

A Comparative Study On Two English Versions Of Shen Congwen's 'Biancheng' From The Perspective Of Ecofeminism

Yan Qian

Southwest University Of Science And Technology

Xiong Tingting

Southwest University Of Science And Technology

Abstract

The struggle to create a life-affirming society intensifies as globalization expands, which can be seen from the 1970s, women all over the world were formulating ecological feminist response to environmental influence of "modernization" through the intersection between gender, feminism and environmental issues. Ecofeminism is at the intersection of women's rights, environmental issues and the various forms of oppression, such as those affecting marginalized and colonial people, as well as the Third World nations by the Western industrialized countries. One of the major propositions of ecofeminism is to build a harmonious planet and to abolish sexism and patriarchy, rather than subject to dominance of men and hierarchy. It, therefore, advocates to deconstruct the patriarchal perspective and reconstruct a community based on ecology and feminism, in a way to cease the exploitation of nature and promote the liberation of women.

"Biancheng" is a representative work of renowned modern Chinese writer, Mr. Shen Congwen, who adhered to his contemplation on humanity's existence and tried to communicate the essence of honoring nature and life. He transformed "Biancheng" from a conventional geographical term into a profound exploration of the intrinsic significance of human existence and spirit, with a particular emphasis on a woman's existence and her connection with nature. Such focus led me to approach "Biancheng" through the lens of ecofeminism. In light of the ecofeminism theory, this paper selects the two prominent English translations of Biancheng by renowned translators Gladys Yang and American sinologist Jeffrey C. Kinkley for a comparative analysis. It is divided into five parts: the first deals with delineating the main ecofeminist theories, the second probes into the previous researches on ecofeminism and translated versions of Biancheng, the third refers to the work analysis, the fourth parts explores how ecofeminism is translated and demonstrated in the two versions through comparative analysis and the last part comes to a conclusion.

Keywords: ecofeminism; Biancheng; translation study; comparative study; nature

Date of Submission: 22-09-2024

Date of Acceptance: 02-10-2024

I. Introduction

Ecofeminism, coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne's, is not only an ideology encompassing different positions and theories on feminism and environmentalism, but also a practical movement for women to defend themselves, their families and their communities against the vicious development and environmental degradation caused by patriarchal society, transnational corporations and industrialized capitalism. Ecofeminist theory is also a framework which was associated with practice and activism from the outset, because it emerged from the call for the emancipation of women and the environment, the shared rejection of global capitalism and the rescue of the human race. It relates human oppression of nature with male oppression of women, and then criticizes patriarchal domination and oppression of both nature and women. Ecofeminists follow a philosophical approach which, as Door and Madsen underline, considers "the earth, Gaia, [as] a living unity and a complex system" (Door, Jorgen and Dorte Bay Madsen 2007, 268). Therefore, ecofeminist theory is not a combination of feminism and ecology, but rather an investigation of the "world system" from a perspective that places the marginalized and the exploited at its centre.

Current post-humanist thought in the age of the Anthropocene has questioned a number of dualism, among them that between an active human agent and a passive Other (the latter being any entity traditionally regarded as non-self or also as subaltern) (Horn and Bergthaller 2020, 101). And such dualism was identified

“as a Western phenomenon that could not easily be translated to, or imposed on, non-Western contexts” (Moore 2015,11). However, there are still other conceptualization about human and the planet that are not based on these dichotomies, and they may open up new avenues of discussion. Because this questioning of the subject/object binary has far-reaching implications for both translation and ecology, not to mention its relevance to ecofeminism. Besides, ecofeminism is considered as a thing of dead or past, while literature is always an ever-growing form that produces provoking and fresh thinking whenever people read it. “Translation became a selective weapon of combat for the political, social and cultural objectives of the second wave of feminist struggle in Spain”, (Pilar Godayol 2024, 73), so did the ecofeminism struggle in other places. Therefore, for ecofeminism to survive and still be useful, it would help to recognize its relevance of other fields.

