



Different Expositions of Chinese and Western Feminisms from the Perspective of Multiple Translations - Taking Game of Thrones as an Example

Yijia Shao*

College of Humanities and Sciences, Northeast Petroleum University, Daqing, Heilongjiang Province, 163000, China

*Corresponding author: E-mail:201201340222@stu.nepu.edu.cn

Abstract. Game of Thrones has been widely known all over the world as a hit American TV series in recent years, and the translations of the hit IP from different countries express the values of different countries. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the feminist differences embodied in Game of Thrones from the perspective of translators in different countries, taking the differences between Chinese and Western translations of female images in Game of Thrones as an example. By analysing the different constructions of the female figure in the play, the origins of feminism and translation and its impact and influence on translation are explored from a feminist theoretical view of translation. The author discusses three aspects of feminist translation: an overview of feminist translation, the different shaping of roles, and the similarities and differences in the development of Chinese and Western feminist translation, and argues that feminism in China needs to draw on the best of Europe and the United States, while at the same time taking into account the country's situation.

Keywords: Feminist Translation; Game of Thrones; feminism

1 Introduction

With the development of the times, TV dramas have become an important way for people to spend their time and entertainment, and in recent years, the American drama with high ratings is the series "Game of Thrones". The Game of Thrones is a medieval epic fantasy television series produced by the HBO network, based on the serious fantasy novel series created by American science fiction and fantasy novelist George R. R. Martin, which has achieved a high score of 9.8 on major rating sites. With the popularity of TV drama, more and more people focus on the story connotation and character connotation of the drama to analyse and study; among them, there are also analyses about the female characters in the drama, but most of them are analysed from the micro point of view of the personal image of the female characters^[1].

Translation, unlike other writing activities, becomes an exchange of cultural, temporal and spatial, social and literary value judgements because it involves the exchange

of languages. In this exchange, the translator brings his or her own background and understanding of the world to the text and the author. The translation is, therefore, a creative endeavour in which the author and the translator work together. Translators do not just need to master the vocabulary and grammar of the target language, as well as translation techniques. The translator's background and the requirements for comprehension make it impossible for the translator to be invisible in practical situations.

With the frequent cultural exchanges between countries, translation has become crucial, and at the same time, through translation, it is possible to find the similarities and differences between cultures in different contexts. Along with the development of the times and women's emancipation, feminism was gradually on the stage of history, and literature and film works for feminism narrative gradually increased. The development of feminism in different countries can be different for the same IP works for feminism deconstruction of different translations. Based on this situation, this project takes the hit IP "Game of Thrones" as an example and studies the different expositions of Chinese and Western feminism under the perspective of multiple translations in terms of female image construction and discourse power. The purpose of this paper is to discover the different articulations of feminism and the similarities and differences in the development of feminism in China and the West by analysing the different expressions of feminist content in Game of Thrones.

2 Outline of Feminist Translation Theory

The idea of feminist translation is interpreted from a feminist standpoint, and its theoretical function is mainly to serve women, i.e., to make women as visible as possible in the language in translation so as to achieve the ultimate goal of letting the world see and hear women. Feminism, which began with feminists believing that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities and rights. However, the contemporary Western women's movement has gone beyond the stage of striving for equal rights for men and women to emphasising women's subjective consciousness and using it to re-examine the entire social culture and historical tradition. In other words, throughout the process of scrutinising the critique, the 'gendered' colouring of women is reinforced and becomes the most important factor^[2]. Feminism is an open, dynamic and extremely wide-ranging forum for the exchange and fusion of ideas. The word "feminism" can no longer accurately summarise its theoretical and practical activities, nor can it adequately express the rich connotation of feminism and its ambitious goal of social transformation. In the difficult choice of cross-cultural translation, we are forced to use words that do not convey the full meaning of the word^[3].

