

## Censorship in translation

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# CENSORSHIP IN TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA<sup>1</sup>

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This article studies censorship and translation in the PRC, focusing on how censorship, as a form of institutional (e.g. government, editorial, publishers') control of the circulation of information and ideas, regulates the activity of translation in the country. It covers 60-odd years sub-divided into three periods: 1) the founding of the PRC to the Cultural Revolution (1949-1966) period, during which censorship in the translation and importation of foreign literature largely revealed a former Soviet Union influence; 2) the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), during which ultra-leftist political and ideological censorship was so severe that the translation of anything alien was strictly forbidden; and 3) the period from 1976 to the present day, during which time the country first experienced a gradual loosening of severe restrictions and then a more relaxed position on incoming foreign literature which, however, was accompanied more recently with re-enforced regulations of information circulated on the internet. The purpose of the paper is to explore the underlying factors for translational censorship in China and the factors that may have affected the changing or non-changing character of translational censorship; and, through the case of the PRC, to throw insights on how the study of translational censorship may contribute to our understanding of the cultural politics of translation in a broader context.

**KEYWORDS:** censorship; translation; literature; China; cultural politics

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Governmental censorship in China can be traced back to as early as the times of Qin the First Emperor of China (259 BCE–210 BCE) who ordered books he did not like to be burned and scholars buried alive for owning forbidden books. Since Qin's times, the country has virtually had an unbroken line of censorship, differing from dynasty to dynasty only in the kind of literature that was allowed or forbidden, and in the scale of censorship. This historical, unbroken line has apparently run right up to contemporary times, through to the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since its founding in 1949, the PRC has endured various modes of censorship, many of them bearing either directly or indirectly on the activity of translation. However, Chinese censorship in translation has somehow been an understudied subject. This paper, then, aims to contribute to this understudied area and its main concerns will centre on the study of how governmental and non-governmental (publishing, editorial, and the translator's own) censorship has affected the enterprise of translation in China, and how underlying Chinese politics and ideology have functioned to affect the transfer/non-transfer of foreign images and ideas. To illustrate the points being discussed, reference will be made to various (self) censorship-affected Chinese translations of such contemporary works as Hillary Clinton's *Living History*, Henry Kissinger's *On China* and Junichi Watanabe's Japanese novel *A Lost Paradise*, and such classics as Pearl Buck's *The Big Earth*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984*, and D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Women in Love*.

## 2. REVIEWING THE LITERATURE ON (TRANSLATIONAL) CENSORSHIP

In general, censorship is a very well researched topic, especially in the West. A quick search at any university library in Hong Kong would, for example, put the number of English-language research publications in the hundreds. However, this type of literature does not closely relate to the theme of this paper, for which the literature review will mainly cover three areas as discussed below: censorship in the PRC; censorship in translation in general; and censorship in translation in the PRC.

Censorship in the PRC It must be pointed out first that, especially in present-day China, ‘censorship’ often seems a taboo word, and so the kind of literature that is censored in the country would mostly be placed under the theme of ‘banned literature’ or ‘banned books’, rather than under the theme of ‘censorship’. This is perhaps because ‘censor’ or ‘censorship’ in the Chinese context is often politically, ideologically or morally so heavily loaded a word concerning the role of the government that people often do not use it, to avoid potential conflict with government censors while ‘banned literature’ or ‘banned books’ seems basically to refer to the fact of there being [the wrong type of] books banned. Nonetheless, in this study, the concepts of ‘banned literature/books’ and ‘censorship’ are taken as logically closely connected concepts, and are reviewed as such.

Five major types of effort can be identified in this category: i) works on the general history of ‘banned books’ in China, as found in Chen Zhenghong ([陳正宏], 2004), Ruan Yuan ([阮元] 1995), Wang Bin ([王彬主編] 1992), Hu Qiguang ([胡奇光] 1993), Luo Qikun and Wang Deming ([雒啟坤, 王德明主編] 1998), Luo Shuhua ([羅書華主編] 1998), Ding Shumei ([丁淑梅] 2008), and Zhong Wen ([鍾雯] 1993); ii) work on banned Chinese novels, as seen in Li Shiren ([李時人主編] 1992), Li Mengsheng ([李夢生] 2006), Zheng Futian and Li Bo ([鄭福田, 李博編] [22 vols.] 1999), Li Shiren *et al.* ([李時人等] 1999) and Wang Congren and Huang Ziheng ([王從仁, 黃自恒主編] 1996); iii) work on banned literature in the Qing Dynasty, as in Shi Tingyong ([施廷鏞] 2004), Wang Bin ([王彬主編] 1999), Jin Xingyao ([金性堯] 1989), and Yao Jinyuan ([姚覲元編] 1995); iv) work on banned literature in the Republican Period, as in Wang Xuhua and Zhu Yibing ([王煦華, 朱一冰合輯] [4 vols.] 2007) and v) work on banned books as well as censored material in the media in modern China and in foreign countries, as seen in Kuhn (2010), Zhu Jianlan (2009), Cai Guoliang ([蔡國良] 1988), Shu Cheng ([舒誠主編] 1992), Li Shou ([李壽主編] 1994), Sun Zhongtian and Guan Defu ([孫中田, 關德富主編] 1992), and the Chinese version of Nicholas J. Karolides *et al.* [卡洛萊茲, 伯德, 索瓦合著, 吳庶任譯] 2002).

All these publications mostly reveal that governmental censorship has indeed been a long-standing topic in China. Though the infamous large-scale burning of books and burying of scholars of the Qin Dynasty in the third century BCE was not exactly repeated in history, the persecution of authors or scholars for writing/publishing books prohibited by the authorities has never ceased, at least not nearly completely during any period of time in history. As Luo Qikun remarked, “the history of banned books in China is a history of changes of the country’s cultural policies over different times as well as one of its cultural development” (Luo Qikun and Wang Deming 1998 [Vol. I]: 1; *my translation*). History reveals that censorship and the banning or not banning of books often have to do with the self-confidence of the ruling class. The times when there was lack of self-confidence in the ruling class were the times when there was tightened governmental censorship and increased banning of books, and they were also the times when culture experienced no or little progress, and even suffered setbacks, such as during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279) and the latter periods of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). Against such a tradition of governmental censorship and book-banning, it is no wonder that censorship, including that in translation in the modern and contemporary times, should become no unfamiliar part of a governing mechanism of the PRC even today. Inasmuch as the issue of governmental censorship is concerned, especially that during the last 60-odd-year period, it has largely remained a rather sensitive topic in the PRC. It is perhaps because of this that most, if not all, of the research literature on censorship published in the PRC has been on the pre-, rather than the post-1949 times. And exactly for this reason, the present study sees it both as a challenge and a potentially rewarding task to probe into the censorship situation in the PRC, that in translation in particular.

CENSORSHIP IN TRANSLATION IN GENERAL Over the last 20 years or so, solid research has been undertaken in the TS field, mainly by scholars in the West, over censorship and translation in the Western world and beyond. Particularly important are the contributions from the various collections of academic research on the subject that have come out since the turn of the new era. These include: (a) two special issues (both guest-edited by Denise Merkle) of the Canadian-based TS journal *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, one being No. 2 of Vol. 15, published in 2002 on the topic *Censorship and Translation in the Western World*, and the other, No. 2 of Vol. 23, published in 2010

on *Censorship and Translation within and beyond the Western World*; and (b) three collections of essays, i.e. *Modes of Censorship and Translation: National Contexts and Diverse Media* edited by Francesca Billiani (2007), *Translation and Censorship in Different Times and Landscapes* edited by Teresa Seruya and Maria Lin Moniz (2008), and *Translation and Censorship: Patterns of Communication and Interference* edited by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin *et al.* (2009). In addition, there were also interesting texts at the forum on censorship and translation in the journal *Translation Studies* (2011. 4:3 and 2012. 5:1).

