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Between Freedom and Constraints: Women Translators in Republican China (1912-1949)

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Between Freedom and Constraints: Women Translators in Republican China (1912-1949)

Master of Arts Thesis

Asian Studies (Research)

Leiden University

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Introduction

A New Generation of Women in Translation

This thesis project begins with a simple question: Why are there no women among the best-known translators in modern China? Honestly, if I had not started looking into the different aspects of the topic on translated literature in the Republican period (1912-1949) two years ago, I would not have "discovered" these translating women at all by myself. To this date, most reference works on the history of modern Chinese literature or translation still pay little attention to women translators. This is a painful oversight of both their historical significance and continual legacy in Chinese culture. It was at the turn of the twentieth century when a new generation of female elites began to emerge on the historical stage. Together with their male colleagues, they contributed to the vast intellectual efforts of translating foreign texts into Chinese, which played a pivotal role in China's modernisation. Fortunately, since the mid-2000s, scholars have tried to uncover historical women translators' lives and works and restore them to a rightful place in historiography and public memory. But important questions remain unanswered. In particular, the current body of scholarship has not sufficiently considered the role gender played in women's individual translational encounters and in Chinese translation history overall.

My research aims to address this problem by asking: How did the gender of women translators affect their practice and experience of translation in Republican-era China? Here, I shall clarify that my goal is not to prove the existence of any gender differences between the translation approaches adopted by Chinese female and male translators. Rather, to embrace gender as a useful category of historical analysis (Scott 2010), I seek to explore the "gendered meaning" of translation in early twentieth-century China. In other words, I am interested in examining the historical attitudes towards translation and how the Chinese educated women were conditioned by gender-related discourses in their time when making sense of their translational pursuits. Therefore, the key to my analysis is to be gender-sensitive, but not gender-deterministic. This enables me to consider different factors that might have influenced these women's engagement with translation, for example: their aspirations to literary authorship, their literary and translation poetics, as well as their multifarious motivations for translating based on ideological, political, economic, and artistic concerns (Luo 2014, 161-176).

Through this investigation, I intend to enrich our understanding of the intertwined relationship between gender, authorship, and translation. Equally importantly, I hope my findings can contribute to a more balanced view of Chinese literary and translation history and a reflection on the genealogy of a modern Chinese female literary tradition.

Women and *Translation* in Republican China

To appreciate the significance of Chinese female elites' encounter with translation, it is important to understand *women* and *translation* as two pivotal concepts in China's modernization and their contemporary perceptions. Together, they co-constituted the favourable conditions for the emergence of Chinese women translators in the early twentieth century and shaped their cultural and knowledge productions.

Since the late nineteenth century, the reform-minded intellectuals tended to portray women as the victims of China's feudal past, emphasising that their emancipation was essential for strengthening the nation. During the May Fourth and New Culture Movement (1915-1925), the vibrant print culture popularised discussions on the Woman Question (*nüzi wenti* 女子問題) and womanhood entered public scrutiny as a much-concerned socio-political problem. The divergent interpretations of the New Woman (*xin nüxing* 新女性) and her proper behaviours and roles in a modernised society sent ambiguous and contradictory messages to the women in reality. But Chinese women were not merely discursive constructs. While their behaviours and thoughts were inevitably shaped by the contemporary gender discourses, they also actively negotiated their own space to define and transform their lived experiences.

The Chinese women translators hailed from a new generation of educated urban female elites. Mostly coming from middle-class backgrounds, they could receive modern-style education at the newly-established girls' schools and afford to study abroad. Their "useful" literacy for the building of a modern nation set them apart from the premodern paradigm of Talented (literary) Women (*cainü* 才女), which was associated with traditional high culture and increasingly disdained.[1] Besides forming an burgeoning urban women's culture as both producers and consumers of modern cultural products, the female intellectuals also aspired to

[1] For a detailed discussion on the conceptualisation of women's talent in early twentieth-century China, see Judge 2008, 87-106.

become worthy members of the new citizenry by serving the public good.[2] Nevertheless, as women did not begin from a place at the centre of the cultural establishment like their male counterparts did, their gender arguably posed more obstacles for them to openly participate in and contribute to the public realm. As such, these educated women had to navigate complex strategies to seize the unprecedented opportunities available to them in their public roles.

Also beginning from the late nineteenth century, the Chinese intelligentsia exhibited a keen interest in the instrumentality of translation to propel China towards modernity in cultural, social, technological, and political aspects so that it could catch up with the Western Others. In the Republican era, the translation of foreign literary texts gained momentum as the leading cultural figures like Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1982), Lu Xun 魯迅 (Zhou Shuren 周樹人, 1881-1936), and Mao Dun 茅盾 (Shen Yanbing 沈雁冰, 1896-1981) advocated for the importance of Western literature in shaping a new, modern, vernacular Chinese literature. Until the professionalisation of translators in the 1930s and the 1940s, the most active and influential translators of foreign literature were often prominent writers in the literary scene (Volland 2014).

While there were voices that supported translation was as much an act of creation as original writing, much of the literary field viewed translation as a secondary, derivative activity (see Chan 2004, 249-256). This is evident in the prevalent apologetic tones adopted by translators to apologise for their inability to fully capture the brilliance of the source texts. Their posture of humility reinforced the perception of translation as subordinate to the original. The undervaluation of translation epitomised in the metaphor proposed by writer Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978) in the early 1920s, which likened original writing to a virgin, as something to be desired, and translation to a matchmaker, as something served merely as a medium. Although Guo might not have intended to disparage women or the women's movement is his time (see Ding 2012, 229-230), this metaphor reminds of Lori Chamberlain 's seminal essay (1998) on the gendered stereotypes embodied in metaphors typically used to theorise translation.

[2] As Timothy Cheek (2015) points out, the term *zhishifenzi* 知識分子, usually rendered in English as "intellectual", was coined to represent the identity of Chinese educated elite, thinkers and writers that drew from the example of European intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century. Although the term itself only came into common usage since the mid-1920s, the concept and social role of an intellectual carried on the Confucian ideal for scholar-officials who were self-appointed and socially expected to serve the public good.

In many cultures, both women and translation have been traditionally perceived as secondary to their male counterparts and original texts, with the latter serving as the primary sources of authority and literary talent. Since the 1980s, this common characteristic has inspired scholars and theorists to explore the intersection between gender and translation and its implications on issues of representation, identity, and power relations (Simon 1996; von Flowtow 1997). My thesis draws inspirations from the subfield in gender and translation studies which investigates the historical role of women as translators and their contributions to cross-cultural communication. Recent scholarship warns against the tempting-yet-restrictive tendency of fitting historical women translators and their works into conventional narratives of marginalisation and subversiveness (Brown 2022). To avoid this pitfall, my analysis adopts a grounded approach to investigate how the female gender of Chinese women translators affected the intra-textual and extra-textual linguistic, cultural, and ideational exchanges via their acts of translation.

Moreover, my theoretical underpinning is informed by feminist translation theory, another product of gender and translation studies.[3] Shifting from the conventional focus on faithfulness and equivalence in translation studies, this theory highlights translators' visibility and agency to foreground female subjectivity in the production of meaning. Fully aware of the potential risks of anachronism of projecting a contemporary Western theory onto the historical Chinese context, my objective is not to assess whether the Chinese women translators practiced feminist translation based on the theorised strategies.[4] Rather, my engagement with this theory lies in the conceptual level of conducting a gender-conscious analysis of translation. This enables me to comprehend my research subjects' multiple agendas in their translation pursuits as well as how they perceived and made sense of their experience of translating as a woman in Republican-era China.

This project focuses specifically on the Republican period due to the highly diverse and heterogeneous nature of the contemporary literary field. Chinese women translators then were

[3] For a useful discussion on the brief history and tenets of feminist translation theory and its applicability to various cultural contexts, see Ergun et al. 2020.

[4] Louise von Flotow theorises three practices of feminist translation: supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and "hijacking" (see Simon 1996, 13-14). Some previous studies have directly applied von Flotow's framework to their analysis, arguing that the Chinese women translators in the Republican era practiced feminist translation. However, such an application of feminist translation theory is rather problematic and uncritical.

encouraged to read and translate the works of internationally renowned authors like William Shakespeare, Leo Tolstoy, and Jane Austen (Luo 2014, 206-276). Depending on their religious beliefs and political inclinations, they also engaged in translating Christian literature and revolutionary literatures from Soviet Russia. Mostly well-educated, this new generation of women translators had better command of foreign languages than their predecessors and was able to translate independently without recourse to other human mediators.

The existing literature on my topic mainly comprises general surveys and reference works, and individual case studies focusing on more well-known or prolific translators (Qian 2015; Chuo 2011; Yin 2020; Meng 2019). Researchers have sought to identify major characteristics of the women's approaches to translation, such as style, language usage, and source text selection. Overall, they note that many of the women translators' works embodied their search for models to construct the New Woman identity and/or to strengthen the country, reflecting the feminist influences of their time and their heightened female consciousness (Mu et al. 2008; Guo 2010; Luo 2014; Liu and Wang 2021, 6179-6202). However, translation's appeal to the female elites should be much more complicated than merely promoting their ideals. Instead of making generalised assumptions about what translation could signify for the women translators, my inquiry attempts to present a more nuanced account of the opportunities and challenges the Chinese educated women faced in their translation practices and experiences.

My research builds on and extends from the previous studies in the following ways. First, I aim to broaden the temporal scope to encompass the 1930s and the wartime period in the 1940s to capture the changing trends and dynamics in the literary field. In my analysis, I explore translation as a multi-layered literary and multifaceted cultural production that goes beyond mere linguistic transfer. As stated in my research question, I seek to delve into both the *texts* and *contexts* of the translating women's encounters with translation, including the production, publication, dissemination, and reception of their translated works. To achieve this, I combine the methods of textual analysis with biographical research and the sociology of culture. Apart from comparing the source and translated texts, I also examine other writings by the women translators that may not be explicitly categorised as translations but exemplify their translation thoughts or skills, such as literary statements, and critical essays. This approach enables me to gain deeper insights into the cultural and intellectual milieu in which women translators operated and the broader impacts of their translation activities.

A Balancing Act

Another important theme of my thesis is to explore the complex dynamics between gender, translation, and authorship. In this endeavour, I seek methodological inspirations from research on historical women translators in Meiji Japan (1868-1912) and Victorian England (1837-1901). The relevant studies reveal that translation allowed the women of letters to transcend ideological and intellectual boundaries for creative self-expression while defusing potential threats and criticism by adhering to societal expectations of exemplary female morality (Copeland 2000; Scholl 2010; Prins 2017). This understanding of translation as both enabling and limiting forms the central image of my thesis — the in-betweenness within freedom and constraints. And it is helpful in examining the negotiations made by Chinese women translators as they assumed their newly-attained public role and social responsibility as female intellectuals. While exercising their agency to seize the opportunities offered by translation, they did not directly challenge the prevailing gender discourses to achieve their goals and wield their desired influences.

During the May Fourth era, the literary act of writing became an indispensable aspect in an educated woman's modern identity (Dooling and Torgeson 1998, 14). However, the writing women continued to struggle in a systemically male-dominated literary field. Women's writing was perceived as a gendered aesthetic category, subjecting female authors to a double standard in critical evaluation and making the idea of producing great literary work seem unattainable for them (Dooling 2005). Contrarily, translation appeared to transcend gender specificity, as translators functioned as mere conduits for communication without claiming authorship. This perception of translation as derivative parallel the prevailing expectations of women's modesty and general invisibility in the public spheres. As such, translation offered elite women an alternative creative outlet, enabling them to engage in literary practice and transcend the historical *cai* 才 (literary talent) / *de* 德 (virtue) dilemma that had plagued Chinese women writers for centuries (Larson 1998).

However, delving deeper into the concept, I suggest that translation was not merely a second-best option for literary opportunities, but a literary act in its own right. Through translation, the female elites found sufficient leeway between freedom and constraints to enter the male-dominated realms of literary and knowledge production. While translation alone did not grant women authorial status, it provided them with a unique space of creative agency and

flexibility, focusing on the transmission and reception of cultural products rather than ownership. By engaging in translation, women translators established public recognition and authority, which they later extended to support their other pursuits. The intermediary role of translation also granted them permission to participate in public debates. Furthermore, access to translation proved to be transformative, allowing women translators to explore their identities and express their opinions through active processes such as understanding, interpreting, and rewriting. In every chapter, I attempt to analyse the respective female translator's perceptions of authorship and translation to reveal more subtleties in the relationships between writing and self-identity formation.

Temporality

The issue of temporality comes to the fore in my conceptualisation of this project. Rather than a well-thought-out theoretical or analytical framework, the thoughts presented below are primarily observations gathered during my research. While I do not intend to provide definitive answers to each one of them in the thesis, I find it necessary to introduce them here as they represent important issues and concerns that I grapple with throughout this study.

The first idea pertains to my analytical focus on the contexts. Examining the gender-related contexts in translation are crucial because they influenced the translation process and continue to impact how the translation products are studied and evaluated, even centuries later (von Flotow 1997). Most of the translated texts produced by the Republican-era Chinese women translators were circulated in literary journals and newspapers, with only the more popular or successful ones later receiving publication as single-volume books. The ephemeral nature of their physical existence has posed challenges in locating relevant sources. Additionally, these women translators left few records of their own, and the others also left few traces of their lives. Despite efforts to fill in the historical silences and re-create the historical moments for my analysis, the lack of sources remains a significant limitation to this project, as is a common challenge faced by many studies in the field of women's history.

The second thought revolves around the notion of immediacy and the social imperatives that guided these female intellectuals' translation endeavours. While the Chinese women translators largely followed the overarching trend of translating renowned authors and masterpieces, they also rendered more recent works by contemporary authors from across the

globe. This feature reflects their access to the transnationally circulated materials, their awareness of both Chinese and global developments, and their desire to address the needs of their time. Generally, the female elites remained peripheral and less vocal in public debates due to their caution regarding potential backlash for defying the socially accepted code of female modesty and asserting their opinions. Translation served as a means for these educated women to engage with the immediate present and participate in crucial socio-cultural dialogues concerning both women and men, albeit in a mediated, more subtle, and perhaps less noticed way.

The third idea centres on the zeitgeist of the era. Mark Gamsa notes that a "time lag" characterised the reception of Western literature in China in general, with the Chinese intelligentsia consciously choosing to reject certain Western intellectual currents deemed unsuitable for their country (2010, 8-10). This raises a series of questions: Did the female intellectuals possess a different mentality in this regard? Would they align themselves with the winds of change to achieve success? Or would they remain staunch in their own views? What happened when they failed to grasp the zeitgeist? And how did they respond to criticism in such cases? In comparison to their male counterparts burdened by the lingering allegiance to pre-modern literary ideals, well-educated women were less encumbered by "a sense of anxiety and guilt" but were equally, or even more, eager to seize the unprecedented opportunity and fulfil the responsibility of serving the Chinese public (McDougall and Louie 1997, 6). It is true that they were not the leading theorists in the literary scene and their thoughts were often not recorded when we look back in history. Yet, this might help explain why some women translators in my study could, at least temporarily, distance themselves from mainstream literary trends, such as the rise of leftist ideologies or using literature as a means for wartime mobilisation. With their intellectual independence, they could keep searching for what they saw as best for modern Chinese literature, and a modern Chinese nation-state.

Finally, thinking about time also prompts us to consider the reverberations and the reception of the women translators' works both in their time and in our present-day context. This consideration is intertwined with the broader issue of historiography, which is a recurring theme throughout this thesis. In recent times, there has been a surge of attention on historical Chinese women translators. Certainly, it is a good sign that we are giving them the credits they deserve, and "saving" them from obscurity. But we also need to ask ourselves: Are we genuinely seeking to learn more about these women and their contributions, or are we merely

exploiting their value as a cultural commodity catering to the demands of a woke market, both in the commercial marketplace and academia? This research aims to go beyond the mere uncovering of neglected historical women translators and reflect on the responsibilities researchers bear in interpreting and preserving their legacy. We will return to this discussion in the Conclusion.

Organisation of the Thesis

Following this introduction comes three chapters that zoom in on distinctive case studies. Chapter 1 looks at Sheng Xingren 沈性仁 (1895-1943) and how she fashioned her self-identity as a New Woman through translation; Chapter 2 discusses the significance of translation in Yuan Changying 袁昌英 (1894-1973)'s career as a female scholar-writer-and-translator; and Chapter 3 analyses Chen Jingrong 陳敬容 (1917-1989)'s uses of translations in her role as a professional female poet-translator. Each case is selected based on the availability of sources, the women translators' diverse life trajectories and approaches to translation, and my knowledge of the source text languages.

Collectively, the three case studies shed light on my investigation in the following ways. First, they exemplify diverse modes of translation, allowing for an assessment of the role of gender in various translation scenarios, including individual translation, co-translation, and re-translations by female and male translators of the same source text. Second, their translated texts encompass a broad spectrum of genres, providing an opportunity to explore 'he women's varied motivations for translation and their recognition and status in the contemporary literary field. Third, these three women were active as translators in different times and circumstances. Charting their translation activities enables us to examine the much-overlooked female responses to the debates and concerns about literature and translation in different historical periods.

The progression of my thesis follows a chronological trajectory. However, this is not to present a linear narrative of the history of women translators in China, but rather to gain insights into how historical changes and shifts impacted their translational practices and experiences. Each chapter commences with an introduction to the context and analytical focus, providing a foundation for the subsequent discussions. Finally, this thesis concludes with a summary of

findings, reflection on potential future directions for research and the significance of this research project. One final note on stylistic considerations: lengthy quotations have been placed in the Appendix to optimise the space within the main text. Readers interested in the quoted texts can refer to the Appendix for further exploration.

Chapter 1

Translating into a New Woman: Service and Self-effacement

Figure 1. Shen Xingren with her first child in the late 1910s. Source: Shen 1973, 22.

Among my three case studies, Shen Xingren's name should be the least known, even to readers who are familiar with modern Chinese literary history. Unlike many of her fellow translating women who left their mark in history through other creative pursuits or participation in social-political activities, Shen is nowadays remembered as a good translator. Yet, if one tries to look up her name on a search engine, what are abundant are at best anecdotes and at worst false information, since Shen left little personal record of her life. Thankfully, by looking into the words people in her social and literary networks had written about her, we can still get a reliable biographical sketch of Shen's life and works.

Born in Zhejiang to an elite family, Shen grew up receiving modern-style women's education with the support of her open-minded parents. Returning from overseas education in Japan in 1917, she then enrolled into the Beijing Women's Normal School 北京女子高等師範學校, an tertiary institution that had nurtured other prominent female writers in her time, such as Lu Yin 廬隱 (1895-1934) and Feng Yuanjun 馮沅君 (1900-1974). During her studies in Beijing, Shen met and married her husband, Tao Menghe 陶孟和 (Tao Lugong 陶履恭, 1887-1960), a professor at the Peking University who had earned his doctorate in Economics from the London School of Economics. As Tao's wife, Shen maintained close contact with the

scholars and intellectuals in Beijing who had studied abroad in Japan, Europe, or the United States. They included the leading spokesmen for the May Fourth and New Culture Movement, Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942), and those who later formed or were affiliated with the Crescent Moon Society 新月社, including Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 (1897-1931), Lin Huiyin 林徽因 (1904-1955) and Jin Yuelin 金岳霖 (1895-1984).

