

# Translation in the digital era: Digital paratexts in translating queer feminism in China

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## Abstract

This study examines the digital paratexts for Chen Xuan's Chinese translation of the queer feminist work *Tipping the Velvet* (*TTV*) (Waters 1999), discussing their role in translating queer feminism in China. Advances in digital technology have brought about changes in many industries. Translation is no exception. One evidence is that more and more translators are using digital media to promote their translations. Such efforts have aroused readers' interest in and elicited their responses to the work. Chen's translation of *TTV* is a case in point. At present, three Chinese translations of *TTV* can be found in China, produced respectively by Lin Yuwei (2006/2009), Chen Xuan (2017), and Zhang Jinwei (2020). A cyberfeminist, Chen is the only one who actively uses the digital media, such as her WeChat Official Account '冬惊 *Dongjing*' (lit. winter shock), Podcast (audio or video), and Douyin (Chinese Tiktok), to promote her translation of *TTV* and explicate the feminism in it. Her WeChat articles, Podcasts, and Douyin about *TTV* have received lots of responses from online readers. These online texts (—texts in the broadest sense) created by Chen and her readers about *TTV* dramatically expand Genette's (1997) notion of paratexts, a concept traditionally used in translation studies, and fall into the two types of paratexts recently categorised by Freeth (2022, 2023), namely production-side and reception-side paratexts. An analysis of these two types of digital paratexts for *TTV* will demonstrate the important role they have played in the translation and reception of *TTV* in China.

## Biographies

Dr. Zhongli YU is an Associate Professor of Translation Studies and Lead of Gender Studies Group of the Institute of Asia and Pacific Studies at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China. She holds MSc in Translation Studies (Edinburgh) and PhD in Translation and Intercultural Studies (Manchester). Her research interests include gender/women/feminism in/and translation, museum narratives and translation, (feminist) translation history, war interpreting/interpreter, translation education, and intercultural communication. She is the author of 'The 1980s Chinese Translations of *The Second Sex* and Women's Situation in 1980s China' (*Translating Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex: Transnational Framing, Interpretation and Impact*, 2023), 'Museum Text Translation in the Chinese Context: The Museum Role and Text Production (with Thomas Hirzel. *Museum Management and Curatorship*. 2022), 'Conflicting Memories of War interpreting' (*The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Memory*, 2022), 'Translating Feminism in China: A Historical Perspective' (*Routledge Handbook Translation, Feminism and Gender*, 2020), 'Becoming Woman in Pu Songling's Strange Tales' (with Thomas Whyke, *Journal of Chinese Humanities* 6:1, 2020), 'A New Wave of Feminism: China's #MeToo' (*Policy Forum* 2019), 'Relay Translation of Feminism in China: An Intralingual Case' (*Journal of Translation Studies* 1:2, 2017), 'Translation as Adaptation and Selection: A Feminist Case' (*Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice* 25:1, 2017), and *Translating Feminism in China: Gender, Sexuality and Censorship* (Routledge, 2015). She is a member of the Editorial Board of *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* and of the *Journal Translation Horizons* and a member of the International Advisory Board of *Feminist Translation Studies*.

Ms. Qiyao ZHANG is a PhD candidate in translation studies in the School of Education and English at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, under the supervision of Dr. Zhongli YU. Prior to this, she obtained a MA in Interpreting and Translation (Mandarin and English), with distinction, at the same University. Her PhD project is "Feminist Queer Translation: Gender, Sexuality and Class". Her current research interests include digital paratexts, reception in the digital age, feminist translation, queer translation, the visibility of translators in digital spaces, and transnational development(s) of queer feminist thoughts.