The argument put forward here reflects my viewpoint that ecofeminism is still a useful and timely framework that can offer some insights. My aim here is to explore the intersections of sexuality, gender, embodiment, and the natural world articulated in literary works from Biancheng’s translated versions and examine whether those intersections have been translated in the two versions. By comparing the two English versions, this paper tries to find in what way, and how ecofeminist ideas have been translated into Chinese contexts and to find out that whether Gladys Yang, a female translator, better translated the ecofeminism idea in her translation. I also want to find out the answers of the following questions, including how do the two translated versions build harmony between masculinity, femininity, and nature? how do they reproduce the heroine’s images, emotions and her intimacy with the nature? and as translators, how can we translate the idea of ecofeminism in literary works? Through above analysis, the author tries to find similarities or differences of the two, especially in terms of translation strategy. The significance of language and the way we use it is even more obvious if we examine how ecofeminist theories have been translated into other languages. It is through the translation from English—that ideas have disseminated, combined the discussion, and enlarged the debate beyond the literature world. Through the analysis of the two translated versions of Biancheng, my objective is to contribute to the redevelopment of the ecofeminist debate by extending the applicability of this theoretical framework to other languages and cultures beyond the English-speaking world.

II. Previous Researches On Ecofeminism And *Biancheng*’s Translated Versions

In the mix of the feminist movement and the ecological movement of 1970s, “ecofeminism”, coined by the French libertarian thinker Françoise d’Eaubonne’s, emerged as a framework designed to unite, revisit and expand these movements. In *Feminism or Death*, Françoise d’Eaubonne’s explains that ecological threats affecting all forms of life are not only a priority, but are inseparable from other fights. In *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (1980) Carolyn Merchant, opened at the beginning of the 1980s a debate on the connection between women and the natural worlds versus a male-dominated science and technology. In 1983 the first collection of essays on ecofeminism appeared: *Reclaim the Earth: Women Speak Out for Life on Earth* (1983), firstly defined “Ecofeminist Imperative” and introduced ecofeminism as both a theory and practice. In 1990, the Spring 1991 issue of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* (1991) included essays on a variety of issues on such as its relation to animal liberation, deep ecology, literary practice, environmentalism and so on. In *Earth care: Women and the Environment* (1996), Carolyn Merchant, emphasized once again how nature can revenge back at human beings in ways that is unexpected. In the following decade ecofeminists kept on deconstructing the woman/nature, man/culture duality. Since then, ecofeminism has evolved in different directions and spread around the world. Today, when we talk about ecofeminism, we know that it is intersectional and global, showing how women live and act in different geographical, social, political and cultural contexts. Ecofeminism was introduced in China in late 1990s and was studied systematically by many scholars, because its congruence with Chinese local features and traditional view of “unity of man and nature”. Researches carried out from different perspectives, such as Cao Nanyan and Liubing (1995) introduced in *Ecofeminism* the basic viewpoints of ecofeminism and its primary school and Xiao Wei’s (2000) studied ecofeminism from the perspective of ethics in *Eco-Feminism and its Ethical Culture*. In the field of literature, all classic works embodying ecofeminism has been translated. The introduction and translation of ecofeminism has greatly enriched the domestic feminism and ecological theory, and promoted the development of ecological criticism as well as feminist criticism. However, few researches on the comparative studies of translated versions in Chinese context have been carried out. *Biancheng*, as one of the significant literary works in China, has been paid great attention since its publications in 1934. A large number of researchers began to study it and translated it into several languages. Till today, there are more than 1000 papers studying this novel. And the first translated version of *Biancheng* came into being in 1936, therefore, the studies on its translation already continued over 80 years. Previous studies on *Biancheng* mainly focused on three aspects, namely, the perspectives of aesthetics, pragmatics and translation strategies. For example, Lian Yan (2012) discussed the translation strategies by comparing the two English versions of *Biancheng*, Zhang Ying

(2011) made a comparative study in light of translation aesthetics of *Biancheng* English versions and Fu Yiting (2008) explored the problem of text cohesion in *Biancheng* and its English translation. They mainly made comparative studies on the strategies and the aesthetics of the original text. Yet, the transnational environment and the translators are ignored and a comparative study on two translated versions from the perspective of ecofeminism is hardly seen. Therefore, there exists huge space to study it in this field.

