Li Jiye’s Translation of *Jane Eyre* as a Leftist Endeavour

**ABSTRACT**

The increased interest in the sociological approach to Translation Studies gives rise to the inauguration of a new branch called Translator Studies (Chesterman, 2009). However, such agent-centered approach may over emphasize the individual translators (Foglia, 2014, p. 26). In response to this particular shortcoming, I propose to integrate Lefevere’s concept of patronage (1992) to examine patrons’ influence over the translating agent as it plays an important role in prompting the completion of the translational product. This paper examines the Chinese Translation of *Jane Eyre* (1936) by Li Jiye as it should be perceived as a translation produced under the agentive influence from Lu Xun and the Unnamed Society with the objective to advocate leftist ideology instead of a personal linguistic endeavor by Li Jiye. The translated text as well as the relevant paratextual and extratextual materials will be examined in context with the sociopolitical and sociocultural backdrop of Republican China in order to identify the leftist imprints in the translated text, which was intended to influence the Chinese reading masses of the 1930s.

**KEY WORDS**


1. **Introduction**

The ‘social turn’ in Translation Studies refers to the incorporation of the sociological perception that translation is a socially-regulated activity prompted by social agents. While Sociology analyses “the structure of social relationships as constituted by social interactions” (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1994, p. 4), the hybrid of the two academic disciplines brings forth the sociological perspective to examine the social contexts that condition the production of translation. The sociological take on translation analysis opens up new research paths for Translation Studies as it objectifies translation as a form of knowledge that concerns the individuals and institutions as social determinants where empirical
investigations of the relevant social practices could be applicable (Inghilleri, 2005, p. 129-30). This change of research focus leads to a further broadened scope for Translation Studies as more social agents are included into the picture. Examples of such agents include editors, publishers, institutions, readers and authors who are involved in the production of translations (Tahir-Gürcaçãoğlar, 2003).

With the research spotlight under the social agents and institutions, it is the objective of this paper to identify the agents, human and nonhuman, that provide patronage (Lefevere, 1992) for the translating agent to further the production or circulation of the translational product. The case study discussed in this paper is the Chinese translation of *Jane Eyre* by Li Jiye (1904-1997) published in 1936. The 1930s were years when China was going through an era of turmoil. From the political perspective, China was facing continuous military aggression from the Japanese while it was also geographically and politically divided by the two major powers: the Communists and the Nationalists. From the literary perspective, the country was also divided into various literary flanks whose literary and ideological orientations were represented under the flags of the different literary societies or organizations.

This was a period when the Communists were making serious attempts to assert their dominance through the strategic use of literature and art. Instigated by the Communists, the League of Left-Wing Writers, known commonly as the League, was formed. The leftists endeavoured to publish and translate proletarian literature and Marxist works. It is generally stated in the majority of orthodox Chinese publications that leftists translated mostly revolutionary-themed literature and literary works from Russia during the 1930s (Ding 1955; Liu 1979). However, quantitative statistics compiled from publication catalogues reveal that this general observation is not entirely true. Leftists also translated literary works from the West, such as Britain, which were criticized as ‘capitalists’ works.¹ Li Jiye and his translation of *Jane Eyre* is one such example in which the translator was a leftist while the novel is not considered proletarian or Marxist.

¹ The bibliographical materials and catalogues consulted for this paper include “The Bibliography of Translated Titles” in *The Compendium of Modern Chinese Literature, 1927-37* [Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi 1927-37], *The Compendium of Modern Chinese Literature, 1937-49* [Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi 1937-49], the *Publication Catalogue of the Republican Era, 1911-1949. Foreign Literature* [Minguo shiqi zongshumu, 1911-1949. Waiguo wenxue], and the *Bibliography of Modern Chinese Literature* [Zhongguo xiandai wenxue zongshumu].
Taking the historical narratives of China during the 1930s as the backdrop, this paper investigates Li Jiye’s translation of *Jane Eyre*, a translational activity conducted as the result of the ideological influences from the translator’s leftist association, namely his mentor Lu Xun (1881-1936) and his literary affiliation, the Unnamed society, to further the involved agents’ leftist ideology.

2. **Theoretical framework: Lefevere’s patronage**

Patronage is “something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature” (Lefevere, 1992, p. 15). Lefevere further suggests that the power of patronage could be exerted by individuals or groups of persons or institutions such as religious organizations, political parties, social classes, publishers as well as the media including newspapers, magazines and television companies (1992, p. 15).

