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# **The Danger of Foreignization: Ling Shuhua's English Autobiographical Work *Ancient Melodies***

*Xiaoqing Liu*

## **Abstract**

*Lawrence Venuti's foreignization theory, with its link of translation strategy with power struggle, is one of the most influential theories in translation studies since the 1990s. At the same time, his theory has also been subject to heated debate due to its loosely defined terms, prescriptive approach, binary thinking, elitist tendency, and other issues. One issue stands out in particular: contrary to its goal of resistance against Anglo-American hegemony, foreignization can lead to its opposite—exoticism or Orientalism—under certain circumstances. In this paper, I examine the validity and application of Venuti's foreignization theory in Ling Shuhua's English autobiographical work *Ancient Melodies*. In Ling's creative writing that embodies several forms of translation, foreignization is the dominant writing and translating strategy. By analysis, I argue that while Ling unwittingly breaks several binaries in translation studies, she deliberately creates the foreignizing effect with her careful maneuver of domestication. Ling's highlighting of foreignizing strategy reveals her binary thinking, which displays deep roots in the power hierarchy of the West. In this way, it can be seen that foreignization strategy functions*

*as a double-edged sword; in its open resistance against power, it is also deeply involved with and assists the power structure.*

Lawrence Venuti's foreignization theory, with its focus on agency, ethics, and politics within translation, is one of the most influential theories in translation studies since the 1990s. By advocating foreignizing translation, Venuti aims to challenge the time-honored domesticating translating practice that has dominated United Kingdom and the United States so as to resist the hegemony of Anglo-American culture. However, as some critics have insightfully pointed out, foreignization and power struggle do not form direct links. In fact, circumstances have shown that foreignization can directly lead to its contrary—orientalism or other forms of power hierarchy or stereotypes. In this regard, the pursuit of the effect of foreignization in translation works can be dangerous rather than beneficial to the foreign “original.” I argue that this is especially true with unconventional translations—i.e., minority writing, autobiographical writing, self-translation, done by ethnic writers in English—in which the authors tend to flaunt their “foreign” identity for marketing purposes and also they conduct their translation in a broader sense than merely linguistic transference. Ling Shuhua's 凌叔華 English autobiographical work *Ancient Melodies* (1953), which embodies these major forms of unconventional translations, is a case in point.

*Ancient Melodies* is by the modern Chinese woman writer Ling Shuhua (1900–1990). In this book, Ling reminisces about her childhood as the tenth child of Beijing's mayor. The book follows a loosely chronological order and traces her life from a six- or seven-year-old child living in Beijing to a middle-school student in Tianjin, who expects to move back to Beijing. From a little girl's perspective, Ling writes about the people, customs, and traditional culture, as well as the familial and social lives of Chinese people at the time. Thus, it provides a vivid picture of the life of the privileged family in China in the early 20th century.

Foreignization is a prominent feature in *Ancient Melodies*. Although

the book does not have a Chinese origin, from which it is translated linguistically into English, it embodies many other forms of translation. In a semiotic sense, it is translated from oral to written form. Ling told her stories orally to Julian Bell, Virginia Woolf's nephew, who encouraged her to write the book. Culturally, Ling translated Chinese culture for her English readers. The genre autobiography, as life writing, is another form of translation. Furthermore, Ling self-translated three of her own Chinese short stories into three chapters of the book. As a result, although *Ancient Melodies* is labeled as creative writing, it can be considered a translation, too. With the boundary between creative writing, translation, autobiography, and self-translation becoming more fluid and interrelated, Ling's book provides a good lens to test the scope and validity of a translation theory, foreignization in this case.

## 1. Foreignization in *Ancient Melodies*

The features of foreignization in *Ancient Melodies* result both from Ling as a writer and translator and from Woolf as her editor and publisher. As a native Chinese raised and educated in China, naturally Ling brought her Chinese upbringing and unidiomatic use of the English language to her writing. Nevertheless, her primary reader and editor, Virginia Woolf, who played a significant role in Ling's writing of this novel, formalized foreignization as the strategy. Woolf states it clearly in a letter to Ling after receiving some manuscripts from her. Woolf writes:

Now I write to say that I like it very much. I think it has great charm. It is of course difficult for an English person at first; there is some incoherence, and one does not understand the different wives; who they are; which is speaking. But this becomes clear after a time, and then I find a charm in the very unlikeness. I find the similes strange and poetical. ... Please go on; write freely; do not mind

how directly you translate the Chinese into English. In fact, I would advise you to come as close to the Chinese both in style and in meaning as you can. Give as many natural details of life, of the house, of furniture, as you like. And always do it as you would were you writing for the Chinese. Then if it were to some extent made easy grammatically by someone English, I think it might be possible to keep the Chinese flavour and make it both understandable yet strange for the English. (cited in Sackville-West 1988: 8)

Two things are striking in Woolf's comment. One is that Woolf does not treat Ling's writing as creative writing but as translation; the other is that her characterization of foreignization coincides with Venuti's, although she does not use his explicit terms.

Woolf's words, together with her double roles as a patron and a reader, exerted direct impact on Ling's writing. On the one hand, her letter of approval represented not only her recognition of Ling, who admired Woolf as a mentor, but also the recognition of the Anglo-American literary world, which was revered by most modern Chinese writers at the time. On the other hand, in terms of translating strategy, what Ling did unconsciously in the beginning was turned into conscious efforts afterwards. Woolf's words made Ling aware of what her readers might look for, and consequently she wrote to appeal to Woolf and the readers she represented. The outcome is clearly manifested in her distinctive writing and translating style in *Ancient Melodies*.

Ling depicts her childhood life in China with strong Chinese linguistic and cultural features. To begin with, Ling uses the genre of autobiography to achieve foreignizing effects. Although it is undeniable that an autobiography cannot provide a full and true account of the author's life because it may entail subjectivity, selection, memory, and other factors, compared to other genres, autobiographical writing still provides the closest access to one's life. The first-person narrator, along with her directness and openness, draws a clear line between what belongs to "I" and what belongs to "you" as the narrator and the reader. As a result, it produces both the effect of "authenticity" and distance, which become a

high form of foreignization. Furthermore, all of Ling's autobiographical reminiscences recount the time of her childhood. This choice further adds to temporal and spatial distance and other differences on top of the cultural and linguistic disparity.

