

A Comparative Study of Two Translations of *Wo Zai Xia Cun De Shi Hou* From Androgynous Perspective

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Abstract—As a complement of feminist translation theory's weakness, androgyny plays an important role in translation practice. Some male translators try to translate feminism fictions from androgynous perspective. This paper analyses two translations of Chinese female writer Ding Ling's *Wo Zai Xia Cun De Shi Hou* translated by male translator Gary J. Bjorge and female translator Gong Pusheng. From the examples, it can be seen that the male translator with feminism sense also can translate feminism fictions successfully, even sometimes better than the female translator. Androgynous perspective is useful in dealing with translating works written by the opposite gender.

Index Terms—Androgynous perspective, Gary J. Bjorge, Gong Pusheng, *Wo Zai Xia Cun De Shi Hou*.

I. THEORETICAL BASIS

Under the background of “cultural turn” in translation studies, feminist translation theory raised by a group of Canadian scholars first. The aim of feminist translation theory is to make women visible in the text [1]. The feminist translation theory gets its idea firstly from metaphors about translation. In these metaphors, similarly, women and translation always are regarded as the lower place than men and the original text. “Feminist translation theory aims to identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegate both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder. To do so, it must investigate the processes through which translation has come to ‘feminized’ and attempt to trouble the structures of authority which have maintained this association” [2]. One of the main tasks of feminist translation theory is to identify and change the gendered metaphor about “female” and “translation” [3]. Then, feminist translation theory also challenges the definition of “fidelity” and the relationship between the original text, writer and the target text, translator. For a long time, “the hierarchical authority of the original over the reproduction is linked with imagery of masculine and feminine; the original is considered the strong generative male, the translation the weaker and derivative female. We are not surprised to learn that the language used to describe translating dips liberally into the vocabulary of sexism, drawing on images of dominance and inferiority, fidelity and libertinage” [2]. Feminist translation theory changes this kind of situation, for it respects translators' subjectivity, and acknowledges target text's status. “For feminist translation, fidelity is to be directed toward neither the author nor the

reader, but toward the writing project---a project in which both writer and translator participate” [2]. “Translation, in this theory of feminist discourse, is production, not reproduction” [4]. When female translators are given the more subjectivity, they are able to translate for their own feminism purpose. Then, one kind of manipulations, “womanhandling” comes. “The feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text. Womanhandling the text in translation would involve the replacement of the modest-self-effacing translator” [4]. The feminist translators “have assumed their right to query the source texts from a feminist perspective, to intervene and make changes when the texts depart from this perspective” [5]. The main feminist translation strategies are supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and “hijacking” [2]. By these measures, feminist translators eliminate the discrimination against women in the original text, and make women invisible. However, there are still some criticisms towards feminist translation. Generally, it is “too emotional, too partisan, and too ideological, in fact, too subjective” [6]. Feminist translation theory is too fierce, for it puts men and women into two opposite extremes, and over-emphasizes women's status, which sometimes harms the gender equality.

To make up for feminist translation theory's limitations, there is a transformation from feminist perspective to milder gender perspective. “Gender” is different from “sex”. “Sex” is a biological concept, which means the biological attribute of male and female. “Gender” is more complicated, which is the characteristics constructed by culture and society.

For example, it is commonly believed that male should be brave and female should be gentle. Beauvoir says that “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman” [7]. The concept of gender breakthroughs the stereotype of men and women. Not all men hold the discrimination against women, and not all men dislikes feminism. The sex can not determine the gender. The concept of gender provides a base for androgyny.

Androgyny's origin is from Greek, for “andro-” refers to male and “gyn” refers to female. In biology, androgyny means owning both male and female characteristics. In psychology, Freud first came up with human beings' androgynous subconsciousness. He believes that feminine and masculine features coexist in personality in dialectic process [8]. Later, a Swedish psychologist, Jung Carl Gustav raised concepts of anima and animus. Anima is the female psychological tendencies in the male's subconsciousness, while animus is the male psychological tendencies in the female's subconsciousness. Then, Woolf brought androgyny into literary criticism. She describes an artist's mind in her *A Room of One's Own*: “In each of us two powers preside, one female;

Manuscript received April 29, 2017; revised July 27, 2017.

