

Chinese Feminisms and Adaptation-as-Translation Readings of Letter from an Unknown Woman

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**Abstract:** In her paper, "Chinese Feminisms and Adaptation-as-Translation Readings of *Letter from an Unknown Woman*," Jinhua Li investigates the complex cultural and political issues engendered by an increasingly popular phenomenon of transnational film adaptations. Through a comparative reading of Jinglei Xu's 2004 adaptation of Stefan Zweig's novella *Brief einer Unbekannten* (*Letter From an Unknown Woman*), Jinhua Li argues that the adaptation-as-translation approach, as a valuable theoretical model for feminist cultural studies of Eastern-Western dynamics, allows the film to be read not only as a "translated/adapted" literary discourse that functions on different narrative levels, but also as a trope for the reimagination of gender politics in China and the reinscription of Chinese feminism.

**Jinhua LI****Chinese Feminisms and Adaptation-as-Translation Readings of *Letter from an Unknown Woman***

The study of film adaptation benefits from the marriage of theories of film adaptation and literary translation because of the similarities shared by both frameworks. In the instance of cross-cultural film adaptations, the adaptation-as-translation reading strategy promises to yield revealing discoveries in terms of the films' gender discourse owing to their shared issue of "fidelity." Chinese literati, following the traditions of Confucian thought, are apt to make their works political allegories that enable readings of multiple diegetic levels; the adaptation-as-translation theoretical model, however, discloses advantageously film allegories through the employment of theoretical frameworks of feminist narratology to tease out their hidden messages. In this paper, I argue that the adaptation-as-translation approach, as a valuable theoretical model for feminist comparative cultural studies of East-West dynamics, allows the film *Yi Ge Mo Sheng Nv Ren de Lai Xin* (2004) (*Letter from an Unknown Woman*) to be read not only as a "translated/adapted" literary discourse that functions on different narrative levels, but also a trope for the reimagination of gender politics in China and the reinscription of Chinese feminism.

Traditionally, the term cinematic adaptation refers to the activity of using a piece of literary property as a source for a film. The term literary translation indicates the activity of translating one piece of literary property from one language to another. Interestingly, the best comment for a successful film adaptation is, "the movie is better than the book," whereas the translator's aim is to make the translation "not like a translation." However, cinematic adaptation and literary translation scholarship have gone through profound changes; the fact that both Clifford E. Landers's *Literary Translation* and Robert Stam's *Film Theory* employ the same metaphor to describe film adaptation as "translation" may not seem a mere coincidence to many scholars and critics. Indeed, one says, "novel x is translated into film y." In general, this analogy, adaptation as translation, is built upon several salient similarities between translated literary properties and adapted films: both owe to the original; both involve two "languages;" both engage particular discourses and reading approaches; both provide vessels for narratives; both suffer an identity crisis as they are permanently suspended in the limbo of "is" and "is not;" and perhaps most importantly, they both connote a rich context that involve the original, critical heritage of the original, previous translations/adaptations, and change of media (in its broader sense). Despite such a rich context, however, there is little up-to-date scholarship that uses adaptation-as-translation as a unique theoretical model in the studies of cultural gender politics.

Contrary to the common understanding that translated work and film adaptation are comparable to the original, Stam claims, "An adaptation is automatically different and original due to the change of medium" (3-4). This adds a provocative dimension to the study of film adaptation as translation. To what extent can the study of adaptation make effective use of translation theories? And what benefits could result from the interactions of translation and adaptation theories in the study of film adaptations? James Naremore argues that the comparison of adaptation to translation "tends to valorize the literary canon and essentialize the nature of cinema" (8). However, we might still find translation theories helpful in our study of film adaptation for several reasons. First, Naremore's proposition has its root in the dubious assumption that a translation is necessarily inferior to the original, and hence film adaptations, similar to literary translations, "valorize" the literary canon. Nevertheless, the fact remains that what is "valorized" is not the literary canon, per se, but the values found in the canon that are deemed worthwhile and usable for the adaptation. In other words, the original is measured against the particular needs of the medium, not vice versa. Second, the employment of a "gendered language associated with the notion of 'fidelity'" (Naremore 8) in the discussion of adaptation-as-translation model is precisely what is profitable and inspiring as it highlights such important issues as

gender politics and narrative hierarchies. In "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation," Lori Chamberlain potentializes the possibility of reading an ideologically-coded film text precisely by decoding the gendered hierarchy in the film narrative. This approach is particularly helpful in my case study of *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, a film adaptation which is both a "translation" and a transnational adaptation. In Chinese history, courtiers have been known to use stories from previous reigns and dynasties as political allegories to illustrate their criticism on the current reign. Analogously, the discourse on gender politics in this film adaptation is an allegory-in-disguise that offers its own critique on Chinese feminism. The adaptation-as-translation reading of *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, however, dismantles this dominant critique and reimagines Chinese feminist discourse.

