

# Manipulating Simone De Beauvoir: A Case Study of the Chinese Translations of *The Second Sex*

Nicki Liu Haiping  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

## Abstract

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, one of the most influential feminist works and the starting point of second-wave feminism, has been translated and published several times in Mainland China and Taiwan since 1972 to date. This paper seeks to analyse how the Chinese translations of *The Second Sex* are manipulated by its cultural mediators, especially translators. Drawing upon the Manipulation School's theoretical frameworks, this paper firstly probes into the praxis of translation activities and Chinese feminist discourses since the 1970s through close reading of the paratextual materials of all the Chinese translations of *The Second Sex*, including translators' prefaces, publishers' notes and introductions. Secondly, through a detailed comparison of two chapters — "Sexual Initiation" and "The Married Woman" — among four Chinese translations, this paper attempts to bring to highlight and analyse the complexities of the configuration of gender/sexual identities taken on by translators, the tension between patriarchy and feminism faced by translators in their social context, and the emotional affinities with or resistance to the source text conveyed by translators in their translations — and, ultimately, of how all of these factors shape the Chinese translations of *The Second Sex* at a linguistic level.

**Key Words:** Beauvoir, feminism, manipulation theory, paratexts, gender, sexuality

## Introduction

Chinese translations of Western feminist classics have been complicated by cultural barriers and manipulated by publishers and translators. Often regarded as a major work of feminist philosophy and the starting point of second-wave feminism, *Le Deuxième Sexe* was translated into English by H.M. Parshley in 1953. Although severely criticised (Simons 1983; Flotow 2000; and Moi 2002), Parshley's English translation was the only source text for Chinese translations until 2011. This paper analyses the process of translating *The Second Sex* from French and English into Chinese, both in Taiwan and mainland China. The paratextual materials of the Chinese translations, especially translators' prefaces and publishers' notes, are closely examined to see how cultural mediators exert subjective powers in response to the

constraints of ideology across the Taiwan Strait. Secondly, drawing on four Chinese translations of the marriage and sexuality chapters (two from Parshley's English translation and two from Beauvoir's original French text), I investigate the small linguistic differences and the extent to which the translator's attitude shapes her/his translation of references to gender and sexuality in the text. The focus of the comparison is not between the French and English source texts and the Chinese target texts but rather the discrepancies among four Chinese target texts. The study of patronage and ideology will be based on a detailed reading of the paratextual materials of all the Chinese translations and the historical findings. This part employs the method of discourse analysis and literary criticism to investigate what the paratexts say and signify. Finally, a specific translator, Yang Meihui, is presented to show her subjectivity in her own writing, which has influenced her translation practice.

### **The Socio-political Context of Chinese mainland and Taiwan**

Following the Chinese civil war (1927-1950), the Communist Party of China took full control of mainland China and founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. After relocating its government to Taiwan, the Nationalist government imposed martial law in 1948, and did not lift it until 15 July 1987. Under military rule, the formation of new political parties was illegal; the Taiwan Garrison Command censored all publications; registration of newspapers was limited to existing ones (Ku 1989: 12). Practically speaking, all channels of reform or normative change were closed and it was made very clear that the government wanted no agitation of any kind. The Nationalist Party attempted to preserve patriarchal and Confucian traditions in a tightly controlled society as one of the means to counter the drastic social and political changes in mainland China. Women were encouraged to play supportive and subservient roles both at home and in society, and thus a maternal image of women has been propagated and glorified (Ku 1989).

Across the Taiwan Strait, following the Communist Party of China's policy of subordinating women's organisations to national interests, gender differences were erased and "iron girls"<sup>1</sup> who, according to Mao Zedong's famous proclamation, "hold up half the sky",<sup>2</sup> served as role models for women. The similarity between Taiwan and mainland China in the 1960s is

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<sup>1</sup> By the time of the Cultural Revolution, the muscular and energetic women played an enormously influential function as role models for Chinese women. Iron girls inspired women to take on the most difficult and demanding tasks. They appeared in many posters and newspapers, dominating the discourse about women during 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>2</sup> This is written by Mao Zedong in 1955, when he commented on the article *Carrying out Equal Pay between Women and Men in Cooperatives* published by Guizhou provincial *fulian* journal. It immediately went viral across mainland China after that.

their “subordination of feminism to priorities of nationalism and class-based revolution... Both revolutionary parties attempted to impose discipline whenever expressions of feminist autonomy or radicalism appeared divisive, and both encouraged a retreat from radical feminism and family revolution” (Stacey 1983: 76-77).

