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FAITHFULNESS, MANIPULATION, AND IDEOLOGY: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF CHINESE TRANSLATION TRADITION

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Abstract
Translation in China has often been done in the service of ideology. This has affected not only the choice of text, but also translation strategies, as can be seen in a number of examples where the source texts were tampered with. However, mainstream translation poetics has always been concerned with the establishment of faithfulness as the overriding criterion for all translations, as if translation should or can be insulated from the interference of socio-cultural factors and the purpose of translation. In recent decades this poetics has exerted pressure on translators to adopt conservative strategies where linguistic rather than ideological considerations are involved.

This has led to three apparent contradictions: between theory and practice of translation, between the position of translated literature in the literary polysystem and its behaviour, and between the criterion of faithfulness and the need to serve ideology; but ultimately it has served to maintain the illusion of accuracy for the effective exercise of manipulation, only to be overridden when it goes against the interests of ideology.

Introduction
For a long time mainstream translation theorists in China have concerned themselves with the search for a general criterion that can be applied to all translations in all times, and for ways to produce translations that can measure up to that criterion. The consensus they have reached is ‘faithfulness’, although differences still remain as to what the word means and how to achieve it. What seems to underlie their search is the assumption that translation could be done in a vacuum, or should be insulated from the interference of such factors as the purpose of translation and the reception of translated works in the target culture.

In reality, however, there is a deep-rooted tradition in China that literature and translation should serve ideology, and numerous instances have shown that manipulation of the source text in conformity to a certain ideology is a phenomenon common to all historical periods. Moreover, there are times when texts are extensively adapted.

Seeing that such theories have not led to a better understanding of translational phenomena, in this article I will investigate the translation tradition of China, adopting a descriptive approach. The article shows that the criterion of faithfulness is based on a conservative ideology that values loyalty, and it ventures to suggest that such a criterion has compelled translators to adopt strategies
that may not be able to meet actual needs, and, at the same time, served to main-
tain the illusion of accuracy for the effective exercise of manipulation, only to be
overridden when it goes against the interests of ideology. It is also hoped that the
findings of this study can be used to partly refine the theories in whose frame-
work it has been carried out, that is, Itamar Even-Zohar’s Polysystem theory and
Gideon Toury’s Descriptive Translation Studies.

Art for ideology’s sake

In China, there have been some traditional assumptions about the relation
between literature, morality and politics. One of these assumptions is that:

*Written Chinese embodies moral and political power.* Mastery of classical learning ... results in cultivation of one’s own self, which, in turn, results in harmony within one’s family, regulation of the kingdom, and pacification of the world. Ultimately, literary cultivation qualifies and enables one to rule, or at least to advise a ruler.

Another is that:

*A literary intellectual should take the world’s well-being as his own responsibility.* His learning gives him not only a special power but also a strict moral duty to care whether all is well in ‘the world’. (Link 1986: 82)

Perry Link further points out that “however ‘modern’ writers may be in their
language, manner, and conscious ideologies”, these assumptions “are embedded
so deeply in their culture as to be beyond question, or even beyond notice”
(1986: 82).

Thus, literature and literary studies are expected to serve ideological goals, as
reflected by the Chinese saying that “writings are for showing the way” (wen yi zai dao).

According to Perry Link, when literature for entertainment emerged in China
about a thousand years ago, “its departure from serious moral-political purposes
caused it to be denigrated - together with visiting teahouses and brothels or watching itinerant jugglers - as something that diverted people from their proper Confucian roles” (1983: 5). But this is not the whole picture, for some works that do not seem to have a ‘serious moral’ have been reread in conformity to the
dominant ideology and thereby accepted as ‘serious’ literature. A classic
example is the *Book of Songs* compiled over two thousand years ago. A sub-
stantial number of the poems in it are generally believed to be folk songs by
unknown authors, some of them are love poems if judged by their surface meaning, and a few have been considered 'obscene' by Confucian standards. Confucian scholars, however, have linked each of them to a historical person or event, and imposed a moral, turning these poems into preachings of Confucian values and eulogies to the benevolence and virtues of kings, saints and royal families. Thus the collection has been exalted to the position of a classic textbook, to be studied for the cultivation of one's moral character (see Xia 1993: 40-57; Yuan Mei 1985: 1-27, 38-47; Jin Kaicheng 1980).

In line with this *engagé* tradition, some modern Chinese writers saw their works as instruments to criticize and change society. In feudal China, the novel was primarily regarded as a genre for entertainment, and had always occupied a peripheral position in the literary polysystem, which was dominated by poetry. At the turn of the twentieth century, however, as the political activist Liang Qichao (1873-1929) put forward the concept of the "political novel" that conveys the author’s political message, the genre began to be used to enlighten the people, criticize the government and advocate revolution (Liu Dajie, 1975 III: 358-361; Liang and Shapiro 1984: 77). Literature in China has generally been increasingly politicized since the May Fourth Movement of 1919, which was a political and cultural movement against imperialism and feudalism, to World War II, culminating in Mao Zedong’s era (1949-1976), when writers had to be concerned with national politics, whether by preference or out of necessity (Chen Yugang et al. 1989: 89-92; Link 1986: 81; Liang and Shapiro 1984: 77-78).