Throughout her literary career, Shen produced seventeen translations which cover wide-ranging genres of plays, fiction, poems, and non-fiction. Such prolificity aside, Shen's choice of translating in the modern vernacular language (*baihua* 白話) and collaboration with male colleagues have garnered much scholarly attention in the Chinese-language scholarship on women translators in early twentieth-century China. The previous studies have mainly focused on Shen's conscious use of translation to promote various models of the New Woman for Chinese readers, since most of the source texts she worked on centred around themes of female experience and identity (see Chuo 2011; Luo 2014; Yin 2020). Undeniably, the service to the Chinese society and nation is an essential theme in Shen's engagement of translation, and I will also examine it in this chapter. But it is only a part of the whole story. More often, the agendas of translating for the nation and translating for oneself are intertwined rather than mutually exclusive. As such, I seek to further explore the personal side of Shen's translation practice and experience. Apart from acting as a cultural broker, I argue that Shen also actively explored her identity as a New Woman through her translation pursuits.

The attention to Shen's translatorial self then brings us to the other keyword in the chapter title – self-effacement. Generally, Shen's translated works received both critical and popular acclaims. Her connections with the influential cultural figures in the literary field also provided favourable conditions in the production and dissemination of her works. However, her paradoxical attitude towards translation remains a mystery for us. Despite putting much effort to her translation projects, Shen seemed to totally give up on the ambition of attaining literary authorship and be content with the influences she could exert as a translator. But as mentioned in the Introduction, translation was still widely considered a secondary and derivative activity in her time. Hence, this chapter will investigate why Chen adopted such self-positioning and how her personal experience and the contemporary gender social-cultural discourses on women's talent and virtue might have shaped her perception of living as a Chinese New Woman.

Subjectivity in Interpretation: Appreciation, Ideal, and Resonance

In December 1918, Shen Xingren published her debut translation, *The Story of a Lost Fan* (遺扇記), of Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)'s *Lady Windemere's Fan* in the influential journal *La Jeunesse* (新青年, also known as *New Youth*) during the high point of the May Fourth era. Shen's husband, Tao Menghe, penned the preface to the translated text. He also served in the journal's editorial committee back then. After providing a lay introduction to Wilde's literary career and works, Tao briefly explained the production process of this translation:

> […] During Xingren's stay in a hospital in September this year, she was very bored, and I had no time to accompany her; therefore, I got her a copy of Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* to relieve her boredom. Xingren liked the story of this play, so she translated it after being discharged from the hospital. I helped to revise her translation a little, I think it has not lost Wilde's original meaning; as for his beautiful tone and playful words, I am afraid it is impossible to follow suit.
>
> "The Story of a Lost Fan", the Japanese translated the original title literally. This current title is drafted by Shizhi [Hu Shi]. We should thank him for this.[5]
>
> (Shen 1918, 598)

As made evident, the other actor involved in this project was the leading cultural critic and their family friend, Hu Shi. Despite its brevity, this preface raises many questions: Why did Shen like the story? How can we understand her motivation to translate Wilde's play? What did Tao mean by Wilde's "original meaning"? Did Shen and Tao interpret Wilde's authorial intention differently? Apart from contributing his idea for the title, did Hu Shi — another editorial committee member — have other influence over this project?

Before delving into the analysis, I shall first provide a plot synopsis. In short, Wilde's play is about the eponymous character, Lady Windermere, who suspects her husband of infidelity with Mrs. Erlynne, a notorious fallen woman. However, Mrs. Erlynne is in fact her

[5] Unless otherwise specified, all English translation of Chinese sources are mine. The Japanese version of *Lady Windermere's Fan* Tao mentioned is likely to be Homei Iwano 岩野 泡鳴 (1873-1920)'s translation published in January 1909.

birth mother who left the family in her infancy. Amid misunderstandings, Lady Windermere plans to elope with her suitor, Lord Darlington, to seek solace. Fortunately, Mrs. Erlynne intervenes and convinces her to reunite with Lord Windermere, even willing to become the scapegoat for her possible offense of infidelity. As the free-spirited Mrs. Erlynne refuses to become a conventional mother bounded by moral notions of sacrifice and love, Lady Windermere never finds out the truth but rethinks her impression of the former. The two women have also built a special maternal linkage through their uplifting of one anther from their respective plights. In the end, both of them have happy endings. Lady Windermere can go back to her husband with any damage to her reputation, and Mrs. Erlynne returns to high society by attending her daughter's ball and eventually marrying another nobleman, Lord Augustus.

Wilde's deconstruction of strict, black-and-white moral standards on good or bad women in *Lady Windermere's Fan* appealed to the iconoclast May Fourth intellectuals who aspired to liberate both women and men from repressive traditional values. Considering the timing of publication, Shen's translation indeed carried along the line of critique on age-old Chinese perceptions of women's chastity initiated by male intellectuals in *La Jeunesse* (Luo 2008, 206). It started with Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967)'s translation of the Japanese poet-and-feminist, Yosano Akiko 與謝野 晶子 (1878-1942)'s article "On Chastity" 貞操論 in May 1918. Then, Hu Shi and Lu Xun published their respective responses in the following July and August. Given Hu's involvement in this translation project, his criticism of the sexual double standards for men and women on chastity can help us understand the contemporary intellectual thoughts that could have shaped Shen's views. Hu advocated for the same moral standards to be applied to both sexes as it aligned with his core belief that individuality and independence are fundamental to a modern Chinese society (Orly and Edwards 2021). For Hu, morality should be an autonomous choice, rather than collective restrictions imposed on individuals. Thus, he might see Lady Windermere and Mrs. Erlynne's demonstration of agency in making their life choices as good examples that would prompt Chinese readers to contemplate whether they should still uphold women's chastity as a moral virtue.

Nevertheless, this reference to Hu Shi's vision confronts us with a tricky problem of how the male-dominated discourse on women's liberation in early twentieth-century China marginalised female voices. In fact, this was not the first time *La Jeunesse* published a female translator's rendition of a Wildean play. Xue Qiying 薛琪瑛 (?-?) was the first Chinese woman

to translate Wilde's dramatic works and serialised her translation of *An Ideal Husband* in the journal with the Chinese title "意中人 (Mr. Right)" between1915 and 1916. Yet, in his letter to the editor-in-chief, Chen Duxiu, Hu argued that the Chinese intellectuals should consider the mentality of their compatriots (*guoren xinli* 國人心理) when deciding on which books should be prioritised for translation. He further criticised that Xue could not have grasped the merits of Wilde's play, and her translation could have wronged Wilde's meaning (Pan 2008, 155-156). In response, Chen suspended the further publication of Xue's translation, and the remaining parts of the text were never printed elsewhere. Yin Shuhui argues that this incident reveals the gender power dynamics within the operations of *La Jeunesse* where the male editors maintained an attitude towards "correcting women" (*zheng nü* 正女). This was a remnant of the patriarchal Confucian norms upholding male authority and responsibility for admonishing women's behaviours (2020, 66-67).

Here, Yin's argument is relevant to thinking whose interpretation of "Wilder's authorial intention" we see in *The Story of a Lost Fan*. If we adopt her argument, does it mean that Tao and Hu already prescribed their reading of Wilde's source text with their editorial authority, which eventually leads to the silencing of Shen's translational agency in articulating her interpretation? I believe the complexity of gender dynamics in this cultural production should not be reduced to such a simplistic conclusion. While Shen's views could be substantially influenced by Tao and Hu through their professional or personal relationships, it does not mean Shen formed no opinion of her own. On second thoughts, even if Shen's subjective interpretation did apparently echo with that of her male collaborators, there might still be nuances in the perspectives they each adopted, or a chance for Shen to take advantage by fitting her insights into the male-defined framework. A case in point is her debut translated work would not have been published so easily in *La Jeunesse*, a preeminent journal of the day, without the Tao and Hu's endorsement and support.

Although Shen Xingren did not leave us any textual records about her translation practice and experience, we can attempt to trace her own understanding of women's liberation by combining different pieces of evidence. For instance, through the memoir of her elder sister, Shen Yiyun 沈亦雲 (1894-1971), we learn that Shen had given birth to her first child with Tao, a daughter named Weizheng 維正, before working on this translation project in 1918. Meanwhile, the couple also took a bank loan to purchase their home in Beijing and built their

family there (Shen 1971, 25). This justifies that Shen had an economic motive to earn extra income for her family from translating. But why did she choose *Lady Windermere's Fan* to be her first translated work specifically? If we connect the dots from her personal circumstances to her choice of source text, the reason she enjoyed Wilde's play might be her finding resonance with the unique mother-daughter bond between the two female leads. As Petra Dierkes-Thrun notes, such female bonding leads to a more enlightened morality that value different personal choices and new ways of social thinking and female agency (2015, 88-91). In this sense, I would venture to argue that Shen's fondness for Wilde's text might reflect her support of women's self-empowerment through achieving female solidarity. And her translation served to offer her readers a fresh vantage point to perceive women's roles in their own emancipation. This focus on women's subjectivity and solidarity also distinguishes her reading of *Lady Windermere's Fan* from her male collaborators who valorised the introduction and construction of new social values.

During the ten-year period from 1917 to 1926, *Lady Windermere's Fan* saw four different translations or adaptations into Chinese, a testament to the immense popularity of Oscar Wilde and his plays in China.[6] Among them, Shen Xingren's and Pan Jiaxun 潘家洵 (1896-1989)'s translations are the most comparable due to their completeness and the close timing of their publication. Pan's translated text, titled *The Fan's Mistake* (扇誤), was published in 1919 in *New Tide* 新潮, another important journal during the May Fourth period run by Peking University students. The editors of both journals also encouraged their readers to cross-reference Shen and Pen's translations (Shen 1919b, 310; Pan 1919, 521).

In general, Shen's translation follows the source text more closely, adopting a word-for-word translation approach; whereas Pan takes more liberty in his translation to resemble the diction of daily speech. Notably, Luo Lie argues that Shen's translation shows a clear feminist consciousness of equal legal rights for both sexes (2008, 207-211). Citing examples b and d as shown in *Table 1*,[7] Luo explains that Shen's translation of the word "laws" from the source text was more accurate and effective than Pan's. She suggests that this difference reflects

[6] For a comprehensive list of the Chinese translation of Oscar Wilde's four social comedies, see Chen 2016, 56.
[7] Luo's comparison also includes Hong Shen's adaption of *Lady Windermere's Fan* into a Chinese play titled *Young Mistress' Fan* 少奶奶的扇 (see 2008, 205-216). Since Hong's work substantially rewrites Wilde's source text, I decide to exclude it from my analysis.

Example	Act	Character	*Lady Windermere's Fan*	*The Story of A Lost Fan*	*The Fan's Mistake*
a	1	Lord Darlington	[Still seated.] Do you think then—of course I am only putting an imaginary instance—do you think that in the case of a young married couple, say about two years married, if the husband suddenly becomes the intimate friend of a woman of—well, more than doubtful character—is always calling upon her, lunching with her, and probably paying her bills—do you think that the wife should not console herself?	（照舊坐着）那麼，你想——我當然是說一個比喻——你想，倘使一對少年夫婦，纔結了婚兩年的光景，這個丈夫忽然和一個——行為曖昧的婦人結交了，成了很親密的朋友，常去訪他，和他一塊兒吃飯，或者替他還賬——你想那個夫人能彀安慰他自己嗎？	你想——我不過是設個譬喻罷了——你想如果一對年輕夫婦，纔結婚了兩年，那丈夫忽然同一個——哼，還不止人言嘖嘖的女子親熱起來，常常到那個女子家裏去，同那女子吃飯，有時候還要替他還債——你想他妻子不應當想個法子安慰安慰自己麼？
		Lady Windermere	[Frowning.] Console herself?	（縐 [sic] 着眉頭）安慰他自己？	（皺眉）安慰安慰自己？
		Lord Darlington	Yes, I think she should—I think she has the **right**.	是的，我想他應該——他有這個**權利**。	我想是應該的——可以這樣做的。
b	1	Lord Darlington	Well then, setting aside mercenary people, who, of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have **committed what the world calls a fault** should never be forgiven?	啊，那麼，把唯利是圖的人放開在一邊。他們確是可怕。你想那些婦人**犯了世俗所謂的罪過**，就永遠不能被饒恕麼？	[譬如說罷，如今大多數的婦女祇曉得要錢] 這些人可怕得很，姑且放在一邊不提，你以為女人犯了過失，不應該輕恕麼？
		Lady Windermere	[Standing at table.] I think they should never be forgiven.	（站在棹旁）我想永遠不能彀被饒恕罷。	（立在案前）我以為不應該輕恕的。
		Lord Darlington	And men? Do you think that there should be the same **laws** for men as there are for women?	我也不能夠麼？你想男女應該受一樣的**法律**麼？	我呢？那麼你看起來對待男子也應該同對接對待女子一樣麼？
		Lady Windermere	Certainly!	當然的！	自然。
c	1	Duchess of Berwick	Our husbands would really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time, just to remind them that we have **a perfect legal righ**t to do so.	假使我們不向我們的丈夫吹毛求疵的鬧着，他們竟會把我們的存在都忘掉了。這正好可以教導他們，我們是有**完全依法的權利**可以這樣做。	要不常常同我們的丈夫吵鬧提醒他們女子和男子應該有同樣的**權**，恐怕他們簡直就把我們忘啦。
d	1	Lady Windermere	But why should I not look? I am his wife, I have a **right** to look!	但是我為什麼不看一看呢？我是他的妻子，有**權利**可以看的！	不過我為什麼不看一看呢？我是他的妻子，我可以看得的！
e	1	Lord Windermere	Margaret, you have cut open my bank book. You have no **right** to do such a thing!	馬格雷脫，你開過我的銀行簿子了。你不應該做這件事體！	瑪格，你把我的銀行支簿割開了。你不應當做這件事！
f	2	Lord Darlington	This woman has the place that belongs by **right** to you.	在你的**權利**之內的地位被那個女子佔去了。	你的地位被那女人佔據了。
g	2	Cecil Graham	Windermere knows that nothing looks so like **innocence** as an indiscretion.	溫特米爾把不應該做的事看得像**沒有罪**一樣。	溫爵爺把不謹慎看做天真爛漫。
h	2	Mrs Erlynne	and how bitterly I have been **punished** for it! No; my **punishment**, my real **punishment** is to-night, is now!	為了這件事我受了多少**刑罰**苦痛！還不是；我的**刑罰**，我真真 [sic] 的**刑罰**是今天夜裏，是現在！	我這報應真利害！我的報應，我的真報應就是今天晚上就是現在
i	3	Lady Windermere	Men are such cowards. They outrage every **law** of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue.	男子實在懦弱。世上各種的**法律**，他們都有膽量去犯的， 但是怕別人的議論。	男子是不中用的東西，他們無惡不作，卻怕人家的嘴。
j	3	Mrs Erlynne	Lady Windermere, before Heaven your husband is **guiltless of all offence** towards you!	溫夫人，你的丈夫對於你在上帝面前可告**無罪**的！	溫夫人，天在上頭你丈夫對你始終居心無他！
k	4	Lord Darlington	You shall not search my rooms. You have no **right** to do so. I forbid you!	你不能抄我的屋子。你沒有這**權柄**。我不准你。	你不能搜我的屋子。你沒有這**權力**。我不容你如此。
l	4	Lord Windermere	Therefore I have a **right** to look upon you as what you are—a worthless, vicious woman. I have the **right** to tell you never to enter this house, never to attempt to come near my wife—	所以我可以照你的品格看待你——一個沒有人品的，不潔的婦人。我可以禁止你永遠不到我家來，永遠不要打算走近我夫人的身旁——	所以我現在可以把你當作一個一文不值的女人看待。我有**權力**不許你再近我的們 [sic] ，再近我的妻子——
m	4	Lord Windermere	You have no **right** to claim her as your daughter.	你沒有**權利**可以認他為你的女兒。	你不配再把他當作你的女兒。
n	4	Lord Windermere	And as for your blunder in taking my wife's fan from here and then leaving it about in Darlington's rooms, it is **unpardonable**.	至於你為魯莽從這裏拿錯了我夫人的扇子，又丟在達林頓的屋裏，這是不能饒你的。	至於你把我妻子的扇子從此地拿了丟在達爵爺的屋子裏，更是荒謬絕倫。

Table 1 Comparison of Shen and Pan's translation of the lines relevant to concepts of laws and rights

Shen's awareness of her identity as an intellectual woman in the Chinese women's liberation movement and her yearning for gender equality. However, if we examine the other examples listed, it becomes clear that Luo's argument does not hold water, as Shen consistently translated concepts relevant to laws and rights in the source text more literally than Pan did.

Another feature distinguishing between Shen's and Pan's translation practices is the former's supplementation of explanatory notes (Luo 2014, 206). In Shen's translated text, many parenthetical notes were provided, offering explanations of English culture and special terms, such proper nouns for geographical locations and Victorian social etiquettes. This reflects Shen adopted the method of foreignisation and aimed to enhance readers' comprehension of the source text. However, the decision to include these notes might not have been solely Shen's idea. In the preface, Tao Menghe noted that foreigners might find it challenging to fully grasp Wilde's plays as they were primarily written in local colour, depicting purely upper-class social life in England in purely English idioms (Shen 1918, 597). Shen likely received much help for the notes from her husband, who had studied abroad in England and had a better understanding of such local colour.

In short, this comparison illustrates that the textual differences between translations authored by female and male translators can be attributed to factors beyond their gender. Indeed, Shen's approach to translation exemplifies the general phenomenon of women translators tending to translate more literally than their male colleagues. While she might have been influenced by the growing trend of straightforward translation (*zhiyi* 直譯) during the May Fourth period, the complex dynamics between gender, authorship, and translation could also have played a role. Rather than asserting authorial mastery by translating freely, Shen seemed to perform her subjection to the source text. This could be due to her more inclusive acceptance of foreign cultures or her deference to the act of translation, which empowered her to enter the realm of literary production (Luo 2014, 233-242). In the long run, we still need more research on gendered differences in translation before reaching meaningful conclusions in similar comparative analyses.

Apart from conducting a synchronic comparison between female and male translators' distinct translation practices, we can also examine this example from a diachronic perspective. That is, we can situate *The Story of a Lost Fan* in the historical trajectory of Chinese translations

of Western female figures in literary texts during the late Qing and early Republican period to observe some broader trends and patterns. Around the turn of the twentieth century, the portrayal of Western female exemplars offered new global realities and feminine possibilities to the Chinese populace. However, the radical potential of these representations was often mediated or mitigated by Chinese authors and translators to suit local reception (Judge 2004). In other words, the early translators tended to adopt the domestication approach, whereas translators of the May Fourth generation leaned towards the foreignisation approach.

