

Speaking from the Translation of She by Ba Jin

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Abstract. Ba Jin's translated works have a relatively important place in the history of Chinese translation. However, Ba Jin's translations of *She* and *The Story of Suvarin* have remained unnoticed by the scholarly community for a long time. A comparison of the 1929 edition of *She* and the 1939 edition of *The Story of Suvarin* reveals slight differences between the two versions. Chen Yuan's pioneering approach to the study of historical sources is a valuable resource for dealing with literary historical materials. The study of historical sources, also known as "Heuistik", originally means "finden" and "Fofindungskunst". The main purpose is to find out "what is historical material", "what are the sources of historical material", and "there are several types of historical sources". This study employs a historical source research approach to examine two of Ba Jin's translation works in the 1920s and the 1930s. Rereading these two translations helps clarify the pseudonym Mara, trace the historical origins of the changes in different versions, and discover the meaning of Anna's name.

Keywords: She; The Story of Suvarin; Mara; Anna; Historiography.

1. Introduction

Among Ba Jin's translations, the novel *She* has long been neglected by the scholarly community. However, revisiting *She* and another version of this translation, *The Story of Suvarin* [1], help clarify the pen name "Mara," discover the changes in different versions of translation, and explore the meaning of the Russian name "Anna." It should be noted that *The Story of Suvarin* was published in the second issue of *The Great Wall of Literature and Art* in 1939, and the document was not found in Ba Jin's *Chronicle*, Ba Jin's *Complete Works of Translation* and other works.

Therefore, it is necessary to bring *She* and *The Story of Suvarin* into the research field. In Chen Yuan's opinion, to study historical works, scholars should carefully examine the historical sources on which they are based in order to examine whether they are reliable, whether the narrative is correct, and whether the citation is sufficient. Historiography is a study of historical sources, which can also be used in the treatment of literary historical materials.

2. The identification of the pen name "Mara"

Zhang Xiaoyun and Tang Jinhai suggested in their article "An Analysis of Ba Jin's Pen Name" in 1981 that "Mara was the pen name used by Ba Jin in 1929 when he edited the *Freedom Monthly*. The first translation of Zola's novel *She* was published under the pseudonym of Mara in the first issue of the first volume of *Freedom Monthly* published on January 30, 1929" [2]. Subsequently, Jin Conglin questioned this in 1982 in his book titled *Ba Jin's Chronology 1904-1949* (volume 1). He stated that, "I have consulted Ba Jin and Comrade Xi Jin on this. Li Xiaolin, Ba Jin's daughter, wrote back, 'This Mara is not my father'. Xi Jin said: 'This Mara is not Ba Jin but another literary youth who imitated Ba Jin's writing style and used Mara, a French Revolutionary Party member, as his pen name. Ba Jin was not in Shanghai at that time, but sometimes he came back to Shanghai. He had contacts with publishers and was dragged to write articles when he came back, so there were also articles written by Ba Jin in 'The New Wave of Literature and Art'" [3]. However, Jin considers Mara as one of Ba Jin's many pseudonyms and has not answered the questions in his book [4].

Coincidentally, the translation of *She*, published in 1929 in *Liberty Monthly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, is the breakthrough point in this issue. The opening page of the novel is marked “by Zola, translated by Mara”, and the text is followed by “extracted and translated from Zola’s novel *The Sprout*”. Thus, the information that Mara is the translator of *She* can be confirmed. The authors looked up the newspapers and found a translation of *The Story of Suvarin* in *The Great Wall of Literature and Art*, No. 2, 1939. This article has the documentary information about “*The Story of Suvarin*” that was originally written by Zola and translated by Ba Jin. However, in the original publication, this information was hand written. At the same time, the issue No. 3 of *The Great Wall of Literature and Art*, 1939, has a column entitled “Highlights of the First Issue and Highlights of the Second Issue.” In the second issue, there is a printed message *The Story of Suvarin* translated by Ba Jin [5]. This confirms the hand-written information about the translator. Thus, it is certain that Ba Jin was the translator of the article *The Story of Suvarin*. The authors also compare *She* and *The Story of Suvarin* and find that the two translations are highly identical, with differences only in individual words. Based on this, the authors can conclude that the two translations came from the same person, thus inferring that Mara is one of Ba Jin’s pen names.