Although a few writers reduced their output or ceased writing altogether after the founding of the People’s Republic of China under Mao, many others would come forward to speak their minds or use literary works to articulate their ideas whenever an opportunity presented itself (Cheng 1990: 86-88).

**Translation for ideology’s sake**

Translation activities in China were mainly concerned with Buddhist scriptures in the first ten centuries of the Christian era, and then with scriptures of other religions, government documents, and science and technology in later centuries (see Ma Zuyi 1984; Hung and Pollard 1998: 368-372). Large-scale translating of works of literature and social sciences began only after China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, with the purpose of building a strong nation by learning from Western sciences and culture (Chen Yugang et al. 1989: 6-7).
The first to systematically introduce Western thoughts was Yan Fu (1853-1921), who translated eleven English works on philosophy, politics, economics, law, and education from the 1890s to the 1910s, such as Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* and Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, with the aim of challenging the traditional Chinese school of thought and enlightening the academic and official elite (Ma Zuyi 1984: 259-265; Pollard 1998: 5-6).

Meanwhile, there was a sudden boom in the translation of foreign literary works. Observing that at the inception of reforms in European countries, "people of great learning and lofty ideals" often wrote novels to express their political views, and these works, having a wide readership, often "changed the public opinion of the whole country", Liang Qichao concluded in 1898 that "political novels have made the greatest contribution to political progress in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Austria, Italy and Japan". As this genre was lacking in the indigenous stock, he announced that he intended to "choose works by famous foreign writers that have a bearing on the current political situation in China and translate them one after another" (1898: 54; cf. Liang Qichao 1984; Wong 1998). A few years later, translated novels flourished and attracted a wide readership, outnumbering indigenous works for some time and influencing the production of the latter (Chen Yugang *et al.* 1989: 42; Tarumoto 1998: 38-39; Yuan Jin 1998).

From Liang Qichao on a trend was firmly set in China for translation - especially literary translation - to serve politics. A good example is provided by the most renowned literary translator of the time, Lin Shu (1852-1924), who translated about 180 works in the first quarter of the century (Ma Tailai 1981). As he did not know any foreign languages, he had to rely on his collaborators for the choice of source texts, and has been criticized for having wasted the major part of his labour on second-rate pieces (Zheng 1981: 11-12; Han 1969: 46; Ma Zuyi 1984: 309). It has been noted, however, that he translated with the intention of saving the nation, and in his prefaces often pointed out the lesson that he thought readers should draw from the story. The following observation, made by a British Sinologist, reflects the majority views of Chinese translation criticism:

The voluminous output of the great translator Lin Shu included a good deal of modish trash. But the people who read his elegant classical renderings of Rider Haggard and Conan Doyle were not in search merely of entertainment. They were in conscious pursuit of the Occident, and were constantly reminded in the prefaces to these translations of the morals they might be expected to draw from them. In
introducing Allan Quatermain Lin Shu lectures his readers on the white Man’s love of adventure and innovation; and in his preface to People of the Mist he reflects that if an Englishman would endure the sufferings and hardships that its hero underwent for the sake of a bag of rubies, the outlook for China with her vast resources of gold, silver, silk, and tea was very poor indeed. (Hawkes 1964: 81)

In the ensuing decades, literary translators, mostly leftist people, were even more purposeful in using translation as a weapon for political struggles. Lu Xun (1881-1936), who is “generally recognized as the leader of left-wing literary writers” in the decade after 1927 (Chen Fukang 1992: 288), contended that as “all literature is propaganda”, it “can naturally be used as one of the tools of revolution” (1957: 68). He also opined that every literary work had a class nature (1957a: 100), and that “proletarian literature is one of the means of ... fighting for the liberation of its own class and of all classes” (1957b: 169). But as he felt that the creative power of Chinese writers was weaker than that of foreign writers because of the backwardness of Chinese culture (1957c: 422), he compared his translation work to the deeds of Prometheus, hoping that his readers might see “fire and light” (1957b: 170).

Besides directly participating in China’s political struggle, foreign literature was intended to have another function: to help in the shaping of a ‘new literature’, which, formed after the May Fourth Movement, is characterized by the use of vernacular instead of classical Chinese, and by an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal ideology (Xiandai hanyu cidian: 1267). For this purpose it must be able to bring in not only art but also modern thoughts (Mao 1989b: 66-67). Therefore, translators were particular about the choice of works to be translated. Besides Russian/Soviet literature, ‘realistic’ and ‘naturalistic’ modern writers of other countries were also favourites. In the early 1920s, Mao Dun (1896-1981), another influential figure in left-wing literary circles, recommended to translators a list of authors and works that included Henrik Ibsen of Norway, Emile Zola of France and Bernard Shaw of Britain, in addition to Russians Gogol, Chekhov, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Gorky and Tolstoy (1989: 3-6). He based his argument on the grounds that as very few “contemporary masterpieces” had been translated into Chinese, top priority should be given to those works that were “most important” and “most urgently needed” by society - that is, for shaping the kind of new literature that he had in mind (1989a: 21-23). Rejecting the view of literature as pure art, he criticized the choice of texts by some translators, asserting that to translate the aesthetic works of Oscar Wilde
and similar texts would be "uneconomical for the achievement of the aims of the New Literature Movement" because Wilde's aestheticism was against the "modern spirit" (1989b: 68). So he suggested that Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* should have been replaced by William Vaughan Moody's *The Great Divide* because the latter could contribute to "our study of the issues of marriage and chastity - the issue of women's independence" (1989a: 23).

