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Feminist Translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life*

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ABSTRACT

浮生六记 *Fusheng Liuji* 'Six Records of a Floating Life' is an autobiography and the chef-d'oeuvre of 沈复 Shen Fu (1763-1825), which concerns delightful trivialities in his impoverished life and his wife 芸 Yun, a meritorious woman characterised by intelligence, diligence and punctiliousness. As an illustrious 性灵 *xingling* work enriched by literary, aesthetic and linguistic prowess, Six Records of a Floating Life has been rendered into English by an illustrious bilingual writer and translator 林语堂 Lin Yutang (1895-1976) and Shirley M. Black, as well as Leonard Pratt and Su-hui Chiang, whose version is featured by a socio-historical perspective (Lu 2010). In this research, I scrutinise Pratt and Chiang's translation under the framework of feminist translation (Flotow 1991), exploring strategies of supplementing, hijacking as well as prefacing and footnoting. In the introduction section, Pratt and Chiang extol the heroine Yun and introduce women serving as courtesans in Qing (1644-1912) China. Additionally, the translators also employ annotations to justify Yun's provocative utterances. Apart from prefacing and footnoting, Pratt and Chiang also deploy strategies of supplementing and hijacking, so as to highlight Yun's merit and avoid dated expressions.

Keywords: *Fusheng Liuji*, Pratt and Chiang, prefacing and footnoting, supplementing, hijacking

Introduction

In this research, I investigate the illustrious 浮生六记 *Fusheng Liuji* 'Six Records of a Floating Life' composed circa 1810 during the Qing (1644-1912) dynasty by 沈复 Shen Fu (1763-1825), an impoverished scholar struggling to make ends meet via employment as a temporary clerk, mediocre painter and occasional trader (Li 2012, Chen and Zhang 2017). Notwithstanding an indication of six fascicles by its title, *Six Records of a Floating Life* (henceforward *Records*) is a torso, in that it merely comprises four extant chapters, viz. Part I 闺房记乐 *Guifang Jile* 'The Joys of the Wedding Chamber', Part II 闲情记趣 *Xianqing Jiqu* 'The Pleasures of Leisure', Part III 坎坷记愁 *Kanke Jichou* 'The Sorrows of Misfortune' and Part IV 浪游记快*Langyou Jikuai* 'The Delights of Roaming Afar' (Doleželová-Velingerová and Doležel 1972, Du 2006, Chang 2017). The expression 浮生*fusheng* 'a floating life' in the title is conjectured to be derived from a lyrical verse entitled 春夜宴从弟桃李园序 *Chunye Yan Congdi Taoliyuan Xu* 'On a Banquet with my Cousins on a Spring Night in the Peach Garden' that is composed by a renowned poet 李白 Li Bai (701-762 AD), during the Tang (618-907 AD) dynasty (Wang 2002, Su 2018), as in Example (1).

> (1) 夫天地者，万物之逆旅也；光阴者，百代之过客也。而浮生若梦，为欢几何?
> Now the heavens and earth are the hostels of creation; and time has seen a full hundred generations. Ah, this floating life, like a dream…True happiness is so rare!
> (*On a Banquet with my Cousins on a Spring Night in the Peach Garden*. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983)

As Shen's chef-d'oeuvre as well as an autobiography and confessional prose (Diao 2015, Chen and Zhang 2017), *Records* manifests the author's observation and appreciation of delightful trivialities in his agonising life as well as his mentality towards art and aesthetics pertaining to scenery, gastronomy, interior decoration, landscape architecture, etc. (Lin 1999, Cheng 2008a, 2008b, Liu 2010, Cui and Wang 2016). Written in elegant classical Chinese, *Records* abounds with literary and historical allusions and textual references (Liu 2010, Yeh 2015, Chang 2017), and accords with a celebrated school of Chinese literary tradition, which is dubbed as 性灵*xingling* 'native sensibility; inner self' and highlights liberal self-expression of exultation and inclination as well as representations concerning 史 *shi* 'historicity', 真 *zhen* 'authenticity' and 趣 *qu* 'taste' (Zhang 2006, Liu 2008, Yuan 2012, Huang 2013, Li 2017).