Through case studies of various national contexts, mostly European (East European included), these collections have brought out significant, groundbreaking contributions on the subject of censorship in translation. The approaches adopted by the authors in investigating censorship in translation in different situations and during different times were very informative, providing not only valuable findings on the spatiotemporal dimensions of censorship and translation but also critical and methodological analyses of this phenomenology. For example, through these efforts, important insights were thrown on why and how censorship played the role of ‘cultural filtering’, or that of ‘cultural blockage’, on foreign works and ideas, for instance, in the late Habsburg Monarchy (Wolf 2002), in Fascist Italy (Dunnett 2002, 2009; Fabre 2007; Stephenson 2007), in Nazi Germany (Sturge 2002, 2004; Philpotts 2007), in Francoist Spain (Merino and Rabadán 2002; Hurlley 2007; Castro 2009, 2008; Zenekorta 2008), in 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century Portugal (Machado 2009; Dos Santos 2008; Maia 2008; Rayner 2008; Rosa 2008; Seruya 2008), in nationalist Greece (Walton 2007), in communist Soviet Russia (Kuhiwczak 2009), in communist Czechoslovakia (Špírk 2008), in East Germany (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2007), in Turkey (Erkazanci 2008), in other Western societies such as France (Kimber 2009) and Britain (Krebs 2007; Nikolowski-Bogomoloff 2009), as well as in politically-minded Israel towards the translation of Arabic literature (Amit-Kochavi 2010).

In addition to studies of the various forms of censorship, both the prior-, preventive type and the post-, punitive type, there has also been in what is called ‘self-’ or ‘semi-censorship’, which may also result in morally and/or politically-driven practices of omissions, additions (including translational comments and explanations in such paratexts as prefaces and footnotes), and other types of translatorial manipulation of meaning through subtle changes in vocabulary and syntax (Olshanskaya 2008). Just as Billiani defined, censorship in the broad sense “is a form of manipulative rewriting of discourses by one agent or structure over another agent or structure, aiming at filtering the stream of information from one source to another culture. Because translation often, though not always, makes the source culture visible within, and accessible to, the target culture, translated texts tend to attract censorial intervention” (Billiani 2007: 3). Therefore, translators can be regarded as “morally or politically correct” “manipulators”, “gate-keepers” or “tacit censors” of their own work (Reynolds 2007; Brownlie 2007; Tymoczko 2009; Gibbels 2009; Camus 2008; Pedersen 2008; Tanqueiro and López-Gay 2008; Pajares 2008; etc.). In this connection, interestingly enough, the translator’s self-censorship becomes inter-related with translatorial intervention and manipulation, and thus (self-)censorship studies seems to become a component part of the study of translatorial/translational intervention and manipulation, and *vice versa*.

**CENSORSHIP IN TRANSLATION IN THE PRC** Although the literature in this respect is quite lacking in the field, preliminary research has revealed two important pieces of publication, i.e. two papers, one by Chang Num Fung (2008) and the other by Red Chan (2007). Entitled “Censorship in translation and translation studies in present-day China”, Chang’s paper is by far the most interesting piece of work on the topic. By using examples from Hilary Clinton’s *Living History*, Mandla Langa’s short story *A Gathering of Bald Men*, Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* and David Lodge’s *Small World*, Chang describes how governmental censorship operates in present-day China, where the censored areas mainly include anti-Marxist and anti-China materials, and obscene materials or explicit descriptions of sex of any kind, including moral taboos such as extra-marital sex. Chang also discusses other questions such as how far censorship is admitted by the government, how publishers are subject to different pressures, censorial or otherwise, some of which may end up in pressures on the individual translator, such as the requirements of translational completeness and faithfulness, the market norms of competition, and pressure from the dominant ideology and the power of the state.

Published one year earlier than Chang's, Red Chan's paper, i.e. "One nation, two translations: China's censorship of Hillary's Memoir" (2007), on the other hand, focuses on how 'self-censorship' (in the broad sense) imposed by the publisher, rather than overt censorship and political pressure imposed by the government, was at work in the publication of the Chinese translation in the PRC of Hillary Clinton's Memoir, *Living History*. Instead of inviting the translators of the original Chinese edition published in Taiwan to make changes, the PRC publisher, who had bought the copyright to publish the same translation in the PRC, made many omissions and changes of tones to textual material to avoid potential political and ideological confrontation within the PRC context.

For example, the first two passages on page 298 of the English original have this: "The arrest of a dissident is not unusual in China, and Harry Wu's imprisonment might have received scant attention in the American media... Wu, a human rights activist who had spent nineteen years as political prisoner in Chinese labor camps before emigrating to the United States, was arrested by Chinese authorities on June 19, 1995, as he entered Xinjiang Province from neighboring Kazakhstan." "Although he had a valid visa to visit China, he was charged with espionage and thrown in jail to await trial..." (*My underlines.*) Their corresponding Chinese translation in the PRC version became: "吳弘達被捕的消息原本不會受到美國媒體的太多關注……"; "吳弘達被控城市間諜活動，因此被拘押並等候審判……". Translated back into English, the first passage is shortened to "The news that Wu Hongda [Wu's Chinese name] was arrested might not have received too much attention from the American media...", and the first line of the second passage becomes "Wu was charged with espionage and so was taken into custody to await trial..." In other words, the underlined parts were either completely left out untranslated (e.g. the phrase "a dissident" in the first sentence and the entire second sentence of the first passage; and the sub-clause of the first line of the second passage); or modulated (e.g. the phrase "thrown in jail" of the relevant second passage was replaced by a milder "taken into custody"). According to the Reading Guide carried in the wake of the publication of the Chinese version on the home page of Simon & Schuster (<http://www.simonsays.com>), publisher of the English original, such omissions and changes were found on some ten pages of the PRC translation of the book. Apparently, the omissions and changes were the result of censorship or (the translator's, editor's or publisher's) self-censorship, and with various hidden agendas behind them. For example, the deletion of the phrase "[a]lthough he had a valid visa to visit China" in the above half-quoted, second passage could leave room for manoeuvring on the part of the reader that Wu might have entered the country 'illegally' since he had long been known as an unwelcome figure to the Chinese government, hence to enforce the legality of his arrest by the authorities. The replacing of the phrase "thrown in jail" by a milder "taken into custody" would probably be to give the impression that Wu was not treated too harshly after all. Most important of all, as is often the claim by the Chinese government, there were no such things in the PRC as "dissidents", "human rights activists", "political prisoners", "labor camps", etc. – there only being "acts against the law" or "people who have broken the law" – so much so that faithfully translating those ST descriptions into Chinese would almost certainly jeopardise the publication of the translation in the PRC.

Another example that readily comes to mind is the blunt omission in the PRC version of such source text material as "I would criticize Chinese government abuses, including coerced abortions and the routine squelching of free speech and free assembly" (p. 302) and even entire paragraphs that criticised "the injustice of the Chinese government's behaviour" (p.304), "the Chinese government's suppression of the NGO forum", and so on.

Admittedly, the author of the memoir, Hillary Clinton, was said to be very upset about being censored, the censored version nonetheless went ahead and over 600,000 copies were reportedly sold, 200,000 of them in the book's first month of sale. In Chan's view, this is a case of censorship taking more than just a political or ideological form as would have conventionally been thought of. "Now the market can be used as an excuse, or a gateway, to bypass political agendas. It has become difficult to discern whether an act of censorship is made on political grounds or mere commercial convenience" (Chan 2007: 128).