III. Work Analysis

An Introduction to *Biancheng*

Biancheng is one of the representative works of Shen Congwen, who is a famous modern writer and professional researcher in China. He was known for combining the vernacular style with classical Chinese writing techniques. *Biancheng*, created in April 1934, has received great attention at home and abroad. After Shen Congwen went back to his hometown and saw great changes happened there, he was amazed by the disappearance of the humanity as well as the harmony and the good features of the local people. Thus, he decided to create a beautiful and natural world that is contrary to the human nature. *Biancheng* observed the changes of fate and the joys and sorrows in the lives of ordinary people, especially the minor characters, and told the love story between Cuicui and Tianbao and Nuosong, showing readers the beauty of human nature and at the same time illustrating the uncertainty of human destiny.

***Biancheng's* Two Translated Versions**

Biancheng has been translated into various languages, of which there are currently four English translations: *Green Jade and Green Jade* (1936) by Emily Hahn and Shing Mo-lei; *The Frontier City* (1982) by Robert Payne; *The Border Town and Other Stories* (1981) by Gladys Yang; and *Border Town* (2009) by Jeffrey C. Kinkley. In this essay, Gladys Yang's version and Jeffrey C. Kinkley's version will be selected and analyzed. Gladys Yang (1919-1999) is a well-known translator in China. From the end of 1930s to the late 1980s, she devoted herself to translating Chinese literary works and *Biancheng* is one of them. Jeffrey C. Kinkley's translation of *Biancheng*, *Border City*, first released in a single-volume translation by Harper Collins Publishers in 2009, is the first single-volume translation of Shen Congwen's works into English and has become one of the publisher's series of classics of modern Chinese literature.

Ecofeminism Connotation in *Biancheng*

In *Biancheng*, Shen Congwen used a lot of space to describe the natural beauty of western Hunan, to portray the character traits, to link the heroine closely with nature, embodying the idea of ecofeminism from three aspects, including intimacy between nature and woman(Cuicui), patriarchy oppression on woman(Cuicui), woman under the extrusion of modernization. Firstly, ecofeminism sees the connection and closeness between women and nature, which can be demonstrated in literatures. From Mary Austin to Wangari Maathai, Maude Barlow, Arundhati Roy, and Winona LaDuke, literary and activist women have spoken in defense of water. Their words and actions provide both a "mirror and a lamp," as literary critic M.H. Abrams (1953) once defined literature's contributions to humanity. (Vakoch, D.A. and Mickey, S. (Eds.) 2018, 15) Shen Congwen also depicted greatly the beauty of the scenery and the nature was bestowed many feminine features, like pure, amiable, and serene. In the opening line of *Biancheng*, "The stream is tranquil, limpid and crystal as Cuicui."(Shen Congwen 2011, 07). Secondly, ecofeminism has described a number of connections between the men's oppression of women and of nature. With such relation, it is easily to find the consistency of emotional experience and their plights. In this novel, when Tianbao wanted to proposal a marriage to Cuicui, he said to himself that "Cuicui is so delicate that I'm worried that she..."(Shen Congwen 2011, 77). The reason why he hesitated was that Cuicui was brought about by her grandfather and grew up beside the mountains and rivers and he was afraid that Cuicui could not conform to the standard of being a virtuous wife. Finally, ecofeminism reveals the severe consequences brought by modernization and industrialization and relates the oppression of nature by the anthropocentrism and the persecution of women by patriarchy. Written in 1930s, when the foreign literature was greatly introduced to China, Mr. Shen described the impact brought by the modernization and industrialization. For example, he listed some products from the outside like "the foreign lamp lit by Mobil oil" and "the pine pastry" (Shen Congwen 2011, 21). Cuicui, as an innocent and unsophisticated girl, is one of the women left by modernization and urbanization.

IV. A Comparative Study On The Two English Versions

The three pairs of relations or more like paradoxes, namely the intimacy between woman and nature, patriarchy oppression on woman(Cuicui), human under the extrusion of modernization, of ecofeminism was also reflected in the original novel. This is the reason why the writer selected and made a comparative study of this book's translated version. In the following parts, the writer will make a comparative analysis of the Gladys Yang's version and Jeffrey C. Kinkley's version from the three aspects. As for the translating examples in the

following paragraphs, the thesis chooses “Version 1” and “Version 2” to replace Gladys Yang’s version and Kinkley’s version respectively.