Nevertheless, the most distinctive feature of foreignization is in the Chinese flavor Ling presents in this book. From cover to content, it looks and reads like a Chinese book, except that the language is in English. By appearance, what strikes readers the most are the title and the cover. The title *Ancient Melodies* comes from a poem by a famous Chinese poet Bai Jūyì 白居易 (772–846). The cover of the book is Ling's own work. It is a painting of bamboo, a plant with rich resonance in Chinese culture and consequently a frequent subject in Chinese arts. Inside the book, the 18 chapters, except for the one happening in Japan, are all set in China—Guangzhou, Tianjin, and Beijing, the three most well-known cities in northern and southern China. Furthermore, eight of Ling's own paintings are inserted in the chapters to illustrate the subjects she writes about. All of the elements together form a lively, vivid, and rich picture of Chinese life and culture.

In terms of content, Ling covers three major aspects of Chinese culture: classical culture, folk culture, and contemporary Chinese life. The classical culture includes literature, music, painting, and philosophy. Primarily, she presents classical Chinese with her own experience; that is, her study of classical literature with Tutor Ben, her access to classical Chinese music through the time with her foster parents, her first lesson in Chinese painting, as well as her knowledge of Chinese philosophy by discussions with her teachers and her classmates about the Chinese philosophers Confucius, Mencius, Laozi 老子, Zhuangzi 莊子, et al. In this way, Ling leads her readers to experience Chinese culture with her, as a Chinese girl who lived through it.

More importantly, Ling also provides an opportunity to let her readers experience classical Chinese culture themselves. She annexes her translation of six classic Chinese poems and three essays, which she herself learned as a child, at the end of the chapter "Tutor Ben." She

includes the musical scores of her favorite tunes and lyrics to let her readers hear the rhythm. Her own paintings, including the one on the cover, let her readers appreciate the genre of Chinese painting. I consider these references to poetry, musical scores, and paintings the highest form of foreignization because in all of them Ling merely presents and refrains from interpretation. Except for the translated poems, the other art forms are unmediated by the author/translator. In this way, English readers are presented with the same artistic and cultural references as presented to their Chinese counterparts.

When presenting folk culture, which includes gardening, fairs, festivals, and other examples, Ling provides illustrations to let her readers experience the scenes and events vicariously. She also consciously introduces background knowledge relevant to cultural norms and activities. For instance, in the chapter "Our Old Gardener and His Friend," following a reference to watering her orchid every morning, she writes:

The Chinese love of flowers has been rewarded by genius in their cultivation. There is a vast lore of wisdom which has been passed orally from generation to generation concerning the fancies and peculiarities of different orchids, chrysanthemums, and bamboos. In the good old days a man who knew how to raise those three kinds of plants was highly respected, even by scholars. He could sit with officers of the Imperial Court; he was considered an educated man. There are forty or fifty books about orchids alone; it takes a lifetime to study them. (Ling 1988: 165)

If the lived experiences allow readers to see the liveliness of Chinese folk culture, the background information provides a sense of depth. In this way, readers can not only see the culture itself but also go more deeply to understand the meaning behind it. In other words, Ling gives her audience not only the sights but also insights into Chinese culture.

When writing about her contemporary life, including her own family, Ling follows Woolf's advice to be detail-oriented. The elaborate

portrayal includes the layout of the house, room decoration, furniture, cooking, food, clothing, social activities, and the complicated relationship inside the family. The complex life of the family is the highlight of this focus on domestic affairs. Ling's father has five concubines. Except for the fifth one, each wife has her own children. As Woolf mentioned in her letter, the relationships between these women/wives puzzled her but also fascinated her at the same time. The jealousy and power struggles among the concubines are the source of much strife and conflict within the family. As a result, when getting together or playing together, children belonging to different wives might enter into disputes and even physical brawls. By contrast, the wives themselves mainly are bitter and biting in their remarks. Their conversations often have implications and connotations. In this way, like photography, Ling discloses the inner life of an upper-class family that was hidden from the sight of ordinary Chinese, let alone from English readers. Thus, similar to her painting, the detail-oriented depiction represents her life as closely as possible. In a sense, the more elaborate the details, the more foreignizing the book reads.

The foreignizing strategy is also embodied in Ling's writing style. As mentioned above, Ling, who was not a native English speaker and who spent most of her lifetime in China before she wrote the book, did not write idiomatic English. However, her writing style was defended and even endorsed by Woolf and other editors. While Woolf took what was considered to be a disadvantage to non-native English speakers and readers as Ling's advantage, Woolf's friend and Ling's second editor Vita Sackville-West also believed that "the whole feeling of the book would be spoilt if some English person were to correct her writing into formal English prose" (Sackville-West 1988: 10). As a result, Ling's unidiomatic English writing was consciously and even deliberately preserved.

Ling uses abundant Chinese proverbs, sayings, phrases, and idioms. Most of them appear in the characters' speeches. For instance, Yee Chien mocks the closeness between Little Tenth and Aunt Shih, saying,



It is true everything depends on luck, for a toothless old lady attracts Little Tenth so much, she is attached to her that she follows her about all day long. "Offer a bad-smelling pig's head to a Buddha who can't use his nose." Isn't this interesting? (Ling 1988: 41)

The proverb is not only easy to comprehend but also produces a comic effect. In fact, the contrast between a foul-smelling pig's head and a Buddha indicates what common people think of the vast difference between Little Tenth and Aunt Shih, as they belong to two different classes. Idioms and sayings like this also frequently appear in other characters' speech. Being a passive and fatalistic woman, Ling's mother draws upon old sayings to confirm her submissive life. Ling writes:

Mother was silent for a while; she sighed deeply and said: "The proverb says, 'One must know one's own position, if one wants to live with dignity.'" (Ling 1988: 76)

The proverb, representing ancient authority and wisdom, reinforces her mother's submissive lifestyle. Nevertheless, the modern man, Cousin Feng, cites a proverb to defend his thought:

You see, the Chinese often put money the second wish. But the proverb says, "With no money even a good capable man has to struggle till death." (Ling 1988: 111)

In addition to proverbs, sayings of Confucius or other ancient philosophers, folk stories, and other aspects of traditional culture are often quoted by people in their speeches. These quotations, which are translated as closely as possible to the Chinese original, together with their situations, represent Chinese well since they show that Chinese people all live in their rich history and culture. These thousand-year-old proverbs are refreshed and

reinterpreted in common people's lives, generation after generation. In this way, Ling represents both Chinese culture and Chinese people's lives and their connection well.

