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(Self-)censorship and the Translator-Author Relationship: The Case of Full Translation, Partial Translation, and Non-translation in the Chinese Context*

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Abstract: This paper studies the translator-author relationship against the backdrop of governmental and non-governmental (publishing, editorial, and the translator’s own) censorship in present-day China. I distinguish three types of translator-author relationship affected by censorship and/or self-censorship, resulting in three categories of translations, i.e. full translations, partial translations and non-translations. The several relationships described will adhere to the traditional concept of translatorial ‘faithfulness’, ‘partial faithfulness’ or ‘unfaithfulness’. Full translatorial ‘faithfulness’ results when the translator is fully committed to his/her author and represents the author as faithfully as s/he possibly can. In this case, the work being translated falls entirely within the category of ‘translatable/importable’ foreign literature, defined in turn as being ‘harmonious’ in relation to existing Chinese constitutional laws. (This category includes translations of all major Western classics from ancient to modern times.) The second type of relationship culminates in ‘partial translations’, whereby omissions, shifts of meaning, or the modulation of overall author-tone necessarily change the intentions of the author, so as to avoid potential conflict with government censors. Typical examples in this second category include the partly censored PRC versions of Hillary Clinton’s Living History and Henry Kissinger’s On China. The final category of translator-author relationship involves prolepsis, i.e. the translator’s anticipatory relationship with a work that has not been – and may not be – translated under existing conditions. Whether or not, in fact, such a ‘non-/zero translator-author’ relationship eventually can emerge, thus converting non-translations into translations or partial translations, is worthy of further research. On this basis, the paper offers a theoretical framework for discussions about how various types of (self-)censorship impact the translator-author relationship and the activity of translation within the context of the PRC.

Keywords: (self-)censorship, translator-author relationship, full translation, partial translation, non-translation, PRC context

1. Introduction

In discussing what paths were open for the translator to bring two utterly unconnected people together, i.e. the SL author and the TL reader, the 19th-century German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher made an oft-quoted remark by saying that “[t]he translator either (1) disturbs the writer as little as possible and moves the reader in his direction, or (2) disturbs the reader as little as possible and moves the writer in his direction” (Schleiermacher 1813, in Robinson 2006: 229). In a sense, what Schleiermacher had in mind was a relationship in translation involving what the translator does or can do to their author and/or reader; or how the translator is related to their author and/or reader. This triangular relationship can be depicted diagrammatically like in Fig. 1. What Schleiermacher did not say, however, was that whether to bring the author to the reader, or conversely the reader to the author, was not always up to the translator. Apart from the translator’s own wish or will in deciding whom to move and whom to leave in peace, there are often such overall determining factors in translation as ‘ideology’, ‘poetics’ and ‘patronage’, as Lefevere would describe them (2004: 11-40), that the translator has first to take into consideration. This triad of conditions on translation reveals the very politics of translation in that any translatorial act is necessarily determined or affected by a whole series of factors resident both within and without the agency of the translator, ranging from the ideology and the poetics of translation to the
patronage under which the translator undertakes his or her work. In this regard, censorship (and self-censorship for that matter) in translation is among those factors that would affect and impact the work of the translator and the various types of relationship involved in the process of translation.

Fig. 1: Triangular Relationship Between Translator, Author and Reader

Rather than encompassing all types of relationship, such as those between translator and author, translator and reader, and author and reader, which translational (self-)censorship may impact in one way or another, this paper will only focus on that of the translator-author relationship. The reason for this focus is that the translator-author relationship undeniably takes core position in the translation process. In the discussion, I will mainly refer to developments in present-day China for illustrative examples on how various types of (self-)censorship in the country impacted and may continue to impact translatorial action and the translator-author relationship, and what insights may be thrown on an understanding of this translator-author relationship in broader terms.

2. Impact of (self-)censorship on the translator-author relationship

As Escolar observed, quite rightly, “translation and censorship mark opposite points on the spectrum of signification: if translation works to raze boundaries between text and reader, censorship strives to raise them” (Escolar 2011: 1). In other words, whilst translation tries to introduce the foreign to a given society so that its intellectual horizon is broadened and culture enriched by the labour of other nations, censorship is employed as the tool of the powerful to complicate and oftentimes prevent that introduction, for fear that the introduced foreign is subversive or potentially subversive to the power of the powerful at home. Of course, no government or people in power would prohibit the translation of material that they would consider ‘harmless’. In other words, they would allow translation to take place if its eventual outcome was rid of what they would consider ‘subversive’ or ‘potentially subversive’. Such a ‘harmless’ or ‘non-subversive’ translation would obviously depend either on the source text (ST) being judged by the censors as ‘harmless’ or ‘non-subversive’ in nature, in which case the translator would be allowed to follow the footsteps of the author faithfully; or on the target text (TT) being made ‘harmless’ or ‘non-subversive’ through translatorial invention in one way or another. Along this line of thought, it may be arguably
true to say that the entire concern of censorship and translation is a concern about how censorship would impact the translator-author relationship.

