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Chinese Avant-garde Fiction in English Translation: Contexts, Paratexts and Texts

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**Chinese Avant-garde Fiction in English Translation:
Contexts, Paratexts and Texts**

**A thesis submitted to Bangor University for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

Changjing Liu

School of Arts, Culture and Language

2021

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.

Yr wyf drwy hyn yn datgan mai canlyniad fy ymchwil fy hun yw'r thesis hwn, ac eithrio lle nodir yn wahanol. Caiff ffynonellau eraill eu cydnabod gan droednodiadau yn rhoi cyfeiriadau eglur. Nid yw sylwedd y gwaith hwn wedi cael ei dderbyn o'r blaen ar gyfer unrhyw radd, ac nid yw'n cael ei gyflwyno ar yr un pryd mewn ymgeisiaeth am unrhyw radd oni bai ei fod, fel y cytunwyd gan y Brifysgol, am gymwysterau deuol cymeradwy.

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Abstract

Focusing on English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction published by UK and US publishers between 1993 and 2003, this thesis studies the translational path of this literary corpus to the Anglophone cultural context in the post-Tiananmen era. Particular attention is given to analysing the strategies employed to recontextualise the translations for the reception of the Anglophone readership, thereby revealing the extent to which the main characteristics of Chinese avant-garde fiction have been rewritten to accord with the ideological patterns pertaining to contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context. In so doing, this thesis aims to highlight the role of ideology and rewriting in the understanding of inter-literary relationships between China and Western countries.

The history of translations of contemporary Chinese literature into English demonstrates that contending ideologies between China and Western countries have fundamentally shaped the inter-literary relationships between them in the contemporary period, and resulted in the predominance of ideological forms of translation of Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context. Under these circumstances, a considerable number of Chinese avant-garde fictional works, which gained their fame in the Chinese cultural context for the pursuit of literary autonomy through radical experimentation with narrative techniques and language, were introduced to Anglophone readers through translation anthologies within a short period of time. This resulted in a boom in English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural context in the post-Tiananmen era.

After outlining two categories of ideological frameworks concerning Chinese avant-garde fiction in translation, with one category more literary focused and the other inclined to convey political connotations, this thesis analyses the processes of translation selection, the paratextual

strategies employed to frame the anthologies, and the approaches that translators used to transfer into English the textual features of Chinese avant-garde fiction. The analysis reveals the tendency to promote a politicised vision of Chinese avant-garde fiction through translation paratexts, to enhance the realistic effects and moral implications of the translated texts, and to standardise the stylistic language of Chinese avant-garde novelists. Consequently, Chinese avant-garde fiction which is characterised by its commitment to aesthetic experimentation and the detachment from socio-political engagements has been rewritten into texts that highlight the oppositional political nature of avant-gardism. These translation shifts affirm that ideological patterns developed during the Cold War had profoundly informed the ways in which Chinese avant-garde fiction was translated into English. A number of translation agents advocating the entry of Chinese avant-garde fiction into the Anglophone cultural system intended to use this aesthetically radical literary genre to challenge Anglophone readers' stereotypical view of contemporary Chinese literature. This study, however, illuminates that the ways in which Chinese avant-garde fiction was translated has resulted in reinforcing Anglophone conceptions of contemporary Chinese writing as texts for societal documentation and the exposure of China's excessive political power.

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List of Abbreviations and Texts

- MZ ST *Mizhou* (迷舟) (1987), Ge Fei, in 收获 *Harvest*, no. 6: 96–106.
- MZ TT Mason *The Lost Boat* (1993), trans. Caroline Mason, in *The Lost Boat: Avant-Garde Fiction from China*, edited by Zhao Henry Y.H., 77–100. London: Wellsweep.
- MZ TT Batt *The Mystified Boat* (2003), trans. Herbert Batt, in *The Mystified Boat: Postmodern Stories from China*, edited by Frank Stewart and Herbert Batt, 142–161. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- QH ST *Qinghuang* (青黄) (1988), Ge Fei, in 收获 *Harvest*, no. 6: 18–27.
- QH TT *Green Yellow* (1998), trans. Eva Shan Chou, in *China's Avant-Garde Fiction: An Anthology*, edited by Jing Wang, 23–42. Durham, London: Duke University Press.
- SCY ST *Shibasui chumen yuanxing* (十八岁出门远行) (1987), Yu Hua, in 北京文学 *Beijing Literature*, no. 1: 4–7.
- SCY TT1 Jones *On the Road at Eighteen* (1996), trans. Andrew Jones, in *The Past and the Punishments: Eight Stories*, edited by Howard Goldblatt, 3–11. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- SCY TT2 Jones *On the Road at Eighteen* (1995), trans. Andrew Jones, in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*, edited by Joseph S.M. Lao and Howard Goldblatt, 485–490. New York: Columbia University Press; also, in its second edition (2007), 439–444.
- SJXD ST *Shujia xiongdi* (舒家兄弟) (1989), Su Tong, in 钟山 *Bell Mountain*, no. 3: 106–24.

- SJXD TT *The Brothers Shu* (1995; 1998), trans. Howard Goldblatt, in *Chairman Mao would not be Amused*, edited by Howard Goldblatt, 25–68. New York: Grove Press; also, in *China's Avant-Garde Fiction: An Anthology*, edited by Jing Wang, 173–211. Durham, London: Duke University Press.
- XG ST *Xugou* (虚构) (1986), Ma Yuan, in *收获 Harvest*, no. 5: 49–69.
- XG TT Sun *Fabrication* (1993), trans. J.Q. Sun, in *The Lost Boat: Avant-Garde Fiction from China*, edited by Zhao Henry Y.H., 101–144. London: Wellsweep.
- XG TT Batt *A Fiction* (2001), trans. Herbert Batt, in *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, and Wind Horses*, edited by Herbert Batt, 23–62. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- XSyz ST *Xianshi yizhong* (现实一种) (1988), Yu Hua, in *北京文学 Beijing Literature*, no. 1: 4–25.
- XSyz TT Wang *One Kind of Reality* (1993), trans. Helen Wang, in *The Lost Boat: Avant-Garde Fiction from China*, edited by Zhao Henry Y.H., 145–184. London: Wellsweep.
- XSyz TT Tai *One Kind of Reality* (1994), trans. Jeanne Tai, in *Running Wild: New Chinese Writers*, edited by David Der-wei Wang, 21–68. New York: Columbia University Press.
- XY ST *Xiangyu* (相遇) (1994), Ge Fei, in *大家 Master*, no. 1: 66–89.
- XY TT Mills *Meetings* (1996), trans. Deborah Mills, in *Abandoned Wine: Chinese Writing Today 2*, edited by Zhao Henry Y.H. and John Cayley, 15–49. London: Wellsweep.

- XY TT Batt *Encounter* (2001), trans. Herbert Batt, in *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, and Wind Horses*, edited by Herbert Batt, 77–104. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- YJBL ST *Yijiubaliu* (一九八六) (1987), Yu Hua, in *收获 Harvest*, no. 6: 62–80.
- YJBL TT Jones *1986* (1998), trans. Andrew Jones, in *China's Avant-Garde Fiction: An Anthology*, edited by Jing Wang, 74–113. Durham, London: Duke University Press.
- YS ST *Youshen* (游神) (1987), Ma Yuan, in *上海文学 Shanghai Literature*, no. 1: 5–12.
- YS TT Mason *A Wondering Spirit* (1998), trans. Caroline Mason, in *China's Avant-Garde Fiction: An Anthology*, edited by Jing Wang, 264–283. Durham, London: Duke University Press.
- YS TT Batt *Vagrant Spirit* (2001), trans. Herbert Batt, in *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, and Wind Horses*, edited by Herbert Batt, 5–22. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Glossary of Chinese Terms

Anxiety consciousness	忧患意识
Anti-rightist Campaign	反右运动 (1957–1959)
Cultural Fever	文化热
Democracy Wall Movement	民主墙运动 (1978–1979)
Experimental Fiction	实验小说
Fifth Generation film	第五代电影
Four Modernisations	四个现代化
Fragrant flowers	香花
Gang of Four	四人帮
Ghosts and monsters	牛鬼蛇神
Hundred Flowers Campaign	双百方针运动
Intellectual liberation	思想解放
Maoist style/discourse	毛文体
Misty Poetry	朦胧诗
New Era	新时期
New-era Literature	新时期文学
Reform and opening-up	改革开放
New Realist Fiction	新现实主义小说
New Waves	新潮
New Wave Fiction	新潮小说

Panda Books Series	熊猫丛书
Poisonous weeds	大毒草
Pure Literature	纯文学
Reform Literature	改革文学
Reportage	报告文学
Retrospective Literature	反思文学
Revolutionary Literature	革命文学
Root-seeking	寻根
Root-seeking Literature	寻根文学
Rusticated youth/ sent-down youth/ educated youth	知青
Scar Literature	伤痕文学
Seventeen-year Literature	十七年文学 (1949–1966)
Socialism with Chinese characteristics	中国特色社会主义
State Literature	国家文学
Stray Youth Fiction	失落代小说
The integration of history and literature	文史不分
Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China	中共十一届中央委员会第三次全体会议 (1978)
To get rich is glorious	致富光荣
<i>Today</i> (literary journal)	今天
Walking toward the world	走向世界
Worker-peasant-soldier Literature	工农兵文学
Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art	延安文艺座谈会 (1942)

Introduction

This thesis studies the translation into English of Chinese avant-garde fiction by focusing on translation anthologies published in the UK and the US between 1993 and 2003. The study draws on critical theories about the role of ideology in shaping translation products and its impact on the (re-)construction of the inter-literary relationships between source and target cultural systems. Through examining the ways in which representative works of Chinese avant-garde novelists were selected, paratextually presented, and textually rewritten, this thesis argues that the translation of this literary genre reinforces dominant ideological patterns pertaining to contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context. On this basis, this study highlights the issues of ideology and rewriting with regard to the translation and reception of contemporary Chinese literature outside China. In particular, the following specific questions are addressed:

- (1) How have contending ideologies between China and Western countries in the contemporary period shaped inter-literary relationships between them, and how are these revealed in translation and translation-related phenomena?
- (2) How has Chinese avant-garde fiction been anthologised and translated for the Anglophone readership as a means of ideological intervention in the target culture's approach to contemporary Chinese literature and Chinese reality?
- (3) What selection mechanisms and paratextual framing have been used in the ten English anthologies published between 1993 and 2003 to transfer Chinese avant-garde fiction to Anglophone readers, and how have these mediated target readers' perceptions of the political stances of Chinese avant-garde novelists?

(4) What textual strategies have been employed within the translated texts to represent some of the defining features of Chinese avant-garde fiction, namely: de-politicisation, de-historicisation, and the de-familiarisation of fictional language?

To answer the above questions, this thesis concentrates on ten translation anthologies produced by seven UK and US independent and academic publishers in the post-Tiananmen era (see Section 2.3.2 for the full list of publications). This choice was made as a consequence of translation anthologies having been the main medium for the international transfer of contemporary Chinese literature. It was an approach also decided upon the value of translation anthologies for the studies of the changing images of a foreign literature, or of authors and works thereof, in the target cultural context.

Anthologies, which Armin Paul Frank (1998) deems to be configured corpora, are usually presented as ‘a compilation of self-standing poems or short stories, deliberately selected and organised in such a way as to serve the editor’s purpose’ (Baubeta 2007, 34). Considering anthologies as a manipulative form that literary texts contained therein undergo, scholars in literary criticisms and translation studies have suggested that studies of the distinctive features of an anthology will permit insights into the interpretation and communication underlying the compilation of the anthology (Essman and Frank 1991; Kittel 1995; Frank 1998; Seruya 2013; Lefevere 2017). Amongst various subcategories, anthologies of translated literature as ‘a very special media of interliterary contact and transfer’ have attracted increasing scholarly interest in recent years (Kittel 1995, xv; also see Essman and Frank 1991; Frank 1998; Lefevere 2017). A consensus has been reached that translation anthologies play a significant role in collectively presenting a literary culture globally, canonising certain literary texts and authors in a foreign literary system, and projecting a compact, coherent image of the source culture and society

across national borders (Essman and Frank 1991; Kittel 1995; Frank 1998; Seruya 2013; Lefevere 2017). One can therefore hypothesise that studies of the compilation of English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction – in relation to other genres of contemporary Chinese literature – have a particular vantage to reveal the changing inter-literary relationships between Chinese and Western cultural contexts. Referring to the semantic, formal and functional features of translation anthologies in general, this study pays attention to the selection, paratexts and texts concerning the anthologies that aim at presenting Chinese avant-garde fiction as representatives of innovative Chinese literary culture to the Anglophone readership. By this means, it seeks an in-depth understanding of the mediations happening in the anthologising and translation processes, the interpretations underlying the translation anthologies, as well as the impact of the translation anthologies on the inter-literary relationships between contemporary China and the Anglophone world.

This thesis also applies an interdisciplinary approach, combining studies of the history of translation, literary criticisms of contemporary Chinese literature, paratextual and textual analyses of the translated texts, and sociological approaches. Specifically, by examining the history of translation and scholarly criticism of contemporary Chinese fiction in the second half of the twentieth century, the dominant pattern of ideological interpretation and reception of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context is illuminated. The analysis of the historical context, in which Chinese avant-garde fiction was intensely anthologised and translated, sheds light on the translation tendency towards intervening in Anglophone ideological assumptions of contemporary Chinese literature. Focused interviews with key agents participating in compiling and promoting the translation anthologies are used to enhance understanding through the incorporation of first-hand contextual information about translation

activities. In order to explore the interpretative framework provided to mediate intended readers' initial perceptions of the translated Chinese avant-garde fiction, paratextual elements (e.g. titles, subtitles, blurbs, cover photos, prefaces, introductions, reviews), as well as the selection of representative works concerning the translation anthologies are examined. Thereafter, relying on the combination of close reading and comparative textual analysis of source and target texts, the thesis illustrates the textual strategies used by translators to rewrite Chinese avant-garde fiction into texts that emphasise the subversive nature of avant-gardism widely recognised in the Western cultural realm.

The first reason why I chose to focus on Chinese avant-garde fiction to study the patterns of translation and reception of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context is rooted in the discursive heterogeneity and aesthetic innovativeness exhibited by these particular literary texts. Emerging in the mid-1980s and therefore part of Deng's era of 'reform and opening-up' (改革开放, hereafter Deng's Reform era; 1979–1989), the avant-garde movement in fiction writing symbolised a radical change in Chinese literary culture. With de-politicisation, de-historicisation, and de-familiarisation constituting the central principles of Chinese avant-garde experimentation, the most distinguished representatives, including Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, Yu Hua, and Su Tong, reoriented their writings from 'what to write' to 'how to write' (Chen 1991, 121, my translation), thereby putting behind them the 'overtly political or sociological mode of fiction discourse' that had dominated the history of Chinese twentieth-century literature (Zhao 1993, 17).

A more important reason that explains the focus of this thesis is the considerable attention that Chinese avant-garde fiction has attracted in the Anglophone cultural context. Upon the discovery of Chinese avant-garde fiction, overseas scholars in Chinese literary studies praised the pursuit of

literary autonomy, and the devotion to artistic aestheticism exhibited by Chinese avant-garde novelists. Among many, Michael Duke (1991), Jing Wang (1996), Xudong Zhang (1997), Kang Liu (2002), Xiaobin Yang (2002), and Yongchun Cai (2003) argue for the postmodern sensibility shown by Chinese avant-gardists, deeming it to be a form of symbolic capital for Chinese literature to be integrated into the world literary system led by Western modern and postmodern culture. Concurrently, critics and scholars such as Michael Duke (1991), Zhao Henry Y.H. (1993), Jing Wang (1996, 1998), and Andrew Jones (1994, 2003) assert the artistic merits of Chinese avant-garde fiction, and argue that introducing this innovative literary genre into the Anglophone cultural system may challenge the stereotypical view therein that contemporary Chinese literature possess only sociological or political content but not literary value (a typical Western view that has prevailed since the foundation of PRC but peaked in years following the Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989).

Alongside critical and scholarly acclaim, translation was enthusiastically carried out to bring Chinese avant-garde fiction to a wider range of Anglophone readers. Following the watershed Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989, when Chinese avant-garde novelists shifted from creating highly experimental fiction to more realist writing, independent and academic publishers in the UK and the US actively participated in the process of importing Chinese avant-garde fiction in translation. Literary critics, scholars, and academic institutions also joined in this process. It even attracted a number of volunteer participants who were involved in selecting, translating, and editing anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Consequently, a significant amount of Chinese avant-garde fiction was anthologised and translated for the Anglophone readership within a relatively short period of time. This further contributed to the dissemination of Chinese avant-garde fiction in international literary fields. As illustrated in the bibliographic survey

(Chapter 2) of the English anthologies of contemporary Chinese fiction published since 1979 – the year following the commencement of Deng’s ‘reform and opening-up’ policy, ten anthologies of contemporary Chinese literature published in the UK and the US were committed to introducing Chinese avant-garde fiction to Anglophone readers. These anthologies, from the first publication in 1993 to the most recent publication in 2003, constitute a large portion of the total twenty-five translation anthologies published in the Anglophone world over the same period. Given that translation anthologies have functioned as the major channel by which contemporary Chinese short fiction has been brought to Anglophone readers, the intensity of the translation activities of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the 1990s and the early 2000s is testimony to the warm reception that the receiving system gave to this Chinese literary trend. More significantly, compared to previously published English anthologies of contemporary Chinese fiction, which focused solely on realist works with strong politico-ideological connotations, Chinese avant-garde fiction featuring radical aesthetics may guide Anglophone readers to approach Chinese literary texts from an aesthetic perspective. As a result, the tendencies of ideological translation of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context might be questioned as anthologists including Zhao Henry Y.H., Jing Wang and Yongchun Cai expected.

In view of the phenomenal transnational path of Chinese avant-garde fiction, studies of their English translations are likely to provide interesting insights into the status of Chinese literature in the Anglophone literary system. Considering the complex rewriting mechanisms that underly the compilation of translation anthologies, the particular interest of this thesis is in the presentation forms and discursive meanings of the translations in the receiving system. Therefore, this thesis closely examined the selection and paratextual elements concerning the

translation anthologies and the linguistic choices of translators in order to identify the position of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural context.

In the field of translation studies, Itamar Even-Zohar's (1990) polysystem approach explains the dynamic interplay between multiple systems, including the one consisting of translated literature. Based on this, Even-Zohar (2012) analyses how the needs and norms of the receiving cultural repertoire at a certain time determine the position of translated literature, and further govern the general strategies of translators. Even-Zohar's theory has paved the way for the subsequent development of descriptive translation studies. Theo Hermans (1985, 1996), André Lefevere (2017), Susan Bassnett (2002), and Lawrence Venuti (1995), amongst others, have reached the consensus that the translation product is always shaped by the attitudes and expectations of the receptor system towards cultural imports from other sources. They also conclude that identifying patterns of pre-existing texts and discourses within the receiving macro-context can help to reveal how source texts and authors might be received in the target system. In particular, Lefevere traces concrete factors involved in shaping literary texts, and argues that professionals including critics, reviewers, editors, and translators working within a literary system will rewrite works of literature coming from outside the system 'until they are deemed acceptable to the poetics and the ideology of a certain time and place' (2017, 12).

With the establishment of Lefevere's rewriting theory, ideology has become a central topic in translation studies. Leading scholars including Tejaswini Niranjana (1992), Gayatri Spivak (1993), Michael Cronin (1996), Douglas Robinson (1997), Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1998), and Maria Tymoczko (1999) have incorporated postcolonial approaches to explore the shaping force of ideology over literary translation and the construction of cultural systems. Studies of the ideological implications of translation production continue to develop to cover

various historical, political, and cultural contexts, shedding light on the phenomenon of cultural domination and opposition made possible by literary translation. ‘Anthologising’, which Lefevere argues is another important form of rewriting, is also subjected to the power of ideology, given the extent to which translation selection constrains how a whole group of texts and authors are received (2017, 93–102). Recently, translation anthologies, combining the two forms of rewriting, have gained increasing attention from translation scholars. For instance, Helga Essmann (1991), Armin Paul Frank (2001) and Teresa Seruya (2013) contend that the selection, reconfiguration (present in the peritexts) and structuring processes pertaining to translation anthologies have largely contributed to the international transference of literary culture, the canonisation of texts, authors and genres, and the formation of cultural identity as well as ideological struggles.

With regards to contemporary Chinese literature, ideological differences between China and Western countries have significantly influenced the transfer of Chinese literary culture to the Anglophone cultural context. Since the foundation of Communist China in 1949, publishers under the patronage of the Chinese government have used translations of contemporary Chinese literature to serve political ends: to spread and reinforce Maoist ideology globally in the heyday of the Cold War, and to create and project a benign image of contemporary China among Western capitalist countries after entering Deng’s Reform era (Chan 2002; Geng 2010; Zheng 2012; Liu 2012). At the same time, translated Chinese literature has been treated by Western sinologists as well as common readers as a convenient and effective channel by which to learn about the political and social realities existing within mainland China (Link 1993; Chan 2015; Ji 2010; Liu 2012; Xiao 2014). As a consequence, ideological translation and reception of

contemporary Chinese literature had become a dominant trend in the Anglophone cultural context by the 1990s.

The shaping force of contending ideologies over English translations of contemporary Chinese literature has drawn wide attention from scholars of Chinese literary studies over the last two decades. This has brought into focus the projection of cultural images through translation production, as well as through criticisms of certain types of Chinese fiction and authors. By examining the subjects, themes, and genres of works circulating in the Anglophone cultural context, as well as analysing items included in collections or anthologies, scholars have revealed that ideologically-driven selection, organisation, and reviewing of translated Chinese writings have contributed to the international fame of Chinese authors who are considered to have heterogeneous political voices (e.g. Gao Xingjian, Bei Dao, Yan Lianke and Ma Jian) as well as those deemed to use their realist writings to expose the social-political realities of mainland China (e.g. Mo Yan, Tie Ning, Lu Yao, Jia Pingwa, Wang Anyi and Wei Hui). In this regard, Lifang Liang (1994), Eva Kneissl (1997), Red Chan (2002), Fu Wenhui (2004), Carles Prados-Fonts (2008), Yu Shuang (2010), Cheng Guangwei (2012), Liu Jiangkai (2012), Ji Jin (2014), Shan Xin (2014), Xiao Di (2014), Jiang Zhiqin (2015), Tong King Lee (2015), Li Gang and Xie Yanhong (2016), Deng Ping and Ma Huijuan (2018), and Valerie Pellatt (2018), have all made significant contributions to the research on the translation and reception of contemporary Chinese literature outside China. Most of this body of work has examined the general translation trends at a macro-contextual level, by means such as reviewing the titles of translated literary works, or analysing the responses that the publication of individual translations has triggered among scholars or in social media.

A limited number of studies have focused on the paratextual dimension of translations of contemporary Chinese literature. Liu Jiangkai (2012), Xiao Di (2014), Tong King Lee (2015), and Valerie Pellatt (2018) exemplify the increasing scholarly interest in verbal and visual materials accompanying translated texts, such as blurbs, prefaces, afterwords, notes, cover designs, and reviews. Their studies have revealed the power of translation paratexts in positioning and marketing Chinese literature for Anglophone readers and have, through so doing, contributed to the discursive formation of China as the ‘dystopic cultural Other’ (Lee 2015, 263–266).

There is also increasing scholarly interest in poetic and ideological issues related to translators’ strategies. Using the method of describing and explaining patterns of shifts within texts, scholars have attempted to reveal translators’ fingerprints in rewriting source texts into texts that accord with the mainstream poetics or ideology of the Anglophone system. Examples of such studies include: Hu Anjiang (2010), Wang Kan (2012), Li Ke (2013), Huang Xin (2014), Zhu Zhenwu and Yang Shixiang (2015), and Xiao Di and Zheng Binghan (2015). However, studies in this field have been inclined to focus on a single text of a specific author or translator. The most scholarly attention has been given to Mo Yan, the winner of the 2012 Nobel Prize in Literature, and Howard Goldblatt, the American translator who contributed to the international fame of Mo Yan and several other Chinese authors including Su Tong, Wang Anyi, Alai and Jiang Rong.

By comparison, few studies have investigated translation strategies used to transfer multiple texts that can be grouped into a literary corpus. Neither is there enough research that connects textual analysis of translation strategies with cultural studies of translation activities; as suggested by Tymoczko (2002). These research gaps, as reflected in this thesis, can be addressed

through studies of translation anthologies that anthologists compile in order to promote the entry of a different literary genre into the target system. The analysis of the selection, paratextual framings, and textual translation processes pertaining to the international transfer of Chinese avant-garde fiction enables to reveal anthologists' interpretations of the inter-literary relationships between China and Western countries. Moreover, it helps bring to light the changing images of contemporary Chinese literature, or of authors and works thereof, in the Anglophone cultural context, and how these images are created and projected in the text selection and paratexts of the anthologies, as well as in translators' strategies.

Thesis structure

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the general theoretical framework. Specifically, the theoretical part discusses the function of ideology in shaping the translations and mediating the image of a literary work or author in the receiving cultural system. In particular, the application of postcolonial approaches to translation studies is stressed in order to highlight the impact of ideological struggles upon translation practices, involving both the selection of texts and the translation strategies employed. The focus then shifts to examine the types of literary works translated and received in the Anglophone cultural context throughout the period of the Cold War. Linking the peculiar translation tendency to the conflicting ideologies between China and Western countries (mainly the US and the UK) at the time, the thesis suggests that the dominant patterns of ideological translation of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context that were existent by the 1990s continue to affect the way in which subsequent translations have been undertaken.

Chapter 2 offers an account of the cultural and socio-political contexts in which Chinese avant-garde fiction emerged, as well as the genre's experimental aesthetics and textual

characteristics. This is followed by contextual information related to English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction. This chapter also includes a preliminary analysis of the objectives of relevant translation anthologies. Based on the large body of literary criticisms and scholarly studies of the short-lived but fertile avant-garde movement within China, the chapter outlines the central principles of Chinese avant-garde fiction as de-politicisation, de-historicisation, and de-familiarisation. Thus, it sets up a foundation for the textual analysis to be carried out in the thesis's subsequent three chapters. With regards to the background to the English translation of Chinese avant-garde fiction, the chapter argues that the Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989 were a turning point in terms of how China's image was perceived internationally, and that this had a profound impact upon the translational path of Chinese avant-garde fiction to the UK and the US. On the one hand, the incident promoted the global circulation of Chinese avant-garde fiction; on the other hand, however, it tended to constrain Anglophone readers' perceptions and interpretations of Chinese avant-garde fiction to the old ideological parameter of the Anglophone cultural system.