Drastic social change transformed Taiwan in the 1970s, during which time the socioeconomic structure had shifted from an agricultural to an industrial economy, with fast accumulation of wealth, growth of the middle class, migration of workers from the countryside into the cities, and rapid advance of women in the work force (Ku 1989). The new generation experienced uninterrupted expansion of educational opportunities and economic prosperity unprecedented in Taiwan so that yearnings for social justice as well as political, legal, and social reforms prevailed.

Meanwhile, moving out of the rigors of the political winter of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Chinese mainland society has been seen as reviving the diversity and vigour that had been harshly repressed for a long time by the revolutionary – totalitarian regime (Min 2005: 274). This period, sometimes described as one of ‘Culture Fever’, nourished a translation effort to present Western Feminisms to the Chinese intellectual world (Wang 1997). For Li Xiaojiang, a pioneer of Chinese feminism, Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* was attractive, not for its theme of ‘second sex’, but for its theme of woman. For her, there was nothing earth-shattering about the observation of women’s inferiority. However, for ‘woman’ to appear in a book title in the early 1980s in China was refreshing. It challenged the Maoist value that ‘men and women are the same’ (Xu 2009). Western feminism, which reflect the Western ontological tradition, came at a time when Chinese women were looking for something to support their struggle to break away from the grip of class theory.

### **Prefaces and Paratextual Features**

The first Chinese translation of *Le Deuxième Sexe* appeared in 1972 in Taiwan, 20 years after the English translation. The first translation in the People’s Republic of China was published in 1986 by *Hunan Wenyi*. Before 1998, all Chinese translations contained only text from Book II of Parshley’s “translation and edition.” Book I was completely left out. Among these translations, the 1988 mainland translation even deletes Chapter XV of Book II, *The Lesbian*, and Chapter XIX, *Prostitutes and Hetairas*. There is only one sentence in the translator’s

preface explaining the deletion: “These chapters are exactly about the lives of women, which answers the question of ‘what woman is’” (Wang Youqin 1987:441).<sup>3</sup> It is implied that the lives of lesbians and of prostitutes could not be included in the definition of Chinese women’s lives. Deletions like these happened frequently in the 1980s and 1990s in mainland China, mostly because Marxism had become the established ideology in Chinese society since the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949 (Zhou 2006:143). Chinese women were not allowed to discuss their rights, and the status of women was one of a wide variety of social and political taboos (Honing and Hershatter 1988:309). Writers and translators were compelled to follow the Communist Party’s principles, so claims of firm belief in Marxism prevail in the translators’ prefaces and publishers’ notes in almost every mainland translation of *The Second Sex*, while discussions of feminism are absent from all of them.

Feminism has long been a negative term in mainland China since it is always accompanied by the adjective “bourgeois” and often by the qualifier “Western” (Wang 1999:1). Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* has undoubtedly been charged as a “poisonous western bourgeois weed.”<sup>4</sup> This strict political control explains, to some extent, the declaration in prefaces and notes in the 1970s and 1980s the publishers’ and translators’ rejection or criticism of Beauvoir and/or existential feminism. In the 1986 edition of Hunan Wenyi’s translation, the publisher’s note states that “Simone de Beauvoir is an existentialist writer and thinker, and she believed that she has held the existentialist view in the writing of this specific book, *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Yet we cannot completely agree with or accept her philosophical view” (1986:2). Another example is the translation published in 1988, which points out that “there are inherent differences between the lives of Western women and Chinese women, and what Beauvoir analyses in this book is Western women’s lives” (Wang Youqin and Qiu Xichun 1987: 441). Based on this assumption, the 1988 edition reduced Beauvoir’s harsh criticism of a socially constructed gender role as “women’s self-reflection” and also states that “this particular self-reflection seems to have no direct link with women’s progress” (ibid 1987:441). This kind of explanation or disclaimer, clearly demonstrated the mainland translators’ or publishers’ beliefs in the superiority of Marxism over other ideologies and their antagonism toward

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<sup>3</sup> All Chinese-English translations are mine.

