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我們的身體如何變成妳的身體？

How Did Our Bodies Become Your Body? *Our Bodies Ourselves* in Taiwan

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*Our Bodies, Ourselves* (hereafter *OBOS*) “is a feminist success story.” It has sold more than four million copies worldwide and been published in a dozen different languages. It has “challenged medical dogmas about women’s bodies and sexuality, shaped health care policies, energized the reproductive rights movement, and stimulated medical research on women’s health.”<sup>1</sup> As early as 1975, the book was also translated into Chinese and published in Taiwan (《妳的身體和妳自己》, *Your Body, Yourself*, hereafter *YBYS*).<sup>2</sup>

The life of the Taiwan *YBYS* was far from a feminist success story; its politics was rather tame compared to *OBOS*, and it did not sell well whether intellectually or commercially. The medical establishment in Taiwan did not take on the potential challenges of the book, and it is doubtful that the medical community was even aware of its existence. Many of those who have been involved in women’s movements in Taiwan are aware of the book *OBOS*, but they might not have heard of the Taiwanese version.

Nevertheless, it would be naïve to assume that the success of *OBOS* could be carried across the oceans. My goal in writing this paper is to understand the historical context in which *YBYS* was produced. How can we understand *YBYS* against the background of the

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<sup>1</sup> Cover back description of Kathy Davis’s book, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Shan Ho, Xiang Da Wu, Mei Wang, Tsuntsun Shih, Rong Han, Yen Han, Chingzu Hwang, and ChundaLai trans. (侯姍、吳香達、王美、石純純、韓蓉、韓燕、黃沁珠及賴俊達), *Ni de Shenti han Ni Ziji* (*Your Body and Yourself*) (Taipei: Funu Zazi She, 1975)

history of popular health manuals for women in Taiwan? How were issues of body and sexuality, the two most distinguished issues in *OBOS*, framed in Taiwan? What was the status of the translated book in terms of medicalization of the society? To answer these questions, I will compare *YBYS* with other popular health manuals in Taiwan as well as the American *OBOS*. By doing so, we can begin to understand the particular historical conditions within which certain feminist agendas in Taiwan were laid out or eliminated.

### Historical Backgrounds

Popular health manuals in Chinese were in existence from the early twentieth century, but it was not until the mid century, partly as a result of specialization of medicine, that health manuals' focus on the "woman's problem" began to emerge. In Taiwan by the 1970s these manuals had become commonplace, with titles that included various permutations of "woman's health encyclopedia," "woman's health manual," "family health encyclopedia," "woman's hygiene manual," and "woman's medical manual." They have been an important source of knowledge for naturalizing women's social status as wives and child-bearers. *Wife Medicine*, *Marital Medicine*, *Woman's Medicine* and numerous other books published in Taiwan (in Chinese) over the last six decades have depicted marriage and reproduction as the essence of womanhood.

Some major changes in the 1970s are important for understanding the emergence of popular health manuals in Taiwan. Large scale industrialization (with U.S. aid) not only improved the economic status of the general population, but it also brought a new set of issues for women, including the care of the body and reproduction. Industrialization began in the late 1950s and accelerated by the establishment of several export processing zones in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, women's participation in the labor market began to increase in

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<sup>3</sup> Richard E. Barrett, "The Changing Status of Women in Taiwan," in *Taiwan: A newly industrialized state* (Taipei: Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University, 1989)

1968. In addition, the year 1968 witnessed the beginning of nine-year universal education that allowed more young girls to acquire education beyond elementary school. The increase of women's education level helped expand the readership for popular health manuals (as opposed to previously when it had been exclusive to the educated elites). The combination of these social and cultural factors brought about a social climate in which ideas of progress, being a modern person, and self-improvement gained much currency.

In terms of production, before the 1970s, popular health manuals had largely been translations from Western and Japanese texts.<sup>4</sup> Beginning in the 1970s, as an outgrowth of the rise in stature of Taiwan's medical profession, many local physicians, mostly men, also began to author such guides for the modern woman; physician authors often positioned these books as a tool for enlightening the "ignorant mass." By then medicalization had also become stabilized, notably in the case of childbirth.<sup>5</sup>

To be sure, the popular health manuals that had emerged since the 1970s were not self-help books in the general sense. What functions did these books serve in the larger scheme of things? Other types of manual, such as manuals for electronic products, household products, and car manuals, are meant to instruct the users/owners how to operate, maintain, and repair the products. In this way, the users helped themselves. Are health manuals a type of self-help guide that enables individual women to "repair" (or care for) their bodies? It is questionable whether health manuals written by physicians were able to empower women, especially when they were encouraged to leave the decision-making to physicians.

