



Translating a Chinese Bestseller into English
under the guidance of the Skopos theory

Xiyang Wang

Mestrado em Tradução - área de especialização em Inglês

Maio de 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my project supervisors Dr. Karen Bennett and Dr. Yan Ying for their helpful suggestions and recommendations during the research and writing of this thesis. My special thanks to Dr. Karen Bennett who was always ready to help me whenever I had a question about my research or writing. I am also grateful for my family and friends' support and for my friends Will Rich and Dave Jumel's kind help.

Abstract

China is getting more and more attention from the world due to its recent rapid development. However, for most people in the West, China is still something of a mystery. In order to enable English readers to know more about the modern society of China from an authentic perspective, the work 看见 *Kanjian (What Was Seen)* has been chosen to be translated partially into English. It is the Chinese bestseller from 2013, a memoir written by the famous Chinese TV interviewer, Chai Jing, which has sold more than three million copies in China. The topics it deals with are real stories from the interviews she conducted, not just major events that have occurred in China, but also events from the lives of ordinary people.

Many difficulties were encountered in the process of the translation, such as textual cohesion and coherence, sentence structure and vocabulary, as well as major cultural issues. How are these problems actually resolved? What translation strategies should be used to realise the translator's translation objective? The Skopos theory will act as the main guide in this case study and the author will give a detailed analysis of translation examples using the Skopos theory.

Key words: Skopos theory; Hans Vermeer; Cristiane Nord; Purpose; Translation

Resumo

Apesar de a China estar a receber cada vez mais atenção do mundo devido ao seu rápido desenvolvimento recente, continua a representar um mistério para a maioria das pessoas no Ocidente. De modo a permitir que um público maior saiba mais sobre a sociedade moderna da China de uma perspetiva autêntica, o livro 看见 Kanjian (*O Que Foi Visto*) foi escolhido para ser traduzido parcialmente para o inglês. Kanjian é um livro de memórias escrito pela conhecida repórter chinesa Chai Jing. Foi o livro mais vendido na China em 2013, com mais de três milhões de cópias vendidas. Os tópicos com os quais lida são histórias reais de entrevistas feitas pela repórter - não só grandes eventos que ocorreram na China, como também eventos das vidas de pessoas comuns.

Foram encontradas várias dificuldades no processo de tradução: a coesão e a coerência textual, a estrutura das frases e o vocabulário e também questões culturais. Como se resolvem estes problemas? Que estratégias deve o tradutor utilizar para atingir o objetivo da tradução? A Teoria de Skopos funcionará como o principal guia neste estudo de caso e o autor fará uma análise detalhada dos exemplos de tradução usando esta teoria.

Palavra-chave: Teoria de Skopos; Hans Vermeer; Cristiane Nord; Objectivo; Tradução

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1. Introduction

There is growing interest all over the world in the social, political and cultural dynamics of China due to its recent rapid development. However, for most people in the West, China is still something of a mystery. In Western book markets, a majority of books translated from Chinese deal with traditional cultural topics. In order to enable English readers to know more about the modern society of China from an authentic perspective, I have chosen to translate the work 看见 *Kanjian (What Was Seen)*, the Chinese bestseller from 2013, a memoir written by the famous Chinese TV interviewer, Chai Jing, which has sold more than three million copies in China. The topics it deals with are real stories from the interviews she conducted, not just major events that have occurred in China, but also events from the lives of ordinary people. For this project I chose two chapters of the book to translate into English, which consists of about 15,500 words in total.

Many difficulties were encountered in the process of the translation, such as textual cohesion and coherence, sentence structure and vocabulary, as well as major cultural issues. The huge difference between the two languages makes it even harder to resolve these problems. So how are these problems actually resolved? What translation strategies should be used to realise the translator's translation objective? The Skopos theory will work as the main guide in this case study.

According to functional translation theory, translation is a purposeful activity (Nord:1997). Translation is a complex activity involving many options which are determined by translation objectives. The Skopos theory proposed by Hans J. Vermeer is an essential part of functional translation theory. Vermeer believes that all the translation activities have their own purpose, especially those taking place in the professional market. *What Was Seen* is a work of non-fiction, which not only contains certain literary features (such as flexible syntax and some poetic descriptions) but is essentially a journalistic text, as the writer used many facts and opinions to narrate

social stories. In this respect, I believed that *What Was Seen* would be a good choice for the application of functional translation theory.

Whether to domesticate or foreignize a translation, has always been a central issue in the field of translation. As Theo Hermans puts it:

Compliance with the set of translational norms regarded as pertinent in a given community or domain means that the product, i.e. the translation, is likely to conform to the relevant correctness notion, which means conformity with the model embodying that correctness notion – behind which we can discern the dominant values and attitudes of the community or the domain in question. Translating ‘correctly’, in other words, amounts to translating according to the prevailing norm, and hence in accordance with the relevant, canonized models. (Hermans,1996:37)

Domestication has been the dominant trend in English translation up to now, which results in the invisibility of translators. However, Venuti appeals to the "visibility" of translators, that is, he strongly recommends foreignization in English as "a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations" (Venuti,1995:20). In this project, due to the distinct cultural backgrounds of the source text readers and target text readers, it was difficult to decide what translation strategy to use. This will also be discussed below by combining the author's translation objective and the current situation of the reception of English translations translated from Chinese.

The project contains five parts. The first part briefly describes the overview of the project. The second part provides background information about the book and the writer. The current situation with regards to the reception of Chinese-English translation is also discussed in this chapter, which helped the translator to decide which translation policy would be followed. The third part is composed of the English translation. The fourth part provides the preparation process before starting the translation, which includes a Translation Brief which indicates who the target readers are and what the translation objective is and explains which translation strategies were

used to solve problems in the translation process with the guidance of the Skopos theory by giving examples. The last chapter is the conclusion about the translator's reflections on this translation practice.

2. Preliminary information

This chapter presents some background to the source text and explains how the translation policy was determined, to bring the text into line with the general situation for the reception of Chinese-English translations in the West.

2.1 Background to the Source Text

What Was Seen is an autobiographical work, describing the writer Chai Jing's personal experiences. It can also be regarded, to a certain extent, as a chronicle of the changes that have taken place over the past ten years in China. One of the reasons why this book is so popular in China is that it clearly presents a picture of current China, which people can relate to.

Born in Linfen, Shanxi Province, in 1976, Chai is a well-known journalist and TV host of China Central Television (*CCTV*), working at the forefront of breaking news. Since 2001 Chai has worked on several influential programmes. As an interviewer, she has witnessed many important events, such as the SARS crisis, Wenchuan earthquake, and Beijing Olympics. She has also tried to uncover some covert but widely existing social phenomena, such as the abuse of local government power, domestic violence and homosexuality.

In this book she does not stress her professional identity as a journalist but simply records what she has seen in the interviews, describing individuals from the news who made an impression on her. From her point of view, everyone is deeply embedded in the world. No one can be just a bystander, because everyone will experience what others have experienced. The people and things that have been recorded in the book are not only the lives of others, but also of you and me. She reveals some social phenomena and reflects on it, trying to let the ordinary people see what she has seen and also to make the reader reflect on what has happened in society. The central theme of the book is to promote the idea that if people want to see, they have to open their eyes and take their blinkers off. And indeed it created a public stir after its

publication.

In this project, Chapter Five "我们终将浑然难分，像水溶于水中" (We Will Eventually Be Hard to Distinguish, Just as Water Flows Back To Its Source) and Chapter Ten "真相常流失于涕泪交加中" (The Truth Often Gets Lost In The Shedding of Tears) are translated into English. In Chapter Five, the author narrates a series of stories about three ordinary people at the bottom of society reflecting the equality and commonality of the human experience. In the first story, a woman was sold into prostitution by drug rehabilitation centre after being arrested for drug-taking. The second story is about a man who was kept in jail for twenty-eight years for something he didn't do. The last story is about a gay man who is married to a woman. Chapter Ten mainly contains interviews about a demolition case in a village of China, though it also discusses a magazine office being sued by a company; the writer's reflection on the assassination of the famous Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaia; a land auction which has not been concluded in three years, and gall bladder bile harvesting from live bears. The writer reflects on how media reporting can be impartial.

One of the most important reasons why this book was chosen to be translated for this project is its great social influence in China. As a Chinese bestseller, more than one million copies of *What Was Seen* were printed in China within one month of its publication in December 2012. According to the statistics of the *2013-2017 Strategic Planning Analysis Report on China Book Publishing Industry Market*, it has sold more than three million copies. It is my belief that its success in China could raise the possibility of arousing interest from English publishers. As Venuti (1995:312) says, "If, upon publication, a foreign text is not an instant critical and commercial success in the culture for which it was written, it probably won't be sought by target-language publishers. A translator must make efforts to interest the publishers."

2.2 General situation of the reception of Chinese-English translations in the West and determination of the translation policy

One of the most important factors determining the purpose of a translation is the intended receiver or audience of the target text with their culture-specific world-knowledge, their expectations and their communicative needs. Every translation is directed at an intended audience (Vermeer, 1987a:29).

Taking a look at the reception of the Chinese-English translation and the general translation style used by popular translations in the target market is a good way to help the translator to decide which method should be used in the translation process.

China has made a lot of effort to export its culture since the middle of the last century. In the 1950s, the periodical *Chinese Literature* was issued in English and French editions. In the 1980s the Chinese Literature Publishing House was founded and its series Panda Books, a collection of English translations of contemporary and ancient Chinese literature works, was launched. In 2009 the Panda Books collection was relaunched and shown at the Frankfurt Book Fair, promoting forty literary works by contemporary Chinese writers. Then the Library of Chinese Classics series project, which comprised more than fifty Chinese ancient classical works, was established. In 2010 the "Disseminating Chinese Literature Overseas" Project was set up. In recent years Chinese cultural output has been proceeding on a large scale. Moyan, Liu Cixin, Cao Wenxuan, and other Chinese writers successively received many influential literature awards, which has boosted China's confidence to export its cultural products. The influence of Chinese literature is clearly growing. However, reception in the West is not as good as it seems.

In 2009 only eight Chinese literary works were published in the USA, which represented only 4% of all the foreign literature in the USA. Shen Ning (Shen 2005: 25), the Chinese writer who currently lives in the USA, said that in the Denver Public Library, where there were more than 220 million books, foreign literature was only a small part of it, occupying only 138 bookshelves, of which Chinese literature only occupied about four and a half bookshelves. The English translator Julia Lovell (cit. Zhang, 2012) once said that in the best academic book shop in Cambridge University, all the Chinese literary works in total occupied no more than one layer of a bookshelf

less than one metre long. The statistics of publishing translated literature in the UK and Ireland, 1990-2012 (Buchler & Trentacosti 2015:17) also show that, though the translations from Chinese into English has doubled since 2000, there were only five translations in 2000 and a mere eleven in 2012. When the *Guardian* newspaper (Flood, 2012) reported about Mo Yan, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature 2012, a netizen made a comment "That's the problem, isn't it? Outside of the Amazon Top 10 and those we see in bookshops, the majority of people in Britain (and the West in general) have no idea of foreign literature." To a certain extent, it showed that, though the fact that Mo has won the Nobel Prize in Literature is significant in China, in the Anglophone world most ordinary readers do not even know the book. In the literary critic John Updike's review (cit. Rothman, 2012) of Mo's novel *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* for *The New Yorker* he writes: "The Chinese novel, perhaps, had no Victorian heyday to teach it decorum". This conjecture, actually, shows a kind of subconscious Western-centrism. In other words, Updike subconsciously presumes a kind of English writers' "decorum" as a criterion with which to evaluate foreign literature. He focuses on its style, neglecting other elements such as accuracy, target audience, economic value in the current book market, etc.

Howard Goldblatt is one of the most famous Chinese-English translators who has translated many of Mo Yan's works into English. He commented that although China at present was the focal spot of the world, it could not be concluded that foreign readers would certainly like, or had to like, Chinese literature. The truth was that Chinese novels were not very popular in the last ten years and publishers did not like to publish Chinese literature (Shi, 2014).

From a broader perspective, the reception of translations of Chinese literature in the Western world still needs to be improved. Compared to European and American literary works, which are being imported into China in floods, the effect of Chinese cultural output in the West is extremely limited.

The sinologist and Chair Professor of Chinese at the University of Edinburgh, Bonnie McDougall (McDougall, 2007), who worked in the Foreign Languages Press

in China in 1980s, has suggested that this situation has resulted from wrong decisions as regards translation strategy and misidentification of the target readers. She pointed out that the people who made the translation rules in China did not actually know English well and knew even less about their English language readership. In the second half of the twentieth century, Chinese-to-English literary translation focused on professional readers, such as publishers and editors, literary bureaucrats, censors and scholars etc, neglecting general readers.

How to change this awkward situation is worthy of discussion. As we have seen, the conventional attitude regarding translation into English is that it has to be highly domesticated and fluent else it will not find a market. As Venuti describes, the translator's activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture is invisible. This means that a translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged by most publishers, reviewers, and readers to be good when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent. In other words, the translation gives the appearance of being not a translation, but an original (Venuti,1995:1). This emphasis on fluency means that the translated text cannot be so faithful to the source text, and foreign-sounding words and syntax are avoided. The authority of "plain styles" in English language writing was achieved over several centuries. The American poet Charles Bernstein described it as "the historical movement towards uniform spelling and grammar, with an ideology that emphasizes non-idiosyncratic, smooth translation, elimination of awkwardness, etc., anything that might concentrate attention on the language itself" (Bernstein 1986:27). From the point of view of these cultural trends, transparency and domestication would become the authoritative discourse for translating, which seems inescapable.

Is this also a suitable strategy for contemporary Chinese-English translation? Let us take as an example the most popular Chinese-English translator, Howard Goldblatt. When he translated Moyan's novel *Red Sorghum: A Novel of China*, he thought its flashbacks, reminiscences and reviews in the original would retard the plot fluency if he conveyed them in translation. Besides that, there were also sub-plots conflicting

against the main one, expressing the theme or delineating the characters loosely or insignificantly; and in the end, he judged that the work would not be acceptable if it were evaluated by the standards of the dominant western poetics. So Goldblatt made lots of adaptations, combining, changing, revising and adding to some of the original chapters. He also deleted some narration, cut the length of Chapter 4, and rewrote the end of the original, etc, creating a version that is quite different from the original (cit. Deng&Zhang, 2017). Its good sales performance shows that Goldblatt's translation style suits the taste of western readers. Goldblatt thinks that the translation is supposed to face its readers first as a cross-cultural communication. If no reader is willing to read his works, his translation will have no chance to communicate with others over the world, no chance to influence them at all, let alone spreading China's culture among them. Thus, he endeavours to render the original in a more domesticated way, downplaying or omitting the elusive Chinese mythology, and certain political or historical issues, in order to tailor the work to western readers' habits or tastes. This is an example of domesticating translation, and he has made himself so "invisible".

Goldblatt was criticised by some Chinese scholars for changing too much of the original works, and for making the works lose their original Chinese cultural connotations. However, his contribution to promoting Chinese literature in the West is undeniable and he has successfully encouraged many English readers to read Chinese literature. Mo Yan also chose to completely trust this translator, supporting all the changes he made. The German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin (Huo,2015) once said that three American translators wanted to translate *Ruined City* written by the famous contemporary writer Jia Pingwa. But Jia refused, as he wanted Goldblatt to translate it. Jia showed that he highly identified with Goldblatt, and that he attached much importance to the translation effect.

Goldblatt's method seems very different from Venuti's proposition for foreignizing translation. Venuti regards the translators' invisibility as "symptomatic of a complacency in Anglo-American relations with its cultural others, a complacency

that can be described - without too much exaggeration - as imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home" (Venuti,1995:17). He thinks translators should be more visible in order to resist and change the condition under which translation is theorized and practised today.

Looking through the translations on the English book market, it cannot be denied that domesticating translation is still dominant. However, the trend seems to be changing gradually. Some years ago, pidgins and syntactic or grammatical mistakes were strictly avoided in a translation, but now the English readers seem increasingly tolerant. More and more Chinese pidgins have entered the West. For example, the *Wall Street Journal* (cit. Yap,2013) coined the word "Chinese Dama" (literally "Chinese Aunties") to refer to a group of middle-aged Chinese women who rushed to purchase gold as an investment in 2013 when gold prices plunged. In the UK, Chinese diasporic writer Guo Xiaolu's *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary For Lovers* (2007), was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction 2007, despite the fact that it does not totally conform to contemporary English reader's reading habits (it is full of grammar 'mistakes' and does not meet the requirement of "fluency" at all).

Scrutinising the British people's attitudes towards Chinese language and culture, their increasing interest is obvious. It is no exaggeration to say that Chinese culture is permeating the fabric of British society. Britain now has the largest Chinese population of any country in Europe (500,000 out of a population of about 64 million) (Mu,2015) More and more British people are not only interested in being exposed to Chinese culture, but also are serious about learning Chinese culture. Dr Lu Xiaoning, a lecturer in modern Chinese culture and language at the University of London, said: "Many parents even send their young children to weekend Chinese school. Mandarin Chinese has also been added to the secondary school curriculum in many parts of the UK since 2014." (ibid.) All these clues showed that British people are making more effort to get closer to China than before.

Therefore, rather than "bringing the author back home and sending the reader abroad" (Venuti,1995:20), it should be possible for the translator attempt to set up a

meeting in a place not too far from the writer, nor too far from reader (that is to say, find a compromise between domesticating and foreignizing strategies). Considering the mainstream reading habit of English readers, I have, in this translation, attempted to make the translation more fluent and explicit with regard to certain language features. However, some exotic elements will be preserved in the translation to let readers learn more about the source-language culture, since there is clearly an interest in this today.

3. Translation

Chapter Five

We will eventually be hard to distinguish, just as water flows back to its source

Canton in June, and it was raining like a maniac. The rain drops were as thick as an ox halter. Everywhere was a total whiteout. The grass and the trees absorbed enough water and grew wildly. The swollen leaves were so green that they were as dark as ink. The ground steamed hot and damp, wrapping the feet. Everywhere there was an air of barbarism and violence.

We were looking for Awen.

She was a drug-addict. After being arrested she was sent to a drug rehabilitation centre for compulsory detoxification. The centre sold her. She was sold into prostitution. After escaping she informed a journalist, and then the journalist reported it to the local police station. Later the drug rehabilitation centre transformed into a mental hospital and continued to operate. They didn't even change the head of the facility.

We wanted to find her, but we didn't have her address or telephone number. The latest news about her was from about three months ago. She had appeared near Chigang. We went to that area and asked at every single "hair salon", slogging through the muddy road step by step. Up until today the Cantonese phrase which I am most familiar with is still "Awen Yao Mou Hai Nei Dou?" which means "Where is Awen?" in Cantonese.

The local driver smiled and said with a sigh, "If you can find her, I'll buy a lottery ticket tomorrow."

After having found the home of Awen, her sister told us that she had stolen a lot of money from home and she also hadn't see her for two years. She hesitated for a

while before adding, "She called us and said she was sold by the drug rehabilitation centre. We didn't believe it so we ignored her. How could something like this have happened in a city like Guangzhou?"

We had no choice but to look for Awen in the village of Kangle where she was accustomed to prostitute herself. In a dark, narrow alley less than fifty metres in length, which was surrounded tightly by a few grey tenement buildings of the *Qilou* kind typical of South of China, stinking rubbish was all over the ground, so deep that it covered the calves of our legs. A few pimps, wearing yellow plastic flip-flops, with their sinewy naked upper bodies pushed past me. At the narrow shabby entrance to the hair salon, the curtains were half open. A woman wearing a cheap tank top with shiny sequins sitting there with open legs, glanced at me expressionlessly and then went to greet my male colleague who was behind me. Waste water, coming from somewhere unknown, dripped onto my hair with every few steps I took.

Each time I came back I had to fight the impulse to cut my hair, not because of the dirt, but because of a certain kind of woman's innate feeling of uncleanness. However, I only stayed there for few nights while Awen had to stand on the street corners every day. As recorded in her statement, if she had had wanted to escape she might have been beaten to death.

Nobody would care whether a drug addict lived or died.

We couldn't find her so we could only make discreet enquiries at the drug rehabilitation centre. Fortunately, the SARS crisis had just finished, so even wearing a big mask no one would feel strange. In order to match the sound engineer Hu He's Northeastern accent, I could only pass myself off as his younger sister, saying that we wanted to send a relative to the psychiatric hospital, and that we had come just to have a look around first. I seemed just like a clumsy TV actress, overacting and talking too much. Luckily the Cantonese people were not sensitive to my Shanxi-styled Northeastern accent.

The door was unlocked, opening the gate I saw the barn where Awen had been living, an iron bed which was so rusty that it had turned black, the pillow was so filthy that its original colour couldn't be recognised. How could I describe it? That smell.

Continuing onwards there was a water room, where water was supplied. As referred to in the statement, the addicts knelt there when they suffered beatings. They were trampled on with the heels, and after being beaten up were forced to drink a bowl of water. If they didn't spit out blood then the beatings would continue. If it was wintertime, they would have to strip naked and kneel under the water tap. The water tap was turned on so that a very thin column of water would drip onto the top of their head.

"You, get out!" a thirtyish-year-old man suddenly slapped Hu He heavily on the shoulder. We both froze.

"Don't worry," the nurse who came in with us said impatiently. "He's a patient."

Seven days passed. We had to leave. As we hadn't interviewed Awen, there was no proof about the key person involved in the affair. But I still didn't know where I could go to find her.