Very often this impact on the translator-author relationship would point to the fact that where there is censorship on translation or censorial manipulation in the translation process there is decision to be made by the translator so as to: (i) whether or not to undertake to translate a given author; (ii) whether or not to translate a given author wholesale; and/or (iii) whether or not to make modulations on the author being translated and how to make these modulations. In the case of (i), the decision would result in either translations (in whatever sense of the word) or non-translations. In the case of (ii), the result would either be for the translation to be ‘fully’ made where every part of the ST would have a correspondent part in the TT, or to be only ‘partly’ equivalent to the ST where there would occur omissions, alterations of meaning and/or changes of overall tone of the source message. In the case of (iii), modulations of some kind would be a must whether or not the translation was ‘partial’ or ‘full’ because even the ‘fullest’ translation could not be an identical copy of the original without some form of ‘deviation’ or even ‘distortion’, let alone translations which would fall into the ‘partly’ equivalent category. And so, in one way or another, all these different categories of translation (including full and partial translation) and non-translation would closely relate to the three types of translator-author relationship affected by censorship and/or self-censorship that we have had in mind in this discussion (more to follow on this argument further below in Section 4).

3. Major periods and features of censorial practices in the PRC

Roughly, I follow the usual line of division and distinguish three main periods of censorial practices in the PRC, i.e. the early Pre-Cultural Revolution Period (1949-1966); the Cultural Revolution Period (1966-1976); and the Post-Cultural Revolution Period (1976-present). Although different ways were suggested, especially in regard to how to delineate the Post-Cultural Revolution Period as will be further discussed below, I will basically keep to this lesser nuanced view of the various periods of development, as the main focus of discussion here is not on how to periodize history, but rather how translational censorship has operated in the given periods of development in the PRC.

During the Pre-Cultural Revolution Period, especially in the early years after the PRC was founded, the translation of foreign (particularly Western) literature 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 fall towards the end of the 1950s), and in part to a political, ideological and moral need for the new-born socialist state to survive and develop. What was allowed at the time was basically the translation of Soviet Russian literature and literature from other socialist, East European countries or from the ‘weaker and capitalism-oppressed’ nations in other parts of the world. As the political and ideological line upheld by the Chinese government and Communist 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.

Events that took place during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) were even more
revealing about the country’s censorship. As part of the ultra-leftist upheaval, an almost xenophobic resentment ensued against the ‘capitalist’ West and this time also the ‘revisionist’ former Soviet Union re-enforced the country’s guard against ‘subversive’, ‘alien’ culture. During the first few years of the Cultural Revolution in particular, political and ideological censorship was so severe that the translation of anything alien was totally out of the question. In fact, the translation and publication of foreign material almost came to a complete standstill - anything that was considered by the Red Guards to be ‘anti-proletarian’ was strictly prohibited.

The Cultural Revolution ended in October 1976 and the time since has often been referred to as the ‘Post-Cultural Revolution’ period. In concrete terms, as indicated above, more nuanced division of the period is possible. For example, as regards the translation of British-American literature, many scholars divided it into three sub-periods, designating them as the “Defreezing” (1976-1978), “Revival” (1978-1989) and “Flourishing” (1990-present) periods (Sun, 2009; SHISU 2010). However, despite such possible differentiations, events in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution can nonetheless be broadly described as constituting a continuum. Even the events that happened between 1989 and 1992 were not a restoration of the time during or before the Cultural Revolution, and everything that has happened since the end of the Cultural Revolution, especially since late December 1978 (when the convention of the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] officially marked the abandoning of the country’s former ‘closed-door’ policies), is but part of one and the same movement, i.e. that of reform and opening up to the outside world. The difference between possible sub-stages of this ‘Post-Cultural Revolution’ period is not one of character, but one of developmental pace.