Foreignization is especially perceptible in Ling's literal translations of Chinese metaphors, such as "breaking your vinegar jar," "Your mouth is bleeding," and "I only gave her a bit of colour, but now she wants a lot of bright red" (Ling 1988: 93, 94). In several places, Ling even uses Chinese words transliterated into the Roman alphabet directly, such as "chun fen" 春分 and "ying-mou" 陰謀 (Ling 1988: 83, 103). The former refers to a type of Chinese painting, which has no corresponding English word. The latter can be translated as "scheme," "trick," or "conspiracy." In it, the first character, *ying* (*yin* 陰),<sup>[1]</sup> has many meanings, including being secret, gloomy, sinister, hidden, and feminine. It captures the women's relationships in Ling's big family and fits the situation of the chapter wonderfully. The zero translation, as the highest form of foreignization, conveys particular meanings; they are unique or undecipherable to outsiders. In either case, foreignization helps achieve the effect perfectly.

Thus, it appears that from form to content and from language to subject, *Ancient Melodies* achieves the foreignizing effect to a great extent. The publication of *Ancient Melodies* by Hogarth Press in Britain in 1953 was a success. J.B. Priestley selected the book as "the book of the year." Peggy Ashcroft read it aloud over the BBC. In 1969 it was reprinted in Britain, and in 1988 it was published in the United States. The book was also translated and published in French, German, Russian, Swedish, and other languages. British well-known journals and newspapers, such as *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Sphere*, and *The New Statesman and Nation*, reviewed the book favorably. Among the comments, foreignization was recognized as the feature of the writing that contributed to its success. For instance, *The Sphere* reviewed it as "[t]old simply and sometimes with startling objectivity, and the result is a special brand of Chinese magic" (cited on the outer cover of *Ancient Melodies*); *The New Statesman and Nation* described it as "[a] flitting patchwork evocation of delight and beauty" (John: 1954, Jan. 16).

*The Times Literary Supplement* commented, “[s]uffice it to say that Mrs. Su Hua introduces the English reader to a fresh world of Chinese sensations, and that these *Ancient Melodies* linger delightfully when louder strains have vanished.” (1954, January 22). The success of *Ancient Melodies* seemed to contradict Venuti’s argument; that is, domestication is the norm and practice of the Anglo-American publishing industry as well as the expected narrative style for English readers (Venuti 1995: 1–42). Rather than fending off her audience, Ling’s foreignizing strategy won her readers. How do we account for this contradiction?

## 2. The Effect of Foreignization

Maria Tymoczko (2000: 35–36) thinks that one of the problems with Venuti’s theory is loose terminology. She particularly picks on the term “resistance” and thinks that it “does not form a coherent category that allows us to replicate his conclusions or extend his perceptions.” Tymoczko summarizes that sometimes resistant translation involves what Venuti calls “discursive strategies,” which can be a deformed form of target language to reflect the source language, and which at other times can be a “fluent” translation but merely the choice of the text itself (36). In a similar vein, I think the key term “foreignizing” in Venuti’s theory is also vague. He does not provide a standard or a parameter as to how foreign a foreignizing translation is supposed to be. Can it be slightly difficult, somewhat hard, or radically incomprehensible? What are the criteria? In the case of Ling, her foreignization does not pose unfathomable difficulties to readers that might repel their reading, yet at the same time it retains considerable mystery and defamiliarization to draw their interest. This I call an effect of foreignization, by which I mean that the effect of foreignization is not complete repudiation of domestication; rather, domestication offers support or supplement. If foreignization plays a major and distinguishing

role, then domestication underlines and highlights such a role. Together, they keep foreignization at a level that makes her writing different enough to draw interest but not difficult enough to defy reading.

As it is comparatively more difficult to pinpoint the “original” in order to make the comparison in the cultural translation, I mainly focus on the three chapters that were self-translated by Ling. Chapters Three, Four, and Five, under the titles “Moving House,” “A Happy Event,” and “The Mid-Autumn Festival,” were written in Chinese and published respectively in Issues 6 and 7, Volume II of *Crescent Moon* (1929), Art and Literature Supplement of *Dagong Newspaper* (1936), and Issue 4, Volume I of *Literature Magazine* (1937) in China. Ling translated these three chapters from Chinese to English herself when she wrote the book. Her translations integrate perfectly well with the rest of the book and are rarely picked out as translations.<sup>[2]</sup> In this sense, the three chapters can serve as representatives for us to examine the translation strategy she employed.

Ling takes care of almost everything—characters, stories, plots, dialogues, actions, and even metaphors—in her rendering from English to Chinese. Nevertheless, while making an effort to preserve the details meticulously to the point of translating them word by word, at the same time Ling also makes deliberate changes and rewritings to accommodate the English way of reading and writing. In other words, she adopts both strategies of foreignization and domestication in her self-translation.

The two areas I find most distinctive in this regard are Ling’s presentation of Chinese culture and her narration of the story. In terms of Chinese culture, on the one hand, as Woolf suggested, Ling presents her childhood as closely to her experiences as possible; on the other hand, she also makes conscious efforts not to overburden her readers with cultural information and images that are specific to Chinese life. For instance, she changes “dumplings” into “fried rolls,” “chrysanthemum” into “daffodils,” and Chinese money, *yuanbao* 元寶, into American dollars. Among these three changes, the first one is from one lesser-known Chinese cultural image to a better-known one; the second one is from a common Chinese

flower to one not so common in China but more popular in the West; and the last one is a complete replacement of the American currency for the Chinese one. Thus, depending on the situation, Ling exercises different degrees of domestication in her cultural translation.

When involving elaborate Chinese titles, traditional Chinese clothing, or the rituals, Ling carefully trims the details. For instance, in the Chinese version of "A Happy Event," Ling describes how the little girl goes to have breakfast with her family in Chinese as "鳳兒走到東面奶奶座的桌邊，照例的叫了爸爸、姑媽、三娘、五娘‘早晨’" (Chen 1998: 414). The literal Chinese translation is: "Feng'er went to the east table where her mother sits, and said 'Good morning' to father, aunt, Third mother, Fifth mother as usual" (my translation). In *Ancient Melodies*, Ling's English version is: "I went to the table where the grown-ups sat. I said 'Good morning' to them" (Ling 1988: 53). Thus, the titles of "father, aunt, Third Mother, Fifth Mother" are summarized as one word "grown-ups" to save the trouble for her readers.

