

The Female Consciousness in Jane Austen's Works and Literary Translation Strategies

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Abstract: Jane Austen was a famous British novelist who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. She experienced social oppression of women and was deeply hurt by the feudal marriage system. Therefore, she created a series of female characters with distinct personalities and progressive views on marriage, using these characters to expound her views on women and marriage. She advocates gender equality, women's self-esteem and self-love, women's breaking of the shackles that bind them, advocating rationality and character in marriage choices, and opposing money supremacy. Her views on women and marriage broke the traditional societal norms of the time and had a certain progressive significance.

Keywords: Female consciousness, Jane Austen, literary translation strategies

1. Introduction

Austen was born in the rural town of Steventon, England, and his father George Austen was a local parish priest. My father was young and poor, and both of his parents passed away at the age of nine. There are eight Jane brothers and sisters, and Jane is the seventh. The family lives a simple yet pastoral life. After their father died, Jane sisters and their mother were able to live on their father's 150 pound inheritance every year and their brother's help. In Austen's England, although men and women were free to love, marriage could not be dissolved. According to British parliamentary law, the upper class can divorce. A husband can choose an unfaithful wife, but a wife has no right to file for divorce from an unfaithful or violent husband. For women who cannot engage in any profession to make a living, choosing a good marriage for their livelihood and wealth is the best means. And this is exactly what Austen strongly opposes. When Austen was young, he had both talent and appearance, and there were many suitors. Unfortunately, some of these pursuers passed away at a young age, some were ugly in appearance, and some came from noble backgrounds but were spiritual aristocrats without money. There are really too few men like the male protagonists in novels who are young, wealthy, elegant, intelligent, and have a flirtatious style. Even if there were, it would not fall on the poor Austen sisters. Austen, who was overly rational, remained unmarried for life. Without an ideal partner, she could only settle for poverty, reciting poetry and composing poems every day, observing others, and examining life [1-2].

2. The Female Consciousness in Mansfield Manor

2.1. Money Consciousness

In the early stages of Jane Austen's novel creation, she always introduced the concept of "money first" when depicting the love and marriage relationships between young men and women, letting many readers know that the maintenance of love and marriage is dominated by money. In the creation of her later novels, Jane Austen began to reduce her emphasis on describing money and instead chose to combine it with love, emphasizing the importance that women place on their inner selves and establishing a better sense of independence. Women's scrutiny of beauty constantly changes with age, and Jane Austen is no exception. Mansfield Park, where Mary, who shares the same temperament as Mary Ann, is no longer favored by Jane Austen and is given a tragic ending. On the other hand, our protagonist Fanny, although gentle and kind like Mary, is different in that she dares to resist fate. Despite frequent pressure from the outside world to marry Henry, she still chooses to follow her own heart. Therefore, at the end of the novel, she has a happy and fulfilling ending. The comparison between these two cross century works already allows us to clearly see that Jane Austen has undergone

a fundamental change in her aesthetic consciousness. She is more fond of women with independent thinking, believing that only women who dare to pursue freedom are worthy of happiness.

2.2. Equality Concept

Jane Austen began to firmly believe in the concept of gender equality. The resistance of women against patriarchy should not only be reflected in their actions, but more importantly, in their spirit. They should have strong willpower and be leaders in their own spiritual field. In the book, although the female protagonist eventually had a happy and fulfilling family with Edmund, and wholeheartedly believed in this man, she was still able to calmly analyze the pros and cons when key issues were presented, rather than blindly trusting others, even if they were her pillow. At the end of the book, Fanny even succeeded in becoming Edmund's spiritual faith, guiding him in the direction of his life. This is the biggest breakthrough achieved by Fanny after the awakening of her female consciousness.

