

# REEXAMINATIONS OF TRANSLATOR'S VISIBILITY AND SUBJECTIVITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FEMINIST TRANSLATION THEORY

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*Abstract: Translators assume an indispensable and irreplaceable role in translations. However, traditional translation criteria and criticism have long centered on the source text; translators, whose initiatives and creativity are brought into oblivion, are thus invisible. Since the "cultural turn" in translation studies in the 1970s, the translator's position has received more and more attention. The translation research has begun to take into account various factors that affect translation, among which feminism exerts tremendous influence on translation theories as well as practice. Recently more and more scholars in China have begun to show concern for the translator's subjectivity, adopting different approaches to their studies. However, few have touched upon the topic from a gender perspective, especially in analyzing the Chinese-English translation practice. Due to the above reasons, this article focuses on the issue of the translator's subjectivity from the perspective of feminist translation study, considering both theory and practice. This article also conducts a case study of Zhu Hong's translated work to explore how this Chinese female translator with feminine awareness demonstrates her creativity and subjectivity in the target text. Compared with Western feminist translators, this Chinese female translator displays her characteristics. Instead of employing radical strategies, she consciously or unconsciously adds her understanding of the source text to the target text to promote readers' understanding of women's lives in China. In addition, it is pointed out in this article that we should be mindful of the over-emphasis on the translator's subjectivity in feminist translations. The concept of "androgyny" is, therefore, suggested as the principle guiding the relationship between authors and translators to be the harmonious coexistent one. This article is divided into seven sections, including an introduction and a conclusion. Throughout the article, the authors combine a descriptive method, contrastive research, and exemplification for a complete discussion.*

## Introduction

For an extended period, almost all the emphases of translation studies centered on the nature of translation, the standards of translation, and the translation techniques. While few scholars cast their eyes on the subject of translation—the translator—since in traditional translation studies, the original text and the author are the sole focus, and these two were considered to pose absolute authority. Thus fidelity to the original text and the author is the top translation standard. Then, to achieve "faithfulness," the translators had to be invisible without leaving any personal trace in the translated text. Translators' subjectivity and creativity were ignored, and translators' status was marginalized. They have not received

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attention and respect for a long time.

The Cultural Turn in translation studies in the west after the 1970s “discover” the translator. This epoch-making shift broadening the scope of translation studies foregrounds translators’ cultural identities and roles in the translation process. The translator then is promoted from the position of invisibility to that of visibility, and the translator’s subjectivity has gone through the course from being ignored to being foregrounded. From then on, translation has not been viewed as a pure linguistic transfer from the source language to the target language; translation studies were no longer confined to the internal discussion on translation but get a new and vast horizon and are closely connected with sociology, psychology, philosophy, politics, cultural studies and so on. The translation research began to take into account various cultural factors that affect translation, among which feminism exerts far-reaching influence on translation theory as well as practice.

With the development of the feminist movement, many researchers have turned to the field of the studies of women translators and women’s translations, which brought about the feminist translation theory. The most outstanding achievements are those of Canadian feminist researchers such as Susanne de Lbniere-Hardwood, Lori Chamberlaine, Sherry Simon, and Luise Von Flotow. Susanne proposed that we should make the female seen and heard in translation as well as in language by using all possible skills and that the method should be the “feminization of language.” Chamberlaine mainly discussed the metaphor of translation, especially the cliché “les belles infidèles” (“the unfaithful beauties” in English). Simon studied the process through which translation maintains and activates the construction of gender identity. Flotow brought gender study and translation study together and pointed out that gender should be an issue of translation. In addition, Gayatri Spivak and Barbara Godard also contributed much to the theory, which is unique in giving prominence to female subjectivity in the production of meaning and womanhandling of the text by implanting feminist ideas in translation.

Similarly, the research on the translator’s subjectivity has been rising in recent years in China since the 1990s, mainly from the perspectives of Skopos theory, Hermeneutics, and Reception Aesthetics. Xie Tianzhen (1999), Xu Jun (2003), and Zha Mingjian (2003) are famous for their research on the translator’s subjectivity. However, few people have touched upon feminist translation, let alone the translator’s subjectivity, from such a perspective. In the early 1980s, Zhu Hong, an expert in British and American literature and a translator, introduced Western feminist ideas into China, which later influenced foreign literary research and criticism and even feminine literary creation in the 1990s in our country (Zhao, 2003, 115). However, it is until the year 2002 that feminism exerted an influence on translation studies. This year, we can find six articles about feminist translation studies published in national academic journals: “Gender, feminism and literary translation” written by Wang Xiaoyuan, “On the creative infidelities employed by feminists in the literature of translation” by Meng Xiangzhen, “Re-write the myths: feminism and translation studies” by Liao Qiyi, “Sex difference and translation: a dialectical study of feminist opinions on translation” by Yan Jianhua, “Resexation of language” by Liu Yaru and “Social and cultural value of women translation” by Liu Yong. All these papers are about the essence and characteristics of the feminist translation theory from different perspectives. From 2003 to 2005, we have begun to see more research fruits

about the theory—Mu Lei, Jiang Xiaohua, Xie Tianzhen, Ge Xiaoqin, Xu Lai, Liu Junping, etc. have contributed a lot. These papers introduce to Chinese readers the viewpoints of the theory and analyze its social and cultural effects. Nevertheless, research on translation and gender in China is a new subject that needs to be further explored. According to Irshad and Yasmin, Feminist theory aims at understanding the nature of gender inequality; by analyzing women's life experience and their social roles. It uses various labels to define feminist trends, which indicate the social, economic, and historical contexts in which they emerged: French feminism, Enlightenment feminism, liberal feminism, black feminism and so on... Feminism attempts to (re)claim language to deconstruct patriarchy. In this context, in the 1970s & 1980s, an alternative woman's language was created that dismantled the patriarch language and made women linguistically visible. Castro and Ergan also have investigated Feminist Translation in minority languages. The Canadian school of Feminist Translation is not suitable for dealing with a plurality of identities.

This theory of feminist translation has been used to analyse several literary genres, but this present research only takes into account those studies, which have analysed the translated novels only. Furthermore, by applying this theory, various studies have been conducted in different cultural contexts around the world. For example, in the Chinese context, Tang (2018), by using the feminist perspective, has analysed gender issues in the Chinese translations of Chinese American women's literature...The above-mentioned studies indicate that feminist translation theory has been used in various cultural and historical contexts. Moreover, in these studies, various perspectives have been considered: Translation strategies used by feminist translators - Chen and Chen (2016); Shuo and Min (2017); Qiu (2019); Hou et al. (2020); Abdel and Allam (2018); the impact of gender ideology in the process of translation - Modrea (2005); Baya (2019); Mohammadi (2014), and so on. (Irshad & Yasmin, 2022)

This article attempts to examine the changes in the translator's status from a historical overview and the position of the translator in the framework of feminist translation theory. By analyzing the activities of feminist translators in their translation practice, this article aims to show how feminist translators display their subjectivity in the translation process, how they manipulate and intervene in the original text, and how they construct their female identity through translation. Combined with the theoretical introduction, there is a case study of Zhu Hong's translation of a Chinese female writer—Lu Xing'er's essay "Are Women 'as Good as Men'?" is also conducted to elaborate the translator's subjectivity demonstrated by the Chinese female translator with gender awareness in her translation practice. Finally, a second thought is given to the limitations of the feminist translation theory, reminding readers to be aware that if the female translator's subjectivity is projected to the extreme, the danger of another kind of discourse power tendency will arise. With the systematic introduction of the theory and the detailed analysis of the case study, this article hopes to help readers gain a more profound understanding of the translator's subjectivity from the perspective of feminist translation theory and, at the same time, pay special attention to the translated works of Chinese feminist translators.

To illustrate the above points, a descriptive approach is mainly taken in this article. Meanwhile, a comparative study is carried out to analyze the significance

of the feminist translation theory in studying the translator's subjectivity, different from those in previous studies. A comparison between female Chinese translators and western feminist translators is also conducted. Besides, exemplification is employed to interpret the strategies employed by feminist translators to foreground their subjectivity and identity.

In 2017, the book *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*, edited by Olga Castro and Emek Ergun, explores feminist approaches to translation across diverse geographical and historical locations as resistant transnational practices that challenge multiple forms of domination. As one of those authors claims: "there can be no solidarity without translation, and certainly no global solidarity" (Castro & Ergun, 2017, 113). Accordingly, the chapters demonstrate such translational activism by focusing on various examples from China, France, Galicia, Germany, India, Italy, Morocco, Poland, Spain, Turkey, the UK, and the US. The chapters also provide cautionary tales on feminist translation activism, which take place in a world marked by colonial power relations that position languages, texts, and activists in asymmetrical relations. (Deller, 2018)

In 2021, a new book *Translating Feminism: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Text, Place, and Agency*, edited by M. A. Bracke, J. C. Bullock, P. Morris, and K. Schulz, as a part of the book series: *Palgrave Studies in Language, Gender, and Sexuality (PSLGS)*, adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the social and political meanings of translation; casts a fresh eye on historical and contemporary feminisms by examining them in their global contexts; bridges the gap between empirical research and theoretical concepts; and re-imagines the established understanding of the feminist canon. According to the editors, the book's key questions are what shifts in meaning occur when a feminist text is translated linguistically and culturally, which agents act as translators of such texts, what strategies do they employ, how do processes of translation reframe visions of a fairer society and reinvent gender roles, and how can we historicize such processes for the second half of the twentieth century? For searching for solutions to those issues, the book starts by providing an original historical narrative of post-1945 global feminisms seen through the prism of transnational encounter, transfer, and resignification across languages and cultures: Firstly, it offers a historical framework, which involves re-thinking the actors and periodization of the existing, and recently thriving, scholarship on global feminisms; Secondly, it reflects on the role played by transfer and translation concerning war and decolonization, the politicization of sex and the body, and the dissemination of concepts such as gender and intersectionality; Finally, the critical concepts adopted in this book—politics of location and resignification—are introduced and situated in this historical narrative, and the key contributions of the book chapters are highlighted. (Bracke, Bullock, Morris & Schulz, 2021, 1)

### I. Reexamination of Translator's Subjectivity

In the past three decades, the focus of translation studies has shifted from the object of translation to the subject of translation. The translator's subjectivity needs to be recognized and emphasized. Before coming to a detailed discussion about the translator's subjectivity, we must first clarify some basic terms such as "subjectivity" and "translator's subjectivity." Feminists claim that translation is

the best way to assert female identity politics and that the translator can rewrite, create and distort the original texts to achieve their political purpose (Gu, 2019, 546).

Subjectivity is originally a philosophical concept, referring to the essential characteristics of the subject which present themselves in the subject's activities acting on the object. As Wang Yuliang (1995) put it: "To be specific, subjectivity is the externalization of the subject's essential force in its activities acting on the object, the character which actively remolds, influences, controls the object and makes the object at its service" (authors' translation). From this definition, we can conclude that initiative is the most prominent feature of subjectivity, and the subject has power over the object. However, one cannot exercise the initiative without any constraints. Since the subject acts on the object, it must be subject to its constraints. Meanwhile, it also suffers restrictions from the objective environments and conditions (Zha & Yu, 2003, 22). These constraints distinguish the severe exercise of subjectivity in translation from irresponsible mistranslation.

When the concept of subjectivity is applied to translation studies, we have the term "translator's subjectivity." Before exploring the connotation of a translator's subjectivity, we must first make clear who the subject of translation is. There is a heated debate on this question, and no consensus has been reached yet in the translational circles. Some regard the translator as the sole subject of translation; some hold that both the author and the translator should be viewed as the subject of translation; some consider the translator and the target-language reader as the subject of translation; others argue that the author, the translator, and the target-language reader altogether constitute the subject of translation (Xu, 2003, 10). On this issue, the authors agree with Nord (Nord, 2001, 85) that what is actually translated is not the sender's intention but the translator's interpretation of the sender's intention because the translator plays an indispensable role throughout the whole process of translation and every stage—reading, understanding and interpreting the original text—involves the display of the translator's subjectivity. Therefore, consciously or unconsciously, many personal factors of the translator, such as gender, personality, temperament, language competence, and even ethics, will influence the translated works. So the first point mentioned above seems to carry more weight, and the subject of translation in this article only refers to the translator. Therefore, according to the above definition of subjectivity given by Wang Yuliang, the subject is the translator, and the object is the source text. Based on this definition, Zha Mingjian and Tian Yu (2003) put forward the definition of a translator's subjectivity:

Translator's subjectivity refers to subjective initiative displayed by the translator—the subject of translation, to realize his/her translational purpose on the premise of respecting the object of translation. Its essential features are his/her conscious cultural awareness, personality, cultural and aesthetic creativity (Zha & Yu, 2003, the authors' translation).

