

# Terminology, Culture and Hermeneutic Translation: The Women Images in *Confucian Analects* and *Proverbs*

Xiaojuan Peng

Foreign Languages School, Yancheng Teachers University, Yancheng, China

## Email address:

20120908xjp@sina.cn

## To cite this article:

Xiaojuan Peng. Terminology, Culture and Hermeneutic Translation: The Women Images in *Confucian Analects* and *Proverbs*. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and Translation*. Vol. 9, No. 4, 2023, pp. 120-129. doi: 10.11648/j.ijalt.20230904.13

**Received:** September 8, 2023; **Accepted:** November 1, 2023; **Published:** November 11, 2023

---

**Abstract:** Neo-Confucianism represents diversities from what Confucius says in *Analects*. Moreover, feminist biblical interpretation might have been deviated from the original sense of text for designing and implementing feminism objectives. It probably refers to transforming cultural recognition unconsciously and silently, which influences the explanation of *Confucian Analects* and *Proverbs* and the correlative feminism translation innovation consecutively. Through the interpretation on relevant terms of women images, male chauvinism, and feminism, it teases the objective women profile descriptions and subjective ones influenced by vicissitude of concepts and different social backgrounds in *Analects* and *Proverbs*. Based on that, it explores the positive and negative women images, and literarily demonstrates them in textual and extended domain, referred in *Analects*. Meanwhile, it detects the obverse and reverse women images, and takes hermeneutic explanation of them from visible and implied aspects, constructed in *Proverbs*. In view of above, it adopts the longitudinal diachronic retrospection in hermeneutic method, and the comparison of multi- versions of two texts on typical women images from the lateral synchronic angle. As a result, the two ancestral sayings and words reveal striking echoes and disparities, which provides a communicative opportunity between east and west classics to form constructing background thoughts for cross-cultural text translation studies.

**Keywords:** Women Images, *Confucian Analects*, *Proverbs*, Culture, Hermeneutic Translation, Terminology

---

## 1. Introduction

Feminist translation study came to the fore from Canada to the world since 1990s. José Santaemilia criticizes the attitudes toward key terms for the application of feminist translation. [2] Justine M. Pas and Magdalena J. Zaborowska propose the pragmatic strategies on how transnational feminism projects to participate in egalitarianism and assimilationism for translation practice, which is dealing with the feminism concept in English to be taken for granted in developing their own vocabulary ambience as feminist activism. [27] Henry Tierney emphasizes the role of translator for feminist innovation centered on translator by dual methodologies of interviewing with foreign translator and comparison between source and target language, which requires subversive texts inevitably to be confronted with personal conflict of some “truth” in individual subject, while feminist translator might be empowered and innovative in the gender descriptive style. [2] These studies expose the potential problems and crisis of feminist translation. The popularity of feminism and highlighting of translators’ ideology generate and

promote recreation and development of subjective adaptation of source text and sense. It focuses on the dominant function of feminist translator to contribute to the principal objectives of striving for feminist rights and eliminating severe sexism, which exhibits the creativity of translator and relative independence to elevate social status of female and translator. Meanwhile, if it’s real as what it shows in the so-called text with “concept of breaching feminism or content of sexism”, should source text be innovated and rewritten in the field of translation by employing supplementing, preface, endnote, hijacking and so on ways in translation process? Has it been ignored to consider the cultural and ideological vicissitude, social changes, and scope of peculiar text in interpreting text? Comparing *Confucian Analects* (abbreviated as *Analects*), a Chinese classic, and *Proverbs*, a Western religious work, the two texts are with giant disparities on cultural representations. However, they all refer to similar women images to some extent. Moreover, the translation of two works is unable to realize the direct communication with authors. In this case, should translation information be omitted or distorted to pass on to readers at the standpoint of being

penetrated by translator-centered theory without any reservation or even beyond boundaries? The translation practice of feminism, needless to say, is based upon translator-centered theory, which is always independent of the source text, deviating from original intention shown by text. Hence, returning to source text from feminism translation practice, it's beneficial to maintain basic responsibility of translation in trans-textual understanding and translation comparison, and expose the fact of source text and the connection between source and target texts.

## 2. Terms and Concepts Relevant to Women Images

Taking women images in *Analects* and Solomon and other authors' *Proverbs* as examples, it should take two groups of term and corresponding concepts into account. The first group of correlative term is male chauvinism in later Confucian annotations of *Analects*. Male chauvinism, also named as patriarchy, is always used with masculinism, phallocrat and so on proper nouns alternately, which refers to authoritative privilege in family or society. It's in charge of family and society, which is individual autocracy and cultural oppression in natural gender relationship substantially. [15] There is no much explicit narration on women images in *Analects*. However, Confucius esteems comments of *Book of Changes* (abbreviated as *Changes*), *The Book of Rites* (abbreviated as *Rites*), and *The Book of Poetry* (abbreviated as *Poetry*), so Neo-Confucianism thinks his male chauvinism is impressive and highlighted obviously by retrospection of the ideologies in ancient codes and records.

"If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the *Changes*, and then I might come to be without great faults." (Shù R) As it says, Confucius praises highly of *Changes*. According to that, one aspect of male chauvinism is embodied by men should be older than women in marriage. The compilers of *Changes* inspect the marriage of "an old husband and a young wife" (*Da Guo*) is unnatural, but "such association is extraordinary" (*Small Symbolism*), which is settled for at the stance of male perspective in patriarchy. While the marriage of "an old wife and a young husband" (*Da Guo*) could not be sustained for a long term, "how can this secure its long continuance?" (*Small Symbolism*) It is even with a narrative sense of contempt, which could speculate that the advantage of male age is conducive to master discourse power. Another aspect is represented by proposal pattern of proactive male and submissive female. For those initiative females in pursuit of dating, "one should not marry" (*Meng*). The later scholars almost approve the annotation *Small Symbolism*, which says woman with the type of moral character do not conform to the requirement of submission. And such a woman should not be taken in marriage, for "her conduct is not agreeable to what is right." It acknowledges male taking initiative to marry is supportive to establish patrilineal consanguineous system as social core status. Specifically, initiative female would enable marriage to be more volatile, moreover, it would bring about the disorder of

patrilineal relationship. The third aspect is polygamy pattern. The annotation of *Changes* inclines to praise this marriage pattern. "The younger sister married off in a position ancillary to the real wife. --- It's the constant practice." (*Gui Mei*), which says younger sister marrying the same husband as elder sister would assist each other to stabilize marriage and position of wife. To be wives or concubines is an "advantage in every way" as "a string of fishes and the favor that lights on the mates of the palace" (*Bo*) In the ideology of male chauvinism, it's secondary whether husband likes or not, but first and foremost is whether to officiate service or not. Men marry more that favors them successively so that they would not be in jealousy to benefit in steering women.