2.3. Mother Image

The mothers portrayed in *Mansfield Park* are all lazy and self-centered women who only care about their own comfort. This selfishness is not only reflected in their lack of attention to their children's studies, but also in their disregard for their husbands' safety when they go out. In their eyes, there is nothing more important than being able to live a comfortable life. In fact, when reading *Mansfield Park*, some readers may find that the female consciousness reflected in the book is sometimes as strong as steel, and sometimes as weak as water, seemingly contradictory and coordinated with each other. In fact, this is precisely because the birth environment of the book is in Jane Austen's period of personality transformation, which is a period of evolution of female consciousness, that it brings readers a seemingly contradictory but actually unified feeling.

3. The Female Consciousness in *Norsang Monastery*

3.1. Chastity Consciousness

One of the major reasons for the frequent civil wars and social instability in the late Roman Republic was the loss of the most revered virtue at that time - chastity, which highlights the importance of cultivating female virtues. For example, in Mr. Allen's view, it is "unsightly" for a young girl and a young man who are not related, but often ride around in an open carriage. Women are not allowed to travel alone with unfamiliar men, otherwise they will be criticized and criticized, and considered to have 'moral shortcomings'. And these women who have lost their moral character will face public criticism and be at a disadvantage in the marriage market. At the same time, women are also restricted in terms of courtship. This is also reflected in the relationship between Catherine and Henry. After discovering that she had a good impression of Henry, the only thing Catherine could do was to treat his sister kindly and try her best to cater to his preferences; And cannot confess or pursue passionately like men do. After all, Henry traveled more than ten miles to visit after discovering his feelings. And the proposal is even more controlled by men. As stated in the text, 'Henry confessed his love to her (referring to Catherine) and also begged for love from her. In fact, both of them understood that the heart already belonged to him'. Even if they are in love, women cannot take any direct action, all they can do is silently wait for the man's response. These restrictions deprive women of dominance from the beginning of marriage, which seems to imply the position they will have in marriage[3-4].

3.2. Family Consciousness

In 18th century England, men still held a dominant position in the family, while women's main tasks were to have children and take care of their husbands and children. Catherine's mother, Mrs. Moran, is such a typical representative. As a capable woman, she has given birth to a total of 10 children and shoulders the responsibility of raising them. This is exactly the daily life of an ordinary British woman after marriage. They don't often go out, and their daily lives revolve around their husbands and children. When Mrs. Allen met her classmate and close friend Mrs. Sop, whom she hadn't seen in fifteen years, on the streets of Bath, Mrs. Sop, who was known for her outstanding achievements, talked about the talents of her sons and the beauty of her daughters, as well as their respective careers and aspirations. She regarded her dedication to the family as an important topic of conversation. Even more absurdly, the two close friends who were classmates at the time only met once

after their respective marriages. At first glance, this may seem unreasonable, but given the context at the time, it seems reasonable. After marriage, women live with their husbands, and the two families may not be close to each other. After marriage, they are busy with their own families, making it difficult for them to find time to gather together. After all, family is their natural responsibility as wives and mothers, and it is also the value and meaning of women's existence. They revolve around their husbands and children every day, silently dedicating their youth and passion to family life.

4. Translation Strategies in Jane Austen's Works from the Perspective of Female Consciousness

This chapter takes Zhang Ling's translation of Jane Austen's work "Pride and Prejudice" as an example to explore translation strategies from the perspective of female consciousness.

4.1. Supplementing Strategy

Within the framework of feminist translation studies, the act of supplementing entails either introducing new details or eliminating existing ones within the source material that are either absent or discreet, with the aim of highlighting disparities in gender. Frequently, a translator adhering to feminist principles may recraft the narrative in a manner that aligns with feminist ideology. Moreover, the act of translating itself serves as a prime illustration of the feminist translator's personal agency. Zhang Ling, a woman of autonomy and contemplation, integrates feminist ideology significantly into her translation endeavors. She advocates for autonomy and liberty and combats the notion that women should be reliant on social standing or wealth. Consequently, she inspires women to seek joy and fulfillment. By infusing her translations with feminist ideology, she communicates this perspective to her audience. This approach to translation is a form of affectionate disguise, focusing on language that constructs a subjective awareness within feminist literature to a degree. The following section will analyze if Zhang Ling's rendition reflects the strategy of supplementation through the lens of feminist translation theory. To a certain extent, Zhang Ling has manipulated the target language. On one side, footnotes facilitate comprehension for readers; on the other, readers are led to interpret the text as the author initially intended. Consequently, Zhang Ling is capable of exerting feminist influence[5].

