

## Feminist Translation Strategies in Children's Literature: A Case Study of Helen Wang's Translation of *Bronze and Sunflower*

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### ABSTRACT

*In recent years, children's literature has gained researchers' attention as a secondary genre. Expounding on the (secondary) status of women, translators, and children's literature, this study draws on how female translators address the translation of children's literature by analyzing Helen Wang's renowned Chinese-English translation of *Bronze and Sunflower*. There are many studies on this translation from different perspectives, which includes translation strategies. Nevertheless, few studies have approached translation strategies from the lens of feminism. Hence, the present article aims to address two issues by taking Helen Wang's translation as a case study: 1) What feminist strategies did Wang employ when translating this book? 2) Did Wang hereby display feminist consciousness? To this end, Delabastita's (1993) taxonomy on translation strategies was adopted to analyze the parallel corpus selected from the original work and its translated version. Overall, the analysis uncovered evidence of the use of these five strategies: substitution, repetition, deletion, addition, and permutation, which suggests that Helen Wang had a feminist approach while translating. Through these feminist translation strategies, she intervened in girls' passive image and women's secondary status, and erasing the values they violate, hence the demonstration of her feminist consciousness. This study may lead to a greater focus on feminist translation strategies in children's literature, with its findings providing a reference for researchers in translation as well as for translators of children's literature. Suggestions for future research are outlined at the end of the article.*

*Keywords: *Bronze and Sunflower*; Cao Wenxuan; children's literature; feminist translation studies; Helen Wang;*

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## INTRODUCTION

Children's literature (henceforth, ChL) has traditionally been considered a secondary genre compared to adult literature (Aixelá, 1996). Although more research has been done on this literature in recent years (Oittinen, 2000; Sunderland, 2004; Paul, 2005; Collie, 2006; Lathay, 2016; Trites, 2018), neither its secondary position, nor its translation, has fundamentally changed. This is also true for the attitude towards translators. Just like the marginalized position of ChL, translators have been equated with women because of their equally weaker social position. As Simmon comments, "translators are handmaidens to authors, women inferior to men" (2005, p. 1). Translators and women are recognized as subordinate or inferior whether to the original or to men (Wu, 2013). When all associated terms are considered, a dominant-subordinate relationship becomes apparent. According to Wu, "the either-or concept of original/translation and author/translator (or translatress) shows the ploy is that men/original/authors are 'production' and women/translations/translators [are] 'reproduction'." (ibid., p. 26) Women, translators, and ChL are inferior compared to men, authors and adult literature. How might the three be addressed in a single instance of translation, namely the translation of women/girl-related descriptions in ChL by female translators? Few studies have examined this topic—the translation of ChL through the feminist translation lens. In this regard, the current study draws on translation strategies and feminist consciousness in ChL by analyzing Cao Wenxuan's children's novel *Qingtong Kuihua* and Helen Wang's translation *Bronze and Sunflower*, namely, the source text (henceforth ST) and the target text (henceforth TT), respectively.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### FROM THE SECONDARY STATUS OF WOMEN TO FEMINISM IN LITERATURE

Since the beginning of time, it has been assumed that men are superior to women. In the Bible, Eve was created from Adam's rib; in China, "Husband is heaven" (Cao & Cong, 2017, p. 33). Both references illustrate the inferiority of women to men. However, as is known, women's status as second-class citizens is a cultural phenomenon rather than a biological one (Kaufmann, 1986, p. 121). After years of repression, Western women started fighting for their rights and for equality with men through social, political, and cultural initiatives. Feminism arose, with women's writing as a central component. Based on their bodies and life experiences, and by recognizing the power of speech, women used writing to explore their social and cultural position and to combat patriarchal language.

There have been three waves of feminism. The second and third were influential in making women visible in literature. The second wave stimulated a theoretical discussion regarding gender differences and women's roles. To make their voices heard, their identities visible, and their rights equal to men's, more educated women began to write. As a result, women's defense became a literary subgenre (Burkett & Brunell, 2021), resulting in its rise in academic fields. The third wave emphasized language, media, and ideas that communicated information about gender, femininity, and masculinity, thereby guiding feminism towards gender equality (ibid.). Specifically, it included more information about women and girls and redefined their image. Feminism in literature emphasizes rewriting and reinventing women's language to establish women's writing, or, in Showalter's words, "the inscription of ... the female difference in language and text" (1985, p. 249). This had an effect on translation.