"I could describe the ceremonies of the Hsiâ dynasty, but Chî cannot sufficiently attest my words. I could describe the ceremonies of the Yin dynasty but Sung cannot sufficiently attest my words. They cannot do so because of the insufficiency of their records and wise men. If those were sufficient, I could adduce them in support of my words" (*Pâ Yin*) It reveals Confucius is very familiar with ritual institutions of Hsia, Sung, and Chou Dynasties, expecting everyone could abide by rites. Seventeen pieces of *Ceremonial Etiquette* should be compiled by Confucius [6], but it is called as *The Book of Rites*, for being annotated or supplemented commentaries. Caused by Confucius quoting it as the script and the continuous losses in imparting process by his students and following generations, the male-centered perspective is more distinctive on the facets of treating male and female differently, distinguishing patriarchal and maternal lines, and respecting father but restraining mother, as political ideology of neo-Confucianism develops. "It should be respective between couple, affective between father and son, deferential from courtier to monarch, so that the order in the three domains would make everything go well." More than that, "Woman, the one obeying others, who should be obedient to father before marriage, husband after marriage, and son after the death of husband." Women could only be affiliated to men sequentially, including father, husband, and son, in a family without individual identity.

Confucius appraises highly on *Poetry*, "in the *Book of Poetry* are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in one sentence--- Having no depraved thoughts." (*Wei Chăng*) And neo-Confucianism's elucidation was depended on speeches from Warring States to the period of two Han Dynasties, when the mainstream discourse appeared and prospered, such as, "wife obeys with husband" developed into "husband regulates wife". Since the age of Confucian Mencius, *Poetry* has been employed as major tool to interpret monarchy politics for Confucianism. It was combined with the thoughts of Yin and Yang, politics, and women to be generated into ideologies centering on three principles, that is, courtier submits to emperor, son complies with father, and wife is regulated by husband. *Mao Poetry* takes the same standpoint to expound poems by Confucian women views. Then, pretty amorous lady with reserved, optimistic and vivacious characteristics in great respect turns to be ideal and stereotyped imperial concubines. [7]

The second group of terms is feminist biblical interpretation to *Proverbs* in the background of the whole *Old and New Testaments*. Feminism is also called as womanism, what is with multifarious definitions. Generally, it's summarized as women expect to change underprivileged and discriminatory identities by multiple challenges and transforming the superior position of men. The feminist criticism methodology is to rectify the phenomenon of male researchers as biblical academic mainstay and disclose the ideologies inclination of male researchers' study. Narrative criticism and reader-response criticism are the two tendencies in feminist biblical interpretation [14], which is a branch of biblical hermeneutics, progressing through the methodology of social gender. To be specific, feminist biblical interpretation is "to interpret and criticize Bible through feminist criticism theory, adopting evolutionary feminism concept and analysis way to design and implement feminist objectives, which is a choice attempting to seek for humanity between female consciousness and widespread male-predominant political and social structure" [12].

With the influence of feminism, many biblical researchers overturn the connotations in the male-predominant narrative technique. Hagar and the daughter of Jephthah are molded into the images of being deprived ego under oppression of patriarchy, while Michal and woman of Canaan are brave images to rebel male chauvinism [24]; Delilah, Jezebel are demonized women, two daughters of Lot and the concubine of a Levite are women insulted and taken advantage of [5]; Rachel stolen household gods is on behalf of revolting patriarchy and seeking for her freedom and felicity [21]; Eve is made from a rib of Adam, what transmits the social value of "woman is belonging to man" in patriarchal narration, and even the phrase "repudiating wife" is with feature of male chauvinism, but the translation as "divorce" is more adapted to the egalitarian tendency [26]; Daughter is regarded as private property of father, who can decide and even bargain on the mate and marriage of daughter, such as Dinah and Tamar, while the essential way for woman to gain rights and identity is mother-child relationship, Hannah as an example [3]. The greatest pursuit of men to ideal women is reflected by the virtuous woman in *Proverbs*, who is clothed with all virtues in the dreams and desire of men in male-predominant narration [10]. The compilation with patriarchal thoughts contributes the acceptance of patriarchy culture, so feminist biblical interpretation would reform the status of women being miswritten, misunderstood and misinterpreted.

### 3. Culture: Vicissitude of Concepts, Social Background, and Women Profile

#### 3.1. The Women Profile of Confucian *Analects* in the Background of *Changes*, *Rites* and *Poetry*

In view of Confucius evaluates the words of *Changes*, *Rites* and *Poetry*, and advocates to return to ancient institutions, the content of previous classics could glimpse his perception to

women in *Analects*. The concepts to describe women is subtly altered in varying conditions of cultural baptism, time variation, and social background. Those changes nurture patriarchy institution, which are easily to be utilized as evidence to criticize male by feminist advocates.

Firstly, referring to the implication of Qian and Kun in *Changes*, "In the third line, undivided, the superior man active and vigilant all day, and in the evening still careful and apprehensive. The position is dangerous, but there will be no mistake" (*Qian*), which shows all comments are explaining auspicious or inauspicious omens though representations of some subjects. Whether dragon of Qian or symbol of Kun could not present any relationship with men and women, or any disparities of superiority and inferiority. What's more, it targets on the subject as substance of men with noble character, either in Qian or Kun. It discusses good or ill omen of noble people by representation, not pointing to men or women particularly. [9] The Western Chou Dynasty (the 11th century -771 B.C.) has established monogamy, but "gender relations were more freely, lively and indulgent in life or marriage" [28], what means relatively natural and forthright in personal behavior. The six rites of marriage were mainly carried out in aristocratic stratum even after the ritual system provided by the Duke of Chou. The men and women of lower class were less influenced by the constraint, reflecting relatively free in gender relation.