Literature review

Extolled as a laudable memoir, *Records* has been rendered into fourteen languages, among which the first and most established English version was translated in 1935 by 林语堂Lin Yutang (1895-1976), an iconic figure in modern Chinese literature (Zhai and Jiang 2006, Chen 2015). As a famed bilingual writer and translator, Lin composed fiction and essays such as 京华烟云 *Jinghua Yanyun* 'Moment in Peking' (1939) and 吾国与吾民 *Wuguo Yu Wumin* 'My

Country and My People' (1934) (Guan 2014, Cui and Wang 2016), and rendered classical writings into influential English texts (Williams 2010, Qian 2011: 1, Huson 2016, Ratcliffe 2017). Lin's Chinese-to-English translation, including his rendering of *Records*, is featured by the translator's subjectivity, the strategy of domestication as well as flexible adaptation and omission of culture-loaded words (文化负载词 *wenhua fuzai ci*) (Jiao 2012, Hao 2013, Wang 2014, Cao 2015, Yu 2018). The second English version is entitled 'Chapters from a Floating Life: The Autobiography of a Chinese Artist', which was translated by Shirley M. Black in 1960, yet this version is incomplete and involves deletions and rearrangements of plots (Runia 2009, Zhang 2015, Liu 2020).

In this article, I explore the third English version translated by Leonard Pratt and Su-hui Chiang in 1983, under the framework of feminist translation. In the introduction section of the English version, Pratt and Chiang give a thorough account of Shen's predicaments from a socio-historical perspective, and they equip readers with understanding of the underlying conflict between society and individuals in pre-modern China. Nevertheless, their rendering fails to fully exhibit the literary, aesthetic and linguistic prowess of *Records* as a *xingling* work, and their translation is void of poetic, surrealistic elements in the source text, namely, the so-called 气韵 *qiyun* 'rhythmic vitality' (Lu 2010).

In terms of feminist translation, Flotow propounds three strategies, viz. supplementing, prefacing and footnoting and hijacking. First, in the context of 'patriarchal language' and its institutions, supplementation in feminist translation highlights translators' consciousness of their political role as mediators. Second, feminist translators are disposed to reflect on their translation in prefaces and demonstrate an active presence in footnotes, by means of womanhandling texts purposefully and contributing to the creation of meaning proactively (Godard 1988: 50). Third, translators intentionally contravene conventional translation practices and feminise the target text, so as to render the feminine visible (Flotow 1991).

Prefacing and footnoting

Records is renowned for its vivid portrait of Shen's wife 芸 Yun, who plays a preponderant role in the memoir (Doleželová-Velingerová and Doležel 1972, Huangfu 2019) and is lauded by Lin Yutang for being exceptionally adorable and meritorious (Lin 1999, Zhang 2004, Xia 2012, Du 2016). To be more specific, Yun attains plaudits for intelligence, diligence, meticulousness (Cheng 2008a, 2008b, Zhai and Zhang 2009, Sun 2014), as well as unstinting devotion to her husband (Li 2012, Diao 2015, Chen and Zhang 2017).

In the introduction section of *Records*, the heroine Yun has been granted the ultimate accolade by Pratt and Chiang, as shown in Example (2).

> (2) Her life was hard but she played on all its graces, and Shen Fu's portrait of her manages to infuse the greatest tenderness into what is one of the most realistic accounts of the life of a woman ever given in traditional Chinese literature.
> (Introduction. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 10)

More significantly, Yun's deed of striving for a concubine for her husband is depicted in the source text (Example (3)), and in the introduction, the translators attribute her conduct to adoration of her husband (Example (4)), which, I propound, circumvents target readers' misconstrual and justifies her comportment as being laudable in an imperial context. Within a patriarchal system in pre-modern China, stringent precepts were promulgated to prescribe and oppress women, epitomised by an immemorial set of intuitions dubbed as 三从四德 *San Cong Si De* 'Three Obediences and Four Virtues' (Gao 2003, Rosenlee 2006: 90-92, Lee 2009). The credos of 'Three Obediences and Four Virtues' was formulated by China's first female historian 班昭 Ban Zhao (circa 49-120 AD) in her far-reaching 女诫 *Nü Jie* 'Lessons for Women', the earliest extant rhetoric on women's prenuptial discipline (Chang 2000, Donawerth 2002: 14, Wing 2003). 'Three Obediences' decrees women's subservience to fathers in prenuptial life, husbands in postnuptial life and sons in widowhood; 'Four Virtues' denotes women's appropriate level of morality, utterances, demeanour and diligence (Hamilton and Wang 1992: 85, Lee 1998, Pang-White 2016).