Echoing Mao Dun's views, Zheng Zhenduo (1898-1958) advocated "literature of blood and tears" (1921), and he appealed, "Oh, translators! Please open your eyes and take a look at the work and at present-day China before you translate" (1921a).

Some translated works in this period took on different roles from those in their source cultures. A typical example is Oscar Wilde. Although his aestheticism was not appreciated by some, he was nevertheless regarded by Chen Duxiu (1880-1942), who later became the founding father of the Chinese Communist Party, as a serious, progressive writer on a par with Victor Hugo, Emile Zola and Charles Dickens (1917: 566). In the same journal which he edited and where his article was published, a translation of *Lady Windermere's Fan* was presented as "the greatest dramatic masterpiece of Oscar Wilde" (Tao 1918: 655).

In 1924, an adaptation of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, translated and directed by Hong Shen (1925), became the first foreign play to be successfully staged, and it laid the foundation for the development of writing, directing and performing of modern drama in China (Xu 1981: 38-39). In the ensuing decades the play was staged numerous times, made into films and adapted into a Shanghai opera and a Beijing opera.

What Chinese rewriters - translators, historiographers, anthologizers, critics, editors, etc. (see Lefevere 1992: 9) - and audiences appreciated most in *Lady Windermere's Fan* seems to be Wilde's treatment of social and family problems rather than his wit. As the liberation of women was one of the key issues in the May Fourth Movement, a famous translator Ge Baoquan remarked, "the social and family problems raised by Oscar Wilde ... were bound to attract the attention of various sectors of society and the reading public" (1983: 11). In contrast, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which has been generally regarded in Britain as Wilde's masterpiece (*The Oxford Companion to English Literature*: 1067), attracted little attention in China until the 1980s.

Thus one can see how radical leftist 'preliminary norms' governing the choice of texts to be translated (see Toury 1995: 58) can sometimes be: Oscar Wilde's
works were translated mainly to serve ideological goals, and yet they were regarded as not effective enough.

After the founding of the People’s Republic, literary translation was “under the direct leadership of the Party” “to serve the people and to serve socialist construction”, as some translation historians put it (Chen Yugang et al. 1989: 345, 351). In the relatively relaxed atmosphere of the 1980s, a large number of works began to be translated mainly for their entertainment or artistic value, but the engaged tradition continued as reflected in the publication of some politically dangerous works, such as George Orwell’s 1984 and Animal Farm, and Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World.

Ideological manipulation in translation

Given the fact that translation has often been done in the service or under the constraints of some ideology, it comes as no surprise that texts were often tampered with deliberately or unintentionally, not only when their content was in conflict with the ideology to be served, but sometimes also when it was not deemed to be good enough for the purpose.

When the translation of Buddhist scriptures began in about the second century, most translators used a literal approach, but in their translation they were influenced by Taoism and Confucianism, the mainstream ideologies of the time. ¹ Xuan Zang (600-664), the best-known translator of Buddhist scriptures in China, was acclaimed for faithfulness and meticulousness (Chen Fukang 1992: 38-44; Ma Zuyi 1984: 60-61), and yet he was unable to ward off entirely the influence of Confucian thoughts. ² Besides, he ‘melted away’ the argument of the source texts and even changed the texts in order to promote the views of his own sect, according to a critic (see Ma Zuyi 1984: 58).

Yan Fu was also an ideological manipulator. He dropped the second part of the title of Thomas H. Huxley’s Evolution and Ethics, translating it as ‘On Evolution’ (Tian yan lun), in order to issue a clear warning to the weak Chinese nation that they were in danger of extinction (Wang Kefei 1992: 10). It is perhaps also for this purpose that he rendered the following passage much more dramatic than the source text (Wang Zuoliang 1982: 24):

EXAMPLE 1

One year after another, an average population, the floating balance of the unceasing struggle for existence among the indigenous plants, maintained itself. (Huxley 1911: 2)
[Back-translation: Within a couple of acres the war rages on. The strong die later and the weak perish first. Year after year there are survivors.]

He also changed the first person narrative into the third person narrative (that is, changing the authorial "I" into "Huxley") to conform with the Chinese convention of historical presentation, and perhaps also in order to assume the role of writer rather than translator for the convenience of adding comments and explanations, and of naturalizing culture-specific items (cf. Wang Kefei 1992: 7).

Putting emphasis on elegance of language in his translations, he chose to use the lexis and syntax popular before the Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) period rather than Modern Chinese (see Yan 1933: 2). This decision was motivated by ideological considerations rather than just a personal stylistic preference. In answer to his critics, Yan stated that his translations were meant to serve only those readers who had been well-read in Chinese classics, and that if other readers were not able to comprehend them, it was their fault rather than the translator’s (1984: 141).