In this case study, the Chinese translation of *Jane Eyre* is defined as a translational product produced by the translating agent, Li Jiye, under the patronizing influence from Lu Xun (a human agent) and the Unnamed Society (a nonhuman agent). The social roles of these actors are analysed as they can be influential for the translational activities and production conducted by the translating agent. The identified agents represent exemplary elaborations on their role as intellectuals who tried to engage themselves in the literary or political conflicts of China during the 1930s. By theorizing the patronizing influence the translator had received from the various agents involved during the process of translation, such individually-angled examination can reveal the processual ideological impact that the agents had over the translator, which was then transferred to the translational product.

3. **The leftist agents**

The leftist agents discussed in this paper include two human agents and one nonhuman agent: Li Jiye, the translating agent; Lu Xun, one of the leading figures of the League; and the Unnamed Society, a short-lived literary organization of the Republican era.

3.1. **Translating agent: Li Jiye**

Born in Anhui in the year 1904, Li Jiye went to Yeji Mingqiang Primary School [*Yeji Mingqiang xiaoxue*] in 1914 and was in the same school with Wei Suyuan (1902-1932), Wei Congwu...
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(1905-1978), and Tai Jingnong (1902-1990), who later became Li’s close literary ally. Li then continued his education at Buyang No. 3 Normal School [Buyang disan shifan xuexiao] where he was beginning to encounter opportunities to read literature related to Communism. In 1921, Li decided to start the publication of The Illumination Weekly [Weiguang zhoukan] in his hometown with Wei Congwu and wrote articles attacking the Chinese feudal conventions and the traditional marriage system. In the summer of 1924, Li completed the translation of Russian writer Leonid Andreyev’s (1871-1919) To the Stars (1905) and with the help of a friend, the manuscripts were sent to Lu Xun for comments. This marked the beginning of the long-term mentorship/friendship between Li Jiye and Lu Xun.

The acquaintance with Lu Xun led to the formation of the Unnamed Society organized with the “primary mission … to publish and promote literary translations by patriotic and promising young writers” (Qi, 2012, p. 62). The period when Li Jiye was affiliated with Lu Xun and the Unnamed Society played an important role in shaping his leftist ideology and this is reflected in the extensive translation output produced during these years. However, the Society was short-lived and it was forced to close down in 1928 due to the publication of the Chinese translation of Literature and Revolution (1924) by Leon Trotsky (1879-1940). Later in 1930, he was offered a teaching job at Hebei Women’s Normal College [Hebei nuzi shifan xueyuan] where he would work until the outbreak of the Japanese war in 1937. It was during these years in Hebei that Li completed the translation of Jane Eyre.

The major reason for the inclusion of Li Jiye a leftist agent is the leftist literary and political orientations inherited from his personal association with Lu Xun. His literary contributions include well-received prose, novels and poetry as well as translations. Li Jiye was a prolific and influential writer, translator and educator. Li was generally remembered for his roles as Lu Xun’s literary protégé and as one of the founding members of the Unnamed Society.

3.2. Agentive influence: Lu Xun

The ideological patronage Lu Xun had over Li Jiye was not at all exclusive. In the late 1920s, Lu Xun had already established himself as the “towering literary figure of the generation”

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2 See “Life Chronology” in Memorial to Li Jiye [Li Jiye jinanji], p. 360-8.
3 Please refer to Li Jiye’s “Autobiography” in Memorial to Li Jiye [Li Jiye jinanji], p. 351-9.
4 See “Li Jiye’s Bibliography of Translation and Literature” in Memorial to Li Jiye [Li Jiye jinanji], p. 369-88.
and it was not an uncommon case for young writers to receive patronage, in various forms, from this venerated personage; in fact, the young writers who were “lucky enough to receive his patronage became overnight sensations” (Liu, 2003, p. 39). Rou Shi (1902-1931), Xiao Hong (1911-1942) and Xiao Jun (1907-1988) are examples of such writers who benefited from Lu Xun’s recognition and could embark on a writing career more smoothly than others, as shown by Kong Haili (1998, p. 31-51).

When Lu Xun and Li Jiye became acquainted in around 1924, it was also the time when Li Jiye was making his way into the literary world. Since then, Li had been expressing unsparingly his heartfelt gratitude to Lu Xun for the mentorship and inspiration that he had received. In the short autobiography Li wrote, he expressed his gratitude once again as he discovered Lu Xun was already reading his first draft of To the Stars, his first serious translation attempt, the very next day after Lu Xun received it (Shanghai Lu Xun Memorial Hall, 1994, p. 354). In this paper, the mentorship relationship between Lu Xun and Li Jiye is theorized from the perspective of ideological patronage, especially Li Jiye’s selection of source texts for translation.