Nevertheless, any substance could be arranged into the concepts of Yin and Yang in opposite roles for the ideological binary opposition, what makes the compilation and expounding of those gender issues involved to symbolize Yang as of men, and Yin as of women. The brief comments *The Great Treatise* on *Changes* are diverted from *Changes* itself greatly, as it shows, "Heaven is lofty and honorable; earth is low. Qian and Kun, were determined. Things low and high appear displayed in a similar relation. The noble and mean, had their places assigned accordingly. Movement and rest are the regular qualities. Hence comes the definite distinction as the strong and the weak." (*The Great Treatise*) Here, Qian and Kun are distinctive from each other, and Qian at high or Kun at low position. Moreover, they relate to both sexes, what means Qian refers to men and Kun to women. After that, it extends to the rule of strong men and gentle women, so women and wives should submit to and follow men and husbands.

Secondly, considering the women behavior etiquette in *Rites*, "daughter-in-law should serve their parents-in-law as they served their own... consulting everything from mother-in-law", [17] daughter-in-law should not take the liberty of doing anything. Beyond that, the regulation of conjugal relation is clear and definite, shown as "Men do not participate in housework, while women do not comment on external affairs" (*Nei Ze*), which says men and women are in different areas with distinctive responsibilities without interfering each other. Husband cannot command wife, and wife is impossible to listen to the commandments of husband if she is not involved into external affairs. In the principals of governing a country by rites, conjugal relation focuses on

achieving harmony, proved by “four rites are executed... promoting marriage harmony” (*Li Yun*). Wife treats husband with respect and concern. Husband honors wife by rites. Therefore, “the fundamental marriage ceremony principle is being intimate after solemn and serious marriage ceremony, which establishes the boundary between men and women and then sets up natural relation.” (*Hun Yi*) Seeing from that, rites in the pre-Qin period require respectively according to the identities of women, which means women shall obey and serve parents-in-law, who are qualified to determine the choices of daughter-in-law, while wives shall serve husbands with rites but not be forced to obey husbands. [18] Confucius also puts that, “it’s reasonable that the wise emperors of past three generations governed based on honoring their wives. So-called wives are the housewives who serve and support parents, who dare not respect them? So-called sons are the offspring who are born from parents, who dare not respect them?” (*Ai Gong Wen*) Husbands are worthy of esteem, but they shall also value their wives.

Certainly, the regulation to women behavior is for emphasizing the superiority and dominance of patrilineal consanguineous system and maintaining the stability of patriarchal system. Along with the absolute collapses of ritual institution since Warring States, Neo-Confucianism complied the rites system from resuming etiquette procedures to expounding its implied moral principles. Sexist were on the high ropes, excavating the thoughts of honoring men but depreciating women, and connecting with governance and doctrine of Yin and Yang, to reinforce manus. “There are three obedient rules for women, who have no right to do anything for funeral on their own. That is, obeying father before marriage, husband after marriage, and son after death of husband” (*Mourning Apparel of Rites*). Intensifying paternity is displayed by the extension and agreement of “three obedient rules”, however, it’s originated from annotations of *Mourning Apparel* to firm patriarchal and manus benefits. After Warring States, especially Western and Eastern Han Dynasties, the sense of three obedient rules were largely transformed in the wake of establishment of feudal moral conduct principles, extending to be moral norm for women from initial funeral codes. Hence, it’s emphasized as “Women, the one yielding to others... the way of three obedience is presented as obeying father before marriage, husband after marriage, son after death of husband, without freedom to do anything independently.” (*Da Dai Li Ji*) Different identities of women determine different mourning apparel rules, which develops to be the doctrine of submitting to all the commandments of men. It’s destined to yield to men in spirit and the subject submitted depends on identities. *Explanations of Appellations* also says, “female means resemblance, and the shape of character woman looks like a person. Then the way of three obedience is doing as what father teaches when young, complying with what husband commands after getting married, and listening to what son says when old.” The three obedience require to surrender the leadership of men. When it develops to *Xuncius*, the thinking to control women is more and more rigorous, and the thoughts of submitting to husbands are overwhelming. [7]

Thirdly, concerning on the external women images of *Poetry*, “Yao Tiao” in *Guan Ju* is not moral constrained description. In the poem, a fair maiden is collecting cresses in water, but the good young man is far away from her. He cannot propose that maiden for the obstruction of water. According to *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, “Yao means profound; Tiao means distant.” “Yao Tiao” should refer to lady afar, which is the appreciation of noble man to beloved maiden. “Shu”, virtuous, is not only used for praising female, but also modifying male. For example, “how can I forget then, those music-loving men” (*Music*). It should be a pervasive ethic norm in Pre-Qin society without substantial moral differences between male and female. Additionally, fair and good maiden in *To A Good Maiden* could “steep hemp in river long...” or “sing a song”, who is proficient at doing housework diligently with outgoing, generous and affectionate personality, regarded as virtuous maiden.

Whereas Neo-Confucianism separates the sense of *Guan Ju* from the romantic love but associates it with governance. Taking *Mao Preface* for instance, “*Guan Ju* is to describe the virtue of imperial concubine. It’s the ethos of a country, starting from imperial family. The metaphor of a common person could symbolize a country’s atmosphere.” The virtue of an imperial concubine could influence the conducting ways of a country, otherwise, it would be licentious everywhere. The chief culprit of a disorder family is not lust of emperor but unmoral imperial concubine. To keeping away the unvirtuous family then a corrupt country, the virtue of imperial concubine is crucial, as a result, a fair maiden to be matched with a sage-king is an ideal pattern of husband and wife. *Mao poetry* thinks a fair maiden “is loved for virtue but not countenance”, who does not seduce men by beauty. *Lu Poetry* thinks “it shall be loyal to spouse as turtledove without other choices.” *Qi Poetry* puts “the sexual passion shall not be revealed by countenance” with restricted behavior and restrained feeling. The explanation of *Guan Ju* has been evolved, from the description of external personality to the moral aspects of scrupulous abiding by regulations in reverence and assistance for husband. [7]. It has been the specific standard for female, which male could be polygynous, but female must be in the charge of male loyally.