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and in the man's brain the man predominates over the women, and in the woman's brain the woman predominates over the man. . . . the normal and comfortable state of being is that the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating" [9]. She then emphasized that "It is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly" [9]. From her words, it is possible for writers to cross the gender boundary to create more complexing and exquisite works. Writing in the other gender's way is fascinating.

In translation field, some female translators prefer translating works of female writers, and they do not confident enough, or are not willing to translate works of male writers. However, to cross the barrier of gender is possible. Although female translator Kong Huiyi likes translating female writers's work, she still confesses that she knows some male translators, "who have the makings of feminine and whose translation can render the feminine quite well" [10]. Similarly, Harwood found that her translation was speaking from men's viewpoint when she translated male rock poet-singer Lucien Francoeur [1]. Liu Junping once have a good imagination about translator's androgyny: "if female translator can grasp the toughness of male writer, or male translator the tenderness of a female writer, the translated text must be perfect" [11]. Simon also gives male translators greater confidence: "Gender issues in translation are relevant to men as well as to women. Men can adopt the precepts of feminist translation theory; women can successfully translate texts by men. . . another interesting area of investigation would be the way gender identities have been disguised through translation" [2]. Their opinions give us an enlightenment that men can think and translate from female's perspective. About translator's androgynous perspective, Li Wenjing provides us a good definition: "If the translator, just like the writer, can also sense and express from the view point of the other gender, it is translator's androgynous perspective" [12]. It will be helpful in the following analysis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The influence of gender to translation has been increasingly explored in these years. Paleczek referred that the feminist translation theory works as a framework for translating gender differences, focusing on the "rewriting" of patriarchal language [13]. Miletich made a research on how women interpret masculinity by analyzing main translation passages to show how translators understand and translate the gender ideology in the source text, trying to find out translators' determining process [14]. As to what to focus on in analyzing the different translations, it depends on the content of source text. For example, Wang Xi compared the language features of different English translations of the *Tao Te Ching* made by translators of different gender, including the choice of words, choice of syntactic patterns and choice of mood [15]. Her result showed that the style of women translators' translations is more spoken, while men are more likely to translate in a more written style [15]. Yang Lihua focused on the translation of sex description, appearance and action in *The Purple Color* by both female and male translators. She found that there were

considerable differences between male and female translators in their expressions of some feminism featured words [16]. Li Jing and Li Changbao conducted a comparative analysis between two translations of Lin Yutang's *Between Tears and Laughter* in terms of three practical translation strategies, supplementing, prefacing & footnoting, and hijacking [17]. They explored translator's androgynous identity, as well as "gender related aggression", then drew a conclusion that it was very important for translation to combine the male authorship (or partnership) and the female translator's identity [17]. Their paper mentioned translator's androgynous identity of female translator. Similarly, the androgynous identity of male translator should be explored too.

The study of translation from androgynous perspective in China mainly lies on the comparison between the male translator's work and female translator's work. Too many researchers have made researches on the Chinese translation of English novels. Seldom researchers conducted researches on the English translation of Chinese literary works. The existed studies on androgynous translation mainly lies in the translation of classical Chinese poem, such as Chen Dan's paper on the translation of *Yijianmei* (an ancient Chinese poem) [18], Liu Rui and Jia Zhengchuan's paper on the translation of *Hong Lou Meng* [19], Cao Wanzhong's paper on the translation of Chinese classical boudoir regret poems [20], Li Zhiying's paper on the translation of Li Qingzhao (a famous female poet in ancient China)'s poem [21]. All such kind of studies concentrate on the English translation of Chinese ancient literary masterpieces, however, few people pay attention to the English translation of modern Chinese literary works. This paper will fill in this gap, to explore the androgynous translation on the English translation of one modern Chinese literary work.