A number of critics have suggested therefore that all these strategies were employed by Yan Fu with the intention of sugar-coating his medicine to make it palatable to his target readers - members of the ruling class, who worshipped classical Chinese, clung to traditional beliefs, and had a xenophobic ignorance of Western culture (Wang Zuoliang 1982; Han 1969:12-18; Wang Kefei 1992).

Besides trying to arouse readers' patriotism in his translator's prefaces, Lin Shu resorted to large-scale abridgement to enhance readability, conformed systematically with the stylistic norms of Classical Chinese so as to produce texts acceptable as literary in the target culture (Ma Zuyi 1984: 306-309; Qian 1981), and sometimes changed the text to give it more relevance to the Chinese situation. As Ma Zuyi observes (1984: 309), when translating Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, Lin rewrote the speech “a quien Dios maldiga, y a todos cuantos caballeros andantes han nacido en el mundo” (Cervantes n.d. Part I: Chapter XXXI: 332) as “by law such knights-errant should be executed en masse, without leaving a single one to harm society”, and then added a note saying that “so should our revolutionaries” (Lin Shu and Chen Jialin 1933: II: 169).
An even more overt ideological manipulator around this time was Su Manshu (1884-1918). He invented a character in his translation of Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* and used this character as a mouthpiece for his own comments on Chinese affairs. Some of these comments were quite shocking by current standards, such as: “The slavish teachings of that Confucius of China are revered as virgin gold and solid rock only by the miserable, wretched Chinese. Surely we, noble citizens of France, need not listen to such shit!” (1991: 696)

Yan, Lin and Su translated at the turn of the century, when free translation and adaptation were in vogue (Pollard 1998: 11-13). After 1949, when large-scale adaptation was rarely done, and, broadly speaking, translators strove for adequacy as general matters were concerned, manipulation in the ideology of the source text did not disappear but just assumed a subtler form.

In the 1950s and 1960s, translators of foreign literature were required to “analyse the work from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism and sterilize it for the reader” (see Jin Mei 1993: 319-321). While emphasizing the utmost importance of faithfulness, an “influential” (Chen Fukang 1992: 417) textbook on translation published in the 1950s nevertheless instructs:

> There are, however, exceptional cases, where absurdities or mistakes from the socialist point of view, if any, in the original text may be corrected in the translation work, if it is to be published for the readers in general ... These alterations or corrections are necessary in making the translation healthful to the reader in New China. (Lu Dianyang 1957: 1, 14)

Such ideological control has loosened up since the late 1970s, but the dilemma it has created for literary translators still exists, as reflected in a lecture given in 1989 by an editor of translated literature who wishes to remain anonymous. While arguing that “faithfulness, including the integrity of the translation, is indeed the target of a true translator”, the editor gives translators-to-be the advice that “any parts of a work that are in serious conflict with the ‘conditions’ of our country must be diluted or deleted; otherwise it will be difficult for the translation to be published, and it will be banned even if it is published” (Anonymous 1989: 10).

A Chinese translation of Graham Greene’s *The Human Factor* (1978) is a product of this dilemma. The following are just two examples of how anti-communist sentiments are diluted:
EXAMPLE 2

Most of the Communists I knew - they pushed, they didn't draw. (Greene 1978: 106)

Wo suo renshi de daduoshu gongchandangren dou shi yi ben zhengren junzi de yangzi, er bu shi zhao ren xiai. (Shang and Zhang 1981: 132)
[Back-translation: Most of the Communists I knew looked like persons of strict morals and did not make themselves loveable.]

EXAMPLE 3

He was a genuine Communist. He survived Stalin like Roman Catholics survived the Borgias. He made me think better of the Party. (Greene 1978: 106)

Ta shi ge zhenzhengde gongchandangren. Ta shi Sidalin chongxin bo de jingyang, jiu xiang Luoma tianzhujiaotu shi Luoma jiaohuang Alshanda Liuji de zinu Bojiya jusu yiyen. Ta shi wo dui gongchandang you le haogan. (Shang and Zhang 1981: 132)
[Back-translation: He was a genuine Communist. He enabled Stalin to recommend reverence like Roman Catholics resuscitated the Borgias, sons and daughters of Pope Alexander VI. He made me entertain good feelings towards the Communist Party.]

Another interesting case for the study of manipulation is provided by two Chinese versions of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, translated by Wang Keyi (1956) and Sun Zhili (1990). The following are some of Elizabeth's speeches when Darcy proposes to her in Chapter Thirty-four:

EXAMPLE 4

I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry. (Austen 1972: 224)

Wo hai meiyou renshi ni yi ge yue jiujuede xiang ni zheyang yi ge ren, napa tianxia nanren dou si guang le, wo ye bu yuanyi jia gei ni. (Wang 1956: 227)
[Back-translation: I had not known you a month before I felt that I would not marry such a person like you even when all the men in the world had died.]