In Ya-Mei Chen's examination, we may find the following:

The translator's subjectivity, defined as the subjectivity that the translator displays during the translation process, includes such features as the translator's cultural consciousness, reader awareness, personal traits, social and ideological positions, linguistic competence, aesthetic tendency and creativity,

all of which may manifest themselves through textual appropriation, adaptation and intervention. (Chen, 2011, 120)

The translator's subjectivity thus runs through the whole process of translational action. To be more specific, the translator's subjectivity is not only reflected in the understanding, interpretation, and aesthetic re-creation on the linguistic level of the source text but also demonstrated in the translator's choice of the source text, cultural purpose and translational strategies, etc.

Translation theory and practice have experienced thousands of years of development, and the translator's subjectivity has undergone a shift from being neglected in traditional translation studies to beginning to be recognized with the advent of the Cultural Turn in the 1970s. Translators' identities and statuses have been ignored for quite a long time. Traditional translation theory holds that translation is a mechanical transformation from one language to another. Thus, the author possesses supreme authority while the translator occupies the subordinate and secondary status, wholly deprived of subjectivity. The notion of equivalence is traditionally considered the top standard for translation. Consequently, translators at home and abroad are all bound by this ideal criterion, such as Yan Fu's "faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance," Qian Zhongshu's "sublimation" (*huajing*) and Eugene Nida's "dynamic equivalence" which requires translators to achieve the same effect in the translation as that of the source text to readers. That means translators should try to "reproduce in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style" (Nida, 1982, 55). In other words, "the ideal target text should be like a piece of glass, which is so transparent that readers cannot feel its existence" (Venuti, 1995, 111). Therefore, translators should remain silent and try to prohibit all subjective intervention in their works.

With the invisible and inferior status, the translator's image is relatively poor both in the west and in China. In the 17th century, the famous British translation theoretician John Dryden compared the translator to "slaves" and laborers on another man's plantation; we dress the vineyard, but the wine is the owner's: if the soil is sometimes barren, then we are sure of being scourged; if it be fruitful, and our care succeeds, we are not thanked; for the proud reader will only say, the poor drudge has done his duty...His metaphor of "dancing on ropes with fettered legs" also vividly reveals the translator's situation of suffering various constraints. (Dryden, 1697, 175) Barbara Godard echoes Dryden's comment as she says: "The translator is understood to be a servant, an invisible hand mechanically turning the word of one language into another" (Godard, 1990, 91). In China, the translator is compared to a "servant," "skilled worker," "craftsman," and even a "parrot." In Yang Jiang's eyes, the relationship between the translator, the source text, and the readers is like "one servant and two masters": the translator is the pitiful servant who must comply with the source text and the readers and cannot act on his/her own.

Generally, traditional translation studies focus on the source texts and emphasize that the types and nature of source texts decide the translation strategies. Therefore, "the translation studies were conducted from the perspective of the source text, ignoring the translated texts." (Chen & Huang, 2014) J. C. Catford defined translation as replacing textual material in one language with

equivalent textual material in another (Liao, 2006, 100). Liao Qiyi has criticized that Catford treated translation merely as a branch of linguistics, focusing on the structural shifts of language and refusing translation as an art (Ibid., 110). For H. J. Ma, Newmark thought an excellent translator should tend to literal translation to guarantee loyalty to the source text. The more important the language of the text was, the closer the translation should be to the source text. He categorized texts as informative texts, expressive texts, and vocal texts. Whereas for the former two categories, translators should adopt semantic translation focusing on the semantic content of the source language, the latter should adopt communicative translation to produce a similar effect between its readers and the readers of the original (Ma, 2010, 33).

From the above analysis, we can see the invisibility of the translator and the denial of the translator's subjectivity in traditional translation studies. However, translation studies began to change with the Cultural Turn in the 1970s. The Cultural Turn since the 1970s in Western translation studies moves the attention of translation studies from the pure linguistic analysis transferring between two languages to the analysis from the cultural perspective and "the interface of translation with other growing disciplines within cultural studies" (Munday, 2001, 127). Since then, many new schools and theories emerged, and those carried far-reaching significance include the Polysystem Theory represented by Itamar Even-Zohar, the Descriptive Translation Studies by Gideon Toury, the Manipulation School by André Lefevere, Susan Bassnett, and Theo Hermans, and the Deconstructionist School by Walter Benjamin, and Jacques Derrida, etc.

Different from the source-text-oriented method, theorists of cultural approaches attach more importance to the translated text and its functions. They no longer considered translated text as an appendix but as an independent literature that played an essential role in received culture. Zohar pointed out that translated literature was part of the social-cultural systems (Xie, 2012, 218).

Culture turn means the process that cultural approach substitutes for linguistic approach and cultural factors was valued by translation. Different from traditional linguistic approach by which the word, phrase, sentence, and text are the translational units, in cultural approach culture becomes the main translational unit. It emphasizes the important role that culture played in translation, and treats translation as micrographic cultural shift with the studying focus shifting from the source text to translated text, from the author to the translator and the source culture to the receptor culture. The shifts from the traditional approaches to cultural approach were mainly represented by the following aspects. (Chen & Huang, 2014)

The Polysystem Theory subverts the traditional notion that translation is the derivative and second-rate form compared to the source text. The theory saw translated literature as a system operating in the target culture's more prominent social, literary, and historical systems, which provides the framework for the newly developed target-language-oriented approach in translation studies. Another reaction to the static prescriptive models of traditional translation studies was Toury's methodology for descriptive translation studies, destabilizing the notion of an original message with a fixed meaning. In descriptive translation studies, equivalence is functional, historical, and related to the continuum of "acceptability" and "adequacy." This new understanding of the once "sacred"

criterion for translation allows for the display of the translator's subjectivity. The Manipulation School views translation as "rewriting." In his *Translation, Rewriting and Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Lefevere says: "Translation is the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting, and...it is potentially the most influential because it is able to project the image of an author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin." (Lefevere, 1992, 9) In the same book, Lefevere also claimed that "On every level of the translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations with an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tends to win out" (ibid: 39) emphasizing the significance of one of the manifestations of translator's subjectivity—ideology. Susan Bassnett also stressed the position of the target text and that the translator is as essential as the source text and the author. As for Hermans, "From the point of view of the target literature, all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose." (Hermans, 1985, 9) The translator's subjectivity began to be recognized and encouraged at that time. The Deconstructionist School pushed the study of the translator's subjectivity further. Walter Benjamin, famous for the article "The Task of the Translator" (1968), believes that it is impossible for the translator to produce identical text to the original one in the target language. The translator's task is not to reproduce the meaning in the original text but to present the hidden meanings in the original. The translator's different understanding of the meaning in the original text supplements the original. The supplement enriches the original text and gives it the "afterlife" in the target language system. For Derrida, the meaning in the original text is open and indefinite, and new meanings brought about by the translator's different interpretations ensure the continuous life of the original. The translation helps the original text overcome the time and spatial limits and enlarge its influences, so the source text is, in this sense, heavily dependent on the translation. Thus the traditional "master-servant" relationship between author and translator has been deconstructed, and the translator is given much more room to exert their subjectivity and creativity.

From the above analysis, we can see the development of the translator's subjectivity in translation studies from being ignored to being admitted and stressed. In a word, the Cultural Turn is a breakthrough in translation studies that "discovers" the translator and places the translator's subjectivity on the agenda in translation studies. People have begun to notice the influence of translations on the target culture and pay attention to the indispensable role of the translator. The translator's subjectivity gradually gains more and more concern since then.

## II. Some Perspectives from Feminist Translation Theory

The feminist trend originated from liberal feminism in the 18th century and touches every academic field, including translation studies. The interplay between these two disciplines gave birth to feminist translation studies. The most important representatives of the studies are Sherry Simon with her book *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (1996), Luise von Flotow with her *Translation and Gender: Translating in the "Era of Feminism"* (Flotow, 1997) and Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood with her *The Body Bilingual: Translating as a Feminine Rewriting* (Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991). Besides, there are Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak with her seminal essay



“The Politics of Translation” (Spivak, 1992) and Barbara Godard with her article “Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation” (Godard, 1990). Some scholars at home also researched and wrote papers in this field, such as Liao Qiyi, Jiang Xiaohua, Ge Xiaoqin, Liu Junpin, Zhang Jinghua, Xu Lai, etc.

In recent years, some scholars have claimed that feminist theory aims at understanding the nature of gender inequality (Shuo and Min, 2017); we may apply the feminist perspective to analyze gender issues in the Chinese translations of Chinese American women's literature (Tang, 2018); the translation is not only a process of transferring linguistic codes from one language to another, but it has also become a political activity (Li, 2020). After the 1990s, scholars started analyzing it from the perspective of cultural theories (Hou, 2020). This theory uses various labels to define feminist trends, which indicate the social, economic, and historical contexts in which they emerged: French feminism, Enlightenment feminism, liberal feminism, black feminism, and so on (Escudero-Alías, 2021). According to I. Irshad and M. Yasmin, the current rising number of studies on translated novels from a feminist perspective might be linked to the rising popularity of feminism, as a social and cultural phenomenon, all around the world, and particularly the rapid development of the interdisciplinary nature of translation studies in recent years (Irshad & Yasmin, 2022).

This section aims to give readers a systematic introduction to the feminist translation theory, including the birth and connotation of this theory and the challenges posed by the theory to traditional translation studies.

Feminist translation theory originated from the Western feminism movement, and it intends to eliminate discrimination against women in translation study and practice, redefine the relationship between the translation and the original and point out that translation should not only refer to specific language skills but also include culture, ideology and other issues. “To achieve these intentions, feminist translators usually adopt three translation strategies, which are preface and footnotes, supplementing and hijacking.” (Chen & Chen, 2016, 178)

This century and the late last century have witnessed the thriving of feminism, which exerts influences not only on our daily life but also on every academic field. While feminism and translation studies' joining hands is not a simple coincidence, but an inevitable trend, internal and external causes contributed to the birth of the feminist translation theory. The former refers to the historical association between feminism and translation studies, and the latter refers to the theory's theoretical source and social basis. It is the historical association between feminism and translation studies that form the solid internal driving force for these two disciplines to integrate into a whole. The close connection includes their similarities and the feminization of translation studies, which we will discuss one by one. According to Sherry Simon (1996: 8-9), the reason why feminism could exert far-reaching influences on translation studies is that these two disciplines share many similarities:

First, both feminism and translation studies fall into the category of cultural studies, which possess an interdisciplinary nature, and both consider power relationships as their motive. The purpose of feminism is to gain legitimate political rights, and the feminists adopted political movements to start their fight. Translation began to be studied as a cultural-political activity after the Cultural Turn. What source could the text be chosen to be translated? What strategies

could be used in the translation? What effects will the translated text have on the target culture? Even the choice of words—the above issues concerned in translation studies are all political-related.

Second, both feminism and translation studies hold that language expresses their cultural identity. Traditional social thoughts and literature, based mainly on the lives of men, have not provided an account of those of women, as is shown in Deborah Cameron's words:

The radical feminist view, then, is of women who live and speak within the confines of a man-made symbolic universe. They must cope with the disjunction between the linguistically validated male world view and their own experience, which cannot be expressed in male language. Indeed, since language determines reality, women maybe alienated not only from language but also from the female experience it fails to encode. (Cameron, 1985, 93)

This view believes that men make language to reflect men's realities, leaving women's realities indescribable. Sherry Simon echoes her idea: "Women's liberation must first be a liberation of/from language." (Simon, 1996, 31) Since translation conveys the idea from one language to another, language, as the medium connecting the source text and the target text, also plays an indispensable role in translation. Meanwhile, language can be used by a translator as a tool to manipulate the text and conduct a cultural intervention.