In this case, if the female perception of Confucius is based upon the inherited thoughts of classic books, it’s still not to achieve the degree of what later critics say in “women is metaphorized as one with low morality, a base person hardly to get on”. Neither would infer Confucius agrees on “womanizing corrupts a country” to discriminate women [23] by only one discourse “of all people, girls and boys are the most difficult to behave to.” [13]. The cultural epochal interpretation presents it’s initiated from intentional deviation by neo-Confucianism critics.

### 3.2. Women Profile of Proverbs in the Background of the Old and New Testaments

Comparing with *Confucian Analects*, there are some similar women images in *Proverbs*. Solomon, Hezekiah, Agur, Lemuel and so on authors sketch various values standards, life

performance, pursuits, behavior orientations and psychological demands of women, including immoral women with mouthful of lies, diligent women with virtues, squabbling women alienating husbands, and wise women teaching children eagerly... Considering this roll is inseparable from the whole scripture, it's necessary to link with context in order to understand micro-description in a macro-perspective.

*The Old and New Testaments* displays events by progressive revelation in narration. As it says above, it's easily to break away emphasis from characters and plots in ups and downs if analyzing from character-centered angle. But it's relatively objective to observe from spanning ages.

There are four women easily ignored in *The Old Testament*, namely, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. It only introduces two women, one of which is Tamar, the wife of eldest son Er from Judah. Judah marries Canaanite woman, impacted by notorious Canaan ethos, which disobeys the upright tenet under curse of God. Furthermore, Er is so evil that God puts him to death. Judah asks the second son Onan to perform obligation of marrying Tamar, while Onan is reluctant to leave heir for Er, impairing honor of elder brother and sister-in-law in the effort of inheriting all the properties of father if Er doesn't have descendant. Then, God puts him to death too. Judah thinks superstitiously that Tamar is inauspicious, who brings misfortune to husbands. He only allows Tamar to live in widowhood at home, not willing to give her the third son in case of his death. However, Judah's wife dies. Tamar sets up mind to give birth to a child for the family. She takes off widow clothes, covering herself with a veil and sitting down at the entrance to Enaim, while father-in-law is on the way to shear his sheep. Judah thinks she is a prostitute and wants to lie with her at the cost of his seal, cord, and staff. Dramatically, Tamar becomes a pregnant for her father-in-law, which is ready to be convicted by the public, while she is exempted for Judah's identification. After that, Judah doesn't lie with her, and Tamar gets twin boys. (*Genesis* 38) According to the Israelite laws, the second son shall marry wife of the first dead son in one family without heir to raise up seed for brother, the third son shall marry wife of the first son if the first two sons all die without heir. The rest can be done in the same manner to ensure each patriarchal clan would not extinct and family estate would not be reduced to other branches (*Deuteronomy* 25:5-10) This is the way of clan system to maintain its blood lineage and multiply next generation. Tamar attaches importance on the laws of God to

choose this way in the shadow of death and enmity when her father-in-law doesn't allow the third son to marry her. Nevertheless, her name is recorded with other following generations into male-dominated genealogy in the *New Testament*, belonging to the one of King David in great prosperous period. (*Matthew* 1:3) It has to be admitted that this is a gradual proof of gender justice across ages that she is recorded in genealogy dominated by male, turning to be with dignity after humility, which is opposed to absolute patriarchal de spotism in the mouth of feminists. In the thoughts of feminists, Tamar might only be regarded as a suppressed woman in patriarchal autocracy without any family identities, who could only sacrifice and compromise to be a child-bearer in condescendence and melancholy for winning dignity.

The second woman is Rahab. As a prostitute without any social confirmation living by the city wall of Jericho, she, descendant of father-daughter incest, born in a cursed land--- Moab, is despised and struggled in her life. She hears Israelite is led to exodus from Egypt and enter Canaan in the mighty power of God, so her heart is melted to admit Jehovah is God in heaven above and on the earth below. She swears with spies to be treated kindly in case of death. When Israelite attacks and destroys the city, Rahab and all her family are saved for the vow. (*Joshua* 6:22-25) Rahab departs from sins in the expectation of common upright life, living with Israelite since then. She marries Jew Salmon and gives birth to Boaz, being the great-great-grandmother of the most famous King David. (*Ruth* 4:18-20, *Matthew* 1:5) These details could only be discovered across ages and beyond historic limitations. The feminist critics might only stare at the situation of women discriminated, ignoring the complete observation of Rahab looking forward brilliant life in the hope of being confirmed and the fact of her elevation from humility. Meanwhile, Rahab plays a role of having treasonous relations with a foreign country to exchange life with lies and betrayal in the opinions of narrow feminism and nationalism.

In the same way, the female images in *Proverbs* contain prostitutes alluring innocent young men, and the virtuous women managing the household industriously and thriftily in the restriction of contemporary background. They are all objective descriptions but not the evil derogation to women criticized by feminists.