Wo renshi ni hai bu dao yi ge yue de shihou, jiu juede napa wo yi bei zi shao bu dao nanren, ye xiuxiang rang wo jia gei ni. (Sun 1990: 182)
[Back-translation: I had not known you a month before I felt that (you) need not imagine it was possible for me to marry you even if I could not find a man in my whole life.]

EXAMPLE 5

I have every reason in the world to think ill of you. No motive can excuse the unjust and ungenerous part you acted there. (Austen 1972: 222)
Wo you zugoude liyou dui ni huaizhe egan. Ni duidai najian shi wu qing wu yi, bulun ni shi chu yu shenme dongji. dou jiao ren wu ke yuanliang. (Wang 1956: 224)
[Back-translation: I have enough reason to entertain ill feelings against you. You had absolutely no heart and no sense of justice in that matter. You are unforgivable whatever be your motive.]

Wo you chongfende liyou bishi ni. Ni zai na jian shi shang banyan le hen bu zhengdang, hen bu guangcaide juese, buguan ni dongji ruhe. dou shi wu ke kuanrong de. (Sun 1990: 180)
[Back-translation: I have ample reason to hold you in contempt. You played a very dishonest and dishonourable part in that matter. What you did is uncondonable whatever be your motive.]

EXAMPLE 6
Under what misrepresentation, can you here impose upon others? (Austen 1972: 223)

Ni you jiang zenyang lai diandao shifei, qi shi dao ming? (Wang 1956: 225)
[Back-translation: How are you going to turn right into wrong, and deceive the world and win the name of an upright gentleman?]

Ni you jiang ruhe diandao heibai, qipian shiren? (Sun 1990: 180)
[Back-translation: How are you going to turn black into white, and deceive the people of the world?]

Sun takes exception to Wang’s translation of Example 4. Arguing that a well-bred lady like Elizabeth should not have used such vulgar language as “even when all the men in the world had died”, he attributes the fault to an emphasis on artistry at the expense of scientificity (1993: 5).

There may be some truth in Sun’s criticism, but it seems that he has not exactly touched the heart of the matter. Conforming with the dominant ideology in China, Wang regards Elizabeth as spokeswoman for the oppressed. He asserts in the preface to his translation (1956: 10):

Elizabeth’s challenge to Darcy represents in fact a strong protest by the women of the times against a series of phenomena of social corruption such as the marriage system and the obsession with rank, and it also represents the women’s cry for independence as a person and for equal rights!

Given this interpretation of Elizabeth’s role, it is only logical that he would tone up her accusations of Darcy the oppressor to make her more like the personification of justice.
It is revealing that although Sun has avoided Wang’s 'mistake' in Example 4, his Elizabeth is, more or less, as fierce and fiery as Wang's in Examples 5 and 6. This illustrates how even honest, 'faithful' translators can be influenced by the dominant ideology without themselves knowing it (Lefevere 1992: 13).

Conservatism in theoretical discourse

Although 'spirited' translators (see Lefevere 1992: 50) have had their moments, and ideological manipulation has been common in translation, conservative thinking has prevailed in theoretical discourse in China, especially in recent decades.

As mentioned earlier, Taoist terms were borrowed to 'translate' Buddhist concepts at the very beginning, but after the religion had carved a niche in Chinese culture, translators in the fourth century began to make great efforts to create new terms specially for such concepts (Ma Zuyi 1984: 35-36). In the seventh century, when Buddhism had become one of the dominant ideologies in China, adequacy was emphasized more than ever before. The greatest Buddhist translator Xuan Zang, although rather flexible where linguistic considerations were involved, resorted to transliteration in five types of situations where he thought translation was impossible or undesirable - when the meaning of a word was mystical, when a word contained multiple meanings, when an item was lacking in Chinese culture, when there was an established transliteration, and when the solemnity of tone was deemed to be more important than clarity for evangelistic purposes (Luo 1984: 589-590; Ma Zuyi 1984: 58-61; Chen Fukang 1992: 42-43). As a result of this principle of the "Five Untranslatables" (wu bu fan), the degree of adequacy was increased, and so was the burden on the receptor. Similarly, pioneers in the translating of Western literature and social sciences, such as Yan Fu and Lin Shu, systematically adapted the source texts to a readership with little knowledge of the West, but their successors generally put more emphasis on adequacy.

Thus it can be seen that in translation practice the emphasis is on acceptability when something totally unfamiliar to the recipient culture, whether it is a religion, a philosophy, or a literature, is first introduced, and then it will gradually move towards adequacy as it gains in familiarity (cf. Even-Zohar 1990: 51).

It seems, however, that the conservative side nearly always wins in the battlefield of theorization. Zhi Qian, one of the earliest Buddhist translators,
strove for a high degree of acceptability in his revision of existing translations, firstly by replacing transliterations with ‘semantic translations’ (that is, renderings which are meaningful in the target language), not only where Buddhist concepts were concerned, but also when personal names were involved, and secondly by the achievement of elegance in the language used (Ren 1981 i: 171-172). According to a historian of Chinese Buddhism, although Zhi’s naturalization was inevitably done at the expense of ‘faithfulness’, his “translation style” remained influential for some time, and his translations made a great contribution to the popularization of Buddhism in China; nevertheless, his practice incurred severe criticism from hermeneuticists, and his translation of a particular scripture triggered off a debate in about A. D. 224 on the question of simplicity (zhì) versus literariness (wen) or literalism versus liberalism in translation, the first of its kind in recorded Chinese history. In the event, the literariness school did not even have the chance to fully argue their case before they were defeated, but it was they who produced the final version of the translation (Ren 1981 i: 172-175; Chen Fukang 1992: 14-17).

