basis of that identification. In general, feminist seems to suggest a distinctly politicized orientation and the presence of defined feminist strategies and goals, whereas woman-identified suggests a primary concern and not necessarily a feminist concern (Godayol, 1998: 161).

Massardier-Kenney (1997: 57) also contests the concept of feminism in translation, stating that the translator may work with texts which are not necessarily considered feminist by a contemporary Western reader, either because they were written before feminism developed or because they come from a cultural context in which feminism is not a viable strategy. She argues that the term “feminist” in von Flotow’s three well-known feminist strategies (supplementing, prefacing/footnoting and hijacking) is problematic because there are no prior redefinitions of this term in her application. According to Massardier-Kenney, “what is feminist then is the use to which this strategy is put in order to emphasize the woman’s point of view that was present in the source text and that the translator is determined to carry over” (1997: 57). She further categorizes the major strategies that can be adopted for a feminist agenda: author-centered strategies that include recovery, commentary and resistance; translator-centered strategies that include commentary, use of parallel texts and collaboration (Massardier-Kenney, 1997: 58).

In a similar vein, Kim Wallmach questions the creativity of feminist translation strategies. She proposes that it is the individual translators' initial norms coupled with the linguistic constraints of the original text that explain translational choices, rather than the systemic norms and conventions of feminist translation (2006: 22). David J. Eshelman also casts his suspicion on the homogenized definition of feminist translation, arguing that "feminist translation practice is far more complex than the simple alteration of source text in blind allegiance to an 'agenda'" (2007: 17). He thinks that hijacking and womanhandling, the more extreme feminist translation practices, should not be equated with all feminist translations. Concurring with their argument, I seek to uncover another dimension to feminist translation practices and feminist translation criticism in a Chinese context, which are not necessarily linked to political activism.

Though feminist translation has so far not taken translation studies by storm (Eshelman, 2007), the intersection between gender and translation has developed towards broader purview and greater complexity ever since the emergence of the Canadian feminist translation school. After positing the two paradigms of FTS, von Flotow goes on to note that the integration of gender into translation studies can be achieved on three levels:

- (1) by focusing on gender as a sociopolitical category in macro-analyses of translation phenomena, such as the production, criticism, exchange, and success of works, authors and translators;
- (2) by examining gender issues as the site of political or literary/aesthetic engagement through micro-analyses of translated texts;
- (3) by shaping the theories applied to or derived from translation praxis (2009: 123).

Similarly, Pilar Godayol recognizes three lines of inquiry in gender and translation:

- (1) theoretical origins: gender definitions, metaphors and myths in the "feminine", a section covering the main theoretical sources that have dealt with the intersection of

- gender and translation over recent years, either conceptually or metaphorically;
- (2) historiographic research: “recovery and commentary” of women translators and feminist authors;
 - (3) translation practices: feminine affinities and paratextual approaches, an approach to various experiences of translate practice based on the relationship between the woman translator and the author (2013: 174).

Castro and Ergun (2018b) also summarize several main areas of research on FTS: gender metaphors in Western discourses on translation, women translators in history, women writers in translation and feminist texts in translation. Most of the areas they delineate fall within the first paradigm in which female gender is described as a category that can in some respects be applied to all women. The second paradigm which destabilizes the notion of women and allows for more diversity in gender identification has hardly been explored or developed probably due to its “blurring of categories” (von Flotow, 2011: 3); or as I suggest, research on gender diversities can be a sensitive territory to chart in some cultures, for example, China.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s combined postcolonial and feminist frame towards translation, underlined by both Simon (1996) and von Flotow (1997, 2007), is particularly revealing to my research. Spivak expressed her concern with “convenient” translations which tended to generalize about the translation of Third World literature from one powerful Anglo-American perspective, based on the imagination that women automatically had something identifiable in common (Spivak, 1993). The superficial inclusion of Third World women in Western culture constrains these women’s voices within a predefined space (Amireh and Majaj, 2014). For example, books which portray Arab women as as oppressed victims of their religion and society are more likely to be translated into English because they can capture readers’ attention and satisfy their curiosity and fascination for the “other”, the “different” (Alhossary, 2013). In view of this, Simon contends that “translation can attain the democratic ideal only if the rhetoricity, the textuality, of the work of Third World women is adequately rendered”

(1996: 138). As feminist ideas are transcultural, translation should not function as a medium to uncritically appropriate the feminist texts of other cultures, as eloquently argued by Christine Delphy (1995) for the case of Anglo-American scholars' misappropriating French feminist texts. A real understanding of the source materials and their cultural history is also fundamental to the analysis of translating women writers from different cultures.

The mutual inspiration of the cultural turn in translation studies and feminist translation theory has empowered the translator to subvert patriarchal conventions and thus aroused more interest in studies of translators' agency. The ensuing suspicion of an exclusive woman-centric focus on political activism in FTS has expanded the scope of gender and translation towards broader inquiries. While Western FTS is developing towards broader purview, FTS in China seems to remain stagnant because issues on gender have been marginalized in Chinese academia. To elaborate on their different priorities and trends, I will now review important studies on women and translation outside China and discuss scholarship on women and translation within China to critically evaluate its development, with a particular focus on how "woman" is used as a category of analysis in China's outward translation turn.

3. Women and translation: international scholarship

Following the criticism of the concepts developed within the radical Canadian feminist translation studies, feminism becomes a conflicted concept in translation studies. Scholars have suggested possible alternatives such as "woman-identified" (Godayol, 1998), "gender-conscious" (Martín, 2014) and "gender in translation theories" (Eshelman, 2007) to readdress the domain that explores the interrelation between women and translation. I adopt the phrase "women and translation" following von Flotow's declaration that

it is time to write about “women and translation” again, time to return to and perhaps expand on the “first paradigm” of gender studies as applied to translation, revisiting a series of agents — translators, writers, fictional characters — that “call themselves or are called ‘women’” (2011: 1).

According to von Flotow, “the ‘women and translation’ paradigm remains of interest, a source of creative study and analysis” (ibid: 9). A “woman” perspective is pragmatic if we are to expose women’s experience in this essentialist world where the binary of women and men is reified in almost every aspect of our life (von Flotow and Farahzad, 2017). While the second paradigm of FTS is developing slowly, a return to *women* as the touchstone of sexual difference in translation studies can generate new insights into FTS (von Flotow, 2012).

In her first collection of “translating women”, von Flotow (2011) focuses on translation activities principally from Anglo-American and European perspectives. This collection features the translation of a variety of text genres, including poetry, botanical texts, Japanese literary text *The Pillow Book*, American chick lit and Simone de Beauvoir’s *Le Deuxième Sexe*. It adopts a “woman” perspective to discuss general issues clustering around translation, with a central focus on women writers, women translators and feminist texts. It touches upon questions such as how translation empowers women writers excluded from artistic and cultural expression, how the woman poet-translator enriches her own writing through translation, how women translators maintain high visibility, how female sexuality is represented in translation and how paratexts frame gender in translation. The sequel of this collection, edited by von Flotow and Farzaneh Farahzad (2017), aims to contribute to the internationalization of FTS and thus shifts the focus to women and translation in cultures “across other horizons”, that is, well beyond the European or Anglo-American centers to locations such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Colombia, Morocco, Sri Lanka, China, Japan and Eastern Europe. The theoretical, ethical and political concerns von Flotow mentions in collecting and publishing the articles further proves the necessity to unleash the hidden potential of

women and translation through transcultural knowledge and transnational and intersectional approaches. This collection is neatly structured into four parts: the role of women translators; applying feminism in translation; translating women authors in context and feminist translation projects. It addresses questions that are central to the first paradigm of FTS and has illuminated the research on translating Third World women writers and feminisms in other non-European contexts. Featuring a wide range of themes, this volume not only discusses the translation and homogenization of Arab and Cuban women writers in the dominant Western discourse, but also how the translation and reception of Western feminist aesthetics into China can be influenced by the translator's subjective and personal choices with respect to gender-related issues and the socio-political condition in the target context. Moreover, this volume adopts a sociological approach that is closely relevant to my research, which reveals the agency of human actors, such as translators, publishers, editors and authors, as well as non-human actors such as the context of a feminist translation project in general. It discusses questions such as how the author and the publisher jointly suppress the translator's agency in order to gain more economic profits, how women's increasing participation in the translation of Quran can subvert the image of the subdued and silent Muslim woman and how the CERFI (known in English as the Center for Women's Studies in Islam) project publishes the works of Muslim feminists to counter ignorance and preconceived notions about Islam, among others. Finally, it is interesting to note Hiroko Furukawa's proposition to de-feminize translation and mitigate the over-feminizing convention prevalent in the Japanese literary world (2017). This reminds us that a focus on women and translation is not a matter of simple equation to "over-feminization" of the translation process, but an advocacy for originality and authenticity with respect to the representation of women.

Through an emphasis on a "woman" perspective in these two collections, von Flotow, together with Farahzad, explains that "this focus on women is, of course, a feminist approach" (2017: xiii). Therefore, woman-centric translation studies may also fall within the scope of FTS, albeit less radical than the one proposed by the early Canadian

School. By contrast, a collection entitled *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives* (2017) edited by Olga Castro and Emek Ergun fully focuses on feminist praxis in translation and openly claims the political title of “feminist”. It advocates that translators should serve as brokers of power and engage in intellectual activism. The editors point out that research on women and translation tends to blur the activist emphasis of the *feminist* praxis of translation. They advocate that “the critical role of translation in the trans/formation of feminist politics remains to be studied thoroughly” (Castro and Ergun, 2017: 2). This “transnational” and “interdisciplinary” collection is a significant contribution to the activist FTS since the prominent development of the Canadian School. It explores the role of translation in the intercultural circulation of feminist texts and develops the second paradigm of FTS through issues of gender minorities. Another “undeniably political” (Larkosh, 2014: 8) volume on translation and gendered identity is *Re-engendering Translation: Transcultural Practice, Gender/Sexuality and the Politics of Alterity* edited by Christopher Larkosh (2014), which addresses issues of homosexuality, gendered violence and the construction of sexuality. These two collections on gender and translation have expanded the scope of this field and invite more dialogues between social activism, gender, sexuality and translation studies.

In contrast with the transcultural focus in these two collections, research by Zhongli Yu deals exclusively with translating feminism in China. Yu investigates the Chinese translation of two seminal feminist texts *The Second Sex* and *The Vagina Monologues*. She dwells on different strategies put in place by female and male translators to translate female body and female sexuality, and explains such differences through references to the wider political, social and cultural context. While focusing on these two case studies, she also discusses gender and translation in general, such as the practice and theory of feminist translation and the interrelation between censorship, sexuality and translation. As José Santaemilia claims, studies of women and translation in China is “an area practically unknown” to the world (2011: 23), yet Yu’s book has begun to fill this gap. According to Yu:

The foremost contribution of the radical Canadian feminist translation approaches has made to translation studies is that it has aroused and is still arousing feminist awareness of researchers, especially from outside the Euro-American context, that stimulates them to study translations from feminist perspective and to discover feminist translation practices or feminist translators in their own culture. This research is one such attempt (2015: 44).

Unlike Yu whose main concern is feminist activism, my research highlights a “woman” perspective towards translation, focusing on how Chinese women’s writing is translated by different agencies in the Anglophone world through a historical inquiry. The shift from an emphasis on a specific political agenda to wide women’s issues can expand the scope for more theoretical and methodological dialogues between translation studies and women studies.

Unlike previously mentioned studies which aim for a non-Western-centric perspective, Eleonora Federici and Vanessa Leonardi focus on the “new European thrust” in FTS (2013: 12), mainly in an Italian context. Compared with other collections with a political and cultural slant, their edited collection focuses more on the linguistic representation of gender-related aspects. Another linguistically-focused collection is a special issue of *Gender, Language and Translation at the Crossroads of Disciplines* edited by Olga Castro (2013), which encourages adopting approaches from feminist linguistics and empirical linguistic studies to explore more of the interfaces between language, translation and gender. In Federici and Leonardi’s book, Elaine Tze-Yi Lee (2013) engages in feminist translation criticism of four Chinese translations of the novel *The Color Purple*. She compares the four translations with regards to their descriptions of sexual coercions, sex subjugation, extramarital affairs and same-sex sexuality. The different ways the translators adopt to translate such contents prove that translations of texts about female sexuality are by no means innocent, especially in a cultural context like China. Lee’s discussion presents a replicable framework for feminist translation

criticism: first select a gendered text, then establish a corpus consisting of sensitive gender-focused contents and finally analyze the translator's position in translating them.

In a similar vein, José Santaemilia's collection *Gender, Sex and Translation: The Manipulation of Identities* (2014) highlights translation as the most privileged locus for the manipulation of gendered or sexual identities and stereotypes. It follows the main lines of inquiry in FTS, such as feminized metaphors of translation, women translators' visibility, gender construction through translation, contextualization of feminist translation and translation of sex-related language. Of particular interest in Santaemilia's book is Janet S. Shibamoto Smith's discussion (2014) on how translations from English into Japanese can naturalize and introduce new literary or sexual conventions that have transformed Japanese romance fiction by providing Japanese readers with new discourses about romance. Her research shows the potential for a wider focus on gender, sex and translation aside from the centrality of women.

The final two volumes I would like to mention are for the most part set in the Spanish context. *Translation, Ideology and Gender* edited by Carmen Camus Camus, Cristina Gómez Castro and Julia T. Williams Camus (2017) addresses gender-related issues through different textualities such as health sciences, poetry and narrative, while *Rethinking Women and Translation in the Third Millennium* edited by Encarnación Postigo Pinazo and Adela Martínez García (2014) continues the feminist quest for equality, recognition and empowerment through translation. These two collections demonstrate the collective endeavor of Spanish feminist translation scholars to facilitate the ongoing development of FTS. Their academic "agency" can exert a wider influence on FTS worldwide, as already shown by the two leading Spanish feminist translation scholars, José Santaemilia and Olga Castro.

Even this cursory look at the major volumes on gender and translation reveals that although FTS has slowed down since the heydays of the Canadian School, this research field is indeed "ongoing, and profoundly interesting" (von Flotow, 2013: 163). FTS

thrives in Canada and is expanding to Europe and other non-European regions, having crossed geographical, historical, ideological, social, cultural, political and gender binary boundaries, with its inquiries stretching across different text genres, theoretical and methodological approaches. The definition of feminist translation has extended from an exclusively gender-conscious approach to a more intersectional and heterogeneous model of cross-border meaning-making (Castro and Ergun, 2017).

Another place to look at for a conglomeration of studies on women and translation is the area of the special journal issues. *Translation, Feminist Scholarship, and the Hegemony of English* (2014), a special issue of *Signs* edited by Claudia de Lima Costa and Sonia E. Alvarez, again discloses the agencies of translating feminisms: non-human actors (academic journals, institutions and foundations) and human actors (women translators and scholars of women studies). These actors integrate into a transnational network that promotes the intercultural communication of feminisms, or in the editors' term, "a material apparatus" which organizes the translation, publication and circulation of the text (2014: 558). Although many studies in FTS have referred to agency in different ways, few attempts have been made to combine sociological approaches with a gender focus in a more systematic manner.

In the special issue of *Gender & History, Translating Feminism: Transfer, Transgression, Transformation 1950s-1980s* edited by Maud Anne Bracke, Penelope Morris and Emily Ryder (2018), discussions on women and translation in the socialist context is worth special attention. Similar to the case of China, Chiara Bonfiglioli observes that in Yugoslavia, "the institutionalization of the 'woman question' meant that this issue was mostly debated within the discursive borders of Marxist theory — that is, in economic and sociological terms" (2018: 242). Such a socialist ideology of women's questions will definitely influence the global circulation of feminisms from and into socialist countries, including related issues of translation. Caroline Summers' question "hostage to feminism?" (2018) argues that the enduring appeal and presence of the former German Democratic Republic writer Christa Wolf in the Anglophone

world owes to Anglophone publishers, reviewers and commentators who categorized her as a feminist writer. The translation agents' "feminist-ized" marketing strategy raises meaningful issues of introducing socialist women writers to the Anglophone world. I will further elaborate this point by discussion about translations of Zhang Jie's works.

The complexity of geopolitical divergences and identity construction is again emphasized in a special issue of *MonTI, Women and Translation: Geographies, Voices, Identities* edited by José Santaemilia and Luise von Flotow (2011). Despite the divergences, there also seems to be certain global patterns with regards to women writers in translation. Arzu Akbatur (2011) observes that Turkish women writers started to get translated into English in the 1980s and 1990s because of the bond between writing and women's increased consciousness. Angela Coutts (2002) claims that from 1982 to 1991, when an increasing number of women undertook research at US universities, a more representative selection of works by Japanese female authors was gradually established. I also find that similar reasons apply to the increasing translation into English of Chinese women writers in the 1980s. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis, it would be of great interest to investigate the translation of women writers on a comparative global scale. This, like all of the previously mentioned publications, are important additions to the development of women and translation, which can be mapped by and large into four categories: translation and activism, translation and identity, translation of sexuality and the rediscovering of a growing genealogy of translating and translated women in diverse languages and cultures.

Other studies are worth mentioning because their diverse theoretical and methodological resources can open new avenues for discussion. Chia-Hui Hsing (2011) discusses the effects of the translator's gender on translating English-language children's literature into Chinese. Diana Bianchi (2018) explores to what extent the gender-based innovations in English crime fiction and science fiction were represented in the Italian versions when Italy was going through remarkable transformations in

relation to the role of women in family and society. Santaemilia (2019), after studying the translation of sex-related language in literature, continues to look at translating sex-related language (and swearing) in audio-visual texts. Besides the diversification of text genres, questions concerning multifarious aspects of women and translation are being raised. Mirella Agorni (2005) and Hilary Brown (2018) envisage the collaboration between women translators as distinctive and unusual forms of agency in the translation history. Ji-Hae Kang and Kyung Hye Kim (2019) point out that the collaborative subtitling of the female-led comedy *Spy* in Korea contains abundant unnecessary foul language that significantly degrades women, thus betraying the carefully devised feminist message in the original. Hiroko Furukawa (2018) investigates the relationship between the sexuality of the female main character and her language use in three Japanese translations of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Eliana Maestri (2018) examines how the interplay between mothers and daughters influences the formation of female identity in the translation of autobiographical narratives by women writers.

Also, more detailed discussions are made to avoid one-sided generalizations. Katayoon Afzali (2017) examines the changes of women's images in translating *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Rebecca* into Persian through textual and paratextual analysis. She observes a paradox in the representation of women characters after the Islamic Revolution: the role of women was diluted in the translation of titles and book covers while the politeness strategies used in dialogues where men were addressing women were increased. Valerie Henitiuk proposes the concept of "phallo-translator" (1999: 476) whose ingrained phallocentric assumptions may ignore the "female meaning" that is fundamental to the message of the original work. Tutun Mukherjee (2011) disagrees with the viewpoint that only biologically female translators can accurately translate the voice of a female author. She believes that a "sincere and diligent translator" of postcolonial women writers should attend closely to "the submerged intensities contained within a text that could then be 'framed' and 'reframed'" in order to translate the marginalized and the underprivileged (ibid: 140). Sanaa Benmessaoud (2013) analyzes the dilemma faced by the postcolonial writer

Mernissi to translate Arab women's experiences into her own writing for Anglo-American audiences. On the one hand, Mernissi wishes to give Arab women their own voices by contesting the Western stereotype that describes Arab women as silent and subjugated objects. On the other hand, in order to ensure an effective communication of her subversive voice, she has to use exotic words, easily accessible tropes, an appealing literary packaging with an ethnographic dimension, and pictures that actually enhance the stereotypical image of Moroccan women. When her work goes through publishing and marketing process, this authority-granting publishing structure further de-emphasizes her feminist intention and commodifies the cultural stereotypes. Benmessaoud argues for a "feminist humanist narrative" to frame the liberating tales of contemporary *Shahrazad* if they are to trespass the linguistic and cultural borders and reach the global market. Such a narrative serves to promote transnational solidarity and understanding rather than cultural differences per se. Benmessaoud thus provides a nuanced account of the challenges to translate Third World women in a transnational context rather than simply following the assumptions of an orientalist framework. Besides the orientalist stereotyping of Third World women, the agency of women scholars, women writers, publishers and other agents in the translation process, together with the contextual influences, are also significant factors which I will discuss in detail in the next chapters.

4. Women and translation: Chinese scholarship

FTS started to appear in China in the late 1990s. Xie Tianzhen (1999) briefly mentioned feminist translation when introducing the cultural turn in Western translation studies. Liao Qiyi (2002) and Ge Xiaoqin (2003) gave revealing accounts of the affinities between women and translation and elucidated the nature and strategies of feminist translation. Immediately following such initial interest, in 2004, four articles on feminist translation were published in the *Chinese Translator Journal*, the only top-ranking translation studies journal in the country. This marked the moment of "feminist translation studies settling down in China" (Yu, 2015: 41). Also in the same year, von

Flotow's *Translation and Gender* was reprinted in China in a local English edition. Feminist translation theories and practices continued to draw attention from Chinese translation scholars until 2008. After this small climax of theoretical imports from 2004 to 2008, the enthusiasm for FTS subsided in China in terms of the scant attention it received from well-established translation scholars and high-quality academic journals.

However, as in several other cases mentioned above, the agency of women scholars came to the fore of the translation discourse. Since 2004, Mu Lei, a leading female translation scholar in China, has instructed her MA students (all women) to engage in systematic studies of feminist translation. Their research was published not only in journal articles, but also collected in a book entitled *Gender Perspective in Translation Studies* (*Fanyi yanjiu zhong de xingbie shijiao* 翻译研究中的性别视角) (2008). Mu interviewed important women translators in contemporary China such as Jin Shenghua, Zhu Hong and Eva Hung, while many of her students worked on gender-related issues for their MA dissertations. Their research follows the same trajectory of the first paradigm in Western FTS, taking a gendered approach to analyze the translated texts and the translators' feminist stance. Their case studies include representative women translators such as Zhu Hong and Eva Hung as well as typical feminist texts such as *The Color Purple* and *The Vagina Monologues*, all of which have been repeatedly discussed in many other articles on FTS. The endeavor of Mu and her MA students contributed a vital spark to the upsurge of FTS in China. A noteworthy point is that they even ventured into a taboo topic in China, the translation of body and sexuality. Unlike the growing interest in the translation of sex-related language, queerness and sexual identity in the West, sexuality remains a sensitive domain to explore in China. This is the predominant reason why the development of FTS in the country is by and large restricted to three categories: reviews of Western feminist translation theories; uncovering of women translators; and analysis of translated texts from a feminist or gender perspective.

Three of Mu's MA students, Li Hongyu, Chen Lijuan and Lü Xiaofei continued their academic career in FTS. Li has published articles in top-ranking journals on renowned feminist translation scholars such as Barbara Godard (2009a) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2009b). Her PhD thesis (2009c) provides a diachronic study of translations of British and American women writers into Chinese and she is among the first in China to approach translation history from a gender perspective. Lü is the only one who still publishes on FTS today, but most of her research is carried out by applying Canadian feminist translation strategies to analyze translated texts, without further attempts to vary perspectives and approaches for a Chinese context. Chen's PhD thesis (2011) is a significant contribution that combines postcolonial theory with FTS. She not only analyzes the politics embedded in the selection of Third World women writers translated into English by Western feminist publishers such as Aunt Lute Books and Virago Press, but also discusses the translation of a Chinese woman writer's text by a Western woman scholar. She argues that both publishers and translators, whether consciously or otherwise, are subjugated to the dominant Western discourse. Consequently, the resulting translation either perpetuates the image of the victimized Third World women or dilutes the writer's Chinese feminism. I concur with Chen's proposition that the researcher should take a self-reflexive standpoint to avoid his or her own preconception, although perhaps she dismisses the important fact that *The Diary of Ma Yan*, a poor girl in a distant Chinese village, is not the only Chinese woman writer's book published by Virago. One of my case studies in Chapter Three is indeed about the famous Chinese woman writer Zhang Jie, who also had two books published by Virago in the 1980s. My study suggests that the publication of Zhang's works by Virago is owed not so much to the commercial appeal of a suffering oriental woman like Ma Yan but primarily to the social networks mobilized by the translator in a feminist translation era.

Aside from Mu and her students, Liu Jianwen, Hao Li, Zheng Saifen and Meng Lingzi also have produced important publications on women and translation. Through Foucault's theory of power/discourse, Liu (2010) analyzes how the translator's gender

identity influences the reconstruction of the feminist discourse in the original feminist text. Unlike Liu's cultural approach, Zheng (2018) proceeds from sociolinguistics and establishes a corpus to investigate the translation of language use by a fictional woman character. Meng (2015, 2019) also adopts a corpus-based linguistic approach to examine the differences between the language use of male and female translators. She is the first in China to advance the second paradigm of "gender and translation" that de-essentializes the notion of gender (2016). Hao (2013) adopts a gender perspective to study the translation history of modern and contemporary women writers into English since the 1930s. She investigates the relevance of the changing gender-related context to the selection and translation of women writers and the influences of women translators' subjectivity on their translation strategies. These studies have gone beyond a simplified replication of Western feminist translation theories and developed their own theoretical approach to explore various issues concerning women and translation in a Chinese context.

With a focus on translating contemporary women writers into English, several other studies are modelled on the research paradigm in China's outward translation studies, albeit with less emphasis on gender implications. As a country used to import Western cultures through translation, China has now been investing heavily in exporting its culture worldwide. Since the beginning of the new millennium, the government has formulated cultural policies for more systematic projects to disseminate Chinese literature through translation. The Chinese government's "Chinese Culture Going Global" initiative renders the outward translation of Chinese literature a scholarly topic of heated discussion in academia. Translating women writers has also become a category of analysis in this outward translation turn. However, most of such studies are formulated on similar research patterns, with medio-translatology 译介学 as their theoretical framework. Medio-translatology, originally a concept in comparative literature and later developed and officially claimed by Xie Tianzhen in 1999, has broadened and enriched the cultural perspective towards translation studies in China. With similar guiding principles to the Cultural School, it aims to uncover the whole

translation process, from text selection to translation and to publication, circulation and reception. Studies on translating contemporary Chinese women writers concentrate on the politics and ideology of two agencies in introducing minority cultures: the translation project sponsored by the government of the source culture and the translation activity initiated by the target culture. Wu Yun (2015) dwells exclusively on Anglophone publishers' selective mechanism of contemporary Chinese women writers and concludes with three trajectories along which their works are received in the Anglophone world. She observes that Western readers are reading Chinese women writers' works for their female poetics, information about Chinese society and literary affinities with Western literature. Fu Wenhui (2013a) analyzes woman-focused anthologies translated and published by the source culture, contending that the government-sponsored publisher tends to select stories that reflect a positive image of China while ignoring those with specific female concerns. Moreover, by comparing the selective mechanism between the source culture and the target culture, Fu (2013b) reaffirms Wu's conclusion that women writers' works are read for their female poetics, information about China and literary affinities with Western literature. Alongside such comparisons, Fu (2015) also discusses how cultural and gender identity has influenced the translation strategies of two women translators, Gladys Yang and Zhu Hong. Though "women writers" are the object of their research, the gender aspect in translation, whether focused on culture or society, are somehow on the sidelines, subjugated to the political discourse of how Chinese literature including women's writing can go global. Wu's and Fu's research provides an overview of how works by contemporary women writers are translated and received in the target culture, but the interplay between agents, gender, translation, culture and politics needs more nuanced and in-depth investigation.

The majority of other journal articles and dissertations on FTS in China are premised on similar research models and concerns, with the bulk of discussion focused on: 1) Western feminist translation theories; 2) women translators such as Zhu Hong 朱虹, Eva Hung 孔慧怡, Zhang Ailing 张爱玲, Chen Hongbi 陈鸿璧 and woman translator

groups based on the same region or a specific historical period; 3) gender perspectives towards the translation of literary canons, including foreign works such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Vanity Fair*, *To the Lighthouse* and *Wuthering Heights*, Chinese classics such as *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (*Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊斋志异), *Six Chapters of A Floating Life* (*Fusheng liuji* 浮生六记) and *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan* 水浒传) and contemporary works by diasporic women writers such as *The Joy Luck Club* and *Snow Flower and Secret Fan*. Though covering different literary texts, many of these studies are published in low-ranking journals, which reflects the peripheral standing of FTS in Chinese academia.

Compared with Western FTS, FTS in China is developing slowly and with a narrow focus because both feminism and sexuality are marginalized topics in Chinese academia. Yu deftly points out that “feminist translation studies in China is still at a low level and at an early stage, with many works consisting of simple summaries and repetitions or short and shallow discussions” (2015: 44). Most of the studies are conducted with references to feminist translation theories and practices originating from Western discourses, von Flotow’s three feminist translation strategies in particular. Similar to Hui Wu’s (2010) call for a non-Western feminist theory to analyze Chinese women’s literary texts, in my view, research on women and translation in China should take in better consideration Chinese cultural, social and ideological specificities and critically address its own theoretical and methodological concerns so as to complement and enrich Western FTS by offering its own unique perspective.

5. Conclusion

While Western FTS is advocating for more “intersectional” and “transnational” approaches, Chinese FTS appears to remain more or less stagnant with its simplistic replication of Western feminist translation theories. My research seeks to initiate a dialogue between these two scholarships. The potential of Western FTS is not restricted to feminist activism, and research on women and translation can gain fruitful insights

from other approaches in translation studies, for example, the sociological approach. My agency-inspired research is developed in four chapters. In the first chapter, I construct a field of translating contemporary Chinese women writers into English by applying a Bourdieusian approach and delineate regular patterns to describe the general structure and operation of the translation field in the four decades: the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. In the second chapter, I analyze the academic, political, feminist and commercial agencies through the translation agents' selection and paratextual strategies, with a particular emphasis on the translational dynamics in politically and commercially dominant translation discourses. In the third chapter, I identify an intellectually motivated translation network for Zhang Jie's works, which comprises the woman writer Zhang Jie, the translator Gladys Yang, the scholar Delia Davin and the feminist publisher Virago. Moreover, I explore how contextual, paratextual and textual agencies establish Zhang's feminist reputation in the West even if she herself denies any association with feminism. In the last chapter, I trace a commercially driven translation network of Yan Geling's *The Flowers of War* that brings together the male film director Zhang Yimou, the woman writer Yan Geling, the translator Nicky Harman, the commercial publisher Harvill Secker and its editor. I focus on how the female voices of Yan's original novella are weakened through multiple translations or adaptations. The translational agencies that influence the intercultural communication of female voices are investigated through contextualization, textual and paratextual analysis, archival research and correspondences with the agents. I hope this research can show an explicit interrelation between agency, gender and translation and foreground feminist translation criticism to facilitate the translation and dissemination of works by women writers.

Chapter One

Chinese Women's Writing in Translation: A Field-Oriented Analysis

According to the translation database “Three Percent”, established at the University of Rochester to collect data on international literature, texts written by women from 2008 to 2018 constitute only 28.7% of all the translations in the database, consisting of some 1,394 titles out of a total of 4,849 (Post, 2017). As translated literature makes up a limited fraction of the books in the Anglophone market, translated literature written by women can be defined as a minority within a minority. According to Josh Stenberg, when selecting Chinese literature for translation, Anglophone publishers tend to “slant towards the male, the racy, the overtly political, the transgressive, and the weird” (2014: 297). Many of the male writers’ historical epics that sweep through the political landmarks of 20th century China, such as Mo Yan 莫言’s *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* (*Fengrufeitun* 丰乳肥臀) (1996), *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* (*Shengsipilao* 生死疲劳) (2006) and Yu Hua 余华’s *Brothers* (*Xiongdi* 兄弟) (2005),⁵ have been translated (Lovell, 2013). By contrast, their female counterparts have been largely neglected.

As Angela Coutts aptly points out, “the dilemma seems to be this: if the writing is by women then it will be marginalized and sexualized, but if the writing is treated as central and important, then women are not given an equal voice” (2002: 115). Literary critics have proposed that a gender perspective does make a difference in reading, writing and other literary practices. Therefore, they argue for a female tradition in modern Chinese literature to “establish the collective identity of women writers, pinpoint their difference from male writers, rescue them from the lacunae of historical memory and restore them to a rightful place in literary history” (Liu, 2002: 149). In a similar vein, given that female writers are facing tougher challenges than male writers

⁵ The year following the title is the year in which the book is first published. All the translated titles mentioned in my discussion, if not cited for paratextual or textual analysis, will not be listed in the bibliography.

to make themselves heard globally, my research aims to uncover a distinct “translation mechanism” that underlies the translation and circulation of contemporary Chinese women writers in the Anglophone world. To be more specific, it provides revelations of what texts by contemporary Chinese women writers are selected and translated into English, how translation agents, women translators in particular, translate and promote these women writers and how female voices of these women writers are disseminated in the Anglophone world. In so doing, I hope this research can generate valid insights into the under-researched field of women and translation with relevance to a Chinese context, echoing Luise von Flotow’s proposition that “it is time to write about ‘women and translation’ again” (2011: 1).

The first two chapters of this thesis provide a general overview of how contemporary Chinese women writers are translated and represented in English translation through the heuristic concept “field”. The first chapter in particular constructs a field of translating contemporary women writers into English within the generic field of translating contemporary Chinese literature and analyzes the synchronic and diachronic dynamics operating in the field. It attempts to answer the following questions: how is the translation field structured in general? What and how are the agents operating in the translation field? What social, cultural, political and economic factors have governed the translation and reception of women writers in different time periods? What are the changes undergoing in the field? The second chapter will address more detailed questions such as: why are some texts selected for translation and some are not? How are these translations framed in their paratexts by translation agents? These general issues underpinning the translation phenomenon will be discussed to demonstrate the agency of literary translation in the dissemination of Chinese women’s writing in the English-speaking world. Below, I first explain the defining features of a social field and key terms in field theory that are relevant to translation studies and outline a theoretical model for my analysis. Then I provide an overview of contemporary Chinese women writers and delineate four regular patterns of how they are translated into English.

1. Constructing a translation field

Although the concepts in Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, such as "habitus" and "capital", have been widely applied in translation studies, the research that integrates interrelated concepts to study the structure and dynamics of a translation field remains limited. A recent work by Sameh Hanna (2016) has delineated the boundaries of a translation field and explained the key concepts within a field such as "social space", "the field of power", "agent", "habitus", "capital", "doxa" and "illusio". His Bourdieu-inspired study has generated illuminating insights into developing a more comprehensive field-oriented analysis of translation.

Bourdieu's concept of "field" is a useful theoretical tool to uncover more social and cultural variables in translation because "it makes possible the investigation of cultural products in relation to a complex network of relations that include both institutions and human agents" (Hanna, 2016: 5). The application of field theory requires a relational thinking that considers translation as a complex phenomenon which has its roots in language, literature, culture, society and power. As Hanna explains,

the dynamic nature of the concept of "field" invites the researcher to think of cultural practices and products relationally, that is, to link these practices to the positions available in the field, the dominant agents occupying them, homologies with other fields and the class structure of the wider social space (ibid).

The relational and dynamic thinking that characterizes field-oriented analysis is instrumental in investigating multifarious factors underlying the translation activity from a historical perspective.

Although there are debates on whether a translation field actually exists or not (Gouanvic, 2002, 2014; Wolf, 2007), I contend that researchers can construct their own translation field based on the structural and operational features of social fields and employ it as

an analytical tool to address their specific research questions. As Hanna reminds us, one merit of the field resides in its “constructedness”, which means that the field is “a heuristic concept, a construct” (2016: 5). It is the dynamic, relational and constructed nature of the social field that makes Bourdieu’s sociological model particularly productive.

To construct a translation field, we need first of all to understand its genesis, internal and external structure. Translation fields often develop out of their homologies with other fields in the wider social space because they are “structurally and functionally interlinked with these fields in a way that affects their internal dynamics” (Hanna, 2016: 52). The “social space” is a wider category which comprises multiple fields (cultural, political or economic) (ibid: 21), with each of these fields operating through the logic of struggle among its members. Another important external force that influences the operation of the translation field is what Bourdieu terms “the field of power” (1993: 37), namely, the laws of economic and political profits that manipulate the production and circulation of cultural products (ibid: 39).

The internal structure of the translation field can be explained through interrelated concepts such as “agent”, “habitus”, “capital”, “doxa” and “illusio”. Bourdieu defines the field as “a network of objective relations (of domination or subordination, of complementarity or antagonism, etc.) between positions” (1996: 231). The positions available in a field are distributed in oppositional terms (Hanna, 2016: 25) and they are occupied by agents “who are socially constituted as active and acting in the field under consideration by the fact that they possess the necessary properties to be effective, to produce effects, in this field” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 107). The agents act in the field under a shared “illusio” – “a collective belief on the part of its members in the value of taking part in its internal struggles” (Hanna, 2016: 59). According to Bourdieu, each field produces its specific form of the illusio, which engages agents’ interest in the game and predisposes them to put into operation the distinctions that are pertinent from the viewpoint of the logic of the field (1996: 227-228). The field of translating Chinese

women writers operates under the *illusio* that it is worthwhile to make Chinese women writers accessible to Western readers, whether for academic, commercial or political purposes.

The agency of translators and publishers is dictated by the position they occupy in the field and is exercised through the capital they have accumulated and the *habitus* they have developed as a result of their membership within the field. “*Habitus*” refers to the “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). This definition indicates a dialectical relation between the *habitus* of an agent and the objective structure of a field. The field structures the *habitus* while the *habitus* contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127). Diana Roig-Sanz and Reine Meylaerts find a similar *habitus* and institutional and symbolic dimension in the case of agents and agencies of transfer in peripheral cultures, with most of the mediators sharing specific dispositions in terms of background, biography and social class (2018: 15). The case is similar when translating Chinese literature into the Anglophone world. As such, in this overview chapter, I will not delve into the *habitus* of each agent, but elaborate on two predominant categories of translation agents in the field: academic agents and commercial agents.

The structure and limits of any field are determined by the type of capital dominant in the field and the distribution of this capital among the agents (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98-99). The structure of the field is always in a state of flux, conditioned by the struggle among its members over different types of capital. Bourdieu comes up with three main types of capital in the social space:

Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications;

and as social capital, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (1986: 243).

The three forms of capital are converted into symbolic capital which is distributed among the agents in the form of economic success, honor or cultural prestige. The logic of all fields is constituted through struggle among agents over the possession of capital and occupying dominant positions (Hanna, 2016: 5). Though the translation field places less emphasis on the concept of struggle, the economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital play a significant role in empowering translators. According to Bourdieu, “the only legitimate accumulation consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognized name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects or persons” (1993: 75). For example, Howard Goldblatt possesses a large amount of capital and has dominated the field of translating contemporary Chinese literature into English. This enables him to contract his works to publishers. In contrast, translators with less capital, such as Nicky Harman and Michelle Deeter, have mostly been translating whatever books are selected by publishers. According to Deeter (2018), she would like to translate *Ode to Joy* (*Huanlesong* 欢乐颂) (2016) by a Chinese woman writer under the wave of the #MeToo movement, but lacked sufficient capital to find support from a publisher because Anglophone publishers tend to select male writers who are more likely than female writers to win literary awards in China.

Another key concept that can be applied to analyze the historicity of a translation field is “doxa”. Doxa “has nothing to do with what is true or false; it has to do with what is seen as acceptable or legitimate at a certain moment” (Hanna, 2016: 45). This implies that “doxa is subject to change over time; what was previously seen as doxic may be later displaced by another doxa” (ibid). The agents occupying the dominant position in the field create a discourse of orthodoxy by deploying what Bourdieu terms “conservation strategies” in order to maintain the status quo of that field and their position within it (quoted in Hanna, 2016: 46). Changes within the field are usually instigated by new comers or already existing members occupying dominated positions,

who take “subversion strategies” and aim to deploy the discourse of heterodoxy to challenge the existing doxa (ibid).

The application of a field-oriented analysis can supplement cultural approaches in translation studies. As Hanna contends, “unlike cultural studies approaches, which choose cultural categories such as ‘gender’, ‘nation’, ‘race’, etc. as units of analysis, Bourdieu’s sociological model allows the researcher in translation studies to deal with a broader and more dynamic unit of analysis” (2016: 5). In other words, unlike the text-focused cultural approaches which place emphasis on translation as an end product, a field-oriented analysis focuses more on the translation process. The analysis of the “agency-structure” relationship that constitutes the field includes not only how translation agents influence the field, but also how the structure of the field conditions their agency. Moreover, the construction of a translation field also highlights a historical perspective to explore the dynamism of the translation phenomenon:

Suffice it to say that the separation of sociology and history is a disastrous division, and one totally devoid of epistemological justification: all sociology should be historical and all history sociological [...] we cannot grasp the dynamics of a field if not by a synchronic analysis of its structure and, simultaneously, we cannot grasp this structure without a historical, that is, genetic analysis of its constitution and of the tensions that exist between positions in it, as well as between this field and other fields, and especially the field of power (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 90).

Therefore, in addition to dwelling on the synchronic translational dynamics that influence the translation of contemporary Chinese women writers, this research also seeks to examine the historical changes undergoing within the field from the 1980s to the 2010s. Based on the above explanation, I outline my theoretical model as follows:

Figure 1 Theoretical Model to Analyze the Translation of Contemporary Chinese Women Writers

As illustrated in the model, social space comprises the translation field, literary field, academic field, economic field and political field, and all of the neighboring fields exert an influence on the operation of the translation field. External changes in the social space will instigate corresponding changes in the translation field. Translation agents in the field can be roughly divided into university presses, commercial publishers, scholarly translators and non-scholarly translators. They enter the field under the *illusio* that it is important to translate works by Chinese women writers into English, whether for political, commercial or academic reasons. They defend or subvert the *doxa* of the field through different position-takings and *habitus*, and with recourse to their social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital accumulated in other fields. I delineate the positions in translating women writers as follows:

- a. Positions relevant to the consecration of the original author. Mainstream writers refer to those who are well-known and have been consecrated by literary critics. Marginal writers are lesser known and are sparsely reviewed and studied by literary

critics.