Indeed, popular health manuals for women were to provide knowledge for those who

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<sup>4</sup> For a history of health manuals for women in Taiwan, see Hsiu-yun Wang, "Medical Knowledge for the Wife: Popular Health Manuals in Taiwan, 1950s-2000s," *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, 76(2009): 119-177. [in Chinese]

<sup>5</sup> 吳嘉苓,〈醫療專業, 性別與國家: 台灣助產士興衰的社會學分析〉《台灣社會學研究》, (2000): 191-268.

wanted to be an appropriate modern woman: how to take care of oneself and one's body as a functional member of a modern society. This trend was part of a broader social transformation; discourses on the self—e.g., popular psychology, literary writings, existentialist philosophy, and up-lifting advice literature—were widely distributed since the late 1960s across various areas of public life, which provided a ready audience for popular health manuals. Knowledge regarding women's bodies and health became critical in the late 1950s in the climate when population control became an issue. When the government began to tackle family planning, knowledge regarding birth control, IUDs, and women's physiology was taught to women.<sup>6</sup>

Books that were authorized by the medical profession were considered essential for individual women's needs. A woman's self and her body became the same thing in the production of such medical knowledge. To be sure, these popular manuals were meant to serve as a device to save physicians time, as many of their prefaces stated; they wanted women to arrive at the doctor's office prepared with "correct" basic knowledge. Writing a kind of prescriptive literature advising women about their lives and bodies, the authors and publishers of these texts assumed more cultural authority than others who wrote prescriptive moral genres utilizing claims of the scientific basis of their knowledge.

Under these circumstances, we may see popular health manuals as one of the elements for the project of medicalization within a larger project of modernization, in the shadow of U.S.-backed anti-communism. *OBOS* was a critique of the medical establishment. As the preface put it: "we had all experienced similar feelings of frustration and anger toward specific doctors and the medical maze in general...doctors who were condescending, paternalistic, judgmental, and non-informative."<sup>7</sup> In contrast, popular health manuals spoke to their readers individually, and the reader was conceived as an isolated woman in her

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<sup>6</sup> 陳肇男、孫得雄、李棟明(2003)。

<sup>7</sup> *OBOS*, p.11.

private domain. Through this discursive strategy of the self, health manuals in Taiwan played a role in the making of a partially informed yet authority-abiding reader, echoing what Talcott Parsons said half a century ago: “The sick role is...a mechanism which ...channels deviance so that the two most dangerous potentialities, namely group formation and successful establishment of the claim of legitimacy, are avoided.”<sup>8</sup> This explains why the title *OBOS* became *YBYS*, as the latter fit well within the convention of popular health manuals in Taiwan. A similar rhetoric can be seen in the way the book cover was designed. (I will come back to this later.) When I raised the question, why the title was changed into [ni de sheng ti, ni zi ji] Your Body and Yourself, one of the translators during a phone interview seemed surprised, as if it was never an issue. “Perhaps it was hoped it would sell well, just like foreign movies, the title doesn’t have to be the same [as the original]” was his answer.<sup>9</sup>

One striking example of the differences between the original and the Taiwan version is how birth control is discussed in *OBOS* and *YBYS*. *OBOS* begins the chapter with the following “Let’s say we want to have sexual intercourse with a man and we don’t want a baby. We want to be able to enjoy sex without worrying about pregnancy.” The *YBYS* translated all the We’s into You.<sup>10</sup>

*OBOS* is a good example of the classic claim that “personal is political,” in which a collective of women challenged medical authorities and the establishment regarding issues of control over one’s own body and sexuality.<sup>11</sup> *OBOS* first appeared as a 130-page newsprint manual in 1970 (under a different title, *Women and Their Bodies*, published by the New England Free Press), and two years later it had become a 276-page book by the trade

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<sup>8</sup> Irving Kenneth Zola, “Bringing Our Bodies and Ourselves Back in: Reflections on a Past, Present, and Future ‘Medical Sociology,’” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 32(1991): 1-16.

<sup>9</sup> Phone interview with Mr. A, Taipei. 2008/11/10.