> (3) 芸曰:"今日得见美丽韵者矣，顷已约憨园明日过我, 当为于图之"余骇曰:"此非金屋不能贮, 穷措大岂敢生此妄想哉？况我两人伉俪正笃, 何必外求?"芸笑曰:"我自爱之, 子姑待之。"
> Today I have met someone who is both beautiful and charming,' said Yun. 'I have just invited Han-yuan to come and see me tomorrow, so I can try to arrange things for you.' 'But we're not a rich family,' I said, worried. 'We cannot afford to keep someone like that. How could people as poor as ourselves dare think of such a thing? And we are so happily married, why should we look for someone else?' 'But I love her too,' Yun said, laughing. 'You just let me take care of everything.'
> (Part I. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 50)

> (4) For though it is indeed a true love story of Shen Fu and his wife Yün, it is a love story set in a traditional Chinese society—and thus their love coexists and intermingles with Shen Fu's affairs with courtesans, and with his wife's attempts to find him a concubine. And yet, for all that, it is none the less love.
> (Introduction. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 9)

In particular, notwithstanding the notorious polygamy imperial China, women's jealousy and rivalry were strictly proscribed, in that it menaced the obligation to produce male heirs in patriarchal households, as required by Confucian filial piety (Chan and Tan 2004, Nichols 2011, Yi et al 2016). Consequently, wifely jealousy was criminalised (Chen 2019) and categorised as one of the 七出 *qi chu* 'seven reasons for expelling a wife'—a man could legitimately terminate a matrimonial relationship if his wife was deemed or besmirched as jealous (Huang 2001, 2014, Tang 2016: 2). Moreover, women were prohibited from establishing passionate intimacy with their husbands, in case they monopolise men's affection or imperil polygamous hierarchy (McMahon 2013). Therefore, I postulate that the translators' elaboration in the introduction

(Example (4)) is indispensable to target readers who are void of profound comprehension of traditional Chinese culture.

Apart from the heroine Yun, the translators' illumination also covers courtesans, so as to circumvent Western readers' puzzlement. As demonstrated by Example (5) extracted from the introduction, Pratt and Chiang expound on the social status of courtesans in ancient China, which not only equips target readers with knowledge of the source culture, but also exhibits translators' feminist awareness.

> (5) It is difficult for Westerners to understand just what a courtesan in China was, because the only equivalent we have for the role is a prostitute. But a courtesan properly called was respectable and respected, and her sexual favours were by no means necessarily for sale. As van Gulik has described in his classic *Sexual Life in Ancient China* (Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1974), a courtesan could often be more independent and powerful than the men she ostensibly served.
> (Introduction. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 9)

Furthermore, Pratt and Chiang complement their translation with annotation, thereby illustrating feminist implications. For instance, in the source text in Example (6), Shen records Yun's confession that she has a homosexuality-themed play in mind when enticing a courtesan to accept the concubinage. The theatrical play 怜香伴 *Lian Xiangban* 'Pitying the Fragrant Companion' (1651), or 美人香 *Meiren Xiang* 'Beauty Fragrance', is composed by 李渔 Li Yu (1611-1680), whose literary name is 笠翁 Liweng (van Gulik 1974: 301, Chang 2011), as in Example (6). *Pitying the Fragrant Companion* concerns homosexual romance between a married woman and a youthful maiden, which spurs the woman's encouragement and the maiden's willingness to become a concubine of the woman's husband (van Gulik 1974: 302, Rupp 2009: 53-54, Sieber 2014, Xu 2019). The theme of *Pitying the Fragrant Companion* accords with the comprehensive tolerance and even embracement of female homosexuality under the Confucian zeitgeist in imperial China (van Gulik 1974: 48, 163): emotional bonds and homoerotic desire were not subject to legal punishment or moral animadversion (Wang 2011), as long as the acts did not defy societal hierarchies or involve male participants of lascivious traits (Ruan and Bullough 1992, Kang 2009: 93).

