Translating Feminism in China: A Historical Perspective

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Translating feminism in China

A historical perspective

Zhongli Yu

Introduction

Feminisms in history have developed in many different social and cultural contexts, and translation has often played a role (cf. Flotow 2012). This chapter provides a historical overview of the translation of Western feminist work in China. I will first briefly introduce the differences between what feminism means in the West and in China. The subsequent overview of the Chinese translation of Western feminist works will help explain the relationship between Western and Chinese feminisms and the role played by translation in the development of Chinese feminism.

Feminism: Western and Chinese

Feminism in general has long been a negative term in the People's Republic of China (PRC), especially in Chinese Communist Party literature, where it is usually qualified as "bourgeois" or "Western." Feminism has been excluded from the official discourse, and the history of Chinese feminism erased from the public mind (Wang 1999, 1). But what is feminism? In what follows we distinguish between Western feminism and Chinese feminism.

Western feminism

Feminism in the West has been a troublesome term due to its complexity and diversity (Beasley 1999, ix). To put it simply, feminism is "a recognition of the historical and cultural subordination of women" (where women are the only world-wide majority to be treated as a minority), and a resolve to do something about it (Goodman 1999, x). Feminism is regarded as being "innovative, incentive and rebellious" (Beasley 1999, 3). The history of Western feminism is commonly divided into three waves (see Krolokke 2005; Rampton 2008), though some feminists do not see the wave metaphor as a helpful way to understand "stages" in feminist history (Howie 2007, 283). The first wave covers the late 19th and the early 20th centuries and its agenda appeared to be largely political in nature, either from a liberal or socialist point of view. The activities and writings of the suffragette movement are typical of this wave. The second wave began in the 1960s and continues into the 1980s, is often referred to as radical, and is concerned with a

wider range of issues, such as sexuality, reproductive rights, family, clothing, the workplace, as well as the rights of oppressed minorities such as lesbians, women of colour, women of developing countries, etc., under the general slogan "the personal is political." In the 1970s, the term *eco-feminism* was coined to relate the oppression and domination of all subordinate groups (such as women, people of colour, children, and the poor) to the oppression and domination of nature (such as animals, land, water, and air) and to capture the sense that because of their biological connection to earth and lunar cycles, women were natural advocates of environmentalism (Rampton 2015). Informed by postcolonial and postmodern thinking, the third wave, emerging in the 1990s, is more oriented to diversity, multiplicity and even ambiguity in women's lives. In Europe, this is referred to as *new feminism*, concerning itself with issues such as trafficking, violence against women, pornography, etc., while theoretically undermining the earlier notion that there can be universal womanhood. In some cases, supporters even shun the very label "feminist" to characterize themselves as rejecting the dichotomy of "us and them." Some third-wavers claim the writings of feminists of colour from the early 1980s as the beginning of the third wave (Heywood and Drake cited in Snyder 2008, 180).

However, the three waves should not be seen as independent of each other. The boundaries are fuzzy; there is no sharp shift in attitude, content, or even dates. For instance, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of Her Own*, as well as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, may all be said to be iconic texts of the first wave of feminism. Yet, Wollstonecraft's book appeared as early as 1792 (just after the French Revolution), fighting under the liberal flag of political rights; Woolf's in 1929 (between the two world wars), introducing the notion of female bisexuality as well as announcing women's unique voice in writing; and Beauvoir's in 1949 (just after the Second World War), critiquing patriarchy and the way it 'others' women. *The Second Sex*, together with Betty Friedan's 1963 work *The Feminine Mystique*, have also been regarded as inaugurating the second wave feminism (Min 2005, 279). The second wave ended in the 1980s with internal disputes over issues such as sexuality and pornography, which ushered in third-wave feminism in the early 1990s. The third wave has been thought to be a continuation of the second wave as well as a response to the failures of the second. It continues to emphasize personal experience, but rejects the claim that all women share a set of common experiences (Snyder 2008, 184–186). Some people regard the third wave as just another way of talking about the contemporary moment, while some others prefer to call it *post-feminism*. Post-feminism literally means "after feminism" or what is "left when feminism is over." Open to many different, conflicting, and problematic interpretations on the one hand, post-feminism seems to connote that feminism is in a mess, in decline, and has failed (Showalter in Gillis et al. 2007, 292).

