A Partial Translation of

Investigation into China's Leftover Women

By

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Abstract

This practice-based dissertation project is a combination of an English translation of some parts in a Chinese feminist book about the "leftover women" in the country with an analysis commentary addressing translation challenges and interesting findings during the process.

The translation is guided by the Skopos theory and functional equivalences are preferred throughout the process. The purpose of the target text is to inform audience from English-speaking countries of this particular phenomenon in China and fill in the blank of the long lost discourse of feminist issues in China in the Western feminism study.

The commentary essay is structured into 3 main parts: general text analysis, translation difficulties and fascinating discoveries and conclusions, with 4 sub-sections in the second part discussing translating headings and titles, cultural-specific items, metaphors, and feminism in translation in details respectively.

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Furthermore, I would also like to thank Aiping Luo, the author of the book where the source text of the translation is from, whose belief in and encouragement to me was my main source of strength to accomplish this task.

I would like to give my last thank you to all my local friends who kindly dedicated their time to proofread my work free of charge, whose genuine advice has played a significant role in the improvement of this work.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award.

Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, this work is my own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. I have identified all material in this dissertation which is not my own work through appropriate referencing and acknowledgement. Where I have quoted or otherwise incorporated material which is the work of others, I have included the source in the references. Any views expressed in the dissertation, other than referenced material, are those of the author.

SIGNED: ……Xueqiong Wu……. **DATE: …06/09/2016……**

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Translation Commentary

Text Analysis

The source text I have chosen for this practice-based dissertation project has been in my collection of readings for a long time. The purpose of choosing this particular book, as I have expressed several times throughout the course, has long exceeded simply valuing the language and translation process, but to realise its sociology significance. The source text is from the first feminist book (*Investigation into China's Leftover Women*) published in mainland China in the 21st century – the first in-depth investigation and revelation of the leftover women's life in China. Two months before the publication of this book, another book on the exact same topic written by an American born Chinese, Leta Hong Fincher, who received her Ph.D. degree in sociology in Tsinghua University, was also published in the English language domain (*Leftover women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China*). As we can assume, Fincher's book quickly gained quite an amount of attention in English-speaking counties and soon took over the discourse domination on this topic all over the world. However, Fincher's book, though offering certain insights and research into the topic, is still from an outsider's perspective, just like almost every other existing discourse on this particular phenomenon spread in languages apart from Chinese. Due to the limited access to Chinese publishing that most people around the world have, the real insiders' voice on the topic has long been lost or excluded in the dominating discourse.

When comparing the two books, we can also find that they are written from two almost completely different perspectives. Fincher only lived in China during her Ph.D. study, which is

a fairly short term to understand the entire social system, thus her book mainly demonstrates the facts and real-life situations, and focuses mostly on two aspects: the role property market in China plays in this phenomenon, and the wealth gap between men and women in the country. The book I translated is written by a native Chinese – a true insider on this topic, who was born and lived there all her life so far, and it looks in depth into the reasons behind, and puts the voice of leftover women forward through large amount of first-person narrative instead of third. It also gives possible solutions to tackle the problem. In general, Fincher's book is based on a much bigger picture – the general social environment in China, and is written in a very worried and pessimistic tone throughout the whole text, while the book I chose to translate goes into very detailed things around the topic by using lots of real-life examples from the interviewees they found, and is presented in a quite serious but calm tone; instead of filled with self-pity emotions, it is looking towards a bright and optimistic future, as expressed during one of the author's interviews: "although the general situation for feminism is still nowhere near great in China and there is still a long way to go, these women should wear the 'leftover' label with pride and confident and keep fighting back instead of drowning themselves in anxiety." This is another reason I prefer this book over Fincher's, even though I fully respect Fincher's work and effort to bring more global attention onto this topic. The leftover women in China does not need to tell the world how bad the situation is – it is not that bad compared to lots of other countries like India, Yemen or middle east countries; instead, they would like to give out positive message that they are not easily defeated and hope the people all over the world would either join or support them in their fight in solving this problem.

Out of personal passion over feminism issues, I have been actively participated in as much feminism related study as I could during my course in University of Bristol, through which I

discovered that the feminism situation in China seems to be a lost picture in the whole feminism discourse in the West: quite a few people never even heard of this “leftover women” issue in China nor have the interest in looking into it. The language barrier before getting access to the discussion and research materials of this topic, as mentioned above, is one of the main obstacles for people to get a full picture of what is really going on inside this China-only social phenomenon. This is why I hope, through translating this book, I will be able to offer the West, or at least English-speaking areas, a more comprehensive and truthful understanding of this situation in China, and fill in the blank of this issue in the field of Western feminism study.

The author of this book is Aiping Luo, a journalist and editor of Guangzhou Daily newspaper as well as a promising human rights lawyer in China, who herself, as a woman still being unmarried in her late 30s, is right in the centre of this China’s 21st-century phenomenon. The book was published in 2014, 7 years after the term “leftover” first appeared in the mainstream media in China when the debate over the phenomenon started to get heated up. The original target audience was mainly Chinese people, who are already quite familiar with the situation, along with some uprising feminists in the country, wanting to go deeper into the research. However, the target audience of the translation only have very limited knowledge on the topic, thus need clarification in lots of places throughout the text. In the source text, the author just listed certain situation without clarifying it is in China or which area in China, as most Chinese people, born and living in China most of their lives, would automatically understand what she is talking about, while it is the opposite for the target readers of the translation: for example, when reading “women are not allowed to have children unless they are married” in the target text, the audience will be confused as it is unlikely to be the same situation in their countries; therefore, in the translation, amplification

approach, which is, to be specific in this case, adding in “in China”, is necessary to make it clear for the readers of target text, even though it is not included in the source text. Despite my personal disagreement with the attitude and tone shown throughout, Fincher’s book, as the only official publishing in English I could find on this topic in recent years, still helped me tremendously in terms of grasping the suitable register and wording in the discourse of this particular phenomenon.

There are two types of language used in the source text, as the book consists of two completely different parts: one is filled with facts and data followed by logical arguments, and the other is full of stories from all the women interviewed. The language used in the former part is very close to those editorial pieces we see on newspapers featuring very clear logic flow, well-presented arguments and non-biased but persuasive tone; the language in the latter part is similar to news reports and magazine articles with more diverse vocabulary and a story-telling register. In the translating process, the translator is required to follow the same register and tone in these two parts. In addition, as the author is very international-minded and has obtained her master degree in the University of Westminster in the UK, her language and writing has shown very obvious western-style influence: exceptional logical flow in arguments and organisation throughout the whole book; and English grammatical sentence structures and signifiers appeared here and there in quite a few places in the text. This does make the translation process in certain areas a bit easier as there was less grammatical or logical switch required and a more direct approach is allowed. This feature of language also makes the book very suitable for an English translation, since the author was unconsciously writing in an “English” way in some places. However, these western-styled writings, though visible if paid attention, are nowhere near dominating in the source text. On the contrary, as it talks about a China-specific social phenomenon, there are still a large amount of cultural

and historical terms or sayings found in the text, which is also where all the translation difficulties and challenges come from, thus most of the language in the text is still in typical Mandarin Chinese style.

According to Reiss's text typology (Munday, 2012:110), the source text is mostly operative, supported by sufficient, informative facts and data collection, and also accompanied by some expressive parts full of story-telling narration by women the author interviewed for the book. Judging from this, we can conclude that the source text language is quite colourful. Therefore, different approaches should be adopted to achieve effective translation for different parts of the source text according to its type classification. For informative text such as organisation names, for instance, "全国妇联", a set equivalence or at least equivalence that has already been acknowledged should be the preferred choice, while certain adaptations need to be applied to the other two types of texts.

As a process of transferring the meaning of one language to another, translation is usually considered to serve the purposes of the target language audience, rather than the source. Thus, my translations are normally guided by needs and comprehension requirements of the target readers, where the how to make sure the target text is easy to understand and natural in expressions, as well as achieving smooth readability in the target language and culture, has always been the No. 1 priority. To ensure this, certain adaptations, either cultural or linguistic, are unavoidable. As Gambier pointed out in one of his papers, even the most basic translation goes way beyond the word-to-word transfer process (Gambier, 1992:421). Each language, however it is close to another language, has its own unique linguistic characteristics and different cultural and social backgrounds it is embedded in, thus adaptations "allow the adequacy of a content with the particular view of each language" (Vazquez-Ayora, 1997:324),

and successful adaptations allow (or even force) the target readers to discover the text in a way that suits its aim, ensures an optimal reception experience, or simply promotes the understanding of a specific message (Raw, 2012:26). In Chinese writings, a complete sentence is often formed using parataxis techniques, which normally consists of several small, logically connected sub-sentence units; while hypotactic structures are more common in English, so translators sometimes need to change those units into different kinds of clauses or adverbials, or in other words, make adaptation in the sentence's grammatical structure. This has become more and more inevitable in most cases of Chinese-English translation due to the differences in the respective syntaxes of the two languages: English, as a more "objective" language, relies to a greater extent on strict rules of grammar and syntax, while Chinese, as a more "subjective" language, has more loose and flexible syntax and relies on the individual words themselves to carry more of the meaning (Ye and Shi, 2009:20). In order to maintain the faithfulness, I tried my best to keep the original logic flow in the target text when making such adaptations. Other adaptations take place mostly on cultural specific expressions and terms, which will be explained in details in the following sections. To summarise, this particular translation process put emphasis on the target text instead of the source text, where functional equivalences are frequently favoured.