Comparing women profile between *Confucian Analects* and *Proverbs*, it can be referred as follows,

**Table 1.** Women Profile Contrast between *Confucian Analects* and *Proverbs*.

<i>Confucian Analects</i> being Affected by	Examples of Women Images	Interpretation of Neo-Confucianism	The Background of <i>Proverbs</i>	Examples of Women Images	Feminism Criticism
<i>Changes</i>	Being Free with no hierarchical differences	Kun standing for women, who obey men and husbands	<i>The Old Testament</i>	Valuing patriarchal descendant and being exalted after humiliation	Child-bearer being suppressed and agonized without dignity, under control of men
<i>Rites</i>	wife obeying mother-in-law, husband respecting wife	Women is inferior to submit commands and leadership of men		Abandoning licentiousness and longing for integrity	Unfair treatment in discrimination to exchange life with lies and treason
<i>Poetry</i>	Being diligent, virtuous with personality	Abiding by wifehood in obedience to support husbands			

## 4. The Hermeneutic Women Images Based on Text

### 4.1. Literature Annotation of Women Images Involved in *Confucian Analects: Positive and Negative Views, Text, and Extension*

The literary form of *Analects* is sayings records of Confucius by his numerous students, who laid out it by names, subjects, or characters. Caused by lacking context, it's necessary to supplement by extended historical records.

There are some positive women descriptions concerned. On the uniformity of appearance and inherence, "Tsze-hsiâ asked, saying, 'What is the meaning of the passage---'The pretty dimples of her artful smile! The well-defined black and white of her eye! The plain ground for the colors?' The Master said, 'The business of laying on the colors follows the preparation of the plain ground.' 'Ceremonies then are a subsequent thing?' The Master said, 'It is Shang who can bring out my meaning. Now I can begin to talk about the odes with him.'" (*Pâ Yin*) Tsze-hsiâ is not clear about the relation between beauty appearance description and consequent content, Confucius points it out that painting shall be based on the plain ground. Then Tsze-hsiâ infers ceremonies are produced after inner benevolence, which is praised by Confucius. The exterior ceremonies and intrinsic sentiments are unified as painting beauty on the plain paper. Furthermore, exterior revealing image of women is corresponding to internal lofty morality standard. On the standards of choosing spouse, "The Master said of Kung-yê Ch'ang that he might be wived; although he was put in bonds, he had not been guilty of any crime. Accordingly, he gave him his own daughter to wife" (*Kung-yê Ch'ang*) Kung-yê Ch'ang is a disciple of Confucius, who knows birds language with upright behavior and manner. [4] He helps an old man to discover the corpse of his lost son by understanding birds' chirping content, which is treated unjustly and abused in prison for sixty days. Then he interprets some birds' words accurately in prison, so the government releases him after investigation. (*Huang Kan's Notes on Analects*) Confucius doesn't deny his integrity for his imprisonment nor suspect his prospect of transient humiliation. Contrarily, Confucius would rather give his own daughter to marry him. It's inferred that the primary standard of choosing spouse for women is moral integrity and honesty other than prominent family or wealth. On appellation, "The wife of the prince of a State is called by him FÛ-ZǎN... The people of other States also call her CHÛN FÛ-ZǎN" (*Ke She*) FÛ-ZǎN and CHÛN FÛ-ZǎN are all respectful appellations to women in feudal society constructed ceremonies. On the kinship relations, Confucius thinks "Let him be filial and kind to all; then they will be faithful to him" (*Wei Châng*) To show filial piety to parents and be kind to all people would enable everyone to be faithful. The filial piety to parents is representation of respect in ritual institution.

Certainly, there are also some negative descriptions of women in *Analects*. On moral characters, "The Master having

visited Nan-tsze, Tsze-lû was displeased, on which the Master swore, saying, 'Wherein I have done improperly, may Heaven reject me, may Heaven reject me!'" (*Yung Yêy*) Nan-tsze is wife of the duke Wei Ling Kung, and half-sister of prince Châo. However, she conducts adultery with Châo with handsome appearance in demoralization and intervenes national policies to interview with Confucius. Confucius has to meet her in kowtow rites. Nan-tsze returns a salute behind fine cambric curtains, jangling with jades and ornaments. Tsze-lû thinks it's disgraceful, Confucius swears that it's inevitable to visit the duke's wife who influences her husband to get currency for his doctrine as a stranger officer, and he would be rejected by Heaven if he has done improperly. Duke Wei, neglecting national affairs, favors and trusts Nan-tsze in everything she says, addicted and womanized by her charm. He invites Confucius to go on a sightseeing tour in a carriage, that follows his what makes him widely arrogant. [19] It disgusts Confucius who says, "I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves beauty." (Wei Ling Kung) Confucius thinks the sovereign shall attach importance on pursuing virtue rather than beauty, and it's futile to assist a ruler spending plenty of time on attractive woman and emptiness without considering governance. So, he leaves Wei in a fit of temper. Herein, the text reveals the disdain to woman with immoral behaviors, displaying a willful beautiful woman who fiddles with ruler in political ambitions from the side view. Therefore, Confucius says, "of all people, girls and boys are the most difficult to behave to. If you are familiar with them, they lose their humility. If you maintain a reserve towards them, they are discontented." (*Yang Ho*) Hereinabove, it doesn't refer to depreciate all women generally, but probably points particularly, what "girls" targets on "Nan-tsze" or similar women, and "boys" on "Wei Ling Kung" or similar men. And "difficult to behave to" indicates that they are difficult to get along with or to be educated for inferior conducts. [20]

### 4.2. Hermeneutic Women Images Constructed in *Proverbs: Obverse and Reverse Views, Visible and Implied Aspects*

In contrast of *Analects*, *Proverbs*, written by those with royal background mostly, consists of sayings, axioms, poems, enigmatic words, metaphors, and instructions, aiming at royal family and ordinary Israelite families. It's with plentiful synonymous and antithetical parallelisms in typical wisdom literature style, arranged by circular logic in classified topics, which requires to conclude corresponding relevant background in similar logical topics except restricted context in some independent poems.