As a pioneer of Chinese modern feminist writer, Ding Ling has attracted attention of worldwide scholars. Until now, there are many researches about feminism in Ding Ling's works, however, researches about the translation of Ding Ling's work are very rare. Ding Ling's most famous work is *Miss Sophia's Story*, and Pu Haiyan and Guo Xiaofei analyzed the English translation of *Miss Sophia's Story* from feminist perspective [22], [23]. Their limitation was that the number of examples was a little few. This paper selected the translation of Ding Ling's short novel *Wo Zai Xia Cun De Shi Hou* (《我在霞村的时候》) as the research object. This novel is not as famous as her *Miss Sophia's Story*, so the relevant studies are not very much. Xiong Ying focused on the great contribution of the English translation of *Wo Zai Xia Cun De Shi Hou* to the Chinese anti-fascism career [24], however, the researches on feminist translation or androgynous translation are very rare. Hao Li focused on the male perspective in the translation of this fiction by a small comparative study of Huang Kun's version and Gary Bjorge's version, which sets an very good example to the latter research [25].

This paper analyses the translation of Ding Ling's fiction *Wo Zai Xia Cun De Shi Hou*. Ding Ling is a Chinese female writer, and her works are famous for the earliest feminism in China. She wrote this story in 1942. "The story is told by a female Party writer, 'I', who gathers material for a (presumably National Defense) narrative from a village

woman whom the Japanese have raped and infected with venereal disease. Furthermore, after the rape, the woman became a prostitute behind the lines to gather intelligence” [26]. The woman mentioned above is called Zhenzhen. Everyone in Xia village, except Xia Dabao, her former lover, looked down upon Zhenzhen because she had been raped. Xia Dabao insisted to marry her, but Zhenzhen refused. Finally, Zhenzhen left Xia village, and started a new life. The story expresses both the great suffering of women and the great contribution made by women in anti-fascism war. This paper makes a comparison between *When I was in Sha Chuan* translated by Gong Pusheng, and *When I was in Xia Village* translated by Gary J. Bjorge.

This paper attempts to solve the following two questions. Do male translators translate feminist fictions as good as female translators? How the androgynous awareness of male translators shows in their translations? As to the research method, this paper mainly adopts a comparative study method. The former studies mainly compare the differences of the translation of female emotions, female actions, female consciousness and female language expressions between male translators’ and female translators’. Depending on the content of this novel, this paper focuses on the translation of women’s suffering, women’s feeling and women’s morality. From the comparison of diction and tone in male translator’s translation and female translator’s translation, the convey of source text’s feminism can be viewed. If the male translator can emphasize female’s feeling and shows his empathy in his translation, then, we can state that the male translator translates this work from androgynous perspective.

III. TRANSLATING WOMEN’S SUFFERING

Example 1:

加上她是一个改组派的脚，我精神也不大好 [27] (Ding Ling’s source text)

On the journey, which was covered on foot..... [28] (By Gong Pusheng)

Also, because her feet had once been bound and my own spirits were low, we traveled slowly [26]. (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Example 1 describes the author’s companion, Agui’s feet. “改组派的脚” means once bounded feet. Foot-binding is one of outmoded conventions in ancient China. A little girl’s parents use a bandage to wrap her feet, putting four small toes under the sole of the feet. Then, the girl’s feet always keep small. Because of the small feet, women can not work walk as fast as men. Having realized the great misery of foot-binding to women, some intellectuals advocated to abolish foot-binding in the early part of the 20th century. Agui’s feet were bounded in her childhood. Later, she unfastened the bandage, but her feet’s out-of-shape could be cured. Ding Ling wanted to use the detail of foot-binding to reveal women’s suffering in China. Gary J. Bjorge translates this detail according to the source text, while Gong Pusheng neglects it. Gary J. Bjorge is not only faithful to the source text, but also willing to show women’s sufferings to readers by his translation.