> (6) 余笑曰:“卿将效笠翁之《怜香伴》耶?”芸曰:“然。”自此无日不谈憨园矣。后憨为有力者夺去, 不果。芸竟以之死。
> I laughed, and asked her, 'Are you trying to imitate Li-weng's *Pitying the Fragrant Companion*?' 'Yes,' she replied. From that time one there was not a day that Yun did not talk about Han-yuan. But later Han-yuan was taken off by a powerful man, and all the plans came to nothing. In fact, it was because of this that Yun died.
> (Part I. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 51)

In Example (7), Pratt and Chiang complement the literal translation in the target text (Example (6)) with an annotation summarising the storyline of *Pitying the Fragrant Companion*. In addition to restating the plot, the translators also clarify the immemorial mentality towards female homosexuality, thereby facilitating readers' comprehension of the source text. Moreover, the translators draw on research findings to prevent misperceptions regarding Yun's loyalty to and adoration of her husband, which indicates their thoughtful representation of this female character from a feminist perspective.

> (7) Yün's confirmation that she had this play in mind gives us our principal clue about just what her real relationship with Han-yüan may have been: the play tells the story of a young married woman who falls in love with a girl, and then obtains her as a concubine for her husband so the two women can be together. As van Gulik has pointed out, Imperial China regarded liaisons between women—as opposed to those between men—quite tolerantly. They did not by any means necessarily imply a lack of affection between such women and their husbands.
> (Notes. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 153)

In terms of Example (8), it manifests Shen's acclamation of Yun as a broad-minded, self-assertive woman, despite the prevailing subjugation and restriction of women in Qing China. The play 西厢记 *Xixiang Ji* 'The Romance of the Western Chamber' (or 西厢 *Xixiang* for short, as in Example (8)) composed by 王实甫 Wang Shifu (1260-1336) is adulated as the most popular love comedy in China (Hsu 2011), as well as the most renowned 才子佳人 *caizi-jiaren* 'scholar-beauty' work encapsulating masculinity and femininity via literary representation of heteronormative courtship and sexuality (Huang 2001: 206, 2003, Song 2004: 19, Ma 2005: 89). Nevertheless, according to conventional ideology, romantic and matrimonial bonds with a natural affinity and a close rapport, represented by the narrative in *The Romance of the Western Chamber*, were regarded with disdain (Wang 1989, Liu 2017, Egan 2019: xi), because yearning for emotional harmony between spouses was surmised to beget societal and financial failure and hence was anathematised by Confucianism (Fei 1947/2007: 467, Chen and Zhang 2017). Ideal marriage dictated by Confucian teachings was expected to lead to reproduction of offspring only (Fei 1947/2007: 465), and couples were prescribed to refrain from pursuing love and attaining enjoyment (Feng 1931/2011: 403, Cheng 2008b, Diao 2015). Therefore, being sentimental and talented was not a commendable trait, in that women's emotionalism and intelligence were conjectured to impede their familial duties and secular happiness (Pratt and Chiang 1983: 73, Ko 1992, Ho 1995, Judge 2001).

> (8) 芸忙回首起立曰:"顷正欲卧,开橱得此书,不觉阅之忘倦。西厢》之名闻之熟矣,今始得见,莫不傀才子之名,但未免形容尖薄耳。"
> Yün turned and stood up. 'I was just thinking of going to sleep, but I opened the bookcase and found this book, *The Romance of the Western Chamber*. Once I had started reading it,

> I forgot how tired I was. I had often heard it spoken of, but this was the first time I had had a chance to read it. The author really is as talented as people say, but I do think his tale is too explicitly told.'
> (Part I. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 28)

Given the fact that Yun is depicted to be a woman with aspiration for knowledge and interest in literature, Pratt and Chiang present the character's attributes faithfully in the target text. Additionally, the translators' note in Example (9) provides background information regarding *The Romance of the Western Chamber*, which implies its controversial nature in Qing China and hence Yun's provocativeness and confidence for self-expression.