One of the most important features of the ‘Post-Cultural Revolution’ period in the field of translation has been the gradual loosening of the country’s restrictions on the import of foreign material, which began from the end of 1978 and was followed in the early 1990s by an even more liberal government position on what would previously have been strictly forbidden foreign literature. For example, the previous ban on such works as Pearl Buck’s *The House of Earth: A Trilogy* (banned on political grounds because they arguably uglify the Chinese people, especially the Chinese peasants), George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* and *1984* (banned on ideological grounds because they bitterly satirise communism) and D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and *Women in Love* as well as Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* (banned on moral grounds), and many other works that had been categorised as ‘un-translatable’, was lifted and all found their way into the Chinese translated book market.

However, it is also arguably true that, given its history and current system, the end of the Cultural Revolution did not put an end to translational censorship in the absolute sense. Despite the dramatic changes over the past 30 years or more, the PRC still maintains the practice of literary and translational censorship, at least in certain subject areas. The most notable areas subject to active (translational) censorship include texts that would be branded as ‘anti-PRC’, ‘anti-Chinese government’ and ‘anti-top Chinese leadership’ texts, and texts on Trias Politica-style democracy, the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, Tibetan independence, Taiwan independence, ethnic conflicts, violence instigation, local protests, all forms of pornography and current events that are of a strongly sensitive nature. In fact, this could be defined as the unchanging dimension of censorship (in China and in broad terms) and everything about this unchanging dimension of (translational) censorship was preconditioned by the Chinese socio-political system. Among the most
fundamental forces that precondition Chinese censorship on translation and publication has been that of the Chinese Constitution under which the country’s Ordinance on Publishing, i.e. “Regulations on the Administration of Publication” (出版管理條例), was enacted. Articles 25 and 26 of the Ordinance bear directly on China’s censorship policies. These clauses cover all major subject areas over which censorship may be exercised: politics, ideology, culture, national security and interests, ethnicity, morality and so on.

The kind of materials mentioned previously which would fall into the ever-persevering category of ‘un-translatable’ or ‘un-importable’, ‘anti-PRC” and ‘anti-Chinese government’ texts, and so would be most likely censored out. Therefore, under the force of these above government regulations and censorial measures, such materials would not be able to be exposed to Chinese readers either in the language in which they were originally composed or in translated form in Chinese. Though it may be possible for individual Chinese readers to access them in some way or another, or for their translations into Chinese to appear outside of the Chinese Mainland including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, or as underground work in the PRC, they would remain as ‘non-translations’ to at least the reading public within the PRC.

4. From non-translation to partial translation to full translation

In terms of the translator-author relationship, the above described changing vs. unchanging aspects of censorship/self-censorship would entail a dynamics which underpins the meaning of the translator’s faithfulness or unfaithfulness to their author. Strict censorship in translation at a given time, for example during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, may mean ‘non-faithfulness’ or ‘zero faithfulness’ to a given author because the given author would be censored as completely forbidden to be translated and there would be no translation, let alone translatorial faithfulness to talk about in the first place. This is what I would categorise as a case of absolute ‘non-translation’.

By definition, a ‘non-translation’ is a translation that has never yet been made but whose absence would be significant because it is the direct result of strict (self-)censorship. If a ‘translation’ that has not yet been made, not because it has been prohibited by (self-)censorship, but because it would not seem to be of interest to any potential readership in the non-censorial sense or simply because no one is aware of the availability of a given ‘translatable’ ST, then such a non-existent translation would be called a ‘zero translation’, and not a ‘non-translation’. As I see it, the concept of a ‘non-translation’ involves a proleptic translatorial relationship or proleptic translatorial faithfulness/unfaithfulness to the author. In other words, it involves the translator’s anticipatory relationship with a work that has not been – and may not be – translated under existing conditions. Whether or not, in fact, a physical ‘translator-author’ relationship eventually can emerge from such a ‘non-/’zero’ relationship, thus converting a non-translation into a translation (either ‘full’ or ‘partial’), is worthy of serious scholarly attention in TS and in the censorship studies field.