This debate seems to be symbolic of the whole history of translation theory in China. However bold they may be in practice, very few ‘spirited’ translators have ever admitted what they have actually done to the source text, let alone flaunted their strategies. On the contrary, in theoretical discussions they sometimes have to conform to the orthodoxy, and to be defensive and even apologetic about their translations. In the “Notes on the Translation” of his On Evolution, Yan Fu laid down “faithfulness” (xīn), “expressiveness” (da) and “elegance” (yi) as the three criteria of translation, and explained at some length why the last two were necessary for the fulfillment of the first, but he offered no justification for faithfulness itself as a criterion as if it was an axiomatic truth. While claiming that he had not departed from the meaning of the source text, he confessed that he had not adhered to its words and structures, and for this reason the work was marked “ideas transmitted” (dazhi) rather than “translated” (biyi) by so and so. He even stated that his way of making expansions was “not the proper way [to do translation] indeed”, and warned other translators not to follow his example (1933: 1).

Yan’s translation strategies were severely criticized by some translation theorists in the first half of the century. One commented that Huxley would have sued Yan if he had learned what Yan had done to his work because Yan had sacrificed the author in pursuit of his own fame (Fu 1984:60), and another
described Yan's *On Evolution* as an extreme case of "wild translation" (*huyi*) (Lin Yutang 1984: 420).

Recent critics tend to treat Yan more fairly by contextualizing his translations. They generally agree that Yan translated with a laudable intention and that his method was effective in achieving his goals, but some still quote Yan's words "not the proper way indeed" to criticize his method (Han 1969: 14; Wang Kefei 1992: 6-7, 10).

However, Yan's theory, that is, his three criteria, has met a different fate. Soon after its publication, it was revered as the only guide for translators and the only yardstick for translation critics (see Luo 1984: 593). Decades passed before it was seriously challenged. The necessity of the requirements of expressiveness and elegance has been queried from the 1940s onwards (such as Zhu 1984: 448-449; Zhao Yuanren 1984: 726), and there have been attempts to reinterpret or modify the three criteria. But, as Luo Xinzhang observes, they have not been successfully refuted, and none of those who have probed into the question of translation criteria, Yan's exponents and critics alike, has ever gone beyond their shadow (1984: 595-596).

Amidst all this obsession with the idea of faithfulness there was a dissenting voice in the 1930s. Zhao Jingshen argued that the order of priority of the three criteria should be "expressiveness, faithfulness and elegance" because an accurate but unsmooth translation would be worse than an inaccurate one if one is to have the reader's interests in mind (1931: 13-14). This view was severely condemned by two left-wing scholars. Qu Qiubai (1899-1935) called it obscurantism and scholar-tyranny that aimed at a monopoly of knowledge and labelled Zhao "an enemy of Proletarian Literature" (1984: 267-268), and Lu Xun picked at Zhao's own translations with a sarcastic tone (1957c: 270-272; 1957d: 273-275).

In opposition to Zhao's emphasis on smoothness, Lu advocated "faithfulness rather than smoothness" for translations that aimed at educated readers, and the use of translationese as a vehicle to import new ways of expression so as to cure the "impreciseness" of the Chinese language (1984: 275-276). In answer to his critics, he defended "rigid translation" (*yingyi*) as an expediency when there were not many good translators around (1957e: 423).

Lu's views have had a great influence on leftist discourse on translation. In 1956 Mao Zedong himself stated his support for Lu: "Lu Xun was for naturalization, but he also advocated rigid translation. I am in favour of rigid
translation as theoretical works are concerned; it has an advantage: accuracy.” (Chen Fukang 1992: 383) All the four anthologies on translation theory published in Mainland China and Hong Kong that cover the pre-1949 period (Liu Ching-chih 1981; Luo 1984a; Translator's Notes 1984; China Translation and Publishing Corporation 1985) have included the articles by Qu and Lu, but Zhao's is nowhere to be seen except in a five-line footnote in one of them (Luo 1984a: 267), and most of the writings that deal with the debate take Lu's side - at least on the surface (such as Huang 1980; Jin Di 1989: 31, 107; Chen Fukang 1992: 291-301).

This does not mean, however, that leftist translation poetics is uniform or has remained unchanged after Lu. On the one hand, there have been attempts to turn translation into a science that aims at the standardization of translation products; for example, Lu Dianyang's textbook implies that the differences among translations done by different translators in China are only the result of imperfection of technique, and claims that "this is not the case with the trained translators in the Soviet Union, where the same article is generally translated almost in the same way, with slight variation in minor points" (1957:15). On the other, some of the writings mentioned above that avowedly take Lu's side are actually attempts to modify Lu's extreme stand, with the argument that the union of accuracy and smoothness is not only desirable, but also possible and even necessary, for without smoothness accuracy cannot be said to have been achieved (Huang 1980; Jin Di 1989: 107-111).

