

# *A Study on Feminist Translation Strategies—Taking the English Translation of Wake Me Up at 9:00 in the Morning by Nicky Harman as an Example*

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**Abstract:** Wake Me Up at 9:00 in the Morning is a full-length novel written by Chinese male novelist A Yi in the 1970s, combining dozens of characters in Aiwan, including Ai Hongyang. After the “cultural turn” in translation theory research, feminist translation theory has gradually entered the vision of translation scholars. This paper selects the English translation of Wake Me Up at 9:00 in the Morning by Nicky Harman, a female translator, for comparative textual analysis, and finds that Harman intentionally uses translation strategies involved in feminism to highlight her identity as a female translator. Through the data collected during close reading, Nicky Harman tends to use supplementing and hijacking as the two main translation strategies.

## 1. Introduction of Feminist Translation Theory

Women have long been considered inferior to men, a prejudice that can be traced back to two of the most influential philosophers of antiquity, Plato and Aristotle. According to Plato, only males are created directly by God and endowed with souls, and only males are complete human beings who can hope for ultimate fulfillment; the best a woman can hope for is to become a man. Feminist translation theory is inseparable from feminism, which originated from the French bourgeois revolution and the Enlightenment at the end of the 18th century, and was initially a liberal feminism based on the theory of gender or gender differences.[1] Between the mid-19th century and the 1920s, this is when feminist advocates fought primarily for women’s rights to property, suffrage, and education. British writer Virginia Woolf even described this wave of “new women” as “career women”. By the rise of the feminist movement in the 1970s, feminism, which originally sought only gender equality and gender neutrality, began to gradually focus on the development of women’s uniqueness. In the late twentieth century, trends such as deconstructionism, feminism, and homosexuality made their debut, creating a dynamic that was more inclusive and pluralistic in character. “Feminism, as an ideology, accomplishes a discursive change that breaks with the old and establishes the new by reexamining traditional culture. It takes ‘gender’ as the basic entry point of literary criticism, breaks through a series of traditional categories and value scales, tries its best to reveal the roots of women’s subordinate position in history, culture and society, explores the interrelationships between gender and text, and challenges the traditional male-centered concepts, in

order to achieve the goal of discovering women's discourse and rebuilding a new theory of cultural studies. The goal is to uncover women's discourse and rebuild a new theory of cultural studies.”[2]

In the 1970s, feminist thought entered the neighborhood of the humanities and social sciences through politics, culture, and literature. In the late 1980s, translation studies began a “cultural turn”, which also created an objective possibility for the emergence of feminist translation theory. “Feminism and translation studies share many similar core themes: both seek to elevate their own social and cultural status, share a critical understanding of language, question traditional hierarchies and gender identities, and question the connotations of ‘faithfulness’.”[3] The identity of translators has been similar to that of women since ancient times, and in the past, in the pursuit of “fidelity”, scholars have often considered translations to be mere derivatives of the original text. The French rhetorician Ménége once used the metaphor of “unfaithful beauty” to describe translation, in which the translator is in a dilemma, and the word “beauty” is used to directly link fidelity to gender. “Shirley Simon hit the nail on the head when she pointed out that the issue of ‘unfaithful beauty’ is that of pitting fidelity against beauty, as if the issue of fidelity is only relevant to women.”[4] “Language is a site of contestation for meaning, an arena of experience, examination, and self-justification. It is not surprising, therefore, that translation studies has been nourished by feminist thought in many important ways.”[4] Under the influence of these factors, together they provided the preconditions for the birth of feminist translation theory. The original intention of Western feminist translators was to subvert the patriarchal-centered language system and recreate it with feminist ideas in order to improve the social status of women and shake the strong discourse foundation of patriarchy. Advocates of Western feminism view translation as a political activity. Women translators do their best to eliminate this unequal social status and male control of language, because it is only by breaking down the unequal status that women’s rights can be fully realized.[5]