At other times, she adds information to help the reader's comprehension. In the chapter "Moving House," the old lady, Ah Shih, jokes with her little friend, Little Tenth, "You coming to eat my green vegetables and white rice again?" (又吃我的青菜白飯嗎?) (Ling 1998: 256). In her English version, Ling rewrites the dialogue as, "You like staying with me, don't you? Though we only have green vegetables and white rice" (Ling 1988: 41). Ling was afraid that her English readers might interpret Ah Shih in a wrong way; therefore, she adds one line and changes the tone to prevent misinterpretation. In the same chapter, maid Yee Chien makes fun with Little Tenth, saying that she "would be sold like a little pig" (Ling 1988:39). Here, Ling uses the same expression as in her Chinese writing, yet she adds a footnote, "in South China, grown-ups used to tell naughty children that they would be sold like little pigs" (Ling 1988: 39). In this way, the foreignism is kept and the reader is accommodated as well.

In the book, Ling provides 27 footnotes. All of them are short and concise. Most are only a few words or one line long; rarely do they run

more than two lines. While providing footnotes as a paratext facilitates reading, it also shows that the main text itself is difficult. This difficulty is caused by no other reason than the foreignizing translation or writing. Nevertheless, like imbibing a strong-flavored drink, rather than diluting it, Ling leaves the choice to her readers to keep the original flavor by ignoring the paratext or softening the effect by referring to it. To a certain extent, this reflects the relationship of the two strategies adopted by Ling: foreignization is primary and highlighted, whereas domestication is minor and supportive. They nevertheless complement each other.

If easing difficulty of understanding is what she did for her average English readers, then adding or strengthening features is what she strived for in order to reach her elite readers, Woolf as well as her fellow editors and publishers. Compared to her Chinese writing, Ling enhanced feminist ideas in her self-translation. There is no doubt that feminist sensibility prevails in her Chinese writings. Nevertheless, it is presented in a way that implies it through revealing the anxiety, conflict, and pain of women. By comparing it with the Chinese “original,” I find that *Ancient Melodies* projects feminist thought much more explicitly and strongly.

“The Happy Event” is a story that condemns the Chinese traditional patriarchal system, which allows a man to marry several wives. The happy event of marrying a new concubine forms a sharp contrast with the pain of the other wives, especially Fifth Mother, who has not been married for long. While Ling’s English translation follows the Chinese writing closely, she carefully rewrites the last few paragraphs. The disparity departs from the discussion of death between Fifth Mother and the little girl, Feng’er in Chinese and “P” in English, on the wedding evening. After Fifth Mother sadly says that she would like to die because one forgets all when one dies, the Chinese version goes on as follows,

“The people who want to die will be happy when they die.”

“Really?” Feng’er opened her eyes widely. She could see that her (Fifth Mother’s) thin face became even more livid in the lamplight; it was pale as a

pumpkin seed. She stared at the light. Her lips were shivering.

“Will you cry when I die?” She bit her lip.

“I will go to your tomb every day to cry for you. Where is your tomb?” Thinking of Huiyatou who goes to his mother's tomb to cry for her, Feng'er answered.

Fifth Mother did not reply. Big drops of tears, like beans losing their thread, streamed down her cheeks.

Feng'er looked at her blankly. After a while, she asked, “Fifth Mother, why do you cry?” (Chen 1998: 412; my translation)

In this sad conversation between Fifth Mother and the little girl, Feng'er, Fifth Mother is so hurt by Father's new wedding that she wants to die. However, the innocent Feng'er does not understand her. Thus, their conversation, which revolves around death and what happens after Fifth Mother's death, slides into a more and more wretched state until Fifth Mother's pain and desolation become unbearable.

It is easy to see that the heartbroken Fifth Mother, who feels no love and comfort in her life, loses her hope to live on. Therefore, she seeks her only consolation in the sympathetic cry from the little girl after her death. However, the little girl naively asks, “Where is your tomb?” This cutting question adds woe to Fifth Mother because it means that, on the one hand, she is already treated as if she were dead, and on the other hand, she might be buried improperly and nobody could find her. Thus, it implies that in both her life and death she has no social status. In the end, the little girl can only ask, “Why do you cry?” It further emphasizes the lonely and painful situation of Fifth Mother; nobody understands her. In *Ancient Melodies*, Ling's English translation modifies the conversation. It reads,

I could not understand what she meant, but I was afraid that questioning would bore her. I listened to her quietly. After a while I began to feel sad for her.

“You will not die. You wouldn't like to forget Mother, and me, and Father?”

I could not continue speaking.

“I can’t forget your mother, she is very good to me, but ...” she covered her face with her hands. I saw her fingers trembling. Her breast heaved slightly.

“I want to know who has been naughty to you. Tell me, tell me. Oh, you are crying.” I spoke with a quivering voice. (Ling 1988: 62–63)

Although the atmosphere remains pathetic in both the English translation and the Chinese writing, the tone in the English one has become less depressing. Compared to the weak question of “Where is your tomb?” by the little girl in the Chinese version, Ling lets the girl cry out, “You will not die” in her English translation. It is a strong voice. It is already a protest, a fight. Furthermore, the girl says, “I want to know who has been naughty to you.” Despite the fact that it is in a quivering voice and the wording is childish, it represents a new generation, a future woman’s condemnation of patriarchy. This speech is very different from her counterpart’s question “Why do you cry?” in that the Chinese version is passive, whereas the English is active. In this way, we can see that Ling strengthens the feminist voice in her translation. She no longer limits herself to simply revealing the pains and sufferings of women, but lets the little girl as a future woman speak out. With the changes, the feminist message is much stronger in the English translation.

In her book *The Lure of the Modern*, Shu-mei Shih critiques the feminist writing in *Ancient Melodies*. She finds it problematic because it is a Western-mediated feminism; through it, Ling and other Third-World feminists are unwittingly complicit with First-World domination in the form of literal feminism. Shih thinks this is especially true with Ling because her “narrative was written under the gaze of a powerful Western feminist” (Shih 2001: 220). Along with it, Shih views the fact that Ling sets her “feminist bildungsroman in the space of a traditional household” in disregard of the great feminist development in China in the first half of the 20th century as “especially troubling” (ibid.). To summarize, Shih argues that Ling’s feminist writing in *Ancient Melodies* had the



intention of appealing to her mentor, Woolf, and her Western readers. Based on my comparison between Ling's English translation and Chinese "original" writing, I agree with Shih that Ling rewrites the feminist thought in *Ancient Melodies* in favor of Woolf as well as English readers.

### 3. Narrative

Although the author seems to be the sole person in charge of the narrative, narrative is not a one-way action. Seymour Chatman (1978: 28) proposes that "a narrative is a communication ... it presupposes two parties, a sender and a receiver." In regard to translation, I see that the communicative feature is strong in *Ancient Melodies*. Compared with her Chinese writing, Ling is more conscious of her English readers and makes efforts to adjust her narration for their readability. Regarding the three stories that she translated herself from Chinese into English, Ling mainly makes changes in three aspects: the narrator, the manner of narration, and the characterization.