- b. Positions relevant to the theme of the source text. I define woman-centered themes as those traditionally linked to women, which concentrate on women's personal and domestic lives rather than broad issues such as war, revolution, nation and so on. Woman-centered themes are considered the ones centered around love and marriage, work and family, female-male relationships, and female sexuality; non-female themes, by contrast, are not explicitly woman-centered, such as those focused on social and political issues that reflect upon the past and present of China and the Chinese people, but with no particular emphasis on women and are not aimed at conveying a message to other women and society at large to provoke some form of socio-cultural change specifically to women's interests. In short, woman-centered themes are widely accepted as *nüxing wenxue* 女性文学 (women's literature) in China – “works about women and written by women authors” (Li and Zhang, 1994: 144). There are many discussions on how hard or even impossible it is to delineate “a female space” or “feminine elements” in women's writing. My definition of the woman-centered themes and non-female themes here only serves to delineate the oppositional positions that construct the translation field because there is indeed a pattern showing the Anglophone publisher's preference in selecting specific topics concerning Chinese women's writing, whether to focus on broad social and political issues or themes traditionally linked to women. I do not mean to establish a binary demarcation between men's writing and women's writing. My concern is rather to investigate how themes traditionally linked to women are being translated into English.
- c. Positions relevant to the consumers of translation. Translators and publishers either mainly address women readers or target readers interested in Chinese society and politics.
- d. Positions relevant to the genre of the original text. Serious literature is usually

consecrated in the literary field and perceived as superior to popular literature. Popular literature in general is selected for translation under commercial imperatives.

- e. Positions relevant to the representation of female concerns. Female concerns inscribed in the writing can either be foregrounded or degraded by translation agents at the textual and paratextual level.

Translation agents take different positions and play both a structuring and structured role in the operation of the field. With the incoming of new entrants such as cultural institutions, professional translators, literary agents and online publishers, their new translation practices and publishing strategies are likely to subvert the orthodox translation discourse and cause changes to the translation field.

Michaela Wolf claims that the struggle for the positions is not necessarily the driving force for the existence of the translation field and translation agents seem to be driven only to a limited extent by the functional mechanism of the social field (2007: 110-111). However, this does not mean that the translation field does not exist. Having constructed a field of translating contemporary Chinese women writers, I also wish to remind readers that translation agents function in relatively weak structures as the bond between them is not durable and “the various agents’ positions are – at least partially – dissolved after concluding the act of mediation” (ibid: 111). That is to say, the translation field “exists only in an embryonic state” (Gouanvic, 2014: 39) and my theoretical model is a tentative proposal which invites further exploration, refinement and modification.

In alignment with the historical perspective in field theory, my discussion will be divided into four decades: the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s, with the view to reveal the nuances of different dynamism behind the translation activity. The four periods are thus divided to present regular patterns of diachronic changes in the “structure-agency”

relationship within the field. Before proceeding with my discussion, I would like to clarify that women's writing in my discussion includes a wide range of writing genres by contemporary Chinese women writers, be they realistic writings about China's social and political conditions or personalized writings about women's special inner world. According to Dorothy Ko, "from its inception, the study of Chinese women's history was integral to the nationalistic program of China's modernization" (1994: 1). Chinese women's writing is inextricably tied with the broader political and social context, but I will not discuss such relational intricacies in detail. My primary concern is how various female voices are disseminated through literary translation, namely, the translation and representation of woman-centered fiction that explores female subjectivity, female experience and female sexuality.

2. Contemporary Chinese women writers: an overview

Traditional Chinese women are often represented by both Chinese and Western scholars as monolithic victims of the oppressive and rigid patriarchal system, a system that deprived them of the right to express their own voices and subsumed them under men's domination as good wives and mothers (Ko, 1994: 1-4). As the Chinese literary tradition consisted almost entirely of writings by men, women writers had to be initiated into a world in which they had no rightful place and no distinct voice (ibid: 18). However, while arguing against the stark view that perpetuates the image of China's past as a perennial dark age for women, Ko uncovered in seventeenth-century Jiangnan (the prosperous region of present-day Shanghai) a vibrant women's culture prompted by urbanization and commercialization. Accompanying it was a vigorous female literary tradition built on women's shared love for poetry and literature, through which women writers added a uniquely feminine emotional content to a literary scene dominated by male writers.

Despite such a literary boom for women writers as described by Ko, the first large-scale social awakening of Chinese women writers' female consciousness did not occur until

the New Cultural Movement (1915–1927), a movement that had advocated for women’s rights, power, authority and status. Nora, the protagonist of Henrik Ibsen’s play *Doll’s House* (1879), was taken as a paragon of the “new woman” and became a powerful influence for China’s May Fourth Movement (1919). The identification of Chinese women with backwardness and dependency was considered as a hindrance to China’s modernization. The ideas of independent, educated and non-traditional “new woman” challenged the traditional domestic and subservient roles accorded to women through the old cultural and social system. Women’s emancipation was construed as a signifier of modernity and was upheld as a national policy to overcome the backwardness of China. The symbolic modern woman was “part of a modernizing discourse that made possible the imagining of a new nation” (Edwards, 2000: 117).

Following the awakening of women’s self-consciousness and the booming of the New Cultural Movement arises the first group of modern women writers. Women writers such as Bing Xin 冰心 (1900-1999), Ding Ling 丁玲 (1904-1986), Lu Yin 庐隐 (1898-1934) and Ling Shuhua 凌叔华 (1900-1990) began to write with “female consciousness”, expressing a desire for individual liberation and a different life from traditional Chinese women. They occupied an unprecedented visible position in the May Fourth literary scene, addressing woman-centered issues concerning freedom in love and marriage, and purporting to subvert the dominating masculine discourse of body and desire. They opted for subjective narrative forms such as fictionalized diaries and letters to express their emotions. A typical example is Ding Ling’s *Miss Sophia’s Diary*. This story was published in 1927 and enthralled contemporary readers with “the first-person rumination on loneliness and lust” (Barlow, 1989: 49). They liked it partially because “both author and protagonist were female and older Chinese literary convention had discouraged women from writing on erotic topics” (ibid).

However, this feminist trend was truncated by the subsequent Anti-Japanese War (1937–1945), which instigated a wave of revolutionary writing. The war became the dominant theme and women’s self-awareness was stifled by nationalism. In the 1930s,

most women's writings addressed the conflict between love and revolution, usually with a focus on the priority of the high ideal of revolution over love. The devotion to revolution required women to share the same aspiration as their male counterparts and discouraged them from following on personal matters. It was advocated that they should transcend the narrow personal focus and assume the responsibilities of a socially engaged writer. As Ziyun Li argued, "the Chinese Noras of the age were only trading one form of patriarchy for another, and they could hardly avoid another form of tragedy" (2002:118). In other words, women's writing during this period was also subjugated to the male-centered critical paradigm of modernization and nationhood.

Despite the nationalist revolutionary discourse that dominated women's writing, some women writers still managed to address issues specific for women in their works. Xiao Hong 萧红 (1911-1942), who was based in the north-east, highlighted the fate of women in those backward areas by portraying vivid women characters in her novels. Her concern with the effect of war on women was illustrated in a series of influential short stories (McDougall and Louie, 1997: 151). In the early 1940s, Yang Jiang 杨绛 (1911-2016), Su Qing 苏青 (1914-1982) and Zhang Ailing 张爱玲 (1920-1995) were rather active in the literary scene under the Japanese occupation of Shanghai. Their writing expressed criticism of the patriarchal family, the dilemmas of marriage and divorce, the experience of motherhood and the question of women's career and economic dependence (Dooling, 2005). They adopted neither a sentimental nor a doggedly polemical stance as some of their forerunners did, but preferring comic narrative strategies that were more detached, playful or even cynical (ibid).

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, women's voices were silenced, as the policy of the Chinese Communist Party upheld absolute equality between the two sexes. The Party legally guaranteed and protected women's rights to participate in the workforce, to choose their own marriage partners and demand divorces. Nevertheless, such a state-sponsored liberation emphasized women's equal responsibility as men to serve the nation, thereby discouraging their pursuit to claim

female characteristics and suppressing their desire to articulate their own concerns. In the Maoist era, literature depicted women in oversimplified terms and a typical heroine is

dressed in a blue or grey “Mao suit,” and remains either single or widowed – single because she has been preoccupied with revolutionary passion in lieu of sexual desire; widowed because she must retain her chastity to her late husband, often a revolutionary martyr and incarnation of the all-powerful Party-state (Shi, 2001:130).

Although women gained legal, economic, education and political rights, gender differences were largely minimized under the dominant political and cultural discourse. Female subjectivity that emerged as a theme in the May Fourth movement was decried as “petty-bourgeois” by Maoist new women. Under the ideology that literature should serve politics,⁶ Ding Ling temporarily stopped writing in the 1950s and Zhang Ailing left mainland for Hong Kong and America. Women writers of this era were represented by Yang Mo 杨沫 (1914-1995), Ru Zhijuan 茹志鹃 (1925-1998) and Zong Pu 宗璞 (1928-), whose writing showed a feminine emotion that was rarely found in the masculinized and politicalized literary scene. Zong’s *Red Bean* (*Hongdou* 红豆) (1957), Yang’s *Song of Youth* (*Qingchun zhi ge* 青春之歌) (1958) and Ru’s *Lilly* (*Baihehua* 百合花) (1958) delved into the female protagonist’s interior subjectivity and individualized form of feelings and were very quickly labelled “petty bourgeois”. From the 1950s until the end of the 1970s, the force of the dominant ideological discourse condemned to silence any individualistic streak in writing (Jin, 2004).

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), sexual identity and gender difference were further denied in the cultural discourse. Female-conscious expression was either discouraged or disallowed. The iconic female figures were the asexual “iron girls” who

⁶ Mao Zedong’s “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art” in 1942 advocated that literature and art should serve the masses, namely workers, peasants and soldiers, and “become a component part of the whole revolutionary machinery, so they can act as a powerful weapon in uniting and educating the people while attacking and annihilating the enemy, and help the people achieve solidarity in their struggle against the enemy” (McDougall, 1980: 58).

undertook the revolutionary struggle equally with their male counterparts. These gender-neutered subjects were often represented in the eight model operas, a dominant literary form during the Cultural Revolution. In these operas, “the depiction of women was further distorted: women became mere vessels of class ideology, sexually neutralized revolutionary militants” (Li, 2002: 119). They were masculinized in Cultural Revolution literature because the literary focus was to serve the interest of peasants, soldiers and workers. In both the political and aesthetic fields, women’s self-formation was enmeshed in the new political aspirations of the nation that were predicated on the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theory of class struggle, leaving no space for female-specific concerns and desires (Roberts, 2010).

It was not until 1978, when the ideological and political restrictions imposed on literature were loosened, that women’s self-conscious writing started to flourish again. The “Liberation of Thought” Movement in China paved the way for literature to enter the “New Era”.⁷ The slogan “creative freedom”, raised at the Fourth Literary Representatives Congress of the China Writers Association in 1984, afforded writers greater freedom of creative expression to express their own thoughts and explore different literary forms than at any time since 1949. Since then, “women’s voice has become louder and louder, and women’s literary works have secured a significant position on the literary scene of the new period” (Li, 2002: 117). Transformations of the whole society and of the literary sphere gave rise to an upsurge in women writers both in terms of quantity and quality. Women writers in this era were engaged in a deeper and wider exploration of female self-realization than May Fourth women writers. Their writing addressed a diverse array of topics in affirmation of women’s concerns, such as romantic love, personal life, female subjectivity, identity, desire and sexuality. They reasserted gender awareness and female integrity, with some of them even charting in taboo themes like homosexuality in order to express female subjectivity and challenge long-dominant male narrative.

⁷ “New Era Literature” refers to the reinvigorated Chinese literature after the Cultural Revolution since 1976.

In the early 1980s, women writers such as Zhang Jie 张洁 (1937-), Zhang Kangkang 张抗抗 (1950-) and Zhang Xinxin 张辛欣 (1953-) emerged as pioneers in approaching the theme of love, marriage and divorce from a female point of view. They asserted women's right to seek true love and interrogated the unequal status between men and women in marriage. Other significant women writers from this dynamic literary scene such as Dai Houying 戴厚英 (1938-1996) and Shen Rong 谌容 (1936-) focused more on describing the realities of Chinese society and reflecting upon the past and present of China from the perspective of female characters. A unique voice from this collective group of women writers was Can Xue 残雪 (1953-), a woman writer better known for the avant-garde puzzlements of her more surrealist fiction.

In the late 1980s, Wang Anyi 王安忆 (1954-) and Tie Ning 铁凝 (1957-) broached the topic of female sexuality. Wang Anyi's "Love Trilogy", *Love in a Small Town* (*Xiaocheng zhi lian* 小城之恋) (1988), *Love on a Barren Mountain* (*Huangshan zhi lian* 荒山之恋) (1991) and *Brocade Valley* (*Jinxiugu zhi lian* 锦绣谷之恋) (1992), made the bold move to tap into women's sexual awakening on the subject of its narrative. Tie Ning's "Three Stacks", *Haystacks* (*Maizhe duo* 麦秸垛) (1986), *Cotton Stack* (*Mianhua duo* 棉花垛) (1989) and *Grass Stack* (*Qingcao duo* 青草垛) (1996) also featured many descriptions of women's sexual desire. These novels are among the first to bring the female body into women's writing.

A point of particular interest here is that Chinese women writers of the 1980s denied being feminists even though their works contained criticisms and attitudes that had strong feminist resonance. On the one hand, women writers addressed a diverse array of topics in affirmation of women's right to be women, but on the other hand, they focused on human problems in general with a pronounced disregard for gender distinctions. They were actively involved in the mainstream literary trends such as "scar literature", "introspective literature", "root-seeking literature", "reform literature" and

“reportage literature”.⁸ Their strong sense of social and political responsibility inspired them to write works that did not explicitly pursue a distinctive “female position”. Delia Davin argues that:

Chinese women’s literature of the 1980s was not on the whole explicitly or avowedly feminist although it explored women’s issues and exposed and condemned discrimination against women and the gender-based suffering of women in Chinese society (1996: 73).

As Kay Schaffer and Xianlin Song point out, women writers refused to identify with the term “feminism” and sought to “write like a man” (2014: 147). Thus I would postulate that their sensitivity to women’s issues derived from a natural urge to express their femininity that had been long denied in the Maoist era, rather than any acute feminist consciousness on their part of the need to struggle against a patriarchal discourse. The social and political responsibility they took upon themselves limited their expression of female subjectivity. It was not until the 1990s that women writers shifted their focus from the “grand narrative” and “national allegory” to more personalised feminist writing. Women were “re-feminized with an emphasis on beauty, maternal desire, and domestic, as opposed to public and collective, space” (Wang, 2004: 20).

Chinese women’s writing developed towards more diverse and innovative directions in the 1990s, especially after 1995, when the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. Women’s writing in this period shifted towards explicitly woman-centered themes. They pioneered new forms such as autobiographies, semi-autobiographical novels and memoirs to explore female sexuality and subjectivity in a male-dominated society. Typical examples are Chen Ran’s 陈染 (1962-) *Private Life* (*Siren shenghuo* 私人生活) (1996) and Lin Bai’s 林白 (1958-) *A War of One’s Own*

⁸ These were popular literary trends in China during the 1980s. “Scar literature” portrayed the devastating experience of cadres and intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution; “introspective literature” reflected upon the disasters brought about by the Cultural Revolution; “root-seeking literature” traced the root of traditional national culture; “reform literature” described the progress of the economic reform initiated after 1978; and “reportage literature” recorded the social reality of China and day-to-day lives of Chinese people.

(*Yige ren de zhanzheng* 一个人的战争) (1994), two representative works in the literary trend of “private writing” that expresses the female’s private self through women’s relationship with their body, a daring trend that signals a further challenge to the dominant male-centered discourse on Chinese sexuality.

Also worth noting are women writers in the trend of new historicism such as Xu Xiaobin 徐小斌 (1953-), Zhao Mei 赵玫 (1954-) and Chen Danyan 陈丹燕 (1958-), who

reconstruct real and imagined matriarchs, weave the personal and private dimensions of women’s lives into broad national and international canvases, offering incisive analysis and creative alternatives to the culturally embedded signficatory systems that demonize women (Schaffer and Song, 2014: 154).

On top of these literary trends, Chi Li 池莉 (1957-) and Fang Fang 方方 (1955-) pioneered the trend of New Realism which deals in stark detail with the everyday life of the ordinary people through a female perspective. Different from women’s writing in the 1980s which was designed to educate and was more aligned with the political and social discourse, women’s writing in the 1990s became more concerned with interiority, subjectivity, sexuality, personal life, identity and desire.

In the late 1990s, the so-called “beauty writer” wave erupted in China under the impetus of consumerist ideology, bringing about “a significant, although short-lived, literary trend for urban youth in the twentieth century” (Schaffer and Song, 2014: 77). Wei Hui 卫慧 (1973-), Mian Mian 棉棉 (1970-), Chun Sue 春树 (1983-) ventured in audacious descriptions of female sexuality and feminine desire. Their writing provoked fierce controversy in China, accused by some critics as vulgar and decadent or even as “writing with their lower half body” (Leung, 2017: 42). The highly sexualized and individualized novels by “beauty writers” challenged the division between serious and popular literature.

Unlike her urban peers, however, Sheng Keyi 盛可以 (1973-), born in a small village in Hunan Province, captured the living conditions of vulnerable migrant women workers with “a rare insight, energy, and vitality” (Schaffer and Song, 2014: 61). Her *Northern Girls: Life Goes on (Beimei 北妹)* (2004) unveiled the hardships that rural migrant women have to go through in order to survive in large cities like Shenzhen.

The 21st century has witnessed a burgeoning of women writers born in the 1980s, who are usually labelled as “new generation women writers”. Different from their forerunners, these writers grew up in a culturally diverse context that is heavily influenced by global consumerism. Their writing shows more characteristics of “popular fiction” as opposed to “serious literature”. They hold the ethics and restrictions of traditional Chinese women in low regard and demonstrate a strong sense of female independence. These young women writers are more open-minded about sex and take less radical views towards the confrontations between women and men. As a young generation, they focus more on the physical and mental growth of young female characters in their novels, a theme that has resonated widely with young female readers in China.

Women writers in post-Mao China thrive as a distinct group on the literary scene, ushering in a second upsurge of literary output by women writers in mainland China. While the first high tide of women writers during the May Fourth period is inextricably bound with social movements, this second tide is more concerned with “oneself” as the subject of writing. Literature by women is no longer dismissed as “female nagging” or “self-indulgence” with narrow literary themes. *Nüxing wenxue* 女性文学 (women’s literature) is conceptualized by literary critics as a separate category that deserves unmitigated attention. Most women critics agree to posit a female literary tradition of Chinese women’s writing, which “grapple[s] with the problem of subjectivity in connection with gender and explore[s] the relationship of the female subject to power, meaning and the dominant ideology in which her gender is inscribed” (Liu, 2002: 169).

According to Wendy Larson, the Chinese feminist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, similar to many other third-world feminist movements, “was initiated by male intellectuals and discursively enveloped within the development of modernity and its seminal political structure, the emerging nation-state” (1998: 7). During the 1950s, the Communist Party ensured women equal rights through constitution and law. Therefore, many people of that era believed that Chinese women had no problems at all and they had achieved complete liberation (Li and Zhang, 1994). Contemporary Chinese women’s political identity are “so completely inscribed within official discourse on gender and institutionalized by Fulian (the All-China Women’s Federation) that they cannot even claim ‘feminism’ for themselves” (Liu, 2002: 151). Even though some female scholars have actively responded to women’s problems in society, there is no sign of a women’s movement in China, making them only a pioneering force at the heart of an “invisible women’s movement” (Li and Zhang, 1994: 150). As there are few other venues for women to explore their experiences of selfhood in the absence of an active and widespread feminist movement in China, women’s writing is a particularly important medium to express Chinese women’s voices.

3. Politics and translation in the 1980s

Although women have been generally underrepresented in English translation, there seemed to have been a global trend to translate more women writers into English during the 1980s, including translation of Chinese women’s writing, which will be discussed in the next few pages. Please note that my analytical model as explained above is constructed mainly to discuss translations published and circulated in the Anglophone world; those initiated by the source culture, including both mainland China and Hong Kong, will only be discussed as comparable parameters.

In the 1980s, Angela Coutts (2002) ascribed the rise in English translations of Japanese women writers to an increasing number of female scholars in the Anglophone contexts.

Arzu Akbatur (2011) pointed out that the emergence of English translations of Turkish women writers was closely associated with the bond between writing and women's expanded consciousness. These two reasons combined were the driving force behind the dynamic translation scene of contemporary Chinese women writers during the 1980s, a scene that witnessed both an unprecedented upsurge in the number of female writers in mainland China and their translation and reception into English by the feminist movement in the West. As I have discussed above, with the reinvigoration of Chinese literature in the 1980s, women writers, as a collective identity, became leading players in this productive and diverse literary landscape. Such a literary renaissance caught worldwide attention, which in turn highlighted the role of translation in disseminating a new image of Chinese literature.

Moreover, the translation and reception of Chinese women writers was further foregrounded by the Western feminist movement in the 1980s. According to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, there was a tendency to "pedagogic and curricular appropriation of Third World women's texts in translation by feminist teachers and readers" (1988: 253). The recognition of differences in ethnicity demanded more knowledge about Chinese women. As Jingyuan Zhang has explained, "the active interest shown by foreign academics, including massive translation projects aimed at bringing Chinese women writers' works to international attention even helped to increase the prestige of women writers in China" (2000: 161). Western publishers were willing to publish fiction by Chinese women writers even if its literary merits were not immediately apparent. It is not an overstatement that the 1980s witnessed the most dynamic translation decade for contemporary Chinese women writers.

During this period, the translation field was homologous with the political field, and was subjugated to the dictates of ideology and politics. A politics of selective recognition intervened in this cross-cultural activity of translating Chinese literature. As China's literary rejuvenation had negotiated long-term political suppression and the West was watching closely over the progress or regression of China's socialism, the

translation and reception of contemporary Chinese literature were unavoidably manipulated by Western ideology and politics. Carolyn S. Pruyn (1988) argued that the utilization of Chinese literature for purposes other than the purely artistic was justifiable. While “restrictions on travel, difficulty of communication, the inaccessibility of certain individuals, the immensity of the country and fears of later political trends often hamper the free gathering of factual information” (Pruyn, 1988: 6), literature provides “a distillation of human experience either in realistic or idealistic form which, when knowledgeably analysed, provides a wealth of understanding of contemporary culture and politics” (ibid).

The translation field was also significantly influenced by the academic field on the grounds that the translational activities were closely associated with the literary development in China as well as Chinese studies and women’s studies in the West. Literary criticism became an integral part of the translational landscape that guided readers’ perspective towards Chinese literature. The major agents operating in the field were international scholars of Chinese studies, though not necessarily from literary studies, such as Geremie Barmé in Chinese cultural history, W.J.F. Jenner in Chinese culture and history, and Helen F. Siu in anthropology. They became the spokespeople for Chinese literature with their cultural, social and symbolic capital accumulated in other non-literary fields. Moreover, a great deal of academic work was being done in both China and the West on gender issues in Chinese literature from sophisticated feminist standpoints, resulting in an explosion of interest in the translation of women writers. As the translation field was biased towards the polar of heteronomy, the selection, translation and reception of women writers was, to a large extent, governed by the dynamics of other neighboring fields such as the academic field, the literary field and the political field.

As China had been relatively isolated from the non-socialist world before the ending of the Cultural Revolution, the translation field owed its genesis to curiosity on the part of Westerners about an exotic and inscrutable China. In the 1980s, when very little was

known about the People's Republic of China and the life of Chinese people under a socialist regime, fiction served as an important medium of information for Western readers. Experienced Chinese-English literary translators such as Howard Goldblatt (2000) and John Balcom (2008) identified in general Western readers a non-literary motivation for interest in the modern and contemporary Chinese novel, prioritising social and historical facts over imagination. This echoed Leo Ou-fan Lee's remark that, "reading contemporary Chinese fiction may be an 'acquired taste' presumably because of its usually pervasive political ideology" (1987). The field operated under the doxa that literature could be translated and read as a social document in order to study the real conditions of China. Political and social criteria rather than aesthetic ones had been the dominant considerations in promoting translations of contemporary Chinese novels (Kinkley, 2000). In their prefaces, anthologists, whether by literary scholar Perry Link or by journalist and critic on politics Lee Yee, provided revealing accounts of the sociology of Chinese reading and the state control of literature. The Western audience's "horizon of expectations" of contemporary Chinese literature was therefore subject to a set of models, paradigms, beliefs and values resulting from a limited knowledge about a politicized China.

During this decade, the dominant position in the field was held by Anglophone publishers who created the orthodox translation discourse, while the subversive position was taken by feminist translators who were struggling against the orthodoxy. Anglophone publishers followed the doxa of the field in their text selection, as manifested in their predilection to select titles that imply no clear gender themes, but rather reflect different facets of Chinese society. They were biased towards the socio-political information reflected in those literary genres rather than the awakening female consciousness manifested in women's writing. These publishers were in general not university presses, a circumstance that indicated one aspect of the economics of publishing women writers.

On the flip side, the flourishing of women's writing in China and the ongoing feminist movement in the West prompted a wave of feminist translation to resist the dominant political translation discourse. Feminist translators in the field such as Gladys Yang and Zhu Hong were influenced by the Western feminist movement and thus took a different stance from the dominant Anglophone publishers. They were inclined to select woman-centered titles and highlight the works' feminist aspects in the paratext. Yang and Zhu mobilized their symbolic capital and initiated translation projects to make Chinese women writers' specific concerns for women known outside China.

Not only did Anglophone publishers show a strong interest in translating Chinese women writers, both mainland China and Hong Kong also made special efforts to translate women writers into English in the form of institutional translation. Interestingly, the operations of these two kinds of institutional translation differ substantially from each other. The translation project in mainland China was initiated by Foreign Languages Press (FLP), an institution sponsored and controlled by the state. Based on her own working experience in the FLP, Bonnie S. McDougall (2011) pointed out that FLP was strictly manipulated by hierarchical management: translators were at the lowest rank of the publishing hierarchy and had little or even no say in decision-making; by contrast, the editors, though with very limited expertise in foreign languages and cultures, controlled the selection and translation process under the ideology of the state.

In contrast, the *Renditions* published by the Research Centre for Translation of Chinese University of Hong Kong (RCT) provided substantial encouragement and support for translators, with texts chosen and translated by Hong Kong scholars and sinologists from all around the world. RCT has arguably presented to the English-speaking academic world some of the best Chinese writing. In comparing her experience of translating for the two institutions, McDougall (2003a) lamented the often poor quality of the material to be translated in FLP, its lack of expertise on difficult points of context and language, and editorial interventions which expurgated texts for ideological

conformity, but commended the editorial excellence of RCT in upholding the translation's high academic and professional standards.

A comparison between the translated titles selected by FLP, RCT and Anglophone publishers gives a fuller account of how Chinese women writers were translated into English. As a state-sponsored institution, FLP selected mainstream women writers whose writing was supposed to facilitate the dissemination of China's international image. FLP shared similar selection standards with that of the Anglophone publishers during the 1980s, both with an emphasis on displaying China's social realities and seeking to promote works which were considered "China's closest approximation to plutography" (Kinkley, 2000: 249). For example, both of them translated and published realistic writings such as *Chinese Profiles / Chinese Lives* (*Beijing ren* 北京人) (1986) and *At Middle Age / Middle Age* (*Ren dao zhongnian* 人到中年) (1980).

The purpose of FLP in translating women writers could be distilled in one sentence from the preface of the single-author short-story collection by Shen Rong – to signal that "the wounds on the dragon in the East have healed and she is now sailing ahead in the vast ocean" (Shen, 1987: 8). As the translation field was dominated by a political translation discourse, the reality-based stories translated and published by FLP were received with considerable interest. For example, FLP's anthology *Seven Contemporary Chinese Women Writers* (1982) was reprinted in 1983, 1985 and 1990, with a total sale of around 30,000 copies (Geng, 2010: 75-76). With rare exceptions, in the 1980s, FLP also translated and published works by women writers that focused on the honest picture these texts were seen to represent of life in China.

In contrast with FLP and the Anglophone publishers, RCT in Hong Kong presented bold and unique female perspectives through translation. It translated and published the unabridged version of Yu Luojin 遇罗锦's *A Chinese Winter's Tale* (*Yige dongtian de tonghua* 一个冬天的童话) (1986). Moreover, it simultaneously issued the entire unexpurgated Chinese text since the Chinese version published in mainland had

undergone enormous excisions for political, prudish and “literary” reasons (Minford, 1986: xvi). This novel was controversial and sensational for its unprecedented open revelation of the author’s personal life and sex. Yu Luojin was “an uninhibited defender of the rights of women, denouncing the immorality of loveless marriage and arguing that divorce should be made more easily available” (ibid: viii). The translation included the author’s manuscript notes that had been deleted in the Chinese version, which gave an honest and vivid description of the sexual experience of the author’s first wedding night. In order to highlight the ideological intervention on Yu’s novel in mainland China, the translation also marked the omissions in the first Chinese edition with single pointed brackets and those in the second edition with double pointed brackets. The translation documented “an important and authentic personal testimony of an era that is already in too great danger of being forgotten” (ibid: xviii). RCT’s endeavor to recover the original voice of a “fallen woman”, as it was designated by the Party authorities, revealed a drastically different ideology from FLP in selecting women writers for translation.

In 1988, RCT again published a novel on female sexuality in extramarital love, *Love in a Small Town* (*Xiaocheng zhi lian* 小城之恋), one of the “Three Loves” by Wang Anyi, which were condemned as “examples of how even ‘female comrades’ had degenerated into writing about sex” (Wang, 1988: vii). The die-hard attitudes in China were that “sex is a taboo subject and it is worse for women than for men to break taboos” (ibid: viii). This book was translated by Eva Hung, chief editor of *Renditions*, and an active promoter of Chinese women’s writing in English translation. Attracted by non-mainstream and unorthodox women’s writing, Hung translated different works by Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland women writers, such as *A Girl like Me and Other Stories* (*Xiang wo zheyang de nüzi ji qita gushi* 像我这样的女子和其它故事) (1986) by Hong Kong’s foremost woman writer Xi Xi 西西 and *The Old man and Other Stories* (*Laoren ji qita gushi* 老人及其它故事) (1986) by Taiwan woman writer Chen Ruoxi 陈若曦.

In particular, Hung edited and published a female-themed anthology with innovative literary styles. RCT's translation magazine *Renditions* Nos. 27 & 28 (Spring & Autumn 1987)⁹ featured a special issue for contemporary Chinese women writers from Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China, an issue intended to "bear witness to their talent as well as be a tribute to their tenacity and courage" (Hung, 1987: 9). Compared with the titles selected by Anglophone publishers and FLP, these stories were lesser known works by the same authors, an indication of a selection mechanism that prioritized literary innovation rather than a conformity to mainstream ideology. As Li Ruru observed in reviewing this anthology,

traditional approaches to writing are no longer enough and they are seeking new forms of expression to convey what they really want to say. The language, the literary form and the technique in this special issue therefore represent some of the pioneer literature in China today (1989: 379).

A cursory comparison of what is selected by different translation agents reveals that translation is also about choice, which is "always involved, always partial, always taking sides, even by merely deselecting and un-choosing" (Blumczynski, 2016: 83). From this standpoint, to include works for translation confirms the works' relevance to the ideology that underlies the selective mechanism while to exclude works indicates their irrelevance to that ideology. Therefore, although the 1980s can be called the most dynamic translation decade for contemporary Chinese women writers, Anglophone publishers tended to deselect woman-centered themes in the political translation discourse, favouring instead texts by women writers that focused on Chinese society and politics.

⁹ The special issues include stories such as Zhang Jie's *What's Wrong with Him?* (*Ta you shenme bing* 他有什么病) (1986), Shen Rong's *Not Your Average Girl* (*Yige bu zhengchang de nüren* 一个不正常的女人) (1984), Zhang Xinxin's *Dust* (*Chentu* 尘土) (1983), Wang Anyi's *The Mouth of the Famous Female Impersonator* (*Mingdan zhi kou* 名旦之口) (1986) and *Love in a Small Town* (1986), Can Xue's *The Hut on the Hill* (*Shanshang de Xiaowu* 山上的小屋) (1985), Liu Suola's *In Search of the King of Singers* (*Xunzhao gewang* 寻找歌王) (1986) and Cheng Naishan's *Why Parents Worry* (*Fumu xin* 父母心) (1986).

4. Commercial disinterest in translating women in the 1990s

In the 1990s, although Chinese women writers continued to produce a literature with a more explicit focus on personal life, interiority, subjectivity, sexuality and desire, there was not the same corresponding amount of translation of this type of writing into English as there had been in the 1980s.¹⁰ Such a disinterest was partly due to the Anglophone world's disenchantment with China after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a significant turning point for Chinese women and women's writing. It brought together the efforts of government, publishers, literary journals and academics to promote women writers, thereby pushing the development of Chinese women's writing to a climax. Since then, Chinese women's writing as a whole has developed towards more complexity and multiplicity, and dominated the literary field perhaps for the first time in Chinese history. Women writers no longer relied on realism to address social and cultural problems and to establish themselves as a part of the intellectual elite. According to Kong Shuyu, "the number of women writers was not necessarily greater than during the 1980s, but the difference now was that their gender and their 'unique female experience' was being exaggerated and celebrated to a much greater degree, to the point of hysteria" (2005: 100). Unlike their predecessors who refused to call themselves "female" writers, women writers in the 1990s were proud to assert their gender standpoint. They experimented with various themes, scopes and techniques, the diversity and complexity of which should not be generalized. This period opened up new spaces for women writers to explore female subjectivity and female experience.

¹⁰ In the 1990s, Anglophone commercial publishers showed interest in Chinese male writers such as Mo Yan and Su Tong because of Zhang Yimou's film adaptation. Zhang adapted Mo's *Red Sorghum: A Novel of China* (*Honggaoliang jiazu* 红高粱家族) and Su's *Raise the Red Lantern* (*Qiqiechengqun* 妻妾成群) into internationally famous films in 1988 and 1991. These two works were published by Viking and W. Morrow and Company respectively in 1993. Later in 1995, Viking again published Mo's *The Garlic Ballads* (*Tiantang suantai zhi ge* 天堂蒜苔之歌) and W. Morrow and Company published Su's *Rice* (*Mi* 米). This shows that literary translation is also influenced by other factors, for example, film adaptation. The influence of Zhang's film adaptation on the translation of Yan Geling's work, a Chinese-American woman writer, will be discussed in Chapter Four.

However, the translation agents in the Anglophone world remained indifferent to the blooming of Chinese women's writing in the 1990s. Feminist writers consecrated by literary critics such as Lin Bai 林白, Chen Ran 陈染, Xu Xiaobin 徐小斌, Xu Kun 徐坤, Tie Ning 铁凝 and Zhao Mei 赵玫, went untranslated. The political interest that motivated the translation of women writers in the 1980s no longer exerted a dominant influence and the translation field still maintained its homologous relations with the academic field. The label of "women writers" lost most of its economic appeal and commercial publishers no longer dominated the field during this period. The dominant agents operating in the field were university presses and scholarly translators, who translated and promoted women writers mainly out of academic and literary interest. Through academic connections, marginalized women writers such as Ding Xiaoqi 丁小琦 and Zhu Lin 竹林 were discovered by scholars and translated into English. However, the limited scope of the translated titles falls short of the rapid development of Chinese women's writing in the 1990s.

In contrast with the indifference of Anglophone publishers to the development of Chinese women's writing, the 1990s witnessed a thriving turn in mainland China to promote women writers with explicit female perspectives. Representative writers such as Tie Ning 铁凝, Lu Xing'er 陆星儿, Chi Li 池莉, Fang Fang 方方, Zhang Xin 张欣, Xu Xiaobin 徐小斌 and Zhang Kangkang 张抗抗 were all translated and published by FLP. Following the success of *Seven Contemporary Chinese Women Writers* in 1982, four woman-centered anthologies were published successively during the 1990s. In the preface to *Contemporary Chinese Women Writer II*, the feminist scholar Ziyun Li aptly pointed out that the seven stories in this collection "abandon the conventional formula of exclusive reaction to important events in society and politics and also do not limit themselves to writing about people's fate or the effect of changes in society on people's lives" (Li, 1991: 7). She explained that unlike the authors in the first collection who "almost without exception, were engaged in exposing social problems or political movements which caused great suffering" (ibid: 5) and whose works were firmly rooted in realism, these new stories all have definite feminine characters about them and

represent the true spirit of women in China. Such a dynamic translation scene for women's writing was prompted by the Chinese government's support to enable the widespread publication of Chinese women's writing both within and outside China as a way of demonstrating its commitment to women's equality (Schaffer and Song, 2014: 113).

RCT continued to publish the second of Wang Anyi's "Three Loves" in 1991, *Love on a Barren Mountain* (*Huangshan zhi lian* 荒山之恋). The words on the title page, "For Women Who Love Not Wisely But Too Well", emphasize the story's focus on female concerns for its ideal women readers. In particular, RCT had a predilection for the theme of the city when translating women writers because Hong Kong, being a former British colony, was seeking to establish its own independent cultural and social identity. Therefore, Eva Hung edited an anthology entitled *Contemporary Women Writers: Hong Kong and Taiwan* (1990) and translated Xi Xi's *My City: A Hong Kong Story* (*Wo cheng: Xianggang gushi* 我城：香港故事) (1993) and *Marvels of a Floating City* (*Fucheng zhiyi* 浮城志异) (1997). Due to Hung's purportedly editorial interest in non-mainstream literature, the anthology again collected stories that "may not be the ones for which these writers are best known" (Hung, 1990: vii). Besides showcasing women writers' achievements, this collection also aimed to inform readers of the changing social structures in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The focus on the dimension of urban society and culture figures prominently in Xi Xi's *My City*. This story portrays life in Hong Kong through the eyes of young protagonists in the 1970s, "a time of tremendous growth for the territory not only in economic terms, but more significantly in terms of local self-confidence and the forging of a Hong Kong identity" (Xi, 1993: back cover). The juxtaposition of women and city rooted in "Hong Kong identity" became the central concern of RCT's translation projects.

The three different translation agencies of Anglophone publishers, FLP and RCT have presented vastly different images of Chinese women's writing, which reaffirms translation scholars' emphasis on how different ideologies can shape the configuration

of translation in distinctive ways. The politically motivated desire to know more about China receded in the 1990s as the West became disenchanted with China after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. The translation field was dominated by an academic translation discourse and provided only a few positions for agents. Despite its failure to generate mass interest and commercial capital, the academic strategy to select, translate and publish women's works contributed significantly to the international feminist agenda. The academic meticulousness in trying to convey both the contextual and textual nuances of women's writing served the genuine interest of introducing Chinese women's themes and experiences to entirely different cultural and social contexts in the English-speaking world.

5. A "beauty fever" in translation in the 2000s

According to Schaffer and Song (2007), there are at least four trends or directions in women's writing which influence different aspects of what could be identified as contemporary feminist writing practice in China: first, the emergence of rural women's voices in the public sphere through personal narratives; second, historical novels that deconstruct and reconstruct representations of women against established versions from Chinese myth and history; third, highly visible and sexualized presence of globally connected urban-based women, the so-called "beauty writers"; fourth, individualized writing which explores gender relations and psychological, aesthetic and experiential forms of female subjectivity. Among the four trends, only the "beauty writers" managed to arouse commercial publishers' curiosity with their highly sexualized and sensationalized contents. Their most representative works were all published in English and were received with considerable interest in the West.

In this period, commercial publishers and academic publishers took different positions in the field to promote Chinese women writers. The former selected popular fictions by "beauty writers" that were usually banned in China, while the latter maintained their position to promote writers consecrated in the mainstream literary circle. The

dominance of economic capital in the field produced a commercial translation discourse that heightened the exploitation of female sexuality for global consumption. “Beauty writers” emerged amidst the confluence of further awakening female consciousness and consumerist culture in the late 1990s. Though short-lived, this literary phenomenon caught worldwide attention for its emphasis on an unbridled and active female sexuality. Women writers such as Wei Hui, Mian Mian and Chun Sue wrote highly sexualized and individualized autobiographical life stories which ventured in audacious descriptions of female sexuality and personal desires. As the themes of their writing were considered as taboos in orthodox Chinese society and culture, some critics denounced their works as vulgar and decadent, or even as “writing with their lower half body” (Leung, 2017: 42). It is precisely these controversies that aroused the interest of Anglophone commercial publishers who sensed the double allure of “beauty writers” from China, the voyeuristic gaze on sexualized female bodies and the politicized curiosity for banned books in China.

In contrast with commercial publishers, university presses maintained their positions to promote works with acknowledged literary merit in China. For example, Columbia University Press published two seminal works in the history of Chinese women’s writing, both translated by well-versed academic translators with large cultural and symbolic capital. It is worth noting that important non-scholarly agents began to emerge in the 2000s, bringing with them different standards from scholarly translators to select and promote writers, such as Joanne Wang, literary agent of Wei Hui and Xu Xiaobin, and Bruce Humes, translator and promoter of *Shanghai Baby*. Broadly speaking, the translation can be mapped into two major categories: academic translation and commercial translation, or using Bourdieu’s terms, symbolic goods of small-scale and large-scale circulation, an opposition upon which the field of cultural production is structured (Sapiro, 2008: 154). At the pole of large-scale circulation, sales are the main criterion to measure success while at the pole of small-scale circulation, “aesthetic or intellectual criteria, arising from the judgement of peers (writers, literary critics), prevail over the larger public’s approbation” (ibid: 155).

While in the 2000s the field of translating women writers in the Anglophone world was dominated by a commercial discourse for “beauty writers”, FLP in mainland China and RCT in Hong Kong continued to adhere to their own ideology in selecting women writers. FLP published two works by consecrated women writers, Lu Xing'er's *The Mountain Flowers Have Bloomed Quietly* (*Dazixiang qiaoqiao de kai le* 达紫香悄悄地开了) (2005) and Chi Zijian's 迟子建 *A Flock in the Wilderness* (*Yuanye shang de yangqun* 原野上的羊群) (2005), the former about a female *Zhiqing* (young urban Chinese sent down to live and work in rural areas) and the latter, a collection of stories about people's life the northeastern China. RCT retained its focus on women's lives in the city and published *City Women: Contemporary Taiwan Women Writers* (*Chengshi nüxing: Dangdai Taiwan nüxing zuojia* 城市女性: 当代台湾女性作家) (2001) and *Living with Their Past: Post-Urban Youth Fiction* (*Huo zai guoqu: Hou dushi de qingnian xiaoshuo* 活在过去: 后都市的青年小说) (2003).