<sup>4</sup> Many Western classics had been condemned as “Western Bourgeois poisonous weeds” and hence had been banned during the Cultural Revolution. Earlier, propaganda Director Lu Ting-I, in the Great Leap Forward period, rejected Western learning as “poisonous weeds” in a *Kuang-ming Daily* article of 13 March 1958: “There is bankruptcy in bourgeois philosophy, science, social sciences, literature and arts. The only value in studying them is that we can learn to recognize them as ‘poisonous weeds’ and by weeding, use them as fertilizer.” (as cited in Goldman and Leo 2002: 349)

existential feminism. It also reflected the Chinese government's efforts to reinterpret feminism within the framework of Marxism and bring the women's movement into the Marxist track (Zhou 2006: 143).

Across the Taiwan Strait, the situation was somewhat similar under Kuo Min Tang's Martial Law (1949-1987). Ouyang Zi wrote in her preface that "Beauvoir's motivation for writing this book is not to encourage women to rise up in revolt, but rather sincerely to break the myth, and to promote people's understanding of women and women's situations, and this is also our motivation to translate this book" (Ouyang 1972:2). Before 1972 there was very little research on women in Taiwan. This deliberate emphasis on "not encouraging women to rise up in revolt" is partly because the taboo attached to social activism was not lifted until the 1980s (Ku 1998: 115).

In terms of attitudes toward communism, existentialism and socialism, Tao Tiezhu's translation is a perfect example of mainland China's and Taiwan's disparate stances. Chinese Books published it first in 1998, and then Owl published it in Taiwan in 1999, changing the simplified Chinese characters into traditional Hanzi. The mainland edition has a translator's preface in which Tao identified himself as a women's studies researcher and expressed hope that his book would be useful as a reference text for Chinese women's theory studies (Tao 1997:5). He attributed elevation in Chinese women's economic, social and political status to the Chinese Communist Party's decades' of hard work and said his translation of *The Second Sex* aimed to ensure the party's work (ibid). When published in Taiwan by Owl [Maotouying], Tao's preface was deleted and replaced with introductions by two university professors, Gu Yanling and Li Yuanzhen. Gu and Li are prominent feminists in Taiwan, who have been active in the women's movement since the mid-1970s. In 1982, together with a group of colleagues who supported gender equality, Gu and Li established the magazine *Awakening* [婦女新知] to encourage women's self-awareness and to raise public concern about women's issues in Taiwan. Gu wrote in the introduction of Tao's Chinese translation of *The Second Sex* that, "local academic discussions, social issues debate and even laws often tend to be vague, general and hasty, failing to leave a profound cultural mark. This phenomenon is caused by the lack of systematic translation and introduction of world classical literature in the publishing industry" (Gu 1999: iv). In contrast to Tao's positive affirmation of the Chinese Communist Party, Gu extends criticism of the publishing industry to political ideology:

Now equipped with the concrete experience gained from the second wave of the feminist movement, looking back to examine *The Second Sex*, we certainly can find some questionable points, such as the overestimation of socialism. About this point, Beauvoir herself later changed her stance as well. From the experience of communist nations, she found out that class struggle did not liberate women. Women have to be real feminists so as to fight for their own liberation. (My translation, Gu 1999: vi-v)

Clearly, Gu's emphasis on Beauvoir's feminism echoes her own support for the Women's Movement in Taiwan. In contrast, Zheng Kelu, the translator of the most current mainland version, said in one of his lectures, "Beauvoir cited quite a lot from Marx's and Engels' theories, however some citations and arguments are still prejudicial". Moreover, "in the conclusion she cited from Marx's 1844 manuscript, which is quite appropriate". However, Zheng did not back up his remarks about Beauvoir's "prejudicial" arguments except to say that "She believed that existentialism is higher than Marxism" (Zheng 2010:12).