3. From *She* to *The Story of Suvarin*

She and *The Story of Suvarin* tell the story of Suvarin, a Russian outlaw who mourned his wife who was hanged in Moscow. At the end of both texts, Ba Jin stated that they were translated from Zola’s novel *The Sprout*. When comparing the two texts, two differences are worthy of attention. The translations are almost identical, one is titled *She* and focuses on Suvarin’s wife, while the other is titled *Suvarin’s Story* and emphasizes on Suvarin. The name of Suvarin’s wife was translated as “Anna” in *She*, but was retranslated as “Anrukhiga” in *Suvarin’s Story*. These changes are intriguing. It is important to explore the meaning behind these changes by applying the historical-source method pioneered by Chen Yuan.

Arianna is a novel written by Ba Jin and published in *Women’s Magazine* (Shanghai), in 1931. It should be noted that the translation of *She*, *The Story of Suvarin*, the novel *Arianna*, and Ba Jin’s personal experience in Paris, are a trinity and exist in an isomorphic relationship. Undoubtedly, Ba Jin was deeply moved by the story of Suvarin and his wife as depicted in *The Sprout*, and even “resonated” with it. That is why he revised the translation ten years after it was first published in 1929.

Comparing to the original text, the heroine of Ba Jin’s novel *Arianna* is very similar to Suvarin’s wife. Both of them are young women who devoted themselves to revolutions, and both of them are punished for their passion. Even in the novel *Arianna*, Ba Jin directly introduces the original text of *The Sprout*.

“Wu, have you read Zola’s *The Sprout*?”

“*The Sprout*? Yes, I read it last year”, Wu said in surprise as he dropped his head.

“Then don’t you remember the words of Suvarin in there? ‘We should not love each other; we love and we sin!’” [6].

It is important to note that the novel *Arianna* has a prototype to trace. In the article *Arianna Warburger* published in *Dagong* (Tianjin) in 1933, Ba Jin explains that the heroine of the novel *Arianna* is Arianna Warburger; Wu is Wu Kegang; and Jin is Ba Jin. The three were close friends, living in Paris at the time, and they often corresponded with each other. Arianna Warburg was a young Polish revolutionary woman who was expelled by the French government for her revolutionary activities, and therefore planned to return to Poland. However, she was wanted in Poland, and returning to Poland would risk of being arrested. Later, Arianna Warburg became ill with a lung disease. However, Ba Jin fictionalized an ending for it. One night, Ba Jin dreamed that he had read in a French magazine that Arianna had been hanged in Warsaw [7]. Ba Jin’s fictional ending is quite implausible. No one expects their best friend to end up on the gallows. However, if this fictional ending is linked to the experience of Suvarin’s wife, the reader can understand it.

This experience of Ba Jin's life in Paris, was the starting point for the novel *Arianna*, and the reason for the resonance with the story of Suvarin and his wife in *The Sprout*. These three aspects map onto each other in a trinity. This explains the change of editions from *She* in the 1929 edition of *Freedom Monthly* to *The Story of Suvarin* in the 1939 edition of *The Great Wall of Literature and Art*. In the course of ten years, Ba Jin's heart, excited by the young female revolutionaries, gradually calmed down, thus having such a revision. The name "Anna" carries Ba Jin's memories of the past years in Paris. The title of *She* reflects Ba Jin's deep concern for the female revolutionary who died gracefully. The authors employ the method of historiography to trace down from the folds of the text to discover the deeper ideological and emotional rationale behind it. Chen Yuan's pioneering method of historiography is helpful in the treatment of literary historical materials.

4. The name of "Anna"

In Russian, Anna (Анна), from the ancient Jewish word meaning mercy (милость) [8]. This name can be traced back to the story of St. Anna St. Joachim. In this story, Anna is extremely sincere to God and quite faithful to her husband. The reunion of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate is particularly touching. It should be noted that this name is also often found in the works of Ba Jin.

It is undeniable that Ba Jin knew the religious meaning behind the Russian name "Anna". *Lina* is a novel by Ba Jin under the pseudonym of Ouyang Jingrong, which was serialized in *The Mercury* from 1934 to 1935. In the introduction of this novel, Ba Jin explains, "These are some letters written by a Polish girl to her friend ... The name of the letter writer is Lina and the name of the letter recipient is Arianna" [8]. The novel has this passage, "The red cross, the six-pointed star of St. Aleksandr Nevsky, the vermilion ribbon of St. Anna, (worn according to rank, some on the neck, some on the button, some on the hilt of the command sword), the cross of St. George of the Golden Dragon on the white ground, the octagonal gold star of St. Stanila, the cross of the two silver eagles on the red ground, (which were taken from your Polish soldiers!)" [9]. The "vermilion ribbon of St. Anna" is a good example of its religious meaning.