Translation Challenges, Interesting Findings and Thoughts

Translating Headings and subheadings

When I was deciding which parts of the book I would translate, I paid more attention to the content of the text without thinking too much of its linguistic side. After I started the

translation, I gradually noticed that somehow there are quite a few headings and subheadings included in the chosen source text, which became one of the challenges I was faced at the time. Unlike translating body texts, heading or title translation can be a very unique and fun part of the whole process, during which the translator is normally allowed more flexibility in playing around the words, granted by the nature of these short texts: concise but eye-catching; free from syntactic restrictions but still complete in meaning. Headings and titles should be put into fair amount of effort to translate because they, as very first things that come into target readers' sight before going into certain sections, are of great importance in terms of attracting target audience's attention to continue their reading, as well as giving them a general idea about what they might be expecting. As pointed out in the book *Thinking Chinese Translation*, the immediate functions of a title are to identify, to indicate the type and character of the content, to summarise and above all, to attract the reader (Pellatt and Liu, 2010:21). Therefore, simple and concise as they are, this kind of texts serve multiple functions that require full realisation in the target text as well, which forms one of the trickiest parts in this particular translation process. My approaches in rendering titles and headings in the source text will be demonstrated as follows:

In the translation of the first heading, the word "资本" was not transferred literally as "capital" or "capitalism", whose meanings are both too broad considering the context. It is not a rare thing that in Chinese writings, people tend to use some "big words" in headings to achieve the eye-catching effect, but a formal correspondence in English might deliver the wrong message to the readers. This is where a functional equivalence in accordance with its context, is usually preferred. Judging from the following content, we can easily conclude that the word "资本" here is one of those "big words" in Chinese which can contain layers of different

meanings to fit in various contexts, and what it actually refer to in this particular source text is actually businesses or commerce. Therefore, to make it clear for the target readers, a translation of the contextual meaning should be the appropriate one. For the word “推手”, the literal translation – “the forcing hand”, though might be understandable to the target audience, is still not only devoid of the conciseness required in headings, but also not a natural expressing in the target language; so changing the perspective and render it as “drive” would improve readability in this case. The word “舆论”, though whose direct translation should be “public opinions”, is among those words that can be interpreted differently depending on the context. As presented in annotation 1, the translator’s first choice was “phenomenon”, which is the correct interpretation in this particular heading, but in the end landed on the borrowed German word “zeitgeist”, because compared to the commonly-used “phenomenon”, it would be out of the expectation, or “comfort zone” of general target readers and thus has more chance of attracting their attentions and interests.

Contrary to sticking to the simplicity nature of normal headings, those in Chapter 5 were made longer in the translation than the original. This is owing to the syntax differences lying in the Chinese and English language as discussed above, where English does not always convey the same amount of information as Chinese in the same length of texts. Although amplification is used here to ensure the same amount of information is delivered, the translations of these headings are still within the allowed limitation for conciseness, and also successfully give out the imperative tone indicated in the original ones.

To conclude, despite the considerably small the part of the whole text they seem to occupy, headings and titles carry “complex and important functions which the translator should not overlook”, and lay “the ground work for both the formal schema and the content schema on

which the target text will be constructed" (Pellatt and Liu, 2010:25). Translating headings and titles is something quite fun to explore, but still needs thorough and comprehensive consideration in order to fulfil all those functions, as they are almost like advertising slogans for the followed text, requiring both creativity and discretion to produce.

Translating cultural-specific Items

The tremendously long history of China has provided a great breeding ground for its rich and profound culture where the colourful language containing lots of unique cultural elements has developed accordingly. We can say that any language is cultural, as they are developed alongside and on the basis of diverse cultures, and also considered a social phenomenon, which is included in the culture sphere. Translating cultural-specific terms or entities is among the most difficult aspects of Chinese-English translation, and a certain level of cultural awareness of both source and target language is required to successfully render these items. In the paper *Cultural Awareness in Chinese-English Translation* published in the peer-reviewed international journal "Theory and Practice in Language Studies", five kinds of cultural factors are recognised in Chinese-English translations: the ecological culture, which refers to the system established by a nationality in the process of adapting, utilising and transforming the environment, including the religious beliefs, modes of production, lifestyles, social organisation and customs of the nationality; the material culture, which includes people's eating habits and their customs and understanding in everyday life; the social culture, which covers social values, the interrelationships among people, political and economic relations, conventions and customs of a certain society; the religious culture and the linguistic culture (Yu, 2013:2323-2325). Realising the existence of these cultures embedded within each language and understanding how to identify and classify them in order to choose the most

appropriate approach in the translation process, are the two indispensable premises in this very type of translation. Although in this chosen source text there are not as many cultural-specific words and phrases as traditional or ancient Chinese writings, they are still worth noticing and discussing.

The most difficult one was the translation of the very Chinese concept of “孝”, which was shown in several variations throughout the source text – “孝道”, “孝顺” or “不孝”. The generally accepted equivalence for this concept is “filial piety”, which has become a recognised term in English, but still not common enough for all of the general public who are also the target readers, to understand – except those who have already obtained a certain amount of knowledge in Chinese language or culture; thus a further explanation or amplification approach including a transliteration, as pointed out in annotation No. 22, is necessary in this case to guide the target audience who are not so familiar with the culture and the concept into the additional research they need. Furthermore, the translator, though chose to adopt this set equivalence, was switching between a few alternatives such as “filial duties”, to avoid repetition in the target text.

The concept of “孝” in the Chinese context is often seen as a virtue of showing full respect and being obedient to the parents or other elderlies in the family. People with this virtue is called being “孝顺”, and those who do not have the virtue will be condemned as “不孝”. These two adjectives do not have established equivalences in English yet, so the translator had to go with a rather descriptive approach and render it as “do as their parents say” and “dishonour their parents (by not doing what they are told)” to give out a clearer explanation of these very cultural terms, instead of simply linguistically adjusting them into “being filial or unfilial”, as both words are quite ambiguous on what exactly they are referring to.

“Chengyu” or traditional Chinese four-character phrases, are another main difficult part of the Chinese-English translation. They are defined as “literary or historical allusions” that “trigger the reader’s imagination” (Pellatt and Liu, 2010:144). When translating these phrases, a knowledge of their derivation is very much required due to the historical nature of these words. The best case would be that an idiom in English that delivers the same message and has the similar connotation can be found. For English-speaking translators, this is more likely to be possible, as they can get the gist of the *Chengyu* through some easy research and find the best way to render it in their mother tongue, while for Chinese-speaking translators, though they know the very in depth meaning of the *Chengyu*, it is still quite difficult to grasp how to transfer them in English idiomatically. Translating *Chengyu*, or any cultural-specific items in general, requires profound understanding in both source and target culture; thus a description approach is often adopted for Chinese translators in this particular process because their interpretation as a native speaker can almost ensure a faithful and comprehensive explanation. However, sometimes this kind of descriptions might end up being “too lengthy to reflect the pithiness of the Chinese source text” (Pellatt and Liu, 2010:145), so to overcome that, the best solution is probably going with a rather indirect translation by “manipulating the text so that the meaning is there in the context” (ibid).

An example from this source text is “含饴弄孙”, which is normally used to describe the jollification that old people have with their grandchildren. The original Chinese present a very concrete image to the readers – “含饴” meaning “having sweets in the mouth” and “弄孙” meaning “playing with grandchildren”. The phrase is trying to express the excessive joy the old people have in heart when enjoying a life like this through the image. “含饴” here is almost a metaphor that compares the joy with grandchildren to the sweetness of candies.

However, this is also a very Chinese cultural thing – eating sweets while surrounded by grandchildren is not really a traditional image of happy retired life in Western elderlies' eyes, so a direct transfer would never create the same effect the phrase has in the source text. This is the reason why the translator chose the description technique, along with compensation by adding in "the ideal retired life" to achieve a more contextually understandable meaning.

Other cultural-specific items in this source text are a few traditional Chinese idioms or old sayings, for instance, "百善孝为先" and "宁拆十座庙，不毁一桩婚". The former one has already got a fixed equivalence which the translator chose to use in the final translation; although no official set equivalence can be found for the latter one, its meaning is very straightforward and clear, at least for a native Chinese speaker, thus a slightly descriptive but direct translation approach was chosen for this one.

Translating cultural-specific items has long been regarded as one of the most challenging parts in any kind of translation. It requires well-equipped knowledge and understanding in history and culture of both languages, and very extensive research ability has also become one of the necessities in completing the task. However, nowadays with the increasing frequency in cross-cultural communications all over the world, it is believed that the target audience in the West are becoming more and more acquainted with Chinese culture and expressions. Lots of "Chinglish" phrases or sentences, such as "long time no see", have already been included in official English sayings, which has in some way gradually made this particular kind of translation a bit easier to get through. Translators now start to have growing flexibility when dealing with these items, because in the end, whichever approach they would adopt all depends on the purpose of the text and the level of fluency the translator wants to achieve in the target text.