Chapters 3,4, and 5 focus on the strategies employed in framing translation anthologies and the approaches that translators used to transfer the textual features of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Chapter 3 examines the selection of texts (not) to be translated, and the interpretative frameworks that paratextual elements surrounding the translation anthologies have provided to the intended Anglophone readers. In so doing the chapter reveals how the Anglophone readerships' initial interpretations of the ideological forces underpinning the literary creation of Chinese avant-garde novelists are shaped. Chapter 4 analyses translators' strategies in dealing with the narrative elements, including narrator, plot, setting, and characterisation which Chinese avant-garde novelists innovatively employ in their narratives set against some of the main

historical events of twentieth-century China. In this way, the analysis explores how translators' textual mediations alter the boundaries between history and fiction in the original avant-garde works, thereby affecting Anglophone readers' interpretations of the radical 'de-historicisation' principle that has sustained the aesthetic experimentation of Chinese avant-gardists. Chapter 5 examines the language style and aesthetic effects produced in the translations, with a particular focus on the semantic ambiguity that characterises the de-familiarised language of Chinese avant-garde fiction.

The conclusion summarises the main translation patterns discovered through the previous chapters, and subsequently discusses the implications of the present study for the reception of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone world. It also notes the study's implications for researching the cultural and political mechanism of translation activities more broadly, and offers comments on future potential research directions.

General Notes

On Terminology

Chinese avant-garde fiction: Throughout this thesis, the term 'Chinese avant-garde fiction' refers specifically to experimental writing by avant-garde novelists who rose to fame around the mid-1980s in mainland China, the People's Republic of China (PRC). Authors writing outside mainland China, such as Zhu Tianwen in Taiwan, Xi Xi in Hong Kong, and Yang Lian residing in Western countries, have also produced Chinese works of fiction that can be counted as belonging to the avant-garde genre. As a result, their works are also included in the anthologies that this study focuses on. Although this thesis contains occasional references to these authors to illustrate the mechanisms of translation selection, detailed textual analyses is not offered on their anthologised works.

Anglophone cultural context/ system: Whilst some pieces of fiction written by mainland Chinese avant-garde novelists have been initially translated and published in English-speaking areas other than the UK and the US, for instance Hong Kong, this thesis's discussion of English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction is confined to publications by British and American publishers.

Chinese literature: This is, on occasions, used as a short-cut term which envelops contemporary Chinese literature from 1950 to the present day.

The Tiananmen Protests: The usual term used by Chinese media is *Tiananmen shijian* (天安门事件) or *Liusi shijian* (六四事件), where *shijian* is a relatively neutral term that best translates as event or incident. Western media commonly refer to the event as *The Tiananmen Massacre* or *The Tiananmen Protests* of 1989. In her study of the paratexts accompanying the Chinese and English versions of Zhao Ziyang's memoir, Pellatt (2010, 2013) discusses the variant ideological grounds on which different expressions of the event are based. Baker (2010) also notes that different choices are made when it comes to expressing the event. Recognising the ideological implications of different ways of expression, this thesis opts for *The Tiananmen Protests* as a term that places the focus on the agency of the revolt instead of the ideological reading of the violent repression that ensued.

On translation anthologies under study: Regardless of the various types of anthologies listed by Frank (1998), this thesis confines the study of translation anthologies to compilations of literary texts by multiple Chinese authors, selected, translated, and presented to the Anglophone readership of contemporary Chinese writing that can put under the category of serious literature. The ten anthologies selected for the study of the international transfer of Chinese avant-garde

fiction share the function of introducing to intended readers (mainly scholars, critics, and students in Chinese studies) innovations in the Chinese literary system, even though they may be ascribed several other purposes. For instance, *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature* (Lau and Goldblatt 1995, 2007) as a general literary anthology tends to have a preservation purpose, and function as a representative repository of different genres of Chinese writing written from the early twentieth century up until the publication year of the anthology. It was chosen for this study because it contains translations of several representative avant-garde fictional works, such as Andrew Jones's translation of Yu Hua's short story, *On the Road at Eighteen* (1995, 2007), which is used for comparative analysis in Chapter 5 to illustrate the translator's strategies in dealing with the distinctive style of the source text. *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, and Wind Horses* (Batt 2001) included in this research corpus is a thematic anthology containing translations of Chinese fictional works associated with Tibet. It was compiled with the explicit purpose of protecting literary production of Tibetan minorities in the international literary field, as well as the implicit function of resisting the domination of Han Chinese over Tibetans. It can be categorised as an anthology of Chinese avant-garde fiction given the fact that this anthology features a selection of avant-garde fictional works by Ma Yuan and Ge Fei. Also focused on in this research are individual issues of a journal, which were devoted to the international dissemination of Chinese avant-garde fiction and published in the form of book volumes, including *Under-Sky Underground: Chinese Writing Today 1* (Zhao and Cayley 1994), *Abandoned Wine: Chinese Writing Today 2* (Zhao and Cayley 1996), *Fissures: Chinese Writing Today* (Zhao, Chen and Rosenwald 2000), and *The Mystified Boat and Other New Stories from China* (Stewart and Batt 2003). The full list of the anthologies under study can

be found in Section 2.3.2, while the differences between them are displayed when the circumstances of the making of each anthology are explained in Section 2.3.3 and Chapter 3.

On the selection of texts for comparative analysis: Novelists including Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, Yu Hua, and Su Tong are frequently cited in scholarly works on, and literary criticisms of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Considering the representativeness of these novelists, their works, as collected in the translation anthologies under study, were selected as target texts (TTs) for the comparative textual analysis undertaken in Chapters 4 and 5. With respect to the corresponding source texts (STs), the analysis has utilised the earliest version published in mainland Chinese literary journals such as *Shouhuo* (收获, Harvest), *Shanghai wenxue* (上海文学, Shanghai Literature), *Zhongshan* (钟山, Bell Mountain), *Xizang wenxue* (西藏文学, Tibetan Literature), *Beijing wenxue* (北京文学, Beijing Literature), *Renmin wenxue* (人民文学, People's Literature), and *Dajia* (大家, Master). As Cheng Guangwei (2009) recalls regarding the development of avant-garde fiction within China, these journals have been the main publishing platforms for the above-mentioned avant-garde novelists. After initial publication in these journals, individual pieces of avant-garde fiction might be edited by authors themselves or at the behest of publishers prior to their being included in collections of the given author's works. Therefore, republications under the same Chinese title may be slightly different, while the extent of difference is hard to know unless all versions are available to be compared. In addition, translation anthologies hardly ever indicate the exact version of ST that the TT has been based on. In light of these complexities, this thesis uses the initial mainland Chinese version of each ST for comparative textual analysis in spite of the fact that Ge Fei's *Xiangyu* (相遇) was firstly published in Taiwan in 1993. By this choice, I do not mean to manifest the shifts between the specific pair of ST and

TT. Rather, the comparison between the earliest version of ST published in mainland China and existing translated texts is intended to reveal the degree of transformation that avant-garde fiction from mainland China has experienced before it is circulated in the Anglophone cultural context. Detailed publication information of the STs and TTs used for comparative analysis can be found in the List of Abbreviations and Texts provided in this thesis.

On the spelling of names and citations

The Chinese pinyin system has been used throughout the thesis, except for some Taiwanese or Hong Kong names (e.g. C.T. Hsia). When referring to a Chinese name, I follow the Chinese custom of placing surnames before first names. Exceptions are given to some Chinese scholars based in Western academia whose names are rendered in the customary Western manner (e.g. Jing Wang, Kang Liu, David Der-wei Wang, Xudong Zhang, Leo Ou-fan Lee).

For original terms in Chinese that are cited in the thesis, the Chinese characters and the English translation are provided in the first instance, after which only the English translation is used. A full list of Chinese terms can be found in the thesis's glossary.

Original titles in pinyin followed by Chinese characters are used to indicate the first citation of Chinese fictional works. For subsequent repetitive citations, only the pinyin form of the Chinese title is employed. Translated texts from Chinese sources are marked by the names of translators in the main body of the thesis, while corresponding English titles and information pertaining to the related translation anthologies are given in the list of abbreviations of analysed texts.

Chapter 1: Ideological Translation of Contemporary Chinese Literature in the Cold War

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that was used for analysing the translation of contemporary Chinese literature into the Anglophone cultural context in the second half of the twentieth century. Drawing on theories of translation as rewriting, the chapter relies on the notion of literary translation as an ideological cultural practice, and inquires into the impact of ideological factors on the production of literary translation, as well as the reception of source language literature and culture in the target system. Particular attention is given to postcolonial translation studies in order to shed light on the ‘implicit hierarchies operating between different cultures’ and to ask ‘how those involved in the production and reception of translation might challenge those disparities’ (Merrill 2012, 160). The postcolonial perspective is here deemed essential for studying translations of contemporary Chinese literature, especially given the ideological differences and struggles that have underpinned relationships between China and hegemonic Western countries since the founding of the PRC in 1949.

After presenting the general theoretical framework, the chapter examines a number of translation patterns of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context during the period of the Cold War (1945–1991). By analysing the types of Chinese literature translated and received in the UK and the US (1950–1989), prior to English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the 1990s, this section contributes to the existing scholarly argument which advances that the translation, circulation, and reception of Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context were particularly susceptible to the politico-ideological tensions between China and Western countries during the Cold War period. As confirmed by the analysis, Chinese literary works that were translated into English by either Chinese government-sponsored publishers or Western publishers before the 1990s tended to serve politically desired ends: to

spread the ideological orthodoxy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) internationally, or to express Western countries' criticisms of China's contemporary political system. While institutions and individuals translated Chinese literature based solely on the socio-political functions and the content of original texts, literary aesthetics of contemporary Chinese writings were barely noticed by Anglophone literary critics or readers. This historical and political context where translations of Chinese literature served as key sites for ideological confrontations had a profound effect on subsequent translation activities. As Chapters 3, 4 and 5 illustrate, although avant-garde fiction has been praised within China for its innovation in literary aesthetics, the way it was translated and received in the Anglophone cultural context reflects the ideological patterns in translational exchanges developed during the Cold War.

1.1 Ideology, rewriting, and the politics of literary translation

The term 'ideology' has attracted considerable attention in a variety of disciplines; from philosophy and sociology through to political science, cultural studies, and linguistics. While claims about this term proliferate, its exact meaning tends to be elusive and confusing (for an introduction to different concepts of ideology, see Eagleton 1991, 1–31). In the field of translation studies, an increasing number of scholars have emphasised the necessity of analysing translation activities as ideologically-related matters, given that translation production as a form of social practice is subjected to the influence of ideologies, while ideologies are socially shared beliefs or ideas shaped or produced through translation.

1.1.1 Introducing ideology

'Ideology' was originally coined by Karl Marx at the end of the eighteenth century to refer to 'the science of ideas' based on 'the analysis of human perception' (Edgar 2008, 171–173). Marx and his fellow Marxist theorists understand ideology as the product of economic structure and

class interests, with the purpose of serving political domination by maintaining and permeating certain beliefs and practices of the time (Abrams 2005, 156). Based on this understanding, Antonio Gramsci formulated the concept of ‘hegemony’ to explain the process of a social class achieving a predominant position and power (Edgar 2008, 155). However, Gramsci emphasises that the rule of the dominant class must be based on consent (1971), and alludes to the possibility for the subordinate masses to ‘intervene in and transform existing economic and political arrangements and activities’ (Abrams 2005, 159). Ideology in Gramsci’s sense, especially the aspect that focuses on subordinate resistance to hegemony through developing alternative ideology, has become a source of inspiration for many scholars in cultural studies, media studies, and literary criticism; amongst others, Edward Said (2003), Stuart Hall (1982), and Terry Eagleton (1998). Another important revision of the early Marxist view of ideology comes from the work of Louis Althusser. Assimilating the thoughts of structuralism, Althusser argues that ideological state apparatuses including educational institutions, media outlets, cultural groups, and political groups operate by means of ideological discourse which ‘interpellates individuals as subjects’ to be connected to the ruling ideology in a society (2004, 678–701). Therefore, Althusser highlights the role of institutions in ideological interpellation, as well as their impacts on the constitution of an individual’s identity within a society.

A more neutral and less political view of ideology than that advanced by Marxist critics is especially popular among scholars in critical linguistics who relate language to ideology and power (Fairclough 1989). Within this field, Paul Simpson defines ideology as ‘the tacit assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups’ (1993, 5). Expanding Simpson’s view, Ian Mason explains that ideology is, from a translation studies perspective, ‘not in the commonly used sense of political doctrine but rather as the set of beliefs

and values which inform an individual's or institution's view of the world and assist their interpretation of events, facts and other aspects of experience' (2010, 86). By integrating new ideas from discourse studies, linguistics, cognitive science, and developments in social sciences, Teun A. van Dijk considers ideology to be more 'mental representations' linked to 'everyday practices in general, and to discourse in particular' (1998b, 308). While acknowledging the close relationship between politics, ideology, and discourse (van Dijk 2006), van Dijk shows more interest in studying 'the internal components, structures or organization of ideologies' (1998a, 7). Because of the abstract and general nature of ideology, van Dijk suggests that the study of an ideology's social and political function should be based on the examination of 'the concrete, contextualized, manifestations of socially shared ideological representations in the minute details of talk, text and other action' (1998b, 308).

Taking into account the various concepts of ideology, this thesis follows a general approach regarding the notion of ideology to study translation-related phenomena. At the same time, specific attention is given to the concept of ideological translation in order to explore the impact of translation activities on the formation of certain identities and power relations between different cultures when ideological differences play a pivotal role. This choice is based on an awareness that translation is first and foremost an ideological practice. Translation takes place due to the participation of individuals or institutions whose production and reception of texts are informed by certain knowledge or beliefs of a specific society at a given time. It follows that translation can never be a neutral meaning transfer across language boundaries; instead, it is a process where individuals or institutions construct meanings. In this sense, a translated product is both a manifestation and output of ideologies in a certain social context. However, readers of a target language relying on the translations to perceive and interpret the textual world and reality

represented in original texts are usually unaware of the ideological construction which occurs during the translation process. What target readers regard as the aesthetic or factual truth about the texts they access might not exist in the source texts, but come from a reproduction or recreation of the original through the medium of discourse.

In addition to the general mechanism of ideology in organising and mediating the knowledge and opinions of target readers towards translated literature, the Marxist concept of ideology – in terms of its socio-political function – is stressed in this thesis's study of English translations of contemporary Chinese fiction. This emphasis is significant because ideology, politics, power, (anti)hegemony, manipulation, and agency are especially prominent in discussing power relationships between mainland China and Western countries. Due to their very different political systems, economic structures, as well as the divergent aesthetic and world views that exist between the two contexts, literary translation dialogues between them tend to be marked by political meanings. Therefore, the study here highlights postcolonial translation studies which deal with 'the imposition of ideological values mainly to the detriment of less economically and politically powerful cultures' (Baumgarten 2012, 63).

1.1.2 Ideological translation, rewriting, and power

In order to understand the ideological motives and constraints which underpin the translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction, as well as the implications for its reception and positioning in the Anglophone cultural context, an analysis of the political mechanisms of literary translation is necessary. Therefore, before moving to the discussion of the specific case studies, this section reviews relevant theories that discuss literary translation from the perspective of ideology, and thence studies of the impact of ideological translation on the construction of power in an interlingual and cross-cultural context.

The studies of the phenomenon of literary translation as discursive constructions are largely attributed to the polysystem theory developed by Even-Zohar (1990) in the 1970s. Treating translated literature as a particular literary system in a larger hierarchical cultural structure, Even-Zohar (2012) provides a theoretical framework to describe and explain the complex interrelations between translated texts and other literary or extraliterary systems. According to Even-Zohar (1990), the position of translated literature within the receiving polysystem decides how texts are selected, to what degree translated texts conform to the norms in the target culture, and how translations influence the translation norms of the target culture. When a translated literature possesses a central position, the translation is likely to set a literary trend by bringing in ‘new, primary models’ to enrich the receiving literary repertoire (Even-Zohar 2012, 166). Thus, texts providing forms and textual features that are missing in the receiving system are more inclined to be selected for translation, and the translations tend to reproduce more closely ‘the dominant textual relations of the origin’ (Even-Zohar 2012, 166). If translated literature is in a peripheral position within a given polysystem, the translations tend to abide by the best ‘ready-made secondary models’ in the target culture rather than importing new ideas and techniques (Even-Zohar 2012, 167).

Since the advent of the polysystem theory, there has been significant controversy amongst scholars about Even-Zohar’s attempt to generalise and establish universal laws of cultural systems based on the small amount of evidence collected from his analysis of textual and cultural relations (Gentzler 1993, 120–125). Despite all the critical voices surrounding it, the polysystem theoretical framework signifies an advance for translation studies. Inspired by Even-Zohar’s emphasis on the role of translation within larger cultural contexts and the interplay between literary and extraliterary factors, other translation scholars have been increasingly aware of

translation as a set of socio-political and cultural activities. Especially after Gideon Toury (1995) put forward the norm theory, which shares the concept of polysystem and focuses on discovering a set of translation norms to explain the translation process, translation studies advanced beyond the prescriptive approach and took a cultural turn in the 1990s. Subsequent scholars in this field commonly agree that translation studies should take into account the cultural, textual, linguistic, and socio-political aspects of any communicative exchange and incorporate ‘issues of power, ideology and the social construction of meaning’ (Mason 2007, 345).

Within this trend, a group of translation scholars, later titled the ‘manipulation school’, have focused on literary texts and descriptions of translations to search for norms governing translation behaviours (Hermans 1985). Their representative essays were initially collected in *The Manipulation of Literature*, whose editor Theo Hermans declares that their shared standpoint is that ‘all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose’ (1985, 11). Among the contributors, some pay special attention to ideological factors that impinge on translation activities and urge the employment of more descriptive and systematic approaches to study how and what ideologies can do to translations as well as the possible effects upon the cultures that the translations are related to. For instance, Hendrik Van Gorp (1985) demonstrates that Spanish picaresque novels were rewritten in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French, English, Dutch and German translations to meet different political and ideological needs; whilst Ria Vanderauwera (1985), based on her examination of the reception of contemporary Dutch fiction in Britain and the United States, reveals the stereotypical conceptions that the target cultures hold towards the source literature. These case studies offer evidence of ideology at work in literary translation. More importantly, they are exemplary in terms of methodologies for the study of translation as cultural politics. It is also in this volume

that André Lefevere (1985), seeing translation as an essential form of rewriting, formally suggests that the analysis of the act of rewriting can shed light on the range of ideological and poetic constraints of the target cultural system within which translation operates.

The rewriting theory, systematically developed by Lefevere and promoted by other members of the manipulation school including Susan Bassnett, José Lambert, and Theo Hermans, is a fundamental framework which illustrates how literary translation is a discursive practice in constant struggle for status in larger cultural contexts. Drawing ideas from Even-Zohar's polysystem model while also gradually distancing himself from it, Lefevere introduces a new set of terms, such as patronage, professionals, ideologies, poetics, image and power, to 'analyse the influence of extraliterary upon the literary' (Gentzler 1993, 140). Compared to Even-Zohar's more general and abstract model, Lefevere's theory concentrates on the more concrete components of the cultural system, thereby offering more practical points to connect the microscopic level of textual production to the macroscopic one of contextual construction.

Alongside many forms of rewriting, including anthologies, histories, criticism, and adaptation, Lefevere argues that translation is the most influential form of rewriting (2017, 9–30). A range of case studies presented by Lefevere and other scholars have justified the conclusion that, when translated literature enters the receiving system, the form and status of the translated text is susceptible to the prevailing ideology and poetics of the target culture in history (Lefevere 1982a, 1982b, 2017; Lefevere and Bassnett 1990). Sharing Lefevere's view, Basil Hatim and Jeremy Munday claim that ideology and poetics are two important constraints in translation, and that they manifest themselves 'in the way texts are consciously or unconsciously brought into line with dominant world views and/or dominant literary structures' (2004, 100).

By 'ideology', Lefevere understands, 'the conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time, and through which readers and translators approach texts' (1998, 48). Believing that ideology affects translation product and reception via concrete elements, Lefevere underlines a range of agents in and out of the literary system who impose and negotiate ideological and poetic constraints in order to accomplish the rewriting of literary works. One category of agents is 'patronage', consisting of 'the person, persons and institutions' that function as 'a regulatory body' to influence the inclusion of certain literary works into a given system (Lefevere 1982b, 5–6). Working as the outside controlling factor, patrons set ideological parameters against which the works of professionals are measured (Lefevere 2017, 9–19), thereby imposing ideological pressures on the translator and strategies that the translator chooses (Lefevere 1981). At the same time, patrons have to rely on professionals inside the literary system, including translators, editors, critics, and reviewers, to ultimately accomplish the practices of rewriting and to 'bring the literary system in line with their ideology' (Lefevere 2017, 12). These professionals, who acquire the inventory of literary devices and the functional view of literary production, are closely tied to ideological forces in the environment of the literary system. Therefore, professionals will 'much more frequently rewrite works of literature until they are deemed acceptable to the dominant ideology and poetics of a certain time and place' (Lefevere 2017, 12). According to Lefevere's theories of translation agency, it is the interplay between patrons and professionals that turns translation into ideological practices, affecting the operation and function of wider socio-cultural systems.

Applying his theories to the analysis of avant-garde literature in translation, Lefevere implies that the intent to 'introduce a new element into the dominant poetics' or 'propose a novel function for literature' may drive institutional patrons to admit new works by avant-garde writers

(2017, 17). Lefevere specifies that ‘the necessity to increase the arousal potential of aesthetic products over time inexorably comes down to a pressure to increase novelty, incongruity and other collative variables’ (2017, 18). Yet, whether patronage will succeed in realising its intention of including avant-garde literature into the system depends, to a great extent, on the broader socio-cultural circumstances in which its patrons are located.

Lefevere specifies one circumstance: ‘literary works which differ sharply from the dominant ideology and/or poetics of the time’ will have to be published ‘outside the domain of the power of the literary system and the jurisdiction of the political system they set out to challenge’ (2017, 17). In such cases, works of professionals become especially crucial to decide if patrons can successfully advance the entry of different aesthetic products into the target system. The professionals involved might neutralise the novelty of the introduced works and rewrite them according to the dominant ideology and/or poetics of the receiving system. It is also possible that professionals might occasionally ‘repress certain works of literature that are too blatantly opposed to the dominant concept of what literature should (be allowed to) be – its poetics – and what society should (be allowed to) be – ideology’ (Lefevere 2017, 11).

In order to illustrate the complex interactions that exist between relevant agents and the application of their particular beliefs to the production of certain effects in translation, Lefevere (1988) gives the example of translating Bertolt Brecht into English. As he notes, in the Cold War atmosphere some critics perpetuated literary and ideological prejudices about Brecht as a Marxist writer while downplaying his artistic merits. There is also the possibility that professionals might operate outside of ideological or poetological constraints, even openly opposing the system (Lefevere 2017, 11). Taking the same case about English translations of Brecht as an example, some other critics read Brecht’s aesthetic products in ways different from the predominant

concept of theatre at the time, accentuating novel aesthetic features within the original works; in collaboration, translators made efforts to recreate Brecht's epic forms and alienation effects so that the translated texts deviated from the theatrical conventions in the UK and the US (Lefevere 1998). As Lefevere points out, all agents 'work together, supplementing and contradicting each other' to decide whether or to what degree to acculturate and canonise the author in the receiving culture (1998, 109).

Acknowledging concrete factors participating in the manipulation of a literature, Lefevere elaborates that:

Translations, deeply affect the interpretation of literary systems, not just by projecting the image of one writer or work in another literature or by failing to do so, ... but also by introducing new devices into the inventory component of a poetics and paving the way to changes in its functional component. (2017, 29)

Lefevere hereby suggests the significance of literary rewritings, mostly translations, in (re-)shaping the receptor literary system. As a positive effect, the rewritings might facilitate target readers' access to the translated literature, thus promoting the acceptance of the foreign literary work in the receiving system, and even enabling it to accumulate fame, or cultural and symbolic capitals in Bourdieu's terminology, until it is lifted to a canonical position within the target literary system. As a negative effect, the rewritings might hinder the translated literature from finding a niche place in the target-language canon.

The detailed theoretical account by Lefevere to a great extent justifies the significant role that ideology plays in literary translation. Ideology is argued to be pervasive in translation because 'individuals and institutions have applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effects in translation' (Fawcett 1998, 107). Equally importantly, various values and beliefs are negotiated during translation to decide the degree of manipulation of source texts, and this

shapes the forms and meanings of translation products. Seen from the perspective of target culture, ideology functions as a form of constraint governing the production and reception of translated texts, and thereby contributes to establishing the relationships of dominance in the receiving system. Based on these recognitions of the close relationship between ideology and literary translation, studies, as discussed in the following section, have increasingly concentrated on analysing expressions of ideology in literary translation in order to gain insights into textual shifts from the source to the target language, as well as the impacts of literary translation on the politics of culture.

1.1.3 Literary translation as cultural politics

In relation to the concept of rewriting, Lefevere theorises the ways in which the receiving system deals with the ‘otherness’ of a foreign text, and addresses the power that is produced when ideological or poetic differences borne by the foreign literature are registered through translation. As Lefevere suggests, both ideological interactions and interventions within a particular sociocultural configuration constitute the political mechanisms of literary translation. In addition to Lefevere and scholars of the manipulation school, the political function of translation in mediating power relationships has been researched by translation scholars who incorporate Foucault’s theories on power and discourse into their studies of the interrelation of translation, power, ideology, and identity. A range of theoretical discussions and relevant case studies have been carried out which have cumulatively consolidated the idea that ‘translation has the power to instigate change in societies and, thus, to shape culture’ (Sidiropoulou 2005, 19).

The research focus on translation as cultural politics to a large extent identifies with Venuti’s works (1992, 1995, 1998, 2010). In *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, Venuti stresses that translation is political for being ‘engaged in questions of language,

discourse, and subjectivity, while articulating their relations to cultural difference, ideological contradiction, and social conflict' (1992, 6). Its political function is further attested to when translation is used as a weapon to serve the purpose of 'constructing or critiquing ideology-stamped identities for foreign cultures, contributing to the formation or subversion of literary canons, affirming or transgressing institutional limits' (Venuti 1992, 9). In *The Translator's Invisibility*, Venuti (1995) investigates translation patterns and their socio-cultural influence, and draws out the domesticating/foreignising strategic paradigm that determines the (in)visibility of translators. On a number of occasions, Venuti (1998) has criticised the violence that resides in the practice of domesticating foreign texts. By 'effacing the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text' and 'making it intelligible and even familiar to the target-language reader' (1992, 5), Venuti illustrates how domesticating 'translation serves an appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political' (1995, 18). Such a fluent translation 'performs labour of acculturation', and thus provides readers in the receiving culture with 'the narcissistic experience of recognising his or her own culture in a cultural other, enacting an imperialism that extends the dominion of transparency with other ideological discourses over a different culture' (Venuti 1992, 5).