On the other hand, however, when there is less strict censorship or when the same strict type of censorship is less strictly implemented, for example during the current, post-Cultural Revolution period in the PRC, the translator’s faithfulness to the author would not be a proleptic phenomenon anymore, but a ‘tangible’ entity, and as such it may allow a variety of interpretations: Unmarked, full translatorial faithfulness results when the translator is fully
committed to their author and represents the author as faithfully as they possibly can. In this case, the work being translated falls entirely within the category of ‘translatable and importable’ foreign literature, defined in turn as being ‘harmonious’ in relation to existing Chinese constitutional laws. For example, all Western classical works, i.e. major works of literature, science (social science included) and philosophy from the Western world up to the 20th century, seem to have been made available in Chinese translations, many of them even having multiple, fully rendered versions, e.g. the innumerable translations and retranslations of Shakespeare including those by such famous, 20th-century translators as Liang Qichao (梁啟超), Lin Shu (林紓), Tian Han (田漢), Zhu Shenghao (朱生豪), Bian Zhilin (卞之琳), Liang Shiqu (梁實秋), Shi Xianrong (施鹹榮), Yu Bufan (俞步凡) and Fang Ping (方平).

Other types of the translator-author relationship culminate in what have been described above as ‘partial’ translations. Within the interpretive framework of this paper, partial translations refer to translations that contain omissions, shifts of meaning, or modulations of overall author-tone that necessarily change the intentions (however partly) of the author, so as to avoid potential conflict with government censors. Typical examples in this category include the partly censored PRC versions of Hillary Clinton’s Living History, Mandla Langa’s short story A Gathering of Bald Men, Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita, and David Lodge’s Small World (Chan 2007; Chang 2008). More detailed illustrations of how exactly such ‘partial translations’ have operated in the PRC context will follow further on below.

For various reasons, one of them moral, ‘deliberate translatorial intervention’ (to borrow a term from Bastin 2012) or self-censorship in its narrow sense, i.e. censoring by the translator him/herself, has often also been actively at work in the PRC. For example, back in the late 1990s, when scholar Zhu Jiarong was asked to translate A Lost Paradise, by Japanese writer Junichi Watanabe (渡邊淳一), into Chinese, she refused unless the publisher would agree to her terms: Omit its explicit sexual content. That was because “[a]s a college teacher, 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). Though this position of Zhu’s changed with the change of time and the overall social atmosphere in the country and in 2010 an unabridged, fully-made re-translation was made, Zhu’s earlier version, i.e. the one made in 1998, was a typical example of how the translator’s self-censorship operated in effecting a translation.

As touched upon in Section 2 above, the issue of censorship and translatorial intervention/self-censorship is often an issue concerning decision making by the translator over whether a given ST is ‘translatable’ (i.e. whether it is allowed to be translated under a given government censorial policy), or whether a ‘translatable’ text is to be translated ‘fully’ or only ‘partially’, and how ‘fully’ or ‘partially’ it is to be translated. Here, the concept of ‘full translation’ must be understood to be in close correlation with that of ‘full translatorial faithfulness’, whilst ‘partial translation’ that of ‘partial translatorial faithness’ and ‘non-translation’ that of ‘non-translatorial faithfulness’; and vice versa. Note that the concepts under discussion here of ‘full’ vs. ‘partial’ vs. ‘non-’ translations, or ‘full’ vs. ‘partial’ vs. ‘non-’ translatorial faithfulness, are only to be set within the context involving (self-)censorship or censorship-related translatorial intervention/ manipulation, and on a relative basis. Whether a translation is ‘fully’ or ‘partly’ or not at all made, or whether it is made with ‘full’ or ‘partial’ or ‘zero’ translatorial faithfulness in the general sense, i.e. in the sense that it does not explicitly involve censorship, is not the concern of this paper.
In this connection, it may be emphasised that thorough understanding of the dynamics of the translator-author relationship as affected by (self-)censorship could be effectively assisted by an understanding of the dynamic relations, or rather, the dynamic movements, between the various forms of translations, i.e. ‘non-translations’, ‘partial translations’ and ‘full translations’. Developments in translation in China, especially in the times since the founding of the PRC, were filled with significant cases of how, under the force of censorship, ‘non-translations’ came about, and how, with the change of times, some of the former ‘non-translations’ moved into the realm of ‘translations’ including ‘partial’ and/or ‘full’ translations, and so on.

Of course, it must also be emphasised that the partly unchanging character of censorship intrinsic to the current system of the PRC would mean an unchanging status of some of the ‘non-translations’. For example, as noted previously, those foreign texts as would be branded as ‘anti-PRC’, ‘anti-Chinese government’, ‘anti-current PRC political system’ and ‘anti-top Chinese leadership’, as well as texts on current events that are of a highly sensitive nature (political, religious, moral, etc.) and all kinds of pornographic material, would absolutely remain in the category of ‘non-translations’. Such typical ‘non-translations’ include Ross Terrill’s Madame Mao, The White-boned Demon (1992) and Li Zhisui’s The Private Life of Chairman Mao (1996), Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses (an absolute ‘non-translation’ on religious and ethical grounds in China), books on the 1989 Tiananmen Square events.