## FROM THE SECONDARY STATUS OF TRANSLATORS TO FEMINIST TRANSLATORS AND THEIR TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

Translators' roles have been regarded as subordinate to the original authors, similar to how women's roles have been regarded. Florio, as early as the sixteenth century, believed that translation and women shared a double inferiority because translating was frequently compared to women and described as a reproduction, emphasizing its inferior status (Simmon, 1996, p. 1). Gilles Ménage in 1654 coined the term *les belles infidèles* to refer to gendered language, expressing the concern of the man and the woman, the translator, and the author (as quoted in Godayol, 2013). Similarly, Wu (2013) argues that translation and women were subordinate or inferior in the human world and that men/originals/authors are production, whereas women/translations/translators (or translatress, i.e., a woman who translates) are reproduction. According to Simmon (1996) and Chamberlain (1992, as quoted in Sun, 2021, p. 276), the author's original text has hierarchical authority over the translator's target text, which echoes women's images in a patriarchal society. According to Simmon (2005, p. 1), "Translators are handmaidens to author(s), women inferior to men". Translators are considered "secondary witnesses" who must pay close attention to the original testimony (Sharon, 2013, p. 309).

Despite all the one-sided perspective of women translators, feminism has brought about a change. The rewriting and reinvention of women's language by feminists influenced translators. They rethought the voices of underrepresented women. Initially, French-Canadian women translators (Godard, 1995) claimed to use innovative and distinct translation strategies (Wallmach, 2006, p. 1) and to challenge conventional views. They felt that women translators must use translation to empower women's voices and achieve their political goals. As a result, some translators embodied their gender consciousness in their works and used different, innovative strategies, giving rise to feminist translation.

Feminist translation emerged from Canadian feminism and is a recent offshoot of translation theory (Wu, 2013). Initially, it redefines and equalizes two crucial relationships: between the original text and the translation and between the original author and the translator, hence raising the status of both women and translators. Pertinent research has been conducted (Godard, 1984; Flotow, 1991 & 1997; Simmon, 2005; Castro, 2013), with two works having a significant impact: Simmon's *Gender in Translation* (1996) and Flotow's *Translation and Gender* (1997). Both have since established a connection between translation and gender and are widely acknowledged as the landmarks for the global dissemination of feminist translation theory (Yu, 2015).

In addition, feminist translation theory emphasizes translators' subjectivity, achieved by their consciously employing feminist translation strategies. Translators attempted to "discontinue intentional or unintentional distortion of women in translation" by employing innovative translation strategies and making theoretical claims that challenged conventional views on translation (Wu, 2013, p. 22), thus resisting their subservient position as "servant[s], [with] invisible hand[s] mechanically turning the word of one language into another" (Godard, 1990, p. 91). Their innovative strategies contributed to developing various categories of translation strategies. In what follows, the most common types will be discussed.

Flotow specifically suggested three strategies: supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and "hijacking" (1991, p. 74). She defined supplementing as a strategy that "compensates for language differences, or constitutes 'voluntarist action' on the text"; prefacing and footnoting are intervention forms that feminist translators can use to reflect on their work to stress their active presence in the text. "Hijacking" means that in order to make "the feminine seen and heard in her

translation”, the translator appropriates the text and deliberately “contravenes conventional translation practice of being see-through and silent” (ibid., pp. 77-79). Of course, the three strategies are interconnected and partially overlap.

Flotow’s strategies have sparked interest in numerous fields of study, and many researchers, irrespective of the genre, use her categories. Cao and Cong (2017) examined the use of her translation strategies in Eileen Chang’s Chinese-English translation of *The Golden Cangue*. Wu (2013), using these strategies, examined Ang Lee’s feminist translation in film adaptations of Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*. Allam (2018) used a qualitative method to analyze an Arab-English translation of *Professor Hanaa* and investigated the frequency of Flotow’s three strategies in terms of lexical and semantic aspects. She discovered that the respective frequencies are 7.2%, 75.3%, and 17.5% corresponding to prefacing and footnoting, supplementing, and hijacking. Tang (2018) compared the use of feminist translation strategies by female and male translators and concluded that they show different preferences: female translators tend to use hijacking and supplementing while male translators omission and rewriting. However, according to Flotow, there are other “numerous strategies used in feminist translation” (1991, p. 74).