Finally, these two disciplines have many common concerns in their studies, as Simon stated in her book *Gender in Translation*:

Translation studies have been impelled by many of the concerns central to feminism: the distrust of traditional hierarchies and gendered roles, deep suspicion of rules defining fidelity and the questioning of universal standards of meaning and value. Both feminism and translation are concerned by the way "secondariness" comes to be defined and canonized; both are tools for a critical understanding of difference as it is represented in language. (Simon, 1996, 8)

Due to the above similarities, feminism and translation studies seem to be connected by the unbreakable bond which can be seen in the feminization of translation studies. Specifically, the feminization of translation studies involves three aspects: the feminization of translation status, the feminization of translation standards, and the feminization of the translator's identity. According to Bible, God first created Adam and then used one of Adam's ribs to bring Eve into being. Thus woman is derivative from man and has long been labeled as secondary, weak, humble, etc. The same is true for translation status in traditional translation studies, where the original writing is entitled to unchallenged authority. In contrast, translation is seen as derivative and inferior, which is "rarely considered a form of literary scholarship" (Venuti, 1998, 32). Therefore, "whether affirmed or denounced, the femininity of translation is a persistent historical trope, in which 'woman' and 'translator' have been relegated to the same position of discursive inferiority" (Simon, 1996, 1). In traditional translation studies, "fidelity" is regarded as the first binding principle of translation. If this norm is disobeyed, the translator may be criticized, and even his/her translation may be reduced to irresponsible. The implication is that a text (and a woman) must be

kept in check for the man/husband to be sure that the offspring—the translation or the children—are legitimately his.

Besides, we can find the feminization of translation standards through many gendered metaphors of translation. The most famous one related to women and translation is the French expression “les belles infidèles” which is equal to “the unfaithful beauties” in English. The expression means beautiful women are unfaithful, while faithful women are not beautiful, which puts “beauty” and “faithfulness” in the opposition that cannot be reconciled, just as the situation of the translation standards of “faithfulness” and “elegance.” From this term, we can see the traditional disparagement of both women and translation. John Florio holds that translators and women have historically been the weaker figures in their respective hierarchies: translators are handmaidens to authors, women are inferior to men; and all translations are “reputed females” because they are “necessarily defective” (Simon, 1996, 1). We can further reveal the unfairness of these gendered metaphors of translation can be further revealed by Lori Chamberlain’s comment in his article “Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation”:

This tag owes its longevity—it was coined in the seventeenth century—to more than phonetic similarity: what gives it the appearance of truth is that it has captured a cultural complicity between the issues of fidelity in translation and in marriage. For “les belles infidèles”, fidelity is defined by an implicit contract between translation (as woman) and original (as husband, father, or author). However, the infamous ‘double standard’ operates here as it might have in traditional marriages: the ‘unfaithful’ wife/translation is publicly tried for crimes the husband/original is by law incapable of committing. (Chamberlain, 1992, 58)

In Lori Chamberlain’s eyes, the chance of being unfaithful is left only to women/translation. In China, the situation is almost the same. As Wang Dongfeng put it, translation critics judge the translated work similarly to the meddling ladies talking about whether their next-door daughter-in-law observes the female virtues, namely, loyal to the husband. (Wang, 2003, 16)

Since fidelity is traditionally considered the top translation criterion, the original writing is entitled to supreme power. In the practice or theory of translation, the translator was then viewed as the medium between the source text and the readers, who need to be silent and invisible, having no rights to go beyond the authority of the original text. Likewise, Women lose their power of discourse and are reduced to “the Other” (Simone de Beauvoir, 1973) in society and culture, which men define as not male. The identity of the socially-denied “Other” for both translator and female reveals the feminization of the translator’s identity. Deconstructionism originates in the 1960s and France, and its leading figure is the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. The theory deconstructs some of the long-held certainties of translation, thus exerting a significant impact on traditional translation studies. The deconstructionists’ dismantlement of fundamental premises of linguistics starts with Saussure’s clear division of signified and signifier. In Derrida’s view, the supposed stability of the signified-signifier relationship does not exist because a word could and should be rendered to different meanings in different contexts. That means meaning is not definite and fixed. According to another representative of deconstructionism, Walter

Benjamin, translation does not exist to give readers the meaning of the original; it exists separately but in conjunction with the original, giving it “continued life” (Benjamin, 1969, 16). This re-creation ensures the survival of the original work once it is already out in the world, in “the age of its fame” (ibid., 17). From the above analysis, we can see the tenet of deconstructionism is to negate the traditional principle of dichotomy, including the opposition between the original text and the translated one as well as the author and the translator, deconstructing the authoritative position of both the original text and the author and elevating the low position of the translation and the translator.

Under the influence of postmodernism philosophy, the paradigm of translation studies was transformed from a structuralism linguistics paradigm to a deconstructionism paradigm, and postmodernism translation theories were innovations in the history of translation studies (Niu, 2017, 690). Similarly, feminists try all means to deconstruct the male hegemony in all aspects of social-cultural order to liberate women from men’s domination and obtain equality between men and women. Therefore, the feminist translation theory drew from the anti-traditional nature of deconstructionism and set its main aim as subverting the traditional patriarchal linguistic system, deconstructing the traditional opposition of men and women as well as the author and the translator, in order to make women’s voice to be heard and translators’ subjectivity foregrounded. As the social basis on which feminist translation theory is established, the feminist movements become the topic we need to understand clearly. The feminist trend originated from liberal feminism in the 18th century with its theoretical basis of gender theory, aiming to gain their legitimate rights to vote and receive an education. The theory of gender, whose political program is the equality between men and women, holds that it is a gender difference that causes the inequality between women and men instead of biological sexual differences. The unequal relationship witnessed three phases of change: firstly, physical difference results in social difference; secondly, social difference leads to value difference; finally, value difference causes the notion of inequality between women and men (Xi, 2003, 6). The purpose of the feminist movement is to change women’s humble status and struggle for equality between men and women in various domains by overturning the value system and ideology established by men.

In the mid to late 1960s, with post-war feminism began to thrive in Western Europe and North America, the notion of gender began to draw more and more attention of the feminists, whose famous slogan is “on ne naît pas femme, on le devient” written by Simon de Beauvoir in 1949 and translated into English by E. M. Parshley in 1953 as “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (Flotow, 1997, 5). That means a baby with female reproductive organs does not simply grow up to be a woman or turn herself into a woman. Instead, she is turned into a woman by the society where she grows up in response to society’s expectations for women. In addition, some women who translated religious works found many religious texts containing sexual discrimination. So, they adopted the “unfaithful” strategy and conducted a rewriting to eliminate the unfairness in the original writings, which started the feminists’ campaign of exercising an influence on translation theory and practice, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *Women’s Bible* as its mark. In the feminist movement, women’s self-awareness has been awakened, which led to their disbelief in the hierarchy of the patriarchal society, their denial that man is superior to women, and their question about those systems which

provide men with privileges as well as the value standards imposed on women by the patriarchal society. So they began to try all means of “doing gender” (Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991) in various domains to change the existing patriarchal society, assert their deserved rights, and foreground their subjectivity.

The feminist translation theory addresses issues of translation studies from the feminist perspective, aiming to “identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegates both women translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder” (Simon, 1996, 1). The feminist impact on translation brings about more concerns about politics. Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood views “translation in the feminine a political act, and an act of women’s solidarity.” (Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991, 65) Feminist translation theory has enlarged the boundaries of translation studies and triggered an unprecedented revolution in translation concepts and thoughts. It denies the traditional notions of translation as reproduction, arguing that translation is cultural interference and coordination during which there are creations of new meanings; it denies the traditional hierarchical concept of the superiority of the original and the subordination of the translation, redefining their relationship as coexistence; it also denies the absoluteness of meaning and emphasizes its richness and diversity, herein reinterpreting fidelity and accentuating infidelity or treason in translation (Gu, 2019, 546) For feminist translators, language is the crucial battlefield to gain their right to discourse and foreground their subjectivity in the patriarchal society. At the same time, translation is the essential means to carry the language reform, as Flotow put it: “Feminist translators are less concerned with the final product and its equivalence or fidelity than with the processes of reading, rereading, rewriting and writing again, and with issues of cultural and ideological difference that affect these processes.” (Flotow, 1997, 48)

The feminist translation theory provides an entirely new angle to translation studies, posing challenges to traditional studies, among which the most subversive ones include the redefined notion of fidelity, the negation of equivalence, and the uplift of the status of translation. The term “transnational” developed over the 20th century to describe cosmopolitan, multicultural societies that stem from migration; the concept of transnational feminist translation studies adds references to postcolonial feminisms to this term, offering new collaborative avenues of research and publication. We may discover the challenges such collaborations pose and how they have impacted an early attempt to produce an anthology of scholarly texts in transnational feminist translation studies (Flotow and Farahzad, 2017). Just as Sherry Simon stated in her book *Gender in Translation: Feminist translation theory aims to identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegates 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 be. ‘feminized’ and attempt to trouble the structures of authority which have maintained this association.”* (Simon, 1996: 1)

The conventional understanding of fidelity relies on numerous sets of rigid binary oppositions that reciprocally validate one another (ibid., 12). Since the Cultural Turn, translation has no longer been a matter of linguistic skills in word-for-word or sense-for-sense. However, an intentional rewriting activity fully engaged with cultural systems, as explained by Simon: “translation is not simple transfer, but the continuation of a process of meaning creation, the circulation of meaning within a contingent network of texts and social discourses.” (ibid., 1):

This idea moves translation away from the utopian notion of “fidelity” which is the long-dominating standard of translation, challenging the traditional view of authority in translation and meanwhile advocating the subjectivity of translators. The translation is regarded as rewriting—rewriting in a feminist way. In feminist translators’ eyes, “fidelity” in traditional translation studies implies the ideological construction of the male discourse, which helps maintain men’s dominant status. So they rebelled against the traditional translation standard, which meant depriving women’s traditional discourse power, and made their definition. For them, “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” (ibid., 2). Thus they are empowered to participate in the creation of meaning and then “communicate, re-write, manipulate a text in order to make it available to a second language public” (ibid., 9). The language here is used to fight against society’s inequality and conduct a cultural intervention.

Besides, based on deconstructionist theory, feminist translators oppose that the meaning of the source text is single and absolute. For them, it is unfair to demand that translated texts be strictly faithful to the original texts as the requirements for women to be loyal to patriarchy in history but not vice versa. If the translation is different from the original, it is the supplement to or development of the original. The traditional notion of “equivalence” believes in the fixed and unitary meaning of the original text, while feminists hold that there exists neither absolute authority nor universality. They advocate “equivalence in difference.” Influenced by Derrida’s deconstructionist theory, feminist translators argue that no definite meaning exists. Owing to the unbridgeable difference between the signifier and the signified, meaning extends in difference. So the theoretical basis for “equivalence” does not hold water for feminist translators. For them, “‘meaning’ is a feature of a specific time, constructed for a specific purpose, by a specific individual working within a specific context” (Flotow, 1997, 96). Therefore, the original text’s meaning does not simply reside in a text but is the result of negotiations and a set of relations between the social-cultural systems within which the text is produced, consumed, and represented by the author and the translator. That means there is no sole and universal meaning of the original, and the meaning reproduced in translation cannot exist forever since feminist translators view translation as a dynamic process in which different meanings in various versions influence each other. Multiple meanings are produced when the interrelationship of different versions is revealed. Also, the differences are generated out of various social experiences as well as different pre-knowledge of the individual reader, and language will code their worldview closely without any conscious choices. Hence, as a particular reader, the translator keeps expressing his/her understanding of the original text rather than the authoritative meaning, as the western saying described: “One thousand readers will create one thousand Hamlets.”