On the other hand, however, there are also those aspects of Chinese censorship that may change with the times and culminate in conversions of non-translations to translations. Some of the best-known ‘non-translations’ which turned into ‘translations’ (‘partial’ and/or ‘full’) included the above-mentioned Pearl Buck’s Nobel Prize winner trilogy of The Good Earth, Sons and A House Divided, D. H. Lawrence’s Lady Chatterley’s Lover and Women in Love, George Orwell’s Animal Farm and 1984, Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita, etc. It is worth noting, though, that Buck’s and Lawrence’s novels became ‘non-translations’ only with the proclamation of the PRC in 1949 – they had in fact been allowed to be translated into Chinese before. In other words, what was involved here was not a case of straightforward movement from ‘non-translations’ to ‘translations’, but rather, one from ‘translations’ to ‘non-translations’ and then from ‘non-translations’ to ‘translations’ again.

The following table presents a few titles (taken from among many hundreds of translated/non-translated foreign literature in the PRC) and is indicative of the movements or non-movements between ‘non-translations’ and ‘translations’, or between ‘translations’ and ‘non-translations’ and/or back to ‘translations’, as impacted by censorship within the Chinese context. What should be re-emphasised, however, is that the various concepts presented in the table, as elsewhere throughout this paper, i.e. ‘full’, ‘partial’ and ‘non-’ translation, are all only relative concepts. Just as ‘full translations’ are never absolutely ‘full’ or identical to their STs, so are there different degrees of ‘partiality’ in what is called a ‘partial’ translation. In the same vein, the meaning of ‘non-translations’ may also vary with the perspective from which it is viewed. For any part or portion of a work that has not been translated can, in the broad sense, be called a non-translation, so much so that any ‘partial translation’ is in fact a translation that contains ‘non-translations’, or translational ‘omissions’ in the traditional sense.
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<th>ST</th>
<th>Pre-PRC context</th>
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<td>Translations</td>
<td>Non-translations</td>
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<td>Partial translations</td>
<td>Full translations</td>
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<td>The Good Earth (Pearl Buck, 1931)</td>
<td>Wu Lifu (伍蠡甫, abridged translation, 1932)</td>
<td>(Between 1949-1980s, no new translations were allowed to be made, nor were those pre-1949 translations allowed to be republished or reprinted in the PRC.)</td>
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<td>Ma Zhongshu (馬仲殊譯, edited translation, 1934)</td>
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<td>Zhang Wanli and Zhang Tiesheng (張萬里・張鐵笙譯, 1933)</td>
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<td>You Chiwu (由稚吾[羅致]譯, 1936)</td>
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<td>Lady Chatterley’s Lover (D. H. Lawrence, 1928)</td>
<td>Rao Shuyi (饒述一譯, 1936)</td>
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<td>Animal Farm (George Orwell, 1945)</td>
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<td>Lolita (Vladimir Nabokov, 1955)</td>
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<td>Living History (Hillary Clinton, 2003)</td>
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<td>On China (Henry Kissinger, 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madame Mao, The White-boned</td>
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<td>(Translation not allowed under current conditions)</td>
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In the narrow sense, on the other hand, a ‘non-translation’ is confined to referring to a separate, non-translated entity, and not to a component part of another work that has been censored and not translated, whilst a full translation refers to one that contains no major censorship-motivated omissions or changes of ST content. Consequently, what warrants the greatest attention by the censorship researcher would be the middle link, i.e. that of ‘partial translations’. Specifically speaking, it would be the omissions, additions and/or changes of ST meaning or author intention found in a given TT that had been allowed to be made under the existing censoring conditions of the PRC that would be most interesting.

Take for example the translation 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 it 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 explicitly clear whether the censorship was a deliberate governmental censorship or one by the publisher, the editor and even the translators themselves, or perhaps a combination of all elements. Whatever nature it was, the translation published by the CTTIC Press in Beijing was not a ‘full’ but a ‘partial’ translation, i.e. one with arguably extensive omissions and changes of the author’s intentions where politically sensitive issues were involved.