Just like the religious meaning behind the Russian name "Anna", the heroine with this name has the character of "Mother Earth" and carries the spirituality of "Mother Russia". This is the case with *She* and *The Story of Suvarin*. Anna, Suvarin's wife, who devoted to the revolutionary cause and committed to her husband, was hanged in Moscow. In addition, in the genealogy of Ba Jin's works, *The General* is a text that must be mentioned in relation to the name of "Anna". It is important to note that both names Anna and Anrukhiga appear in this text.

Russians are very particular about names and use them in different ways depending on the nature of communication and the occasion. Most often, husbands and wives call each other by their first names or use other terms of endearment that are customary at home [11]. In *The General*, Fedor Novikov refers to his wife as Anna in the external environment, for example, "in that room there still lives his wife Anna"; while in the internal environment of the family, especially when the two spouses communicate with each other, his wife is referred to as Anrukhiga, e.g., "Anrukhiga, you are so beautiful" [12]. Accordingly, in the external environment Anna's husband's name is Fedor Novikov, while in the internal environment his name is Fergal. Thus, it is clear that Anrukhiga and Fergal are terms of endearment. This definition of Anrukhiga also helps to understand the change of versions from *She* to *The Suvarin Story*.

In the work *The General*, Anna is the wife of Fedor Novikov, "with all the benefits of an ordinary Russian woman". Even, after her exile in Shanghai, Anna is willing to prostitute herself in order to maintain her family's livelihood. Her silent, stoic character traits reflect the country's feminized and even materialized Russian cultural traditions. In other words, Anna's humiliation has the same ideological rationale as the rape of "Mother Russia". Therefore, after hearing the story of "Mother Russia's Black Earth", Fedor Novikov was moved to say "Mother Russia, we are all her sons", and at the same time his ears echoed Anna's voice, "I want to go back. I must go back."

Another work that should not be overlooked is “With a brief biography of Liorev”. The name Anna also appears in this work. The With a Brief Biography of Liorev tells the story of Liorev’s play *The Night Before*. *The Night Before* has two main characters, namely Anna and Wasili. In the last scene, Anna, with a superhuman will, sends a signal of disaster to her beloved Wasili to die with the governor, and after knowing that he is dead, she grieves, weeps and gasps, and in a moment of out-of-body despair calling back and forth like a warrior, “Onward! Forward!” [12]. A review of the play shows that Ba Jin attached great importance to the play and did the translation work [14]. The name “Anna” is also reflected in the article *Mara*, Godet and Adam Rux. In this work, the character of “Anna” is solitary, passionate and romantic. She insists on seeking happiness in death, as her father did, and “the older of the two remaining sisters, Maria Anna, follows in her father’s footsteps” [15]. Finally, on a May night, she committed suicide by throwing herself into the Rhine. This was because she saw the light of eternity and heard the music of heaven, so she did not want to come back to earth. Also, the name Anna appears in *On the Threshold* [16].

5. Conclusion

In Ba Jin’s works, there is a series of Anna images. These Anna figures are beautiful, passionate and tough, willing to sacrifice everything for love and faith. Just as the Russian name Anna implies the religious meaning of mercy, the series of images carries the spiritual qualities of “Mother Russia”, generosity, silence, suffering and perseverance. The humiliation of Anna has the same rationale as the rape of “Mother Russia.” From *She* to *The General*, to *A Brief Biography of Loyola*, *Mara*, Godet and Adam Rux and *On the Threshold*, readers can find that the sequence of Anna’s images are constructed in Ba Jin’s works. This is a literary phenomenon that needs attention.

This article examines the translations of *She* and *The Story of Suvarin* in an attempt to clarify the pseudonym *Mara*, investigate the “historical origin” of the changes in the version, and discover the meaning of the name Anna. The anonymous text *The Story of Suvarin* is significant to the study of Ba Jin’s translation. And Chen Yuan’s method of historiography is effective in dealing with literary historical materials.

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