This transition mirrors the overall trend of shifting from liberalism to literalism in Chinese translation history and illustrates on two essential points: One, while the transnational transmission of feminist ideas provided models and theoretical resources for the emerging Chinese feminist discourse, the Chinese intellectuals and theorists exercised agency in interpreting them for their own agendas. Two, although the Chinese intelligentsia sought inspiration for modernisation from the West, the power dynamics between China and the West in their cultural contacts remained in constant flux. This became particularly evident after World War I, when Chinese intellectuals became disillusioned and recognised the problems within Euro-American societies. Together, they serve as a poignant reminder that the complex and multi-directional cultural exchange between China and the West cannot be neatly captured by a simplistic "Western impact—Chinese response" paradigm or the reductive binaries such as Chinese/Western and tradition/modernity.

The Invisibility of a Woman Translator

During the peak of her career between 1919 and 1925, Shen Xingren continued to publish translated works on *New Youth* and other journals run or edited by reform-minded intellectuals, such as the abovementioned *New Tide*, *Short Story Magazine* (小說月報), and *the Morning Post Literary Supplement* (晨報副刊). Indeed, Shen's successful translational career owed much to the help of her male collaborators. Not only were her thoughts influenced by them, but they also lent their hands to the publication and favourable evaluation of her works. Compared to the active presence of her male colleagues, Shen often took a more subdued role in the translation production process, even though she did claim translatorship by signing her works. One distinctive characteristic is that she seldom penned the translator's preface to her works, but letting authoritative male editors or intellectuals do that for her. And when she wrote

prefaces or postscripts for her translations, the style was rather different from those penned by her male counterparts. As discussed in the previous section, when examining the gender dynamics in Shen's translation practice and experience, we should avoid portraying her merely as a victim in a male-dominated literary field but heed the nuances that showcase her agency. With the following examples, I contend that Shen consciously played with the invisibility of the role of translators, instead of simply being overshadowed by her male colleagues.

Shen had her first co-translation project with her husband, Tao Menghe. In 1920, they published a translation of the British economist John Maynard Keynes' (1883-1946) *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, under the titled of *European Economy After the Peace Conference* (歐洲和議後之經濟). Except from having her name listed as a co-translator, we cannot determine how the couple worked together or divided the workload. Judging from the Tao's translator's preface (Tao and Shen 1920, 1-4), the project should be conceived and initiated by him, who had training in economics and travelled around Europe during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Yet, with her interest in Mathematics and adequate proficiency in English, we can speculate that Shen was able to contribute to this non-fiction translation as Tao's intellectual equal. And Tao respected his wife's contribution by giving her the credits she deserved. Otherwise, for an established scholar like Tao who had been publishing his own works independently, there was no due for stressing the collaborative nature of a work if he had completed it solely.

One year later in 1921, Shen published her translation of the British playwright John Drinkwater (1882-1937)'s six-act play *Abraham Lincoln*. It is noteworthy that Hu Shi's editorship was highlighted parallel to Shen's translatorship in this translated product. Beyond showing recognition to Hu's work, it might also be the publisher's marketing strategy to boost sales since Hu was a highly sought-after star in the contemporary literary scene. Regardless of the reason, in this example, we once again witness this cultural leader playing an essential role in Shen's translation practice. Hu also proclaimed his editorial labour both in the preface and his personal diary. In the former, he stated that the well-known linguist, Zhao Yuanren 趙元任 (1892-1982), had reviewed the translation beforehand, changing mostly Lincoln's joke in Act 4 and adding the numbered musical notation to the song about John Brown in Act 1. Hu himself then meticulously proofread the whole work again, claiming that there was hardly a page he did not change because that was his responsibility to the translator (Shen 1921, 3-9). Moreover,

in his diary entries on 8 and 9 May 1921, Hu recorded that he inserted a long note while reviewing Acts 1 and 6 and corrected much of Act 2, respectively (Cao 2004, 29-30).[8]

Unless further evidence is available, we cannot compare the differences between Shen's manuscript and Hu's emendation. While we should heed the gap of cultural authority between them, it is also important to note that Hu's active editorial involvement and significant revisions did not directly amount to disapproval of Shen's language skills or her translation efforts. Both Hu and Zhao had received higher education in the United States. Therefore, it is unsurprising that they were more well-versed in English and knew more about American history and culture than Shen was. Previously, we have seen how Tao helped refine Shen 's translation of Wilde's play. Likewise, these two male senior colleagues of Shen might be driven to produce a higher-quality translated text for a popular and well-written political-historical drama they wished to introduce to the Chinese readers. Shen might as well grant them permission to amend her translation because she was equally dedicated to contributing to the intellectual endeavours of translating foreign masterpieces to offer inspirations for the development of a new Chinese literature. After all, it was the May Fourth intellectuals' common goal that through a revitalised Chinese culture, they and their compatriots could imagine and fashion both a modern Chinese identity and a modern Chinese nation that could stand on the global stage on an equal footing with its foreign Others.

Considering their continuous engagement in the Republican era, Hu indeed maintained an amicable relationship with Shen and her family. From one of Shen's letters to Hu where she consulted the latter's opinion on what she deemed an inaccurate word choice in her husband's writing (Geng 1994, 42-43), we can infer respectful ideational exchange rather than abusive order-following characterised their interactions. The fact that Shen later worked in the editorial team for *The Endeavour* (努力週報), a weekly journal founded by Hu Shi,[9] also reflects his acknowledgement of her capabilities. Therefore, it is essential that we recognise and explore the nuances of the gender dynamics in their relationship before applying easy labels of a helpless female translator yielding to a presumptuous male editor.

[8] The note Hu supplemented locates at the end of Act 1 and it is about John Brown's biography, see Shen 1921, 16-17.

[9] Hu Shi was dissatisfied with the shift in the editorial stance of *La Jeunesse*, which became increasingly inclined towards the ideology of the newly founded Chinese Communist Party. Sharing a similar view, Tao Menghe supported Hu's decision to create a new journal and worked as an editor for *The Endeavours*.

Another reason that arouses my interest in this example is its contemporary reception and the further discussion it provoked. In 1929 and 1933, two male readers published their reviews of Lincoln, which was already a popular work that had two reprints (Zhu 1929; Lu 1933). They praised the fluency of the translated text, but only because it had been edited by Hu and Zhao, two established male scholars in the contemporary times. And when launching their critiques on the mistranslations, they both addressed Hu, the editor, as the responsible person, instead Shen as the translator of this work. It is understandable for younger male literati opting to challenge Hu instead Shen to gain cultural capital in the literary field. Hu also directly responded to the review published in 1933 to justify and defend some of translation choices (Lu 1933, 110-111, see also Appendix). Apart from reasserting his authority, Hu might see the need to take Shen under his wing as she was regarded as his protégé in their collaboration. At first, one might feel uneasy to see how Shen's role and opinion were largely neglected by her male contemporaries. But a more in-depth understanding of the context can explain Shen's choice of staying almost invisible under the cloak of her more authoritative male collaborators. Broadly speaking, the women of letters in early twentieth-century China tended to avoid getting entangled in such open debates and criticism due to the feminine social code of reticence and invisibility in the public sphere (Hong 2008). Contrarily, the men of letters would not hesitate to confront their critics and launch "pen battles" to stand up for their ideas. As such, to protect her reputation, it was far easier and perhaps even better for Shen to keep a low profile.

One final example to show that the possibility of harmonious teamwork in male-female co-translation projects is the collaboration between Xu Zhimo and Shen Xingren. Their partnership followed a relay format, with Xu translating the first nine chapters, after which Shen took over to complete the translation of *The Charwoman's Daughter* by the Irish author James Stephens (1880-1950). Their translated text, titled *Mary Mary* (瑪麗瑪麗), was initially serialised on the *Morning Post Literary Supplement* in 1925, and later evolved into a single-volume book. In his preface, Xu Zhimo explained that Shen enjoyed the story, so he suggested her to continue and complete the entire translation from where he left off. (Xu and Shen 1927, 2; see Appendix). Their correspondence also revealed the publication decisions of their co-translated work (Chen 2021). While Xu assumed the responsibility of handling all business affairs, he willingly shared his insider knowledge of the publishing field with Shen and ensured she was involved and well-informed throughout the process. In an extraordinary gesture of appreciation, Xu even offered to give Shen all the royalties, acknowledging that the book was

predominantly the result of her hard work and that his own contribution was limited to a few pages. In short, this collaborative project was a testament to mutual trust and respect between the two. It was a happy partnership where both translators supported each other's work and recognised each other's contributions.

In fact, Shen Xingren did not lack her voice as a translator, and she would assert her agency whenever necessary. Aside from selecting sources texts according to her preferences, Shen demonstrated her commitment to the craft of translation by continually striving to improve the quality of her translated texts. An illustrative example is her revisiting and republishing the French author Anatole France (1844-1924)'s *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife* five years after her initial translated version. In the postscript, Shen stated she almost retranslated the entire work from scratch to revise all the mistakes, highlighting her pursuit of refinement in her works (1924, 134).[10] Evidently, Shen treated her translation endeavours seriously, but preferred not to draw much attention to herself. From Xu Zhimo's correspondence with Shen (Chen 2021), we can also deduce that Shen made attempts to write novels but chose not to publish any of them. But why did Shen refrain from claiming authorial mastery in translation and never produce original works of her own?

Several factors might help explain Shen's lack of literary ambitions. One of them relates to her personal character. According to her close acquaintance, the Chinese philosopher Jin Yuelin, he always encouraged Shen to write because she had a perceptive mind. However, Shen lived her life for others rather than for herself and was a shy person concerned about embarrassing herself or others. Her sensitivity and criticality hence hindered her from taking assertive actions in the public realm (Jin 1943). It is also possible that Shen lacked confidence in her ability to produce good-enough pieces, especially when her literary and social circle were filled with accomplished intellectuals and writers of her time. In this sense, translation allowed Shen to engage in a literary act of creation, while also offering her a protective shield under the veil of mediation. By positioning herself as a mere translator, Shen could dare to be creative and derive pleasure from literary production without exposing herself to the same level of public scrutiny and criticism that often directed towards women's original writing.

[10] Shen's first translation of this source text, titled "The mute wife" (啞妻) , was published in *New Tide* in 1919, whereas this retranslation was published in *Short Story Magazine* in 1924. For a comparison between the two versions, see Yin 2020, 136-137.

Shen's 1922 translation of the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev's prose poem, "Porog" (Threshold 門檻) (see Appendix), might offer further insights into her inclination towards self-effacement. Without knowledge of Russian, she translated the work from an English rendition published a few months earlier (Saunders 1922). Although Shen might not have fully grasped the context of Turgenev's writing,[11] it is possible that she found resonances with the unnamed female character in this poem, in a way comparable to what we have seen in the previous section. This character displayed immense bravery, being willing to sacrifice her life for the nation without expecting anything in return. If Shen indeed translated this piece out of her appreciation for such valorous deeds, we can also interpret her choice to remain nameless for her translational service to the Chinese nation with the same attitude. Certainly, this choice meant she would not leave her name in history, but seeking recognition might never be her goal. While Shen's modest disposition might have been shaped by the contemporary gender norms on female subservience, her agential decision to stay relatively invisible as a translator demonstrates a keen awareness of her personal agendas for translation and the gender dynamics in the contemporary literary field.

A Good Wife Wise Mother and A Female Citizen

In 1918, Hu Shi delivered a speech at Beijing Women's Normal School, sharing his insights about the social role of a New Woman, particularly drawing from his observations of American womanhood. According to Hu, a New Woman should transcend the traditional gender expectations of a Good Wife Wise Mother (*xianqi liangmu* 賢妻良母), and instead, strive for intellectual and economic independence while making significant contributions to society (1918). Shen Xingren was likely among the student audience for Hu's speech. Given their personal connections, his ideas would possibly have served as a frame of reference shaping Shen's self-perception as a New Woman in the May Fourth era. In this section, we will explore how Shen embraced some of the characteristics as described by Hu and fashioned herself into a Chinese New Woman through her translation endeavours.

[11] Turgenev's prose poem was written in 1878, probably prompted by the trial of the Russian socialist activist Vera Zasulich (1849-1919). Also, the poem should be read together with his other novel, *Nakanune* (On the Eve), see Fitzlyon 1983, 170.

In addition to the co-translation with her husband, Shen took on individual projects in translating non-fiction works, which gained significant influence and wide acclaim. This sets her apart from the prevailing assumption that women translators were limited to rendering presumed "feminine" literary genres like poetry, fiction, and drama. While it is true that Shen was not the first woman translator to tackle non-fiction works, her predecessors mostly worked within the confines of "feminine" fields, such as nursing, pedagogy, and home economics (see Luo 2014, 260-276). Contrarily, Shen's translation endeavours ventured into the intellectual territories of world history and science, allowing her to transcend putative gender boundaries in knowledge production and contribute to society in her unique way.

The most representative work in Shen's career was her translation of the Dutch-American author Hendrick van Loon (1882-1944)'s *Story of Mankind* (人類的故事), which ignited what became known as the "van Loon Fever" (*fanglong re* 房龍熱) in China. As was customary, Shen sought the endorsement of a male intellectual for her work, and she approached Zhu Jingnong 朱經農 (1887-1951), a colleague of Tao Menghe and Hu Shi who had previously introduced H.G. Well's well-known *Outline of History* to Chinese readers. In his introductory preface, Zhu emphasised the significance of having a skilled translator to do justice to a good book and praised Shen for her profound comprehension of the source text and her ability to translate it in an engaging and elegant manner (Shen 1925, 8; see Appendix).

This time, we can also hear Shen's own voice in a translator's preface (1925, 1). Right from the beginning, Shen criticised van Loon's book for being only "half the story of mankind" due to its lack of discussion on history in the East, except from a chapter on "Buddha and Confucius". Despite retaining the original title out of her respect for him, Shen decided to exclude this specific chapter because she believed van Loon's introduction displayed a lack of understanding of both sages. By contrast, Shen praised van Loon's method of teaching history using graphs and images, especially for its appeal to children's psychology. This preface clearly demonstrates Shen's independent thinking from her critique of van Loon. By targeting young adults as her audience, she also exhibited an aspiration for serving the country through educating the younger generation.

During the January 28 incident in 1932, the Commercial Press lost Shen's translated manuscript when the Japanese army attacked Shanghai. Shen later retranslated the entire book

and republished it as "a new version after the national calamity" (1935, 9). This rhetoric prompts us to consider whether Shen's motivation for (re-)translation was driven by nationalistic sentiments. According to her sister's memoir, average women like them, who were unable to directly engage in politics during Japan's aggression in China in the early 1930s, channelled their vigorous emotions through words and daily life boycotts (Shen 1973, 26). If this was the case, then translation—as Shen's primary literary medium—also functioned as a means for her to respond to current affairs and contribute within the limited roles available to female citizens during foreign invasion.

Shen's translation activities began to decrease from 1926, which was likely due to her husband's career advancement,[12] leading her to shift her focus towards caring for their family as a mother of three. However, it would be inaccurate to view Shen's own career as being suppressed by the prevailing Good Wife Wise Mother discourse. In contrast, Shen's upbringing might have influenced her readiness to embrace her domestic duties as she held great admiration for her mother's selfless devotion to the family. Additionally, her prior education in a missionary-run school in Japan may have further encouraged her commitment to family service (1971, 18; 23). Although her domestic responsibilities reduced the time she could spend on her literary practices, Shen did not give up on her translation pursuits. Apart from working on the revised edition of *Story of Mankind*, Shen also published a translation of *Biology in Everyday Life* (生物學與日常生活), a popular science reading by the British scientists John R. Baker (1900-1984) and J.B.S. Haldane (1892-1964) in 1935. Her choice of source text might be attributed to her early dream of studying medicine, which was later discouraged by her mother but led her to discover her interest in literature.

As we can see, Shen's self-fashioning as a New Woman was bounded by neither the traditional notions of a Good Wife Wise Mother nor Hu Shi's transcendent model. Instead, she carved her own path with her translation activities and balanced her public and personal responsibilities. As a successful translator, she achieved intellectual and financial independence, making contributions to the construction of modern knowledge without neglecting her family life. Shen's experience shows that a New Woman could embody the roles of both a nurturing

[12] In 1926, Tao Menghe was appointed as the head of the social research department at the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture to conduct large-scale sociological research based on Western methodologies in China.

mother for her own children and a "mother of citizens", while also being a dedicated female citizen on her own, actively shouldering responsibilities for the nation's modernisation.

A Talented Woman's Legacy

When the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) broke out, Shen Xingren and her family relocated to rural Sichuan due to Tao Menghe's posting for sociological research in the inland regions. Despite the challenging times, Shen volunteered for the Red Cross (Liu and Wang 2021, 7015), which again demonstrates her dedication to national service. However, her already frail health deteriorated during the war, and she passed away in 1943 from pneumonia. It is said that the esteemed Sinologists John K. Fairbank (1907-1991) and Joseph Needham (1900-1995), who were both doing fieldwork in China back then, tried to visit the couple around the mid-1940s. But eventually they only found a melancholic Tao mourning for the loss of his dear wife (Qiu 2015, 49). While future researchers may seek to verify this anecdote with other credible historical sources, the overall dearth of information about Shen's life and works leaves us with a lingering question: How well can we truly know her?

In this chapter, we have examined various aspects of Shen's identity — as a female translator, an educated female elite, a daughter, a wife, a mother, and a female citizen — through the snippets of her own writings and the written accounts about her by her contemporaries. For the readers of today, some of Shen's career and translation choices may not align with what we now consider as feminist or progressive. And it is true that she did not take a radical position as a woman translator or a New Woman in the Republican era. However, her modesty and dedication to service were precisely what earned her a reputation as a good translator with high calibre and prolificity in her time. This underscores the enduring influence of "the regime of feminine virtue", as Joan Judge (2008) puts it, in shaping acceptable modes of female self-expression in the public sphere. Without overtly challenging the traditional gender roles and expectations, Shen's self-effacement in her translatorial role enabled her to transcend the talent/virtue dilemma and demonstrate possession of both qualities.

The recent surge of scholarly interest in Shen perhaps contributes to the republication of her works, particularly the once-popular *Story of Humankind*. For example, a 2018-reprint proudly proclaims Shen's version as the world's first Chinese rendition of van Loon's work and the most faithful and concise among all Chinese translations (Figure 2). In promoting this

legendary translation, Shen herself is also celebrated as a legendary translator. The accompanying blurb exaggerates her achievements, portraying her as a professor at Peking University and a widely acclaimed Talented Woman alongside Lin Huiyin. In reality, Shen held neither of these titles.