Recently, fourth-wave feminism is said to be emerging, partly because of the millennials' articulation of themselves as their own kind of feminist. Feminism of the fourth wave goes beyond the struggles of women. It sounds clarion calls for gender equity and a broader awareness of oppression along with racism, ageism, classism, ableism, and sexual orientation (Rampton 2015).

Chinese feminism

Chinese feminism is no less difficult to define, due to its linguistic and conceptual ambivalence and controversy (Ko and Wang 2006, 463). The birth of Chinese feminism was "an event of global proportions" at the turn of the 20th century (Liu et al. 2013, 4–6). The wave metaphor was also translated into Chinese to delineate the evolution of Chinese feminism which can also be divided into four waves. The first wave began in the May Fourth Movement (1915–1921) when Western feminism was introduced to China. The May Fourth Movement

was an anti-imperial, political, social, and cultural revolution with the Chinese women's liberation movement as a part of it, during which Chinese male intellectuals adopted "a Western view of history" and endeavoured to awaken Chinese women to "break from the traditional Confucian highly unequal social relation of men and women" (Min 2005, 274–275). Arranged marriage was condemned, and young people got the right to choose their own marriage partners. The custom of foot-binding was denounced, and the new women were to be educated just like their brothers. The term "feminism" at this time was translated into "女权主义 *nüquan zhuyi*" [women's rights-ism] to reflect the political desires and demands of feminists (Xu 2009, 203). The spirit of the May Fourth Movement flowed and ebbed, and the feminist movement declined in the decades to come.

The period from the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to the 1970s can be taken as the second wave, during which Chinese feminism was a state policy designed to mobilize rural and urban women into the public sphere (Barlow 2001, 1288). As an important aspect of socialistic revolution and construction, Chinese feminism is called "socialist feminism" (社会主义女权主义 *shehui zhuyi nüquan zhuyi*, or 社会主义女性主义 *shehui zhuyi nüxing zhuyi*) (Chen 2003, 278), or "socialist state feminism" (社会主义国家女权主义 *shehui zhuyi guojia nüquan zhuyi*) (Wang 2017, 11), and gender relations were integrated with the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist view of gender equality. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), with Maoist ideology of "Woman can hold up half the sky," the Chinese Communist Party was committed to re-moulding women according to the male standards and emphasized the masculinization of women. The masculinized women "liberated" by the state mitigated the long-held gender stereotypes, but were still held responsible for carrying out the noble functions of mother and wife in the family (Leung 2003, 359–366). From 1949 to the end of Cultural Revolution, China turned inward on the whole, and writings from the capitalist West became unavailable to ordinary educated people.

Western feminism re-entered China in the 1980s when China adopted open policies. This marked the start of the third wave. The "movement towards the liberation of thought" and economic reform after the Cultural Revolution increased women's self-awareness. A collective feminist consciousness arose among Chinese women, with growing recognition of gender differences and inequality. As China started to shift from "state-socialism" to "market-socialism," Chinese women became more vulnerable, more frequently turned into sex objects, and exploited and discriminated against in employment contexts. The differences between men and women were re-emphasized to "justify inequalities" that came with economic reform (Min 2005, 275–276). At this stage, Chinese feminism showed an enthusiastic return to a female identity or "female essence" (女性气质 *nüxing qizhi*) (Zhong 2006, 637), i.e. imagined femininity.