What the feminist translators want is to create differences and attract people’s attention to their translated works, to construct their identity and subjectivity in the target culture, and direct people’s focus on the gender issue in the patriarchal society as well as in language. Although traditionally, “difference” suggests translation failure, it now carries a positive connotation. It even becomes necessary for one source text to have different target texts according to different ideological positions. As Edwin Gentzler commented on Derrida’s notion of

translation: Instead of being defined merely as a crossing over in order to grasp something, translation can also provide a place or a forum for the practice of a crossing over that disseminates and escapes. "Instead of translations fixing the same meaning, translation can also allow further room for play, extend boundaries, and open up new avenues for further difference." (Gentzler, 2004, 160-161)

The feminist translators oppose the traditional understanding of the relationship between original and translated texts, which is defined as master and servant. According to Jacques Derrida, a Deconstructionism theorist, the source text is not the original text but the one which has also been translated since it is an interpretation of an idea. (Derrida, 1985) Susan Bassnett echoes this idea with her proposition that any text is not the absolute original because language is a kind of translation—first, the translation from the non-linguistic world. Then each symbol or phrase is the translation of another one. (Bassnett, 1990) Therefore, the dichotomy between the original and the translation is deconstructed. Thus there is no reason for translation to be viewed as inferior. Feminist translation theorists claim that the relationship between the original text and the translated text should be co-existent. In other words, they should be in a continuum instead of on two opposite poles that are entirely different or contradictory. In addition, Walter Benjamin pointed out in his "The Task of the Translator" that translation gives the original the continued life in the target culture, attracting the attention of the target readers. A good translation can ensure the existence of the original in different cultures and even enlarge its popularity among target-language readers. (Benjamin, 1968) For the readers in the target culture, the translated work is, in most cases, the only available text regardless of how authoritative the original text is in the source culture. Hence, the social and cultural function the translation plays in the target culture is irreplaceable by the original.

In short, translation helps the original surpass the limitation of time and space, broadening the impacts of the latter. The translated text thus does not exist for the original text but for itself. Therefore, the dependence of the original on the translation is by no means less than the dependence of the translation on the original. They supplement each other and form an organic whole. This interdependence between translation and the original is described as "symbiosis" by Bassnett, indicating that the original text and the translation should enjoy equal status. (Bassnett, 1990) Godard took this idea even further by saying: "in feminist discourse, translation is production, not reproduction," which means translation has shifted from a "reproductive activity" in the traditional view to a "productive activity." (Godard, 1990, 91)

From the above analysis, we can see that the challenges posed by the feminist translation theory to traditional translation studies have one thing in common: the nature of underlining the translator's subjectivity. Then, in addition to all those theoretical analyses, let us look at the feminist translators' practice which foregrounds their subjectivity and identity.

### III. Translators' Subjectivity in Feminist Translation

Feminist translation theory emphasizes the translator's subjectivity because of its deconstructive nature. The translator's subjectivity is brought into full play in feminist translation practice owing to feminist translators' political purpose of the

translation. This section attempts to review the strategies adopted by feminist translators to inscribe and stress their subjectivity in translation practice. Ruoxuan Sun discusses the translator's subjectivity based on Skopos's theory, exploring how it can be seen in different feminist translation strategies and analyzing how it influences Chinese feminist translation studies. The motivation arises from Sun's gender identity, gender awareness, and the fact that Chinese feminist translation theory is still at an early age, which significantly encourages Sun to do this project, attracting domestic attention to feminism and contributing to Chinese feminist translation studies. Followed by a brief introduction, a description, and an evaluation of the leading feminist translation theory, Sun critically reviews the translator's subjectivity based on Skopo's theory by analyzing, exploring, and evaluating different feminist translation strategies. In Sun's analysis, the emergence of feminist translation theory is more like a political act to reveal gender discrimination in translation. It "emphasizes the overt visibility of the translator as an agent creatively negotiates between source and target language" (Pas and Zaborowska 2017, 139). Therefore it "reinforces the translator's subjectivity. (Sun, 2021, 276) Sun continuously focuses on the influence of the translator's subjectivity in Chinese feminist translation and examines the developments of feminist translation theory in China. (Ibid., 275) For Sun, in general, Chinese feminism discourse witnessed three main stages: "the late Qing and early Kuomintang Republican years, the first three decades of the People's Republic of China, and the years following Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening-up" (Li, 2017). As influenced by the Chinese deep-rooted traditional ideology of male chauvinism, feminist translation theory did not gain popularity in China before modern times (Yu, 2015). After entering the modern period, women's voices were noticed by a small group of feminist advocators. The feminist movement, as a political legacy of the May 4th Movement in China, allowed women to play increasingly supportive and important roles in society (Liu, 2017). Then in 1999, Xie Tianzhen's \ Medío-Translatology was the first to introduce Western feminist translation studies in China" (Ibid., 2017). Reaching its peak in 2013, feminist translation was starting to become a burgeoning research area in China (Ibid., 2017).

Language is a mirror of reality, reflecting and reinforcing it. The importance of language is clearly revealed in Luce Irigaray's statement:

Language is one of the primary tools for producing meaning: it also serves to establish forms of social mediation, ranging from interpersonal relationships to the most elaborate political relations. If language does not give both sexes equivalent opportunities to speak and increase their self-esteem, it functions as a means of enabling one sex to subjugate the other. (Simon, 1996, 105)

It is doubtless that women are permanently reduced to the bottom of the social ladder, becoming the "second sex." While the language in the feminist context is no longer a static and value-free system of symbols but a medium by which men manipulate women and the arena for women to gain their power of discourse. It is viewed as a man-made artifact, made to reflect men's ideas and experiences; women are thus confined to using symbols created by men and have to express their own experiences in men's language. Hélène Cixous commented on this phenomenon:



And if you examine literature history, it's the same story. It all refers back to man, to his torment, his desire to be (at) the origin, back to the father. There is an intrinsic bond between the philosophical and the literary (to the extent that it signifies, literature is commanded by the philosophical) and phallogocentrism. The philosophical constructs itself starting with the abasement of woman. (Julian Wolfreys & William Baker, 1996, 96)

Therefore, she advocates a new rhetoric of translation that can break through the inequality between both the sexes and texts (original and translated). Especially when the source texts are ideologically unfriendly, feminist translators will rewrite them by changing the man-oriented expressions at different levels to produce a work that is in accordance with the promotion of women's ideology.

A realistic account of language use, by reference to which questions that concern feminists can be formulated, has to refine and extend, as well as instantiate, an abstract philosophical account (Hornsby, 2000, 106). We may find a considerable debate on the conceptual Chinese translation of the concept "feminism," being translated as "女性主义" or "女权主义" (Xu, 2009, 203). The differences mainly lie in explaining two Chinese characters: "性" and "权." "性" aims to seize increasing public attention on women and eliminate some sexist descriptions in translation, while "权" calls for more political involvement and employment opportunities for women. Also, the dilemma results from its political and feminist demands and desires. Because feminist translation theory was labeled an educated tool in revolutionary China (Ibid., 2009), for those reasons, we may also find two translations of "feminism" in contemporary China reflected the future trend of Chinese feminist translation, either focus on breaking male-centered society or raising woman's political position (Lin, 1997). Alexandre Baril suggests that "all feminist intersectional analyses are Anglophone and all Francophone feminists are cisgender" to highlight the exclusion of language issues in Anglophone intersectional analyses and of trans issues in their Francophone counterparts (Baril, 2017, 125)

In order to present their feminine subjectivity and better foreground their identity in translation, feminist translators prefer to choose texts for translation, which shows their initiative. Feminists point out that the patriarchal canon has traditionally defined aesthetics and literary value in terms of the privileged work by male writers. As a result, much writing by women has been "lost." Since translation plays an essential role in making available the knowledge, experiences, and creative work of our ancestors, feminist initiatives were triggered to recover the women's works that have never been translated at all and those been suspected to be misrepresented in the patriarchal translation. Numerous publications of such work have appeared in translation in recent years, often accompanied by academic essays contextualizing the source texts and discussing some issues these translations raise, such as Diane Rayor's (1991) collection of lyric poetry by women poets of ancient Greece (Rayor, 1991), Helen Dendrinou Kolias' (1989) English version of the autobiography of Elisavet Moutzan-Martinengou, a nineteenth-century upper-class woman from the Greek island of Zakynthos, and a large number of anthologies of women's writing in translation, among which the famous ones include the two volumes of *Women Writing in India* (Tharu & Lalita, 1991/1993) and *Translating Slavery: Gender*

and *Race in French Women's Writing, 1783-1823* (Kadish & Massardier-Kenney, 1994), etc.

Bible is another focus of feminist translators. They make great efforts to retranslate Bible and publish the feminist edition of it because feminist translators claim that the earlier versions of the Bible, in their eyes, are filled with male-biased language, male imagery, and metaphors so that women are excluded from the full participation in Christian belief. The earliest example of such an effort was the *Inclusive Language Lectionary* published by the National Council of Churches in 1983. This lectionary presented gender-neutral adaptations of Scripture for the readings prescribed in the *Common Lectionary*. Till 2004, there were at least 18 English versions of the Bible that were "gender-neutral" or used the "inclusive language" (Marlowe, 2001).

Feminists also cast their eyes on the influential existing translations essential for women, initiating gender-conscious translation criticism. A good example in case is the English translation of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe. Le deuxième sexe*, referred to as the "feminist bible," was published in France in 1949. Its English translation, *The Second Sex*, by American professor of zoology Howard Pashley, came out in 1952. The English version was on the New York Times bestseller list in the spring of 1953 and has seen several reprinting to see its success and influence in the target culture. However, more than ten percent of the original is deleted without any mark or explanation in this translation. Critic Margaret Simons stated that the names of 78 women—politicians, military leaders, courtesans and saints, artists, and poets—have been eliminated. (Simons, 1983) The lineage of influential women, crucial to feminist historiography, is thus broken through "patriarchal translation" (Flotow, 1997, 50). This kind of translated work also draws feminists' attention to the promotion of women's due rights and interests.

Feminist translation practice manifests feminist translators' creativity and subjectivity to a great extent. Like Peter Newmark, who argues that translators should "correct" source material in the name of the "moral facts as known" (Newmark, 1991, 46), feminist translators "correct" texts that they translate in the name of the feminist "truth." Over the past decade, many women translators have assumed the right to query their source texts from the feminist perspective, to intervene and make changes when the texts depart from this perspective. They try hard to control the power of discourse and feminize the language by employing all kinds of language techniques available to make women seen and heard in their translation and to foreground the gender bias in the source text to promote readers' reflection on gender issues. Ting Guo explores how its translation of Anglophone lesbian media content has been intertwined with global gender politics and has participated in the emergence of queer feminism in China. It argues that on the one hand, the process of researching, comparing and choosing the appropriate Chinese equivalents becomes an important process of Chinese queer feminists' self-making. (Guo, 2021, 199) As some scholars argue, prefacing and footnoting is not exclusively a feminist translation procedure; this procedure is employed in translated works that do not foreground gender. (Leonardi & Taronna, 2011; Castro, 2013) "The only practice that is considered to be essentially feminist is hijacking, the appropriation of a text whose intentions are not necessarily feminist by the feminist translator. I argue that all three practices, if employed, are still feminist if they serve to transform the fact of gender into a

social and literary project.” (Rattanakantadilok, 2017, 59)