## 2. Introduction of Research Object

### 2.1 Introduction of *Zao Shang Jiu Dian Jiao Xing Wo*

*Zao Shang Jiu Dian Jiao Xing Wo* is written by A Yi (real name Ai Guozhu), who has worked as a policeman, a secretary and a sports editor for the Zhengzhou Evening News. He did a brief stint on the editorial board of Chutzpah, once an influential literary magazine featuring the work of young and avant-garde writers such as A Yi himself. A Yi, a former police officer, has a deep understanding and grasp of the depiction of the lives of lower-class people. He likes to call himself “a writer who tells crime stories” rather than “a detective thriller writer”, and he is more interested in the minds of criminals, he believed “the vast majority of crimes are accidents.” The title of the novel, however, comes from an interview with Borges that A Yi read. Borges mentioned writing a short story titled *Wake Me Up at 9:00 in the Morning*. But A Yi failed to find the story in Borges’ work, therefore A Yi used the phrase - *Zao Shang Jiu Dian Jiao Xing Wo* - for the title of the book. In the novel, the main character, Hongyang, gets drunk and barks at Jin Yan to be the alarm clock to wake him up in the morning. But the next morning, when it was time to wake him up, Jin Yan realized that he was dead: he had already drunk himself “to death”. The novel thus begins by retracing, through the telling of a hasty, perfunctory funeral, how Hongyang - an illiterate man once thought simply to be an outlaw - grows to become a town hearsay, utilizing his violent strengths and the requisite swindling. There is no love, faith, righteousness or affection in this man. Through him, the novel provides a pictorial depiction of the fading countryside and its characters.

### 2.2 Introduction of *Wake Me Up at 9:00 in the Morning*

Nicky Harman is a renowned British translator of Chinese literature, winner of the 14th Chinese

Book Special Contribution Award in 2020, and has devoted herself to translating Chinese literature for some 20 years. Her translations include *K-The Art of Love* by Hong Ying, *Banished!* by Han Dong, *Flowers of War* by Yan Geling, *Gold Mountain Blues* by Zhang Ling, *The Chilli Bean Paste Clan* by Yan Ge, and *Happy Dreams* by Jia Pingwa, among approximately forty works by current Chinese writers. This translation by Nicky Harman was published and sold by Oneworld Publishing in 2022. Nicky Harman once commented on the published translation from Chinese into English in 2022 that “The not-so-good news is that, as in previous years, women writers and women poets are far less well-represented than men. The gender imbalance in all categories is shocking!”. It can be seemed clearly that she urged a gender equality in the literature world as fair as possible.

### 3. Textual Analysis

“Early feminist theorists emphasized the need to construct a 'female language' to express their own unique inner experiences and to escape from the fixed image of women constructed by the hegemonic male-centered discourse. They began to see language not only as a tool for communication, but also as a tool for manipulation.”[6] “Like the post-colonialism, feminist translation advocates “non-fluent” translation strategies for “intervention”.[7] And for feminist translators supplementing, adding prefacing and footnoting and hijacking are the translation strategies customarily used to realize interfering texts.[8] After reading the text carefully, the author found that Nicky Harman, also a female translator, mainly used the translation strategies of augmentation and hijacking in order to emphasize her figure as a female translator, and therefore will discuss and analyze the use of these two translation strategies in the following.

#### 3.1 Supplementing

“Women translators are sensitive to the fact that they feel entitled to, or use feminine terms to make up for the lost markers of femininity in translation, in order to avoid monolithic representations of masculinity, in order to redress the traditional linguistic and translational gender inequalities.”[9]Based on the dissection of the original text, feminist translators compensate for semantic deficiencies due to culture, language, etc. Although this approach is also widely used by other branches in the field of translation, feminist translators tend to do this in order to strengthen the sense of femininity in the text.

##### 3.1.1 Adding the Physical Description of Female Characters

###### Exampel 1

**ST:** ... She cooked and lived by herself, only occasionally visiting the small supermarket in Aiwan at night. Because to live, one needs salt, matches, and soap.

**TT:** She had a face like potting compost and a heart grey as ashes, and turned up only occasionally at night at the shop in Aiwan when she needed salt, fuel or soap.