The three narrators are all changed from the third-person to the first-person in the English translation. Although Ling's primary concern is to keep consistency with the rest of her chapters, which are written in the first person, the change evidently introduces differences in her narrative in English. The point of view, tone, speech mode, and other aspects all alter along with it. This feature is seen not only in the dialogues and psychological portrayals but also in the non-event description. For instance, in "A Happy Event," when Ling writes about the scene of the feast, the whole Chinese paragraph is an objective depiction of the ritual—the settings of the ancestor shrine, candies, incense sticks, and wine, etc.—with no people or feelings involved. By comparison, in her English narrative Ling adds both emotion and action. She starts her paragraph with the sentence "Everything reminded me of a New Year's Day" and in the

middle inserts “the smell of them [incense] made one feel that it was an unusual day” (Ling 1988: 53). Toward the end, she adds an action of the servant coming to fill the wine. In this way, the English depiction becomes more personal and vivid.

Furthermore, her first-person narrator in English evidently intrudes more into the narrative compared to the more detached or distant position of the third-person narration in Chinese. For instance, in the beginning paragraphs of “Mid-Autumn Festival,” Ling’s depiction of the house in the Chinese version is purely objective. In the English translation, she not only provides details about the fun and emotional feelings about her enjoyment, but she also adds these lines:

My mouth waters even now after many years when I think of their deliciously sour taste. ... This haunting always made me imagine that I was inside a vast sea, seeing and catching all the queer creatures. (Ling 1988: 66–67)

The intrusion again brings the personal and emotional factors into the objective narration and appeals to the reader’s feeling. According to Gerald Prince (1982: 12):

If a narrator may be more or less intrusive, he may also be more or less self-conscious, that is, he may seem more or less aware that he is narrating ...

Apparently, Ling’s first-person narrator in English is more conscious of her narration than the third-person one in her Chinese writing. It shows Ling’s higher awareness of her English readers in her translation.

Similarly, it is also clear that Ling modifies the characterization of her major characters in English. Take *Third Mother*, for example. A paragraph in Chinese describes her in this way:

正巧三娘拿着一碗吃剩水餃子過來問小孩子還吃不吃，她今天穿了粉藍色的

素緞袍子，圓白的臉上一團的笑，七姊便拉着她問是不是爸爸說要給一個孩子一個元寶作封標。(Chen 1998: 145)

Literally, this paragraph reads,

At the moment Third Mother came with a bowl of left-over dumplings. She asked the children if they wanted them. She was wearing a light blue satin gown, with a broad smile on her white, round face. Seventh Sister then pulled her and asked her if Father was to give each child a *yuanbao* (Chinese money) as a present. (my translation)

In this paragraph, although Third Mother is a central character, she only performed two actions: she came into the room and offered left-over dumplings to the children. From the two actions, readers might have a vague impression that Third Mother seems to be nice to children. The other two events—the neutral physical depiction of her and that she was approached by Seventh Sister—has no impact on this impression. By contrast, the English version is more compact, with the whole narration centering on Third Mother:

At this moment, Third Mother came up to our table, holding a big bowl of fried rolls in her hand. She helped her daughters, saying: “Silly little creatures, you should ask your father to give you, each one of you, a golden dollar instead of a silver one. You know when he’s happy he gives you everything you want.” Third Mother finished this with a laugh. She had very pretty teeth and when she laughed she looked extremely charming. We all watched her. (Ling 1988: 54)

In addition to changing “dumplings” to “fried rolls” and Chinese money to dollars, as we mentioned earlier, in the English version Third Mother becomes unquestionably a central character, who executes all actions. Furthermore, all these actions together tell her character; that is, Third Mother seems to be lively, good-looking, and nice to her daughters. In this way, English readers can have a much stronger impression of Third Mother.

A similar change applies to another major character, Fifth Mother. In Chinese the narrative of her focuses mainly on her physical appearance. On the day Father marries Sixth Mother, the Chinese story describes her as:

她穿着一條粉紅緞子繡花裙，藍緞繡花短上衣，頭上戴着些珍珠花，髮旁插着  
朵大紅絨蝙蝠。腳上蹬着花鞋，斯斯文文的低着頭走進當屋。(Chen 1998: 416)  
She wore a pink, embroidered satin skirt and a blue, embroidered blouse.  
Pearl flowers covered her hair. A bright red hat slanted on one side of her  
head. Her shoes were flowery. She entered the hall demurely, bending her  
head low. (my translation)

In this paragraph, which is made up of five sentences, four of them are stative narration and only one is active. Along with it, all the focus is on the attire of Fifth Mother except for the last sentence, which describes her quiet movement. Ling's intention is to contrast the outer liveliness of the outfit of Fifth Mother with her inner loneliness; however, this meaning is too implicit for English readers. Ling's heavily stative narration hardly reveals the inner feeling of Fifth Mother, whose sadness is not clearly portrayed in the last active narration. By contrast, the English translation is made up of almost all active narrations. It reads:

She was wearing a shining pink dress, and walked gently with timid steps.  
Her face did not show any expression, her eyes were half closed and her lips  
tightly folded. (Ling 1988: 56)

In this paragraph, most of the elaborate description of attire in Chinese is cut, reduced to only the one phrase "a shining pink dress." The description of the facial features of Fifth Mother, which emanate her sadness, is added. In this way, readers are in a better position to interpret her sentiments because they can read her mind. Furthermore, the active narration makes the narrative more dramatic. According to Prince (1982: 63):

The proportion of active and stative events in a narrative is an important characteristic of that narrative. Thus, all other things being equal, a story in which most events are stative will be less dynamic than one in which most events are active.

It is not hard to see that in this case Ling's English translation is more dynamic than the Chinese "original."

Andrew Plaks and Kenneth DeWoskin (1977: 315) think that Chinese literary tradition attaches more importance to non-events than does the Western tradition. In fact, they propose that in some early Chinese works, the emphasis on "words" and "events" is disproportionate, with the favor on the former. This legacy continues in modern Chinese writing. In this sense, Ling's change from stative to active narration to make her character more distinct and her story more interesting actually shows her consciousness of adopting English narrative style.