*Letter from an Unknown Woman (Brief einer Unbekannten)* was written by Stefan Zweig in 1922. The novella tells a story of unrequited love of a woman in Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century. A man receives a letter which is written in the manner of a confession of a dead woman who has been in love with him almost all her life. The two lovers scarcely know one another although she first falls in love with him when she is thirteen. They have shared the most intimate moments together in two different times in her life. After seven years, she returns as a young woman to find him and they spend their first night together. Another ten years later, she meets him for the third time as a mature woman and mother of his son. They spend the night together for the second time, but this time he pays her -- for her "service" as a high-class prostitute. Zweig's novella was first adapted into a Hollywood feature film by Max Ophuls in 1948 with a script by Howard Koch. In 1982, the novella was translated into Chinese by Yushu Zhang at Peking University. It was subsequently adapted into a Mandarin film by Director Jinglei Xu, who won the Aitadis New Director Award at the San Sebastian International Film Festival with this film and it achieved commercial success as well: it earned four million renminbi (US\$ 500,000) during its premier weekend nationwide in China in 2004. With such critical and commercial acclaim, Xu has become one of the most promising new Chinese directors and has gained international recognition. For her artistic achievement and unique style, Xu is the only Chinese director who was introduced in a special article on *Time* magazine in June 2005, which does not hesitate to call her "a film starlet who has matured into a multitalented cinematic force," the "darling of a new generation of Chinese filmmakers" (Beech <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1074115-1,00.html>>). However, what is more significant for my study is the fact that Xu's adaptation is the first independent Mandarin film that employs a piece of Western literary property as its resource. Therefore, what Xu's film presents is both an adaptation and a translation in the literal and figurative meanings of the word; the film "translates" German into Chinese while it adapts a foreign story to the Chinese cinema. Hence, it proves to be a valuable case study of the adaptation-as-translation theoretical model.

Xu's film adaptation acknowledges its literary "genealogy" by adopting a cinematic point of view that is comparable to that of reading. Along the same line of Imelda Whelehan's observation that the camera "cannot help but afford us a sense of an omniscient perspective" (11), James Monaco has an illuminating comment on the difference of reading a novel and watching a film: "Novels are told by the author. We see and hear only what he [sic] wants us to see and hear. Films are, in a sense, told by their authors too, but we see and hear a great deal more than a director necessarily intends ... With films we have a certain amount of freedom to choose, to select one detail rather than another" (29-30). However, being offered such a profusion of close ups in Xu's film, viewers could not find too much to choose from. For much of the film, the audience feels minimal "authorial" intrusion: the camera either remains stationary or moves at an imperceptibly slow speed. As people are trained to read differently when they read novels and films, they tend to, subconsciously, read the film in the way that they are led to use in their "reading" experience of the film -- that of reading a book. So, as James Griffith, referencing Edward Branigan, observes, "the constructed relationship between 'telling and told' measures a 'distance which need not be fixed but may be manipulated throughout the text'" (55). This manipulation of audience's reception of the film text, further expanded by Branigan, is achieved by the

construction of "a series of levels each, in turn, embedded or framed by a higher authority" (176). The "series of levels" designates a narrative structure that is best illustrated by Gérard Genette's theory of narratology.