Differences in using metaphors

In most existing languages in the world that have a history of literature, metaphors can be found in daily usage and writings. Metaphors are expressions using common everyday concepts to describe more abstract ideas (Ye and Shi, 2009:79). Apart from concretising certain concepts and images, metaphors also colourise the text, which is welcomed in both literal and nonliteral writings. Metaphors include similes, or visible metaphors, and non-visible ones, which have become part of the language convention and very hard to notice in most cases. As suggested in *Introduction to Chinese-English Translation*, commonly accepted ways to deal with metaphor translating are: keeping the original metaphor; using a new metaphor; replacing the existing metaphor with a non-metaphor and vice versa (Ye and Shi, 2009:80). However, differences lie in the choices of using metaphors among languages, and English and Chinese are no exception. In translating this particular text, I have discovered that certain metaphors do not have the same effect nor deliver the same message or connotation in the target text, resulting in ambiguity and confusion if retained and transferred directly.

The first example of this kind is the word “绑架” used in the phrase “生育权的绑架”. Here the author is comparing the restrictions and controls imposed on the realisation of reproductive rights by the society, to a form of abduction or hijacking (绑架), using the same metaphor as the one in a recently emerged phrase in Chinese – “道德绑架”, which means to judge others on the moral high ground or trying to control people with moral rules. Native Chinese who are familiar with the word “道德绑架” would automatically understand what the author is trying to express by saying “生育权的绑架” as they can infer the meaning of the metaphor from an already commonly-used phrase. However, to the target readers, it is not the case as they are new to this particular metaphor and neither “abduction” nor “hijacking”

has the same interpretation they have in Chinese. This is a metaphor that certainly will not work in the target language, thus replacing it with a non-metaphor but clear expression would be the appropriate approach here to avoid unnecessary confusion and misinterpretation among the target audience, which is how the translator rendered it in the end using the word "withheld".

Following in the same sentence, another typical Chinese metaphor "凌驾" appeared, which gave the translator some headache in finding the proper functional equivalence in the target language. In Chinese, the word "凌驾" is one of those non-visible metaphors that have become conventional in regular Chinese writings; originally it is associated with riding an animal or some type of vehicles, as "驾" literally means to be over something and control it. In modern Chinese, it has been generalised into being patronising or having control over something or someone. If we retain the original metaphor and adopt a more direct and literal approach, the closest translation would be "overriding", which does not have the same level of abstractness as it has in Chinese, thus will not convey the same meaning as clearly in the target text. To maintain the original register and colourfulness of the source text, instead of leaving out metaphors completely, the translator chose to replace it with another metaphor which has the same image and would be easily understood in the target language by translating it into "a suppressing tool to keep women on the leash", because the word "leash" gives out a picture of controlling and taming – very close to what was indicated in the metaphor in the source text.

Another example of such is the metaphor "阉割" used in the sentence "就是女性的母性受到男权阉割的写照". In this sentence, the author was trying to express the anger and strong emotion when she talked about women's maternity rights being deprived of by the

patriarchal society, so she used a very strong and a bit exaggerating metaphor – "阉割", which literally means "to castrate the testicles of a male animal or man". While using hyperbole is nothing rare in Chinese and this word has been commonly adopted as a metaphor in the language when talking about things – usually more abstract things, like lawful rights or political power being violently taken away by force majeure, it is not really a recognised metaphor in English. Therefore, a direct transformation approach will neither work nor sound natural here in the target text. The translator had to sacrifice the colourful side of the text to achieve a faithful translation by completely omitting the metaphor and focusing on conveying the actual meaning behind it. Either "suppression" or "deprivation" is the actual message the source text trying to deliver, thus a choice was made by the translator in accordance with this.

Despite the differences discussed above, Chinese and English do sometimes share the same metaphor as well. In this book, the author used "枷锁" (shackles) several times in various contexts when describing restrictions. In English writings, this particular metaphor is also acceptable and regularly used. In this case, keeping the original metaphor should be the preferred approach as it is seen valid in both languages.

Translating metaphors can be challenging but fun at the same time. Apart from the four common approaches listed above, each translator can include their own interpretation into rendering them as well. Other factors that need to be taken into consideration are, as proposed by Ye and Shi, "the type of text involved" and "the freshness and originality of the metaphor" (Ye and Shi, 2009:82). In the end, the readability and fluency of the target text would come first when making translation choices.

Gender and Feminism in Translation

Thanks to the source text I chose and my personal interest in this very topic, I had the chance to do a bit of research in this area of translation study, which was first launched by Luise von Flotow in her book: *Translation and Gender: Translating in the "Era of Feminism"*. Throughout history of human language that was constructed by men in the first place, women's voice and language have long been repressed without the recognition they deserve: from at first when women was (and still are in some places in the world) almost completely shut out of proper education and literary world, to the time when the mother of "Harry Potter" was turned down by tons of publishers in the beginning because "printing a woman's name as the author on the cover page would never make the book sell". She had to change her publishing name into J.K. Rowling – something people could not guess the gender, to get this one of the most successful book series in history to be on the shelves of bookshops back then.

Feminism fight has been reaching out to all kinds of areas in our society, including the linguistic domain, as languages are very much gendered. In a time where women have to first somehow hide themselves in order to be seen, like what happened to J.K. Rowling as presented above, subverting the patriarchal hegemony has never become so urgent and desperate, and the role of recovering women's identity and re-manifesting women's language characteristics from the long-existing linguistic patriarchy is of great importance in this great endeavour, which relies not only on women's writing that is still often hidden or stereotyped, but also on the feminism translation. The main practices of feminism translation, as mapped out by Luise von Flotow, include "translating women's body, recovering women's lost works, asserting the translator's identity, revising the rhetoric of translation, reading and rewriting existing translations" (Wu, 2013:25), and her main strategies are all "interventionist approaches"(ibid), which are "supplementing, prefacing, footnoting and hijacking" (Simon, 1996: 13). These strategies have brought quite a lot of criticism onto the feminism translation

as it is believed to be interfering the fidelity of the translation process in general, which was considered the main tool to maintain men's linguistic dominance. As Sherry Simon pointed out in her study, translators were "relegated to a lower cultural status" (Wu, 2013:26) in the society and were like "handmaidens to authors, women inferior to men" (Simon, 1996:1). Women and translator have historically been weakened in their respective hierarchies (ibid). Translation has long considered a service, or "an act of reproduction" (ibid:11), and translators mediation service providers. This very same kind of stereotypes are seen in many places when people just automatically assume girls would pursue academics and careers in the arts and humanities direction, and more boys would be in science and engineering studies and occupations. Therefore, the significance of feminism translation is gradually exceeding its linguistic domain and seen as a tool to overturn patriarchal ideologies and create spaces for transcreation, a modern concept in translation field which restores the subjectivity of translators by allowing more flexibility than ever before.

There are two frequent asked questions within this particular area of translation: "how are social, sexual, and historical differences expressed in language and how can these differences be transferred across language? What kind of fidelities are expected of women and translators – in relation to the more powerful terms of their respective hierarchies?" (ibid: 8-9). A heatedly debated argument has soon been raised on the basis of these questions: is it true that women's writings are better translated by women, and men by men? Will feminist translators produce better target text of feminists' writings? This debate is essentially questioning whether women would understand women's language better simply because there will be some kind of resonance and mutual compassion shared between them. In my opinion, it is true to some extent, but not entirely, as gender is more of a social recognition rather than purely related to sexes one is born with. Male feminists do exist and have played

a tremendously important role in feminism fight as a whole, and arbitrarily excluding these people who certainly have lots of similarities as other female feminists in understanding women's voices, out of the whole feminism translation domain is not fair in any sense. To summarise, although gender roles have been seen influential in translating gender-related discourse or voices, it is not that much of a binary division at all.

Chinese, unlike French or German, is not a syntactically gendered language, thus it is hard to detect the linguistic feminism characteristics on the surface even it is written by a woman or even feminist writer. Feminism discourse in Chinese language and writings is rather subtle and mostly shown through tone and register, or the idea itself. In this particular source text, the author keeps very good consistence in nonbiased, calm and logical language and register on the whole, with only a few emotional and feminism stands showing. One example is when she writes "这是因为在这些没有父亲的家庭中，母亲无需在男人身上分散精力，所以对孩子的关注和互动多于一般的夫妻家庭". In this statement, the author sees men as an unnecessary burden on women's energy when it comes to child caring, which basically tells the readers that women do not necessarily need men in their lives. This sentence here can be seen very biased and feminist; it is the very example of women's individuality expressed through the text. Translation of this part can vary depending on the translator's stance: a non-feminist would probably think this is too strongly biased and change it into a more neutral expression in translation such as "unmarried women will have more energy on their children compared to married couples who live together". This is exactly where the author's feminist voice get distorted, and what we would prevent from happening in feminism translations. I, as a woman and feminist myself, decided to stay as close as I could to the original text so that the author's language would not be lost in this book about feminism.

In the end, feminism translation is just like any other adaptation in the translation process chosen by the translator for certain purposes. There is no answer of right or wrong in these arguments as they are all decided by the function of the text and objectives of the author and the translator. However, bringing feminism translation into the sight of translation study is of great significance to the feminist fight in the linguistic discipline.