Intimacy between Nature and Woman(Cuicui)

“Ecofeminist theory helps us imagine healthier relationships; stresses the need to attend to context over universal judgments; and argues for the importance of care as well as justice, emotion as well as rationality, in working to undo the logic of domination and its material and practical implications. This volume deepens these significant insights.” Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen 2014, 9-10). Ecofeminism not only pays attention to the closeness between women and nature, but also contends for the significance of emotion and rationality, especially for women who seem to possess the same natural identity. It holds the idea that women’s emotion should be focused and emphasized. Such emotion in literary works can enhance the charm of literary works and arouse people’s love and care about nature. In this novel, Shen Congwen described many natural images, such as the mountains, bamboo forest, rivers and so on and their beauty were not only demonstrated in words but also showed in the relationship between human and nature. By describing the intimacy between nature and Cuicui, Shen Congwen expressed Cuicui’s mood swings in her living village and combined its scenery with human’s emotions and feelings. From the perspective of translation, translators should reflect the relationship between woman and nature and demonstrate the interdependence between human and nature. The author will illustrate whether those ideas are delivered or not through translations by following examples:

Original 1: “翠翠在风日里长养着，把皮肤变得黑黑的，触目为青山绿水，一对眸子清明如水晶。自然既长养她且教育她，为人天真活脱，处处俨然如一只小兽物。人又那么乖，如山头黄鹿一样，从不想到残忍事情，从不发愁，从不动气。” (Shen Congwen 2011, 12

Version 1: “Wind and sun have tanned the growing girl's skin, her eyes resting on green hills are as clear as crystal. Nature is her mother and teacher, making her innocent, lively and untamed as some small wild creature. She has the gentleness of a fawn and seems not to know the meaning of cruelty, anxiety or anger.” Gladys Yang(Trans.) 1981, 10

Version 2: “Cuicui grew up under the sun and wind, which turned her skin blacks as could be. The azure mountains and green brooks that met her eyes turned them clear and bright as crystal. Nature had brought her up and educated her, making her innocent and spirited, in every way like a little wild animal. Yet she was as docile and unspoiled as a mountain fawn, wholly unacquainted with cruelty, never worried, and never angry.” (Kinkley (Trans.) 2009, 05)

In the original section, Shen Congwen intended to portray the beauty of the the heroine Cuicui. And readers can know the beauty of her from the description. But Shen Congwen not only just employed words to express her innocence and loveliness, but also combined her beauty with the nature. In his novel, he described the little girl as an animal in nature and compared her as a small mammal. Her beauty blends into the green mountains and rivers, which expresses the idea of “the unity of heaven and man”, which is also advocated by ecofeminism. In this example, both the two versions conveyed the original meaning. But whether they translated the ideas of ecofeminism should be further discussed.

In Version 2, Kinkley relected the picturesque scenery by using “azure mountains and green brooks”, while in Version 1, Gladys Yang just used the “green hill” which is not as concrete and detailed as the Version 2. In the original section, Mr. Shen compared the heroine, Cuicui, as a little animal and depicted her liveliness in the wild. Compared with the “fawn”, the “docile and unspoiled as a mountain fawn”, actually better embodied the innocence and vividness, presenting the whole spirituality as much as possible. In this book, Cuicui’s mother had died and she was brought up by her grandfather. “Our current representations of ‘Mother Nature’ emerge out of a romantic tradition based on a male, disembodied fantasy of the ideal woman. This ‘cult of the romantic’ has also been extended to nature.”(Greta Gaard 1993, 219) . Nature was compared to a mother who nurture her child, Cuicui, and in Version 1, the word “mother” gives a natural connotation to the word “education” in the original text, which conveyed the intimacy and interdependent relationship between nature and woman. Version 1 did better in reproduction the original spirituality of nature, while Version 2 translated the closeness between Cuicui and nature through words “mother” and “teacher”.