The unknown woman's letter, which functions at different levels in the film narrative, is at the same time the mimesis of "reading" the letter and the "translation" of the letter. The "letter" is at the same time an act of correspondence and the sign of a literary discourse. It is the "why" of the film, as it potentializes the entire film; the "what" of the film, since it presents its own story; and the "how" of the film, for it is actually the "content" of the film. That is, the letter becomes the cinematic representation of the letter as a literary discourse. According to Genette's definition of narrative levels, "any event a narrative recounts is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed" (228). Thus, the unknown woman's letter initiates the "the narrating instance of a first narrative" and serves as the extradiegesis of the film. The letter, which is represented in the film mostly through voice over, becomes the "narrating instance of a second narrative," i.e., the intradiegesis (Genette 229). It follows that the letter as a film text becomes the second narrative, the metadiegesis. The extradiegesis (film/letter) of the film is the direct product of the adaptation process, where the film, through its employment of images and montage, establish the letter's "narrating instances." The intradiegesis (letter-as-voice-over) designates the combined product of adaptation and translation. On the one hand, the letter, as a literary discourse, is adapted into the voice over, an audio device; and on the other hand, the letter becomes a product of translation from the original novella. Similarly, the metadiegesis (letter-as-film-text) proves to be the product of adaptation again, since it adapted what is narrated in the letter into film text.

A gendered "reading/being read" dichotomy dominates the film text. The opening of the film establishes the visual dominance of the letter through its exploitation of close-ups and extreme close-ups: among thirteen shots that constitute the first three and a half minute of the film, eleven are extreme close-ups of the letter. The camera traces the letter as it travels through the postal service when it is stamped, sorted, delivered, and finally handed to the unknown woman's lover. This cinematographic indulgence in the application of close-ups simulates the experience of reading a book, as the distance between the position of a "reader" and the book she is reading translates approximately into close up in the cinematic point of view. Significantly, the act of "reading" in Director Xu's film is charged with sexual implications through its allusions to gender politics. Books in fact become symbolic of male potency and the first attraction the man (whose name is Xu) promises. The unknown woman, Jiang, as a teenage girl, finds herself so impressed by the amount of books Xu owns that she even wanted to "stroke the smooth leather bindings" (Zweig 20), which casts a subtle foreshadowing of their erotic relationship. As Jiang recounts this in her letter, she says, "I thought about you the whole evening, although I had not seen you yet. I had only about a dozen cheap books, bound in worn cardboard. I loved them more than anything else in the world, and was continually reading and rereading them... The idea of so many books aroused a kind of unearthly veneration. ...That night, I dreamed of you for the first time" (Zweig 20-21). Apparently, Xu becomes the objectification of her love for books and she assumes the position of the reader who desires to "read and reread" him. Paradoxically, her fascination with Xu transforms her into one "book" in his collection as well as another object of his amorous conquest. Consequently, her love turns her position from a "reader" into a "book," and her experience from "reading" to "being read." The film carries on this analogy in several subtly rendered scenes. When Jiang moves back to Beijing after six years, she carefully takes the books. Her books, although still fewer in quantity, are higher in quality -- a subtle insinuation that she now has become sexually eligible and available for her lover. In another scene that precedes their first night together, she finally does something that she has always wanted to do but never has had the chance -- she strokes the smooth leather bindings of his books, one by one. In a sense, she becomes one of them, another trophy that demonstrates Xu's art of love in the epistolary form. In this pivotal moment, she leans on the book shelves and her entire body becomes almost completely submerged in the dark

shadow the book shelves produce on the left half of the frame. Bending down toward her, Xu studies her as if he is reading a rare book, and she is ready to lay bare in front of him, just like an opened "female" text.