Conclusion

Since I chose this text entirely out of personal aim and interest, the whole translation process was a very enjoyable one, even though it was considered to be a tougher task as I am not a native speaker of the target language. However, sometimes people do wonder: which one is more important for producing a better-quality translation – the command of the source language or the target? Some may argue it depends on the type and function of the text, and others would say they are of equal importance: native speakers in target language have more chance of producing very high-quality and well-received target texts, but there is still a fair amount of risk that they might misunderstand or misinterpret certain parts of the source text, and the same way happen to the native speakers in source language, as their knowledge of the target language has inevitable limitations. This still seems to be a paradox to be solved in the translation field. Perfect translation never exists as both kinds of translators would strive to polish their skills and language continuously.

Through this particular project, apart from building up my confidence in doing the work which has normally been assigned to English native speakers, I have also learned my limitations in the target language. I also gained a deeper understanding in translating cultural-specific items as well as translating metaphors through both reading and actual translation practice. I am fully aware that I probably will never produce a Chinese-English translation target text that is

as good as the one made by English-speaking translators, but this will never stop me from taking this kind of challenging tasks and trying to improve my English language skills in the future.

On the whole, this has been a satisfying project to accomplish. I do wish I would have the opportunity to translate the whole book someday.

Translation Target Text

The commercial drive behind the "leftover women" zeitgeist[1]

Within a few short years, almost all the TV programmes, the Internet, magazines and literature have all turned to celebritise[2] leftover women in China: several TV series on this topic, like *Let's get married* and *It's time for you to marry*, just to name a few, became huge hits in the country, and the film *I will* featuring a story of a leftover woman falling in love with a handsome and wealthy man, chose to be released on Valentine's Day. Behind this heated topic lies the strong and ubiquitous commercial force: all kinds of tangible business bodies that are even only slightly related to single women – dating websites and TV programmes, the country's film and publishing industry, counsellors or "love experts"[3], hospitals, and all

[1] The original source text is "舆论", which literally means "public opinions", but in Chinese in certain context, "舆论" sometimes nearly equals a "phenomenon", as in being very heatedly talked about. "Phenomenon" was my original choice, but afterwards the translator felt the word is not catchy enough for a subheading, whose main purpose is to quickly attract the readers' attention. "Zeitgeist" is originally an German word but start to became widely-used in English language nowadays, yet still not common enough people and its meaning is closer to the source text "舆论" in the sense of "spirit of the time".

[2] The source text here uses the word "垂青" with a bit ironic tone in there. At first the translator went with a more direct approach and chose the word "favour" in English with a quotation mark, but soon feel it didn't bring out the same sense of irony in the target text. After a thorough consideration and research, the translator found the word "celeritise" should be the best fit here, as firstly it very well connects with the context of TV shows, literature and Internet features; and secondly, brings out the ironic tone at the same time.

[3] Usually when people see the word "心理咨询师" in Chinese, the first equivalence they will think of in English would be "psychiatrist" or "shrinks", but in the source text context, the author was referring to a specific kind of counselling service that helps people with relationship related problems. As psychiatrist also deals with mental illnesses which obvious is not included in the source text, the translator thinks the word "counsellor" would the most appropriate translation here after consulting with some native English speakers.

sorts of other businesses (especially E-commerce) – have been actively involved in the huge commercial benefits brought with this topic. The entertainment business relies on the general public craze on this topic to increase its viewership or box office; more and more shops hope to sell their products to leftover women; medical industry is trying to get leftover women to worry about their health conditions so that they will need its health check services; the rising dating industry is not only targeting leftover women, but also those unmarried women who are not old enough to be called "leftover", yet have the fear of ending up becoming one. All these businesses have realised that it is within their common survival needs to sustain the popularity of this topic and constantly attract the public's attention onto it, and only through continuously stigmatising and marginalising this group of women that they can keep profiting from them. As a result, by manipulating mainstream media, businesses have been building up and supporting a whole new social environment where pressure on girls to be married before certain age is getting bigger and bigger, which has dragged millions of unmarried women into this vicious vortex of public attention. What is worse, the strong and deep root that marriage has in Chinese social attitude and system has hugely strengthened the dominating role of this recently-formed concept, which has greatly restricted the development of the supposed-to-be diversity in lifestyle that should have emerged with the economic boom.

All-China Women's Federation (ACWF)

– The black hand behind the businesses

In order to take the lead[4] in China's uprising dating market, one of the most famous dating website in the country – Baihe – has already taken the initiative and become allies with China Association of Marriage and Family Studies (CAMF), which is directly under the administration of All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), to better rushing unmarried girls into marriage since 2007. It is common sense that as the country's biggest women's association, the ACWF shoulders the responsibility of empowering women and resolving social problems concerning women's rights. However, their priority now seems to be eliminating the leftover women in the country. Why? According to Leta Hong Fincher's research, the ACWF website published the first article using the term "leftover women" in 2007. Since then, they started publishing numerous articles on their website insulting single and well-educated women. Fincher thinks this is because the ACWF also has the responsibility to improve the country's population quality, so to achieve that goal, the fastest way they could think of is to "threaten" those highly-educated unmarried women into having children for the sake of the country (www.kaoder.com, 2012). On the other hand, Fincher also asserts that the long-existing tradition of boy preference has resulted in a large number of deliberate abortions of baby girls, which has led to enormous gender imbalance in the country. Millions of men in China will end up wifeless in the near future, and it is considered by the authority a huge threat to social stability (Fincher, 2011). Thus, the big task was landed on the ACWF to persuade more and more single women into marriage as soon as possible.

[4] The source text is "占领" which should have been translated as "take over". However after a careful reading of the whole source text sentence, the translator thinks the author wants to express that the Baihe website realised the market potential earlier than most of other dating websites and secured their leading role in the market by connecting with CAMF, and in reality, it is true they are one of the leading companies in the area. This is why the translator chose to translate it into "take the lead".

However, a notice about establishing training courses for “marriage and family counsellors” released on April 12th, 2010 by the marketing department of ACWF, gave out the message that despite their gender, anyone who hasn’t formed a family is considered to a potential threat to the current social order in China.

> *“Families are like cells of our society and the harmony within families are fundamental to forming a harmonious society. To better promoting family virtues and encouraging more people to get involved in forming harmonious families that serves our ultimate goal to build a harmonious society, the ACWF has decided to work with CAMF to put forward a training project for ‘marriage and family counsellors’.”*

This quote from the notice showed us that to ACWF, the harmony of families is like the cornerstone of a harmonious society. The growing number of the “leftover women” is seen to pose more and more potential damage to those cornerstones and sabotage the government’s agenda of bringing in a harmonious society. Therefore, putting those leftover women into marriage is becoming a political scheme. We, the authors, have to point out that those unmarried women has never pose any threat or done any damage to the society. On contrary, they are doing great in their jobs and have made great contribution to the society. Apart from that, they are usually very financially independent and thus very active consumers, which is obviously helpful to the country’s GDP growth and economic development in general. As a matter of fact, the emergence of this particular group should be treated as a sign of empowerment of women in China. Widespread wrongful perception on this social group is the reason why the fallacy that leftover women are threatening the process of building a harmonious society was formed in the first place. The ACWF’s responsibility should always have been protecting the rights of women from different communities or social groups and

fighting to put right policies that was established by other authorities blindly pursuing superficial harmony, but will endanger women's rights in the long run. Otherwise, what do women in China need them for?

Chapter 2

The Myths[5] and Dilemmas in the Era of "Must Marry"[6]

This is an age when almost everyone around you is putting pressure on you to marry in China. Lots of people may say, each one of us has the freedom to choose the life style we want, and whether to be married is one's personal business. However, people who are saying this obviously have not realised what kind of influence social system, along with pop culture and traditional customs, could have on their fellow citizens: in China, you are not allowed to have children if you are not married, and at the same time, you will be labeled as "leftover women"; on the other hand, marriages are always blessed and the day that women become brides is

[5] The translator's first instinct was to translate "迷思" in the source text into "confusion" as at the time she thinks the author wanted to say the public pressure for women in China to marry at certain age makes them quite lost about how to deal with it. However after read through the whole chapter, she knows that the author is listing some facts and situations in the country that lead to this "leftover women" phenomenon instead of talking about what those women's feelings. "Confusion" seems too subjective in this case and "myth" not only rhymes with the source text, but also connects well with the "不断重复的神话" in the following text, thus should be an appropriate choice.

[6] Although the direct translation of "逼婚" should be "force to marry" or "forced marriage", it does not refer to the same thing happening in China. "逼婚" in Chinese context means family members or public giving women after a certain age pressure to marry. The translator took the meaning according to the source text context and think "the era of 'must marry' "conveys that meaning clearly and at the same time, is concise enough for a subheading.

said to be the most beautiful day in their lives …This[7] shows us two completely different attitudes Chinese society has towards married and unmarried women. When the freedom of choice to stay single is taken away, marriage can no longer be considered something that belongs to women's free will and choice. Does marriage equal happiness? It has long been a much repeated myth. After our comprehensive study into married women's condition in China, we found that there is almost no protection available for them within their married life. What leftover women experience might just be some emotional downturn which has low possibility of resulting in physical harm, while to married women, the high-occurrence of domestic violence and marital rape, the tiring housework without anything in return, and the segregation and isolation from society that they can do nothing about, are their everyday reality and things that need urgent attention. If people are only busying embellishing marriage but at the same time keep turning a blind eye to those potential harms married women are facing, the glory of marriage is simply another self-deception.

