

Integration of French Ideology and Chinese Painting Methodology: Fu Lei's Translation Theory and its Pragmatic Practices before and after the Second Sino-Japanese War

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Jin Sheng-hwa regarded Fu Lei as 'one or two of the best translators in a century'. As a participant of the May Thirtieth Movement (1925), Fu Lei played a significant role in dispersing not only French literature, but also French realist narrative consciousness in China, after his study at the University of Paris from 1928 to 1931 – around a decade after the First World War. He introduced pre-First-World-War works of Romain Rolland and Honoré de Balzac to the Chinese public before and after the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) respectively. His translation of social parody that Rolland and Balzac succeeded from Gustave Flaubert and Victor Hugo evoked cultural imagination of intellectuals. It helped construct a hypothetic community, corresponding to Western humanitarian idealism, against current political bureaucracy and social hypocrisy in China.

This paper will focus on the translation theory of Fu Lei, which identifies the ideological difference between the East and the West and emphasises the importance of spiritual similarity. I will pay particular attention to his inheritance and interdisciplinary application of traditional Chinese painting theories that Yuan Wen, Chao Yidao, Yang Shen and Li Zhi suggested, and also the historical and personal consistency about the works Fu selected for translation in specific context. I argue that Fu not only provided a theoretical framework and practices to emancipate Chinese translation work from rigid paradigm, but also delivered his personal revolutionary sense through his translated French literary pieces that implicitly encouraged intellectual engagement in anti-government activities and relevant translation activities.