Against this background, Massardier-Kenny (1997) challenged Flotow’s position and proposed two more feminist translation strategies: author-centered and translator-centered. The former includes recovery, commentary, and resistance, focusing on the reader’s understanding of the source text. The latter includes commentary, parallel texts, and collaboration, through which translators attempt to improve the reader’s perception of the target text (pp. 58-63).

Wallmach (2006) also has a classification of feminist translation strategies, incorporating Vinay and Darbelnet’s five categories, namely, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation, into Delabastita’s, namely, substitution, repetition, compensation (or permutation in Delabastita’s terminology), and adaptation (p. 15). Wallmach asserts that her research helps to “determine the creativity of feminist translation strategies” (ibid.). In this study, Delabastita’s categories will be examined in depth.

As Delabastita (1993, pp. 33-37) defined it, substitution is replacing an ST item with a code item in the TT. In a narrow sense, this includes all transfers of ST items and TT counterparts. Repetition means that the ST item is not replaced but repeated or transferred to the TT. In this case, the maximal semantic equivalent is disregarded. Commonly, the ST item with a specific meaning is not transferred into the TT.

In contrast to deletion, addition refers to a linguistic, cultural, or textual element that has been added without including ST information. In translation, these two approaches coexist frequently. According to Delabastita (ibid.), permutation is changing the translational relationship between the respective textual positions in both the ST and the TT.

Delabastita (ibid.) also mentions the relationship between the five strategies. Substitution, as one of the most common translation strategies, is thought to be the only one that occurs in strict recoding processes; the other four appear to be the characteristics of recording in a broader sense. Delabastita’s categories were initially proposed to translate literary wordplay or puns. However, Wallmach has used them to study feminist translation.

#### FROM THE SECONDARY STATUS OF CHILDREN’S LITERATURE TO FEMINISM IN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE AND ITS TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

ChL, according to Barnett (2023), is a subsection of literature written for children readers. Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown defined it as “good-quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children of those ages, through prose

and poetry, fiction and nonfiction” (2011, p. 2). It is a genre intended for children and of benefit to children’s minds and development (Fadiman, 2023). However, similar to the subordinate status of women, ChL is regarded as inferior to other literary genres. Thankfully, the rise of feminism also affected the status of ChL. At the beginning of its second wave, children’s fiction emerged as a significant focus of feminist theory (Lehtonen, 2007, p. 1). During the third wave, children’s media featured intelligent and independent girls as main characters, such as in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Mulan*.

Feminism has had an impact on the study of ChL. The first is rereading and reevaluating devalued ideas in the classics. From a feminist perspective, classics reveal a different side (Gunther, 1994). Second, neglected texts are reconsidered. Trites (1997) examined feminist voices in ChL by revisiting *Walking Sleeping Beauty*. Finally, feminism corrected the direction of power and gender in ChL, resulting in studies codifying feminism in ChL. Rereading and reexamining children’s classics helps identify female heroes “who transcend their world in positive, female-oriented ways” (Lehtonen, 2007, p. 1), contributing to ChL and female roles within it.

Along with the change in ChL, there has been a change in the translation of ChL. Many researchers began to examine its translation strategies (Shavit, 1986; Lathey, 2006, 2015; Coillie & Verschueren, 2006; Klingberg, 2008). Mieke Desmet explored the strategies for translating ChL, primarily from the perspective of manipulation, and concluded that these strategies are omission and deletion, purification, substitution, explanation, and simplification (cited in O’Sullivan, 2019, p. 20).

Desmet’s translation strategies are expounded here, which will be compared in the subsequent section. Due to ideological concerns, omission and deletion should communicate appropriate values to young readers, and therefore, making the target texts readily accessible and acceptable. Purification is used to eliminate elements that contradict the values of the target culture. To improve children’s comprehension, substitution replaces complex or unintelligible elements. Explication is the rephrasing or addition of explanations. In a narrow sense, simplification refers to using short sentences in concrete and non-figurative language instead of long abstract sentences.

## RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

As aforementioned, feminist translators use innovative strategies in their translation practice to prevent the intentional or unintentional distortion of women from protecting their voices. Because feminism invariably influences ChL, feminist translation of ChL is inevitable. Following Lathey’s emphasis on the translator’s “creativity in translating for children” (as quoted in Li, 2019, p. 1), this unquestionably requires observing their creativity in their translation practice, with no exception for feminist translators’. In this regard, it is necessary to investigate how female translators express feminism in their ChL translations. However, there are few studies on this topic, and less so on novels (Irshad & Yasmin, 2022, p. 1), not to mention feminist translation strategies. In regards to this, which of the categories discussed above is most relevant to studying the feminist translation of ChL? The following are some things to consider.

Desmet’s and Delabastita’s strategies overlap. Some are identical, such as deletion and substitution. Although most of Desmet’s strategies are intended to simplify the target text for young readers, they are proposed from a manipulation standpoint. Furthermore, feminist

translation strategies such as Flotow's, Massardier's, Wallmach's, and Delabastita's should be considered, given the focus of the current study. Based on a cursory review of the selected material, it is reasonable to conclude that not all Flotow's three strategies are amenable to further analysis, as Helen Wang does not employ the strategies of prefacing and footnoting. Finally, given the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between adult authors and young readers, as well as between adult translators and child readers, Massardier-Kenny's author-centered and translator-centered strategies are inapplicable. Whether the author-centered or translator-centered perspective is preferred, it is easy to overlook the children-centered perspective.

In addition, the translation *Bronze and Sunflower* by Wang is suitable for a case study in ChL. Most importantly, it belongs to the genre of the novel, which is less explored than other genres, and is an icon among Chinese-English translations of ChL. Wang is also known for translating Chinese children's books into English. Her best-known and most acclaimed book is *Bronze and Sunflower*, for which Wang has won five international prizes. Because of its great success, many studies have been published on this book, including on its translation strategies. Unfortunately, however, few have looked at it through the lens of feminist translation theory.

For these considerations mentioned above, this article uses Delabastita's five categories to answer two research questions: What feminist translation strategies does Wang employ when translating this book? Does Wang's translation exhibit a feminist consciousness? By addressing the two questions, the current study aims to find out the translation strategies and feminist consciousness in Helen Wang's translation of *Bronze and Sunflower*, hence gaining insight in how the feminist translators render ChL.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to find the answers to the above research questions, a qualitative, descriptive method was used. After reviewing the literature, a discourse analysis was conducted on Wang's translation of *Bronze and Sunflower*. Next, to gain a better understanding of the feminist strategies she employs, a parallel corpus of feminist aspects was collected from both the ST and the TT and analyzed, using Delabastita's framework. In addition, the author analyzed Wang's translation strategies to determine whether or not she was translating motivated by feminist consciousness. A deductive approach was adopted to look at the overall picture of feminist translation strategies in ChL.

## FEMINIST TRANSLATION STRATEGIES IN *BRONZE AND SUNFLOWER*

### OVERVIEW OF HELEN WANG AND *BRONZE AND SUNFLOWER*

*Bronze and Sunflower* is the English translation of *Qingtong Kuihua* by Cao Wenxuan, whom *The New York Times* once called "one of China's most beloved writers". Cao has authored over fifty books, which have earned him several awards in China, including the Bingxin Children's Literature Award and the Hans Christian Andersen Award. Wang's contribution to the book's success cannot be overlooked, as she allowed people from abroad to enjoy the story.

Against the backdrop of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, *Bronze and Sunflower* tells the heartwarming story of a girl named Quihua, translated as Sunflower in the English version.

Sunflower moves from the city to the countryside because of her father's job. Since her mother passed away, she was forced to adjust to solitude while her father worked outside of the house. Qingtong, or Bronze in the English version, a boy with a speech disability, came to her aid when a character called Gayu duped her, and the two are linked by fate. When Sunflower's father dies in a drowning accident, she is left an orphan. She is then sent to Damaidi, where Bronze's family adopts her. The once-lonely pair becomes inseparable. Though life is poor, Sunflower grows up in a happy environment and is rescued from misery by Bronze and his family. The topic of growth is timeless and universal, and the book has gained global popularity, being translated into over seventeen languages.