Even in the non-event descriptions, Ling sometimes changes the third-person indirect speeches in Chinese into first-person dialogues in her English translation. For instance, the Chinese paragraph reads,

三娘因為自己有兩個“傳宗接代”的兒子，抖得很。常常衝着大家藉故取笑媽媽說七星伴月還是月裡嫦娥托的身呢。(Chen 1998:434)

Third Mother is complacent because she has two sons who can carry on the ancestor's name. She thus often snickers at Mother that she is a moon accompanied by seven stars or incarnated from the goddess in the Moon. (my translation)

In the English translation, what Third Mother says in an indirect speech becomes a direct speech. The paragraph reads:

She seemed overjoyed at seeing Mother's distress. She began to tease Mother, saying: "How proud one would be if one knew one had been a goddess of the moon in the former life. Do excuse us mortal beings if we have been impolite to you." Then she laughed loudly. (Ling 1988: 68)

In regard to the function of dialogues in an embedded narrative, Mieke Bal (1994: 60) thinks that

The dialogues embedded in a narrative text are dramatic in kind. The more dialogue a narrative text contains, the more dramatic that text is.

Bal's theory well applies to Ling's case. Third Mother's sarcasm is much harsher and accordingly more hurting in her direct speech in the English translation.

Ling does not change her Chinese writing style entirely into an English one. Nevertheless, aware of her English readers, she makes efforts to improve dramatic effects to enhance readability. These efforts can be considered domesticating strategy because they ease the reading for the target readers. While it is hard to make a similar comparison for the rest of her chapters that were directly written in English, it is not difficult to see that Ling is consistent in her writing style. For instance, the perspective of a child as the narrator alleviates the difficulty of comprehension. The Chinese culture, traditional or contemporary, is explained in the stories or experiences and viewed through the child's eyes, which are both easy and interesting to read. Nevertheless, domestication does not cancel or overshadow foreignization in the writing. Rather, it moderates and at the same time highlights foreignization. As a result, it helps to emphasize the foreignizing effect.

Now, a question arises: if domestication is employed at the same time, is the translation still considered foreignization? My answer is yes. Technically, foreignization and domestication cannot be completely separated; they are not categorically antagonized. Rather, all foreignization embodies domestication to different degrees.<sup>[3]</sup> Culturally and politically, as Ovidio Carbonell Cortés (1998: 65) argues in his article "Orientalism in Translation," the defamiliarization or foreignization, which attempts "to *preserve* the distinct qualities of the foreign or exotic text," is "in fact a rewriting" and "an effect" in the target culture (original emphasis). In other words, foreignization is always and already a result of manipulation. In Ling's case, the foreignizing

effect that wins her readers is precisely created by her careful employment of domesticating strategy within it. To both her English readers and to a bilingual reader like me, the effect she achieves is foreignization. Then, does foreignization attain its goal as Venuti anticipates?

## 4. The Danger of Foreignization

In translation studies, the critique of foreignizing strategy includes such areas as its binary thinking (source and target languages, domestication and foreignization, fluency and unfamiliarization, etc.), imposing the translator's way of reading on the readers, falling back on a prescriptive translation approach, overemphasizing cases in the English-speaking world, accentuating an elite standpoint of the translators and mistrusting the popular and the populist, and creating the gap between translation theory and society, etc. (see Robinson 1997; Pym 1996; 2001; Tymoczko 2000). While these perspicacious propositions reveal the problems of foreignization particularly in translations in traditional sense, Ling's case shows that there are other issues in unconventional translations.

To begin with, the Anglo-American publishing industry is not a monolithic whole as Venuti proposes. Although the norm of fluency and domestication prevails, it does not mean that all publishers abide by this rule. One of the key factors that make them go against the rule is profit. On those occasions, exoticism or foreignism, rather than domestication, is the very selling point. In fact, this is often the case with both translation and minority writing, especially autobiographical work. Susan Hawthorne (1989: 625) has an apt argument concerning the publication of minority women's autobiography and voyeurism. She writes:

The demand for autobiography by those deemed "exotic" is, I believe, precipitated by voyeurism on the part of the dominant culture. The history

of voyeurism by men of women provides a useful analogy here. The owners and purveyors of pornography—the ultimate in voyeurism—are clear about their reasons. They are in it for the money, and their pornography contributes to (and underlines) the dehumanization of women. Cultural voyeurism is promoted by the same constructed “needs.”

While the Western publishing industry can exploit non-Western women writers in a double way, on the whole it never stops consuming and profiting from “non-Western” products in general. A typical example is the prestigious Booker prize, sponsored by the Booker company. While the company recognizes and promotes postcolonial writers, it also has high colonial background in the Caribbean sugar trade (Huggan 2001: xii). The two seemingly contradictory sides of the Booker company reconcile well in its goal of profit making.

As a result, foreignization does not always achieve the goal of attaining power struggle or resistance. Many cases of minority translation and writing, including Ling’s, have shown that they lead to “exoticism” or “Orientalism.” Although it cannot be denied that Woolf and her fellow editors and publishers had the good intention of introducing Chinese culture to British readers, they inadvertently encouraged “Orientalism.” Ling followed the expectation. Thus, true to the reviews, Ling portrays an ancient, mystical, beautiful, and fascinating picture of China that evokes “delight and beauty” (John 1954: 76). This picture fits the imagination of Westerners and reinforces the social hierarchy rather than challenges it. Cortés (1998: 65) has an insightful exposition on this issue. He writes:

This should be understood not as a transgression of the norm, but as norm itself, and a norm that operates on certain occasions and on certain texts. As some scholars have pointed out so perspicaciously, this norm has to do with the question of the canon. Whereas it may be said that “naturalness” stands as the desirable diction in the majority of translations into English (at least in the American milieu), the fact that fluency, transparency or invisibility should



acquire canonical status also determines that non-transparent translations somehow emphasize the “foreign” character of the work translated and the different set of values it is assumed to convey. If fluency as a strategy gradually takes hold as a convenient way of incorporating, for example, classical texts in the corpus of Western knowledge, defamiliarization stands as a common practice when translating exotic texts. Their semiotic character is determined by the differences sought in order to distinguish these texts from canonical texts. The translator therefore orientalizes the “Oriental” text, exoticizes those texts considered exotic, and renders archaic works purported to represent bygone and paradigmatic times (cf. the Anglo-Saxon translations by Ezra Pound commented upon by Venuti).

While Cortés prefers the term “defamiliarization” to “foreignization,” he and Venuti are not different in what they refer to. In his exposition, Cortés adds a layer that Venuti fails to differentiate; that is, “defamiliarization” or “foreignization” can be what the target readers and publishers look for. The reason is that “defamiliarization” confirms the canonical position of the hegemonic literature and at the same time emphasizes the “otherness” of the foreign literature that is non-canonical and different. In other words, it does not challenge the hierarchy of the target culture but reinforces it by situating itself in the margin.