With the proliferation of feminism in China, the previous translation of feminism as "women's rights-ism" became unsatisfactory and now is often a derisive term in China, as it implies the stereotype of a "man-hating he-woman hungry for power" and is usually related to "more Western-oriented, politically-based oppositional feminism." In the 1990s, the new translation of feminism as "女性主义 *nüxing zhuyi*" [womanism/women's gender-ism/feminine-ism] replaced the old one in the academy in China, to "describe the orientation of the Chinese women's movement" and to "distinguish Chinese from western feminism" (Xu 2009, 203), while "women's rights-ism" is reserved for Western feminism. The new term sounds "far less threatening" and is more popular among Chinese feminist scholars. It is said that it implies "promoting femininity" and "reinforcing gender distinctions," a position that would hardly be regarded as feminist in the anglophone world (Ko and Wang 2006, 463). Now it also refers to "new cultural strategies and attitudes towards women in the twenty-first century" and signifies a "'smiley' or friendly/complimentary Chinese-styled feminism" (Schaffer and Song 2007,

20). According to Huang Lin (cited in Schaffer and Song 2007, 20), contemporary Chinese feminism is "sharp but not aggressive," concerned with "the harmonious development of both sexes" and focused on the "eternal subject of humanity." The implications behind the two (May Fourth politicized, contemporary depoliticized) Chinese terms for feminism reflect a "pluralist and complex feminism in China, where the formula of 'difference within commonality' put forth by international feminism" (Spakowski 2011, 47) does not fit.

Like in the West, the fourth wave seems to have come with the turn of the new century, a wave informed by activism, in spite of heavy censorship on civic activism (Yu 2019). Focusing on gender inequality and sexual misconduct, feminist activists of the young generation and NGOs have organized various campaigns, both online and offline. For instance, students of Fudan University in Shanghai have organized activities on V-Day – a day established as part of a movement to stop violence against women and young girls – since 2004 with an annual production of *The Vagina Monologues*. The recent #MeToo Movement in China (cf. Yu 2019) is another case in point. The growing online activism, which came with the development of digital technology and partly because the Internet has become a new source of women's oppression, reconfirming real-world power hierarchical relations (cf. Han 2018), has led to the emergence of a Chinese digital feminism. In the digital era, Chinese feminist activism has close connections with or is actually part of global feminism, as can be seen in the two examples just mentioned, although they carry distinct local characteristics and elements. It should be noted that the term Chinese feminist activists use to refer to feminism is "women's rights-ism," signifying that women's rights are still an important issue today; meanwhile, the milder version "womanism" is often used in academia. It should also be pointed out that some academics use both terms, such as Li Yinhe (李银河), a sociologist and sexologist at China Academy of Social Sciences and Ai Xiaoming (艾晓明), a professor in Gender Studies at the Sun Yat-sen University, also widely known as a feminist activist, active in safeguarding the rights and interests of women, including anti-(sexual) violence against women (Yu 2015, 73). Unlike many Chinese women intellectuals who are reluctant to be tagged a feminist, Li Yinhe bluntly acknowledges that she is a 女权主义者 *nüquan zhuyi zhe* (women's rights-ist). Condemning the demonization of feminism in China, she interprets feminism as targeting a harmonious relationship between men and women and argues that anyone who advocates equality between men and women is a *women's rights-ist* (Su 2010). According to Ai Xiaoming, there is not much difference between womanism and women's rights-ism. She uses one or the other, depending on the circumstances. When facing a male chauvinist, she prefers to use the term "女权 *nüquan*" [women's rights]. She believes that the key issues of feminism are rights, resources, and power relationships (Yu 2015, 73).

Translation of Western feminism into Chinese feminism

The above very brief account of Western feminism and Chinese feminism provides a framework for examining Chinese feminism from the perspective of translation. This section is an inventory of what feminist works have been translated in different periods of time in the history of Chinese feminism, which will further reveal the trajectories and features of Chinese feminism. The majority of the following data come from CNKI (China national knowledge infrastructure) and Baidu (the world's largest Chinese search engine), collected with a focus on academic and non-fictional writings on feminism and gender. Some data was collected randomly from the quotations in academic writings in women's studies and feminist studies. The data is not exhaustive as not much can be found from before 1949 on CNKI and Baidu, but a story can be told with the key information collected. Literary works are excluded because of the scope of this study. The following examination falls into three chronological periods, roughly

following the waves of Chinese feminism: Late Qing (1895–1911) and Republican (1912–49), the Mao era from 1949 till the late 1970s, and post-Mao era from the 1980s to the present.