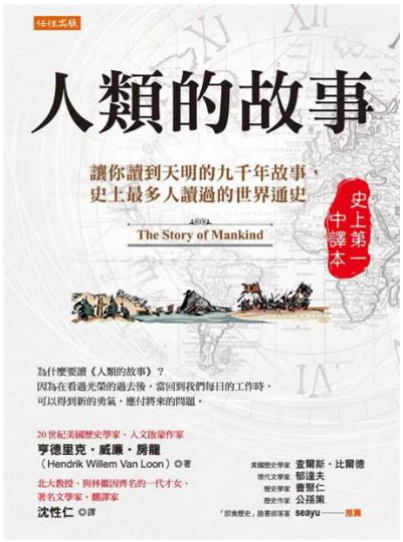

Figure 2. Example of a reprint of Shen's translation of *Story of Mankind* in recent years. Source: Shen 2018.

Nonetheless, this retrospective recognition of Shen as a Republican-era Talented Woman marks a shift in the term's usage. No longer burdened by the negative connotation it once carried, the Talented Woman now evokes romantic imaginations about a literary period that was replete with aspirational and gifted male and female writers. The fact that Shen's translations and her reputation have experienced a revival in the market stands in an intriguing contrast to the phenomenon that many famous male author-translators' translated works have been forgotten, including those of Lu Xun and Hu Shi (Volland 2014, 131). And it prompts us to contemplate the role of historiography in canonising and commemorating historical figures, regardless of their gender or literary fame. As we witness the changes in Shen's posthumous reputation, it is fascinating to ponder how her story and legacy will continue to unfold.

Chapter 2

The Necessity of Translation: A Female Intellectual's Playbook

Figure 3. Yuan Changying in the 1930s. Source: Yang 2002, 6.

Yuan Changying is nowadays chiefly known for her adaptation of the Han *yuefu* 樂府 poem *Southeast Fly the Peacocks* (孔雀東南飛) into a modern drama (1930). However, as we shall see, this was not the work she wanted to be remember by. Indeed, Yuan was a prolific author who explored different genres and accomplished a wide-ranging oeuvre that comprises of both original and translated works of fiction and drama as well as literary and academic essays. Compared to the other women writers in her generation, Yuan's path to literary achievement was rather peculiar. Whereas most of her peers' first publication were their creative works, Yuan's first authored essay, "On the necessity for women to study abroad" (論女子留學的必要), appeared in *Pacific Ocean* (太平洋),[13] a journal well-known among the Chinese overseas student circles in the 1920s. In it, she argued for the benefits of providing equal opportunities to Chinese female students to receive overseas education (1920b). This argumentative essay shows Yuan Changying's understanding of the roles Chinese female intellectuals ought to take and determination of using her literary output to improve the Chinese society. Throughout her

[13] Earlier in the same year, Yuan wrote a letter to *Pacific Ocean*'s founder-and-editor Li Jiannong 李劍農 (1880-1963) to voice her support on implementing co-education in Chinese colleges. Co-Education concerned many May Fourth intellectuals as they deemed access to education a key to women's emancipation.

career, Yuan continuously championed the cause of women's education in both words and deeds.[14]

Inspired by the title of her authorial debut, this chapter examines Yuan Changying's personal and professional trajectories, tracing the necessary steps that she took to become a recognised female scholar. With Yuan as my case study, I seek to investigate the opportunities, challenges, and motives in her translation activities and understand the empowering potential translation promised for her cohort of young educated female elites. Coming from a well-to-do gentry family in Hunan, Yuan did not need to translate for a living. She also seemed to delegate her contemplation of feminist issues to argumentative essays and plays; [15] whereas, her translations largely reflect her poetics, sharing her expertise on outstanding works of literature and insights about the role of literature in society. From the outset of her literary and scholastic career, Yuan strived to position herself as a serious academic who hoped to contribute to the knowledge transmission between China and the West. Her choice of source texts exemplifies her sustained effort to engage in the public and intellectual discourse on modernising Chinese literature with the goal of bettering Chinese people's lives. This invites us to further consider: How did translation serve her purpose? Who was her intended audience? And what kind of knowledge did Yuan look for in the Western texts and seek to communicate to her Chinese audience via translation?

As one of the few recognised women playwrights in her time, previous scholarship on Yuan Changying's life and works tends to focus on her dramatic works (see, for example, Yan 2008 and Keung 2000). And her translated texts, literary criticism and proses are often considered as a footnote to her playwriting career. However, rather than being auxiliary, these genres were important to Yuan's self-identification as a literary critic, professor, and writer as well as establishing and cementing her place in the contemporary literary scene. Therefore, we should consider the different aspects of her oeuvre as a whole to understand Yuan and her participation in public life as a female intellectual. Indeed, any attempts to do so should read

[14] For example, Yuan was a member of the Women's Education Committee 女子教育委員會 in the Beijing branch of the Chinese Education Improvement Society 中華教育改進社 in the early 1920s. Together with two other female committee members, she published an article titled "Plans to improve Chinese women's education" (改進中國女子教育之計劃) in the organisation's publication in 1923. Moreover, in 1948, Yuan donated money to subsidise the tuition fees of female students from low-income families at Wuhan University.

[15] For a discussion of the distinctive characteristics of the female characters portrayed in Yuan's plays, see Keung 2020, 244.

her translations together with her other literary endeavours, life experiences and the larger socio-political, historical, and cultural milieus to discover the connections among them.

In this chapter, I argue that Yuan Changying's access to translation enabled her to demonstrate her intellectual capability to an elite readership and promote her literary vision. Due to the fragmentary historical records, I have limited access to the translated works in her later career. As such, this study presents an inchoate attempt to explore, rather than an extensive analysis of her entire and prolific translation career. My analysis focuses on Yuan's translation practice and experience from the period of early 1920s to the mid-1930s. To establish a clear structure, I will divide her career into three phrases: the first from 1922 to 1926; the second from 1927 to 1928; and the third from 1929 to 1937 based on the milestones in her life. Yet, readers should note that this temporal division does not aim to create fixed boundaries or a linear narrative in understanding Yuan's career.

Step One: Finding Her Feet (1922-1926)

Yuan Changying's parents were an early source of inspiration for her strive for excellence. Depressed by the long-time ridicule from relatives and neighbours for only giving birth to daughters, Yuan's mother passed away when she was five year old. Her three sisters also died prematurely. This bereavement fuelled Yuan's feminist spirit from a young age, and she vowed to herself that she would become an outstanding Chinese woman one day and fight for other women in China (Yang 2002, 95). On the other hand, Yuan's father was a prominent official who had served as the financial secretary in several provinces in the Nationalist Government. As Yuan was the only surviving daughter he had with his first wife, he sought to provide her with fine education (Keung 2020, 220-221). Apart from sending her to the McTyeire School 中西女中 in Shanghai, which was known for nurturing many female intellectuals in modern China, Yuan's father also funded her studies in a boarding school in London and later her bachelor's studies at the University of Edinburgh. [16]

Being one of the few female students studied in Europe and successfully obtained a degree, Yuan's graduation was celebrated in both the international and domestic press (Keung

[16] Keung notes that the "Master of Arts" programme Yuan studied at the University of Edinburgh was not equivalent to a postgraduate master's as assumed by many historical and contemporary researchers, but a conventional undergraduate degree (2020, 204-205).

2020, 224-225). As Denise Gimpel's argues in her study of another contemporary female writer-scholar, Chen Hengzhe 陳衡哲 (1893-1976), the status of an overseas returned graduate already conferred promising female intellectuals, like Yuan and Chen, a degree of intellectual authority (2015, 12). To be sure, it was relatively easy for Yuan to find a teaching job at the Beijing Women's Normal School, where she was probably the first Chinese woman to teach Shakespeare in China (Yang 2002, 69). However, to secure a firm footing in the literary field, she still needed the acceptance as a serious professional academic and recognition of her skills from the literary establishment, which was — and continues — to be dominated by male intellectuals.

To achieve this goal, since her studies at the University of Edinburgh, Yuan had actively participated in the scholastic community (Keung 2020, 245-246). While working at Beijing, she continued to engage with the social network formed by Anglo-American educated intellectuals, including Xu Zhimo, Zhou Ganshen 周鯁生 (1889-1971) and Chen Xiying 陳西瀅 (Chen Yuan 陳源, 1896-1970) (Gong 2022, 87). Through them and her husband, Yang Duanliu 楊端六 (1885-1996) who then worked for the Commercial Press in Shanghai, Yuan's network brought her opportunities to publish her original and translated works in literary journals, such as the above-mentioned *Pacific Ocean, Eastern Miscellany* (東方雜誌) and *Contemporary Review* (現代評論). Yuan also worked hard to achieve public recognition by publishing a lot. Her network simultaneously consisted of her preferred target audience — individuals who were knowledgeable or interested in Western literature and would critically assess her writings. And she had to impress them for their approval to join the intellectual's club and have her contributions valued by the other members.

In the eyes of some people, Yuan was an amateur author who spent her spare time to write, while devoting to her teaching profession. Indeed, there was a five-year gap between her authorial debut and the publication of her first creative work, a short fiction titled "Wenjun 玟君" in *Short Story Magazine*. But during these years, Yuan kept producing both literary and non-literary translations to establish her place in the literary scene. Her first two translated texts were literary criticisms by two renowned French authors, Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) and Anatole France. Published in early 1922, "On creation and critique" (創作與批評) (1922a), was an excerpt taken from Maupassant's preface, "Le Romain*"* (The Novel), to his novel

Pierre et Jean (Pierre and Jean). During the May-Fourth era, Maupassant's works were widely translated to China by prominent literary figures, such as Hu Shi, Mao Dun and Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑 (1895-1968) (Zha and Xie 2007, 193-194). One year later, Yuan published a translated excerpt of France's preface to his four-volume collection of book reviews *La Vie Littéraire* (The Literary Life) (1923b). She named the piece "An adventure of the soul" (靈魂之探險) after France's famous quote, "the good critic is he who narrates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces" (1921, iii). France was the 1921 Nobel Prize in Literature Laurette, and his works had caught Chinese literati's attention since 1922 via the introduction of his life and works in *Short Story Magazine*. By deciding to translate these two authors' literary criticism essays, instead of their creative works, Yuan demonstrated her intellectual capability to understand and engage with broader literary theories and debates. As such, her translations promoted not only the two French masters but also herself as their translator.

In between the publication of these two translations, Yuan also wrote a preface to her sister-in-law, Yang Runyu 楊潤餘 (1899-?)'s translation of *Les Vieux* (The Elders) by Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897)(1922b). In it, Yuan introduced Daudet's life, literary style and achievements and encouraged the readers to read more French literature. Writing in such an authoritative literary historiographical tone was common in the genre of prefaces to translated texts in the early twentieth-century China. What sets this example apart is that — as we have seen in Chapter 1 — in many women translators' works, such introductory prefaces were often written by their male colleagues or editors. Certainly, Yuan might be invited to pen the preface for Yang because of their family relations. But, more likely, it should be her demonstrated extensive knowledge in French literature that granted her the authority to do so.

Yuan Changying's familiarity with French literary studies also led to her commission to write a short introduction on French literature by the Commercial Press (1923a). The book performed well in sales with multiple reprints (see Chen 2008), and Yuan were later invited to do an expanded edition during the interwar period. Here is not the place to engage in a detailed comparison between the two editions, but I want to draw the reader's attention to the short list of references she included at the end of book (see Appendix). Despite not being complete bibliographical entries, her references clearly comprised of general surveys of French literature. Yuan might have used them when developing her knowledge in the subject during her training

at the University of Edinburgh.[17] Although her exact work process is not known, Yuan apparently relied on translation in her pursuit of producing new knowledge for her elite readership in China.

In her early career, the first literary translation Yuan produced was *Will O' the Mill* by the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), and the translated text was serialised in *Pacific Ocean* in 1924. Unlike the May Fourth intellectuals' emphasis on introducing foreign masterpieces to China, this short story was not Stevenson's most famous works, which include *Treasure Island* and *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Rather, this could be part of Yuan's leisure reading as Stevenson had been a local literary celebrity in Scotland. Yuan might also be attracted to this short story because its structure is similar to a three-act play. Regardless of the reason behind her selection of source text, this example deserves our special attention since it was the first time Yuan translated in modern vernacular Chinese. Until this point, most of the other translations or essays that Yuan published after her return to China were written in the traditional literary style (*wenyan* 文言), or a mix of both; whereas, most Chinese female translators translated in *baihua* as default in the 1920s (Luo 2014, 225). This language choice indicates Yuan's conscious decision to engage with her target group of well-educated audience who embraced both traditional literati culture and modernised lifestyle with foreign influences. It further shows there was never a clear break and sharp transition between the two languages even at the heyday of the May Fourth era. Given that Yuan's first original short story was published in 1925, her switch to the vernacular might be an attempt to try her hands before producing her own creative works. As such, translation also served a productive starting point for the aspiring writer in Yuan.

Apart from short stories, Yuan also started to translate plays and ultimately becoming a specialist in this genre. Her foray into drama translation began with two works from the Austrian playwright Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931), *Lebendige Stunden* (Living Hours) (1925a) and *Die letzten Masken* (The Last Masks) (1925b). In the preface of *Living Hours* (生存的時間), the editor of *Eastern Miscellany* noted that Schnitzler excelled in writing one-act plays. This might explain Yuan's interest in translating his works as she also preferred to write in the one-act format as a dramatist. Moreover, the editor referred readers to another translation of Schnitzler's magnum opus, *Anatol*, already published by the Chinese Literary Association

[17] For a detailed discussion of Yuan's academic training at Edinburgh, see Keung 2020, 204-205.

(Yuan 1925a, 143). Chen Xiying had published a review of this translation of *Anatol* done by Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (1893-1984) and edited by Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (1898-1958) in 1924. In it, Chen criticised the numerous errors in that translated text, expressing concerns that such poor-quality work could reflect negatively on the source text and the efforts of introducing European literature into China in general (1924, 24). There is no concrete evidence to prove the causation between Chen's review and Yuan's translation. Yet, given that they were in the same literary and social circle, it is possible that Yuan might share his belief that there were no satisfactory translations of Schnitzler available on the market, leading her to produce her own.

The final work I want to highlight in this foundation-building phase of Yuan's career is her translation of the British playwright Harold Brighouse (1882-1958)'s *Lonesome-like* (寂寥似的) (1926). In her oft-cited translator's preface, Yuan linked the play's setting in a cotton mill to the May Thirtieth Incident in Shanghai that happened one year ago in 1925. She hoped this play would move and inspire more Chinese artists to engage in fieldwork with the underprivileged, understand their emotions, and create more "modernised dramas" (*weixin xiju* 維新戲劇), which would improve people's lives and the society (1926, 125-126). This preface clearly articulates Yuan's literary ideal. Like many of her contemporaries, she believed that the educated elites had a responsibility to guide the people and serve the public good. Literature in the broad sense, and drama, in this case, were the means for literati to fulfil their civic duty. Meanwhile, Yuan regarded drama not only as a tool for bringing societal change and public enlightenment, but also an art form. The mentioning of "modernised dramas" reveals her aspiration to modernise Chinese drama by absorbing Western dramatic techniques, practices, theories, and aesthetics. And this aspiration remained a significant driving force in the subsequent phases of her career as she continued to translate and ventured into playwriting herself.

Step Two: Promoting Her Vision (1927-1928)

The year 1927 was a watershed in Yuan Changying's literary career. First, she furthered her studies in French Language and Modern Drama at the Université Paris III. Her departure for France in August 1926 was reported in a Shanghai-based pictorial journal, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 4 Yuan (standing in the middle with a cross marked in front of her) and the family and friends who saw her off her voyage to Paris. Source: *The Eastern Times Photo Supplement* 1926.

The caption to this photo lauded Yuan's effort to further her academic pursuits, revealing that she had already built a good reputation with her works (The Eastern Times Photo Supplement 1926). Indeed, it was rather unusual for a female intellectual in Republican-era China to have both the commitment and the privilege to study abroad twice in her life. Such unique experience certainly helped create a standout résumé for Yuan that sets her apart from her peers. Together with her demonstration of strive for higher academic achievements, these conditions were conducive for promoting her professional image and conferred her greater intellectual and public authority.

Second, Yuan stopped signing her work under her married name (Yang Yuan Changying 楊袁昌英) but returned to use her birth name. There is no evidence nor discussion into proving why she did so. But according to her daughter, Yang Jingyuan 楊靜遠 (1923-2015), Yuan Changying and Yang Duanliu's semi-arranged marriage did not lead to a happy marriage life due to their differences in age, personality and temperament (2002, 68). Besides, Yuan was, in her daughter's words, a "career-driven woman" (*shiyexing nüxing* 事業型女性) (2002, 76). Unlike many other female translators, or working mothers in general, it seems that she did not need to take care much of the domestic responsibilities. She also left for studying in Paris alone, asking her father to look after her three-year-old daughter until her return, while Yang Duanliu kept working in Shanghai (2002, 69). Combining these leads, we might speculate that Yuan wanted to establish an independent identity for her scholarly and literary endeavours. And the relative freedom and support she had from her family afforded her the right to be herself.

During her time in Paris, Yuan Changying remained actively engaged with the literary scene in China and contributed literary reviews, original plays and proses to literary periodicals. Additionally, she published two translations of French short stories, one by Georges-Eugène Bertin (1868-1938) and another by Anatole France. Similar to the case of *Will O' Mill* mentioned above, the two source texts were not the respective authors' most famous works, and they were more likely pieces that Yuan enjoyed reading or encountered during her studies. Upon arriving and reuniting with her family in Shanghai in April 1928, Yuan's career started to take off. Coming home with greater academic prestige, she took on the role of a professor of English studies at China Public University 中國公學, where Hu Shi served as the incumbent headmaster. Regarding her literary production, Yuan's focus shifted towards promoting her literary thought through translation.

Shortly after her return, Yuan published an article in *Contemporary Review* to introduce the new theatre movements she witnessed in France (1928a). Through Yuan's words, we can sense her excitement to "bring the world to China" by sharing her first-hand knowledge and exposure to the latest developments in dramaturgy. To her, the theatre modernisation movements happening on the international stage seemed not merely a model for emulation, but also a potential future for China — only if it had not been worn out by internal warfare, which depleted financial resources and impoverished its people (1928a, 80). This subtle critique on current affairs again showed Yuan's aspiration of serving her country as a female intellectual. Moreover, the themes and techniques she introduced in this article, such as the human struggle with destiny and the exploration of psychological perspectives from Freudian psychoanalysis, indeed foreshadowed her innovative adaptation of *Southeast Flies the Peacocks* (1930).[18] Generally speaking, Yuan's own plays exhibit a distinctive style characterised by her incorporation of multi-disciplinary knowledge and highly theoretical-based dramatic experiments (Keung 2020, 272). In this sense, translation enabled Yuan to draw inspirations both for the future advancement of modern Chinese theatre and her personal literary achievements.

[18] Instead of the tragic romance of the main characters Liu Lanzhi 劉蘭芝 and Jiao Zhongqing 焦仲卿, Yuan's adaption foregrounds the complex psychology and perspective of the antagonist, Mother Jiao 焦母 to explore the oppressive motherhood in traditional China (Dooling and Torgeson 1998, 211). For an detailed analysis on the play, see Yan 2006, 109-118.