It is important to note that around 1926 Lu Xun, the mentor himself, was going through a significant stage of ideological transition to the leftists, which was completed in 1930 when he took leadership of the League (Eber, 1985. p. 261-3). This ideological conversion of Lu Xun, which involved major intellectual changes, as noted by Leo Ou-fan Lee, was due to his acquaintance with the Marxist literary theories and his familiarity with the theories of art and literature formulated by Plekhanov (1856-1918) and Lunacharski (1875-1933) (Lee, 1976, p. 291-324). A fundamental precept of the construction and conversion of Lu Xun’s leftist ideology was another Russian writer Leonid Andreyev. Lu Xun appreciated Andreyev’s works so much that he actually undertook the task of translating two of his short stories, included in the Anthology of Foreign Fiction [Yuwai xiaoshuoji] published in 1909. A few years later he translated two more short stories by Andreyev for another anthology entitled Collected Works of Modern Translated Fiction [Xiandai xiaoshuo yicong] published in 1922. In addition to these completed translations, Lu Xun also attempted to translate another longer

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5 Li Jiye’s writings dedicated to Lu Xun are collected and compiled in In Memoriam Mr. Lu Xun [Huiyi Lu Xun Xiansheng] (1956).

Lu Xun’s inclination to Russian writers evidenced not only his literary preference, but also an ideological principle highly associated with the function of literature. Lu Xun’s conversion to the leftist was more about the confirmation and sharpening of his belief in the educational function of literature by describing the lives of the “oppressed” in his fictional creations (Eber, 1985, p. 264). This was a sense of sympathy for the “oppressed people” that Lu Xun developed in the early 1920s when he could identify China and its people with such literatures that described the sufferings and hardships of the “oppressed nations and people” (Shuang, 2009, p. 111). The origin of the term “the oppressed” can be traced to a number of special issues of the very popular *Short Story Monthly* [*Xiaoshuo yuebao*] published in the 1920s in which literary works from Russia, Poland and other ‘minority countries’ from Europe were branded with the name “literatures of the oppressed nations” (Shuang, 2009, p. 111). They were European countries “oppressed by the major powers” while literature about them was related to thematic subjects such as revolution, national emancipation, and freedom (Eber, 1977, p. 129). The concept of “literatures of the oppressed” impacted Lu Xun and his brother Zou Zuoren (1885-1967), on the way they perceived literature and its function. They then formulated one major motive to introduce such foreign literature to the Chinese audience with the purpose to enlighten the general masses with concepts such as “[n]ationalism, patriotism, heroism, love of one’s oppressed country, and unconventional and fearless men trying to bring light and freedom” (Eber, 1977, p. 130). With these as the fundamental images and definition of the “oppressed nations and people” developed in the early 1920s, the new sociopolitical and sociocultural context of China in the 1930s broadened the membership of these “oppressed nations and people” to include not only nationalities in Europe but also people who spoke Arabic, Persian, Brazilian and many other languages, who were facing imperialist oppression (Eber, 1977, p. 139). These literatures of the “oppressed nations and people” played an important role in the literary dynamics of China during the 1920s and 1930s while the central themes of such literature remained the same, i.e. the pursuit of freedom and emancipation from imperialism, national revolution, and the opposition to social injustice (Eber, 1977, p. 140). These conceptual ideas about the literature of the “oppressed nations and people” are further concretized in Lu Xun’s essay “How I Started Writing Fiction” [*Wo zenyang zuoqi*]
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In Xiaoshuo lai (1933), in which he explains that through the descriptions of the “oppressed people” or the unfortunate characters in a diseased society, he wants to expose sickness and bitterness and to arouse attention for cure (1989, vol. 4, p. 511-4). The cure is the “enlightened individuals” with evolved and improved humanism awakened by these literary works.