Late Qing (1895–1911) and Republican (1912–1949)

Western feminist concepts or ideas came to China with the late Qing reformers who were learning from the West about how to strengthen the nation. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the concept of "女权 *nüquan*" [women's rights] was introduced to China when Chinese reformers, all men, promoted the notions of people's rights or civil rights, human rights, and natural rights with the goal of strengthening the nation. This is regarded as the beginning of feminism in modern China (Ko and Wang 2007, 2). The term "女权 *nüquan*" was generally understood as women's rights. In his Chinese translation of Herbert Spencer's 1851 treatise *Social Statics: Or the Conditions Essential to Human Happiness Specified, and the First of Them Developed*, Ma Junwu (马君武) translated the expression "rights of women" into "女权 *nüquan*." As the first translation on the subject of women's rights in Chinese, Spencer's work was extremely influential. From 1902, 女权 *nüquan* became a slogan in discourses of women's liberation. On the eve of 1911, there emerged debates on women's rights, giving rise to the articulation of different gender roles for women, such as mothers to the nation, equals in duty to men, seekers of new social roles for women without gender distinction, and women as the main agents of their own liberation (rather than looking to men for liberation) (Sudo 2006, 475–486).

The debates on women's rights in this period of the early 20th century are deliberate efforts by Chinese women elites, such as Jin Tianhe (金天翮), Qiu Jin (秋瑾), Zhang Zhujun (张竹君), and He Zhen (何震, aka He-Yin Zhen 何殷震) to construct their versions of Chinese modernity and new womanhood. The debates continued into the May Fourth Movement (1915–1921), with shifted focuses and theoretical underpinnings. An exalted motherhood based on a mixture of biological determinism, eugenics, and sexology was translated from Japan, the USA, and Europe. During this period, the women's rights movement in the global context was introduced in journals, leading to the emergence of feminist organizations nationwide which demanded women's rights to equal educational and employment opportunities, freedom of marriage and divorce, and equal political participation (Ko and Wang 2007, 5–6). In the May Fourth era, the definition of women's rights was much expanded to include all the preceding. The educated women who acted from their newly acquired subject position of "being a human" formed a new social category called "new women" (Wang 1999, 14). "To be a human" in that time meant "to be a man" with all the constituting modern values. In other words, the May Fourth Movement advocated that Chinese women should be the same as men, and not become 'the other' of men. This May Fourth emphasis on women being human quickly took root in China, and equality between men and women as a principle was written into the platform of both the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Party (i.e. Kuomingtang) (Wang 1999, 19).

The Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921, a time when feminism, women's liberation, and equality between men and women were under heated discussion. Because several key founders had been vocal advocates of feminism, the Party endorsed the May Fourth feminist demand for equal rights for women from its inception. After the Party turned to Marxism, members steered the debates on women's rights towards a socialist program, emphasizing the elimination of private ownership and the class system, and adopting an exclusionary strategy copied from European socialists to differentiate the "proletarian women's liberation movement" (focusing on the Party's goal) from the "bourgeois feminist movement" (focusing on gender equality). As the Party aimed for political alignment rather than theoretical development, the promotion of its feminist agenda on women's rights co-existed with a disparagement

of women's rights-ism. As a result, feminists in the Party learned to manoeuvre in the discursive space of a "proletarian women's liberation" so as to avoid the negative label of women's rights-ism that made them "bourgeois narrow feminists" (Ko and Wang 2007, 5–6).