### **Detailed Translation Analyses**

Whatever claims translators present in the prefaces, they consciously or unconsciously move the texts they translate into their own ideological positions and sexual stereotypes: gender and sexual identity seem inseparable from the activity of (re)writing. This section analyses the complexities of gender and sexual identities that translators take, the tensions the translators encounter between patriarchy and feminism, the resistance translators express in their manipulations, and ultimately, how all of these factors shape the Chinese translations of Beauvoir's view of marriage.

Concerning the four translations I examine, the first is the earliest Chinese translation in Taiwan published in 1972 by Ouyang Zi, Yang Meihui and Wang Yujing; the second translation is the earliest one by a mainland translator, done by Tao Tiezhu in 1998; the third translation is the most recent Taiwanese translation directly from the French by Qiu Ruinian in 2013; the final translation is the first mainland China translation from the French by Zheng Kelu in 2011. These translations were chosen on the basis of their importance and popularity, not just to compare the work of two Chinese mainland men vs. four Taiwanese women. Additionally, irrespective of whether the translators have worked from Beauvoir's original text in French or Parshley's translation into English as their source text, my analysis highlights how the translators still manage to reach similar or even the same interpretations as

long as they have same ideological stances. This suggests that translators' own subjective agency wins out over the influence of social backgrounds and the language of source texts.

I chose the chapter "The Married Woman" because marriage and sexuality are privileged areas in which to study the cultures we translate for, where "issues of cultural sensitivity are encumbered by issues of gender stereotyping and cliché," where each culture places its moral or ethical limits whenever it encounters taboos and historical dilemmas (Flotow 2000: 31). In "The Married Woman," Beauvoir demonstrates her attitude towards marriage by saying that "to ask two spouses bound by practical, social and moral ties to satisfy each other sexually for their whole lives is pure absurdity" (Beauvoir 1952: 466). She thinks that marriage "almost always destroys women" and it is a perverted institution oppressing both men and women (ibid). Therefore, Beauvoir's discussion of marriage becomes a promising place in which to analyse the shifts and variations among the four translations and how a translator's subjective stance manifests itself linguistically in a text. The following examples are chosen from my self-constructed corpus of these four translations, with a special focus on several keywords including marriage, sexuality, virginity and family. Here is the very first sentence of the chapter "The Married Woman":

(1) French ST by Beauvoir in 1949: La destinée que la **société propose traditionnellement** à la femme, c'est le mariage. (221)

Parshley's English translation in 1953: Marriage is the destiny **traditionally offered** to women by society. (415)

Yang (Taiwan 1972 from English) : 婚姻, 是**傳統社會指派**給女人的命運。(6)  
[Marriage is the destiny **assigned** to women by the **traditional society**.]<sup>5</sup>

Tao (PRC 1998 from English) : 結婚, 是**社會傳統賦予**女人的命運。(487)  
[Marriage is the destiny **endowed** to women by **social tradition**.]

Qiu (Taiwan 2013 from French) : 在**傳統社會**裡, 女人的命運註定是要走入婚姻。(707)

[In **traditional society**, women are destined to enter the marriage.]

Zheng (PRC 2011 from French) : 從**傳統**說來, **社會賦予**女人的命運是婚姻。(199)

[Speaking from **tradition**, the destiny **endowed** by society to women is marriage.]

The translator needs to uncover the source text writer's choices and to re-encode those choices as appropriate in the target language (Munday 2013: 16). Therefore, I see the translator's choices as meaningful expressions of his/her conscious or unconscious decisions

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<sup>5</sup> The back translations are mine.

at the lexical level, which represents the translator's interpretation of the source text. Positive inscribed affect and appreciation is explicit and intense in Tao (PRC 1998)'s and Zheng (PRC 2011)'s translation of "offer/propose" as "endow" [賦予], which conjures up notions like "endowed human rights" or "innate God-given human rights" [天賦人權] in Chinese. While negative attitudes are conveyed very strongly by Yang (Taiwan 1972) and Qiu (Taiwan 2013): "指派" and "註定是要" [are destined to]. Collocation also plays an important role: "指派" [assign] has a negative value here because of its collocation with "命運" [destiny], which indicates no freedom of choice. Through Tao (PRC 1998)'s and Zheng (PRC 2011)'s translations, marriage is an endowment, while in Yang (Taiwan 1972)'s and Qiu (Taiwan 2013)'s translations, marriage is an assignment.