Lu Xun’s leftist inclination as well as his perceptions of literary works by writers of the “oppressed nations” and about the “oppressed people” as well as their functions formulated during the late 1920s and early 1930s would serve as important elements to the construction of Li Jiye’s decision to translate Jane Eyre. After Li’s first translation attempt of Leonid Andreyev’s To the Stars in 1924, Li translated more works by the same author, such as The Marseillaise (1925), Rape of the Sabine Women (1926) and The Black Maskers (1927). These translations were published in the late 1920s when the written correspondence between Lu Xun and Li Jiye was the most frequent and the mentor was offering his disciple comments on many of his translation drafts.6

3.3. Agentive influence: the Unnamed Society

Another important agent contributing to Li Jiye’s ideological orientation is the Unnamed Society and it was Lu Xun who played a contributive role in the formation and the actual operation of the Society. After Lu Xun and Li Jiye became acquainted in 1924, Lu Xun initiated the formation of the Unnamed Society a year later. Major members of the society were mostly young and budding intellectuals such as Li Jiye, Wei Suyuan, Wei Congwu, Tai Jingnong and Cao Jinghua (1897-1987). Seeing the difficulties for emerging writers to publish their works, the Society was established with the predominant goal to advance young writers’ literary careers by providing them with a new publishing platform. Between the years 1925 and 1928, for instance, the Society printed a bi-monthly literary journal titled The Unnamed [Weiming].

Since Lu Xun was the leader of the Society, the literary objectives endorsed by the members corresponded with the mentor’s perspectives on literature formulated during the late 1920s. The Society agreed that in the aspect of literary production and publication, priority should be given to the translation of literary works from Russia, Northern Europe

6 The written correspondences between Lu Xun and Li Jiye are included in vols. 11-13 of The Complete Works of Lu Xun [Lu Xun quanjji] (1989).
and the United Kingdom as well as literary works about socialism, revolution and the “oppressed people” such as women and workers (Qin, 2011, p. 185). As prescribed by Lu Xun, literature about the “oppressed people” can be used as an overture which would gradually lead to people’s revolution. The correlation between literature and revolution is explained in a speech Lu Xun delivered at the Whampoa Military Academy in 1927 as he asserts that:

> Literature should voice out the inequality, pain and people’s suffering ... when such voices become people’s roar, it is time for people to wake up and get ready to revolt. As soon as people’s roar is noted in literature, revolution is about to appear because they are already in rage. Therefore, when people’s anger can be heard in literature, it is time for revolutions to take place (1989, vol. 3, p. 419).  

This notion about the function of literature, to “voice out the inequality, pain and people’s suffering” through literature, would later become the grounding principle of the Unnamed Society and Li Jiye’s translational activities from the late 1920s until the mid-1930s (Li, 2004, vol. 2, p. 51).

The first literary work published by the Unnamed Society was Lu Xun’s “After Leaving the Ivory Tower” [Chuzou xiangyata zhi hou] (1925); he later became a frequent contributor to the Society. The Unnamed Society’s literary principles cast significant ideological influences on the members as well. A close examination of Li Jiye’s publication bibliography confirms the point that when Li Jiye was associated with the Unnamed Society, almost all of his translated works were published by the Society and most of these works were originally the work of Russian writers.  

The Unnamed Society, albeit short-lived, was a closely-knit organization and members frequently produced translations in a orchestrated effort. Examples of such joint translation projects include Poor Folk (1846) by Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) and Literature and Revolution (1924) by Leo Trotsky. Wei Congwu took the responsibility to translate Poor Folk from the English translation by Constance Garnett (1861-1946) and Lu Xun checked it against

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8 For Li Jiye’s literary contributions, see Memorial to Li Jiye [Li Jiye jinianji], p. 369-88.
its Japanese translation while Wei Suyuan compared the manuscripts with the Russian source text before it was published in 1926 (Gamsa, 2008, p. 284). Similar logistics were used for the translation of Leo Trotsky’s *Literature and Revolution*, a key text that encapsulates the essence of Trotsky’s views on literature. Lu Xun read the Japanese rendition of the source and initiated another collaborative translation project with Li Jiye and Wei Suyang using the same three languages (Gamsa, 2008, p. 284). The consequence of the publication of *Literature and Revolution* in 1928, however, was the Society being raided by Warlord Zhang Zongchang (1881-1932) and the incarceration of Li and Wei for 50-odd days (Yeh, 1990, p. 374).