The Mao era from 1949 until the late 1970s

In the Mao era, feminism was a taboo subject. The intellectual space for debating women's rights and social spaces for women's spontaneous activism were closed down (Ko and Wang 2007, 6). During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the publishing industry suffered serious restrictions and translation publishing almost stopped. Only one book on women of socialist countries is found: a book imported from the Soviet Union (China's ally at that time), with two Chinese translations of it being published respectively in 1950 and 1951. This translation choice underlies the then current socialist ideology of women. The Party's Marxist position on women meant that women's liberation could only be guaranteed by a socialist revolution with a top-down approach. Mao's statement "Men and women are the same," uttered in 1964, somewhat echoed the May Fourth ideal of humanist inclusion of women. During this period, the push for male-female equality is said to have been the strongest, and the boundaries separating the sexes were overridden by the movement of women into men's work and political activism (Mann 2011, 49). The May Fourth urban middle-class "new women" were replaced with the rural or lower-class urban "iron girls" (铁姑娘 *tie guniang*, referring to the selfless hardworking women of the 1960s). The term "iron girls" embodies the socialist gender ideology and the socialist value that women should be regarded as important builders of society. The perception of women as constructing socialism laid a foundation for some degree of gender equality (Wang Lihua 1999, 27, 34). However, a women's liberation idea that maintained the male-universal as the norm was problematic, because such equality between men and women actually deprived women of their difference, and androgenized women somehow created the illusion that Chinese women were liberated and enjoyed equal status as men (Yu 2015, 170), when in fact many of them found the masculinist Maoist gender equality oppressive (Wang 1999, 19).

The post-Mao era from the 1980s to the present

In the post-Mao era, though still loaded with negative connotations, the term "feminism" re-emerged, marking an opening-up of both discursive and social spaces for feminist contestations and activism. The translation and publishing of feminist works in the decades after the Cultural Revolution has been governed by policies for a publishing industry working in a complex social and political context, and this has resulted in ups and downs in translation publishing, showing three distinct features: the revival and fluctuation of translation publishing from 1980 to 1989; the depression and reformation of translation publishing from 1990 to 1999; and the market-oriented development of translation publishing in the 21st century (Yu 2015, 162–167). The following review explores these three periods, with special attention to works with retranslations, with year of publication indicated in the brackets after the source text title.

The 1980s

The reform and opening up that occurred in China from the late 1970s, especially the emancipation of the mind, provided favourable conditions for Western theories coming into China, which began to appear from the mid-1980s. At that time, about 20 feminist works were imported. They were concerned with the female body, female sexuality, married women, working women,

and gender sociology. Among them, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (*TSS*) (1986, 1988×2, 1998, 2004, 2009×2, 2011), and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1988×3, 1992) were the most popular. Each had three translations published in the 1980s and retranslations in the following decades. Another three works that had retranslations are Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature: The Roaring inside her* (1988, 2007), Robin Norwood's *Women Who Love Too Much* (1989, 2011), *Our Bodies, Ourselves* of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (1989, 1998).

Of all these works, Beauvoir's *TSS* is the most influential one, with eight Chinese translations published from 1986 to the present, showing its lasting influence. The arrival of *TSS* in China is seen as marking the advent of European and American feminism. An important reason for the popularity of Beauvoir's book in China is that the difficult situation of women discussed in its Book II is very similar to the situations Chinese women were facing as a result of the transformations in China after the Cultural Revolution. Beauvoir's naming of women as the second sex reflected the experience of Chinese women as an invisible gender in society. Chinese urban women in the 1980s were in theory equal to men at the political, economic, and legal levels created by the socialist system. However, under this seemingly absolute equality, women faced the heavy burden of a male standard of work in society and the concealed expectations of being "贤妻良母" [good wife and virtuous mother] at home. The icons of model workers or "iron girls" elevated during the Cultural Revolution were being replaced with "socialist housewives," the new exemplar for women who were committed and devoted to the family role (Leung 2003, 365). The campaign of emancipating the mind at the turn of the 1980s showed a tendency to reconstruct a patriarchally centred gender order, and Chinese women's political and social status deteriorated with the economic reform. Beauvoir's naming women as the second sex struck a chord among Chinese intellectual women and prompted them to reflect on their own experiences as the second sex. Chinese feminists of the 1980s made use of the phrase "women, the second sex" to mark the existence of gender differences so as to break through their invisibility at a time when slogans proclaimed "men and women are the same," and to cultivate women's consciousness as being essentially different from men's (Yu 2015, 168–170).