As FLP and RCT ceased to show a persistent focus on translating women writers in the 2010s, I suggest that among the three agents, RCT, with its flexible editorial policies and wide participation of both Chinese and Anglophone scholars, has been the most effective and cogent agent for the articulation of women's issues during the past decades. The individuality and subjectivity of its chief editor Eva Hung, manifested most significantly in the selection and introduction of the translations, not only shows herself to be abreast of current academic concerns on feminist issues, but also contributes to their debates “in cogent, forceful and – most of all – jargon-free fashion” (Winterton, 2003: 57).

6. Multiple agents in translation in the 2010s

In the previous three decades, the structure and operation of the translation field was simple in that there were only two major agents: commercial agents and academic agents. Though more positions became available in the field after the 1980s, they were

still limited. It is not until 2010, when new agents from different social and cultural backgrounds entered the field, that significant changes began to take place. Newcomers such as professional translators, translation organizations and online publishers bring with them different selection standards, translation strategies and publishing methods. The increasingly complex structuration of the field is an outcome of the correspondence between internal struggles within the field and external changes in the social space. Changes in the social space cultivate new readerships and create new demands for literary translation. Correspondingly, the producers in the translation field are required to come up with new ways of production to meet the demands posed by changes in the larger social space. It is often the new entrants who usher in iconoclastic translations to subvert the doxa of the field and instigate changes in the field.

From the early 20th century onwards, modern and contemporary Chinese literature has been translated and read largely in scholarly circles. They were translated by scholars from Chinese studies and mainly distributed as course materials to interested university students. Those who are not interested in China, nor subjected to the merciless discipline of a compulsory reading list, were unlikely to explore Chinese literature further (Jenner, 1990). In recent years, with the joint efforts of newly emergent translators and publishers, aside from serious literature intended largely for academic learning and research, popular Chinese literature has also been translated into English and has garnered a comparatively large general readership.

The emergence of freelance translators, literary translation websites and e-books has generated a shift of translation outside the academy. The internal structure of the field is changing as the translation activity is no longer dominated by scholars from Chinese studies and traditional publishers. According to Josh Stenberg (2015), many advanced students of Chinese literature find in translation a professional outlet for their skills as the prospects of a career in Chinese studies are shrinking. Meanwhile, continued immigration has created a larger pool of Chinese-English bilinguals and the residency of Chinese-English translators tend to be increasingly Asia-based. Their different

habitus from traditional scholarly translators will shape the translation scene in different ways.

Besides, while university presses keep promoting consecrated titles by mainstream Chinese writers, small translation-based and Asia-oriented presses such as Comma Press, Zephyr Books, Two Lines Press and Merwin Asia are publishing lesser known titles in English. New translation-based publishers such as AmazonCrossing, the literature-in-translation arm of Amazon Publishing and Better Link Press, a New York-based Shanghai press are also part of the translation networks for Chinese literature. Worthy of particular mention is Paper Republic,¹¹ a website dedicated to facilitating both literary and publishing connections between China and the rest of the world. It hosts the publication of the translated Chinese literary journal *Pathlight* and plays a significant role in bringing writers, publishers and translators together for the promotion of Chinese literature. This website featured a “women in translation month” in August 2016 with a specific focus on young generation women writers such as Lu Min 鲁敏, Zhang Yueran 张悦然, Li Jingrui 李静睿 and Yan Ge 颜歌. Another dynamic network that brings all the agents together is the “Writing Chinese”¹² project hosted by the University of Leeds, an important hub to promote contemporary Chinese writing in the English-speaking world, which also features different women writers in its “Author of the Month” program.

Since the cultural product of literary translation is the product of socioeconomic forces, external changes in the social space also prompt changes in the translation field. As the world is becoming increasingly globalized, foreign readers have come to know more about China and “the pitch for a book does not have to rely on painting China as exotic and crazy anymore” (Larson, 2013). Jo Lusby, managing editor of Penguin Books China, also remarks, “in the past, people tended to see China as speaking with one voice, having one experience [...] But what (global) readers are beginning to glimpse now is

¹¹ See <https://paper-republic.org/>.

¹² See <https://writingchinese.leeds.ac.uk/>.

the great diversity of voices and opinions within China” (quoted in Larson, 2012). Commercial publishers no longer rely exclusively on themes that describe history and politics to attract readers. Instead, different genres of Chinese literature are being translated, though in limited numbers, for global readers to hear the diversity of voices and opinions from China. Such a change in the demands of readers in turn has facilitated the internal changes of the translation field.

Unlike the previous decades when translators had to accumulate their capital in other fields, more methods are now available for translators to accumulate their capital in the translation field. A growing number of translation funds, both from China and the target nation, are available. Among them the most active are the cultural bureaucracy of Mainland China (Chinese Writers’ Association, Ministry of Culture, the China Book International), Taiwan (National Museum of Taiwan Literature), Singapore (National Arts Council), the United States (PEN America, National Endowment of the Arts), Hong Kong (Arts Development Council) and the United Kingdom (PEN Translates, Arts and Humanities Research Council) (Stenberg, 2015: 15). For example, Nicky Harman, a translator whom I will discuss in the fourth chapter, is the recipient of PEN Translates, which not only affords her more economic freedom to publish her translations, but also increases her symbolic capital as a translator. Besides, literary translation prizes such as the Best Translated Book Award are also instrumental in building translators’ cultural, social and symbolic capital. Recently, the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation was launched in 2017 to promote foreign writers in English translation. After more than thirty years’ evolution, the field of translating Chinese literature is moving slowly towards more autonomy from political and cultural institutions.

Changes in the translation network of authors, translators, editors, academics, publishers, and readers have redefined the boundary of the translation field and brought about new modes of production. Different agents select different titles to be translated and published, making a broader spectrum of novels by Chinese women writers

available in English. Both consecrated women writers such as Tie Ning and Chi Zijian and new-generation writers such as Sheng Keyi and Yan Ge are translated.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have constructed a field of translating contemporary Chinese women writers into English as my theoretical model. “Field” is not to be understood as a static structure where “the actions of human agents are bound to have a predictable set of results” (Hanna, 2016: 5). The different positions between the translation agents and the multiple historical dynamics impacting the translation highlight the dynamic relevance of “field” to translation studies. The construction of a translation field requires a relational thinking that links this cultural practice to the positions available in the field, the dominant agents occupying them and its homologies with other fields.

A relational and dynamic field-oriented analysis can debunk simplistic and static generalizations that women writers from China, when translated, are homogenized into the target Anglophone cultural system. My analysis shows that contemporary Chinese women writers are not translated and promoted in a homogenous manner. Instead, nuanced ideological, political, social and cultural dynamics have motivated and influenced translation activities in different historical periods, such as the homologies between the translation field and other fields, the agents’ gendered or non-gendered position-takings, the shift from a dominant political translation discourse to a dominant commercial translation discourse and the changes instigated by newcomers in the field.

After introducing the literary development of contemporary women writers, I have delineated four regular patterns in the field of translating their works into English: in the 1980s, politics dominated the translation of women writers; in the 1990s, Anglophone publishers became disinterested in translating women; in the 2000s, commercial publishers were keen to translate “beauty writers”; in the 2010s, multiple

agents have emerged in the translation field. In the next chapter, I will provide more details about each of these four periods of translation through paratextual analysis.

In recent years, newcomers to the field have redefined the boundaries and dynamics of the field, which opens up more possibilities for readers with different interests in China. The positions available in the field are no longer limited to consecrated or controversial authors, university presses or commercial presses, scholars or scholarly translators; the genre expands from serious literature to popular literature; the focus from consecrated women writers to new-generation women writers; the publishing method from traditional to online; the publisher from university presses to translation-oriented independent presses; and the translator from scholar translators to freelance translators. According to McDougall (2007), the hypothetical readership of translated Chinese literature can be divided into three categories: committed readers with general cultural interests in China; interested readers such as academics in literary and translation studies and literary critics; disinterested readers with universalistic expectations of literary values. The growing demands of these different readers also effect changes in the field. As newcomers stand for “discontinuity, rupture and subversion” (Wolf, 2011: 10), the changes they produce will continue to restructure the translation field. As Red Chan observes:

If the genre of Chinese novels in English is to grow healthily – that a broader representation of Chinese stories in a diversity of voices is to be developed – the phenomenon of one man doing all the talking needs to become a thing of the past. This is not to dismiss an outstanding translator like Goldblatt in his own right, it is more a call to potential translators to break into what used to be the private preserve of a handful of ‘China experts’ (2002: 173).

It is to be hoped that a broader spectrum of women’s writing will be translated and interpreted with better understanding and sympathy through the endeavor of more

gender-aware translation agents, whose subjectivity and individuality can make visible different aspects of women's concerns from lesser translated cultures.

Chapter Two

Translational Agencies: A Paratextual Analysis

The significance of paratextual elements has been widely recognized in translation studies (Tahir Gürçağlar, 2002; Pellatt, 2013; Neather, 2014). According to Kathryn Batchelor, “one of the basic premises of paratextual theory is that paratexts serve as thresholds through which people come to a text, and therefore exert an influence on the ways in which the text is received” (2018: 172). In this chapter, I will discuss what positions the agents take in different translation discourses and how their position-takings are manifested in their selection and paratextual strategies. The focus is on the dominant political translation discourse in the 1980s and the commercial translation discourse in the 2000s, highlighting the influences of political and economic factors on the translation of women writers. Instead of engaging in a close reading of the literary text in which female voices are imbricated, my discussion concentrates on whether the central theme of each text indicates female concerns and how women writers’ works are framed in the paratext through translation. For this purpose, I investigate four categorical agencies, namely, political agency, commercial agency, academic agency and feminist agency, primarily by analyzing agents’ selection and paratextual strategies. In translation selection mechanism, exclusions of titles can be seen as a form of censorship, which implies the initial stage of translational agency. Paratextual elements play a crucial role in framing readers’ interpretation of the translation and can be considered an effective means of investigating translation agents’ intervention in the translation process (Pellatt, 2013). Theo Hermans emphasizes that paratexts are places where translators can “signal their agenda” (2007: 33), and Kathryn Batchelor defines a paratext as “a *consciously crafted* threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way(s) in which the text is received” (2018: 142, my emphasis). Therefore, both selection and paratextual strategies are essential in codifying the ideological apparatus underlying the translation activity. By examining the inclusion and exclusion of titles, book covers, blurbs, translator’s prefaces and afterwords, introductions and

book reviews, the discussion will focus on the agents' awareness or unawareness of woman-centered subjects in promoting women writers in translation.

1. Translation agents in the 1980s: for politics or women?

The 1980s was arguably the most dynamic translation decade for contemporary Chinese women writers. It appears that the translation field was dominated by a political translation discourse, and Anglophone publishers tended to select controversial and provocative works from China. In the meantime, the rapid development of women writers in China and the feminist movement in the West created a feminist translation discourse that inspired women translators to pay more attention to the female aspects of Chinese women's writing. As illustrated in Table 1, the selection of titles represents a variety of literary trends during the 1980s, including "socialist realism literature", "introspective literature", "root-seeking literature", "reportage literature", "avant-garde literature" and "reform literature". Given the discussions by literary critics and the book reviews published on them, popularly received works include *Stones of the Wall*, *Chinese Lives*, *Heavy Wings*, *Six Chapters of Life in a Cadre School*, *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* and *At Middle Age*. Among them, only *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* is explicitly woman-centered, addressing the dilemma between love and marriage. In conformity with the doxa of the field which read Chinese literature as social documents, even realist writing was prone to be purged of the more fictional elements. For example, Jeffrey Kinkley pointed out that the translation of *Chinese Lives* deleted many of the writers' "brilliant literary inventions (for in truth the original is close to fiction), resulting in a homogenized book of life stories for those who 'want to know about China', rendered in an often rather 'flip' tone" (2000: 250).

Table 1 Translated Works by Contemporary Chinese Women Writers in the 1980s

Author	Year	Chinese Title	English Title	Translator	Publisher
Dai Houying 戴厚英	1985	人啊，人！	Stones of the Wall	Frances Wood	London: Michael Joseph
Yang Jiang 杨绛	1986	干校六记	Six Chapters of Life in a Cadre School: Memoirs from China's Cultural Revolution	Chu Djang	Colorado: Westview Press
Zhang Xinxin 张辛欣	1986	我们这个年纪的梦及《北京人》节选	The Dream of Our Generation and Selections from Beijing's People	Edward Gunn, Donna Jung & Patricia Farr	New York: East Asia Program Cornell University
	1987	北京人	Chinese Lives (co-authored with Sang Ye 桑晔)	W.J.F Jenner & Delia Davin	London: Macmillan London
Zhang Jie 张洁	1986	爱是不能忘记的	Love Must Not Be Forgotten (selected stories)	Gladys Yang et al	San Francisco: China Books & Periodicals
	1987	沉重的翅膀	Leaden Wings	Gladys Yang	London: Virago Press
	1988	无事发好就好	As Long as Nothing Happens, Nothing Will (selected stories)	Gladys Yang et al	London: Virago Press

	1989	沉重的翅膀	Heavy Wings	Howard Goldblatt	New York: Grove Press
Wang Anyi 王安忆	1988	流逝	Lapse of Time (selected stories)	Gladys Yang et al	San Francisco: China Books & Periodicals
	1989	小鲍庄	Baotown	Martha Avery	London: Viking
Can Xue 残雪	1989	天堂里的对话	Dialogues in Paradise (selected stories)	Ronald Janssen & Jian Zhang	Illinois: Northwestern University Press
Cheng Naishan 程乃珊	1989	调琴师	The Piano Tuner (selected stories)	Britten Dean	San Francisco: China Books & Periodicals
Shen Rong 谌容		人到中年	<i>At Middle Age</i> (a novella)	Collected in two anthologies: <i>The New Realism: Writings from China after the Cultural Revolution</i> (Hippocrene Books, 1983) and <i>Roses and Thorns: The Second Blooming of the Hundred Flowers in Chinese Fiction</i> (University of California Press, 1984)	

A comparison between the translated and untranslated texts further confirms the ideology behind the selective mechanism of Anglophone publishers. Woman-centered texts that focused on women's quest for true love or questioned the unequal status of men and women in marriage were not translated, such as Zhang Kangkang's *Northern Lights* (*Beijiguang* 北极光) (1981), Zhang Xinxin's *Of the Same Horizon* (*Zai tong yi dipingxian shang* 在同一地平线上) (1981) and Shen Rong's *Lazy to Divorce* (*Lande lihun* 懒得离婚) (1988). Instead, translations of their realist writings focused on the

portrayal of Chinese society were well received in terms of book reviews. Lu Xing'er 陆星儿, a feminist writer best known for her fictional work and essays about women, received barely any attention. Tie Ning's 铁凝 representative feminist writings also failed to attract the attention of Anglophone publishers and were not selected, such as *Haystacks* (*Maijie duo* 麦秸垛) (1986) and *Cotton Stack* (*Mianhua duo* 棉花垛) (1989), two works about female sexual desire, and another novel *Rose Gate* (*Meigui men* 玫瑰门) (1989), a story about how a female protagonist degenerates from an idealist woman into a paranoid and dark-hearted person. Works by Chi Li 池莉 and Fang Fang 方方, pioneers of the trend of New Realism in the late 1980s, also remained untranslated. Their female perspective on the concreteness of life seems to have been deemed less appealing to Western readers than the revolutionary male rhetoric of other texts.

A paratextual analysis highlights the gender-neutral manner in which the translations were presented and interpreted. Dai Houying's *Humanity! Ah, Humanity!* (translated as *Stones of the Wall*) (1985) deals with the tragic plight of Chinese intellectuals who either persecuted others or were persecuted during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Campaign. In *Library Journal*, Carol J. Lichtenberg commented:

Each character is like a stone in the Great Wall, living out an "old, impressive and tortuous history." This is a highly reflective work combining psychological depth and human understanding with an intense but controlled style of expression. Highly recommended for most libraries (1986: 94).

In contrast, Michael S. Duke pointed out that "although it is important politically, it must be considered an artistic failure...recently rather badly translated by Frances Wood with the unfortunate title *Stones of the Wall*" (1990: 211). Such contradictory reviews of this book arise from the agents' different perspectives on the aesthetics of the translated text. The book reviewer Lichtenberg was attracted to the highly sentimental descriptions of how each character survived the torture of the political

turmoil, while Duke, a literary expert in Chinese literature, was more concerned with its literary aspects. The translator Frances Wood explained in an interview:

But we had to change the title. *Ah, Humanity!* or *Oh Ye Human Beings!* which was another suggestion, sounded frightfully old-fashioned in English and also did not convey the important fact that this is a novel set in China, about Chinese people. So I took the phrase stones of the wall from the book because English speakers know about the Great Wall (quoted in Fu, 2015: 193).

Wood's explanation of the change of the title further attests to the documentary value of this novel as an informed reading for Western readers to know about China and Chinese people. Though written by a female writer, it is not a book manifestly for or about women. The reviewer Giles Mathews even expresses his disappointment in discovering a female voice in the text: "even more than this is a Chinese book, it is a woman's book. There are long ruminations about feeling and motive – the kind of thing a lady wants to talk about when a gentleman wants to go to sleep" (1985); what he really is concerned about is to "let us keep our fingers crossed for China" (ibid).

The paratexts of the translation are suggestive of strong political connotations. In the translator's note, Wood emphasizes the political background of the story and explains how university intellectuals and students were persecuted in the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution. The "Praise for *Stones of the Wall*" states that the novel

comments on the mores and basic concepts of modern Chinese political ideology and criticizes the Cultural Revolution in uncompromising terms [...] what really distinguishes Dai's work from other 'critical' novels which tend to limit themselves to acceptable targets like the Cultural Revolution, is her disclosure of the dry-rot in the People's Republic as a whole (Dai, 1987: 3).

On the back cover, the book is introduced as “both a story of individuals and of mass politics, a rare glimpse behind the inscrutable face of the Orient” (Dai, 1987). Wood followed the translation strategy that defended the dominant political translation discourse and added detailed explanations of the social and political terms in the endnotes.

Shen Rong’s *At Middle Age* (1983), another representative work of women’s writing, tells the story of a middle-aged intellectual, Dr. Lu Wenting, who struggles between her obligations to patients and family. She works extremely hard and devotes herself to China’s modernisation, but is underpaid and suffers financially. This novella is collected in two anthologies, but neither of them shows an interest in the gender discourse contained in the text. *The New Realism* intends to disclose “how diligent workers, peasants and intellectuals survive in an ideological system riddled by the abuse of personal power and status by cadres at all levels” (Lee, 1983: 13). The other anthology *Roses and Thorns* is more literarily oriented, which explains the genre of China’s “middle-length” fiction and praises the author for her skill “in weaving disparate aspects of the doctor’s life into a narrative whose consistent tone gives it unity” (Link, 1984: 261). In spite of having a female protagonist, the extra domestic burden borne by women in promoting China’s modernisation is not mentioned in the paratexts. Likewise, in the introduction to *Six Chapters of Life in a Cadre School*, Yang Jiang’s female strength and resilience is also not mentioned. Her chronicle of mundane activities with no complaints or polemics was regarded as “a telling commentary on the governmental system and its bureaucrats” because “what is left unsaid speaks louder than what is said” (Yang, 1986).

Besides these popular stories, other translated titles also tend to be interpreted through a socio-political lens. *Lapse of Time* is regarded as a “solid addition to the growing body of Chinese literature on the Cultural Revolution” (“Review of *Lapse of Time*”, 1988). *The Piano Tuner* “sheds passionate white light on contemporary China, offering faith and solace to its bedraggled spirits” (“Review of *The Piano Tuner*”, 1989a). It

contains “realistically drawn characters who evoke sympathy” and “convincingly describes families surviving the chaos and aftermath of revolution” (“Review of *The Piano Tuner*”, 1989b). *As Long as Nothing Happens, Nothing Will* “turns a witheringly accurate lens on the absurdity, corruption and hypocrisy of contemporary Chinese society” and “should be read by everyone who wonders what revolution, reform and repression have made of the oldest and most populous civilization on Earth” (Isaacs, 1992). For *Baotown*, “although it can be read simply as folktale, political China does intrude” (“Review of *Baotown*”, 1989). Even Can Xue’s *Dialogues in Paradise*, a novel with no specific social and historical background, is also interpreted ideologically as “timeless tales of repression, suspicion and horror [that] serve as metaphors for the culture within which they were uneasily rooted” (Hussein, 2010). The reviewers were unanimous about the political disasters in China. As Hitchcock contended:

Eurocentric discourse, even within progressive strands of sinology, tends to emphasize that what has gone wrong with the Chinese Revolution (everything from the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the famines, the cult of Mao, and the Cultural Revolution, to the massacre that ended the Beijing Spring) is simply that it has been pursued by Chinese Communists (1993: 88).

Most of these selected titles were not specifically woman-centered and their literary value was considered secondary to their socio-political value in the eyes of the reviewers, who defended, rationalised and maintained the orthodox political translation discourse.

Political factors exerted such a dominating influence that even the stories that focused on women were presented without adequate understandings of their female experience. *The Dreams of Our Generation* (1986) describes the shattering of the idealism of a sensitive intellectual woman, who finds little consolation in her family and work. However, in the preface of its translation, such woman-specific contents are ignored and Zhang is introduced simply as a writer who “examines the socialist experience of

China not in the terms by which it has been promoted” (Zhang, 1986: 5). In alignment with the doxa of the field that emphasizes social and political information, this 87-page translation contains as many as 51 annotations about social, cultural and political terms. *Lapse of Time* (1988) by Wang Anyi tells the story of how a rich merchant’s wife has to support the whole family after losing all the privileges she used to enjoy before the Cultural Revolution. In the preface of its translation, the famous sinologist Jeffrey Kinkley focuses mainly on the humanism in Wang’s works and concludes with the author’s own words: “I hope that my fiction has this effect – that people will read it and say, ‘Yes...this is the way things were once upon a time. These are the lives that people led’” (Kinkley, 1988: ix). No mention is made of the writer’s female identity or the specific female concerns present in the stories. *Love Cannot Be Forgotten* (1983)¹³ describes a woman’s unbelievably romantic love and lifelong devotion to a married man, with whom she enjoys no more than one day’s companionship, yet in the introduction, the novel is again interpreted from a political perspective. The story, the paratextual introduction suggests, “seems to be asking the question: in China’s socialist society, are individual emotions incompatible with political duty?” (Siu and Stern, 1983: 91). Also, some readers claim that “the author is warning that infatuation with beautiful political ideals may lead to a loveless marriage to a political system” (ibid).

Compared with single-author collections, anthologies of women writers played a more significant role in representing the awakening of female consciousness as a collective group. *One Half of the Sky: Stories from Contemporary Women Writers of China* (1987) edited by Frances Wood, included several important woman-centered short stories by contemporary women writers, such as *The Right to Love* (*Ai de quanli* 爱的权利) by Zhang Kangkang, *How Did I Miss You?* (*Wo zai na'er cuoguo le ni* 我在哪儿错过了你) by Zhang Xinxin and *Because I'm Thirty and Unmarried* (*Yinwei wo shi sanshisui de guniang* 因为我是三十岁的姑娘) by Xu Naijian. Although Wood had translated and

¹³ *Love Cannot Be Forgotten* is collected in an ideologically inflected anthology, *Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation* (1983), edited by Helen F. Siu and Zelda Stern. A more popular version is *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* (1986) translated by Gladys Yang.

reviewed several titles by Chinese women writers, she was not a feminist translator in the strict sense. Commissioned by the publisher, she conceded that she edited this anthology out of a sense of duty and did not much enjoy the stories (quoted in Fu, 2015: 192). Whereas Wood provided some cultural information about the challenges Chinese women faced in the preface, this anthology was still subject to the doxa of the field, as it was emphasized at the end of the introduction, “as so little is still known about China today, particularly the feelings of the Chinese, fiction is perhaps the only medium of information” (Wood, 1987: x).

The translators R.A. Roberts and Angela Knox were not experts in literary studies, but students majoring in Chinese or Chinese Economics and Politics. The quality of their translation was questioned in several book reviews. For example, in Zhang Xinxin’s *How Did I Miss You?* appears this:

“人生最爱美的十年，却在几件蓝衣服来回替换中过来，为了自己渐渐丰满的胸部悄悄发愁，故意收拢双肩” (Zhang, 1985: 26).

Literally, it means “in the prime ten years when girls can doll themselves up, I had only several blue clothes coming and going in constant displacement. Worrying about my bulging breasts secretly, I deliberately shrugged my shoulders to cover them up” [my translation]. This sentence described how the young girl was embarrassed by her coming of age in the Maoist era, but it was mistranslated by Knox as follows:

What should have been the most enjoyable ten years of my life were spent in blue clothes coming and going in constant displacement, quietly worrying about my brain which was gradually filling of its own accord, and deliberately shrugging my shoulders (Knox, 1987: 114).

The girl’s shame of having budding breasts was mistranslated (deliberately or not) into worry about her brain, failing to convey the rhetoric of the original female writing. Yet,

despite the questionable quality of the translation, this anthology included several important contemporary stories and offered a glimpse of what woman-centered writing in China was like.

Westerners studying and reading Chinese fiction seem to have been more interested in the socio-political aspects of the stories than in their literary value. Such an ideological inclination heavily influenced the translation and promotion of contemporary Chinese fiction. Although women writers during the 1980s emerged collectively to reclaim their sexual identity denied in the Maoist era, they were represented to Western readers without specific attention to the gender issues present in their writing. Woman-centered themes were not favoured in the selection of texts. Ultimately, during the 1980s, even if many representative texts by Chinese women writers were translated into English, the label of “women writers” was exploited largely for commercial value, just as Wood explained: “the fact that they were women’s short stories meant that Heinemann (the publisher) was keen to publish *Half the Sky*” (quoted in Fu, 2015: 194). Their awakening female consciousness was not elaborated upon or brought out in translation. The dynamic translation scene was dominated by political and ideological considerations, and was not intended specifically for women’s expression of gender-specific thoughts and experiences in literature.

Such a dynamic translation scene for women writers eventually gave rise to a feminist translation trend represented mainly by Gladys Yang and Zhu Hong. Yang, a well-established translator, was living and working in China. She became interested in the women’s movement after years of isolation from the outside world during the Cultural Revolution (Davin, 1999). She translated works by new Chinese women writers and highlighted their feminist sensibility in a way that resonated with Western feminists. Zhu was the first scholar in China to introduce Western feminism and feminist literary criticism. Her ambition to promote marginalized Chinese women writers arose from her deep feminist concerns. Their cultural and symbolic capital accumulated by the two translators in the translation and academic field enabled them to take a subversive

standpoint against the dominant political translation discourse and participate in a feminist discourse through their own targeted strategies.

As already discussed, feminist translation was developed by a small number of Canadian women translators who dared to assert their female identity and make the feminist aspect of their chosen texts more visible through anti-traditional, aggressive and creative approaches. Less radical than Canadian feminist translators who adopted translation strategies such as “womanhandling” and “highjacking”, Yang and Zhu used prefacing as their major feminist translation practice to emphasize the writers’ female consciousness. Unlike the dominant agents who highlighted socio-political information, Yang and Zhu rarely added annotations to social and political terms. For example, “对红五类实行阶级报复” which literally means “class revenge against Five Reds” [my translation], namely, revolutionary army men, revolutionary cadres, workers, poor and lower-middle peasants, was translated simply into “something akin to political sabotage” (Zhu, 1991: 177).

In the translation of *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* (*Ai shi buneng wangji de* 爱是不能忘记的) (1986), Yang provides a sympathetic introduction to Zhang Jie and comments on her feminist sensibility. She describes Zhang’s fearlessness in “lashing out at male supremacy, hypocrisy, corruption, bureaucracy, nepotism and other malpractices holding up China’s advance” (Yang, 1986a: x), and acknowledges Zhang as “a pioneer who highlighted women’s problems before authorities fully recognized them or took official action” (ibid: xi). Moreover, she points out the controversy caused by Zhang’s two significant feminist texts so as to underscore the writer’s feminist position. According to Yang, *Love Must Not Be Forgotten*, was accused of undermining social morality because most Chinese took it for granted that everyone must marry. *The Ark* (*Fangzhou* 方舟) (1986) was denounced for encouraging women to let their resentment against men embitter them to the extent that they behaved in an unwomanly fashion and were not really happy. As prefaces have a role to “ensure that the text is read

properly” (Genette, 1997: 197), Yang’s emphasis on the feminist dimension of Zhang’s work was intended to predispose readers’ attention to read Zhang as a feminist writer.

In the preface to another of Zhang’s book, *Leaden Wings* (1987), an example of reform literature but packaged as a feminist novel by Virago Press, Yang highlighted the inadequacy of marriage practices in China and again discussed Zhang’s feminist texts. Yang’s feminist slant was not only evident in her own preface, but also in the afterword by her close friend Delia Davin, a pioneer of Chinese women’s studies in Britain. Davin (1987) discussed why the women characters shock or disappoint more than they inspire and explained the historical differences resulting in the differences between Zhang’s views on women’s oppression and those of Western feminists. Davin’s afterword helps to explain why state-sponsored feminism in China has guaranteed women’s legal, economic and political equality, but hindered women’s individual freedom, self-development and self-realisation. *Leaden Wings* was retranslated as *Heavy Wings* two years later, mainly for its political implications, as it was regarded as “virtually a fictional primer for the summer uprising in Tiananmen Square” (Wilkinson, 1989). The differences between these two translations will be discussed in the next chapter.

Similarly, Zhu Hong, a renowned feminist literary critic of foreign literature, also developed an interest in studying and translating Chinese women’s writing in the 1980s. She edited and translated a seminal anthology, *The Serenity of Whiteness: Stories by and about Women in Contemporary China* (1991), with the intention to bring marginalized Chinese women writers to international attention. The inclusion of works by neglected women writers makes it an important contribution to international feminist goals. In Zhu’s words, she purposefully selected those lesser-known women writers in the hope of making a greater number of new Chinese women writers available to American readers (1997).

From the book cover to the preface to the selection of stories and to the actual translation, *The Serenity of Whiteness* is well packaged as an anthology of writing by

and about women. Its milky white book cover features an oil painting of a white room in the middle, with the white curtain fluttering gently with the breeze and the white daffodils beside the bedside table quietly tossing out their heads. Everything in the room exudes a serenity of whiteness, which seems to embody women's silent strength. In an interview, Zhu mentioned that instead of advocating fighting for women's rights, she preferred Chinese women's silent strength, as is manifested in the stories she collected in this anthology (quoted in Fu, 2015). The cover conveys not only the meaning of the book title, but also the intent to present women characters as self-reliant through silent suffering.

The stories collected in this anthology address multifarious woman-centered themes, such as love, marriage, divorce and abortion. The foreword by Catherine Vance Yeh also concentrates on the woman-focused content of the stories. Yeh argued that a shift of focus can be observed in women's writing: from restoring women as human after the dehumanizing effects of the Cultural Revolution to questioning what it means to be a woman. She offered useful background information for readers to understand Chinese women's writing and recommended this anthology as a "testimony to the vitality and growing self-awareness of the woman's voice in contemporary Chinese literature" (Yeh, 1991: xi). In the end, she further acknowledged the unique "ethnicity" of these women writers:

Writings by other women writers, who themselves are more Westernized and write for a more Westernized public might have had a more familiar ring to Western readers. The stories collected in Zhu Hong's volume, however, find their interest, strength, and authenticity in their very link to a strong and still pervasive tradition among both modern Chinese women writers and the Chinese reading public (ibid).

This anthology was applauded by many book reviewers for giving voice to women from China. It is "a moving, if relentless, document of Chinese women's lives" ("Review of *The Serenity of Whiteness*", 1992) and reveals "the overdue emergence of new,

authentically female voices in contemporary Chinese literature” (See, 1992). Zhu Hong, as translator and editor, “fully shares these writers’ concerns” and this anthology, “translated with understanding and sympathy, suggests the growing force of women’s voices in Mainland Chinese literature” (Webster, 1993: 256).

The confluence of the Western feminist movement and China’s resurgence of writing by and about women ushered in a dynamic translational scene for Chinese women writers. Even though a large number of women’s works were translated into English during the 1980s, they were not translated or received with adequate understanding and sympathy in terms of women’s concerns that they had portrayed. The complexities of female voices from specific Chinese historical and social contexts were reduced to documents about Chinese people’s struggle under the emotional and physical privations of communism. A countervailing force against the mainstream political translation discourse was initiated by women translators who played an active interceding role in disseminating woman-focused experience. With different strategies of selection and supplementary materials, Gladys Yang emphasized the female subjectivities expressed by women writers and Zhu Hong uncovered marginal women writers from China.

2. Dominance of academic translation agency in the 1990s

Though Chinese women’s writing was developing towards complexity and multiplicity after the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, feminist writers consecrated by literary critics were not translated. Anglophone publishers’ interest in China diminished after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. As illustrated in Table 2, China Books & Periodicals published another work by Cheng Naishan, a writer famous for “reviving the long-suppressed images of old Shanghai, its people, its modernity, and its taste” (Leung, 2017: 50). Her major work *The Banker* (1992) is a fictionalized account of her grandfather, a leading figure in the Bank of China. This family saga is a canvas painting of Shanghai. *The Everlasting Rock: A Novel* (1997) by Zong Pu, a well-established woman writer in China with a refined writing style, belongs

to the genre of “scar literature” which describes the devastation brought about by the Cultural Revolution. It tells the story of how intellectuals and professionals had to work and live in accordance with party guidelines and how they managed to survive with remarkable resilience. We can safely assume that this story was also translated mainly for its political implication and documentary content, similar to *Six Chapters of Life in a Cadre School*, both being stories about intellectuals’ life during the Cultural Revolution. Just as Fatima Wu contended, “one should not fail to note the title’s clear emphasis on the word novel, which, ironically, connotes solid reality” (1999: 208).

Table 2 Translated Works by Contemporary Chinese Women Writers in the 1990s

Author	Year	Chinese Title	English Title	Translator	Publisher
Cheng Naishan 程乃珊	1992	金融家	The Banker	Britten Dean	San Francisco: China Books & Periodicals
Can Xue 残雪	1991	苍老的浮云	Old Floating Cloud: Two Novellas	Ronald Janssen & Jian Zhang	Illinois: Northwestern University Press
	1997	绣花鞋的故事	The Embroidered Shoes	Ronald Janssen & Jian Zhang	New York: Henry Holt
Wang Anyi 王安忆	1992	锦绣谷之恋	Brocade Valley	Bonnie McDougall & Maiping Chen	New York: New Directions

Ding Xiaoqi 丁小琦	1993	女儿楼	Maidenhome	Chris Berry & Cathy Silber	Melbourne: Hyland House Publishing
Liu Suola 刘索拉	1994	混沌加咖喱	Chaos and All That	Richard King	Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press
Zong Pu 宗璞	1997	三生石	The Everlasting Rock: A Novel	Aimee Lykes	Boulder: Lynne Rienner
Zhu Lin 竹林	1998	蛇枕头花及 其他	Snake's Pillow and Other Stories	Richard King	Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press

While politics still exercised an impact on the selection of titles, several academic translators adopted an academic translation mode and produced helpful translations for readers to understand women's expression of their experience in literature. Bonnie S. McDougall encapsulates the characteristics of academic translation as follows:

Academic translation was usually initiated by the translator and published for an academic audience by an academic press; each work would have a scholarly apparatus including such items as an introduction, notes, and a glossary. These translations were generally reliable and provided helpful background information and commentaries to explain nuances in meaning and significance (2011: 5).

The translation of woman-centered writing during this period encompassed three works by Wang Anyi, Ding Xiaoqi and Zhu Lin, all of which were promoted by scholarly translators, indicating the dominance of cultural and symbolic capital in the field. As avant-garde writers such as Can Xue and Liu Suola share close affinity with Western

literary trends and their works are not explicitly woman-centered or distinctively Chinese, I will not discuss the translation of their works in detail. Academic translation is usually characterized by detailed preface or afterword either by the translator or the author. *Brocade Valley* (1992), the third novella of Wang's "Three Loves", depicts the fleeting extramarital affair between a female editor and a male writer, through which the protagonist's struggle in her boring and loveless marriage is exposed. This novella is the most controversial among the three because its female protagonist, rather than being punished, is rewarded with a new sense of self. As *Kirkus Review* commented, "[the story is] perhaps too old-fashioned and finely wrought for Western tastes, but beautifully subtle in its evocation of a woman's emerging independence in a society suffocated by tedium and conformity" ("Review of *Brocade Valley*", 1992). The well-versed scholar translators Bonnie S. McDougall and Maiping Chen divided the introduction into "the author", "the story", "the setting" and "the translation", providing references to the protagonist's awakening female subjectivity and relevant background information for Western readers to understand the story. By portraying the protagonist's awakening sexuality and desire, this novella shows how a Chinese woman writer transgresses the sexual puritanism of contemporary women's writing. It is arguably the first woman-centered writing published by Anglophone publishers.

Ding Xiaoqi immigrated to Australia and joined La Trobe University in Melbourne as a Visiting Fellow in 1989. Through personal academic connections, her *Maidenhome* was published by Hyland House in association with the Monash Asia Institute at Monash University. According to the website of the publisher, *Maidenhome* was highly commended and won "The Age Book of the Year Awards" in 1993. Among all the translations by Anglophone publishers discussed above, it is the first to be packaged with a woman's portrait on the book cover to visualize its central female perspective. The academic publishing strategy has ensured a paratextual framing that makes accessible to Western readers the author's woman focus. On the book jacket, *Maidenhome* is introduced as a book to bring readers "authentic and startling portraits of women trapped in a society where the ideas of Confucian patriarchy, communist

self-sacrifice and imported western culture all jostle for supremacy” (Ding, 1993). In the foreword, Sneja Gunew, a scholar in women’s studies, asserts: “what struck me most powerfully about these stories are their very different interpretations of femininity, of how one represents women within that specific cultural context” (Gunew, 1993: vii). In the essay “Maidens and Other Women: The Fiction of Ding Xiaoqi” appended to the volume, the translator Chris Berry situates Ding’s fiction in both the Chinese and international context of women’s writing and astutely points out, “when Ding Xiaoqi, Ding Ling, Zhang Jie and others (women writers) write an inner voice, they are not retreating into the domestic sphere but claiming the right to speak as subjects in their own right” (Berry, 1993: 209); however, compared with the chaste and highly romantic love of Zhang Jie’s stories, Ding Xiaoqi’s works have “more direct and physical descriptions and experiences as well as more intense renderings of the inner voice” (ibid: 210). *Maidenhome* was later reprinted by the American feminist publisher Aunt Lute, whose symbolic capital further confirmed this novel’s significance in terms of its feminist implications.

Zhu Lin was at the periphery of the literary establishment in China and she was discovered by the “Fiction from Modern China” series published by the University of Hawai’i Press. Different from other women writers who concentrated on urban intellectuals, Zhu directed her pen towards women in Chinese village society, portraying young women chiefly characterized by an innocence that makes them easy victims for men in authority. The translation of Zhu’s works is indebted to the translator Richard King, a well-known scholar in Chinese studies, who has also translated several of Zhu’s short stories for *Renditions*. In the “Translator’s Postscript: Zhu Lin’s Literary Mission” (1998) of *Snake’s Pillow and Other Stories*, King wrote a convincing commendation of Zhu’s literary contribution. Moreover, he exerted his cultural capital and wrote an academic article, “In the Translator’s Eye: on the Significance of Zhu Lin”, in order to help Western readers understand Zhu’s works and increase her popularity. He hoped that “a body of reasonable translations might win Zhu Lin some recognition among western readers, and thus (since that is how things work in China)

increase her popularity and standing at home” (King, 1993: 214). King emphasized Zhu’s feminist significance and argued that her work “has many resonances with the international body of twentieth-century women’s writing and should provide worthwhile material for future research by feminist literary scholars” (ibid: 211). Unlike commercial translation agents who operate under economic imperatives, academic agents share closer literary and aesthetic affinities with the author they translate. King’s exertion of his cultural and symbolic capital accumulated in the academic field showed his earnest endeavor to promote a talented woman writer who was isolated from the mainstream literary establishment.

As argued by postcolonial feminism, feminist ideas originating from the so-called “Third World” countries are prone to be interpreted through a Western model of feminism. Sanaa Benmessaoud argues that “the failures of Western translators to reproduce the rhetoricity of third-world women’s literature ends up suppressing the agency of these women and reifying them into a monolithic group” (2013: 186). Through the agency of scholarly translators, academic translations, though circulated largely in the academic circle, have played an ethical role in reversing the uneven global system of knowledge production and reception. The scholarly translators’ endeavor to make accessible and credible the work of women long ignored in patriarchal scholarship “creates links between writing, translation politics, and issues of culture and gender” (von Flotow, 1997: 32). The academically framed paratexts of these translations provide valid information for Western readers to understand and study the complexity of Chinese feminism.

The Anglophone publishers’ indifference to the diverse voices of women writers emerging in the 1990s again confirms the marginality of women writers in the global literary field. Unlike the 1980s when the translation field was dominated by political and social interests, I would consider the 1990s as a period marked by an academic translation discourse. University presses and scholarly translators selected a few woman-centered titles and enriched a translation field where politics had been the

priority. However, given that the subverting force initiated by the academic circle is not likely to generate economic capital and therefore too weak to change the doxa of the field, it would be long before multiple female voices from China could be disseminated and understood with sympathy in the West.

3. Commercial agents and translation of “beauty writers” in the 2000s

The division between academic translation and commercial translation figures more prominently during the 2000s. The highly sexualized and sensationalized writing by the so-called “beauty writers” conforms to the violence of commercial culture and created a dominant commercial translation trend. According to McDougall, “commercial translation was usually initiated by a translator or by a literary agent or publisher, all parties sharing the aim of attracting a broad audience” (2011: 5). Unlike academic translation which aims to be informative and educative, commercial publishers packaged the works by “beauty writers” with explicit references to female sexuality as a selling point.