Upon release from jail, Li continued to focus on the translation of literary works from Russia including a collection of short stories he entitled *The Misfortunes* (1929) and *The Humiliated and the Insulted* (1934) by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. These translated works that described the lives of the “oppressed people” can still reflect the literary principles and ideological orientations of Lu Xun and the Unnamed Society. When Wei Suyuan died at the age of thirty in 1932, the Unnamed Society had basically dissolved and Li Jiye had already taken up a teaching position in Hebei. However, the literary principles subscribed to by the Society as well as Lu Xun’s ideological influence, would still play an important role in the construction of Li Jiye’s cultural capital in the years to come. This can be evidenced by Li’s translational activities such as *Jane Eyre*, *War and Peace* (1869) and works by other Soviet writers until the 1950s. Li finished the translation of *Jane Eyre* in the early 1930s when he was teaching in Hebei. Although the novel is not a literary creation from Russia and is frequently received as a romantic novel, it portrays the uncompromising, rebellious spirit of an “oppressed” young lady who strives for freedom and independence while the epic novel *War and Peace* is one of the finest literary creations by Leo Tolstoy which depicts the stories of five Russian aristocratic families during the French invasion of Russia.9

In all, Li Jiye’s ideological orientation during the years when he was translating *Jane Eyre* was the result of the agentive influence from his mentor Lu Xun and the Unnamed Society. Such ideological imprints can be noted in Li’s translation of *Jane Eyre*, which would in turn impact readers of the translated novel.

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9 By this time, Li had already moved to Tianjin where he would spend four years to complete the translation of *War and Peace* but the book would never be published because the entire manuscript was lost in transit on its way to publication during the Sino-Japanese War (Shanghai Lu Xun Memorial Hall, 1994, p. 355).
4. **Li Jiye’s Jane Eyre: a leftist translation**

When Li Jiye finished the translation of *Jane Eyre* in 1933 he made an attempt to get it published by writing a brief proposal to Zhonghua Bookstore with the translation draft attached. The proposal was then endorsed with a simple remark “Not approved” without any reasons stipulated (Gong, 1989b, p. 124). The translation, however, was eventually published in the serialized *The Collected Works of World Literature* [Shijie wenku] of Shenghuo Bookstore [Shenghuo shudian] from August 1935 to April 1936, and was republished in book form in September 1936. The inclusion of Shenghuo Bookstore in this discussion has two implications: it provided a platform for the publication of the translational product and the publisher’s leftist affiliation was an important key to strengthen the defined leftist orientation of the involved agents. A quick review of the currently available data collected about Shenghuo Bookstore shows that it was established in 1932 by the well-known patriotic journalist Zou Taofen (1895-1944) (Reed, 2004, p. 284). The bookstore was most noted for its progressive weekly journal of the same name (Lee, 2001, p. 120). Supported by the Communists, the bookstore published criticisms of Nationalists’ policies and the intensifying Japanese aggression; both were meant to stimulate readers to action. In 1938, the Nationalists began to refuse advertisements for publications of the Shenghuo Bookstore (Coble, 2015, p. 113). The bookstore’s Shanghai branch was first closed by the Chiang Kai-shek government in 1941. This was followed by the closure of other branches in Guilin, Guiyang and Kunming. At the same time many of the bookstore staff were also arrested (Coble, 2015, p. 113). These historical facts about the Shenghuo Bookstore will be coupled with the translating agent’s ideological orientation constructed with the agentive influence from Lu Xun and Unnamed Society in order to validate the leftist imprints noted in the translation.

The original Chinese title of the translation was *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* [Jian Ai zizhuan] and later when the translation appeared in book form, it was changed to *Jane Eyre* [Jian Ai]. It is a well-received point in a number of orthodox Chinese research projects that Lu Xun is credited for personally referring Li Jiye to Zheng Zhenduo (1898-1958), who was then the chief editor of *The Collected Works of World Literature*, for the publication of *Jane Eyre*. The foundation of this argument probably originated from Li Jiye’s autobiography written in the 1980s, in which he states very clearly that it was with Lu Xun’s reference that
he finally managed to publish his first translated novel *Jane Eyre* (Shanghai Lu Xun Memorial Hall, 1994, p. 355). This particular point is mentioned again and again in various studies related to Li Jiye. An easily found example of such is Li Jiye’s obituary issued by the Xinhua News Agency in 1997, in which Li was given credit as the first Chinese translator to render Jane Eyre and it was published with Mr. Lu Xun’s referral (quoted in Gong 1989a: 118). Another example is the chronological list of Li’s major life events included in *Memorial to Li Jiye* [Li Jiye jinianji]. Under the entry of the year 1935, it reads, “*Jane Eyre* was included in *The Collected Works of World Literature* with Mr. Lu Xun’s recommendation” (Shanghai Lu Xun Memorial Hall, 1994, p. 362). In addition, Li’s gratitude for Lu Xun’s contribution to the translation of *Jane Eyre* can be interpreted from a poem written by Li Jiye on the 1st of May 1983. The poem was written to commemorate the publication of a new edition of *Jane Eyre* and the poem consists of two stanzas, each with two couplets. In the first stanza, Li wrote:

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There was once an orphan, so poor and lonely,

yet the love and determination in the orphan is beyond this world.