> (9) The romance originated in the T'ang and has come down in several versions; this, the most famous, culminates with the dramatic capitulation of a young lady to the desires of a student. Its language is teasing and in places erotic, and Yün must have intended her casual reading of the book to be provocative.
> (Notes. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 149)

Moreover, annotations added by Pratt and Chiang circumnavigate target readers' misconceptions about the heroine's comportment and utterances. For instance, in Example (10), the conversation between Shen and Yun concerns excrement and insalubriousness, so in order to circumvent readers' repugnance, the translators attribute the abominable discussion to the protagonists' immaturity and comprehensive tolerance towards such a subject in the Chinese society (Example (11)).

> (10) 余曰:"然则我家系狗窦耶?"芸窘而强解曰:"夫粪, 人家皆有之, 要在食与不食之别耳。然君喜食蒜, 妾亦强映之。腐不敢强, 瓜可扼鼻略尝, 入咽当知其美, 此犹无盐貌丑而德美也。"
> 'In other words, my house is a doghouse?' I said, continuing to joke with her. Yün was embarrassed and quickly explained. 'There is dung in every house. The only question is whether one eats it. I don't like garlic, but I still eat it because you like it. I would never ask you to eat stinking bean curd; but as for pickled cucumber, if you would only hold your nose and eat some you would realize how good it is. It's like the old stories about the girl named Wu-yen, who was ugly but virtuous.'
> (Part I. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 38-39)

> (11) Readers who feel the discussion is becoming offensive are correct; it is the same in Chinese. The only explanation is that both Shen Fu and Yün were still quite young at this point, and that Chinese society is more comfortable with the subject of defecation than Western society; it enters into serious writings from Confucius to Mao.
> (Notes. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 152)

In Example (11), the translators state that the subject of defecation occurs in serious writings from Confucius to Mao. To be more specific, an expression concerning manure can be attested in the anthology 论语 *Lunyu* 'Analects' (circa 5thc BC) that records insightful aphorisms and maxims of Confucius, as in Example (12); similarly, an expression concerning flatulence can be attested from a verse in one of Mao's *ci*-poetry (词 *ci*), viz. 念奴娇・鸟儿问答*Nian Nu Jiao Niaoer Wenda* 'Nian Nu Jiao: A Dialogue Between Two Birds' (1965), as in Example (13).

> (12) 宰予昼寝。子曰:“朽木不可雕也,粪土之墙不可杇也!于予与何诛?”
> Zaiwo was still sleeping during the daytime. The Master said, "You cannot carve rotten wood, and cannot trowel over a wall of manure.
> (*Analects.* Book 5. Trans. Ames and Rosemont 1999: 97)

> (13) 还有吃的,土豆烧熟了,再加牛肉。不须放屁!试看天地翻覆。
> There was also food, Potatoes were cooked, And beef was stewed. Don't you fart! See how the world'll greatly change!
> (*Nian Nu Jiao: A Dialogue Between Two Birds*. Trans. Li 2018: 1142)

It is notable that in the source text in Example (10), Yun compares a fetid but delicious foodstuff to an unsightly but commendable historical personage. Apart from transliterating the woman's name in the target text (Example (10)), Pratt and Chiang also exemplify her altruistic deeds in an additional note (Example (14)), thereby illuminating female virtue in the source culture.