If “exoticism” or “Orientalism” is the overtone, expectation, and situation anticipated and prescribed by the target reader, then the foreign author/translator functions as the accomplice in this process. Richard Jacquemond (1992: 155) discusses the case of the translation of Arabic literature into French, stating that:

The Occidental reader prefers to turn to works which confirm his prejudices and his presentation of the Orient. In return, some Arabic authors, in their search for a larger non-Arabic audience, feed these biased representations by producing either touristic literature or one that amplifies the Oriental contradictions as imagined by the Occident.

Although the translation of Chinese literature/culture into English is not the same as the translation of Arabic into French, they unavoidably share the “exchange” of Orientalism in the relationship between the reader and author.

In Ling’s case, her appeal to her English readers can be best seen in her efforts to aestheticize Chinese culture. If the title of the book and paintings that Ling employs help achieve the effect of exoticism and mystery, then in content she especially embellishes it for that purpose. *Ancient Melodies* covers about two decades of Ling’s early life, which are also the first two decades of the 20th century—one of the most turbulent eras in China, with such significant events as tangled warfare among warlords, the downfall of the Qing dynasty, and the founding of the new republican nation. However, these momentous social and political events, which involved every Chinese at the time, are rarely touched upon, except for the brief mention of the May Fourth movement in the chapter “My Teacher and My Schoolmate.” In fact, even in that chapter, the movement only serves as a background, and the focus is on the discussion of Chinese classical philosophy. By excluding the social and political reality, Ling manages to create an image of Chinese culture and life that is primarily domestic and traditional, a world of differences from the modern, industrialized society of her English readers.

In this domestic realm, modernity can hardly hold a space. Although there are instances where modern life invades the narrative unavoidably, it is often described as a clumsy imitation of the Western style and thus appears awkward. For example, in the two weddings—one traditional and the other modern—which take place in the same year, the former is a happy one whereas the latter turns out ridiculous. Not only are the arrangements compromise between Eastern and Western customs, but also the tune played during the wedding is “heard years later in an American church at a funeral service” by the author (Ling 1988: 190). In “My Teacher and My Schoolmate,” the only chapter dealing with modernity, Ling centers on her teacher and her schoolmate’s explicating the Chinese classics to critique the radical thought of the May Fourth movement. In this way, Ling not only

draws a clear line between modern and tradition but also shows her strong favor of the latter at the disadvantage of the former. The result is that she creates a traditional picture of Chinese culture that forms the "Other" to the industrialized and metropolitan West of her English readers.

Although Ling's writing is not always about poetry, philosophy, and laughter, but also about jealousy, tears, and strife, Ling takes care to avoid evil. In other words, she "paints" her life in a way to achieve the aesthetic result. There are almost no bad people in the book. Even the man who is going to be executed exhibits an admirable philosophical attitude, which resonates with the onlookers as he makes his way to the execution ground. Among all the characters, the only ones who can be counted as "bad" are the women who are jealous of one another and set up plots to fight for the favor of their men. Nevertheless, they are also victims of patriarchy. Ling advocates feminism; however, she has no intention of condemning her father, the man who represents patriarchy and directly causes the conflicts and unhappiness of the women in the house. Instead, Ling describes him as a respectable, amiable, and hardworking man with refined taste. He associates himself mostly with high intellectuals. Above all, he loves his family. He discovers Ling's talent in painting, finds as much time as possible to play with his children, and tries hard to appease his women. In this way, the women's issue becomes an issue separate from him. In fact, Ling uses the Great Queen Wu Chui-tien (Wu Zetian 武則天) in the Tang dynasty as an example to show that women can win power by themselves. She writes that her great-uncle is a feminist who encourages Ling to follow the example of Wu Chui-tien to achieve success. If men are all sympathetic to women, where do women's issues come from? Implicitly, Ling attributes the issues to women themselves and to the old system and society. In this way, she smooths over the real issues and attributes them to the stereotype of the Chinese culture.

The most noticeable rewriting Ling makes is with Ling's foster father, one of the characters in the book. In the chapter "My Foster-Parents," Ling writes, "My Foster-Father was the most talented man" (Ling 1988:

192). According to Ling, her foster father, who was a high-rank politician, was well-traveled and highly talented. He was versed in the four high-class accomplishments: music, chess, calligraphy, and painting, which are rare attributes. Ling cites her father, who exclaimed:

Uncle Chao is really a very clever man, but he should have lived in the Sung Dynasty at the time of talented Emperor Hui Chung, so that he would not have wasted his time doing dull and monotonous civil service duties. The Emperor Hui Chung would certainly have given him a chance to develop his talents. He might have become as good a landscape painter and calligraphist as any master of the Sung Dynasty. (Ling 1988: 195)

Furthermore, Ling regards him as a man of integrity. She remembers that he once told her, “I think I should first tell you four words. I hope you will remember them. They are Popularity, Peculiarity, Vulgarity, and Laziness. You must try to avoid them in your work” (Ling 1988: 197). Ling’s portrayal of her foster father, which focuses mainly on his artistic accomplishments and character, can make us think of the word *junzi* 君子, which is used to describe a man of high moral character in ancient China.

However, Ling’s portrayal does not correspond with the historical record. The real name of Zhao Pengsheng, Ling’s foster father, was Zhao Bingjun 趙秉鈞. He had a complicated history. His birth as well as his death was a mystery. He was said to be smart and strong, and his cleverness and bravery helped him advance quickly in the military. Eventually, he won the favor of Yuan Shikai 袁世凱, the Provisional President of the Republic of China at the time. Zhao’s personality was believed to be cruel and merciless. One biography depicts him as “cruel, ruthless, deep, and sinister,” and says that he had the nickname of “butcher” in his lifetime, partially related to the fact that he was the initiator of the Chinese police system (cited in Chen 2010: 35). Not only was the ruthless side of his character deliberately omitted by Ling, but also the other side, his artistic achievement, was

exaggerated. According to scholar Chen Xueyong, the calligraphy left by Zhao Bingjun shows that his writing was not notably excellent. Chen casts doubt not only on Ling's father's high praise of Zhao but also on Zhao's moral instruction to Ling (263–64).

Similarly, Sasha Su-Ling Welland (2006: 37–45) points out that her grandmother, who was the sister of Ling, had a different account of their family history. Ling's sister thought that Ling's mother came from a common family, rather than the distinguished and prosperous one as Ling narrated. Although it is hard to judge who is right and who is wrong, there is no doubt that Ling's version is more appealing and dramatic than that of her sister. Although it is commonly agreed that memory tends to ease the painful experiences of our past, when a particular account is drastically different from history, then we should not simply fault memory but the intention of the author.