The observe view of women is involved in it. Speaking of the exterior appearance and kinship of women, it says, "a loving doe, a graceful deer---may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love" (5:19) Viewed from the visible aspect, Solomon persuades son to be satisfied with adorable and favorable wife married at young age, whose love is lingered by husband, so he shall not be double minded to embrace the bosom of another man's wife. Herein, a pretty and elegant woman in pure love devotes all sentiments into husband,

who is captivated by the fine marital sexual life. On the kinship of woman, father-in-law fully supports his son and daughter-in-law to keep undivided monogamous relation. When father-in-law discovers son's selfish motives, he would try his utmost to prevent son from doing wickedness, assisting him to treat daughter-in-law kindly, and persuade son to cherish holiness and privacy of marital sexual love without improper thought, which safeguards woman forcefully. Seen from implied aspect, Israelite is to guarantee faith purity and blood lineage by endogamy in the same faith group, on the other hand, to marry women of different religions would disperse clan, even lose belief, and produce a series of problems, so it's beneficial to maintain legal Israelite women status by highlighting sound marital relation. When mentioning character, "a kindhearted woman gains respect" (11:16), the virtuous kindness of women would contribute to others in glory of wealth, which expounds the necessary connection between interior quality and external honor. Referring to parenting pattern, "listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching", the synonymous parallelism presents mother's teaching is as same important as father's and women are as equal as men on parenting status or authority to children. Concerning family obligation, "a wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies" (31:10-31) In the acrostic, the noble woman is industrious on workday and night, managing real estate profitably. She does not eat the bread of idleness, providing food clothes for family and servants and extending her hands to the poor. Moreover, she speaks with wisdom which brings her praise, enabling husband to deal with important affairs with officials in the city. She is assigned works different from husband's and performs her function orderly, playing an invaluable role to husband in many family obligations and behaving positively in society. From the implied perspective, it shall not be underestimated that virtuous woman is crucial to construct a solid family, and it reflects the holiness and well-organized management of God by family

order for God stresses on equal and respectful relations in either family or society.

On the other hand, it also refers to reversed women images. As for female sexual orientation, "with persuasive words she led him astray, she seduced him with her smooth talk" (7:6-27) It describes a wayward woman, whose husband is not at home, lurks in the street or squares to take hold of a young man and cajole him into inner room. On the pretext of practicing Canaan fertility sacrifice in bedroom with expensive-decorated perfume, she allures him to conduct extramarital relation in the purpose of "drinking deep of love". This type of woman is glib-tongued and brazen-faced in the clothes of religion lasciviously, not satisfied by marital relation but carrying on clandestine sexual affair. Though having husband, she is sleazier than prostitute in disordered carnal intercourse to trap innocent young men, regardless of hard-earned wealth and valuable dignity of husband in high reliability. For the implied aspect, God always makes analogy of his relationship with Israelite as the one of husband and wife, what requires devoting loyal love. Nevertheless, Israelite doesn't approve the love from God but worshipping many Canaan idols with wayward women by flattery. Regarding the family life, "better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered" (21:19) The enigmatic words show the same subject in the former and latter circular logical context. The woman losing emotional control lacks life wisdom, but easily gets angry and quarrels with husband without self-reflection. She cannot be a good helper for husband but expect to be a commander so that her husband would rather live in a wild land than with her, driving away husband and destroying family unity. In the implied connotation, unbalanced inner heart would be reflected by exterior mood influencing life, in which disorder confuses conjugal relation, however, the ultimate solution to change it is top-down-wisdom.

Hereby, the hermeneutic contrast between *Confucian Analects* and *Proverbs* based on text is presented as follows.

**Table 2.** Hermeneutic Text-based Contrast between *Confucian Analects* and *Proverbs* on Women Images.

	<i>Confucian Analects</i>	Summary	<i>Proverbs</i>	Summary
Positive / Obverse views	Unification of exterior rites and internal moral sentiments	Women would be respected if maintain harmony between appearance and heart to meet higher inherent requirements	Wife is adorable, enabling husband to be satisfied in marital sexual life	Endearing woman satisfies husband's needs in harmonious marital relation and virtuous woman is honourable
	The primary standard of mate is with noble character and integrity		Family endeavours to safeguard marital rights of woman	
	The appellation of wife of a state prince is ritually called as FŪ-ZĀN		Kind-hearted woman gains honour	
	Mother ought to be treated with filial piety		Virtuous woman is equal in family and praised in public with social influence	
Negative / Reverse views	Conducting adultery with wickedness	Inner corruption would be reflected externally	Adulatory immoral woman coaxes innocent	Cunning carnality destroys men and uncontrollable temperament alienates family
	Ostentatious nature hardly to be educated		Bad-tempered women break up marriage	

## 5. From Hermeneutics to Translation

### 5.1. The Translation and Interpretation of *Confucian Analects*

Based on above expounding, it's easily to summarize

Confucius is a self-contradictory person on feminine concepts, if only semantically and literally concluding and extracting in narrow sense on *Analects* but overlooking author's perception background, annotations of the past dynasties, and the historical facets of context and extension. As what some critics say, on the one hand, Confucius puts forward thoughts of "the benevolent loving others" and "no teaching distinction

in classes”; on the other hand, “there is gender dead zone on “benevolence” for the practice carrier, noble person, is targeting on men.” [16] Confucius tells how a noble man practices “filial piety” to parents, meanwhile, there are apparent distinctions between father and mother being treated in filial respect. [11] In fact, it’s significantly reinforced through analysis of cultural intentions penetration in past annotations. With regard to historical fact, Confucius lost his father at the age of three, living with his mother Yan Zheng, who might teach him earnestly to support him to be a sage from poverty. He can help mother to do farm work when he is young, so he could memorize “when I was young, my condition was low, and therefore I acquire my ability in many things, but they were mean matters.” (*Tsze Han*) His mother passes away at his sixteen, so he emphasizes filial piety extremely and refers to parents concurrently. Accordingly, he should agree on a world of universal harmony, that is, “it shall not only support and attend upon parents, but also wait upon parents till they pass away at old age; not only bring up children, but also foster them to grow up healthily; More than that, adults could make contribution for the society, old wifeless men, orphans, lonely old men and handicapped person would be assisted all the time. Consequently, men do as their duties, and women have their families.” (*Rites*) Herein, the respect to parents is equal. If understanding it by the former contradictory opinion, it’s effortless to deduce from “of all people, girls and boys are the most difficult to behave to”, which classifies all women, including concubines or maidservants, into the rank of hardly to be educated. Actually, the analysis of extended historical text indicates they might be Nan-tsze and Wei Ling Kung, or plainly, young pretty scheming women as Nan-tsze and base person indulged in beauty as Wei Ling Kung. Therefore, it would be widely divergent and impact on translation and targeting readers’ comprehension if translating according to contradictory understanding and later misplaced interpretation for Chinese ancient records. Hereto, as what following examples shown in *Yang Ho of Confucian Analects*,

James Legge: The Master said, “of all people, girls and servants are the most difficult to behave to. If you are familiar with them, they lose their humility. If you maintain a reserve towards them, they are discontented.”