4.2. Hacking Strategy

Within the realm of feminist translation studies, the act of supplementation involves introducing or eliminating certain details not explicitly present in the source material to highlight disparities in gender. Frequently, a translator with a feminist outlook may recraft the narrative in a way that aligns with feminist principles. Moreover, the act of translating serves as a prime illustration of the feminist translator's personal perspective. Zhang Ling, a woman of autonomy and contemplation, integrates feminist philosophy significantly into her translation work. She advocates for self-reliance and liberty and rejects the notion that women should be reliant on social standing or wealth. Consequently, she inspires women to seek joy and fulfillment. By infusing her translations with feminist ideology, she communicates this viewpoint to her audience. This approach to translation is a form of affectionate disguise, focusing on language that constructs a subjective awareness within feminist literature to a degree. The following section will examine if Zhang Ling's rendition reflects the strategy of supplementation through the lens of feminist translation theory. To a certain extent, Zhang Ling has manipulated the target language. On one side, footnotes facilitate comprehension for readers; on the other, readers are led to interpret the text as the author initially intended. Consequently, Zhang Ling is capable of exerting feminist influence. Zhang Ling, a self-reliant and introspective woman, places significant emphasis on feminist ideology in her translation processes. She champions self-reliance and liberty and argues against women's dependence on status and wealth. Thus, she motivates women to seek happiness. By embedding her feminist beliefs into her translations, she presents them to her readers. This translation tactic is a loving form of disguise, focusing on language that shapes the subjective consciousness of feminist literature to a certain extent.

4.3. Hijacking Strategy

The perfect portrayal of women is frequently skewed during the male-dominated translation process. Disregarding the principle of equal rights, defects exist within the male-centric model of literary production. As a result, when feminist translators encounter original texts that fail to reflect feminist perspectives at the linguistic and conceptual levels, they aim to alter the source material to facilitate an

innovative translation approach. Zhang Ling, a female translator, attempts to seize control of the original text to influence the portrayal of women. Nevertheless, she opts to omit the translation of the word "my," deviating from the structural framework. In the absence of a possessive pronoun, the hierarchical relationship between master and servant vanishes. Thus, the underlying message of the sentence might be altered. According to her translation, love evolves from a reciprocal affection to a more individualized sentiment. Here, Zhang Ling diminishes the proactive depiction of the male character, Collin, through his absence. This move aims to highlight the equal opportunity for love between men and women. Zhang Ling incorporates additional linguistic elements, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, to eliminate gender bias and emphasize gender equality. When the added content fails to align with the intended meaning, Zhang Ling employs a strategy of textual appropriation. She deliberately modifies the meanings of certain words and sentence structures. By doing so, derogatory terms targeting women vanish. Such terms are either transformed into neutral language or simply disregarded. The characteristics attributed to women are transformed into a subjective voice that actively and proactively conveys their thoughts, rather than being portrayed as a passive recipient of male actions. The resulting text is instrumental in establishing a positive representation of women.

5. Conclusion

Due to the limitations of the times, Jane Austen's female consciousness often oscillated between tradition and modernity. Therefore, she attached great importance to the position of marriage in women's lives, just like Mrs. Bennet's hobby of marrying daughters. Jane Austen's goal was to provide women with happy marriages and to seek a guarantee for their lives through marriage, which was a deeply rooted concept in society at that time. However, Jane Austen's exploration of women's fate has important practical significance. The views on women and marriage reflected in her novels not only effectively broke through the outdated marriage ideas of the society at that time, providing great spiritual support for women, but also greatly promoted the development of women's literature in British society and the awakening of female consciousness.

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