Fifty years have passed so swiftly,

Recollecting my days when I was still an apprentice of translation. Oh, how I miss my mentor.  
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Li’s appreciation of his mentor who inspired him when he was “still an apprentice of translation” is well reflected in this poem written in 1983. A rough calculation of “fifty years” ago would be approximately 1933, the year when Li was engaged with the translation of *Jane Eyre*, which is about “a poor orphan” who possesses the qualities of “love and determination” (Li, 2004, vol. 3, p. 124). Although the name of the very much missed mentor is not revealed in the poem, it could be interpreted that Li Jiye had Lu Xun in mind when he wrote this.  

A crucial paratextual item to explain Li Jiye’s motivation to render *Jane Eyre* into the Chinese language in early 1930 is the 39-page “Translator’s Note”.  This paratextual item includes three major themes: an extensive biography of Charlotte Brontë from her childhood years in Yorkshire to her last solitary years in London; an analysis of the author’s writing

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10 The poem is included in *The Collected works of Li Jiye* [Li Jiye wenji], vol. 3, p. 124.

11 The generally-accepted viewpoint that the publication of Li Jiye’s *Jane Eyre* is a result of Lu Xun’s personal referral to Zheng Zhenduo (1898-1958) is challenged by scholar Gong Mingde (see Gong, 1989a).

12 The “Translator’s Note” was originally written in 1979 and later revised in 1981. Reference made in this paper is the one included at the end of *Jane Eyre* republished in 2004, *Collected Works of Li Jiyie* [Li Jiyie wenji], vol. 6.
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style, and the elaborative characterization of the protagonist. These three themes can be regarded as the major reasons for Li Jiye to render the novel into the Chinese language.

A point to note here is that the very first Chinese translation of Jane Eyre actually appeared in China in 1925. It was, however, an extensively abridged rendition by Zhou Shoujuan (1895-1968). Similar to other typical translation products of the early 1920s, Zhou’s rendition of Jane Eyre was more of an adaptation and it was written in classical Chinese. Although it was the first Chinese translation, it is seldom studied. It is important to highlight that it has not mentioned in any of Li’s personal recollection that he was aware of Zhou’s version; thus the hypothetical motivation for Li Jiye to translate Jane Eyre with the intention to improve on the previous rendition cannot be established. Instead, the more likely reason for Li Jiye to translate Jane Eyre is the prestige of the novel and its canonical status in the source text culture. In the “Translator’s Note”, Li Jiye praises the novel by quoting from a number of positive literary comments published in significant journals and newspapers in the source text culture (2004, vol. 6, p. 603-5). All of these affirmative comments could be interpreted as the translator’s attempt to affirm the prestige of the novel as well as the writer’s canonical status in the source text culture. In addition, the translator specifically mentions that by the time the “Translator’s Note” was written, Jane Eyre was the novel that had the most number of reprints and publications in England (2004, vol. 6, p. 605). As can be observed from the translator’s overt efforts to authenticate the canonical status of the novel through such authoritative quotations, it is the novel’s canonicity that justifies the source text selection.

Another thematic subject of the “Translator’s Note” is the description of the female protagonist. Li describes Jane Eyre as a model of the “new woman” who is:

(…) passionate and rebellious; she dares to defy social conventions from her oppressors. As a female from an era where social and economic independence does not exist, she advocates male-female equality and independence. She has the courage to overcome obstacles encountered in life and she represents a legendary figure in her romance. Jane Eyre is a phenomenal character in English literature (2004, vol. 6, p. 619).