Feminist translators create new ways of expression at the lexical level to draw readers' attention to women's creativity and belief. Luise von Flotow offers us the example of Barbara Godard's translation of *L'Amer, ou le chapitre effrité* (1977), a novel by Nicole Brossard. “Amer” contains at least three terms: mere (mother), mer (sea), and amer (bitter). It represents the author's understanding of motherhood as a bitter and embittering experience. Also, it reflects one of the essential images of feminist thinking that links women to water, to the cyclical and fluid nature of the sea (Flotow, 1997, 15). Here the untranslatable wordplay is rendered by Godard as three combined terms: “The Sea Our Mother” and “Sea (S)mothers and (S)our Mothers” in a graphic play around a capitalized “S”: “The” standing to the left, “our” and “mothers” vertically lined up on the right forming “These Our Mothers” or “These Sour Smothers” (Simon, 1996, 14), which convey the meanings embodied in the original expression. Another example is Sussanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's translation of *Letters d'une autre* by Lise Gauvin. She translates “Québécois” the adjective designating the population of Quebec, into English as “Québécois-e-s,” taking the French masculine plural (which supposedly includes all the female inhabitants of Quebec), and using a source language feminist neologism, which specifically adds the female component with the hyphen plus the silent “e,” to comprise both genders, especially to emphasize the ignored women. (Lotbinière-Harwood, 1989)

Many other new words are coined and widely used by feminist translators to stress women's participation in social and cultural activities, such as “re(her)ality” for “réalité” (Godard, 1984), “history” (hist + story, “hist” is an affix meaning “womb” in Greek) in response to “history” (his + story), etc. Feminist translators also use “chairperson” and “firefighter,” to name a few, to replace those “sexist” words in everyday use. At the same time, they avoid using derogatory affixes such as -ess, -etted. “Like any ‘ism,’ feminism is rich with jargon, which can lead deeply personal conversations to turn unnecessarily dense. While some terms are entrenched, others are contemporary additions to an evolving lexicon. To help you break through, here are definitions for everything from ‘feminism’ and ‘misogyny’ to ‘bropropriated’ and ‘feminazi.’” (Dastagir, 2017)

Desexation here refers to changes made at the grammatical level by feminist translators to inscribe their identity and strive for equality between men and women in the translated texts. Their efforts are clearly reflected in several sets of Biblical texts which have been retranslated in “inclusive language” since the Bible, in their eyes, is a book that must speak to “young and old, male and female, and persons of every racial, cultural and national background” (*Inclusive Language Lectionary*, 1983, Preface). When describing the words or recommendations of any other author or organization, it would be incorrect and unethical to use desexed or gender-inclusive language if the original author or organization did not use such language (Bartick, Stehel, and others, 2021).

In *The Word for Us*, a translation of John and Mark, Romans and Galatians, the translator Joann Haugerud asks:

When Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John and invited them to become (according to the King James and other versions) “fishers of men”, did Jesus

mean that they would set out to catch male humans only? Or were women to be included? If the former, then Christianity is really for men only and women would do well to shun it. But if Jesus meant to include all people in the invitation to a new way of living, and there is ample evidence that he did, then the correct contemporary English translation of these words is “fishers of women and men”. (Haugerud, 1977, i)

Therefore, Haugerud rejects using words such as “man” or “mankind” to include women. The translators of the *Inclusive Language Lectionary* (1983) support this position, stating that “Women have been denied full humanity by a pattern of exclusion in English usage” and that “in this lectionary all readings have been recast so that no masculine word pretends to include a woman” (Introduction). The recasting of masculine language takes several forms: terms such as “brethren” or “king,” which have exclusively male referents, have been replaced with more specific inclusive terms such as “sisters and brothers” or more general terms such as “monarch” or “ruler.” The phrases “women and men” or words such as “people” or “person” replace the generic “man” in various contexts. In addition, the “ponderous weight of masculine pronouns” (Haugerud, 1977, iii) has been weakened, which can be found in the following verse from the Revised Standard Version of John 6: 35-37:

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst...; and he who comes to me I will not cast out.....

Joann Haugerud translates as

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; anyone who comes to me shall not hunger and anyone who believes in me shall never thirst...; and those who come to me I will not cast out.....

Haugerud’s solution is to use neutral and plural pronouns to eliminate male bias. Another solution is to repeat a name rather than employ the masculine pronoun “he.” Feminist translators do not seek to change the content of those texts. However, they want to overcome some of the patriarchal excesses imposed on the Bible through translation and establish a sense of inclusive mutuality considered more appropriate to contemporary religious instruction and worship. Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood’s translation also echoes this strong stand. In her translation of “generic” writing, writing in French that uses the “universal” forms of the French language and grammar, including references to women in the predominantly masculine forms of words and agreements, she deliberately feminizes a complete English translation of a text written in “generic” French to pursuing the objective of “making women visible and resident in language and society” (Flotow, 1997, 28). She even disrupts the standard English word order, using “her and his” and “women and men” to avoid “generic male speak” in her translation (1989) of *Lettres d’une autre* by Lise Gauvin. Appropriation refers to the changes in texts whose intentions are not necessarily feminist from a feminist point of view. It is the strategy employed by feminist translators at the textual level.

The different English versions of Brossard’s “Ce soir j’entre dans l’histoire

sans relever ma jupe” are the typical examples of the application of this interventional strategy. This line is from the play *La nef des sorcières* (1976), translated as *A Clash of Symbols* by Linda Gaboriau (1979), in which many figures of women, symbolizing various roles women play, present themselves. Male translator David Ellis “faithfully” translated the sentence into “Tonight I shall enter history without lifting up my skirt.” In contrast, the feminist translator Linda Gaboriau thought his version could not reveal Brossard’s connotation of a woman’s participation in public life as an author, rather than as a stereotypical female, here as a sexually available “lover.” Therefore, she translated the sentence as “Tonight I shall step into history without opening my legs,” fully demonstrating women’s emotions after getting rid of the long-period suppression and humiliation imposed by men and striking the listening audience more forcefully. The translator thus gains much more room to exert his/her subjectivity and creativity by “hijacking” (Flotow, 1991) the intention of the original text in their translated works. Feminist translators adopt prefacing and footnoting to intervene in the source text to describe the author’s intention, as well as to explain the reason for choosing the original text for translation and translation strategies to help the readers get a better understanding of the translated works. Feminist translators may also take advantage of prefaces and footnotes to express their affinity and frustration in their encounter with the source text. In this way, the feminine identity of the translator is exposed to readers. Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood’s translation (1989) of *Letters d’une autre* by Lise Gauvin, a collection of letters to a friend abroad by a “Persian” woman visiting Quebec, serves as a good example here. Lotbinière-Harwood explained in her preface “About the *her* in other”:

Dear reader,

Just a few words to let you know that this translation is a rewriting in the feminine of What I originally read in French. I don’t mean content. Lise Gauvin is a feminist, and so am I. But I am not her. She wrote in the genetic masculine. My translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speak for women. So my signature on a translation means: this translation has used every possible feminist translation strategy to make the feminine visible in language. Because making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world. Which is what feminist all about. (Lotbinière-Harwood, 1989, 9)

What is remarkable about this explanation is that the translator's signature entitles the translator to equal authority with the author. In the rest of the preface, she gives examples of her changes. De Lotbinière-Harwood also makes many footnotes to ensure that readers are aware of the changes she has made in the translation. In a word, prefacing and footnoting prioritize the feminine identity of translators so that people will pay attention to how they translate. Feminist translators also take advantage of printing techniques to foreground women’s identity and draw readers’ attention to gender issues in the original writings as well as the translated works. For instance, when feminist translators translate the French word “une” (“one” referring to a female or feminine object), they substitute “one” in the translated text for the corresponding English word “one”

by changing the letter “e” into a bold “e” in order to present the gendered character of the French language. Another example is to use capital and bold “M” to write the word “HuMan” to lay stress on the inequality between men and women in language. To conclude, feminist translators try every means to “doing gender” (Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991) at various levels in their translation to foreground their creativity and subjectivity, as Godard’s comment concerning the work of Nicole Brossard:

Brossard disrupts these power relationships in language by challenging our normal expectations about punctuation, spacing and typography. Attempting to subvert our *passive* consumption of novel or poem, she blurs grammatical constructions, introduces blanks, gaps, ruptures, deconstructing the text so that meaning is negotiated through a perpetual process of interaction. (Godard, 1984, 15)

#### IV. Case Study of Zhu Hong’s Translation Works

Although Western feminism was introduced into China by Zhu Hong in the early 1980s, and then gradually exerted profound influences on the research and criticism of foreign literature in the following twenty years, as well as on women’s literary creations after the 1990s (Zhao, 2003, 115), its effects on translation theory and practice in China are tiny. Chinese scholars such as Liao Qiyi and so on began to cast their eyes on the impacts of feminism on translation in 2000. While an essential component of feminism, the feminist translation theory started to be noticed in 2002, when we can find six articles about the theory in national academic periodicals. Most of the research remains on the inquiry of the theoretical layer, mainly introducing the nature and characteristics of the theory. However, few have touched upon the translation practice from the perspective of feminism except Wang Xiaoyuan, who found the existence of “male dominant consciousness” in translation by studying twelve Chinese versions of *Pride and Prejudice* (Wang, 2002), and Meng Xiangzhen, who asserted “gender difference” in translation between male and female translators after comparing the two Chinese versions of *Wuthering Heights* translated by Yang Bi (female) and Fang Ping (male) respectively. (Meng, 2002) Both Wang and Meng focus their studies on English-Chinese translation practice. The original works chosen are typical feminist writing with solid feminine awareness in Western literary circles. In this section, we will analyze Zhu Hong’s Chinese-English translation of a Chinese female writer—Lu Xing’er’s essay “Are Women ‘as Good as Men’?” from the collection *A Frolic in the Snow* will be analyzed to explore how the Chinese female translator with strong feminine awareness, foregrounds her femininity and subjectivity in the process as well as the product of the translation. Meanwhile, the differences between female Chinese translators and their western counterparts will also be discussed.

Zhu Hong<sup>1</sup>, a former researcher at the Institute of Foreign Literature, the

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<sup>1</sup> Zhu Hong belongs to the first generation of female literary critics in China and the first female translator to introduce contemporary Chinese literature to the English-speaking world. She is the author of *A Brief*

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, is one of the feminists in China and a famous female translator with strong gender awareness, as well as a critic of feminine literature in China. She committed herself to introducing the ideology of feminism to China and promoting cultural understanding between Chinese and English peoples. She first introduced feminism in the 1980s, and she has also translated some contemporary Chinese novels and short stories into English and published them in the United States and other countries, aiming at letting foreign readers hear all kinds of voices uttered by Chinese women and help them to understand the living status and puzzles of Chinese women (Mu, 2003, 43). In January 2018, eighty-five-year-old Zhu Hong 朱虹 appeared at the Beijing Book Order Fair for the publication of the translation "Warm Thorns 温暖的荆棘," a bilingual version in Chinese and English, written by the famous Chinese female writer Bi Shumin 毕淑敏.

Aided by the Harvard-Yanqing Association in the 1980s, Zhu Hong went to America to complete her share of a task for the book entitled *A Brief History of American Literature*. She was inspired and enlightened by the feminine literature and studies there and then compiled a book of American women's literary works. She also admitted that her concern over women's issues had affected her translation (ibid., 42). Later, in 1989 when Britain financially aided her on a trip to Italy, a strong desire struck her to introduce contemporary Chinese female writers and their works to foreign cultures. As a result, many Chinese-English translated works regarding women's issues came out, among which the famous ones include *The Chinese Western*, *The Serenity of Whiteness*, *The Stubborn Porridge and Other Stories*, and *A Frolic in the Snow*, etc.

Chinese feminism, a women's movement for independence and equal rights in western countries, shares the same aims as Western feminism. However, as an intellectual trend, due to different social and historical backgrounds, Chinese feminism differs from Western one. The latter gives prominence to women's self-consciousness and the request for truth, so the development of its movement is of solid individual characteristics. At the same time, feminism in China is characterized by group consciousness. In addition, since women in China have been suppressed by feudalism for a long time, and the traditional Chinese culture puts excellent values on harmonious interpersonal relationships, their self-consciousness is not as apparent as their western counterparts. As a result of the above social and cultural differences, Chinese feminism cannot be as radical as western feminism, and the strategies adopted by Chinese women translators, in general, are more moderate and gentle. Based on the above analysis, we can easily understand Zhu Hong's similarities and different characteristics in her translation compared to Western feminist translators. Like western feminist translators, she prefers to translate literary works written by the same sex, especially those works concerning women's issues written by Chinese women writers with feminine awareness. Therefore we can see her subjectivity and female consciousness in the choice of source texts.