Five "Magic Weapons"[8] to Tame Women in China

In this society where freedom of marriage is an universal right, the decision of whether to marry, to whom we marry and when to marry should only be made depending on what is best for them in terms of improving and bringing the most benefits in their current lives, which is what men would normally consider when it comes to marriage. It is only when women are

[7] "落差" in the source text needs to be omitted because it basically means the same thing as "different attitudes" in the same sentence, thus would become redundancy in the translation.

[8] The translator chose a more direct translation here because she think it is colourful enough for a subheading and with a quotation mark, gives out a bit of ironic tone indicated there in the source text.

choosing marriage according to these same considerations that the demand in marriage is balanced and an equal relationship in marriage can be built. However, in reality, can women in China put maximizing benefits of their own as top priority when getting married? The answer is no. The society, the culture and both spoken and unspoken rules in this country are obstacles for women in making such choices in marriage, as it is considered to be the duty of women to satisfy the need of the society through marriage.

The Over-sanctification of Marriage

Marriage has always been sanctified throughout history in China. There is an old saying that goes: “One would rather destroy 10 temples than jeopardise a marriage”, which implies the sacredness of marriage exceeds the holiness of the guardian gods of Chinese temples. This long-term cultural brainwash has made unmarried women in China believe that the meaning of marriage is not only two people living together to improve each other’s life, but also a sanctified social norm that every woman needs to conform to, and an unavoidable path leading to the completeness of their lives.

However, the intrinsic nature of marriage in China is merely binding of interests granted by law. Couples in China have to get registered because firstly, having children outside marriage is forbidden in China so the only way to realise their reproduction rights is through marriage; and secondly, they want to add insurance to their relationship using the “marriage contract” due to lack of sense of security. These two reasons, though valid and fair, are nowhere near being sacred. Compared to just being in relationships, the extra rights and duties couples receive through marriage are all financial. According to the Marriage Law of the People’s Republic of China, husband and wife shall have equal status and respect each other in the

family, but this stipulation does not have mandatory binding in reality, as there is no procedure designed to check whether the couple at the registration office decide to tie the knot[9] out of love or other selfish reasons. In fact, the marriage law is unable to interfere if one no longer respects or loves the other inside marriage; it only has influence on the financial rights and duties of the husband and wife. Therefore, marriage is more like a financial contract, which has no difference from other contracts signed between two individuals or companies. If love, as part of human nature, is nothing noble, what is sacred about the marriage certificate that can guarantee neither love nor morality except having jurisdiction over economic behaviours?

The purpose of sanctifying marriage in China is to tame and restrict women by making them believe marriage should be the biggest hope in their lives; the day they walk down the aisle should be the most beautiful day of their lives; a marriage that works out great is their lifetime success; betrayal in marriage will become their greatest shame in life; and sabotaging other people's marriages is considered an enormity[10]. Since sacred things are worth sacrificing one's own interests to pursue and protect, women should never think about "what kind of benefit will marriage give to me?" or "what can I gain from this marriage?" Simply because marriage is regarded as something sacred in China, women in this country are obliged to aspire to it and be willing to give up their other interests to defend it. We can see from this that the best

[9] Someone who read this piece of translation told the translator not to use the phrase as it is quite colloquial, but after some careful thinking, the translator decided not to change it, as firstly, she does not want to use the word "marry" too many times in the target text; and secondly, this is a book targeting general public readers, so it should be okay to use one or two colloquial phrases; and also, the word suggested was "convene", which has a too broad meaning for this particular context.

[10] Even though "enormity" might not be a really common word, the translator do feel it has the closest meaning to "弥天大罪" in the source text among all the words she could find.

way to force people to chase after things that do not accord to their personal interests is to label those things with a sanctified tag so that people will then stop asking “why” and “for what” or even think of such questions.

The most direct embodiment of the sanctification of marriage in China is that it is the one and only family relation established by adult citizens that is protected by law. A patriarchal society sees only one lawful family relation - marriage, and provides no legal protection to any other family relations formed by adults, and this is all down to the purpose of maintaining an unequal family structure – the fundamental necessity of the survival of patriarchy, within which men will always be receivers and women providers. The family relations between siblings are no longer taken seriously in this country, even if those between twin brothers or sisters are sometimes even more stable than the relations between average husbands and wives, as they not only spend time together growing up but some of them even work together or take care of one another all their lives. In addition, although there are lots of biological unrelated sworn brothers and sisters that have shared life and death with each other throughout the history of China, no lawfully provided registration procedure has been allowed to such relations. Touching love stories do not necessarily come from married families; they can also come from family consisting of biological or sworn siblings; and the protection or guarantee granted to women through marriage can also be provided by cooperative relations between sisters. So why is it that these kinds of establishments are not only deprecated by customs, but also ignored by any legal protections? It is because any patriarchal society needs to use the inequality in married families to suppress women’s interests in order to maintain male privileges – if women are allowed to get registered to form a family with sisters to fulfil their mutual needs, a large amount of men will not be able to greedily profit from women legitimately as husbands and fathers, which will lead to instability

of the patriarchal society. The same reason applies to the fact that the more patriarchal a place is, the more likely same-sex marriage is not accepted in that place, as two parties in same-sex marriages have the same gender and are from the same generation, which minimises the gap of social status between them and maximises the possibility of establishing entirely equal and cooperative relations - the more of these kinds of relations there are, the more impact the patriarchal society will receive.

Deprivation of Reproductive Rights from Unmarried Women

To have children of one's own, along with love, are two different kinds of rightful desires of human beings and whether a woman has the right to bear her own child should not depend on whether she is in a relationship or married. Although there is no legal prohibition on single woman giving birth in China, the country's Family Planning Commission and the Department of Assisted Reproductive Technology have both released certain bans on unmarried women's childbearing and implement fines on whoever violate the ban, even when they only have one child, which is in the accordance with the family planning regulations in China (Jiling province and Shenzhen are the only two places in the country that allow unmarried women to have kids under certain conditions). Even though discrimination against illegitimacy is expressly interdicted by law in China, there are still a large amount of obstacles in actual procedures when it comes to registering these children as official citizens of the country[11], which has

[11] "户口" is a very specific cultural concept and the closest English equivalence would be "census", which is more of a collected data record than a proof of identity as that in China. In China, "户口" will affect almost every aspect of a person's life – even passport issuing needs it. So the translator generalised it in translation and explained it in way that target readers would easily understand.

brought enormous inconvenience to their lives and education. Depriving unmarried women of their reproductive rights means women in China can only carry down the family name for their husbands without the freedom to choose to have kids out of their own will.

Judging from physical conditions, women should have more autonomy over reproduction than men: to realise their reproductive rights, women can use donated sperm, and thus do not necessarily need physical contact with men, but it is the exact opposite to men, whose reproductive rights can only be realised through a woman's body. In the patriarchal society, the true purpose of deliberately introducing an imposed relation between women's reproductive rights with marriage and depriving unmarried women of this lawful right, is using this specific right of women to hijack them to stay in their marriage, thus prevent the collapse of patriarchy from happening – the only way women can have offspring of their own is to help men achieve their patricentric dream at the same time. Although there are a lot of other ways, other than marriage, through which men can become a father, it is still thought to be the most economical and secured way where men are able to realise their fatherhood dream over their children: the household registration record in China will recognise his fathership if the child was born within the wedlock, which ensures his authority over the child even if he is an irresponsible parent; Children born inside marriage are not allowed to completely cut off from their father, and there is no stipulation in Chinese law that says Children can be freed from filial duties to their father even after being mistreated by them. We can see that in China, marriage is the best guarantee to "free paternity".

One of the most popular opinion of male chauvinism in China is to attack leftover women being incompatible with childbearing after certain age, in order to emphasise the importance of reproduction to women. However, as discussed above, they also regard giving birth outside

marriage as one of the immoral behaviours. That is to say, a premise is required for rightful maternity in China, which is to secure paternity at the same time through childbearing; and the mothership will be considered improper or even shameful if it has no beneficial influence to men's realisation of fatherhood. In China, one thing we continuously hear is "I gave birth to a child *for him*" – this is the exact reflection of the reality where maternity rights are suppressed[12] by patriarchy. Still, quite a few people are trying to "justify" this unacceptable deprivation of reproductive rights from unmarried women, whose most common excuses are as follows:

Excuse No.1: Childbearing outside marriage is a disgrace and humiliation to women and does not conform to social ethics.

If a woman is forced to give birth unwillingly under circumstances such as being abducted or cheated and then abandoned, then yes, it is a dark history in her life. However, it is a very natural desire for women to try to have kids outside marriage simply out of their own will or due to certain personal considerations. What is it to be shameful when a women is doing what they want to their own body and within their supposed-to-be lawful rights? Why on earth do women have to conform to the ethics set by the patriarchal society for restricting and taming them? When a married, pregnant women finds out her child has congenital disease during one of the pregnancy examinations, there will not suddenly be a stipulation forcing her to get an abortion by saying "bringing him/her into the world with a birth defect

[12] Chinese and English have different ways of using metaphors and the source text "阉割" would be too strong and doesn't give the same impression in the target text, so the translator generalised it and convey the real meaning without the embellishment in the translation.

is unfair to this life (because he/she will certainly suffer)[13]", as opposed to unmarried pregnant women facing possible forced abortion by the Family Planning Commission even if it is their first child, as it will still be considered a child "outside *the* plan"[14]. So in China, being a child of an unmarried woman is even more unfortunate than a child with an anomaly, isn't it? Nowadays, China has not only set up certain policies banning unmarried women from having children and receiving any possible aid from the government, but has also been constantly stigmatising unmarried mothers, resulting in an extremely difficult condition where those mothers have to raise the kids all by themselves and deal with pressure caused by nonstop humiliation from the public at the same time. All these stigmatisations mostly comes from the "shackle" enforced by the patriarchal society to prevent women from childbearing without getting married.