In 1998, I saw an old magazine in the library of the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, whose cover had fallen off. There was a photo of a girl cuddling a man from behind. She was a sixteen-year-old sex worker from Hainan, who earned money to support her boyfriend. She was wearing a dress with polka dots. She liked cats. She had a high fever and was calling her mother... In the last photo, she was lying on a bed without a mattress. Moonlight was shining on her face. She was looking at me.

After looking at these photos I wrote a letter to the editorial office I wrote a commentary titled "There is no Shame in Life Itself", saying that I would be willing to be their reporter free of charge. My only wish was that was able to cooperate with

Zhao Tielin, the photographer who had taken these photos. In no time I got a chance to film autistic children with him.

At that time I was twenty-two years old. Zhao clicked the camera and soon finished taking photos in the training centre. But the mother I wanted to interview never accepted my offer, "I don't want to talk about my life with others." I felt a bit foolish, not knowing what to do.

Zhao said, "I must rush off." I looked at him anxiously.

He just said one thing: "You want to interview the weak, then you have to make the weak sympathize with you." Seeing that I didn't understand, he added one last thing: "At the time I took photos of those prostitutes, because I was even poorer than them. I didn't even have money to eat. They felt pity for me so they allowed me to take photos. After the shoot they even invited me for a meal". After saying that he left.

I didn't know what to do, so I just followed that mother, going wherever she went at a distance of about ten metres from her. She didn't look at me at all and entered a courtyard, without closing the door. I paused for a second, then I also went in. She went into the house. I stood in the courtyard. The sky slowly became dark. Through the curtain hanging in the room, I couldn't make out what she and her child were doing. They were probably eating. About an hour later, her child, who must have finished the meal first, came out into the courtyard. As he went down the stairs he stumbled. Without thinking, I put my hand out to support him, and then played with him in the courtyard.

After a while his mother came out, leading a dog, looking at me and said. "We are going for a walk, you can come along."

Before going back to Beijing we decided to go to the house of Awen's sister again and leave a note for Awen. Her sister didn't want to see us again and didn't open the

door. It suddenly started to rain. Having no umbrella I grabbed a newspaper to cover my head and looked into the house. Her sister could see us but she never came out.

Our flight left the following day. I received a call from Awen's sister after I had fallen asleep. "She will go to your hotel tonight, eleven forty."

At first she hadn't believed us. She had thought we wanted to do harm to her young sister. But when she had seen the drenched people in the pouring rain, she felt it wasn't exactly as it first appeared. Then she had gone to find the local media to confirm our identity. After having searched for the whole day she eventually located her younger sister through a drug dealer.

"I also hope that she can have a chat with you so that we can figure out what on earth happened," she said.

We moved the bed away and set about adjusting the lighting. No one said a word.

At eleven forty, still no one had arrived. Twelve forty, still no one. My colleague Xiao Xiang comforted me "Drug addicts are all unreliable". I refused to give up and stood at the entrance, waiting.

When Awen arrived, it was already one o'clock in the morning. She sat down opposite me. I handed her a bottle of water and looked at her very closely. She had the appearance of young person, but under her straight hanging hair her cheeks were terrifyingly sunken. Her lips were black-and-blue. Only her pupils were pitch-black and extremely large. She was wearing a cheap light yellow polyester dress and her legs were almost fleshless.

Her voice was barely audible and it sounded like she was talking in her sleep. She repeated some sentences over and over again. The interview only finished at about four in the morning. The driver had fallen asleep listening to the interview. I didn't want to interrupt her. She had had no chance to talk about this year of her life and even if she had spoken no one would have believed her. She said, "I could be so

shameless! I even felt myself that I was shameless... Now thinking about this it still is. You can stand on that street and bargain with other people. That's to say you are not selling other people, you are not selling anything. To sell what? To sell yourself! That's bargaining with other people to sell yourself!"

She said in her nightmares she still went back to that place over and over again, wearing the night gown from the time when she was sold by the drug rehabilitation centre. The sky was getting dark. She would have to start standing on that street corner, waiting to sell herself.

"Is the drug rehabilitation centre there to rescue people, or to ruin people?" She asked, trembling from head to foot.

In the dead of night, everything was extremely quiet. You could hear the humming of the electric current in the lights. She said: "I also want to be a useful person, I hope society gives me a chance, doesn't treat us as if we were not human."

I said goodbye as I took her to the door and then I asked her where was she going. She hesitated a little and didn't answer straight away, saying that the friend who brought her here was coming to collect her. After saying that she paused for a moment and glanced at me. The look seemed as if she was a little ashamed. It also seemed that as if she was seeking my opinion about her. I embraced her and only then did I realise how thin she was. She took drugs and stole things, but she was still a human. She was a target of abuse and suffered nightmares. She had endured torture which should not have to be endured.

After the programme was originally broadcast the head of the drug rehabilitation centre was arrested. However somebody said, "Since Chai Jing went to the *News Probe* programme, the programme has degenerated to shoot the lowest level of website news" – which meant you didn't go to cover current political affairs, but more were concerned with people at the margin of society, just in order to shock and attract

attention.

When Zhao Tielin had photographed the prostitutes earlier, some people also said the same thing. Before seeing his photos I didn't care about this topic either. I knew these kinds of women existed but I thought they were unrelated to me.

But through his eyes, I saw sixteen-year-old Vee was carrying a cat and having fun with it, without concern for the queue of men waiting. When she had a high fever, she just sat on a stool, holding up her weak head, supporting her cheeks, listening to an old client talking about the meaning of life, watching her earn some money and went to eat with the boyfriend that she supported, cheerfully with arms wide open. The expression in her eyes when she turned her face to look at me under the moonlight made me aware of her existence.

Knowing and feeling are two entirely different things.

At the time when I saw the photos I wrote "The look in her eyes shook my body repeatedly, which made me feel painfully warm."

Since coming to the *News Probe* programme, I've been looking for people like Vee subconsciously. I've heard about this kind of person but I never felt they really existed.

We found a man in Guangxi Province who had been detained for twenty-eight years longer than the sentence that had been handed down to him. The detention centre was located in the mountains. You couldn't reach it by road. We had to walk five kilometres. The harsh summer sun beat down upon us. When we were halfway there it suddenly started to rain heavily. With nowhere to shelter and nowhere to escape, all our legs were covered the fresh red dots left by the bites of midges. The soles of cameraman's leather shoes were stuck in the mud. He was weighed down by the equipment and could only make progress by walking on tip toes.

There was a man whose name was Xie Hongwu. His father had been a landlord at the time of the Cultural Revolution. Back then, the landlord class was considered as an enemy of the people, so his father was denounced and killed. Xie was over thirty years old and not yet married. One day when he was tending his cattle, the loudspeaker announced suddenly that Chiang Kai-shek¹ had distributed reactionary leaflets. Someone in the group said that he had seen Xie pick up one of the leaflets. From then onwards Xie was locked up in a detention centre. From reading the investigation files, I realised that except for a warrant issued by the chief of the County Public Security Bureau in 1974, there were no other documents. There had been no trial, no verdict and no term for his custody period.

He had been in prison for 28 years.

When we arrived there Xie Hongwu had already been released following the intervention of the National People's Congress. He was sent to an ex-servicemen's care facility. The prison cell where he had been detained was in ruins. Melon vines reached up to my knees. The prickly hairs of the big shiny green leaves looked dark and wild. The foundations of the building were still there. I pushed the weeds to one side and measured roughly a metre and half wide, less than two metres long. Just enough room for one person to lie down. There were three prison cells like this, which were all for detaining mental patients. I asked the staff of the detention centre if there had been any windows in the cells? They said that there was a window in that place at a height of about two metres, but looking out of the window you would have seen only another wall.

After leaving the detention centre, Xie Hongwu received more than six hundred thousand yuan in compensation from the government. But he was over sixty years old and had no family. His house in the village had been pulled down and a school had been built in its place. He could only continue living in the ex-servicemen's care

¹ Chiang Kai-shek was a political and military leader and an influential member of the Kuomintang (KMT), the Chinese Nationalist Party. He was regarded as an enemy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Mao Zedong at the time of the Cultural Revolution

home. His only possession was a ceramic cannister. The doctor said that when Xie Hongwu had been released, his hip was curved like a ball and all his joints were atrophied. He was unwilling to sleep on the bed and wanted to sleep on the floor. "As the result of his humpback, the muscles of his four limbs had withered away. He couldn't fall asleep lying down, he could only fall asleep sitting down".

He hadn't had contact with the outside world for over twenty years and had basically lost the ability to speak. But the doctor said some of his mental faculties were still intact. The care home's service included doing laundry. But he refused, he wanted to wash his clothes himself. After eating, all of the patients' bowls would be washed and then be disinfected by the hospital staff, but he always washed his own bowl until it was spotless before handing back to them. While we were doing the interview, I handed him a bottle of water. He carefully poured half of the water into the ceramic cannister and then gave the other half to me, for me to drink.

I wanted to communicate with him on paper by writing but he only knew how to write "Chairman Mao" then.

I had no choice. I could only squat in front of him and look at him. His face was small and wrinkled. Most of his teeth had fallen out, leaving just a few. Only the eyes were a light green color, almost transparent, innocent as a child.

Suddenly, pulling at my hand, he let me touch his kneecap. It was hollow in the middle. Then I touched the other one - hollow as well. I looked at him in astonishment.

The people nearby said, "They were dug out at that time."

Twenty-eight years he had been in that cell. Never once had he left it, never had he had a recreation break, never had he had books or newspaper. He even went to the toilet inside. He was considered as a mental patient. But there was no identification record in the files. When I interviewed the detention centre's chief, he said, "Everyone said he had a mental illness. Besides he didn't complain." But even though he was a

mental patient, he could not be detained. The head of the facility said, "By that time he had no family left. We couldn't get rid of him." His seventy-year-old brother was still alive, still living in the village. But Xie Hongwu was "subject to control" at that time, so his elder brother didn't even dare to ask about his whereabouts. He thought Xie was already dead. Every year during the Qingming festival, when people commemorate dead relatives, he burned paper in his honour in the village.

I asked the head of the facility: "You had already detained him for more than twenty years. He'd been detained here for over twenty years, with only a detention warrant, didn't that concern you? Why was this person detained, why was he not set free?"

"If I was concerned about it, he would already have been set free and sent home."

"Why weren't you concerned about him?"

"I've already said that I didn't have so much energy and I didn't enquire about that matter. Anyway it's an old problem. It seemed natural for him to be there. How could I describe it? Just as if it was legitimate. All the former facility heads put him in the lunatic asylum so when I arrived I just did the same. I'm in charge of so many things. I have to make sure they have enough to eat and drink, they don't freeze to death or starve to death. I hadn't thought about it before. If I had thought about it before, I would have resolved it since long time ago. If we had such high standards, we would have been so advanced since a long time ago."

The interview finished at dusk. The sunset was beautiful. Xie Hongwu and the other old people were sitting on the lawn, having a rest, as stipulated by the care centre. The staff brought some chairs and let the old people sit in a row neatly with their backs towards the crimson sky. Xie Hongwu bent over in his rattan chair, looking straight ahead, indifferent, seemed unwilling to do anything. However I couldn't help talking with the staff "Isn't it possible to turn their chairs, turn them in another direction?"

He was a little baffled but still turned them around.

At a party my friend said, "The subject you were dealing with was too marginal, most people wouldn't even touch those kinds of problems." The writer Yefu had said "That's because we are not like most people. To a large extent we are already immune from being humiliated."

There were professors, reporters, civil servants in the group of people. Everyone was reticent to speak.

The writer Wang Xiaobo once said "When you are at home or in the work place or in front of the people you know, you will be treated like a human and be respected. But in a place where no one knows you, you may be treated as an object. I want to be treated like a human everywhere, instead of as an object. That is dignity."

Someone half in jest, half in teasing, said "You guys filmed pornography, gambling and drug abuse. Next time you will have to film the homosexuals."

I responded "We are certainly going to film them."

He paused and said, "I don't even want to watch this programme. It's disgusting!"

A person nearby heard it and blurted out, "Are you going to interview homosexual patients?"

A friend said that he liked the partner of the law firm in the film *Philadelphia*. He was able to fire that AIDS-infected gay so gracefully. As he looked at me, he continued "Everybody has free choice, you can't force others to be tolerant."

I asked him, "Do you understand them?"

"How could I not understand?" He said once a gay man confessed his love for him, since then he started ignoring that man. "It just made me feel disgusted."

"Why did you feel disgusted?"

"Anyway, from the time we were little, we were educated to be like that." He was probably not willing to speak much more about this topic and turned his face away.

Homosexuals are invisible in this country, though there are almost thirty million of them. This group had never appeared on the China Central Television (CCTV) before.

"I can tell others that I'm HIV positive, but I can't say that I'm homosexual myself," said twenty-one-year-old Dawei." Among AIDS-infected patients, some are infected through blood transmission, some are drug addicts and still some others by prostitution. Homosexuals are on the lowest level and are the most despised."

"When the doctor inquires, just say that you visited a prostitute," Professor Zhang told all the AIDS-infected homosexual patients when they were seeking a consultation. He was afraid that there would be problems.

He was the first researcher into homosexuality and he is the authority in that field of research in China.

What he said was not out of worrying too much.

I met a young guy in Qingdao. He said that he had had more than two hundred sexual partners. After he became infected with venereal disease he came here from somewhere else to be treated. When a doctor at the local hospital discovered his status as a homosexual, he refused him treatment. The doctor said that prostitutes could be treated, but he couldn't provide the boy treatment, saying, " Don't you feel ashamed? What will people like you do in society in the future?"

He knelt in front of the doctor.

It did no good.

A mother brought her son who had just turned twenty to look for Professor

Zhang Beichuan. Her son was homosexual. That mother said, "If I had known it sooner I would have strangled him at birth."

They work, study and struggle through life like other people, but they can't show their true identity in public. The vast majority of them have to marry the opposite sex. Most of the social places to develop a relationship are public toilets or public baths, but in those places it's almost impossible to find love, only sexual relationships, and with strangers.

"Having sexual relationship with strangers has great benefits for homosexuals. The benefit is safety." said Professor Zhang.

Safety? I was very surprised. It's the least safe way with regard to health.

"You don't know me, I don't know you either. After the act, as they don't know each other, they don't need to worry about their identity being revealed."

In a place without a past or a future, love cannot survive. There's only sex.

"I once said that as long as I was not that kind of person, I would be willing to have nothing." Yifei sat opposite me. He had delicate features. He used "that kind of person" to describe himself. He was even too ashamed to use the word "homosexual". "I feel I'm the only abnormal person in the whole world. Because I feel that the phenomenon of myself is unhealthy, it's an illness. I force myself to not touch any boy, try my hardest to keep away from them and try my hardest to find a girl. The stress on my nerves is very great."

Before 1997, it was possible he could have been put in jail because of his sexual orientation for the crime of "indecent assault" .

"Homosexuality is genetically determined. Among dozens of species of antelopes, same-sex sexual behavior has been observed, and attachment has been observed among primates, Human attachment phenomenon is to a certain degree what

we call that love," said Professor Zhang.

In 2001, in the third edition of the *Chinese Mental Disorders Classification and Diagnostic Criteria*, homosexuals are no longer referred to as being mentally ill, but "homosexuality" was still referred to within the "psycho-sexual disorder" category.

Yifei took the money that his family had given him to learn piano and went to see a psychiatrist where he received treatment. Like in the Kubrik film *A Clockwork Orange*, a person has their desires forcefully aroused, and at the same time is made to feel pain, thirst and nausea using emetic drugs or electric shock treatment. "You felt ill this afternoon because you're getting better," a doctor dressed in a spotless white gown said in the film. "You see, when you're healthy, we respond to the hateful with fear and nausea. You're becoming healthy, that's all."

It's done again and again, until the human body has a rapid and fierce aversive reaction to its own desires, like seeing a venomous snake.

Professor Zhang said he knew a man who had received this kind of treatment. In the end he became a monk.

"Then one will not be able to have the desires to choose homosexuality."

"One will not need to have desires anymore. "

"One is cured then."

They sat opposite me, hand in hand, interlocking their fingers.

I had never seen a scene like this and I was a little bit startled. But after having watched it a little bit longer, the slight discomfort feeling in my heart was gone.

The first question I asked was "How do you describe the relationship between you?"

"Love." They responded without any hesitation at all.

The one who was the more active and liked to smile more said, "Every time when I see a wedding limousine drive past I always give them my blessing. I hope I myself can also do the same in the future."

Right now, it can only be a dream for them. The vast majority of them will end up choosing to get married to the opposite sex and have a family,

We interviewed a wife, who had been married for nine years with a daughter. but her husband was virtually never intimate with her. She said, "I feel he is quite weird."

"Weird in what way? "

"He has never kissed me."

"Suppose that you want to have sex with him. when you show him that, how does he react?"

"I feel that he often naturally huddles himself into a ball, being very frightened and shows his utter disgust."

"Disgust?"

She smiled desolately, "Correct."

I paused a while, then asked " So at that time you ..."

"Somewhat self-contemptuously and simply felt that I was in fact not very attractive. When our daughter was three years old I started seeing a psychiatrist."

Her husband said "Wait until you are fifty years old and become sexually apathetic, then everything will be alright."

They had maintained their marriage like that for nine years. She felt that her husband was always "furtive", he cleaned all the internet history after surfing the internet. She thought at that time that he was impotent and was searching for some

information online, so she was too embarrassed to ask. Until one night, she woke up in the middle of night, it was almost three o'clock and she saw him still online. After a while he went to sleep, then she turned the computer on to have a look and found that the websites he had browsed were all about gays. She closed her eyes, "In blink of an eye I knew with a hundred percent certainty that he was gay."

A few days after, she made some food for him. While he was not paying attention, she approached him and patted him on the shoulder and said, "Admit it, I know you are gay."

He was stupefied for a moment, then he broke into a flood of tears.

In the evening, suddenly she heard a sound as if something upstairs had fallen. "I thought that he had killed himself, so I rushed upstairs while thinking I didn't want anything as long as he was still alive." After she got upstairs, "I saw all the lights of the attic were turned off, he was lying there alone, I was so sad and lay on top of him."

In the heavy darkness she used her hand to stroke him. His face was covered with tears. They hugged and cried. He said at that time, "Someone like me shouldn't have got married. I've hurt a woman. This is my life time's pain."

She said, "I hate him, but I also pity him."

I said, "From your description I imagine the inner feelings of your husband. He was suffering greatly also."

She said, "Every day he was pretending. Anytime we attended a social engagement together, he always tried desperately to tell everybody dirty jokes, which made others feel that he was especially randy and especially fond of women. He was tired every day, having to carry on his pretence."

I asked Yifei, "Why did you still get married to a woman?"

He said, "There is a friend who said 'my parents would believe the river will

flow backwards rather than believe that a thing like homosexuality exists.' "

Many gay people can only look for a sexual partner in a public baths or on line. According to our research into the operators of public baths, it shows very few people voluntarily used condoms when they looked for sexual partner by these methods. A male sex worker said that on busy days he could have sexual relations with about four or five people during a day, and that most of the clients were married.

"In this situation, if he contracts a disease from this group, then it means..."

He said, " It will spread to his family."

Dawei was infected with HIV on his first sexual encounter.

"Why didn't you use a condom?" I asked him.

"I had never seen a condom." Dawei responded.

Before he had sex he was just like every immature child. He said in a very quiet voice, after mustering all his courage, "I thought it was only kissing and hugging."

Nobody had told him what safe sex was or how to avoid danger. Even if he had known, he said that he would not have dared to keep condoms with him, for fear of being discovered by other people.

"Condoms mean sex and not protection to our Chinese people," said Cui Zien, the openly gay teacher from the Beijing Film Academy.

When the interview finished, Professor Zhang gave each of us ten condoms and a brochure. I was carrying an open-mouthed bag which had no zip at that time. When we arrived at the restaurant, there was no space to put my bag, so I put it on the chair and leaned against it. I pressed it nervously over and over again. As a result, when the waiter passed by and rubbed against it, the damn bag just fell on the floor.

Everybody in the restaurant watched as a whole load of small square condoms fell out onto the floor from a lady's handbag.

Everyone stared at me. Professor Zhang bent over and slowly picked them up one by one, as if he was just picking up chopsticks.

I asked Professor Zhang, "Why can't our society accept homosexuality?"

He said, "Because in our sexual culture we regard giving birth as the objective of sex, treat ignorance as purity, stupidity as a virtue and regard prejudice as a principle."

He had investigated, off and on, 1100 homosexuals. 77% of them felt a high degree of anguish, 34% of them had strong suicidal tendencies, 10% of them had unsuccessfully attempted suicide, 38% of them had suffered insults, sexual harassment, assault, blackmail and extortion, criticism and punishment, and other harm.

"Every year those homosexuals who committed suicide, actually they were suffering a psychological kind of AIDS, were psychologically terminally ill patients. Who gave them this terminal illness? The HIV virus didn't give it to them. Society did," said Cui Zien.

I asked, "Is there anything more important than life for homosexuals?"

"Yes."

"What is it? "

"Love, freedom, the air and space to openly express one's own identity."

"What if it can't be provided? "

"If it can't be provided, then this kind of repression, this kind of pain and desperation will always continue. Then it will become a chronic illness of society which can never be resolved."

When we were filming, all our male colleagues were very professional. They were very polite to the interviewees, but unusually, they didn't engage in idle chatter, they didn't even make any comment while they were eating.

My colleague Lao Fan and I inevitably surmised in private what they really thought. They only smiled but did not reply. Xiao Hong said that he had been harassed by a man, "That feeling..." I continued asking him. He said that he had a feeling of unease, not because he was of the same sex, but because of a feeling of being harassed.