From the Middle Ages onwards, an effective way for women to enter the world of literature was through translation. In the early years of patriarchal rule, women were excluded from public society and the academic sphere. Literary creation is discouraged, only translations are permitted, and women's voice is severely restricted. Subsequent feminist translation studies have found that. Early female translators did not follow traditional translation requirements when translating religious texts. Instead, a personal political declaration was added, albeit with minor changes. However, it was also an

early female revolt against the patriarchal system [3]. Secondly, both women and interpreters are subordinate in their respective hierarchies. In Western culture, God created men before women, and women are subordinate. This is similar to the status of translation. In the field of translation, too, the original comes before the translation, and the original has a relative hierarchical authority. No matter how close the translation process is to the original source text, the original work is seen as derivative. Much of the achievement of a work is attributed to the original author, and the contribution made by the translator in the dissemination of the work is often overlooked. The relationship between women and the question of translation is one of empathy, which makes the connection between the two strong.

After the 1980s, following the emergence of Western theories such as psychoanalysis and formalism, Feminist literary criticism and gender theory are also knocking at the door of translation studies. In recent years, scholars of Western translation theory have been exploring the origins and influences of feminism and translation, as well as the role of feminism in translation studies; China has paid relatively little attention to this research trend. The development of feminism in China is not too late, but so far, Chinese feminist translation theory is far from perfect. A reading of the literature reveals that the Chinese translation community did not begin to come into contact with feminist translation theory until 2000. Therefore, it is necessary to make further in-depth discussion on feminist translation theory so that it can be integrated into Chinese translation theory research and practice as soon as possible. Therefore, it is necessary to make further in-depth discussion on feminist translation theory so that it can be integrated into Chinese translation theory research and practice as soon as possible.

3 Different Constructions of the Old and New Images of Women in Chinese and Western Cultures

3.1 Constructing the image of women in the original play

Game of Thrones tells the story of ancient extinct creatures stumbled upon on the borders of the continent of Westeros, creatures that pose a great danger to humankind. Meanwhile House Eddard Stark is facing a change of kingship, and there are several important families in the show, each with their own agenda that has plunged the country into endless war. In the course of the struggle for power among the various families, the pattern within the families changed, and many families in which men were in power were gradually replaced by women. It also reflects the feminist bent of the play.

Game of Thrones is an American drama that involves more than 20 forces, and there are about nine of them that have a high screentime and one of them is undoubtedly the Starks, who are the main force. The TV series Game of Thrones began with the story of the Stark family, and most of the subsequent episodes have been centred around members of the Stark family. House Stark is the ruling house of the North. They had no intention of getting involved in the power struggle in the South, but the family was

dragged into the struggle when King Robert invited Ned, a Stark family member, to be the Hand of the King, and Ned was later killed. The various members of the Stark family scattered in all directions after Ned's murder. As can be seen by the direction of the plot, originally, the Starks were a male-dominated family, and after the head of the family was killed, the members of the family dispersed in all directions. Women, who originally had no power, gradually learnt to rely on their own strength to defend their lives and rights and to be able to avenge his death. It is an expression of feminism.

Secondly, there is a great deal of depiction of sexual intent in *Game of Thrones*. The original author of the *A Song of Ice and Fire* novels once said that artists must tell the truth, but they are inspired by and rooted in history. All wars from the ancient Sumerians to the present involve rape and sexual violence^[4]. In the Western perspective of *Game of Thrones*, sex sheds its unashamed veneer and becomes a weapon in women's struggle for power. Among the many characters, Missandei can be regarded as the representative character of women seeking sexual freedom. In the seventh season of *Game of Thrones*, the writers focused on the female characters' pursuit and enjoyment of sexuality, and sex is not a patriarchal obligation to bear and raise children. When the pursuit of the fulfilment of one's own desires becomes the goal of sex, women take back some of the initiatives over their own bodies.

3.2 Construction of Female Image in Translation

China's historical background of Confucianism is different from that of the West, and at the same time, because of historical problems, Western feminist translation theories were introduced to China later. Although there have been advances with the times, there are still many points that need to be avoided. For example, in the seventh season, the "sexual liberation" associated with Missandei and Grey Worm was not presented in the introduced series. This is deeply related to the idea of abstinence in Confucianism, which has been practiced for thousands of years in China, that is, "no desire is just". Although it is no longer taboo to talk about sex, the Chinese people are still relatively conservative, which makes the process of introduction only according to the acceptance of the Chinese audience cut down. Therefore, the viewer can only perceive the feminist content in the lines of the female characters. However, some sequences about women's "sexual liberation" cannot be visualised in front of the viewers, so the feminist content that the scriptwriters want to express cannot be fully received by the viewers.