Helen Wang is the translator of *Bronze and Sunflower* into English. In 2017, she won the Marsh Award for Literature in Translation for her translation of this children's novel "into lyrical prose that brings to life the riverside village of Damaidi and its inhabitants" (praise for the book from Wang's translation, 2019). Aside from that, her translated version, published in the United States, contributed to the book's recognition as a New York Times Book, Notable Children's Book of the Year, Wall Street Journal Best Book of the Year, Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book of the Year, and Kirkus Prize Finalist. Moreover, Wang received the Chen Bochui "Special Contribution" Award in 2017 for her contribution to the dissemination of Chinese ChL to the world.

#### FEMINIST TRANSLATION STRATEGIES IN *BRONZE AND SUNFLOWER*

##### SUBSTITUTION

In the case of substitution, according to Delabastita, the relevant ST item is replaced with a TT code item. This strategy encompasses all transfers of ST items and their TT equivalents (1993, pp. 33-37). In this context, the narrow sense is used.

The following two examples show this feminist translation strategy in greater detail.

Example.1.

ST 1: 葵花很孤独。(Cao, 2005, p. 2, my emphasis in this article; same hereafter).

TT 1: She was *alone*. (Wang, 2019, p. 2)

In ST1, Cao describes Sunflower being "孤独". Although "孤独" has two equivalents in English: "alone" and "lonely", "alone" refers to the state of being apart from others, whereas "lonely" refers to a distressing psychological state. Cao shows that the little girl feels lonely without her father and other people. Cao appears to favor Sunflower's psychological feelings. However, Wang adopts the first and substitutes "alone" for "lonely" in the target text.

In contrast to this description of the female character Sunflower, another example of "孤独" is used here to describe the male character Bronze and the animals, such as the bird, the fish, and the horse.

ST 2: 青铜很孤独。一只鸟独自拥有天空的孤独，一条鱼独自拥有大河的孤独，一匹马独自拥有草原的孤独..... 他并不是世界上最孤独的孩子。(Cao, 2005, p. 25)

TT 2: Bronze was *lonely*. As *lonely* as the only bird in the sky, the only fish in the river, the only horse on the steppes.... He was not the *loneliest* child in the world. (Wang, 2019, p. 37)

The Chinese characters "孤独" in this sentence are identical to those in ST1. Accordingly, two alternatives exist in English: "alone" and "lonely." This time, however, in TT2, Wang chose the word "lonely" to describe Bronze's dreadful mental state, as lonely as birds, fish, and horses. Is there a difference between the two scenarios? According to Wang's translation, there is indeed a



difference. The distinction lies not in the Chinese characters but in Wang's selection of English words. There is a stark contrast between the descriptions of Sunflower and Bronze. Thus, the description of Sunflower avoids painful emotions.

#### REPETITION

Repetition means repeating or transferring the ST item in the TT instead of replacing it. In this case, the maximum semantic equivalent can be ignored.

##### Example 2

ST3: 葵花指着太阳，然后用树枝一笔一画地在沙地上写下了两个大字：太阳。她大声地念着：“太—阳！”然后，用树枝在那两个字上不停地重复着笔画，嘴里念念有词：“一横，一撇，一捺，一点，‘太阳’的太……”(Cao, 2005, p. 89)

TT3: Sunflower pointed to the glowing ball in the sky, then found a stick and wrote two characters in the earth:

太阳...

She read them out loud: “*Tai yang*... the sun.” She retraced the strokes of the characters over and over again, naming each of the brushstrokes as she wrote. “*Heng* (a horizontal line), *pie* (descending to the left), *na* (descending to the right) and finally *dian* (a dot). That’s *tai*...” (Wang, 2019, p. 134; original emphasis)

The family in the story was too poor to send more than one child to school. However, Sunflower could attend school following her family's plans due to a trick. Cao depicts a scene from ST3 in which Sunflower teaches her brother Bronze to read. She does not start with the basic Chinese characters like “一” (meaning “one” in English), “二” (“two”), or “三” (“three”). Instead, she goes by what she observes — “太阳” (“the sun”), which showed her optimistic nature. Sunflower is portrayed as an optimistic girl who receives an education, which is a positive image from the view of feminism. In TT3, Wang retains this positive image of Sunflower and repeats the Chinese character “太阳” while simultaneously transcribing the Chinese characters showing Sunflower's reading ability in pinyin, namely “*tai yang*”, “*heng*”, “*pie*”, “*na*”, and “*dian*”. Only by repetition would the semantic equivalent of these Chinese characters in English not be overlooked. To compensate for the loss of meaning, Wang adds an explanation in brackets to these characters to benefit young readers.