Original 2 “月光如银子，无处不可照及，山上篁竹在月光下皆成为黑色。身边草丛中虫声繁密如落雨。间或不知道从什么地方，忽然会有一只草莺“嘘！”啭着她的喉咙，不久之间，这小鸟儿好像明白这是半夜，不应当那么吵闹，便仍然闭着那小小眼儿安睡了。” Shen Congwen 2011, 12

Version 1: “Silver moonlight lies everywhere, turning the bamboo forests on the hills black. The chirring of insects in the undergrowth is steady as a downpour of rain. An oriole gives a few trills before realizing it is too late for such a commotion. Closing its little eyes, it settles back to sleep.” (Gladys Yang(Trans.) 1981, 10

Version 2: “The moonlight was silvery and it shone everywhere. The bamboo stands in the mountains appeared black under the moon. From the thickets of grass came the chirping of insects, thick as rain. Occasionally, a warbler suddenly twittered from some hidden place, until the little bird seemed to realize that it was too late to

be making noise and closed its eyes to go peacefully to sleep.” (Kinkley (Trans.) 2009, 05)

In the original text, after listening to her grandfather talking about her mother, Cuicui felt that there was a sense of sorrow in her mind. Growing up in the nature, her every kind of emotion was connected to the environment.

“The ability to empathize does not seem to require that the community be only human. The ability to empathize with nonhuman animals, for example, is not only possible but widely practiced. Our ability to empathize with other beings need not be based solely on anthropomorphic projection”. (John Fisher 1987, 203.), which means not only human has the power to feel others’ emotion, but also animals or other living things have such ability to empathize, highlighting the close bond between human and nature. In this section, Mr. Shen employed huge space to describe the whole and complete scenery at that night, so as to set off her sad feeling. In this sentence, Shen Congwen also utilize the little bird’s silence to express the heroine’s deep thoughts, as if it could understand the heroine’s thoughts. Shen Congwen blended the image with the nature with his meticulous writing skills, therefore, the original unity between human and nature was fully embodied in the intimacy between Cuicui’s internal state with the surroundings in the novel. Both two translated versions expressed the original meaning, however, the Version 2 better demonstrated the harmony within all forms of nature. In Version 2, Kinkley used some words, such as “under”, “from the thickets of grass” and “hidden”, which depicted a whole of picture under the moon. In this picture, everything is connected with others and all forms life in nature living in harmony. Besides, in the Version 2, the little bird’s cautiousness was delivered and demonstrated perfectly, which better showed their ability to empathize and the close tie between animals in nature and Cuicui.

Patriarchy Oppression on Woman(Cuicui)

Ecofeminism believes that the reason why the earth has a harder life and women’s misfortunes is the price of phallocracy. Shen Congwen is a writer who concerns the living condition of women and Cuicui is one of them. He calls for the independence of women. However, male-dominant thinking was deep-rooted at that time and he was also be affected by such thinking. Cuicui, though beautiful and naive, still was a victim with yielding quality to such patriarchy society.

Original 3 “翠翠太娇了，我担心她只宜于听点茶峒人的歌声，不能作茶峒女子做媳妇的一切正经事。我要个能听我唱歌的情人，却更不能缺少个照料家务的媳妇。” (Shen Congwen 2011, 77)

Version 1: “Emerald’s so lovely, I’m afraid all she’s fit for is listening to our Chatong songs, not running a house like one of our Chatong girls. I want a sweetheart to listen to my songs, but I need a good wife who’ll manage my household well.” (Gladys Yang(Trans.) 1981, 76)

Version 2: “Cuicui is so delicate, I worry that she may be suited to listening to our Chatong love songs but not the humdrum errands of an ordinary Chatong wife. I want a sweetheart who can listen to my songs but she also has to be a wife who can manage household affairs.” (Kinkley (Trans.) 2009, 55-56)