Following the publication of this article, Yuan translated three plays from two of the six iconic playwrights in contemporary French theatre that she had highlighted in the piece. The first one was *Le Temps est un Songe* (The Time is a Dream) by Henri René Lenormand (1882-1951), serialised in *Contemporary Review* (1928b). Yuan hailed Lenormand's works as "masterpieces that are must-reads for anyone who wants to study recent French theatre", and noted *The Time is a Dream* was an original, melancholic piece that deeply captivated its audience (1928a, 83). The second translation was a single-volume book containing Jean-Jacques Bernard (1888-1972)'s *Martine* and *L'Ame en peine* (The Unquiet Spirit) (1930a). Yuan lauded them as Bernard's two masterpieces (1928a, 84), and eventually, the book was published by the Commercial Press in 1930. This strong connection between Yuan's literary criticism essays and translated works shows that Yuan utilised her translation output with great self-awareness to promote her own literary vision. Through her translations, Yuan not only paid homage to the writers she appreciated, but she also acquired a platform to formulate and advocate her literary thought.

Step Three: Following Her Heart (1929-1937)

This third period was the time in Yuan Changying's career when she was, in modern parlance, free to choose her jobs. In mid-1929, she accepted a job offer as a professor of Foreign Literary Studies at the newly founded Wuhan University and moved to the city with her daughter. One year later, her husband joined them from Shanghai and taught at the University as a professor of Economics. The tenured position provided Yuan with stability and recognised her expertise in drama studies, and people started to address her with the honorific title of "master" Yuan 袁先生. Originally, the term "先生" denoted someone born earlier with extensive knowledge, but its usage evolved to become the Chinese equivalent of "mister" and carry gender connotations. Consequently, only knowledgeable, and accomplished women in their professional fields were conferred this masculine title. The fact that female scholars like Yuan had to work so diligently for recognition and a gendered title proves the formidable height of the intellectual barriers they needed to overcome. Among her close circle of friends Yuan was known as Mrs. Yang 楊太太. Still, she was not burdened by any domestic duties as their family could afford hiring cooks and helpers (Yang 2002, 79-80).

Yuan's new role allowed her to devote her heart and soul to her greatest passions: teaching and writing. The eight years she spent living and working at Luojia Mountain 珞珈山, where Wuhan University's main campus was situated, marked the most prolific period of her literary career. She also expanded her writing practice into the genre of essays, and her travel writing was particularly well-received (Yang 2002, 80). As a female playwright, Yuan achieved success with her 1930 drama collection *Southeast Flies the Peacock and Other One-Act Plays* (1930b), solidifying her authority and reputation in the public eye.[19] However, due to the increasingly politicised literary field, Yuan's plays came under fierce attacks by the League of Left-Wing Writers in the 1930s. With her privileged background, her family members' service at the Nationalist Government, and her elitist approach to playwriting, Yuan was labelled as a bourgeois writer and criticised for her different views on political issues and the usage of literature. Nevertheless, Yuan did not alter her writing style or subject matters. Her plays continued to reflect on themes of love and marriage as well as social issues related to the improper behaviours of well-educated individuals (Keung 2020, 249-264). She remained resolute in catering to an elite readership with her literary endeavours, as she firmly believed that intellectuals should utilise their education to bring forth positive influences for the Chinese society.

As a respected drama studies scholar, Yuan utilised scholarship as a means of refining her ideas and communicating with her intended readers. Although the number of translated plays she produced decreased compared to the previous phases, translation remained an integral part of her work. Notably, Yuan's critical essays were often intertwined with translations and related to the subjects she taught, such as Greek Mythologies and Tragedies, Modern Western Drama, Shakespeare, and English Prose (Yang 2002, 80).[20] For instance, in 1931, Yuan wrote an article about Hermes and the invention of the lyre, showing how ancient Greeks lived a poetic and artistic life. This article was heavily based on her translation of the French poet, Leconte de Lisle's (1818-1894)'s rendition of Homer's hymns (1931, 161). Similarly, in 1935, she penned a lengthy essay titled "Shakespeare's Humour" (沙斯比亞的幽默) (1935), delving into the etymology and meaning of humour and its usage in the genre of comedies. To support her arguments, she included translated excerpts from J. B. Priestley (1894-1984)'s *English Humour* and several classic Shakespearean plays such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer*

[19] For an overview of Yuan's playwrighting career, see Keung 2020, 209-220.
[20] Yuan also gave courses on Chinese-English translation and modern French language. For her students' recounts of her teaching, see Yang 2002, 11-26; 36-42.

Night's Dream, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. All the translated texts featured in the essay were her own translations because she could not find other satisfactory translations available in Chinese.

To avoid getting entangled in politically charged criticisms, Yuan mostly published her works in politically neutral publications in the 1930s. This decision might also explain why her works had lower visibility and a narrower reception (Gong 2022, 90; Keung 2020, 217). During this period, she produced three translated texts. Among them, I only managed to access to her translation of *The Rope* (繩子) by the American playwright Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953), which was published in *Les Contemporains* 現代雜誌 in 1934. Fortunately, this translation proves to be an intriguing example that deserves closer examination. In the postscript (1934, 1198), Yuan candidly stated that she took on the translation as a favour for the editors of *Les Contemporains*, who persistently invited, or one might say nagged, her to contribute to their special volume on contemporary American literature. Yuan mentioned completing the entire translation within three weeks, despite the pressure of deadlines, her other commitments, and the sweltering weather. She excused herself for not having enough time to refine it into a great translated text, but instead, she prioritised ensuring that the readers could grasp and understand the source text.

The most interesting part arises when she expressed her lack of appreciation for the play. The first reason given was her difficulty in understanding the language used by sailors and dock workers in the play, which might be relevant to the contemporary literary debate on whether bourgeois writers could authentically produce proletarian literature. Despite admitting feeling "ashamed" of her lack of knowledge, her disclaimer subtly revealed a sense of irony and disapproval towards the revolutionary literary trend. The second reason provided was that *The Rope* was an early work of O'Neill. She felt it did not fully represent his literary achievements and elaborated on why she did not consider it a good piece. Yuan's expertise in drama studies certainly granted her the authority to offer her critique. Yet, it might also reflect her slight dissatisfaction with the editors of *Les Contemporains*, who had selected and requested her to translate this piece. This example illustrates Yuan's agency as a translator and the liberties she could exercise as a respected female scholar. With her authority established and reputation secured, she could confidently express her preferences and views.

Yuan's other two translations were *Apple Women* (蘋果婦人), a short story by the British author Harold Alfred Manhood (1904-1991), and *The Home of Vision* (意中的家), a play by the British female playwright Constance Holme (1880-1955) (Chen 2008, 367). Both texts were published on the *Wuhan Daily Literary Supplement* (武漢日報現代文藝) in 1935. The editor-in-chief of this publication was one of her best friends, the well-known female writer of the May Fourth generation, Ling Shuhua 凌叔華 (1900-1990). Therefore, Yuan might have submitted her translations as a personal favour or Ling might have invited her to contribute. It is worth noting that both authors were not widely renowned, and their source texts were not considered masterpieces. This leads us to question the rationale behind Yuan's choice of source text. If we look back on the previous phases, Yuan sometimes made similar choices, and her translations of Stevenson, Bertin and France are a case in point. For future studies, it is interesting to explore whether Yuan was driven by personal gratification rather than strategic calculation when selecting these texts for translation. This suggests a more personal approach to translation, one which she followed her own inclinations and appreciation for literature. If that is indeed the case, her attitude towards translation might mirror that towards her authorial role, which is to regard writing as a means of self-exploration and self-expression (Gong 2022, 90-91; Keung 2020, 258-261). As such, these examples might shed light on Yuan's identity as an author-translator and offer insights into her perception of her authorial and translatorial personae.

Despite shifting her career focus to her academic life and refraining from publicly expressing her political stance, Yuan did not hesitate to voice her opinions on the role of literature in society and human life when the time called for it. Yuan's determination to actively participate in public debates since the outset of her career sets her apart from the self-positioning of Shen Xingren in Chapter 1. However, it is crucial to note that Yuan could only do so by leveraging the intellectual and public authority derived from her scholarly reputation. In two essays, "The Mission of Literature" (文學的使命) and "Literature Needed at the Present Stage" (現階段所需要的文學), Yuan criticized left-wing literature for dominating the literary field. Her objections centred on literature being subjugated to political purposes and the neglect of literary pursuits in the aesthetic and spiritual domains. For Yuan, writers had noble missions in capturing the beauty of life, broadening readers' horizons, enhancing their imagination, fostering mutual understanding, and ultimately bringing happiness to people (1932, 14-15). Even in the face of the impending war, she stressed that the role of literature was to cultivate

high morality in the youth and inspire them to contribute to the nation's rejuvenation (1937a, 4-5). Evidently, Yuan's literary thought was rooted in the May Fourth ideal of using literature for enlightenment. However, such ideas were increasingly regarded as impractical and obsolete in the face of the real-life social problems affecting the lives of many in the poverty-ridden lower class (Denton 1996, 9-10). The incompatibility of her thoughts with the prevailing revolutionary fervour of the time resulted in a significant gap between Yuan's lofty motivations and the actual readership she could effectively reach. Notwithstanding her earnest desire to make positive social impacts as a female intellectual, Yuan's works, theories, and arguments ultimately failed to exert the desired influence.

Passing into History

In the late 1930s, as Yuan Changying reflected on her literary and intellectual pursuits, she decided to exclude her drama scripts and translations in her self-elected collection, *Ink Sketches from a Forest Nook* (山居散墨). Comparing them to her critical essays and literary prose, Yuan referred to these literary outputs as "time-sensitive works" (*you shijianxing de wenzhang* 有時間性的文章) that did not fully represent the depth of her serious contemplation (1937b, 1). Such acute self-awareness reflects Yuan's prioritisation of her role as an intellectual and professor over that of a writer or translator. Her eagerness to achieve higher intellectual accomplishments might have been influenced by the traditional Confucian literati ideal of the "three immortalities" (*san buxiu* 三不朽) – to establish one's place in history for remembrance through their service (*ligong* 立功), writing (*liyan* 立言), and virtue (*lide* 立德). It might not be how she expected it, but Yuan did achieve this to a certain extent. As her reputation grew, contemporary critics began to regard her more as a female scholar than a female writer, leading to her exclusion from some anthologies of women writers' works published during her time (Gong 2022, 90).

Paradoxically, the literary criticism and critical essays that Yuan was the proudest of stemmed from ideas and knowledge she encountered in foreign references, which in turn highlight the significance of translation in her intellectual journey. In this sense, it was precisely translation that enabled Yuan to cross the gender and intellectual barriers and express her opinions in argumentative writing, a genre that was historically exclusive for male scholar-officials in premodern times. Although Yuan might not have been consciously aware of her use

of translation, translation continuously played a crucial role in bolstering her authority in both the literary scene and public arena. Translation also empowered her to become a female intellectual who sought to fulfil her social role and responsibility as a literary scholar and critic. From another perspective, we can also gauge the necessity of translation in Yuan's career as a female intellectual through her advice to her daughter, Yang Jingyuan. In the latter's memoir, she recounts how her mother encouraged her to practice translating and writing, and actively helped her look for places for publication (2002, 105). For Yuan, it was only through extensive writing and publishing that one could find their place in the literary scene. Inspired by her mother's hard work and spirit, Yang later became a celebrated translator of the works of the Brontë sisters and children's literature.

After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, Yuan Changying's life took a drastic turn. The harsh realities of war compelled her to learn cooking for her family, while her husband, Yang, assisted with other household chores. Despite the difficulties they faced, both Yuan and Yang remained devoted to their teaching and writing endeavours. In 1944, Yuan managed to publish an expanded edition of her early scholarly studies on French Literature. As we have seen before, she relied on the translation of foreign academic sources in her knowledge production. Thus, it is likely that translation again offered her much assistance in completing this ambitious 180,000-word project (Yang 2002, 97; 102).

Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Yuan's family decided to stay in Mainland China. And Yuan went into ecstasies over contributing to the great Socialist cause and building a new Chinese nation with promising prospects. Like many other May Fourth intellectuals eager to put their ideas into practice, she actively engaged in politics and was elected as a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of Hubei Province. Additionally, she joined the China Writers Association. Translation remained her constant companion as she published her views on how to organize translation efforts in this new era. In the early 1950s, Yuan also began learning Russian when she was approaching sixty years old, but her proficiency grew to the level where she could translate Soviet literary works. Allegedly, she also translated a few of Mao Zedong's poems into English, seeking to present this hopeful new China to the world (Yang 2002, 198; Chen 2008, 386).

However, this period of relative bliss and peace soon ended abruptly. During the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1956, Yuan Changying actively voiced her critiques of the government,

leading to her persecution as a “rightist” in the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957. She was stripped of and banned from all public duties, as well as subjected to manual labour, first in a library and later as a street sweeper until 1962. Subsequently, in the Cultural Revolution years (1966-1976), Yuan was forced to return to her birthplace, a remote village in Hunan. Despite the hardships she faced during her banishment, she still intended to work on and publish a re-translated volume of Shakespeare’s plays. Regrettably, the project remained unfinished, and she passed away in 1973 (Yang 2002; Chen 2008). But it was her dedication to modernising Chinese drama through translation and the foreign literary works which she brought with her and kept her company that became a spiritual pillar and supported her through these challenging times. In this way, we might conclude that, for Yuan, translation served not only as a practical tool to benefit society but also as an endearing literary practice close to her heart. Throughout her life, translation acted as a medium for communicating her literary vision and expressing her profound love for literature.

In 1979, Yuan’s convictions and charges of anti-revolutionary crimes were officially reviewed and revoked. Thanks to the efforts of scholars and the republication of her works, her name resurfaced in the public eye since the early 1980s. Her daughter, Yang, played a vital role in this resurgence, advocating for her mother’s remembrance and editing a compilation of memorial essays by her other best friend－the female writer Su Xuelin 蘇雪林 (1897-1999), relatives, colleagues, students, as well as recent scholarly works on Yuan‘s life and works. There has been a growing interest in Yuan as a significant cultural figure, especially since the 120th anniversary of her birth in 2014 (Keung 2020, 202-203). However, much information about her later career remains to be unearthed. Ultimately, the remembering of Yuan Changying prompts us to reconsider how we can better assess and understand the contributions of women playwrights and drama practitioners to the development of modern (spoken) drama in China. The conventional literary historical narrative has often focused on the three founding fathers of modern Chinese drama: Tian Han 田漢 (1898-1968), Hong Shen 洪琛 (1894-1955) and Ouyang Yuqian 歐陽予倩 (1889-1962). Male playwrights like Cao Yu 曹禺 (1910-1996), Ding Xilin 丁西林 (1893-1974) and Xiong Foxi 熊佛西 (1900-1965) are also frequently mentioned in textbooks and scholarly essays. This is not to deny their works and achievements nor the fact that women playwrights were few in the early period, reflecting their gradual exclusion from the theatre under the Qing (McDougall and Louie 1997, 159). However, it raises the no longer new yet often-asked question: where are the women in this history? Could there be

founding mothers for modern Chinese drama as well, and if so, who are they? How can we evaluate their contributions alongside their male counterparts? In addition to Yuan, Bai Wei and Yang Jiang are two other women playwrights whose dramatic works are gaining increasing recognition and discussion. Still, there are many other women whose names and efforts in the archives await rediscovery and acknowledgment.

Chapter 3

Found in Translation: A Female Poet-Translator by Profession

Figure 5. Chen Jingrong in 1953. Source: Chen 2000.

Chen Jingrong's early life can be read as a real-life example supporting Lu Xun's argument to his famous speech "What happens after Nora leaves home?".[21] Despite her upbringing in a patriarchal family in Leshan, Sichuan, Chen was exposed to ideas of gender equality and women's liberation through reading literary works written by May Fourth writers in middle school. At the age of fourteen, Chen was courageous enough to run away from home and pursue a new life in Beijing. She had been encouraged by her English teacher and a poet himself, Cao Baohua 曹葆華 (1906-1978), who recognised her literary talent and helped published her first poem in Tsinghua University's student journal in 1932. Though her initial attempt failed, Chen persevered and eventually made her way from Chengdu to Beijing in 1935 with Cao's assistance. Yet, the reality was far from a painted rosy picture. Due to the absence of funding, Chen had to endure harsh living conditions, frequently moving from one roof to another, and ultimately had her dream of attending college crushed (Chen 2008, 727).

[21] Hu Shi's 1918 Chinese translation of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was a resounding success, sparking a "Nora phenomenon" in China. Numerous women were inspired by the play's protagonist, Nora, to leave their homes. In this speech delivered at Beijing Women's Normal School in 1923, Lu Xun cautioned against the socio-economic challenges that idealistic young women seeking liberation and independence might encounter. He presented two possible outcomes for the disillusioned Nora: either she would become a prostitute or return to her husband's home (1923).

Nevertheless, as many talented artists often thrive under hardships, Chen's formative years in Beijing became a fertile ground for her budding literary career. Apart from writing poems, Chen's routine was to visit different libraries to read voraciously and audit classes at Peking University and Tsinghua University to immerse herself in both classical Chinese literature and foreign literature. Her romantic relationship with Cao also enabled her to join Cao's literary and social circle, which included famous poets, like Bian Zhilin 卞之琳 (1910-2000), He Qifang 何其芳 (1912-1977), and Liang Zongdai 梁宗岱 (1903-1983), and learn from their discussions on poetry. Meanwhile, Chen began taking private French lessons from a French widow and reading French poetry, establishing a foundation for her to later translate as an autodidactic French learner (Almerg 1988, 5).

When the Second Sino-Japanese War erupted in 1937, Chen returned to Chengdu with Cao and his friends. Due to their deepening disagreement, the couple parted ways in 1939. She later fell in love with another poet, Sha Lei 沙蕾 (1912-1986) who courted her with beautifully-written love letters and poem. In 1940, they got married and moved to Lanzhou. Yet, Sha proved to be an unfortunate choice for a husband. The demanding responsibilities as a homemaker and mother of two, along with the concomitant isolated lifestyle, also brought Chen's creative career to a halt. Eventually, at the age of twenty-eight, Chen escaped from her oppressive marriage in January 1945. She made the difficult decision to leave behind her two daughters, and tragically, the younger one passed away from illness a few days after her departure (Sha 2001, 162).

I have spent some time on narrating Chen Jingrong's early life because we will see a different her in the upcoming pages. No longer a probable miserable Nora, Chen became a professional poet-translator who achieved financial independence and personal empowerment. This chapter focuses on the first peak of Chen's career between the period of 1945 and 1948. Through her translations of poetry and children's literature, I will examine how Chen harnessed the power of translation to explore her literary thought and creative freedom. Readers should note that the quoted poetry translations are from the printed versions in the late 1940s. Chen later revised them in different contexts; however, a detailed comparison between her translations and retranslations should be the subject of another study.