Stuart Hall (1990: 226) thinks that cultural identity is never a fixed essence. Instead, it is a construct, a politics. He states:

The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual “past,” since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already “after the break.” It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourse of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental “law of origin.”

Then, what is Ling's position in this matter? Ling is still in the mindset of binaries, which are made up of self and Other, East and West, tradition and modern, and other duals. (Ling addresses the difference and misunderstanding between the East and the West by the voice of her cousins in the last chapter “Our Two Feng Cousins.”) Rather than resisting and challenging the power hierarchies, Ling actually bolsters them with her

foreignizing strategy. She highlights the differences and makes all of the aforementioned pairs seemingly incompatible.

Concerning the relationship between self and Other, Sander Gilman (1985: 18) argues in *Difference and Pathology*:

Because there is no real line between self and the Other, an imaginary line must be drawn; and so that the illusion of an absolute difference between self and Other is never troubled, this line is as dynamic in its ability to alter itself as is the self.

In Ling's case, to sustain this imaginary line between the Self and the Other, she makes herself and her readers believe that what she creates is an "authentic" presentation of Chinese culture.

Consequently, contrary to one of the biggest aims of foreignization, which is to reveal the invisibility of the translator, Ling does not have herself shown as she is. Rather, she comes across as stunted. As the narrator representing the author herself, she is presented as a little girl. Although the gender characteristic of a little girl is not strong in the book, still the gender coincides with the stereotypical association of the Orient with women. What is especially conspicuous is her diminutive image and identity. She is portrayed as both adorable and timid. The adult characters, including her mother, describe her as "like a little pussy cat in the corner" and "a tiny sparrow flying around" (Ling 1988: 67). Both metaphors, "cat" and "sparrow," indicate that she is feminine and sensitive. The metaphors also suggest that she is meek and timid. The adjective modifiers, "little" and "tiny," not only portray the physique but also the diminutive existence of the narrator. Staying "in the corner" or just "flying around" specifies her space of activity as small and inconspicuous. In a word, the narrator is obscure in her existence as a little girl. Although in later chapters she grows up as a high school student, that image is vague. Thus, as a narrator, without a full sense of herself, the little girl is not capable of taking a critical view of her past or the culture in which she lives. As an author, Ling keeps her

entire adulthood concealed from her writing. In fact, her prolonged sojourn in Britain before the book was published is not mentioned in the writing at all. Although Ling has her purpose and arrangement for selecting only the early part of her life to write, one outcome is that the narrator is not on a par with her Western editors and readers; she is lower. Her subjectivity is further compromised by her consciousness of being under their gaze. In this sense, the image of the little girl reveals her intention of winning the love and favor of her Western readers. This construction of a miniature of self is consonant with the place of her culture as different and other from the West. In this sense, Ling achieves the foreignizing effect in a way that contradicts Venuti's theory; that is, as an author/translator, she has to downplay her identity in order to overplay the differences of her culture.

## 5. Conclusion

Ling executes foreignization in *Ancient Melodies*. That is to say, in both language and culture, Ling deliberately preserves and even highlights Chinese features. These include both the essence of classical Chinese culture and careful details of contemporary Chinese life and distinctive Chinese proverbs, idioms, metaphors, and expressions. In particular, Ling provides her own paintings, musical scores, literal translation of her childhood readings, as well as Chinese expressions with zero translation, to let her English readers experience Chinese culture and language as much and as directly as possible. Thus, from the title and the cover painting to the story and the discourse, Ling creates a work that appears as "authentic" as possible to Chinese culture. The effect she produces is foreignization.

Nevertheless, although Ling performs the strategy Venuti advocates, her foreignization calls Venuti's theory into question rather than endorsing it. To start with, Venuti follows Friedrich Schleiermacher in making two binary groups, the author and the foreignization and the reader and domestication.

However, Ling's case shows that her foreignization includes rather than excludes the target reader. Although Ling's case is not a conventional translation, I propose that translation in general presupposes its target readers, whether they are real or implied. The reader is a factor that cannot be avoided or dismissed no matter how close the translator keeps to the author and the text. In other words, Ling's foreignization shows that the source text and the target text are not necessarily always in opposition or contradiction.

Similarly, rather than acting in complete opposition to domestication, the foreignizing effect created by Ling shows that domestication and foreignization are compatible and interconnected. With foreignization functioning as the primary feature of the writing and translating, domestication underlines and supports foreignization. In other words, domestication moderates foreignization and makes foreignization easy to understand. At the same time, domestication emphasizes foreignization and makes foreignization more appealing. In Ling's case, with the combination of both strategies she makes the cultural context considerably easier to grasp and the narrative more dramatic. Both efforts distinguish the cultural differences and enhance the interest of the target readers.

In addition, as the success of Ling's book shows that not all Anglo-American publishing houses look for domesticating translations. In fact, as Cortés explicates, foreignization or defamiliarization, as with domestication, can serve the purpose of maintaining the cultural hierarchy in the Anglo-American world. With domestication associated with canonical works, foreignization can become the exclusive strategy for translating "other" cultures and hence can result in their exotic nature. In this case, foreignization strengthens rather than resists the hegemony of Anglo-American culture.

Ling's autobiographical writing in English problematizes the dichotomies between the source and the target and between domesticating and foreignizing strategies, as well as the homogeneity of the Anglo-American publishing industry in Venuti's theory. The fact that *Ancient Melodies* embodies both creative writing and translation and Ling acts as both



writer and translator further undermines other binaries such as writing/ translating and writer/ translator. Nevertheless, Ling breaks the binaries in translation in a considerably unwitting way. Consciously, she still subjects herself to the power structure that divides the West from the East, the modern from the traditional, and herself as a Third World woman writer from the First World ones. This mentality puts her in the position of the Other in relation to her English editors and readers. With the foreignizing strategy, she accentuates the gap by creating a distant, ancient, traditional, and aesthetic picture of Chinese culture. Its distinctiveness and exoticism further fix its position as being the Other. The result is that foreignization does not resist, disrupt, or transform the cultural hegemony of the West but instead reinforces it.

## Notes

- [1] The character *yīng* 陰 is written as *yīn* in the modern Chinese phonetic system *Hanyu pinyin*.
- [2] To my knowledge, Chen Xueyong is the only critic who points out that these chapters are translations.
- [3] Michael Boyden expresses a similar thought in his article "Language Politics, Translation, and American Literary Translation" (2006).

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