The 1990s

In the 1990s, about 40 translations were published. The increased number owed much to the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. This Conference is regarded as an important marker in the reform-era history of China's women's movement in its relationship with international feminisms, and a watershed in the history of Chinese feminism (Wang and Zhang 2010). Through the Conference slogan of "gender mainstreaming," the concept of gender (as opposed to biological sex) was clearly introduced. Moreover, the Conference led to the growth of women's NGOs in China, and increased the number of gender-related international development projects, in which many women's studies scholars participated. Through projects, academic conferences, seminars, and workshops, the Conference brought Chinese feminists into much more frequent encounters with Western feminists. A major concern that developed at this time was what exactly constituted Chinese feminism as Chinese feminists perceived the need to "indigenize feminisms" within China (Xu 2009, 197). Since the early 1990s, Chinese feminists are said to have enthusiastically embraced the global feminist concept of gender and used it innovatively to create local practices of "gender training" (Wang and Zhang 2010, 40). Examples of such innovation are not rare (cf. Min 2017), signifying transformation and localization or indigenization of Western feminism to suit the local context. One result is that the term "womanism" instead of "women's rights-ism" became current as the translation of feminism.

In this period, the translated works concerned not only women's secondary position, women's lives, the female body, female sexuality, and gender, but also women's rights, needs, and self-esteem, feminist theology, and feminist literary criticism. The most influential book was Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, with two translations being published respectively in 1995 and 1996, and several retranslations later (2005, 2006, 2012, 2016). The Hite reports were very popular too. *The Hite Report: A Nationwide Study of Female Sexuality* was first published in 1994, with two retranslations being published in 2002. Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1991) and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1999) were both retranslated respectively in 2003 and 2000. These key works were repeatedly translated and published in the next century, implying that women's rights are still a major concern of Chinese feminists, as the market economy, officially called the "socialist market economy," which started from 1994, has resulted in the rehabilitation of patriarchal culture and caused new problems for women as is discussed later in the chapter. These developments explain why feminist activists prefer the version "women's rights-ism" as mentioned before.

The 21st century

A more market-oriented economy in the new century promoted the growth of translation publishing. From 2000 up to July 2018, at least 214 works on feminist topics were published, covering a wider range of issues. While the topics introduced in the 1980s and 1990s continue, the imported works cover many more subjects on women, such as psychology, history, language, literature, power, law, citizenship, economics, art, music, leisure, and women's decision not to marry. Gender has become another major subject, moving beyond issues of women and men to address homosexuality, bisexuality, intersex, queer, desire, identity, history, ethics, science, semiotics, media, and public administration. Prostitution is a new topic, with three translated works published respectively in 2000, 2003, and 2009.

Besides the retranslations already mentioned, four other works have retranslations: Betty Friedan's *The Second Stage* (2000, 2007), Karen Horney's *Feminine Psychology* (2000, 2009), Marilyn Yalom's *A History of the Wife* (2002, 2016), and *Women's Lives: A Psychological Exploration* by Claire A. Etaugh and Judith S. Bridges (2003, 2012). Translations of Shere Hite's other reports were published. The translation of the Hite report on male sexuality was published in the same year as the retranslation of the Hite report on female sexuality (2002). In 2008, Chinese translations of the three Hite reports respectively on Shere Hite herself, the family, and sex and business were published. The subjects of the translations and retranslations reflect social issues in China of the new century, such as trafficking, prostitution, prejudice against female university students in the job market, prejudice against gender minorities, and violence against women, including sexual harassment and rape, partly exposed in the recent #MeToo Movement in China. From the translations, Chinese readers learned not just concepts and theories, but also practical approaches for activism, as discussed in Zhongli Yu (2017, 2019).