Turning Over a New Leaf

With the help from her brother, the He Qifang couple, and Ba Jin 巴金 (Li Yaotang 李堯棠, 1904-2005), Chen Jingrong started a vagrant life in the war-time capital of Chongqing, taking on whatever job opportunities available to sustain herself. Finally, she found stability as an editor at Wen Tong Bookstore 文通書局 and was later transferred to its Shanghai branch in 1946. Compared to the early start of her writing career, Chen did not began translating until the mid-1940s. But her first encounter with translation occurred a decade ago when she assisted Cao Baohua to copy manuscripts for his translations of Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) (Almberg 1988, 5). Despite the ongoing Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), the print industry in Shanghai experienced a transient revival from 1946 to 1948, offering numerous opportunities for literary productions (Volland 2016, 372). Chen precisely rode the wave of this publication bloom when she decided to quit her job at the Bookstore and embarked on a professional career as a poet-translator in the winter of 1946. To make her living, she illustriously produced poems, essays, and translations and frequently contributed to literary journals and newspapers. Eventually, her hard work paid off. In Shanghai, Chen made her career breakthrough by publishing two collections of poetry and one of prose,[22] which established her name in the literary scene.

As a firm believer in the benefits of wide reading (Chen 2000, 105), Chen's omnivorous reading habits was conducive to fostering her writing and translation practices. Although she did not get used to the metropolitan atmosphere of Shanghai (Almberg 1988, 6), the city's status as a cultural and business centre granted her access to a diverse array of literary products. She delighted in reading fine literary works, both in their original language and translation, without concern for their country of origin or genre. Her cosmopolitan approach to literary consumption indeed reflects her feminist poetics which embraced non-hierarchy and eclecticism. We will return to discuss this further in the next section.

Furthermore, the geopolitical location of Shanghai played a significant role in Chen's flourishing literary career. Under the Nationalist Party (Guomindang, GMD)'s administration, the city enjoyed a relatively freer literary environment than the areas controlled by the Chinese

[22] The prose collection was *Star and Rain* (*Xingyu ji* 星雨集) (1947) and the two poetry collections were *Poems of Grace* (*Yingying ji* 盈盈集) (1948) and *A Symphonic Collection* (*Jiaoxiang ji* 交響集) (1948).

Community Party (CCP), where the demand of arts serve politics had been stipulated since Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976)'s Yan'an Talks in 1942. Upon her relocation to Shanghai, Chen forged connections with like-minded poets like Tang Qi 唐祈 (1920-1990),[23] Tang Shi 唐湜 (1920-2005), Hang Yueke 杭約赫 (Cao Xinzhi 曹辛之, 1917-1995) and Xin Di 辛笛 (1912-2004). Despite leaning towards left-wing political ideology, the five of them remained staunch advocates of the aesthetic ideals in literature, expressing concerns about political interference compromising the literary quality of poetry. This set them apart from the mainstream literary trend dominated by sloganistic and propagandistic political poetry that celebrated revolutionary efforts and addressed "the masses" as its audience (Li 2015, 43; Meng 2019, 227).

Starting from mid-1947, Chen Jingrong and her acquaintance collaborated as the core editorial committee for *Poetry Creation* (詩創造),[24] an influential and popular poetry-focused journal founded by a senior poet Zang Kejia 臧克家 (1905-2004). Particularly, Chen made significant contribution to the two special volumes on translation and poetic theory (Li 2015, 40; Chen 2008; 729). Deserving our attention here is a poetry review she published under her pen name "Mo Gong" 默弓 in the latter. In it, Chen commended three contemporary poets — Zheng Min 鄭敏 (1920-2023), Mu Dan 穆旦 (1918–1977), and Du Yunxie 杜運燮 (1915-2002) — as "bona fide voices" (*zhencheng de shengyin* 真誠的聲音) whose "silent but precious efforts" would lead to a promising future for modern Chinese poetry (Chen 2000, 141). Aside from criticising the revolutionary clamour in the contemporary poetry scene, Chen also provided insights into her understanding of modern poetry, which emphasised the genuineness of expression and the poet's profound understanding of real-life experiences without being bounded by reality (2000, 142). Notably, Chen's poetic insights were derived from her extensive reading and hands-on translation of poetry, which we will delve into further in the next section.

Increasingly, Chen and her literary circle faced attacks from more radical leftist writers and critics, such as Hu Feng 胡風 (1902-1985) and his July Group 七月派, for their reluctance

[23] Chen Jingrong and Tang Qi first encountered each other in Lanzhou, where they were allegedly to have been romantically involved, see Li 2015, 39-40.
[24] With the exception of Xin Di, who held a job at a bank and was responsible for providing funding support for the operation of the journal (Li 2015, 40).

to strictly conform to the Party line or exclusively promote Party writers (McDougall and Louie 1997, 263). The factional politics compelled the quintet to leave *Poetry Creation* and establish their own journal, *China's New Poetry* (中國新詩), in June 1948. This newfound literary space facilitated their further interactions with the abovementioned Zheng, Mu, Du, and Yuan Kejia 袁可嘉 (1921-2008). These four poets were among the other fledging literary talents who studied at the National Southwestern Associated University 國立西南聯合大學 in Kunming. Under the guidance of esteemed poets and authors, such as Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1889-1946), Shen Congwen 沈從文 (1902-1988), and Bian Zhilin, they were encouraged to hone their poetic arts for belletrist pursuits. In the post-Mao era, all nine poets reunited and jointly published an anthology in 1981. The eponymous poetry collection earned them the retrospective title of the "Nine Leaves" School 九葉詩派 in literary history for representing of a distinctive strand of modernist poetry in the 1940s.

Returning to Cheng Jingrong's career, her editorship at *China's New Poetry* assigned her new responsibilities as a critic and a tastemaker. To fulfil this role, she called upon translation to introduce poetry from other regions, such as Austria and Greece, and occasionally broker literary criticism to the readers. One notable example is her translation of Stephen Spender (1909-1995)'s review on the English poetry scene during World War II (1948b). In the brief preface, Chen presented Spender as a brilliant British poet and critic whose other works had been previously translated into China. Spender's review aimed to offer a fair critique of wartime poetry based on their literary merits, while acknowledging the inevitable use of poems for wartime mobilisation and morale boosting. Granted we cannot conflate Spender's opinion with Chen's own. Yet, given her disapproval of sloganistic and propagandistic political poetry, it is possible that Chen turned to translation as a way of subtly advocating her literary beliefs with the appeal to a foreign authority.

In this sense, the common efforts shown to translate literary criticism allow us to draw a comparison between Chen Jingrong and Yuan Changying in Chapter 2. As female writers actively building their careers and entering the male-dominated realm of literary criticism, they both sought public recognition and chose translation as a platform to amplify their literary ideas. By reflecting on the role of literature in society, they were also equally enthusiastic about introducing the latest developments in their preferred literary genres to Chinese readers through translation. However, the two of them were different in terms of their backgrounds and the

circumstances in which they translated. Yuan already possessed certain authority with her academic qualification but aimed to demonstrate her intellectual capability and establish herself as a respected female scholar. On the other hand, Chen's lack of college education placed her at the periphery of the elitist literary establishment, and she had to prove herself differently. Fortunately, she could draw strength from the tradition of female poets in history and her undeniable literary talent earned her recognition in the poetry scene. Besides, Yuan held a full-time tenured teaching job and translation at times only played a supportive role in her career, whereas Chen relied on translation (and writing) for her livelihood. In short, despite their diverse professional roles, both Yuan and Chen found translation significant in bolstering their authority and wielding influence in their respective literary pursuits.

Freedom In and Through Poetry Translation

Since its inception, translation has provided a rich depository of modes and possibilities to inspire generations of Chinese poets and their pursuits to develop modern Chinese Poetry (Yeh 2016). Chen Jingrong were among the many poet-translators who looked for guidance and found solutions for her poetics via translation. As Chen's thinking and techniques matured in the mid-1940s, her poetry underwent a stylistic change. The earlier inward sentimentalism evolved into in-depth observations on the surrounding reality and her metropolitan experience, accompanied by more refined structures and a widening scope of subject matter (Chen 2000, 176-177; Almberg 1988, 13-26; Li 2015, 162).

To appreciate the freedom Chen enjoyed and achieved via her poetry translation, it is necessary to first understand the principles of her poetics. The hallmark of Chen's poetry lies in eclecticism. Years of experimentation in writing and translating enabled her to develop an idiosyncratic style that deftly blended the traditional and the modern, the Chinese and the foreign, as well as the aesthetically "masculine" and "feminine" styles (Almberg 1988, 10-13; He 2020, 5-7). In her poetic statements, Chen described that she had absorbed and integrated diverse influences into her works without adhering to any school or -ism. To her, the art of poetry was embodied in the poet's unique creation, with good poetry knowing no distinctions based on origin or use, and plurality was the key to the prosperity of the poetry scene (2000, 184 and 204).

I have defined Chen as having a feminist poetics that valorises non-hierarchy and eclecticism. This is not only because her personal life, as we have seen, was significantly affected by thoughts of women's liberation and gender equality. But my perspective also stems from a broader understanding of the development of modern Chinese poetry in the early twentieth century. As Bonnie Kime Scott astutely points out, modernism was unconsciously gendered masculine (1990, 1). The leading Chinese (male) poets and theorists tended to modernise this ancient literary tradition in what could be seen as a "masculinised" way. That is, they sought to disassociate poetry from qualities and characteristics that were gendered as "feminine" — traditional, lyrical, sentimental, expressive, spontaneous — and steer it towards new forms and contents that were modern, philosophical, emotionally-restrained, self-consciously crafted and technically advanced. Although female poets were a minority in the contemporary poetry scene, my point is not that male and female poets could be strictly distinguished based on their biological sex, writing in either "masculine" or "feminine" ways. Contrarily, they often interacted with and learned from each other, and a single poet can be influenced by both "masculinised" and "feminised" poetic styles.

In fact, Chen Jingrong, also assimilated the "masculinised" modernist poetics and viewed poetry creation as a self-conscious, contemplative, and diligent process in which the poet distilled everyday observations and sentiments into rhythmic and condensed language (2000, 165-167). However, her feminist poetic vision rejected the idea of gender limitations in literature, asserting that female poets could excel in topics and genres typically considered "masculine" (2000, 144). Besides, her poetics emphasised the genuineness of affective evocation and expression rooted in the poet's lived experience. This explained why she believed poetry and arts in general should serve the truth, instead of politics (1947b, 21). While Chen valued content over form, she also valued the importance of honing one's poetic skills and achieving a balance between content and form to create harmonious poetic effects (1948d, 32). Furthermore, in her discussion of poetry with Fang Jing 方敬 (1914-1996), Chen seemed to have revealed the aspiration behind her poetry translation practices. According to her, the contemporary foreign influences on Chinese poetry were "incomplete, indirect, and outdated". Meanwhile, many disdained the classical poetic tradition, leading to the production of a new poetry that lacked cultural distinctiveness. Nonetheless, Chen remained optimistic about the future possibilities of modern Chinese poetry, believing it could eventually influence foreign

poetry in reverse, if Chinese poets looked beyond the market, the times, and politics and devoted more effort to the craft of poetry (1948d, 33).

We can now delve into two cases of Chen's translation of Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) and Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)'s poetry. As indicated in the subtitle, my analysis focuses on two aspects. For freedom *in* translation, I will examine the liberty she took when making translation decisions; whereas, for freedom *through* translation, I will study how translation enabled her to unreservedly explore and develop her poetics, thereby contributing to her burgeoning career as a poet-translator.

Translation of Baudelaire

During her time in Chongqing, Chen Jingrong's colleague lent her an anthology of nineteenth-century French literature in original language. Compared to her tedious day job, Chen derived pleasure in her leisure reading and gave translating some of the fine works a shot. Then, for a whole summer, she worked on her translations at night, with the intention of publishing a selected translation volume on modern French poetry. Unfortunately, she lost the manuscript later, and the plan was dashed (Chen 1947a; 2000, 106-107). Charles Baudelaire was among one of the poets Chen translated.[25] From mid-1946 to early-1947, she published seven translations of Baudelaire's poems that "share a thematic of pain, suffering, sadness, and perplexity" on the *Wenhui Daily Literary Supplement* (文匯報筆會) (Meng 2019, 232).[26] Despite her earnest attempts, Chen faced accusations of being an ill-timed "Baudelairean" whose translations did not align with the prevailing literary trend of political poetry. These criticisms were clearly motivated by ideological conflicts and should be understood in the broader context of internal bickering and power struggles among left-wing writers. However, Chen's female gender identity did make her more vulnerable to attacks from male critics who derived their power from male-dominated discourses on nation, revolution, and class, especially after she assumed the editorship of *China's New Poetry* in 1948 (Meng 2019, 228; Li 2015, 47-48). Fortunately, Chen was not alone in this battle. For instance, one of the accomplished senior poets, Dai Wangshu 戴望舒 (1905-1950), took notice of her translation

[25] Th others include Paul Fort (1872-1960), Émile Verhaeren (1855-1916), Jean Richepin (1849-1926), Anna de Noailles (1876-1933), Louis Mercier (1870-1951), and Maurice Levaillant (1883-1961) (Chen 1947a).
[26] They include "Spleen" (Spleen), "L'homme et la mer" (Man and the Sea), " Le Flambeau vivant " (The Living Torch), " Harmonie du soir" (Evening Harmony), "La Musique" (Music), and " Les Aveugles" (The Blind). All of them are from Baudelaire's collection, *Flowers of Evil*.

efforts. Although his rendition of Baudelaire was published one year after these critiques, Dai argued for the value of translating Baudelaire's poetry and refuted claims that such works would have adverse effects on modern Chinese poetry (1948, 98-99).

In February 1947, Chen also stood up for herself and defended her works against her biased critics in the essay titled "On my poetry and poetry translation" (談我的詩和譯詩) (1947a). Meng Liansu notes that in the first part of the essay, Chen publicly and explicitly linked the impediment of her literary pursuits to the persistent oppression of women in Chinese society (2019, 231-232). By doing so, Chen occupied the moral high ground to challenge the male critics, who should support the CCP's policy of liberating female compatriots instead of being their oppressors. Apart from foregrounding her gender identity, Chen launched other counterarguments which demonstrated her profound understanding of the contemporary literary and socio-political discourses. First, she appropriated the male critics' revolutionary rhetoric, contending Baudelaire's "dissatisfaction with the status quo" and "anti-tradition, anti-feudalism spirit" made his works still worthwhile to read, instead of being utterly useless for the Chinese context. Second, she argued for the benefits of learning from Baudelaire's artistry to help improve some modern Chinese poets' total disregard of poetic form and skills. Chen also went along with the critics' argumentation, conceding that Baudelaire's works had his flaws, but only then to further assert that the literary merits of great works would transcend time and trends. Here, we again see her trenchant critique of the "slogan-like, prose-like, and formulaic" political poetry for their low literary value.

Intriguingly, in this essay, Chen drew a clear line between her translations and her poetry, urging her critics not to conflate the two. She also argued that she was not an academic specialist on Baudelaire and had no duty to defend his poetry. This distinction between her authorship and translation underscores the peculiar position translators occupy in a politically repressive context. With the mediated nature inherent in translation, Chen could strategically deflect the blame that had been put on her and navigate the delicate balance between upholding her artistic integrity and transgressing the ideological constraints. Ending the essay, Chen went even further to advocate for a more "democratic" literary review system with fair and objective critiques. Her proposal reflected and channelled the concerns of many writers who worried that leftist critics were subservient to narrow political interests. The demand for democracy was also a rhetoric employed by the CCP to garner support against the GMD (Li 2015). Hence, here

Chen deftly utilised this rhetoric against her critics to bolster her position and champion her right to creative independence.

On the other hand, Meng notices that Chen's essay "Baudelaire and the Cat" (波德萊爾與貓) (1946) reflects her original interpretation of Baudelaire's poetics, which can be seen as a disguised pronouncement of her own poetics (see 2019, 228-230). Indeed, Chen's description of Baudelaire's poetics mirrors the principles she espoused. The overlaps between them include the beliefs that poetry should be rooted in lived experiences, and a poet must possess a genuine love for life to sustain their passion for writing (2000, 105). In this sense, Chen's translation functions to promote both Baudelaire and herself as his translator/interpreter, conferring her greater authority to make her personal poetic statements. Such a self-aware use of translation is even more apparent in her rendition of Rilke, which we will further discuss in the next section.

Regarding Chen's translation practice, let us now examine a concrete example of her translation of Baudelaire's representative poem, "Spleen IV". By conducting a comparative analysis between Chen's translated text and those of her senior contemporaries, Bian Zhilin (1933) and Dai Wangshu (1948), we can further shed light on her distinctive approach to and creative freedom in translation (see full translated texts in Appendix). As we can see, all three poet-translators kept Baudelaire's form in terms of the number of lines and stanza division and followed his line breaks. However, unlike Bian and Dai, Chen decided not to reproduce the line lengths and cross rhyme scheme, granting her greater flexibility in the choice of diction and syntax. Gloria Bien notes the merits of Chen's version as: "Chen achieves a powerful, economical statement that makes both Bian and Dai's versions seem padded and contrived. This power in simplicity is evident in many of her translations" (2013, 56). However, since Chen was mostly a self-learner, her command of language could, at times, be less precise than that of Bian and Dai, especially considering that Dai had studied abroad in France. Her most noticeable deviation from the source text occurs in the final stanza:

Chen's translation (1946b):
——長長的送葬馬車的行列，沒有鼓樂，
在我的靈魂裏慢慢地排隊；希望，
失敗的哭泣的希望，和殘酷的暴戾的痛苦，
在我傾斜的**膝**上**展開**黑色的旌旗。

Bian's translation (1933, 9):

——走不盡的葬列，不打鼓不奏樂，
慢慢地從我的靈府穿過；希冀，
失敗了，慟哭；慘痛，又暴又凶惡，
在我低垂的**頭**上**插**一面黑旗。

Dai's translation (1948, 71):

——而長列的棺材，無鼓也無音樂，
慢慢地在我靈魂中遊行；「希望」，
屈服了，哭著，殘酷專制的「苦惱」
把他的黑旗**插**在我垂**頭**之上。

French source text (Scarfe 1986, 158) :

— Et de longs corbillards, sans tambours ni musique,
Défilent lentement dans mon âme ; l'Espoir,
Vaincu, pleure, et l'Angoisse atroce, despotique,
Sur mon **crâne** incliné **plante** son drapeau noir.

As highlighted in the quotation, Chen had two mistranslations in the last line. The first one is translating the noun "crane" (head) as "knee", but the latter should be "genou" in French. The second one is rendering the action verb "planter" (to stick in/to drive in) into "unfold/spread" in Chinese but the meaning is not directly equivalent. When Chen later revised her translation in 1957, she corrected both of them. But were they really careless mistakes? Or could they be her unique interpretations? Certainly, we cannot rule out the possibility that she relied on a flawed source text in the first place. Yet, considering Chen's good translation practice of frequently checking a dictionary and consulting different available copies of the same source text (2000, 76 and 163), such glaring errors raise doubts about her mere oversight. Therefore, I would suggest that Chen's 1946 translation represents her own interpretation of Baudelaire, which significantly altered the poem's final imagery.