Excuse No.2: Children of single mothers are often looked down upon by their peers, which could affect their psychological well-being.

As a matter of fact, a child's young heart would not normally understand discrimination against friends simply because they are fatherless or motherless, unless deliberately instigated by parents. Currently there is no evidence showing such a phenomenon being common around China even though it is featured in quite a few TV programmes and films, as well as literature works. Kids would mock their peers for a variety of reasons: not looking pretty enough, having poor academic performance, wearing glasses, being dirty with a

[13] The translator adopted the amplification approach here as she thinks it would make the target text clearer in logic flow.

[14] Another amplification approach is used here to give a further logical reason to the target readers in this case, as they are unfamiliar with the social environment that the source text comes from, and would not be able to understand certain social incident automatically like the source text readers, thus needs further information for clarification.

running nose etc. Will the chance of being mocked for growing up in a single-parent family be any bigger than any of these reasons? Not necessarily[15]. There is no stipulation trying to stop people released from jail from having kids within their marriage, so does that mean the possibility of children from single-parent families facing discrimination from their peers is even higher than that of kids whose parents are previous criminals? Furthermore, why should the children and their single mothers take the blame for such discrimination against them? Isn't this the recently popular logic of victim blaming? The right way to eliminate discrimination should be rectifying actions and the way of thinking of the perpetrators, instead of taking the right of childbearing away from unmarried women in the name of protecting their kids from peer prejudice.

Excuse No.3: Single mothers do not have enough resources to raise the children by themselves, which would be unfair to those kids.

In China, there is no set income threshold for married couples to meet before having children and in fact there are lots of child-desiring unmarried women whose personal income is even higher than the combined income of some married couples; let alone the fact that a large number of married couples would have two or more children, which means they have to bring up at least one child each. Therefore, a woman with good income certainly has the ability to raise a child on her own – why is their childbearing rights deprived of then? This undoubtedly results from a diversity of problems in this country – the economic status of women in China is still not very high and quite a few single mothers struggle financially to take care of their

[15] The translator chose to use a question and an answer to recreate the rhetorical tone instead of moving over the rhetorical format because she thinks this way better fits the language flow in the target text and thus leads to better readability.

kids all by themselves, but why can't the government provide some benefits for these women since their children will grow up to be no different to those children born to married parents and become important labour force in the country? The government should have the duty to help out single unmarried mothers in taking care of their kids, instead of depriving their chance of being mothers simply because they might fail to provide enough resources for the kids.

Excuse No.4: Missing of a paternal role[16] when growing up will have significant impact on the lives of children who are brought up by single mothers.

If a single woman gave birth to a child using assisted reproductive technologies, then yes, the child does not have a legal father; however, if a married woman is widowed during her pregnancy, her child will never have the chance to see his/her father either. What is ridiculous is that there is no regulation prohibiting widowed women having children, nor does the public think it is immoral. Does this imply that this patriarchal society would accept a woman bearing a child for a deceased man, rather than a woman having her own kids simply because she wanted it? A piece of UK-based research published in 2010 studied 47 children from fatherless families, 27 of whom were raised by single mothers and 20 by lesbian couples. It closely observed them from the time of being infants to their adulthood, and found that there is no difference in their growing up compared to other regular kids. In addition, these kids are even mentally healthier on average and better at dealing with family relations. This is because in these kinds of families, the mothers tend to put more attention on and have more time

[16] Here the translator chose a different perspective to interpret the source text "亲生父亲的关照" and summarised into a more native and natural way of expression in the target text, and translated it as "paternal role".

interacting with their kids than normal families, as they do not need to spare their energy on another man. There have been research reports pointing out that fathers' presence is not the *sine qua non* in deciding whether their children will grow up healthily and happily; the quality of the family relations are way more important than how a family is formed (Golombok & Badger, 2010).

If a child is conceived through normal sexual contact instead of assisted reproductive technologies, he/she does have a legal father. The law in China stipulates that the father has the same level of child support duty toward both his legitimate and illegitimate children. When an unmarried father does not take responsibility of caring for his children, it is him who is making the mistake and breaking the law, not the unmarried mother. The current law in China still has no coercive measure to make sure both married and unmarried parents are fully responsible to their kids. However, unmarried mothers can easily cut their children off from the fathers should they misbehave and be irresponsible to the kids, while it is rather difficult for married mothers to do the same thing, consequently permitting[17] incompetent fathers be bad examples in their children's lives.

A father's caring for his kids does not necessarily depend on whether the child was born before or after marriage, but relates rather to the chances and cost of gaining fatherhood. The cost of men becoming fathers is extremely low and the more easily they can get it, the less possible they will cherish it. Only through cutting down men's opportunities to have kids and increase the cost of it, could we encourage men to be more responsible fathers. Thus,

[17] It was a bit tricky to translate "任由" in the source text. The translator chose to render it as "sadly letting" but was pointed out to be not very natural in the target text. The translator soon changed it into "consequently permitting" as the word "consequently" would automatically give the target readers the impression that it is something that the subject could do nothing about.

the best way to manually achieve this is women setting up more strict standards and higher requirements for men in the dating market, which will eventually lead to better childcare from fathers for the generations to come[18].

The most common excuse that local authorities use to prevent women from childbearing outside marriage is the famous "One-Child Policy", which is more of a parlance[19] of patriarchy to restrict women's rights. To implement the "One-Child Policy", the government only needs to impose a limit of one child per woman, without putting restrictions on the legitimacy of the child. Meanwhile, allowing unmarried women to have kids actually has a positive impact on the population control in China as most married women who did not obey the policy were pressured by their husbands and the families they married into, to unwillingly give birth to more than one child. Some women might not choose to enter into marriage if they are allowed to have kids without getting married, thus freeing themselves from the pressure of having more kids for the husbands' family, which will surely lead to a decreasing birth rate in the country. For example, the Mosuo tribes in China do not believe in monogamy so the men in the tribe are unable to urge the women to have more kids for them. Their population succeeded in staying balanced without influence from the outside world. In fact, the Mosuo women had the lowest birth rate among China in the 20th century, with most of them having only one child. They also had the largest proportion of childless women in the country at the time and their children's age gap topped the country's record as well (Stacey, 2009).

[18] The translator sacrificed a bit of the original meaning of the source text to better fit the logic flow of the target text. The meaning of the target text is still close enough to the source to serve as a valid and proper translation.

[19] The source text "说辞" can be "excuses" or "a kind of embellished yet deceiving way of speech" in English depending on the context. Judging from the whole sentence, the author used this word, again, in a little ironic way, thus the latter meaning is more appropriate here; so after some research, the translator chose the word "parlance" which beautifully gives out that meaning and the ironic tone at the same.

A lot of people, including scholars, still hold the belief that children raised by single mothers tend to have mental health issues, which they posit will pose a threat to the stability of the society. They ignore the fact that lots of women became single mothers because they had no other choice, e.g. they got pregnant by accident; they were cheated and abandoned, or divorced while pregnant etc. which also results from the persecution by this patriarchal society. We should fully support unmarried childbearing when it is well-planned and out of one's free will, as there is no sound proof that this kind of family will bring bad influence into the children's lives. A piece of Israeli research published in 2007 shows that offspring born through artificial insemination have normal emotional development and mother-child relations (Weissenberg, Landau & Madgar, 2007). In our opinion, women who choose to have kids without getting married are in no doubt very financially independent, which will set a good example for their children who will have more chance of becoming more independent later in life after being influenced by their mothers self-reliance when growing up.

There are two questions that almost every woman in China will find familiar: "What? You don't want kids? What did you get married for then?" It is hard to imagine how many women in this country have no choice but to enter into marriages in order to keep their reproductive rights due to the social norm set by the patriarchal society and the pressure from public opinions. The anxiety leftover women in China have mostly comes from the fear that they will not be able to have their own children unless they are married. Reproductive rights being

withheld[20] makes marriage a suppressing tool to keep women on the leash[21] in this country. Only when the reproductive rights of single and unmarried women are fully recognised and respected, can women be valued again as subjects to human reproduction, instead of being seen as childbearing tools for men to realise their patriarchy dreams.

The Moral Pressure from Filial Piety

The traditional culture of Chinese society puts great emphasis on filial duties (or "Xiao" in Chinese), which, as part of the Confucian philosophy, educates young ones to respect their parents, elders and ancestors[22]. There is an old saying that goes "filial piety is the foundation of all virtues", and being obedient and doing what the parents say are the two core aspects

[20] When seeing the phrase "生育权的绑架" in the source, the translator at first quickly connected it with another popular phrase in Chinese – "道德绑架" in recent years, but soon realised the two "绑架"s are quite different in meaning. In the phrase "道德绑架", the "绑架" is more like a "restriction" or "coercion" which people use to judge or even pressure others to do what they think is the right thing. However in the source text here, "生育权的绑架" actually refers to the situation where women in China are not able to get access to this lawful rights whenever they want, thus in this case, the word "withheld" is a better choice.