On the other hand, Chinese translators have been able to describe feminist content well. For example, in this play, the translator has done a good job of portraying Daenerys as both the daughter of the Targaryen family and the queen, which intuitively presents the image of Daenerys as a "great heroine" in front of the audience. The viewer is able to see that although Daenerys is playing multiple roles, the characterisation is centred on a "big heroine" and a "growing heroine". For example, the original line "Women? Is that meant insult me?" directly translates to "Women? Is that meant insult me?", but the translator translated it as "If I were a man, would you still insult me for that?" in order to express her reaction to sexism. The reverse expresses Daenerys' reminder to others that a woman is not considered a humiliation. In addition, the translator focuses on distinguishing her language translation from her brothers' brutal-

ity, cruelty and indiscriminate behaviour. The viewer can feel that she started to be a little bit strong from the initial weak, so she became an independent and strong woman, and in her life, she always upholds the concept of self-confidence, strength, and bravery, so the viewer is able to feel the strength of the woman from her image portrayal [5].

4 Similarities and Differences in the Development of Feminist Translation in China and the West and its Implications.

4.1 Differences and similarities in the development of feminism in China and the West in the comparison of the two editions

Through analysing *Game of Thrones*, it is found that the development of feminism in China and the West is very different in terms of both the construction of women's image and the shaping of women's discourse.

There is a clear sense in the original TV series that the feminist tendencies presented in the show have become more pronounced and even more extreme from the first season to the seventh. This has a lot to do with the ways in which women are fighting for their self-empowerment in contemporary Western society. In the United States, for example, there is a wide variety of schools of feminist thought in the United States itself, but the major influences on the practice of the feminist movement have been liberal feminism and radical feminism. Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the first defenders of women's human rights, in her book *A Vindication of Women's Rights*, compared privileged women to "the feathered race". i.e., a bird in a cage with nothing to do but dress up and "move from one perch to another in a deceptive manner". Wollstonecraft argued that the bourgeois white woman sacrificed her own health, freedom, and virtue for whatever prestige, pleasure, and power her husband (or father and other male relations) offered her. Despite the limitations of her analyses, Wollstonecraft paints the image of a mentally and physically powerful woman as a vision, one who is not enslaved by her passions, husband, or children. Although there are divisions within the feminist movement in the United States, the "rights framework" remains the central framework in both theory and practice. The American feminist movement is centred around a "rights framework" that is closely linked to its historical and social context. [6]. This "rights framework" is manifested in film and television dramas through bloody patricide to subvert patriarchal power; although the process is radical, but from the side also reflects the determination of feminists in Western society for women's emancipation movement and the serious and resilient.

In contrast to the radical women's liberation movement in the West, Chinese translators in translating *Game of Thrones* have weakened the bloody scenes in the play by reducing the bloody and violent scenes or by euphemizing some extreme lines, and the translation tends to be smoother. The Chinese feminist movement has long operated under the Marxist ideology of women's liberation. Unlike liberalism, which identifies the essence of human beings as the capacity for reason, Marxism argues that the essential characteristic of human beings that distinguishes them from animals is productive labour rather than pure rational thought and that the root cause of women's op-

pression is the difference in the division of labour^[7]. The late development of embodied feminism and the moderated approach to the fight for rights has contributed to the rise of women's discourse and the strengthening of feminism. Like the women's movement in the United States, the women's liberation movement in China only formed a consensus framework centred on "equality in the division of labour" in a specific context, which can be called an "independent framework". On the one hand, the women's liberation movement was part of the overall national liberation movement. The national liberation movement is committed to the liberation of all oppressed people, including, of course, oppressed women, and the achievement of women's liberation is, therefore, an important source of legitimacy for the socialist State. However, unlike the West, Chinese feminism developed later and took a more subdued approach, not advocating radical male-female confrontation, so in the translation of imported film and TV dramas, some radical depictions were often weakened and changed to euphemistic ways of presentation.

4.2 Implications for the Development of Feminist Translation in China

As time progresses, the public receives more content and becomes more open-minded. Much of the rise of female power in China in recent years has been attributed to the rise of the Internet. With the establishment of women's communities, women have been able to come together and speak out in public, and the general public has dared to discuss topics that they were previously embarrassed to discuss, such as sex.