Example 2:

那是给鬼子糟蹋的呀 [27] (Ding Ling’s source text)

She was molested by the Devils [28]. (By Gong Pusheng)
That’s because she was abused by the Jap devils [26]. (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Example 3:

谁还肯要鬼子用过的女人 [27] (Ding Ling’s source text)

Who wants to have a woman who has been used by the Japanese? [28] (By Gong Pusheng)

Who would want a woman who was abused by the Jap devils? [26] (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Example 4:

我的确被很多鬼子糟蹋过 [27] (Ding Ling’s source text)

And I have actually been molested by so many Devils that I can’t even remember [28]. (By Gong Pusheng)

It’s a fact that I was abused by a large number of Jap devils [26]. (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Example 5:

尤其当现在的贞贞被很多人糟蹋过，染上了不名誉的，难医的病症的时候 [27] (Ding Ling’s source text)

Even though Ching-Ching had been used by so many Japanese, and had contracted the notorious disease [28]. (By Gong Pusheng)

Zhenzhen had been abused by many men, and had contracted a stigmatized, hard-to-cure disease [26]. (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Examples 2 to 5 emphasize that Zhenzhen was raped by Japanese soldiers. “糟蹋” and “用过” are both means “rape”, showing the heroine’s very miserable experience. Hao Li also made the similar study on the use of “糟蹋” in her doctoral thesis [25]. When translating “糟蹋”, Gary J. Bjorge always chooses “abuse”. “Abuse” with the meaning of “to treat a person or an animal in a cruel or violent way, especially sexually” [29] emphasizes the “cruel” and “violent” of rape. “Abuse” is very powerful, and it expresses the extreme pain of the raped woman. Gong Pusheng chooses “used” or “molest”. “Molest” means “to attack sb. especially a child, sexually” [29], not as severe as “abuse”. As a man, Gary J. Bjorge considers rape from the woman victim’s perspective. He pays attention to the great hurt of rape to women, so he uses the more powerful expression “abuse” to complain the hurt of rape.

Example 5 tells that Zhenzhen caught serious venereal disease in Japanese army camp, which brought her notorious fame. Gong Pusheng puts more attention to translate “不名誉的”, then forgets to translate “难医的”. Gary J. Bjorge translates “难医的” as “hard-to-cure”. The heroine of this fiction, Zhenzhen, contracted disease from forced sexuality. That is the reason why the disease makes her notorious. The disease harms Zhenzhen both spiritually and physically. Gong Pusheng over emphasizes the mental part, neglecting the physical part. Actually, readers also care Zhenzhen’s physical health. Unfortunately, the disease is hard to cure, and Zhenzhen must suffer from physical pain for a long time. Gary J. Bjorge conveys this important detail, deepened readers’ sympathy to the miserable Zhenzhen.

Example 6:

我一点也没有变，要说，也就心变硬一点罢了。人在

那种地方住过,不硬一点心肠还行吗,也是因为没有办法,逼得那么做的哪 [27]! (Ding Ling's source text)

If I have, the only difference is that my heart has become a little harder. When you are in a place like that you are just forced to do things [28]. (By Gong Pusheng)

If I have changed, maybe it's that my heart has become somewhat harder. But could anyone spend time in such a place and not become hard hearted [26]? (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Zhenzhen told the author her experience after her escape from Japanese army's capture. Many villagers regarded her as an unchaste woman for she had been raped by Japanese soldiers. They thought that Zhenzhen changed a lot, not a virgin anymore. Then, villagers treated her in a very unfriendly way and spread rumors about her. Zhenzhen felt very upset. In fact, in her mind, she believed that her inner morality never changed. So, she said the above words to the author. Zhenzhen acknowledged that her only change was becoming more tough, which was the best way to go through all kinds of hardships in Japanese troops. In other words, to overcome the sufferings and survive in that kind of difficult situation, everyone had to be tough, without other choices. A very subtle difference of these two translations is the choice of personal pronoun. Gong Pusheng chooses "you" for a better effect of conversation, but the "you" in this sentence refers to the author, also a female. Some readers may accidentally consider that "the heart being harder in tough circumstance" only relates to women. Gary J. Bjorge uses "anyone", which consists of both men and women. This kind of expression shows that "the heart being harder in tough circumstance" is a common humanity. Here, Gong Pusheng only focuses her view on women, while Gary J. Bjorge considers both men and women, showing his androgynous awareness.