#### DELETION AND ADDITION

As mentioned earlier, deletion is a commonly used strategy in which the ST element is not transferred to its TT counterpart. Here is an example from Wang's translation.

##### Example 3.

ST4: 爸爸就会与她睡在一起。让她枕在他的胳膊上……(Cao, 2005, p. 6)

TT4: She wanted him to let her rest her head on his arm... (Wang, 2019, p. 12)

This example demonstrates that there are two sentences in ST4 but only one in TT4, which is merely the counterpart of the second part of ST4 — “让她枕在他的胳膊上”. There is an apparent omission of the first character in ST4 — “爸爸就会与她睡在一起”, which translates as “Baba would sleep together with her”. Although the translation appears somewhat odd initially, it can be interpreted as quite usual when viewed in the context of China at that time. The “Historical Notes” section in Wang's translation (2019) shows that the story is set in southern China in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time, China was still underdeveloped, and people

lived in poverty. It was common for family members to share a large, heated brick bed on which they ate, relaxed, and slept because most families could not afford rooms or beds for each family member. This might have been the case with Sunflower and her father.

Apart from widespread poverty, Sunflower's background must be considered. Her mother died when she was three years old. Since then, her father had fulfilled both parental roles. After exhausting work in the fields and evening meetings, Sunflower's father had yet to put her to bed, a task generally reserved for mothers.

This is a common and understandable passage in the original text. However, Wang chose not to translate “爸爸就会与她睡在一起” which literally means “Baba would sleep together with her”, presumably to prevent readers from associating it with morally inappropriate acts.

Addition, opposed to deletion, involves adding a linguistic, cultural, or textual element lacking in the ST. What follows up is an example of this type.

Example. 4.

ST5: 她害怕了，一双小手死死揪住堤坡上的草。(Cao, 2005, p. 9)

TT5: Her small hands clung to the grass, holding on *for dear life*. (Wang, 2019, p. 14)

ST5 describes that Sunflower was afraid of falling into the river and drowning, and she strived to survive. When all the elements are translated, the English version of ST5 reads, “Sunflower was full of fear (corresponding to ‘她害怕了’ in the original) and grasped, in an extremely tight way, the grass on the river bank (‘一双小手死死揪住堤坡上的草’ in the original).” Compared to this version, Wang deletes “她害怕了” — the description of Sunflower's fear of falling into the river, which will probably create an aura of impending death, causing fear among female readers and negatively affecting their psychology. Instead, she added “for dear life” — the purpose of the little girl's act, which was to be courageous enough to save her own life, and the word “dear”.

#### PERMUTATION

Permutation as a translation relationship between respective textual positions in the ST and TT. Permutation emphasizes how several things, here the elements in the respective texts, are combined, arranged, or ordered. Below is an example of this strategy.

Example. 5.

ST6: 新鲜的空气，明亮的阳光，新鲜的鱼虾和高质量的稻谷，使这里的女人都特别能生养孩子。一生就是一串，若按高矮走出来，看上去就像一列火车。(Cao, 2005, p. 49)

TT6: *The women were healthy and strong* — they had fresh air and sunshine, fresh fish from the river, and fresh rice from the paddy fields — *and had no trouble getting pregnant*. (Wang, 2019, p. 72)

In ST6, the author Cao describes in the first sentence the natural environment in Damaidi—the place the story took place: “新鲜的空气 (literally meaning ‘fresh air’ in English), 明亮的阳光 (‘bright sunshine’), 新鲜的鱼虾 (‘fresh fish and shrimps’) 和高质量的稻谷 (‘and high-quality rice’) 使这里的女人都特别能生养孩子 (‘helped the women living here have a special ability to bear many children’)”. In the second sentence, Cao uses a parable to paint a picture of a large number of children being born to the women living in Damaidi. The original text says: “Once they bore one child, they would have two, three... and then a cluster (literally meaning ‘一生就是一串’ in Chinese). If the children came out in a high-low order (‘若按高矮走出来’), they looked like a long train (‘看上去就像一列火车’).” Wang deletes the second sentence in

ST6 and rearranges the order of the remaining elements. She also adds “(women) were healthy and strong” and replaces the original “特别能生养孩子 (literally meaning ‘have a special ability to bear many children’ in English)” with “had no trouble getting pregnant (literally meaning ‘怀孕毫不费力’ in Chinese)”. It shows that Wang employs four feminist translation strategies — deletion, permutation, addition, and substitution — in this sentence.