Speaking specifically about translations into English, Venuti observes that fluent translation strategies have been widely applied to sustain the hegemony of English-speaking nations, particularly America, 'maintaining the cultural dominance of Anglo-American individualism, representing foreign cultures with ideological discourses specific to English-language cultures' (1992, 6). Realising this unequal cultural exchange to which translation has enormously contributed, as well as translation's potential power in social changes and political engagements, Venuti calls for a strategic cultural intervention by the means of a foreignising translation that

consciously ‘signifies the difference of the foreign text yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target culture’ (1995, 20). In so doing, translation can counteract the ‘ethnocentric violence of translation’ and challenge the hegemony of Anglophone cultures (Venuti 1995, 310). Although the binary conceptual tools proposed by Venuti have been criticised for their unclear criteria (Pym 1996; Carbonell Cortés 1998; Tymoczko 2000; Shamma 2005), his theories on translation interventions and cultural dominations, to a great degree, privilege questions of cultural function, power, hegemony, and ideology in the studies of literary translation.

Other scholars have also paid attention to cases where translations act as forces of resistance and activism, affect the power relations between cultures, and serve the ideological purpose of establishing and shaping certain forms of identity. Volumes such as *Translation, Power, Subversion* (Alvarez-Rodríguez and Vidal 1996), *Translation and Power* (Gentzler and Tymoczko 2007), and *Translation, Resistance, Activism* (Tymoczko 2010) touch upon multiple facets of the ideological discourses of translation, and offer a variety of cases as evidentiary bases for studies regarding translation and power. In *Apropos of Ideology* (Calzada-Pérez 2002), contributors aim to validate translation as a fundamental site for ideological dialogues and struggles in the currently globalising world. *Translation and Global Spaces of Power* (Baumgarten and Cornellà-Detrell 2018) is another volume that stresses the implications of global, regional, and institutional power relations for translation production, circulation, and reception. Within it, contributors including Stefan Baumgarten, Jordi Cornellà-Detrell, Jonathan Ross, and Pei Meng, focus on examining the role of translation in the global political economy, and emphasise the power of economic capital over translation practices. In addition, volumes such as *Translating Ireland: Translation, Languages and Identity* (Cronin 1996), *Identity and*

Difference: Translation Shaping Culture (Sidiropoulou 2005), and *Translation and Identity* (Cronin 2006) reflect on ‘how certain forms of identity have come into being and how they are shaped’ (Cronin 2006, 3) in the medium of translation. These theoretical and empirical studies resonate with each other, and continuously enlarge conventional understanding of translation practices and products, as well as the interplay between translations and wider socio-political and cultural contexts.

A vast body of scholarship has approached the politics of translation from a variety of ideological perspectives, including geopolitics, nationalism, language, religion, gender, and aesthetic values, and through so doing has demonstrated translation as a form of discursive formation with power in its diverse manifestations. Yet, studies affiliated to postcolonial research have given special attention to power differentials that contextualise translation and are also mediated through translation. A range of studies have adopted postcolonial approaches to explore the phenomenon of domination and opposition that accompany translation events, or using Tymoczko’s term, ‘translation as a possible vehicle of political engagement’ (2000, 24). Insightful results have been achieved in this research direction, by Tejaswini Niranjana (1992), Gayatri Spivak (1993), Cronin (1996), Douglas Robinson (1997), Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1998), Maria Tymoczko (1999), and Sherry Simon and Paul St. Pierre (2000), to name just a few of the outstanding figures in this field. These studies have highlighted the crucial role of translation in various colonial projects. As Niranjana criticises, translation ‘produces strategies of containment. By employing certain modes of representing the other – which it thereby also brings into – translation reinforces hegemonic versions of the colonised’ (1992, 3). More importantly, postcolonial translation studies have opened up ‘broader question about the

ideological underpinning of translation acts' (Merrill 2012, 161), while inviting more in-depth analysis of the use of translation for cultural politics in general.

With regards to the modes in which translation is used to achieve a dominant position in relation to other cultures, Wang Hui summarises that:

Translations from the dominating culture constructs a whole set of Orientalist images of dominated cultures, images which come to function as “realities” for both dominant and dominated peoples. This is accomplished through various means, including the choice of translation materials, the orientalist paradigm of translation and fluent, domesticating translations. (2009, 201)

In her studies of literary translation from a minority culture – Ireland in relation to England – Tymoczko (1999) points out that a reduction process happens to the complexity of the original literature. Such translation patterns, which Tymoczko describes as ‘philological practices of translation’, are argued to have been ‘the norm for translating the native texts of minority and non-Western cultures’ (Tymoczko 1999, 269). Regarding the operation of this reduction process, the following explanation by Tymoczko is worth quoting in full:

Through the silences of the positivist editor and translator, the ambiguities and difficulties of the marginalized text, as well as the fallibilities and uncertainties of the translator are equally erased. The process perpetuates the panoptic ideal of the imperialist gaze, which confers perfect knowledge on the observer/ translator (flawed only by “corruptions” in the source text), at the same time the text to be translated is downgraded in status from a piece of literature to a non-literary work. Even as it fails to represent the esthetic force of non-canonical works, philology entraps its subject matter, inscribing it within a scholarly framework shaped by dominant Western values. (1999, 269)

The reductive process that Tymoczko observes is not limited to literary translations situated in a colonial context. In his study of American translations of contemporary Chinese poetry, Yunte Huang (2002) identifies a similar pattern of reduction. Through comparative textual analysis of Chinese poems by experimentalist poets such as Bei Dao and Yu Jian and their different English translations, Huang reveals that stylistic variations in translations ‘reduce the formal

experimentation in the original to a minimal level' (2002, 173). Taking into account the ideological or power differentials between China and America, Huang further argues that 'the formal reduction is intimately tied to an ideological reduction and ethnographic essentialization: It reduces Chinese poetry to expressions of a few political themes rendered in precise imagery and make the translation itself into an ethnographic account of the political reality of contemporary China' (2002, 173). Despite different forms of power differentials, these studies demonstrate that literary translation can be an empowering activity for the dominant culture to strengthen its forces in many aspects, not only literarily, but also socially, politically, and culturally.

Having realised the violence of translation in cultural politics, translation studies scholars have also started to think of potential resistance to cultural oppression brought about by literary translation. In cases of literary translation in Ireland, Tymoczko suggests, 'not only do oppressed people have programmatic political purposes for translating traditional cultural materials, but aside from its specific political agendas, translation is important because it defines national natives and the world alike' (1999, 82). Cases in post-colonial context India, taking studies by Niranjana (1992) and Gayatri Spivak (1993) as examples, also provide evidence that literary translation can be a site of resistance and transformation, and that it can contribute to renewing cultural identity as well as the representation of people of the dominated group.

1.1.4 Ideological mediation and translation strategies

With increasing recognition of the ideological and political implications of translation activities, the translator's position and engagement in translation production have also become the focus of scholarly attention. There has been a large body of research investigating the textual practices of translators to show how ideological translation practices intersect with the agency of a translator.

One of the most cited studies is Venuti's discussion of translator's ideological interference. Adopting Fredric Jameson's Marxist literary thoughts in his theorisation on translation, Venuti claims that 'translator's text, is necessarily a political unconscious as well, sedimented with ideological contradictions, shaped by institutional constraints, involving translation in larger, social conflicts' (1992, 11). It follows that a translator, especially a socially and politically aware translator, can potentially intervene in and transform existing power relations through their 'choice of a foreign text and the development of a discursive strategy' (Venuti 1992, 11). Against this theoretical background, Venuti (1992, 1995, 1998) has appealed to conventionally invisible translators to pursue foreignising translations as a form of activism to counteract the hegemonic power of English-speaking nations.

Compared to Venuti, other scholars appear less prescriptive in studying translators' ideological involvement. Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, for instance, claim that 'translators intervene in the transfer process, feeding their own knowledge and beliefs into their processing of a text' (1997, 147). Based on this, Hatim and Mason suggest examining 'the way a whole range of linguistic features are treated in a particular translation' to provide evidence to the ideological consequences of translators' choices, (1997, 122). Tymoczko also argues for the key role of translators, believing that the 'ideological aspects of a translation are inextricable from the "place of enunciation" of a translator' (2003, 181). This, in turn, is linked to 'both the ideological positioning and the geographical and temporal positioning' (Tymoczko 2003, 185). For this reason, Tymoczko (2003) further proposes that it is important to take into account a translator's activism in a specific spatial-temporal context to explore the politics of translation.

Supplementing Tymoczko's views pertaining to translators' ideological interferences and their relevant socio-political impacts, essays in *Translation, Resistance, Activism* (2010) examine

specific historical examples of where translators are recognised as crucial agents for literary, cultural, and political changes during the course of the last two centuries. A more detailed analysis of the discursive presence of translators can be found in *Style and Ideology in Translation*, in which Jeremy Munday (2008) investigates translations of Latin American writings into English in the political climate of the Cold War by tracing translators' voices within translated texts. A close examination of the linguistic choices of these translators enables Munday to identify the textual strategies that translators use in a tendency towards muffling or changing the voices of original authors, particularly in the translation of García Márquez's voice (2008, 95–124). Based on these findings, Munday (2008) further argues that the rising fame of the Latin American writers of the Boom, both at home and in Anglo-American culture, was the consequence of power struggles more conducive to the ideological expressions of the dominant Anglophone culture.

Within the field of descriptive translation studies, there is a critical consensus that research on the ideological factors impinging on literary translation should combine cultural and linguistic approaches. Cultural studies are necessary to indicate ideological parameters within the socio-political environment that translation behaviours are subjected to, while linguistic analysis help to identify the strategies pursued by a translator to bring out certain translation effects and ideological consequences. The integration of these two areas of studies, as Tymoczko (2002) suggests, not only reveals the concrete operation of socially shared ideologies in the minute details of translated texts, but also affirms the function of literary translation as a discursive practice which serves to secure or challenge prevailing power relations.

Up until now, one of the most common methods to study the influence of ideology on literary translations is to focus on the specific works of a translator within a particular sociocultural

system. Through analysing linguistic expressions and effects in translated texts and comparing them with those in the original, scholars have sought to establish the extent and form of translators' ideological mediation. Sharing Lefevere's thought that translators are not the only social agents positioned in translation practices, scholars have paid attention to other agents involved in different phases of the translation process to investigate their contribution to translation discourses, taking Fawcett's (1995) study for example. In order to have a deeper understanding of the roles of agents other than the translators, recent translation scholarships, Urpo Kovala (1996), Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002), Keith Harvey (2003), Mona Baker (2006), Anna Gil-Bardají, Pilar Orero and Sara Rovira-Esteva (2012), and Valerie Pellatt (2018), among others, have focused on the paratexts of translations – in general, the various textual materials accompanying translated texts, as reviewed in Chapter 3. Through discourse analysis of translation paratexts, existent studies have brought to light ideological parameters set up by individuals and institutions working within and outside the literary system to influence the ways in which the target readers approach translated texts and their knowledge of the original literature and culture.

A handful of scholars including Lefevere (2017), Helga Essmann (1998), Armin Paul Frank (1998), and Teresa Seruya (2013) have also noted the value of translation anthologies in studying cultural politics exercised through literary translation. Essmann and Frank argue that translation anthologies are a form of 'configured corpora', which function as both 'reservoirs of manifestations of a given culture' and 'ways of giving structure to the respective culture' (1991, 65). Translation anthologies create 'a meaning and value greater than the sum of meanings and values of the individual items taken in isolation' (Frank 1998, 13). Teresa Seruya, Lieven D'hulst, Anlexandra Assis Rosa, and Maria Lin Moniz state that anthologies, in parallels with

translations, are ‘evidence of the “prejudice of perception” since they tend to reflect, create and project an image of the best poetry, short story, authors (of a nation or in the world) as well as of the relations between national literature’ (2013, 4). They also point out that ‘the interpretation and evaluation underlying this projected image are either explicitly present in titles, subtitles, blubs, prefaces, notes, commentaries or postfaces, or implicitly embodied in the selection itself’ (2013, 4). With regards to these distinctive functions and characteristics of translation anthologies, it can be envisaged that analysis of the selection and arrangements in translation anthologies may allow a revealing of the values and perceptions that anthologists hold of the inter-literary relationships, as well as the diverse constraints that anthologists face with regards to the circumstances in which they are compiling the anthologies. In addition, careful analysis of the translated texts included in the anthology may enable to provide insights into whether translators’ textual configurations complement or contradict the anthological reception expected by the anthologists. Combining the two categories of analysis, the study may shed light on the deeper structure of the translation anthologies that is formed through the complex interactions between relevant agents, and further highlights the politics of power which underly the compilation of translation anthologies.

The foregoing sections have reviewed theoretical discussions on ideological issues related to the phenomenon of literary translation and research methods to study the ideological practices of various translation agents. Referring to this theoretical framework, this thesis focuses on English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction to examine the paratextual and textual strategies that relevant translation agents adopt to re-contextualise this Chinese literary genre in the Anglophone cultural system. By these means, this study discusses translation patterns and effects within a historical configuration characterised by ideological confrontation, and further reveals

the impact of the anthologising and translation events on Anglophone ideological views of contemporary Chinese literature. To prepare for the paratextual and textual analyses conducted in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, the rest of this chapter addresses the socio-political and cultural contexts of English translations of contemporary Chinese literature in the second half of the twentieth century. In this way, it sheds light on the dominant ideological view of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context.

1.2 Ideological translation and reception of Chinese literature in the Cold War

Studies on the relationships between ideology and literary translation have highlighted that translations are outcomes of underlying systematic configurations of values and assumptions in the receiving culture. Therefore, it is essential to understand the target attitudes and expectations towards the source culture and the ways in which preceding translations have been undertaken. This section reviews scholarship that has focused on the patterns of translating contemporary Chinese literature to the Anglophone cultural system prior to the entrance of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the 1990s. Considering the radical transformations that the Cold War had on the global political structure and international imaginations of China, special attention is given to scholarly findings and debates about the types of Chinese literature that were received in the Anglophone cultural system during this period. In this way, this section explores the general expectations of the Anglophone reading public towards literary works translated from contemporary China, thereby laying the ground for analysing ideological factors underpinning English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction.

1.2.1 Translations into English conducted within China

Due to the extreme ideological control and radical cultural policy in the Mao era (1949–1976), censorship over literary activities prevailed to bring literary works into line with the views of the

Party. This highly political atmosphere severely hampered literary production within the country. To a degree, only ‘Worker-peasant-soldier Literature’ (工农兵文学), which was dictated by ‘Maoist style/discourse’ (毛文体) (Li Tuo 1994, 115–130; 1993, 65–77; 1998) to serve China’s revolutionary course planned according to Leninist-Maoist dogma, was allowed to be published and circulated (Link 2000; Hung 2002; McDougall 2003; Wang 2000, 39–64).

The field of literary translation also fell victim to strict political control in terms of both quantity and quality. Foreign Languages Press, administrated by the Ministry of Culture and supervised by the Publicity Department of the Chinese Communist Party,¹ functioned as the only channel that selected and translated modern and contemporary literary works to capitalist countries such as the US and the UK (Zheng 2012). As Eva Hung suggests, since China’s ‘sustained effort at self-translation also has a strong ideological impetus ..., writers and works selected for translation all served to reinforce the government’s world view, which had no room for those considered antagonistic to the regime’ (2002, 330–331). With regards to the fictional genre, translated works were limited to those few works that met the doctrinaire version of socialist realism (Zheng 2012). The lowest point was reached during the Cultural Revolution,

1. In July 1952, the International Press Bureau of the General Press Administration of the central government was formally reorganized into Foreign Languages Press. In 1954, along with the merger of the General Publishing Administration and the Ministry of Culture, Foreign Languages Press was administratively led by the Publishing Administration Bureau of the Ministry of Culture, while its business policy was managed by the Publicity Department of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1970, Foreign Languages Publishing Administration was in the charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1972, it was shifted to the charge of the Foreign Liaison Department of the Party. Since 1991, the Publicity Department has remained its leadership of Foreign Languages Publishing Administration. More information on the history of the Foreign Languages Press, see the website of China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration, http://www.cipg.org.cn/node_1006431.htm.

when only slogans gleaned from Chairman Mao's writing and the literary output of the worker-peasant-soldier triune were translated into other languages (Zheng 2012). Thus, during Mao's regime, literary translations into English constituted part of the government's programme of propaganda for promoting and consolidating Maoism and communism internationally.

The Party's ideological control over literary activities started to loosen when China entered the post-Mao era (1976–1989), and subsequently led to a series of literary reforms in the late 1970s and the 1980s (see Chapter 2 for a description of these). Responding to Deng's strategic move of reform and opening-up and global cultural development, activities related to the literary translation of Chinese works into English also increased in the 1980s (Lin 1985, 21–23). Nevertheless, political ideology still dominated cultural life within China. Literary translations arranged and managed by government-backed publishers continued to be guided by the principle of promoting communist ideology. Taking the most-noted *Panda Books Series* by the Chinese Literature Press as an example, although the selection expanded to cover a wider range of contemporary writing, the selected pieces were still required to remain in line with the Party ideologically (Geng 2010). Compared to the age of Mao, literary translations in the post-Mao era were driven more by the desire of the Party under Deng's leadership to 'create a new positive image of China that embraced capitalism and democracy in the international community so as to provide a favourable external environment for reforms and economic developments within China' (Geng 2010, 59–60, my translation). Therefore, Chinese literary works selected for translation into English were required, by publishers' governmental sponsors, to reflect the determination of Deng's reformist regime to correct the radical Maoism and to rebuild and strengthen China in the mode of market socialism (Chan 2002).

Given the translation history of contemporary Chinese literature conducted within China throughout the Cold War period, it can be detected that there was a tendency by which – as far as government-backed publishers participated to translate Chinese literature to the Anglophone world – literary translations existed to serve the ideological agenda of the Party. This tendency reflected the translation norm prevailed within China at the time. Regulated by this norm, Chinese government-backed publishers organised translation activities to promote the political interests of the Party around the globe. By selecting and exporting to the Anglophone world Chinese literary works that complied with the Party's political values and beliefs, literary translations within China functioned as a counterforce against the capitalist ideology of Western countries. While literary translation under this normative constraint served to secure the power relations between China and Western countries, it also considerably affected the way in which contemporary Chinese literature was perceived and interpreted in the receiving culture. That Chinese publishers tended to prioritise ideological values over aesthetic features of Chinese literary works appeared to reinforce the tendency of interpreting contemporary Chinese literature from a political perspective in the Anglophone cultural context. To a certain degree, as Klein's (2016) study of the reception of Mo Yan and his Nobel Prize in the Anglophone world illustrates, Anglophone readers stereotypically treat all contemporary writers promoted by the Chinese government as supporters of the Chinese Party.

1.2.2 Importing contemporary Chinese literature into English by the 1980s

After Maoist China 'shut off direct Western access to many of its most interesting writers' (Lovell 2010, 202), area studies promptly developed in Western countries, particularly in the US, to supply 'a pocket of specialized geographical knowledge of particular areas of strategic concern' (Tsu 2010, 6–7). It was then that Western governments and affiliated foundations

sponsored academic institutions to develop Chinese literary studies into a branch of area studies to research the history of, and social life in, China (Miyoshi and Harootunian 2002; Link 1993). Besides the dominant area studies approach, Perry Link points out that many of the scholars in the US in the 1960s took ‘more complexly humanistic approaches to China’ (1993, 4). Therefore, Chinese literary texts, especially realist fiction, were read and studied as ‘a means to understand Chinese social life’ (Link 1993, 4). Based on the reading and analysis of the content of Chinese stories, the Anglophone reading public was able to justify their right to criticise the Chinese political system, and even express their ‘outright sympathy with the putative enemy’ (Link 1993, 4).

Bonnie McDougall explains Anglophone readers’ strong political-ideological orientation in approaching contemporary Chinese literature during the Cold War, and uncovers the ‘Ditchley effect’ on the positioning of Chinese literature in the Anglophone world (2003, 27–28). Owing to the first international conference on Chinese literature held at Ditchley in 1962, research on modern and contemporary Chinese literature in both the UK and the US was confined to the exercises of ‘content analysis of stories’ and focused on the censorship that the Chinese Party imposed upon authors (McDougall 2003, 27). The Ditchley effect was long lasting; it not only ‘set the tone for the next quarter-century of Chinese literary studies’, but also instructed the act of translating contemporary Chinese literary works into English to take a politico-ideological contextual focus (McDougall 2003, 7). In particular, McDougall observes, the texts that were taught and researched in the UK and the US were ‘largely those criticised by the Party for reasons of domestic politics: factional, controversial and highly unstable’ (2003, 28). These texts, deemed to be ‘literary dissent from China’ (McDougall 2003, 28) were, to a great extent, favoured by Anglophone academic institutions and individuals because of their potential to

undermine the communist ideology that the Chinese Party attempted to establish outside China through promoting the global circulation of Maoist literature. Alongside this academic trend, Anglophone publishers also selected and translated contemporary Chinese writing censored by the Party for staying outside the orthodoxy ideological line, so that the translations could reveal some ‘truth’ of Maoist China to Anglophone readers.

Seen from the limited number of publications about Chinese literature produced by Anglophone institutions or individuals by the 1980s, Maoist literature written between 1949 and 1976 captured the mind of Anglophone scholars. Yet, Jeffrey Kinkley’s survey of Anglophone reception of Chinese literary works shows that Anglophone scholars ‘did not take Maoist literature too seriously’; rather they ‘read it as sociology, as a window on the Chinese revolution’ (2000, 242). Publications exemplifying the sociological and political perspectives taken by Anglophone scholars to study Maoist literature include *The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Chinese Intellectuals* (MacFarquhar 1960). This collection focuses on reflecting the political movements in the 1950s: the ‘Hundred Flowers Campaign’ (双百方针运动) (1956–1957), during which the Party encouraged citizens to express openly their opinions of the Communist regime, and the subsequent ‘Anti-rightist Campaign’ (反右运动) (1957–1959) against those who were critical of Mao’s regime and its ideology. Within it, MacFarquhar included several translated works of ‘Seventeen-year Literature’ (十七年文学) (1949–1966) and arranged all texts in a chronological order in an attempt to give the Anglophone reading public an idea of the Chinese intellectual condition under communist rule (Ji 2010). Two volumes published in the 1970s, *The Chinese Literary Scene: A Writer’s Visit to the People’s Republic* (Hsu 1975) and *Revolutionary Literature in China: An Anthology* (Berninghausen 1976), also include translations of several Chinese essays and representative socialist revolutionary literature in

order to illuminate the developmental aspects of the Chinese revolution and the status of Chinese intellectuals living in Communist China.

To an extent, approaching contemporary Chinese writing as sociological and historical documents about Communist China became a mainstream activity in the Anglophone world in the heyday of the Cold War. As Julia Lovell argues, ‘for much of the past half century politicised assumptions lay at the base of lukewarm interest in modern Chinese literature’ (2010, 201). Moreover, ideological bias seemingly always played a significant role in determining what types of Chinese writing Anglophone readers could access and how they interpreted them, as attested by the popularity of Chinese writers with an anti-communist stance in the Anglophone cultural system. Deciding not to let China’s propaganda institutions control Westerners’ knowledge about Communist China, Anglophone institutions and individuals paid more attention to Chinese writers and literary works which were criticised or censored by the Chinese Party than to those which advocated the doctrines of communism. MacFarquhar, for instance, made use of the editor’s introduction to his 1960 collection to openly criticise Mao’s totalitarian rule and the government’s repression of Chinese intellectuals. In addition, Ji Hailong notices that MacFarquhar selectively translated the parts of Chinese writing containing the authors’ doubts about the political movements, and exaggerated critical voices in the translated texts; thereby amplifying the intellectual discontent in Communist China (2010, 43–46). Another example which indicates Anglophone scholars’ inclination to, in Laughlin’s (2013, 209) words, ‘political advocacy (mostly with an anti-communist bias)’, relates to Robert Tung’s *Proscribed Chinese Writing* (1976). As its foreword indicates, this collection was designed as a textbook for students in Chinese studies; through presenting works of Chinese authors who were criticised by the

Party, Tung attempted to showcase the existence of literature that could stand as a dynamic force against the repressive Communist authorities within China.

Scholars in Chinese literary studies of the post-Cold War era, including Perry Link (1993), Duke (1993), Kinkley (2000), McDougall (2003), Prado-Fonts (2008), Ji Hailong (2010), Liu (2012b), and Ji Jin (2014), have looked back at this particular historical period in order to discuss how Cold War ideologies constrained the perception, distribution, and reception of Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context. Their findings commonly point to a pattern whereby, to cite Ji Jin (2014, 28, my translation), ‘by the 1980s, contemporary literature was translated and circulated in the Anglophone cultural context mainly to provide materials for area studies or China studies, with the focus given to its geopolitical implications; contemporary Chinese literature was read as sociological documents to know Chinese society and politics’. As these studies attest, whilst the conflicting geopolitical relationships that existed in the heyday of the Cold War largely informed and conditioned the use of Chinese literature in the Western world, translation as the channel that brought Chinese literary works to the Anglophone scholarship and common readers was also affected.

The trend of translating Chinese literature, especially literary works by Chinese dissident voices, is argued by Bruno to have been an ‘important part of Cold War propaganda’ (2012, 268). To serve the politico-ideological agenda, the Anglophone imagination of Chinese authors was promoted in a way similar to ‘the Western romantic image of the dissident as a heroic individual fighting alone against the Soviet system’ (Bruno 2012, 268). Such a mode of imagination tended to reduce Chinese authors into a binary scheme in which, any writer opposing left-wing orthodoxy within China was depicted as ‘a literary genius’ (McDougall 2003, 28) and praised for their ‘struggling for democracy’ (Owen 1990, 29; see also, Zhang [2001],

Cheng [2012] and Xiao [2014]). As a result, such works and authors were warmly accepted into the Anglophone cultural context. Meanwhile, any writer who did not choose to adopt a political stance against the Chinese government was seen as a ‘talentless Party hack’ (McDougall 2003, 28), and was therefore rejected by the receiving Anglophone system.