IV. TRANSLATING WOMEN'S FEELINGS

Example 7:

何苦来呢 [27]?(Ding Ling's source text)

Why so... [28]? (By Gong Pusheng)

Why make yourself suffer [26]? (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Example 7 comes from a woman trying to persuade Zhenzhen. Zhenzhen just had a big quarrel with her parents. Zhenzhen's capture by Japanese soldiers gave her notorious fame, which also shamed her parents a lot. Xia Dabao, Zhenzhen's lover, wanted to marry Zhenzhen. Zhenzhen refused him. Everyone could not understand Zhenzhen's action. Zhenzhen's parents thought that if Zhenzhen had married Xia Dabao, Zhenzhen could have a better life, as well as a better fame. A woman from this village also thought that Zhenzhen's refuse towards Xia Dabao would make Zhenzhen suffer a lot. So this woman persuaded Zhenzhen to marry Xia Dabao. Comparing these two English translations, it is easy to find that Gary J. Bjorge expresses the meaning more directly, however, Gong Pusheng translates it in a more euphemistic approach. Here, directly saying "make yourself suffer" exposes Zhenzhen's misery. Gary J. Bjorge explores Zhenzhen's feeling beyond the word from female perspective, then, he captures this subtle point and adds some infelicity in his translation.

Example 8:

她从没有表现出她现在很希望有一个男子来要她,或者就只是抚慰吧 [27] (Ding Ling's source text)

She never expressed the need or the desire for a man's care and comfort [28]. (By Gong Pusheng)

She never expressed any hope that a man would marry her or, if you will, comfort her [26]. (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Example 8 expresses that Zhenzhen never wanted a man to marry her or comfort her. "要" is equivalence of "marry". In traditional Chinese context, it is a little embarrassed for a young woman to fancy a man to marry. It is quite common that a man should chase a woman. A woman should wait to be selected and accept a man's love. So, Gong Pusheng regards this tradition, and lets Zhenzhen only want "a man's care" instead of "a man". In opposite, Gary J. Bjorge uses "marry" directly, and gives Zhenzhen, and other girls a voice to articulate their desire for men.

Example 9:

既然已经有了缺憾,就不想再有福气 [27] (Ding Ling's source text)

I am unclean, a woman with a black spot. So I'm not hoping for any happiness [28]. (By Gong Pusheng)

In any case, I am unclean, and with such a black mark I don't expect any good fortune to come my way [26]. (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Here, example 9 is about Zhenzhen's feeling towards life. Carrying the huge mental burden of being raped, zhenzhen felt disappointed about life. Zhenzhen never wants the extra fortune in her life. In Gong Pusheng's version, Zhenzhen is "not hoping for any happiness". It seems like that Zhenzhen's life is in despair, and Zhenzhen has no pursuit for a happy life at all. In Gary J. Bjorge's version, Zhenzhen only doesn't "expect any good fortune". Actually, Zhenzhen still has the desire to pursue a happy life. Gary J. Bjorge finds the positive side of Zhenzhen's character.

V. TRANSLATING WOMEN'S MORALITY

Example 10:

你总得说一句呀,你就不可怜可怜你的娘么 [27] (Ding Ling's source text)

Can't you say at least one word? You should have a little pity on your mother [28]. (By Gong Pusheng)