Conclusion

The brief explanation of Western feminism and Chinese feminism demonstrates both differences and interconnections. The overview of translations of Western feminist works in each period largely shows how these coincide with the features of Chinese feminism in different waves, and reveals their impact on Chinese women and feminism. The preceding discussion focuses on works that have retranslations, regarding them as being more important for Chinese feminism, with many more translations not mentioned due to lack of space. To sum up,

the translation of Western feminism has experienced three phases in China: introducing and importing, learning and imitating, and transforming and localizing. The imported feminism was transformed when interacting with the local society, and gradually developed into Chinese feminism to accommodate local needs and agendas. Naturally, there exist both differences and similarities between Western and Chinse feminisms.

The influx of Western feminism since the 1980s has led to a series of changes in China, demonstrating the important role of translation in the development of Chinese feminism. From the 1980s, courses, programs, and centres of women's studies and gender studies were gradually established in Chinese universities to counter gender-blindness in a class-focused Marxist theory of women, the neglect of women in general history, and the ignorance about and prejudice against gender minorities. From the 1990s, NGOs for women and gender minorities developed online and offline. Activities or campaigns for women and gender minorities emerged and have been developing despite strict censorship from the authorities. All such changes deserve scholarly attention.

Future directions

In addition to academic and non-fictional writings on feminism and gender discussed in this study, a larger number of feminist literary works have been imported, and many are very popular among Chinese readers: for example, *Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Golden Notebook*, to name but a few. The imported feminist literary works are an important part of (feminist) translation history, a historical study of which would shed further light on the history of Chinese feminism, and hence should be explored in the future.

Further reading

Liu, Lydia H., Rebecca E. Karl, and Dorothy Ko, eds. 2013. *The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory*. New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press.
This book introduces the birth of Chinese feminism at the turn of the 20th century. It focuses on three important thinkers, i.e. He-Yin Zhen (何殷震, 1884–1920?, a pre-eminent feminist theorist and founding editor of an anarcho-feminist journal *Natural Justice*), Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873–1929, a journalist, philosopher and reformist), and Jin Tianhe (金天翮, 1874–1947, a liberal educator and political activist), and includes in the volume their major feminist texts (translated from Chinese). The latter two were male scholars, another indication that the first wave of Chinese feminism was led by Chinese male intellectuals (cf. Yu 2019).

Spakowski, Nicola. 2011. 'Gender' Trouble: Feminism in China Under the Impact of Western Theory and the Spatialization of Identity. *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, 19(1), 31–54.
This paper examines articulations or rhetorics of a Chinese feminist "identity" as part of a new conceptual grid of global-local interrelations. It takes reflections on "gender" as a departure to move on to wider discussions of what Chinese feminism is in light of theory imported from the West.

Wang, Zheng and Ying Zhang. 2010. Global Concepts, Local Practices: Chinese Feminism Since the Fourth UN Conference on Women. *Feminist Studies*, 36(1), 40–70.
This paper discusses feminist conceptual, organizational, and social transformations in China since the early 1990s, which have unfolded in conjunction with transnational feminist movements during the period when China became a global capitalist giant. It locates Chinese feminism at the intersection of local and global processes, contributing to understanding the dynamics between locally grounded feminist strategies and the global circulation of feminist concepts and practices.

Yu, Zhongli. 2017. Relay Translation of Feminism in China: An Intralingual Case. *Journal of Translation Studies (New Series)*, 1(2), 47–74.
This paper discusses an intralingual case of relay translation of feminism in China, i.e. the Chinese campus production of *The Vagina Monologues* by students of Fudan University in Shanghai. It examines

the translators' behaviour in the specific social context, particularly the strategies of the translators for dealing with constraints that arise from social context and cultural differences.

Yu, Zhongli. 2015. *Translating Feminism in China: Gender, Sexuality and Censorship*. London and New York: Routledge.
This book explores how Western feminism is translated in China, with reference to two feminist works *The Second Sex* and *The Vagina Monologues*. It pays special attention to how the content on the female body and female sexuality (including lesbian love) is translated or censored, the influence of the translator's gender identity, as well as the social and political contexts in dealing with such content.

Related topics

Feminist studies, women's studies, gender studies, feminist theory, feminist history, translation history

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