As regards a person's attitude to sex and love, the point "is not whether it's male-male, female-female or male-female", but the person themselves.

When I interviewed the gay couple, those two men were hand in hand. We had talked for a long time and out of the corner of my eye, I saw that Hong and Fan were passing notes to each other. I thought they disliked them and were tired of the interview so didn't want to listen. Later they transcribed the notes into the computer and sent them to me:

Fan: How do you understand gay people now?

Hong: I don't believe there is any difference in the pleasure between homosexuals and heterosexuals, the desire is the same.

Fan: Chai and I were still discussing it last night. But one thing should be adhered to: sex should be a thing of beauty. Over-indulgence and gratuitous sex leaves people feeling indecent. Completely separated from love, don't we degenerate into animals?

Hong: I agree with your view. If the thirst can't be resolved, how do you talk poetically about the spirit? In the final analysis, there is no tolerant system which can accommodate multitudinous living states. Let people love freely, the more freedom there is, more purity exists!

When we were recording the programme, Dawei insisted appearing on camera without his appearance being disguised, which surprised me. We were used to disguising interviewees to protect them. He was gay, he was also infected with AIDS. I considered it was necessary to protect him.

"No, I don't need to," he said.

"Why do you want to do it like that?" I thought he was too young, "Do you know the price you will have to pay?"

"I know." He answered affirmatively.

"Then why would you choose to not use a protective screen?"

He looked straight at the camera, smiled heartily, "Because I want to tell everybody that I'm gay. I want to live with everyone happily. I want to find true love."

Yes, it's without shame.

Yifei is a dancer. During a pause in the interview Li Ji filmed him dancing. His face needed to be disguised so it was only possible to film his shadow.

A huge silhouette was projected on the wall, contorting, exaggerating, jumping with great effort, then fiercely pulled down by gravity. Without equipment on site, it wasn't possible to play music. He could only dance listening to the rhythm in his heart.

Fan used this dance at the end of the programme. She dubbed in Hong Kong singer Leslie Cheung's song "Me". He sang it at that performance after he had publicly disclose himself as being gay.

I am what I am.

I always love myself as I am

Happiness is that there is more than one way to be happy

The highest honor is, everyone represents the glory of the creator

No need to evade, living for the life that I like

No need to wear make up, standing on the bright corner

When the video was submitted to censorship, we originally didn't dare to hold out much hope. After all it was 2005. It was the first time the special topic of homosexuality had appeared on the screen of CCTV, and we showed homosexuals staring straight at the screen and demanding equality.

The chief censor was Sun Bingchuan. He had graduated from the Department of Chinese Language and Literature of Peking University. His long silvery hair draped over his shoulders.

I caused him countless problems, but he put up with it. He wasn't likely to approve of it but he tolerated it. I had done a behind-the-scene story of the Chinese Conservatory of Music enrollment. Three students encountered unjust treatment which resulted in them being excluded from the admission list. The programme was broadcast under a lot of pressure. We had to do the interviews in disguise, wearing caps and glasses to film with the hidden camera in the school. Cao Jiejie, Lao Fan and I, we three girls went there together to send the video to be censored. I had just come back from a business trip to the Northwest and I brought cigarettes from chief censor Sun's hometown specially. Sitting next to him, I handed him the cigarettes and poured him a glass of water, fearing that he would frown. When he heard the student playing Erhu², he blurted out "This song is Jiang He Shui³". Fan pressed the pause button, staring at him, her eyes openly revealed her amazement "You know so many things."

He already knew our intention and smiled gently.

After watching the programme, he stopped the video tape and lit a cigarette, then asked one question "Can broadcasting this programme change the destiny of these three kids?"

"It can."

He didn't say anything else, just signed it on the playlist.

But with this episode about homosexuality, I didn't even have the courage to accompany them to the censor. Whether an episode was passed or not, it wasn't about just changing some paragraphs or putting it aside, it's just decided by one pair of eyes,

² Erhu is a traditional Chinese two-stringed bowed musical instrument,

³ Jiang He Shui, a famous Chinese song, which means River Water.

whether it would be broadcast or not. I held my mobile phone the whole time waiting for the result, until I received the text message from Fan "It passed, not a single word was changed." On the first day when chief censor Sun was transferred to CCTV from the Propaganda and News Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, everyone was waiting to see what would happen. He didn't say anything at the conference, just smiled like a feline and quoted a poem by Su Dongpo.

*The beautiful and mysterious rain of Lushan mountain,
the magnificent tides in Zhejiang river;
they are both worth the effort to visit.
It would indeed be a pity for a visitor to miss,
the rain of Lushan mountain and the tides of Zhejiang river.
Finally I visited Lushan mountain and Zhejiang river,
there I saw misty rain and surging tides,
only to find that the desire and impulse I had was nothing more than that.
Without any surprise the misty rain of Lushan mountain was just misty rain on
Lushan mountain,
and the Zhejiang river tides were just Zhejiang river tides.*

I wrote this poem in the book of comments that was presented to him upon his retirement.

I had lost contact with Zhao Tielin for a long time. One day a friend mentioned him, then I found out that he had already passed away in 2005. I was dumbfounded for a while. He had given me a business card at that time, with a black frame around his name. When others asked about it, he just laughed, "I've died so many times."

He said "Life and death are ordinary."

Zhao Tielin was born on the battlefield and had been raised by foster parents in the countryside. His mother killed herself during the Cultural Revolution. He went to work in the mine and he had a business which failed after graduating from Beijing University of Aeronautics. The place he rented in Hainan was where the prostitutes lived. At the beginning he had harbored scholarly ambitions. He wanted to find someone like "Li Xiangjun" or "Du Shiniang" – both beautiful, gifted and dignified

courtesans in ancient China – to satisfy his desire to "rescue a fallen lady". Then he realised that these things basically don't really happen in real life. Instead, he took flattering photos of prostitutes with great earnest, charging twenty yuan for each photo to provide for himself. "They knew that I was a reporter. I put food on the table by taking photos. They provided for themselves by selling their youth. If you don't blame me, I won't blame you. It's fair enough. I was totally honest with them about my purpose. It was showing respect to them. they knew that I wouldn't distort the things concerning them."

Some people considered that he was "harming" them with his photos rather than "taking care of" them. "You cannot call it harm, neither can you say it's caring," he said, "When they thought you were also struggling for survival, that made us equal."

During sixty years, Zhao lived the life of a drifter. Before he died, Zhao lived in a forty-five square meter apartment and got around by riding a bike. He was lucky enough to live in what was perhaps the best era for Chinese documentary photography. He also knew that following this path was tantamount to following the path of poverty. Seeing his photos before he died made me feel ill at ease. He was like those people that he had photographed, enduring everything that fate had brought to bear upon him, without glossing over it, not having to show gratuitous mercy either.

Life and death, hardship and getting old are contained in everyone's being, one day we will encounter them.

We will eventually be hard to distinguish, just as water flows back to its source.

Chapter Ten

The truth often gets lost in the shedding of tears

In 2004, I was in the villages of Fujian province to conduct interviews related to demolition cases.

More and more farmers crowded around. With so many people clamouring, it wasn't possible to hear clearly. I simply stood up and asked "Did you agree with this demolition scheme at that time?"

"We didn't agree," A farmer at the front of the line said. Then everyone shouted one after another, "We didn't agree! We didn't agree!"

I said, "Those who didn't agree, please raise your hand."

All the people there raised their hands in a hullabaloo and the older people clasped their hands together to make a fist, yelling, "Me! Me!"

I thought this scene was full of tension. It was good enough to explain the topic as well.

In the evening after work, Li Ji, the cameraman, reminded me at the dinner table that it was best not to interview in this fashion. It was better to sit down with a few people and ask questions so that they would be able to state their views more calmly and to collect evidence. When people crowded around, what they expressed was probably just a kind of emotion.

I didn't say anything and couldn't take in completely what he had said. The interests of the farmers had been greatly infringed upon and they had signed petitions without results. Couldn't they just express themselves in their encounters with the media? Moreover, having such emotion was indeed the reality.

Some months later I conducted an interview with the boss of a pharmaceutical

company in Fujian related to the death of two workers caused by making emergency repairs to a waste pipe. However, public opinion suspected a connection between their deaths and the cover-up of the pollution. The Environmental Protection Bureau admitted that they had received so much pressure that they were unable to investigate that matter. We had no right to carry out an investigation to obtain evidence. No matter how many doubts we had, the opposite party could just deny it, "No", "It doesn't exist". It was as embarrassing as the first time when I did an adversarial interview.

I remembered that once I was watching Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS)'s *60 Minutes* news programme. The journalist Lesley Stahl was interviewing the former Vice-President Al Gore. She asked him if he was going to run again in the Presidential election.

Gore kept prevaricating and beating around the bush for eight minutes. It looked like this interview would be a failure.

Suddenly, she asked, "Mr. Gore, so you're gonna grow your beard back?"

Gore paused for a moment then continued humming and hawing.

She smiled, dropping the matter, then the programme finished... That smile was like her saying, "See, that's a politician."

I generally imitated that interview. We were sitting in the office at the factory. There was a pungent smell of sulfur dioxide. The cameraman raised his collar to cover his nose.

I asked the factory boss, "Does the discharge from the factory comply with the standards?"

"Yes, it does."

"Have there ever been any illegal discharges at the factory?"

"Never."

"Then what is this pungent odour that we can smell here?"

"I can't smell anything."

"So you are saying that you can't smell it?" I leant against the back of my chair, tilted my head and raised my eyebrows.

His face just twitched, "my nose, hmm, is not as sensitive as yours."

I smiled and then the programme finished.

Afterwards, everybody said it hit the nail right on the head because of the lasting impression made by the ending.

I felt a little bit of pride.

Director Zhuang reviewed this piece and after he had finished watching it, he said to me just one phrase, "You have to doubt, but you must not interrogate."

"One can't even express that little sense of sarcasm? " I asked him, "But how can that be fair to those people who have died? "

"A journalist supplies facts, not emotions," he said, in exactly the same way as Li Ji.

When I stepped out of the door I bumped into Chen Meng in the south courtyard, and I didn't have time to hide. Normally whenever my face had any unusual look, he would criticise me. If you looked reasonably happy, he would try to talk to you, feeling that you "certainly hadn't been thinking recently". But if you were not happy, would you try?

"What's wrong?" he asked as anticipated.

I just started speaking. He immediately commented, "Your problem is that you are always too dedicated. Ardent love can lead to exaggeration, with emotions come

distortions. Then it will not be possible to know things as they really are."

"If everybody were like you..." I blurted it out emotionally.

"Like me, how?"

"Sophisticated, like you."

"If you are not satisfied being here, you can go to CNN. Or you can be a free-lance writer," he got angry, "While you are here you have to..."

I interrupted him, "Be indifferent like you?"

The conversation broke down again.

Every time when I finished quarrelling with Chen Meng, he was always the one to call me first. Not to comfort me or to be angry, just to carry on talking with me.

"Pain is treasure. That is bullshit. Young lady, pain is pain," he said, "Pondering on pain. That is treasure."

I turned around and went to the Jingmen skyscraper's equipment room, in search of Lao Peng, to air my grievances.

At that time there were several big shots in the commentary department. He was one of them. Female colleagues used to call him the "TV beast". Once when he was editing the programme, he ate and slept in the office for ten days and ten nights without washing or grooming himself. The smell in the room made it impossible for people to enter. At that time, in the Little River Cemetery Ruins at Lop Nur, he carried forty kilograms of equipment and provisions for a journey through the desert. Each day he drank a bottle of water and ate a piece of dry crusty pancake. In weather of minus 38° he only had one sleeping bag. When he was back and ate hotpot with us, he said that he woke up frozen at midnight when he was sleeping in the thousand-year-old tombs. He stretched his hand, reached out for a branch of rose

willow and tossed it onto the bonfire. Being sleepy with eyes half closed, he suddenly saw a sky full of stars.

Lao Peng leant against a wall lined with video cassettes, smoking a pipe. As he watched me enter, he rinsed out one more cup with hot water to make tea, without even looking at me and asked, "What's wrong?"

I mumbled that the chief didn't allow me to satirize bad people. I thought he would have supported me, but he said, "I wanted to tell you off from the beginning, concerning that episode of the programme about sand storms. In the scene you followed the people walking to the well with contaminated water. Just standing there you asked, 'Is this water drinkable?'"

I asked what was wrong with that.

His small narrow eyes peered at me over the top of his black framed glasses. "Isn't your father a doctor of Chinese medicine? Chinese medicine talks about observing, listening and smelling, questioning and feeling the pulse. What's your hurry? The affairs of the netherworld. They don't have to be matters of life and death for normal people. Can't you first observe, smell, listen to the sound of the water and let the camera pan in, then ask?"

I had no words to reply so I picked up that green glazed Japanese porcelain cup from the table and prepared to drink. "Hey", he said, then reached over to pour the first brew of tea out, then changed it to 1994 *Pu'er* tea. "By drinking tea in this way your tongue can then taste between the light and heavy," he said.

My colleague from *News Probe*, Xiao Zhuang, had once said, "TV programmes tend to portray one person as a good person and another as a bad person. Actually, in this world there aren't good people and bad people, there are only people who have done good things and people who have done bad things."

When I watched films as a youngster, the kids sitting on the seedshell-covered floor loved most to ask the question "Is he a good guy or a bad guy?" As soon as the bugle call went out, their eyes were filled with burning tears and their teeth gnashed at the villains.

I thought that I didn't like it that way. In fact besides that one way, I also couldn't have been very different.

Zhang Jie gave me the right to choose the topics. There were some topics he wanted me to interview about, but I chose not to. I considered some of the subjects notorious and wanted to keep well away from them. Zhang Jie was a tolerant person. Seeing my resolute look, he gave up.

The editor-in-chief of the *Phoenix Weekly*, Shi Yonggang, was my friend. Talking about it, he reminded me implicitly by saying, "A news journalist has the responsibility to record people whatever kinds of opinion they hold. Judgement is the business of the audience themselves." Turning the cup in my hand, I smiled without saying anything, thinking that each person has their own interests.

In those years my interest was to make programmes about contentious issues that were very intense and strongly adversarial. The result should be like raining copper hailstones on a large-scale and with great momentum. This can even make the earth tremble.

When I was investigating the case of Awen being sold into prostitution by the drug rehabilitation centre, the moment when I entered the office, the head of the rehabilitation centre picked up his thermos and said, "I'm going out to get some hot water". I put my arm out to stop him, "Don't bother." Under my fingers the muscle of his bicep was as hard as steel.

He claimed that he knew nothing about this trade in selling people.

"I can prove that everything you said is a lie." The journalist Zhao Shilong who was accompanying me pointed at him with his pen.

"I don't know him," The chief turned to me. The vein on his neck was throbbing. "I've absolutely never seen him before."

"You're lying," Zhao Shilong said as he leant forward, "I disguised myself as a human trafficker in order to trade with you. I have photos as proof."

The villain was exposed. I felt the mission had been accomplished.

After the programme aired, the English edition of a newspaper wanted to run this story. The editor phoned Xiao Xiang to ask about the details. "When did the drug rehabilitation centre start to deal in female drug addicts? How many people have been sold altogether? Where did those women come from? How much was the drug rehabilitation centre's illicit income from human trafficking? Where has all this money gone to? Who was the responsible authority at the centre? Why haven't they been interviewed? ..."

Xiao Xiang said, "Buddy, the questions you ask are so important. We also really want to know, but some questions we really are not able to answer." The organizer and drug rehabilitation centre's discipline couldn't be investigated at that time because they were under police control. The account ledgers, the patient discharge list and some other important evidence relating to the drug rehabilitation centre's trafficking of female drug addicts had been incinerated beyond recognition. Xiao Xiang said frankly, "Even if there were thousands of reasons why they couldn't answer the questions. But from the professional point of view this programme was a failure. All we had was an accusation from a female drug addict whose image on the screen had been altered, a leak from a whistle-blower whose voice and image had both been altered, an undercover journalist, a fierce confrontation and a repudiation. The *News Probe's* principles of accuracy, in-depth and balance reporting couldn't be fully reflected in this programme."

It was like after the rain. The surface of the earth got wet, without penetrating the soil, or reaching the plants' roots. On the cracked earth, no matter how strong the tremor, soon after there was no trace to be seen. After punishing some individuals, the drug rehabilitation centre simply changed its sign and I had already turned to make another programme.

I felt nothing more could be done. The environment we live in determined it, just as Xiao Xiang said, "A hungry man can survive if he eats some meat as a matter of urgency. At this time it's impossible to follow the traditional Chinese philosophy - *Kuai Bu Yan Xi*, which translates as "do not eat to your fill of the best cut". You can only serve one hunk of steak.

I thought everything would be alright as long as there was no mistake in grasping the matter. Oriana Fallaci was much more aggressive than I was. The famous CBS anchor Dan Rather once said that TV happened in the blink of an eye, so it had to be dramatic. He was famous for challenging President Nixon on his debut. An interview with President Bush senior nearly turned into a quarrel. He has never hidden his point of view or his emotions. After 9.11 he sat on the floor, reading *America the Beautiful* with tears in his eyes. All this won him the reputation of being "fearless" and "emotional". But when our chief director Yuan Zhengming censored the video he reminded me, "You have to control yourself. Sometimes you forget that you are interviewing."

I said to the chief director Yuan that none of the audience criticised it, and they even really liked it, feeling that "it's her true temperament".

Yuan's face darkened, "You'd better not let the audience see what your true passion is. What you are like in your private life is your own business, but on the programme you can't show that."

He even responded appropriately to the situation, giving me a copy of the

Diamond Sutra. I secretly named him *Fang Zhang*, which means Buddhist abbot.

When I was young I watched the film *Shaolin Temple*. I really hated the old Buddhist abbot in the film. He asked Jet Li "About abstaining from lust and desire, are thou are able to control it from now on?"

Young Li peeped at the love token which he was grasping in his hand, arching his eyebrows. The girl watched from behind the door, her welling eyes full of emotion.

The old monk asked again "Are thou able to control it?"

"...Yes."

The girl turned around and left.

With a fluttering heart, why did you let him control it!

The chief director Yuan got promoted to the head of the TV station. He was not in charge of investigation but he still warned me occasionally, "You can see Barbara Walters. As she gets older, she becomes more and more in control. You also should be like that."

"So I should be more mature?" I thought that I was still quite young.

"It's not maturity," he said, "This is one of your professional requirements. Whether you are mature or not you have to do this."

In 2005 Lao Hao and I did a report about the suing of *China Reform* magazine. As a result of a report published about the Guangdong Huaqiao Housing Development Ltd. Co. which had restructured irregularly and had prevented its employees from stating their opinions, the employees' benefits were infringed and the magazine office was taken to court by the company, which claimed 5 900 000 yuan in damages. The Huaqiao Company stressed that the report contained inconsistencies, without having

interviewed the company formally, nor having stated any favourable facts about it.

Investigative reporting very often attracts lawsuits. As long as there exists any controversy about the numbers or the details, the likelihood of being sued is very high. Once sued, the majority of the witnesses do not appear in court for their own protection. Therefore, the rate of the media losing cases in the first instance is more than 60%.

This time they finally won. The judge recognised that some points in the report were different from reality, but not seriously inconsistent with the facts. His sentence concluded "It's only necessary that the content of the news report has been judged by the interviewer with average people's cognitive ability at that time, thinking it is supported by information sources which can be reasonably trusted and regarded as fact. Neither hearsay nor something fabricated. In that way, the news agency obtains the immunity regarding facts under the law."

I asked him, "How do you want your audience to understand this judgement?"

"It depends on how great this society's tolerance for the media is, then this society will progress by the same amount. The requirement of a civilized, democratic society that follows the rule of law needs media oversight."

I had a warm feeling.

When the boss of the Huaqiao Company was interviewed, he said that he accepted the sentence of the court. He was also to accept the media's "immunity". But he had one doubt, "You are also a journalist, tell me, you only have one side's version. Without hearing the other side, how could this be an impartial piece of reporting?"

I asked the editor-in-chief of the magazine office at that time why they hadn't interviewed the Huaqiao Company. He said "In most critical reporting, no matter how you seek opinions, the result will always be the same. The material is more reliable as

evidence, so it is unnecessary to reflect all kinds of conflicting opinions."

When *China Reform* was sued, many media agencies reported this matter. They also only interviewed the magazine office, without hearing any voice from the Huaqiao company.

Big institutions can often decide instantly whether a particular news report survives or not. The media companies certainly are vigilant and share a bitter hatred of the enemy. I am also a journalist so when I heard that the editor-in-chief refused to hand over the informant in exchange for mediation, saying, "I can't give up my professional ethics. I'll go to jail if I have to," I felt a blood rush of excitement

But still there was a small doubt which resurfaced in the interview. I pushed it down then it came back up again. "Give each party an opportunity to speak". Aren't these the values we ourselves encourage? If it really isn't possible to conduct the interview, do you have to quote some evidence or background that are favourable to them? Very instinctively, I thought that the powerful parties deprived other people of the right to speak. When they were deprived of the right to speak themselves, then that would be their punishment. The punishment was a kind of constraint.

But then I thought, "In this way, what is the essential difference between the Huaqiao Company that at that time suppressed the facts and retaliated against the whistle -blowing workers, and us?"

I reassured myself, "We are in the right."

However, it seemed that there was no universal standard for being right. No matter what programme I made, there was always someone who commented on my blog calling themselves righteous and saying "Whatever CCTV approves, I'll oppose it".

Once an American colleague talked with me about a problem in mainland China. He made an arbitrary judgement. I told him that I had been to that place, how I

understood the situation to be quite different.