Xu Yuanchong: It’s difficult, said the master, to deal with women and servants. If you are familiar with them, they will be immodest; if you keep your distance, they will complain.

Wu Guozhen: The Master said, “Women and inferior men are difficult to get along with. Shown intimacy, they will lose humility. Kept aloof, they will complain.”

Gu Hongming: Confucius remarked, “of all people in the world, young women and servants are the most difficult to keep in the house. If you are familiar with them, they forget their position. But if you keep them at a distance, they are discontented.”

Legge’s version [8] translates “Nü Zi” into “girls” with footnote “concubines”, Gu adopts the analogous version. If the designated subject could be extended from “Nan-tsze” to “concubines or young women as Nan-tsze”, the two versions

might be regarded as ones pertinent to source text. However, Xu [25] and Wu’s [22] versions amplify source sense to all female group, translating as “women”. Though Wu’s version elucidates to remove the problematic women opinion of Confucius in his mind, Confucius turns to be a person who is powerless to confront the old traditions and exaggerated as one with female discrimination by scholars after Han Dynasty. Thereby, lacking consideration of cultural thoughts vicissitude, interpreting author perception background, whole context, and historical observation, those reflected from interpretation and translation would be argued arbitrarily by feminism.

## 5.2. The Hermeneutic Translation of Proverbs

It shall consider progressive revelation relation in Bible, linking context, the harmony of scripture, historical background, text and literature, genre and even grammar to carry out hermeneutic translation of *Proverbs*, describing the text by interpreting scripture to avoid misunderstanding. Feminists would criticize perfect wife is fixed on the virtuous woman in Chapter 31 in male chauvinism narration. As what Simone de Beauvoir [1] says, “women are not born to be like that but molded gradually.” Ma Yuelan thinks “women turn to be so-called ‘virtuous wife’ for adapting to the patriarchal society even at cost of personal freedom and felicity, which reinforces patriarchal society objectively.” Moreover, the “male-centered narration angle” ignores the feeling description of wife. [14] Seeing from the whole biblical structure, progressive perspective doesn’t belittle female deliberately, for example, those of Tamar and Rahab are extremely objective. In respect of context, the former content shows it’s an oracle, which mother teaches her son King Lemuel not to consume on the lust of concubinage (31:3), or alcoholic anesthesia, to reflect from the side that royal family might be in polygamous carnal pleasures (31:3). Then it narrates that it’s important to gain virtuous wife, who is worth far more than rubies. Fully trusted by her husband, she is valuable and praised by family and society in fearing the Lord. Such a wife is in toil and moil, but with remarkable social status. She must be gratified, so she could laugh at the days to come. By the principle of harmony in scripture, it’s consistent to the “wise woman” building her house (14:1) and “virtuous woman” to be crown of husband in the circular logic of *Proverb*. It’s also accordant to Ruth showing filial piety to mother-in-law in hopeless condition (*Ruth* 1:8-18) and Tabitha always doing good and helping the poor (*Acts* 9:36) in whole scripture. Regard to genre, the instruction from mother to son is a home-letter extended with sincere words and earnest wishes, which could be applied into mate selection for young man in Israelite family. Generally, it’s positive, but not in male-centered narration to reinforce patriarchal society. More properly, it’s earnest female-centered teaching. Therefore, many versions represent high uniformity in the first verse of chapter 31, as follows:

NIV: A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

KJV: Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.



ESV: An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.

CSV: A truly good wife is the most precious treasure a man can find!

Except the sentence pattern, imperative sentence but not rhetorical question, of CSV version is slightly different from other versions, the highly consistent versions in sense all reveal the precious virtuous woman's high value praised in public with great honor. In this regard, the feminist rewriting and hijacking translation ways in the good will of changing misunderstanding and misinterpreting are opposed to source text content, which is beyond the basic loyal translation principle precisely, in facing context and harmonious interpretation aspects.

## 6. Conclusion

The women image of *Analects* in so-called patriarchal comments has been distorted. With the variation of age and culture, the women images in *Changes*, *Rites* and *Poetry* influencing Confucius are originally those individualized, diligent in virtue, seeking for freedom, respected by husband without any status differences. The analysis requires to prevent from the unduly narration of later Confucian scholars, forming objective concept of positive and negative women images in the condition of interpreting with context and historical supplements. Generally, other than the criticism on oppression of polygamous patriarchal thoughts to women and licentious lifestyle, *Analects* constructs an ideal philosophy of women images, that is, individual woman shall maintain inherent disposition and character represented by external behaviors, nubile women shall attach moral standards more than exterior conditions for selecting mate, and elder women should be respected.

Meanwhile, feminist critics think the male-centered narration angle in *Proverbs* depreciates women images, what lacks supporting evidence in fact. In the hermeneutic history and cultural background, the women recorded on male-dominant genealogy value on laws of God to preserve descendants for pedigree in the integrity life with an impression from lowliness to dignity. The text needs to be exegetical studied, considering the principles of context, harmony, historical background, literariness, genre, and grammar in case of garbled statements. In the observe and reverse views analysis, excluding the possible polygamy phenomenon for royal members and denial to adulteress, the text constructs a perfect image of women, that women in marriage is loving and charming what satisfies husband in sexual life, managing housework in diligence, talents, and wisdom, and receiving confidence of husband and praise of everyone in harmonious family relationship.