In the French source text and other translations, the speaker of the poem ultimately succumbs to their overwhelming spleen as the personified Anguish planted a black flag on their bowed head. However, Chen's rendition leaves the doer of the action ambiguous by juxtaposing Hope and Anguish in the penultimate line with the connective "and". Furthermore, she softens the intensity of the ending action, portraying it more like a gentle, and perhaps ceremonial, unfolding of the flag. Her word choice of the "inclined knee" might suggest that

the speaker kneels in surrender. This alteration eliminates the pain and violence present in the source text, resulting in a translation that maintains the sense of melancholy without conveying complete despair. Chen's interpretation seems to imply that the speaker's surrender brings relief instead, hinting at the possibility of hope and the potential for seeking (spiritual) freedom.

Here, it is important to reiterate that the variations in these three poet-translator's translated texts do not arise from gender differences, but rather from their individual approaches to translation. Both Bian and Dai were intrigued by formal experiments and sought to explore translation's capacity to reproduce Baudelaire's form and rhyme scheme into their Chinese versions (Bien 2013, 49-54; Dai 1948, 97). By contrast, Chen prioritised content over form and focused on capturing the essence of Baudelaire's poem, affording her greater liberty in making translation choices in terms of both form and content. Chen's freedom in poetry translation can also be attributed to several factors, one of which is the genre specificity of poetry. As poetry is notoriously considered untranslatable, and there exists a prevalent belief that poets should be better at translating poetry, Chen could enjoy a greater creative license as a poet-translator and interpret the source text with her own poetic sensitivity. In this specific case, Chen's decision to radically change the ending might be influenced by classical Chinese poetic aesthetics that value implicitness (*hanxu* 含蓄). Indeed, both Chinese and Western critics have noted the affinities between Baudelaire and Tang-dynasty poets (Bien 2013, 4). The progressive structure of having three consecutive stanzas starting with "When..." paints a bleak and depressive atmosphere for the poem from its very beginning. Instead of concluding with abrupt violence, Chen chose to slow down the pace, leaving a deliberate ambiguity and lingering tone (*yunwei* 韻味) with the final two lines. This invites readers to ponder the poet/translator's intended meaning, adding to the poem's richness and depth. Interpreted this way, Chen's deviation from the source text is highly possible to be her deliberate artistic choice rather than careless mistranslations.

Translation of Rilke

Chen Jingrong's first encounter with Rilke came through the Chinese translations by Bian Zhilin and Liang Zongdai in the 1930s. After moving to Shanghai, she read more of Rilke's poetry through English translation. And she found her resonance with Rilke surpassed her early fondness for Baudelaire, prompting her to translate his works out of sheer admiration (Chen

2000, 107). In 1948, Chen published two articles on her translations of Rilke in *Poetry Creation* (1948a) and *China's New Poetry* (1948e), respectively. Among the twelve poems she translated, "Erinnerung (Memory)" deserves our further examination, as it allows us to read it alongside another contemporary poet Wu Xinghua 吳興華 (1921-1966)'s translation of the same source text (see the Appendix for comparison). Nevertheless, since Chen did not know German, her translations of Rilkean poems relied on the relay translations in English by Ludwig Lewisohn (1882-1955), an American-based German novelist and literary critic, whose selected volume of translation was published in 1946. The twelve poems Chen chose for translation aligned precisely with those included in Lewisohn's book. This might justify why her selection of source text differed significantly from that of other contemporary Rilkean translators in China, such as the aforementioned Bian, Liang, Wu, and Feng Zhi 馮至 (1905-1993).

Chen's translation (1948e, 20)	Lewisohn's translation (1946, 20)
〈回想前生〉	Evocation
你等待着，你所等待的是一個 要揚起、擴大、和解脫的事物； 是那無比的，沒聽說過的，最偉大的 覺醒的石頭，是那些面向着你的 最後的深淵。	And thou waitest, the one thing awaitest That shall lift and enlarge and set free; The matchless, unheard-of, greatest, Stones that waken, the latest Deeps with their face to thee.
棕式和金色封面的卷帙 站在塵封的書架上閃亮； 你夢着你最後的去處 **和往昔婦女們的** **飄垂的衣裳。**	On dusky shelves stand glowing The volumes in brown and gold; Of the lands of thy ultimate going **Thou dreamest and of the flowing** **Garments of ladies of old.**
忽然你認識了他們的式樣。 你看見在空中升起 一個已逝時日的熱情 痛苦，面貌，和祈禱。	**Of a sudden thou knowest its fashion.** Arising thou seest in air A perished period's passion, Anguish and feature and prayer.

From the quotation above, we can see that Chen closely follows and produces a literal translation of Lewisohn's translated text. However, if we compare her translation with Rilke's original work and Wu's version, it is precisely her faithful adherence to Lewisohn that leads her to deviate from the source text in the highlighted lines. The image of the women's fluttering garments and the speaker's subsequent recognition of their fashion result from Lewisohn's

effort to reproduce Rilke's rhyme scheme at the cost of altering the content. But how did people evaluate Lewisohn's and Chen's translations? Well, Lewisohn's publisher touted him as an ideal choice to interpret Rilke's works both as a man and a poet (Lewisohn 1946), and one contemporary reviewer even praised Lewisohn for bringing Rilke's poems to life again through his translations (Klein 1946, 253-255). Similarly, Chen's acquaintance, Tang Shi, commended her as: "the fact that the translator can render poems with such elegance and ease shows that she enters the role of the poet and recreates them" (2003, 35). Their views clearly resonate with André Lefevere's theory of translation as a form of rewriting (1992). In this light, rather than criticising Chen for mistranslating, we should see her translation as an embodiment of a multi-layered translation-and-rewriting process. It started with Rilke rendering his poetic sensibility onto words on paper, then through Lewisohn's rewriting into English, and finally Chen's relay translation and interpretation of the essence of Rilke's poems into Chinese. With each translation, the source text acquires new meaning through the hands of creative and poetically sensitive translators. It goes without saying that the resulting products differ from Rilke's stanzas. But does this automatically make Lewisohn and Chen bad translators? Absolutely not.

Another noteworthy feature in this case is Chen's use of translation to articulate her poetics. Before presenting her translation of "Erinnerung" and other poems, Chen provided a translated excerpt of Lewisohn's preface to his 1946 book to introduce Rilke's life and works to Chinese readers (Chen 1948e; Lewisohn 1946). Upon close comparison, it is evident that Chen's translation was abridged and substantially edited. For instance, she omitted Lewisohn's addressing of the context of Rilke's reception in the West after World War II and rearranged his content to suit her flow of writing. Although Chen preserved much of Lewisohn's explanation of Rilke's style and poetics, she also inserted concepts and expressions that were absent in his text, which were likely derived from her other readings on Rilke.[27] As such, Chen's preface should be read as her integrated interpretation of Rilke's poetics but presented in the disguise of a translation. With the borrowed words and authority from a foreign literary critic, Chen was able to legitimise her poetic statements, which indeed drew many inspirations from her reading of different translations and hands-on experience of translating Rilke. In short, far from being a "poet manqué" (Almberg 1988, 10) who only practised her hands by rendering Baudelaire

[27] One of them should be an essay Feng Zhi wrote to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Rilke's death in 1936. Chen had quoted this essay in her postscript to the translation published on *Poetry Creation* three months ago (1948a, 11-12).

and Rilke's poetry, translation enabled Chen to freely explore and refine her poetics, which was instrumental to her self-discovery and growth as a poet-translator.

An Obligation to the Masters of the Future

Apart from her poetry translations, Chen Jingrong's efforts in translating children's literature also merit our attention.[28] From 1947 to 1948, she translated six volumes of Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875)'s fairy tales from English renditions. Chen was the first female translator in China to undertake such a large-scale translation project of Andersen's tales, and her translated works performed well in sales. In her translator's preface dated May 1947, Chen explained her motivation, citing the lack of quality children's readers in China and her sense of obligation to provide these famous tales to the future masters of the Chinese nation (1948c, 1-3). Notwithstanding the harsh realities of the Chinese Civil War, Chen aimed to offer innocent children happy food for thought and beautiful imaginations, helping them broaden their spiritual horizons and become happier and stronger, so that they could create a better future. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Chen had to leave her daughters in Lanzhou to seek independence and focus on building her literary career. Therefore, beyond such social obligation, it might also be her personal agenda to compensate for her own children that inspired her considerable efforts in translating children's literature.

Moreover, Chen serialised her translation of an adventure tale, "Treasure Trove of the Sun" (太陽的寶庫) by the Soviet writer Mikhail Prishvin (1873-1954), in *Kai Ming Youth* 開明少年 between May and August 1948. Although this source text is less known now, it was reportedly the winner of the first prize for the best children's reader in the Soviet Union in 1945 (Chen 1948f, 57). Set against the backdrop of the Soviet War Effort against Germany (1941-1945), the story revolves around two orphans, Nastya and Mitrasha, and their one-day adventure in a forest. The siblings quarrelled about choosing between a well-trodden path and a by-road for their quest to collect cranberries near a peat swamp and parted ways. Eventually, they overcame their respective challenges and returned to their village as triumphant heroes. The story is replete with Soviet literary symbols. The most obvious one is the eleven-year-old Mitrasha's victory over the antagonist, a formidable wolf named Grey Landowner, by shooting

[28] Chen also published a translation of Victor Hugo (1802-1885)'s *Notre Dame de Paris* (The Hunchback of Notre-Dame) in 1948.

it to death. Besides, the siblings embody two prevalent traditions in Soviet portrayals of heroic children: the "adventure model" and the "realist model" (Maslinskaya 2020, 282). And the "treasure trove of the sun" in the title refers to peat, which held great significance as an important source of fuel and energy production in the Soviet economy to transform the rural peasantry into the working class (Bird 2006, 591).

One might be surprised by Chen's drastic transition from Anderson to Prishvin as we have seen her persistence in separating politics from her literary pursuits and freedom in selecting source texts with fewer pronounced political undertones. Yet, we should not forget that both Chen and her close literary and social circles were left-leaning, and this was far from a sudden change of allegiance. Moreover, in 1948, Chen developed a romantic relationship with Jiang Tianzuo 蔣天佐 (1913-1987), a literary critic, translator, and CCP member. She later married Jiang in this same year, which might have influenced her political inclination. Chen's preference for eclecticism and wide reading might also lead her to discover and appreciate Prishvin's work as a fine piece worthy of translation. To my knowledge, there is little research on the translation of children's literature in wartime China. However, Chen's translation activity in this genre aligns with the overall development of children's literature in this period. With the rise of revolutionary children's literature, the perception of children gradually shifted from their being immature "little adults" to "masters of the future". Meanwhile, the demand for and creation of children's literature based on Western models declined, while that for Soviet examples increased (Farquhar 1998).

It is unknown whether Chen made her own decision or how she got access to translate this text. As Chen did not know Russian, she most likely translated the tale from an English version or with assistance from someone proficient in the language. Probably the one who helped her was Ge Baoquan 戈寶權 (1913-2000), a male colleague and translator specialising in Soviet literature. Chen usually wrote her own translator' s prefaces. Yet, this time, it was Ge who penned the introduction of the writer that was included in her translated text (Chen 1948f, 56-57). Chen's taking a backseat in her translation is reminiscent of Shen Xingren's situation in Chapter 1, where both women relied on their male colleagues' endorsement of their literary careers. But Chen's case should be pertinent to the politics and ideological conflicts in the contemporary literary field. Notably, Ge held a prominent position in the CCP. Considering that the CCP had gained an upper hand in the Civil War in 1948 and Chen had been criticised

by radical leftist critics, could this translation be her attempt to redeem her herself and prove her allegiance to the left-wing literary circle? If this was the case, we again witness Chen making a clear distinction between her authorial and translatorial roles and assigning them different duties. Put differently, she might have chosen to "sacrifice" her creative freedom as a translator to preserve her artistic integrity as a poet. Without further evidence, this discussion on Chen's motives remains speculative. Still, we can conclude that translation played a pivotal role in her life, particularly when she had to make significant life decisions.

The Bittersweetness of Translation

In late 1948, Chen Jingrong followed her newly wedded husband, Jiang, to leave Shanghai for Northern China. After a long journey with a detour in Hong Kong, they finally arrived in Beijing in March 1949, and Chen enrolled in a cadre school, Huabei People's Revolutionary University 華北人民革命大學, to "transform" her worldview (Chen 2008, 731; Sha 2001, 163). Although a new China was founded, the bright future promised to intellectuals did not materialise. Due to cultural and political reasons, Chen faced a prolonged hiatus in her poetic career and did not resume publishing her poetry until after 1979. But she then welcomed and experienced her second peak of literary success in the 1980s.

In the early 1950s, while working at a day job at the Supreme People's Procuratorate 最高人民檢察院, Chen used her free time at night to teach herself Russian and kept publishing translated works. Translation once again opened new doors for her. Chen's widely acclaimed 1953 translation of the Czech writer Julius Fučík (1872-1916)'s *Reportáž psaná na oprátce* (Notes from the Gallow, 絞刑架下的報告) earned her an editorial position in the literary journal *Translation* (譯文) and membership in the China Writers Association in late 1956 (Chen 2008, 732), enabling her to continue living a literary life. Translation also facilitated Chen's reunion with her daughter, Sha Lingna 沙靈娜 (b. 1941), in 1954, as the latter wrote a loving letter to her mother after reading this translated work. Sha has later become a professor of Chinese literature and produced acclaimed intra-lingual translations of classical Tang Poetry and Song Lyrics into vernacular Chinese. During the political movements in the late 1950s and the Cultural Revolution, Chen was "sent down" to the countryside to do manual labour.

Fortunately, she was relieved of the hardships soon and posted to work as an editor for the literary journal *People's Literature* (人民文學) from 1965 until her retirement.

Reflecting on her bittersweet experiences of translating in 1982, Chen emphasized that literary translation required both arduous labour and creative reproduction of the source text. She also distinguished between a true translator (*yizhe* 譯者) and a mere "translation-smith" (*yijiang* 譯匠), asserting that the former should possess proficient language skills, a meticulous attitude, and expressive and creative writing abilities to achieve "faithfulness, fluency, and elegance" in their translation (2000, 158-159). Evidently, her attitude towards translation never changed in her recognition of the translator's agency and translation as a serious literary act. When Chen published her selected collection of Baudelaire and Rilke's poetry translations in 1984, she expressed her hope that through translating and writing, she could contribute her humble efforts to China's cultural development (2000, 111-112). Indeed, she did just that. Her 1957 translation of nine poems by Baudelaire, published in a special issue of *Translation*, exerted significant influences on an entire generation of young poets in the underground poetry scene in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Bei Dao 北島 (Zhao Zhenkai 趙振開, b. 1949) and Duo Duo (Li Shizheng 栗世征, b. 1951) (Tamburello 2015; Yeh 2016; Meng 2019). Translation held a special place in Chen's life by continually offering her new possibilities in her literary pursuits. With more attention paid to her translation endeavours, the legacy Chen left will continue to build new connections both within and beyond the literary world of her time.

Conclusion

What Comes Next?

Piecing together different clues, the picture I have presented in this thesis allows us to discern some interesting connections in the three Chinese women translators' encounters with and motivations for translation while appreciating their idiosyncrasies. Shen Xingren, Yuan Changying, and Chen Jingrong all showed their agency in undertaking translation to their avail while negotiating the freedom available for and constraints imposed onto them by their circumstances. Translation presented a choice for them. And it was a productive and empowering choice that enabled them to pursue their respective goals in their newly acquired public roles in Republican-era China. As female intellectuals, all three of them found their ways to act as active participants in the cultural arena, offering their perspectives, helping to construct modern knowledge, as well as shaping aesthetic considerations or literary forms via their translation of foreign literatures. As translators, they all contributed to and were an essential part of the modernisation of Chinese literature and culture. While my project predominantly focuses on the Republican era, future studies can go back and forth to other periods and investigate how the vicissitudes in history change the people's perception of gender, authorship, and translation as well as women translators' practices and experiences of translation.

Moreover, this study has sought to illustrate the nuanced gender dynamics in the Republican-era literary field in various historical events and adopt a gender-sensitive approach to study Chinese women translators in the past. Inspired by the ideology of women's emancipation in the early twentieth century, Shen, Yuan, and Chen took different positions in (Chinese) feminism, and each interacted with the male-dominated literary establishment in their distinctive ways. With shared beliefs and goals, Shen collaborated with her male colleagues for access to publication and endorsement. But she also possessed her subjectivity and cannot be labelled reductively either as a victim or complicit. Yuan initially sought to win the favour of her elite readership and relied on connections with men for publication opportunities. Yet, she remained assertive in expressing her opinions, especially after gaining recognition and public authority by herself. Chen, on the other hand, enjoyed more liberty beginning from a peripheral position. However, when politics increasingly held sway, she also found herself needing to yield to the establishment.

This point is pertinent to Kim Scott's "a tangled mesh of modernists" (1990, 10), in which she sheds light on the intricacy of literary connections between male and female figures in literary modernism. Again, it is important to note that there can be both positive and negative sides to literary women's connections to their male colleagues. Examining them in black-and-white thinking only leads to oversimplified reading. Indeed, none of my three cases overtly subverts the gender discourses of their time (Chen tried to run away from her patriarchal family, but it cannot be counted as subversion in a radical sense). However, by seizing their literary opportunities, they offered challenges to these prevailing discourses within the constraints of their conditions, and thus sometimes (un)consciously pushed the boundaries of their gender roles as female (writers-)translators.

Looking back on my research journey, I realise that it has revolved around two keywords: imagination and solidarity. This brings us back full circle to the simple question of "Where are the women translators?" in the very beginning. Initially, I was only curious about why they have been brought to scholarly attention in recent years after being forgotten for decades. Yet, the more I tried to understand them and their translation practices and experiences, despite through inadequate amount of sources, the more I appreciated the importance of grasping the broader contexts of modernism, nationalism, feminism, and so on, in which they operated. This sounds axiomatic. But it is my lesson of acquiring how to do translation studies without simply juxtaposing the source and translated texts on the same page and then wracking one's brain to come up with some analyses by playing "spot the difference". As such, my project evolved from recovering the women translators' lives and works to collaborating with them to understand some broader issues in modern Chinese literary and translation history.

Yet, my biggest takeaway from this project is rethinking how to study/write women's literary history. Adding these translating women back to existing references and textbooks is far from sufficient. Meanwhile, to frame them in narratives about suppression and subversion can be limiting too, because it is often us, the interpreters of their works, who make stronger claims for their significance or contributions with hindsight than they probably did for themselves. Shen Xingren's self-effacement is a case in point. While it is crucial to reflect on the effects of having a male-dominated canon, our focus should not be on displacing the male translators with female ones. Ultimately, what we want and need is to open up spaces for new ways of imagining different possibilities in and of looking at history.