These disparate attitudes continue in the Chinese translations of the terms, "traditional" and "society." Coincidentally the two Taiwanese female translators, Yang and Qiu, made the same decision by combining them into one phrase: "the traditional society" [傳統社會]. Yet, the male translators, Tao's and Zheng's renderings are "social tradition" [社會傳統] and "speaking from tradition/ traditionally speaking" [從傳統說來]. Position difference expresses different semantic emphasis. The semantic emphasis of the two women's translations is "society," while the men's is "tradition". "Assigned in traditional society" has additional implications: first, what is assigned at that time is not assigned right now; second, it is a modern society that the readers are living in, which is in contrast with the traditional society in the source text. This unconscious juxtaposition of "now and then" and "here and there" is where Yang (Taiwan 1972) and Qiu (Taiwan 2013), as feminist-identified translators, subtly plead for revolt against marriage. However, Tao (PRC 1998)'s and Zheng (PRC 2011)'s emphasis on tradition sends a very different message. Tradition is highly valued in Chinese culture and carrying forward traditional Chinese virtues [弘揚中華傳統美德] is a common slogan, which can be seen everywhere in mainland China. As a result, Beauvoir's view on marriage is distorted by Tao (PRC 1998) and Zheng (PRC 2011) and she becomes supportive of the traditional Chinese view of marriage in their translations.

Meanwhile, Yang's and Qiu's negative attitudes towards marriage and traditional society/morality goes hand in hand with their sympathy with unmarried woman, which render them more attached to their "rewriting" of *The Second Sex*:

(2) French ST by Beauvoir in 1949: C'est par rapport au mariage que se définit la célibataire, qu'elle soit frustrée, révoltée ou même indifférente à l'égard de cette institution. (221)

Parshley's English translation in 1953: The **celibate woman** is to be explained and defined with reference to marriage, whether she is **frustrated, rebellious**, or even **indifferent in regard to that institution**. (415)

Yang (Taiwan 1972 from English) : **女子到了相當的年齡而未完婚，不論是由於失戀、找不到適當的對象，或由於反對結婚，或甚至對婚姻置之度外，人們均稱呼她們為“獨身”女子，以別於“結了婚”的女人。**(6)

[When women reach a certain age still unmarried, no matter whether it is because of a break up, failing to find a suitable lover, objecting to marriage or even having no regard for marriage, people all address them as “celibate” women, as distinct from “married” women.]

Tao (PRC 1998 from English) : **對獨身女人的解釋和界定與婚姻有關，不論她是受挫的、反抗的，還是對婚姻制度滿不在乎的。**(487)

[The definition and demarcation of celibate women is related to marriage, no matter whether she is frustrated, rebellious, or makes nothing of the institution of marriage]

Qiu (Taiwan 2013 from French) : **一般也都以婚姻為標準來評斷獨身的女人，說她因失婚而受挫，說她因叛逆而拒絕婚姻，或者說她不在乎婚姻制度。**(707)

[Generally marriage is used as standard to judge celibate women. They say she is frustrated due to divorce, or she rejects marriage because she is rebellious, or she doesn't care for the institution of marriage.]

Zheng (PRC 2011 from French) : **獨身女人的定義由婚姻而來，不論她是受挫的、反抗過的，甚或對這種制度毫不在乎。**(199)

[The definition of celibate women comes from marriage; no matter she is frustrated, had rebelled before, or doesn't care about this institution at all.]

The three adjectives in the source text, “frustrated, rebellious, or even indifferent”, are translated literally by Tao (PRC 1998) and Zheng (PRC 2011) as “受挫的，反抗(過)的，滿/毫不在乎的”，the most simple and direct Chinese equivalents. However, Yang (Taiwan 1972) gives rich explanations and descriptions to each of these states of unmarried women. “Break up and/or failing to find a suitable lover” is Yang's (Taiwan 1972) effort to explain women's objection or indifference to marriage. Coincidentally, Qiu (Taiwan 2013) makes similar explanations in her translations: “...she is frustrated due to divorce, or she rejects marriage because she is rebellious...” The two Taiwanese translators' obvious addition in their translations belies their sympathy for unmarried women. These words come from the

translators' identification with unmarried women. Highly educated and unmarried in their early 30s, Yang (Taiwan 1972) and Qiu (Taiwan 2013) have their own feminist motivations for translating this feminist bible.