Looking back, three points of summary can be drawn from the above literature survey. First, no lack of research is found done on censorship in China, but most of the research has been on the general type of censorship rather than censorship in translation, and it has been mostly focused on censorship (or banned literature) from a historical perspective rather than on contemporary China. Second, solid

academic research on censorship as correlated to translation has been accomplished in the TS field, but it has basically been in the West and mainly about censorship and/in translation in the Western world with rather limited attention directed at the Chinese context. But nonetheless, as is seen thirdly, important efforts have been made towards the study of translational censorship within the context of the PRC, such as in Chang (2008) and Chan (2007), but these efforts have not been extensive or intensive enough. Therefore, a more comprehensive effort is in order.

### 3. HOW CENSORSHIP OPERATES ON TRANSLATION IN THE PRC

By definition, censorship refers to the examination of books, films, television programmes, newspaper articles and other forms of communication whose purpose it is to change or suppress ideas in them that are found unacceptable (cf. *Oxford Dictionary*). Broadly speaking, censorship is exercised by those in power within a society, most noticeably the government. Arguably all governments, no matter how liberal or tolerant they may claim to be, have either actually censored material they dislike or at least had the impulse or mechanism to censor, if not during times of peace, then during times of war (e.g. adversary propaganda material), and if not in private places, then in public. For example, no country the world over would allow obscene material to go public without censoring or restricting it in some way.

However, pointing out the ubiquitous nature of censorship does not mean denial of the differences between countries or systems in the extent to which it is applied. Indeed, it is evident that censorship is more strictly or more extensively applied in some countries than in others. In a sense, censorship may be regarded as one of the main features of an authoritarian system, characterised by tight government control of information and ideas being circulated within society at all times. Although the successful developments in the PRC over the last 30-odd years show that the country has become increasingly more open, the fact that it remains a “socialist country with Chinese characteristics” – as the Chinese government self-describes it – means that some kind of authoritarianism or “democratic centralism” (so called in the PRC) is innate within the system, and with it censorship.

There is therefore no doubt that the censorship of books, including translated books or books for translation, has always been an important part of government - or rather the Communist Party's - control of ideas since the founding of the socialist state of the PRC in 1949. The actual work of censorship was first effected by the setting up of a Publishing Committee in February 1949 under the Publicity Department of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, which was later turned into the General Administration of Publishing of the Central People's Government in November of that same year and was replaced in 1954 by a new organisation, the Publication Bureau under the Ministry of Culture<sup>2</sup>. As the country's top authorities with power over publication, these successive government bodies were not only responsible for the planning and organisation of the country's publication activities – they were also, and most importantly, the ‘advisors’ on or ‘censors’ of all major publication projects, including translation projects. For example, in 1952, the General Administration followed the Soviet model in issuing “Guidelines for Implementing *The Regulations on Editorial Boards and Working Systems of State-Run Publishing Houses*”. These guidelines demanded, among other things, that all publishing houses submit their publication plans for official scrutiny and approval by the authorities and ensure that before publication, every book or translation manuscript go through a process of initial review by copy-editor, double review by senior editor and third review by editor-in-chief before final approval by the publishing house director (Ni 2011: 41; *my translation*).

Of course, in those early years of the PRC, these guidelines or regulations were normally issued through the ‘internal’ channels of the publishing houses and were not made known to the public – partly because the relevant policies were not considered of everyday importance to the general public and partly because the government did not want to appear as if it were encroaching on people's rights, as ‘freedom of speech’ and ‘freedom of the press’ have always been professed to be the constitutional rights of PRC citizens. However, it must be said that today, after more than 30 years of implementing open-door policies and with the advancement of modern science and technology, many changes have been introduced by the Chinese government especially in the way it handles censorship. Though it has not really fundamentally loosened its censorship policies, it has made them more transparent. Instead

of shying away from openly acknowledging that censorship exists, the government now makes its censorship position publicly known by putting publishing guidelines on the internet.

This change of attitude first began in 1997. On 1 February that year an ordinance, the first of its kind, entitled *Regulations on the Administration of Publication* (出版管理條例), was adopted and promulgated by the State Council of the PRC and was immediately made known to the general public through the news media. On 25 December 2001, an expanded version (which increased the number of articles from 57 to 68) was decreed by the State Council, and then on 19 March 2011 a newly revised version consisting of 74 articles was adopted and decreed. It is these two latter versions of the ordinance which may now be found on the Policies and Regulations page of the website of the General Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China. The main difference between the three versions lies in the increased specification of the various articles and clauses, whilst the basic spirit with regard to censorship has remained unchanged. Of the 74 articles listed in the latest version of the ordinance, the most important three, as far as the country's explicit censorship policies are concerned, are Articles 3, 25 and 26.

Article 3 can be regarded as a provision of superordinate regulations, regulations that serve as the general principles for all publishing activities in the PRC. It says:

Publishing must adhere to the principles of serving the people and the cause of socialism, adhere to the principle of regarding Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of "Three Represents"<sup>3</sup> as the guiding ideologies, implement the "Scientific Development Concept"<sup>4</sup>, disseminate and accumulate scientific technologies and knowledge beneficiary to the improvement of the education-cultural level of the people and to economic development and social progress, give full scope to folk culture, promote international cultural exchanges, and enrich the spiritual lives of the people (*Based on the Chinese original accessed from the homepage of the General Administration of Press and Publication of the PRC; my translation*).

In brief, this is to say that all publishing activities in the PRC must observe what is stated in China's constitution as the *Four Cardinal Principles* (四項基本原則), namely: (a) the principle of upholding the socialist path; (b) the principle of upholding the people's democratic dictatorship; (c) the principle of upholding the leadership of the Communist Party of China; and (d) the principle of upholding Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought (later extended to include the clauses on Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of "Three Represents" and the "Scientific Development Concept"). These are principles about which debate was not allowed in the PRC, and against which censorship is benchmarked: any material which goes against or violates these principles will not be allowed to be published or translated.

However, although the principles cannot be questioned *per se*, their interpretations are nevertheless open to debate. For example, it is possible to debate the meaning of socialism, and in fact the Chinese government's description of China as a 'socialist country with Chinese characteristics' is indicative of this openness. Also, the addition of the "Three Represents" and the "Scientific Development Concept" to the fourth *Cardinal Principle*, in Article 3 of the ordinance, means that the principles are not a static phenomenon but may be dynamically developed, provided no fundamental change is made to their spirit.

In contrast to Article 3 and cross-referenced in many articles and clauses throughout the ordinance, Articles 25 and 26 provide more concrete guidelines for the enforcement of censorship. The following is a literal translation of the articles by the author – based on the 2011 version of the ordinance of the original:

ARTICLE 25 No publications shall include any of the following:

1. Contents that are opposed to the Cardinal Principles established in the Constitution;
2. Contents that endanger national unity, sovereignty or territorial integrity;
3. Contents that disclose secrets of the State, endanger national security, or damage national honour or interests;
4. Contents that incite ethnic hatred or discrimination, undermine the solidarity between ethnic groups, or encroach on ethnic customs and habits;
5. Contents that promote evil cults or superstition;

6. Contents that disturb public order or destroy social stability;
7. Contents that publicise obscenity, gambling and violence or instigate crimes;
8. Contents that insult or slander other people, or impair the lawful rights and interests of other people;
9. Contents that endanger public morality or harm the good traditions of culture;
10. Other contents that are prohibited by law, administrative regulations or provisions of the State.