These highlighted descriptions about Jane Eyre – a humiliated orphan, rebellious, desirous of freedom – represent a ‘prototypical feminist’ position that contains two major ideological
elements inspired by the translator’s leftist inclination: “revolution” by “the oppressed people” and women’s liberation. First of all, Jane Eyre is an exemplary figure of “oppressed people” which was a main literary concern of Lu Xun and the Unnamed Society. Li’s repeated emphasis of Jane Eyre’s rebellious spirit and her desire for liberation is extended to the translated text. Jane Eyre’s desire to “resist” and “revolt,” two frequently-appearing words in the novel, are translated as *fankang, duikang* and *fanpan* (which literally mean resist, defy and rebel), as well as *douzheng* (which literally means struggle). These terms, frequently appear in Chinese leftist literature and intentionally used by the translator in a repetitive manner, should not be seen as merely a literal translation of “resist” and “revolt” into Chinese; instead the use of these terms was prescribed by Lu Xun’s views on literature and revolution in order to highlight the rebellious nature of the protagonist. A contrastive example used to validate this argument is another translation of *Jane Eyre* by Wu Guangjian (1867-1943), published in around the same time as Li’s version. In Wu’s translation, the two Chinese terms “resist” and “revolt” are translated into other variations that suggest a fainter hint of leftist association.

The voice of Jane Eyre, the “oppressed” female protagonist, and the repeated use of terms such as *fankang, duikang, fanpan* and *douzheng* in Li Jiye’s translation are a praxis of the functions of literature formulated by Lu Xun and adopted by the Unnamed Society. Through Li Jiye’s strategic internalization of the “oppressed” governess’ desire to “resist” and “revolt”, the female protagonist’s evolved humanism serves as an inspiration to Republican Chinese readers during the years when China was experiencing internal turbulence and Japanese aggression. Such discursive imprints in the translation, therefore, are important evidence that reflect the translating agent’s leftist inclination and the ideological influence from Lu Xun and the Unnamed Society during the years when the novel was translated.

The translator further asserts in the “Translator’s Note” that the novel is a success in the United Kingdom because the author champions “women’s liberation” through the female protagonist (2004, vol. 6, p. 606). Li discerns in the “oppressed” heroine’s rebellious spirit to “resist” and “revolt” an important quality that a “new woman” of Republican China should

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13 Published by the Commercial Press in 1935, the Chinese title of Wu’s *Jane Eyre* is *The Adventures of an Orphan Girl* [Gunu piaolingji].
14 For a detailed discussion about the leftist discourse in Li Jiye’s *Jane Eyre*, see Zhang Ping’s essay “Socio-cultural context and translators’ discursive decisions – a contrastive analysis of two translations of *Jane Eyre*” [Shehui wenhua huanjing yu yizhe de xuanci – Dui《Jian Ai》liangzhong yiben de bijiao] in Memorial to Li Jiye [Li Jiye jinianji], p. 255-64).
possess in order to achieve “women’s liberation.” Taking a different perspective from the radical leftists who saw “women’s liberation” as a de-gendered campaign where women were dressed in worker-peasant style and assigned tasks originally taken up by men and even their physical appearance was transformed to that of the male worker-peasant style (Li, 2002, p. 119), Lu Xun believed that women’s financial independence was the ultimate key to “women’s liberation”. This is reflected in his famous speech “What Happens after Nora Leaves Home?” (1923) in which he assertively argues that women can never lead an independent life without financial independence, which can only be acquired through some kind of professional skill; women who abruptly leave home like Nora in Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll’s House are faced with two scenarios: she will either fall to the ills of prostitution or commit suicide. Li Jiye was in line with his mentor in this respect as the equation of women’s financial independence with “women’s liberation” is a point highlighted in the novel, when Jane Eyre declares, “I am independent ... as well as rich: I am my own mistress” but still chooses to love Mr. Rochester who by this time is already blind (Chapter 37). This point is reiterated in the “Translator’s Note” where Li describes Jane Eyre as a character who possesses the spirit to pursue male-female equality, freedom, social and financial independence (2004, vol. 6, p. 619). The translator then borrows a notable fictional female character Lady Wang Xifeng to illustrate what financial independence could mean to a woman (2004, vol. 6, p. 620). Lady Wang is a character from Dream of the Red Chamber [Hongloumeng] (c. 1791), also called The Story of the Stone, a well-studied Chinese novel written by Cao Xueqin (1715-1763). Wang Xifeng is generally known to Chinese readers as a beautiful and elegant lady who is also intelligent, competitive and calculating. For years, she controls and manages the finances and domestic affairs of the Jia family while she makes full use of this power to capitalize on financial returns for herself. By drawing a direct comparison between Jane Eyre and Lady Wang Xifeng, the translator is trying to use these two exemplary characters to illustrate Lu Xun’s point about financial independence as a crucial key to “women’s liberation.”