**Analysis:** Shui Zhi, the devoted wife of Hong Yang, has been residing in solitude within the confines of Aiwan. The betrayal of her husband, Hongyang, has compelled her to endure profound loneliness and relentless emotional turmoil in silence. The relentless march of time has not only etched indelible marks within the recesses of her mind but also imparted the telltale signs of aging and hardship upon her physical appearance. In her translation, Nicky Harman skillfully incorporates descriptions of Shui Zhi’s appearance and mental state, thereby rendering her character more lifelike and nuanced. This detailed portrayal accentuates the profound loneliness and isolation that Shui Zhi has faced as a woman who has lived alone for numerous years. This empathetic depiction reflects the translator’s deep empathy for the countless women who share a fate similar to Shui Zhi.

Just as Wang Anyi eloquently observes, “owing to societal and physiological factors, women are often more attuned to experiencing and attending to their feelings than men, resulting in a stronger individual consciousness. Conversely, men tend to possess a more collective consciousness.”

### Example 2

**ST:** Immediately, the world was illuminated by bright light, the mountains were clear and the waters were green. The branches and leaves bowed down, dripping the last raindrops. The dozens of deceased individuals vanished without a trace in an instant. The old woman, drenched and standing in the middle of the field, wept: ...

**TT:** The hordes of dead had disappeared without a trace, and Hongliang’s mother was soaked through. Her pockets, her old-fashioned cloth shoes and her tangled hair, even her sockets were full of water.

**Analysis:** In that stormy, thunderous afternoon, Hongliang’s mother, an old and tough rural woman, sat alone under the humble roof, her heart filled with endless thoughts and sorrow for her young son, Hongxing, who had never returned. Her eyes are hollow and disoriented, as if she can penetrate the barriers of time and space and catch a glimpse of the figure that left forever in the mine disaster. This yearning for her son made her create an illusion in a trance, as if she saw Hong Xing standing not far away, beckoning to her, but then instantly disappeared into the wind and rain.

Driven by this sudden phantom, she disregarded her old age and frail body, resolutely rushed into the raging rainstorm. The rain was pouring down like a torrent, mercilessly lapping at her body, drenching her all over, as if it wanted to wash away all her sorrow and despair. Her clothes, long outdated, but clean and neat, that she used her hard-working hands to sew from one stitch to another, but now in this storm looks particularly thin. Her hair, tangled by the rain into a strand, pasted on her cheeks, covering her wrinkled face, but could not hide that pair of eyes full of sadness and longing. She staggered forward, each step seemed to use all her strength, but her gaze was unusually determined, as if she could really catch up with that indistinct phantom and embrace her departed son again. This scene not only makes people feel the harshness and relentlessness of the environment, but also gives people a deeper understanding of the mother’s deepest pain and despair, as well as her love and longing for her son, which she will never give up. Nicky Harman, as a female translator, with her keen sensibility and ability to capture delicate emotions, successfully strengthens the original meaning of “the whole body wet” in this description, and creates the image of a simple but compassionate rural woman through the detailed portrayal of her appearance, so that readers can feel the bleakness of the scene and the character’s innermost feelings more intuitively and profoundly. The reader can more intuitively and deeply feel the bleakness of the scene and the pain of the character’s heart.

### 3.1.2 Adding the Feelings Description of Female Characters

#### Example 3

**ST:** The news of the death stunned Shuizhi. Then, she shook off Muxiang and hurried towards the rebuilt Hongyang mansion where she had left.

**TT:** She addressed Shuizhi gravely as ‘Younger Brother’s Wife’, and it was only then that Shuizhi learned of her husband’s death and slumped to the door in shock, mumbling: ‘So that’s why!’ Then she set off for the home she had left so long before, hands trembling, anxiety leaving her unsteady on her feet.