ARTICLE 26 No publications that cater for minors shall include any contents that entice minors to imitate acts involving the violation of public morality and illegal or criminal acts, or contents that harm the physical and mental health of minors such as terror and cruelty.

These clauses are clearly concrete enough and cover all major subject areas over which censorship may be exercised: politics, ideology, culture, national security and interests, ethnicity, morality and the like. The areas not specified, such as those relating to religion and economics, can be said to have been covered by Clause 10 of Article 25, which relates to “other contents that are prohibited by law, administrative regulations or provisions of the State”. But on the other hand, as in the case of the *Four Cardinal Principles* mentioned above, discrepancies may arise in the interpretation and implementation of what is meant by the clauses, especially in areas that may be considered fuzzy and/or those that change with the times.

Take for example the clause on “contents that disturb public order or destroy social stability”. What exactly does it mean? How do the contents of such publications disturb public order or destroy social stability? The following story serves as a useful illustration. In the last quarter of 2011, open protests against the local government took place in the fishing village of Wukan in southern China. To begin with, news reports about these rebellious events, whether first-hand Chinese reports or translations of foreign articles, were highly restricted - if not completely prohibited - presumably because they carried “contents that disturb public order or destroy social stability”. However, before the protests turned really ugly, the authorities caved in to mass pressure - they recognised the legitimate status of the self-elected village leadership, which had earlier been branded ‘illegal’ by the local authorities, and promised to listen closely to the villagers and respect their legitimate rights. The previously imposed ban on the reporting of the events was automatically lifted and all major newspapers in China - including *The People’s Daily*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China - began to praise the way in which the Wukan villagers had handled their own affairs. The dramatic change of government position, from branding the villagers’ actions as illegal, and hence to be suppressed, to entering into dialogue with them and even singing their praises, shows how the same contents may be described differently and how the role of censorship can change with the overall socio-political situation.

The same can be said of other areas in which decisions in the censoring process change with the overall socio-political situation and with the times. Events that have taken place over the 60-odd years since the founding of the PRC provide plenty of examples on this, one of the best known being the changing fate in China of the Italian modernist director Michelangelo Antonioni’s documentary *Chung Kuo, Cina*. In 1972, in the midst of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and at the suggestion of the Italian government, Antonioni was invited by the Chinese government to visit China and make a documentary about the country. However, when the 217-minute-long documentary was released, it was not passed by the Chinese censors and was banned from being shown in China. It was denounced by the Chinese authorities as ‘anti-Chinese’ and ‘anti-communist’, or in the language of the current government ordinance on the Regulations on the Administration of Publication, its contents “damaged” the “national honour or interests” of the Chinese people. Triggered by an antagonistic commentary printed in the influential *People’s Daily* on 30 January 1974, a massive, countrywide campaign to villainise Antonioni and his documentary raged for more than a year. In the first two months of the campaign, a huge avalanche of articles denouncing the film was published, some of which were compiled into a 200-page volume published in June 1974 by the People’s Literature Press, one of the most prestigious publishing houses in Beijing. Named “The Chinese People Are Not to Be Insulted: A Critique of Antonioni’s Anti-China Film *Chung Kuo, Cina*” (中國人民不可侮——批判安

東尼奧尼的反華影片〈中國〉文輯), the collection featured 43 militant pieces criticising Antonioni and his film, many of them written by people from the places visited and filmed by him.

This negative Chinese attitude towards Antonioni and the official Chinese prohibition of his documentary were, however, put to an end when the Cultural Revolution came to a close with the downfall of the Gang of Four<sup>5</sup> in October 1976. From then on, not only was there no more harsh criticism of Antonioni and his film, but in 1979 the Chinese Foreign Ministry submitted a request to the Central Committee of the Party and the State Council to “rectify the bad influence of the Gang of Four over the criticism of Antonioni’s *Cina*”, which was soon approved. In 1980, the then Chinese Minister of Culture sent an apology to Antonioni, who gladly accepted it. On 25 November 2004, the documentary was shown for the first time at a film festival hosted by the Beijing Film Academy to honour the works of the then 92-year-old Italian director.

By contrast, there are also areas in which restrictions may be tightened rather than loosened. Some of the most typical of these concern censorship of “contents that endanger national unity, sovereignty or territorial integrity”, “contents that incite ethnic hatred or discrimination, undermine the solidarity between ethnic groups, or encroach on ethnic customs and habits”, and “contents that publicise obscenity, gambling and violence or instigate crimes”. Of course, all countries are sensitive to issues surrounding national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity and all set their own bottom-lines which are not to be violated. In this regard, China is no exception.

In today’s world, in which so much information is spread via the internet, censorship may be extended to include censorship of the internet. A separate *Regulations on the Administration of Electronic Publication* (电子出版管理條例) came into effect on 1 January 1998 and a revised version was issued on 15 April 2008 by the General Administration of Press and Publication, both of which contain clauses on the censorship of electronic material and on the internet. However, as censorship of this type of material is arguably so special and complex an issue that it requires separate treatment, it will not be discussed further in the present paper.

**THE EFFECT OF SELF-CENSORSHIP ON TRANSLATION** Apart from governmental censorship, there is also what can be called ‘self-censorship’ operating to effect translation in the PRC. For example, in the PRC, translators, publishers, or organisers and patrons of translation projects may consciously or unconsciously/subconsciously avoid selecting certain types of material for translation, or avoid faithfully translating certain ‘sensitive’ parts of a chosen text. Often, it may not be because the material is of an overtly prohibitive nature in the political, ideological or religious sense, but because there is a wish to conform to the expectations of a moral, ethical or cultural tradition, or a wish to make economic gains out of the translated work.

For example, back in the late 1990s, when scholar Zhu Jiarong was asked to translate the Japanese novel *A Lost Paradise* by Junichi Watanabe (渡邊淳一) into Chinese, she refused unless the publisher would agree to edit out its explicit sexual content. A portrayal of the extra-marital affairs of two middle-aged people and their desperate passion for each other despite worldly prejudices, the novel became an immediate bestseller in Japan and the Asia region after it was published in 1997. But to the Zhu of the 1990s, the use of explicit sex language in her translation was out of the question. This was because “[a]s a college teacher,” Zhu said in an interview many years later on how had felt when she was first invited to undertake the project, “translating a novel full of erotic content would be my last choice. I would feel so embarrassed to see my students in class” (Zhu, qtd. in Du Guodong 2010). The publisher agreed to her conditions and she went ahead with the project, producing a heavily censored version of Watanabe’s work which was published in 1998. Interestingly enough, however, with the passing of time accompanied by the change of the general social aura in the country where people seemed to be becoming more and more liberal-minded towards what was ‘moral’ or ‘immoral’ about extra-marital relationships and descriptions of sexual conduct, Zhu’s stance on Junichi Watanabe changed. In 2010, some 12 years after she made her first, abridged translation of Watanabe, she came out with a full, uncensored second version. In this new version, all explicit sexual descriptions in the original that were abridged from her first translation were now restored and faithfully reproduced. This resulted in an increase of some 30,000 Chinese characters/words spread throughout the book (amounting to more than 40 pages in total) as compared with the older version of 1998. The following is a concrete example of how Zhu self-censored her translation in the 1998 version (TT1) in contrast

with her newer, uncensored 2010 version (TT2). The example is taken from Chapter 2, “Autumn”, of Part I of the book, which depicts one of the many love-making scenes between Rinko (凜子) and her lover Kukino (久木):

#### TT1

[一旦]把女人肉体驱入了绝境的魔鬼，又从背后凑了上来，在呼吸刚刚平静下来的女人耳边嗫嚅着：

“你的罪还在后头呢。”

“你要干什么……”

凜子明知故问，下面有做的是明摆着的。

近来久木和女人的做爱方式与以前大不相同了。

……

虽说现在男人占据着使之焦急的优势地位，可是一旦接受了女人的要求，一瞬间那人就成了女人的牺牲品，成为被贪婪汲取的存在。因此，男人要在处于优势时尽可能地虚张声势，使女人焦急。

这也是从前的久木所不曾有的……

(Just as her breath was about to calm down, the devil that had driven her flesh into desperation came up again from behind her, whispering into her ear:

“You’re yet to suffer...”