Table 3 Translated Works by Contemporary Chinese Women Writers in the 2000s

Author	Year	Chinese Title	English Title	Translator	Publisher
Wei Hui 卫慧	2001	上海宝贝	Shanghai Baby	Bruce Humes	London: Constable and Robinson
	2005	我的婬	Marrying Buddha	Larissa Heinrich	London: Constable and Robinson

Mian Mian 棉棉	2003	糖	Candy	Andrea Lingenfelter	Colorado: Westview Press
Chi Zijian 迟子建	2004	超自然的虚构	Figments of the Supernatural	Simon Patton	Sydney: James Joyce Press
Chen Ran 陈染	2004	私人生活	A Private Life	John Howard- Gibbon	New York: Columbia University Press
Chun Sue 春树	2004	北京娃娃	Beijing Doll	Howard Goldblatt	Riverhead Trade
Zhang Jie 张洁	2005	敲门的女孩子	She Knocked at the Door	Sylvia Yu & Julian Chen	San Francisco: Long River Press
Can Xue 残雪	2006	天空里的蓝光 和其它故事	Blue Light in the Sky and Other Stories	Karen Gernant & Zeping Chen	New York: New Direction Press
	2009	五香街	Five Spice Street	Karen Gernant & Zeping Chen	New Haven: Yale University Press
Fang Fang 方方	2007	风景	Children of the Bitter River	Herbert Batt	Norwalk, CT: Eastbridge Books

Wang Anyi 王安忆	2008	长恨歌	The Song of Everlasting Sorrow: A Novel of Shanghai	Michael Berry & Susan Chan Egan	New York: Columbia University Press
Xu Xiaobin 徐小斌	2009	羽蛇	Feathered Serpent	John Howard- Gibbon & Joanne Wang	New York: Atria International

To begin with, I wish to draw attention to an overt change in the book covers of the translations, which suggests a paradigm shift in framing Chinese women writers, from gender-neutral to highly gendered representation. Such a shift indicates that perceptible changes were undergoing in the field of translating women writers. Among the illustrated book covers below, the first is Zhang Jie's *Leaden Wings*, which, though intended as a feminist novel, depicts a realistic canvas of Chinese people's daily life. The second is Ding Xiaoqi's *Maidenhome*, featuring a seemingly exotic portrait of a traditional and conservative Chinese woman. These two covers (Figures 2 and 3) were designed in a constrained manner in terms of the representation of femininity, with neither flamboyant pictures nor colors to assert a feminist agenda or to attract male gaze. In the 2000s, the covers displayed more daring representation of Chinese women. The translation, be it commercialized (Figures 4-7) or academic (Figures 8 and 9), were marketed with book covers that highlighted sexuality and feminine aesthetics. Among them, the most ostentatious covers are of those books by "beauty writers" (Figures 4-7), packaged and marketed as "chick lit"¹⁴ in their global circulation, a genre for which the book cover plays a key role in the marketplace. Though the design of the book cover also depends on the story itself, such a shift in paratextual framing still serves to implicate varying dynamics that operate in the translation field, that is, female sexuality

¹⁴ Chick lit is "a fiction genre that developed in English-speaking countries in the mid-late 1990s within the so called 'chick culture', a popular cultural phenomenon aimed at white, middle-class, heterosexual women in their 20s and 30s that encompasses movies, magazines, books and many other media products" (Balducci, 2011: 10).

becomes increasingly visible, albeit in a flaunting and glaring manner as far as “beauty writers” are concerned.

Figure 2 book cover of *Leaden Wings* in the 1980s

Figure 3 book cover of *Maidenhome* in the 1990s

Figure 4 book cover of *Candy* in the 2000s

Figure 5 book cover of *Beijing Doll* in the 2000s

Figure 6 book cover of *Shanghai Baby* in the 2000s

Figure 7 book cover of *Marrying Buddha* in the 2000s

Figure 8 book cover of *A Private Life* in the 2000s

Figure 9 book cover of *Feathered Serpent* in the 2000s

Rocio Montoro has recognized the significance of book covers to the identification and promotion of chick lit and argued for a multimodal approach to analyze chick lit as a genre. She claimed that “semiotic resources employed in these novels are especially successful at encoding meaning for the genre as a whole rather than for individual works” (Montoro, 2012: 17). She further claimed that “the particular combination of semiotic resources used in the genre has struck a chord with readers and publishers alike and that these benefits are being reaped for purposes other than the purely literary (this is, for marketing or sales)” (ibid). The four book covers of “beauty writers” exploited color, layout and typographical techniques of chick lit, all representing a conflation of the flashy and sexy author and the narrator of the text for the explicit purpose of lucrative publicity. The consistency of the four covers indicates that they are packaged as belonging to the Anglophone-American literary genre of chick lit, with recognizable features such as a background in bright colors and a title written in fancy lettering; pictures or illustrations in a cartoon style and displaying the silhouette of a young woman (Balducci, 2011: 56). The four covers were framed in bright pastel colors such as pink and orange which were easily associated with pleasure and frivolity. They all featured a silhouette of a young woman, either with a cigarette in hand or with unmitigated sexual seduction. The chick lit packaging of works by “beauty writers” unfolds the manipulative force exercised by the poetics of the target culture on

translation, which unavoidably undermines the original works' specific literary and cultural significance.

The popularity of works by “beauty writers” in the translation field owes, on the one hand, to its literary affinity with chick lit, a literary genre that has been developing since the middle 1990s, and on the other hand, to the sensation caused by their being banned in China. Despite all the national criticism and suspicion, Wei Hui's *Shanghai Baby* (2001), banned in the summer of 2000, became an immediate international best seller. It has been translated into 34 different languages, sold over six million copies in 48 countries and become one of the most-sold contemporary Chinese novels (Kong, 2010: 137). Wei earned enormous economic and symbolic capital through the global circulation of *Shanghai Baby* and her second novel *Marrying Buddha* (2005), a sequel to *Shanghai Baby*, was also translated. Wei's phenomenal success prompted the translation of two other works by Mian Mian and Chun Sue. These translations were marketed as commercialized literary products with hyper sexual visibility. They were stamped with trademarks such as “sex”, “drug”, “abuse”, “freedom”, “bloody youth”, “self-abandonment”, “self-discovery” and “banned in China”. Set in China's big metropolises such as Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen as suggested in their titles, these stories participate in a globalized commodity culture and demonstrate the sexual and economic confidence of a new urban generation of Chinese women.

Unlike scholarly translators who promoted woman-centered writing in the 1990s, commercial publishers added no effective paratexts to facilitate Western readers' understanding of this special literary and social phenomenon in China. These “beauty writer” novels, when translated into English, have lost their significance in the trajectory of Chinese feminism and are interpreted as mere commercial pulp novels. Apart from the packaging of the commercial publisher, Bin Liu and Brian James Baer (2017) found that the non-scholarly translator Bruce Humes (deliberately or not) played down the characterization of other female characters and rendered erotic scenes with thick and heavy colors. He thus flattened the image of the Chinese female protagonist

as lust-driven, superficial, and egocentric, which fits into “the Western feminist model of a reckless escapee from Communist despotism, as well as the erotic model of a shameless ‘lover (whore)’” (Liu and Baer, 2017: 424). By the same token, the book reviewers also evaluated this novel from a Western perspective. *Publishers Weekly*’s review of *Shanghai Baby* states that “western readers will find it reminiscent of fiction by the brat pack writers of the 80s, though more clichéd and less edgy. This book is as alluring as a gossip column, but, alas, as shallow as one, too” (“Review of *Shanghai Baby*”, 2001a). Similarly, *Kirkus Review* points out that “this much-censored chinese debut novel, a young woman’s tour of sex, drugs, and rock’n’roll, is likely to raise nary an eyebrow when set against its western counterparts” (“Review of *Shanghai Baby*”, 2001b). Such comments indicated that works by “beauty writers” were homogenized into Western poetics. These transgressional voices from China were perceived as cliché against the Western literary standard. In Liu and Baer’s words, “the high-consumption lifestyle underlying *Shanghai Baby*, while unprecedented and thus mind-blowing to the contemporary Chinese readers at the time of the book’s publication, is commonplace for the coeval English readers” (2017: 421). While *Shanghai Baby* is the most reviewed English translation of a Chinese novel by a woman writer on amazon.com, almost 70 percent of the commenting readers had a low opinion of the book as a whole (ibid). Despite the negative comments from Western readers, it inspired a trend for translating “beauty writers” from China.

This “beauty fever”, though dismissed in China as erotic and vulgar, provided a new outlet for Chinese women writers to speak in their own voices and assert themselves. The complex social and cultural context in which they emerged and thrived was neatly captured in the blurb of Xin Yang’s *From Beauty Fear to Beauty Fever* (2011), “after years of revolutionary policies of ‘gender erasure’, ‘beauty fever’ was the product of the intertwined narratives of resistance politics, feminism, capitalism, consumerism and the postmodern ludic carnival”. The novel’s depiction of sexual experience “cannot only be understood as a release of sexual freedom, but also as a counter-reaction to China’s modern past” (Koetse, 2012: 16) when sex was considered taboo in China.

Shanghai Baby is one of the few contemporary novels in which the author “feels detached enough to explore the non-sociocentric self” (McDougall, 2003b: 110). In this sense, the paratexts surrounding the translations seem to have reduced the works by “beauty writers” to a simplistic reading within the same reception framework of chick lit in the Anglophone world.

The paratexts associated with these translations suggest a dominant commercial translation discourse in the 2000s for women writers, in which the female voices of “beauty writers” were articulated through the medium of chick lit. The formation of such a translation discourse pertains to the positions taken by the translators. Bruce Humes, translator of *Shanghai Baby* and a newcomer in the translation field, had different habitus from those scholar translators. He was interested in the book’s possible economic capital because of the two appealing trademarks: “the west’s Shanghai complex: a love triangle set in modern Shanghai” and “banned by the authorities in China” (Humes, 2003). He translated the book primarily for its immediate marketability in the Western market. Conversely, Howard Goldblatt, the foremost scholarly translator of contemporary Chinese fiction, mentioned that he did not like Chun Sue’s *Beijing Doll* (2004) and was commissioned by the publisher to translate it (Fu and Zhang, 2008). The non-scholarly translator’s commercial interest and the academic translator’s disinterest in the literary value of the original work reinforced the commercial dynamics in the translation field.

Despite suspicions of their literary value, this trend of translating “beauty writers” have left an indelible inscription on the history of translating Chinese women writers. For example, in reviewing Chi Zijian’s *Figments of the Supernatural* (2004), Ping Wang points out: “these stories may not be as sensational as *Shanghai Baby*, but they nevertheless possess a quiet charm and lasting grace” (2005). This comment upholds *Shanghai Baby* as a yardstick to evaluate Chi’s work, highlighting again the sensation it engendered. In another case, a publisher suggested to exploit *Shanghai Baby*’s symbolic capital by changing the title of Wang Anyi’s *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*

into *Miss Shanghai* for better marketability. The academic translator Michael Berry struggled against the commercial impetus with his cultural and symbolic capital and managed to retain the novel's original title in its translation. Wang's novel, consecrated by China's highest literary award, the Mao Dun Literary Prize, embodies more cultural capital than economic capital. These examples suggest that the translation field in the 2000s was dominated by a commercial motivation to exploit "beauty writers" for economic capital.

Different from the commercialized "beauty writers", the two seminal works in the literary history of Chinese women's writing, Chen Ran's *A Private Life* and Wang Anyi's *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*, were included in the "Weatherhead Books on Asia" series launched by Columbia University to promote significant Chinese literary works in history. They were translated respectively by Michael Berry and John Howard-Gibbon, two well-known scholars in Chinese studies. Howard-Gibbon also translated another important work by a woman writer, Xu Xiaobin's *Feathered Serpent* in collaboration with Joanne Wang, an experienced and insightful New York-based literary agent who has played an important role in making Chinese writers known overseas. Unlike the commercialized translations which proffered no effective prefaces or introductions for readers to better understand the original work, the three translations provided useful information by way of such paratexts.

Chen Ran's writings on women's private lives were likely to hold particular attraction to Western feminist readers, but the culmination of her writing, *A Private Life*, was not translated until 2004. Its book cover (Figure 8) foregrounded the private female space by showing a woman's leg soaked in the bathtub. The translator's note framed the work by focusing on two aspects: the writer's feminist significance and the novel's political implication. Chen was introduced as "a kind of disturbance on the perimeter of mainstream Chinese literature, a unique and important female voice" (Howard-Gibbon, 2004: xii) and "her unique and personal postmodern feminist story has created a

different and very challenging image of women within Chinese literature of the 1990s” (ibid: xiii).

Aside from being the private chronicle of a woman’s coming-of-age, this work also carried political connotations, addressing the deep trauma resulting from the Tiananmen Massacre in the 1989. The novel was described as “a riveting tale of a young woman’s emotional and sexual awakening [...] set in the turbulent decades of the Cultural Revolution and the Tian’anmen Square incident[...]exposes the complex and fantastical inner life of a young woman growing up during a time of intense social and political upheaval” (ibid: xii). The emphasis on the political background orients readers’ expectation towards a tale related to the Cultural Revolution and Tiananmen Massacre, as Schaffer and Song observe:

The publisher’s dust jacket and “Translator’s Note” of the English edition explicitly frame the narrative against the backdrop of Tiananmen Square and the summer of 1989. These paratextual elements guide readers to interpret the work as a reflection on the politically infused, post-traumatic after-effects of the massacre (2006: 6-7).

Such paratextual framing is reminiscent of the political translation discourse that dominated in the 1980s. Though the doxa that translations of contemporary Chinese writing could be read as political and social documents to know more about China is gradually changing, the intervention of political factors is still part of the discourse. As Sameh Hanna (2016) argues, fields of power, or the dynamism of economy and politics exercises an unfailing impact on the structure and functioning of cultural fields. Even for heavily commercialized translations of “beauty writers”, “banned in China” is a conspicuous signal on the book cover, and words such as “uncensored”, “raw” and “bloody” indicate a sociopolitical negative image of China.

The other translation included in the “Weatherhead Books on Asia” series is Wang Anyi’s *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow* (2008), which tells the life story of the beautiful

“Miss Shanghai” Wang Qiyao amidst all the historical vicissitudes of modern Chinese history. This novel was selected by the famous sinologist David Der-wei Wang for its significant status in the history of Chinese literature. It is exquisitely designed and packaged with a high caliber of literary quality. Instead of painting a stereotypical Shanghai lady with cheongsam, the book cover features a woman’s face in an artistic style. In the translators’ note, Michael Berry and Susan Chan Egan mainly explain some stylistic variances from the original (2008: vii) and in the afterword, Berry offers several clues for readers to appreciate this consecrated literary work (2008: 431-440). The translation of this novel can be regarded as a typical example of academic translation.

Another monumental work in women’s writing, Xu Xiaobin’s *Feathered Serpent* (2009), which constructs a feminine genealogy that spans four generations of Chinese women, was published by Atria International. When explaining why this work was translated, Judith Curr, executive vice president and publisher of Atria, emphasized that it was about “four generations of Chinese people with a backdrop of 100 years of political turmoil” (2009). Probably as a response to the publisher, the author, instead of explaining the story itself in the preface, stressed the deprivation inflicted on the Chinese people by political unrest and stated, “I feel compelled to add that we live in a society that has lost its conscience, and where we have lost our spiritual convictions” (Xu, 2009: x). The novel’s significance in women’s writing is not mentioned in the paratext.

Though published by a mainstream publisher, Xu’s novel was not vigorously reviewed. *Kirkus Review* highlighted the “political turmoil” in the story, claiming that the surrealistic moments and dreamlike episodes appeared to “disguise the author’s only partly subtle critique of the Chinese state at the time of the Tiananmen Square massacre” and concluding the story as “an allusive, sidelong view of Chinese history by a writer who has seen many of its darker moments” (“Review of *Feathered Serpent*”, 2009). Such interpretation again confirms the influence of ideology on the translation and

reception of contemporary Chinese writers. My intention here is not to advocate that a political interpretation should be completely discarded in the reception of Chinese literature, but to highlight how political considerations were prioritized in the paratextual and interpretative framework of translating Chinese women writers.

Compared to single-author collections, anthologies are more effective in updating discernible trends and displaying different genres of women's writing. In the 2000s, two important anthologies about Chinese women's writing were translated and published: *Red Is Not the Only Color* (2001) and *Dragonflies: Fiction by Chinese Women in the Twentieth Century* (2003), both by academic publishers. *Red Is Not the Only Color*, a collection about same-sex intimacy, seeks to deviate from the heroics of the grand narratives usually found in contemporary Chinese literature. It includes three famous same-sex stories by mainland women writers, *Breaking Open* (*Pokai* 破开) by Chen Ran, *A Record* (*Jilu* 记录) by Zhang Mei and *Brothers* (*Dixiongmen* 弟兄们) by Wang Anyi. This anthology is thus named to interrogate the association of "red" with stereotypical cultural and political uniformity in China and to challenge the dominant Chinese and Western conceptions of gender, sexuality, and the political. The theme of same-sex relations emerging in Chinese writing in the 1990s provided new spaces for the exploration of female subjectivity, but these narratives were not translated and introduced into the Anglophone world until the appearance of this anthology. The other collection *Dragonflies: Fiction by Chinese Women in the Twentieth Century*, which includes women's writing from 1920s to 1990s in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, reveals many changes that occurred in Chinese women's lives in the 20th century. Its informative introduction provides a panoramic view of Chinese women's writing in the 20th century and displays a prominent woman focus that is not available in many other paratexts of the translations by Chinese women writers. These two anthologies, published as academic materials, constitute important supplementary sources for Anglophone readers to understand women's writing in China.

As discussed above, “beauty writers” created a huge sensation in the translation scene of Chinese women writers in the 2000s. They are intended mainly for women readers because chick lit is generally acknowledged to be primarily written by women and (largely) for women (Montoro, 2012: 2). Nevertheless, despite the similarities between “beauty writers” and Western chick lit, a more sympathetic cross-cultural reading is required to understand their significance in the specific Chinese context. Their seemingly effortless assimilation into the existing collective expectation of Western readers confirms what David Damrosch defines as “being sucked up in the Disneyfication of the globe” (2003: 17). Non-Western works can only be translated and accepted when they match the assumed collective expectations of Western readers. Ideally, translation agents should foster a “translation culture” (2013: 159) advocated by Lawrence Venuti to acknowledge differences imported from other countries. However, in reality, the production of literary translation is manipulated by the field of power, namely, economic and political dynamics, which can hinder the agency of translators and scholars who aim to establish a translation culture.

The positions available in the field of translating women writers were occupied by agents motivated either by commercial benefits or academic interest. Heavily commercialized translations of “beauty writers” were tailored by the publisher to satisfy commercial demands while academic translations, though with limited diffusion, risked less distortion in disseminating women’s writing from lesser translated cultures. Even though the translation field operated in relatively weak structures and was at an embryonic state, we can see that the categorical agents and their positions in the field are not transient. The translation agents have been working under juxtaposed influences of political and commercial imperatives as well as their academic and personal interest.

4. Non-scholarly agents and translation of diverse female voices in the 2010s

In the 2010s, there is neither a prominent political translation discourse as in the 1980s when translation agents prioritized the social and political aspects of women’s writing

nor a dominant commercial translation discourse as in the 2000s when female sexuality was heightened to promote works by Chinese “beauty writers”. As illustrated in Table 4, we can find multiple new relations and features within the translation field, such as cooperation between translators and small, independent publishers, such as Nicky Harman with the Balestier Press, between a specific writer and translator, such as Sheng Keyi and Shelly Bryant, and also the emergence of translated e-books. If such bonds between translation agents continue to exist and develop, the field of translating contemporary Chinese literature will develop towards more autonomy.

Table 4 Translated Works by Contemporary Chinese Women Writers in the 2010s

Author	Year	Chinese Title	English Title	Translator	Publisher
Lu Xing'er 陆星儿	2010	啊，青鸟	Oh, Blue Bird	Yanting Wu	New York: Better Link Press
Xu Xiaobin 徐小斌	2011	敦煌遗梦	Dunhuang Dream	John Balcom	New York: Atria International
	2016	水晶婚	Crystal Wedding: A Novel	Nicky Harman	London: Balestier Press
Tie Ning 铁凝	2012	大浴女	The Bathing Women	Hongling Zhang and Jason Sommer	New York: Scribner
Sheng Keyi 盛可以	2012	北妹	Northern Girls: Life Goes On	Shelly Bryant	Australia: Penguin
	2014	白草地	Fields of White (EBook)	Shelly Bryant	e-penguin

	2014	死亡赋格	Death Fugue	Shelly Bryant	Sydney: The Giramondo Publishing Company
Chi Zijian 迟子建	2013	额尔古纳河的右岸	The Last Quarter of the Moon	Bruce Humes	London: Harvill Secker
Wang Yuan 王媛	2014	北京女人	Beijing Women	Colin S. Hawes & Shuyu Kong	Portland: MerwinAsia
Yan Ge 颜歌	2014	白马	White Horse (EBook)	Nicky Harman	London: HopeRoad Publishing
	2018	我们家	The Chili Bean Paste Clan	Nicky Harman	London: Balestier Press
Can Xue 残雪	2014	最后的情人	The Last Lover	Annelise Finegan Wasmoen	New Haven: Yale University Press
	2017	边疆	Frontier	Karen Gernant & Zeping Chen	Rochester: Open Letter

Besides these titles listed above, Paper Republic has translated and published many short stories online by new-generation women writers born in the 1980s, such as Ren Xiaowen 任晓雯, Xia Jia 夏笳, Li Juan 李娟, Di An 笛安, Lu Min 鲁敏, Wang Xiaoni 王小妮 and Li Jingrui 李静睿. Popular new-generation women writers such as Anni Baobei 安妮宝贝 and Zhang Yueran 张悦然 are translated by Asia-based independent

publishers. For example, Anni Baobei's *The Road of Others* (*Quwang biechu de lushang* 去往别处的路上) and Zhang Yueran's *The Promise Bird* (Shiniaiao 誓鸟) were published in 2012, respectively by Make-Do in Hong Kong and Math Paper Press in Singapore.

The “multiplicity” of the translation field is reflected in the following dimensions: first, representative woman-centered novels written in the 1990s are translated and published, such as *Oh, Blue Bird* (2010) and *The Bathing Women* (2012). Second, urban intellectual women are no longer the only major protagonists in the translated stories. *Beijing Women* (2014) is a collection of short stories about how women make a living in Beijing working as escorts, popular singers, waitresses or private business owners. *Northern Girls* (2012) is a story about how immigrant women from rural areas are struggling to survive in big cities like Shenzhen; *The Last Quarter of the Moon* (2013) shares the life philosophy of ethnic women in northern China. Third, besides consecrated women writers, lesser studied new-generation women writers born in the 1980s are becoming gradually visible in the translation scene. Fourth, a couple of unpublished novels in China have been published in English, such as *Death Fugue* (2014), a story about the haunting influence of political suppression on a whole generation and *Crystal Wedding: A Novel* (2016), introduced as extraordinary for being “the first book by a mainland Chinese author to speak so frankly about sex and Chinese women” (Xu, 2016: 7). Politics and sex, the two taboo topics in China, find an outlet in their English translations and have traversed the cultural context that suppresses their voices.

In the previous decades, academic translators in Chinese studies have played a dominating role in the field, thereby establishing a close homology between the translation field and the academic field. In the 2010s, non-scholarly translators such as Nicky Harman, Shelly Bryant and Bruce Humes feature more prominently in the translational landscape. Harman is an active London-based professional translator of contemporary Chinese literature. Although she said in an earlier interview that she did

not purposefully take a feminist perspective in translating texts by women writers, she has devoted considerable efforts to promoting women writers in recent years and has facilitated the translation and publication of works by Xu Xiaobin and Yan Ge. In her article “10 Chinese Women Whose Writing Should Be Translated” (2016) and her interview “Greatest Women in Translation: Nicky Harman” (2018), she draws critical attention to the international underrepresentation of Chinese women writers and mentions ten titles worth translating, all of which are written by new-generation women writers.

Humes, translator of Wei Hui’s *Shanghai Baby* and Chi Zijian’s *The Last Quarter of the Moon*, is interested in ethnic literature, and manages a personal blog “Ethnic ChinaLit: Writing by & about non-Han Peoples of China” to increase the visibility of Chinese ethnic cultures. Shelly Bryant is a Singapore-based poet and writer, who began her translation career by chance and has remained in the translation field ever since. After her translation of Sheng Keyi’s *Northern Girls* being nominated for the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2012, she has accumulated symbolic capital in the translation field and received a growing number of requests for her translation services. These non-scholarly translators share different social backgrounds from those scholarly translators who take translation primarily for academic interest. They tend to select writings by young women writers, most of which are not consecrated in the literary circle. Besides, they are less likely to add long academic prefaces or annotations to the translation.

Though the emergence of new agents has introduced subversive translation strategies against the orthodox discourse of the translation field, the field of power, namely, the economic and political dynamics, will continue to exert their influences on the translation activity, albeit with a less dominant impact than that of the 1980s. The presentation and interpretation of *The Bathing Women* is a typical example to disclose persistent economic and political influences on the translation. This original novel is about how women fulfill themselves spiritually and develop their sense of self after psychological trauma. The translator Zhang Hongling selected this work after being

persuaded by the literary agent who proposed that American commercial publishers favored woman-centered writing because a large proportion of the readership in the market was women (Zhang et al, 2017).

The title and the book cover of the translation purposefully exploit female sexuality to arouse readers' interest. The original title *Dayunü* 大浴女, metaphorically meaning "women rising from ashes", was translated into "the bathing women", a title easily associated with erotic female bodies. The book cover is also designed in a stereotypical manner often adopted to promote women writers, featuring a woman with her upper half face unseen. It seems that political interpretation is unavoidable for any stories from China, especially when the story is set in a historical context. In reviewing the story, Jason Beerman shifted the focus of the story from the growth of the female protagonist to the growth of China, claiming that "a Chinese novel that narrates the lives of its characters from the Cultural Revolution to the go-go 1990s cannot help but be read as an allegory of China's rise to modernity" (2012). He further commented that "the novel manages to poignantly portray a China coming of age, sacrificing a generation or two along the way to gilded glory" (ibid).

It is a tough challenge for any translated story, whether it is from China or other countries, to be presented and appreciated with enough sympathy in the target culture. The total number of translations by women writers is disproportionately limited if compared with the large quantity of works available in the source culture. A diachronic discussion on what works have been selected and how they are framed in paratexts can provide a partial account of the multiple factors conditioning the translation of women writers in different historical periods. It is worth noting that the field of translating women writers is dominated alternatively by the political translation discourse in the 1980s and the commercial translation discourse in the 2000s. As woman-centered themes are likely to be subjugated to political interpretation and commercial exploitation, Chinese women's writing, particularly its diversity in the plurality of expressions, has not been truly recognized and appreciated in the Anglophone world. It

is hopeful that with translation agents from different social and cultural backgrounds entering the field, the situation about translating Chinese women writers will be changing slowly but promisingly.

5. Conclusion

The above overview concentrates on what works by women writers are translated, whether the perspective of the translation is woman-centered or not and how these translations are framed through their paratexts. This discussion of women's voices does not involve close textual analysis as in the case of literary criticism, rather it addresses pertinent questions underpinning the agency of translation in complex global dialogues: what stories are selected and translated, what themes are deemed relevant by Western publishers, how the books are presented and marketed to Western audiences and how the books are received and interpreted in a different culture. Given the way Chinese women's writings are selected and presented in the paratexts, I propose that the translation of Chinese women's writing is prone to be misrepresented in political or commercial discourses, but the individuality and subjectivity of translation agents, be they scholarly translators or freelance translators, can challenge the dominant discourse and instigate changes in the translation field. Such changes in the "structure-agency" relationship is the guiding principle of my field-oriented analysis.

Though a seemingly dynamic translation scene for women writers appeared in the 1980s, it was governed by a political translation discourse that resulted from a dual patriarchal control: the Chinese nationalist agenda imposed on the writers' feminist preoccupations and the predilection of Western ideology for the politics of China. This seemingly thriving translation turn for Chinese women writers was in fact still subject to a voyeuristic gaze that positioned China as the subaltern other. It was women translators who maintained a subversive position against the orthodox translation discourse, thus contributing to the rise of what we could call a predominantly feminist translation era for contemporary Chinese women writers. Women writers' awakening

female consciousness was subsumed under the dominant political translation discourse that downplayed the feminist dimensions of the work of these authors. It fell on feminist translators to facilitate and reinforce the articulation of women's concerns. In the 1990s, even though women's writing in China developed towards a more emphasized focus on woman-centered themes, only three woman-centered works were translated through academic agents' commitment and endeavour – *Brocade Valley* by Wang Anyi, *Maidenhome* by Ding Xiaoqi and *Snake's Pillow and Other Stories* by Zhu Lin. Among these three authors, the marginalized position of the latter two in Chinese literary circle implies the agency of academic translators and publishers to uncover not so well-known writers through translation. This sudden decline in the interest as shown by Anglophone publishers in Chinese literature can be partly attributed to the disenchantment of the West with China after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. In the 2000s, the international popularity of Wei Hui's *Shanghai Baby* (2001) instigated a fever for translating works by "beauty writers", all of which were banned novels dismissed in the Chinese literary circle. The commercial agents promoted their translations as chick lit, with trademarks that heightened female sexuality and disobedience. In spite of their commercial success, these works were considered as literary failures in terms of the reviews they received. After being alternatively dominated by a political translation discourse in the 1980s and a commercial translation discourse in the 2000s, the field of translating women writers is undergoing significant changes under the influences of both internal and external factors. A more diverse range of women writers are being translated in the 2010s through the endeavour of agents from different cultural and social backgrounds.

Michaela Wolf (2007: 117) observes that most of the scholars who doubt whether a translation field exists do not go further and take steps to develop an alternative or completing theoretical model based on the conceptualization of Bourdieu's field theory. This study shows that constructing a translation field is instrumental in facilitating a more comprehensive and historical understanding of translating contemporary Chinese women writers into English. The positions of various agents in the field are made up

by the interplay of their capitals and their habitus (Wolf, 2011). As my intention here is only to provide an overall trajectory of how the translation field operates and evolves, I have essentialized the agents' habitus into two categories, academic and commercial, without delving deep into the habitus of each agent as an individual. Within this theoretical framework, a field-oriented analysis can complement the cultural approach which emphasizes the manipulation of unequal East/West power relations over the global flows of knowledge and the influences of East/West ideological discrepancies on the selective and interpretative mechanisms of translation. The added sociological perspective reveals that the culturally and ideologically embedded discourse of "representational inevitability", as argued by Aijun Zhu (2007), is not the sole reason for an allegedly reductionist translation of the complex and diverse spectrum of Chinese women's writing. According to Zhu, the representation of Third World women in the West is likely to be governed by a discourse of nationalistic and male-centered "representational inevitability":

A pervasive but seriously flawed reading practice that reduces creative texts to documents on the social, cultural, or political conditions of their specific racial or national communities, while serving as a discursive control of the West over the Third World, and of a masculinist nation over feminist desires (Zhu, 2007: 11).

This internalized discourse has resulted in a set of limited interpretative conventions that reproduce "an essentialized, exoticized, and necessarily inferior Third World culture, denying it the diversity, fluidity, and sophistication accorded to the West" (ibid: 17). Such an ideological apparatus will constrain the interpretation, translation and reception of Chinese women writers.

This study finds that even though the discourse of "representational inevitability" imposed tight constraints on the translation of Chinese women writers in the 1980s, in the decades that followed, the academic agents and the commercial agents struggled to take dominant positions in the field, producing either academic-style translations or

commercialized translations with their invested social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital. The university presses adhere to the principle of selecting texts that have literary significance, feminist translators purposefully choose texts that serve their feminist agendas, while commercial publishers exploit female sexuality for economic profits. I will further explore their agencies in translating women writers by focusing on two case studies in the next two chapters.

Chapter Three

Feminist Agency in Translation: Gladys Yang and Zhang Jie

You are particularly unfortunate, because you were born a woman...

—— Zhang Jie, *The Ark* (Yang, 1986a: 113)

This chapter focuses on the feminist agency to translate and promote Zhang Jie in the 1980s when there was a juxtaposition of political and feminist translation discourses. I analyze how the feminist agency in this specific translation era facilitated Zhang's reputation as a feminist writer or even as "an angry feminist" (Leung, 2017: 294), notwithstanding the writer's persistent refusal to be identified with the label "feminist". I start with a contextualization of this translation era to explain why Zhang's works were translated and positively received in the West and how the term feminism was interpreted differently and even refused by contemporary Chinese women writers in the 1980s. Then I investigate how the translator Gladys Yang 戴乃迭 (1919-1999) became a locus of a translation network that comprised the author, the British scholar in women's studies Delia Davin and the leading feminist publisher Virago and how these translation agents framed Zhang's works textually and paratextually to emphasize the female concerns in Zhang's writing.

The aim of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, by foregrounding Yang's translation of women writers, I argue that as a collaborative translator with her husband Yang Xianyi 杨宪益 (1915-2009), her contribution to promoting women writers is not sufficiently acknowledged. Yang Xianyi liked the classics better while Gladys Yang preferred to translate contemporary stories, especially those written by women writers (Qian and Almberg, 2012). However, prominent attention has been given to Yang's well-known husband and their co-translation of Chinese classics, causing speculations of "妻以夫贵" (literally meaning "the wife gains fame through the husband") (Fu, 2000). This

chapter hopes to free Yang from such patriarchal assumptions and restore her as an independent woman translator.

Moreover, unlike the congenial feminist collusion between author and translator in Canadian feminist translation, Yang's translation and promotion of Zhang seems to highlight an incongruity between author and translator in terms of their feminist slant. Olga Castro and Emek Ergun claim that feminist translation studies should move beyond its Western-centric focus for an intersectional and transnational turn and to recognize that

every act of feminist translation also has a place in a map and in history within which the languages being used, the texts being translated, the discourses being de/activated and the agents re/signifying the travelling text (author, translator, reader, publisher, etc.) are created and trying to create (2018b: 135).

In a similar vein, Luise von Flotow (2009a) also emphasized the significance of intersectionality to feminist translation as the very particular situation of Quebec became emblematic of international feminism. This chapter responds to the intersectional call of the scholars and practitioners and seeks to draw attention to the multiplicities and divergences of feminist translation studies through a historically situated discussion of Yang's translation of Zhang Jie.

1. The feminist translation era: a context

Contextual agency is a key factor that leads to Zhang Jie's success in translation. With changes in the translation field after the 1980s, Zhang almost disappeared from the translation scene. As discussed previously, the conflation of Chinese women writers' awakening female consciousness and the Western feminist movement in the 1980s gave rise to a predominantly feminist translation era for contemporary Chinese women writers. Since feminist translation usually occurs in an "era of feminism", an era

powerfully influenced by feminist thoughts (von Flotow, 1997), the feminist context is the precondition to cultivate and popularize feminist translation practices. There are two dominant categories of agents in the translation field: those who selected works with social and political significance and those who upheld a feminist translation discourse to underline women writers' female identity and female consciousness. Zhang's writing appealed to both categories of translation agents. Again I have to reiterate here that such a demarcation is predicated on the preference the Anglophone publisher shows in selecting topics concerning Chinese women's writing. I do not intend to set a dichotomy between men's writing and women's writing. As Peter Hitchcock (1993) argues, Zhang's social critique can also be interpreted from the perspective of feminism in a broader sense, that is, a testimony of greater courage than her male counterparts to address social and political issues. The feminist publisher Virago's promotion of Zhang's political writing accumulated more symbolic capital for her as a feminist writer. Ultimately, the juxtaposition of political and feminist translation discourses in the 1980s became the underpinning of Zhang's consecration as a prominent Chinese woman writer in the West.

Zhang Jie played a leading role in the collective "women writer" group emerging in China during the 1980s and had many of her works translated into English by then. According to a quantitative study by He Mingxing (2014), Zhang is the most influential contemporary Chinese woman writer in the West. She is hailed as a pioneer among early feminist writers whose work represents female consciousness and women's issues, acclaimed by well-known literary scholars as "China's first feminist novelist" (Lee, 1987) and "undoubtedly an influential writer who loudly and indignantly expresses women's voices in the history of contemporary Chinese literature" (Leung, 2017: 296).

Interestingly, a search of the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database on Zhang Jie during the 1980s shows that in contrast with her feminist reputation in the West, no scholar in China adopted feminist theories to interpret her works. Some scholars only mentioned in passing her concern for women's destiny and

only one article discussed her *funü guan* 妇女观 (outlook on women) (Ma, 1987), a term that can be understood as a referent to feminism in a specific Chinese context. Xu Juemin (1982) pointed out that Zhang's discussion on extramarital love was cliché against Western standards and such a futuristic topic had no immediate social relevance in China. By then, the cultural and social context in China was not ready for a feminist reception of Zhang's works which had aroused social, moral and political controversies.

In 1986, Zhang Jie became the first Chinese writer to be nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Even so, the literary significance of her works was questioned by many book reviewers. Beth McKillop commented: "Zhang Jie's stories are eloquent in their fury at the lot of women in China today. The theme of women's unhappiness is resonant, but the author lacks the skill to lift her work from reportage into literature" (1988: 308). Frances Wood (1988) remarked that though her work was informative, it remained disappointing as literature. Sylvia Chan added, "all I can say is that the novel has painted a basically truthful picture of the old Chinese nation in the throes of rejuvenation, and that although its artistry leaves much to be desired, it is not much worse than many other novels written in the same period" (1989: 204). Literary aesthetics aside, I suggest instead that the socio-political and feminist significance of Zhang's works consecrated her in the literary world of the 1980s. Zhang's popularity provides indeed an eloquent case to uncover the complex translation relations operating in the translation field and to understand the feminist translation practice that prompts the introduction of a Chinese woman writer into the Anglophone context.

Despite Zhang's feminist reputation, she refused to be labeled as a feminist writer in the 1980s. Such a paradox derives from the disparity between Chinese feminism and Western feminism. As Dorothy Ko and Zheng Wang observe, "the very subject of 'Chinese feminism' is ambivalent and controversial linguistically and culturally" (2007: 1). The translation of the English term "feminism" into Chinese has been a complicated issue because of its cognitive incommensurability in two entirely different cultural

reception contexts. There are two common renditions of the English term “feminism” in Chinese, which critically reveal the reception context of Western feminism in China:

Feminism as *nüquan zhuyi* (women’s rights or power-ism) connotes the stereotypes of a man-hating he-woman hungry for power; hence it is a derisive term in China today except for a small circle of scholars and activists. Feminism as *nüxing zhuyi* (female or female-ism), in turn, appears far less threatening. Its popularity may stem from its semantic flexibility; as curious as it may sound to an Anglophone reader, *nüxing zhuyi* is often taken to mean an ideology promoting femininity and thus reinforcing gender distinctions. Although few in the Anglophone world would consider this position “feminist”, this “softer feminism” enjoys more purchase than *nüquan zhuyi* among Chinese scholars who identify themselves as feminists (Ko and Wang, 2007: 1).

The term “feminism” conjures up very different images in the West and China. This is why Yang is not considered as a feminist translator by some translation scholars in China as her translation practices are not perceived as radical as those of some Western feminist translators. For this reason, I follow Carol Maier in referring to Yang as a “woman-identified” translator (Godayol, 1998) who translates from a female vantage point and is committed to promoting women writers, but not necessarily with a distinctly politicized orientation.

The liberation of Chinese women originated and developed along a different trajectory from Western feminist movements. Chinese women’s movements were closely intertwined with national liberation. The term “feminism” was introduced to China in the early 20th century, but it was not until the 1980s when a substantial number of Western feminist theories were translated into Chinese that Chinese feminists began to rethink women’s issues. These theories have elicited many controversies among Chinese intellectuals, officials and activists since their first introduction into China. Some Chinese critics argued that Western feminism would only promote “war between the sexes” and it “has nothing to do with the reality of hardworking socialist women”

while others recognized its importance as “a new theoretical challenge to the validity of a Marxist perspective on women” (quoted in Zheng, 2016: 16). This explains why Rosemary Roberts claims that Chinese women writers in the 1980s are something of a “riddle”:

All those who have discussed the subject specifically deny being feminists, yet without exception their works contain criticisms and attitudes that have strong feminist significance. All believe in the principle of true equality for women, yet in interviews and articles and in their fiction, one can find attitudes that serve primarily to keep women subordinate to men (1994: 39).

Women writers such as Shen Rong, Wang Anyi, Dai Qing, Zhu Lin and Zhang Jie refused to identify with the term “feminism” because it was considered as derogatory and stigmatized, suggesting a loss of femininity and a hostile relationship between women and men. This suggests that Chinese women writers in the 1980s wrote from an innate desire to reclaim their female identity long denied in the Maoist era rather than from an acute feminist awareness to subvert the patriarchal system. As Wendy Larson points out, although the works of Chinese women writers took up dimensions of Western feminist concepts such as women’s equality, subjectivity, sexual difference and sexuality, their understanding of such concepts was grounded on different discursive lines (1998: 203).

Feminism in China has been entangled in China’s political, cultural and social transformations. Peter Hitchcock contends that the development of China’s women’s movement in the 20th century has been almost “exclusively concerned with the progress of socialism, to which it has contributed a great deal and by which, without doubt, it has been hindered” (1993: 89). Such state-controlled feminism precluded Chinese women from pursuing fuller individual freedom and self-realization. According to Lingzhen Wang,

the changing and often conflicting demands that major political, social, and cultural movements made on Chinese women – by ignoring their emotional and physical needs as well as subjective voices during the twentieth century – pose serious questions about the goal of women’s liberation (2004: 201).

Women’s liberation, regarded as a key trope of China’s modernity, has been inextricably tied with a nationalistic agenda. Therefore, many women writers in the 1980s sought to write “like a man” so that they could address social and political issues with more confidence and assurance.