In addition, Li Jiye’s translation motivation can be explained by the author’s association with socialism, an ideological position that resonates with Li’s leftist inclination. The

15 “What Happens after Nora Leaves Home?” is originally a talk Lu Xun gave at the Beijing Women’s Normal College on December 26, 1923. The English version is collected in Women in Republican China. A Sourcebook (Lan & Fan 2015, p. 176-81).
association of Brontë with socialism is not a commonly-perceived point in the study of English literature, but it is prominent in the author’s profile created by the translator. In Section Three of the “Translator’s Note”, Li states that in an article entitled “The English Middle Class” written by Karl Marx, the socialist master once placed Charlotte Brontë and Charles Dickens together in the same category (2004, vol. 6, p. 621). In the article, Marx actually includes Dickens, Thackeray, Brontë and Gaskell in one group and crowns them as “the brilliant contemporary school of British novelists” and praises their writings as “eloquent and graphic portrayals of the world that have revealed more political and social truths than all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together” (Marx, 1973, p. 64). In the “Translator’s Note”, however, Li only mentions Brontë and Dickens; Thackeray and Gaskell are dropped from the list. This, I argue, is Li’s intentional omission. The established status of Dickens in Republican China explains why Li kept him while dropping the other two. In the 1930s, many novels by Dickens had already been translated into Chinese and Dickens was generally received by most Chinese readers as a social critic whose novels “were classified as satires devoted to exposing social ills” (Hung, 1996, p. 32). The juxtaposition of Brontë and Dickens as “brilliant writers”, therefore, is Li’s strategic alignment of the two writers’ profiles as satirists who wrote to expose social ills.

5. Conclusions

This paper examines the Chinese translation of Jane Eyre by Li Jiye under the ideological influence and patronage of Lu Xun and the Unnamed Society. It is from the perspective of Lefevere’s patronage that the production of this particular translated novel is examined against the specificities of the 1920s and 1930s of Republican China. Leftist literature, from literary texts with an overt, radical leftist stance to literary creations reflecting a mild leftist inclination produced during these years would be an important foundation for the construction of a hegemonic leftist cultural and literary ideology in the interrelated strands of literature and politics which would gradually take shape later with the Yan’an Rectification Movement (1942-1944) and also the founding of the People’s Republic of China (1949). An important reason for the success of the League and also the leftists is their affiliation with Lu Xun; as explained by Wong Wang-chi:
Lu Xun’s contribution to the left in the thirties was invaluable. His name alone stood out as a great symbol. A famous writer and the ‘mentor of the youth’ [qingnian daoshi], he was able to attract around him a group of young fighters. This alone made him such an important member of the left-wing literary movement (1999, p. 7).

The ‘mentor of youth’ attracted around him a large number of young people who were trying to embark on their literary careers. Lu Xun’s role corresponds with Lefevere’s definition of a patron who helps further the production of literature and translation while Li Jiye, as Lu Xun’s protégée, adopted and applied his inherited leftist ideological orientations in the literary creations produced during the 1920s and 1930s.

Playing to the leftist tune, Li Jiye subtly embedded their leftist discursive imprints into the translations which would be used to enlighten the readers’ “rebellious spirits”. Highlighted in the Chinese translation of Jane Eyre is the female protagonist who is described as “oppressed people” with a “rebellious spirit” and this should not be taken as a mere coincidence with the growing popularity of revolution literature during the late 1920s and early 1930s, which became a noted literary trend with the growing number and influence of leftist writers (Liu, 2003, p. 63-4). Instead of packaging the novel as pure romance, the “rebellious spirit” of the female protagonist is highlighted by the translator to reflect the leftist tenet in the novel.

Existing studies about Li Jiye seldom use Jane Eyre as an example to illustrate the translator’s reflection of his leftist ideals. An easy explanation is that the novel is generally perceived as belonging to the category of romance, making it an unlikely exemplar of leftist literature favoured by the leftists during the time of publication. However, this discussion of Li Jiye’s Jane Eyre adds a new dimension to the existing studies about the leftist writers and translators because it has been evidenced through the romantic novel that the translator’s leftist ideological orientations, formed under the agentive influence of the involved agents, can still be excavated from the translation which was intended to be used “as a weapon in the battle of revolution” (Anderson, 1990, p. 54).
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Contributor’s Bio: Bibiana K. I. Kan is a lecturer at the Chinese-English Translation and Interpretation Programme of the Macao Polytechnic Institute. Her research interests include literary translation, agents and translation, as well as translation in Republican China.

E-mail address: bibianakan@ipm.edu.mo