The Anglophone imagination of China channelled through the lens of literary translation and literary criticism was in sharp contrast to that of Japan which American institutions and publishers attempted to construct as their political ally. Edward Fowler (1992) has examined Japan’s modern fiction in translation, especially that produced and promoted by American publishers in the 1950s. As thus found, to fix Japan’s ‘prewar image of a bellicose and imminently threatening power’, American publishers such as Knopf were actively involved in promoting Japanese fictional works that projected Japan as ‘an exoticized, aestheticized, and quintessentially foreign land’ (Fowler 1992, 3). Referring to Fowler’s findings, Lovell (2010) reflects on the American reception of Chinese literature at that time. Based on her comparative analysis of the two cases, Lovell opines that the ideological constraints impacting America’s translation practices in the 1950s was a mechanism to serve the US ideological project of ‘reinventing Japan as an unthreatening regional ally against Communist China’, and that Knopf was enthusiastic in ‘marketing a picture of Japan – through carefully selected and translated works of its modern fiction – as a nonbellicose land of exotic aestheticism, the very opposite of the country’s aggressive, jingoistic prewar image’ (2010, 202).

The distinctive images that Anglophone institutions constructed about war-time China and Japan in the heyday of the Cold War were consequences of the ideological translations of the particular time. Meanwhile, the discursive consequences testify to the power of translation practices in shaping ideological views towards the subjects. In a way, translations of Chinese

literature in the Anglophone cultural context matched up with the prevailing Cold War view of China in the West, prioritising the values and beliefs of the capitalist system while accentuating the narrative of Communist China as the ideological ‘other’. Thus, Communist China was identified with ‘totalitarianism’, ‘aggression’ and ‘threat’ via translation, and became an antithesis of values such as ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ that the capitalist US and the UK associated with themselves or their political ally, Japan (for Western images of China during the Cold War see Mackerras [1989]). In this sense, literary translation as an ideological practice served the political agenda of the capitalist bloc, consolidating its own fundamental ideologies about capitalist-liberal democracy while distorting the image of the ideological enemy.

It is also worth highlighting the role that sinologists played in translating Chinese literature into English, and therefore in the Anglophone discursive formation of China. Sinologists consisting of ‘students, researchers and teachers specialising in the study of various aspects of Chinese culture’ were the most instructive agents for English-speaking readers to access and interpret Chinese literature (McDougall 1991, 52). Sinologists usually participated in the translation production of Chinese literature, and to a large degree, therefore determined what got translated and how Chinese texts were translated. In this sense, sinologists had the main control of Chinese authors’ entry into the Anglophone system and how their images were projected to the Anglophone reader. Moreover, given their research positions in Western academic institutions, sinologists possessed a certain form of authority to narrate and represent aspects of China. Predominantly through literary criticisms and reviews, sinologists provided parameters for non-professional readers’ interpretations of the original Chinese literary works. At the same time, the pedagogic function of sinologists gave them influence as to whose work was worth teaching to broader audiences, and thereby dictated the circulation and reception of Chinese

literary works in the UK and the US. The multiple roles carried out by English-language sinologists accentuated their great potential in shaping the Anglophone interpretation and reception of Chinese literary texts. As scholars including Link (1993), Chan (2002), and McDougall (2003) have illustrated, through translating, teaching, and researching contemporary Chinese literature, sinologists possessed the power to make a considerable difference to the image of China in the Western bloc.

In the context of the Cold War, most sinologists were constrained by the ideological convictions of the time. When sinologists applied their ideological beliefs of Communist China to the translation production of contemporary Chinese literature, a process of ‘interpellation’ – to use Althusser’s (2004) term – was triggered, potentially causing the translation readership to tacitly accept their ideological approaches to Chinese literary works. Scholars including Link (1993), Chan (2002), and McDougall (2003) recall that, by the 1980s, major sinologists in the UK and the US were engaged in non-literary domains, such as history, anthropology, social science, and government. Against their academic backgrounds, sinologists in this highly politicised historical period tended to treat Chinese literary works as ‘historical source materials’ (Link 1993, 5), or as Goldblatt describes, ‘read more as a window onto contemporary events and society than for its aesthetic or entertainment values’ (2000a, 327). Sinologists were actively involved in presenting certain types of Chinese literary works to target readers, thereby disseminating specific knowledge of China that could reflect the ideological concerns of receiving countries. In this sense, sinologists largely catalysed the Anglophone ideological reading of contemporary Chinese literature, and in so doing perpetuated the simplified vision of the relationship between politics and Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context. Before averting themselves from the approach to read contemporary Chinese literature as socio-

political documents, Sinologists continued to lead Anglophone readers to focus on the content of Chinese literary texts to search for evidence to criticise the Chinese political system.

1.2.3 Importing post-Mao literature into English in the 1980s

The death of Mao in 1976 and the beginning of Deng's Reform era heralded a halting of the long-hostile relations between China and Western capitalist countries. As Deng's China set out to integrate itself into the world capitalist economy, the Western image of China improved (Turner 2016). At the same time, there arose a great 'interest of Westerners in the tremendous changes that had taken place in China since the late 1970s' (Gu 2014, 3). The new literary scene within China (as discussed in Chapter 2) also caught the attention of Westerners. Anglophone institutions and individuals actively responded and introduced a new wave of post-Mao Chinese writing to Anglophone readers.

Owing to the publication of the English collection of short stories by Taiwanese author Chen Ruoxi, *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (trans. Nancy Ing and Howard Goldblatt 1978), there arose great interest in reading Chinese Cultural Revolution-related stories in the Anglophone world (Lee 1979). Chen's stories – based on her experiences in mainland China during the Cultural Revolution before she moved back to Taiwan – present a vivid eyewitness account of everyday life in Mao's China, giving Anglophone readers a sense of realities which could not be garnered from previous publications about China. The collection produced a great sensation once published in the Anglophone world, and thence paved the way for the entry of increasing Chinese Cultural Revolution-related writing into the English book market. Soon afterwards, two more collections were published: *The Wounded: New Stories of the Cultural Revolution, 1977-78* (trans. Geremie Barme and Bennett Lee 1979) and *Stories of Contemporary China* (1979). These collections brought to Anglophone

readers mainland Chinese writers' stories about experiences during the Cultural Revolution. For Anglophone readers with a knowledge void of Maoist China, these new writings, which emerged immediately after Mao's death to reflect on wrongs of Chinese revolutions and to search for the causes of tragedies in twentieth-century China, provided valuable reading materials to access China's Communist society. The fact that many of these works were written by those who had experienced Mao's despotic rulings seemed to increase their historicity. With the 'revelation of Chinese poverty, violence and persecution narrated by the very same Chinese intellectuals who were victimised' during the Cultural Revolution (Vukovich 2012, 6), the two 1979 collections, satisfied, at least in the immediate term, Anglophone readers' desires to learn about what happened when Mao's regime ruled China.

Studies by various scholars, including Jeffrey Kinkley (2000), Red Chan (2002, 2015), Yu Shuang (2010), and Liu Jiangkai (2012), have helped to contextualise the Anglophone reception of contemporary Chinese literature in the post-Mao era. As they commonly show, although geopolitical tension was no longer the decisive factor in cultural exchanges between China and Western countries after China entered the post-Mao era, the once dominant ideological projection of contemporary Chinese writers still profoundly impacted Chinese literary images in the Anglophone cultural context. Their studies of the titles of English anthologies published in the 1980s bring to light anthologists' political inclination in presenting fictional works from post-Mao China. The following titles serve as examples: *Wild Lilies, Poisonous Weeds: Dissident Voices from People's China* (Benton 1982), *Stubborn Weeds: Popular and Controversial Chinese Literature after the Cultural Revolution* (Link 1983), *Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation* (Siu and Stern 1983), *Roses and Thorns: The Second Blooming of the Hundred Flowers in Chinese Fiction, 1979–1980* (Link 1984), and *Seeds of Fire: Chinese Voices*

of Conscience (Barmé and Minford 1988). Chan argues that ‘the highly suggestive words in the abovementioned titles, for example, “wild”, “poisonous”, “stubborn”, “monsters”, “thorns”, “weeds”, “roses” or “harvest” whet the reader’s imagination of a China wrestling with problematic conditions’ (2015, 48).

Chan’s viewpoint invites deeper analysis of the recurring patterns within these anthology titles. Imagery such as ‘poisonous weeds’ (大毒草), ‘ghosts and monsters’ (牛鬼蛇神), and ‘fragrant flowers’ (香花), was frequently used by the Party to label Chinese cultural products with either liberal-democratic ideas or a pro-communist stance during the Cultural Revolution. In light of this, anthology titles containing this type of imagery underlined the connection of the collected works to the Cultural Revolution, and led Anglophone readers to interpret the writings in collections with reference to past political upheavals. In addition, adjectives like ‘wild’, and ‘stubborn’ were adopted to describe the imagery, and thus alluded to historical subjects that defied ideological control and even advocated subversive rebellion. Some subtitles also used expressions such as ‘dissident voices’, ‘controversial’, ‘harvest’, and ‘conscience’ to explicate and emphasise the dissidence and morality that the selected writings represented. While the titles accentuated issues of politics in Mao’s regime, especially the problem of speech freedom, the outspokenly political qualities of original authors were praised. Collectively, they constructed a discourse, which tended to incite Anglophone readers to the idea that post-Mao literature was worth their attention because of its socio-political function in exposing the totalitarian image of Mao’s China rather than its literary quality. As Kinkley comments, English anthologies of Chinese literature published in the 1980s ‘confirmed Western impressions that the new Chinese literature cared far more about social critique than literary values’ (2000, 243).

Amongst the mainstream of translating post-Mao literature for its social and political significance, it is worth noting that literary works by Chinese dissident writers continued to enjoy high prestige internationally. McDougall describes the popularity of Chinese dissident writings among English-speaking readers as follows:

By the end of the 1980s, it had become accepted that the margin (the so-called dissident voices of the 1970s and 1980s) was more central to the Chinese literary tradition than the so-called centre, the official literature of the 1980s, and its preferred authors of the earlier decades. Especially since 1989, it has also become accepted that we need not allow the Chinese government to decide what we read. (2003, 33)

McDougall's description above can be further justified if we examine the selection of anthologies published in the 1980s. Of the anthology list of post-Mao literature for English-speaking readers, *Wild Lilies, Poisonous Weeds: Dissident Voices from People's China* (Benton 1982) compiles the literary works of Chinese intellectuals who enthusiastically pursued political liberalisation in the 1978–1979 democracy movement. Likewise, *Stubborn Weeds: Popular and Controversial Chinese Literature after the Cultural Revolution* (Link 1983) presents a full picture of controversial literary works that were written during the 'thaw' of 1979–1980 but soon censored within China. *The New Realism: Writings from China after the Cultural Revolution* (Lee 1983) brings to the attention of English-speaking readership more dissident Chinese writings, and seeks to expose the problematic structure of the Communist society whilst also repudiating the Party's tyranny. *Roses and Thorns: The Second Blooming of the Hundred Flowers in Chinese Fiction, 1979–1980* (1984), another anthology edited by Link, continues to introduce controversial literary works containing Chinese intellectuals' vivid accounts of the unjust and corrupt Chinese government. *Seeds of Fire: Chinese Voices of Conscience* (Barmé and Minford 1988) turns out to be another collection which claims to have exposed Chinese intellectuals' struggles under the Party's totalitarianism.

To a certain extent, English anthologies of post-Mao literature echoed the trend of ideological translation in Mao's era, in terms of providing Anglophone readers with an access by which to learn about the social and political upheavals within China, as well as expressing compilers' general concerns about the strict censorship imposed by the Chinese government. In the view of Tong King Lee, 'in translated literature, the tendency to construct a tyrannical China, through the selection of sensitive titles and the use of rhetorical devices in paratexts, falls in line with these broad trends of Western perceptions of China' (2015, 264). Although Deng's China made a gesture towards integrating itself into the global capitalist market in the last decade of the Cold War, ideological struggles between China and Western countries still underpinned literary exchanges between the two blocs. Therefore, translations of post-Mao literature were also carried out in accordance with Cold War assumptions and beliefs in the Anglophone cultural context in order to maintain its relationships of dominance with Communist China.

1.2.4 The Cold War ideological patterns and implications

Based on the examination of the types of Chinese texts translated into the Anglophone cultural context at different stages of the Cold War, dominant patterns concerning ideological translation of Chinese literature into English have been brought to light. Conditioned by ideological differences and struggles between China and Western countries, translation and translation-related activities reconstructed Chinese literary texts in favour of certain ideological discourses. For Chinese government-backed publishers, translations of selected writings into English functioned as a way of reinforcing orthodox ideologies of the Party around the globe. For the Anglophone world, translations of Chinese literary works, particularly those which reflected the Party's suppression of liberal-democratic intellectuals, offered a convenient channel to know and criticise its ideological opponent. Regardless of who carried out the translations, translation

selection was unanimously based on the ‘political and social, rather than artistic, merit’ of original texts (Kinkley 2000, 245). As it turned out, only Chinese texts which were considered to be of great documentary value for Anglophone readers wishing to learn about Chinese social and political conditions were selected and translated into English. It is thus within the ideological context of the Cold War that Chinese literary works were ‘reduced to ... texts for the exposure of political ideologies’ while ‘expressions of political conviction [functioned] as the main criteria of literary assessment’ (McDougall 2003, 28).

A range of scholars have attempted to address the cultural and socio-political implications of the translation patterns developed in the ideological milieu of the Cold War. Among many, Xudong Zhang expresses his concerns about the ‘unchallenged habit [outside China to] view everything in the PRC through the imagined totality of the government and its official policies and rhetoric ..., [and to] see anything extra-government as instantaneously and naturally subversive, progressive, and good’ (2001, 6). For Zhang, this habit, as a continuation of the oversimplified view of China during the Cold War, carried with it the implication that when Chinese cultural products reach Western audiences ‘new configurations of social space are often unaccounted for, and new cultural-intellectual manifestations misread and wilfully interpreted’ (2001, 6). Similarly, Carles Prado-Fonts (2008) criticises that the Anglophone politicised vision of contemporary Chinese literature developed during the Cold War is still at work nowadays. Constrained by this vision, ‘Chinese novels or stories are scrutinised from a political perspective [alone] ..., [whereas] the rhetorical and poetic devices that characterise them and that, fundamentally, make them literary’ are generally neglected (Prado-Fonts 2008, 40–41). Klein also argues that ‘a Cold War-era binary opposition *vis-à-vis* China’ is still deeply-rooted in the Western cultural contexts (2016, 175); inasmuch as translations of Mo Yan’s writings are

undistinguishably treated by Western readers as a simple reflection of China's socio-political conditions, whilst literary aesthetics of Mo Yan's works are usually not commented on.

These scholars commonly suggest the far-reaching implications of the Cold War ideological patterns for cross-cultural exchanges between China and Western countries. Translation of contemporary Chinese literature as one of the most important forms of cross-cultural communication is particularly subjected to the influence of the ideological struggles between the two contexts. Consequently, the translational representations of Chinese literature in the ideological milieu of the Cold War promoted the ideas that 'modern China is an entity that can be abstracted and captured in works of fiction' (Lee 2015, 259), and that through translations of Chinese fiction Anglophone readers could grasp the image of China as 'a repressive, dystopic Other' (Lee 2015, 251). It can be further suggested that the ideological patterns developed in the Cold War Anglophone cultural context could have implications that go beyond the politically-charged historical period. Considering that translation 'involves reconstituting the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that pre-exist it in the target language' (Venuti 2010, 65), it is likely that translation activities which took place shortly after the Cold War would follow the previous ideological patterns. By implication, Chinese avant-garde fiction, which has been translated into English since 1993, might also be rewritten to fit in with the dominant discursive formation of Chinese literature and China in the Anglophone cultural context.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the close links between ideology and translation, and explained the dominant ideological patterns pertaining to contemporary Chinese literature in the Cold War period. The chapter's first part highlights the importance of studying translation as an ideology-

related phenomenon. It then expounds the theories that translation as a form of rewriting is underpinned by ideological factors and produces discourses that affect the larger ideological structure. Further, it discusses how literary translation can be an essential part of cultural politics; through different strategies, literary translation contributes to establishing certain images of a literature and culture, while maintaining or challenging existing power relations.

The second part of this chapter examines translation patterns of Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context of the Cold War, and reveals that translations of contemporary Chinese literature of the time were a key site of ideological struggles between China and Western countries. Positioned within the ideological context, institutions, including the government, political foundations, and academic institutions, collaborated with individual sinologists to select and translate Chinese writings that were considered of great documentary value to the Anglophone world, whilst also (re-)constructing a whole set of images to function as ‘realities’ of China’s Communist society for the Anglophone readership. These ideological patterns have largely contributed to the Anglophone readership’s beliefs and expectations of Chinese literary works as realistically representing China’s socio-political realities. This may well affect the way in which translations after the Cold War are carried out. Bearing these theories and this contextual information in mind, we now turn to what happened to Chinese avant-garde fiction in English translation in the post-Cold War era.

Chapter 2: Approaching Chinese Avant-garde Fiction and its English Translation

Chinese avant-garde fiction was an outcome of the radical reform of Chinese literary culture in the mid-1980s. Scholars of avant-garde fiction such as Li Tuo (1993), Chen Xiaoming (1991, 1993), Xudong Zhang (1997) and Xiaobin Yang (2002) have acclaimed this literary phenomenon on the grounds that it signals a step forward in the Chinese pursuit of literary modernity. Its achievements have been seen to symbolise Chinese cultural parity with the West in terms of modern literary development and the integration of contemporary Chinese fiction into the mainstream of the world literary system (Duke 1991; Zhao 1993; X. Zhang 1997; Jones 2003). When a range of Chinese avant-garde fiction was translated into the Anglophone cultural context – recognised as the hegemonic centre of the world literary system (Jones 1994) – its dissemination was praised for its commitment to spreading Chinese literary modernity outside mainland China, manifesting abroad Chinese ‘postrevolutionary literary sensibility’ (J. Wang 1998, 14). However, questions need to be addressed before this positive scholarly view of Chinese avant-garde fiction can be accepted: in what ways and to what extent have the innovative aesthetics and discourses represented in Chinese avant-garde fiction been identified and relayed by the target Anglophone literary culture? The answers to these questions are addressed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

To lay the ground for tracing the transformations that have occurred in the cross-cultural transmission of Chinese avant-garde fiction, this chapter illustrates the aesthetic innovativeness and discursive heterogeneity exhibited by this literary movement, as well as the historical and socio-political contexts in which certain works of this genre have been anthologised and translated for Anglophone readers. The first part of this chapter offers a contextual account of Chinese avant-garde fiction and its critical reception in Chinese literary studies. In a nutshell, it

can be argued that Chinese avant-garde fiction emerged during the mid-1980s as part of Chinese intellectuals' pursuit of literary autonomy and their integration into the globalising world.

Appropriating Western modern and postmodern theories and practices, avant-garde novelists committed themselves to aesthetic experimentation with a view to challenging the tendency towards politicisation, historicisation, and the ordinary mass language that had characterised Chinese literary creation in the twentieth century. De-politicisation, de-historicisation, and de-familiarisation thus constitute core principles of Chinese avant-garde fiction, as demonstrated in Section 2.2.2. In accordance with these principles, Chinese avant-garde novelists employ various narrative approaches and linguistic techniques to experiment with fiction writing in order to subvert the subjugation of literary discourse to dominant socio-political discourses.

The second part of this chapter explains the contexts in which Chinese avant-garde fiction was introduced to the Anglophone world as a means of ideological intervention in the target culture's imagery of contemporary Chinese literature and China. It also presents the corpus of existing English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction between 1993 and 2003. Section 2.3.1 illustrates the impact that the historical turning point of China, the Tiananmen Protests of 1989, had on the global circulation of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Section 2.3.2 discusses publications of English anthologies of contemporary Chinese fiction produced by publishers in mainland China, the UK, and the US since 1979 to the present (2020), thereby affirming the great attention that Chinese avant-garde fictional genre aroused in the Anglophone world in the 1990s. Section 2.3.3 examines the publication background for each anthology in order to shed light on the various purposes served by the translation anthologies. To better understand the agenda underlying the anthologising and translation events of Chinese avant-garde fiction, empirical data collected from several key translational agents was applied. Altogether, this chapter sets up

a foundation for understanding the specific strategies used to recontextualise Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural context.

2.1 Approaching avant-garde: literary aesthetics and political intentions

‘Avant-garde’, originally a military term for ‘advance-guard’ or ‘vanguard’, first came into vogue in the European cultural context of the late nineteenth century (Webber 2004; Abrams 2005; Bru and Martens 2006; White 2012). Since then, avant-garde has been extended to refer to self-conscious artists and authors, who ‘by violating the accepted conventions and proprieties, not only of art but of social discourses ... set out to create ever-new artistic forms and styles and to introduce hitherto neglected, and sometimes forbidden, subject matter’ (Abrams 2005, 176). Avant-garde is considered a distinctive cultural formation of modernism, described by Matei Calinescu as a ‘spearhead of aesthetic modernity’ (1987, 119). From the artistic and literary movements of Futurism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Cubism and Surrealism, to Absurdism, Situationism, the Beat Generation, and metafiction in the post-war era (referring to the period since the end of World War II), avant-gardists have committed themselves to aesthetic innovations, ‘creating not merely new works of art but an entirely new artistic language’ (Buchanan 2018, under ‘Avant-garde’).

‘Aesthetic avant-gardism’ has been an inseparable aspect of the ever-expanding discussions and practices of avant-garde literature (Bray, Gibbons and McHale 2012, 1). Largely owing to the characteristics of aesthetic unconventionality and innovation, as well as the effects of shock, avant-garde literature is often used interchangeably with ‘experimental literature’ (Bray, Gibbons and McHale 2012, 1). John White points out that European literary avant-gardes are marked by the image of ‘introverted artistic groups preoccupied with their private aesthetic agendas and achievements’ (2012, xvi). By extension, literary avant-gardes radicalise ‘innovations in

aesthetic forms and content, while also engaging viewers and readers in deliberately shocking new ways' (Gammel 2016, under 'Avant-garde').

In one of the earliest theoretical accounts of the avant-garde, Renato Poggioli attributes one of its main concepts, aesthetic activism, to the remarkable historical and social changes that happened in 'bourgeois, capitalistic, and technological society' since the late nineteenth century (1968, 107). In Poggioli's view, literary avant-garde's concentration on linguistic creativity is a 'necessary reaction to the flat, opaque, and prosaic nature of our public speech' (1968, 37). More importantly, the avant-garde consciousness of language can be 'cathartic and therapeutic in respect to the degeneration afflicting common language through conventional habits' (Poggioli 1968, 37). Contemporary literary scholars such as Charles Russell (1982, 1985) and Julie Armstrong (2014) have also explained why literary experimentation is held as an agent of transformations in art, individual life, and society. A consensus has thus been reached: the rise of capitalism, a leap forward in scientific and technological developments, and the turbulent climate of the two World Wars during the twentieth century have considerably contributed to writers' sense of alienation from the dominant bourgeois society, and thence led them to criticise many of the previous aesthetic principles of literary works and rethink art's form and function in society (Russell 1985; Armstrong 2014). The literary avant-garde, Russell argues, is 'self-reflexive experimentation' (1982, 54); in that, avant-garde writers challenge established literary forms, create new forms of language and writing techniques, and by means of formalist innovation not only express their sense of alienation but also advance an idealised future.

After examining the social and historical contexts of experimental fiction, Armstrong (2014) goes into detail about the concrete forms of avant-garde literary aesthetics. He highlights that experimental fiction writers share the intention of modernist writers 'to break new ground and

deviate from traditional realist fiction’, while pushing the boundaries of literary creative practices further (2014, 10). According to Armstrong (2014), conventional realist writers tend to tell a story that is linear in form and plot in order to represent the reality of exterior world; whereas experimental writers are more interested in the process of perceiving and representing reality from multiple perspectives and, as a result, the way in which they tell their stories is as important as the individual story’s content. To support their new ideas of fiction and reality, such writers experiment with new techniques and forms, for example, ‘symbols, motifs, fragmentation, dislocation, juxtaposition, collage, ambiguity, montage, stream of consciousness and multiple narratives’, in an attempt to ‘explore and grapple with a world that they could no longer understand’ (Armstrong 2014, 20–21). They also experiment with the way language is used in fiction; consequently, fictional language is no longer regarded a simple tool to convey a message or to tell a story, but rather being lifted to the centre of criticism to explore ‘its role in shaping, and sometimes frustrating meaning’ (Bray, Gibbons and McHale 2012, 7).

Since the emergence of the avant-garde in the European cultural contexts, as Joe Bray, Alison Gibbons and Brian McHale remark, ‘aesthetic avant-gardism continues to be allied with political radicalism’ (2012, 1). Poggioli’s theory of the avant-garde has stressed that ‘the avant-garde image originally remained subordinate, even within the sphere of art, to the ideals of a radicalism which was not cultural but political’ (Poggioli 1968, 9). Referring to Poggioli’s chronological accounts of the shifting connotations of the avant-garde, John White reaffirms the necessity of reassessing the image of literary avant-gardes by taking into account ‘the new avant-garde experimental version of an ancillary form of *littérature engagée* bringing its energies to bear on contemporary socio-political and other related agendas’ (2012, xvi). For Peter Bürger, another leading avant-garde theorist, political connotations and the revolutionary spirit contained in a

literary work are fundamental criteria by which to define the avant-garde. Bürger declares that ‘the European avant-garde movements can be defined as an attack on the status of art in bourgeois society’ (1984, 49), and as an attempt ‘to reintegrate art in the praxis of life’ (1984, 22). According to Bürger’s conception of the avant-garde, political intent is the essential principle of the avant-garde. By this principle, the real avant-garde is distinguished from pre-avant-garde aestheticist modernism that claims for pure aesthetic experience as well as a total separation of art and society (Bürger 1984, 15–34); whilst also being demarcated from the post-war ‘neo-avant-garde’, which, Bürger believes, extends the radical experimentation innovation of the former avant-garde but fails to develop the anti-institutional function’ (2010, 695–715).

Departing from Bürger’s contested theory of the avant-garde in terms of its anti-autonomous political radicalism, (for an introduction to relevant debates, see Webber 2004, 8–13), subsequent scholars have paid attention to the intertwining relationship between literary aesthetics and political ideologies. Take for example Andrew Hewitt’s study (1993) of literary works by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti; the founder of the Italian Futurist movement. Hewitt’s analysis brings to light the interactions between aesthetic modernism and political fascism while underscoring the prominent political connotations of European avant-garde literature. More instances supporting Hewitt’s view are provided in Sascha Bru and Gunther Martens’s (2006) collection, *The Invention of Politics in the European Avant-Garde (1906–1940)*. In it, scholars commonly argue that the historical avant-garde movements of the first half of the twentieth century, such as Surrealism, Futurism, Expressionism and Dadaism, demonstrate that political intervention has often been a motivating factor in artistic and literary experimentation (Bru and Martens 2006). Moreover, specific cases studied in the collection attest to the diverse political intentions that the historical avant-garde could accomplish, whether it was racial politics, individual identity, direct

engagement with political parties, or the positioning of national culture (Bru and Martens 2006). These scholarly observations prove that European historical avant-garde works and practices can be reconfigured ‘as traces produced or performed alongside official politics’, with the capacity to challenge existing ‘politics and other spheres in the public life’, hence articulating ‘a political voice in its own right’ (Bru and Martens 2006, 22–23).