“What’re you doing...”

Rinko asked the evident.

Recently, the way Kukino made love to his woman had become very different from before.

...

Although the man was presently in an advantageous position to stir up his woman’s desire, once he gave concession to her demand he would instantly become her victim, a being subjected to her greedy absorption. Therefore, he should make the best of this advantageous position by doing as much swashbuckling as he could, to make his woman yearn with desire.

This was something Kukino had not had before...) - *My English translation from the Chinese.*

#### TT2 (*my underlines*)

把女人肉體驅入了絕境的魔鬼，流著涎水，又一次從背後湊了上來，在呼吸剛剛平靜下來的女人耳邊喃喃道：

“你的罪還在後頭呢。”

凜子倏地縮了一下脖子。久木兩手從她的身後伸到前胸，用指尖輕輕揉捻起她的乳頭來。

“不要……”

凜子想護住胸部，可是乳頭已覺醒般的霍然突起，久木反復地愛撫這可愛的乳頭，然後低下頭探進被單裡，輕輕將嘴唇貼了上去。

“你要幹什麼……”

凜子明知故問，下面有做的是明擺著的。

久木毫不理睬，銜住了剛才右手愛撫著的乳頭。

近來久木和女人的做愛方式與以前大不相同了。

……

虽说现在男人占据着使之焦急的优势地位，可是一旦接受了女人的要求，與她交媾的話，男人一瞬间就成了女人的牺牲品，成为被贪婪汲取的存在。因此，男人要在处于优势地位时尽可能地虚张声势，使女人焦躁。

百般挑動之下，女人的肉體早已如火球般燃燒了。圓潤的肩頭和豐滿的胸部都已汗津津的，而那隱秘的叢林處更像泉水滋潤了一般。見女人已充分地做好了接納他的準備，男人這才從容不迫、不緊不慢地逡巡著進入了。

這種做法也是以前的久木所不曾有的……

(Just as her breath was about to calm down, the devil that had driven her flesh into desperation came up again from behind her. With flowing saliva in his mouth, he murmured into her ear:

“You’re yet to suffer…”

Rinko’s neck shrank slightly as Kukino’s hands stretched out from behind and were placed on her breasts, his fingers picking and rubbing at her nipples softly.

“No…”

Rinko tried to fend off the fingers, but only to find that her nipples had been aroused and had risen all of a sudden. Kukino caressed these charming little nipples repeatedly, and then diving his head beneath the blanket, he gently stuck his mouth to them.

“What’re you doing…”

She asked the evident.

Ignoring what she was asking, Kukino softly took between his lips the nipple that he had been caressing with his right hand.

Recently, the way Kukino made love to his woman had become very different from before.

... [Note by this author: Nearly two more pages of similar sexual descriptions follow here in Zhu’s 2010 translation, but these have been cut out from here for lack of space.]

Although the man was currently in an advantageous position to stir up his woman’s desire, once he gave concession to her demand and to have intercourse with her he would instantly become her victim, a being subjected to her greedy absorption. Therefore, he should make the best of this advantageous position by doing as much swashbuckling as he could, to make his woman yearn with desire.

Excited so passionately, her flesh had long been burning like a ball of fire. Her beautifully round shoulders were wet, her big breasts were wet, and the depth of that secrete hidden forest of hers was wet as if nurtured by spring water. Feeling his woman completely now ready to take him, he exploringly, gently and with measured movements, penetrated.

This was something Kukino had not had before...) - *My English translation from the Chinese.*

Comparing TT2 with TT1, we can easily tell that the underlined parts in TT2 are not found in TT1, meaning that these are the restorations of what has been censored and abridged in TT1. Evidently, this kind of language is overtly and shockingly explicit. In a society like China, especially back in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and before, when people’s attitude towards sexual relationships was predominantly conservative, a lot of what would seem quite normal today would then be regarded as serious taboo, and publications that broke that taboo might end up in being banned, to say the least. For example, in 1993, the famous Chinese novelist Jia Pingwa published his *Deserted City* (廢都), which was almost immediately banned by the State Publishing Administration because it contained an extensive amount of explicit sexual content. Even though the book was awarded the prestigious French literary prize of the Prix Femina in 1997, the ban on the book by the Chinese government did not end till 2009. Leaving government censorship aside, it would be important to note that within the Chinese context, the context of the 1990s and before, when the general mindset of the ordinary people was not as open as it is today, making extra-marital affairs the central theme of a novel such as in Watanabe’s *A Lost*

*Paradise* would already seem ‘immoral’ enough to the Chinese, describing sexual behaviour or translating material on sexual behaviour in such meticulous and minute detail would be even more morally unacceptable. Especially if the translator happened to be a teacher, it would be downright incredible. For in the eyes of Chinese people, teachers are role models and they should provide ‘good examples’ on moral matters. Therefore, it was only natural that Zhu the publisher-designated translator of Watanabe should have felt that “translating a novel full of erotic content” was not something she would want to do because she was worried that if she translated the original literally she would cause ‘embarrassment’ and ‘lose face’ in front of her students. This was exactly why she censored herself while she was making her first translation of Watanabe in 1998.

In a somewhat different vein, the PRC version (2003) of Hillary Clinton’s *Living History*, as discussed in Section 2 above, can be viewed as an example of how the market may become the reason, or at least part of the reason, for a translational (self-)censorship to take effect. Note that, given the increasingly open-minded and politically relaxed environment of the PRC since the late 1970s and early 1980s, the translation of that work *per se* was not regarded as an ‘non-translatable’ or ‘non-importable’ work, at least not on the surface – as the authorities did not openly prohibit the book from being translated. Nonetheless, in the eyes of the publishing house, certain parts of the book were deemed so politically sensitive that they must be omitted or changed in the Chinese version in order for such a potentially ‘profitable’ work to eventually get published.

The same is true of the more recent publication of *On China* (2011) by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. The author being a highly regarded and welcomed figure to the Chinese, the book was translated into Chinese almost immediately after its English original was published. However, in spite of the overall welcoming attitude of the Chinese government towards the book, its translation was censored nevertheless, though it was not clear whether the censorship was an explicit or implied governmental censorship, or the publisher’s, editor’s and even the translator’s own censorship. Whatever it was, the translation published by the CTTIC Press in Beijing was not a ‘full’ but a modulated, ‘partial’ translation, i.e. one with arguably extensive omissions and changes of the author’s intentions where politically sensitive issues were concerned. An overall comparison of the target and its source text reveals, for example, that everything concerning the issue of the 1989 Tiananmen events was either completely deleted or drastically altered. In the translation of Chapter 15 alone there were some 25 omissions and more than 30 modulations or changes, ranging from single words to phrases and sentences to whole paragraphs.