Based on the comparison of the examples from both the ST and the TT, it is found that Wang employs Delabastita’s five feminist translation strategies, sometimes only one and sometimes several.

### WANG’S FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE TRANSLATION OF *BRONZE AND SUNFLOWER*

A feminist consciousness implies ideas that lead to gender rebellion and the identification of perceived oppressors to promote social change (Gurin et al., 1980). It is a woman’s attitude that demonstrates her feminist identity rather than her labeling herself as a feminist. Hence, it is a distinct awareness, which can be recognized by the use of “feminist vocabulary of motives” (Green, 1979, p. 359). In the theory of feminist translation, a translator’s gender consciousness does have an impact on his/her translation activity. In fiction translation, feminist translation strategies, as well as the transference of gendered language, are equally essential (Irshad & Yasmin, 2022, p. 4). Using specific translation strategies, a feminist translator intervenes in gendered language. Given this, it is reasonable to assert that a translator’s use of feminist translation strategies demonstrates her feminist consciousness.

In the context of the present study, Wang employs all five feminist translation strategies. Wang replaced “lonely” with “alone” in Example 1, and emphasized that Sunflower was “alone” because nobody accompanied her. However, she did not feel lonely. This undoubtedly reduced the depressed feelings. From a feminist translator’s standpoint, the depressed state is cruel for a seven-year-old girl. This strategy demonstrates Wang’s protection of the little girl’s emotions and liberation from a negative psychological state.

Moreover, the deletion of “爸爸就会与她睡在一起” (literally meaning “Baba would sleep together with her”) in Example 3 protects the girl from being associated with morally inappropriate practices. In addition, the repetition of “太阳” (“tai yang” in *pinyin*; “the sun” in English) in Example 2 and the deletion and addition of Example 4 protect the girl’s character and promote the development of a healthy psychology and positive values. This is evidence of Wang’s feminist consciousness.

Furthermore, multiple strategies in Example 5 present more of Wang’s feminist consciousness. Initially, the deletion of the second sentence in ST6 helps to avoid the stereotype of women’s subordinate status, as men’s accessories and breeding machines, thereby removing a negative influence on girls’ attitudes toward marriage. Second, permutation aids in establishing a clear cause-and-effect relationship: women were physically fit and fertile because they had access to a healthy environment and sufficient food. The substitution, along with the addition of “were healthy and strong,” also conveys a positive message to girls: if you are healthy and strong, you will have no trouble becoming pregnant. Finally, this concept is transferred to girls: a woman has the right to decide whether or not to become pregnant. Giving birth to numerous infants violates her rights. The feminist consciousness of Wang is clear in this example.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the corpus selected, the current study concludes that Wang used all five of Delabastita's proposed translation strategies. Wang employed a single strategy in some (Examples 1, 2, and 3) and multiple strategies in others (Examples 4 and 5). The examples provided are not exhaustive, and her translation contains many more. Although Wang has never claimed to be a feminist translator, the above translation shows her feminist awareness. Her feminist translation strategies eliminate what violates proper ethics in the target culture and shield girl readers from the view of female passivity and subordination.

This study is a preliminary examination of this field, which may lead to a greater emphasis on feminist translation strategies in ChL. In addition, it provides a basis for future research on the feminist translation of ChL. However, its limitations are inevitable due to the paucity of prior research. First, the examples are not exhaustive because of the selection of a limited parallel corpus; second, the study lacks comprehensiveness because only fiction is examined, which may not be representative enough to provide a comprehensive picture of ChL translation.

Given the importance of ChL to their education, more attention should be paid to this field. Future research could make a further exploration of Wang's translations from the feminist perspective, including both *Bronze and Sunflower* and her other children's books. Studies could also look at more examples of ChL, using different research methods, such as quantitative or mixed methods, in more languages and cultural settings.

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