Political intervention and activism also constitute a characteristic concept of the neo-avant-garde, although Bürger tends to dismiss avant-garde trends of the post-war era as apolitical due to their affirmation rather than negation of the institutions of art. Located ‘within the context of postmodern thought’ (1982, 55), Russell explains, ‘the self-reflexive formalism of the avant-garde today transforms aesthetic innovation into an exploration of discourse and the social context of rebellion into the social text of ideology’ (1982, 56). In discussions of experimental literature, Bray, Gibbons and McHale present a similar but more explicit view, and contend that ‘political subversion has indeed been a feature of recent experimental writing across the world’ (2012, 8). Several scholars who contributed to the collection edited by Bray, Gibbons and McHale (2012), including Tyrus Miller, Ellen Friedman, Aldon Nielsen, Priyamvada Gopal, and Charles Bernstein, have provided a wide range of cases to illustrate the contention that self-conscious authors in the contemporary West also use experimental literature as a medium to address social and political issues related to gender, racial minorities, multilingualism, economic systems, commercialisation, and globalisation. As their studies of contemporary experimental literature demonstrate, the newer avant-garde literature emerging in the mass consumer society of recent decades has succeeded the historical avant-garde concepts of aesthetic activism and political interventions.

It is important to bear in mind the political connotations of avant-garde writing in the Western cultural context, since the study in this thesis involves the cultural transmission and reception of avant-garde fiction from a different national tradition. As the following section explains, avant-garde fiction emerging within mainland China in the mid-1980s borrowed and employed ideas and techniques of Western avant-garde literature for its own aesthetic experimentation. However, the socio-historical contexts in which Chinese avant-garde fiction was situated possessed different political connotations from its Western predecessor. As Yu Zhansui has keenly noted, Chinese avant-garde fiction differs from the avant-garde in the European context, ‘due to its obvious tendency towards separation from social reality, clinging to literary autonomy, and its nature as “institution art”’ (2008, 33). When Chinese avant-garde fiction is translated into English, there is the question of how Western traditions of avant-garde writing could possibly impact the shape and reception of Chinese avant-garde fiction among English-speaking readers. This is an issue returned to in the next three chapters.

2.2 Chinese avant-garde fiction: contexts, aesthetic principles, and techniques

Since its appearance in the mid-1980s, Chinese avant-garde fiction has been interchangeably named ‘xinchao’ (新潮, new-wave) (J. Li 1988a) and ‘shiyan’ (实验, experimental) (Zhang 1988a) fiction. It was not until the late 1980s that the term ‘xianfeng’ (先锋), or ‘avant-garde’ in English, was customarily adopted to describe this literary phenomenon (Li 1989; Liu 2002, 89; Zhang 2009, 58). In 1989, a group of Chinese literary critics defined avant-garde fiction as ‘a wave of writings that are highly linked to and under the direct influence of Western modernist philosophy, aestheticism and modern literary creation’ (Li 1989, 28, my translation). Speaking of its literary value, they also commented that ‘from philosophical thoughts to artistic forms, avant-garde writings obviously lead the trend’ (Li 1989, 28, my translation). Analogous to the Western

traditional avant-garde, Chinese avant-garde fiction is characterised by its radicalism in ‘subverting orthodox fictional conventions, reclaiming aesthetic autonomy and the use of experimental narrative techniques’ (Zhao 1994, my translation). The core of the avant-garde school, Ma Yuan (1953–), Can Xue (1953–), Ge Fei (1964–), Yu Hua (1960–), Su Tong (1963–), Sun Ganlu (1959–), and so forth, rose to fame in the second half of Deng’s Reform era of the 1980s when the frenzy of the Cultural Revolution was replaced by a contradictory mixture of a drive towards modernisation and dystopian frustration.

Despite its short life span of less than a decade, Chinese avant-garde fiction represents a milestone in Chinese literary history. The eminent avant-garde critic Chen Xiaoming speaks highly of this 1980s literary movement:

Avant-garde literature created a new concept of fiction, narrative methods and language experience. Without exaggeration, avant-garde fiction rewrote a range of basic propositions related to contemporary Chinese fiction, as well as the definition of fiction itself. Fiction writing has been moved to a place about individualised experience (existential experience and language experience), therefore contemporary fiction has made unprecedented achievements and reached a high artistic level which had hardly been achieved before. (Chen 1993, 308, my translation)

Overseas scholars in Chinese literary studies such as Xudong Zhang (1997), Kang Liu (2002), Jing Wang (1996), and Yongchun Cai (2003) have also viewed Chinese avant-garde fiction as ‘an integral part of the international avant-garde movements, influenced by Euro-American and Latin American trends’ (Liu 2002, 96). Furthermore, scholars such as Michael Duke (1991), Xiaobin Yang (2002) and Jing Wang (1996) have praised the postmodern traits manifested in Chinese avant-garde fiction, and viewed it as a literary expression of postmodernism with Chinese characteristics. Given the discovery of postmodern sensibility shown by Chinese avant-garde novelists, scholars such as Zhao Henry Y.H. and Jing Wang undertook the commission of bringing Chinese avant-garde fiction in translation to Western readers in the 1990s.

Although closely linked to, and heavily influenced by, its Western avant-garde precursors, Chinese avant-garde fiction offers a different story in terms of its aesthetic activism and socio-political responsibilities. Kang Liu elaborates the difference between the two, ‘while Western avant-garde aims at deconstructing the bourgeois values and norms, Chinese avant-gardists target against the revolutionary ideologies and discourses that dominated Mao’s China’ (2002, 96). To have a full understanding of the discursive heterogeneity and narrative innovativeness of Chinese avant-garde fiction, we need to set this literary movement against its historical and socio-political contexts. Having done so, we can then approach its textual features and examine the possible transformations it might go through when introduced into another cultural background.

2.2.1 Decentralisation and the pursuit of literary autonomy in the 1980s

Chinese avant-garde fiction came to public consciousness in 1986 (Zhao 2003, 197), a new historical era marked not only by reforms, cultural renaissance, openness, and optimism, but also by traumatic memories, chaos, and disillusion. The death of Chairman Mao and the 1976 fall of the ‘Gang of Four’ (四人帮) (four Party officials who were charged for causing the ten years of turmoil) terminated the turbulent Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). After this decade of deep transformations, the whole nation seemed to awaken to the danger of excessive political power. For the Cultural Revolution generation once exposed to extreme intellectual suppression, and of which many became ‘rusticated youth’ (知青, also known as the ‘sent-down’ youth or ‘educated youth’) sent to the Chinese countryside to be re-educated, the disillusioned vision of totalitarian Communist China was stronger than ever. Facing the ruins of the Cultural Revolution, a decadent and a dehumanised society, the whole country started to search for a way to reform China and sought to bring back enlightenment and wealth in the future (for more detailed historical background of the post-Mao period, see Liu 2004, 1–46). At this time, the Third

Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (中共十一届中央委员会第三次全体会议) (1978) announced the transition from the Maoist era to Deng Xiaoping's new era of reform; characterised by the emancipation of thoughts and the re-opening of socialist China to the capitalist world (officially termed as 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' [中国特色社会主义] to accommodate Deng's 'reform and opening-up' policy).

In the shifting socio-political atmosphere of the late 1970s, Chinese intellectuals reclaimed a level of freedom in expressing their disillusion towards bygone political movements, alongside their subjectivity as political and critical agents participating in the reconstruction of China. Modernity and modernism resurged as buzzwords after the previous decade's nearly complete disruption of cultural production. Intellectuals searched enthusiastically for an alternative culture to mainstream discourses. But such a search was painful and ambiguous, and further complicated by the on-going global struggles that accompanied China's attempts to integrate itself into the capitalist world. The sphere of literary-cultural production also went through dramatic changes and reforms, characterised by Chinese writers' desire to liberate literary activities from the strict control of political discourse and their quest for literary autonomy.

This section is not meant to serve as a chronological showcase of the literary discursive evolution and praxis in Deng's China. Rather, it aims to underline avant-garde fiction as the most radical experimentation in Chinese literary modernism. By outlining pre-avant-garde literary movements in the post-Mao era, a necessary frame of reference is set up to illustrate the discursive heterogeneities and aesthetic characteristics of Chinese avant-garde fiction, as well as its claim of literary autonomy in Chinese literary history.

The first literary trend that emerged in the post-Mao era was ‘Scar Literature’ (伤痕文学) (Knight 2003, 527–532). Scar Literature derived its name from the publication of Lu Xinhua’s story *Shanghen* (伤痕) (1978). Since then, it has been used to refer to a range of literary works interested in ‘portraying the suffering endured by unjustly persecuted artists, intellectuals, common people, cadres, and educated youth “sent down” to the countryside’ (Knight 2003, 527). Its appearance was possible once Mao’s radical political and cultural paradigms were replaced by Deng’s campaigns of ‘intellectual liberation’ (思想解放). Once literary policy was relaxed, intellectuals who had been repressed and persecuted during the Cultural Revolution came to the front to expose and condemn the injustice and cruelty of the past through their literary works. While early Scar Literature testified to the immeasurable traumas experienced during the Cultural Revolution, later works extended to memories of earlier chaotic periods from the early Republic of China to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (1912–1966). In terms of the ideological and political function of Scar Literature, its explicit criticism of ‘the unrestrained implementation of political orthodoxy’ during the Cultural Revolution ‘reinforced the Deng regime’s efforts to consolidate its power by distancing itself from Maoist ideology’ (Knight 2003, 527–528). In addition, in its description of individual search for historical truth and redemption, Scar Literature implicitly reintroduced ‘such humanist subjects as the importance of individual autonomy’, which could contribute to ‘Deng’s program of promoting a rational, progressive, and affluent society’ (Knight 2003, 528).

Scholars hold that several other literary genres of the 1980s, including ‘Retrospective Literature’ (反思文学), ‘Reform Literature’ (改革文学) and ‘Reportage’ (报告文学), inherited the aesthetics and political connotations of Scar Literature (Duke 1991; Knight 2003; Zhao 2003). Rather than continuing to depict the sufferings and traumas of the past, Retrospective

Literature attempted to look at the country's problematic socio-political and cultural conditions from a rational perspective; accordingly seeking out the reasons behind these tragedies and probing individual responsibility for historical progress (Knight 2003; Zhao 2003). Most influential among these were Gao Xiaosheng's *Li shunda zaowu* (李顺大造屋) (1979), Wang Meng's *Hudie* (蝴蝶) (1980), Chen Rong's *Ren dao zhongnian* (人到中年) (1980), and Zhang Xianliang's *Nanren de yiban shi nüren* (男人的一半是女人) (1985). Reform Literature, such as Jiang Zilong's *Qiaochangzhang shanren ji* (乔厂长上任记) (1979) and Gao Xiaosheng's *Chen huansheng shangcheng* (陈焕生上城) (1980), paid more attention to developments in Deng's Reform era. While writers of Reform Literature aimed to realistically reflect in their literary works the hardship and problems occurring in Deng's programme of the 'Four Modernisations' (四个现代化) (goals to modernise the fields of agriculture, industry, defence, and science and technology in China), they also analysed the challenges that Deng's reforms made to backward traditional values in contemporary Chinese society (Leung 2017). Reportage, beginning with Liu Binyan's *Ren yao zhi jian* (人妖之间) (1979), developed almost at the same time as Reform Literature. Reportage had the similar concerns of narrating and describing events, persons, or social phenomena of the time, but used the form of non-fiction prose in order to claim more veracity and authenticity for literary works (Laughlin 2002). As Yingjin Zhang comments, 'working in this fashion, the genre seeks "truth" more than "information" with regard to actual events, and its narration and description of events thus function as exploration of the aesthetics of historical experience' (2004, 235).

Emerging in the 'New Era' (新时期) of Deng's leadership, Scar Literature, Retrospective Literature, Reform Literature, and Reportage shared the formula of depicting and reflecting

traumas and suffering in China's recent revolutionary and reform history. 'New-era Literature' (新时期文学), as a general designation for these genres, indicates 'an attempt to open up a new possibility for the nation, which desperately desired to overcome the painful memories of its recent past' (Yang 2002, 19). When New-era Literature performed the socio-political function of 'exposing the dark aspects of society' (Knight 2003, 528), its writers rarely lost faith in the ideals of enlightenment and modernisation; rather, they used literary works as a forum to 'call for a new consciousness that embraced humanism and progressivism' (Rutkowski 2016, 611). Having seen these characteristics, Jing Wang (1998), Zhao Henry Y.H. (2003), and Deirdre Sabina Knight (2003) state that New-era Literature revived the May Fourth tradition of critical realism that took the core of the enlightenment philosophy and traditional Chinese literati's 'anxiety consciousness' (忧患意识). What New-era writers accomplished, Andrew Jones describes, is 'the heroic task of exposing social and cultural ills and to provide the reader with an epitaph or an explanation (be it political, social, cultural, or psychological) for the brutality they have just witnessed ... [with the ultimate aim of] 'underwriting the making of a brighter world' (2003, 554).

In the period directly following the Cultural Revolution, 'writing was still an anxiety-ridden political act' (J. Wang 1998, 1). Li Tuo, a firm advocate of Chinese literary experimentation, expounds that new writing emerging in this period 'indeed brought some new dimensions to the literary scene ... [yet they] did not change the power structure underlying the discourse of Worker-peasant-soldier Literature' (1994, 121). In other words, although New-era Literature challenged the total control of Maoist discourse over the entire system of writing, it did not run counter to the ingrained norm of literature serving socio-political discourses. In light of this,

ensuing writers continued to seek alternative routes to move literature away from its narrow socio-political engagement so that an autonomous literary space might be established.

1985 was a turning point (Zhao 1993; Li 1994). After that new discourses emerged which contributed to the ‘rhetoric of decentralisation’ (Zhang 1997, 110–121), and further removed literary discourse from the control of political ideology, thus paving the way for the arrival of the avant-garde movement. The transformation within the literary field could be considered to have been a necessary reaction to the socio-political condition of the time. On the one hand, bourgeois liberalisation developed into a trend as the whole nation lived under Deng’s promise to embrace a rational, progressive, and affluent world; on the other hand, the setbacks in economic reforms (particularly compared to the surprisingly rapid economic developments of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) and the raging campaigns against bourgeois liberalisation, continuously exhausted the public’s faith in capitalist socialism promoted by the Party. The conflicts experienced during the process of modernising China within a global context only deepened the public’s mood of disillusionment and increased intellectuals’ scepticism towards mainstream political ideology. All these changes which had occurred since around the mid-1980s contributed to the atmosphere of ‘de-politicisation’ in the cultural area (Wang 2008; Zhang 2009, 57–62).

Against this socio-political and cultural background, three new literary genres – ‘Stray Youth Fiction’ (失落代小说), ‘Root-seeking Literature’ (寻根文学) and ‘avant-garde fiction’ (先锋小说), called by Zhao the three tides of ‘New Waves’ (新潮文学) – took shape (Zhao 2003). The prevalent spiritual crisis, strong scepticism towards reality, and declining politico-ideological consciousness led to the rise of Stray Youth Fiction. Such stories as those in Liu Suola’s *Ni biewu xuanze* (你别无选择) (1985), Xu Xing’s *Wu zhuti bianzou* (无主题变奏) (1985), and Liu

Xihong's *Ni buke gaibian wo* (你不可改变我) (1986) no longer revolve around the themes of nation, revolution, and reform. Neither do they recall the Cultural Revolution in a sentimental way. Stray Youth writers refused to perform socio-political functions in their works (Zhao 1993, 10–12). Instead, they chose to be rebellious youths, to express their feelings of confusion, loneliness, and nihilism living in urban China. The only theme included in these authors' works, to cite David Der-wei Wang's (1994, 252–257) term, is a 'flirtation with China'. The strong individualism and playful attitude held by Stray Youth writers freed literary creation further from social and ideological pressures, and made it possible for contemporary fiction to develop its own autonomous value.

Compared to Stray Youth writers who favoured 'a nihilistic defiance of any value system' (Zhao 1993, 11), 'Root-seeking' (寻根) writers were more self-conscious in their establishment of their own autonomous literary space as a resistance to the influence of dominant socio-political discourses and mainstream culture. Responding to heated discussions on Chinese culture in the mid-1980s, known as a time of 'Cultural Fever' (文化热) (Wang 1996, 37–117; X. Zhang 1997, 35–70, Leenhouts 2003, 538), Root-seeking writers turned their attention to marginal cultures located in remote rural and minority areas to find their roots. This can be seen in such Root-seeking works as A Cheng's *Qi wang* (棋王) (1984) and Han Shaogong's *Ba ba ba* (爸爸爸) (1985), Li Rui's *Houtu* (厚土) (1986) and Mo Yan's *Hong gaoliang* (红高粱) (1988).

The fundamental logic of this Root-seeking movement was to engage in global modernism, and to revitalise Chinese culture by breaking out of 'the artistic patterns of realism (already stereotyped) and political relations' (Li 2000, 111). This cultural and literary strategy adopted aspects of world literature, Latin-American magic realism for instance and particularly their

approach of ‘blending local traditional culture with Western modernity’ (Leenhouts 2003, 537). By stressing much broader cultural aspects of literature, Root-seeking Literature presented an alternative to mainstream realist writing endorsed by the Party, thereby moving literature away from its previous moral and socio-political engagement. As Mark Leenhouts explains, ‘the roots writers’ stress on “culture” can also be seen as an alternative to, or a weapon against, “politics,” which Mao had put in command of the arts’ (2003, 534). Moreover, by drawing attention to the aesthetic dimension of literature, Root-seeking writers delved into questions of literary identity and subjectivity, which again helped to construct a literary discursive space where politics played only a minor role or no role at all. From various perspectives, Root-seeking Literature ‘came to terms with the irksome aesthetic and ideological confinement of realism, whatever brand’ (Wang 2000, xxix), and deconstructed the fundamental form in which socio-politically-oriented mainstream literary discourse had previously played out its ideologies. When the suppressive power of the ideological dogmas of official literature was dismantled, ‘a timely stage for the radical aesthetic experiments of avant-garde fiction was finally set up’ (Leenhouts 2003, 538).

2.2.2 Avant-garde experimentation: de-politicisation, de-historicisation. and de-familiarisation

Zhang Weidong (2009) regards Scar Literature, Reform Literature, Root-seeking Literature, and avant-garde literature as four successive phases of dismantling the concepts of ‘State Literature’ (国家文学) and ‘Revolutionary Literature’ (革命文学), of which avant-garde literature accomplished the last mission of de-politicising literary practices. Zhang’s view supports Michel Hockx’s argument that the avant-garde literature of the 1980s moved towards ‘involutionary literary culture’, and paid attention to aesthetics instead of the relationships between literary works and writer’s social and political concerns (Hockx 2008, 234–252). The earnest avant-

garde proponent Zhang Yiwu explains the avant-garde transcendence of prior literary movements of the 1980s in this way:

In previous literary innovations, the basic function of fiction has not changed, although they have distinguished themselves from our fictional traditions with regards to morals, historical contents, cultural implications, and narrative techniques. The current [avant-garde] experimentation subverts and destroys the central function of fiction and replaces it with a completely new essence.... It cares about the revolution of fiction itself. It does not simply multiply the styles of fiction; instead, it questions the essence of fiction and attempts to apply a new interpretation to it. (1988b, 76, my translation)

The radical attitudes manifested in Chinese avant-garde fiction were partly a consequence of the backgrounds of its writers and promoters. The career of avant-garde fiction started with Ma Yuan and Can Xue; members of ‘rusticated youth’. However, most avant-garde novelists were members of the younger generation including Yu Hua, Ge Fei, Su Tong, Sun Ganlu, and Bei Cun. Unlike previous New-era writers who participated in the Cultural Revolution and were deported to rural hinterlands for re-education as a consequence of that participation, the young avant-gardists came of age when China had already entered Deng’s Reform era. Given the fact that they missed ‘the encounter with the climatic history of the Cultural Revolution and of the nation’s crude awakening from it’, Jing Wang infers that young avant-garde novelists commonly experienced a ‘crisis of historical consciousness’ (1998, 8). In the socio-political sphere, they played only a peripheral role, as Wu Liang describes, ‘they could only stay outside the realm of political debates and social topics’ (2000, 125). Furthermore, affected by the current of ‘bourgeois liberalisation’ of the time, the young avant-gardists were more interested in seeking a diverse array of narrative forms to produce (post-)modernist works in favour of individual expression of subjectivity, than writing in the realist way prescribed by political authority (Yu Hua 2017, 787–791). On top of these, Yu Zhansui argues that avant-garde novelists consciously restrained themselves ‘from transgressing the boundary drawn by the Party’ for fear of losing

their newly gained fame and wealth (2008, 40). Owing to historical circumstances like these, avant-garde novelists ‘were in the process of extricating themselves from the existing categories of politics, economics, morality, and law’ (Li 2000, 111), while searching for a path by which to establish a discourse that grounded the value of their literature in its autonomy from socio-political discourses.

Another important factor that contributed to the formation of the avant-garde movement in China was the modernist and/or post-modernist influence that poured in from the West. Despite strict governmental control of literary exchanges during the Cultural Revolution, Western literary masterpieces in translation circulated secretly among young intellectuals. Their reading experience, even though underground, planted a seed for literary transformations taking place in the 1980s (Bei Dao 1993). Reflective of the atmosphere of loosening political control over cultural exchanges in Deng’s Reform era, many Western literary works and theories were imported in a short period of time. The avant-garde generation obtained the opportunity to read large volumes of Chinese translations of classical and modern Western masters ranging from modernists writers such as Franz Kafka, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner, to postmodernists like John Barth, Joseph Heller, J. D. Salinger, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, Alain Robbe-Grillet, and Samuel Beckett. As Zhang Weidong (2009) observes, the encounter with a wide range of modern and/or postmodern literature from around the world allowed avant-garde writers to realise the gap between the Chinese literary field and the world literary field, and thence increased their urge to break the constraints imposed by State Literature or Revolutionary Literature so as to participate in world literature. This reading experience did not just provide avant-garde novelists with methodological references; more importantly, this connection with the world literary field offered them an aesthetic prototype to

deal with the dilemmas of being late in literary modernisation, as well as the crisis of historical consciousness that the young generation had to face. Learning from Western aestheticism that meanings of the text lay not simply in its content but also in its formal features, these avant-garde rebels indulged themselves in an enclosed formal experimentation with narrative techniques and language. ‘A new fictional subject that has no historical, socio-political, or even personal identity’ was thus constructed, serving to highlight avant-garde novelists’ individual experience of the fragmented reality of modern existence (J. Wang 1998, 11).

In these socio-political and cultural contexts, avant-garde fictional experimentation in the 1980s became a quest for Chinese literary aesthetics to achieve autonomy from socio-political discourses. In a way, the avant-garde aesthetic pursuit was a necessary consequence of the intellectual loss of belief ‘in the sensational impact of literature over society and in their sacred mission as the vanguard of political and cultural critic’ (Wang 1996, 160). Thereafter, they shifted their focus to aesthetic exploration in order to reinvent a *raison d'être* for their creative activities. Although Jing Wang acknowledges that several literary movements in the post-Mao era acquired the characteristics of a public institution, she highlights that only avant-garde experimentalists ‘separated themselves from the danger of politicisation’ and ‘declared aesthetic autonomy from the political’ (1996, 161). Taking into account the long-term Chinese tradition of intertwining literary aesthetics with socio-political discourses, the emancipation of aesthetics achieved by avant-garde novelists brought broader implications. As Jing Wang points out:

What the emancipation revoked was not merely the shackles of politicisation but also the aura attached to the danger and significance of literature as a negative practice, in other words, the utopian vision of aesthetics as the project of ideological subversion. The shift of the *raison d'être* of literature from a cultural force to a pure aesthetic project. (1996, 159)

Xudong Zhang holds a similar view, and argued that literary reforms and innovations during the 1980s were interventions on the part of intellectuals aimed at searching out an alternative discourse to mainstream socio-political discourses (1997, 33–163). However, the genre of avant-garde fiction was a radical innovation in terms of the enormous symbolic capital accumulated.

As Zhang notes, it was:

A bridge between the sociohistorical dynamism and its subjective or stylistic anchor, this celebrated genre, the purported pure play of language is viewed as an idiosyncratic register of the individual and collective experiences configured in the New Era, thus a formal, imaginary working out of the political and cultural possibilities offered by a changing world. (1997, 7)

Zhao Henry Y.H., a fervent proponent of Chinese avant-garde fiction, emphasises its artistic value after comparing it to various preceding fiction movements in the 1980s. Speaking of fictional themes and subjects, Zhao argues, ‘until the rise of the recent so-called avant-garde fiction, Chinese fiction has always centred on particular themes, and has tended towards the didactic, aiming to send a message by way of the text’ (1993, 16). Even the Root-seeking genre was no exception: while Root-seeking writers still looked for alternative themes and subjects lying outside the circle of orthodox Han Chinese culture, avant-garde novelists had moved beyond this search, leading readers to focus wholly on formalist characteristics that fictional narratives could invent (Zhao 1993). For Zhao, the radicalism of avant-garde fiction lies in its subversion of the whole game of narration to construct a new set of narrative rules.

The abovementioned scholars present a consensus that Chinese avant-garde novelists have developed an aesthetic discourse that can be regarded as the ultimate discursive evolution in the history of contemporary Chinese literature. Although New-era literary inventions have been praised for their challenges to Maoist discourse, they were much constrained by socio-political ideologies. Even the relatively more forceful challenge to realism of Root-seeking writers ‘did

not preclude its participation in the cultural discourse of China's social modernity' (Wang 1996, 160). In comparison, avant-garde novelists pursued completely different rules of narrative writing, and shared the aestheticism of 'art for art's sake' promoted by Western modernist and post-modernist writers. Chen Xiaoming comments that by shifting the focus from 'what to write' to 'how to write', these avant-gardists sought a subject-position of literature in order to embrace an upheaval of literary production and innovation (1991, 121, my translation).

De-politicisation

Studies of the history and characteristics of Chinese avant-garde fiction tend to imply that its writers did not intend to use aesthetic radicalism as a cultural force for ideological subversion, but consciously involved themselves in a pure aesthetic project to explore the complexities of literary forms and language. To use Jing Wang's words, avant-garde fiction has been 'relieved of the weight of its oppositional logic' (1996, 159), and its appearance marks 'the expiration of the old mythology that art and literature served as a norm of political agency' (1996, 161). Providing critiques and reflections about political discourses, such as totalitarian Maoism as focused on by the trends of New-era Literature, or Deng's reform ideology as dismissed by Stray Youth Fiction and Root-seeking Literature, was not the intention of Chinese avant-garde novelists. This school simply refused to turn writing into 'an anxiety-ridden political act' (J. Wang 1998, 1). According to Jing Wang, 'nothing could be more unbearable for them than the concept of "burden" – whether it was conceived of as a cultural, historical, socio-political, existential, or not the least of all, semantic burden' (1998, 2). Therefore, Jing Wang uses the term 'de-politicisation' to refer to the aesthetic approach of Chinese avant-garde fiction.