This words were spoke by Tianbao, one of the main heroes in the story. Tianbao is a man with patriarchy worldview, actually, a representative of men at that times. He thought Cuicui, though good-looking, must be capable of taking care of a family as other wives in Chatong, and that Cuicui must remould herself if she wanted to marry him. However, he ignored the fact that Cuicui was a woman with her thoughts, thus, she could choose to marry him or not. In this sentence, Tianbao intended to say that Cuicui is too innocent to play the role of a traditional good wife. This is the reason why he became hesitated to pursue Cuicui. Both the two translated versions expressed the literal meaning. However, the Version 2 better embodied the patriarchy and men-oriented worldview. The reasons are as follows. Firstly, the word “娇气”, meaning “too innocent and vulnerable” and implying her inability to be a good wife, was translated into “lovely” in Version 1, more like a praise, thus, the translation did not express the implication in the original novel. The word “媳妇” means “wife” in Chinese, and it was translated into “girl” and “wife” in Version 1 and Version 2 respectively. Obviously, Version 2 delivered the original meaning in a better translation. Secondly, in version 2, the translator added some words, such as “love”, “ordinary” and “but”. Those words, better portrayed the image of typical man with patriarchy views, because what Tianbao pursued was not an unworldly girl with her mind on romantic love but a wife who can manage to running a family as any ordinary wife in Chatong. The word “but” not only makes the sentence more coherent but also translated the content behind “but”, which shows Tianbao’s requirements for a wife and his oppression on woman. Therefore, Version two, by portraying the image of a selfish and showing the oppression of men on women in such background, translated the implied meaning in a better way.

Original 4 “茶峒人年青男子眼睛光，选媳妇也极在行。” (Shen Congwen 2011, 71)

Version 1: “Our Chatong youngsters have sharp eyes when it comes to choosing wives.” (Gladys Yang(Trans.) 1981, 76)

Version 2 “Young men here in Chadong have good eyes and they’re very good at picking their wives.” (Kinkley (Trans.) 2009, 55-56)

The main difference between the two translations of Original 4 lies in the translation of “选”. The

word “选” implies that women are compared to objects for men to pick, reflecting gender inequality and even gender discrimination. “In the dominant Patriarchal cultures, reality is divided according to gender, and a higher value is placed on those attributes associated with masculinity, a construction that is called ‘hierarchical dualism.’” (Karen J. Warren 1987, 17-18) Thus, men just view women as subordination of their own power. In Version 1 the use of “choose” could not reflected its original implication, meaning that women are considered as objects waiting for men to pick. Version 2 employed “pick” accurately showed men’s subjectivity and their implicit oppression on women.

Human under the Extrusion of Modernization

Ecofeminism thinks that the responsible parties for the degradation of environment and the oppression of female is the “technological civilization, super-urban and super-industrial, the insane race that launched the unstoppable wheel toward profit, in much the same way that the Gauls sent burning wheels hurtling down steep slopes;”(Hottell, Ruth and Merchant 2022, 125). Growth is brought about by male-dominant society and production is considered as destruction. In this novel, the modernization and industrialization are the root causes of Cuicui’s misery life and her fellow country people.

Original 5 “在河边管理一个碾坊比管理一只渡船多变化有趣味，情形一看也就明白了。但一个撑渡船的若想有座碾坊，那简直是不可能的妄想。凡碾坊照例是属于当地小财主的产业。” Shen Congwen 2011, 51

Version 1: “Obviously the job is more interesting and varied than looking after a ferry. But no ferryman can dream of owning a mill like this. All the mills in these parts belong to landowners.” (Gladys Yang(Trans.) 1981, 39

Version 2: “Compared to running a ferry, running a mill was a more multifaceted and interesting job; that was clear at a glance. But it was wholly in vain for a ferryman to hope to have a mill someday. Mills all belonged to the local rich people.” (Kinkley (Trans.) 2009, 48)

In this sentence, the meaning is that the mill, a representative of modernization is inaccessible for people in lower class. There is a reason in ecofeminism viewpoints to account for it, that is, “the caste of the masters profits most from growing itself and limiting the expansion of the disadvantaged,” (Hottell, Ruth and Merchant 2022, 129). The vulnerable are always those who subjected to lose their terrains, freedom and rights. Thus, it was impossible for grandfather, a poor man without any power, to possess a modernized “mill”. In *Biancheng*, since the appearance of modernization and industrialization, people living in the lower class, such as grandfather and Cuicui have been left out and marginalized. In the original sentence, the “mill” and “ferry” actually stands a sharp contrast, because “mill” is the symbol of industrialization while “ferry” is the representative of traditional living styles for the poor people. Both the two translated versions translated it literally, which delivered the implied meaning. But the translation of the sentence in the Version 1 is better, because it translated the “landowners” which is the symbol of power and money, indicating men’s control that took over running the planet by competition, aggression, and sexual hierarchy, which is one of ecofeminist’s viewpoints. The “rich people” in Version 2 could not express the power in men’s hand.