**Analysis:** When Muxiang finds Shui Zhi with a heavy heart, Shui Zhi vaguely guesses the heartbreaking news from her sad face - her ex-husband Hong Yang has suddenly passed away. This news was like a thunderbolt from the sky, making it difficult for Shui Zhi to accept for a moment, and her heart was filled with shock and disbelief. She staggered as if the path beneath her feet had become blurred, with only one thought driving her - she had to go to her husband’s place in person,

to see for herself and hear for herself in order to ascertain whether this was a nightmare or not. In translating this scene, the translator skillfully utilizes additions to the linguistic form, adding sentences that can profoundly emphasize Shui Zhi's inner feelings of dismay and struggle. These added sentences, like a mirror, reflect Shui Zhi's heart torn by grief and doubt. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that female translators are often better able to deeply understand and delicately capture the emotional fluctuations within the characters. In the process of translation, they will unconsciously add more ink to the depiction of emotions, so as to be able to more realistically and vividly convey the psychological state of the characters in a particular situation. Therefore, in this scene, Shui Zhi's dismay and struggle are presented by the translator in a more delicate and touching way, so that the reader can deeply feel her inner pain and helplessness.

#### **Example 4**

**TT:** Oh my son, oh my son," the grief-stricken old woman cried as she scrambled and crawled over to him, "My dear son."

**ST:** 'Son, son, son, son, son, son, son,' the wretched old woman cried as she tried desperately to reach him. 'My son, my son!'

**Analysis:** Hongliang's mother, in that stormy, twilight moments, as if in the haze caught a trace of a familiar but distant figure - that is her heart never lingering attachment, has disappeared for a long time, and may even have met with the unfortunate phantom of the youngest son, Hongxing. This momentary "reunion", like a flood that breaks the dike, will be her heart's long-suppressed sadness of the emotion of a flood, into endless tears and silent cries. The author of the original text skillfully used language description to delicately portray the mother's helplessness and grief at that moment, and the words are full of deep emotional power. In translating this passage, the female translator not only retained the emotional essence of the original text, but also skillfully made additions, adding the exclamation point that expresses strong emotion and the word "son" that is repeatedly called out, just as the mother in despair called out to her lost loved one over and over again, and each call aggravated the grief and reluctance in her heart. Such an addition not only strengthens the mother's grief after the loss of her son, but also makes this emotion cross the language boundaries and hit the readers directly in their hearts. This is precisely because female translators often have a more sensitive perception of emotions and deep empathy, and they strive to accurately capture and reproduce all kinds of emotions of the characters in the original text in the process of translation, which makes the translation more vivid and touching on the basis of remaining faithful to the original text. Through this translation, readers can more truly feel the mother's deepest despair and sorrow, as if they were also in that stormy afternoon, experiencing the baptism of the heart with her.

### **3.1.3 Adding the Psychological Description of Female Characters**

#### **Example 5**

**TT:** "Do it if you have the guts," she hissed, "You've been boasting for decades, now sit up for me."

**ST:** 'You sit up!' she muttered, her resentful tone telling them all that she was not just the abandoned wife, that she and she alone was his nearest and dearest and always would be: spouse, sister, mother, all women, rolled into one. 'You were such a big mouth all those years, now you sit up properly for me!'

**Analysis:** After learning the news of her exhusband Hongyang's sudden passing, Shui Zhi's psyche went through intense fluctuations. Although the two were once husband and wife and lived together, Hongyang's way of life has always been arbitrary, without giving Shui Zhi the care and respect she deserves. Now, with the passing of Hongyang, female translator Nicky Harman delicately adds the rich inner activities of Shui Zhi in her translation, revealing the multiple identity



and role transitions she took on after her husband's death. Shui Zhi realized that she had not only become Hongyang's widow, but this identity had burdened her with endless grief and responsibility. At the same time, she also became a sister to other members of the Hongyang family, and this familial bond gave her a glimmer of comfort in her grief. More importantly, she became the mother of their common child, and the power of maternal love made her stronger in adversity, vowing to hold up a sky for her child. Nicky Harman deeply reveals the numerous important roles that women play in complex social relationships through the perspective of Shui Zhi. These roles are not only bestowed by society, but also the resilience and responsibility demonstrated by women themselves in the face of life changes. The translator attempts to strengthen the subordinate status of women in traditional patriarchal society, revealing the unfairness and constraints hidden behind this status, in order to raise social attention and reflection on the status of women, speak up for women, and strive for the respect and equality they deserve. This translation processing not only enriches the connotation of the text, but also enhances the social significance of the work, allowing every reader to feel the power and difficulty of women from it.