Ge Fei's *Zhuiyi wuyou xiansheng* (追忆乌攸先生) (1986) is an illustrative example to reflect the fundamental de-politicisation principle of the Chinese avant-garde fiction movement. This story revolves around a police investigation into the death of a village doctor, Mr. Wuyou, who was brutally executed for the crimes believed to be committed by the dreaded chief of the village. The personal history of Mr. Wuyou closely resembles that of victim personages portrayed by a range of Wound Literature authors. Yet, unlike his predecessor writers who use literary writing as an instrument to expose and condemn the injustice and cruelty of the past, and at the same time, reaffirm the dominant progressivism of Deng's era, Ge Fei tends to consciously shy away from the task of revalorising the cultural past. What Ge Fei presents in this fiction is simply a bizarre picture of communal life consisting only of villagers' fragmentary flashes of their personal past. Filled with fantasy and hallucinations, a story like this is more a mock than an affirmation of the redemptive power of memory endorsed by mainstream realist writers. As such, it undermines the function of fiction in serving the dominant socio-political discourses of the time, and thereby contributes to the autonomous status of fiction writing.

Kang Liu attempts to distinguish the Chinese avant-garde fiction movement from its Western European equivalent in terms of avant-gardists' dealing with the relationships between aesthetics and politics (2002). Compared to Western European avant-gardists often letting aesthetics stand against coercive politics, Chinese avant-garde writers resorted to aesthetic means to avoid the culture of radical politicisation (Liu 2002, 92). By extension, it was precisely their evasive and indifferent attitudes towards political power that mattered to Chinese avant-garde novelists.

With regards to the term 'de-politicisation' as used in relation to Chinese avant-garde fiction, one point needs to be clarified. Although critics such as Jing Wang (1996; 1998, 1–14), Xudong

Zhang (1997), and Kang Liu (2002) agree that de-politicisation has the effect of anti-establishment political movements, they oppose the view that the movement of avant-garde fiction was directed against political orthodoxy in contemporary China. For these critics, the idea of Chinese avant-garde writers as dissidents opposing Maoism and/or Deng's ideology is unacceptable. They especially reject the notion of avant-garde writers as political activists diametrically opposing to whatever views purported by the propaganda cadres of the CCP. As Yu Zhansui claims, Chinese avant-garde fiction might disappoint many literary critics and readers who imagine the avant-gardists as "cultural heroes" bravely fighting against Communist ideology and political control (2008, 40). From this viewpoint, to interpret de-politicisation as an oppositional political stance, such as in Li Tuo's reading of avant-garde fiction as the aggressive subversion of Maoist style/discourse from a single-minded politico-ideological perspective, is to devalue the meaning of the Chinese avant-garde, overlooking 'the historical, socioempirical as well as cultural-symbolic conjecture in which the avant-garde experiment resides and which it meant to reconstruct aesthetically' (Zhang 1997, 403). What Chinese avant-garde novelists attempt to evade extends to all forms of intellectual concern with regards to political participation and intervention, spanning from the Confucianism ideology dominant in early Chinese cultural and literary production, and regardless of whether the intervention is to advocate or to oppose political power. Therefore, de-politicisation does not imply an oppositional political stance, rather it refers to the strategic repositioning of avant-garde authors *vis-à-vis* their volatile political surroundings. Rutkowski summarises this as, 'towards political struggles and ideological dogma, Chinese avant-gardists show only irreverence' (2016, 625).

Being one of the central principles of Chinese avant-garde fiction, de-politicisation, reflects what Torbjörn Lodén (1993) observes to be the common plea for 'Pure Literature' (纯文学)

among young intellectuals around 1985. In the general ‘de-politicising cultural atmosphere of the 1980s’ (for a detailed description of the historical background, see Wang Hui 2008), the Chinese avant-garde’s choice of aestheticism functioned as a means to de-politicise, and moved its literary discourse away from the constraints of political orthodoxy in order to assert a relative autonomy for contemporary Chinese literature. Lodén points out that ‘the process has been accompanied by a movement away from objective and towards subjective factors and, in the subjective sphere, also a shift of interest away from ‘reason’ or ‘rationalism’ toward feelings and instincts’ (1993, 155). Consequently, the literary convention of realism, frequently utilised by the political orthodoxy to impart to the public censored truth and values, became the main target that the avant-gardists attempted to subvert.

De-historicisation

One of the main strategies that Chinese avant-garde novelists employed to transcend the limits of mainstream realism was experimentation with representations of history and reality in fictional narratives. Xu Xiaonan uses the term ‘historical aphasia’ to describe the avant-garde characteristic of narrating history, and argues that ‘Chinese avant-gardists adopted narrative methods and subjects to (re-)construct an (aesthetic) discourse beyond the reason of “history”; to the degree that “history” suffers from a complete aphasia in avant-garde writing’ (1998, 16–19, my translation). Other scholars such as Zhao Henry Y.H. (1991), Xiaobin Tang (1992), Jing Wang (1998), Chen Xiaoming (2003), Yongchun Cai (2003), Howard Y.F. Choy (2008), and Yu Zhansui (2008) have expressed a similar view, and believed that Chinese avant-garde novelists rejected conventional norms of fictional narratives which prescribed writings to be an objective representation of Chinese socio-political life. For young avant-gardists, Jing Wang argues,

“‘history’ was a blank sign, only serving as a mere allegory for the impasse of narration’ (1998, 12).

Although avant-garde novelists commonly held the attitude of ‘historical irreverence’ (Jones 2003, 558), they frequently employed actual historical events as backdrops to their stories. For example, Ma Yuan’s *Cuowu* (错误) (1987) is based on his ‘sending-down’ experience as a ‘rusticated youth’ in the countryside of China during the Cultural Revolution; Can Xue’s *Shanshang de xiaowu* (山上的小屋) (1986) can be read as an allegory to the immediate historical past of the Cultural Revolution; Yu Hua also applies memories about the Cultural Revolution to frame his fictional work *Yijiubaliu* (一九八六) (1987); Ge Fei traces earlier historical events in his fictional work, with *Mizhou* (迷舟) (1987) adopting the historical episode of the Nationalist Party’s Northern Expedition of 1928 as a background event, while his later piece, *Xiangyu* (相遇) (1994), is set against the backdrop of recent Tibetan history. As Wu Liang has noted, these stories ‘arose from the memory of history and yet went beyond historical judgment; it raised questions about human existence and yet refrained from becoming involved in contemporary life’ (2000, 128). History is an essential element of avant-garde fiction, but the narration of history, according to Yongchun Cai, is a ‘pure rhetoric to question the grand ideological historical discourse’, especially its core – certainty and linear causality (2003, 188).

The avant-garde exploration of an alternative historicism and transcendent truth in narrative writing can be attributed to its desire to surpass the historicisation tradition to which realist writers adhere. Based on the conventional cultural idea – ‘the integration of history and literature’ (文史不分) (D. Wang 1998, 297–314), Chinese literary narratives tend invariably to, in Jameson’s (1983) term, ‘historicise’. According to Anthony Yu, ‘history occupies a position

of virtually unrivalled esteem and authority' in traditional Chinese culture (1988, 13). Therefore, Chinese traditional historical novels, although being a hybrid form of fictionalised presentation of historical events, lean to view historiographic writing as the supreme original model whereas fiction is the deviant imitator (Yu 1988; Zhang 2003; Maxwell 2011). To some degree, fiction set against a real historical context may be acknowledged to carry the 'truth' about a particular period. This customary view of the dependence of fiction on history constituted a fundamental premise of the means that traditional Chinese novelists employed to make history into fiction. Thus, classical Chinese fiction, including *Sanguo yanyi* (三国演义, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*), *Shuihu zhuan* (水浒传, *Tale of Water Margin*), and *Jinpingmei* (金瓶梅, *The Golden Lotus*), to name but a few, all exhibit textual features inclined not simply to simulate history, but to identify the law of historical development as a dynastic or cyclical process (Yu 1988; Zhang 2003, 1–16; Maxwell 2011).

The tradition of understanding historical truth or objective reality through the writing as well as the reading of fiction continued to prevail when China began its transition to modern times at the end of the nineteenth century (D. Wang 1998, 297–314; Zhang 2003, 1–16; Yu 2008, 16–19; Matthews 2016, 662–663; Wang 2004, 17–58). Largely attributed to European Enlightenment philosophy, Darwin's theory of evolution, and Marxist historiography that May Fourth intellectuals adopted in the face of imperialist violence and national crisis, Chinese historical conception shifted to linear, progressive, and teleological history. Consequently, Chinese writers with heavy concerns for the Chinese nation were led to 'hard-core realism', to use Hsia's (1980, 240) term; by writing about Chinese people in misery and the malaises of tradition, Chinese fiction writers constructed a historical discourse that could 'serve the grand end of enlightening the people and finally strengthening and rejuvenating the nation' (Yu 2008, 19). As Ban Wang

keenly observes, May Fourth novelists, Lu Xun being the best-known example, undertook to historicise, by means of rendering the remembered past – China’s traumatic encounters with imperialism and colonialism – into historical narratives, so as to criticise degenerate conditions of the past while carrying utopian hope for the future (2004, 17–57).

The May Fourth generation of Chinese writers promoted the practice of writing Chinese traumatic history in fiction during the period of national danger. Thereafter, Chinese Communists further developed this practice, so that historicisation through literature could provide an effective instrument for the ideological mobilization of the masses in revolutionary movements. Mao’s 1942 talks at the *Yan ’an Forum on Literature and Art* (延安文艺座谈会) encouraged writers to follow the tenets of socialist realism to serve China’s revolutionary cause, and set up the ground for the strengthening historicisation convention in the following three decades. As it turned out, fictional narratives produced throughout Mao’s era were inclined to use ‘a holistic and logical way’ to represent the law of history as ‘linearly progressive development’ (Chen 2003, 225, my translation). According to Chen Xiaoming (2009), none of Chinese literary periods exemplify the historicisation endeavour of Chinese socialist writers more than the seventeen years (1949–1966). Zhang Qinghua (2003) has similarly pointed out that literary works created in the 1950s and 1960s tended to yield to Mao’s revolutionary ideology. It follows, that fictional narratives produced in Mao’s era were mostly written in the mode of socialist epics with sublime subjects such as ‘emancipation’, ‘revolution’, ‘praise’ and ‘truth’, while interpreting historicity simply as historical actualities of class struggles, progress, and reforms, with no relation to individuals (Zhang 2003, 23, my translation). In extreme cases, writers presented fabricated experiences as truthful accounts of history in order to present a glorious imaginary picture of the ideal socialist country (Zhang 2003, 23–25).

The so-called historical truth pursued by writers in Mao's era was rarely questioned until the end of the Cultural Revolution. Immediately after Mao's death, Deng appealed to the whole nation to reflect on Maoist interpretations of Chinese revolution and history. It was then that Scar Literature, Retrospective Literature, and Reform Literature emerged to narrate and account for personal painful experiences of the Cultural Revolution as well as traumatic events that had happened further back in time. With a renewed historical consciousness, writers of these literary trends made collective efforts to rewrite official history. Yet, constrained by the continually dominant Marxist ideology, they were unable to move too far away from the teleological notion of history endorsed by their predecessor novelists of the Maoist period. As Ban Wang explains, while new literary techniques were applied to represent more diverse historical themes or subjects in Deng's Reform era, memories of the traumatic past were similarly reconstructed into discourses that served 'to ensure and justify the continuity of the emergent nation-state with its past' (2004, 6). Root-seeking novelists who emerged soon after attempted to depart from the grand narrative of national history by reinventing the past through fiction. A principal approach chosen by them was to 'return to the "original" source of living memory' unclaimed by the official history (Wang 2004, 7). This meant bringing into focus cultures located in remote and marginal areas of China and to consider myths, legends, and anecdotes as indispensable components of history. In this way, Root-seeking novelists demonstrated different perspectives and alternative modes of historical imagination. Zhang Qinghua comments that:

Seen from the perspective of narrative methods, Root-seeking fiction has reflected "new historicism theory" in a wide range, including subversions against orthodox historical mode, investigations into marginal, folk and anti-mainstream culture, the structuralist approach to interpret history.... However, it still has the metaphysical nature that Derrida endeavours to challenge: its investigation into and narration of history still imply some understanding of "certainty", and some "sense of purpose" that its fiction of history can somehow influence the ideology and reality of contemporary China. To some extent,

Root-seeking Literature should be regarded as a part of the enlightenment philosophy and practice in that age. (2003, 26–27, my translation)

As Zhang thus implies, underlying the thematic cluster of all pre-avant-garde literary movements in Deng's Reform era there was still a morally, historically, and epistemologically centred subject; set up to reflect writers' humanist position.

The established pattern of historicisation was an unavoidable challenge for almost all self-conscious Chinese novelists who wished to be in the vanguard of literary experimentation. Avant-garde novelists took a completely different path from their predecessors to deal with this challenge. They discarded the approaches taken by the preceding New-era writers who had made efforts to account for past events and their historical significance in literary texts. Neither did they follow Root-seeking writers who tried to enlighten their readers with a historical consciousness of remote and marginal cultures unrepresented in official historical and literary discourses. According to Yongchun Cai (2003), avant-garde novelists drew inspiration from the postmodern approach to history that regards history as the rewriting of reality; thus, they held the belief that no one could capture the historical essence behind literary signifiers since all that was signified was constructed by the political unconscious. Believing that historical events could only be subjectively interpreted but not objectively observed outside the closed circle of textuality, avant-garde novelists dedicated their narratives to articulating the artificiality of history. Their innovative conception of history led them to avoid any totalising literary methods which aim at objectively reflecting and judging human experiences. Chen Xiaoming thus uses 'de-historicisation' to define the avant-garde counteractive views and strategies against the literary tradition of historicisation (2003, 224–255). Grounding their literary experimentation upon such an innovative concept, avant-garde novelists greatly re-configured the historical consciousness and managed to 'explore a radical reimagining of history' (Rutkowski 2016, 612).

Avant-gardists' endeavours to de-historicise has led to the inevitable 'death' of 'history' (Cai 2003, 189). As Yongchun Cai explains, 'the "history" constructed in the avant-garde texts is in essence not so much a thematic discourse (on truthful historical events and historical figures) as a rewritten formalist discourse, to be perceived from a perspective of narrative strategy rather than one of historical reality' (2003, 189). Comparing the conventional norm of historicisation to avant-garde de-historicisation, Chen Xiaoming observes the following shifts brought about by avant-garde authors:

The norm of 'what to write' decides that readers could find themes that could have a direct dialogue with ideology in a complete narrative on history, whereas the avant-garde principle of 'how to write' decides that writing is about to discover the writers' very individual experiences and to look for pure literary elements such as narrative perspectives, syntax, style and registers. (2003, 229–230, my translation)

In Jing Wang's words, avant-gardists turned the narration of history into 'a mere linguistic maze, a pure energy field, and an aesthetic game of narration' (1998, 9). Seen from the viewpoint of these critics, the real power of the avant-garde genre in the process of de-historicisation lays in its attention to formalist aesthetics. Relying on experimentation with narrative elements essential for the representation of history, avant-garde novelists express their heterogenous ways of seeing the real world and history, further accomplishing the goal of accumulating aesthetic autonomy and the separation of aesthetics from the socio-political.

Scholarly studies of representative avant-garde texts show that formal experimentation used to de-historicise is carried out at various textual levels, covering major narrative elements such as structure and plot, setting, point of view, characterisation, and theme, as well as style.

'Metafiction' can be considered one of the most effective methods used by avant-gardists to destroy the verisimilitude and interpretative guidance essential for traditional realism, and expose the fictional nature of history (Zhao 1992, 90–99; Cai and Pan 2013, 10–14). Ma Yuan, a

Chinese writer who based his writing on his experiences in Tibet, pushed metafiction to an extreme during the literary avant-garde movement. In his representative works, the playful narrator ‘Ma Yuan’ is always eager to remind his readers of the artificiality of his fiction. In a typical declaration at the beginning of Ma Yuan’s *Xugou* (虚构) — ‘I am the Han Chinese Ma Yuan; I write fiction’ (1986, 49), the narrator has already revealed that the whole story surrounding his experience in a leper colony in Tibet is pure fabrication. The narrator’s self-reflexive interplay with narrative, in Zhao’s analysis, ‘casts fundamental doubt about the possibility of creating a fictional world to “reflect” the real world’ (1992, 97).

Other new forms and techniques that avant-garde novelists employ to challenge the conventional notion of history in realist fiction include fragmented narrative structures, illogical story plot, and multiple points of view, as shown in Ma Yuan’s *Zhihe de sanzong diefa* (纸鹤的三种叠法) (1984), *Xugou* (虚构) (1986), *Cuowu* (错误) (1987), and *Youshen* (游神) (1987), as well as Ge Fei’s *Zhuiyi wuyou xianshen* (追忆乌攸先生) (1986), *Mizhou* (迷舟) (1987), *Qinghuang* (青黄) (1988), and *Xiangyu* (相遇) (1994). These experimental narrative techniques, namely of ‘narrative gap’ (Wu 1987, my translation), ‘weakening plot’ (Lin 1989, my translation), and ‘narrative labyrinth’ (Lin 2015), question the standard complete and lineal structure favoured in orthodox realist fiction. By presenting complexity, uncertainty, and absurdity at the textual level, avant-garde novelists also conveyed a new historical consciousness that denies the objective truth and historical progressiveness believed by orthodox realist writers. In this sense, the avant-garde experimentation has resulted in a revolution at an epistemological level.

Avant-garde novelists also experimented with the roles of the narrator and characters in fictional narratives to increase the effect of de-historicisation. In orthodox realist fiction, a third-person omniscient narrator usually acts as a rational authority to tell readers what they believe to be objective truth, whereas in avant-garde fiction, narrators turn out to be unreliable and irrational, with limited narrative perspectives to understand reality. A child without the capacity to judge right from wrong could be a narrator, as in the case of the innocent boy, Pipi, in Yu Hua's *Xianshi yizhong* (现实一种) (1988), and the wicked little Shu Nong in Su Tong's *Shujia xiongdi* (舒家兄弟) (1989); so could the mentally-unhinged and unnamed madman in Yu Hua's *Yijiubaliu* (一九八六) (1987). Lacking the ability to understand or judge, these narrators can only stay on the surface and describe the most direct sensations in the world. As Wu Yiqin notes, 'their experiences tend to be abstract, fragmented, and constantly changing, therefore a complete picture of the physical world can hardly be formed through their eyes; they are no longer obliged to tell their readers everything true, certain or reasonable' (1997, 107–108, my translation).

Aside from the changed role of the narrator in avant-garde fiction, fictional characters no longer play the key role of constructing an ordered narrative to press home a complex theme and further depict the complexity of the world. Zhao calls this feature of avant-garde fiction the "flat" characterisation', in which 'the previous round characters are replaced with flat and one-dimensional characters who do not care about the outside world but with their own world or the world of intertextuality' (1992, 98). The clear demarcation between protagonists and antagonists characteristic of socialist literary aesthetics is, therefore, blurred. The feeling, emotion, will, or consciousness belonging to avant-garde characters all exist in free and independent forms, rather than in straightforward causality with grand circumstances or fate. Moreover, since avant-garde writers insert various transcendental elements such as myth, folklore, and religion into

characterisation, their psychological characterisation becomes increasingly fuzzy when read *vis-à-vis* traditional realist characterisation. A typical example of these flat characters can be found in Yu Hua's *Shishi ru yan* (世事如烟) (1988). This story can be viewed as a collage, where disconnected elements such as fortune-telling, wedding, murder, suicide, and conspiracies are forcefully put together, while the logical order of the events is frequently disrupted by absurd dreams, hallucinations, and memories of enigmatic characters. To further construct a misty world, as the fiction title suggests, Yu Hua reduces nameless human characters to abstract numbers such as 4, 6 and 9, who show complete indifference towards catastrophic life of their own or others. Another important means to enhance the absurdity of avant-garde characters is to use madness as the fiction theme. Jing Wang regards Can Xue as a typical example in this respect, describing her characterisation as 'distinctively paranoid persona within the confines of her nightmarish world, a self-consciously depoliticised and an empty, albeit psychically energized, form without content cannibalism' (1998, 6).

As evidenced through the above discussions of the de-historicisation principle of Chinese avant-garde fiction, through experimenting with key narrative elements of realism, avant-garde novelists can pre-empt any mimetic expectation arising from the realist mode of representation, thereby annulling the essential literary method of maintaining the notion of historical factuality and objective truth. In this way, narrative experimentation can serve as an agent of the transformation of historical consciousness. After moving away from the Party-approved norm of objective representations of history and reality towards subjective interpretations involving individual readers, avant-garde writers challenged the subservient position of literature to socio-political discourses, and through so doing asserted the autonomous nature of the rules of literary creation. As Lodén acclaims, the Chinese avant-garde experiment 'not only provides aesthetic

enjoyment in a narrow sense, but also widens our horizons and deepens our insight into the complexities of the human condition' (1993, 160).

De-familiarisation

After a thorough examination of the textual features of Chinese avant-garde fiction, Wu Yiqin (1997) argues that the appearance of the avant-garde genre represented a revolution in the conception of fictional narrative. All experimental approaches employed by avant-garde novelists reflect their explorations of the relationships between content and form, the fictional world and reality, and literary subject and function (Wu 1997, 21–36). However, Wu considers language experimentalism as 'the most fundamental strategy for avant-garde writers to subvert the "real world" constructed according to the hegemonic political discourse and literary conventions, thereupon constructing their distinctive stylistic forms and artistic aesthetics' (1997, 109, my translation). Howard Choy also illustrates how Yu Hua uses 'the violent performance of language to challenge the rational, innocuous language of the grand narrative' (2008, 204). According to a group of avant-garde critics, including Li Jie (1988b), Zhang Yiwu (1988b), Chen Xiaoming (1989), Li Tuo (1989b, 1993), Wu Yiqin (1997), Chen Sihe (1999), Yongchun Cai (2003, 2011), and Zhai Hong (2004), linguistic innovation by avant-garde novelists was as significant to establishing the genre's autonomy as its radical experimentation with narrative techniques.

Avant-garde experimentalism with fictional language is radical, mainly because it drastically changes the way language is used to represent reality and serve the interests of political ideology. As Jing Wang elaborates, in the hands of avant-garde novelists, the authentic 'continuum of sign-representation-reality' attached to conventional literary language to construct the verisimilitude

of narratives is dramatically disrupted, with the result that ‘the ensuing foregrounding of floating signifiers’ can profoundly challenge the language function to objectively represent the world (1998, 9). As language is emancipated from the burden of signifying ‘truth’ in the collective sense, literary creation can become a more autonomous artistic activity for individual writers. Galloping freely inside their imagination, avant-garde novelists have constructed a ‘linguistic maze’ (J. Wang 1998, 9) to reflect their personal perceptions and experiences of the world rather than their judgements complying with orthodox socio-political discourses.

Although avant-garde linguistic innovation takes various forms, they all share the aesthetic effects of a ‘de-familiarised language’ (Zhai 2004, 84–99, my translation). ‘Defamiliarization’, literally meaning ‘making strange’, is considered by formalists as the most effective technique to allow readers to see objects out of their normal context and to perceive them as in artistic ways (Lemon and Reis 1965, 4). According to Shklovsky, who initially formulated the notion of defamiliarization:

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects “unfamiliar,” to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because of process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important. (Shklovsky 1917 in Lemon and Reis 1965, 12)

The notion of defamiliarization offers ideational models for Chinese avant-gardists. As Yongchun Cai remarks, ‘the doctrine of defamiliarization serves well as a “motivation” for Chinese postmodern writers in the 1980s in their linguistic and artistic endeavours to create fictional deviation’ (2003, 334). At the same time, as argued by Chen Lixuan and Zhang Hengjun (2011), the idea of de-familiarisation provides practical techniques for Chinese avant-gardists to conduct their experimentation. Fictional language thereupon becomes ‘an effective

medium that they use not only to achieve a new defamiliarizing blasphemy against the accepted norm but also to combat the accepted notion of secular reality with a resolute attempt to confine them to the verbal surface of a text' (Cai 2011, 335).

With de-familiarisation of language as one fundamental principle, avant-garde novelists were able to present innovative styles that could mark the artistic value of their writing. Sections 5.2 and 5.3 in Chapter 5 of this thesis provide an in-depth analysis of the avant-garde concept of de-familiarised language, before focusing on the linguistic devices used by Yu Hua, Ge Fei, and Su Tong to create a particular style of semantic ambiguity. Before this, the present section expounds on some other stylistic features in order to explain the radical language experimentalism endorsed by avant-garde novelists.

One imaginative and inventive approach that avant-garde novelists used to foreground language as an autonomous artistic subject on its own right was related to the use of lyricism. Scholars such as David Dei-wei Wang (1994, 248–252), Chen Sihe (2004, 129–150), and Yongbin Wang (2012) explain that avant-garde novelists tried hard to incorporate poetic expressions into fiction to create metrical patterns that were linked to the language of lyrical poems. Sun Ganlu is an extreme example of this. Calling Sun 'an alchemist of language', Wu Liang illustrates that 'Sun Ganlu produced works that can hardly be called fiction. His language was patchy, self-generating, and anti-narrative. Through his imagination, he withdrew from daily reality' (2000, 135). Based on the analysis of Sun's fiction *Wo shi shaonian jiutanzi* (我是少年酒坛子) (1987), Chen Sihe points out that 'dreamlike lyricism and poetic quality permeate Sun's surrealist fiction. In this fiction, words no longer point to reality, neither have the symbolic or metaphorical intention imposed by the subject; they slip away from the ideographic function,

becoming some free imagery' (2004, 298, my translation). An example of this extreme lyrical inclination in Sun Ganlu's fiction is:

那些人开始过山了。他们手持古老的信念。在一九五九年的山谷里。注视一片期待已久的云越过他们的头顶。消失在他们将要攀登的那座山峰的背后。渐渐远去。等候他们爬上顶峰。再一次从高处注视。消散或者在天边隐去。然后。为这座山峰命名。(I) (Sun Ganlu 1987, 179)

LT: Those people began to climb the mountain. They had ancient beliefs in their hands. In the valley of 1959. [They] Stared at a cloud that had been long longed for passing over their heads. [And] Disappearing in the back of the mountain that they were going to climb. [The clouds] Gradually receded. [While] Waiting for them to reach the top. [And to] overlook from the top once more. [The clouds] Dispersed or disappeared beyond the horizon. Then. [They] Named this mountain. (I)

Such poetic expressions subvert not only the function of literary language to put across a message that contained a certain fixed meaning, but also the normal sense of the fiction genre. More importantly, it consolidated awareness of the subjective position of literary language, and thus contributed to the pursuit of literary autonomy by Chinese avant-garde novelists.