In this familiar "reading" experience, viewers/readers encounter necessarily a subtext that derives from the richness of the context. Shots and sequences in this film appear intertextually related to its 1948 predecessor, the heavily didactic version. In one of her interviews, Director Xu addresses the earlier film's influence: "*Wu Shan Yun* (the Chinese translation of *Letter from an Unknown Woman* [1948]) was also adapted from this novel, but it is colored with a strong moral critique that is characteristic and typical of that age. However, my generation, the contemporary women, are more focused on internal feelings. My *Letter* is a pure love story that can be easily understood by my contemporaries" (*Ye Ge Mo Sheng Nv Ren de Lai Xin* <<http://ent.tom.com/1002/1631/20041025-103403.html>>). Although Director Xu distinguishes her own film from the previous Hollywood production, her film pays tribute to the 1948 film in several aspects. In the film Xu calls Jiang "Nv Wu," a direct Chinese translation of the word "sorceress," a term Stefan, the male protagonist in the 1948 film, uses to call Lisa, the female protagonist. Interestingly, this word does not ever appear in the original novella. Besides this rather obvious intertextual allusion, Director Xu also uses cinematic language to comment the 1948 production. In another shot that happens immediately after Jiang is first "seen" by Xu in the street: she sits in her small apartment at night eating a *kaki*. The duration of this shot is twenty-two seconds, which is conspicuously longer than average in this film. Thus, we have reason to believe that the director attempts to use this shot as a medium for her message. Being the only object that has a distinctive color in the frame, the *kaki* adds a warmer shade to the darker tone of the left side of the frame and, thus, reinforces the lighting contrast, a metaphor for Jiang's sexual awakening. Allegorically, the *kaki*, signifying the forbidden apple, alludes to the eroticism that is represented in a more or less "Chinese" manner in a later sequence, in which the love-making scene is customarily truncated. More significantly, it also turns into a signifier that embodies the intertextuality that goes beyond the perimeter of the literary property; it is an allusion to the moral critique offered by its artistic predecessor, the 1948 adaptation. Parallel with this subtle eroticism, a stronger heterosexual imperative is built into the romance between the male and female leads. Director Xu's definition of her adaptation, "a pure love story" carries necessarily with it a universal application. Thus, the heterosexual imperative becomes so prominent in the minimalist adaptation approach of the novel: there are virtually only two characters in the film, Man and Woman, and neither of them apparently has close friends of the opposite sex, as if the only possible (and normal) relationship between man and woman is laced in romantic love. The entire story abstracts itself almost utterly from its social milieu, and thus the male and female relationship upholds a heteronormative value system as universal.

The ending of both films might strike viewers as surprisingly similar. The 1948 ends with a medium long shot of Lisa's image as Stefan first saw her, standing shyly behind the door. Director Xu's film ends with a medium long tracking shot in Xu's first person perspective. When Xu slowly walks through doors of the quadrangle courtyard, he sees the young Jiang as he first saw her -- her face is framed within the wooden window, like a book, on a shelf. If Director Xu, as she proclaims, does not intend for her film to be a moral critique, this ending, which strikes viewers as almost a verbatim quotation of that of the 1948 adaptation, betrays an unavoidable contrast between Jiang's innocence and Xu's sophistication and, perhaps, his unfeeling cynicism. Therefore, the fact that Director Xu's *Letter from an Unknown Woman* takes place in 1948, the same year the Hollywood film is produced, hardly seems a mere coincidence. The time span this film covers includes the most turbulent years in the modern history of China: civil war, the anti-Japanese war, and World War I. The choice to set the film in 1948 nullifies Director Xu's disavowal that "the bigger issues like politics are for the older generation" (He <<http://www.xujinglei.org/letter/s01.htm>>). Understandably, if her story were set in contemporary China, her film could be labeled as an overtly obvious political allegory. In addition, it would probably arouse endless discussions of social problems such as underground prostitution and high-class escort

services. Thus: "Overtly political films, like some of Zhang's work, still have no chance of being screened in China without undergoing major cuts by the censorship board. But Xu's avoidance of political fare doesn't mean she is content to churn out the clichéd boy-meets-girl comedies that are the mainstay of Chinese cinema" (Beech <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1074115-1,00.html>>). Her unique stylistic film adaptation, especially read through adaptation-as-translation philosophical, threatens a revelation of sexual politics of her own "translation" that ventriloquizes, through the photographic metaphor of the dichotomy of reading/being read, the inequality of power dynamics of who reads and what should be read. It is precisely because of the "translatedness" of Director Xu's film that this film can be "read and reread" as a modern feminist political allegory.