<sup>10</sup> *YBYS*, p. 69

<sup>11</sup> Davis (2007) *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. For a book review, see Gordon, “Translating Our Bodies Ourselves,” *The Nation*, May 29 2008.

publisher Simon & Schuster paperback.<sup>12</sup> The Taiwanese version was translated by a group of 8 people who were women writers, a doctor, and a professional translator. The publisher, Women's Magazine (婦女雜誌社) also published a monthly *Funu Zazi* (Women's Magazine, began in 1968 and ended in 1994). The time lag between the American version and the Taiwanese one was rather short. The publisher of *YBYS*, the Women's Magazine, did little to promote the book. The book advertisement appeared only twice in the magazine, and the book title was printed on the postal order form for a few months.

In terms of readership, *Funu Zazi* claimed to aim at young girls and housewives, but mostly likely the newly emerged middle class women were the majority. Its editors and social network consisted of a group of cultural elites in urban Taipei, and the magazine addressed women's issues in a fast changing society. The magazine took pride in its high quality printing, elegant writing, being informative on every front of modernity ( latest fashion, recipes for cooking, and driving lessons, among others). *YBYS* was well with the trajectory of *Funu Zazi*, especially in being a respectable reading for the well-educated middle class women.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, the reason why the American *OBOS* sold well was not just commercial promotion. Rather, the women's movement paved the way for readership. In 1970s Taiwan, organized women's movements were still a decade away. Despite the fact that Lu Hsiu-lien (b.1944) had initiated some activities and published some controversial books (notably *New Feminism*, 新女性主義), it did not result in substantial social movement. As Taiwan was still under marshal law (lifted in 1987), social movements were rather limited. In addition, women's movements in the West were often reported in a negative light if not outright ridiculed in the newspapers.

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<sup>12</sup> Sandra Morgen, *Into Our Own Hands: The Women's Health Movement in the U.S., 1969-1990* (Rutgers University Press, 2002); Wendy Kline, "'Please Include This in Your Book:' Readers Respond to Our Bodies Ourselves," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 79 (2005): 81-110.

<sup>13</sup> For a history of *Funu Zazi*, see 王心美(2008)

In short, seeing *YBYS* in this light, it is not surprising that *YBYS* shares little of the politics of the original *OBOS*, despite the fact that the former was a translation of the latter.

### *OBOS* vs *YBYS*

Let's begin with the book cover. A photo from the women's movement of the late 1960s adorns the book cover of *OBOS*, showing women's solidarity and the book's concern to include different voices. In contrast, the solitary young woman on *YBYS* with her long straight hair seemed to be captured in a state of isolation, the point being a romantic presentation rather than an empowered collective. The discursive strategy is consistent with the other popular health manuals in the same time period. The woman's body was not something that could be dealt with in public, and precisely because it was framed as a private issue it was an individual woman's own matter.<sup>14</sup>

### Framing *YBYS*

In addition to the one-woman cover, a short description can also be seen: "This [book] is not written by doctors or writers. It's a book written by American young girls and wives for women. It will help you become a real woman." By explicitly indicating that the book was written by young girls and wives, it revealed the social distance between *OBOS* and *YBYS*. In this regard, *YBYS* was very different from other translated popular health manuals. The latter often erased the origin of the book or sometimes covered up the fact that it was a translation. As the makers of these manuals seemed to assume that knowledge regarding women biology must be universal and therefore no need to reveal the social context of the book.

This contrast is double-edged. By framing *YBYS* as a book written by non-experts, it was then perceived as less authoritative. The distance that "American young girls and wives"

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<sup>14</sup> Hsiu-yun Wang, (2009).

created also weakened the point that *OBOS* was trying to make, namely women as a critiquing collective. At the same time, it weakened the U.S. as the source for authoritative knowledge. Taiwan had been under the influence of the U.S. in many ways since WWII, including the medical establishment. The medical community looked upon their US counterpart for standards or, even if they were not following the US closely, they tried to have American associations as the stamp of approval

## Content

In the American *OBOS*, there are 18 chapters, whereas in *YBYS*, there are only 12 chapters (See Appendix). What is missing from the latter? The most conspicuous omission is the chapters on Dykes, abortion, rape, self-defense, pregnancy, preparation for childbirth, postpartum, and exceptions to normal childbirth.

The omission of Dykes was an indication that sexuality was still limited to heterosexuality. Except its vague and somewhat tragic presence in literature, homosexuality was visible in the popular media mainly through crime reports.

Given the fact that abortion was illegal until 1984, its absence was understandable. In addition, abortion was rarely dealt with extensively in the convention of popular health manuals. Most importantly, it was not understood as an issue of “rights.”