Though often hailed in the West as the first feminist novelist from China, Zhang Jie dissociated herself from feminism and emphasized in several interviews that she did not look upon herself as a feminist author. When asked at an interview in 1986 whether she was a feminist, Zhang replied, “Western feminists have thrown down the gauntlet to men, I don’t agree with that. I don’t believe that this world only belongs to men, neither do I believe it only belongs to women. The world belongs to everyone” (quoted in Roberts, 1994: 42). Zhang’s statement revealed not only the overriding significance of humanism for post-Mao writers after the Cultural Revolution, but also her limited understanding of Western feminism. Zhang insisted that she was not a feminist, arguing that she did not think the term “feminist writer” had much substantive meaning in contemporary life and reiterated the importance of social consciousness and social problems in general (Feldman, 1986; Wu, 1986). At a lecture in the Netherlands in 1995, she quoted her personal experience to explain why she was not a feminist author:

It is not that I dislike being called a feminist, it’s just that I have never actually been a feminist in my relationships with men [...] If you look at the daily life of my husband and me, I think I am a very traditional woman, far from a feminist [...] If people draw the conclusion from my work that I am a feminist, then that is perhaps because my work expresses my wish dream about things I do not possess in real life [...] I often feel that I am exhausted by the kind of life I’ve had, and that I finally want to rest. If my husband

could be depended upon, what would be wrong about letting him provide for me, take care of all the problems that I am confronted with in this world, cherish me, look after me? If my husband could do these things, I would rather not be a feminist (Chong, 1995: 56-58).

From the perspective of Western feminism, Zhang here seems to have showed an ambivalent attitude towards women's independence, especially in terms of male-female relationship. On the one hand, she showed her disappointment and dissatisfaction with the patriarchal marriage system in China; on the other hand, she still believed that women could depend on men and wished her husband could take good care of her. The incommensurability of feminism in different cultural contexts requires "thick translation", which refers to translation with plenty of annotations and explanations so as to achieve more effective intercultural communication. Gladys Yang added background information in the preface to inform readers of the social and cultural context for Zhang's female concerns while the gender studies scholar Shu-Mei Shih failed to provide any form of thick translation when she worked as an interpreter for Zhang and some American writers in the spring of 1988.

Shih pointed out that when answering the question whether Chinese women writers were keen on expressing feminist intent and exposing female oppression, Zhang replied after a pause that there was no such thing as "feminism" in China and that she would not call herself a "feminist" or a "feminist writer" (2002: 93). At that moment, Shih considered Zhang's rejection as a tactic to avoid making anti-official statements at a state-sponsored event. However, later Shih regretted having been a transparent translator and not having attempted thick translation. Shih thought that she should have asked Zhang to tell the tale of Chinese socialism and its complex relationship to women's liberation over the previous decades so that she could translate Chinese women's unique experience for those American writers. According to Shih, this episode reminded her of "how easily cross-cultural encounters misfire, often simply because the Western subject refuses to acknowledge the historical substance that constitutes the Other's supposed difference" (ibid: 94). Shih's reflection demonstrates

a translator's awakening consciousness to intervene as a mediator for the communication between women writers from different cultures. Facing similar challenges as Zhang's translator, Yang has mediated between the writer's ambivalent attitude to feminism and a feminist Western reception context, thereby helping to establish Zhang as a feminist novelist through translation.

2. Gladys Yang as a woman-identified translator

As discussed in the introduction, the Canadian School is often regarded as the birthplace and universal paradigm for feminist translation studies. Feminist translation tends to be universalized as the anti-traditional, anti-patriarchal, aggressive and creative interventionist approaches taken by Canadian women translators to assert their female identity and feminist agenda. Yang's feminist translation practice challenges the hegemony of Canadian feminist translation and provides a more complicated example of translating women writers in a specific cultural and historical context. According to Castro, "in the case of women authors from post-colonial, remote or minority cultures, translation is an essential and often the only channel of communication that these writers have to be able to share their subjectivities with those beyond their borders" (2009: 9). Unlike the radical feminist activism that purports to revolutionize the target culture, Yang does not have a distinctly politicized orientation and her objective is to promote women writers from a non-hegemonic language into the Anglophone world. Based on this consideration, instead of giving Yang's endeavor to promote women writers a feminist label, I would rather refer to her as a woman-identified translator.

A majority of Zhang Jie's works were translated and promoted by Yang, who particularly chose to translate the work of women writers in the 1980s under the influence of the Western feminist movement. Gladys Yang, originally named Gladys Margaret Tayler, was born in Beijing in 1919 and returned to Britain in 1926. She was the first Oxford student to obtain a bachelor degree in Chinese and had lived in China from 1949 with her husband, Yang Xianyi, a renowned Chinese-English translator. By

then Beijing-based and in collaboration with her husband, she translated many classic works of traditional Chinese literature, including the world-renowned *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Honglou meng* 红楼梦). She had established herself as a well-known translator before embarking on an independent career to translate women writers. Yang's cultural, social and symbolic capital afforded her relative autonomy in translating and promoting women writers. For example, when the editor of *Chinese Literature*¹⁵ refused to publish the English translation of *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* because the story excused extramarital love, Yang managed to include it in a Panda book of stories by women writers.¹⁶ This translation was later reprinted in San Francisco by China Books & Periodicals, expanding Zhang's presence among Anglophone readers. Yang was also able to mobilize her social networks to promote women writers, speak through translator's prefaces and rewrite the texts based on her own interpretation.

Nevertheless, the significance of Yang's career as a translator was overshadowed by her husband and her special cause to translate and promote women writers was sidetracked by their collaborative translation of traditional Chinese fiction, poetry, drama and essays. Even though the style of the majority of their translations was presumably Yang's and it was often her voice that rang through (Hawkes, 2001; Vernon, 2002), readers tended to assume that it was the husband who brought fame to the wife. Such unjustified conjectures prompted Yang to translate more difficult texts on her own. In the "Gladys Yang Collection" of the British Library, only two women scholars, Bonnie S. McDougall and Delia Davin, mentioned Yang's contribution to translating women writers, underwriting the fact that "apart from the marvelous 'joint' translations of classic work – Gladys made contemporary women's fiction very much her own field and was alone in promoting it" (McDougall, 2001a).

¹⁵ A translated English magazine in China.

¹⁶ Panda Books were modelled on Penguin Books to promote Chinese literature in English translation.

Yang left Britain with her Chinese husband and had lived, worked and raised a family in China through sixty years of war, revolution and political upheaval. She worked with women in factories and the fields during the Cultural Revolution and her life experiences in China certainly increased her interest in women and the position of women (Wood, 2018). After the Cultural Revolution when she began to translate solo, she started to promote women writers as a special cause. According to W.J.F. Jenner (2007), right after the Cultural Revolution when China began to open up to the outside world, Yang became an invaluable asset to Chinese writers who were in search for international recognition. Yang made friends with contemporary women writers such as Zhang Jie, Shen Rong and Dai Houying, and translated their stories into English to make them known outside China. Her contribution to translating women writers is deftly encapsulated by McDougall:

Her contributions to Chinese women's literature were pioneering in every respect. She was the first to introduce to English language readers the newly popular women writers such as Zhang Jie, Shen Rong and Xin Fengxia; she collected, compiled and promoted their work; having shared similar experiences before, during and after Cultural Revolution, she interpreted their work with authority as well as sympathy; knowing them as personal friends, she brought intimate knowledge to her introductions as well as dedication to the task; and she was tireless in arranging personal contacts between their writers and her Western visitors. She was, as far as I know, the first person in any part of the world to specialize in modern Chinese women's writing, and her efforts made it possible for students of Chinese in other countries to hear the author voices of modern Chinese women writers (2001b).

Unlike Chinese women writers who refused to be labelled as "feminist", Yang was interested in the Western feminist movement after years of seclusion from the outside world during the Cultural Revolution (Davin, 1999). Yang's speech on Chinese women writers at the University of Leeds in 1983 can be regarded as her manifesto for women's rights. In the speech, she not only pointed out the special difficulties faced by Chinese

women writers, but also cited remarks by a Chinese professor as a choice example of male chauvinism in China:

Women students have three obstacles they must overcome if they strive for success. One is women's sense of inferiority. For many women this is to a large extent a psychological frustration which is affected by various historical and social practices. Another obstacle is women's lack of perseverance. For those who are devoted to science research, both talent and perseverance are important. But the latter is more important... The third is women's narrow-mindedness and vanity. This will seriously hamper women's success if it is not overcome (Yang, 1985: 510).

Judging from her devotion to translating and promoting Chinese women writers and her sympathy for Chinese women, Yang may be labeled as a feminist translator. However, instead of following the radical textual interventions of Canadian feminist translators, Yang's translation strategies vary with the nature of her source texts and thus cannot be generalized into easy categories.

2.1 A feminist translation network

Von Flotow emphasized the significance of translation context in the discussion of gender-related issues because "translation is a deliberate act, eminently social, historical, and personal – a hugely variable, opportunistic act – and as such it is context-bound" (2014: 39). Therefore, feminist translation is historically, culturally and geographically inscribed. The gender-related issues involved in the translation of Zhang Jie's works varied from other feminist translation practices. As I discussed previously, the feminist translation discourse in the 1980s was instigated by an upsurge of women writers in China and a developing feminist movement in the West. While emerging Chinese women writers were seeking international recognition through translation, many of them became friends with Yang. As Zhang's ambivalent attitudes towards feminism were manifested in the text, Yang had to mediate between the original text,

her own translation agenda and the feminist reception context. Sherry Simon points out that feminist translation arises from a “willful collusion and cooperation between text, author and translator” (1996: 15). The close collaboration, or “closelaboration” (Eshelman, 2007: 18), in whatever terms it is established, is an important dimension in feminist translation. Judging from the letters in “Gladys Yang’s collection” archive, in the 1980s, Yang enjoyed a close friendship with Zhang, who aspired to gain international fame through Yang’s translation. This afforded Yang more freedom to rewrite the text according to her own discretion. Yang also contacted her friend Delia Davin, a British scholar in Chinese women’s studies and endeavored to have two of Zhang’s works translated and published with the leading feminist publisher Virago.

According to Ursula Owen, “Virago came out of the early years of a women’s movement which concerned itself with silences, invisibility, the denial or marginalizing of women’s experiences in a male-dominated culture” (1988: 88). It not only was aimed at women and women’s interests, but also at the general market and the education market. As Virago was one of the three publishing houses in Britain with a brand name, its name and reputation could add more symbolic capital to the author as a feminist writer. The relevant agents in feminist translation are not only feminist writers and translators, but also those active in wider cultural contexts, such as publishers, editors and the audience with its perceived needs (Bracke et al, 2018: 220). The agency of Virago in promoting Zhang’s works ensured a wider accessibility of these works.

Aside from the feminist publisher Virago, the personal relationship between Gladys Yang and the British scholars Frances Wood and Delia Davin was also instrumental in promoting contemporary Chinese women writers in translation. Yang maintained close correspondences with them and introduced women’s writing for them to translate. Both Wood and Davin were active in the translation scene of Chinese women writers in the 1980s, either writing book reviews on the translation of women’s writing, anthologizing women’s stories or conducting academic research on Chinese women. In particular, Davin made extra efforts to bring two of Zhang’s works to English readers.

Yang collected Zhang Jie's most seminal feminist works, *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* (*Ai shi buneng wangji de* 爱是不能忘记的) (1979), *The Ark* (*Fangzhou* 方舟) (1983) and *Emerald* (*Zumülü* 祖母绿) (1984) in the single-author anthology entitled *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* (1986), which was published in the Panda book series and reprinted by China Books based in San Francisco. The three stories addressed issues traditionally linked to women such as love, marriage and divorce. *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* aroused considerable controversy in China because it justified extramarital love over social norms. The story tells the lifelong platonic relationship between a married woman and man, advocating that marriage should be based on love. *The Ark*, considered as the touchstone fiction for Chinese feminists in the 1980s, describes how three middle-aged divorced women live in alliance against the male-dominated society. Their shared run-down apartment embodies the ark of female consciousness that shelters them from a hostile world in which single divorcees suffer blatant discrimination. *Emerald* tells a love story of two independent, strong-willed women Zeng Ling'er and Lu Beihe with a cowardly, unreliable man Zuo Wei. The female protagonist Zeng Ling'er takes the political blame for her boyfriend Zuo Wei during the Cultural Revolution and is exiled to a remote town while bearing their illegitimate child. However, Zuo never manages to summon up his courage to search for Zeng. Several years later, when Zuo's wife Lu Beihe requests Zeng to help Zuo with his project, Zeng agrees because she wishes to make contributions to the society. No longer did she have any remnant attachment to or hatred for Zuo. This story witnesses Zeng's metamorphosis from a romantic and innocent young girl to a self-reliant and resilient woman.

Besides these woman-centered stories, Zhang Jie had two social critical works translated and published by Virago in the 1980s: *Leaden Wings* (1987) and *As Long as Nothing Happens, Nothing Will* (1988), also promoted by Gladys Yang. While translating *Leaden Wings*, Yang had Zhang's permission to compress and cut the original text even though Zhang herself was not satisfied with all the deletions

afterwards. Yang mentioned that it was a “battle” getting *Leaden Wings* accepted by the publisher (Yang, 1984) probably because Virago had never published a book by a Chinese woman writer. Her friend Delia Davin had devoted “much time, expertise and money” to get *Leaden Wings* published by Virago (Yang, 1986b). The translation network comprising the author, the translator, the scholar and the feminist publisher was endorsed by a shared concern for women and operating within a juxtaposition of political and feminist translation discourses.

Owing to the juxtaposition of these two translation discourses, the translation of socio-political writing by Chinese women writers promised potential commercial success. Immediately after the publication of *Leaden Wings*, Virago published another work by Zhang in 1988, *As Long as Nothing Happens, Nothing Will*, a collection of five stories introduced in the blurb as “a biting account”, “the grueling story” and “the most savage tale” about Chinese society. Zhang asked Carole Murray to bring the stories to the UK. When introducing these stories to Virago, Murray wrote:

The writing is currently attracting considerable criticism in China for the shocking nature of its explicit references to incest and virginity. There are strong indications that modern Chinese writing is moving into a phase of sharp and rather bleak satire and the other world seems to be very much in this vein. It is rather a lacerating and well observed portrait of certain aspects of current cultural life in China (Murray, 1986).

Murray’s description of Zhang’s writing focused on social satire and we can postulate that Virago published Zhang’s works not entirely for her feminist sensibility, but also because she was an important woman writer writing about China. This was in line with Virago’s publishing agenda:

It would be broadly true, begging all sorts of questions, to say that Virago press is a feminist publishing house. Most of their books are not about, in quotes, “women’s issues”. many of their authors are not feminists, quite a few of them were writing long before the

word was invented. What Virago have really been doing for the last 15 years, has been to ensure that writers are not ignored, or forgotten, or passed over because they are women. (Virago Press, 1987)

Even so, Virago's reputation as a leading feminist publisher added more symbolic capital to Zhang as a feminist writer by publishing two of her works. Françoise Massardier-Kenney argues that "translating is an activity which creates authority for the writer translated and that the translator is a critic responsible for introducing and marketing a specific 'image' of the writer" (1997: 60). Apart from the translator, the publisher Virago is also responsible for introducing and marketing Zhang's image. In Virago's blurb, Zhang is promoted as a courageous woman writer whose portraits "do not serve the interests of the socialist cause" (Zhang, 1988: back cover) because she "dissects some of the more hidden areas of daily life in Chinese society, speaking out on such taboo issues as sex, and satirizing what she sees as hypocrisies and abuses – plotting and maneuvering at work, nepotism, conniving to secure a prestigious husband, a better flat or job" and "brilliantly captures those telling details that are 'officially' invisible" (ibid).

The writer's eagerness to have her works translated, the translator's devotion to translating women writers, the scholar's contribution to the translation project and the publisher's willingness to publish Zhang Jie were conditioned by the specific feminist translation era in the 1980s. This translation network ensured the accessibility of Zhang's representative works in English, a case rarely seen in translating other women writers. In the next pages, I will analyze Yang's presence and imprint in the translation of *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* and *Leaden Wings* as a feminist translator, or more accurately, as a woman-identified translator.

2.2 Feminist stance: Yang's translation of *Ai shi buneng wangji de*

Feminist translators tend to “womanhandle” the text, replacing the modest, self-effacing translator and becoming active participants in the creation of meaning (Godard, 1989); feminist translation is therefore a deliberate re-signification or “faithless translation” that makes the text operate in a new and different way (Bracke et al, 2018). Though Yang did not share the same political agenda as Canadian feminist translators, she exerted an agency that diluted the sentimental style of *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* and reinforced the narrator's feminist stance.

Zhang Jie's short story *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* (*Ai shi buneng wangji de* 爱是不能忘记的) (1979) was the first to break the taboo to justify extramarital love in the late 1970s. It challenged the traditional concept of love and marriage and sparked a national sensation. Nevertheless, no matter how bold this story was at that time, it only touched upon spiritual love whereas physical love and female sexuality were totally absent from the text. This story was groundbreaking in the sense that it challenged long-standing social conventions by describing an extramarital platonic love and advocating that marriage should be based on love. The extraordinary controversy it aroused in China attracted Anglophone publishers' attention. Besides the translation by Yang, it was also collected in two other anthologies with different translations: *Roses and Thorns: The Second Blooming of the Hundred Flowers in Chinese Fiction 1979-1980* (1984) edited by Perry Link and *Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation* (1983) edited by Helen F. Siu and Zelda Stern.

The story has an explicitly feminist theme which calls for women to remain single rather than rush into a loveless marriage. The narrator Shanshan, an unmarried 30-year-old young woman, is facing a dilemma of whether to accept her boyfriend's proposal or not. Even though Shanshan's boyfriend is so handsome that people around her all consider him a perfect choice for marriage, Shanshan is still hesitating because she does not really love him. Such hesitation is soon resolved after reading her mother Zhong

Yu's diary, *Love Must Not Be Forgotten*. The diary describes in vivid detail Zhong's romantic love and lifelong devotion to a married man, with whom she enjoyed no more than one day's companionship. Deeply touched by her mother's story, Shanshan is determined to oppose loveless marriage and wait for the right person to marry. Such a story was distinctively feminist as opposed to China's social ideology of the 1980s when romantic love was not encouraged and extramarital love was strictly forbidden. Yang, being a sympathetic woman reader, adopted a woman-identified approach that conveys "how translators identify themselves with a female character (usually the protagonist), or how they relate to female authors through literary translation" (Lee, 2013: 76). She identified with the female characters and her intervention was particularly apparent in translating emotive and evaluative expressions which reveal the narrator and her mother's attitudes towards love and marriage.

Translating women writers from a non-hegemonic culture into a hegemonic culture presents a double challenge, that is, attending to female aesthetics of the source text while ensuring its readability for the target reader because the target culture may not be accepting. Stylistically, *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* shows all the main features traditionally associated with women's speech, that is, "polite, emotional, enthusiastic, gossipy, talkative, uncertain, dull and chatty" (Kramarae, 1980: 58). Though Zhang is a popular writer, many readers dislike her romantic, sentimental style and passages of purple prose (Yang, 1987b: 141); especially for many Chinese intellectuals, her writing is simply too sentimental (Feldman, 1986). Sarah Hart described Zhang's emotional writing as "unbridled sentimentality", "acute self-pity" and "sudden and overwhelming upsurges of feeling" (1986: 51). Lee (1987) also commented, "indeed, one could conclude that Ms. Zhang is as much a romantic as she is a feminist" and he also suggested that with all such outpourings of the heart, her inability to exercise control over her narratives makes the story sentimental, full of descriptive clichés and overblown prose. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993) alerted us that the translator should attend to the textual specificity when translating women writers from a Third World culture. Yang, instead, went against such a proposition and toned down the

original purple prose to improve readability. She translated the original emotional and uncertain speech into a blunter and more direct style and deliberately rewrote some parts to explicate the mother's extramarital love for another man. Even though Yang did not accurately translate the style of the original author, her sensitivity to gender issues in translation and her endeavor to promote women writers still qualify her as a woman-identified translator.

Compared with Yang's textual intervention, her paratextual framing of Zhang as a feminist writer is more potent and effective. In the translator's preface, Yang intentionally leads readers to understand and respond to the author from a feminist perspective. Yang introduces Zhang's personal experience by saying that

she had divorced her husband because he maltreated her, and in a society still influenced by traditional ideas that was considered as a stigma. She thus bitterly experienced the discrimination against women about which she writes so pungently (Yang, 1986a: x).

She also foregrounds Zhang's feminist sensibility by saying:

Whether writing satirically or in a romantic vein she tackles current social problems with deep insight, lashing out at male supremacy, hypocrisy, corruption, bureaucracy, nepotism and other malpractices holding up China's advance (ibid).

She then markets Zhang's personal image as an aggressive and resourceful fighter who "welcomes provocative questions and swiftly rebuts them or skillfully evades them" and who "deserves credit as a pioneer who highlighted women's problems before authorities fully recognized them or took official action" (ibid: xi). In the end, Yang stresses that

because Zhang Jie is thoroughly militant, with a strong sense of social responsibility, she will no doubt continue to tackle sensitive issues with disregard for her own welfare (ibid: xii).

Yang's preface highlighted the author's feminist contribution in an informed and deliberate manner, having emphasized Zhang's sense of social justice and her deep concern for women's issues.

Eshelman (2007: 16) proposed that "when one is working on a text with an overt feminist agenda, the translator's mind had better contain an interpretative framework like feminist translation". Valerie Henitiuk (1999) also emphasized a female interpretative stance to avoid a phallogentric translation. A translator without an active reading of the source text will only superficially translate the text, unaware of other deeper levels of significance. To better illustrate Yang's female interpretative stance, I will discuss her translation with reference to Siu's translation in the anthology *Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation*. We can find that the literal translation of Siu, a professor in anthropology, followed closely to the original text while Yang read the text actively and intervened whenever she thought necessary.

An obvious difference is Yang's use of high modalities in translating the source text. Modality indicates the speaker's degree of belief in or commitment to a proposition. Yang's use of high modality marks such as "must", "shall", "should", "still", "I believe", "to (do)..." and "don't..." reinforces the narrator's stance that love is more important than marriage. For example, the translation of the title is already particularly revealing in itself. Yang translated the original title "Love *Cannot* Be Forgotten" into "Love *Must Not* Be Forgotten" to emphasize the intensity of the undying love described in the story and the active role the protagonist played in preserving the memory of that love. Moreover, Yang explicated the ambiguities within the text based on her interpretation even if her own understanding altered the original meaning. Below I list

some examples which reveal Yang's voices in the translation. As Siu's translation is basically a literal translation of the original, I will not add any extra glossaries.

Example 1 我和我们这个共和国同年。三十岁，对于一个共和国来说，那是太年轻了。而
对一个姑娘来说，却有嫁不出去的危险 (Zhang, 1997: 369)。

Siu's translation: The Republic and I are the same age. For a republic, thirty years old is too young. But for **a woman**, it may be too late to get married (Siu, 1983: 92).

Yang's translation: I'm thirty, the same age as our People's Republic. For a republic thirty is still young. But **a girl** of thirty is virtually on the shelf (Yang, 1986a: 1).

Example 2 我知道，已经有人在背地里说长道短：“凭她那些条件，还想找个什么样的？”
在他们的想象中，我不过是一头劣种的牲畜，却变着法儿想要混个肯出大价钱的冤大头。这
引起他们的气恼，好像我真的干了什么伤天害理的、冒犯了众人的事情 (Zhang, 1997: 369)。

Siu's translation: I know there are already people who gossip behind my back: “Given her own qualifications, what does she expect?”

In their eyes, **I am nothing but a poor sort of creature, trying every trick to lure the “foe” into offering favorable terms.** This makes them angry, as if I have done something really immoral and offensive (Siu, 1983: 92).

Yang's translation: I know people are gossiping behind my back, “who does she think she is, to be so choosy?” To them, **I'm a nobody playing hard to get.** They take offense at such preposterous behavior (Yang, 1986a: 1).

Example 1 and 2 provide information about Chinese women's disadvantageous position in marriage. It is too late for them to get married at thirty and they should not expect to marry somebody better than themselves. In Example 1, unlike the source text, Yang starts the first paragraph with monologic “I” and the thematic progression goes from “I'm thirty” to “a girl of thirty is virtually on the shelf”. “Girl” is a literal translation of “姑娘” which refers to unmarried young women in Chinese. Yang's choice of “a girl of thirty”, though carrying the cultural implication of the Chinese term “姑娘”, is not readily acceptable in English. Valeria M. Pelet (2013) points out that the

usage of girl and woman in the wrong context can range from being inappropriate to offensive and the basic rule to follow is age. Females are referred to as “girls” when they are around college age, then “young women” and when they reach the “dreaded” age of thirty, they are called “women”. Yang’s choice of the word “girl” in this context conveys an element of Chinese culture. The word “姑娘” in Chinese clearly indicated that this is a female who is not married. The phrase, *laoguniang*, literally meaning “old girl”, is a derogatory term equivalent to “spinster” in English. Yang’s use of the word “girl” instead of “woman” not only shows a disregard for the social patriarchal convention that consider women of thirty no longer young, but also places the protagonist in a specific cultural context, though this point would probably be lost on most Anglophone readers.

Example 2 expresses the public’s anger and contempt to the narrator, a woman no longer young but still hesitant about whether to accept her boyfriend’s marriage proposal. The second sentence “I am nothing but a poor sort of creature, trying every trick to lure the ‘foe’ into offering favorable terms” is overemotional and degrading to women. It is especially disturbing from a feminist perspective because such a comment recreates a male-dominated relationship. Yang tones down this expression. Since the sentence “a girl of thirty is virtually on the shelf” has already implied this kind of public attitude, Yang generalizes its meaning into a well-known tactic, “playing hard to get”.

Example 3 虽说人类社会已经进入了二十世纪七十年代，可在这点上，倒也不妨像几千年来人们所做过的那样，把婚姻当成一种传宗接代的工具，一种交换、买卖，而婚姻和爱情也可以是分离着的。既然许多人都是这么过来的，为什么我就偏偏不可以照这样过下去呢？(Zhang, 1997: 370-371)

Siu’s translation: Never mind that this is the twentieth century – on this point we **might as well** follow what people have been doing for several thousand years: treating marriage as a means of perpetuating the family, or as a business transaction in which love and marriage are quite separable. Since so many people have made a go of it that way, **who am I** to break tradition? (Siu, 1983: 93)

Yang's translation: Although living in the seventies of the twentieth century, people **still** consider marriage the way they did millennia ago, as a means of continuing the race, a form of barter or a business transaction in which love and marriage can be separated. Since this is the common practice, why shouldn't **we** follow suit? (Yang, 1986a: 2)

Example 3 is the narrator's monologue about whether to follow the marriage tradition in China, in which Yang openly asserts her feminist stance. She translates "we might as well follow what people have been doing" into "people still consider marriage the way they did", no longer showing a tacit agreement to consider marriage "as a means of continuing the race". She even translates "why on earth is it that I alone can't" into "why shouldn't we follow suit" to address women readers directly rather than the narrator herself.

Example 4 珊珊，要是你吃不准自己究竟要的是什么，我看你就是独身生活下去，也比糊里糊涂地嫁出去要好得多! (Zhang, 1997: 371)

Siu's translation: Shanshan, if you don't know exactly what you want, **I think you are much better off staying single than getting married with no idea why** (Siu, 1983: 94).

Yang's translation: Shanshan, if you aren't sure what you want, **don't rush into marriage – better live on your own!** (Yang, 1986a: 3)

In example 4, Shanshan's mother advises that a woman should figure out what she really wants in life before getting married. Yang translates the sentence into two imperative sentences "don't rush into marriage" and "better live on your own!", the tone of which is more definitive than the source text's statement that "I think you are much better off staying single than getting married with no idea why".

Example 5 “…… 人说‘知足者常乐’，我却享受不到这样的快乐。”说着，她自嘲地笑了笑。“我只能是一个痛苦的理想主义者。” (Zhang, 1997: 373)

Siu's translation: "...People say, 'the contented are always happy,' yet **I have never enjoyed** this happiness." As she said this, she gave a slight, self-mocking smile. "I can only be a miserable idealist." (Siu, 1983: 95)

Yang's translation: "...Those content with their lot will always be happy, they say, but **I shall never enjoy** that happiness." She added self-mockingly, "A wretched idealist, that's all I am." (Yang, 1986a: 4)

Example 5 expresses the mother's idealism towards love. She refuses to be content and happy in a loveless marriage and ends up as a wretched idealist. Compared with Siu's translation "I have never", Yang's translation "I shall never" shows the mother's uncompromising determination to pursue true love, not only in the past but also in the future.

Example 6 我明白了，什么也没有忘记，一切都还留在原来的地方。年复一年，就跟一棵大树一样，它的根却越来越深地扎下去，想要拔掉这生了根的东西实在太困难了，我无能为力 (Zhang, 1997: 379)。

Siu's translation: I understood then that I had not forgotten anything; everything was in the same old place. Year after year, like a big tree, the roots had penetrated deeper and deeper. It was too difficult to try to pull out **this rooted thing**, I was powerless (Siu, 1983: 101).

Yang's translation: I realize then that I have forgotten nothing. Everything is unchanged. **My love** is like a tree the roots of which strike deeper year after year – I have no way to uproot it (Yang, 1986a: 9).

Example 7 “妈妈，这是为了谁？”我惊恐地问她。

“为一个亲人。”然后怕我受惊似地解释着，“一个你不熟悉的亲人。” (Zhang, 1997: 381)

Siu's translation: "Mother, who is this for?" I asked her anxiously.

"For a relative!" Then, fearing that I would be upset, she explained, "A relative you are not familiar with." (Siu, 1983: 102)

Yang's translation: "For whom are you wearing that, Mother?" I asked anxiously.

“**For my lover.**” Not to frighten me she explained, “someone you never knew.” (Yang, 1986a: 10)

In examples 6 and 7, the translator explicates the taboo love by translating the mother’s implicit reference, “that rooted thing”, directly into “my love” and “for a relative” into “for my lover”. After the death of Zhong Yu’s lover, Shanshan asked her mother for whom she was wearing the mourning-band. In the source text, Zhong only implicitly mentions that it is for a relative while in Yang’s translation, Zhong straightforwardly admits that it is for her lover.

Example 8 我真想大声疾呼地说：“别管人家的闲事吧，让我们耐心地等待着，等着那呼唤我们的人，即使等不到也不要糊里糊涂地结婚！不要担心这么一来独身生活会成为一种可怕的灾难。要知道，这兴许正是社会生活在文化、教养、趣味……等等方面进化的一种表现！” (Zhang, 1997: 385)

I really want to shout: “Don’t worry about the pettiness of others! Let us patiently wait – wait for the person who calls us. Even if we never get one, we should not unthinkingly marry! Don’t worry about this single life turning into a horrible disaster. **One should realize** this may just be a sign that society is advancing in the realms of culture, cultivation, taste...” (Siu, 1983:106)

I long to shout: “Mind your own business! Let us wait patiently for our counterparts. Even waiting in vain is better than a loveless marriage. To live single is not such a fearful disaster. **I believe** it may be a sign of a step forward in culture, education and the quality of life.” (Yang, 1986a: 13)

Example 8 is the final paragraph of the story in which the narrator declares her refreshed view towards marriage. Modalities, or emotive and evaluative expressions, are affective and attitudinal, which is the barometer of the narrator’s point of view. Yang translates “one should realize” into “I believe” to assert the narrator’s new-found feminist stance.

According to Luise von Flotow, “feminist translators are less concerned with the final product and its equivalence or fidelity than with the processes of reading, rereading, and writing again” (1997: 48). Unlike Siu’s faithful translation, Yang reads the story actively based on empathy between women and intervenes with her own interpretation. While reinforcing the female voices of the original text through high modalities, she also interweaves her own voice into the story.

2.3 Women’s voices: Yang’s translation of *Chenzhong de chibang*

Leaden Wings / Heavy Wings (*Chenzhong de chibang* 沉重的翅膀) (1981) exposes the difficulties and problems for China’s modernization through the vivid portrayal of different characters linked to the Morning Light Auto Works. It describes the lives of different men and women from all levels of society under China’s modernization drive. This novel was considered as a representative work of “reform literature”, the narrative that described the progress of the economic reform initiated after 1978 and dominated the literary scene in the early 1980s. *Chibang* was so popular that it was among the few contemporary Chinese novels which had two English versions: first translated by Gladys Yang as *Leaden Wings* and published by Virago in 1987, and later retranslated by Howard Goldblatt as *Heavy Wings* and published by Grove Weidenfeld in 1989.

A winner of the 1985 Mao Dun Literary Prize, the most prestigious award for novels in China, *Chibang* was translated into more than fourteen languages. The symbolic capital accorded to *Chibang* in the source culture facilitated its publication in other languages. Since the first publication of *Chibang* in 1980, Zhang has revised it three times so that it can align with the dominant ideology in China.¹⁷ Lin Zeng (2014) points out that *Heavy Wings* and *Leaden Wings* are based on different Chinese versions, but as the

¹⁷ Censorship from the Chinese government ensured that all literature adhered to party ideology. For more details about Zhang’s rewriting of *Leaden Wings*, see Jin Hongyu 金宏宇 and Xu Wentai 徐文泰. “‘Gaige wenxue’ shi ruhe ‘lian’ cheng de —— Yi Zhangjie *Chenzhong de chibang* de banben bianqian wei kaocha duixiang ‘改革文学’ 是如何‘炼’成的 —— 以张洁《沉重的翅膀》的版本变迁为考察对象 (How Is the Reform Literature Refined —— Taking the Version of Zhang Jie’s *Heavy Wings* as a Research Object).” *Tianjin shifan daxue xuebao* 天津师范大学学报 (Journal of Tianjin Normal University), 2018, 3, pp. 51-58.

differences between these versions concern primarily political and literary aspects, not the woman-centered content, this will not influence my gender-oriented comparison of the two English translations. Such kind of repeated rewriting suggests the political significance of this important reform novel. *Chibang* is hailed as the first novel to honestly tackle the theme of China's reform and modernization. Women's issues are not the main theme of the story. According to Wood, part of *Chibang*'s success in Germany was "due to the number of businessmen who bought it, hoping to understand the machinations of politics within Chinese ministries and factories" (1988: 137), a factor which also influenced its translation and reception in the Anglophone world.

Even though female themes are only peripheral to the story, *Chibang* is an important addition to Chinese women's writing, exemplifying a significant aim of post-Mao women's writing: responding to what happened to women socially and politically by describing how female characters interact with real-life situations in a distinct voice (Wu, 2010: 410). Hitchcock (1993) argues that in *Chibang*, apart from the declarative statements about women's condition, such as the view of failed marriages and the castigation of obvious double standards held by some leading male characters, Zhang also encoded a broader sense of feminism in her writing, that is, the refusal of Chinese socialist realism in favor of a critical realism to evaluate particular historical moments in the People's Republic of China. Hitchcock claims that

what makes the novel "political" is that it redefines the political sphere of interest of the Chinese women writers. It is that redefinition more than the individual characterization of women in the book that makes *Heavy Wings* a powerful statement on the politics of Chinese feminism (ibid: 123).

Hitchcock's observation highlights the need to take into consideration relevant cultural and political variables when analyzing Chinese women's writing.

Several studies on Yang's translation have been carried out from a gender perspective, but they focus primarily on her feminist translation strategies, without further exploration of the nuances of translating the non-feminist text *Chibang* through feminist agency. Zhang Shengxiang and Wang Jiali (2015) discussed Yang's subjectivity as a feminist translator and analyzed her feminist linguistic, syntactical and textual strategies. Yin Meiqin (2017) also analyzed Yang's translation strategies in dealing with female subject matters. Song Min (2018) adopted the three translation strategies originating from Canadian feminist translation – supplementing, prefacing and footnoting and hijacking – to analyze Yang's translation. As some textual examples cited in those studies are hardly distinguishable from the translation strategies used by other non-feminist translators, their studies remind us of the main objection to feminist translation: “an overly simplistic equation of feminist translation with translator intervention” (Eshelman, 2007: 17). According to Zhongli Yu, “feminist translation theory is more about an ideological meta-discourse than about actual translation techniques” (2015: 27). This is why Olga Castro (2009) advocates that feminist translation should go beyond the fundamentally practical level. To be more specific, feminist translation studies should not only concentrate on practical strategies, but also explore what lies behind the translation strategy, namely, the cognitive, ideological, cultural, political and social variables that underlie the translator's feminist practices, the analysis of which can contribute to more heterogeneous understandings of feminist translation studies.

Lingzi Meng (2019) constructed a corpus to compare *Leaden Wings* and *Heavy Wings*. While she analyzed how the sex of the two translators influenced the language of their translation, my comparison delves into the agency that reinforces the female perspective of *Leaden Wings*. Castro (2009) argues that there lacks a systemic structure to study the intersection between translation and feminisms because researchers have been largely overshadowed by the Canadian proposal. Instead of following the paradigm of Canadian feminist translation, I pose new questions about women and translation: how to emphasize the female perspective in a text that is not explicitly

feminist? How to define the translator's gendered agency if she is not to subvert the gender dichotomy by challenging the literary and linguistic conventions of the source language? How does the translator exert her feminist agency while ensuring the readability of her translation, especially when she is translating from a non-hegemonic culture into a hegemonic one?

The translation of *Chibang* is an exemplary case that allows us to compare two translations governed by different discourses: the dominant political translation discourse and the subversive feminist translation discourse. *Leaden Wings* was packaged as a feminist novel by Virago which was heartened by the reception of Zhang's *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* collection. Its retranslation *Heavy Wings* was published mainly for the novel's political implications as it was regarded as "virtually a fictional primer for the summer uprising in Tiananmen Square" (Wilkinson, 1989). To put it simply, *Chibang* was first translated as a "feminist intervention" (Virago's *Leaden Wings*) and then retranslated as "a voice of post-Tiananmen dissidence" (Grove Weidenfeld's *Heavy Wings*) (Hitchcock, 1993: 195). The following discussion will focus on how the feminist translation *Leaden Wings* and the politically inflected translation *Heavy Wings* are framed paratextually and textually.

Broadly speaking, the marketing mechanism includes practices such as "the decisions publishers make in terms of the presentation of books to the marketplace, in terms of format, cover designs and blurb, and imprint" (Squires, 2007: 2). Such paratextual elements also exert considerable influence on the reception of the translation. While acknowledging this novel as "China's first political novel", *Leaden Wings* foregrounds women characters and their concerns in the paratext. In contrast, *Heavy Wings* mentions the novel's "eloquent feminism" only in passing and instead emphasizes the political and social problems of Chinese society. Valerie Henitiuk (1999: 470) asserts that "the perfectly transparent translation is impossible because each translation will give greater or lesser emphasis, subconsciously or otherwise, to different kinds of values, character

traits, and impressions”. *Leaden Wings* and *Heavy Wings* have prioritized different aspects of the source text and thus assumed different forms.

The foreword to *Heavy Wings* contains this sentence: “life is the eternal struggle of Man with his Fate” (Goldblatt, 1989). The use of “Man” and “his” is a clear signal that the male translator Goldblatt is not gender aware. In contrast, the translation agents of *Leaden Wings* aim to foreground the female perspective. Virago tried to draw readers’ attention to women’s issues by stating in the blurb that “we glimpse a society where women reach high levels of power, yet still suffer from prejudices rooted in the feudal past: wives are subservient, widows pitied and divorcees condemned; unmarried women are eccentric, even sinister” (Yang, 1987a). Gladys Yang foregrounded women characters by translating their names into meaningful words that imply their personalities, such as “Autumn”, “Grace”, “Jade”, “Bamboo”, “Joy” and “Radiance”. In contrast, the names of male characters were transliterated with pinyin. Yang also added a long preface that explained the literary context of Zhang’s writing, her representative feminist stories *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* and *The Ark*, and highlighted the inadequacy of the marriage system in China. Yang explicitly claimed that as the original was rather long-winded and diffuse, she made some deletions, especially in places the arguments about politics and economic policy go on for far too long. In this light, she was less concerned with the political and social aspects that were valued by most Anglophone publishers in the 1980s.

This gender focus of *Leaden Wings* is particularly conspicuous in the informative afterword added by Davin. She highlighted Zhang’s concern with subjects such as love and marriage, provided further comments on each woman character and explained why Zhang’s views on women’s oppression differ from those of Western feminists. She acknowledged Zhang’s courage in taking the development of heavy industry in China as the main theme, claiming that “this is a statement in itself as it is not a usual subject for a woman writer to tackle” (Davin, 1987: 175). She commented on each woman character, explaining why they shock or disappoint more than they inspire, pointing out

that “although she is concerned with women’s predicament and with issues like marriage and divorce which particularly affect them, Zhang Jie’s views on women’s oppression are clearly different from those of western feminists” (ibid: 180). Despite the translation agents’ endeavor to emphasize the female aspects of *Leaden Wings*, this novel still fails to impress readers with its feminist implications. Davin’s afterword to explain the negative portrayal of the women characters was even considered by the reviewer Michelle M. Yeh as painting “a distorted picture of the women characters” and consequently giving readers “a misleading view of the story as a whole” (1988: 508). Hitchcock also stated that *Leaden Wings* did not read like a feminist novel even though Yang tried to help by cutting down on some of the economic details of the day-to-day running of the ministry and Virago added an introduction by Yang and an afterword by Davin that discussed women’s issues (Hitchcock, 1993: 103-104). The promotion of a non-feminist text through a gendered agency became a conundrum for the translation agents.

Leaden Wings and *Heavy Wings* can be considered as two different interpretations of the same text through different agencies. Piotr Blumczynski emphasized the significance of the agents’ contextual and ideological positioning if translation is understood as conceptualization and construal (2016: 123). The differences between the paratextual elements of the two translations indicate a discernible contextual shift that influences the interpretation and reception of *Chibang*. While the feminist agency of the publisher, the translator and the scholar attempted to shift the emphasis of *Leaden Wings* to women, the publisher of *Heavy Wings* highlighted the author’s political prescience and framed the text as a reference to the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. Its book cover can be associated with a man slumbering in a suppressive and hopeless socio-political environment. The original Chinese of the title page “谨将此书献给为着中华民族的振兴而忘我工作的人” (literally meaning “dedicated to those working selflessly to invigorate the Chinese nation”, as Yang translated) is translated into “dedicated to all those who work for the future of China, even at the expense of their own”, which can be considered a tribute to those who sacrificed themselves in the

Tiananmen Square protests. In line with the blurb that emphasizes the novel's insights into the crackdown in Tiananmen, the reviews of *Heavy Wings* unanimously use words such as “prescient”, “foreshadow”, “prophetic” and “primer” to reinforce for readers the link to the protests that were to follow shortly.¹⁸ As the trace a translator leaves in every text is the trace of context (von Flotow, 2014: 51), the agency the publisher imposes on the paratexts is also the trace of context. Such a paratextual framing of *Heavy Wings* reflects the ideology dominating the reception context of Chinese literature in the West in the 1980s.