He interrupted me, "China basically doesn't have real journalists."

"A real journalist firstly should give other people an opportunity to speak," I said.

"You are the dishonest party."

With that the conversation ended.

In 2006, 48-year-old Anna Politkovskaia was assassinated. Four years ago, I had seen on TV this female journalist entering the Moscow Theatre where more than seven hundred hostages were being held. I was full of admiration. Chechen kidnappers demanded that she be an intermediary between them and government. The kidnappers trusted her, because, in her reports, she had more than once publicly criticised the suffering in Chechnya resulting from the decisions made by Vladimir Putin.

Today, the cause of her death is still shrouded in controversy. Putin and the Chechen armed groups both remain under suspicion. Not long before her death, the leader of the Chechen armed groups, Shamil Bassayev, had invited her to interview him. She refused, saying that "After the hostage incident, I no longer have anything to talk with him about. There are no heroes in this world, only people who have suffered."

She was the forty-third journalist to have been assassinated in that country in the previous fifteen years. At that time I wrote an article on my blog, "The people who have killed journalists wanted to make people afraid – feeling afraid for needing the truth and wanting to think." There was a picture of an old woman putting a white rose in front of her portrait. I wrote "The Russian people commemorated her with flowers. There's a kind of power in this world, which is weaker than everything, but it's

stronger than fear."

I was deeply touched by that rose.

Afterwards I met an American political scientist called Ann, who had been living in Moscow for sixteen years. I talked about Anna Politkovskaia with admiration. Ann hesitated and said, "I'm sorry for Anna, but I didn't appreciate her reports."

"Why not?" I was quite surprised.

"Because there were too many opinions in her reports," she said, "She always criticised simply from the point of view of the side which she considered weak."

I replied that Anna had said that her principle was - *Criticism is the only language of journalists.*

She shook her head, "These kinds of reports are very difficult to be objective."

I thought as she was American, she didn't understand what Russian journalists had to tolerate. "She was in an environment like that, the people who have been persecuted frequently are hard to avoid..."

She said, "But by this way you will slowly become the person who you are originally against."

Her words sounded reasonable, but I still couldn't bear to judge Anna from this perspective. I just couldn't do it. Some friends discussed this. One was a fellow journalist who said, "She's our honour and inspiration".

Another person countered, "Say 'my', don't say 'our'. Your emotion can't represent other people's judgement."

This sentence was a real put-down, and it piqued me.

This colleague said, "I am most disgusted at making fun of tragedy and sorrow."

The other one said slowly, "Really? What thing is so sacred that it can't be made

fun of?" It piqued me again.

After He Weifang's networking group on the social networking service website *Douban* had been closed down, a senior colleague wrote a long article on his blog to commemorate and praise it. In the article's comments, there was a person who signed off as the leader of the group, saying "In our group, some articles are constructive. But not like you said, all of them are like that." He wrote at the end, "Don't deify a thing just because it has died." This sentence was harsh but fair.

Also in the same year, Dan Rather resigned from CBS. In 2004, two months before the American presidential election, when Dan Rather hosted the *Evening News*, he quoted an air force memorandum from 1972 to 1973, hinting that the Bush family had once forged Bush junior's military service records.

It caused a public outcry, but finally the provider of the document admitted that he had misled CBS. Dan Rather had to leave the *Evening News* and went back again to *60 Minutes* as a journalist. In 2006, he finally left CBS where he had worked for forty-four years.

A chill came over my whole body. A piece of news had been checked and verified by various people. Why was it that the host was the one who had to resign? At the press conference an American colleague said that if the programme had been awarded the Peabody Award, the one who would have accepted the prize would also be Dan Rather, no one else. This piece of news caused trouble, the one who had to be responsible for it also must be him.

Dan Rather said that he had always made great efforts to interrogate the people in charge and verify that the facts themselves existed.

When I saw the word "interrogate", my stomach dropped.

The American media commented that Dan Rather's fondness for challenging authority and his craze for "investigative reporting" had caused to become the biggest

victim in this failure.

I wrote an article entitled 'The Other Side of the Right of Speech', referring to that interview with the Huaqiao Company. "Perhaps we won't have the opportunity to interview the accused. But do we have doubts about the information provided by our source? Can we ask the whistle-blower questions from the point of view of the accused? Have we exhausted every kind of technical elements, demonstrating the tendency to search as far as possible for evidence that is favourable to the accused party? 'Not being able to do it' is just a technical problem. 'Not having to do it', however is a kind of mindset for using force to fight force." In my blog I quoted what my colleague Xiao Zhuang had said "There should be no good people nor bad people in a programme. There are only people who have done good things and people who have done bad things."

A reader left a comment at the bottom of the blog, "Before, you felt there were only good people and bad people. Now there are only good things and bad things. In the future there will only be something or the absence of something"

Alas...

The Union for the Disabled of Sanming city in Fujian province arranged free cataract surgery for old people in the area. The surgery was subcontracted out to an unlicensed doctor, who was guilty of medical malpractice, resulting in many people losing their sight. Before we went there, there already existed a lot of news reports. I interviewed the person who was in charge of the Union, a lady in her forties. At the end of the interview, which had lasted for more than an hour, she burst into tears.

I was quite surprised, thinking that I had done something wrong.

She said "Before, no one was willing to listen to everything I had to say."

Lao Hao and I looked at each other. We hadn't expected this reaction.

Good and evil inevitably exist in human nature. The old people who accepted the free surgery were all poor. One of them sat opposite of me, wearing a pair of old fashioned liberation army style shoes full of holes, and was only able to eat with a spoon shakily, with rice grains splattering on his blue-green clothes. Having been faced with this kind of person, it was impossible not to feel sympathy. Having been faced with the person who had caused this result, it was also impossible to not feel indignation.

But if she hadn't finished talking about that for over one hour, there would be no way of knowing how the lenses used in the surgery were purchased, how the problem of the lens quality happened, where the doctor was from, why a designated hospital subcontracted the surgery to an unlicensed person, who gave the Union the "Sight Rehabilitation Project" target which had to be met... Behind this person, the hidden and unobserved complex cause and effect were like a big net, spreading boundlessly.

I still admired and studied Fallaci and Anna, but I also started thinking again about their interviews. They were willing to risk their lives in the torrent of bullets for an interview. They were filled with a burning passion and they were deeply sympathetic. But it also easily resulted in dividing the world into those who wield power and those who are abused. They credited or blamed someone for what had happened in history, resulting easily in putting personal likes and dislikes above the facts.

After "9.11", Fallaci wrote the book, *The Rage and the Pride*. She said that she herself had "cried for six days and six nights" to write this book. It was not reporting, not even literature. In her words it was an instruction manual. In this call to arms she used words such as "bastard", "rapist" and "worm".

Tears and rage are human nature. But I gradually felt that what the public

demanded of the profession of journalists was to reveal the world, not standing in front of something, swinging their fists.

After I arrived in Moscow, I was waiting in the customs queue for two hours but they still didn't let us through. The person who was at the front of the queue turned out several boxes of ginseng from his suitcase and handed them to the lady customs officer. She smiled and turned around skillfully in her chair, bending down and put them under the counter. Everyone copied his example, getting their clearance stamp and being released. The glass of the airport bus was broken, but the big scarlet graffiti on the wall of a building in the street could be clearly seen: AMERICAN GO AWAY! The Russian journalists on the bus said that there were fifty thousand Skinheads here. They called themselves national soldiers and attacked foreigners who didn't have Slavic features, because they believed that they had looted their resources. At the hotel entrance, people getting off the bus suddenly stopped. In front of them there were five or six skinheads, wearing short leather jackets and steel toe-capped boots. When they looked at us, the overseas student who was accompanying us suddenly turned around, his face turning ashen white. He had once been set upon by skinheads. If an elderly couple hadn't stopped them, he "would have definitely been killed". No one said a word, holding the handle of their trolley suitcases tightly. Not far away, a policeman with his hands behind his back, holding a handful of melon seeds, watched idly.

The next day when I went out I couldn't find a taxi. Then I stopped a wrecked Lada, driving along as if it were ploughing a field. The spikey-haired driver was listening to heavy metal music. He could speak a little bit of English, repeating "The communist era was better, because there was bread to eat."

Suddenly he made a sharp turn and squeezed in front of a large bus.

"You know what? Every week there were some rich people assassinated in Saint

Petersburg." He looked at my expression, then smiled, revealing a gold tooth. "Ah, in the last assassination, the killer only murdered the person, leaving one hundred and fifty thousand US dollars untouched."

He waved his hand in approval, saying, "We just need to get rid of these capitalists!"

I kind of understood Ann's thoughts - If the world is only differentiated into two parts according to the bases of strong and weak or black and white, it will possibly be just like a cube. You push it down, then the other side turns up, the original state still exists.

In April of 2009 I went to Chongqing to investigate. A land auction had not been concluded for three years. As a result of this the factory had stopped production. Some workers wrote to me hoping that we could report this. There were many red fingerprints on the letter, which impressed me a lot.

The key protagonist in this matter was called Chen Kunzhi. He was accused of manipulating the land auctions.

"He had a gun and held it against people's heads to force them to sign the agreement," someone said. The same person claimed that he had been detained by him and he had witnesses and evidence. The director knew the interview would be dangerous, so he let us change the mobile phone and use disposable SIM cards and said, "Without interviewing him, can the programme be viable?"

"The basic evidence was enough", said the production director Jianfeng

"Then its ok without interviewing him. Safety first", said the director.

The other interviews finished and there was enough material to use. The luggage was loaded into the car and the plane would take off in a few hours. All of us were sitting in the hotel, looking at each other. We all knew what the others were thinking,

"Should we interview Chen Kunzhi or not?"

Even if we didn't interview him the programme would be viable. But every journalist would feel dissatisfied.

"Then do a telephone interview and leave as soon as the interview finished," said Jianfeng.

At four o'clock I called him but didn't get through. My colleagues and I looked at each other, sighing with relief but also feeling disappointed.

The number was dialed again. Following a beep, came a very clear "hello".

"I am a journalist from CCTV. I want to interview you about the case of the land auctions and hear your explanation."

"I'm playing golf," he said.

"Can I meet you?" I thought he was sure to hang up the phone straight away or to say that he was not available. Then, we could hurry on with our journey in peace and we would even be able to have time to eat rice noodles at the airport.

Unexpectedly in the end he said, "Come over then."

Many people would feel it's strange. Why would so many figures like him actually accept to be interviewed on TV? The *60 Minutes* journalist Mike Wallace once said that it was because all the people you thought were bad, in their own hearts believed that they hadn't done anything wrong.

In the interview he proudly admitted to almost all of the facts, including having manipulated the auction and having received a mediation fee of more than seventeen million yuan. But "manipulating the auction" from his point of view was a legitimate activity. He even felt that he had acted morally, because he managed to "be responsible to those who had paid him". As for those who had been detained and threatened by him, he thought they were greedy profiteers who were like scum and

trying to make the most from it. He felt that he had saved the whole deal. Everybody who wanted to get rid of him was just like a swarm of "buzzing flies" and they wouldn't succeed.

We were sitting on the edge of a huge domelike golf course. He regarded me as the audience for his heroic stories. I doubted if he realized what he was saying and the significance for him.

"According to the lawyer I asked, there was no legal problem with what I had done." He tilted his head, there was a somewhat complacent expression on his face. When he saw me to the door, he showed no scruples, "I graduated from a University of public security. I just took advantage of the law."

In the subsequent investigation and trial, he was given a death sentence with possible reprieve.

But that was not the end of the matter. Chen Kunzhi once said to me "No one was in the right in this affair, don't beat the drum under the banner of righteousness. Everyone acted for profit."

I originally thought this was a world with a clear distinction between black and white, which was divided into the weak being bullied and the bully using violence. Only after having verified the information he had provided did I discover that some of those who he had robbed in the auction were not merely victims. In the beginning they all wanted to make a profit from it. Furthermore, it was not a legitimate profit. It was just under the law of the jungle, big fish eating little fish. In the end they were all eaten up.

Those who informed us led the revolt. They threw out the factory boss and sealed up the iron gate in order to stop production and sold off some equipment, then split up the money. Soon after they threw the other factory boss out and divided up a part of

the dividends again. Waiting until Chen Kunzhi had controlled the conclusion of the auction, they used force to resist and refused to transfer the land. They also divided the factory and the wasteland into plots, then rented them out. It was a further sum of money. And it was all grabbed by this dozen or so people... These people were not the suffering working class that I had imagined before setting out. There was no group identity, no uniform group of poor people, everybody was out to make a profit for himself.

When they were interviewed, everybody wrote their will, thinking that they would be killed by gangsters, even including Chen Kunzhi. He added, "I was threatened by the mafia" ... I wasn't able to control my curiosity and asked everyone to read their will out. They all did so in a tearful voice.

I remembered that when I interviewed the Professor Yi Zhongtian in the *Lecture Room* programme, he turned the tables on me, converting himself from the guest into the host and asked, "The slogan of *News Probe* is searching for the truth. Tell me, what is the truth?"

I said after thinking for a while, "The truth is the bottom of a bottomless pit."

A member of the audience left me a comment in my blog after watching the programme, "Then tell me, what is searching?"

Another member of the audience wrote the answer for me at the bottom, "Maintain your vigilance against different arguments, then you can maintain your independence. Searching is a never-ending believing, a never-ending doubting, a never-ending disillusionment, a never-ending destruction, a never-ending reconstruction. The purpose is only to avoid becoming a slave to bias. In other words, provoking encounters of each kind of bias and obtaining a balance. That is what I understand by searching."

After finishing the interviews for the *Chongqing* episode, I wrote a letter to Professor Qian Gang, saying that this episode of the programme made me not dare to make direct comments on any matter again.

I wrote, "I have doubts about any interview with the absence of one party, even if there isn't any problem in technical terms. We must let the other party talk and explain. Even if these explanations make our originally simple right-and-wrong matter chaotic, make me a passive observer, make me embarrassed in the interviews and make me have to give up some nice interview segments which I've already done, and brings with it the risk of the programme being dropped by the public relations department, I'll have to do it like that. It's not only being responsible for them, but also at the same time lets us complete our own complex understanding of the world. Even if this kind of understanding makes it hard for me to understand or makes me anxious."

Professor Qian wrote back, "Those who search for the truth shouldn't be coerced by anything, including public opinion. We have to stand in 2012, 2022, or even somewhere further in the future to look at ourselves."

At the end of the letter, he said, "Don't cherish your feathers too much."

I understood what he meant. Being an investigative journalist, it is very easy to wear the caps of "justice", "conscience" and "advocate for the people". Within it, there is vanity and also sincerity. But, it is indeed one of the motivations for journalists to persist in difficult times. Now, if we remove the journalists' cap there may be no shelter when it's windy and rainy.

I wrote these on my blog, but a reader asked, "Journalists valuing neutrality isn't the same as valuing indifference. Are there no ethics in this profession?"

In 2011, various celebrities and netizens jointly signed to oppose the listing of the Guizhentang Pharmaceuticals of Fujian Province because it was harvesting gall

bladder bile from live bears for traditional medicine. The director of the company, Qiu Shuhua had cried for more than ten minutes before agreeing to be interviewed. Without having replied to any specific questions, she only said that the people who had accused her were driven by some Western anti-Chinese forces. She didn't have any proof and simply said that they had been framed.

I asked, "Isn't it possible that in the present society, after having developed for thirty years, the awareness of animal protection is much stronger than before and the voice is also much louder? "

She stopped crying, "I have no way of saying that."

I said, "Then would you like to calm down and analyse this problem again?"

This matter of harvesting gall bladder bile from live bears was related to the changes in the law, economy and wild life protection policies over the last twenty years and it also related to the relationship between Chinese people and animals in the proceeding millennium. It was not possible to respond to these with emotions. I formulated questions mostly using "Isn't it possible...", and this was because I was not sure that I myself was definitely right. The position couldn't be chosen easily. I only wanted to understand by asking questions "If you choose a certain position, then it will be inevitable to make some choices. What will be others' choices? Which results will be produced according to experience?"

Qiu was always stressing that she would definitely not give up harvesting bile from live bears. I asked, "Isn't it possible that once you get your listing, as the whole country's industrial policy is currently changing, in the future after the industry shrinks, it will present risks for the shareholders, and for you also? "

She hesitated for a while, being persuaded and said, "If the artificial substitution can be researched and developed, we can also do research and development."

The transformation seemed unexpected. But in the beginning when confronted by

a large number of dissenting voices, the shift had already started. As a way of defending themselves, people stick to their position as firmly as set-cement. If you don't interrogate just show doubt and hesitate for a while, some air can enter, some water can get into it and your two feet won't get stuck in it. Thought by its very nature is restlessness. Once a person starts to wobble, the new ideas will be like a shoot, sprouting out of the soil.

Interviews are not used to judge, but to understand; are not used to recreate the world, but only to know the world. The ethics of journalism are to let others "understand".

At the invitation of the State Council Information Office I went to have a meeting to talk with some government officials. One of them referred to the reason why he had blocked the news, "Because irrespective of whether I released it or not, they (the journalists) wouldn't have spoken well about me." The people in the audience all nodded.

When it was my turn to speak, I said I would talk about three detailed points. The first was one year when I was in America. It was exactly at the time of the affair, when CNN host Jack Cafferty insulted the Chinese people by describing them as "goons and thugs". I talked about this matter with an African-American who I met on the street. He told me that they all hated that person a lot. He added that Cafferty also insulted black people. But he didn't represent CNN, nor did he represent white people, he only represented himself. I also talked some obvious provocative and biased points in the reports of some American media coverage with some US State Department officials. The officials said dispiritedly, "They also treated us like this." But they accepted the journalists' professional role, because "their right was given to them by the constitution".

The second detailed point was, once just after the snow disaster had happened in

China, I went to the National Development and Reform Commission to interview an official. At that time the commission was criticised on line for having failed in its duty to deal with the snow disaster emergency. I asked him about this problem. He let out a long sigh after finishing his reply, then said, "Finally someone is asking me about this question," as he had finally got an opportunity to explain it publically. If the news is always being blocked, then everyone will always believe the rumours. No one will ask you the question that you want to answer.

The third detailed point was when I conducted interviews in Guangdong Province about illegal land expropriations. As soon as I sat down and asked my first question, the city mayor said angrily, "How dare you ask me a question like this without warning?!" The question was simply "Why did you order illegal land disposals?"

He stood up and pointed at the video camera, swearing.

I reminded him "Mr. Mayor, it's still recording."

"I'm telling you to turn it off!" He was about to pounce on the camera. In a rage, he exclaimed, "I've never met any journalist who dared to ask questions like you did."

"I've also never met any city mayor who didn't even dare to answer the questions." I also got a little bit angry at that time. It was the first time I had quarrelled with an interviewee straight away.

We were going to leave on a flight early the next morning and we intended to sleep. In all probability he had got out of the wrong side of bed that morning, and now that it was eleven o'clock at night, he was waiting at our door with an ashen face, "Interview me again." My colleagues looked at each other, saying, "Ignore him."

The interview from the morning had already been recorded. He was like a quick-tempered cartoon character and a bit of a drama queen. The audience would love to see this. But what we wanted was not his show of lack of control, but his information. Chen Wei and Lao Wang set up the recording equipment, I washed my

face and said, "Sit down." The interview lasted forty minutes. He talked about the decision-making process of illegal land expropriation and the local finance and taxation enforcement. After the interview I said to him as I was leaving, "I could have not interviewed you, you knew that. But I carried out the interview, because I respect my profession. Please respect journalists in the future."

After talking about these three detailed points, I said, "You think the media is biased. Yes, the media may be biased, it's all the same in any country in the world. However the best way to correct it is the exchange of ideas, letting one idea compete with another and using reason to rouse reason."

I met a friend whom I hadn't seen for a number of years. He said that several people had watched my programme in a bar. "In the beginning they thought that you were a little fighter. But now, seeing that you specialize in interviewing government officials they all laughed at you. I even stuck up for you, saying that you're not a push-over."

I asked him whether he had listened to the contents. He replied no. "Well," I said.

"You have changed. It can be seen from the expression in your eyes," he said.

"Do you think it is alright?" I asked him.

He was silent for a moment, then said, "I think... As long as it's good for you then it will be alright."

I said the programme was my own choice. I felt the information provided by that government official influenced many people's lives, the audience need to understand. He said, "Oh, then you are..." He made a hissing sound but still withheld the provocative thing he was going to say.

That was his style of speaking. I didn't think it strange, then I said, "No matter who the report is about, they are all equal."

"Do you really think that you are equal to everyone else?" he asked.

"Speaking about myself, when the camera is rolling, everyone only has a single identity - *my interviewee*."

He guffawed, saying, "You're really naive."

I also smiled, "Yes, everything will be regarded as the truth if people believe it."

In one of the first pages of my interview notebook, I copied a paragraph. Goethe asked his disciple to go to a nobleman's party. The young disciple said, "I don't want to go. I don't like them." Goethe admonished him, "You want to be a writer, then you need to keep in touch with different kinds of people, only then can you research and understand all of their characteristics. Moreover, don't try and get their empathy and approval. Only like this can you deal with anyone... You have to immerse yourself in the great big world, whether you like it or not."

No matter how many expectations the bystanders had of him, how vociferous the environment was, the disciple said, "I have no desire to fight, I don't plan to write a war song."

In the programme which my friend had watched, the government official who I interviewed criticised the errors in the financial decision-making at the high levels of government. He had talked about it for about five minutes very candidly.

After the interview I asked him, "How can you survive with this personality?"