#### **Example 6**

**ST:** "This person also loves me," she thought, "always in a way of avoidance."

**TT:** He's loyal to me, she thought. Even the way he's avoiding me betrays how much he loves me. This was how she figured it: A woman knows perfectly well which man really loves her. Other men only love her cunt, but this one loves the person she is - her personality, her temperament, her life experience and her destiny - and to him she's not just a sex object. Even if he doesn't meet her eyes, he's always present, full of sympathy. And it's not the sympathy of a master but that of an elder brother: the helpless, anxious sympathy of someone who feels impelled to protect her. Over the last three years, every time Xu Yousheng had looked at her his expression was melancholy, his eyes a deep lake.

**Analysis:** Jin Yan has just experienced the great shock of Hong Yang's sudden death, followed by the violent treatment of Ai Shiren and Ai Hongbin. When she is physically and mentally exhausted, she meets Xu Yousheng, one of the male protagonists who has always been fond of her. At this fragile and critical moment, Jin Yan's inner emotional fluctuations are delicately drawn out, thanks to the female translator Nicky Harman's keen capture and deep understanding of emotions. Nicky Harman skillfully reveals in the additional translation why Jin Yan is only willing to open her heart to Xu Yousheng in this particular situation. She not only depicts Jin Yan's helplessness and longing for understanding after her misfortune, but also deeply analyzes the unique attitude and concept of women when facing love. Unlike men who may pay more attention to external conditions or social status, women often long for their partners to fall in love with their real, concrete and complete selves, including their strengths and flaws, beauties and shortcomings. Through the interaction between Jin Yan and Xu Yousheng, translator Harman skillfully demonstrates the innocent yearning and persistent pursuit of love in women's hearts. She not only presents a vivid characterization for the readers, but also takes this opportunity to convey women's true views and expectations of love, calling on the society to respect and understand women's emotional needs more, and to promote equality and harmony between the genders. Such a translation treatment not only enriches the emotional level of the text, but also enhances the artistic value and social significance of the work.

### **3.2 Hijacking**

"Simon, a famous feminist translation theorist, has also said that feminist translators have challenged the traditional way of generating meaning in texts, realizing the role and responsibility of determining meaning. Under feminist care, female translators utilize a variety of translation

strategies to highlight women's language, speak for women, and draw attention to the female translation process.”[4] The hijacking strategy is the strategy that best reflects women's demands and claims. Female translators usually add their own ideas and opinions to the translated text, and reorganize the image of women by rewriting the original text with derogatory and discriminatory statements about women, in order to convey to the readers the idea of valuing women and striving for equal social status with men. After classifying Nicky Harman's use of hijacking translation strategies in English translation, the author finds that Nicky Harman mainly blurs gender differences, downplays or deletes feminine descriptions, and rewrites female insults in order to reveal his female identity.

### 3.2.1 Blurring Gender Differences

#### Example 7

**ST:** She's new, a virgin. She hasn't had a chance to corrupt herself yet. He sneaks a peek at her.

**TT:** She was brand new, had not had time to go to rack and ruin, he observed surreptitiously, and for many days afterwards....

**Analysis:** When Hongliang's gaze falls on Elaine, whom he deeply adores, his inner world is delicately sketched out. As he comes from a rural family, Hongliang's words are inevitably a bit crude and straightforward, and this style of language is particularly direct and unabashed in expressing his emotions. The author of the original text here boldly and truthfully shows Hongliang's passionate and simple love for Elaine, but at the same time exposes some deep-rooted social prejudices. In the original text, the use of terms such as “new goods” and “virgin” undoubtedly reveals a male tendency to objectify women, treating them as objects or labels and ignoring their value and dignity as independent individuals. The expression “corrupting oneself” further emphasizes the traditional male paranoia about female sexuality, believing that once a woman has had sex, she is no longer “complete” and is even worthy of scorn and contempt. This concept is undoubtedly a form of injustice and discrimination against women. However, when translating this content, the female translator Nicky Harman showed a high degree of sensitivity and sense of responsibility. She intentionally changed the meaning of the original text, replacing “new goods” with more neutral and respectful term as “brand new”. “Use 'rack and ruin' to metaphorically express the concept of 'corrupting oneself' in the original text, while avoiding pejorative expressions that are directly related to sexual behavior.” Such a translation not only undermines the dominant and active position of men in gender relations to a certain extent, but also tries to convey to readers a more equal, respectful and understanding concept of gender relations. Nicky Harman's translation is not only a faithful reproduction of the original text, but also a kind of cultural criticism and advocacy of gender equality. Through the skillful transformation of language, she guides readers to reflect on the prejudices and injustices in the traditional gender concepts, encourages people to look at gender relations with a more open, tolerant and equal attitude, and jointly builds a more harmonious and just social environment.