Notably, although Yang emphasizes women's issues at the paratextual level, she deletes many of the narrator's comments on women in her translation. I searched for the two key words “女人 (women)” and “男人 (men)” in the source text and found 105 hits of “women” and 40 hits of “men”. A list of their translation is presented in Appendix 2, but here I will illustrate some examples that are most relevant to explain Yang's translation strategies. As Goldblatt's translation is by and large faithful to the source text, I will not provide any extra glossaries.

Example 1 他的精神上所承受的全部社会压力，却靠两个女人的保护来平衡。生活竟把他推进这样一狭窄的天地，这样一种等待施舍的地位。他还算什么男人。男人应该是强者啊 (Zhang, 1997: 179)。

Goldblatt's translation: All that keeps his spirit balanced in the face of social pressure is the support of two women. Life has forced him into a corner and made him little more than a charity case. How can he call himself a man! Men are supposed to be the strong ones (Goldblatt, 1989: 163).

Yang's translation: deleted

Example 2 嫁男人真有点像押宝 (Zhang, 1997: 285)。

Goldblatt's translation: For women, marriage is a gamble at best (Goldblatt, 1989: 247).

¹⁸ See Appendix 1 for more details about the paratextual comparison between *Leaden Wings* and *Heavy Wings*.

Yang's translation: Marriage is a gamble (Yang, 1987a: 135).

Example 3 女人在男人那里，比男人在男人那里好办事。在不丧失原则的情况下，利用一下这个有利的因素又有什么不可 (Zhang, 1997: 292)。

Goldblatt's translation: Women have ways of getting things done when they're dealing with men. And as long as principles aren't involved, what's wrong in exploiting that advantage? (Goldblatt, 1989: 254)

Yang's translation: deleted

Example 4 家里的事，样样不用他操心，那是女人的事情 (Zhang, 1997: 262)。

Goldblatt's translation: He didn't have to worry about things at home, women were supposed to take care of that (Goldblatt, 1989: 229).

Yang's translation: deleted

Example 5 她也同一般女人一样，特别容易发现别的女人的缺点 (Zhang, 1997: 284)。

Goldblatt's translation: Like women everywhere, she frequently finds fault with other women (Goldblatt, 1989: 246).

Yang's translation: deleted

Example 6 然而他抗争得过这个社会的习俗吗？人们会大惊小怪：离婚干什么？有个女人不就得了，何况，从实质内容来说，这个女人和那个女人，没有什么不同 (Zhang, 1997: 252)。

Goldblatt's translation: But does he have the strength to oppose the mores of the society? Everyone would be alarmed: Divorce? You already have a woman, what else do you want? Besides, this woman's no different from the one you have (Goldblatt, 1989: 218).

Yang's translation: But what would people say if he asked for a divorce? (Yang, 1987a: 121)

Women writers of the 1980s showed an ambivalent attitude towards feminism: on the one hand, they addressed women's issues in order to seek autonomy and on the other

hand, they refused to be called feminists and did not hesitate to assign negative qualities to women. They “addressed an assemblage of gender dilemmas within a new but still patriarchal and conservative social, cultural and political context” (Schaffer and Song, 2014: 13). In the examples listed above, Yang eliminated passages which were explicitly non-feminist and limited the narrator’s voice only to commenting on the women characters in the story. In many other similar cases (see Appendix 2), she deleted general references such as “a woman”, “women”, “a lot of women”, “a real woman”, “frail women”, “some women”, “for women”, “like women everywhere” in the narrator’s discussion on women’s issues because such comments were negative and thus contrasted with the feminist translation discourse under which *Leaden Wings* was produced.

Example 7 就算她是一个顶干瘪、顶枯燥的职业妇女，她也有需要诉一诉委屈、听一听宽慰话的时候啊。但是人们早已习惯于把她看成是一个没有性别，没有感情的机器人，大概连贺家彬也这样认为。她摇头。也有例外的时候，比方那封匿名信。人们大概在中伤、造谣的时候，才想起她还是女人，她的性别在这时才有意义。

女人的神经比男人的脆弱、敏感。然而这样的流言蜚语，落在这样一个丑人儿的身上，分外让人感到残酷和痛楚，这永不会开花，也永不会结果的生命。

.....

叶知秋却深深地叹息，心里想：不知给自己心爱的男人生个儿子是什么滋味？不过她是不会哭的，眼泪是漂亮的、有人疼爱的女人才有的奢侈品 (Zhang, 1997: 231-232)。

Goldblatt’s translation: Even if she is a haggard, lackluster professional woman, there are still times when she needs to air some grievances and hear a few comforting words. But people have gotten used to treating her like a sexless, emotionless robot.

Apparently, at least some people recognize her as a woman when they spread their slanderous rumors. That’s when her gender makes a difference.

Women’s nerves are, all in all, more shatterable and sensitive than men’s. It’s particularly painful to see slanderous rumors directed at such a homely woman. A woman whose life will never blossom and never produce fruit.

Ye Zhiqiu sighs deeply. What must it feel like to bear the child of the man you love? she wonders.

But she's not the one to cry. Tears are beautiful, a luxury reserved for women who are loved (Goldblatt, 1989: 198-199).

Yang's translation: deleted

Example 8 郑子云暗暗苦笑：要是叶知秋能够结两次婚，也算没有白白地当过一次女人 (Zhang, 1997: 216)。

Goldblatt's translation: Zheng sneers inwardly. If Ye Zhiqiu could get married twice, she'd feel like a real woman! (Goldblatt, 1989: 185)

Yang's translation: deleted

Davin points out in the afterword that “Zhang repeatedly attacks the conventions of marriage as it exists now in China, but she appears to see a ‘good’ relationship with a man as the best guarantee of happiness for a woman” (Davin, 1987: 179). Zhang described a conventional male-female relationship in which women were dependent on men, but Yang seems to have suppressed such an articulation in her translation. For example, Zhang did not present the uncompromising and hardworking woman reporter Ye Zhiqiu as a role model because Ye was leading a celibate life, but Yang deleted the parts that could tarnish Ye's image as an independent woman, as in the above two examples. Von Flotow claims that “one way to do so (oppose hegemonic discourses) is to intervene in places where images of women and women's voices no longer correspond to contemporary expectations, and make them correspond, in other words, to impose corrective measures” (1997: 34). Yang's corrective measures, though not pushed to the extent of subverting patriarchal ideology, maintain the integrity of Zhang as a vanguard woman writer speaking for women's rights.

It should be noted that another objective for Yang to streamline the source text is to improve readability because many of the narrator's comments are didactic and long-winded. As the famous sinologist W.J.F Jenner observes, Yang did a good editorial job

by cutting out about half of *Chibang*, making the book a much better read in the process (Jenner, 2007). Yang's editing of the original can also be explained through the unequal capital accorded to Chinese and English. Sherry Simon alerts us that "attention must be given not only to the gendered aspects of the exchange, but to the heritage of inequality inscribed into the very languages of contact" (1996: 32). According to the data on global circulation of translated literary products, more than 40 percent of all the books translated worldwide come from English while other languages (among them languages with large amounts of native speakers, such as Chinese and Arabic) take up less than 1 percent in the market share (Koster, 2014). Such a power asymmetry poses a dilemma to a gender conscious translator: whether to sacrifice the gender aspects for readability in order to reach a wider readership. The same dilemma also applies to Sanaa Benmessaoud's discussion on the postcolonial woman writer Fatima Mernissi. Though Mernissi highlights the difference of Moroccan women in order to speak for them, she has to suppress the rhetoricity of the Moroccan dialect by using fluent English throughout the book, which in turn hampers the representation of Moroccan women (Benmessaoud, 2013).

Although Yang did not follow the source text closely, she remained faithful to the feminist translation discourse. She initiated a translation network for Zhang and had two of Zhang's works published with the leading feminist press Virago. As Angela Kershaw explains, "it is generally agreed by analysts of the publishing industry that it is the author who must be marketed and sold to consumers as a brand" and consumers "might plausibly buy a book by an unfamiliar woman author because it is published by Virago" (2010: 9). In the case of *Chibang*, Yang the translator, Davin the scholar and Virago the feminist publisher functioned as "a bank of social and symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 2008: 125) which enhanced Zhang's image as a feminist writer.

The paratexts are sometimes more powerful than the translated text in framing the source narrative. The content of *Chibang* is challenging for the woman-focused agents

and they rely heavily on the supplementary materials to make explicit their main concern for women's issues, as Carol Maier points out:

For a feminist translator, the question of supplementary materials would be crucial because of the opportunity they offer a translator to comment, as editor, on the work of both author and translator and to stress the relation between that work and feminist principles and practices (1998: 107).

The supplementary materials of *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* and *Leaden Wings* have carried Zhang's awakening female consciousness over and informed Western readers of the development of Chinese women writers in the 1980s. The paratextual and textual framing of *Leaden Wings* by the translation agents, with the former foregrounding women's issues and the latter deleting discussion on women that carried negative connotations, though contradictory on the surface, aligns essentially with the feminist translation discourse and can generate illuminating insights into feminist translation studies.

3. Conclusion

Since not every text, author or translator is explicitly feminist, I propose that the concept of a woman-identified translator can liberate feminist translation from its focus on political activism, thereby expanding the breadth and depth of studies on women and translation. My study of Gladys Yang's translation and promotion of Zhang Jie's works raises an important question for feminist translation studies: how can theoretical insights from feminist translation inform the research on women and translation in general to address wider issues, for example, the issue of translating women writers from non-hegemonic languages into hegemonic languages? I refer to Yang as a woman-identified translator to avoid the political activism usually associated with the term "feminist", but Yang's agency in promoting women writers is undeniably woman-

centered, which shares with feminist translators the same agenda to make women writers more visible and to allow women to speak for women through translation.

Yang mobilized her social and symbolic capital and initiated a translation network for Zhang. The translation network between Yang, Davin and Virago ensures a gender focus on publishing the translation. It should be emphasized that the collaboration between feminist translation agents is manifested in diverse forms and their agency deserves more attention in the research on women and translation because the feminist agenda needs to be endorsed by female alliances that facilitate the converging of women's courage, intellect and power.

Apart from establishing a woman-focused translation network, Yang's feminist agency is exerted at both the textual level and the paratextual level. Her prefacing is particularly effective in valorizing and enhancing Zhang's feminist image, having applauded her courage to critique social problems and her feminist perceptiveness to speak for women. While aiming for better readability, Yang's translation strategy varies with the nature of the original text. For a feminist text like *Love Must Not Be Forgotten*, she reinforced the feminist stance of the original while for a non-feminist text like *Leaden Wings*, she deleted the narrator's negative comments on women and concentrated on framing the novel from a female perspective through paratextual elements. It should be noted that Yang's agency to translate against the dominating nationalistic and male-centered discourse also owes to the amount of social and symbolic capital she has accumulated in the translation field.

Although the agency of the translation network, as manifested at the paratextual and textual framing, is an important factor to building up the author's feminist reputation in translation, the significance of contextual agency cannot be underestimated. The juxtaposition of political and feminist translation discourses also facilitated Zhang's image as a feminist writer. Zhang's concern for women's life and the political realities arose from the specific historical and social context in the 1980s. The juxtaposition of

these two translation discourses enabled both her political writing and feminist writing to be translated and positively received in the Anglophone world. It is precisely this contextual, paratextual and textual agency that has jointly reinforced Zhang's feminist voices in translation.

Zhang's case adds another dimension for the concept of "representational inevitability", highlighting that the representation of women from non-hegemonic cultures in the West is not only dictated by power asymmetries, but also influenced by contextual factors and the agency of the translator, the publisher and other mediators. Moreover, this chapter can be regarded as a response to the proposition that the future of feminist translation studies should invite more scholarship on diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. Having investigated how Zhang's feminist voice is strengthened through an intellectually motivated translation network in a specific feminist and political translation era, in the next chapter, I will now adopt a woman-centered approach to explore how the female voices inscribed in Yan Geling's *Jinling shisan chai* are weakened through multiple agencies in a commercial translation discourse.

Chapter Four

Commercial Agency in Translation: Yan Geling's *The Flowers of War*

This story is dedicated to all the women sacrificed in The Rape of Nanjing. As it unfolds, I hope my readers can share my feeling that their sacrifice is not only heart-rending but also glorious [my translation].

——Yan Geling, *Beican er xuanlan de xisheng* (2011d: 69)

This chapter focuses on the translation of Yan Geling 严歌苓's *Jinling shisan chai* 金陵十三钗 (*The Flowers of War*), a story about women's sacrifice in the Nanjing Massacre. It has undergone a chain of translations, or as Inez Okulska terms, "a transmedial translation series", which means "a series of translations that interpret the original in the space of various media, or that remain in a dependent relationship to each other, forming mutually interconnected links in a chain of inspiration" (2016: 58). *Jinling* was originally a short novella, then adapted into an international film, expanded and translated into another English novella, and finally a novel and a TV series. Such creative transformative processes involve not only interlingual translation, but also intralingual and intersemiotic translation. This translation series is enacted by a commercially motivated translation network that comprises the film director, the publisher, the writer, the translator and the editor. This discussion will not analyze the transformation of different versions in detail. My objective is rather to formulate a feminist critical approach to translation and explore how woman-centered contents in the story lose their significance in the film adaptation and the English translation.

I would like to begin by discussing the translation of the book title since as Monika Fludernik explains, the title of a novel "is clearly important for the narrative as it is usually determined by the author as opposed to the publisher and taken to signal something crucial about the story" (2009: 24). The original title "The Thirteen Hairpins of Jinling" (*Jinling shisan chai*) becomes "The Flowers of War" in the 2011 film adaptation and the subsequent 2012 English translation. This translation erases all the

cultural allusion of the original, in particular, the allusion to the famous “The Twelve Hairpins of Jinling” (*Jinling shi'er chai* 金陵十二钗) in Cao Xueqin’s 曹雪芹 *A Dream of Red Mansions* (*Honglouloumeng* 红楼梦) from the 18th century, one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature.¹⁹ “The Twelve Hairpins of Jinling” thus evokes the elegant and dignified image of twelve admirably beautiful ladies in the classic. Their different talents and unique personalities lead them to different fates. In classical Chinese, “Hairpin” is metonymic for women and “Jinling” was the name of today’s Nanjing in the Southern Tang Kingdom (937–975). The Chinese title of Yan’s novel “The Thirteen Hairpins of Jinling”, therefore, captures specific cultural connotations which can readily strike a chord in Chinese readers.

Since a literal translation of this culture-loaded title cannot convey the same flavor as the original Chinese, it was changed into “The Flowers of War” by the film director and the publisher of the English translation in order to meet the demands of international marketing. With the combination of “flowers” and “war”, the title of the English translation – a complete deviation from the metaphorical and culturally resonant meaning of the original title – conjures up images of poppies, a symbol of remembrance, tradition, and honor in the West (Matthews, 2016). Moreover, the change of the title heralds a shift of focus from female characters to the war story.

These two substantially different titles lead readers towards different interpretive paths and indicate a strong rewriting impulse behind the translation initiative. The change of the title not only implies the rewriters’ choice to shed Chinese cultural references that are unlikely to resonate worldwide, but also indicates their perspective of the female characters. The discrepancy between these two titles also reveals important information about the publisher’s marketing strategy for the English translation: prioritizing the war story rather than the stories of the female characters. The commercial imperative in the international book market takes precedence over the principle of faithfulness in

¹⁹ The other three classics are *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan* 水浒传) and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi* 三国演义) from the 14th century, and *Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji* 西游记) from the 16th century.

translation. It is justifiable to speculate that the commercial and ideological apparatus motivating the title change can further influence the reconfiguration of women in the translation.

Before proceeding with my discussion, it is necessary to clarify the choice of novella by Yan, a Chinese American writer, as my case study. This may appear in contrast with my previous chapters which focused on the works of mainland Chinese women writers. It must be noted however that *The Flowers of War* is not a story about migrant women, so its interpretation and translation are not subject to the same textual and cultural intervention as migrant writing. Also, unlike other better known Chinese-American women writers, such as Amy Tan who writes in English and usually focuses on themes of migrant experience, Yan Geling, a Chinese-language writer, is mostly read and commended by scholars in China. The accessibility of her works to Western readers also depends on the agency of translation. Most importantly, *The Flowers of War* makes a good case study because of its multi-layered women's voices, which not only discusses women's plight in the atrocities of war, but also the female experience and subjectivity of two very different groups of women, schoolgirls and prostitutes. Whether and how such female voices are conveyed through translation deserves to be investigated in depth.

Furthermore, as I explained in the first chapter, after the dominant political translation discourse of the 1980s, the field of translating women writers has operated under two predominant dynamics: commodification of female sexuality and a tendency towards multiplicity, with more agents from different cultural and social backgrounds translating texts that represent the Chinese diversity of women's experiences in the current world. The translation of Yan's story embodies both these dynamics, the analysis of which can provide seminal insights into how a woman's novel is shaped by multiple translation agents with strong economic motivation.

In this chapter, I strive therefore to undertake translation criticism with an emphasis on the gender issues raised in the process. I begin with an analysis of the paratextual elements to unveil the translation agents' interpretative choices in framing the English translation. My focus then shifts to an examination of how woman-focused contents of the original text have suffered a significant loss in the translation process. In my analysis, I will combine approaches such as rewriting theory, translation criticism and theory of gynocriticism. Rewriting theory explains the patronage's agency in manipulating the translation process; translation criticism provides a critical framework to analyze the translation; and gynocriticism underpins the discovery and recovery of the muted female voices in translation.

1. The original story, film adaptation and English translation

Jinling shisan chai, a novella by Yan Geling, was first published in 2005 and then adapted into five different versions: the original short novella (2005), a film adaptation (2011), an expanded Chinese novel (2011), an expanded English novella (2012) and a TV series (2014). Yan is a prolific contemporary Chinese writer and has many of her works adapted for the screen. When she was 12 years old, Yan performed as a ballerina and folk dancer in the People's Liberation Army during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Later she worked as a war journalist in the Sino-Vietnam border conflict in the late 1970s. Before moving to the United States in 1989, Yan was a member of the Chinese Writers' Association of the People's Republic of China and published many screenplays, short stories, and novels based on her life experiences in the army and war. Although she was already a well-established writer in China, she entered a creative writing program at Columbia College, Chicago where she obtained a Master of Fine Arts in 1995. Yan has won many literary prizes and garnered a wide readership in China because of the film and TV adaptation of her works. Yan is famous for her sustained focus on women's lives and issues which form an integral part of her writing. She usually creates "female characters with the selfless capacity to meet victimization with love" (Wei, 2012: 81). Apart from *The Banquet Bug* (2006), the only book she wrote

in English, her other four books translated into English include: *White Snake and Other Stories* (*Baishe he qita gushiji* 白蛇和其它故事集) (1999), *The Lost Daughter of Happiness* (*Fusang* 扶桑) (2001), *The Flowers of War* (*Jinling shisan chai* 金陵十三钗) (2012) and *Little Aunt Crane* (*Xiaoyi duohe* 小姨多鹤) (2015). Literary critics and readers often interpret Yan's writing as emanating from a female perspective and her oeuvre represents a diverse range of themes concerning women. This warrants a detailed discussion of the translations of her writing from a gender-focused perspective.

Jinling shisan chai tells the story of thirteen prostitutes who volunteer as sex slaves for the Japanese soldiers to save schoolgirls in the Nanjing Massacre. Other major characters include Father Engelmann, his assistant Fabio Adornato, and the Chinese soldier Major Dai. This story is set in a secluded church where both the prostitutes and the schoolgirls are seeking sanctuary from the war. The schoolgirls live in the loft while the prostitutes occupy the basement of the church, a purposeful segregation to prevent the innocent and pure girls from being tarnished by women who are perceived as obscene and filthy. There are many clashes and confrontations between the schoolgirls and the prostitutes, especially between Meng Shujuan and Zhao Yumo, the two main female characters in the story. Ultimately, the prostitutes redeem themselves from their "sins" and obtain honor and respect through their heroic sacrifice of replacing the schoolgirls as sexual slaves for the Japanese soldiers.

The concerted dual naming of the film adaptation and the English translation as "The Flowers of War" indicates the publisher's intention to draw on the audience's emotional connection with the show on screen. The publisher adopts a marketing strategy for brand identification: if audiences can be enchanted by the film, they can also identify with the English translation. The publication of the English novella and the Chinese novel immediately after the release of the film suggests the powerful commercial imperatives behind the promotion of this transmedial translation series. Both the Chinese versions and the English novella include the phrase "Zhang Yimou's film" on

the book covers, cashing in on the film-maker's international popularity. As a proper contextualization helps us understand how the translated product is shaped, it is therefore necessary to explain the intertextual framework within which the film influenced the subsequent English novella.

Zhang Yimou's *The Flowers of War*, China's Oscar entry for 2012, is one of the most expensive films ever made in China, with a budget of about 90 million dollars. Zhang decided to adapt the novella for the screen because he was deeply impressed by this unconventional story about the Nanjing Massacre. Therefore, the major plot of the story remained unchanged in the film. Zhang explained how Yan's novella was to him, "like a faint mist of pink color amid the cruelty and brutality and that kind of feeling to me was very artistic" (Goodridge, 2012: 187). This specific coloration can be understood as referring to the woman-specific elements inscribed in the story. Apart from the director, Yan also explained that her role as a script writer was to add "女人香" (a feminine fragrance) or "女性的体温" (a feminine touch) to the film (Yan, 2011b; 2011c).

But how did this "feminine" assume different forms when presented for an international and a Chinese audience? In the international film, it is associated mainly with an exotic and sensual female community which is likely to bring about global commercial benefits. The prostitutes are dressed in seductive, rainbow-hued silken dresses, with their heightened sexuality displayed on screen. Sustained slow motion sequences capture this group of boisterous prostitutes for the desire of an implied male heterosexual gaze. Such scopophilic eroticism reminds us of Laura Mulvey's observance that in mainstream cinema, the image of woman is usually objectified as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man for visual pleasure (1988). Women are "looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1988: 62). In the English version of the written narrative, large chunks that describe the female characters from both the original novella and the later Chinese novel are either erased or diluted. Unlike the feminist translation discourse which strengthened the feminist

agency of the translation network described in Chapter Three, the commercial translation discourse enacted by the film adaptation has, to some extent, suppressed the translational agency from disseminating the women's voices in the war story.

In the film, Zhang introduces the character of the American mortician John Miller (played by Christian Bale) as the leading role and shifts the focalization from the women to the mortician. Miller not only saves the schoolgirls through his awakened heroism, but also conquers the heart and body of Yumo, the most beautiful and charming prostitute among the group. The viewers are presented with several close-ups on Yumo's wiggling buttocks, accompanied with Miller's licentious exclamations: "I love seeing that ass!", a demonstration of how female sexuality is exploited for male consumption. Fragmentation of the female body on screen tends to co-occur with male focalization, functioning as a strategy to further subject the female body to male gaze. The film also features an eroticized and sentimentalized disrobing scene of the prostitutes and even a bed scene between Miller and Yumo. This can be seen as further evidence to justify the accusation, levelled at the director by some critics, of "selling out with Hollywood-style sexing-up of a traumatic period" (Sebag-Montefiore, 2012).

Another significant change in the film is the deletion of the first-person narrator that in the Chinese novella and novel was the niece of the schoolgirl protagonist, Shujuan. The film is narrated from Shujuan's point of view so as to present a more authentic historical narrative which can bring the audience close to the historical moment more quickly and effectively. The English novella also follows this rewriting strategy and excises the narrative "I". Consequently, the matrilinear links between Shujuan's niece, Shujuan and the prostitutes, as well as the female bond between them, are severed. The Chinese novella and novel present two levels of narrative voices: a first-person narrator who organizes her Auntie Shujuan's past memories and a third-person omniscient narrator who tells the story. In the English novella, without the narrator "I", there is no mediator between the schoolgirls and the prostitutes to observe their conflicts, compromises, empathy and mutual understanding. We can speculate that such a rewriting strategy

serves the readers' expectation of a more "authentic" historical narrative. This is why *The Flowers of War* is viewed by many Western reviewers as a historical fiction, usually mentioned in tandem with other stories about the Nanjing Massacre, such as Ha Jin 哈金's *Nanjing Requiem* (2011) and Lu Chuan 陆川's film *City of Life and Death* (*Nanjing! Nanjing!* 南京! 南京!) (2009).

It should be noted that the original novel *The Flowers of War* is also a highly gender-aware narrative about womanhood, women's bodies, women's frailties and power, women's social status and their destiny, and finally women's redemption. The schoolgirls' first awakening of their sexuality, the prostitutes' subjectivities and the clash between the innocent schoolgirls and the experienced prostitutes are significant components of the female rhetoric imbricated in the story. However, a large proportion of this woman focus is lost in both the film adaptation and the English novella.

Zhang Yimou hoped that the film version of *The Flowers of War* could achieve a balance between strong, profound filmmaking and entertaining, profit-making cinema (Goodridge, 2012: 186). Nevertheless, the film was not successful both in terms of the international box office and critical reviews, and as Kurt Orzeck observed, "when it comes to attracting Stateside audiences, some Chinese movies, no matter how lavishly produced, get lost in translation" (2012). The film received considerable media attention, but only a few reviews offered favorable comments. According to *The Observer*, it was "a special film of sacrifice, redemption and hope in the shadow of a holocaust that packs an emotional wallop from which there is no escape" (Reed, 2012). The *Daily Mail* critic defended the film from several accusations and praised the director for making "an impressive epic that wears its heart unashamedly on its sleeve" (Tookey, 2012). Both reviews commended this film for capturing the profound emotional appeal in a holocaust epic. Zhang's endeavor to impress the viewer with the sublime beauty of humanity in wartime is acknowledged in these two favorable reviews.

In contrast, many other reviewers criticized Zhang for dramatizing and sexualizing this historical moment and failing to do the historical record full justice with his sumptuous visual splendor. They were disappointed at the way Zhang interpreted and presented this historical event, arguing that the film lacked historical accuracy and depth. The film was thus labelled as a “deluxe, Hollywood-inspired melodrama” (Hale, 2011). In *The Irish Times*, Tara Brady questioned: “*The Flowers of War* is convoluted, coincidence-heavy and occasionally downright daft. How did a US citizen get here? Why do the prostitutes always look so pristine? Who thought that a soft-focus sex scene would add to the film?” (2012). Todd McCarthy commented in *The Hollywood Reporter* that “it’s something you’d think only the crassest of Hollywood producers would come up with – injecting sex appeal into an event as ghastly as the Nanjing massacre – but it’s an element central to *The Flowers of War*, a contrived and unpersuasive look at an oft-dramatized historical moment” (2011). In *The Guardian*, Andrew Pulver pointed out: “it’s fair to say that something has been sacrificed in translation, the ponderous romance he offers to appeal to an international audience doesn’t really do the historical record full justice” (2012), while in *The New York Times*, Mike Hale argued that “‘*The Flowers of War*’ suffers greatly in comparison to several far superior, less hyped movies about the Nanjing massacre” (2011). The film adaptation was overall criticized for exploiting sex in framing the Nanjing massacre because it did not align with the agenda of a historical narrative.

Moreover, compared with the profuse attention paid to the historical background, the gender perspective from which the writer observes the story is by and large ignored and excluded in the film adaptation. As mentioned in a review of the film by Lawrence Pollard (2012), Yan did not want her fictional account to be seen as a historical record, and Lijia Zhang, one of Yan’s friends, lamented that the original written narrative was more interesting than the film because it focused very much on the women’s story, but the film placed too much emphasis on the Hollywood star. Such a shift of focus is indicative of how women’s themes and experiences were repressed in the film

adaptation. “The faint mist of pink color” that attracted Zhang to the novella in the first place was superficially captured through heightened female sexuality on the screen.

The Flowers of War exemplifies Zhang’s attempt to “translate” a local Chinese story for international audiences. It is outside my area of expertise and the scope of the thesis to analyze the film adaptation from a cinematic perspective. The analysis that follows does not aim to provide a critique of Zhang’s strategy in framing the story, but rather it intends to elaborate on how the confluence of commercial imperatives and patriarchal ideology shaped not only the film adaptation but also the English novella. Zhang aims for commercial success with *The Flowers of War* because, in the film industry, economic capital plays an unquestionably dominant role. However, even though he created an American protagonist for the film and a substantial portion of the script was in English, such a domestication strategy still failed to attract international audiences.

Yan’s story is a site where issues of gender, race and history are combined inextricably and requires in-depth intercultural knowledge to be reconfigured in a cinematic narrative for international audiences. By following the tenets of global consumerism, Zhang resorted to the elements of “Hollywood’s classic white savior narrative” (Yang, 2014: 247) as his major adaptation strategy. The narrative focus is shifted to John Miller who undergoes spiritual transformation from an alcohol addict to a hero and protects the female characters from the war. His masculinity even conquers the female protagonist Yumo both spiritually and physically. In their bed scene, Yumo offers her own body and pleads with him to take her home immediately, a scene which was criticized by reviewers for playing the trope of exotic victims awaiting the white hero to save them. For example, Zhen Li claimed that “Zhang’s movie adaptation works as a visual feast that reinforces the stereotypes such as sexism and orientalism by allowing white patriarchy to maintain control over all women’s bodies” (2012: 90). Such an interpretation of the film obviously runs counter to the original author’s intention to give voice to strong women characters and their experiences.

Zhang's intention to make the story more accessible to Western audiences only ended up evoking disputes within and beyond China. As Jing Yang observes, "the classic white savior tale appears too fragmentary to contain the complexity of cross-cultural interaction, especially with the emergence of strong Chinese women characters" (2014: 258). The insertion of a white hero in a national tragedy and especially his romantic conquest of a Chinese woman attracted criticisms for creating "erotic patriotism" and "a self-conscious postcolonial sample catering to the West" (Yang, 2014: 246; 253). The embedding of a Hollywood-style story in a Chinese film is scrutinized for its possible complicity in perpetuating an orientalist discourse, all the more so when the gender perspective that frames this historical drama is converted into a focus on the white, male and colonial protagonist. The woman-focused content of the story is reduced to lush visual spectacle of color and motion. According to Corinn Columpar (2002), mainstream Western cinema is profoundly implicated in both sexist and racist practices which perpetuate a white, male perspective through various stereotypes and a visual economy. From this perspective, Zhang's *The Flowers of War* can ultimately be seen to have contributed to this discourse, even if directed by a Chinese man.

Nonetheless, the film adaptation exerted an undeniable influence on the ensuing English novella, this influence evident not only in the textual alterations, for example, the excision of the first person narrator, but also the paratextual framing, especially the book cover. The commercial translation discourse manipulated the whole formative process of the translated product. The publisher saw the potential profits of publishing the translation with the release of the film adaptation and asked Yan to expand her original novella into a longer version. Yan had written two expanded versions of the original novella by then: a longer novella and a novel. According to a letter by Yan, there were aspects of the novella that the publisher, Harvill Secker of the UK, preferred over the novel version; moreover, the publisher insisted that the book should be released on the same schedule with the film even if not all of these changes were what she would have necessarily preferred (quoted in Zhang, 2016). We can thus assume that the publisher played a dominant role in the translation network. Even if the writer and the

translator participated in the translation process, the publisher and the editor ultimately took the lead in the translation network and decided the ultimate form of the translation with the collaboration of the writer and the translator. According to Edwin Gentzler, “every act of reading, of writing, of translation, involves acts of choosing certain elements, privileging certain ideas and forms of expression” (2016: 12). While adapting the story, the director, the publisher and the writer emphasized certain layers of interpretation and ultimately worked collaboratively to present *Jinling shisan chai* to international audiences.

2. Translation process of *The Flowers of War*

Building upon the framework of descriptive translation studies, in the next part of this discussion, I aim to analyze the translation process and examine factors that influence the ultimate translated product. The philosophical approach towards translation studies justifies the translation agents’ creative endeavor to produce an “afterlife” for the original. George Steiner considers the source text as “enhanced” by the act of translation. He suggests that “enhancement occurs immediately when a source text is considered worthy of translation, and the subsequent transfer to another culture broadens and enlarges the original” (quoted in Munday, 2013: 247). According to Steiner, resistant difference originating from the gap between different languages and cultures obstructs the translator from penetrating the original text, but such impermeability can be transcended by elective affinity, which is a kind of congeniality and resonance between the translator and the text. Though the film adaptation is not faithful to the original, it gives the original a continued life and could also be called a translation in an allegorical sense. What draws Zhang Yimou to the story is the triumph of human nature in the darkest moments and the faint mist of pink color amidst the wartime cruelty and brutality. The major resistant difference for him consists in how to mediate different horizons of expectation between Chinese and Western viewers. Such elective affinity and resistant difference continue to influence the rewriting of the English novella.

Rewriting is a significant theoretical tool in translation studies, initially proposed by André Lefevere in 1992 and most recently by Edwin Gentzler in 2016. Lefevere advocates the view that “rewriters adapt, manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time” (2010: 8). He emphasizes the role of patronage or what I call agents in furthering or hindering the reading, writing and rewriting of literature through their manipulation of ideology and poetics. Lefevere investigates literary rewriting through the heuristic construct of “system” and approaches rewriting principally from literary inquiries, with a particular emphasis on the systematic factors that govern the reception, acceptance or rejection of literary texts in the target literary system. Gentzler (2016) has widened the definition of translation, blurring the boundaries between the original, translation and rewriting while expanding the objects of translation studies from interlingual translation to intersemiotic translation. According to him, it is likely that viewers often see a production before they read the book, an adaptation which “aims at making the text more accessible to everyday readers, taking the text out of the hands of the literary elite and broadening its interpretation and reception” (Gentzler, 2016: 224). The intersemiotic translation of a text, for example the film adaptation, should also be studied in the intertextual framework in alignment with other interlingual translations.

The theoretical insights evinced from their discussion are instrumental to my analysis. The film adaptation broadened the reception of Yan’s story, albeit in a less faithful manner. The interpretative framework of the film adaptation again consolidated the manipulative commercial mechanism underlying the English novella. Motivated by the film adaptation, the patronage, or the publisher in this case, initiated a commercial translation discourse that governed the translational agency of the writer, the translator and the editor, a discourse that hindered the interpretation and reception of the text as a woman’s story told from a female perspective. Lefevere and Gentzler analyzed rewriting in translation with regards to literary and cultural implications within a

specific historical context. My discussion follows the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of rewriting theories in translation studies, but with a sustained focus on the tripartite interaction between patronage, commercial imperative and the woman-centered experience and perspective of Yan's narrative.

The original Chinese novella *Jinling shisan chai* was first adapted into the film *The Flowers of War* directed in 2011 by the internationally famous director Zhang Yimou. In the meantime, Yan had extensively revised and extended it into a novel which was also published in 2011. The English version was translated by Nicky Harman and was soon published by Harvill Secker in 2012 with the film's title. Before talking with Harman,²⁰ I assumed that the published Chinese novel was the source text she had based her translation on. However, it transpired that she had never read the published novel, but rather that Yan had given her another version of a novella which had never been published in Chinese. The publisher knew *Jinling shisan chai* was going to be adapted into a film by Zhang and asked Yan to expand the story so that it could be published as a book in English. Yan agreed and expanded the story into a novella which was the one Harman went on to translate. At the same time, Yan also expanded the novella into a separate novel, thus playing a very active and dynamic role in the translation network of her own work. This complicated translation process is illustrated in Figure 11.

²⁰ On November 27, 2018, I talked with Nicky Harman in the UK about the actual translation process of *Jinling shisan chai*. All the following references about the translation process are from our personal communication.

Figure 11 Translation network for *Jinling shisan chai*

While comparing the original novella, the English novella and Yan's own novel, I observed significant differences with regards to the expression of gender-specific thoughts and experiences. Some descriptions of women-specific experiences from the original novella and the expanded novel did not appear in the English novella. As the translator confirmed to have translated exactly the text she was given, I presumed that the editor was responsible for all the changes in the translation. The translator claimed that the editor only made one change. It was the writer herself who came up with two expanded versions while the publisher ultimately decided the ultimate form of the English novella. As the expanded Chinese novella the translator had followed faithfully was never published, instead of positing a definite source text and target text, I will compare the English novella and the Chinese novel and the transformative process between them involves not only interlingual translation, but also intralingual translation. In the following discussion, all the discrepancies between the English novella and the Chinese novel, if not specified, are due to Yan's own intralingual translation.

I would like to put forward that the English novella *The Flowers of War* is not premised on the traditional faithful translation principle, but on the rewriting impulse driven by commercial imperatives. Judging from the adaptation strategy of the film and the reviews it generated, the story was interpreted principally from a historical perspective which diluted the focus on women into a reductionist exhibition of exotic female sexuality. Something comparable takes place with the paratextual framing and the textual alteration of the English novella under the commercially motivated translation network headed by the publisher. Ultimately, a gynocritical analysis will show how the woman-centric contents of Yan's story are diluted in the intercultural communication provided by the English novella.

Among the scant studies on the translation of *The Flowers of War*, there are two contradictory views: Zhu Zhenwu and Liu Wenjie (2017) analyzed Nicky Harman's translation strategies such as addition, deletion, domestication and free translation. They concluded that Harman translated the original novel creatively yet faithfully. Sheng-mei Ma (2017) remarked that Harman's translation could be called a "makeover" and Yan would be hard pressed to recognize her own novel if it were translated back into Chinese. This discrepancy reflects a significant methodological flaw in translation studies: an exclusive focus on the textual level without considerations for the actual translation process, a tendency which is likely to result in subjective speculations. My research shows that other translation agents, not the translator, are responsible for the differences between the English novella and the Chinese novel. This is why I seek to apply an agency-oriented method which takes into account the whole formative process of the translation rather than concentrating on a linear logic directly from the source text to the translator and to the target text.

As previously mentioned, the expanded novella the translator based her work on was never published. As the translator claims she remained faithful to the original, the discrepancies between the Chinese novel and the English novella must have been determined by other agents in the translation network. Therefore, it is beside the point

either to compliment the translator's creativity or to accuse her of being unfaithful to the original. The translation of *Jinling shisan chai* is shaped not solely by the translator, but by the agency of the commercially motivated translation network. It is therefore the agency of the commercial translation network that should be scrutinized. As the publisher and the editor aim to compete for economic capital, even if the translator takes a different position from them, she is still unable to react against the dominant commercial translation discourse. Unlike the field of translating contemporary Chinese women writers in the 1980s, economic capital features more prominently in the more recent translation field under the influences of global consumerism. Besides, the feminist era that facilitated feminist translation practices in the 1980s has now passed its peak. If the novella had been translated and published by a feminist translator and publisher, it would have probably assumed a very different form.

From a sociological perspective, Daniel Simeoni (1998: 7) claims that "translators have always occupied subservient positions among the dominant professions of the cultural sphere", which reminds us of the translator's invisibility as discussed by Lawrence Venuti (1995). Venuti critiques the lack of attention to the translator's role and advocates the strategy of foreignization to resist a hegemonic English culture that emphasizes fluency and transparency in translation. I propose that a translator's position, including issues of subservience and invisibility, depends not only on their economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital but also on the translation discourse within which they operate. Harman mentioned in our personal communication that unlike Howard Goldblatt, a renowned Chinese-English translator with substantial symbolic and social capital, all too often, she has to follow the publisher's decision and she hopes to gain greater autonomy by translating more books. Also, even if translators have sufficient capital to make their own decisions, they still have to subscribe to economic dictates when they are translating a book for commercial purposes.

Harman is a well-known London-based Chinese-English literary translator. She taught for the MSc in Translation at Imperial College until 2011 and now translates full-time

from Chinese. She started translating Chinese fiction around the year 2000 and before translating *The Flowers of War*, she also translated works by other women writers such as Anni Baobei 安妮宝贝, Hong Ying 虹影, Dorothy Tse 谢晓虹, Xinran 欣然 and Zhang Ling 张翎. Her agency in promoting the translation of Chinese fiction is manifested in a number of activities: she is a founder of Paper Republic, a website aimed at bringing Chinese authors and Chinese-English translators to Western publishers; she is also the Chinese-to-English Workshop Leader of the International Literary Translation Summer School administered by the British Centre for Literary Translation; she organizes bimonthly book club meetings in London to read contemporary Chinese fiction and discuss translation techniques and theories. Unlike other translators who exert their agency in rewriting the original text, Harman upholds the principle of fidelity and she mentioned in an interview with Li Hao:

Personally I've never done what is called "rewriting" [...] I very much sympathize with the theory and practice of the feminist translators. I've never actually been in a position to carry it out myself. I think it would be fascinating to do but I haven't done it [...] I can only speak for myself. I translate what's in front of me. I'm not in the business of creating a different slant on a work. That comes back to the author's intention. I'm the servant of the author (Hao, 2012: 21-25).

Her statement further confirms the manipulation of other agents in the English translation of Yan's book. The textual alteration discussed by some scholars does not come from the translator, but from other translation agents.