From Zhu Hong's point of view, works about women from the angle of the

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*History of American Literature* and *The Art of Dickens' Fiction, Essays on English and American Literature, Selected Western Chinese Novels* (Chinese to English), the editor-in-chief of *the Dictionary of Foreign Women's Literature*, and many other works.

female is different from those written by a male because male writers are likely to treat gender issue as social problems. In contrast, female writers can better understand women's unique psychological and physiological feelings, which can help better reveal the authors' ideas. There are two criteria for her selection: one is that the writer is female, and the other is that the characters are female. (Jiang, 2004, 14) The reason, according to herself, is that "I feel I can get into their (female writers) hearts and grasp what they what to express and identify myself with the original writer"(Mu, 2003, 44). In addition, she found distance when translating works of male writers (ibid: 44). Zhu Hong also shows her female consciousness in her translated works. Generally speaking, she will first try to get the main idea embodied in the original text with her own experiences and knowledge and her understanding of gender issues. Then, accordingly, she will set the appropriate keynote for the translation and employ some manipulation strategies, ones different from those of western feminist translators. The following part is a practical inquiry into Zhu Hong's translation of a Chinese female writer, including a comparison between female Chinese translators and western feminist translators.

Influenced by Western feminism, feminist literature began to develop in China in the early 1980s and has witnessed rapid development in the last twenty years. Huang Lin, a famous Chinese feminist critic, once delivered a speech in Hong Kong on the topic of "The Formation and Evolution of Mainland Feminist Writing of the 80s and 90s", in which she divided the development of Chinese feminine literature into three stages: 1) the formation stage since the early 1980s; 2) the growing stage in the mid-and-late 1980s; and 3) the stage of feminist writing since early 1990s. Lu Xing'er 陆星儿, a member of the Chinese Writers' Association, is a typical outstanding female writer out of the first stage with awakened feminine consciousness, whose writings are mainly about women's lives. She was born in 1949 and joined the nationwide Movement of Educated Youth, Going to and Working in the Countryside and Mountain Areas in 1968—she went to the Great Northern Wilderness and stayed there for ten years. Lu Xing'er belongs to a group of educated youth writers, and her writing career started from her experience in that remote rural area.

Upon her death in 2004, many famous Chinese writers spoke highly of her devotion to feminine literature. She claimed that males and females differ from each other physiologically, psychologically, and emotionally. While having an online chat with her fan readers, she advocated the gender difference in writings, saying that men and women are different in their understanding and feelings towards the world and that women are more sentimental while men are more rational; as a result, the perspective of women and that of men are for sure different in representing life and world, which lead to the apparent difference in their writings. She is always concerned about women's lives, especially exploring the fate of Chinese women to voice out women's rights and privileges in her works. She is good at challenging the "universally acknowledged" concepts from the female perspective (Zhu, 2002, 95). According to Qiao Yigang, we can understand women's awareness in two ways from the perspective of the female subject: one is to get an insight into women from the female perspective and to define the nature and life meaning of themselves as well as their position in society; the other is to examine the outside world from the feminist perspective and try to grasp a better understanding of female characteristics. (Qiao, 2004,



141). The essay "Are Women 'as Good as Men'?" falls into the former way. It is an example of Lu Xing'er's challenge to the "universally acknowledged" role of women imposed by tradition, society, and men.

From the perspective of a woman, Lu Xing'er raises doubt about two slogans—"women hold up half the sky" and "women are as good as men" and "women should be womanly, must show femininity"—which have been taken for granted by the society and men, arguing that "I have my reservations." The former is regarded as the "indisputable truth" of these two slogans" when the author was a little girl. At the same time, men proposed the latter due to the liberation of their desires with the reform policy and opening up to the outside world. To the author, these two slogans, taken as "an emblem of women's liberation" and "a big step forward for Chinese women" from some people's point of view, are the requirements imposed on women by men. In her mind, women thus have to shoulder more responsibilities and heavier burdens than their male counterparts, which causes all women to feel "exhausted and drained." She also leaves a thought-provoking question in the ending part: since "the liberating 'just as good' and the progressiveness of 'not as good' are all demands made by men on women," how do men "to be liberated from tradition and making some progress themselves"? The subversive analysis of the slogans and the satirical tone in this article fully demonstrate Lu Xing'er's feminine consciousness and will for sure trigger readers' reconsideration of the status and challenging position of contemporary women in China.

Zhu Hong, as the translator of the text full of rising feminist ideas, manifests her subjectivity through conscious or unconscious manipulation in the translation under the premise of grasping the intention of the author and bringing to the target readers the treatment of contemporary Chinese women. The following part is a detailed analysis of strategies employed by her in the translated text. Reinforcement here refers to the translator's practice of choosing more vital words in the target language to reinforce the meaning of the original, which means the connotations of the words chosen by the translator are more prosperous than the words in the original text to achieve a more substantial literary effect. In other words, the translator tries to strengthen the impact of certain words by endowing the originally plain words with greater force to let those words strike the target readers more impressively. The following examples can illustrate what efforts Zhu Hong has made in her choice of words so that the meanings or the connotative force of those words are upgraded to a higher level than their counterparts in the original.

Example 1:

那时候，这口号被我们喊在嘴上，心里只感到骄傲与豪迈。

At the time, as we *chanted* the slogan, our hearts were filled with pride.

Example 2:

时过境迁，在“男女都一样”的口号被喊得过于长久之后，社会来了改革。

And now times have changed. The slogan "women are as good as men" has obviously been *flaunted* long enough. With the onward march of time, reform has *set in*.

Example 3:

他们对女人的要求和欲望便相应地来了改革，不再停留在“都一样”的刻上，而是提出新口号：“女人应该像个女人，一寸一寸都要体现出女人味道。”

Their demands on and their desires for women have also undergone a reform and

have moved beyond the marker of being “as good as.” Now they have *unleashed* a new slogan: “women should be womanly, must show femininity.”

Example 4:

难怪女人们一致地感到辛苦感到劳累。

No wonder women all feel *exhausted* and *drained*.

The above four examples show Zhu Hong’s subjective manipulation in the translated text. The authors use an italic font in both the source and target text to highlight the translator’s reinforcement strategy.

Example 1 fully reveals people’s zeal and excitement about the slogan “women hold up half the sky” and “women are as good as men” in those days. From the source text, we can get the idea that the people were so passionate about the slogan that even little girls at that time knew it and yelled it out with pride. While the translator uses the word “chanted” rather than “yelled” or “shouted,” the corresponding expressions in the literal sense in English, for “喊在嘴上” to achieve a more substantial literary effect. The word “chanted” means “to sing or shout the same words and phrases many times” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary*, 2004, 264), which contains richer connotations and implications than the Chinese phrase “喊在嘴上.” “Chant” can also be used as a noun, which means “a religious song or prayer or a way of singing, using only a few notes that are repeated many times” (*ibid.*, 264). So the word “chanted” chosen here may carry two implications, both of which reinforce the meaning expressed by the author in the original: one is that women in China so welcomed the slogan standing for the liberation of Chinese women that even little girls shouted it out many times every day; the other is that this slogan was accepted and cherished by women as something sacred, like a chant.

In example 2, the English word chosen to represent the meaning of “喊” in the source text is “flaunted,” a word usually with a disapproving connotation, whose meaning is “to show something you are proud of to other people, in order to impress them” (*ibid.*, 662). From the original context, we can see that the author is aware that “basically women are not the same as men,” although women are told so. The slogan “women hold up half the sky” and “women are as good as men” is the demands imposed on women by men under the disguise of the “emblem of women’s liberation.” Grasping the author’s intention, Zhu Hong shows her critical and negative attitude towards the slogan by using the usually derogatory word “flaunted”, which also uncovers the situation that the seemingly proud slogan deceived women for a long time. The female translator’s feminine consciousness is inscribed into the target text with the reinforcement of the meaning that the author wants to express in the original. In addition, readers may sense the satirical tone of the text and understand the translator’s and the author’s genuine attitude toward the slogan. Let us look at the translation of “来了” in example 2. The phrase “set in” usually refers to “something unwelcome, such as rain, bad weather, and infection, etc., to begin and seem likely to continue” (*ibid.*, 1589). Therefore, “set in” chosen here, instead of the plain and neutral word “come,” implies that women could only passively accept the social reform as well as men’s new demands for women came together with the reform. The phrase also reflects that women did not hail the reform, which brought new male demands on them as they disliked bad weather and infection. Besides, the phrase

“set in” indicates the possible continuation of men’s reformed requirements on women—“women should be womanly, must show femininity.” Here the deliberate choices of words made by the translator reinforce the original meaning expressed by the author from the feminist perspective.

The same case also applies to example 3. For the Chinese expression “提出,” there are such corresponding ones in English as “bring forward,” “put forward,” or “propose.” The translator, however, uses “unleashed,” which means “to suddenly let a strong force, emotion, etc. be felt or have an effect” (ibid., 1933). In fact, “提出” in Chinese is quite a neutral word. So we can see that the author does not attach much personal feeling or emotion to this expression in the source text. While “unleashed” in the target text implies that men released their demands and desires on women without hesitation or restraint. The satirical tone is exposed from the use of the word “unleashed,” indicating that “male demands and male desires” had been under suppression before (which was not true) and now were finally released with the reform. Therefore, the word “unleashed” chosen by the translator helps strengthen the satirical tone running through the original text, satirizing those men who know and satisfy their own needs without considering their female counterparts.

In example 4, the translator adds more message to the Chinese expressions of “辛苦” and “劳累” by translating them into “exhausted” and “drained” instead of employing such equivalent terms in the literal sense of “difficult” or “tired.” The level of tiredness expressed by “exhausted” is higher than that conveyed by “tired” and “drained,” which means “very tired and without energy,” carries the level even further. These two words, carefully chosen by the translator, further stress the heavy burden men imposed on women: “They must be like men to avoid being despised by men, and then they must be different from men to be desired by men.” So the meaning in the original is upgraded in the translated text. Thus, readers’ sympathy toward women’s situation of being driven to complete exhaustion will most likely be stirred up.

From the above four examples, we can see that Zhu Hong fully grasps the satirical tone and the awakened feminine consciousness the original author intended to convey and strengthens them by reinforcing the meanings of some words in the source text to arouse target readers’ reflection on the situation Chinese women were thrown into. The modification here refers to the translator’s deliberately making slight changes to the source text. With a strong sense of feminine consciousness, Zhu Hong made some purposeful changes in the translated text to better reveal Chinese women’s treatment in the patriarchal society. As a result, the translator infuses her feminine ideas into the target text through those alterations and lets the translation better serve her feminist purpose. The following examples can illustrate this point:

Example 5:

女人的“一样”和“不一样”

Are Women “*As Good As Men*”?

Example 6

在我们还是小女孩的时候，我们就懂得一条千真万确的道理：妇女半边男女都一样

Ever since I was a little girl, we all held it as an *indisputable truth* that “Wome

hold up half the sky,” that “women are just as good as men.”

Example 7

……总之，在各行各业女人们的表现决不落后于男人；总之，男人能做事情女人没有办不到的；总之，女人和男人应该而且必须并驾齐驱

...that women have *caught up with men* in every field of action; that women were perfectly capable of doing whatever men can do; that women can and must keep up with men.

Example 8

其实，所谓“一样”的口号，使女人们在做着女人的同时再做男人；其所谓“一样”的口号，让女人们又给自己加重一挑担子；其实，女人和在根本上还是不一样

The fact is, “women are as good as men” means that women after doing what women do, *must take up another burden*. *Let's face it*, basically women are not the same as men.