An overall comparison of the TT against its ST reveals, for example, that everything concerning the issue of the 1989 Tiananmen was either completely deleted or modulated. 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). In other chapters, similar omissions or changes were also made. The following discussion of a few examples culled from various pages of the book gives a more concrete idea of how those omissions and modulations came about under censorial or self-censorial operations involving the translation of On China. For clarity’s sake, the discussion is divided into two parts, one on omissions and the other on modulations. Each example comprises an ST in English and its TT in Chinese plus a back-translation into English where the TT is a non-translation, followed by this author’s commentary on the TT:

**Part I: Omissions**

- **ST** (my underline)
  We could not look the other way when it came to human rights or political reforms… (p.415)

  **TT** (my underline)
涉及政治改革問題時，我們不能視而不見……（We could not look without seeing when it came to political reforms…）(p.411)

**Commentary**
In the eyes of the Chinese government, the use of the term “Human rights” by Western governments is often their pretext to interfere with China’s internal affairs. As such, the term has become a hyper-sensitive political jargon within the PRC context, so that more often than not it will disappear in translations, as is the case with the above-cited TT.

- **ST (my underline)**
The cooperation Mao encouraged was not limited to Asian issues. With no trace of irony, Mao encouraged U.S. military involvement in the Middle East to counter the Soviets—exactly the type of “imperialist aggression” that Chinese propaganda had traditionally thundered against. (p138)

**TT (my underline)**
毛澤東所鼓勵的合作還不只局限於亞洲問題。 (p.279) (The cooperation Mao encouraged was not limited to Asian issues. ...)

**Commentary**
As indicated by the author’s implied comment within the underlined part, there involved a great irony in the Chinese leader’s position. This kind of irony is of course not welcome to the Chinese government or the Chinese people, hence the entire phase had to be deleted from the TT.

- **ST (my underline)**
In 1986, when conservative critics blamed Hu for indecisiveness in the face of student demonstrations, he was replaced as General Secretary by Zhao Ziyang, another protégé of Deng [Xiaoping], while remaining a member of the ruling Politburo. (p.409)

**TT**
1986年趙紫陽接替胡耀邦任總書記後，胡耀邦依然是政治局委員。 (In 1986, ... Zhao took over from Hu [Yaobang] as General Secretary whilst Hu remained a member of the Political Bureau)(p. 405)

**Commentary**
Such descriptors as “conservative critics”, “protégés of Deng” and “ruling (Politburo)” do not comply with the political terminology officially used or permitted to be used in the PRC. Besides, the official Party position on different opinions, approaches or political lines within the Party is that they are never and have never been differences between the ‘conservatives’ and ‘(radical) reformists’ (as are often so called by the West), but differences between the ‘correct’ and the ‘incorrect’ line within the CCP. Therefore, if one wanted to get across the meaning of “when conservative critics blamed Hu for indecisiveness in the face of student demonstrations”, the ST sentence would have to be rephrased into something like “when those who hold the politically correct line within the party criticised Hu for not being firm enough in the face of student demonstrations”. As it is, it is surely no ‘translatable’, hence deleted from the TT altogether.

**Part II: Modulations**

- **ST (my underline)**
The China I saw on this occasion had lost the self-assurance of my previous visits. (pp.421-p.422)

**TT (my underline)**
此次訪問，我看到了中國心態上的變化。 (p.417) (My back-translation: On this visit, I saw...)

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changes in the mindset of China)

**Commentary**
The translation involved a generalisation, a translational modulation that seemed to better comply with the censorial line of the Party.

- **ST (my underline)**
  Now that the heirs of Mao were arguing that the age of ideology was over… (p.425)

- **TT (my underline)**
  今天的中國領導人說，意識形態時代已經宣告終結…… (p.421) (*My back-translation: The Chinese leaders of today were saying that the age of ideology was proclaimed over…*)

**Commentary**
Such descriptions of Chinese leaders as “the heirs of Mao” are not considered appropriate in the political language of present-day China.

- **ST (my underline)**
  What happened next was not. Mao intervened by telling Zhou to stop the drafting of what he called a “bullshit communiqué.” (p.131)

- **TT (my underline)**
  接下來發生的情況就出人意料了。毛澤東進行了幹預, 讓周恩來不要再去寫那個公報。 (p.265) (*My back-translation: […] to stop the drafting of] that communiqué.*)

**Commentary**
The ST phrase “bullshit communiqué” was changed to “that communiqué”. For presumably in the translator’s view a faithful reproduction of “bullshit” in Chinese would seem inappropriate, because its being put within quotation marks in the ST indicates direct speech and yet it would be doubtful whether Mao had actually used such coarse language on such an important occasion.