It can be said nevertheless that while Lu Xun advocated adequacy at the expense of acceptability, post-1949 discourse on translation seems to have paid more attention to acceptability, or rather, have put equal emphasis on the two poles at the same time. But in a sense faithfulness to the original has always been the overriding criterion from Lu Xun to the present day, only that the concept of faithfulness has been enlarged to include smoothness, and there has been very few bold enough to speak against the primacy of the original like Zhao Jingshen did.

The position and behaviour of translated literature

Itamar Even-Zohar hypothesizes a link between adequacy-oriented translational norms and a central position of translated literature in the literary poly-system, but an examination of the situation in China seems to show that this is not always the case.
Viewed from a Polysystem theory perspective, the Chinese literary polysystem is an old and established one, and is consequently independent and self-sufficient most of the time, developing within its own spheres. It has become a central literature in the macro-polysystem of the region, interfering rather than interfered with, and therefore has been in no need for translated literature for centuries.

But crises set in twice in the modern history of China. The first was brought about by China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese war towards the end of the nineteenth century. As a strong desire was produced to modernize the nation culturally, technologically and economically, items in the old indigenous literary stock were no longer deemed acceptable by the progressive intelligentsia, and a literary vacuum occurred, generating an urgent need for foreign models. As a result, translated novels doubled indigenous ones in quantity, and exerted an influence on the latter (Chen Yugang et al. 1989: 42). It can be said that in this period translated literature occupied a central position in the Chinese literary polysystem.

Translated literature began to be gradually pushed to a peripheral position after 1949, and out of the polysystem completely during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Then another crisis took place after the downfall of the Gang of Four in 1976 as the country was opening up to the outside world and revolutionary literature of the past decades was rejected by the disillusioned, creating an opportunity for the comeback of translated literature. But as the vacuum this time was rather quickly filled by a large variety of home-made products, translated literature did not move into the centre; instead, it only managed to occupy a relatively important position in the first half of the 1980s, and was pushed outward again in the second half, when the literary polysystem itself was in turn pushed to the periphery of the cultural (macro-)polysystem of which it constitutes a part.

The prediction made by polysystem theory about the behaviour of translated literature, however, seems to have only a limited applicability to the Chinese situation. According to Even-Zohar, when translated literature assumes a central position, translators tend to be adequacy-oriented, and when translated literature occupies a peripheral position, they tend to be acceptability-oriented (1990: 50-51). This hypothesis works nicely with regard to the history of religious translation in China. After much research, Nakamura Hajime refutes the general assumption that ‘after Buddhism was introduced to China, it adapted itself to the
Chinese way of thinking only after much time had passed," and observes that the influence of Confucian ethics and Taoism on the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures was heavy 'even' in early periods and was 'largely absent' later (1957: 156, 170). While his findings may be a revelation to some, they only prove what the hypothesis sets out to explain and predict.

However, the hypothesis seems to be unable to account for the whole history of literary translation. It is true that at the inception of the crisis at the turn of the century, when translated literature was just leaving the periphery, pioneering translators such as Yan Fu and Lin Shu resorted to systematic adaptations of the source texts in conformity to home conventions so as to achieve a high degree of acceptability, and later translators such as Lu Xun usually put more emphasis on adequacy as translated literature had established itself in the centre of the poly-system. Nevertheless, it seems that it is the translations of Yan and Lin that have produced the greatest long-term impact on the Chinese literary and cultural (macro-)poly-system, and have become canonized, if any translated works are canonized at all, in the sense that they are "preserved by the community to become part of its historical heritage" (Even-Zohar 1990: 15), whereas, as a result of Lu Xun's translation method, "nobody bothers to read his translations any more, although his own writing is widely read everywhere and all the time" (Gao 1989: 5).

However, Lu Xun's discourse on translation seems to be still exerting an influence on the thinking of theorists and practitioners alike in the People's Republic, and although the prevalent translational norms since 1949 have moved away from the adequacy pole, they have never come near the acceptability pole but seem to have settled somewhere in between - with minor oscillations and some individual variations, of course. This is evidenced by the linguistically and culturally exotic flavour that can be found in so many translations and by the scarcity of conscious attempts that result in, say, "jokes added in compensation for jokes lost", as Douglas Parker has done to his English translation of Aristophanes (see Lefevere 1992: 51). Meanwhile, the position occupied by translated literature has been shifting to and fro between the periphery and the centre.
Concluding remarks: three apparent contradictions

In the above review of the translation tradition in China, three apparent contradictions may be noticed: between theory and practice of translation, between the position and behaviour of translated literature, and between the overriding criterion of faithfulness and the need for translation to serve ideology.

The contradiction between theory and practice can be seen in the first debate on translation criteria in the second century, where the literariness or liberalism school who produced the final version of the translation was defeated by the simplicity or literalism school, and in Yan Fu, who resorted to systematic adaptation in his practice but emphasized faithfulness in his theorization. A possible reason for this contradiction is that while sometimes some translators see the need to do otherwise, theoretical discussions have always been influenced by the concept of loyalty, which has always been very much valued in the traditional Chinese society - to the emperor, to the supreme leader and the ruling party, and to one's parents and husband or wife.