#### Example 8

**TT:** Before realizing she had gone mad, I was still annoyed at her for seducing a man.

**ST:** Before I realised she was crazy, I got furious with her one day for picking up a man.

**Analysis:** After Squint and Hook Pinch meet, the two of them embark on a path of lawlessness for a variety of reasons, including burning mountains, robbing and even murdering people, etc. Behind these behaviors, part of it stems from Hook Pinch's saddening background. Hook Pinch's mother suffered from mental illness, and fate did not seem to have mercy on this unfortunate family, hook pinch in his youth was diagnosed with the same disease as his mother. In the face of this heavy love, Squint chose not to give up and stayed by Hook Pinch's side, giving her the utmost care and attention. However, as her condition worsens, Hook Pinch's memory begins to become confused,

and she even forgets the Squint who loves her so much. Under such circumstances, a series of heartbreaking scenes occurred, which were vividly depicted in the original text. It is worth noting that there may be some expressions in the original text that are insulting to women or demeaning to their status. In translating these contents, the female translator Harman showed a high degree of sensitivity and social responsibility, and she intentionally avoided these inappropriate phrases by adopting more neutral and respectful phrases instead. This approach not only reflects the subjectivity of the female translator, but also emphasizes the proactive choice that women should enjoy in romantic relationships, not unlike men. By carefully selecting female vocabulary, the female translator attempts to construct a uniquely female language as a means of asserting female power and authority. This linguistic practice is not only a challenge to traditional gender stereotypes, but also a profound reflection and remodeling of women's social status. Through such a translation strategy, the female translator aims to alert the readers to re-examine and rethink the social status of women, and to call on all sectors of society to give women more respect and understanding. She uses her actions to speak up for the disadvantaged group - women, and endeavors to promote the process of gender equality, so that everyone can grow and develop freely in a more just and inclusive social environment.

### 3.2.2 Downplaying or Removing Feminized Depictions

#### Example 9

**ST:** At this moment, the father looked at his wife's damp hair sticking to her temples and the fresh beads of sweat appearing on her forehead, neck, and cleavage, and perhaps had the same thought as Xu Yousheng: ...

**TT:** The husband looked at his wife now, at the damp hair clinging to her temples and the beads of sweat on her forehead, neck and cleavage, no doubt thinking the same way as Xu Yousheng:...

**Analysis:** When Zhou Haihua's husband hears the news of Hongyang's unfortunate passing, his inner world embarks on a complex journey, especially when it comes to observing his wife's subtle mental activities. Since Zhou Haihua was one of Hongyang's many lovers, this fact lay quietly under the riverbed of their married life like a hidden stone. The husband secretly speculates in his mind how his wife will react when she learns of this shocking news. This imagination not only stems from his concern for his wife's emotions, but also implies his vague speculations about the relationship between his wife and Hongyang. In this inner monologue, the author skillfully intersperses delicate descriptions of the female figure of Zhou Haihua, which are like a ray of subtle light, laying the groundwork for the later revelation of the complex and subtle relationship between Hongyang and Zhou Haihua. However, in these descriptions, there are also some words that may reinforce gender stereotypes, such as "cleavage", which tends to place women in the position of being gazed at by men, unintentionally reinforcing the sexualized image of women from men's perspectives. In the English translation by Nicky Harman, a female translator, she noticed this and chose the word "cleavage" to replace the word "cleavage" in the original text. This seemingly minor change is actually significant, as it subtly weakens the feminization of Zhou Haihua in the original text and avoids the tendency to treat women as mere sex objects. Nicky Harman's approach aims to alert readers to gender stereotypes, reminding us to realize that a woman's sexual attraction to men is not the only measure of her charisma, and it should not be the only yardstick for evaluating a woman's value. Through this rewriting, Nicky Harman hopes to guide male readers to look at women from a more objective and comprehensive perspective, to transcend the constraints of gender stereotypes, and to realize that women's charms and values are multi-dimensional and not limited to physical appearance or sexual attractiveness. At the same time, she also conveys an important message to all readers: on the road to gender equality, we need to work together to understand and accept each other with a more open and tolerant mindset, and work together to build