He said, "The bureaucratic system is a complex system. If there were merely one type of person then it would be hard to continue playing."

"What do you rely on to let others still accept you even though you are so outspoken?"

"Doing the right thing," he replied.

I thought about what I had asked Ann, "If one thinks Anna's way is not actually the best way, then what is."

Ann said, "Doing the right thing is the best defence".

No matter how hard people try to control themselves, human emotion can't be eradicated. Sometimes it is loose and sometimes it is tight, forever and ever. I asked Lao Fan to delete the scenes when I overacted on camera during the editing process. She didn't listen. Sometimes she even emphasised them, dubbing with music. She thought only the emotional journalists could influence the audience. I couldn't help it, I could only blame myself, "Make a sign for me, if I don't control myself in the interview just hold up the sign, writing two words on it - *be dignified*." I couldn't do anything about it. What the Buddhist abbot said in the film was right. Monks and journalists, these two professions both require a person to be able to *control him- or herself*. If one can't keep control or doesn't want to keep control, then one can only quit. In the *Diamond Sutra* that he gave me, there was a phrase, "Be aware of the thought, once aware, it stops following". People aren't able to clean away their emotions to judge objectively, but must be on the lookout. Once one can be aware of it, after being made aware of it one can stop following the thought.

Lao Fan grinned and winked, "Ah! I feel we are quite good! You are not a fairy sister. You are an ordinary person, just walk on the earth."

A member of the audience once had criticised me on my blog, I felt what he had said was very good. In a women's social circle I talked about it with others, "If you have bribed readers with sorrow, then you must have used sorrow to please yourself. I guess when Ms. Chai Jing makes programmes and writes blogs, she's always in floods of tears. Honestly speaking, the psychological foundation of sorrow and the feeling of seeking bitter revenge is being self-moved. The emotion of self-indulgence is easy and fast to get and easy to become addicted to. To resist it consciously is especially precious. Behind every piece of trivial news there is hidden a long-winded chain of logic. To us, a vast majority of these chains of logic point in the same direction. It is

because of these secrets which can't be spoken but are self-explanatory that we have to remind ourselves 'we can't start howling when we just arrive at the hillside of this chain of logic'."

This member of the audience also wrote, "Doing the right thing is the most important skill of this profession. However, being self-moved and getting moved in the very beginning are the biggest enemies of doing the right thing. The truth often gets lost in the shedding of tears."

4. The application of translation strategies under the guidance of the Skopos theory

Skopos is the Greek word for "aim" or "purpose" and was introduced into translation theory by Hans J. Vermeer as a technical term for the purpose of a translation and of the action of translating.

Skopos theory, established by the German linguists Hans Vermeer and Katharina Reiß, focuses on translation as an activity with an aim or purpose, and on the intended addressee or audience of the translation. From this perspective translation is no longer limited by conventional source-text oriented views. The purpose is assigned to every translation by means of commission. Vermeer defines commission as the instruction, given by oneself or by someone else, to carry out a given action — here: to translate. (ibid.:229)

"Translational action" was put forward by Justa Holz-Manttari in 1981, being designed to cover all forms of intercultural transfer. In this model, translation is defined as complex action designed to achieve a particular purpose. The purpose of translational action is to transfer message overcoming culture and language barriers through message transmitters produced by experts. She regarded a translator as an expert, who is therefore responsible for deciding whether, when, how, etc., a translation can be realized. (ibid.)

Christiane Nord defines the Skopos theory in this way, "According to Skopostheorie (the theory that applies the notion of Skopos to translation), the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (Skopos) of the overall translational action. This fits in with intentionality being part of the very definition of any action" (Nord, 1997:27).

Skopos theory focuses above all on the purpose of the translation, which determines the translation methods and strategies that are to be employed in order to produce a functionally adequate result. The result is the target text, which Vermeer

calls the *translatum*.

4.1 Translation Brief

According to Nord(1997:60), the translation brief and source-text analysis are very important in a translation . The translator has to consider certain differences with regard to the culture-bound knowledge, experience or susceptibility of the respective audiences. To find aspects in which the source and the target texts will diverge, the translator has to compare the source text with the target-text profile defined in the translation brief. A translation brief can help translators have a clearer idea about how they are going to deal with the translation. Vermeer affirms that "every translation presupposes a commission, even though it may be set by the translator to himself."(Vermeer,1989:228) In this case study, in the absence of a professional brief from a client or agent, I produced my own translation brief, based on the categories suggested by Christiane Nord (Nord,1997:60):

- The intended text functions: Referential (information about current Chinese society), expressive (expressing feelings or emotions of the characters in the text and the writer), and appellative (inducing the receivers to respond in a particular way, in this case, to make them reflect on the social environment where they live).
- The target-text addressees: English people who are interested in understanding more about current Chinese society and those that already know something about China, like Chinese language learners and sinologists; also any other readers who intend to know something about China, though they may have never read anything written by Chinese writers or they know nearly nothing about China culture.
- The prospective time and place of text reception: In the following two years, mainly in the UK.
- The medium in which the text will be transmitted: Printed book and e-book on the internet.
- The aim for the production of the text: To enable readers to know more about current Chinese society and help them to reflect on issues that might also have some bearing on the society where they themselves live and to convey the information,

emotions and the writer's ideas that are expressed in the source text. However, in order to get it published, the work will have to fit in with English reading habits and modes of expression.

What interests the majority of British and American publishers are the financial benefits, as only when they believe a book will attract readers, preferably as many as possible, will they decide to publish it. That is the reason why they seldom publish translations. Venuti also pointed out that "British and American publishers have devoted more attention to acquiring bestsellers, and the formation of multinational publishing conglomerates has brought more capital to support this editorial policy while limiting the number of financially risky books, like translations"(Venuti,1995:15) Therefore, as explained in the translation brief, not only Chinese language learners and sinologists (who form a very small population), but also general English readers were considered as target readers. They may have never have read anything written by Chinese authors and know nothing about the Chinese culture. The writer records many dialogues with her interviewees, most of whom are members of general public and describes frankly their stories in the book, which employs a colloquial and informal style. For these reasons the register of the translation is also informal and tends to be more explicit than the original so that it can be more intelligible to a wider of audience, aiming to attract more general readers. In order to make the translation attract more readers and get published, the decision was taken to set the translation policy after understanding more about the current situation of reception of the translation from Chinese in the West, as how target readers react to a translation is of vital importance. A translator's Skopos may be same as the writer of the source text. To achieve the same effect as the source text does, it requires that the translator need to strive to satisfy target readers' preferences.

As Vermeer asserts, "If the commission is specific enough, after possible adjustment by the translator himself, the decision can then be taken about how to translate optimally, i.e. what kind of changes will be necessary in the translatum with respect to the source text." (Vermeer, 1989:230)

In what follows, I shall discuss how each of these apply to the English translation of *Kanjian*, using examples from the text.

4.2 Examples of how the Skopos approach is applied in the translation

The skopos can help to determine whether the source text needs to be "translated", "paraphrased" or completely "re-edited".(Vermeer,1989:231), viz, either to employ documentary or instrumental translation strategies (Nord,1997:47) Each strategy is based on a defined skopos which is itself based on a specified commission.

4.2.1 Cohesion and coherence

Cohesion and coherence are essential for aiding readability and idea communication. Coherence is about the unity of the ideas and cohesion the unity of structural elements. Cohesion, as the primary means of reaching discourse coherence, is an aspect of vital importance in textual linguistics. Both English and Chinese employ cohesive devices, but they belong to different language families and their way of thinking differs from each other, so there exists much dissimilarity between Chinese cohesion and English cohesion (Yang, 2014).

Chinese shows paratactic prominence, which means the grammatical meanings and logical relationships in the discourse are expressed by the meanings of the words and clauses in it, without the employment of conjunctions and connectives. English is hypotactic-prominent which means in English the grammatical meanings and logical relationships in the discourse are expressed using many conjunctions and connectives (ibid.).

In English it is very common to see the use of personal pronouns like "we", "she", "they" and relative pronouns like "that" and "which" to avoid recurrences of nouns. The sentence may be long and complicated, but it is still clear enough to understand.

In Chinese the situation is very different. Given the structure of the language, a long sentence in Chinese would be very complicated and may not be understood properly. Therefore, in Chinese we can only find short sentences or long sentences divided into short phrases separated by commas (Taub, 2017). If a translator keeps the structures of the translated text too close to the source text, it may lead to misunderstandings, neglecting how the text as a whole functions communicatively.

Therefore, how to deal with this problem in translation is very important, as it determines whether readers can or cannot understand the final text.

e.g.1

Source text: 看见 (Kan Jian)

Translation: What Was Seen

Analysis: The Chinese title of the book, 看见, literally means *to see* in Chinese. The concept of grammatical time in Chinese is not handled through the use of different tenses and verb forms as it is in English. 看见 can mean *saw*, *seen* or *seeing*. According to the contents of the book, the writer records what she has seen in the interviews she conducted. *What I Have Seen* could clearly represent the book contents, which has already been used as a translation for the title in English journalistic reports about. However, Chai stated that she didn't add a subject "I" in the title, because it seemed too subjective and decided to leave it without a subject to make the title sound more natural. As referred to in the translation brief, conveying the information, emotions and writer's ideas that are expressed in the source text is one of the aims of the translation. It relates to the relationship between target and source texts, which is called "intertextual coherence". Since a translation is an offer of information about a preceding offer of information, it is expected to bear some kind of relationship with the corresponding source text (Nord,1997:32). Source texts are the foundation and the information source for the translation. There must be coherence between the source text information received by the translator, the interpretation the translator makes of this information and the information that is encoded for the target text receivers. Only then can readers accept the translation and resonate with the writer of the source text.

However, the fidelity of the translation to the original text will be adapted according to the purpose of translation. In order to convey the thought of the writer, i.e., to make the target text more coherent with the source text and in order to tell readers what the book deals with in a candid and clear way, the title was translated as "What Was Seen".

e.g.2

Source text: 他叫谢洪武，父亲当年因为是地主，被斗死了，他三十多岁一直没成家

Literal translation: His name was Xie Hongwu, father was a landlord back then, was denounced and killed, he was over thirty years old and never got married.

Translation: His name was Xie Hongwu. His father had been a landlord at the time of the Cultural Revolution. Back then, the landlord class was considered as an enemy of the people, so his father was denounced and killed. Xie was over thirty years old and not yet married.

Analysis: As we can see from the literal translation version, there is a great difference between Chinese coherence and English coherence. While the semantic relation between one component and the next is clear in Chinese, if translated literally, it can be very puzzling or even wrong in English. In this phrase, readers may have doubts about who didn't get married and who was killed, Xie or his father? And the Chinese phrase structures of short phrases with commas are not correct in English. In order to achieve the aim of making the target text fit in with English reading habits and modes of expression, the sentence structure was altered, adding a full stop to the independent sentence in English and adding the pronoun "his" before "father", and the second pronoun "he" was changed to "Xie" in order to make the sentence less ambiguous in English.

e.g.3

Source text: 调查性报道很容易惹官司，只要数字或者细节存在争议，被起诉的可能性很大，一旦被起诉，出于保护，证人多数不会出庭，媒体的一审败诉率在百分之六十以上。

Literal translation: Investigative reporting very often attracts lawsuits, as long as there exists any controversy about the numbers or the details, the likelihood of being sued is very high, once sued, for their own protection, the majority of the witnesses do not appear in court, the rate of the media losing cases in the first instance is more than 60%.

Translation : Investigative reporting very often attracts lawsuits. As long as there exists any controversy about the numbers or the details, the likelihood of being sued is very high. Once sued, for their own protection, the majority of the witnesses do not appear in court. Therefore, the rate of the media losing cases in the first instance is more than 60%.

Analysis : In the source text the whole paragraph is divided into short sentences connected by commas without any conjunctions or connectives. The loose coordinated style linked by commas is very frequently applied in Chinese discourse; however, it may be regarded as a mistake in English. In order to achieve the main Skopos of the translation "make the translation more readable for English readers" and reflect the original style. The original sentence structure of the source text was generally maintained and only a few changes were made to make the sentence sound more natural, such as adding the full stops to complete sentence segments and adding the connective.

4.2.2 Explicitation

Owing to cultural differences, there are proper names and cultural allusions in the Chinese text which are hard to explain in English. Chinese-charactered words are of mainly three types: words related to culture and history; words describing politics and economics; and words dealing with daily life experiences. They appear a lot in the

current text. Cultural differences are a great challenge in a translation. There are somethings that are self-evident in a certain culture but have to be explained with great efforts to another culture. Something that doesn't need to be explained to the native readers has to be explained well to foreign readers.

As the translator aims to attract more non-specialist readers, the target text should appeal to as broad an array of reading preferences as possible. In order to understand better English readers' reading preferences we can take a look at how well received Chinese-English translators, especially some native English-speaker translators, deal with the explicitation problem. Adding footnotes is one device used to explain further information to the readers. But the sinologist and famous Chinese-English translator Howard Goldblatt (Hu,2010) suggests that one should never impede the fluency and readability by adding footnotes too casually. The sinologist and translator McDougall also stated the same opinion. She strongly suggested that translators should trust their readers. (McDougall,2007) Therefore, considering the desire to conform to target culture behaviour and expectation, the combination of a borrowing and a target-language explanation is applied frequently in the translation process, which makes the target text more explicit, avoiding putting footnotes too frequently Here are some examples:

e.g. 4

Source text: 我们去那一带，一家发廊一家发廊地问，深一脚浅一脚的泥水路。到今天，我最熟的一句广东话还是"阿文有无系呢度"。

Translation: We went to that area and asked at every single "hair salon", slogging through the muddy road step by step. Up until today the Cantonese phrase which I am most familiar with is still "Awen Yao Mou Hai Nei Dou", which means "Where is Awen?" in Cantonese.

Analysis: Being one of the dialects in China, the written characters of this phrase in Cantonese are the same as in Mandarin, but the phonology and other linguistic

features are dramatically different. The writer shows this difference in the source text by adopting Cantonese linguistic features, so the translation used phonetic symbols according to Cantonese pronunciation instead of Chinese Mandarin pronunciation. Although for English readers who have no linguistic knowledge of Chinese, it would not matter whether Cantonese or Pinyin phonetic symbols are used, to those who have some Chinese linguistic knowledge, the difference would be apparent. It goes without saying that English readers would not understand the phrase without the addition of clarification. The explanation was inserted into the text of the translation itself in order to let it read more fluently. In this way, the specialist target readers and non-specialist target readers both can obtain information that the translator wants to convey from the source text.

e.g. 5

Source text: 一个不到五十米的巷子，被几座灰浊的骑楼紧夹着，窄而深，几乎没有光线，满地恶臭的垃圾直淹到小腿。

Translation: In a dark, narrow alley less than fifty metres in length, which was surrounded tightly by a few grey tenement buildings of the *Qilou* kind typical of South of China, there was stinking rubbish all over the ground, so deep that it covered the calves of our legs.

Analysis: The term *Qilou* is used to describe two-story buildings in southern China, which are designed for mixed residential and commercial uses. In order to fulfill its referential function without interrupting the reading, a brief explanation was inserted directly into the text. It not only helps readers in their understanding of what *Qilou* is, but also avoids interrupting the reading process and maintains its original exotic style.

e.g.6

Source text: 他叫谢洪武，父亲当年因为是地主，被斗死了

Literal translation: His name was Xie Hongwu. His father was a landlord back then

so he was denounced and killed

Translation: His name was Xie Hongwu. His father was a landlord from the time of the Cultural Revolution. Back then, the landlord class was considered as an enemy of the people, so his father was denounced and killed.

Analysis: Most Chinese readers would understand that "back then" hinted at the time of the Cultural Revolution. The text world corresponds to source-culture reality. The source-text receivers are able to match it to their own world reality whereas the target receivers are not able to. The target readers would not understand why the landlord had to be killed without a satisfactory explanation. In order to make it more explicit and to fill the cultural gap, the phrase was translated with supplementary information.

e.g.7

Source text: 他没说什么，大会上只笑咪咪引了句苏东坡的诗：“庐山烟雨浙江潮，未到千般恨不消。到得还来别无事，庐山烟雨浙江潮。”

Translation: He didn't say anything in the conference, just smiled like a feline and quoted a poem of Su Dongpo

*The beautiful and mysterious rain of Lushan mountain,
the magnificent tides in Zhejiang river,
they are both worth the effort to visit.
It would indeed be a pity for a visitor to miss,
the rain of Lushan mountain and the tides of Zhejiang river.
Finally I visited Lushan mountain and Zhejiang river,
there I saw misty rain and surging tides,
only to find that the desire and impulse I had was nothing more than that.
Without any surprise the misty rain of Lushan mountain was just misty rain on
Lushan mountain,
and the Zhejiang river tides were just Zhejiang river tides.*

Analysis: The seven-character quatrain is a form of regulated verse with four lines of seven characters each. It is a typical classical Chinese form. Shelley summarized the difficulty of poetic translation in this way: "it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its color and odor, as to seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet"(cit. Bassnett,

1998:58). Classical Chinese poems are very mysterious even to Chinese readers. Poets are able to describe complex scenes and express profound emotions by using just a few words. Translating classical Chinese poems while maintaining their form in English is virtually impossible. There doesn't exist an English translation for the poem yet. In order to make the poem more intelligible to English readers the poem was translated into a form that is familiar to English readers and an amplification strategy was applied. At the same time different readers may have different interpretations of the poem, so no further explanatory notes were added to clarify the poem, with the intention of maintaining the mysteriousness of the poem and invoking the imagination of readers.

4.2.3 Appellation

One of the biggest pitfalls of Chinese-to-English translation is the rendering of a Chinese person's name into English. Name structure is different in Chinese and English. Chinese names always start with the surname, which is followed by the given name, while in English it's the opposite. The main method used in this translation is transliteration using the pinyin system and following the Chinese name order. However, sometimes changes need to be made to avoid confusion.

e.g.8

Source text: 当年看照片时我写过：她的目光一下一下打在我的身上，让我感到疼痛的亲切来到"新闻调查"后，我下意识里寻找像阿V这样的人——那些我知道，但从没感到他们存在的人。

Translation: Since coming to the News Probe programme, I've been looking for people like Vee subconsciously - I've had heard about this kind of person but I never felt they really existed.

Analysis: In the source text the writer used an English letter as an anonym to disguise the identity of the informant (generally the characters are described with a typical Chinese name). In order to maintain continuity and textual coherence, the name was

translated into English as "Vee" as a representation of the pronunciation of the letter *V*.

e.g.9

Source text: 记者莱斯利采访前任副总统戈尔。

Translation: The journalist Lesley Stahl was interviewing the former Vice-President Al Gore.

Analysis: In the source text, the writer translated the names into Chinese according to their pronunciation and followed the general rule for Chinese names, using two or three characters for a name. For this reason, the writer simply translated one of their names, either the given name or the surname of the western figures. In English texts it is not normal to call someone directly by their surname or given name when they appear in the text for the first time. In order to conform to the target culture habit and cater for English readers' reading preferences, these names were stylized as is the English custom. Instead of saying "Lesley" and "Gore", "Lesley Stahl" and "Al Gore" were adopted.

e.g.10

Source text: 余光看到小宏和老范正在一边传纸条。

Translation: Out of the corner of my eye, I saw that Xiao Hong and Lao Fan were passing notes to each other.

Analysis: "小", (Xiao) literally means 'little' or 'small' in Chinese, while "老" (Lao) means 'old'. It is very common in Chinese to put these prefixes before a person's surname or title as an informal appellation. In daily life they are sometimes used between close friends, regardless whether the speaker is younger or older than the addressee. It is simply a way of addressing another person with a display of intimacy. Considering that calling a person by the prefix old/young in English may be misleading to English readers, *Xiao* and *Lao* were translated by following the rule of pinyin.

4.2.4 Textual structure and paragraphing

The Dutch sinologist Mark Leenhouts (cit. Ran, 2014) commented that to many Western readers Chinese novels are fragmentary. They feel that stories are divided into sections resulting in an incomplete feeling. The stories often have no main storyline but many little plots. So when they read Chinese novels they may feel disappointed. *What Was Seen* also has the same problem. Each chapter contains different stories and the narrative jumps about between stories in a way that the English reader may find bewildering. Although there are section breaks in the source text (extra line spaces between different sections), this may not be so clear to English readers. What is more, the way the writer divided different sections is still sometimes confusing to English readers as the writer didn't separate sections at the end of each story (see e.g. 12). In order to achieve textual coherence and avoid confusing readers, asterisks were used to mark the breaks between different sections and I also made some adjustment to the section breaks as the writer used to do.

e.g. 11

Source text:

[...] "没事，"跟我们进来的护士不耐烦地说，"病人。"

七天了。我们必须走了。但没有阿文的采访，就没有核心当事人的证明。可我不知道还能去哪里找她。

一九九八年的时候，我在北京广播学院的图书馆看到过一本旧杂志，封面都掉了，是一个女孩从背后搂着一个男子的照片——那是海南一个十六岁的三陪女，她挣钱养活男朋友[...]

Translation:

[...] "Don't worry", the nurse who came in with us said impatiently, "he's a patient".

Seven days passed. We had to leave. As we hadn't interviewed Awen there was no proof about the key person involved in the affair. But I still didn't know where I could go to find her.

In 1998 I saw an old magazine in the library of the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, whose cover had fallen off. There was a photo of a girl cuddling a man from behind. She was a sixteen-year-old sex worker from Hainan, who earned money to support her boyfriend[...].