Notably, in recent years, Harman has been promoting women writers in translation with an increasingly deeper and wider engagement. The translator's trajectory in the translation field is partly determined by the network of social relations between them and other translation agents. Harman maintains a good relationship with women writers such as Xu Xiaobin and Yan Ge and also with literary agents such as Joanne Wang and publishers like the Balesier Press. Two of her translations of women writers were

published by the Balestier Press: *Crystal Wedding* 水晶婚 by Xu Xiaobin (2016), a book not even published in China and *The Chilli Bean Paste Clan* 我们家 by Yan Ge (2018). Both of them were awarded the English PEN Translates Award. These translation networks have reinforced Harman's symbolic and social capital, which enables her to contract her works to publishers as academic sinologists did in the 1980s. Besides her actual translation practice, she has written an article entitled "10 Chinese Women Whose Writing Should Be Translated" (2016) to argue against the undeserved near-invisibility of Chinese women writers. In a recent interview, she further pointed out:

One area that we all need to work on, however, is a greater focus on Chinese women writers. I tallied up the gender balance in my translations, and it's about even. But in our annual rollcall of translations from Chinese on Paper Republic, there is a preponderance of male authors, reflecting, one has to assume, men's greater visibility in the literary world both east and west. Out of the 110 winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature, only 13 have been women. Only a fifth of winners of China's prestigious Mao Dun Prize have been women, which is a bit dismal because there are so many good female writers in China (Harman and Alberoni, 2018).

As Harman continues to accumulate capital in the translation field while advocating for translating women writers, we may expect to see a more active agency on her part to promote Chinese women writers in translation.

Lefevere proposed two categories of patronage that control the literary system: professionals within the literary system, who partly determine the dominant poetics, and patronage outside the literary system, which partly determines the ideology. In his discussion, ideology is not limited to the political sphere, but also refers to the "grillwork of form, convention and belief which orders our actions" (Lefevere, 2010: 16). The final shape of *The Flowers of War* is decided by translation agents outside the literary system, namely, the publisher and the media. It is packaged more as a

commercial than a literary product. The media hype about the film adaptation and the publisher's incentive to take advantage of the film's commercial appeal dominates the working of the translation network. For example, analogous to many film reviews which emphasize a historical narrative, the plots in the translation are reorganized to emphasize the historical perspective over the women's voices and experiences in the text, as evidenced also by an analysis of the paratextual framing of the translation.

3. Paratextual framing of the translation

Paratexts play a crucial role in framing readers' interpretation of the translation and provide effective insights into the involvement of multiple agents in the translation process. "Framing", in Mona Baker's definition, is "an active strategy that implied agency and by means of which we consciously participate in the construction of reality" (2006b: 106). It involves "setting up structures of anticipation that guide others' interpretation of events" (Baker, 2007: 156). This process can be enacted through translation paratexts and as Batchelor explains, "paratexts are thus conceptualized in Baker's model as locations in which framing – an action – can happen" (2018: 145). I will now examine book covers, blurbs, introductions and book reviews as important components to frame the interpretation of the translation of *The Flowers of War*, the whole gamut of which can reveal significant aspects of the translation agents' purposes and readers' expectations.

Book covers are an ensemble of images, words and colors, which can disclose the ideological agenda behind the translation and publication initiative. They are designed to draw the attention of potential readers and entice them to pick up the book. According to Marco Sonzogni, a book cover is more than a picture-text combination because "it implies the intentions of the author, the expectations of the reader, the strategies of the publisher, the creativity of the designer, the traditions of the culture and the trends of the market" (2011: 5). The commercial value of book covers is manifested in the sense that

book covers are essential tools in the marketing process because of their strategic position in terms of communication, working as an advertisement that uses primarily visual means to attract attention to the text and to convey the minimum of essential information (title and author) and possibly other information (publisher's name, advertising copy, blurbs, etc.) (ibid: 15).

Another function of these graphic features is that they “arouse or confirm certain assumptions about the content of the work” (Fludernik, 2009: 18). Therefore, a book cover can also be called an intersemiotic translation of the book. The three book covers of the English editions of *The Flowers of War* are presented below. They are designed in congruity with the ideological and commercial agenda that motivates the publication of the translation.

Figure 12: Published by Harvill Secker, 2012, it excludes the translator's name and highlights “Zhang Yimou's epic film”.

Figure 13: Published by Other Press (movie tie-in edition), 2012, it indicates a relationship of hierarchical dependence on the film.

Figure 14: Published by Vintage, 2013, it excludes the translator's name, replaces the authority of Zhang Yimou with a quote from *The Independent*.

As Lance Hewson argues, “for the general public, translation is at best unproblematic and thus simply not an issue” (2011: 1). The three book covers provide nothing in the way of the translator’s preface and the translator’s name is either not mentioned or barely noticeable on the cover. From a translational perspective, the omission of the translator’s name on the cover testifies to Hewson’s remarks:

There is another form of more genuine ignorance that results both from the successful marketing strategies of publishers and the opinions generally held about translation. Publishers consistently reduce or nullify the translator’s role (a novel in translation is marketed as if it had been written by its (original) author alone and often the translator’s name does not even appear on the front cover) (Hewson, 2011: 1).

Other Press deploys a marketing strategy that deliberately exploits the reputation of the film and adopts the film poster as the book cover. It is also interesting to note the subtle difference between the first and the third cover: “the book behind Zhang Yimou’s epic film” disappears, replaced by the comment “testament to the bravery of women in the most horrifying of circumstances” from *The Independent*. One year after the release of the film, the third edition of the book seems to make the effort to attract readers by emphasizing women’s sacrifice in the war, moving away from the film.

The first and third covers feature a stereotypical image of Chinese women on the right, which is strikingly similar to the covers of other books about women from China. On the left it features a war scene with several small figures of crawling soldiers, overshadowed by the large portrait of the woman. The red color reminds readers of the bloodshed in the war while the Chinese-style pavilion indicates that this is a story set in an ancient Chinese city. Gunther Kress claims that “writing, image and color lend themselves to doing different kinds of semiotic work and each has its distinct potentials for meaning” (2010: 1). The combination of all the elements reduces the cover to a visual translation of the title “The Flowers of War”, namely, woman and war. However, the cover designer does not distinguish the women in the story from other

cultural stereotypes about Chinese women, endowing no specific and significant identity to the female protagonists. As Brian Mossop observes, “while a cover may certainly convey aspects of the text, or at least not contradict it, the meaning of the text may also be sidelined, suppressed or even negated by another, much more important function of covers: they are first and foremost marketing devices” (2018: 2). The woman on the cover of *The Flowers of War* thus only serves as a commercial icon rather than an intersemiotic translation of the book’s content. It consolidates the cultural stereotype of Chinese women as exemplified in the two book covers below:

Figure 15: These covers are from books by Lisa See, an American writer who is famous for her novels on Chinese women, such as *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* (2005) and *Shanghai Girls* (2009).

As Munday notes, “paratexts are material additions to a text which comment on, evaluate, or otherwise frame it” (2009: 214). In the case of *The Flowers of War*, the stereotypical framing of women characters plays out more expressly at the paratextual level. The book covers frame the story from the angle of the film adaptation. Alternative frames to the story through the book cover are exemplified by the book covers of the Spanish translation and the Italian translation:

Figure 16: The Spanish (left) and the Italian (right) edition of *The Flowers of War*, both published in 2012.

In the two book covers, the prostitutes' curvy bodies and Shujuan's contemplative presence in the rubbles are also taken from the film, reaffirming its powerful influence on the trajectory of the translation and publication of the story into different languages. The Spanish version also exploits female sexuality as a marketing strategy while the Italian version concentrates more on the humanistic aspects as shown in the color combination and Shujuan's meaningful gaze into the distance. From a literary perspective, the Italian version is more emotionally powerful compared with the stereotypical image of a Shanghai woman in the English version.

Such a commercial predilection is understandable if we take into account the fact that, as Sonzogni points out, the success of a book cover is measured in sales and its main role is to increase the circulation and success of the book for publishers (2011: 15). Hailing Yu and Zhongwei Song (2017) argue that the semantic relations of pictures and words should be explored beyond a single page because even if not put together, they are still meant to complement each other in a broader context. The book cover, aside from its commercial function, also complements the verbal text and contributes to the overall meaning of the translated work. In the case of *The Flowers of War*, the book

covers discourage a more sensitive and nuanced gender-focused reading of the story, but encourage an interpretation within the framework of the film adaptation.

The blurbs on the back cover of the text also play their part in the marketing game and offer a foretaste of the reading experience to come. Monika Fludernik explains the role of back covers thus: “with a brief summary of the theme of a novel and often details of setting and characters, they inform and help potential readers decide whether to buy the book or not” (2009: 17). The blurb on the back cover of the Harvill Secker edition selects a paragraph from the novella, placing the prostitutes’ private life under a voyeuristic gaze and depicting a group of rollicking prostitutes through bright colors. It reads as follows:

The cellar was not a cellar any more. It had been transformed into an underground brothel...Those who had brought bedrolls had spread them over the cots; silk quilts in impossible pinks and greens, ready for a normal business day on the Qin Huai River...The women’s furs lay strewn around, and the hooks on which sausages and hams had once hung were festooned with a garish assortment of scarves, wraps and brassieres.

This paragraph focuses on the sensual aspects of the women’s environment, hinting at a debauched atmosphere of a brothel, which is in itself an intertextual reference to Zhang’s sumptuous visuals. Also, in the synopsis of the book, the prostitutes are described simply as “irreverent”. Such paratexts indicate that the complexity and tragedy of the female experience portrayed in the book are sidelined.

With a similar book cover to Harvill Secker’s, the Vintage’s edition adopts the Other Press’s blurb, which still does not mention how the thirteen prostitutes sacrifice themselves for the schoolgirls. It describes how the Japanese army has occupied Nanjing and committed untold atrocities on civilians, leaving the reader wondering about the ending with the suspenseful phrase “these girls and women are in great danger”. Yan shows deep sympathy to women’s sacrifices in the war and has created

multi-layered women characters for the story, however, the centrality and complexity of these women characters and their tragic, selfless experiences are not conveyed properly in the paratextual apparatus.

The version published by Other Press is not presented as a literary translation of its own but a book tied-in to the film adaptation. It is released with the same poster of the film, adopting a common marketing strategy in the publishing industry. Such cross-promotion and brand identification creates a synergetic effect that can bring more cultural and economic profits. Unlike the book cover that features a stereotypical image of Chinese women, this cover displays different characters from the movie, with the thirteen-year-old schoolgirl Shujuan standing in the center. Their different facial expressions reveal greater depth about the story than the stereotypical image of a Shanghai woman. Though the translator's name is not excluded on the cover, it is in a much smaller font size and a far less conspicuous position compared with the words "now a major motion picture". I propose that it is because the publisher assumed that the general public would be more interested in the book due to its film adaptation rather than it being a literary translation.

Book covers and blurbs illustrate the publisher's interpretative choice in translating the content into visual forms and the extent to which this literary translation is commercialized. My analysis has shown that the paratexts have reduced the prostitutes' multi-layered characterization into stereotypical or even negative generalizations. Kathryn Batchelor (2018: 195) reminds us that to examine paratexts is to examine the activities of people because paratexts are created by people. In our case, paratexts can be important sites to investigate the agency of translation agents. Following the film adaptation, the publisher's agency functioned to the detriment of a sympathetic understanding of a woman-focused agenda inscribed in Yan's story.

Besides these book covers and blurbs, readers' reviews, the audience-created paratexts, are also critical in evaluating the effect of a translation. They provide compelling

evidence of how the translation is actually interpreted in the target culture and what elements of the story attract the readers' attention. Reception theory seeks to redirect the attention from the author to the reader, emphasizing the reader's interpretative practices and subjective horizon (Holub, 2003) while reader-response theory draws attention to what happens when human beings engage in the process of reading (Harkin, 2005). Such theories foreground the need to take into consideration the readers' reading practice when formulating an interpretation-based translation criticism. I will analyze reviews from both professional and non-professional readers to examine their comments on the translation, their interpretation of the story and the influences of the film adaptation on their reading of the written narrative, especially with regards to the woman-focused contents.

Generally, the translations of works by contemporary Chinese writers are reviewed by literary magazines such as *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal* and *Booklist*, but none of them reviewed *The Flowers of War*. Prominent attention was given to the film adaptation, leaving the English translation sparsely reviewed. I have collected and analyzed five book reviews from *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, *Complete Review* and *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*. Most of the reviews have commended the translation, considering the novel "beautifully" and "ably" translated, the prose of the translation "clear" and "straightforward" and praising this "excellent" translation work for its "skillful" rewriting. The evaluative words are highlighted to illustrate that the translation is linguistically and stylistically satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that a translation, usually a complex and non-neutral social and cultural product, should not be evaluated in terms of the language alone. This is why this research argues strongly for feminist translation criticism to uncover the loss of women's voices and experiences when the text is transplanted into another cultural context.

These five book reviews that I have analyzed are not concerned with paying specific attention to gender issues raised in the Chinese novel and among them, only the

reviewer Clarissa Sebag-Montefiore in *The Independent* mentions the female characters' qualities. She points out that both the schoolgirl Shujuan and the prostitute Yumo are "testament to the bravery of women in the most horrifying of circumstances" (2012). Altaher Bassmah Bassam in *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* interprets the story from a post-colonial perspective and states that "by closely looking at the characters, the first thing that strikes one as odd is the presence of a white man in the midst of Asia during WWII" (2017: 134). The reviewer argues that as women represent the Chinese subaltern contaminated by the war and colonization, the prostitutes' sacrifice to save the schoolgirls symbolizes the resistance to protect the land of its virginity and fertility. In *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, Glen Jennings engages in a historical reading, observing that "although Geling Yan's work is fiction, there is more truth in *The Flowers of War* than in the words of many contemporary politicians" and "it is a significant historical novel, one that characterizes a period of great cruelty and enormous compassion" (2012). Isabel Hilton, writing for *The Guardian*, offers a more literarily slanted comment, saying that "the novel is rewarding for its spare prose and subtle treatment of the conflicts, quarrels, racial ambiguities and acts of transcendent heroism woven into the story" (2012). In *Complete Review*, M.A. Orthofer holds instead the view that the novel is deficient as a novel because "Yan offers movie-scenes, and little depth; there are many characters and stories here, but she barely does more than skim the surface of any of these" (2012), which resonates with the literary scholar Graham J. Matthews's remark that

the schoolgirls, prostitutes, and Father Engelmann are presented as a set of national allegories rather than as fully developed characters. The schoolgirls represent national ideals of purity and innocence while the prostitutes represent the obscene and sinful underside of Chinese society before their differences are reconciled in the face of an implacable alien other (2016: 664).

Such comments associate the female characters with the nation and subsume their gender-specific concerns to the general political discourse. While discussing the story

from different angles, none of the reviewers engage in a woman-focused reading or gendered interpretation that is essential to understanding the story. By foregrounding a gendered reading, my intention is not to dismiss other perspectives, but to underwrite the fact that female experiences, even if they are fundamental to the messages of the work, can still be diminished and sidelined in translation.

While talking about the non-professional reviews, Monika Fludernik observes that verdicts from customers on websites such as <http://www.amazon.co.uk> can also influence our first impression of a particular narrative text (2009: 17). The English translation of Yan's novel is categorized under the subject matter of historical fiction in Goodreads and Amazon, websites that collect public online reviews. I surveyed the 108 community reviews in Goodreads, the 62 customer reviews in Amazon and found that most of the reviewers mentioned the novel in tandem with the film, which confirmed once more the influence of the film on the reception of the translation. The reviewers focused principally on the historical background and the war story, stating that they were impressed by the redemption, courage, strength and endurance of the characters in the war. Few reviews went beyond the historical storyline, providing stimulating insights into the flaws of its characterization. Here are some exemplary comments that highlighted these problems:

However, ironically, none of the cast moves past typical stereotyping; for instance, the American priest shoulders the "white man's burden", the usual prostitutes as seen in Ms. Yan's *The Lost Daughter of Happiness*, and the insane rivalry between students.

—— Harriet Klausner, Jan 21, 2012, Amazon

Given the dramatic setting, much of the novel is surprisingly weak. The characters are well constructed but familiar; the prostitutes are similar to the other prostitutes who make regular appearances in Asian novels (including Geling Yan's infinitely superior *The Lost*

Daughter of Happiness), while Father Engelmann channels the standard American priest serving in a distant land.

—— TChris, Jan 31, 2012, Amazon

Many of the characters fell a bit flat —— the schoolgirl protagonist in the first chapter is hardly mentioned and developed as the novel continues, except in the epilogue at the end. She comes across as a rather shallow, sheltered girl overly obsessed with teenage bickering.

—— Raisa, Jan 06, 2013, Goodreads

Unfortunately, they (the characters) never really grow or develop into interesting characters on the road to self-sacrifice either. It's an easy read, but one that leaves little imprinted on the memory in its wake beyond the feeling that the subject really did deserve better.

—— Trevor Willsmer, Oct 12, 2012, Amazon

It is worthy of note that two of the reviewers point out that the prostitute is reminiscent of another of Yan's novels *The Lost Daughter of Happiness*, the translation of which also suffered considerable changes from the original. As a reader of both stories in their original, I would say that the prostitutes in *The Flowers of War* and the prostitute in *The Lost Daughter of Happiness* are by no means similar. The readers' association of the different prostitutes in Yan's two works suggests that to some degree, these female characters are read as archetypes rather than fully fleshed out individuals. For this, and for the diminished nuance and complexity of the female protagonists, the responsibility partly lies with the commercial translation network headed by the publisher, as I will argue shortly.

4. Gynocritical analysis of the translation

Before looking at the translation of *The Flowers of War*, I will briefly discuss the English translations of three of Yan's other books, all of which have women protagonists. A cursory glance at the three book covers shows two things: female characters are the central focus of Yan's writing and the fictions are not packaged as literary translations because the translators' names are all excluded from the book covers. Their cover designs confirm Rosalind Coward's claim that the marketing of woman-centered novels by commercial publishers is often directed towards the popular fiction market (1985: 235).

Figure 17 The book covers of Yan's works in English translation

Similar to *The Flowers of War*, the focus on women in Yan's *The Lost Daughter of Happiness* and *White Snake and Other Stories* is also subject to varying degrees of rewriting. Jin Wen (2006) points out that in publishing *The Lost Daughter of Happiness*, the translator and the editor at Hyperion agreed to shorten many passages from the Chinese original in order to make the translation read more like an "English-language novel". One of the consequences is that Anglo-American critics, with access only to the sanitized, incomplete version of the novel in English, have largely construed the

female protagonist Fusang as the proverbial “inscrutable Oriental” (Wen, 2006: 573). Chen Lijuan (2011) found that Western translators and publishers, whether the feminist publisher Aunt Lute Books or the commercial publisher Hyperion, manipulated Yan’s fiction works to the expectations of Western feminism. The reason why I call attention to the translations of Yan’s other works is to emphasize that though Yan is recognized as a woman writer with deep awareness of gender roles and experiences, the woman-centered content of her works has a history of not being handled and conveyed with sufficient sympathy and integrity in the English translations.

Above, I explored the context in which the English novella *The Flowers of War* was produced and analyzed the paratexts that framed the translation. My findings show that the indirect agency of the film director and the direct agency of the publisher influenced the commercial translation discourse. Though the writer and the translator were also participants in the translation network, their agency was secondary to the publisher’s needs. In the next part of my discussion, I will devise a framework based on Lance Hewson’s notion of translation criticism, with the hope to recover the women’s voices and experiences central to the Chinese novel, but omitted in the English novella. Such omissions are due to the author’s intralingual translation because she was required to align the English novella with the film adaptation under the imposition of a commercial translation discourse.

Hewson claims that “a kind of pragmatic attitude or decision that allows the reader or the literary critic to take the translated text at face value without worrying about the way it inevitably differs from its source” (2011: 1). This explains why literary reviewers tend to choose impressionistic descriptive words to comment on translations. According to Hewson, translation criticism is an interpretative act that involves value judgement, which “attempts to set out the interpretative potential of a translation seen in the light of an established interpretative framework whose origin lies in the source text” (ibid: 6). My undertaking can be called a feminist translation criticism built upon Elaine Showalter’s theory of gynocriticism as the interpretative framework. My

ultimate argument is that translation criticism should not be limited to linguistic and stylistic comparisons between the source text and the target text, but can be expanded to include a range of interpretative mechanisms.

There has been so far very limited discussion on forging a feminist translation criticism, namely, reading translations critically from a feminist perspective. When discussing Canadian feminist translation practices in the 1970s, von Flotow (1997) mentioned a “gender-conscious translation criticism” with regards to the English translation of Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*. She discovered that large sections of the original French text recounting names and achievements of women throughout history were deleted through “patriarchal translation”. Also deleted were references to cultural taboos, for example, lesbian relationship and unwelcome realities like the tedium of women’s everyday lives. These omissions would definitely hinder the readers’ understanding of the original feminist text. Von Flotow (ibid) concluded that these omissions, with more than ten percent of the original material, were such serious interventions that should be marked and explained. In a similar vein, Valerie Henitiuk (1999) argued that because of ingrained phallocentric assumptions, the phallo-translator can ignore the “female meaning” that is fundamental to the message of a work, thereby altering the essential nature of the original text. This study shows that there are also phallo-agents, not necessarily the translator, who can also bury or sideline female voices and experiences central to a narrative text, whether consciously or otherwise. By opening the door on how the English novella of *Jinling shisan chai* was produced, we can find that even if the translator remained faithful to the expanded novella she was given, the agency of the director, the publisher, the writer and the editor ended up betraying the original story, especially on gender issues. I will compare the English novella with the Chinese novel, providing concrete examples of how their agency operated at the textual level.

Unlike the translation criticism which seeks to establish a set of standards for systematic stylistic comparisons between the source text and the target text, my feminist translation

criticism focuses on women's experiences in translation. I will analyze the diminished presence of a female perspective in the English novella with recourse to the framework of gynocriticism. Elaine Showalter claims that "the program of gynocritics is to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience rather than to adapt male models and theories" (1985: 131). The purpose of gynocritics in literary criticism is to construct a woman's culture that can identify the specific characteristics of a female tradition and speak for women against the male discourse that has been dominating literary history. Gynocritics postulates that women's specific experience assumes distinctive forms in art and that the feminist critic's focus should be on uncovering the experience of the "muted" feminine in literature. By the same token, the concept of gynocritics can also be employed in translation criticism to advocate for a woman-centered inquiry into the translation of women's writing. Without a gender-aware approach to translation criticism, the "muted" feminine discourse is likely to result in a misinterpretation of themes and structures of literature written by women in translation.

Gynocriticism aims to identify and defend a "female space" that can "bring into being the symbolic weight of female consciousness, to make the invisible visible, to make the silent speak" (Showalter, 1981: 201). According to Showalter (*ibid*: 186), there are four models in theories of women's writing that define and differentiate the qualities of a woman writer and a woman's text: women's writing and women's body; women's writing and women's language; women's writing and women's psyche; women's writing and women's culture. Each of these represents an area ripe for gynocentric feminist examination, but they also overlap and cannot be neatly distinguished. I do not intend to give a detailed explanation of each area of analysis, but will take the concept of gynocriticism as the point of departure for interpreting the omissions, with a view to make the original female experience that became invisible in the English novella visible again.

After a close reading of both the English novella and the Chinese novel, I have categorized the deviations with relation to woman-focused themes as follows: removing the first-person female narrator, rearranging and rewriting plots that influences the original woman-focused narrative and deleting references that express female issues. As I have mentioned earlier, the first person narrator, Shujuan's niece, is deleted in both the film adaptation and the English novella. Consequently, the matrilineage between the three female characters Yumo, Shujuan and the niece who narrates is erased. Moreover, as the niece narrator's comments and explanations are essential to eliciting readers' sympathy for the female characters, the removal of the first-person female narrator deprives readers of the opportunity to better appreciate and sympathize with the female characters. The English novella tends to streamline the text in favor of a clearer communication of the historical narrative, thus leading to a reductionist understanding or neglect of woman-focused themes.

The Chinese novel begins with the character of the niece recounting her aunt Shujuan's endeavor to find Yumo, and ends up with Shujuan's completion of her investigation into the whereabouts of the thirteen prostitutes. Such a structural arrangement indicates an emotional connection between Shujuan and Yumo, which foregrounds the female bond that is central in the original plot. In the English novella, the story begins with Shujuan's experience in the war and ends with the encounter between Shujuan and Yumo in the courtroom. In the epilogue of the English novella, Shujuan reunites with her families, witnesses Yumo's testimony at the War Crimes Tribunal in 1946 and discovers what happened to another prostitute, Cardamom. In the Chinese novel, instead, Shujuan meets Yumo at the beginning of the story and the persecution of Cardamom appears in the middle of the narrative. The testimony of the survivor at the end of the English novella is typical of a holocaust narrative. Reorganizing the plots in such a way taps into the interest of part of the target Western audiences who prefer holocaust narratives. Glen Jennings suggests that the rearrangement of the plots precludes the reader from knowing in advance the fate of certain characters because "at its heart, this is a war story that requires tension and suspense to be effective" (2012).

Harman also mentioned to me that the editor changed the order of the materials because English readers did not want to know the ending at the start of the narrative. Therefore, the editor took out the parts that disclose the fate of the women characters in the beginning and put them at the end of the story. While the historical narrative may be enhanced by reorganization of the materials, the female bond, namely, the schoolgirl's persistent search for the prostitutes, is erased from the plot. While the female narrative focus is not properly conveyed through the English novella, the priest takes on a more important role. He sacrifices himself as a saint-like white savior, whose death invokes the stereotype of a Christian martyr. In the scene when the prostitutes are sent away for Japanese soldiers, the priest is described as follows in the original Chinese story:

I seemed to see Father Engelmann standing there stupefied, with the only hope that this substituting scheme would go smoothly without any interruption. He could no longer afford to handle any unexpected obstacles in the way [my translation] (Yan, 2011a: 216).

However, this scene plays out quite differently in the English novella:

“Please wait!”

Father Engelmann ran towards the truck.

...

“I’ll go with my students,” the priest said.

...

“I’ll go and make sure they sing properly. It has been ages since they last sang...” Father Engelmann insisted, trying to climb into the truck.

...With a hand clutching the wooden rail of the truck bed and a foot on the rear wheel, the priest was left suspended, his long, black cassock entangling his limbs.

...

Yumo reached out her hand and placed it on Father Engelmann's.

“Father, you shouldn't ...”

“Give me a hand, my child...” the priest cried out.

All of a sudden the truck picked up speed. Rifles sounded. Yumo screamed as Father Engelmann fell off the truck. Fabio saw her clutching her bleeding forearm as the priest thudded to the ground. He rushed to his side and called his name, but Father Engelmann could no longer hear (Harman, 2012: 237-238).

As the English novella was to be published with the release of the film adaptation, the translation agents including the author herself needed to adjust the story in line with the film. This may explain why the English novella, via the writer's intralingual translation, reconfigures the priest as a Christian martyr, reminiscent of the white savior narrative of Zhang's film adaptation. Such a discrepancy between the published Chinese novel and the English novella reveals the ideological mechanisms behind the translation, namely, a downplaying of the female relationship among women, an underlying emphasis on patriarchal narrative and a focus on adapting the story for a readership interested in holocaust narrative.

Moreover, the omission of the references to explicit women's issues in the English novella, adding up to a total of around 5,000 words, can also be interpreted as a disservice to a genuine and sympathetic reading of the woman-focused themes inscribed in Yan's story. All the omissions below are my translation, presented with the purpose of discussing how the English novella is framed through an interpretation that downplays the female perspective.

To begin with, the female characters, though central to the original Chinese novella and the Chinese novel, are not given equal attention in the English novella. Some paragraphs that are essential for their characterization are completely erased. Such fragmentary erasures, once pieced together, reveal the agents' interpretative choices. The translation agents display a limited understanding of the female characters in the story as exemplified by the omissions that are relevant to the characterization of Yumo, Shujuan and the prostitutes. Several descriptions of Yumo's physical features, revelation of her courage and womanly sophistication as well as some references to the

prostitute characters in the scene where they first appear in the story are deleted. More importantly, large parts that add nuance and depth to Shujuan's characterization are also omitted, as in the examples below:

omissions	my translation
<p>葬礼一开始，书娟就流下眼泪。我姨妈孟书娟是个不爱流泪的人，她那天流泪连她自己也很意外……她从头到尾见证了他们被屠杀的过程。人的残忍真是没有极限，没有止境。天下是没有公理的，否则一群人怎么跑到别人的国家如此撒野？把别人国家的人如此欺负？她哭还因为自己国家的人就这样软弱，从来都是受人欺负。书娟哭得那个痛啊，把冲天冤屈都要哭出来（Yan, 2011a: 187-189）。</p>	<p>Tears rolled down Shujuan's cheeks as the funeral started. My aunt seldom cried before, and even she herself was surprised that she should cry that day... She witnessed every detail about how they were killed and realized that there was no end to human cruelty. If there was justice, how come the Japanese could wreak havoc in another country and torture its people? She cried at the weakness of her own countrymen for being oppressed and trampled by foreign invaders for so long. She cried her heart out as if to vent all her grievances.</p>
<p>书娟的五脏都回荡着单弦弹奏的“采茶调”，毫不谐趣俏皮，丧歌一样沉闷。她走进寒气逼人的教堂大厅，坐在黑暗里。丧歌般的“采茶调”奇特地让她想起曾拥有的江南，江南有自己的家，有常常争吵但吵不散的母亲……这一刻她发现她连仓库里的女人都能容得下，而对父母，她突然感到刺心的想念和永不再见面的恐惧（ibid: 140-141）。</p>	<p>The tune “Picking Tea” reverberated through Shujuan's whole body, as somber as a dirge. She walked into the cold hall of the church and sat in the darkness. The dirge-like tune reminded her of Jiangnan where she enjoyed family bliss...in that moment she realized that she was actually able to accept the women in the cellar.</p>

	However, at the thought of her parents, she felt a deep piercing longing and a terrible fear that she would never see them again.
我姨妈向我形容这个戴姓的少校是“天生的军人”，“是个有理想的军人”，“为了理想而不为混饭而做军人的。”戴少校很英俊，这是我想象的。因为理想能给人气质，气质比端正的五官更能塑造出男性的美。这种男性也更讨女人喜欢，讨我姨妈那样渴望男性保护的小姑娘喜欢 (ibid: 46)。	My aunt thought Dai was born to be a soldier, “a soldier with ambition” and “a soldier fighting for his own aspirations, instead of just making a living”. I thought Dai must be very handsome because high aspirations could shape his temperament and enhance his masculine beauty. Such a man must be very popular among women, especially for a girl like my aunt who was hankering for man’s protection.
她有些失望，戴少校对玉墨这种女人也会眉目传情，令十三岁的书娟十分苦闷 (ibid: 104)。	The thirteen-year-old Shujuan was so disappointed to find out that even a decent man like Dai could also flirt with a woman like Yumo.

Far from being a bickering girl as described in some reviews, Shujuan displays complex feelings. However, references to her terrible fear of war as a young girl, her patriotic sentiments, her homesickness, her young-age melancholy and her awakening female consciousness about male-female relationships are largely omitted in the English novella.

Moreover, the cultural background of Nanjing prostitutes is also deleted. Such omission is understandable in the sense that like the cultural allusion of the title, the cultural

background of the narrative is not likely to resonate with the target readership. For example:

omission	my translation
<p>再说，南京这座自古就诱陷了无数江南美女并把她们变成青楼绝代的古城，很少生产丑陋的窑姐，丑女子首先通不过入门考核，其次是日后会降低妓院的名望，甚至得罪客人。所以在电影尚未萌芽时期的江南，盛产的穷苦美女只有两个去处，一是戏园，一是妓馆 (ibid: 214)。</p>	<p>The ancient city of Nanjing seduced many Jiangnan beauties into its embrace. They were later trained into famous prostitutes of unrivalled charm. Nanjing has seldom produced ugly prostitutes, because first of all, the ugly could never pass the test. They would also tarnish the brothel's reputation and displease guests. Therefore, before the film industry came into being, the poor beauties in Jiangnan only had two choices, either to go into the theatre or the brothel.</p>

Also deleted are the names of the melodies these prostitutes play, such as “Plum-blossom in Three Movements”, “A Night of Flowers and Moonlight by the Spring River” and the story-telling and ballad singing in Suzhou dialect, all of which symbolize a kind of cultured beauty. The erased cultural information is an important component of the background characterization of the Nanjing prostitutes. Rather than acting as a bridge to facilitate cross-cultural understanding, the translation purges a significant amount of the original text's cultural specificities. Probably the translation agents deemed it unnecessary to retain the cultural information as the title has already been changed. However, the omissions de-emphasize once again the role of the female characters.

Besides, the conflicts between Shujuan and Yumo or the innocent and the experienced female protagonists and the ultimate understanding reached between the girls and the prostitutes are all diminished in the translation. The schoolgirls' changing attitude

towards the prostitutes, from resentment to empathy, further indicates a growing bond between the two main groups of female characters. Such a female bond is key to understanding the woman-centered focus of the story. The erasure of this emotional connection ultimately undermines this thematic focus and distorts the author's intention to write about and for women, as in the examples below:

omissions	my translation
<p>我姨妈书娟此刻悟到，她的母亲和父亲或许也是为了摆脱某个“贱货”离开了南京，丢下她，去了美国。母亲和父亲吵了几个月，发现只能用远离来切断父亲和贱货的情丝。她用自已的私房钱作为资金，逼着父亲申请到那个毫无必要也毫无意义的考察机会。书娟此刻还意识到，她和母亲们生活里是没有赵玉墨这类女人的。要不是一场战争，她们喝书娟永远不会照面。男人们在贱货们面前展露的，是不能在妻子儿女面前展露的德行，是弱点。这些寄生在男人弱点上的美丽女人此刻引起了书娟火一样的仇恨。教堂墙外烧杀掳掠的日本兵是敌人，但对于十三岁的女孩来说，到目前为止他们仍是抽象的敌人，而地下仓库里的这些花花绿绿的窑姐，对于书娟，是具体的、活生生的反派。她们连英雄少校也不放过，也去开发他们的弱点 (ibid: 114-115)。</p>	<p>At that moment, my aunt realized that perhaps her parents had left Nanjing because of some “slut” ... she also came to know that but for this war, a woman like Zhao Yumo would never have appeared in her and her mother's life. Men would expose their weaknesses in front of a slut and hide them before their wives and daughters. Shujuan was hostile to those beautiful women because they were feeding off men's weaknesses. The Japanese soldiers pillaging the city outside the church were enemies indeed, but for a thirteen-year-old girl like Shujuan, they were not real. Instead, the colorful tidal wave of the prostitutes in the cellar were their immediate enemies. Just think how they couldn't even resist exploiting the weaknesses of a man as heroic as Dai.</p>

<p>书娟必须不断调整角度，才能看见赵玉墨的舞蹈，最初她只看到一段又长又细又柔软的黄鼠狼腰肢，跟屁股和肩膀闹不和地扭动，渐渐她看见了玉墨的胸和下巴，那是她最好看的一段，一点贱相都没有。肩上垂着好大的一堆头发，在扭动中，头发比人要疯得多。……²¹</p> <p>书娟觉得这是个下流动作。其实她知道，这种叫伦巴的舞在父母的交际圈里十分普遍，但她认为给玉墨一跳就不堪入目。</p> <p>……</p> <p>书娟对戴少校越来越失望。一个正派男人知道这女人的来路，知道她这样扭扭不出什么好事来，还笑什么笑？不仅不该微笑，而且应该抽身就走。就像书娟母亲要求书娟父亲所做的那样，任何贱货露出勾引企图时，正派如书娟父亲那样的男人必须毫不留情地抽身。书娟在夜里听到父母吵架，多半是因为某个“贱货”，她始终没搞清楚那“贱货”是父亲的女秘书，还是她的女学生，或者是个女戏子。</p> <p>……</p> <p>我十三岁的姨妈却只有满腔嫉恨：看看这个贱货，身子作痒哩，这样扭！</p> <p>……</p> <p>连我十三岁的姨妈都看迷了 (ibid: 105-110)。</p>	<p>To watch Zhao Yumo dance, Shujuan had to keep adjusting her position. At first, she only saw a long, slim and tender waist wiggling out of step with the bottom and shoulders. Gradually she saw Yumo's breasts and jaw, the most fascinating parts of her body, which would never make one think of a prostitute. Thick hair cascaded upon her shoulders, which was moving even more out of control than her body.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Shujuan watched this obscene dance with contempt. She knew the dance was called rumba, actually a popular one in her parents' social circle. However, if Yumo was the dancer, then it was obscene.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Shujuan became increasingly disappointed in Dai. How should a decent man like him smile at Yumo since he already knew what Yumo was and what her undulating body was all about? He should immediately turn away, just as Shujuan's mother required of her father. A decent man like him should emotionlessly reject any</p>
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²¹ Some parts are deleted because this example is very long and the omitted descriptions are not closely related to my analysis.

	<p>seductive attempt from a slut. Shujuan used to hear her parents quarreling at night over some “slut”. Until now she still had no idea about whether the “slut” was her father’s secretary, or a student or an actress.</p> <p>...</p> <p>My thirteen-year-old aunt was so angry at Yumo: look at that slut! It looks like she is going to wiggle her whole body into pieces!</p> <p>...</p> <p>Even my thirteen-year-old aunt was enchanted by her dance.</p> <p>...</p>
她们是南京城最漂亮的一群“女学生”。这是我想象的，因为女学生对她们是个梦，她们是按梦想来着装扮女学生的，因此就加上了梦的美化 (ibid: 214)。	<p>I imagined them (the prostitutes) as the most beautiful “schoolgirls” in Nanjing. Because schoolgirls were what they dreamed of being, they dressed like their dreams and thus became dreamlike.</p>
还需要一些时间，需要一大截成长，她们才能彻底看清这天晚上，这群被她们看成下九流的女人 (ibid: 217)。	<p>There will be many more years of life experience before they can finally understand what those women did on that night, those detested by them as depraved and unworthy.</p>
她认为她自己的一生都被一九三七年十二月的七天改变了。她告诉我，离开教堂后，她和同学们常常冒出窑姐们的口头禅，或冒出她们唱的小调，那些肮兮兮的充满活力的小调	<p>She (Shujuan) believed that her whole life had been changed those seven days in December, 1937. She told me that after they (the schoolgirls) had left the</p>

居然被学生们学过来了，全是下意识的。偶然正常起来，她们也不再是曾经的女孩，变得粗野，个个不饶人，你嘴脏我比你脏，一旦破了忌讳，她们觉得原来也没什么了不起，男人女人不就那一桩事？谁还不拉不撒？到了想解恨的时候，没有哪种语言比窑姐们的语言更解恨了。那之后的几个月，法比·阿多那多费了天大的劲，也没能彻底把她们还原成原先的唱诗班女孩 (ibid: 219-220)。	church, they would blurt out the prostitutes' pet phrases or hum their crude yet lively tunes. When quarrelling, they were no longer those innocent girls, but became rude and aggressive, pouring out strings of dirty words. Once they broke the taboo, they could no longer rein it in. That thing between men and women is no big deal, just as common as other normal needs, isn't it? The language used by the prostitutes was the best outlet for resentment and revenge. Several months later, no matter how hard Fabio tried, these choir girls just couldn't revert to how they used to be.
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As “a girl's core gender identity is positive and built upon sameness, continuity, and identification with the mother” (Showalter, 1981: 196), the prostitutes, in some sense, serve as the schoolgirls' allegorical mothers and lead them towards womanhood in the wartime. Yan herself indicates the prostitutes' motherly role in the economy of her story, “the girls were startled into silence, Yumo's words sounded so ordinary, like a young mother whose children were getting on her nerves” (Harman, 2012: 227). However, another sentence that suggests the absence of Shujuan's mother when Shujuan has her first period is erased: “Shujuan felt an unbearable pain in her stomach and no one had ever told her it could be so painful. Her mother should have told her about this, but she was not there [my translation]” (Yan, 2011a: 23). The female bond between the schoolgirls and the prostitutes proves that “the relationships of women

characters to each other are determined by the psychodynamics of female bonding” (Showalter, 1981: 196).

The erasure of how Shujuan’s thinking changes in the course of the narrative again downplays and alienates the bond between the schoolgirls and the prostitutes. The Nanjing prostitutes are different from other stereotypical prostitutes, as exemplified by the omission of references to their cultural background. They are sold to the brothel because of poverty and they have no other choice but to accept their ill fate. These Nanjing prostitutes represent a special group of women who also need empathy and understanding, instead of being exploited only as sexual objects under a voyeuristic male gaze. At the start of the story, the schoolgirls are full of contempt and hatred towards the prostitutes, associating them with inferiority and filth. As the story develops through, it is the prostitutes who have taught the schoolgirls how to control their own bodies, how to control their fears and how to grow into real women. In the end, the schoolgirls dispense with the male discourse internalized by their hatred for their female bodies and female sexuality, thereby establishing their female identity and becoming the owners of their own destiny. However, such a connection between the schoolgirls and the prostitutes is almost fully neglected in the English novella.