a more harmonious and just social environment.

#### **Example 10**

**ST:** "Please have the doctor take a look at him again," she said. They were extremely agitated ("At a time like this, she's still whiny and using a fake voice," someone said), and roughly shoved her aside.

**TT:** 'Get a doctor to have a look at him,' she said. Their voices rose an octave with annoyance and they almost threw her out...

**Analysis:** Jin Yan was still immersed in unacceptable shock, she could not believe that Hongyang would leave this world forever on that seemingly ordinary next morning. Her mind seemed to be shrouded in a thick fog, unable to accept this cruel fact. In her despair and helplessness, she pleaded with the villagers and relatives who rushed to her, hoping that they would lend a helping hand and seek the help of a doctor, as if this would allow Hongyang to reopen his eyes and return to her side. However, the people around them have long since gained insight into the merciless truth, and they know that Hongyang has embarked on the road of no return, never to wake up again, no matter how much Jin Yan calls out, how much she pleads, can not change this established fact. In Nicky Harman's English translation, she has carefully adjusted the original text in a delicate and sensitive way. She chose to delete the portrayal of Jin Yan's inner thoughts by other people in the original text. This deletion was not arbitrary, but rather out of a deep understanding and sympathy for Jin Yan as a female character. Nicky Harman knows that in this moment of grief, Jin Yan is suffering from unspeakable pain and helplessness, and that her reaction is an expression of the most genuine human emotions, not a false sentiment or a show in the eyes of others. Therefore, Han chooses to delete the inaccurate evaluation of Jin Yan here, which aims to protect Jin Yan's dignity as a woman and the true expression of her emotions, so as to prevent readers from being influenced by the bias of the original text and having a wrong impression and understanding of Jin Yan. Through this translation process, Harman hopes that readers will be able to understand the character of Jin Yan more objectively and comprehensively, and feel her true emotions and helplessness in the face of the impermanence of life, thus triggering a deeper reflection on life and human nature.

### **3.2.3 Rewriting Content with Feminine Insults**

#### **Example 11**

**ST:** She almost shed a tear, then looked down and laughed at herself, like someone who receives a text message saying they've won a prize and actually goes to check it out: 'Where in this world is there such a thing as a free lunch?' She was originally in the profession of prostitution.

**TT:** Jin Yan almost cried as she looked down, like someone who's just received a text telling them they've won a prize and then had a follow-up message reminding them that there's no such thing as a free lunch. This was what she did, after all.

**Analysis:** The moment Jin Yan steps into Aiwan for the first time, the gears of fate quietly turn, leading her to a twisted and complicated experience. She is lured by Boss He with the offer to star in a movie into a place that seems to be full of opportunities but is actually full of dark currents. The conditions offered by Mr. He are like an invisible net that binds Jin Yan tightly - if she wants to get the precious chance to perform, she has to pay for it with her own body. This is undoubtedly a difficult choice for a helpless and lonely Jin Yan. Jin Yan's heart is filled with hatred and helplessness towards the world's deceitfulness. She knows that she was born from a humble background and had a bad fate, and has long been reduced to a lost girl, struggling to survive in a society full of prejudice and discrimination. In the face of Boss He's coercion, she is filled with struggles and contradictions. On the one hand, she longs to change her fate by appearing in the movie, but on the other hand, she cannot accept this kind of transaction at the cost of her body. In