Similarly, the way issues of rape were framed in *OBOS* was probably unthinkable for 1970s Taiwan: “Rape is an exaggerated acting out of some of our society’s conventional ideas toward women. Women are supposed to ‘belong to’ a man, so they often are considered ‘fair game’ or to be ‘asking for it,’ if they are not visibly protected by a man. Women are often viewed as passive sex objects ‘there to be violated.’”<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>15</sup> *OBOS*, p. 155.



The politics of a text depends upon the context in which it was produced. We may now return to the fact that YBYS was not a feminist success story. OBOS's politics was very much tamed by several changes made for the local Taiwanese YBYS, including changing the mode of utterance (or subject position) from "we" and "us" to the singular you, omitting some of the topics that would challenge the patriarchal establishment, and framing the book as women's little talk.

Appendix

<p>Table of Content of <i>OBOS</i></p> <p>Ch1. Our Changing Sense of Self,</p> <p>Ch 2 The Anatomy and Physiology of Sexuality and Reproduction</p> <p>Ch3. Sexuality</p> <p>Ch 4 Living With Ourselves and Others—Our Sexual Relationships</p> <p>Ch5. <b>In Amerika They Call Us Dykes</b></p> <p>Ch 6 Taking Care of Ourselves (Nutrition, Exercise and Health Habits)</p> <p>Ch 7 <b>Rape</b></p> <p>Ch 8 <b>Self-Defense</b></p> <p>Ch 9 Venereal Disease</p> <p>Ch 10. Birth Control</p> <p>Ch 11 <b>Abortion</b></p> <p>Ch 12 Considering parenthood</p> <p>Ch 13 <b>Pregnancy</b></p> <p>Ch 14 <b>Preparation for Childbirth</b></p> <p>Ch 15 <b>Postpartum-After the Baby is Born</b></p> <p>Ch 16. <b>Some Exceptions to the Normal Childbearing Experience</b></p> <p>Ch 17 Menopause</p> <p>Ch 18 Women and Health Care (American Health Care System; Choosing and Using Health and Medical Care, Coping, Organizing and Developing Alternatives)</p>	<p>Table of Content of <i>YBYS</i></p> <p>Ch 1.Changing Sense of Self</p> <p>Ch 2. The Anatomy and Physiology of Sex</p> <p>Ch 3 Complicated Sex</p> <p>Ch 4 American Women Talk About their Sex Life</p> <p>Ch 5 Food and Nutrition</p> <p>Ch6 Women’</p> <p>Ch 7 Venereal Disease</p> <p>Ch 8 Moderating birth [節育, birth control]</p> <p>Ch9 Decision on Whether to Have Children</p> <p>Ch 10 Childbirth</p> <p>Ch11 Menopause</p> <p>Ch12 Women and Keeping Healthy</p>
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摘要

台灣的婦女雜誌社於 1975 年翻譯並出版了一本婦女健康書，名為《妳的身體和妳自己》

(以下簡稱《妳的身體》)，此書的原版為美國第二波婦運中的健康運動直中名著《我們的身體·我們自己》(1970) (以下簡稱《我們的身體》)。本文以此令人費解的書名翻譯為起點，探討台灣版的《妳的身體》出現的歷史脈絡，並比較中英文版本內容上的差異。從我們的身體變成妳的身體的歷程，反映了台灣歷史中的性別身體政治，尤其是大眾醫普書的特性。此一特性，使得原本在美國脈絡中具有高度運動性的文本，在翻譯過程中，從原來的「我們」所標舉的集體性與運動性，變成以專家權威對著單獨個別的「妳」發言的權力關係，不但縮小其與同一時期其他台灣婦女醫普書的差異，亦消除了其政治性(包括對於醫療體制可能的批判)。在內容方面，諸多性與身體議題(如女同志)的內容的竄改、刪除、負面用語及去脈絡化，也反映了此一文本受到台灣脈絡馴化的程度。此外，本文亦將台灣的《妳的身體》與 Kathy Davis(2007)所探討各國版本的 *Our Bodies Ourselves* 相比較。此一文本的改頭換面及相當程度的質變，顯示台灣在醫療化逐漸確立的關鍵歷程中，未形成對醫療體制相當的制衡力量，也因為如此，日後諸多的問題如各種手術(如子宮切除)的氾濫及醫療化，僅有來自醫療經濟管束的有限力量，直到 1990 年代中期，婦女運動才開始注意到台灣醫療關係中的身體政治，並提出批判。本文使用歷史方法(包括口述史訪談)，分析的史料包括 *Our Bodies, Ourselves*、中文版《妳的身體妳自己》，及同時期台灣婦女醫普書籍。

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