Example 9:

那么，男人世界又是如何要求男人们从传统中得到解放和进步的呢？

Now *what about asking men to be liberated from tradition and making some progress themselves?*

The above examples manifest the strategy of modification employed by the translator. In example 5, the translation of the title of the source text, we can see the apparent interventions made by Zhu Hong, reflected by three alterations: first, the translator does not put “一样” into simple equivalences such as “same”, “alike” or “equal”; instead, she uses “as good as” to compare men and women; second, the translator omits “不一样” in her translation; third, the translator adds a question mark at the end of the title, converting the originally declarative title into an interrogative one. Let us examine these slight changes one by one. “Good” here does not refer to the good or evil quality in morality or ethics. However, it indicates personal values, including one’s abilities, potentials, and talents, which fully and adequately convey the meaning expressed by “一样” in the title 女人的“一样”和“不一样。” Besides, the translated version of “as good as” for “一样” could better reflect women’s self-affirmation of their value and their consciousness of struggle for equality in the patriarchal society—they are not satisfied with just being “the same” as men and desire to be “as good as” men since “women were perfectly capable of doing whatever men can do.” Then the omission of “不一样” in the translation, together with the addition of the question mark at the end of the original title, focus readers’ attention on the question “Are Women ‘As Good As Men?’” and ignite their interests to read on to find the answer to the question in the following article. It should be mentioned that the translator renders the expressions “一样” and “不一样” that appear many times in the source text into different English versions to match different contexts.

In example 6, “千真万确的道理” was translated into “indisputable truth,” which strengthens the original meaning—“truth” refers to “a fact most people believe that to be true” (ibid: 1896), while the adjective “indisputable,” which means allowing of no contention, further reinforces the authority of the slogan “women hold up half the sky” and “women are as good as men” that no one doubts its authenticity. The translation of “千真万确

的道理” by Zhu Hong vividly portrayed the naivety, earnestness, and persistence of the little girls the exact age of the author—they would for sure defend against those people who held suspicion about the “indisputable truth” in their minds. In addition, the translation of “indisputable truth” also paves the way for the following parts in which the author shoots her disputes at the “authoritative” slogan.

Example 7 is another good instance where the female translator's subjectivity can be easily detected because the translation represents the translator's feminine awareness in her translation of “决不落后于男人” into “have caught up with men” rather than “not drop behind men,” and “并驾齐驱，” into “keep up with men” rather than “run neck and neck.” The translator shows initiative in adding her understanding to the original text. The phrase “not drop behind men” will give the readers the impression that women are likely to be left behind by men. While “have caught up with men” gives prominence to women's struggle for equal positions and fair treatment in the patriarchal society, it demonstrates women's strong will to realize their value in the male-dominated world. Furthermore, the phrase “keep up with men” instead of “run neck and neck” for “并驾齐驱” intensifies the difficulty for women to make achievements as men although they are “just as good as men, just as smart, just as capable just as talented.” Therefore, with the intentional modifications in the translated text, these two phrases reveal the translator's inclination to expose her feminine consciousness with implied criticism for the unfair treatment women receive in the male kingdom.

In example 8, the author exposes the profound implications hidden behind the slogan “women are as good as men”—to “accomplish” the demands put on women by men means, in addition to doing what they are supposed to do, generally the things “men do not stoop to,” women also have to do the things as men at the same time, which means another burden put on their shoulders in the eyes of the author. Zhu Hong changes the original by omitting the part of “再做男人” so that readers' attention is directed to the burden part. Another noticeable alteration made by the translator in this example is the translation of the adverbial phrase “其实” appearing three times. The three parallel sentences beginning with “其实” in the original text are structurally altered in the target text. After combining the first two clauses into one sentence, the last “其实” was converted into an imperative sentence, “let's face it,” calling on readers to face reality under the disguise of “women are as good as men” that “basically women are not the same as men.”

The original text in example 9 is a question the author raises for readers to ponder at the end of the article. At the same time, the translator renders the interrogative sentence into a suggestion by employing “what about” in the translation, from which the translator implies the inferior position occupied by women with the satirical tone—in response to “the liberating ‘just as good’ and the progressiveness of ‘not as good,’” the changing demands made on women by men, women politely suggest “asking men to be liberated from tradition and making some progress themselves,” which better underlines the inequality between men and women.

From the above analysis, we can see that Zhu Hong foregrounds her subjectivity and feminine features in translation by making modifications to better

disclose Chinese women's actual situation to the outside world.

Supplementing is one of the standard practices of western feminist translators, by which feminist translators can make up for the difference between the source and target language. In the compensation process, translators can rewrite the original text creatively based on the feminist stand and belief. Feminist translators can use supplementing to add their point of view and ideology to the translated text. Barbara Godard's translation of *L'Amor* mentioned above is a typical example of the application of supplementing strategy, and while in the case of Zhu Hong's translation, supplementing is usually a means of compensating for the necessary information from her point of view, which is absent in the original text, to highlight the feminist values. In other words, Zhu Hong deliberately adds some message to the target text to make up for the information she considers missing or implied in the source text. The added information in the target text thus reflects her insight into women's issues in China and manifests her feminine consciousness in projecting gender differences. The following examples show how she uses this strategy to foreground her subjectivity.

Example 10

仔细想想，“男女都一样”的口号曾鼓舞着许多妇女竭力地建树了和男  
样的丰功伟绩

Come to think of it, the slogan “women are as good as men” has spurred women on to achievements *to challenge men's*.

Example 11:

同时，女人却依然要做那些和男人不一样的事。

But at the same time, women must still do what men do not *stoop to*.

Example 12:

在强调“一样”时，女人和男人并非真的一样

When we stressed that women should be “just as good as men”, women in reality were not *limited to* being “just as good”.

Example 13

要求她们既要做得和男人“一样”，不被男人轻视，又要做得“不一样”，  
人们欢欣，她们真是招架不住的，而且，也是不公平的

They must be like men to avoid being despised by men, and then they must be different *from men* to be desired by men. How can they bear the strain! It is no fair.

As seen in each of the above examples, the translator supplemented the expressions with underlines. In example 10, instead of simply putting “和男人一样的丰功伟绩” into its literal translation of “same achievements as men's,” the female translator adds “to challenge men's” as the modifier to the “achievements” in the target text, which sheds light on a woman translator's affirmation of as well as admiration for women. As a female translator with a feminine consciousness, Zhu Hong always consciously or unconsciously leads readers to respect women for their accomplishments that challenge men and their efforts to fight for equality in the male-dominating society. The word “challenge” also fully reveals women's strong will and desire to be “as good as men” and even surpass them in every field of action.

The original meaning of the source text in example 11 is that besides making achievements to be “as good as men,” women must still do what men will not do.

In the target text, Zhu Hong supplements the expression “和男人不一样的事” with “stoop to (do)” to reveal the reality that what women initially do is what men show contempt for since the word “stoop” means “to lower one’s moral standards to do something bad or unpleasant” (ibid: 1737). Therefore, the unfair nature of the slogan “women are as good as men” was disclosed—the demands made by men on women put another burden on women’s shoulders. Moreover, it is a one-way slogan from men to women as there is no “corresponding demand on men to be ‘just as good as women.’” The added expression “stoop to (do)” also reveals women’s inferiority in the patriarchal society as what they do is what their male counterparts disdain to do. So Zhu Hong’s deliberate supplementing here highlights her subjectivity and the feminine consciousness in the target text and directs readers’ attention to the gender issues in the male-dominating world.

In example 12, “女人和男人并非真的一样” was translated into “women, in reality, were not limited to being ‘just as good,’” in which the phrase “limited to” was the translator’s supplement into the original text. The added part reflects Zhu Hong’s perception of the deceitful slogan, as the author wrote, “The fact is, ‘women are as good as men’ means that women after doing what women do, must take up another burden.” The expression “not limited to” also exposes Zhu Hong’s indignation about men’s unlimited demands on women and the unfair treatment Chinese women receive in the patriarchal society.

In the last example cited above, “男人” (men) appears three times in one sentence in the source text, from which we can see the author wants to emphasize men’s caprice with their changing demands on women. In contrast, Zhu Hong adds one more “man” in the target text, intensifying the tone and making the translation sound more forceful in criticizing the male-dominating world. The added “men” form a more stable parallel structure of the translated text, further emphasizing the unfair treatment men imposed on women. The frequent repetition of the word “men” helps create the feeling of oppression, which echoes women’s oppression imposed by men. Another application of the supplementing strategy in example 13 is the translation of “How can they bear the strain!” for “她们真是招架不住的。” From Zhu Hong’s point of view, all the demands and desires made by men for women are too much for women to endure, so she changes the declarative sentence into an exclamatory one to strengthen the original tone text. Moreover, the word “strain” is supplemented here, not only concluding the result of the fact that women “must be like men to avoid being despised by men, and then they must be different from men to be desired by men” but also stressing women’s excessive pressure imposed by the patriarchal society in both physical and mental sense.

Throughout the translation, we can locate many places where Zhu Hong employs the strategy of supplementing to implant her ideas and foreground her ideology, giving full play to her subjectivity as a female translator with solid feminine consciousness.

From the above analysis of the English version of *Are Women “as Good as Men,”* we can see that Zhu Hong displays her subjectivity in translation through the employment of strategies including reinforcement, modification, and supplementing. With her aim of helping the outside world know Chinese women and their situations, then arousing readers’ reflection upon gender issues in China in the target culture, Zhu Hong, who has solid feminine awareness, fully

demonstrates her initiative in the process of translation—first in choosing the source texts, second in infusing her understanding into the target text. As a representative of the female Chinese translator of contemporary Chinese literature, Zhu Hong's work shares similarities with the translations of western feminists, but also it has its features. Both Zhu Hong and feminist translators in the west made changes and added their understanding and ideology to the target texts to make women visible in the texts. Nevertheless, due to the difference in social and cultural backgrounds between China and western countries, Zhu Hong displays her subjectivity consciously and unconsciously through mild strategies. She chooses those female works with a feminist tendency for her translation. At the same time, her western counterparts mostly translate experimental feminist works with “enormous technical challenges in the translations” (Flotow, 1997, 14), so they need to use more radical strategies mentioned in section 3, like coining new words, prefacing and footnoting, and even printing techniques, etc. Besides, unlike the vigorous feminist movements, feminism in China developed as an intellectual trend. Women got many of their rights peacefully, which determined that too radical translation strategies are not likely to be accepted. However, in her translation, Zhu Hong has indeed “overstepped the bounds of invisibility that traditionally define her role” (ibid., 21). She achieved the “visibility” of the translator. Moreover, it is her female features, consciously or unconsciously, that help us remember that gender, as a form of expression of ideology, plays its role in translation.

#### V. Two Critiques of Feminist Translation Theory

Undoubtedly, the feminist approach to translation and translation studies has widened the scope of translation studies, infusing new blood into formal translation studies. Feminist translation not only provides studies on the translator's subjectivity with a brand new perspective—a gender perspective. It also offers a wide variety of possibilities for feminist translators to exert their subjectivity. However, to realize its political purpose, the feminist translation theory puts too much emphasis on the feminist translators' manipulation of language and intervention, which to some extent departs from or even distorts the nature of translation activity. Inevitably the theory has encountered severe criticisms. According to Flotow (ibid., 77), the criticisms addressed to the feminist approach to translation and translation studies can be divided into two types: one from outside feminisms and the other from within feminisms. In the Middle Ages, women formally entered the field of translation by translating the Bible and thus gave birth to the feminist translation theory. On this basis, feminist translators carried out translation practice. “The application of the theory caused many limitations and dishonest problems, such as deliberately modify the original content, increase and bowdlerize footnotes. This article discusses the theoretical basis and the limitations of this theory, so as to the conflict and combination of theory and practice of puts forward possible solutions.” (J. Xiang, T. Xiang & Hu, 2021, 100)

Critics from the outside favor an “objective” approach to scholarship and writing. They consider that “gender issues are too emotional, too partisan, too ideological, in fact, too subjective for real scholarship” (Flotow, 1997, 77).



Certain scholars disclose that some demands of feminists are too extravagant, destructive, and unfounded. If these demands are attained, they will have dysfunctional effects on women and society. Those scholars are using critical reasoning to show the feminists where they got it right and, more significantly, where they got it wrong.