translating this experience, Nicky Harman, a female translator, demonstrates a deep sympathy and understanding of Jin Yan's character. Instead of directly translating Jin Yan's occupation, she adopts a more subtle and implicit approach, allowing readers to gradually realize Jin Yan's true identity between the lines. This translation strategy not only skillfully protects Jin Yan's privacy and dignity, but also avoids placing women in an awkward situation of being scrutinized and judged. Nicky Harman's approach is not only a personal protection for Jin Yan, but also a spontaneous care and defense of all women in vulnerable positions in society. She hopes that through her translation, she can arouse people's attention to women's dignity and rights, and push society to treat every woman more justly and equally. In this era full of challenges and opportunities, Nicky Harman interprets the power of translation with her own actions, speaking out for women and standing up for justice.

#### **Example 12**

**ST:** Then she can still serve as the whip that lashes at Hongyang, forcing him to ponder an important question: Are you even a man, dammit?"

**TT:** As long as she was still herself, though, so long as a finger of hers was still alive, so long as her groans floated in the air and people still spoke of her, then she would continue to taunt Hongyang, a reminder of his failings as a man.

**Analysis:** At this tense and critical moment, Hong Yang's wife, Shui Zhi, is facing an unprecedented severe test. She steps forward and puts herself under the pursuit and coercion of the police and the United Defense Force in order to buy Hongyang precious time to escape. In those dark, cold interrogation rooms, Shui Zhi suffered inhuman treatment, the police and the United Defense Force brutally beat and intimidated her in order to obtain a confession. Deep inside Shui Zhi, anger, fear and indignation intertwine to form a torrent of complex and intense emotions. She knows that as a woman, she is always in a vulnerable position in this male-dominated society. When discussing discourse, discourse patterns and gender relations, Lori Chamberlain has profoundly pointed out that women have long suffered from male oppression and suppression at the physical, linguistic and even cultural levels. This oppression is not only reflected in the material and physical aspects, but also deeply rooted in people's consciousness and concepts, forming an unshakeable gender bias. In translating this passage, Nicky Harman demonstrated a high degree of sensitivity and responsibility. She knew that certain vulgar and sexist words in the original text would not only aggravate the injustice and insult to women, but also leave an indelible negative impression on the readers. Therefore, on the basis of faithfully conveying the meaning of the original text, Nicky Harman has skillfully "hijacked" the original text, avoiding the vulgar words that are obviously sexist towards women. She reconstructs the text in a more neutral, objective and respectful language, erasing the biased and insulting words against women. Such a translation strategy not only protects the dignity and rights of Shui Zhi's character, but also conveys an important message to readers: in the pursuit of gender equality, we need to work together to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and prejudice, so that everyone can breathe freely and thrive in a more just and equal social environment. Nicky Harman's approach is undoubtedly a strong defense of women's rights and a profound interpretation of the art of translation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Millett, Mary Daly, and others have argued that "language is not just a tool of communication, but a tool of manipulation," and that "language is an instrument of women's oppression and subjugation, and if it is not to be replaced by a new, feminine language, then it must be reformed." [10] Simon has said: "Translators, like women, are chronic underdogs in their respective fields. The translator is the author's maid, and the woman is subservient to the man." [4] According to the above comparative analysis, female translator Nicky Harman's choice of translation strategies

matches the usual translation strategies of female translators summarized by feminist translator Floto. By adding adverbs that express emotion, punctuation marks, and descriptions of women in the text, she highlights the emotional qualities of the female translator group; by “hijacking” the original text with words that are demeaning to women, and by rewriting the words that emphasize the male characteristics, she presents the female translator's figure. Feminist translation theory changes the way the original text has a unidirectional influence on the translator, making the translator occupy an important position between the reader and the original text and author. “Feminist translation theory has led theoretical researchers to emphasize the workings of power, ideology, and the power of language to construct reality behind the translator.” [11] Feminist theory has enabled translation theory researchers to go beyond the traditional constraints, to study translation in a larger context, and to enrich the diversity of translation studies. Not only does it make feminism spread to a certain extent, but more importantly, it gives people new inspirations and perspectives to study translation, broadens people’s horizons and ideas, and pushes translation research toward a more mature and comprehensive way.

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