Analysis: In the source text the section break is an extra line space, which was put between the first and the second paragraph. However, the first and second paragraphs are still related. The third paragraph started a new story, as it referred to another time and other characters. In order to avoid causing confusion to English readers' reading process the book. The section break was removed between the second and third paragraph. And the section break mark was changed to asterisks, which are clearer.

e.g.12

Source text:

他忽然拉着我的手，让我摸他的膝盖，中间是空的。

我再摸另一个，空的。

我吃惊地看着他。

Translation:

Suddenly, by pulling at my hand he let me touch his kneecap. It was hollow in the middle. Then I touched the other one, hollow as well. I looked at him in astonishment.

Analysis : A one-sentence paragraph is very common in contemporary Chinese discourse. It is a way to emphasize the textual atmosphere and express emotions. Example 13 not only indicated the miserable fate of the figure, but also showed the

dread and sympathy of the writer. The source text reader can easily feel the same feeling that the writer had. However using a paragraph for a single sentence may confuse English readers as it is not a common method of paragraphing in an informative text. In order to avoid this confusion the sentences were often combined within the same paragraph. At the same time, in order to create a tense atmosphere, each sentence was described in a short and brief way.

4.2.5 Citations

The writer used many citations in the source text. Some were translated from English. When a source text includes quotations translated from the target-text language, the translator has to decide whether to translate the phrase according to how it appeared in his/her source text or be faithful to the original. However, this can be resolved by the Skopos of the translator.

e.g.13

Source text: “这是健康人类的有机组织正在对破坏规则的恶势力作出反应，你正在被改造得精神健全，身体健康。” 电影里，穿着一尘不染白大褂的医生说。

Translation 1 (faithful to the source text): "This is the organism of healthy human beings reacting against the vicious power which breaks the rules. One is being transformed to a healthy body and a healthy psyche." a doctor dressed in a spotless white gown said in the film.

Translation 2 (faithful to the original quotation): "You felt ill this afternoon because you're getting better. You see, when you're healthy, we respond to the hateful with fear and nausea. You're becoming healthy, that's all." a doctor dressed in a spotless white gown said in the film.

Analysis: By comparing translations 1 and 2, we find that what the writer wrote in the source text is actually quite different from the original film lines. The background of the film in question, *A Clockwork Orange* is in Britain, which is exactly the intended

place of text reception. Many English readers may actually have seen the film and have an impression of it. In order to coordinate with the target readers' social reality, the real film lines were inserted. The original lines can also produce a more natural textual environment which create a translation that is not like a translation.

e.g.14

Source text: 而且 CBS 的著名主播丹·拉瑟说过：“电视就是瞬间，要有戏剧性。”

Literal translation: Moreover, the famous CBS anchor Dan Rather once said, "TV happens in the blink of an eye, so it has to be dramatic."

Translation: Moreover, the famous CBS anchor Dan Rather once said that TV happened in the blink of an eye, so it had to be dramatic.

Analysis: The original quote couldn't be found. In order to be coherent with the source text but bring it closer to reality (it is uncertain as to whether Dan Rather had really uttered the phrase in question), the direct speech was changed to indirect speech but the meaning was maintained. In this way the target text can still serve the same communicative function as the source text.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this project has been to explore the possibilities for a Skopos theory approach towards reaching a compromise between foreignization and domestication translation of the non-fiction work 看见 (*What Was Seen*). Conforming to the Skopos theory, all translational actions have their own purpose. According to different translation purposes the target text may present a result which closely corresponds to its source text, or it may be processed flexibly. As Vermeer states that "Skopos theory thus in no way claims that a translated text should ipso facto conform to the target culture behaviour or expectations, that a translation must always 'adapt' to the target culture. Everything between these two extremes is likewise possible, including hybrid cases" (Vermeer,1989:231). In a word, the final translation should accommodate the translation purpose. This is also the central idea of Skopos theory. If translators aim to attract foreign readers as much as possible, they have to exhaust their wits and wisdom to satisfy the target readers' reading preferences. This project takes the Chinese-English translation of 看见 (*What Was Seen*) as an example, and talks about how the translation policy was made according to the current situation of the reception of Chinese-English translation in the West. It also illustrates how the translation strategies were made to deal with translation problems such as cultural issues and textual coherence with the guidance of the Skopos rule, coherence rule and fidelity rule of the Skopos theory.

By using the guidance of the Skopos theory in this translation practice I found the Skopos theory can help translators make decisions in a translation process. Due to different cultural backgrounds and reading preferences between the source-text readers and target-readers, translators have to make a lot of difficult decisions and choices in a translation process. Once translators set up their translation purpose, they can use different translation methods and strategies with more flexibility to achieve their real-life objective.

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VII. Attachment: Source text

第五章 我们终将浑然难分，像水溶于水中

六月的广东，下着神经质的雨，一下起来就像牛绳一样粗，野茫茫一片白。草树吸饱了水，长疯了，墨一样的浓绿肥叶子，地上蒸出裹脚的湿热，全是蛮暴之气。

我们在找阿文。

她是一个吸毒的女人，被捕后送去强制戒毒。戒毒所把她卖了，卖去卖淫。她逃出后向记者举报，记者向警察举报，之后戒毒所换成精神病院继续开，领导都没换。

我们想找到她，但没有地址和电话，最后的消息是三个月前，她曾经在赤岗附近出现。我们去那一带，一家发廊一家发廊地问，深一脚浅一脚的泥水路。到今天，我最熟的一句广东话还是“阿文有无系呢度”。

开车的本地司机笑叹：“你要能找着她，我明天就去买六合彩。”

找到了阿文家，姐姐说她偷家里的钱太多，已经两年没见到。迟疑了半天，她才说：“她也打过电话来说被戒毒所卖了，我们不相信，没理她。在广州这样的城市，怎么会有这样的事情。”

我们只好去阿文卖淫的康乐村找。一个不到五十米的巷子，被几座灰浊的骑楼紧夹着，窄而深，几乎没有光线，满地恶臭的垃圾直淹到小腿。三五个皮条客穿着黄色夹脚塑料拖鞋，赤着精瘦的上身，从我身边挤过去。窄破的洗头店门口，拉着一半的窗帘，女人们穿着带亮片的廉价吊带衫张腿坐着，没有表情地看我一眼，去招呼我身后的男同事。不知道哪里的污水，每走几步，就滴在我的头发里。

每去一次回来，我都得强压把头发剪掉的冲动，不是脏，是一种女人本能的污秽感。但我只不过待几个晚上，阿文必须每天在那里站街。笔录里说，如果她想逃走，可能会被打死。

没人会在意一个吸毒的人的生死。

找不到她，我们只好进戒毒所暗访。好在非典刚过，戴个大口罩也没人奇怪。为了配合录音师呼和的东北腔，我只能以他大妹子的身份出现，说要送亲戚进精神病院，先来看看。我像个拙劣的电视剧演员，表演过火，话多且密，幸好广东人对我一口山西腔的东北话不敏感。

开了锁，打开栅栏门，我看到了阿文住过的仓房，锈成黑色的铁床，枕头脏得看不出颜色。怎么说呢？那个味儿。

再往前走是水房，笔录里说戒毒人员挨打的时候就跪在这里，用脚后跟砸，打完灌一碗水，如果不吐血，继续打。冬天的话，要脱光衣服跪在水龙头下，开细细的水柱，从头顶淋下来。

“你，出去！”三十多岁的男人忽然重重拍了一下呼和的肩膀，我们俩都怔住了。

“没事，”跟我们进来的护士不耐烦地说，“病人。”

七天了。我们必须走了。但没有阿文的采访，就没有核心当事人的证明。可我不知道还能去哪里找她。

一九九八年的时候，我在北京广播学院的图书馆看到过一本旧杂志，封面都掉了，是一个女孩从背后搂着一个男子的照片——那是海南一个十六岁的三陪女，她挣钱养活男朋友，穿圆点裙子，喜欢小猫，发高烧，给妈妈打电话……最后一张，是她躺在只有一张板的床上，月光照着她，她看着我。

看完这些照片，我给编辑部写信，写了一篇评论叫《生命本身并无羞耻》，说我愿意给他们无偿做记者，唯一的期望，是能和拍这些照片的摄影师赵铁林合作，很快我得到机会和他一起去拍孤独症儿童。那时我二十二岁，老赵拿着相机在培训中心咔咔拍完了，但是我要采访的母亲一直不接受我：“我不想跟别人谈我的生活。”我呆头呆脑不知道怎么办。

老赵说：“我走了，先。”

我眼巴巴望着他。

他说了一句：“你想采访弱者。就要让弱者同情你。”看我不明白，又补了一句：“当初我拍那些小姐，因为我比她们还穷，我连吃饭的钱都没有，她们可怜我，让我拍，拍完了，她们请我吃饭。”说完走了。

不知道怎么做，我就跟在那妈妈的后面，她去哪儿我去哪儿，隔着十米左右。她看都不看我，进了一个院子，没关门，我愣一下，也进去了。她进了屋子，我站在院子里头，天慢慢黑了，屋子里垂着帘子，我看不到她和孩子在做什么，大概在吃饭。约莫一个小时之后，孩子先吃完，到院子里来了，下台阶的时候一个踉跄，我下意识地扶了他一下，跟他在院子里玩。

过了一会儿，他妈妈出来，牵着条狗，看着我：“我们去散步，你也来吧”

回北京之前。我们决定再去趟阿文姐姐家，留个信给阿文。她姐不想再见我们，没开门。雨骤然下起来，没有伞，我拿张报纸顶着头，往里张望，她姐在屋子里能看到，一直没出来。

第二天的飞机。晚上已经睡了，我接到阿文姐姐的电话：“她今晚到你们酒店来，十一点四十。”

她原来不信这事，认为我们想加害她妹妹，看到大雨里淋得稀湿的人，觉得不太像，又去找当地媒体确认我们的身份，找了一天，通过毒贩找到她妹妹。

“我也希望她能跟你们谈一谈，好知道到底发生了什么事情。”她说。

大家把大床搬开，开始布灯，谁也不说话。

但十一点四十，没人来。十二点四十，也没人。小项安慰我：“吸毒的人都不靠谱。”我不死心，站在酒店门口等着。

阿文来的时候是凌晨一点。她在我对面坐下，我递给她一瓶水，很近地看着

她，年轻人的样子，但低垂的直发下，双颊可怕地凹陷下去，嘴唇青紫，只有眼睛，乌黑的，非常大。她穿着廉价的淡黄色的确良套裙，腿上几乎没有任何肌肉。

她嗓子喑哑，听起来像是呓语，不断重复某些句子。采访差不多凌晨四点才结束，司机听得睡过去了。我不想打断她，这一年多的生活，她一直没机会说，说出来也没人信。她说：“我可以这样厚颜无耻！我都觉得自己厚颜无耻……现在想起来也还是。你可以到那条街上站在那里跟别人讨价还价。不是说卖别人，卖什么，是卖自己呀！那是跟别人讨价还价卖自己！”

她说在噩梦里，还会一次次回到那个地方——穿着从戒毒所被卖出来时的那条睡裙，天马上就要黑了，她就要开始站在那条街上，等着出卖自己。

“你戒毒所是挽救人，还是毁灭人？”她浑身颤抖地说。

深夜非常安静，能听到台灯“滋滋”的电流声。她说：“我也希望做一个有用的人，希望社会给我一个机会，不要把我们不当人。”

告别时我送她到门口，问她去哪，她犹豫了一下，没直接回答，说送她来的朋友会来接她。说完顿一下，看了我一眼。这一眼像是有点愧意，又像是询问我对她的看法。我揽了她一下，这才知道她瘦成了什么样子。她吸毒，偷东西，但她是一个人，她受侮辱，做噩梦，受了她本不该受的罪。

节目播后原戒毒所所长被捕。但有人说：“自从柴静去了新闻调查，节目就堕落到了去拍网站新闻的最底下一行。”意思是你们不去拍时政新闻，却去关心边缘人群，无非为了耸动，吸引眼球。

赵铁林当年拍三陪女的时候，也被人这么说过。看到他的照片之前，我对这个题材也不关心，我知道这些女性存在，但觉得她们与我无关。

但通过他的眼睛，我看到十六岁的阿V抱着小猫嬉乐，不顾排队等着的男子，她发高烧的时候坐在板凳上举着虚弱的头，托着腮听老嫖客讲人生道理，看着她挣了一笔钱去跟自己供养的男朋友吃饭，张开双臂兴高采烈的样子，她在月光下侧脸看我的眼神，让我感觉到她的存在。

知道和感觉到，是两回事。

当年看照片时我写过：她的目光一下一下打在我的身上，让我感到疼痛的亲切。

来到“新闻调查”后，我下意识里寻找像阿 V 这样的人——那些我知道，但从没感到他们存在的人。

我们在广西找一个被超期羁押了二十八年的人。看守所在山里，不通公路，要步行五公里。大毒日头晒着，走到一半，豪雨兜头浇下，没遮没避，腿上全是小咬留的鲜红点子。摄像的皮鞋底儿被泥粘掉了，扛着机器斜着身子顶着鞋尖往前走。

他叫谢洪武，父亲当年因为是地主，被斗死了，他三十多岁一直没成家，有天放牛，大喇叭里突然喊，蒋介石投反动传单啦。大队里有人说，看见他捡了一张。从此他一直被关押在看守所。从调查卷宗看，除了一张一九七四年六月由当时县公安局长签发的拘留证外，无卷宗，无判决，无罪名，无期限。

他被关了二十八年。

我们去的时候，谢洪武已经在人大干预下，解除关押，被送到一家复员军人疗养院。关押他的囚室被拆了，长满到我膝盖的瓜蔓，漆绿的大叶子上刺手的绒毛，野气森森。地基还在，我拨开杂草，大概量了一下，一米五宽，不到两米长，刚够躺下一个人吧。这样的牢房有三个，都是关押精神病人的。我问看守所工作人员，这个牢室有窗吗？他们说大约两米高的地方有过一个窗。从这个窗看出去，是另一堵墙。

从看守所出来之后，谢洪武获得六十多万元的国家赔偿。但他年过六十，没有亲人，村里的房子拆了盖了学校，只能在复员军人疗养院过下去，属于他的物品是一只瓷缸子。医生说刚出来时谢洪武的腰弯得像一只球，各个关节都萎缩了，他不愿意睡床上，要睡地上，“由于驼背，四肢肌肉萎缩，躺着睡不着，要坐着才能睡着”。

他二十多年没有与外界说过话，语言能力基本丧失了，但医生说他的一部分心智是明白的——疗养院的服务项目里有洗衣服，但是他不要，他自己洗。吃完饭，病人的碗都是医院的人洗完了消毒，他总洗得干干净净才送去。采访的时候，我给他一瓶水，他小心地把一半倒进瓷缸子，把剩下一半递给我，让我喝。

我想跟他在纸上谈谈，可他只会写“毛主席”三个字了。

没有办法。我只能蹲在他面前，看着他。他的脸又小又皱，牙掉得没有几颗了，只有眼睛是几乎透明的淡绿色，像小孩儿一样单纯。

他忽然拉着我的手，让我摸他的膝盖，中间是空的。

我再摸另一个，空的。

我吃惊地看着他。

旁边的人说，这是当年被挖掉了。

二十八年，他都在这个牢房里头，没有出来过，没有放风，没有书报，大便小便也在里面，他被认为是精神病，但档案里没有鉴定记录，我采访看守所所长，他说：“都说他是神经病，再说他也不喊。”但即使是精神病人。也不能关押，所长说：“他已经没有家人了，清理不出去。”村子里，他七十多岁的哥哥还在世，只是谢洪武当年是“管制对象”，哥哥不敢过问他的下落，认为他早死了，年年清明在村头烧把纸。

我问所长：“他在你这儿已经关了二十多年，只有一张拘留证，你不关心吗？这个人为什么被关，为什么没放出去？”

“如果关心他早就放回家了。”

“为什么不关心他呢？”

“我说了，没有那个精力，不问那个事，也是多年的事，好像他是自然而然的，怎么说，好像合法一样。以前几个所长都把他放在疯人室里，我上来还照样。我又管这么一摊子，管他们有吃有喝，不冻死、饿死。早没有想，如果想了早就处理了，有那么高境界，我们早就先进了。”

黄昏采访完夕阳正好，谢洪武和其他的老人，都按疗养院规定在草坪上休息，工作人员拉来一批椅子，让老人们整齐地背对满天红霞坐成一排，谢洪武弯在藤椅里直视前方，看上去无动于衷，没有意愿。但我还是忍不住跟工作人员说：“不能把他们的椅子转一下，换成另一个方向？”

他有点莫名其妙，但还是换了。

聚会上，朋友说，你现在做的这些题目太边缘了，大多数人根本不会碰到这些问题。作家野夫说：“那是因为我们已经不是大多数人，在很大程度上已经免于受辱了。”

一群人里有教授，有记者，有公务员，都沉默不语。

王小波说过，你在家，在单位，在认识的人面前，你被当成一个人看，你被尊重，但在一个没人认识你的地方，你可能会被当成东西对待。我想在任何地方都被当成人，不是东西，这就是尊严。

有人半开玩笑半挤兑，说：“你们这么拍黄赌毒，再下去的话就该拍同性恋了。”

我说：“确实是要拍他们了。”

他愣一下说：“这节目我看都不要看，恶心。”

旁边有人听到了，脱口说：“你要去采访同性恋患者？”

有朋友说，他喜欢《费城故事》里律师事务所的那个合伙人：“他可以那么得体地把那个感染艾滋的同性恋开掉。”他看了看我：“每个人都有选择的权利，你不能去要求别人宽容。”

我问：“你理解他们吗？”

“怎么不理解？”他说，曾有一个同性恋男子向他表白，他从此再不理这人。“就是觉得恶心。”

“为什么你会觉得恶心？”

“反正从小的教育就是这样的。”他可能不太愿意多谈这个话题，脸转过去了。

同性恋者就这样隐身在这个国家之中，将近三千万人，这个群体之前从来没有在央视出现过。

“我可以对别人说我是艾滋病毒感染者，但不能说自己是同性恋者。”二十一岁的大玮说，“在感染艾滋的人里头，有血液传播的，吸毒的，还有嫖娼的，同性恋是最底层的，最被人瞧不起。”

“医生问起，你就说是找了小姐。”张北川教授对已感染艾滋要去看病的同性恋者说。他担心会有麻烦。

他是中国对同性恋研究最早、最有成绩的学者。

他的话不多虑。

我在青岛见到一个男孩子，他说他有超过两百多个性伴侣，患性病后从外地来治疗，当地医院的医生知道他的同性恋身份后拒绝医治。医生说，妓女可以治，就不能给你治：“你不嫌丢人啊，你这种人在社会上将来怎么办？”

他在医生面前跪下了。

没有用。

一个母亲带着刚刚二十岁的孩子来找张北川，她的孩子是同性恋者，那个母亲说：“早知这样生下来我就该把他掐死。”

他们和其他人一样工作、上学，努力活着，但他们不能公开身份，绝大多数不得不与异性结婚，大多建立情感的社交场所是在公厕或是浴池，但那样的地方不大可能产生爱情，只能产生性行为，而且是在陌生人之间。

“和陌生人发生性关系，对于同性恋者来说有巨大的好处，这个好处就是安全。”张教授说。

安全？我很意外，这是在健康上最不安全的方式。

“你不认识我，我也不认识你，两个人完了关系大家互相都不认识，不用担心身份的泄露。”

在没有过去和未来的地方，爱活不下来，只有性。

“我曾经说过，只要自己不是那种人，我愿意一无所有。”翼飞坐在我对面，长得很清秀。他拿“那种人”来形容自己，连“同性恋”这三个字都耻于启齿，“我觉得全世界只有自己一个人不正常。因为我觉得自己那种现象是一种不健康，是一种病态。我强迫自己不去接触任何一个男孩子，尽量疏远他们，尽量去找女孩子，精神上对自己压力很大。”

一九九七年之前，他有可能因为自己的性倾向入狱，罪名是“流氓罪”。

“同性恋是先天基因决定的，几十种羚羊类动物里面，也观察到同性之间的性行为了，在灵长类动物里边，还观察到了依恋现象，人类的依恋现象，在某种程度我们就称之为爱了。”张北川说。

二〇〇一年，第三版《中国精神障碍分类与诊断标准》不再将同性恋者统称为精神病人，但“同性恋”还是被归于“性心理障碍”条目下。

翼飞拿家里给他学钢琴的钱去看心理医生，接受治疗。像库布里克的电影《发条橙》，一个人被强制性地唤起欲望，同时用药物催吐或电击的方式，让你感到疼痛、口渴、恶心。“这是健康人类的有机组织正在对破坏规则的恶势力作出反应，你正在被改造得精神健全，身体健康。”电影里，穿着一尘不染白大褂的医生说。

一次又一次，直到人体就像看到毒蛇一样，对自己的欲望作出迅速而强烈的厌恶反应。

张北川说他认识一个接受这种治疗的人，最后的结局是出家了。“你再也不会有选择同性恋的欲望了。”

“你再也不用有欲望了。”

“你好了。”

他们坐在我对面，手拉手，十指交握。

我没见过这样的场景，稍有错愕，看的时间稍长一点儿，心里微微的不适感就没了。

我问的第一个问题是：“你们怎么形容你们之间的关系？”

“爱情。”他们毫不迟疑。

他们当中更活泼爱笑的那个说：“每次看到婚礼的花车开过，我都会祝福他们，希望我将来也能这样。”

当下对他们来说，只能是幻想。他们中的绝大多数最终会选择与异性结婚，成立家庭。

我们采访了一位妻子，九年的婚姻，生育了女儿，但丈夫几乎从不与她亲热。她说：“我觉得他挺怪的。”

“怪在哪儿？”