To give a concrete idea of what such omissions and changes were like and how they reflected the working of (self-)censorship, explicit or implied, in the case of the translation of *On China*, a few examples are provided in the following table for analytical purposes:

	ST ( <i>my underlines</i> )	TT ( <i>my underlines</i> )	My comment
<b>Omissions</b>	Students in Beijing and other cities took the opportunity to voice their frustration <u>with corruption, inflation, press restrictions, university conditions, and the persistence of Party “elders” ruling informally behind the scene.</u> (p.409)	北京和其他城市的學生利用這一機會表達他們的不滿……(Students in Beijing and other cities made use of this opportunity to express their dissatisfaction...) (p.405)	Though the Chinese government would not find it possible to completely dismiss people’s grievances with their plight, they would not tolerate any insinuation that Deng Xiaoping should step down from his <i>de facto</i> position as paramount leader of the country.
	<u>Some reports held that elements of the People’s Liberation Army defied orders to deploy to the capital and quell the demonstrations, and that government employees were marching with the protesters in the street.</u> (p.410)	Complete deletion. (p.406)	This kind of information (unconfirmed and even rumour-like) would be too damaging to the military-Party relationship, and so should not be made known to the public.
	This U.S. reaction, Scowcroft argued, reflected deeply held values... <u>“What the American people perceived in the demonstrations they saw—rightly or</u>	斯考克羅夫特解釋說，美國這次反應體現了其篤信的價值觀……(Scowcroft explained that this	The underlined (deleted) part of the remark on the U.S. side seems to imply that the Chinese government suppressed a just

	<u>wrongly—[as] an expression of values which represent their most cherished beliefs, stemming from the American Revolution.”</u> (p.420)	reaction of the U.S. reflected its deeply held values...)(p.415)	demonstration. This criticism was certainly unacceptable to the Chinese government.
	<u>The quest for a new phase of cooperation would not be able to avoid human rights issues altogether. Deng’s query of who should initiate a new dialogue was, in the end, answered by Deng himself, who began a dialogue over the fate of a single individual: a dissident named Fang Lizhi.</u> (pp.427-428)	Complete deletion. (p.423)	The issue of “human rights” and the dissident Fang Mengzhi (who sought political asylum in the US Embassy in Beijing after the Tiananmen events) were too sensitive an issue to the Chinese government at the time.
Modulations	“ <u>Tiananmen</u> ” as the heading of Chapter 15 and “Tiananmen” or alternatively, such other expressions as “ <u>Tiananmen Square</u> ”, “ <u>the tragedy at Tiananmen</u> ”, “ <u>the Tiananmen crisis</u> ”, “ <u>the violence in Tiananmen Square</u> ”, “ <u>the Tiananmen protest</u> ”, “ <u>the Tiananmen [Square] demonstrations</u> ”, etc., on more than a dozen occasions within the text, in referring to the violent events at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on 4 June 1989	The heading of the chapter was replaced by “ <u>美國的窘境</u> ” ( <u>American Dilemmas</u> ), which was the subtitle of Section One of the chapter in the original, whereas within the text all ST uses of “Tiananmen” and the like were either modulated or changed or replaced (if not deleted altogether) by such expressions as “ <u>天安門事件</u> ” ( <u>the Tiananmen event</u> ), “ <u>1989 年春夏之前(之後)</u> ” ( <u>prior to/after the late-spring and early summer of 1989</u> ), “ <u>1989 年事件</u> ” ( <u>the 1989 event</u> ), or “ <u>1989 年</u> ” ( <u>in 1989</u> ).	These TT expressions are all expressions officially adopted or allowed by the Chinese government, and other ways of referring to the same event such as those in the ST are not permitted.
	...they could not understand why the United States took umbrage at an event that had injured no American material interest and <u>for which China claimed no validity outside its own territory.</u> (p.422)	他們不理解為什麼美國對這樣一個不傷及如何美國實質利益，而且中國認為別國無權干涉的事件如此憤怒。(...they did not understand why the United States was so angry at such an event that did not injure any American material interest, and <u>an event which, China believed, other countries had no mandate to interfere with</u> )(p.418)	This is either a deliberate, politically-minded translatorial intervention or a seemingly careless mis-decoding of the ST message by the decoder.
	Washington was unwilling to turn over <u>a dissident espousing liberal democracy to face what was certain to be harsh retribution.</u> (p.429)	而華盛頓不願意交出這位持不同政見者，由中國政府自己出處理。(And <u>Washington was unwilling to turn over this dissident for China to handle for themselves</u> )(p.424)	The discrepancy between the TT and its ST reveals what may or may not be tolerated by the Chinese (self-)censor.
	I could go through with the ceremony and be seen <u>as toasting those the press was labelling “the butchers of Tiananmen Square.”</u> or refuse to toast and put in jeopardy the whole purpose of the trip. (p.435)	我可以參加祝酒， <u>留下碰杯的照片</u> ，也可以拒絕祝酒，從而危及此次訪問的整個目標。(I could took part in the toast and <u>leave behind pictures of toasting</u> , or refuse to toast and jeopardize the whole purpose of the trip) (p.427)	The faithful reproduction of such language as “the butchers of Tiananmen Square”, “the June 4 crackdown” and “the Tiananmen massacre” is absolutely prohibited in the PRC.

Of course, more could be said in discussing why and how those omissions and changes in the above table came about the way they did. For example, by examining the translation of the ST sentence in the first row of the above table (i.e. “Students in Beijing and other cities took the opportunity to voice their frustration with corruption, inflation, press restrictions, university conditions, and the persistence of Party ‘elders’ ruling informally behind the scene” translated as “北京和其他城市的學生利用這一機會表達他們的不滿.....”, meaning: “Students in Beijing and other cities made use of this opportunity to express their dissatisfaction”), one might also want to say that this drastic dilution of ST meaning had derived from censorship because the government would not tolerate that kind of pungent

language directed at the ruling Party and government in general, let alone the ‘ill’ insinuation and criticism directed at Deng Xiaoping and his comrades who were at the very core of leadership within the Party. What was more, since Kissinger was ‘an old friend of Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese people’, how could he have said anything like that? If he did appear to the Chinese people to have said that, then there would be the more likely implication (than if such a thing had been said by a ‘non-friend’ or ‘enemy’) that Deng Xiaoping’s holding on to power was indeed one of the causes for student demonstrations and protests at Tiananmen Square. This was certainly not something the Chinese government and Deng’s supporters would want to see.

However, partly because of the limitation of space and partly because it would seem sufficient enough for its purpose, this paper will content itself with the analytical comments made in the “My comment” boxes of the above table. Brief as they may seem, those comments and analyses hope to have provided some kind of model for describing and discussing the whys and hows of the various translational omissions and modulations found in the Chinese version of Kissinger’s *On China*.

In addition to situations like the above, similar cases also exist out of the translator’s or publisher’s ‘personal’ considerations. Take for example the case of Salman Rushdie’s novel, *The Satanic Verses*. As widely known, after its publication in 1988 the book was thrown into a major controversy when the Islamic world accused it of blasphemy. To this day the publishing and purchase of the book remain illegal in most countries with a predominantly Muslim population. Though the author of the book has not been physically harmed, despite a *fatwā* calling on all good Muslims to kill him and his publishers, others connected with the work have been victims of violent attacks: A Japanese translator was stabbed to death; an Italian translator was seriously injured in an assassination attempt; a Turkish translator became the intended target of a related attack; and a Norwegian publisher was nearly killed. Against this background, and also presumably out of deference to, or mere fear of, the sensibilities of Muslims, including those (some 30 million-strong) in China, no Chinese individuals or collectives have even attempted to translate or publish the novel. Obviously, what is at work here seems to be the translator’s, editor’s and publisher’s own censorship, in compliance with their understanding of the general social and political situation or in line with their anticipation of possible governmental censorship in the areas concerned.