As Sherry Simon writes in the preface to her book *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*: “The identity and motivations of translators affect the work they do” and women discover feminist writing with which they feel intense affinities (1996: ix). The feminist translators' emotional affinities and sympathy for women continues in the translations of the “Sexual Initiation” chapter, in which Beauvoir analyses how a woman's first sexual experiences inform her entire life. The following is an example of how a patriarchal male-identified translator, consciously or unconsciously downplayed the harm and trauma women suffer and how Ouyang (Taiwan 1972) and Qiu (Taiwan 2013) share strong emotional affinities with the women in the text. In this last example, I contrast the patriarchal-identified translators with feminist-identified translators:

(3) French ST by Beauvoir in 1949: Cette légende trahit encore une fois le goût de domination du mâle qui veut qu'en sa compagne rien ne soit autonome, pas même l'envie qu'elle a de lui. (152)

Parshley's English translation in 1953: this legend once again **betrays the male's flair for domination**, expressing his wish that she should be in no way independent, even in her longing for him. (370)

Ouyang (Taiwan 1972 from English) : 這一傳說再度洩露了男性之控制欲，表達出他希望她在各方面，即便在她對他的渴望中，都無法獨立。(147)  
[this legend again **gives away male's desire for control**, expressing that he wishes that she, at every aspect, even in her longing for him, cannot be independent.]

Tao (PRC 1998 from English) : 這一傳說再一次表現了男性有支配的天賦，並表達了他的這一願望：她決不應當有獨立性，甚至在她渴望他時。(427)  
[This legend again **manifests that male has a gift for dominance**, and expresses his wish: she should never have independence, even in her longing for him.]

Qiu (Taiwan 2013 from French) : 這種看法完全是錯誤的；這種錯誤的認知再一次說明瞭雄性想要統轄一切的心理，他並不希望他的伴侶是獨立自主的，甚至不希望她對他也有欲望。(635)

[**This perspective is completely wrong; this incorrect understanding** again demonstrates **male's psychology to control everything**, he doesn't hope that his mate is independent, and even doesn't hope that she has desire for him.]

Zheng (PRC 2011 from French) : 這種說法再一次透露了男性對統治的興趣，他希望他的女伴毫無自主性，甚至沒有對他的渴望。(137)

[This saying again **reveals male's interest in dominance**; he wishes that his mate has no independence, or even no desire for him.]

Different attitudes towards “male’s flair for domination” makes the translators’ renderings different. And if we rank them in terms of the negative appreciation of men’s flair for domination, it would be: male’s talent/gift to dominate [男性有支配的天賦] (Tao, PRC 1998), male’s interest in dominance [男性對統治的興趣] (Zheng, PRC 2011), male’s psychology to control everything [雄性想要統轄一切的心理] (Qiu, Taiwan 2013), male’s desire for control/male control freaks [男性之控制欲] (Ouyang, Taiwan 1972). These different renderings of the same source texts concern the negotiation of meaning where a translator chooses one of many possible linguistic interpretations. So, those words and utterances that are (not) selected by the translator tell us much about the values he or she places on those words. Tao (PRC 1998) does not criticise male’s flair for domination, and he renders it into “male’s gift/natural talent.” In contrast, Qiu (Taiwan 2013) refers to it as a “completely wrong opinion” [這種錯誤的認知 & 這種看法完全是錯誤的]. Regarding the translation of the verb “betray,” Ouyang (Taiwan 1972) wrote “leak out [洩露]” and Tao (PRC 1998) wrote “show/demonstrate [表現].” What Ouyang (Taiwan 1972) used is a term that commonly describes a negative situation in which secrets have been exposed, while Tao (PRC 1998) used a neutral term, which can be construed as positive for the male persona in the text.