“他从来没吻过我。”

“比如说你想跟他很亲密的时候，你表达出来，他会什么反应？”

“我觉得他经常很本能地把身体缩成一团，很害怕、很厌恶的那种样子。”

“厌恶？”

她凄凉一笑：“对。”

我停了一会儿，问：“那你当时……”

“挺自卑的，就是觉得自己真是没有吸引力吧。从孩子三岁的时候，我就开始看心理医生。”

她的丈夫说：“等你到了五十岁，成为性冷淡就好了。”

他们维持了九年这样的婚姻。她看到丈夫总是“鬼鬼祟祟的，每次上完网以后，都把上网的痕迹清除掉”，她当时以为他是阳痿，在上面查什么资料，也不好意思问。后来，有一天晚上，她半夜醒了，差不多两三点钟，看他还在上网。过了一会儿他去睡了，她去把电脑打开一看，他上的全是同性恋的网站。她闭了一下眼睛：“那一瞬间我知道他百分之百就是。”

过了几天，她做了一些菜给他吃，趁他不注意的时候，过去拍了拍他的肩膀：“你承认吧，我知道你是同性恋了。”

他当时就愣了，就是一瞬间，眼泪哗哗往下流。

晚上，她突然听到楼上好像有个什么东西掉下来了。“我以为他自杀了，拔腿就往楼上跑，我当时就想，我什么都不要，只要他能活着就行了。”她上楼后，“看到阁楼上灯全都灭了，他一个人躺在那个地方，我就很难过，一下子扑在他身上。”

浓重的黑暗里，她用手一摸，他满脸是泪水。他们抱在一起哭。“他当时就说，我这个人不应该结婚的，我伤害了一个女人，这是我一辈子的痛。”

她说：“我恨他，我也很可怜他。”

我说：“从你的描述当中我想象你丈夫内心的经历，他过得也很痛苦。”

她说：“他每天都在伪装。每次我跟他一块儿要是参加个应酬什么的，他都拼命给大家讲黄色的笑话，给人造成的感觉，他这个人特别黄，特别好女色。他每天很累，不停在伪装自己。”

我问过翼飞，“你们为什么还要跟女性结婚？”

他说：“有个朋友说过，我父母宁愿相信河水倒流，也不相信有同性恋这个事情存在。”

很多同性恋者只能在浴池和网上寻找性伙伴。我们对浴室经营者的调查显示，这种方式中主动使用安全套的人非常少。一个提供性服务的男性性工作者说，多

的时候一天他大概与四五个人有性接触，大部分顾客都有婚姻。

“在这个状况下，如果他从这个群体中感染了疾病的话，就意味着……”

他说：“传播给他的家人。”

大玮是发生第一次性关系之后，就感染艾滋的。

“你为什么不用安全套？”我问他。

“我连安全套都没见过。”大玮说。

他在做爱前像每个稚嫩的孩子一样。“我以为只是亲吻和拥抱。”他鼓起勇气说，声音小小的。

没有人告诉他什么是安全的，怎么避免危险，就算他知道，他说也不敢把安全套带在身边，怕别人发现。

“安全套对国人来说意味着性而不是安全。”公开同性恋身份的北京电影学院老师崔子恩说。

采访结束的时候，张北川送了我们每人十个安全套和一本宣传册。我当时提的是一个敞口的包，没有拉锁。到了吃饭的地方，没有地方放包，我把它放在椅子上用背靠着，身体紧张地压了又压。结果服务员经过时一蹭，这只可恶的包就掉在地上了。

全餐厅的人，都看到很多小方块的安全套从一个女人的包里滚落到地上。

所有人都盯着看，张北川俯下身，一只一只，慢慢地把它们捡起来，就好像他捡的不过是根筷子。

我问张北川：“我们的社会为什么不接纳同性恋者？”

他说：“因为我们的性文化里，把生育当作性的目的，把无知当纯洁，把愚昧当德行，把偏见当原则。”

他前前后后调查过一千一百名男同性恋。他们百分之七十七感到极度痛苦，

百分之三十四有过强烈的自杀念头，百分之十自杀未遂，百分之三十八的人遭到过侮辱、性骚扰、殴打、敲诈勒索、批判和处分等伤害。

“每年自杀的那些同性恋者，他们就是心理上的艾滋病患者，心理上的绝症患者。这个绝症是谁给他的？不是艾滋病毒给他的，是社会给他的。”崔子恩说。

我问：“有一些东西对同性恋者来说比生命还要重要么？”

“对。”

“是什么？”

“爱情、自由，公开表达自己身份的空气、空间。”

“假如不能提供呢？”

“不能够提供，这种压制，这种痛苦、绝望就会一直持续下去，就成为社会的一个永远解决不了的痼疾。”

拍摄的时候，男同事们都很职业，对采访对象很客气，但与往常不同，一句不多说，吃饭的时候也一句议论都没有。

我跟老范私下不免猜测他们怎么想的，他们都笑而不答。小宏说起当年遇到过一个同性骚扰，“那个感觉……”他这样的老好人也皱了眉头。我接着问下去，他说不舒服的并不是“同性”，而是被另一个人“骚扰”的感觉。

一个人对性和爱的态度“不在于男男、女女、男女”，只在于这个人本身。

我采访那对男性情侣的时候，两位男性手握手，谈了很久，余光看到小宏和老范正在一边传纸条。我以为他是反感这两人，听不下去采访。后来，他把小纸条抄在电脑里发给我：

范：你现在怎么理解男同性恋呢？

宏：我不相信快感之于同性和异性之间有什么差异，一样的欲望。

范：我和柴昨天晚上也还讨论来着。但有一点仍然是坚持的，性应该是有美感的。过于放纵与挥霍的性多少让人觉得有些猥亵。完全脱离了爱，岂不是又退化成了动物？

宏：同意你们的观点。当饥渴都解决不了，又何谈精神上的诗意？归根结底。没有一个宽容的制度可以海纳五光十色的生存状态。让人自由地爱吧，愈自由愈纯洁。

录制节目时，大玮坚持要以本来面目面对镜头，这让我很意外。我们的习惯是用隐身的方式来保护这样的采访对象，他是同性恋，也是艾滋感染者，我认为他需要保护。

“不，我不需要。”他说。

“你为什么要这样做呢？”我认为他太年轻了，“你知道自己会付出的代价吗？”

“知道。”他很肯定。

“那你为什么一定不用保护性的画面处理呢？”

他的眼睛直视镜头，笑容爽朗：“因为我想告诉大家，我是个同性恋，我想和每个人快乐地生活在一起，我想得到真爱。”

是，这并无羞耻。

翼飞是舞者，采访间隙李季拍他跳舞，他面部需要保护，只能拍影子。

投射在墙上的巨大剪影，变形，夸张，用力跳起，又被重力狠狠扯下。现场没有设备，放不了音乐，他只是听着心里的节奏在跳。

老范在节目最后用的就是这一段舞蹈，她配上了张国荣的《我》，那是他在公开自己的同性恋身份后的演唱：

I AM WHAT I AM

我永远都爱这样的我
快乐是快乐的方式不止一种
最荣幸是谁都是造物者的光荣
不用闪躲为我喜欢的生活而活
不用粉墨就站在光明的角落

这个片子送审的时候，我们原不敢抱指望。这是二〇〇五年，中央电视台的屏幕上第一次出现同性恋的专题，他们正视镜头，要求平等。

审片领导是孙冰川，老北大中文系的，银白长发披肩。

我给他添过无数麻烦，他一句怨言和批评都没有。他不见得赞成，但他容忍。我和老范做中国音乐学院招生内幕，三个学生遇到不公正对待导致落榜。这节目播出压力大，采访时需要乔装打扮，戴上帽子眼镜，藏好摄像机进学校拍摄。审片时，我、草姐姐、老范三个姑娘一起去。我刚从西北出差回来，专门捎了条孙总家乡的烟，坐在边上递烟倒水，生怕他皱眉头。他听到学生拉二胡的时候随口说一句“这曲子是《江河水》啊”，老范劈手按了暂停的钮，盯着他，眼神里是赤裸裸的惊喜：“您懂的真多。”

他早看出来我们用意，莞尔一笑。

看完节目，他让停下带子，把烟点了，就问了一句话：“这个节目播了，能不能改变这三个孩子的命运？”

“能。”

他再没多说，在播出单上签了字。

但是，同性恋这一期，我连陪着去审的勇气都没有。这期通不通过，不是改几个段落，或者放一放再说，就是一眼之下，播，还是不播。我一直攥着手机等结果，一直等到老范短信：“过了，一字未改。”

孙总从中宣部新闻局调到央视第一天，人人都在观望。他没说什么，大会上只笑眯眯引了句苏东坡的诗：“庐山烟雨浙江潮，未到千般恨不消。到得还来别无事，庐山烟雨浙江潮。”

他退休的时候，我在留言簿上写上了这首诗，送还他。

我和赵铁林很长时间没有联系。有天朋友说起，才知道二〇〇九年他已经去世。我半天说不出话来。

当年他给过我一张名片，名字上有一个黑框。别人问，他就笑：“我死过很多次了。”

他说：“生死寻常之事。”

赵铁林出生在战场上，寄养在乡下，“文革”中母亲自杀，他去矿山挖矿，从北航毕业后，做生意失败，在海南租处就是三陪女住的地方。一开始也有文人心理，想找个“李香君”或者“杜十娘”之类的人，满足“救风尘”的愿望。后来发现“根本没那回事儿”。老老实实地给她们拍“美人照”，一张二十块钱，养活自己。“她们知道我是记者，我靠拍照片吃饭，她们靠青春吃饭，你也别指责我，我也不指责你，能做到这样就行。我如实告诉她们我的目的，这对她们来说就是尊重，她们知道我不会扭曲她们。”

有人认为他的照片“伤害”了她们，或者在“关怀”她们。“无所谓伤害也谈不上关怀，”他说，“当她们认为你也是在为生存而挣扎的时候，咱们就是平等的了。”

六十年间他颠沛流离，临终前住着四十五平方米的房子，骑着自行车来去，他遇上了中国纪实摄影“也许是最好的时代”，他也知道选择这条路就是“选择了贫困”。看到他临终前的照片，我心里不能平静。他像他拍摄的人一样，承受命运施加于自己的一切，不粉饰，也不需要虚浮的怜悯。

生和死，苦难和苍老，都蕴涵在每一个人的体内，总有一天我们会与之遭逢。

我们终将浑然难分，像水溶于水中。

第十章 真相常流失于涕泪交加中

二〇〇四年，我在福建农村采访拆迁。

围拢的农民越来越多，人多嘴杂听不太清，我索性站起身问：“你们当时同意这个拆迁方案吗？”

“不同意！”居首一位农民说。接着大家纷纷喊起来：“不同意！不同意！”

我说：“不同意的人请举一下手。”

呼啦啦全部的人都把手举起来，老人家的手攥成了拳头，喊：“我！我！”

我觉得这个镜头很有张力，也足够说明问题。

晚上工作完，摄像李季在饭桌上提醒我，采访最好不要用这种方式，可以约几个人坐下来问，比较从容地陈述，拿出证据。人们围拢的时候，表达的很可能只是一种情绪。

我没说话，不完全听得进去——农民利益受损这么大，上访无果，碰到媒体都不能表达一下吗？再说了，有情绪也是现实。

几个月后，在福建采访一家药业的负责人，两位工人因为抢修排污管死亡，舆论怀疑死亡与遮掩污染有关，环保局承认受到压力无法调查此事，我们没有侦查取证的权力，疑问再多，对方都可以否认，“没有”、“不存在”。像我第一次做对抗性采访时一样窘。

我想起有次看美国哥伦比亚广播公司（CBS）的新闻节目“60分钟”，记者莱斯利采访前任副总统戈尔，莱斯利问他：“你还会复出竞选总统么？”

戈尔一直打哈哈绕圈子，八分钟，眼看这采访要失败了。

忽然她问：“戈尔先生，您还会留胡子吗？”

戈尔愣了一下，继续支吾。

她一笑，收住了，全片结束——那一笑就是“看，政客”。

我大概模仿了这个采访。我们坐在厂子的办公室里，刺鼻的二氧化硫味道，摄像师拿领子掩着鼻子，我问这位老总：“工厂的排污是达标的吗？”

“是。”

“有没有非法排污？”

“没有。”

“那我们在这儿闻到的强烈味道是什么？”

“我没有闻到什么味道。”

“您是说您闻不到？”我靠着椅背，歪着头，挑了一下眉毛。

他的脸抽了一下：“我的鼻子，嗯，没有您那样灵敏。”

我笑了一下，节目结束。

事后大家都对这个结尾印象深刻，说真锐利。

我有点得意。

庄主任审这个片子，看完对我说了一句话：“要疑问，不要质问。”

这点讽刺之意都不能流露吗？我问他：“可是怎么对得起那些死去的人呢？”

“记者提供的是事实，不是情绪。”他说的跟李季一样。

一出门，在南院碰上陈虻，没躲得及。平日我脸上只要有任何异样，他都会批评我——你要是看上去挺高兴，他就会找你谈谈，觉得你“最近肯定没思考”。但要是不高兴，你试试？

“怎么啦？”果然。

我刚说了个头儿。

他就评论：“你的问题是你总是太投入了，热爱就会夸张，感情就会变形，就没办法真实地认识事物了。”

“都像你那样……”我带着情绪冲口而出。

“像我怎么样？”

“像你那样老于世故。”

“你如果对这儿不满意，你可以去 CNN，或者你当自由撰稿人。”他火了，“你要在这儿就得……”

我打断他：“像你这样无动于衷？”

又谈崩了。

每次跟陈虻吵完，倒都是他给我打电话，不安慰我，也不生气，只是继续跟我讲。

“痛苦是财富，这话是扯淡。姑娘，痛苦就是痛苦，”他说，“对痛苦的思考才是财富。”

我拐了个弯，去京门大厦的机房找老彭诉苦。

当年评论部有几天牛人。他是其中之一，被女同事叫“电视牲口”，有次编片子，十天十夜，吃住在办公室，不洗不梳，屋子里的味儿进不去人。当年，在罗布泊的小河墓地遗址，他扛着四十公斤重的机器和给养在沙漠中走，每天一瓶水，吃一块干饅。零下三十八度的天气只有一条睡袋。回来吃火锅的时候跟我们说，睡在千年古墓群里，半夜被冻醒了，伸手摸到一根红柳扔进火堆，睡眼惺忪中忽然看到满天星斗。

老彭靠着满墙带子抽烟斗，见我进来，多烫一只杯子泡茶，看都不看我，“怎么啦？”

我嘟嘟囔囔地说领导不让讽刺坏人，以为他会支持我，但他说：“我早想骂你了，沙尘暴那期节目，镜头里你跟着人家走到苦水井口，刚站下就开口问：这水能喝么？”

我说这怎么了。

他小细眼从黑框眼镜上方瞪我：“你爸不是中医么，中医讲望闻问切，你急什么？江湖的事不是非要人性命不可。你能不能先看一看，闻一闻，听听水声，让镜头里的气淌一淌，再问？”

我没话可说，端起桌上那只青釉的日本瓷杯准备喝，他“唉”一声，伸过手把杯里第一遍泡的茶倒了，换上九四年的普洱，“这样喝茶你的舌头才喝得出薄厚。”

“新闻调查”的同事小庄有句话：“电视节目习惯把一个人塑造为好人，另一个是坏人，实际上这个世界上没有好人和坏人，只有做了好事的人，和做了坏事的人。”

小时候看电影，人物出场，小朋友们坐在一地瓜子皮里，最爱问的是：“好人坏人？”冲锋号一吹响，立刻热泪盈眶，对坏人咬牙切齿。

我以为自己不喜欢这模式，实际上除了这个模式，我也不太会别的。

张洁给了我选题的权力，有些题目他想让我采访，但我选择不做，认为有些采访对象臭名昭著，想离他们远点儿。张洁这人宽容，看我一副神色毅然的样子，就作罢。

《凤凰周刊》主编师永刚是我的朋友，说起这事含蓄地提醒我：“新闻记者有责任去记录持任何一种观点的人，评判是观看者自己的事。”我转着手里杯子笑而不语，心想，各有各趣味。

那几年我做节目的趣味是猛题，烈度高，对抗强，要像铜豆大雨，规模大，气势强，大地为之颤动。

阿文被戒毒所卖去卖淫一案，一进办公室，所长拎起暖瓶说“我出去打点热水”，我伸手挽了他一下“不必了”，手指下他胳膊肌肉僵得像铁。

他声称对所有卖人的交易不知情。

“我可以证明你说的都是假话。”同去的记者赵世龙拿支铅笔指着他。

“我不认识他，”所长转向我，脖子上静脉突突跳动，“绝对没见过。”

“你撒谎。”赵世龙半探起身子，“我假扮成人贩子就是跟你交易的，有照片为证。”

坏人暴露，我觉得任务完成了。

节目播出后，一家报纸的英文版要转载此事，编辑给小项打电话问有关细节：“戒毒所从什么时候开始贩卖戒毒女的？前后有多少人被卖？这些人都来自何处？戒毒所贩卖人口的非法收入有多少？这些钱都到哪里去了？这个所的主管单位是谁？为什么没有采访他们？……”

小项说：“哥们，你提的问题太重要了，我们也特别想知道啊，但有些问题我们确实没有能力回答。”组织者、戒毒所里的管教当时在警方控制下无法见到，戒毒所贩卖戒毒女的账册、放人单等重要证据被焚烧拍不到，小项说得很坦率，就算有千条万条原因，但“从专业角度这个节目算是失败的。只有一个图像被处理的戒毒女的控诉，一个图像和声音均被处理的知情人的‘泄密’，一个卧底记者，一场激烈的对质与抵赖。‘新闻调查’一以贯之的准确、深刻、平衡原则在这个节目中并不能完全体现”。

雨过地皮湿，没渗入土壤，也不触及根须，龟裂土地上，再强烈的震颤稍后就不见踪影，惩办完个别人，戒毒所换个牌子，我已经转头做另一期节目了。

不过我觉得这没办法，处身的环境决定如此，就像小项说的：“一个饥饿的人，赶紧吃上一顿肉就能活命，这时候你不可能也做不到脍不厌细，只能端上一碗颤巍巍的红烧肉。”

我认为只要掌握的事实并无错漏即可，法拉奇比我激烈多了，而且 CBS 的著名主播丹·拉瑟说过：“电视就是瞬间，要有戏剧性。”他出道就以挑战尼克松

总统著称，对老布什总统的采访几乎演变为一场争吵，从来不讳言自己的立场和情感，“九一一”之后他坐在地上含泪朗诵《美丽的美国》，这些都为他赢得“勇敢无惧”“富于感情”的声名。

但总编袁正明审片时提醒我：“不要不能自持，你有时忘了在采访。”

我对袁总说，观众没人批评啊，还挺喜欢，觉得“性情以对”。袁总黑着脸：“你别让观众看出你的喜好来，生活里你怎么样是你的事，上了节目你就不能有这个。”

还对症下药，送我一本《金刚经》，我在心里给他起了个外号，方丈。

小时候看《少林寺》，真讨厌老方丈，他问李连杰：“戒淫欲，汝今能持否？”

小李偷偷看眼手掌里定情的信物，眉尖耸动，姑娘在门后看着呢，眼波像水。

老和尚没完没了：“能持否？”

“……能持。”

姑娘一扭头走了。

挺荡漾的心，你让人家持什么持啊你说。

袁总升了袁台，不管调查了，还偶尔提醒我：“你看人家芭芭拉·沃尔特斯，老了，越来越稳定克制，你也得这样。”

“成熟是么？”我心想可我还没老呢。

“不是成熟，”他说，“这是你的职业要求，你成不成熟都得这么办。”

二〇〇五年，我与老郝报道《中国改革》杂志被诉案。

因为刊发广东华侨房屋开发有限公司改制不规范、压制员工表达意见、致使员工利益受损的报道，杂志社被企业告上法庭，索赔五百九十万。华侨公司强调报道有失实之处，没有正式采访公司，也未罗列对公司方有利的事实。

调查性报道很容易惹官司，只要数字或者细节存在争议，被起诉的可能性很大，一旦被起诉，出于保护，证人多数不会出庭，媒体的一审败诉率在百分之六十以上。

这次终于赢了。法官认为报道个别地方与现实有出入，但并非严重失实，他的判决是：“只要新闻报道的内容，有在采访者当时以一般人的认识能力判断，认为是可以合理相信为事实的消息来源支撑，不是道听途说或是捏造的，那么，新闻机构就获得了法律所赋予的关于事实方面的豁免权。”

我问他：“您希望观众怎么来理解您这个判决？”

“这个社会对媒体的容忍有多大，这个社会进步就有多大，一个文明、民主、法治的社会是需要传媒监督的。”

我心头一热。

采访华侨公司老总时，他说服从法律判决，也可以接受媒体的“豁免权”，但他说有一个疑问：“你也是做记者的，你说说，只听了一方的言论，没有另外一方的言论，那怎么可能是一个公正的新闻呢？”

我问过当时杂志社总编为什么不采访华侨公司。他说：“大多数批评报道，无论你怎么征求意见，结果都是一样。材料比较可作为证据，那就不必再把各种不同的意见全部都反映出来。”

《中国改革》被起诉时，多家媒体对这件事的报道，也只有对杂志社的采访，没有华侨公司的声音。

大机构在当下往往能决定一篇报道的存废，媒体当然有警惕，有同仇敌忾之心，我也是记者，听到总编拒绝交出线人来换取调解，说：“我不能放弃我的职业道德，让我下狱我就下狱。”会感到热血沸腾。