- **ST (my underline)**
  [According to recent Chinese historical accounts, Zhou had been specifically instructed by Mao] to “brag” that “although all under the heaven is in great chaos, the situation is wonderful.” (p.124)

- **TT (my underline)**
  根據近年來中國出版的歷史文獻, 是毛澤東特意指示周恩來要說“天下大亂，形势大好”。 (p.248) (*My back-translation: … to say …*)

**Commentary**
Such words as ‘brad’ carry rather pejorative connotations. It would be rather ‘un-communist’ for a communist leader to ‘brag’ or ‘boast’ about anything, hence the need to change the negative ‘brag’ to the neutral or neutral-positive ‘say’.

- **ST (my underline)**
  … But the two Communist autocrats were not destined to cooperate easily. (p.57)

- **TT (my underline)**
  不過這兩位共產黨的領袖注定不會輕易合作 (*My back-translation: … but the two Communist leaders were not destined to cooperate easily*) (p.105)

**Commentary**
The Chinese government would certainly not regard their leaders as ‘autocrats’!

- **ST (my underline)**
…to eliminate domestic opposition to Party rule … (p.73)

**TT (my underline)**

……消除國民黨在大陸殘餘的反動勢力…… (My back-translation: …to eliminate the remnants of reactionary forces of Kuomintang or the Nationalist Party…) (p.139)

**Commentary**

‘Domestic opposition’ was too weak a name for the Chinese Communists to use in describing “the remnants of reactionary forces of the Kuomintang”, and must therefore be turned into this usual descriptor, i.e. “反動勢力” (the reactionary forces [the KMT]).

Needless to say, the omissions and modulations/changes made to *On China*, its Chapter 15 in particular, were in large measure politically motivated and were censorship- and/or self-censorship driven. However, there might also be cases where no political or (self-)censorship-related implications were necessarily involved, e.g. in the possibly unintended misinterpretation of the phrase “… (they could not understand why the United States took umbrage at an event that had injured no American material interest and) for which China claimed no validity outside its own territory” (p.422) translated in the CTTIC version as “……(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” (My back-translation: “… [they did not understand why the United States was so angry at such an event that did not injure any American material interest,] and an event which, China believed, other countries had no mandate to interfere with”) (p.418), for which my suggested, more accurate translation would be “……(……) 而且中國並不宣稱在其他地方也適用的事件(……)”; or in the rendering of “seasoned by a historical memory extending over millennia” (p.422) as “基於 1000 年的歷史記憶的沉澱” (p.417), where “millennia” in the ST became “one thousand years”, an obvious factual inaccuracy that could be hardly attributed to (self-)censorial needs. But detecting translation inaccuracies in the general sense is not the purpose of this paper, so the non-translations or omissions and modulations/changes I have had in mind, including those discussed above, all relate to the effect and impact of censorship and/or self-censorship, hence all carrying political and socio-cultural significations, significations that mean so much more than if those non-translations or omissions and modulations/changes had not occurred in the TT.

5. Conclusion

Censorship, both governmental and non-governmental (i.e. publishers’, editors’, and the translator’s own), has a strong influence over how the translator is related to his/her author, ranging from the non-existence of the translator-author relationship in a non-translation under strictly prohibitive censorship, to relationships of varied degrees of closeness, whereby a close translator-author relationship means full translatorial commitment to the author effecting a full translation whilst a less close translator-author relationship means some partial form of translatorial commitment in the sense that (self-)censorship-driven omissions, shifts of meaning, or modulations of overall author-tone are made to the translation. It must also be pointed out that the impact of (self-)censorship on the translator-author relationship is often of a dynamic nature, such that its impact often changes with the political and ideological climate of a society in which translation takes place.

Examining developments within the PRC context, we may further conclude that in all societies and under all power-structures, where censorship exists as a normal scene,
translational faithfulness or non-faithfulness must necessarily be a reflection of whether and/or how much the translator is committed to his or her author not only in terms of the linguistic dimensions of the text they are translating but, to some extent more importantly, also in terms of the extralinguistic, socio-political and ideological dimensions of their text. And this concern both sits at the core of this paper and must indeed be at the core of current research in TS and censorship studies.

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