Although not as radical as Sun, other avant-gardists frequently indulged themselves in poetic language. By means of strengthening the style and rhetorical effect of linguistic expressions, avant-garde novelists moved away from ordinary language, even though such a method might sacrifice the basic function of fictional narratives to tell a story. As fictional language is de-familiarised, fiction as a whole tends to be infused with indeterminacy, ambiguity, paradox, and absurdity. In terms of linguistic features, the aesthetics of the avant-garde language are especially reflected in the condensed use of figures of speech, for instance simile, metaphor, synaesthesia, and personification. These rhetorical devices enabled avant-garde novelists to assemble elements that were usually considered irrational for 'traditional realistic fiction which emphasised the objectivity of the world by keeping individual's subjective feelings to a minimum' (Chen 1993,

141, my translation). Compared to orthodox realist writers who applied figures of speech simply to enhance the explanatory effects of their narratives or as a means by which to promote characterisation, avant-gardists favoured rhetoric performances as a way to express an individual's highly subjective perceptions of the world. The mysterious, strange, and incomprehensible atmosphere existing throughout their texts thus reflects the avant-garde awareness of the impossibility of using language to create a total and objective representation of the real world.

For Chinese avant-garde writers, the self-consciousness of language was another driving force in their pursuit of the autonomous status of literary creation. Their experimentation with fictional language affirmed that language is far more than a carrier or an instrument to convey certain meanings, rather it can be a subject in itself. Through de-familiarising the ordinary language favoured by conventional realist writers, avant-garde novelists invented new styles, whilst also enabled autonomy from the rules of literature. In this sense, 'Chinese avant-garde fiction is also close to the postmodernism belief that language is a self-disciplinary system which has the ability to construct its own world and reality' (Zhai 2004, 72, my translation).

2.2.3 Critical reception of Chinese avant-garde fiction in Chinese literary studies

As a literary movement, avant-garde fiction's heyday in the Chinese literary field was somewhat short-lived. Entering the 1990s, the core of the avant-garde school ceased to lead aesthetic experimentation and dissolved into discrete voices and professions. Despite its short life span, critical discussions of this major literary phenomenon and its influence on the overall development of contemporary Chinese literature still persist.

Several literary critics have evaluated the short-lived avant-garde fiction movement, and summarised that its achievements have influenced subsequent fictional creation. According to Chen Xiaoming, the avant-garde ‘formal experimentation has greatly expanded the functions and expressions of Chinese fiction’, and ‘strengthened the role that individual perceptions and linguistic styles play in fictional creation’; with its writing focus shifting from ‘what to write’ to ‘how to write’, Chinese avant-garde fiction manifested ‘postmodern sensibility’ (1991, 137–139, my translation). Zhao Henry Y.H., and many other Chinese critics, including, for instance, Zhang Yiwu (1988a), Li Tuo (1993), and Wu Liang (2000), have remarked that the appearance of avant-garde fiction in mainland China indicated that contemporary Chinese writers were able to put behind them a political or sociological mode of fiction discourse. When compared to the long-term intertwined relationship between the socio-political and the aesthetic in Chinese literary history, nascent avant-garde fiction is a landmark that ‘signif[ied] a successful separation of the literary aesthetic from the dominant socio-political discourses and a real achievement of contemporary Chinese literature in pursuing pure literature’ (He 2005, 17, my translation). Due to these achievements, Zhao Henry Y.H. praises avant-garde fiction for symbolising ‘the great and important changes taking place in the world of contemporary Chinese literature’ (1993, 18).

Chinese avant-garde fiction not only gained fame among Chinese literary critics; it also attracted international attention. Anglophone literary critics of Chinese literature such as Michael Duke (1991, 389–394), David Der-wei Wang (1994, 238–258), and Jing Wang (1998), have spoken highly of this new wave of Chinese fiction. The changing views of Michael Duke constitute a typical example of the special attention that avant-garde fiction has gained abroad. In contrast to his previous critiques of modern and contemporary Chinese fiction, which he considers mediocre due to ‘the lack of literary artistic merits and the author’s excessive concern

with social reality' (1990, 198–230), Duke's complimentary remarks on avant-garde fiction are significant. Duke regards avant-garde experimental fiction as 'a major turning point in contemporary Chinese fiction' (1991, 389), one which represents 'successful artistic projection of the individuality and the universality of the human imagination'; qualities that Duke thinks of as necessary for the successful acceptance of Chinese fiction by international readers (1990, 217). Responding to the prevailing slogan among Chinese intellectuals— 'walking toward the world' (走向世界),² Duke hopes that Chinese avant-garde fiction might 'convince readers that Chinese fiction has certainly taken its place in the march of world fiction and whetted their appetite for more of it in English translation' (1991, 394). Similarly, Andrew Jones comments that avant-garde fiction 'signals a watershed in modern Chinese fiction' (2003, 555), because its formal innovation is a successful revolt against the constraints of suffocating politico-ideological discourses (2003, 555–556). Despite the brief flowering of avant-garde fiction, 'its artistic legacy remains vital to the ongoing articulation of contemporary Chinese literature and culture' (Jones 2003, 559).

The vigorous avant-garde movement was originally driven by a desire to set up an autonomous status for contemporary Chinese writers. In the process, Western modern and postmodern theories and practices provided essential references for avant-gardists to break the constraints of existing literary standards. Their efforts also signalled a desire for 'contemporaneity'; 'literary parity with the developed Western literature, and a place at the world literary table' (Jones 2003, 555). Many critics, both in China and abroad, including Wang Ning (2013), Zhao Henry Y.H. (1994), Jing Wang (1996), and Xiaobin Yang (2002), have

2. Walking toward the world, a Chinese phrase, according to Duke, 'may be taken to mean approaching the quality of the finest in world fiction' (1991, 389).

proclaimed that the avant-garde movement heralded the advent of literary postmodernity in China. As Xudong Zhang explicates,

The avant-garde movements in the literature not only made palpable the particular social-cultural experience of Deng's China. These 'breakthroughs' further functioned as what I call a symbolic primitive accumulation of wealth and provided as infrastructure for a Third world and socialist nation to assimilate shocks and search for a subject position when incorporated into the postmodern world. (1997, 22)

As these advocates of Chinese avant-garde fiction commonly suggest, the heterogeneous aesthetics manifested in the fiction symbolise that the gaps between China and the world (predominantly a synonym for the West) have been bridged, with contemporary Chinese literature having finally caught up with literary developments in the West; thereby placing China as a participant within the world literary system.

2.3 Translating Chinese avant-garde fiction into English

The rest of this chapter focuses on examining the socio-political and cultural environments in which representative works of Chinese avant-garde novelists were anthologised and translated into English in order to understand the historical, socio-political, and cultural factors that promoted or constrained the global circulation of Chinese avant-garde fiction between 1993 and 2003. The Tiananmen Square Protests in 1989 were a historical turning point for the position of contemporary Chinese literature in the world literary system. After this watershed year, Chinese literary culture has been deeply embedded in the global markets of commodity exchange (Xu 2000; Zhao 2003; Denton 2003a). Within China, accompanying the decline of high-brow literary production, there was an increase of Chinese cultural products oriented towards the needs of international consumers. Concurrently, this political event significantly reconfigured the images of contemporary Chinese culture and society in Western countries. As the Tiananmen crackdown re-evoked Western perceptions of China as a totalitarian and repressive state that once prevailed

during the Cold War, the Anglophone readership's conceptions and expectations of Chinese literary products were led back to their old political and ideological parameters. In these circumstances, there was a rising tendency for Anglophone publishers to select, translate, and promote Chinese literary works which were considered to be realist reflections of political upheavals in mainland China for the target reading public. Along with the rise of Chinese literary diaspora and the development of film adaptations of contemporary novels in the post-Tiananmen era, the tendency of ideological translation was further strengthened. These two phenomenal cultural trends, situated within the context of cultural globalisation, played an arguably profound role in shaping Western public imagination of an antagonistic relationship between Chinese communist state power and intellectuals, as well as the function of contemporary Chinese literature as national allegories. Both trends contributed to existing narratives of contemporary China across media, and increased ideological constraints of the Anglophone cultural system within which translations of contemporary Chinese literature have to comply or challenge.

2.3.1 A watershed year: the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests

The Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989 (15 April–4 June) began as a series of demonstrations led by Beijing university students calling for freedom of speech and the press. Shortly afterwards, millions of ordinary Chinese citizens showed their support and joined the protests across the country, which called on the government to tackle the problems of corruption, rampant nepotism, and economic inequality, as well as demanding democratic reforms. The movement climaxed on the night of 4 June, when Chinese troops fired on crowds, killing and wounding many (the exact number is still unclear) (Tuner 2016, 127–133; Leung 2017). In the aftermath of the crackdown, the widespread arrests of protestors and supporters continued. Some Chinese intellectuals involved in the movement were arrested and imprisoned, while others fled the

country and eventually found refuge in Western countries. Meanwhile, Chinese political authorities strengthened their controls over public expressions of dissent, and imposed stricter censorship on the media. For a long time after 1989, literary works directly referring to the Tiananmen Protests were regarded as illegal publications and banned inside China (for the censorship imposed by the Chinese government upon Tiananmen-themed publications, see Minxin Pei 1994, 152; Heinz Oliver Kramer 2002; Belinda Kong 2012; Xiao Di 2014).

For Chinese intellectuals who were eager to be critical participants in the reform of China, the failure in Tiananmen Square decimated their desire to become ‘a balancing force in the political game’ (Zhao 2003, 198). Furthermore, as the government strengthened ideological control over intellectual activities, intellectuals in the post-Tiananmen era became even more disassociated from politics. Despite its destructive political effects on pro-democratic intellectuals, this nationwide movement ‘has done little to slow down the trend [of avant-garde fiction]’ (Zhao 1993, 17). In Zhao’s (1992) opinion, the principle of ‘art for art’s sake’ which predominant avant-garde novelists such as Ma Yuan, Yu Hua, and Ge Fei persisted in, kept them from being involved in the antagonism between reformist intellectuals and hard-liners within the Party. Therefore, the publication of the works of avant-garde novelists was still possible even in the most sensitive year of 1989. In fact, major Chinese literary journals, including *Zhongshan*, *Renmin wenxue*, and *Dajia*, continued to bring several representative works of avant-garde novelists to the public in both 1989 and the years afterwards.

Yet, Zhao also points out that ‘publication and critical appraisal of the avant-garde writers has definitely been discouraged’ in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Protests (1992, 99). The decline of the literary avant-garde movement in 1990s mainland China was more related to the changing cultural and literary landscape following the 1989 Tiananmen Protests than the immediate

aftermath of the Party's forceful suppression. As Andrew Jones describes, 'the avant-garde as a viable and ideologically coherent movement ultimately fell victim not to censorship or official disapproval but to the vagaries of the market and the changing artistic agendas of its constituent members' (2003, 559). After a three-year lull following the protests, the whole nation, responding to Deng's call that 'to get rich is glorious' (致富光荣), started to focus on marketisation and commercialisation (Zhao 2003, 198–202). Intellectual culture and literature, walking out of the shadow of the Tiananmen crackdown, started to follow commercial trends as well. Given that the government phased out the system of providing state-sponsored writers with a salary for life and reduced the funding provided for domestic publishers, making money from the commercial market became the primary choice for most intellectuals and writers.

The commercialising literary trend was not all negative, as it not only allowed intellectuals to stake out a 'territory independent of societal and political pressures' (Goldblatt 1995, ix), but also made it possible for them to acquire public notoriety and economic capital quickly. Many writers 'responded by popularising their work' (Denton 2003a, 300). However, for elite intellectuals, the sudden rise of consumer culture meant that the already small readership of high-brow literature shrank even further. The most radical form of high-brow literature, avant-garde fiction, was pushed to the social and cultural periphery and ceased to lead the literary trends in China. One way for high-brow literature to live and work in the changing socio-cultural environment of the post-Tiananmen era was, to cite Poggioli's description of the Western neo-avant-garde, to 'reconcile itself to the culture of the times by collaborating with parts of the public' (1968, 79). According to Xu Jian (2000), core avant-garde novelists such as Yu Hua, Su Tong, and Ge Fei also transformed their experimental styles in order to find a new place in the commercialising trend. By giving up their focus on formalist aesthetic experimentation, they

managed to produce more market-oriented and reader-friendly literary works, for instance, Yu Hua's *Huozhe* (活着) (1993) and *Xu Sanguan maixue ji* (许三观卖血记) (1995), Su Tong's *Mi* (米) (1991) and *Wo de diwang shengya* (我的帝王生涯) (1992), and Ge Fei's *Yuwang de qizhi* (欲望的旗帜) (1996). These full-length novels are exemplars of 'New Realist Fiction' (新现实主义小说). This genre, Wang Ning argues, is a reaction to both 'the radical experimentation made by the avant-gardists' and 'the traditional realistic aesthetic principle' (2011, 305). Through 'highlighting a sense of commonalty ... [and] compromising with the reading public' (Wang 2011, 305), New Realist Fiction narrowed the gap between high-brow literature and popular literature while continuing to display writers' literary sensibilities.

In addition to the 1989 Tiananmen Protests causing dramatic changes to the literary culture within China, it also greatly reconfigured China's international image. When Western media reported the unfolding events of the Tiananmen Square crackdown with headlines such as 'Massacre in Beijing' (*Time*, 12 June 1989) and 'Butchers of Beijing' (*New York Times*, 12 Dec 1989), the entire world watched in shock. The Party's forceful suppression of protesters was immediately met with worldwide condemnation, economic sanctions, and arms embargoes, accompanied by international governmental support in the form of asylum provided for those protesters and participants who were projected as victims of the Tiananmen tragedy. The issue of human rights in China was raised to a level so high that it was considered as having 'helped rally support for Tibet' in the international movement of Tibetan independence (Kristof 1991, 4).

Compared to the previous Western impression that Deng's China embraced the core Western values of democracy and capitalism, the political event at the end of the 1980s was seen as a revival of totalitarianism in China, and a sign of regression in China's path towards

democratisation (Turner 2016, 120–142). Consequently, the benign image of Deng's China as a friendly potential ally, progressing towards Western civilisation, was severely damaged. Instead, narratives about uncivilised Communist China – customary during Mao's repressive regime – resurfaced around the world, particularly in the US, which acted 'as a global promoter of capitalism and democracy' (Turner 2016, 113). 'In as much as the Tiananmen events are inextricably related to global (read: Western) media, the post-Tiananmen image of China has ever since been caught in an endless spin of politicization and demonization' (Liu 2004, 137). Furthermore, whereas ensuing events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Communist Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War 'gradually undermined the potency of the narratives of communism across the world', the Western image of China 'as an ideological other' remained unchallenged (Xiao 2014, 126). A historic moment like this meant that Western ideological assumptions of China may continue to constrain its public reception of contemporary Chinese cultural products, even though Deng's regime 'restarted his socialist-capitalism in economy' in 1993 in an attempt to remove some ideological barriers between the post-Tiananmen China and the Western world (Zhao 2003, 198).

Contemporary Chinese writing circulating in Western cultural systems after 1989 soon attested the vital and enduring impacts of the Tiananmen Protests. Despite the negative effects on China's international image, this event brought about a period in which contemporary Chinese literature appealed to the global publishing industry. Jeffrey Kinkley notes that 'the post-Tiananmen era may have led to a sharp decline in American media and student interest in China, as it did in literary production in the mainland, yet Western publication of works in translation has enjoyed continued vigour' (2000, 247). In fact, Kinkley's survey of the publications of Chinese literature in translation between 1949 and 1999 shows that shortly after the event,

‘translation of literary works into French and German as well as into English goes on posthaste’ (2000, 239). Red Chan’s study on mainland Chinese novels in the Anglophone world during the post-Mao era similarly shows that contemporary Chinese fiction continued to attract the interest of Anglophone publishers and translators following the Tiananmen Protests (2002).

Kay Schaffer and Xianlin Song have examined the event’s implications for the global flow of ‘alternative Chinese values and beliefs disallowed at home that the process of translation permits’ (2006, 2). Focusing on the English translation of Chen Ran’s semi-autobiographical novel, *A Private Life* (2004), which narrates struggles in life of the protagonist during the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Protests, Schaffer and Song (2006) trace translation shifts contributing to the ideological representation and interpretation of Chen Ran and her work. As their study has found, whereas Chen’s original text implicitly reflects on the Tiananmen Protests whilst emphasising a philosophical meditation from an indigenous Chinese feminist stance, its English translation reduces ‘stylistic aesthetic experimentation that characterises Chen’s work’ and instead offers Anglophone readers a framework to interpret the novel as ‘a tale of political intrigue that climaxes with the Tiananmen Massacre’ (2006, 5). Xiao Di (2014) has systematically studied the selection, framing, and reviewing of English translations of Chinese novels published in the UK and US between 1980 and 2010, and revealed that the 1989 Tiananmen Protests had a massive impact on the politicised dissemination and reception of Chinese novels in the Anglophone world. According to Xiao, the Tiananmen Protests caused Anglophone publishers and reviewers to focus ‘especially on [Chinese] narratives of censorship and dissidence’ (2014, 8), and further framed translations of this type of literature as reflections of the political event and an exposure of Communist China’s totalitarian and repressive regime.

The post-Tiananmen era also saw the rejection of translations of contemporary Chinese literature commissioned by Chinese government-backed publishers in the receiving Anglophone system. As McDougall notes, ‘especially since 1989, it has also become accepted that we need not allow the Chinese government to decide what we read’ (2003, 33). Geng Qiang’s (2010) study confirms that the selection of Chinese writers and works sanctioned by Chinese official institutions met with incredulity in the Anglophone cultural context after 1989. The *Panda Books Series* promoted by Chinese Literature Press during the 1990s no longer appealed to English-speaking readers in the way in which it had in the 1980s, even though Chinese official institutions continued to heavily subsidise the publication and translation of official canons overseas (Geng 2010). With regards to the reasons behind this, Geng Qiang explains:

After the Tiananmen event, political or ideological constraints of the Anglophone cultural system to a great extent impacted the selection and translation of contemporary Chinese writings, which further developed the expectation towards Chinese dissident voices among Anglophone readers. Given these circumstances, the *Panda Books Series*, seen by the Anglophone culture as the mouthpiece of the Chinese Party, was rejected. (2010, 123, my translation).

These studies commonly suggest that the Tiananmen Protests in 1989 has significantly perpetuated the politicised conception that Western cultures hold towards contemporary Chinese literature. In the Anglophone cultural system, the predominant ideological constraints controlled the dissemination of contemporary Chinese literature. Rather than selecting Chinese literary texts on the basis of their intrinsic aesthetic merits, Anglophone publishers tended to select those that complied with the Anglophone reading public’s ideological perceptions of Communist China. Moreover, the selected Chinese texts had to be rewritten in translation to highlight political and social implications. This more recent trend of ideological translation bore similarities to the translation tendency of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context during the Cold War period – as discussed in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1.

The tendency to ideologically represent and interpret contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context of the post-Tiananmen era was to an extent reinforced due to the ‘rise of Chinese diasporic literature, both in Chinese and in the language of the host countries’ (Zhao 2003, 204). As introduced at the beginning of this section, a group of intellectual activists and supporters managed to flee China and seek refuge in Western countries. There they joined other Chinese intellectuals such as Liu Binyan, Bei Dao, Yang Lian, and Gu Cheng who had gone abroad for personal reasons or as a consequence of political pressure from the government when the Tiananmen Protests were forcefully suppressed on 4 June, and were propelled into the diaspora thereafter (either because they were barred from re-entering the PRC or chose to stay abroad). Over the ensuing years, many of them gained fame in the West as ‘self-identified dissident writers’ (Kong 2012, 4), and wrote about the political event or their lives in exile. With reference to Tiananmen’s myriad literary effects, Belinda Kong comments that although the Tiananmen Protests ‘remains a topic under official censorship by the Communist government’, it had brought about ‘a distinctly politicised Chinese literary diaspora’ (2012, 2). Whether originally written in Chinese or not, through writing about the Tiananmen crackdown from abroad, diasporic writers such as Gao Xingjian, Ha Jin, Annie Wang, and Ma Jian ‘give voice to Tiananmen’s history via literary forms’ (Kong 2012, 2).

In light of the Chinese literary diaspora, a group linked to the literary journal *Jintian* (今天, *Today*), including Bei Dao, Yang Lian, Gu Cheng, and Duo Duo, were especially embraced by the global literary community in the post-Tiananmen era. These writers, as representatives of the so-called ‘Misty Poetry’ (朦胧诗) group – owing to their penchant for abstract language and obscure meaning – became well-known amongst the Chinese reading public through the publication *Jintian* during the 1978–1979 ‘Democracy Wall Movement’ (民主墙运动) (Cui

2014, 45–51; Kong 2003, 550). The journal provided a forum for these poets to express their yearning for ‘individualism’ and ‘spiritual freedom without political restrictions’, until it was banned within China in 1980 (Editorial Board of *Jintian* 2009). After being underground for a decade, *Jintian* was re-launched in Sweden in 1990 as an avant-garde journal for transregional Chinese literature. The revived *Jintian* opposes cultural despotism, and advocates the freedom of literary and artistic creation, as well as the pluralistic development of Chinese literature (Bei Dao 2008; Cui 2014, 128–134). With Bei Dao as chief editor, *Jintian* ‘secured funding from several international foundations and the backing of well-known writers (Chinese and Western) as well as sinologists as advisers to the foundation’ (Kramer 2002, 10).

Conditioned by the Tiananmen Protests and international reactions to the event, core contributors to *Jintian* who originally wrote and published underground within China were able to write more freely in Western countries. Since then, the *Jintian* group of writers were unprecedentedly involved in the trend of literary globalisation. With their improved international visibility, particularly facilitated by English translations of their Chinese works (as illustrated in Chapter 3), they were able to construct a literary system based on global distribution networks and international readership; thereby acquiring the potential to reconfigure contemporary Chinese writers across multiple Western milieus.

It is worth noting that not all Chinese diaspora writers were like *Jintian* exile writers, banished from China for being activists during the Tiananmen Protests. Some celebrated Chinese authors in the diaspora, including Jung Chang, Ha Jin, and Dai Sijie who left China to study overseas when China was reconnected to the Western world in Deng’s Reform era, chose to stay abroad after the Tiananmen Protests. Others, such as Hong Ying and Yan Geling, migrated to European countries and the US in the early 1990s, and then became professional writers. Among them,

Jung Chang is arguably the best-known. With the publication of the biography, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*, in English in 1991, Jung Chang won her first big commercial success. By telling the family saga through the eyes of three generations of Chinese women living in twentieth-century China – her grandmother, her mother, and herself, Jung Chang introduced Anglophone readers to the sufferings of Chinese people during the political upheavals that occurred between the 1940s and 1970s. While being banned in mainland China, *Wild Swan* gained popularity around the world, as McDougall has noted, ‘it sold 10 million copies worldwide and was translated into 30 languages’ (2014, 57). As for the cultural implications of Jung Chang’s success, Eva Kneissl argues that ‘*Wild Swans* did establish a model for other Chinese writers – what came to be called by some Western publishers as the “misery memoir” sub-genre of Chinese fiction’ (1997, 205). McDougall also comments that the book’s phenomenal success ‘reinforce[d] the impression that English-language readers welcome or at least don’t object to books that are critical of contemporary China’ (2014, 57). These scholarly observations have been affirmed by publications of post-Tiananmen diaspora authors in Western countries. Within a decade of *Wild Swan* (1991), other Chinese authors followed suit, writing stories with recurrent motifs of trauma and oppression in Maoist China. This trend produced best-sellers such as Anchee Min’s *Red Azalea* in English (1993), Hong Ying’s *Ji’e de nver* first published in Chinese (1997) and then translated into English as *Daughter of the River* (1998), Anhua Gao’s *To the Edge of the Sky* in English (2000), and Dai Sijie’s *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* in French (2001). These personal narratives have enjoyed popularity among Western consumer readers.

Prior to the Tiananmen Protests, Chinese emigrant authors had gained considerable currency in global literary markets through ‘turn[ing] the Cultural Revolution memoir into a genre

sensation' (Lovell 2011, paragraph 1). Those emerging in the post-Tiananmen era appeared to continue to follow the patterns of writing China's traumatic history and politicising Chinese diaspora. As Kong has noted, 'after the massacre, we can detect in diasporic literature an intensified engagement with matters of political power, a new kind of negative identificatory tug-of-war with the communist state' (2012, 6). By including Tiananmen in their narrative themes and content, diasporas who wrote after 1989 appeared to benefit from accumulating economic, cultural, and social capital in the international literary market.

Chinese literary diaspora which emerged in Deng's Reform era and extended to the post-Tiananmen era was a dynamic cultural group. Regardless of the aesthetic and ideological complexities which underlay the cultural production of diaspora authors, Shuyu Kong describes, 'much Chinese diaspora literature depicts marginal living as emotionally traumatic, spiritually depressing, and culturally threatening' (2003, 552). Their choice of imagining and writing about China via literary narratives can be interpreted as a reaction to the historical changes in the global political and economic infrastructure. There was a strong tendency among post-Tiananmen diaspora writers to 'marshal the cultural authority of world literature, especially in the West, in order to critique the excesses of communist state power', particularly with regard to the Tiananmen Protests but also with reference to other democratic movements in China's contemporary history (Kong 2012, 6). Belinda Kong argues that such a tendency risks 'perpetuating Cold War perception of China as a brutal totalitarian country by artistically resurrecting an episode of violent state repression and failed protest' (2012, 6), as well resulting in restricting imagination of Chinese diasporas 'as victim populations, as nameless hordes of the dispossessed and persecuted' (2012, 11).

While post-Tiananmen diaspora writers gained fame and economic rewards in the global literary market, the way in which their writing about China is ideologically interpreted by Western readers also cast shadows over the circulation and reception of a broader range of contemporary Chinese literature outside China. In this aspect, Pei Meng's (2018) study has provided convincing evidence about the implications of autobiographical writings by emigrant writers such as Hong Ying, Ma Jian, and Xin Ran for representations of China and translations of Chinese literature within the British literary field. As Meng illustrates, what determined the translation selection was the literary agent's understanding of 'prevailing cultural and ideological dispositions' and the economic rewards that could be gained from accommodating 'this type of literature within the British target culture as principally factual "eye-witness narrations"' (2018, 220). Therefore, within the globalised Anglophone literary market, 'Chinese autobiographies were framed as market commodities, with commercial revenue over-riding literary value' (Meng 2018, 220).