[21] The word "凌驾" in the source text here is a bit difficult to translate. At first, the translator went with a direct approach and chose to use the word "overriding", but was told it does not really make sense to the target readers. The translator then closely analysed the source text again and realised that the author was trying to express marriage being a kind of restriction or taming tool to women in China, so she changed into description approach and used an equally vivid metaphor – "leash" to covey the author's purpose.

[22] Phrases like "孝道", "孝顺" or "不孝" in this part of the source text are among the most difficult things to translate throughout this whole task. Although "filial piety" is the official equivalence, the translator still switched between this one and "filial duties" to avoid using the same wording through the whole text. As the translation of this book is targeting the general public, who might not be familiar with the term "filial piety" unless they have learned a certain of Chinese history and culture, or Confucius philosophy, so the translator amplified a little here to give those who never heard of the term some guidance in case they want to look into it.

of this virtue. To the parents of leftover women in China, filial duties of their daughters include getting married and having a family, which is becoming more like their own wishes rather than their children's. As one of the main virtue requirements in Chinese society, filial piety has become one of the main sources of pressure to the leftover women in China.

In most parents' or older generations' mind, getting married can assure their female descendants companies in senior life and carers in times of sickness - someone who will basically take over their job when they can no longer be around; or to some, it means a step closer to the ideal retired life surrounded by the joy of grandchildren[23]. Quite a few women we interviewed said it should be their responsibility and duty to help their parents fulfil this wish or at least make them not worry over this matter anymore, but the dilemma is, on the one hand, their mind will not be at ease if they could not make their parents happy by stepping into marriage soon enough; on the other hand, it is also unacceptable for them to put up with some random man they are not fond of for life before they find the right one. These interviewees would, in the end, feel guilty or even be morally condemned by various relatives. Women experiencing the most pressure of "must marry" are those whose parents or elders in the family are divorced, have health issues or experienced certain hardships, and want their female offspring to be married as soon as possible. What is more, these interviewees tend to feel they have let the parents down when they are still in need of parental care or aware of the amount of anxiety these "personal issues" are causing their parents, as they believe as adults, it should be their partners', instead of aged parents' responsibility to take care of them. In fact, this pressure from family will easily urge these

[23] Description and generalisation approaches are both adopted here to translate the classic Chinese phrase "含饴弄孙". The translator generalised the "含饴" into "joy" because it is clear enough to convey the happy feeling expressed through the source text and also makes the meaning more straightforward for the target readers.

women to look for someone to marry in a rush and even the thought of just quickly finding a random man to form a family will emerge in some of these women's mind.

The guilt Yannan had for her parents became extremely strong whenever she was ill, especially when it was a serious health problem. Once she broke some bones and had to rest at home for 3 months, 2 of which she was trapped in casts, and she had to completely rely on her parents' care on daily basis. Guilt started to pile up as she looking at her aged parents busy running around taking care of her, as in her head, this kind of things should have been done by her other half, but the reality gave her no choice but put this burden on her old ones, depriving them of the senior life[24] they want, which adds even more guilt onto Yannan's mind. Her parents always express their desire for the jollification of a three-generation family, like what most of other elders have, and their face would light up even when they are talking about friends becoming grandparents. Yannan knows how badly they want a grandchild as well, making her feel ashamed to face them because she is unable to make that wish come true just yet[25]; but at the same time, she cannot just marry a random man and have kids with him. "They have sacrificed so much bringing me up and their only hope for me is being happy in life, which is exactly what I have been constantly telling them – I am quite happy now like

[24] The translator adopted the modulation approach when translating this part, which changed a bit the logic connection between sentences. In the source text, the sentence should connect closer to the later text than the previous ones. However, in the translation, it is the other way around. This is due to the ambiguity of the source text sentence, which can be seen as related to either the text before or after it. As the same thing that Yannan feeling bad about unable to give the retired life her parents want, is repeated again in the later text, the translator decided to connect this sentence closer to the text before it to avoid repetition in the readability, and added the word "relaxed" as a contrast to "busy taking care of Yannan" mentioned in the previous sentence.

[25] Another amplification approach is adopted here to explain why Yannan was so upset in detail to the target readers and also add in more logic flow in the target text.

this, but they still keep saying they are worried that I won't be as happy in the future (if I am not married)."

After breaking up with her ex-boyfriend and lost her job at the same time, Chun Tao told her parents that she would rather stay single all her life if she could not find the right man to marry. As a result, she was accused, by her own mother, of dishonouring the family[26] and not being considerate to her old ones.

> *"My mom kept saying that she didn't bring me to this world to see me like this, that I have never considered how she and my dad would feel about this, and they would never be in peace if I stay unmarried."*

Hua Qiu's mother started to worry about Hua Qiu's marital status when Hua Qiu was 26 years old. She would burst into tears whenever she talked about this on the phone with one of Hua Qiu's aunts. Then that aunt would call Hua Qiu on behalf of her mother, trying to persuade her into blind dates, as a courtesy to make her mother happy. Ru Yi doesn't have much desire to get married, so she doesn't feel the urge to enter marriage herself. However, the pressure her mother has been putting on her to start a family give her quite a lot of anxiety. To Ru Yi, getting married has become more like a way to be obedient to satisfy her mother, but being boyfriendless at the age of 32, it seems that her mother's wish could not be realised any time soon. However, what her mother experienced is the source of her real pressure in this matter: Ru Yi's mother divorced her father at the age of 40 due to the intolerance of him cheating around. After the divorce, she really struggled, because as a rural-born women with limited

[26] As mentioned in one of the previous annotations, "不孝" is a tricky one to render in this translation. At first, the translator used the word "impiety", but soon found out that the word "piety" also has a religious meaning, which would be easily mistaken of when it is not shown together with "filial", and then cause confusion among target readers. Therefore, the translator took the much broader meaning here to avoid misunderstanding.

education, she could only find strenuous labour work with very low salary. Having endured all those hardships, Ru Yi's mother really hoped Ru Yi could find a decent husband and live a happy life – one that is different from what she had. What is worse, Ru Yi's mother is also in a poor state of health, which, in Ru mind, might be worsened by worrying too much about her personal issue. This is what gives Ru Yi constant guilt, and she said she would feel the urgency of being married as soon as possible every time she thinks of the fact that it is still troubling her sick mother.

Wen Nuan's mother has been concerned about her "marriage issue" since she was about 24-25 years old. Although Wen Nuan is working in a different city, her mother calls frequently asking when she is planning to get married. Wen Nuan usually paltered over this topic and quickly hung up the phone. Obviously, her mother was not impressed by her attitude and warned her:" Do not call me anymore if you are not going to discuss this with me!" This made Wen Nuan quite upset as those words sounded like a threat to her. It was not until a car accident that Wen Nuan realised her mother's concern was for real. "My youngest daughter hasn't been married yet" was literally what gave her mother strength to survive after the accident. Until then, Wen Nuan had never been aware of how much anxiety her unmarried status had brought to her mother. During the time she was looking after her mother, Wen Nuan's mind was clouded with mixed feelings, which knocked her down as well in the end. She even began to think about giving up looking for someone she likes or a proper relationship and going ahead marrying whoever wants to marry her in order to put her mother's mind at ease. However, after careful consideration, she came to her senses, believing marriage should be built by two people that genuinely like each other. She also worried that if she had got married only for her mother's sake, there would hardly be any happiness in her married life,

and her mother would still end up being sad if she got divorced. She would rather continue waiting patiently than going through all that hassle.

Ji Qing's mother had quite a tough experience in marriage: she got married again after her first divorce and ended up with a second divorce. She has always been eager to find company in her senior days but kept meeting dead ends due to her age, social awkwardness and limited number of friends. Her experience has made Ji Qing feel the responsibility to offer her mother a better life as Ji Qing has become the pillar in her life and all she could rely on.

Jing Feng was brought up mostly by her grandparents, so she felt most pressured when her grandfather was critically ill. In June 2011, Jing Feng rushed home from Shanghai when she heard her grandfather was dying. She was extremely sad seeing her dear grandfather suffering. She was also well aware that her grandfather wanted to see her living happily, which included having a well-paid job, staying healthy and most importantly and having her own family. She had already been doing quite well in her life with a very good job and a stable income, but the only thing that still worried her grandfather at the time is her being unmarried at the age of 33. During her visit, she really wished she were already married so that her grandfather would be able to see her being happy and loved and finally settle in peace. The constant self-blame nearly gave her a mental breakdown and made her cry for half an hour on the phone with one of her friends.

Chapter 5

Strategies to Cope With "Must Marry" Pressure from Parents

Speaking of marriage, leftover women have to deal with the stress resulting from not only their own inner emotional needs but also lots of people around them, such as parents, relatives and colleagues. People we interviewed have expressed that their parents are the major source of this kind of pressure, as opposed to relatives with whom their contacts are far less frequent in daily life so that this part of the influence, though still quite annoying, can hardly generate any substantial stress onto the interviewees. It is the parents who initiate this "must marry" pressure, but the stigma of failing their filial duties and dishonouring their parents is marked on their own leftover daughters. The public compassion in China has always been favouring the worrying parents over stressed leftover women who are also suffering from huge external pressure. Refusing to give in to this social norm of "must marry" is the main reason why these leftover women choose to stay unmarried even when they exceed the suitable age to marry in China. The pressure that once made them feel lost, troubled or even hurt has also given them a chance to grow, fight back and break free.