> (14) A good woman remembered in many Chinese operas. Though ugly, she was made empress by King Hsün of the Northern Ch'i Dynasty (550-577 A.D.) because she reprimanded him for his poor government.
> (Notes. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 152)

There is no denying the fact that the translators' annotation is not flawless. For instance, Example (15) alludes to an illustrious long narrative poem 琵琶行 *Pipa Xing* (aka *P'i-p'a Hsing* in Example (16)) 'The Mandolin Song; Ballad of the *Pipa*' composed by a celebrated poet 白居易 Bai Juyi (aka Pai Chü-I in Example (16)) (772-846 AD) (Yang 1996, Shang 2011, Buswell and Lopez 2013, Luo 2018), a pioneering figure of an innovative genre dubbed as 新乐府*xin yuefu* 'new music bureau' (DeBlasi 2002: 25, Chen 2015, Tan 2017). *The Mandolin Song* is featured by elaborate depiction, exquisite rhythm and profound nostalgia (Shields 2006, Chan 2011: 144, Zha 2015, Wang et al 2019). In terms of the plot line, *The Mandolin Song* concerns a former courtesan's dolorous status quo: according to the poet's preface, 'when she grew older and her looks declined, she entrusted herself to become a merchant's wife' (年长色衰, 委身为贾人妇 *nianzhang seshuai, weishen wei gurenfu*) (Fuller 2017: 283). The plot has been briefly summarised in an annotation, which reflects the translators' sympathy for the

courtesan who is past her prime (Example (16)). Nonetheless, it can be seen from the original poem (Example (17)) that the heroine is alone because her husband is on business, rather than being 'abandoned there by her merchant husband', as stated by the translators in Example (16).

(15) 生而颖慧, 学语时， 口授《琵琶行》, 即能成诵。…一日, 于书簏中得《琵琶行》, 挨字而认, 始识字。刺绣之暇，渐通吟咏, 有 秋侵人影瘦，霜染菊花肥”之句。
Even while small, she was very clear. While she was learning to talk she was taught the poem *The Mandolin Song* and could repeat it almost immediately…One day Yun found a copy of *The Mandolin Song* in her brother's book-box and, remembering her lessons as a child, was able to pick out the characters one by one. That is how she began learning to read. In her spare moments she gradually learned how to write poetry, one line of which was, 'We grow thin in the shadows of autumn, but chrysanthemums grow fat with the dew.'
(Part I. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 25-26)

(16) *P'i-p'a Hsing*, a T'ang Dynasty poem by Pai Chü-i (772-864). It tells of the meeting between an official exiled to the distant South and a former courtesan from the capital who has been abandoned there by her merchant husband.
(Notes. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 149)

(17) 门前冷落车马稀， 老大嫁作商人妇。商人重利轻别离， 前月浮梁买茶去。
My gates became desolate, horses and riders few. Having grown older, I married to become a merchant's wife. Merchants value profit and think little of partings. Last month he left to buy tea at Fuliang.'
(*Ballad of the* Pipa. Trans. Fuller 2017: 286-287)

Supplementing and hijacking

Apart from prefacing and footnoting, Pratt and Chiang also deploy supplementing and hijacking as their strategies of feminist translation.

In Example (18), the translators add 'thanks to her work' to the target text, so as to emphasise Yun's diligence and the preponderant role she plays in household expenses. Analogously, 'fortunately' in Example (19) has been added to the target text, which signifies the translators' effort to acknowledge Yun's culinary skills and contribution to her family.

(18) 四龄失怙, 母金氏, 弟克昌, 家徒壁立。芸既长, 娴女红, 三口仰其十指供给, 克昌从师, 修脯无缺。
Yün's father died when she was four years old, leaving her mother, whose family name was Chin, and her younger brother, Ko-chang. As first they had virtually nothing, but as Yun grew older she became very adept at needlework, and the labour of her ten fingers came to provide for all three of them. Thanks to her work, they were always able to afford to pay the tuition for her brother's teachers.
(Part I. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 25)

(19) 芸善不费之烹庖，瓜蔬鱼虾, 一经芸手，便有意外味。
Yün fortunately was good at making a meal without spending much money. Melon, vegetables, fish, and shrimps, when passed through Yun's hands, would take on a delicious taste.
(Part II. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 64)