In sum, if one examines developments over the past 60 years or so of the PRC, one would find that the most important reasons underpinning censorship and/or self-censorship are those of a political and cultural nature. Of course, the founding of the ‘socialist’ state of the PRC was a political event in the first place. In order for the socialist system of this new state to first survive and then develop, the State and the Party have had to ensure that all activities in the country, including that of translation, are serving the interests of the country as their supreme goal – any that did not comply with this goal, for example in literature or in the translation of literature, would be censored. On the other hand, the activity of translation is not merely a political activity. By definition, translation is most importantly a cultural, or rather a “cross-cultural transfer”, “an intercultural activity” or “intercultural action” (Vermeer 2004; Wolf 1997; Nord 1997). Therefore, while emphasis is placed on the political agendas behind translation, its cultural or intercultural, literary and artistic value must not be neglected.

The importance of this may have been understood very well by the top leaders of the Chinese government, even in the early days of the PRC. For example, at a meeting in 1959 with the editors of the English language journal *Chinese Literature* in Beijing, which specialised in the publication of English translations of Chinese literature, Chen Yi, the then Vice-Premier of the State Council of the PRC talked about the close correlations between politics and the artistic value of a literary (as well as translational) activity. He said that Art as expressed in a work of literature or translation “is a supreme form of politics. It is also the most powerful form of ideology ... The more artistic a work is, the more likely it will be able to realise its political agendas. On the other hand, the less artistic value a work carries, the less likely it can achieve its political goals” (qtd. in Ni 2011: 29; *my translation*).

Chen’s discussion of the relationship between politics and the artistic significance of (literary) translation may not be quite the same as “the (cultural) politics of translation” speculated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1998), who considers translation as an important approach in pursuing the larger feminist agenda of achieving women’s ‘solidarity’. However, there is something shared between Chen and Spivak: they both recognise that translation serves a political or cultural-political purpose. Hence, in the final analysis, the act of translation is an act of (cultural) politics. It is therefore appropriate for our discussion to focus on the cultural-political dimensions of translational censorship

in the PRC and see how Chinese politics and culture have interacted in censorial operations on the activity of translation through the three periods of development of the PRC.

#### 4. CULTURAL-POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF TRANSLATIONAL CENSORSHIP IN THE PRC

**FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE PRC TO THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION** In the early years after the PRC was founded, foreign (particularly Western) translation was heavily censored. This was due in part to the influence of a 'fraternal' Soviet Union (at least before close China-Soviet ties began to crumble towards the end of the 1950s), as well as a political, ideological and moral need for the new-born socialist state to survive and develop. This Soviet influence in the early years took three main forms. Firstly, the translation of Soviet Russian literature was prioritised and became the most valued type of translation during this period. According to statistics provided by Chen Zhongyi (2009), from 1949 to 1959 a total of more than 3,500 literary pieces from the Soviet Union were translated and published with a circulation of more than 82 million copies, amounting to over 60% of the total amount of translated foreign literature across the country. Secondly, the translation of literature from other socialist, East European countries, as well as 'weaker and capitalism-oppressed' nations in other parts of the world, was also given much attention because this was the line taken by the socialist-communist model of the Soviet Union. Finally, Chinese literary criticism and, by extension translation criticism, during those early years basically followed the Soviet model, that of a Marxist-Leninist materialist realism aimed at eradicating the 'bad influence' of bourgeois works of the West and making translated foreign literature serve the needs of the Chinese people. In order to achieve this, and to enable the newly-established socialist state to move through the unstable first few years that any new-born system must face, tight government control was naturally expected in its so-called superstructure of society, including of the press and publication.

In contrast to the strong Soviet influence, Western (mainly English and American) literature was confined to a rather limited scope. Throughout the 17 years from 1949 to 1966, a mere 460 works of British-American literature were translated. According to Sun Zhili (1996: 3-6), 245 of these were translations English texts and 215 American. They mainly consisted of works by classic authors such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dryden, Milton, Byron, Shelley, Keats and the Brownings; and by such English and American novelists as Defoe, Swift, Fielding, Scott, Austin, Thackeray, Dickens, the Brontë sisters, Eliot, Hardy, Conrad, H. G. Wells and Galsworthy, Allen Poe, Mark Twain, Jack London, Dreiser, Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck and so on. As the political and ideological line upheld by the government and Party was one of the proletariat, of the working class and the peasants, anything that conflicted either directly or indirectly with this proletarian line would definitely not be allowed to be imported and translated, and any attempt to translate such works would be regarded as breaking a translational taboo and would lead to trouble for the translator and/or the publisher. Typical examples of censored and forbidden books included Pearl Buck's *The House of Earth: A Trilogy*, consisting of *The Good Earth*, *Sons* and *A House Divided* (forbidden on political grounds because they arguably vilified the Chinese people, especially the Chinese peasants), George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984* (forbidden on ideological grounds because they bitterly satirised communism) and D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Women in Love* (forbidden on moral grounds because they were considered obscene).

**THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION PERIOD** Events that took place during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) were even more revealing in terms of how cultural politics, through Party-led censorship, affected or prevented the importation of foreign literature into the PRC. This socio-political movement, launched by Party Chairman Mao Zedong with its stated goal being to remove capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society and enforce socialism, was marked by ultra-leftist upheaval in all walks of life, bringing about great damage to the country, not only socially and economically, but also and perhaps worst of all educationally and culturally. As part of this ultra-leftist upheaval, an almost xenophobic resentment ensued against the 'capitalist' West and the 'revisionist' Soviet Union (the Sino-Soviet split in ideology had in the early 1960s turned the two countries from friends into foes) re-enforced the country's guard against subversive, alien culture. During the first few years of

the Cultural Revolution in particular, the Red Guards were so belligerently backed by Mao and his associates, and political and ideological censorship was so severe, that the translation of anything alien was totally out of the question. In fact, the publication of foreign material almost came to a complete standstill - anything that was not considered by the Red Guards to be 'proletarian' was strictly forbidden, and even talking about it publicly would sometimes become a taboo and get people into political trouble.

On the other hand, however, it is also interesting to note that, in spite of strict political intervention in cultural and translation activities and a ban on the importation of 'undesirable' elements of foreign (especially Western) culture, the government allowed the publication of a newspaper called *Reference News* even during the peak years of the Cultural Revolution. First launched in 1931 by the *Xinhua* (New China) News Agency - the Chinese government's official news agency - as a regularly published collection of translated news articles for circulation amongst Party officials above a certain level and upgraded in 1957 to a daily open subscription newspaper with a circulation over 3 million, until the early 1980s *Reference News* was almost the only official channel through which the Chinese public could get information about the outside world. Though basically a collection of news stories from the foreign (mostly Western) media, carefully selected and translated by *Xinhua*, its publication could be regarded as a censorial exemption.

**THE POST-CULTURAL REVOLUTION PERIOD** The Cultural Revolution ended with the downfall of the Gang of Four, who were arrested in October 1976, about a month after Mao's death. The subsequent period is generally referred to as the "Post-Cultural Revolution Period" in China, although it may be further broken down into various sub-stages. For example, as regards the translation of British-American literature, many scholars divide this period into three sub-periods and describe them as the so-called "Defreezing" (1976-1978), "Revival" (1978-1989) and "Flourishing" (1990-2008) periods (Sun *et al* 2009; SHISU 2010). But despite these possible differentiations, events in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution can be broadly described as falling into a continuum. Even the events that happened between 1989 and 1992 were not a restoration of the period during or before the Cultural Revolution, and everything that has happened since the downfall of the Gang of Four is but part of one and the same movement, i.e. that of reform and opening up. The difference between possible sub-stages of this period is not one of character, but one of developmental pace.

