

## **The Male Lens on *Jane Eyre*: Translating/Constructing Femininity Across a Century of Chinese Cultural History**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The early twentieth to the early twenty-first century marked fundamental changes in gender roles and identities, as Chinese women journeyed from the rigours of Confucian orthodoxy to personal sovereignty, and from the shadows of ignorance towards enlightenment. This transition, far from linear, was defined by ongoing rounds of dialogue and deliberation. Standing at the forefront of these negotiations were Chinese male intellectuals and translators, who, historically positioned as importers and gatekeepers of Western gender and feminist discourses, played a key role in shaping modern and contemporary gender ideologies in China.

As a compelling case of cross-cultural negotiation, this doctoral thesis examines how progressive Chinese male translators have contributed to the localisation of Western women's literature. It studies Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* through the lens of three male translators across a century: Wu Guangjian (1935, early translation), Song Zhaolin (1996, canonical version), and Li Jihong (2019, controversial version). It analyses how these translators represent femininity, displaying feminist leanings in their prefaces, while mediating gender discourses within their translations. The study quantitatively and qualitatively examines cultural terms and expressions with gender implications across five dimensions: marriage and marital status, morality and ethical norms, education, societal roles, and beauty aesthetics, revealing how translators participate in the construction of gendered ideology. Anchored in the cultural turn in Translation Studies, this research situates textual analysis within a broader cultural history, an arena of contestation where Confucian traditions, contemporary norms, and

gender empowerment trends interact in push-and-pull dynamics, all vying for translators' attention. It further analyses how translators engage with these socio-cultural forces, noting their linguistic alignment with particular cultural currents while marginalising others.

Amidst these negotiations, Western gender discourses are continually reinterpreted and reshaped, either to accommodate or challenge the prevailing norms and values. Consciously or unconsciously, translators function as cultural architects, constructing and consolidating ideals of femininity within the contours of their time. Their roles alternate as marriage proponents, moral custodians, education advocates, beauty aesthetics definers and consumers, advancing female empowerment through domains like education, while simultaneously reproducing patriarchal symbolic orders in spheres such as morality. Translators, in their professional capacity, resemble chameleons inhabiting a cultural jungle, adjusting their linguistic camouflage in response to changing cultural agendas, yet underpinning every interaction with a persistent core of patriarchal biases. This study both acknowledges and problematises the transformative power of translation in constructing gender roles and identities.

**KEYWORDS:** Chinese cultural history, cultural turn in translation studies, gender roles and identities in China, translation as cultural negotiation, translation bias

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《简·爱》翻译与性别重构：  
百年中国文化史中的女性身份与社会角色

摘要

二十世纪初至二十一世纪初，中国女性的性别身份与社会角色经历了根本性嬗变：从儒家礼教的桎梏走向主体意识的觉醒，从蒙昧的阴影迈向启蒙的曙光。这一转变绝非坦途，而是在持续不断的思想碰撞中曲折前行。中国男性知识精英与译者们立足这些思潮前沿，凭借西方性别与女性主义话语引介者与守门人的双重身份，对现当代中国性别意识形态的构建起到了关键作用。

本博士论文置身于西学东渐的历史脉络，探索具有进步性别意识的中国男性知识分子如何推动西方女性文学的本土化。以夏洛蒂·勃朗特《简·爱》为研究对象，论文聚焦伍光建（1935 初创本）、宋兆霖（1996 通行本）与李继宏（2019 争议本）三位译者，探究其如何阐释与重构文本中的女性身份和角色：一方面在序言中彰显女性主义话语，另一方面则在译本中操控性别呈现。本研究采用量化统计与质性分析相结合的方法，对译本中涉及性别意涵的文化术语进行对比分析，围绕婚姻家庭、道德伦理、教育规范、社会角色与身体美学这五大女性生存维度展开，揭示译者如何通过翻译实践，参与本土性别斡旋与意识形态建构。以翻译研究的“文化转向”为理论基础，本研究将微观译本分析置于宏观文化史视野之下，考察儒家传统、时代规范与性别赋权思潮的多重力量博弈，并追踪译者据此采用的语言策略，探讨其如何顺应或边缘化特定的文化思潮。

在翻译过程中，西方性别话语经历着持续的重释与重构，或顺应或挑战不同时期的主流规范与价值。无论自觉与否，译者始终扮演文化建筑师的角色，描摹并强化着其时代语境中的理想女性图景。他们在多重社会职责间穿梭：既是婚俗制度的倡导者、道德体系的守护者、也是教育理念的革新家、体貌美学的定义者与消费者。这种角色张力在翻译实践中呈现双重悖论：一方面在教育等议题推进本土女性赋权，另一方面又在道德等维度再生产父权象征秩序。译者如同栖身文化丛林的变色龙，语言保护色随历史文化潮流而变幻，而其认知底色却未挣脱父权偏见的桎梏。本研究在肯定翻译实践对性别身份建构中的变革力量的同时，也对其内在的复杂性与局限性进行批判性反思。

关键词：翻译研究的文化转向，性别角色与身份认同，中国文化史，翻译的文化斡旋，翻译偏见