但还是有一个小小的疑问，在采访中浮了出来，我把它按下去，又浮出来——“给每一方说话的机会”，这不是我们自己鼓呼的价值观吗？如果实在不能采

访，要不要引用一些有利于他们的证据或背景？很本能地，我想，强力者剥夺别人的发言权，当他们的发言权也被剥夺的时候，就是对他们的惩罚，惩罚就是一种约束。

但我又想：“这样一来，我们和当初压制打击举报职工的华侨公司又有什么本质区别呢？”

我劝说自己“我们是正义的”。

可是，正义好像没什么放诸四海而皆同的标准，不管我做什么节目，我博客底下总有人留言自称正义，说“凡 CCTV 赞成的，我必反对”。还有次与一位美国同行谈到中国内地的一个问题，他下了一个绝对的判断，我说我去过那个地方，了解到的情况有些不一样。

他打断我：“中国根本没有真正的记者。”

“真正的记者首先要给对方说话的机会。”我说。

“你们是没有信誉的一方。”

谈不下去了。

二〇〇六年，四十八岁的安娜·波莉特科夫斯卡娅被暗杀。四年之前，我在电视上看到这位女记者进入七百多人质被绑架的莫斯科剧院，充满敬佩。车臣绑匪要求她充当与政府之间的调停人，绑匪信任她，因为她在报道中一再公开批评普京的决策给车臣造成的痛苦。

她的死亡原因至今仍有争议，普京和车臣武装都被怀疑。去世前不久，车臣武装的负责人巴萨耶夫曾约她采访自己，她拒绝了，说在人质事件后，“我已经没有任何可与他谈的，这世上没有英雄，只有受苦受难的人民”。

她是十五年来，这个国家第四十个被暗杀的记者。当时我写了一篇博客：“杀害记者的人是想让人们恐惧——为需要真相和想要思考而感到恐惧。”有张照片是一位老妇人把白玫瑰放在她遗像面前。我写道：“俄罗斯的人民用花朵纪念

她，这个世界上有一种力量，比什么都柔弱，但比恐惧更强大。”

我被这支玫瑰深深打动。

后来遇到美国政治学者 Ann，她在莫斯科待了十六年。我以钦敬口吻谈起安娜，Ann 迟疑了一下，说：“我为安娜难过，但我并不赞赏她的报道。”

“为什么？”我有点意外。

“因为她的报道中观点太多，”她说，“她总是站在她认为的弱者一方简单地批评。”

我说安娜说她的原则就是“批评是记者唯一的语言”。

她摇头：“这样的报道很难客观。”

我认为她是美国人，不理解俄罗斯的记者要承受什么，“她是在一个那样的环境下，常常被迫害的人很难避免……”

她说：“但这样慢慢会变成你本来反对的人。”

她的话有道理，但我还是不忍心从这个角度去评价安娜，我做不到。朋友们讨论此事，一位是同行，说“她是我们的光荣”。

另一位反对：“说‘我’，不要说‘我们’，你的情感不代表别人的判断。”

这句话真是煞风景，但刺激了我一下。

这位说：“我最反感拿悲壮的感情开玩笑。”

那位慢悠悠地说：“是么，什么东西是神圣到不能开玩笑的呢？”又刺激了我一下。

贺卫方豆瓣小组关闭后，有位前辈写过一篇长长的博客纪念它，赞美它，文章下面的留言里，有一个署名是这个小组组长的人，他说：“我们的小组里有一部分文章是有建设性的，并不像您说的那样篇篇都是。”这人最后写道：“不要因为一样东西死去就神话它。”

这话硬而清脆，像银针落地。

也是在这一年，丹·拉瑟从 CBS 辞职。

二〇〇四年美国总统大选前两个月，丹·拉瑟在主持“晚间新闻”时引用了一份一九七二到一九七三年的空军备忘录，暗示布什家族曾伪造小布什的服役记录。

舆论大哗，但最终文件的提供者承认他误导了 CBS，丹·拉瑟不得不离开“晚间新闻”，重回“60 分钟”当记者，二〇〇六年，他最终离开了工作四十四年的 CBS。

我通体寒意——一条新闻有多人把关，为什么是主播辞职？新闻发布会上美国同行说：“如果这个节目得当年的皮博迪奖，领奖的也是你丹·拉瑟，不是别人。这条新闻惹了麻烦，承担责任的，也必须是你。”

丹·拉瑟说：“质问当权者是我一直的努力，我认为事实本身是存在的。”

我看到“质问”二字，心里咯噔一下。

美国媒体评论说，喜欢挑战权威的嗜好和对“调查性报道”的狂热，使丹·拉瑟在这次失误中成了最大的受害者。

我写了一篇文章，叫《话语权的另一半》，写到了对华侨公司那次采访：“我们也许没有机会采访被指证方，但是有没有对自己获知的一方信息存疑？能不能站在对方立场上向报料人发问？有没有穷尽各种技术要素，体现出尽可能去寻找对对方有利证据的倾向？‘做不到’，只是一个技术问题。‘不必做’，却是一个以暴制暴的思维模式。”博客里引了小庄那句话：“一个节目里应该没有好人和坏人，只有做了好事的人，和做了坏事的人。”

底下有位读者跟了一句：“过去你觉得只有好人坏人，现在只有好事坏事，将来只有有事无事。”

哎。

福建三明残联为当地老年人安排免费白内障手术，手术外包给一个没有执照的医生，发生医疗事故，导致多人失去视力。我们去前，已经有很多报道，我采访残联负责人，四十多岁，采访了一个多小时，结束后她哭了。

我有点意外，以为怎么着她了。

她说：“之前从来没有人愿意听我把话说完。”

我和老郝对望一眼，没想到是这个反应。

人性的好恶不可避免，去做免费手术的老年人都贫穷，坐我对面，穿着带破洞的旧解放鞋，吃饭只能一勺一勺抖抖索索喂在嘴里，青布衣襟上掉着米粒。面对这样的人不可能没有同情。面对造成这个结果的人，也不可能没有愤怒。

只是如果她没说完这一个多小时，没法知道手术的晶体是怎么购买的，怎么出的质量问题，医生从哪里来，定点医院为什么会承包给一个没有执照的人，谁给残联布置的非完成不可的“复明工程”的指标……这个人的背后，隐而未见的复杂因果如同大网，铺向无边。

我依然尊敬并学习法拉奇和安娜，但也开始重新思量采访，她们甘冒枪林弹雨，为一次采访可以倾注生命，性烈如火，同情心极深，但也容易将世界分为掌权者与被侮辱者，将历史的发生归功或归罪于某一个人，容易将好恶凌驾于事实之上。

法拉奇在“九一一”之后写《愤怒与自豪》，说自己“哭了六天六夜”写下这本书——那不是报道，甚至不是文学，用她的话说是“训诫书”，这篇檄文里用的都是“坏蛋”、“强奸犯”、“蛆虫”这样的字眼。

泪水和愤怒是人之常情，但我慢慢觉得公众对记者这个职业的要求是揭示这个世界，不是挥舞拳头站在什么东西的对面。

我到莫斯科。海关排了两个小时都不放行，排在最前面的人从箱子里翻出几盒人参，递给边检小姐，她一笑，熟练地在椅子上一拧身。弯身放进柜台下，

每人效仿，盖章放行。机场巴士的玻璃是碎的，但可以清楚地看到路边建筑物外墙上鲜红淋漓的大字：AMERICAN GO AWAY！车上的俄罗斯记者说，光头党有五万人，自命为民族的士兵，攻击不是斯拉夫面孔的外国人，认为他们抢夺了自己的资源：在酒店门口，下车的人群忽然停下来了。前面是五六个光头，穿着短皮夹克和金属鞋头，他们看过来的时候，陪我们的留学生突然转过身去，脸色苍白。他曾受过光头党围攻，如果不是一对老夫妇喝止，“必死无疑”。谁也不说话了，紧紧握住手提箱拉杆，不远处，警察背着手捞一把瓜子闲看着。

第二天我出门，找不到出租车，拦住了一辆破拉达，开起来像犁地一样。头发蓬蓬乱的司机听着重金属音乐，能讲一点英文，唠叨着“还是共产党时代好，有面包吃”。

他猛地一个急转弯，抢在一个大公车前面。

“知道吗？彼得堡每个星期都有有钱人被暗杀。”他看了看我的表情，一笑，露只金牙，“哈，上次那个杀手，只杀人，十五万美金，一点都没动。”

他赞赏地挥一下手：“就是要跟这帮资本家干到底！”

我有点理解了 Ann 的想法——一个世界如果只按强弱黑白两分，它很有可能只是一个立方体，你把它推倒，另一面朝上，原状存在。

二〇〇九年四月，我去重庆调查。一块土地拍卖，三年不决，工厂因此停产，一些工人写信给我们希望报道，信上按着很多红指印，给我很深的印象。

此事的关键人物叫陈坤志，他被指证操纵土地拍卖。

“他有枪，指着人的头让人签协议。”有人说。这人自称被他拘禁过，人证物证都有。领导知道采访有危险，让我们把手机都换掉，用一次性的卡，说：“不采访他，节目能成立么？”

“基本的证据够了。”编导剑锋说。

“那不采也成，安全第一。”领导说。

其他采访结束，够用了，行李装上了车，飞机过几个小时起飞，我们几个在宾馆坐着，面面相觑，都知道对方心里的话：“采不采陈坤志？”

不采节目也能成立，但是个新闻人，都放不下。

“那就电话采访吧，采完走。”剑锋说。

四点钟，我打了他电话，没有通，我和同事们对视了一下，松了口气，又有点失望。

再拨一遍吧。

嘟的一声响，非常清晰的“喂”。

“我是中央台的记者，采访土地拍卖的事情，想听听你的解释。”

“我在打高尔夫。”他说。

“能见见你么？”我认为他肯定直接挂掉或者说没空。那样我们就可以轻松赶路了，在机场还来得及吃碗米粉。

结果他说“来吧”。

很多人都会奇怪，为什么那么多这样的人居然会接受电视采访，“60分钟”的记者华莱士说过一句话：“因为所有你认为的坏蛋在心里都不认为自己错了。”

采访时，他几乎是得意洋洋地承认了所有的事实，包括操纵拍卖，收了一千七百万中介费用，但“操纵拍卖”在他看来是一次正当劳动，他甚至自觉有道德感，因为做到了“对出钱的人负责”。至于那些被他拘禁要挟的人，他认为都是想从中多捞一把的脓包，而他拯救了整件事，所有想搞掉他的人只像“苍蝇一样嗡嗡”，都得了逞。

我们坐在巨大的穹形高尔夫球场边上，他把我当成了一个英雄故事的听众，我怀疑他知不知道正在说出的话对自己意味着什么。

“我问过律师了，我做的在法律上没有任何问题”他歪着头，脸上几分得意之色。送我出门的时候，他已经没有顾忌了：“我是公安大学毕业的，我就是耍玩

法律。”

在后来的调查和审判中，他被判处死缓。

但这事没有完。陈坤志曾对我说过一句话：“这个事件中没有人是正义的，别打着这个旗号，大家都是为了利益。”

我原以为，这是一个黑白分明的世界，分为被欺凌的弱者和使用暴力的劫掠者。对他提供的信息进行印证后，我才发现，拍卖中被他劫掠的人有些确实不是单纯的受害人，他们最初都是要从中牟利的，而且牟的都不是正常的利益，只不过，在丛林法则下，大鱼吃小鱼，最后被吃掉了。

那些向我们举报的人领头闹事，把一个厂长赶下台，焊上铁门不让厂子生产，私卖设备分了一部分钱，不久又把另外一个厂长赶下台，又分了一部分钱。等陈坤志把拍卖控制成交后，他们以暴力相抗，拒不交地，把厂房和荒地拆成一个个格子租出去，又是一笔钱，都是这十几个人掌握了……这些人不是我出发前想象的受害工人阶级，没有群像，没有长得一模一样的穷苦人群体，只有一个一个诉求利益的人。

采访的时候，各方人士都写了遗书，认为自己将被黑帮分子所害，包括陈坤志也说“我被黑社会威胁”……我没克制住好奇，请每个人都把遗书念了一遍，每个人都声泪俱下。

想起在“百家讲坛”采访易中天，他反客为主，问我，“新闻调查”的口号是探寻事实真相，你说说，什么是真相？

我想了想，说：“真相是无底洞的那个底。”

有观众看了这个节目，在我博客里留言：“那你说说，什么是探寻？”

底下有另一位观众替我写了个答案：“保持对不同论述的警惕，才能保持自己的独立性。探寻就是要不断相信、不断怀疑、不断幻灭、不断摧毁、不断重建，

为的只是避免成为偏见的附庸。或者说，煽动各种偏见的互殴，从而取得平衡，这是我所理解的‘探寻’。”

采访完重庆这期，我给钱钢老师写信，说这期节目让我不敢轻易再对任何事物直接发表评论。

“我对一方缺席的采访抱有疑问，哪怕技术上来讲证据没有任何问题，也必须让他们说话和解释。即便这些解释会让我们本来简单的是非变得混沌，会让我被动，让我在采访中陷入尴尬，让我可能必须放弃一些已经做完的不错的采访段落，会带来节目被公关掉的风险，也必须这样做，不仅是对他们负责任，同时也让我们自己完成对世界的复杂认识，哪怕这个认识让我苦苦难解，让我心焦，”

钱老师回信说：“追求真相的人，不要被任何东西胁迫，包括民意。我们要站在二〇一二、二〇二二，甚至更远的地方来看我们自己。”

信的最后，他说：“不要太爱惜你的羽毛。”

我明白他的意思，做调查记者最容易戴上“正义”、“良知”、“为民请命”的帽子，这里面有虚荣心，也有真诚，但确是记者在困境中坚持下去的动力之一。现在如果要把帽子摘下，有风雨时也许无可蔽头。

我把这些写在博客里，但有读者问：“记者价值中立并不等于价值冷漠，难道这个职业没有道德吗？”

二〇一一年，福建归真堂药业因活熊取胆汁入药，被众多名人与网友联名反对上市，企业负责人邱淑花接受采访前先哭了十几分钟，不回答具体的问题，只说攻击她的人由西方反华势力推动，她也没有证据，只说：“就是陷害。”

我问：“有没有一种可能，是现在的社会发展了三十年之后对于动物的保护意识要比以前强了很多，声音也大了很多？”

她眼泪收住了：“这个我也没办法说了。”

我说：“那您愿意把情绪沉淀一下，再梳理一下这个问题么？”活熊取胆这件

事与二十年来法律、经济、野生动物保护政策的变化和千百年来中国人与动物的关系有关。这些都不是情绪能够回答的，我多以“有没有可能……”开头来提问，也是因为我不确定自己一定是对的，不能轻易选择立场，只想通过提问来了解“如果你采取了某个立场，将不可避免作出什么选择，另一些人的选择会是什么，按照经验将会产生什么后果？”

邱一直在强调绝不放弃活熊取胆，我问：“有没有可能你们一旦上市了，国家产业政策现在正在变化，将来这个产业萎缩之后对股东、对你们也有风险？”

她犹豫了一下，松了口：“人工替代品如果能研发，我们也可以研发。”

转变看上去突兀，但在最初面对大量反对声音时，晃动其实已经开始，人往往出自防卫才把立场踩得像水泥一样硬实，如果不是质问，只是疑问，犹豫一下，空气进去，水进去，他两个脚就不会粘固其中。思想的本质是不安，一个人一旦左右摇摆，新的思想萌芽就出现了，自会剥离掉泥土露出来。

采访不用来评判，只用来了解；不用来改造世界，只用来认识世界。记者的道德，是让人“明白”。

应国务院新闻办的邀请，我去跟政府官员座谈。其中一位说到他为什么要封闭新闻，“因为不管我放不放开，他们（记者）都不会说我好。”底下人都点头。

到我发言，我说，说三个细节吧。一是有一年我在美国的时候，正好是 CNN 的主持人卡弗蒂用“暴徒和恶棍”描述中国人的“辱华事件”。我跟美国街头遇到的黑人谈这事，他说我们很讨厌这个人，他也侮辱黑人，但他不代表 CNN，也不代表白人，他只代表他自己。我又和美国国务院的官员谈到美国的一些媒体报道中有明显的挑衅与失衡处，他们灰头土脸地说，“他们对我们也这样”，但他们接受记者的职业角色，因为“这是宪法给他们的权利”。

第二个细节是，有一次雪灾刚过，我去发改委采访一位官员，当时网上批评发改委在雪灾中有应急漏洞，我问他这个问题，他答完长出口气，说：“总算有人问我这问题了。”因为他终于得到一个公开解释的机会。如果一直封闭新闻，

结果就是大家都会相信传言，不会有人问你想回答的问题。

第三个细节是我在广东采访违法征地，刚坐下问第一个问题。这位市长就火了：“你居然敢问我这样的问题？！”这个问题只不过是：“你们为什么要违法批地呢？”

他站起来指着摄像机爆粗口。

我提醒他：“市长，正录着呢。”“你给我关了！”他就要扑到机器上来了。

他怒气冲冲：“我没见过敢像你这样提问的记者。”

“我也从来没见过你这样连问题都不敢回答的市长。”我当时也有点急了，第一次直接跟我的采访对象语言冲突。

我们第二天一早的飞机走，准备睡了，晚上十一点，他大概是酒醒了，脸如土色地在门口等着：“再采访我一次吧。”同事们对视一眼，说“别理他了”。

上午的采访都已经录下来了，他是漫画式的形象，快意恩仇，而且充满戏剧性，观众爱看。但我们要的不是他的失态，而是信息。陈威老王架机器，我洗了把脸，说“坐吧”。采访了四十分钟，他说违法征地的决策程序和地方财税的压力。采访完出门时我对他说：“我可以不采访您，这您知道。但我采访了，是因为我尊重我的职业，也请您以后尊重记者。”

说完这三个细节，我说：“您认为媒体有偏见，是的，可能媒体会有偏见，世界任何一个国家都这样，但纠正偏见的最好方式就是让意见市场流通起来，让意见与意见较量，用理性去唤起理性。”

一个数年未见的朋友碰面，说与几个人在酒吧里同看我的节目，“原来觉得你挺斗士的，一看你现在都专访官员了，都嘲笑你，我还替你辩解来着，说你也不容易。”

我说你听内容了么，他说没有，我说哦。

他说：“你变了，从你的眼神里就能看出来。”

“你觉得这样好么？”我问他。

他沉默了一下，说：“我觉得……对你好就好。”

我说节目是我自己的选择，我觉得这个官员说的信息，影响很多人生活，观众需要了解。他说：“哦那你就是……”他发出了啾啾的音，但还是把后面那个刺激的字收住了。

他说话就这个风格，我不以为怪：“不管报道谁，都是平等的吧。”

“你真觉得你跟人家是平等的？”他说。

“对我来说，摄影机红灯亮的时候，任何人都只有一个身份：‘我的采访对象’。”

他扑哧笑了，说：“太天真了。”

我也笑：“是，凡事信以为真。”

在采访笔记本前页，我抄了一段话，歌德让他的弟子去参加一个贵族的聚会。年轻的弟子说“我不愿意去，我不喜欢他们”，歌德批评他：“你要成为一个写作者，就要跟各种各样的人保持接触，这样才可以去研究和了解他们的一切特点，而且不要向他们寻求同情与共鸣，这样才可以和任何人打交道……你必须投入广大的世界里，不管你是喜欢还是不喜欢它。”

不管围观者对他的期待有多深，环境有多鼓噪，他说：“我没有战斗的情感，也不打算写战歌。”

那位朋友看到的节目中，我采访的官员批评上级政府财政决策失误，说了四十五分钟，很坦率。

采访完我问他：“您这个性怎么生存？”

他说：“官僚系统是一个复合系统，只有一种人就玩不下去了。”

“那你靠什么直言不讳还能让人接受？”

他说：“准确。”

我想起问过 Ann 如果你认为安娜的方式并不是最好的方式，那什么是？

Ann 说：“Doing the right thing is the best defence。”——准确是最好的防御。

无论如何自制，人的情绪是根除不了的，有时松，有时紧，永远永远。我让老范编辑时把我表情过度的镜头掐掉，她不听，有时还要强调出来，加点音乐，觉得记者有情绪才能带动观众。我拿她没办法，只能自责：“你给我做一个牌子，采访时我再不克制就举牌子，上面写两个字：‘自重’。”没办法，方丈说得对，和尚和记者这两个工种，都要求人“能持”，持不了，或者不想持，只能别干了。他送我那本《金刚经》里，有一句“念起即觉，觉即不随”，人是不能清空自己的情绪判断的，但要有个戒备，念头起来要能觉察，觉察之后你就不会跟随它。

她嬉皮笑脸：“哎呀我们觉得挺好的，你又不是神仙姐姐。你是凡人，还是在地上走吧。”

有位观众曾经在博客里批评过我，我觉得说得真好，女人酒局上，说给她们听：“如果你用悲情贿赂过读者，你也一定用悲情取悦过自己，我猜想柴静老师做节目、写博客时，常是热泪盈眶的。得诚实地说，悲情、苦大仇深的心理基础是自我感动。自我感动取之便捷，又容易上瘾。对它的自觉抵制，便尤为可贵：每一条细微的新闻背后，都隐藏一条冗长的逻辑链，在我们这，这些逻辑链绝大多数是同一朝向，正是因为这不能言说又不言而喻的秘密，我们需要提醒自己：绝不能走到这条逻辑链的半山腰就号啕大哭。”

他写道：“准确是这一工种最重要的手艺，而自我感动、感动先行是准确最大的敌人，真相常流失于涕泪交加中。”