Most importantly, references to female bodies in the war, a key trope to understand the untold torment and pain the Nanjing Massacre inflicted upon women are also deleted. Thousands of women were raped including young girls and grandmothers, sometimes even in the streets and in broad daylight. This is why Yan Geling emphasizes that this story is dedicated to all the women sacrificed in The Rape of Nanjing (Yan, 2011d). As Jincai Yang points out that “the novella charts female experiences of sexuality, physical abuse and survival through the body” (2015: 576), the female body can thus be regarded as the threshold to comprehend women’s suffering in the war. This crucial point is for the most part omitted from the English novella, as in the examples below:

omissions	my translation
<p>十五岁的豆蔻被绑在椅子上，只有一个念头：快死吧，快死吧，死了变最恶的鬼，回来掐死咬死这一个个拿她做便孟的野兽、畜生。这些个说畜话、胸口长兽毛的东西就这样跑到她的国家来恣意糟践。她只盼着马上死去，化成一缕青烟，青烟扭转变形，渐渐幻化出青面獠牙，带十根滴血的指甲，刀枪不入，行动如风。把自己想成青面獠牙刀枪不入的豆蔻又啐又骂，挨了耳光之后，她喷出的不再是唾液、浓痰，而是血。她看见对面的人形畜生被一朵朵血花击中，淹没……最大的一朵血花从她上腹部喷出，然后她的肩膀，接下去是她的下腹。人形畜生不喜欢一个又吵又闹又吐血水的泄欲玩偶，用刺刀让她乖觉了 (ibid: 155)。</p>	<p>While bound to the chair, the fifteen-year-old Cardamom had only one thought: let me die and turn into the most ferocious ghost to bite those savage beasts to death. The hideous monsters came to her country and committed such unforgivable crimes. She only wished to die quickly. She imagined herself turned into a wisp of smoke that was forming into the shape of an invulnerable and agile ghost with sharp teeth and nails. The Japanese slapped and beaten her. She kept spitting and swearing violently, with blood gushing out of her mouth. She seemed to see those monsters hit by the blood wave and drowned...the largest blood wave splashed from her upper abdomen, then her shoulders and later her lower abdomen. The monsters didn't like to have such a rebellious puppet to vent their desire and stabbed her to death.</p>
<p>我在看到这张照片时想，这是多么阴暗下流的人干的事。他们进犯和辱没另一个民族的女性，其实奸淫的是那个民族的尊严。他们把这样的照片作为战利品，是为了深深刺伤那个被羞辱的民族的心灵。我自此之后常在</p>	<p>When I looked at this picture, I couldn't imagine what kind of hideous and perverted people were capable of doing this. They raped and trampled the dignity of another nation by assaulting</p>

<p>想，这样深的心灵伤害，需要几个世纪来疗养？需要多少代人的刻骨铭心的记忆而最终达到淡忘？ (ibid: 155)</p>	<p>and insulting its women. They trumpeted such a picture as a trophy to stab the heart of the invaded nation. I couldn't help wondering how many centuries it would take to heal such a tremendous trauma and over how many generations could such etched memories fade away?</p>
<p>少佐听见了一声少女的叫喊……少佐和大部分日本男人一样，有着病态的恋童癖，对女童和年轻女子之间的女性怀有古老的、罪恶的幕恋。少佐把那声似有若无的叫喊想成她奉出初夜的叫喊，越想越迷醉。那声叫喊是整个血腥事件中的一朵玫瑰。假如这病态、罪恶的情操有万分之一是美妙的；假如没有战争，这万分之一的美妙会是男人心底那永不得抒发的黑暗诗意。但战争使它不同了，那病态的诗意在少佐和他的男同胞身心内立刻化为施虐的渴望。作为战胜者，若不去占有敌国女人，就不算安全地战胜，而占有敌国女人中最美的成分——那些少女们。所以少佐要完成他最后的占领，占有敌国少女，占有她们的初夜 (ibid: 189)。</p>	<p>The officer heard a scream from a young girl ... Like most Japanese men, he had a perverted desire for girls and young women. He was mesmerized by the scream of the schoolgirls, fantasizing how they would scream in the same way on their virgin night. Their scream was like a rose budding in the bloody event. Without the war, such dark fantasies, should there be any faintest poetry about it, would have been suppressed in the innermost corner of their heart. The war unleashed their desire, turning it into a longing for sadistic pleasure. As a conqueror, if he didn't conquer the women of the conquered country, the victory could never be complete. To conquer the women, they should conquer the best among them, the virgins. This was how the officer intended to complete the victory, to</p>

	conquer the virgins and be the master of their first night.
(就在书娟赤裸下身，站在马桶前，好奇而厌恶地感到腹内那个秘密器官如何活过来，蠕动抽搐，沁出深红色液体时)，完全不清楚威尔逊福音堂的高墙外，是怎样一个疯狂阴惨的末日清晨。成百上千打着膏药旗的坦克正在进入南京，城门洞开了，入侵者直捣城池深处。一具具尸体被履带轧入地面，血肉之躯眨眼间被印刷在离乱之路上，在沥青底板上定了影。此刻十三岁的孟书娟只知是一种极致耻辱，就是这注定的雌性经血……我的姨妈孟书娟就是在这个清晨结束了她混沌的女童时代 (ibid: 7)。	(She was torn between curiosity and disgust at the dark liquid issuing from deep within her belly), completely unaware that outside of the church, it was a crazy and gloomy morning of a doomsday, on which thousands of Japanese tanks were charging into the city and running over the dead bodies. Shujuan, by then just a thirteen-year-old girl, only knew that the female blood was a symbol of supreme humiliation. It was on this morning that the innocent girlhood of my aunt Meng Shujuan ended.

Yan's original story starts with Shujuan's menarche or first period, after which the schoolgirl acquires a sense of her body as a woman. In the English novella, “初潮 (menarche)” is translated euphemistically into “it”: “it had finally happened to her, as it does to every woman” (Harman, 2012: 1). The translator's avoidance of a term that denotes a physiological change in women at the very beginning of the novella, though for literary fluency as Harman mentioned in our conversation, shows that the English novella is not shaped by a gyno-centric perspective. The translation also deletes the part where Shujuan's menstruation is fused with Nanjing's bloodbath: when the dark liquid was issuing from deep within her belly, the tank was charging into the city and running over the dead bodies. The juxtaposition of Shujuan's awakening female body and the Nanjing Massacre explains her resentment towards being a woman because women are more vulnerable to Japanese soldiers' sexual exploitation. This resonates with what the

author wished to emphasize: the double persecution suffered by women during the war. Female bodies are often socially and politically empowered or disempowered. However, references to female bodies which encourage a gynocritical reading of this war story are also omitted in the translation. The soldiers' perverse obsession with virgins and Cardamom's desperate struggling against the rape disappear in the English novella. As a result, the vulnerability of female bodies in a patriarchal system and the monstrosity of sexual exploitation of women in the war are downplayed. As Yan writes explicitly from a gender perspective, references to the female body are fundamental to understanding the female message she wishes to convey, but the translation overlooks this aspect.

Shujuan's contempt and hatred for her own female body does not end here. She hates having the same body as Yumo, a prostitute who feeds off man's weakness. She believes that it is a woman like Yumo who has ruined her family, leaving her abandoned and trapped helplessly in the church. A great deal of Shujuan's thinking and large chunks of the conflicts between Shujuan and Yumo are erased in the English novella, making Shujuan's resentment towards the prostitutes appear rather childish. In the story, Shujuan harbors a vicious scheme against the prostitutes – "if she could get half of it [a shovelful of coal dust] down the shaft and a couple of sparks fell on the faces of those sluts who fed off men's weakness, how happy she would be! How good it would make her and her classmates feel!" (Harman, 2012: 122-123). As large chunks that describe Shujuan's inner thoughts are streamlined in the English novella, readers may think that she is just a spoilt, wayward and unreasonable girl, as confirmed in some of the book reviews.

The above analysis attempts to provide a gynocritical reading of the omissions in Nicky Harman's translation of Yan Geling's *The Flowers of War* for Harvill Secker. The removed passages were largely due to Yan's intralingual translation from the original to the expanded novella because they were deemed inconsequential or expendable under a commercial translation discourse. Though Yan wrote explicitly in the article

entitled *Heartrending but Glorious Sacrifice* (*Beican er xuanlan de xisheng* 悲惨而绚烂的牺牲) (2011d) about her imposition of a female perspective on history, she had to compromise to commercial imperatives so that her work could be made available in English. These deletions should not be perceived as merely mechanical as they brought about profound changes to the thematic focus of the story. They silenced the very female experience that the original story purported to highlight and effectively limited the reading scope of Yan's story. Based on paratextual and textual analysis, we can ultimately conclude that the English novella lessens the story's emphasis on female experiences and themes, rendering my proposition for a feminist translation criticism of the text even more necessary.

I have borrowed "gynocentric criticism" from literary studies to recover a lost "female space", such as the characterization of women characters, the significance of female bodies and the female bonding between the schoolgirls and the prostitutes. This female space is submerged in a translation discourse dominated by economic imperatives and an ideology that prioritizes the war narrative over the women's focus. I do not intend to delve deep into the theoretical and methodological complexities of gynocentric literary criticism, but I propose that such an approach can provide rich potentialities for the construction of a feminist translation criticism, a criticism that can recover the subsumed female message in translation.

5. Conclusion

The translation of *The Flowers of War* has been discussed not from a literary inquiry focused on the language and style, but from a feminist perspective that aims to recover the woman-specific contents lost in translation. This is not limited exclusively to the translator's agency and the binary comparison between the source text and the original text. More specifically, I have explored how the agency of the film director, the publisher, the writer and the editor is manifested at the paratextual and textual level of the translation. Borrowing insights from rewriting theory, translation criticism and

gynocritical theory, I have formulated a woman-centered interpretative approach to examine the translation agents' rewriting strategies and their underlying impacts on the intercultural communication of female voices.

The engagement with contextual, textual and paratextual analysis can avoid one-sided conclusions. I contextualized a commercial translation discourse to explain how Zhang Yimou's film adaptation motivated author and publisher to rewrite and translate *Jinling shisan chai* for commercial gains. The intertextual references between the film adaptation and the English novella have been discussed at both the paratextual and the textual level. Book covers, blurbs, book reviews and textual alterations all tend to exploit women characters for their sexuality and de-prioritize their concerns. In this light, I have proposed a feminist translation criticism based on the interpretative framework of gynocriticism to recover the lost woman-focused contents in Yan Geling's Chinese novel.

Ultimately, this chapter revealed how translation networks operate behind the publication process of *The Flowers of War*, debunking the premise that translation is practiced invariably from the source text to the target text through an untroubled linear process. In the case of *The Flowers of War*, the director and the publisher, though leaving no perceptible imprints of their intervention in the translation, exerted more agency than the translator in shaping the final translated product. Even the writer herself deleted large parts of woman-centric contents to align the English novella with the film adaptation. This again highlights the paradox faced by gender-aware translation agents to promote women writers from lesser translated culture: on the one hand, they wish to convey the female point of view of the original writing; on the other hand, they must follow the literary, sociological, cultural and commercial workings of the target culture so that their translation can be published and well received. The agency of the director and the writer contributes new insights to the concept of "representational inevitability" in the way that apart from the West, even the Chinese themselves are somehow manipulated by such a discourse in representing Chinese women.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the feminist translation agency of an intellectually inspired translation network, which strengthened the feminist stance of the author. In contrast, in this chapter, I have analyzed a commercially driven translation network, which instead weakened the female perspective of the war story. By comparing these two agencies, I wish to emphasize potential factors that influence the translation of women writers, namely, the translation discourse, the translation agents' gendered or non-gendered awareness and their cultural, social, economic and symbolic capital. As female voices tend to be trivialized and marginalized in translation, the objective of feminist translation criticism is to offer interpretations that allow for a more comprehensive reading of the female perspective of women's writing. I am not arguing for feminist translation strategies that intervene in the text for the sake of a feminist agenda, but for the need to pay more attention to gender-related specificities when translating women writers. To achieve this, feminist translation criticism from the standpoint of translation ethics seems very urgent since the most ethical role of translation is to facilitate understanding. The feminine, as it is the case with the foreign, is particularly vulnerable to being rewritten, if not altogether, obliterated by translation agents in a political or commercial translation discourse. Feminist translation criticism, as advocated by gynocriticism, ought to make the invisible visible and the muted feminine speak.

Conclusions

Julia Lovell (2013) proposes that from the 1920s, women writers in China were “criticized and belittled for concentrating too much on emotions and inner lives, at the expense of the ‘big’ political issues favored by male writers: war, revolution, nation and so on”. For example, in the 1980 and 1985 versions of Yu Luojin’s *A Chinese Winter’s Tale* (*Dongtian de tonghua* 冬天的童话), the Chinese publishers erased a significant part of the narrator’s thoughts about marriage, sex and divorce and being a specific individual woman, making the story into “a woman’s political and economic experience during the Cultural Revolution” (Wang, 2004: 144). As Lovell (2013) further points out, Anglophone publishers may have conveyed some of this bias in translating Chinese women writers. My research has sought to test this assumption by examining how Chinese women’s expression of gender-specific thoughts and experiences in literature have been translated into English. In doing so, I proceed with an ethical concern to investigate whether the already marginal and unimportant role accorded to literary themes and contents traditionally associated with women becomes even more marginal and unimportant in translation.

In my research, I adopt an agent-aware approach to investigate the translation and dissemination of Chinese women’s writing. I define agency as any action, collective as well as individual, direct as well as indirect, which makes a difference to the intercultural communication of women’s voices. While relying on Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory and Bruno Latour’s actor-network theory (ANT), the two “unexpected allies” in translation studies as argued by Hélène Buzelin (2005), I have proposed that the theoretical concept of agency is not a simple terminology to be explained in isolation, but is always structural, relational and dynamic. To be more specific, agency is structured by different translation discourses and networks, and can also influence such structures. Moreover, agency is subject to changes and should be investigated through relational and dynamic thinking. Such sociological approaches can complement cultural approaches which focus on broad notions like ideology and nation,

thus allowing for broader and more dynamic units of analysis. By taking into consideration various social, political and economic specificities in the translation process, sociological approaches can help us avoid generic speculations that may be produced by an exclusively cultural approach.

The first two chapters of this thesis have investigated agency from a field-oriented analysis, presented as a macro-level study and providing a panoramic view of what works by women writers are translated and how these works are interpreted and presented in paratext. Within this panoramic view, the construction of a translation field has helped me identify what agents work within it, what different positions they take, what capital dominates its operation and what social, economic, cultural and political factors have governed the agents' actions. Although the translation field is at an embryonic state, such a field-oriented analysis facilitates a dynamic, relational and historical understanding of the dialectical influences between structure and agency. Political agency, feminist agency, commercial agency and academic agency exercise various degrees of domination and have different ramifications during the four decades that have been discussed. In the 1980s, politics dominated over the awakening female consciousness whilst feminist translators foregrounded the female aspects of women's writing. In the 1990s, academic agents took the dominant position and introduced women writers with helpful paratextual material to elaborate on their female perspective. In the 2000s, commercial publishers commodified female sexuality by marketing the "beauty writers". In the 2010s, multiple agents entered the field and contributed to the translation of more diverse female voices. Though political and economic imperatives have exercised their power over translation throughout the years, the agency of some scholarly translators, academic publishers and non-scholarly translators has enabled the publication of marginalized and new women writers other than consecrated mainstream women writers. Changes began to take place in the translation field with the incoming of new agents, the setting up of translation funds and prizes as well as external changes in the social space such as Western readers' increasing knowledge about China.

As some action remains invisible within the general framework of a linear thinking from the source text to the target text, this research has drawn insights from ANT and traced the interaction between heterogeneous elements during the translation process. It identified the feminist attributes in translating Zhang Jie's works, the commercial attributes in translating *The Flowers of War*, and investigated the agency of these two translation networks. A feminist agency was prominent in the 1980s when there was a juxtaposition of political and feminist translation discourses. This specific context prepared the terrain for Gladys Yang to translate and promote Zhang Jie because Western publishers were interested in both Zhang's socio-political satire and her feminist works. Yang's social and symbolic capital, especially her personal connection with the British scholar Delia Davin, enabled her to mobilize a feminist translation network where the leading feminist publisher Virago played a key role. Zhang's aspiration to gain international recognition and her friendship with Yang afforded Yang more freedom to intervene in the translation. Yang highlighted Zhang's feminist sensibility in paratext, but also showed an ambivalent attitude in translating the female aspects of Zhang's works. She strengthened the feminist voice in Zhang's *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* by using high modalities, but deleted large parts of the narrator's comments on women in Zhang's *Leaden Wings*. For one reason, most of these comments ran counter to the feminist translation discourse; for another, Yang toned down Zhang's descriptive clichés and overblown prose to make the translation more readable to her target English-reading audience. This reminds us that feminist translation practices have nuanced and diverse manifestations and the feminist translation strategies of a woman-identified translator like Yang cannot be generalized into easy categories.

In the case of translating Yan Geling's *The Flowers of War*, Zhang Yimou's film adaptation enacted as the trigger for a commercial translation network in which the publisher played a dominant role. The publisher Harvill Secker saw economic profits in publishing the translation with the release of the film adaptation and asked Yan to

expand the original novella so that it could be released as a single book. Yan expanded the original novella into a longer novella and a novel. The publisher preferred the expanded novella and commissioned Nicky Harman to translate it into English. Subsequently, the expanded novella was published in English, but not in Chinese while the novel was published in Chinese, but not in English. During this process, the writer herself was also “translating” the original novella to the request of the publisher so that it could align with the film adaptation. In contrast with the writer’s own rewriting, the translator translated faithfully what she was given. As a matter of fact, the writer’s intralingual translation is responsible for most of the discrepancies between the English novella and the Chinese novel. The editor further changed the structure of the English novella to make it more like a historical narrative. Through the writer’s intralingual translation and the editor’s rewriting, the female voices inscribed in this war story have suffered significant losses in translation. By adopting feminist translation criticism, this study has not only challenged a text-based translation criticism which assumes that the translator alone makes all the choices, but it also recovered the lost female voices through a gynocritical interpretation of the discrepancies between the English novella and the Chinese novel.

As shown in both the panoramic field-oriented study and the two case studies, the conceptual tool of agency can debunk a static and linear thinking of translation and invites researchers to take into consideration more diachronic and synchronic factors which can exert an influence on translation. In particular, my agency-oriented study reveals the unstable source texts in the two case studies, offering potential to theorize the author’s intralingual translation. Zhang’s and Yan’s rewriting of the source text to suit the demands of ideological changes and commercialized requirements respectively should be regarded as an important agency to sustain the afterlife of the original. This poses a crucial question to the study of the relationship between writing and translating. Moreover, the investigation of agency in translation studies should reach beyond a sociological perspective and incorporate textual analysis. Textual analysis has, to some extent, been undervalued due to the popularity of social and cultural analysis in

translation studies. There are potential risks inherent in this centrifugal move away from analyzing the actual text to macro-contextual historical, cultural, ideological, social and political accounts. I concur with Maria Tymoczko that “the best work shows a convergence — working towards the macroscopic from the direction of the microscopic, or vice versa, so that one’s data from the macroscopic level are complemented and confirmed by data from the microscopic level” (2002: 17). The importance of textual analysis should not be downplayed, and proper angles and methodologies are needed to approach the translated text. Although the traces the translation agent leaves in a text can be discursive and fragmentary, once knitted together, they provide referential evidence to complement the macro contextual analysis. As paratexts are also places where agents can exert their agency, they should be incorporated into the discussion as well. In this research, I have drawn together contextual, paratextual and textual analysis, delving not only into the structuring effect of the context and the interaction between different agents, but also providing supporting evidence about how their agency is manifested at the paratextual and textual levels.

Finally, the findings of this study raise specific questions pertinent to translating women writers from a non-hegemonic language into a hegemonic language. Such translational activities are indeed under the sway of the discourse of “representational inevitability”, but more attention should be paid to how and why translation agents contest or conform to this discourse. Though several translation scholars in China have devoted special attention to the translation of contemporary women writers into English, they have generally failed to show concern for issues specific to translating women writers, as the bulk of their discussion focuses on generic influences of ideology. As feminist translation studies is usually universalized under the umbrella of the Canadian School, this research proposes to expand the field of women and translation by reaching beyond a political activist focus and to explore wider issues related to various aspects of women and translation in different social and cultural contexts. My two case studies disclose a dilemma specifically to translating women writers from non-hegemonic languages into

English. While highlighting the female experiences in the original work, both translator Gladys Yang and author Yan Geling have done an editorial job by bowdlerizing references to women's concerns in order to improve readability for a Western readership. In this way, some of the female voices are unavoidably lost lest they become obstacles for an effective reception of the original text in the target culture. Based on this consideration, I would emphasize that a gynocritical perspective in translation criticism is essential to facilitating the global communication of commonly degraded female voices. As translators would appear to maintain that "a feminist approach is unnecessary and that gender plays no role whatever in translation" (Eshelman, 2007: 16), feminist translation has reached an impasse. This makes feminist translation criticism all the more necessary if one is committed to uncovering and undoing the patriarchal and hegemonic dominance underlying the process of translation. It is my hope that this research will contribute to draw attention to the multiple factors conditioning the translation of women writers and in particular the gendered or non-gendered agency of translators and publishers as manifested in different historical and ideological contexts.

Appendix 1

Paratextual comparison between *Leaden Wings* and *Heavy Wings*

	<i>Leaden Wings</i>	<i>Heavy Wings</i>
book cover	<p>a lively scene of different people working in a factory</p>	<p>a lonely man walking in smog</p>
blurb	<p>This absorbing novel of daily life in modern China is one of the first since the Cultural Revolution to be translated in the West [...] We glimpse a society where women reach high levels of power, yet still suffer from prejudices rooted in the feudal past: wives are subservient, widows pitied and divorcees</p>	<p>[...] “Many people thought I had gone too far when my novel was published,” she (Zhang Jie) says. “Now they accept the existence of the problems I describe.”</p> <p>For a brief, breathtaking moment in the spring of 1989, China’s democracy movement galvanized</p>

	condemned; unmarried women are eccentric, even sinister. On its publication in China in 1980, <i>Leaden Wings</i> was both praised for its honesty and condemned for its satire. It has been described as ‘China’s first political novel’.	the world as students and workers took to the streets by the hundreds of thousands. Zhang Jie’s <i>Heavy Wings</i> offers unique insights into the frustrations and aspirations behind those extraordinary weeks of protest, as well as the intransigent forces behind the brutal crackdown that followed [...] It triumphantly shows that the longing for freedom cannot be suppressed and that the attempt to stamp out individual foibles, dreams, and striving is a doomed one.
title page	Dedicated to those working selflessly to invigorate the Chinese nation.	Dedicated to all those who work for the future of China, even at the expense of their own.
preface	[...] The story that brought her into the public eye was ‘Love Must Not Be Forgotten’. The Chinese media often imply that an individual’s highest fulfilment comes from serving the people and making a contribution to the country. In ‘Love Must Not Be Forgotten’ Zhang Jie argues that this is not enough. The quality of life depends to a great extent on personal relations, and marriage is crucially	Zhang Jie’s novel was in the vanguard of the “reform literature” that dominated the early 1980s, a corpus of influential writing that took the “Four Modernizations” as its subject matter.

	<p>important [...] Thus the inadequacy of the present marriage system is highlighted, this time mainly from the viewpoint of men [...] In accounts like these Zhang Jie makes clear her belief that men and women must together overthrow the outdated aspects of traditional moral values and establish genuine socialist ethics if they are to find fulfilment and happiness in their personal relations [...] Zhang Jie is reflected in several characters, among them the uncompromising woman reporter Autumn, who tackles problems she is incapable of solving [...] ‘The Ark’, her next major work, is about the difficulties of three divorcees trying to live independent and dignified lives in a man’s world. It has been acclaimed as an original and important feminist novella [...]</p>	
foreword/ prologue	<p>What is life? A friend tells me, “Life means finding happiness in hardships.” “No!” I say. “Life is an endless battle with fate.”</p>	<p>What is life? A friend says, “Life is finding happiness in hardships.” “No!” I say. “Life is the eternal struggle of Man with his Fate.”</p>

names of women characters	The names of women characters are translated into meaningful words that imply their personalities, such as “Autumn”, “Grace”, “Jade”, “Bamboo”, “Joy” and “Radiance”, while the names of male characters are transliterated with pinyin.	All names are translated with the pinyin system of romanization.
book reviews	<i>The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs</i> : The 1981 Chinese edition of the novel, on which the present English translation is based, contains a 23-page-long speech by Zheng Ziyun. It is rather unfortunate that it has been drastically condensed in the translation. I do not dispute that the original speech is dull and repetitive and would probably turn away many Western readers, but it is nonetheless crucial to the central theme of the novel [...] She is particularly bitter about conventional sexual morality which condemns divorce and celibacy [...] All I can say is that the novel has painted a basically truthful picture of the old Chinese nation in the throes of rejuvenation (Chan, 1989: 202-204).	<i>Kirkus Review</i> : Prescient, complex and deeply searching novel about political life in China [...] Occasionally weighed down by its own ambition, and by a sometimes leaden translation, this is an otherwise profound window into contemporary China and a source of sharp light on the stir behind its recent horrors (1989). <i>Los Angeles Times</i> : Tiananmen Square and its aftermath change the dated to the timely, and perhaps to the prophetic [...] What can we do with a didactic novel? Learn. “Heavy Wings” has a lot to teach (Eder, 1989). <i>The New York Times</i> : Zhang Jie’s novel, “Heavy Wings”, first published in China nine years ago,

	<p><i>The China Quarterly</i>: The novel begins with promise as peripheral characters, many of them women, are introduced in a series of deft sketches [...] Though it informs, and despite heroic efforts by Gladys Yang and Delia Davin, <i>Leaden Wings</i> remains disappointing as literature (Wood, 1988: 137).</p> <p><i>World Literature Today</i>: The theme of the novel is straightforwardly expressed: for China to be modernized, democracy and respect for ideas must take precedence over dogmatism and narrow-minded party loyalty [...] Though it (Davin's afterword) points out Zhang Jie's concern with women in <i>Leaden Wings</i> in particular, for her writings in general it has very little to offer. In fact, Davin's commentary paints a distorted picture of the women characters and consequently gives us a misleading view of the story as a whole (Yeh, 1988: 508-509).</p>	<p>foreshadows the frustrations that erupted in student demonstrations last year and led to the democracy movement [...] We watch as government intrudes on the personal lives of these characters (Mitgang, 1990).</p> <p><i>Booklist</i>: Zhang Jie's novel is virtually a fictional primer for the summer uprising in Tiananmen Square [...] A fascinating glimpse of a country racked by turmoil (Wilkinson, 1989).</p>
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Appendix 2

Textual comparison between *Leaden Wings* and *Heavy Wings*

source text	Goldblatt's translation	Yang's translation
<p>Example 1:</p> <p>也许因为这一生她将永远无法实现自己的母爱，像一切女人一样，顽强地需要一个表现这种天性的机会 (Zhang, 1997: 3)。</p>	<p>Maybe she knew that the prospect of maternal love was forever lost to her and, like women everywhere, desperately needed a release for her maternal instincts (Goldblatt, 1989: 5).</p>	<p>Perhaps it was because she knew she would never have any other outlet for her maternal love (Yang, 1987a: 2).</p>
<p>Example 2:</p> <p>要是她知道老头子在杭州给她买龙井茶叶的时候，带着怎样一种揶揄的口气，学得保定府的口音对人说：“送给我‘耐’（爱）人的。”她一定不会这么笑了 (ibid: 15)。</p> <p>她把一个女人的全部天才和智慧都用来打发这令人操心的日子了 (ibid: 20)。</p> <p>这还不算，刘玉英放弃了女人天性里对于美的一切追求。</p>	<p>But she probably wouldn't be smiling if she knew how he always says condescendingly, "this is for the little woman" (ibid: 15).</p> <p>She employed all of her feminine talents and knowledge in the service of getting through these troubling days. And there was more: Liu Yuying suppressed her feminine desire to be as attractive as possible (ibid: 20).</p> <p>But now that you have a family, you have an obligation</p>	<p>deleted</p>

<p>既是有了家，你就得咬牙撑住它，那才叫男人。要是你只会怨天怨地，打孩子骂老婆，拿他们撒气，你还叫男人吗，那叫窝囊废！(ibid: 21)</p>	<p>to do whatever it takes to support it, or else you'll never be able to call yourself a man!</p> <p>If you only know how to go around complaining, beating your children, and yelling at your wife, then you're not a man in my book! (ibid: 21)</p>	
<p>Example 3:</p> <p>一个单身女人带着个孩子过日子真不容易(ibid: 43)。</p>	<p>Being a single parent is hard on a woman (ibid: 46).</p>	<p>She'd had a hard time bringing up a child on her own (ibid: 27).</p>
<p>Example 4:</p> <p>况且，这女人和他妻子不同，不能用那种“好男不和女斗”的迁就态度，她是完全独立于男人之外的。也不能用虚伪的奉承，虽然好些女人都喜欢那一套假话。她的头脑相当清楚 (ibid: 23)。</p>	<p>But this woman is so different from the woman he's been living with all these years that he knows he mustn't patronize her the way most men do with women; she's not someone to be taken lightly. Flattery won't get him anywhere, either, even though it works with a lot of women. She's too level headed for that (ibid: 56).</p>	<p>As she was so different from his wife he couldn't humor her or throw dust in her eyes. She was too level headed for flattery (ibid: 33).</p>
<p>Example 5:</p> <p>难道她的精神，已经随着肉体变得老朽？让一个人的情感保持经久不变的吸引力究竟是什么呢？难道仅是物质上、形式上的美？但再美的肉体也会老化、起皱。他不</p>	<p>Could her spirit have aged along with her body? Isn't there anything that can sustain a person's emotions over the long haul? There must be more to life than possessions and appearances. even the most</p>	<p>Had she withered mentally as well as physically? The loveliest women must age, grow wrinkled. Why did so many of them devote their</p>

明白为什么好些女人，偏偏把全副精力，放在监视自己的丈夫和防范别的女人这种完全不可挽回的后果上，而不注重于保持自己的进取精神，永远把一个崭新的、可爱的、美好的、因而也是富有魅力的精神世界展现在丈夫的眼前？ (ibid: 54)	beautiful women grow old and wrinkled. Why do so many women devote themselves to keeping tabs on their husbands and being on guard against other women, something over which they ultimately have no control, instead of trying to sustain their own progressive spirit? They could present their husbands with a new, loving, beautiful, and altogether appealing spiritual world (ibid: 57).	energy to keeping tabs on their husbands instead of cultivating their own minds? (ibid: 34)
Example 6: 一个女人戴眼镜，要多难看 (ibid: 56)。	Eyeglasses make girls look ugly, ugly, ugly, ugly! (ibid: 59)	Women who wear glasses are frumps! (ibid: 35)
Example 7: 像她妈妈这样的女人，似乎不缺乏使男人爱她的那些条件 (ibid: 58)。	Xia Zhuyun doesn't seem to lack any of those qualities that make men fall in love with women (ibid: 61).	A woman like that should have been able to keep her husband's love (ibid: 37).
Example 8: 女人嘛，总是有些让人觉得短浅的地方，也许正是这短浅使她们显得可爱了？ (ibid: 59)	All women seem a bit shallow, but maybe that's their appeal (ibid: 62).	All women had their foibles: maybe that was their attraction (ibid: 37).
Example 9: 她在笑自己：一个以丈夫为中心的傻女人。一样的饭菜，	She smiles at the thought, mocking herself as a foolish woman whose world rotates	She smiled at herself: silly to be so obsessed

<p>但有他在，仿佛连味道都不一样了。一样的房间，但有他在，仿佛连温度都升高了几度 (ibid: 70)。</p>	<p>around her husband. When he eats with her, the food somehow tastes better. When he's with her, the room somehow seems warmer (ibid: 71).</p>	<p>with her husband (ibid: 42).</p>
<p>Example 10: 但在中国这块封建意识还到处寻隙侵蚀的土地上，女人，是顶顶让人敏感的问题啊，稍不注意，就会使人身败名裂。郑子云对待女人的问题，是十分谨慎的 (ibid: 149)。</p>	<p>In China, with its long history of feudalism, anything involving women is a sensitive issue that piques everyone's interest. Your reputation can be destroyed if you let down your guard for even a moment. Zheng never forgets this in his dealings with women (ibid: 139).</p>	<p>However, in China so steeped in feudal ideas people took an exaggerated interest in women, and he must be careful of his reputation (ibid: 75).</p>
<p>Example 11: 他的精神上所承受的全部社会压力，却靠两个女人的保护来平衡。生活竟把他推进这样一狭窄的天地，这样一种等待施舍的地位。他还算什么男人。男人应该是强者啊 (ibid: 179)。</p>	<p>All that keeps his spirit balanced in the face of social pressure is the support of two women. Life has forced him into a corner and made him little more than a charity case. How can he call himself a man! Men are supposed to be the strong ones (ibid: 163).</p>	<p>deleted</p>
<p>Example 12: 最使男人无法对付的，大半就是一个令人喜欢的女人的任性 (ibid: 182)。</p>	<p>There is nothing more irresistible to a man than a willful look in the eyes of a woman he cares for (ibid: 165).</p>	<p>She was looking at him with willful eyes, which he found irresistible (ibid: 90).</p>

<p>Example 13:</p> <p>孔祥又说：“听说和贺家彬合写文章的那个女记者离过两次婚呢。”说罢，从眼镜片后头，迅速地向郑子云射来两道警告意味的光。他说到“离婚”那两个字时的口气，就跟说到妓院，说到花柳病一样。</p> <p>会议室里像加了兴奋剂，就连空气的流速，也似乎加大了许多，所有的脑袋全向孔祥扭过去。</p> <p>郑子云暗暗苦笑：要是叶知秋能够结两次婚，也算没有白白地当过一次女人。既然婚姻法上，明明白白地写着感情破裂可以离婚，为什么离婚在孔祥的眼里，却成为一条应该受到指控的罪过呢？他自己可以胡来，别人却不可以离婚 (ibid: 216)。</p>	<p>“There’s talk that the woman reporter who coauthored that article with He Jiabin has been divorced twice!” Kong Xiang volunteers. He shoots a warning glance at Zheng Ziyun. He said the word “divorce” as though he were saying “whorehouse” or “syphilis”.</p> <p>Everyone turns to look at Kong Xiang.</p> <p>Zheng sneers inwardly. If Ye Zhiqiu could get married twice, she’d feel like a real woman! Since divorce is permitted, why do people like Kong Xiang treat it as though it’s a crime? He can play around all he wants, but others have no right to divorce! (ibid: 185)</p>	<p>At this point Kong Xiang said, “I’ve heard that the woman journalist who helped Ho Jiabin write that report has been divorced twice!” He darted a warning glance at Zheng. To him divorcees ranked with prostitutes.</p> <p>The meeting livened up: all heads turned towards Kong.</p> <p>The Marriage Law allowed divorce if husband and wife were incompatible, Zheng was thinking, so why did a lecher like Kong regard it as a crime? (ibid: 107)</p>
<p>Example 14:</p> <p>现在，又去糟蹋一个无权、无势，没有反抗和保护自己能力的弱女人。这些人对付恶，是那样的懦弱、胆怯，对付一个女人，却是那样的强</p>	<p>This time they’re trying to smear a woman who is powerless to defend herself. They are too timid and cowardly to deal with real evils, but when it comes to a frail woman, they attack with</p>	<p>Now they were smearing a woman powerless to defend herself. Too cowardly to tackle real abuses, they struck hard when</p>

大、勇敢。何等的可悲啊 (ibid: 222-223)。	all the force they can muster. What a tragedy! (ibid: 191)	it came to attacking a woman (ibid: 111).
<p>Example 15:</p> <p>“我觉得你好像得了一种猜忌狂。你防范这个女人，防范那个女人，恰恰不防范你自己。为什么把你自己看得这么轻，又为什么这样死乞白赖呢？我对这些女人感到不理解。她们年年过三八节，天天高喊妇女的解放，回到家里却依附于丈夫的旧式妇女没有什么两样。我以为仅仅把妇女解放运动理解为政治、经济地位上的平等是不够的，妇女解放还应该靠自己的自强，而不是靠——”</p> <p>他停下来，看着夏竹筠的头发、服饰。“她应该不断地进取，让她的丈夫崇拜她的人格、精神、事业，而不是把她当做一朵花来欣赏……”</p> <p>他还想说，借婚姻的链索，把自己挂在男人脖子上的办法，是消极的办法，是妇女无能和无志气的表现。只靠法律和社会压力把丈夫和自己压合在一起，反映了妇女人格上的不独立。事实上，</p>	<p>“You’ve become so morbidly suspicious, keeping tabs on every woman except yourself. What happened to your self-respect? You’re so bitchy all the time! I don’t understand some women, the way they run around on Women’s Day demanding liberation, but when they go home they’re just like any other wife who’s totally dependent on her husband. As far as I’m concerned, women’s liberation means more than political or economic equality. It means relying on your own strength, not on...” He pauses and looks at Xia Zhuyun’s hairdo and her attire. “A woman should strive to improve herself so her husband will respect her character, her spirit, her dedication, and not treat her like some lovely flower ...”</p> <p>He keeps himself from telling her that by draping herself</p>	<p>“You’re morbidly suspicious of all other women. Have you no self-respect? I can’t understand women like you. On International Women’s Day you shout about the emancipation of women. But at home you depend on your husbands like feudal wives. Political and economic equality isn’t enough. Women have got to emancipate themselves.” He stopped, eyeing her hair and clothes. “You should get ahead, with your husbands’ respect. Not just doll yourself up...” He wanted to say that common</p>

<p>在任何社会中，如果没有事业和理想上的一致，爱情也不可能存在或维持。恩格斯说：“婚姻不仅决定一个人的肉体生活，也决定一个人的精神生活。”在这方面，知识水平、共同的志趣，往往是爱情的基础 (ibid: 224)。</p>	<p>around her husband's neck she is living passively, devoid of ambition. A woman's reliance on laws and social pressures to force a man and wife to stay together only proves her lack of independence. The fact is, love cannot exist or prevail in any society that has no consistency in enterprise and ideals. Engels said, "Marriage doesn't just determine one's physical life, but one's spiritual life as well." Love is founded upon knowledge and common interest (ibid: 191-192).</p>	<p>interests and understanding should be the basis of love (ibid: 111-112).</p>
<p>Example 16:</p> <p>那么，她牢牢想要守住，战战兢兢生怕失去的是什么呢？是那许多女人都逃不脱的虚荣的诱惑。</p> <p>她开始嚶嚶地哭泣。</p> <p>女人的眼泪是无坚不摧的武器，它是超越千百条道理之上的，有理没理都可以取得最后的胜利。</p> <p>郑子云立刻缄默。走开是不合适的，人在流泪的时候，</p>	<p>What is she afraid of losing? Nothing except the vain seductiveness so many women don't know how to give up.</p> <p>She begins to sob.</p> <p>A woman's tears are a powerful weapon that defies reason and assures final victory.</p> <p>Zheng Ziyun says nothing. He begins to feel fidgety. He can't just walk away. Crying is a</p>	<p>She started sobbing. A woman's tears are more potent than reasoning. Zheng said no more (ibid: 112).</p>

就把自己摆在了一个弱者的地位，何况她还是个女人，男人是不能这样对待女人的 (ibid: 225-226)。	sign of weakness. Besides, she's a woman, and a man simply doesn't treat a woman that way (ibid: 193).	
Example 17: 女人的逻辑 (ibid: 229)。	Feminine logic! (ibid: 197)	deleted
Example 18: 就算她是一个顶干瘪、顶枯燥的职业妇女，她也有需要诉一诉委屈、听一听宽慰话的时候啊。但是人们早已习惯于把她看成是一个没有性别，没有感情的机器人，大概连贺家彬也这样认为。她摇头。也有例外的时候，比方那风匿名信。人们大概在中伤、造谣的时候，才想起她还是个女人，她的性别在这时才有意义。 女人的神经比男人的脆弱、敏感。然而这样的流言蜚语，落在这样一个丑人儿的身上，分外让人感到残酷和痛楚，这永不会开花，也永不会结果的生命。 (ibid: 231) 叶知秋却深深地叹息，心里想：不知给自己心爱的男人	Even if she is a haggard, lackluster professional woman, there are still times when she needs to air some grievances and hear a few comforting words. But people have gotten used to treating her like a sexless, emotionless robot. Apparently, at least some people recognize her as a woman when they spread their slanderous rumors. That's when her gender makes a difference. Women's nerves are, all in all, more shatterable and sensitive than men's. It's particularly painful to see slanderous rumors directed at such a homely woman. A woman	deleted

<p>生个儿子是什么滋味？不过她是不会哭的，眼泪是漂亮的、有人疼爱的女人才有的奢侈品 (ibid: 232)。</p>	<p>whose life will never blossom and never produce fruit.</p> <p>Ye Zhiqiu sighs deeply. What must it feel like to bear the child of the man you love? she wonders.</p> <p>But she's not the one to cry. Tears are beautiful, a luxury reserved for women who are loved (ibid: 198-199).</p>	
<p>Example 19:</p> <p>也许她是例外，很多人以为女人的爱像蓄水池里的水，随便什么时候一开闸门，就会哗啦、哗啦地流泻出来 (ibid: 237)。</p>	<p>For many people motherly love is a reservoir whose water spills out when the gates are opened. Maybe she was an exception, for what she discovered was not motherly love, but greater responsibilities (ibid: 205).</p>	<p>What joys felt was not so much mother love as increased responsibility (ibid: 117).</p>
<p>Example 20:</p> <p>然而他抗争得过这个社会的习俗吗？人们会大惊小怪：离婚干什么？有个女人不就得了，何况，从实质内容来说，这个女人和那个女人，没有什么不同 (ibid: 252)。</p>	<p>But does he have the strength to oppose the mores of the society? Everyone would be alarmed: Divorce? You already have a woman, what else do you want? Besides, this woman's no different from the one you have (ibid: 218).</p>	<p>But what would people say if he asked for a divorce? (ibid: 121)</p>
<p>Example 21:</p>	<p>He didn't have to worry about things at home, women were</p>	<p>deleted</p>

家里的事,样样不用他操心,那是女人的事情 (ibid: 262)。	supposed to take care of that (ibid: 229).	
Example 22: 可惜现在军队里不委任女人做将领,不然,何婷照样可以当一个不亚于任何男人的常胜将军。其实女人在征服什么、占有什么、得到什么的欲望上,比男人有韧性得多 (ibid: 283-284)。	Too bad there has never been a female general in the army. She's confident she could do as well as any man if she was given the chance. But then, everyone knows that women have to fight harder than men to overcome the difficulties of possessing or achieving anything (ibid: 245).	Too bad the army no longer had women generals, or she could have led troops as well as any man. Women had to be much more tenacious than men (ibid: 134).
Example 23: 她是一个有头脑的、进攻型的女人,断然不肯留在文工团里,早就看准了“政治”这碗饭 (ibid: 284)。	She was admitted to the party without a hitch. An intelligent, aggressive woman, she was determined to give up her work in cultural troupes and make a career in politics (ibid: 246).	Having joined the party early, she had shrewdly determined to make politics her career (ibid: 135).
Example 24: 她也同一般女人一样,特别容易发现别的女人的缺点 (ibid: 284)。	Like women everywhere, she frequently finds fault with other women (ibid: 246).	deleted
Example 25: 嫁男人真有点像押宝 (ibid: 285)。	For women, marriage is a gamble at best (ibid: 247).	Marriage is a gamble (ibid: 135).
Example 26: 女人在男人那里,比男人在男人那里好办事。在不丧失	Women have ways of getting things done when they're dealing with men. And as long	deleted

原则的情况下，利用一下这个有利的因素 (ibid: 292)。	as principles aren't involved, what's wrong in exploiting that advantages? (ibid: 254)	
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