Original 6 “翠翠看看屋前悬崖并不崩塌，故当时还不注意渡船的失去。但再过一阵，她上下搜索不到这东西，无意中回头一看，屋后白塔已不见了。一惊非同小可，赶忙向屋后跑去，才知道白塔业已坍塌，大堆砖石极凌乱的摊在那儿。” Shen Congwen 2011, 51

Version 1: “For the moment this does not worry her, for the cliff has not caved in after all. But as she looks this way and that for the boat, a gasp escapes her the white pagoda behind their hut has gone! She races back there. Yes, the pagoda has crumbled into a mountainous clutter of rubble and bricks.” (Gladys Yang(Trans.) 1981, 198

Version 2: “Observing that the bluffs in front of the house had not collapsed, after all, Cuicui at first failed to notice that the ferryboat had disappeared. But as she looked up and down for it, she involuntarily turned around, and the white pagoda behind the house was gone. Startled by the enormity of the loss, she hurried out to the back of the house. The pagoda had collapsed into a big mass of bricks and stones.” (Kinkley (Trans.) 2009, 150

This sentence described a miserable scene where the ferryboat lost, the pagoda was collapsed and grandfather died. All of those images were symbols of intrusion of modernization and industrialization and extrusion of local people, including Cuicui and her grandfather, thus, the harmony between nature and human as well as between men and women must be broken. In this novel, “ferryboat” is the symbol of traditional transportation and Cuicui is a representative of the women in the oppression of men at that time. However, Version 1 translated it as “boat” which may be ambiguous, making people confused whether it is a kind of transportation or not. Besides, the “boat” could not show the broken balance between the old and the new lifestyle. After witnessing the collapse and the crumble of the pagoda and the masonry, Cuicui felt astonished helpless, but she must try to face it without her grandfather. Version 2 added some words or phrases such as,

“shrilly”, “involuntarily”, “hurried” and “run into” which reflected her reluctance. But she had to face the fact that everything has changed, just like when people face the modernization and push forward by it. Thus, Version 2 not only reflected the deep meaning and character’s minds but also relates the fate of human with the collapse of everything in the small town.

V. Conclusion

As one of the representative works of Shen Congwen, *Biancheng* reflected his sympathy and deep concern to woman and nature. In his novel, by depicting Cuicui an innocent girl who is close to nature, he delivered the meaning of ecological harmony. Though with all good qualities of traditional women, Cuicui could not escape from the oppression of men and extrusion of modernization and industrialization. This paper, under the guidance of ecofeminism, makes a comparative study of the Gladys Yang’s translated version and Kinkley’s translated version from three aspects, chooses several examples in the original work and analyzes various aspects, such as images, personalities and emotions, so as to make sure the spirit of ecofeminism in the original work is translated in terms of sentences, structures and style.

For the translation of intimacy between woman and nature, Gladys Yang’s used strategies like transliteration and footnoting, trying to express its cultural connotation of the living things in nature. However, she also failed to reproduce Cuicui’s dependence on the nature, because she just simplified, generalized or even omitted some sentences which showed the close relationship between nature and Cuicui. Compared with that, Kinkley’s version expressed the ecofeminism thoughts in a better way. Because he not only translated the intimacy between surroundings and the main characters, but also reflected the similar fate of human and nature.

For the translation of patriarchy oppression on woman, Gladys Yang used mainly used hijacking to weaken the contents contrary to ecofeminism thoughts in her translation. She also employed different translation strategies, such as supplementing, hijacking and footnoting in her translation when she dealt with politics, military and religion terms so as to meet the translation criteria of ecofeminism. When portraying the images of main characters, such as Tianbao, Gladys Yang used free translation, so as to avoid confusion, which build a harmony between masculinity and femininity. While Kinkley is more faithful to the original text and portrayed a man with patriarchy thinking. For the translation of human under the extrusion of modernization, Kinkley made a sharp contrast between modernization and tradition by translating the implicit meanings and features of local things. His translation dug out many details that Shen Congwen intended to deliver and translated them in a clear way, which reflected translator’s subjectivity.