Although popular opinion feels that the feminism shown in *Game of Thrones* is too ridiculous or radical, it is all about women's efforts to pursue their rights. In terms of literary translation, the decline in women's social status is not unrelated to the ongoing restructuring of established relationships between people that are regulated by society as a whole. In Engels' thesis, it is clearly stated that changes in the social system have led to fundamental changes in the status of women. The institutional level is simply an agreement on women's equal political, economic and other rights with men. However, women's true independence cannot be achieved by merely hoping for the continuous improvement of the system. As postmodern feminism points out, it is necessary to completely deny and question the existing social order, and it is only by "jumping" out of the established stereotypes of existence that it is possible to think in a new way in order to realize the establishment of a true human being. From the perspective of feminist translation in China in recent years, translators have advocated the construction of women's discourse in the midst of "difference," placing emphasis on women's living experience, especially how society defines women's sense of self and the limitations that such a sense of self faces in the midst of societal change and development^[8]. Therefore, the construction of inner independence from the depths of women's spirit is the main theme of the construction of women's culture. Even if they are underprivileged in mainstream society, women can still establish their own identity if they have the courage to speak out^[9]. The feminist translation should find its own position, reasonably amplify women's voices through literature and speak for women. The ultimate purpose of feminist translation is to serve feminism. If we want to promote feminism, we must, restrain the behaviour of public opinion; we seek women's freedom

in all its forms, but we must not stigmatise this freedom by having it exploited by others. Criticise the traditional rules, regulations and customs that bind women and build their own value system. Secondly, the public should be well educated through translated works. Ideology seems to be a derogatory term for a country that advocates equality, democracy and freedom, but if there are equality, freedom and democracy in the ideology itself, then it is necessary to make use of them to enlighten the public, and fully integrate the idea of equality between men and women into the schools and the society, so as to influence the public in a subtle way ^[10].

5 Conclusion

By analysing the different articulations of Western feminism in *Game of Thrones* in terms of image construction, discourse and more can be found: There are differences in the development of feminism between China and the West, where Western feminist thought carries a clear gender assertion and focuses on overthrowing hierarchical notions of masculinity.

Feminist translation theory has been in China for a short period of time, and its degree of acceptance is relatively low. When Chinese translators come across feminist translation ideas, they may not see them as a weapon of struggle but rather as a "gentle" expression of their own opinions in translation. It can be seen that since there are differences between China and the West in terms of cultural traditions, ideologies and values. The development process of things always goes through the stage of beginning to maturity; Chinese feminist translation should be based on rational analysis and should not receive external interference such as ideology. Therefore, while introducing and absorbing Western feminist thought, it is all the more necessary to absorb the essence of each school of thought according to the actual development of Chinese feminist translation and combine it with the specific situation, and ultimately achieve the ultimate goal of safeguarding women's status and the strictest.

References

1. Deng, L. (2017). A Brief Analysis of Feminist Tendencies in the TV Series *Game of Thrones*. *China Ethnic Expo*, (09).
2. Chen, D., Sun, J., & Xie, T. (1997). *Comparative Literature*. In *Proceedings of the conference*. Beijing: Higher Education Press.
3. Du, F. (2003). *Women's Studies and Women's Local Exploration--Gender Perspective and Interdisciplinary Vision*. Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publishing House.
4. Martin, G. R. R. (1948). *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Preface.
5. Liu, J., & ZHANG, R. (Year). *The Construction and Orientation of Women's Image in the American Drama Game of Thrones*. Hebei Agricultural University.
6. ZHU, B., & LI, L. (2015). *Independence and Rights: A Comparative Study of the Chinese and American Feminist Movements and Gender Equality..*
7. Jagger. (2009). *Feminist Politics and the Nature of Man* (M. Xin, Trans.). Beijing: Higher Education Press.

8. Zhang, Y., & Mu, J. (2021). The Way Backward, the Way Forward - Comparing Little Women and Bernadette, Where Are You Going to See the Development of Feminism. Journal Name.
9. Zhang, K., & Zhang, C. (2020). The ecofeminist significance of identity construction in The Joy Luck Club. English Square, (12), 3-7.
10. Li, H. (2007). Gender and Translation--On the Development and Current Situation of Gender Perspective in Translation in China. Shanghai International Studies University.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