You must say something. Don't you feel sorry for your mother [26]? (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Example 10 also comes from Zhenzhen's quarrel with her parents. Her parents hoped her to marry Xia Dabao, but Zhenzhen refused. Zhenzhen's father complained Zhenzhen. He thought Zhenzhen was selfish. Because of Zhenzhen's experience, villagers looked down upon Zhenzhen's parents. Zhenzhen's father believed that Zhenzhen's marriage would help them get rid of the bad reputation. This sentence comes from Zhenzhen's father. He considered that Zhenzhen's mother had suffered villagers' despise a lot. Marrying Xia Dabao is the best for Zhenzhen to show her filial piety to her mother. It is very obvious that the tones of these two translated versions are quite different. Gong Pusheng translates Zhenzhen's father's word softer, while Gary J. Bjorge uses a more fierce way to translate. Generally speaking, Gary J. Bjorge's translation is close to Chinese typical traditional father. In Chinese tradition, a father often

plays a strict and serious role in educating their children. To some degree, Zhenzhen's father's blame towards Zhenzhen is a representation of blame from traditional Chinese patriarchal discourse. Gary J. Bjorge's translation shows the blame from patriarchal society better, which makes Zhenzhen more miserable. Gary J. Bjorge takes advantage of the familiarity of male discourse to serve for revealing female's misery. This time, he also does translation from androgynous perspective.

Example 11:

名声就实在够受了 [27] (Ding Ling's source text)

Her notorious name is enough to stop anyone [28]. (By Gong Pusheng)

Her reputation is enough to deter anyone [26]. (By Gary J. Bjorge)

Example 11 expresses that Zhenzhen's capture by Japanese soldiers made her fame notorious. It was so difficult for her to find a good man who did not mention her notorious reputation to marry. The most noticeable difference of these two translations lies in the word "notorious" used by Gong Pusheng. Gary J. Bjorge deletes this word. Maybe the less mention of the word "notorious", the less harm to Zhenzhen's image to readers. He considers Zhenzhen, trying to convey a better image for her. This time, he also translates from androgynous perspective.

VI. CONCLUSION

Gary J. Bjorge shows his androgynous awareness well in examples above. He has a sharp sense on gender issues, conveying women's sufferings and feelings very well. In his translation, there is no discrimination against women. Although he is a male translator, he is meticulous about gender issues even than female translator.

Beyond the text, it is necessary to explore translators' background. Gong Pusheng (1913-2007) is a female Chinese diplomat. She obtained her bachelor degree of economics in Yenching University (one of the most famous universities in China at that time), and then studied religious studies and international politics in Columbia University. During World War II, Gong Pusheng had a short stay in India, and found that most Indian people did not actively fight against fascism, for they only cared for their own national independence. With the help of translating *When I was in Sha Chuan* in 1945, Gong Pusheng intended to introduce how Chinese people fight against the Japanese army, in order to inspire Indian people's passion for fighting against fascism [24]. At the same time, due to Ding Ling's international fame, the translation of Ding Ding's work was popular in Europe and America. The spread of this fiction let people from all over the world know the fight in China really needed help. Hence, Gong Pusheng's *When I was in Sha Chuan* made great contribution to seek international aid for Chinese revolution and peace career [24]. Gong Pusheng's major intention of translating *When I was in Sha Chuan* is serving the anti-fascism career, not advocating feminism. On the contrary, Gary J. Bjorge is a male scholar. He "wrote the first English-language doctoral study of Ding Ling's fiction" [26]. He is an expert of Ding Ling and feminism, and he edited a feminism book *I Myself Am a Woman: Selected Writings of Ding Ling* together with Tani E. Barlow in 1989. His *When I was in Xia Village* is taken from this book. Obviously, his intention of translating this novel is

to study Ding Ling's feminism thought and advocates feminism.

The androgynous perspective enables translators cross the gender boundary. It is possible for a male translator to translate a female writer's work with the help of understanding the other gender and the awareness of gender issues. In translation practice, there are some recommendations. First, the translation aim is very important. To achieve the androgynous translation effect, translators should have the translation aim to respect the other gender. Second, in translation process, translator should be sensitive to the gender issues and sexual descriptions in the source text. By the way, learning some feminist translation theory or androgynous theory will be helpful too. In conclusion, translating works of opposite gender from androgynous perspective not only challenging, but also feasible.

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