Through cross-cultural comparison, both display surprising similarities on opposing licentious women but appreciating women with lofty moralities. However, *Analects* emphasizes on preserving ritual regulations and disclosing personal charm in etiquette constrictions to realize the ideal of political governance order. While royal sayings highlight the reverence

toward God and laws to reserve genealogy and present individual woman value led by wisdom. They both are similar on external interpretation and manifestation forms of women images, but they are from totally different ideological roots, which do not interfere the translation dialogues in two cultural system, paving a communication platform for Chinese and western classics.

Therefore, it seems to harangue rewriting and recreating by translator-centered theory, being separated from source text, overlooking diachronic changes and peculiar text, for unable to communicate with author. Feminist translation practices mainly by translator-centered theory would trigger the loss of understanding on source text. Translation cannot distort original content excessively. It should return to source text to transmit intrinsic information of text objectively, adhering to bottom line of translation.

## References

- [1] Beauvior, Simone de, Tao, Tiezhu (translator). *Le Deuxième Sexe* [The Second Gender]. Beijing: Chinese Book Company. 2004.
- [2] Castro, Olga, and Emek Ergun, eds. 2017. *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- [3] Chen, Yanyan. 2015. "A Comparative Study on Womanhood in the Hebrew Bible and Rabbinic Literatures". PhD diss., Shan Dong University.
- [4] Cheng, Shude. 1990. *Collection and Comments of Confucian Analects*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- [5] Deng, Yan. 2016. "On the Image in the Old Testament". *Journal of Anhui University of Technology (Social Science)*. 33 (2): 31-33.
- [6] Ding, Ding. 2003. *An Inspection of Mourning Apparel of The Book of Rites*. Social Sciences Academic Press.
- [7] Jiao, Jie. 2010. "The Orientation to Women in *The Books of Changes*, *The Book of Rites*, and *The Book of Odes*: The Mainstream Women Views from the Western Zhou Dynasty to Western Han and Eastern Han Dynasties." PhD diss., Shaanxi Normal University.
- [8] Legge, James. 2013. *Confucius: Confucian Analects*. The Great Learning & The Doctrine of the Mean. New York: Dover Publications. Inc.
- [9] Legge, Jame. 1993. *Book of Changes*. Changsha: Hunan Publishing House.
- [10] Li, Yanbo. 2004. "The Images of Women in the Old Testament of the Bible: A Cultural Interpretation". *Journal of Xiangtan University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*. 28 (3): 55-58. Doi: 10.13715/j.cnki.jxupss. 2004.03.013.
- [11] Li, Chenxi. 2021. A Brief Analysis of Women Views in Confucian Analects from Women Images. *Chinese Culture*. No. 3: 29-32.
- [12] Lin, Yan. 2013. "Feminist Biblical Interpretation Overview". *Religious Studies*. No. 4: 213-219.

- [13] Lu, Cui. 2008. "On Women Views of Confucius and Hesiod from the Standpoint of 'Harmful Women'". *Culture Journal*. 10 (2): 10-16.
- [14] Ma, Yuelan. 2014. "Feminism of the Virtuous Wives in Biblical Classics". *Journal of Hebei Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*. 37 (5): 85-91. Doi: 10.13763/j.cnki.jhebnu.psse.2014.05.013.
- [15] Pan, Zimian. 2001. "Male Chauvinism in Sexual Bribery". *Nanfang Daily*. Jan. 14. [https://baike.baidu.com/reference/10293437/327a90iFWQMaD0E6Hj0REn2g8s2nuaSxDLG53gHB67L\\_tfZIYjwABZCv\\_xyI7fpJ8EXxzcHgHYmSDp3BYZGR1T6\\_JjrjsK3nQFV2b96FwnVTNaVjsk](https://baike.baidu.com/reference/10293437/327a90iFWQMaD0E6Hj0REn2g8s2nuaSxDLG53gHB67L_tfZIYjwABZCv_xyI7fpJ8EXxzcHgHYmSDp3BYZGR1T6_JjrjsK3nQFV2b96FwnVTNaVjsk)
- [16] Peng, Hua. 2010. *Confucian Women Views Study*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press. 41.
- [17] Ruan, Yuan. 1980. *Exegesis on Rites of Mourning Apparel, Comments on Thirteen Classics*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. 1106.
- [18] Sun, Xidan. 1989. *Collection and Interpretation of the Book of Rites, Comments on Thirteen Classics*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- [19] Si, Maqian. *Confucius Family (17), Records of the Historian (Vol. 47)* <http://www.guoxue.com/book/shiji/0047.htm>
- [20] Wang, Jingping. 2011. "New Comments on Analects 17.25". Spring Collection in Memoir of the First Symposium of Jilin Provincial Museum Association, November 422.
- [21] Wang, Rongxi. 2020. "Biblical Women Images Interpretation. Foreign Languages Education", *Translation Development and Innovation Studies*. November 69-71. DOI: 10.26914/c.cnkihy.2020.051021.
- [22] Wu, Guozhen. 2015. *A New Annotated English Version of the Analects of Confucius*. Fuzhou: The Straits Publishing & Publishing Group.
- [23] Wu, Xinying. 2013. "An Exploration into Viewpoint of Hermeneutics in Analects 17.25". *Academic Journal of Jinyang*. No. 1. Doi: 10.16392/j.cnki.14-1057/c.2013.01.011.
- [24] Xu, Xiaoyan, Alison M. Jack. 2019. "Biblical Women Study under the Perspective of Feminism Criticism". *Journal of Lanzhou Institute of Education*. 35 (7): 65-67.
- [25] Xu, Yuanchong. 2005. *Confucius Modernized*. Beijing: Higher Education Press.
- [26] Yan, Fangming, Qin, Qian. 2021. "Feminism Interpretation to Patriarchal Narration in Biblical Chinese Translation Process". *Foreign Languages and Translation*. 108 (1): 13-17. Doi: 10.19502/j.cnki.2095-9648.2021.01.003.
- [27] Yang, Hong. 2022. "An Introduction and Evaluation of Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives". *Translation Research and Teaching*. No. 1: 123-126.
- [28] Yang, Xiangkui. 1997. *Society and Ritual Culture in Zhou Dynasty (Revised Edition)*. Beijing: People's Publishing House. 222.