Both the two translated versions have their own features and advantages. However, in terms of the reproduction of ecofeminism thinking in the original text, Kinkley did better. Because he concerned more the intimacy between nature and woman, the internal feeling of the main characters and their personalities by employing ecofeminism translation strategies. To better deliver the ecofeminism ideas, translators not only need to understand the original implications and backgrounds, but also should employ various ecofeminism strategies, so as to reproduce the original meaning, emphasize women’s discourse right and pay attention to translators’ subjectivity.

References

- [1] Caldecott, Leonie, And Stephanie Leland, Eds. 1983. *Reclaim The Earth: Women Speak Out For Life On Earth*. London: Women’s Press.
- [2] Cao Nanyan, And Liu Bing. 1995. *Ecological Feminism*. *Encyclopaedic Knowledge*,(10): 33-34.
- [3] Carol J. Adams And Lori Gruen. 2014. *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections With Other Animals And The Earth*.
- [4] Carolyn Merchant. 1980. *The Death Of Nature: Women, Ecology And The Scientific Revolution*. San Francisco: Harper And Row.
- [5] Ching Ti, And Robert Payne(Trans.). 1982. *The Frontier City*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- [6] Door, Jorgen And Dorte Bay Madsen. 2007. *Food For Thought—Metabolism And Metaphors*. *Sustaining Language: Essays In Applied Ecolinguistics*. Edited By Alwin Fill And Hermine Penz. Wien Berlin: Lit Verlag, 267-278.
- [7] Emily Hahn, And Shing Mo-Lei(Trans.). 1936. *Green Jade And Green Jade*, Tien Hsia Monthly.
- [8] Fu Yiting. 2008. *A Study On The Articulation Of Chinese-English Literary Translation*, Nanjing Jiaotong University.
- [9] Gladys Yang(Trans.). 1981. *The Border Town*. Beijing: Chinese Literature Press.
- [10] Greta Gaard. 1993. *Ecofeminism, Ethics And Action*, 219.
- [11] Horn, Eva, And Hannes Bergthaller. 2020. *The Anthropocene. Key Issues For The Humanities*. London And New York: Routledge, 101.
- [12] Hottell, Ruth, And Merchant, Carolyn(Trans). 2022. *Feminism Or Death*, D’eaubonne, Francoise.
- [13] John Fisher. 1987. *Taking Sympathy Seriously*, *Environmental Ethics*, 203.
- [14] Karen J. Warren. 1987. *Feminism And Ecology: Making Connections*. *Environmental Ethics* 9: 17-18.
- [15] King, Roger J. H. 1991. *Caring About Nature: Feminist Ethics And The Environment*. *Hypatia* 6 (Spring1991), 75-89.
- [16] Kinkley Jeffrey C (Trans.). 2009. *Border Town*. New York:Harper Collins Publishers.
- [17] Lian Yan. 2012. *A Comparative Study On The Translation Strategies Of Two Translations Of Border Town*, *Journal Of Jiamusi College Of Education*, (4).
- [18] Merchant, Carolyn. 1996. *Earthcare: Women And The Environment*. New York: Routledge.
- [19] Moore, N. 2015. *The Changing Nature Of Eco/Feminism*. *Telling Stories From Clayoquot Sound*, Vancouver: Ubc Press, 11.
- [20] Pilar Godayol. 2024. *Early Ecofeminist Debates Of The Seventies And Eighties In Barcelona*, 73.

- [21] Shen Congwen. 2011. *Biancheng: English-Chinese Translation (New Classroom Standard Bilingual Library)*. Nanjing: Yilin Publishing House.
- [22] Vakoch, D.A., And Mickey, S. (Eds.)2018. *Literature And Ecofeminism: Intersectional And International Voices (1st Ed.)*.
- [23] Xiao Wei. 2000. *Ecofeminism And Its Ethical Culture*. *Women's Studies Series 4*: 37 - 41.
- [24] Zhang Ying. 2011. *A Comparative Study Of Two English Translations Of Border Town From The Perspective Of Translation Aesthetics*. Taiyuan University Of Technology.