Five Tricks to deal with desperate parents

Sometimes, once the cause of the pressure is gone, for instance, the health issues of a parent or a senior family member are resolved, the stress to marry will disappear accordingly. Wen Nuan, whose example was mentioned in previous chapters, felt much more relieved once her mother had been discharged from hospital; the same thing happened to Jing Feng after her grandfather started to get better – "I've been feeling much better recently. It seems that the amount of pressure just suddenly dropped. I can hardly notice it anymore." Apart from this, our interviewees have told us different ways to cope with pressure from theirs parents, which will be demonstrated in details as follows.

Trick No.1: Try to be cooperative in arranged blind dates.

Interviewees adopting this trick would attend all the blind dates arranged by their parents or even initiatively ask their parents to find dates for them, but they will not go any further[27] with men who failed to meet their spouse-selecting criteria. Using this trick gives out a positive[28] signal to parents that their daughters are doing what they were told and actively involving themselves in finding a future husband, which will greatly ease the tension caused by parents pressuring daughters to marry in the name of filial duties regardless of their disagreements. Even though this does not necessarily lead to marriage any time soon, it is still quite effective in terms of calming worrying parents down. For interviewees that still lives with their parents, there is no set schedule for these arranged blind dates – they will go ahead whenever a potential candidate is found. It is a different story for interviewees who live in a different city, away from parents: most of the time, they can only go on dates during public holidays when they are home visiting their family as their parents are more likely to have a social network within their home city; there are some cases that parents are able to find candidates in their daughters' current cities, making it a lot more easier for the daughters to attend those dates.

Yannan told us that even though her parents could not understand her thoughts on marriage, she would still go on those blind dates just to make them happy and let them know what she

[27] The translator softened the tone here by changing the wording from "坚决拒绝" (firmly reject) into "will not go any further" to better fit the register of the paragraph in the target text.

[28] If directly translating the phrase "善意的信号" into "a kind signal", it would be quite ambiguous in the target text and does not give out the exact same meaning as the source text. Thus, the translator render it in a more understandable way to the target readers and translated it into "positive signal" which is also included in the meaning of the source text.

is really looking for. Once her parents asked her to attend a big dating event held by a bachelor's club and despite initial reluctance, Yannan listened to her parents and went eventually after seeing them anxiously running around searching information for her – not only did they manage to contact the organizer, her mother, who never knows how to use the Internet, somehow find the emails and address of the event venue and copied them down for her – she did not want to let them down.

After Wen Nuan's mother warned her not to call unless she would talk about marriage plan with her, Wen Nuan changed the tactic into communication and cooperation. She told her mother that it is not that she doesn't want to get married, but she could not find a suitable partner. Then she started to ask her mother to help. In this way, she perfectly kicked the ball back to her mother. She even reacted extremely cooperative to all the blind dates arranged by her family when she learnt that her motehr is still worrying about her marital status after the car accident. Hua Qiu also said yes to blind dates just to settle her mother's mind. However, she was actually not in the mood for a relationship. To avoid giving misleading signals, she refused to pick up any calls from those men she went on blind dates with, neither did she agree to any further dates with them, which left the matchmaker in a very awkward situation. After a while, her mother finally knows Hua Qiu's mind and never tried to ask friends to find dates for her daughter any more.

Fang Fen stayed single for 4 years, between 24 and 28 years old, before starting a relationship with her second boyfriend. Her mother started to nag about finding a new boyfriend and set up blind dates for her since she was 25. Fang Fen is away from her mother and lives in a different city, but she goes home quite often and once she is home, she would attend those blind dates, at least once per year on average. Zi Ling is another example willing to go for blind

dates arranged by parents. “Yes, I do go on blind dates, and I usually go with my mum, you know, trying to put her off[29] in a different way – if I don’t like the guy on the date, it is over, no negotiation. I will become the one to blame if I refuse to go, but they can’t do anything if it doesn’t work out in the end.”

Trick No.2: Fill them up with Negative Examples

Some of the interviewees said they would list some friends’ unsuccessful or even tragic marriages when their parents began to pressure them on marital issues. Examples range from “flash marriages[30]” ending up in divorces to mental issues caused by constant pressure of “must marry” from surroundings. They also state clearly that parents should take the blame if their daughters are trapped in an unhappy marriage after tying the knot out of unbearable pressure. This trick is meant to break the stereotype stuck in most Chinese parents’ mind that women are promised with happiness once they are married, and make spaces for the daughters to break free from the control over their life choices. Reminding parents that they should take responsibility for the possible failures in their daughters’ future marriages if they keep being pushy over this matter is a great way to draw a line with them, and judging from

[29] “让她死了这条心” in the source text is a very Chinese expression which will not have the same effect when literally translated into English, so although “to put her off” is not the exact equivalence here, it still conveyed the same meaning as was expressed in the source text. Therefore, the translator thinks it is a valid and appropriate translation.

[30] Even though the source text here does not use the word “闪婚”, it can be judged from the context that the author was saying the same thing and she used this word later on in the source text in a very similar context. The translator used a very literal translation for the word “闪婚” because the target readers can easily understand it by associating it with the existing word “flash mob”.

the our interviewees' experiences, it can effectively persuade parents into gradually staying away from their marital decisions.

Whenever there is pressure from her parents, Yue Ling would vividly tell her mother the horrible stories from some of her friends' unfortunate married lives. Yue Ling's mother could relate to the pain in those stories and started to realise it might not be a good idea to push her daughter too hard on this matter. Yue Ling also frequently gossips about her friends' marriages with her mother, updating all the flash marriage divorces. Her parents soon realised that marriage is something that requires thorough and careful consideration and should only happen after finding the right one. Yue Ling's mother was married quite late compared to other peers in her generation and only had Yue Ling when she was 31, which has become another excuse[31] Yue Ling use in defending her possible late marriage – she kept telling her mother it was genetic, not only implying she *will* get married one day, but also tossing the ball to her mother by saying she gave her the "late marriage gene" and that is the reason why she was still single at the age of 28. Unlike lots of children in China, Yue Ling is never shy to express her feelings. She tells her parents "I love you" quite often, which results in a very healthy and happy environment in her family, so after using this tactic, Yue Ling managed to free herself from the "must marry" pressure quite easily.

Yi Yi's mother wants her to find a man that can support her financially so she will no long need to work too hard herself, but Yi Yi told her mother that the fate of each woman is decided by

[31] Since the metaphor works differently in the source and target texts, simply transmitting the metaphor over would lead to ambiguity and confusion. This is why the translator chose to ditch the metaphor here and focused on convey the actual meaning. The translation might not be as colour, but very straightforward and clear in meaning.

many factors[32] and whether she is going to have a good one is not necessarily guaranteed by finding a husband. “What if he leaves me for another woman? I’ll have to rely on myself in the end.” – Yi Yi was trying to tell her mother the fragility of modern marriages in general and women should never try to be dependent on a man through marriage.

Even though Li Yu’s parents are supporters of one’s freedom in marriage choices, they still couldn’t help to start being a bit pushy when there was no sign that their daughter would be married any time soon. Whenever this happened, Li Yu would ask her parents rhetorically:” Will you guys take the blame if I marry the wrong guy?” Then her parents would shut up about it. This is a very effective tactic that Li Yu came up with by herself. “They know the fact that they are not able to take the huge responsibility of me marrying wrong, so they stopped pressing me on this.” She also passed this successful strategy to some of her classmates.

Fang Fen has quite a bit of examples of her friends being married too soon and divorcing very shortly after that she can use to fight back the “must marry” pressure her mother gives her. Every time her mother brings this topic up, she will throw those examples at her nonstop. Fang Fen told us that her friends’ relationship and marriage stories are all quite hear-stirring – not in a good way though, and her mother began to worry Feng Fang would experience similar things in her future marriage after hearing those “tragedies” happened to Feng Fang’s friends, which gradually made her accept Feng Fang’s cautious attitude towards marriage.

With the increasing number of unhappy marriages they witnessed or heard of, most Chinese parents will start to loosen the control over their daughters’ choice in marriage and give them more freedom to make the decisions they are comfortable with. In the village that Xin Yi’s

[32] The source text “福报” is quite ambiguous in meaning and can be interpreted in various ways. The translator translated it according to her own understanding of the source text.

parents live in, divorce is not a rare thing any more nowadays, but it is always women that get the short end of the stick. After a while, Xin Yi noticed that her parents even became more cautious than her when it comes to getting married. Her mother would get tightened up whenever Xin Yi told her about any potential wooers, as she always worries Xin Yi might meet the wrong man and end up being unhappy. By the time we interviewed Xin Yi, her mother already told her not to marry indecent men, - “if the person is not really a good one, why getting married with him then? You know things will only become worse once you are married to him.” Xin Yi told us that she could really feel the change of attitude in her mother. “It’s all because we have so many such unfortunate examples in our village, people nowadays are more complicated than before. I would rather stay unmarried than being with a bad guy.”

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