Pratt and Chiang's feminist translation practice is also embodied by their rendering of a gender-specific pronoun. In Example (20), Yun refers to herself as 妾*qie* that literally means 'concubine'. As a self-referring term conveying self-abasement or self-depreciation in imperial China, *qie* was deployed exclusively by women as a first-person pronoun to express inferiority to their interlocutors; this self-denigrating term prevailed women's conversations with their husbands, despite the fact that they were not necessarily concubines (Chen 2013). An alternative first-person pronoun with a higher degree of self-denigration is 贱妾 *jian qie* (Lit. 'humble concubine') (Trans. Mine), which can be attested in Ming-Qing fiction exemplified by an anthology 喻世明言 *Yushi Mingyan* 'Stories to Enlighten the World; Illustrious Words to Instruct the World' compiled by 冯梦龙 Feng Menglong (1574-1646) (Li 2012). In Pratt and Chiang's target text, *qie* is translated into 'I' via the approach of domestication, which, I postulate, not only circumvents target readers' bewilderment, but also manifests translators' endeavour not to derogate women's social status.

(20) 芸泣曰："妾固不合妄言，但阿翁当恕妇女无知耳。"
Yün wept and said, 'I may have been wrong to write so improperly, but father should forgive the ignorance of a woman.'
(Part III. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 75)

Furthermore, translators' strategy of hijacking is epitomised by an expression of sexual innuendo. In Example (21), a pubescent courtesan is depicted as 瓜期未破 *guaqi wei po* that literally means 'melon period is not broken yet' (Trans. Mine); the metaphorical meaning, however, is derived from 破瓜 *pogua* '(of a maiden) to lose one's virginity; to deflower a virgin girl' (Revised Mandarin Chinese Dictionary 2015). The expression initially appears in a narrative 杜十娘怒沉百宝箱 *Du Shiniang Nuchen Baibaoxiang* 'Du Shiniang Sinks Her Jewel Box in Anger' (Example (22)), which is collected in a vernacular fiction anthology 警世通言 *Jingshi Tongyan* 'Comprehensive Words to Admonish the World' in 1624 (Hanan 1973, Yang 2000, Wang 2013) by a novelist, poet and historian 冯梦龙Feng Menglong (1574-1646) (McLaren 2012, Ling 2014). In stark contrast to *pogua* that has been translated plainly into 'had lost her virginity' in the novel (Example (22)), *guaqi wei po* in *Records* has been rendered into 'not yet fully mature' in an implicit manner (Example (21)). The translators' adaptation indicates that they are intent on avoiding objectifying women.

(21) 有女名憨园, 瓜期未破，亭亭玉立, 真"一泓秋水照人寒"者也, 款接间, 颇知文墨。
However, she had a daughter named Han-yuan, who, though not yet fully mature, was as

beautiful as a piece of jade. Her eyes were as lovely as the surface of an autumn pond, and while they entertained us it became obvious that her literary knowledge was extensive. (Part I. Trans. Pratt and Chiang 1983: 49)

(22) 那杜十娘自十三岁破瓜，今一十九岁。七年之内，不知历过了多少公子王孙，一个个情迷意荡，破家荡产而不惜。
Now age nineteen, Du Shiniang had lost her virginity when she was thirteen. In those seven years, she had taken on goodness knows how many young men from rich and noble families, who were, one and all, so enamored of her that they were ready to throw away their family fortunes for her sake.
(*Du Shiniang Sinks Her Jewel Box in Anger*. Trans. Yang and Yang 2005: 548)

Conclusion

When rendering *Records* into English, Pratt and Chiang adopt three strategies of feminist translation, as posited by Flotow (1991). In the introduction section, the translators laud the heroine Yun and elaborate her seemingly aberrant conduct of securing a concubine for her husband, so as to manifest her compliance with 'Three Obediences and Four Virtues' as a complaisant woman in an imperial, patriarchal context. Additionally, the translators introduce women serving as courtesans in Qing China, thereby illuminating the source culture and circumventing target readers' puzzlement. Moreover, Pratt and Chiang deploy annotation to justify Yun's provocative utterances pertaining to (homo-)sexuality and excrement, which preserves her positive image. Apart from prefacing and footnoting, Pratt and Chiang also employ the strategy of supplementing, by means of adding expressions highlighting Yun's competence and contribution to her household. In terms of hijacking, it is encapsulated by the translators' substitution of the gender-specific pronoun *qie* that is a self-referring term conveying self-deprecatory abasement, and they also adapt an expression of sexual innuendo to avoid objectifying women.

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