A comparative analysis of multiple translations is particularly useful for studying word choice and for analysing the value orientations behind these selections (Munday 2013:13). There are dozens of examples in the Chinese translations of the two aforementioned chapters. Tao (PRC 1998) and Zheng (PRC 2011), the male mainland China translators, display consistently detached attitudes towards Beauvoir’s views on marriage. Ouyang (Taiwan 1972), Yang (Taiwan 1972) and Qiu (Taiwan 2013), the three female Taiwanese translators, seem to express emotional affinity with women in the source texts and an alliance with feminism, deviating from the Chinese patriarchal norm.

### **Translator as Writer**

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, as Chinese literature on the mainland was relegated to Maoist doctrines and socialist models, a remarkable literary revolution was going on in Taiwan. A landmark journal, *Modern Literature*, was founded by students, Pai Hsien-yung,

Leo Ou-fan Lee , Chen Ruoxi, and Ouyang Zi, and others, who were translating modernist works into Taiwanese. These translators went on to dominate the Chinese literary scene as writers and critics for the next half century. Ouyang Zi and Yang Meihui were among this group, and they translated *The Second Sex* into Chinese in 1972 after they graduated from the Foreign Languages and Literature Department at National Taiwan University. The translation they did was commissioned by *Chenzhong* (Morning Toll) Publishing, which was founded by Pai Hsien-yung and his brother Pai Hsien-jing in 1970.

In addition to translating *The Second Sex*, Yang Meihui wrote *女人 , 女人* [*Women, Women*] (1973), *婦女問題新論譯叢* [*Woman's Problems: New Essays and Translations*] (1974-6), *女性, 女性主義, 性革命* [*Women, Feminism, Sexual Revolution*] (1988), which were published in both Taiwan and Hong Kong. In these books, Yang (Taiwan 1972) summarised, among others, Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970), Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament* (1935), and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). She also translated some work of Western feminists, including Kate Chopin, Katherine Anne Porter and Betty Friedan. Beauvoir is a crucial component of Yang's body of work, and she heavily referenced *The Second Sex* in *Woman's Problems: New Essays and Translations*, which is full of Yang's own analysis of women in Taiwanese and Chinese culture. Yang "compiled, selected, translated and annotated" all three volumes of *Woman's Problems: New Essays and Translations*, which were published in Chenzhong's New Series by Chenzhong (Morning Toll) Publishing from 1974 to 1976; this is two years after the Chinese translation of *The Second Sex* in the same series.

In another work, *文學家之愛* [*Litterateur's Love*] in 1995 Yang wrote in the preface, "this book looks at eleven writers' marriages to observe how under specific social constraints, they make it work, adapt, or even rebel against the social norm" (Yang 1995:14). This translation is reminiscent of her work on *The Second Sex*, demonstrating a subtle juxtaposition of words and a willingness to entertain thoughts of revolt against the social norm. It was the beginning of her feminist identity. Identities emerge from practice, from what people do rather than from their essential, immutable selves. Their positions are articulated in discourse, and are contingent and performative, diverse and contradictory (Butler 1990). Very much the same happens in Yang's translation of *The Second Sex* (Taiwan 1972) and her writing in *Litterateur's Love*, where her attitude towards marriage seems similar to Beauvoir's. It is

actually through language and translation that we negotiate, reinforce, consolidate or destroy a wide range of identities that are no more than a product of social construction (Butler 1990; Santaemilia 2008). As Yang wrote in the preface of *Litterateur's Love*, “they often creatively manage their own way to find a place for their love and desire to be unfettered” (Yang 1995:15), I would say Yang manages to find her own way to a place in her work for her feminist agenda. Therefore, instead of arguing that Yang’s being a feminist affected her translation of *The Second Sex*, I would say translating *The Second Sex* helped solidify Yang’s feminism and is evidenced by her later works. As Beauvoir would put it, one is not born, but rather becomes, a feminist translator.