If we look back at the women's literary practices and culture in China from the premodern to the modern eras, there are certainly similarities. One notable instance is that the Talent Women in premodern times also relied on their close male kin to publish their works, but the circulation was often limited only among their families and friends. More importantly, as Barbara Mittler reminds us, "at different times in Chinese history, certain – sometimes rather astonishing – freedoms had been opened up to certain groups of (elite) women" (2019, 332), the Republican-era Chinese female translators were only one group among the many Chinese women who seized their opportunities to pursue their freedoms in their myriad roles. As such, it is not the Chinese (elite) women who changed so much that we can "discover" a new generation of women in translation. Indeed, they have always been a part of history. But it is us and our perspectives that have changed so that we look at them differently. To achieve the goal of opening up more spaces, we first have to practice imagining with our questions, our sources, and our (prior) knowledge.

Finally, it is time for solidarity. As mentioned above, to research the phenomenon of Chinese women translators in the Republican era, we need to build a relationship with the research subjects to thoroughly understand their thoughts, their translations, and their lives. Adopting this attitude helps avoid hasty and biased judgment that might skew our interpretations. Equally essential is the solidarity among researchers. As we can see, the puzzle is far from solved. There are still many Chinese women translators, regardless of their literary fame, whose stories remain to be told. And we need collaboration and concerted efforts to tackle this task. One practical and imperative way to contribute to this endeavour is addressing the issue of source availability. Information about Chinese women translators is scattered across different types of sources, making it nearly impossible for one to gather all the necessary materials from just one library or academic database. Therefore, it will be highly beneficial if researchers can work together and start building an inclusive database of women translators and relevant research materials, such as their biographies and complete bibliographies of their published works. Additionally, translating these sources would promote greater collaboration and enable more researchers to study this rich historical and cultural phenomenon.

Furthermore, the research on historical women translators is inherently an interdisciplinary project which requires familiarity with knowledge from various fields, including but not limited to, literary studies, translation studies, gender studies, print culture,

and intellectual history. By collectively uniting efforts, forming partnerships, and engaging in discussions from different analytical foci and approaches, we can overcome each other's blind spots and develop a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. In response to the call for building a world map of women and translation, as advocated by José Santaemilia (2013), we can also initiate meaningful dialogues with other translation cultures and further explore the global exchange of ideas and texts facilitated by women translators across the world. All in all, we have more stories to tell, not just about the historical Chinese women translators themselves, but also the many other topics, people, things, and ideas that are related to them. And together, we can tell better stories with imagination and solidarity.

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Appendix

Chapter 1

a. Excerpt of Tao's preface to *The Story of a Lost Fan* (Shen 1918, 597-598)

王爾德的戲曲大部分都是用本地風光，local color，所描寫的又是極純粹的英國上等社會，所用的話也是極純粹的英國熟語，所以外國人不容易領會的。但是我因為這個緣故，更覺著有趣味。今年九月性仁在病院裏，悶極無聊，我又沒有工夫去陪伴他，乃請王爾德的『遺扇記』給他解悶。性仁喜歡這出戲裏的故事，出院後就把他譯出來。譯筆倒沒有大錯誤，我又替他修改了些，想還沒有失掉王爾德的原意，至於那漂亮的語氣，俏皮的說話，恐怕不能依樣畫葫蘿[sic]了。
『遺扇記』日人即按原名直譯。現在這個名字，是適之代擬的。應當謝謝他。

Most of Wilde's plays are written in local colour, depicting purely upper-class social life in England in purely English idioms, so foreigners do not understand them easily. But I find [them] more interesting because of this. During Xingren's stay in a hospital in September this year, she was very bored and I had no time to accompany her; therefore, I got her a copy of Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* to relieve her boredom. Xingren liked the story of this play, so she translated it after being discharged from the hospital. I helped to revise her translation a little, I think it has not lost Wilde's original meaning; as for his beautiful tone and playful words, I am afraid it is impossible to follow suit.
"The Story of a Lost Fan", the Japanese translated the original title literally. This current title is drafted by Shizhi [Hu Shi]. We should thank him for this.

b. Excerpt of Xu Zhimo's translator's preface to *Mary Mary* (Xu and Shen 1926, 2 and 4)

這本「瑪麗瑪麗」(在英國叫做 "A Charwoman's Daughter" —— 一個老媽子的女兒，)是我前四年在硤石山上度冬時一時高興起手翻的。當時翻不滿九章就擱下了，回北京再也想不起興致來繼續翻。　　劉勉己也不知是那一位撿了我的譯稿去刊登了晨副，沈性仁看了要說那小說不錯，我一時的靈感就說那就勞駕您給貂完了它！隨後我

又跑到歐洲去了。　沈女士真守信，生活儘忙，居然在短時期內把全書給譯成了交給我。　是我懶，把稿子一擱就是一年多，想不到留到今天卻幫了新月的忙。

[…]

但這轉譯當然是一種障礙，即是不至是一種隔膜。翻譯最難是詩，其次是散文寫成的是詩。　　瑪麗瑪麗是後一類。　　經過一度轉移，靈的容易變呆，活的容易變死，幽妙的容易變粗糙——我不能為我們自家的譯品味着良心來辯護，但我們當然也只能做我們做得到的事。　我們的抱歉第一是對作者，第二是對讀者。

"Mary Mary" (called "A Charwoman's Daughter" in Britain — an old maidservant's daughter) is a book that I translated on a whim when spending my winter on Yangshi Mountain four years ago. I shelved it after translating nine chapters, and when I returned to Beijing, I no longer had the interest to continue.　Liu Mianji also had no clue who picked up my translation and published it in the *Morning Post Literary Supplement*. Shen Xingren read the novel and said it was good, instantly I had an inspiration and said, well then please help me finish it! After that, I went to Europe.　Miss Shen kept her promise, and despite her busy life, she actually translated the whole book and gave it to me within a short period of time.　It was because I was lazy and left the manuscript on hold for more than a year, I never imagined that keeping it until today would help Crescent Moon.

[…]

But translation is, of course, an obstacle, even if not a barrier. Poetry is the most difficult to translate, followed by prose poetry.　Mary Mary is the latter.　　After a transfer, the animated tends to become dull, the lively tends to become dead, the subtle tends to become crude – I cannot defend our own translation without conscience, but of course we can only do what we can do.　　Our apologies are firstly to the author and secondly to the reader.

c.　Shen's translation of Ivan Turgenev's "Porog" from Saunder's English rendition

Shen's Translation (1922)	English Translation (Saunders 1922, 309)
門檻	The Threshold
一間極大的屋子，正面一扇窄小的門。只見那門開着，望過去門背後黑沉沉	I see an enormous building; in the front wall a narrow door is open wide; dismal darkness is behind the door.

的，門檻上立着一位俄國的女子。那屋子裏陰森森的冷風颼颼。忽聽得一陣聲響，裏邊發出一種緩緩的沉重的聲音說：

「喔，你想要越過這門檻來，你知道你的後面有什麼等着你？」

那女子回答說，我知道。

「凍，餓，恨，譏笑，輕視，監牢，病，以至於死。」

我知道。

「寂寞，孤苦。」

我知道。我很願意等着受各種的打擊。

「不但是你的敵人要這樣對待你，就是你的親戚，你的朋友也要這樣待你呢？」

就是我的親戚，我的朋友要這樣待我，也不妨的。

「那好了，你情願犧牲嗎？」

我情願。

「沒有名目的犧牲？你結果一定死，並且以後沒有人記念你，提起你。」

我不求人的感恩，不求人的憐恤。什麼名目，我都用不着。

「你甘心……犯罪嗎？」

那女子頷首回答說：「就是犯罪……我也甘心的。」這時候那聲音停住了，不一時又提出幾個問句來，只聽見說：

A girl stands in front of the high threshold, a Russian girl. The thick darkness breathes with frost, and with the freezing stream a lingering dull voice comes out of the depth.

“Oh, you desiring to step over this threshold, do you know what awaits you?”

——I do, the girl answers.

“Cold, hunger, hatred, mockery, defiance, jail, sickness, death itself.”

——I know.

“Solitude, isolation.”

——I know. I am ready. I am willing to bear all the blows.

“Not only from the enemies but also from relatives, from friends?”

——Yes, even from them.

“All right. Are you ready for sacrifice?”

——I am.

“For nameless sacrifice? You will perish, and nobody, nobody will ever know whose memory to honor.”

——I do not seek any gratitude, nor compassion. I do not need any name.

——“Are you ready… for crime?”

——The girl bowed her head. “Also for crime… I am ready.” The voice paused, and in a while resumed the questions.

“Know you,” it finally spoke, “that you may disbelieve everything you do believe now, you may realise that you have erred and you have ruined your young life in vain?”

「你現在所信的，將來你也許會不信，你一朝也許會醒悟過來，知道你一時失足，把你的青年時代白白的葬送掉了，這個你知道嗎？」	——And *that* [emphasis in original] I know, and still I wish to enter.
那我知道，我還是要進去。	"Enter!"
「進去！」	The girl stepped over the threshold and the heavy curtain fell behind her.
那女子進了門檻，一重厚幕從她背後下來，把她的身子隱蔽了。	——Fool! a voice was heard to exclaim with a gnashing of the teeth.
只聽見有一個聲音切齒振聲的說，癡子！	——Saint! Was heard from somewhere.
遠遠的在別處又有一個聲音說，神聖！	

d. Excerpt of Zhu Jingnong's preface to *History of Mankind* (Shen 1925, 8-9)

還有一事，要請讀者註意。一部好書，非得一個好手替他翻譯出來不可；否則原書好處，往往被譯文所埋沒。現在房龍的書，得著沈性仁女士替他翻譯，真是一件可慶幸的事。沈女士長於文學，不特對於原書能徹底了解，並且譯筆極能曲折達意。原書和譯文，可稱雙美。

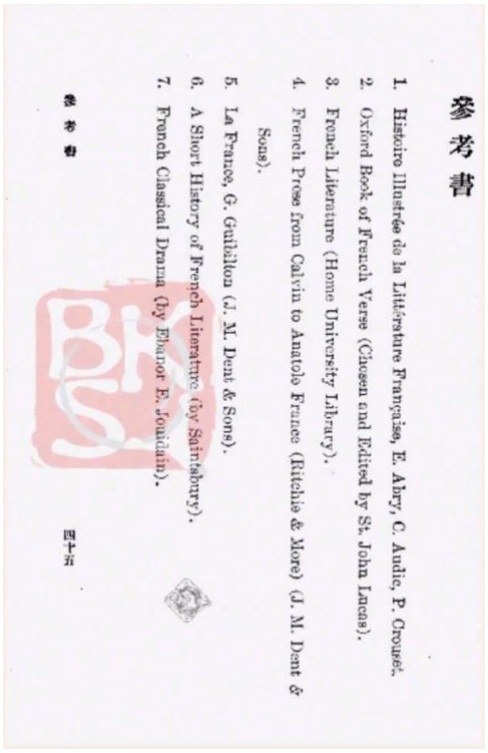
沈女士把這部書譯成之後，將全稿寄給我看。要我替他作一篇序。我是從來沒替人家做過序的，因為做序很難，所以不大敢冒昧嘗試。不過沈女士的譯作是我素來佩服的；房龍的書又極有價值；因此大膽說幾句話，把這部書紹介給讀者。信手寫去，不成其為序文，還望讀者勿笑。

There is one more thing that I would like to draw the reader's attention to. A good book must be translated by a good translator; otherwise, the virtues of the original are often buried in the translation. It is really a blessing to have Miss Shen Xingren translate van Loon's book for him. Miss Shen is well-versed in literature, and not only does she have a thorough understanding of the original, but her translation skills are highly expressive. The original and the translation can be described as a harmonious pair.

After Miss Shen finished translating this book, she sent me the complete manuscript for eview. And she asked me to write a preface for it. I have never written a preface for anyone before, as it is challenging, and I did not dare attempt it. However, I have always admired Miss Shen's translations; and van Loon's book is of great value; therefore, I am bold enough to say a few words and introduce this book to the readers. I wrote whatever came to my mind, if it is not considered a formal preface, I hope the readers will excuse me.

Chapter 2

List of References of in Yuan's scholarly study on *French Literature* (Yuan 1923a, 45)



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四十五

A transcription of the text on the page:

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Chapter 3

a. Translations of Baudelaire's "Spleen VI" by Chen, Bian, and Dai

Chen's Translation (1946b)
〈悲哀〉

當低而重的天空像蓋子一樣，沉壓着
長久為倦怠所覆蔽的歎息的心，
而且從環抱一切的地平線上，
傾注給我們一個比一切夜還悲慘的黑暗的白晝。

當大地變成了一個潮濕的監牢，
在那裏，希望好像一隻蝙蝠，
自己用胆怯的翅膀去敲打四壁，
又把頭向着朽壞的天花板碰撞。

當雨散下它巨大的線條，
模倣着大監獄的鐵柵的樣式；
一羣啞默的醜陋的蜘蛛，
走來將它們底細絲展布在我們腦中。

一些鐘忽然瘋狂地跳躍起來，
向天空發出一聲可怖的嘶鳴，
好像一些無家的遊魂
開始執拗地悲歎。

——長長的送葬馬車的行列，沒有鼓樂，
在我的靈魂裏慢慢地排隊；希望，
失敗的哭泣的希望，和殘酷的暴戾的痛苦，
在我傾斜的膝上展開黑色的旌旗。

French source text (Scarfe 1986, 158)

Spleen

Quand le ciel bas et lourd pèse comme un couvercle
Sur l'esprit gémissant en proie aux longs ennuis,
Et que de l'horizon embrassant tout le cercle
II nous verse un jour noir plus triste que les nuits;

Quand la terre est changée en un cachot humide,
Où l'Espérance, comme une chauve-souris,
S'en va battant les murs de son aile timide
Et se cognant la tête à des plafonds pourris;

Quand la pluie étalant ses immenses traînées
D'une vaste prison imite les barreaux,
Et qu'un peuple muet d'infâmes araignées
Vient tendre ses filets au fond de nos cerveaux,

Des cloches tout à coup sautent avec furie
Et lancent vers le ciel un affreux hurlement,
Ainsi que des esprits errants et sans patrie
Qui se mettent à geindre opiniâtrement.

— Et de longs corbillards, sans tambours ni musique,
Défilent lentement dans mon âme; l'Espoir,
Vaincu, pleure, et l'Angoisse atroce, despotique,
Sur mon crâne incliné plante son drapeau noir.

English translation (Waldrop 2006, 100)

Spleen

When the sky, low and heavy, weighs like a lid on the groaning spirit, prey to long ennui;
when from the full encircling horizon it sheds on us a dark day, sadder than our nights;

when earth is changed into a damp cell, where Hope, like a bat, beats timid wings against the walls and bumps its head against a rotten ceiling;

when the rain's immense spots imitate prison bars and a mute population of vile spiders constructs webs at the base of our brains,

bells burst out suddenly in fury and hurl skyward a frightful howl, like homeless wandering spirits raising a stubborn whine.

— And long hearses, without drum, without music, file off slowly within my soul. Hope, conquered, weeps, and atrocious Anguish, despot, upon my bowed head plants his black flag.

Bian's Translation (1933, 9)	Dai's Translation (1948, 71)
〈憂鬱〉	〈煩悶 二〉
當天宇，又低又重，將一個篷蓋， 掩上被厭倦壓得悲嘆的心魂， 當攏抱四野的天邊倒灌進來 一個白晝，比黑夜愁慘陰森；	當沉重的低天像一個蓋子般 壓在困於長悶的呻吟的心上， 當牠圍抱着天涯的整個周圈 向我們瀉下比夜更愁的黑光；
當大地變成一個潮濕的暗牢， 牢內，像一隻驚慌的蝙蝠，期望 用膽怯的翅膀向牆壁上亂敲， 用頭顱把腐爛的天花板衝撞；	當大地已變成了潮濕的土牢—— 在那裏，那「願望」像一隻蝙蝠般， 用牠畏怯的翅膀去把墻壁打敲， 又用頭撞着那朽腐的天花板；
當暴雨展示它無窮盡的線條， 正同一個大監牢底鐵棚相仿， 當一羣怪齷齪的蜘蛛，靜悄悄， 在我們腦穀底深處結着絲網，	當雨水鋪排着牠無盡的絲條 把一個大牢獄的鐵柵來模倣， 當一大羣沉默的醜蜘蛛來到 我們的腦子底裏佈牠們的網，

許多鐘上突然跳出一聲怒吼， 像無家可歸，飄來蕩去的幽靈， 非常可怕地向天心縱身一投， 怒吼又變做一陣倔強的悲鳴。	那些大鐘突然暴怒地跳起來， 向高天放出一片可怕的長嗥， 正如一些無家的漂泊的靈怪， 開始頑強固執地呻吟而叫號。
——走不盡的葬列，不打鼓不奏樂， 慢慢地從我的靈府穿過；希冀， 失敗了，儘哭；慘痛，又暴又凶惡， 在我低垂的頭上插一面黑旗。	——而長列的棺材，無鼓也無音樂， 慢慢地在我靈魂中遊行；「希望」， 屈服了，哭著，殘酷專制的「苦惱」 把他的黑旗插在我垂頭之上。

b. Translations of Rilke's "Erinnerung (Memory)" by Chen and Wu

Chen's translation (1948e, 20)	Wu's translation (1944, 7)
〈回想前生〉	〈回憶〉
你等待着，你所等待的是一個 要揚起、擴大、和解脫的事物； 是那無比的，沒聽說過的，最偉大的 覺醒的石頭，是那些面向着你的 最後的深淵。	然而你等着，等着那一件事情 來到，使你的生命無限豐富； 那強有力的，不比普通， 石頭的醒來從夢中， 翻轉向你的深窟。
棕式和金色封面的卷帙 站在塵封的書架上閃亮； 你夢着你最後的去處 和往昔婦女們的 飄垂的衣裳。	模糊的閃耀在書架中 金色與棕式的書冊； 而你沉想着旅行的所經， 與圖畫，與獲得的婦人 的衣着，重新失落。
忽然你認識了他們的式樣。	而你突然覺悟：我知道了。

你看見在空中升起	你立起來而在你面前
一個已逝時日的熱情	立着過往的一年間
痛苦，面貌，和祈禱。	所有的痛苦，形體與祈禱。

English translation (Herter-Norton 1962, 73)	German source text (Herter-Norton 1962, 72)
Remembering	Erinnerung
And you wait, are awaiting the one thing that will infinitely increase your life; the powerful, the uncommon, the awakening of stones, depths turned towards you.	Und du wartest, erwartest das Eine, das dein Leben unendlich vermehrt; das Maechtige, Ungemeine, das Erwachen der Steine, Tiefen, dir zugekehrt.
Dimly there gleam in the bookcase the volumes in gold and brown; and you think of lands journeyed through, of pictures, of the apparel of women lost again.	Es daemmern im Buecherstaender die Baende in Gold und Braun; und du denkst an durchfahrene Laender, an Bilder, an die Gewaender wiederverlorener Fraun.
And you know all at once: That was it. You arise, and before you stands a bygone year's anguish and form and prayer.	Und da weisst du auf einmal: das war es. Du erhebst dich, und vor dir steht eines vergangenen Jahres Angst und Gestalt und Gebet.