In one interview, Jinglei Xu unconsciously reveals the manifestation of feminism in her film: "When I reread this novel after ten years, I realize that the man is truly pathetic: he lived his whole life in vain. The female protagonist is almost too cruel: she loved him wholeheartedly as long as she lived, but she only let the man know of her love after her death, with a letter. But he could not remember her, and neither could he find her ... This completely subverts the man's confidence in his own emotions, letting him to doubt his existence. This is the most terrible thing in the world" (He <<http://www.xujinglei.org/letter/s01.htm>>). So, just as her film character Jiang uses her letter to gain power and control in her relationship with Xu, Director Xu employs her film as an illustration of an alternative feminism, one that is articulated controversially in a sentence in the advertisement of her film: "I love you, but that is not your business." The pronounced independence, however, betrays what the film advocates, where Jiang makes sure that her love will be the "business" of Xu as long as he lives. Jiang's letter, rather than being a "love" letter, becomes evidence of her manipulation of gender politics, which is most exemplified by the inherent hegemony of the unilaterality of writing a letter: the letter absolutely forbids any response as it proclaims, "If you ever hold it in your hands, you may know that a dead woman is telling you her life story" (Zweig 12-13). In other words, the reader of the letter has no power of discourse at all. This deprivation of discourse in turn results in Xu's inability, somewhat ironically, of making decisions in his relationship with Jiang; she, in fact, exercises the masculine activity of decision making. Always able to obtain what she desires from Xu, Jiang takes active control over her relationship with him. She presents herself to him, and she withholds information from him; Jiang is the one who "writes" the book of her life, and it is she herself who decides what exists in her writing and what does not. Therefore, Jiang's choices make her a pronounced feminist, although she does not take an aggressive battle against gender hegemony. Nonetheless, she uses her apparent passivity to obtain what she wants without having to compromise her femininity designated by traditional gender roles.

In the spirit of poststructuralism, we might realize that the fact that Director Xu denied any feminist politics in her film precisely betrays her investment of feminist social critiques in the film. This realization, consequently, provides us with enlightening perspective in our reading of this film. So, seen as a translation of Zweig's novella, Xu's adaptation could also be "read" as a feminist reading of the original, which puts it in direct confrontation with the issue of fidelity. As Chamberlain notes: "The sexualization of translation appears perhaps most familiarly in the tag *les belles infidels* -- like women, the adage goes, translation should be either beautiful or faithful. ... For *les belles infidels*, fidelity is defined by an implicit contract between translation (as woman) and original (as husband, father, or author). However, the infamous 'double standard' operates here as it might have in traditional marriage: the 'unfaithful' wife/translation is publicly tried for crimes the husband/original is by law incapable of committing. This contract, in short, makes it impossible for the original to be guilty of infidelity. Such an attitude betrays real anxiety about the problem of paternity and translation; it mimics the patrilineal kinship system where paternity -- not maternity -- legitimizes an offspring" (307). Chamberlain's insight toward the patriarchal connotation behind the fidelity issue unveils a gendered hierarchy that exists on several different levels of my adaptation of her approach. On the level of the narrative structure, as I discuss previously, the intradiegesis turns into the reading narrative, whose con-

tents are represented as the film text, its own metadiegesis. As a result, the letter-as-voice-over becomes the "original" upon which the letter-as-film-text is built. So, the reading of the letter by the voice over becomes privileged as the "father" (and therefore "original") of the film text. The female translator (a particularly befitting denominator in this case is the fact that the screenplay writer and the director is the same woman Jinglei Xu) must be "faithful" to the "original" text to produce the legitimate heir. Legitimacy depends, then, upon a film text that corresponds to the contents of the voice over's reading. Interestingly, Director Xu's film is not "faithful" to the original novel at all on the extradiegetic level: it moved the story from 1900 Vienna to 1930 Beijing and altered the narrating instance which generates this story. Alterations of this kind are referred to in the literary translation practice as "adaptation," which, according to Landers, "apply a different set of methods to the self-same problem of recreating as closely as possible for the TL [target language] reader the effect experienced by the SL [source language] reader" (58). Paradoxically, therefore, Director Xu's film adaptation might be interpreted as "faithful" to the original precisely because it is not absolutely faithful to the original.