Reflective of the irreversible socio-economic opening up and relation was the gradual loosening of the country's restrictions on the import of foreign culture. This was reform of the field of translation followed by an even more liberal government position on translation after paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's 1992 policy talks on continued opening up and reform in China. As a result, translational censorship was relaxed. For example, the ban on works like Pearl Buck's *The House of Earth Trilogy*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984*, D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Women in Love*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, and most works that had been categorised as 'non-translatable', 'bourgeois' or 'anti-communist'/'anti-socialist' and even 'anti-Chinese', was quietly lifted and these works all gradually found their way onto the Chinese translated book market. Meanwhile, almost every one of the three hundred plus publishing houses across the country is now involved in publishing translated works, whilst only a few of them would have been allowed to do so before. Rough statistics on the number of translations of British-American works alone during the post-Cultural Revolution period (1976 to 2008) estimate that over 4,500 British and more than 5,800 American works have been published (Sun *et al* 2009: 2). This suggests that in today's China it would not be difficult to find a Chinese translation of any of the most important foreign literary titles, especially those written in the world's major languages, provided of course that they were of interest to translators and that they fell within the still-existing boundaries of permissible territory, however 'unlimited' this territory may be.

This very last point implies that, in spite of the drastic changes since the end of the Cultural Revolution that have much resulted in the relaxation of censorship, there are also aspects of translational censorship that are change-resistant in the PRC. This is especially proven true by the fact that, even after more than 60 years of development and when the country is said to have entered a very liberal-minded stage in the era of economic globalisation, censorship on translation is still at work.

The following section will further discuss both the changing and unchanging aspects of translational censorship in the PRC.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Censorship (that in the PRC included) as a form of government and non-government (publishers' editorial, and the translator's own) control of incoming foreign information and ideas regulates the activity of translation in various ways: (a) complete blocking or preventing of foreign works from entering a country culminates in 'non-translations', i.e. translations that have never yet been made by any given point in time but whose absence is socio-politically or otherwise significant (as was the case with innumerable foreign, mainly Western, literary pieces which were not allowed to be translated during the ultra-leftist Cultural Revolution period in the PRC); (b) partial blockage (whether government/institution- or translator self-imposed) results in 'partial translations', whereby censorship- or self-censorship-driven omissions, shifts of meaning, or the modulation of overall author-tone necessarily change the intentions of the author (e.g. the PRC versions of Hilary Clinton's *Living History* and Henry Kissinger's *On China*, and Zhu Jiarong's 1998 version of Watanabe's *A Lost Paradise*); and (c) reduced (to zero or near-zero) censorship leads to full, unabridged translations in areas where the relevant source texts seem to fall entirely within the category of 'translatable/importable' foreign literature, defined in turn as being 'harmonious' in relation to existing constitutional laws of the target culture (e.g. translation in the PRC since the end of the Cultural Revolution of most if not all major Western classics from the ancient to the modern times).

It can also be concluded that while censorship in translation is by no means unique to the PRC - all countries or cultures exercise constraint on the importation of foreign literature at one time or another, and for one reason or another, be it political, ideological, moral, religious or otherwise - given the long Chinese history of censorial practices and its current socio-political system, the PRC is among those where literary and translational censorship has been particularly strict and where it has up to this day remained a socio-political and cultural constant though changes (drastic at times since the late 1970s and 1980s) have also taken place over its past 60-odd years of development. The research of this paper finds that the most striking changes within the PRC context seem to have occurred on what used to be branded as 'decadent', 'bourgeois', or morally 'bad', hence 'untranslatable', material (e.g. the works of D.H. Lawrence, Vladimir Nabokov, etc. where complete 'non-translations' of the past have gradually moved through 'partial translations' to 'very faithful' full translations), while the least changes seem to be with censorship in the political and ideological arena. Although many of the politically or ideologically 'untranslatable' works of the past such as Pearl Buck's *The Big Earth* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* are now no longer forbidden and 'faithful' full translations are allowed and have indeed been made, not all works in this area are given the automatic 'go-ahead' for translation, especially if the works address very 'sensitive' issues and topics directly related to the PRC. In this case, the relevant works either must undergo omissions and changes in translation (that is, if they are allowed to be translated in the first place; e.g. Hillary Clinton's *Living History* and Henry Kissinger's *On China*), or they will not be translated at all if they fall into the category of the politically or ideologically 'untranslatable', such as many of the non-orthodox biographies published in English or other languages of contemporary Chinese political figures such as Mao Zedong and people related to him (e.g. Terrill's *Madame Mao*, *The White-boned Demon*, 1992) or non-orthodox stories of any current member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CCP, and books that may give rise to ethical/ethnic problems (e.g. Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*) or material that may be regarded as violating current Chinese laws, etc. But then, just as the works by Buck, Orwell, Nabokov, etc. were barred from translation at one time but unbarred at another, no one could say for certain that this last mentioned situation will remain unchanged forever, although there may forever be censorship and censorship in translation (for better or for worse) in the PRC. And this, in the view of this author, constitutes the dialectics of the dual character, i.e. the changing and unchanging character, of censorship in translation in China, and perhaps in the world beyond China as well.

## NOTES

1. This article derives in part from the research outcome of my projects supported by Hong Kong Baptist University (Project Code: FRG2/11-12/019; FRG1/12-13/039).
2. This Publication Bureau ceased functioning between 1966 and 1982, and then in 1986 was upgraded to the ministerial level of the General Administration of Press and Publication, which has since also shouldered the concurrent responsibilities as the National Copyright Administration of the PRC.
3. The “Three Represents” (三个代表) is a socio-political ideology credited to Jiang Zemin, Chinese Communist Party Chairman (1989-2002), who first introduced his theory in 2000 while on an inspection tour in Guangdong province. He was attempting a comprehensive summary of the Party’s historical experience and how to adapt to new situations and tasks when he stated:

... our party has always won the support of the people because in revolution, construction and reform over the various historical periods, the Party has always represented the developmental needs of China's advanced production capacity, represented the progressive direction of China's advanced culture, and represented the fundamental interests of the broad majority.

In 2002, at the Party Congress, this theory was written into the Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party and becoming a guiding ideology of the Party. Briefly stated, the theory stipulates that the Communist Party of China should be representative to advanced productive forces, advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority.
4. The “Scientific Development Concept” (科學發展觀), sometimes translated as the ‘scientific development perspective’ or the ‘scientific outlook on development’, was put forward in 2003 by Hu Jintao, Chinese Communist Party Chairman (2005-2012), and was added to the Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party in 2007 as one of the guiding socio-economic ideologies of the Party, in the same way as Jiang Zemin’s theory of ‘Three Represents’. Incorporating sustainable development, social welfare, a humanistic society, increased democracy, and ultimately the creation of a harmonious society, such a scientific approach is said to be effective in minimising conflict amongst different interest groups in society in order to maintain stability on the national level, in turn fostering economic and cultural advancement.
5. The Gang of Four was a name given by Mao to the political faction composed of Mao’s wife Jiang Qing and three of her close associates, all of them top officials within the Chinese Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution, who, after their arrest in the aftermath of Mao’s death, were charged with treacherous crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Gang was officially blamed by the Chinese government and Party for the worst excesses of the political, ideological, economic and societal chaos that the country was plunged into, although it remains unclear which major decisions during the Cultural Revolution were made by Mao himself and carried out by the Gang, and which were of their own planning.

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