They got it right when they demand for freedom from all forms of discriminations and when they campaign for their inalienable rights but they got it wrong when they seek political, economic and social equality. These rights are alienable and thus cannot be granted but attained. The rights that are fundamentally human, can be granted but there are others that can only be developed by the individual. The feminists are wrong to demand for such rights. The feminists are therefore advised to work hard to attain equality, for it is a product of hard work and not something that is to be granted. However, while working to attain this equality they should be mindful of the consequences of this struggle (Bisong & Ekanem, 2014, 33)

One criticism of this category focuses on the issue of “gender neutrality” — the feminist initiatives in Bible translation. According to Nida, most living creatures are of either the female or male sex, so “there are no cognitive models to form a basis for understanding such gender neutrality” (Nida, 1995). “Biological sexual difference is thus seen to make gender a given that must be recognized and expressed in language, and that cannot be linguistically transgressed” (Flotow, 1997, 78). The argument is directed against language reform, one of the foundations of feminist activity. Nida argues that inclusive language in Bible translation is “no valid solution to the issue of gender neutrality” (Nida, 1995), holding that only radical change within the Christian church will lead to changes in the inequitable roles assigned to women and men.

An example in case is the term “androgyny,” first put forward by the famous feminist literary critic and writer Virginia Woolf to refer to an ideal man-woman relationship, presently refers to “the union of the physical characteristics of both sexes in one being” (Flotow, 1997, 78). This union could be taken as a form of gender neutrality. However, in this term, the expression of the male part, “andro,” still comes first. After examining Beauvoirian androgyny, Megan M. Burke argues that androgyny is an affective mood constitutive of openness to the possibility of living with sexual differences. Consequently, androgyny plays a central role in fraternité and gestures to a future beyond dimorphic sexual difference. Accordingly, Beauvoir’s brief reference to the androgynous world of the future appears as she reimagines the reproductive heterosexual couple.

If we follow Beauvoir carefully, androgyny compels the pursuit and realisation of a relation to freedom that does not rely on the exploitation of facticity and the subordination of difference. Instead, androgyny is that which affectively orients us towards new ways of assuming our situations, allowing us to turn away concretely from the masculinist mood of the past. Rather than dismissing the place of androgyny in Beauvoir’s future world, considering what an androgynous milieu would do to our embodied expressivity allows us to push the limits of Beauvoir’s political vision. (Burke, 2019, 16)

Another type of criticism directed against gender-conscious translation addresses various kinds of translation metatexts appearing with the experimental work and

the numerous anthologies of women's writing as "superfluous 'noise' that distracts from the actual text" (Flotow, 1997, 78), which means the translations with those metatexts cannot stand on their own. That is to say, the metatexts in the feminist translations provide essential material and the necessary information for readers to understand the translated texts.

Canadian Robyn Gillam (1995) levels the charge of "elitism" to the experimental feminist writing, which is "not meant for popular consumption but aimed at an educated readership with some knowledge of the burgeoning women's movement and the willingness to engage in linguistic work" (Flotow, 1997, 79). Gillam's main point is that specific translations make the already difficult source texts even more obscure, thus lacking accessibility for common readers. Similarly, Rita Felski (1989) claims that French feminism "overestimates the political effects of language games" (Flotow, 1997, 80). In the critics' eyes, some feminist translations are only addressed to a small group of academics who are already bilingual and, at the same time, have interests in the linguistic achievements of both the author and the translator. For instance, Evelyne Voldeng attacks Godard's English translation of Brossard's *L'Amèr, ou le chapitre effrité* for "creating a puzzling ambiguity that only a bilingual reader understands when referring to the source text," which actually loses the significance of translation. (Voldeng, 1985, 139)

The terms employed by Brazilian critic Rosemary Arrojo (1994) to refer to feminist intervention in the translation are "opportunism," "hypocrisy," and "theoretical incoherence." For Arrojo, "it is opportunistic to claim to be faithful to the tenor of a text, as Suzanne Levine does, and yet admit to deliberately intervening in the translation for feminist reasons" (Flotow, 1997, 82). By "hypocrisy," Arrojo attacks the "double standard" adopted by feminist translators. Feminists describe the theories produced by George Steiner as violent and aggressive (in his well-known article "The Hermeneutic Motion," Steiner described the process of translation as a four-step process: trust, penetration, incorporation, and restitution, which denotes men's erotic possession of women) while they refuse to see that feminist intervention is no less aggressive. For example, an expression like "hijacking," a commonly used strategy in feminist translation proposed by Flotow (1991), refers to translators' appropriation of text whose intention is not necessarily feminist from a feminist point of view (see 3.3.3). By "theoretical incoherence," R. Arrojo sees that it is theoretically incoherent for feminist writers or translators to claim to "recreate meaning, anew" while admitting that "no meaning can ever be 'reproduced' or 'recovered' but is always created, or recreated, anew" (Arrojo, 1994, 158).

Moreover, Gayatri Spivak (1988) points out the tendency of new colonization in feminist translation. In her opinion, the Anglo-American feminist translators were overly appropriate. They intervened in third-world female literature, thus changing the original writing style and eliminating the differences in women's lives in the third world. These translations "construct a third world as well as a third world literature that correspond to western tastes" (Flotow, 1997, 85). In a word, the limitations of the feminist translation lie in its overemphasis on the translator's subjective and creative role in translation—they overdo their feminist ideas. We should be aware that if the female translator's subjectivity is projected to the extreme, the danger of another kind of discourse power tendency will arise. We try to avoid both feminist translation theories and practice from going

extreme.

In recent years, one of the primary debates has been Socialist Feminism vs. Liberal Feminism. K. Ghodsee examines the feminist networks that developed between the Second and Third Worlds and shows how alliances between socialist women challenged American women's leadership of the global women's movement. Drawing on interviews and archival research across three continents, she argues that international ideological competition between capitalism and socialism profoundly shaped the world women inhabit today (Ghodsee, 2019). There is a (post)socialist "missing other" from the intellectual spaces occupied by transnational feminism, "we do not believe that this is only due to an epistemic exclusion borne of a strict, Western-centric frame that continues to represent itself as universal and delocalized" (Bonfiglioli & Ghodsee, 2020). What is socialist feminism, and why is it needed to fight the global rise of authoritarianism and fascism? Frieda Afary brings the insights gained through her study of feminist philosophy and offers a bold new vision of an alternative to capitalism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and alienation (Afary, 2022) In Diane Grossman's examination, "popular culture" shapes and is shaped by ideology, including gender ideology. For this reason, early second-wave feminist theory and activism saw popular culture as one of the most critical impediments to women's liberation. Where liberal feminists sought more representative models for women in popular culture, Marxist feminists, like Marxists more generally, tended to see popular culture as a product of capitalist production and, therefore, problematic not only at the level of gender analysis but also as antithetical to the class struggle (Grossman, 2020, 321). Lucy Delap provides a global history of the movement against gender injustice, clarifies questions of feminist strategy, priority, and focus in the contemporary moment, and incorporates alternative starting points and new thinkers, challenging the presumed priority of European feminists and ranging across a global terrain of revolutions, religions, empires and anti-colonial struggles (Deplap, 2020) Some scholars argue that the rich scholarship on suffrage and post-suffrage magazines suggests methodologies and strategies for investigating feminist magazines throughout the twentieth century and exploring their media ecologies. Drawing on recent critiques of feminist historiography, they posit that, as mediating objects and sites of activism, periodicals can tell stories about feminist histories. However, they can also problematize those stories, refusing to plug historical gaps and resisting producing a singular and unified history of feminism (Baril, 2017, 125).

### Conclusion

*The Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism, and Gender* provides a comprehensive overview of feminism and gender consciousness in contemporary translation studies. This handbook applies a transnational approach to the subject, which is being developed in many parts of the world--more than 20 countries, such as Russia, Chile, Yemen, Turkey, China, India, Egypt, the Maghreb, and also the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Europe. It presents, discusses, and critically examines the many different aspects of gender in translation and its local and transnational implications (von Flotow & Kamal, 2021). The translation is a subjective social-cultural activity inseparable from translators' efforts. However, the translator as the translating subject has not been

recognized by people for a very long period in history. In traditional linguistically-oriented translation studies, much emphasis was laid on the linguistic function of translation, and “equivalence” and “faithfulness” were held as the “sacred” assessment standards for all kinds of translation, which means translators were required to follow the author step by step, and be invisible. Therefore, translators at that time were supposed to suppress their subjectivity and try to represent the original spirit of the source text without leaving any traces of their own in the translated works. The subjectivity and creativity of translators were neglected. The Cultural Historians engage with issues of translation in many ways. For the past fifteen or so years, some historians and translation theorists; have attempted to build bridges between the two academic fields. Working towards a sub-discipline is sometimes referred to as “translation history.” (Bracke, Morris & Ryder, 2018, 214)

The “Cultural Turn” in the 1980s spurred translation studies to broaden their research boundary under the influence of many intellectual theories, such as the Polysystem Theory, Descriptive Translation Studies, the Manipulation School, the Deconstructionist School, and feminism etc. Since then, translation has not been regarded as a pure linguistic transfer from the source to the target language. Various factors have been considered in the translation process, among which the feminist approach to translation stands out and receives extensive attention. The feminist movement in the west evoked the formation of feminist translation theory, which has brought the issue of “gender” into translation studies and broadened the study of the translator’s subjectivity.

Feminist translation theory presents a new world to us in translation studies. For feminists, translation is considered a place where different cultures collide and interact. The theory has enriched translation studies with new insights into the process of translation and the translator’s identity; redefined such concepts as “difference,” “fidelity,” and “equivalence” in translation and challenged the view of the translator’s invisibility; and also casts new light on the relationships between writer and translator, source text and target text and writing and translation. Feminist translators change from hiding behind the writer to being actively involved in the process of meaning construction. Feminist translators view translation as a way to help women liberate from patriarchal domination and gain equal status with men in various domains. Their political purpose of translation often leads them to bold and interventionist translation strategies. Language is also taken as a manipulation tool, and they create feminine language voices for them. Therefore, translation ceases to be a passive linguistic transfer from one language to another and becomes an active process influenced by the translator’s identity, ideology, and personality. In other words, the translator’s subjectivity and creativity are highlighted in the framework of feminist translation theory. Although Western feminism was introduced into China by Zhu Hong in the early 1980s, it is since 2002 that feminism translation theory has been discussed in the translation field. However, most of the research is conducted on a theoretical base, and case studies, especially those of Chinese-English translation, are few. From the analyses of Zhu Hong’s translation in this article, we can conclude that in the process of translation, the female translator with strong gender awareness consciously or unconsciously manifests her female subjectivity and creativity, but in different ways from those of feminist translators in the West, due to different historical and cultural backgrounds between China and the West.

Owing to feminist translators' excessive display of their subjectivity and the adoption of interventionist translation strategies, feminist translation has encountered severe criticism from both inside and outside feminism. Some strong opponents hold that feminist translation cannot be termed translation because it subverts traditional translation theories. However, feminist translators' overt and bold intervention into and manipulation of the original text manifests their untiring efforts to fight against patriarchal oppression. They try to leave their trace and make their gendered identity visible in the translated text through rewriting in a feminine way. By so doing, they want to reconstruct their cultural identity and equal position as men in the patriarchal society. Despite all the significance of feminist translation, we should be aware that feminist translation theory tends to go extreme. The over-emphasis on manipulation of and intervention into the source text and the excessive exertion of the translator's subjectivity will negatively affect both translation theories and translation practice. For finding a solution, we may borrow the concept of "androgyny" in feminist literary criticism here to be taken as the starting point to reconsider the relationship between the author and the translator in the feminist translation theory. This concept was first put forward by the feminist critic and writer Virginia Woolf in her book *A Room of One's Own* (1929), referring to an ideal man-woman relationship. It deconstructs the opposing dichotomy between the author and the translator and suggests that the relationship between these two should be the harmonious coexistence established based on equality and mutual respect's difference. Only when the concept of "androgyny" is adopted in feminist translation can the best balance between the author and the translator be kept, and the translator's subjectivity is appropriately brought into play.

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