This gap between theory and practice also exists in other parts of the world. But somewhat unique to China is that the gap has been made narrower because the translational norms postulated by theoreticians, being closely linked to the dominant ideology, seem to have exerted pressure on practitioners, compelling them to adopt conservative strategies that may not be able to meet actual needs.

In this respect one should bear in mind that the less democratic a culture is, the more influential are norm-setting activities, including prescriptive translation theories. And in the People's Republic of China the type of prescriptive theories that promote 'faithfulness' has been made more so by the advocacy of Lu Xun and the support of Mao Zedong. Because of his status as "a great literary scholar, thinker and revolutionary" (Ci hai: 2016), Lu's translation theory, which emerged at a time when translated literature occupied a central position, seems to have maintained an authoritative status independent of the changes in the position of translated literature. There has hardly been any open challenge to his views on translation, and theorists seem to regard the debate of the 1930s on the issue of faithfulness versus smoothness as closed - that no more needs to be said about it - on the grounds that "the principle of 'smoothness rather than faithfulness' has long since been in bad odour as the result of the criticism by Mr Lu Xun" (Jin Di 1989: 31).

This has led to the second contradiction, which is between the position and behaviour of translated literature. When translated literature occupies a peri-
pheral position, it is only logical to expect the translator to conform to home conventions so as to cater for the taste of the reading public. It is on this logic that Even-Zohar's hypothesis about the behaviour of translated literature is based. But it seems as though the logic of real life is not always perfect, as can be seen sometimes in the high price paid for the stubborn pursuit of an ideal without regard to reality. In the Chinese case that ideal is faithfulness, or loyalty - an ideal that is "inspired by a conservative ideology" (Lefevere 1992: 51), and the price paid since the late 1980s is the loss of readers, or at least the non-attempt to win back a portion of the lost readers.

As to the contradiction between the overriding criterion of faithfulness and the need for translation to serve ideology, it turns out that the former is not always overriding after all. As André Lefevere points out, "if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological ... nature, the latter tend to win out" (Lefevere 1992: 31). But seldom has anyone admitted in writing that this is the case or even that there is any conflict at all. While source texts are being 'sterilized', translation theorists go on emphasizing faithfulness as a moral principle, as the responsibility of the translator to both the original and the reader (such as Jin Di 1989: 107). Some of these statements may have been made in good faith, but the illusion of faithfulness that they have helped to maintain is just as well from the standpoint of the patron, for manipulation is effective only when it is done without other people knowing it.

Ultimately, the translation tradition of China is characterized by the supreme position of ideology. It has created a conservative translational poetics that prioritizes faithfulness, forcing translators to comply, sometimes contrary to actual needs, but its creation is not to go against its own interests.

The Chinese scene shows that translational norms are not determined by the position of translated literature alone. A more important factor seems to be the degree of liberality in the whole culture, or in the particular (school of) translation practitioners and theorists.

In other words, translational norms may be heavily influenced by norms originating outside the literary polysystem, especially ideological norms. Therefore, Even-Zohar's hypothesis in relation to the determination of translational norms must be revised and augmented to account for extraliterary norms operating in the culture as a whole (Gentzler 1993: 120).
Notes
1. Ma Zuyi finds that Taoist terms and concepts have been borrowed to 'translate' and explain Buddhist ideas (1984: 27-28). Nakamura Hajime gives a number of examples to illustrate "The Influence of Confucian Ethics on the Chinese Translations of Buddhist Sutras" (1957); attributing the transliteration of words that mean 'embrace' and 'kiss' to a desire to mask their meaning, which was deemed "vulgar" by the Confucian gentleman, he remarks that in those times "the modification was probably necessary" (1957: 159-160).
2. Nakamura Hajime observes that Xuan Zang made the meaning of 'embrace' and 'kiss' clear in his translation, but still the influence of Confucian thoughts can be seen in certain passages; for instance, in the source text, a mother exhorts her daughter not to marry a prince in this way: "We, however, my daughter, are prostitutes, we give pleasure to all people, we do not make our living by serving one man only"; but in the translation this became: "... We of a humble position are not fit to marry princes", because the receiving culture could not accept that prostitution was not necessarily a lowly occupation; and "laymen who practise the five precepts of morality take wives" was translated as "they take wives and concubines", because while "keeping concubines was not sanctioned by the Buddhist law", in Chinese society the practice was "permitted as a matter of course" (1957: 160-163).
3. An English version by J. M. Cohen reads: "God blast you and every knight errant ever born on the face of the earth!" (1950: 276)
4. Lin became a loyalist after the Qing Dynasty was overthrown by the revolutionaries led by Dr Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925).
5. Gideon Toury’s term, which means “the reconstruction of the maximal relevant features of [source text]” (1980: 29), or “[subscription] to the norms of the source text, and through them also to the norms of the source language and culture” (1995: 56), as opposed to “acceptability”, which is determined by “subscription to norms originating in the target culture” (1995: 57).

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