### **Conclusion**

Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* has been translated through a trajectory with an uneasy and even broken process in PRC and Taiwan. Paratexts of different Chinese translations of *The Second Sex* offer valuable insights into the presentation of Beauvoir’s existentialist feminism within the changing historical and political climate. The translators’ prefaces and publishers’ notes are analysed closely in this paper to reflect the rewriters, especially translators’ intentions and strategies when they translated *The Second Sex* from 1970s Taiwan to today’s China. Moreover, through a comparison of four Chinese translations, a study of word choices and the value orientations behind these selections displayed different translations of Beauvoir’s harsh critique of marital institution. The two Taiwanese translators, as active responsive readers of Beauvoir, share an intersubjective empathy for the women who reject marriage due to various reasons, women who are coerced into getting married, and women who suffer in marriage. Moreover, they negotiate the evaluation of traditional morality by using negatively inscribed words to address them. Their tactical reading of Beauvoir leads to their supplementation and manipulation in their translations. By contrast, Tao and Zheng, the mainland China’s translators, detached from Beauvoir’s critique of marriage and her strong empathy for women, rewrite marriage as a right “endowed” to women, beatify men’s image, reinforce the essentialist view of women’s immanence, and even make Beauvoir in Chinese seem to be self-contradictory due to their mistranslations. To sum up, the translators’ encoding and decoding of *The Second Sex* is a dynamic process conditioned by the sociocultural context and relative power of the patronage and other stakeholders. Questions of how the differentiated and undifferentiated patronage systems influence the translations of Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* within the changing

historical and cultural climate in mainland China and Taiwan would be a propitious avenue for further research.

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## Appendix

Year	Translator(s)	Chinese Title	Publisher	Content (abridged or not) & Translated from?
1972-1974	歐陽子 Ouyang Zi, 楊美惠 Yang Meihui, 王俞靜 Wang Yujing	第二性-女人 The Second Sex- Woman	臺北：晨鐘出版社 Taipei: Chenzhong (Morning toll) Publisher	The second volume of Parshley's translation
1986	楊美惠 Yang Meihui, 王俞靜 Wang Yujing	第二性—女人 The Second Sex- Woman	長沙：湖南文藝出版社 Chang Sha: Hunan Wenyi Publisher	The second volume of Parshley's translation
1992	歐陽子 Ouyang Zi, 楊美惠 Yang Meihui, 楊翠屏 Yang Cuiping	第二性 The Second Sex	臺北：志文出版社 Taipei: ZhiWen Publisher	The second volume of Parshley's translation
1988	曉宜、張亞莉等 [Xiao yi, Zhang Yali, etc.]	女人的秘密 Women's Secrets	北京：中國國際廣播出版社 Beijing :Chinese International Broadcasting Publisher	Abridged translation of the first volume of Parshley's translation

1988	王友琴, 邱希淳, 丁文娟, 於銀春 Wang Youqin, Xichun, Yu Wenjuan, Ding Wenjuan	女人是什麼 What is Woman	北京 : 中國文聯出版公司 Beijing : Chinese Literary Federation Publishing Company	Part IV (without chapter XV) Part VII (without chapter XIX) of 1983 Penguin classics edition
1998	陶鐵柱TaoTiezhu	第二性 The Second Sex	北京 : 中國書籍出版社 Beijing: Chinese Books Publisher	Complete translation of Parshley's translation
1999	陶鐵柱TaoTiezhu	第二性 The Second Sex	臺北 : 貓頭鷹出版社 Taipei: Owl Publisher	Complete translation of Parshley's translation
2004	李強Li Qiang	第二性 The Second Sex	北京 : 西苑出版社 Beijing: Xiyuan Publisher	Abridged translation of the first volume of Parshley's translation
2009	舒小菲Shu Xiaofei	第二性 The Second Sex	北京 : 西苑出版社 Beijing: Xiyuan Publisher	Abridged translation of the second volume of Parshley's translation
2011	鄭克魯 Zheng Kelu	第二性 The Second Sex	上海 : 上海譯文出版社 Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House	Complete translation from Beauvoir's 1949 <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i>
2013	邱瑞鑾Qiu Ruiluan	第二性 The Second Sex	臺北 : 貓頭鷹出版社 Taipei: Owl Publisher	Complete translation from Beauvoir's 1949 <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i>

Table 1. Chinese Translations of *The Second Sex* since 1972