Curiously, the director herself seems apparently baffled by this "adaptation," as she contradicts herself in several interviews. In one interview, she claims that she remains "faithful to the original," but she also repeatedly emphasizes that her adaptation is a "pure love story" based upon her own reading of the novel (He <<http://www.xujinglei.org/letter/s01.htm>>). Her fidelity to the "original" is nothing more than her own gendered "reading" of the original, just like Jiang's dubious passivity in her relationship with Xu. Although Jiang never hesitates to tell Xu that the boy is his son, social values at that time do not value a child born outside of wedlock, and thus the issue of legitimacy, in translation as well as in relationship, might not be easily or simply determined by fidelity. Extending this hierarchy to the relationship between Xu and Jiang in the film, Xu appears to be the "original" -- being husband (in actuality), father, and author all at once. Jiang becomes the "faithful" translator who gives birth to his son, with whom the letter begins. Or, more precisely, it is the son's *death* that the letter begins with. The son's death is mentioned three times in the film, functioning as a transitional device that introduces the couple's three meetings in Jiang's life. The death of the son becomes the subverted mirror image of the Electra complex, the "Other" of the spiritual death of the innocent girl she once was. As Jiang's narrative voice reveals, she does not inform Xu of the existence of the boy because she fears that her son's legitimacy will be questioned—which does not appear to be an unwarranted assumption. Her letter says: "Never would you have believed that I, the nameless partner in a chance encounter, had been faithful to you, the unfaithful. You would never, without misgivings, have accepted the boy as your own. Even if, to all appearance, you had trusted my word, you would still have cherished the secret suspicion that I had seized an opportunity of fathering upon you, a man of means, the child of another lover" (Zweig 70). Thus, the son, who is permanently branded as "bastard" -- although not because of his mother's infidelity, but because of his father's promiscuity -- must not live, since only a monogamous relation can guarantee the legitimacy of the offspring as well as the purity of lineage (language). Analogously, the translator cannot pledge being "faithful" with full responsibility because "legitimacy" has less to do with motherhood (translation) as it does fatherhood ("original" in terms of language and tradition). By waiving her son's right to be legitimate and Xu's right of paternity, Jiang proactively reverses the gender hierarchy through her untraditional traditionalism.

In pre-Communist China, women were encouraged to follow feudal codes of ethics. Having a sexual relationship with a man before marriage and even surrendering herself to him out of her own will is regarded as a cardinal sin, let alone giving birth to a child before marriage. Although the film does not elaborate on the difficulty and hardship Jiang must have gone through, history tells us that it would not have been pleasant. It is not that Jiang does not know what awaits her if she chooses to raise the child alone, but she still decides to remain silent about the boy. What she does appears to be extremely untraditional, even to the point of being anti-traditional. Yet on the other hand, she embod-



ies the piety of traditional love -- she loves only one person throughout her life. Although she is forced to make a living by making her body a commodity, she never loves anyone else. This virtue, long honored by feudal codes of ethics, is *Cong Yi Er Zhong* (literally, "being faithful to one's husband unto death"). Although Xu is never legally her husband, ironically, Jiang treats him no less than such. Her apparent passivity turns into the weapon of her active struggle to assert her own femininity. Thus, Jiang, bereaved of her son, initiates the death of the translator by taking her own life in a suicidal manner (although the film never tells us explicitly how she dies, we are led to believe that she kills herself; in the 1948 adaptation, the woman is found dead in a hospital because of typhus; in the novel, the woman dies of influenza). The death of the translator -- i.e., Jiang -- turns the author of the original -- i.e., Xu -- into the translator. The letter, which secures Jiang's image as a "passive" woman who suffers a tragic death, turns out to be her best camouflage in her manipulation of Xu's masculinity and her assertion of feminism. What the receiver and reader can do with the letter, hence, is not to answer it and by doing so regaining the power of discourse, but to "translate" it into his own masculine language. In her letter, Jiang says, "Believe my words, for I ask nothing more of you" (Zweig 13). Securing her position as the "author," therefore, Jiang succeeds in her metamorphosis from the "translator" to the "author" through Xu's reading/translating of the letter. Thus, Jiang transforms into both the "text" on which Xu writes with his phallus-pen and the "text-turned-translator" who bears the legitimate offspring of the original (father, author).

The second encounter of the couple parallels the first one visually: in the same narrow alley, at the same time -- night, and in the same season of the year, winter. The camera takes almost exactly the same position -- slight to the right side, long shot, moving slowly down: the woman translator "is not simply subordinated, she is not the author's secretary. She is also the one who is loved by the author and on whose basis alone writing is possible" (Derrida 145). These two scenes, thus, become mirror images symbolizing the similarity between writing and translating and the inseparability of adaptation-as-translation. More significantly, this parallel alludes to the symbiotic existence of the translator and the author. Thus, the apparent hierarchical gender politics in the film *Letter from an Unknown Woman* is subverted by this interdependence and interchangeability of writing and translating as read through the adaptation-as-translation model.

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