Another force which propelled contemporary Chinese literature into global dissemination in the post-Tiananmen era was the commercial success achieved by what Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu (1997) termed, 'transnational Chinese cinemas'. As early as 1988, *Red Sorghum*, adapted from Mo Yan's novel *Hong gaoliang jiazu* (红高粱家族) (1986), won worldwide attention for Zhang Yimou, one of the most celebrated filmmakers of the Fifth Generation (第五代电影).³ It was only after the acclaimed film that the Chinese novel was translated into English by Howard

3. The term 'Fifth Generation' refers to the first group of students who graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982. According to Wendy Larson, the Fifth Generation directors were 'the first group to work largely after the death of Mao, and their innovations mark the switch out of Maoist socialist realism, the attempt to enter the international film market, and a general and severe questioning of Chinese film-making techniques, contents, aesthetics, and institutional structures' (1999, 196).

Goldblatt in 1993, with the title *Red Sorghum: A Novel of China*. This film potentially paved the way for more film adaptations of contemporary Chinese novels to enter the global cultural system. Shortly after *Red Sorghum* had gained international popularity, Zhang Yimou adapted Su Tong's novella *Qiqie chengqun* (妻妾成群) (1990) into the film *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991), with the support of transnational capital. Once again, the film won prestigious awards abroad and achieved great box-office success, despite, or perhaps even because of, the fact that the film was officially banned in China. Soon afterwards, *Qiqie chengqun*, together with two other more classic pieces of Su Tong's avant-garde fiction, were translated by Michael Duke, and the translation collection was published in 1993 under the same title as the film. In 1994, Zhang Yimou adapted Yu Hua's less experimental novel *Huozhe* (活着) (1993) into the internationally renowned film *To Live*. The film, which presents political and social upheavals over decades of modern Chinese history through following the story of one Chinese family, was denied a theatrical release in mainland China. However, the ban imposed by the Chinese government seemed to promote its box office sales in the US and European markets, according to Kang Liu (2004). Almost a decade after the release of the film, the original novel was finally translated by Michael Berry into English and published through Random House in 2003.

All examples given above share the pattern of being Chinese novels that were adapted into films in the first place, with translation only happening after the film adaptations had gained popularity around the globe. This pattern was not coincidental. As Claire Huot (1999), Kinkley (2000), Kang Liu (2004), and Xiao Di (2014) have suggested, the global success of these movies made the original novels more visible in Western capitalist markets and brought recognition to Chinese authors such as Mo Yan, Su Tong, and Yu Hua on the world literature stage. Publishers operating in the globalising cultural systems were thus attracted to translate the original texts to

recipient readers who might be ‘curious to establish whether the original novels were better than the movies’ (Kinkley 2000, 255).

While film adaptations enhanced the global visibility of contemporary Chinese novelists, they also generated discourses that constrained the interpretations and receptions of the translated novels, as well as the broader range of cultural products that emerged from post-Tiananmen China. From a theoretical viewpoint, film adaptations can be regarded as the creative translation of a narrative from one medium or mode to another (Venuti 2007; Krebs 2014; Perdikaki 2018). It follows that when the novelistic source is adapted and made available to the recipient audience, it is likely to be rewritten in accordance with the socio-political and cultural contexts in which the adaptation takes place. In this sense, film adaptations encourage a revised reading and imagination of the original narrative and the source culture. Speaking of the Chinese films under discussion, scholars including Zhang Yiwu (1994), Xudong Zhang (1997), and Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu (1997) have addressed the allegorical approach that the Fifth Generation filmmakers tended to employ to capture the attention of Western critics and gain international fame. Conditioned by cinematic commodities in the global marketplace, Xudong Zhang argues, these films provided Western viewers with allegories to capture the ‘intense social, cultural, and ideological struggles and conflicts’ in the twentieth-century China (1997, 209). Zhang Yiwu criticises cinematic representations of China as exotic, erotic, backward, and uncivilised which were, ‘not serious studies of actual Chinese history or contemporary society; but the means to fulfil the desire and illusion that the hegemonic capitalist culture holds towards Chinese cultural products, an expression of the fantasy to historicise contemporary Chinese culture and politics’ (1994, 8, my translation). Given the popularity of these films amongst Western viewers and the close intertextual relation that the films established in adapting Chinese novels, it can be inferred

that subsequent English translations of contemporary Chinese novels are likely to be affected by the Western allegorical narratives of Chinese culture that these internationally acclaimed films helped to construct.

2.3.2 The translation boom of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the UK and the US

As discussed in the above section, entering the 1990s, and as a consequence of cultural globalisation, Chinese literary products gained increasing visibility in the Anglophone cultural context. Yet, ideological distinctions between China and the Western world remained as an influential constraint which impacted the representation, circulation, and reception of contemporary Chinese literature among Anglophone readers. To a considerable degree, the motifs and content of Chinese literary works selected and promoted by Anglophone publishers continued to focus on Chinese intellectuals' sufferings from political oppressions and the general public's traumatic experiences during China's primary historical events of the twentieth century. This mode of ideological representation of contemporary Chinese literature was, to a certain extent, reinforced by the active participation of the global market force in the post-Tiananmen era. It was particularly promoted by producers of Chinese culture – including writers, publishers, and directors of film adaptations – who focused primarily on financial rewards and brought about allegories of Chinese politics and society that could answer to the needs and expectations of the Western general public. Against this background, a significant amount of Chinese avant-garde fiction was anthologised and translated into the Anglophone cultural context within a short period of time. These heightened anthologising and translation events can be described as the boom of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the UK and the US.

This section firstly outlines the characteristics of this boom – the distinctive translation patterns of the avant-garde genre – by offering a bibliographic survey of the English anthologies

of contemporary Chinese fiction published from 1979 to 2020. Additionally, the survey serves to offer a better understanding of the recent history of literary cultural exchanges between mainland China and the Anglophone world. Thus, it may supply information concerning the dominant ideological and poetological currents in the receiving system that could play a role in the way avant-garde fictional works are selected and presented to the Anglophone readership through anthologisation and translation. Subsequently, it further examines concrete factors that led to the boom, with particular attention given to anthologists and other translations agents involved in the international transfer of Chinese avant-garde fiction. In this way, it brings to light the publication background of the translation anthologies under study, the agent networks underlying the translations, intended readers and effects of the translations, and possible paratextual methods and translation strategies used in the making of the translation anthologies.

The bibliographic survey here is based on the categorisation of the Modern Chinese Literature and Cultural Resource Center (MCLC), *Index Translationum*, an international bibliography of translations maintained by UNESCO, and the member library collections of WorldCat. In addition, it is indebted to existent critical scholarship on contemporary Chinese literature in English translation, to name only a few key pieces: Louie and Edwards (1993), Kinkley (2000), Chan (2002), and Liu (2012). Aside from anthologies that focus exclusively on narrative fiction, contemporary Chinese anthologies tend to group fiction together with other literary forms, such as poetry, essays, and non-fictional prose. These hybrid anthologies, compiled to high standards, have been key channels for the circulation of contemporary Chinese fiction globally, and are therefore also included in this survey. In consideration of the research focus on contemporary Chinese literature, anthologies exclusively of modern Chinese literature or contemporary Chinese poetry are not included in this survey.

As the bibliographic survey shows, during the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, UK and US publishers published seventeen, twenty, fourteen, and eight anthologies of contemporary Chinese literature, respectively. This result confirms Anglophone publishers' increasing interest in importing contemporary Chinese literature via the medium of translation anthologies in the immediate decade after the watershed year of 1989. At the same time, the decline of translation anthologies in the 2000s and 2010s shows the relatively less attention that Anglophone academic and independent publishers paid to Chinese short stories or novellas. This decline can be interpreted as the result that many Chinese novelists started to shift from writing short stories to book-length novels or abandon fiction for other professions since the 1990s, as partly mentioned in the preceding Section 2.3.1, or discussed by Lovell (2012).

Focusing on the 1990s alone, it can be observed that a markedly large portion of anthologies out of the total number published in this period are devoted to avant-garde fiction. From the first publication in 1993 to the most recent one in 2003, a total of ten anthologies featuring English translations of Chinese avant-garde fictional works have been published (see Table 1). Of those ten anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction, seven were published in the 1990s, which constitutes more than one third of the total of twenty anthologies of Chinese fiction that were published by UK and US publishers during that decade. The other three anthologies were published in the first three years of the new century. The concentration of publications in the 1990s attests to the importance of this decade in terms of circulating Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural context. In contrast, from 2003 to the present day, none of the published anthologies feature Chinese avant-garde fiction, which, to a certain extent, evidences the lost appeal of this literary genre in the Anglophone cultural context.

Table 1. Publications on English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction

Year	Title of Anthology	Editor	Publisher
1993	<i>The Lost Boat: Avant-garde Fiction from China</i>	Zhao, Henry Y.H.	London: Wellsweep
1994	<i>Running Wild: New Chinese Writers</i>	Wang, David Der-wei & Jeanne Tai	New York: Columbia University Press
1994	<i>Under-Sky Underground: Chinese Writing Today 1</i>	Zhao, Henry Y.H. & John Cayley	London: Wellsweep
1995	<i>The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature</i>	Lau, Joseph S.M. & Howard Goldblatt	New York: Columbia University Press
1995	<i>Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused</i>	Goldblatt, Howard	New York: Grove Press
1996	<i>Abandoned Wine: Chinese Writing Today 2</i>	Zhao, Henry Y.H. & John Cayley	London: Wellsweep
1998	<i>China's Avant-Garde Fiction: An Anthology</i>	Wang, Jing	Durham: Duke University Press
2000	<i>Fissures: Chinese Writing Today</i>	Zhao, Henry Y.H., Yanbing Chen & John Rosenwald	Brookline, MA: Zephyr Press
2001	<i>Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, and Wind Horses</i>	Batt, Herbert J.	Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield
2003	<i>The Mystified Boat and Other New Stories from China</i>	Stewart, Frank & Herbert J. Batt	Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press

Examining the publishers responsible for compiling these anthologies shows that seven UK and US publishers were responsible for the production of all ten English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction; none were undertaken by mainland Chinese publishers. The selection of the anthologies produced by mainland Chinese publishers shows different criteria from those of Anglophone publishers. Under the ideological guidance of the government, Chinese government-

backed publishers are inclined to select and translate contemporary writing with the purpose of presenting China in a manner that highlights its embrace of humanism and progress, instead of avant-garde fictional works which tend to be detached from political debates and social topics. Taking English anthologies published by the Chinese Literature Press in the 1990s for example, a series of collections were produced to introduce Anglophone readers contemporary Chinese women writers acclaimed for their profound depiction of personal feelings and private life, Fang Fang, Shen Rong, Wang Anyi, Liu Xihong, Zhang Jie, Chi Li, and Zhang Kangkang, for instance. The Chinese Literature Press also published an anthology entitled *Love That Burns on a Summer Night* (1991), which displays stories with local themes and ethnic minority subject matters written by authors including Tashi Dawa, Zhao Danian, Zhang Chengzhi, and Malquinhua. Only a few short stories that have been critically viewed as experimental were included in the official selection, including *The Mountain Cabin*, a major avant-garde piece by Can Xue, which features in *Best Chinese Short Stories, 1949–1989* (1989). Beyond Can Xue, who was most likely promoted for capturing and writing honestly about the profound pain of a nation, Tashi Dawa, a Chinese novelist of half-Tibetan and half-Han ethnic background renowned for writing in a style close to Latin-American magical realism, appeared to be one of the only experimental novelists favoured by government-backed publishers. Between 1990 and 1991, the Chinese Literature Press published translations of several of Tashi Dawa's stories, which were then included in his personal collection, *A Soul in Bondage: Stories from Tibet*, and published through Panda Books in 1992. In contrast, Anglophone publishers have been more enthusiastic about Chinese avant-garde fiction than their mainland Chinese counterparts; appearing eager to introduce young Chinese experimental writers through the medium of translation anthologies to Anglophone readers.

Comparing Anglophone anthologising and translation activities between the 1980s and 1990s, a shift in the critical reception patterns of contemporary Chinese literature can be detected. As Red Chan comments, ‘the apparent fixation of translators on realist, political stories in the 1980s did change somewhat after the pro-democracy movement in 1989’ (Chan 2003, 161).

Anglophone publishers and critics of the 1980s focused exclusively on realist Chinese writing with strong socio-political content and ideological implications, particularly controversial and provocative writing, as illustrated in Section 1.2.3 of Chapter 1. In comparison, the boom of English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the 1990s and the early 2000s indicates a collective effort to present new aspects of contemporary Chinese literature to Anglophone readers, and even an intention to intervene in the canonical constitution of contemporary Chinese literature in English.

The potential transformation of the perceptions and representations of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context can be interpreted further as being the result of the development of Chinese literary studies into an independent discipline in Western academic institutions in the 1990s. With major changes happening in the world, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and China’s entry and full participation in the global capitalist economy, the 1990s witnessed the increasing impact that culture and economy can bring to exchanges between countries, although political ideology still played a substantial role in the process (Section 2.3.1). The once dominant area studies during the period of the Cold War were generally declining in America. Of them, China studies which tended to ‘view Chinese literary texts only as historical source materials’ to understand Chinese society and politics (Section 1.2), gradually gave way to Chinese cultural and literary studies where literary texts were analysed more ‘as works of art rather than reports on history’ (Link 1993, 5). Academics in

Chinese cultural and literary studies also ‘quickly recognised the value of Chinese avant-garde fiction’ (Liu 2004, 113). As avant-garde fiction distanced itself from social and political discourses, and instead pursued literary autonomy, it soon became a popular choice for scholars and academics to explore literary aesthetics and cultural tendencies emerging in contemporary China. The developments in Chinese cultural and literary studies in 1990s America thus helped Chinese avant-garde fiction to find ‘a new niche for their products in the global cultural market’ (Liu 2004, 113). Consequently, American university presses became more actively involved in compiling anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction in English translation, which were then used as teaching materials in Chinese literature classes and for academic purposes.

The expanding team of translation agents, especially those who were eager to present aesthetic aspects, and the modernist values of new waves of Chinese writings to Anglophone readers, was another factor that helps explain the boom of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural context in the 1990s. Editors including Zhao Henry Y.H., John Cayley, and Jing Wang have been ardent proponents of Chinese avant-garde fiction, and speak highly of its aesthetic experimentation. In my interview with Zhao (2015), Zhao stated that he had been specialising in literary formalism even before the appearance of Chinese avant-garde fiction; since the avant-garde literary experimentation verified his literary theories, he made great efforts to help Chinese avant-garde writers win literary recognition. In the same interview, Zhao (2015) recalled that during his PhD studies (1983–1988) at the University of California, Berkeley, Chinese scholars and writers, including the noted literary critic Li Tuo, frequently visited UC Berkeley, bringing with them the latest news about the Chinese literary circle; Chinese avant-garde fiction was thus quickly imported into the library of UC Berkeley in its original version shortly after its publication in mainland China. Living and working abroad for years, first in America, then in

London, Zhao formed a link between the Chinese literary circle and Anglophone academic and publishing institutions. Therefore, when John Cayley, the sole founder of the Wellsweep press, entrusted him with the job of compiling the first English anthology of Chinese avant-garde fiction, later entitled *The Lost Boat: Avant-garde Fiction from China*, Zhao happily accepted the editor position, and used his network of contacts to assemble a team to undertake the translation and publication works. The key role played by Zhao in the publication of *The Lost Boat* (1993) led to his engagements in the publication of three more anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction: *Under-Sky Underground: Chinese Writing Today 1* (1994) and *Abandoned Wine: Chinese Writing Today 2* (1996), which Zhao co-edited with John Cayley and published through Wellsweep, as well as *Fissures: Chinese Writing Today* (2000), which Zhao co-edited with Yanbing Chen and John Rosenwald and published through Zephyr Press.

According to John Cayley's answers to my questionnaire in 2016, as an experimental writer and translator himself, he had such a long-standing interest in Chinese literature and culture that he established Wellsweep in 1988 to serve his wish to introduce a number of writers as distinct voices rather than the subjects of orientalist anthologies that expressed a typical, often stereotyped, Chinese style. Additionally, Cayley (2016) emphasises that 'for my own, and for Wellsweep's part, the motivation for publication was chiefly and importantly literary'. Jing Wang, a cultural and literary critic on contemporary China, in her monograph *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Deng's China* (1996) argues confidently for the high literary aesthetics that Chinese avant-garde fiction represents. Following it, Jing Wang compiled and edited *China's Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998) to introduce seven most noted avant-garde novelists to English-speaking readers. Because of Wang's demonstration of her

complex view of the avant-garde movement in Deng's Reform era, her anthology won critical acclaim as 'the academic benchmark for new wave translations' (Kinkley 2000, 258).

Other than the above-discussed editors, scholars and critics specialising in Chinese literary studies, such as David Der-wei Wang, Andrew Jones, Michael Duke, Yongchun Cai, and Herbert Batt, as well as Chinese diasporic authors centred around the literary journal *Jintian*, played the different roles of social agents in the anthologising and translation events of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Relying on their individual impacts and social networks, these agents contributed to the cross-cultural transference of Chinese avant-garde fiction and thereby enhancing the visibility of this literary genre in the Anglophone cultural context. The boom of English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the 1990s and the early 2000s testify to the sociological translation theories on how translation agency constitutes an important contextual factor conditioning the translation process and products (Bassnett 2002; Wolf 2002; Wolf and Fukari 2007; Kung 2009). Bearing in mind the cultural and socio-political factors underpinning the boom, the following section delves into the production process of these anthologies to get a deeper insight into their history and the ideological frameworks that structure the translation production.

2.3.3 English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction

Focusing on publishers' institutional backgrounds and the roles of translation agents in the anthologising and translation process, the analysis shows that the ten anthologies fall into two broad categories. The first encompasses those that are more literary focused. Through introducing the radical literary aesthetics of Chinese avant-garde novelists into the Anglophone literary system, anthologies belonging to this category aim at intervening in the ideological perceptions and expectations held by Anglophone readers towards contemporary Chinese

literature. The second projects oppositional political and cultural views in terms of nation-state, cultural hegemony, and geopolitical boundaries, and underlines the political connotations of Chinese avant-garde fiction.

The first category contains three anthologies: *The Lost Boat: Avant-garde Fiction from China* (1993) (hereafter *The Lost Boat*), *China's Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998) and *The Mystified Boat and Other New Stories from China, Special Issue of Mānoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing* (2003) (hereafter *The Mystified Boat*). The second category can be further divided into three subcategories. Among them, the three anthologies centred around the literary journal *Jintian*, including *Under-Sky Underground: Chinese Writing Today 1* (1994), *Abandoned Wine: Chinese Writing Today 2* (1996), and *Fissures: Chinese Writing Today* (2000) (hereafter *Under-Sky Underground*, *Abandoned Wine*, and *Fissures*, respectively), present a counter discourse against the excesses of Communist state power through establishing the literary identity of post-Tiananmen diasporic intellectuals in the world literary system. *Running Wild: New Chinese Writers* (1994) and *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature* (1995) (hereafter *Running Wild* and *The Columbia Anthology*, respectively) jointly advocate the notion of 'cultural China' posited by Wei-ming Tu (1991). By grouping avant-garde fiction from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and overseas Chinese communities throughout the world together under the banner of contemporary Chinese literature, these two anthologies challenge the definition of 'Chinese literature in terms of the old geopolitics' (Wang 1994, 239). *Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused* (1995) and *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Wind Horses and Prayer Wheels* (2001) (hereafter *Chairman Mao* and *Tales of Tibet*, respectively) share a discourse of criticising China's authoritarian political system, with the former focusing on questioning the authority of the Party's cultural politics, whilst the later opposes the domination of Han Chinese

culture over peripheral Tibetan culture. Since Chapter 3 develops the main arguments about oppositional discourses shaping and being shaped by translation anthologies in the second category, the following concentrates on illustrating how the three anthologies in the first category construct the discourse of translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction as an ideological intervention in the Anglophone cultural system.

The Lost Boat (1993) can be regarded as a path-breaking publication for the Anglophone readership's recognition of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Various translation agents, including the publisher Wellsweep, the editor Zhao Henry Y.H., and many translators, were actively involved in compiling and publishing this anthology, and set out 'to establish a new canon of contemporary Chinese literature in English' (Chan 2002, 91). As introduced in the preceding section, Wellsweep was founded by John Cayley as a small independent publisher that focused on introducing new and innovative Chinese writing to Anglophone readers. In his responses to the questionnaire I sent, Cayley (2016) also explicated that Wellsweep not only received good support from the Arts Council of England – which was set up to fund similar projects with the kind of international reach that Wellsweep could offer – but also established strong links with the independent, experimental, and avant-garde poetry community, including the *Jintian* group of writers; Bei Dao, Yan Lian, and Duo Duo, who made great contributions to the rapid growth of Wellsweep in the early 1990s. In addition, Cayley (2016) appreciated that scholars and students had supported Wellsweep for, basically, nothing, because they were committed to shared values and to the small but significant contribution that Wellsweep was able to achieve. In my interview with Zhao (2015), he also stated that a few of the translators volunteered due to their interest in Chinese literature, including Helen Wang who was responsible for the translation of Ma Yuan's

Cuowu (错误) and Yu Hua's *Xianshi yizhong* (现实一种); throughout the process, translators, writers, and the editor worked closely to maintain the literary quality of the translation.

As its editor, Zhao Henry Y.H. played a key role in the publication of *The Lost Boat* (1993), and ensured that the target Anglophone readership would receive the selected Chinese avant-garde authors in the way he wished. Therefore, in the anthology's introduction, Zhao presents a critical analysis of the new waves of recent Chinese fiction, including Stray Youth Fiction, Root-seeking Fiction, and avant-garde fiction (1993, 9–18). While affirming the progress made by these literary currents, particularly in emancipating literary creation from the dominant 'overtly political or sociological mode of fictional discourse' (Zhao 1993, 17), Zhao argues that avant-garde novelists' 'rediscovery of formal experimentation has highlighted the purely literary values of the New Wave Fiction and helped to make it worthy of the attention of students and general readers throughout the world' (1993, 16). Noticing that most Western scholars of contemporary Chinese literature tended to select works of Chinese authors for compilations based chiefly on their sociological or political content, Zhao specifies clearly that the purpose of his compilation was 'to compensate for this tendency, to give readers a chance to see for themselves the literary qualities of some of the best recent New Wave Fiction' (1993, 17). Given Zhao's strong arguments in the introduction, together with his great interest in formalist literary theories, it can be argued that Zhao attempted to open up a discursive space for accentuating literary aesthetic features and values of Chinese avant-garde fiction. To further support this discourse, Zhao devoted the 'main part of the collection to the nascent avant-garde fiction' (1993, 18), including *Mistake* (错误) (trans. Helen Wang 1993) and *Fabrication* (虚构) (trans. J.Q. Sun 1993) originally written by Ma Yuan, *The Lost Boat* (迷舟) (trans. Caroline Mason 1993) by Ge Fei,

and *One Kind of Reality* (现实一种) (trans. Helen Wang 1993) by Yu Hua. In this way, Zhao hoped that the selected works would convince western readers and critics of ‘the great and important changes taking place in the world of contemporary Chinese literature’ (1993, 18).

As the above analysis suggests, anthologising and translation activities related to *The Lost Boat* (1993) constituted a resistant discursive practice to the conventional Anglophone way of perceiving and representing contemporary Chinese literature. Individual and institutional translation agents involved in the process shared the concept that Chinese avant-garde fiction spoke for the aesthetic merits of contemporary Chinese literature, and also recognised the ideological constraints on the reception of contemporary Chinese literature in Western cultural contexts. Therefore, they worked together to bring representative Chinese avant-garde fictional works to Anglophone readers to mediate the way target readers would approach contemporary Chinese literature. In the process, translation agents and networks proved their impacts on the translation of a formally and discursively heterogeneous Chinese fictional genre in the Anglophone cultural context. Yet, whether the translation of Chinese avant-garde fiction could succeed in challenging what Zhao and Cayley considered a stereotypical view of contemporary Chinese literature in the Western cultural context still relied to a great extent on textual strategies used in translation production; a point Chapters 3, 4, and 5 return to and discuss further.

A similar discourse focused on mediating Anglophone perceptions and receptions of contemporary Chinese literature can be found in Jing Wang’s introduction to *China’s Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998, 1–14). In it, Jing Wang states clearly her reason for compiling such an anthology: for academic purposes, this anthology is intended to raise the

‘awareness of the global debates over the issues of local history, cultural locations, and postmodernity’ (1998, 14). For lay readers, her words are worth quoting in full,

It serves to contradict the prevalent myth propagated throughout the decade of the 1980s by Western media: that Chinese writers were preoccupied with issues of human rights and that their ultimate cause can be defined as championing the principle of liberal democracy against the autocratic regime of communism. The avant-gardists demonstrated eloquently that writers in China could afford to turn an impervious back to socio-political consciousness. What is collected in this anthology, in a nutshell, a dramatic manifesto of the aggressive making of a postrevolutionary literary sensibility obsessed with form and the pleasure of storytelling. (J. Wang 1998, 14)

Like Zhao Henry Y.H., Jing Wang was no doubt aware of the Western tendency to stereotype Chinese contemporary fiction as sociological materials from which to gain an understanding of Chinese society and political issues. She thus attempted to demonstrate a new literary wave that might help to establish a new canon of contemporary Chinese fiction in the Anglophone cultural system. As one of her discursive strategies, she laid out within the introduction the comprehensive range of artistic concepts and narrative skills possessed by Chinese avant-garde writers in order to distinguish them from preceding Chinese writers. In Wang’s critical view, unlike their predecessors whose writing was ridden with burden, ‘whether it is cultural, historical, socio-political, existential, or not the least of all, semantic burden’ (1998, 2), avant-garde novelists’ formal experimentation turned writing into a mere ‘aesthetic game of narration’ (1998, 9). As another strategy to challenge the ideological perceptions of contemporary Chinese literature persisting in the post-Tiananmen Anglophone cultural context, Jing Wang carefully selected representative works of the avant-garde school. Consequently, most of the stories she selected were those published before 1989, when avant-garde novelists were at the peak of formal experimentation. Only two stories included in the anthology were published in the 1990s, which, according to Jing Wang, served as ‘specimens of the school in their transitional, post-

1989 phase' (1998, 14); a time when the avant-gardists' radical formal experimentation gradually gave way to the production of New Realist Fiction.

Another discourse highlighting formalist aesthetics in Chinese avant-garde writing can be detected in *The Mystified Boat* (2003), a collection which was published as a special issue of the literary journal *Mānoa*; run by the University of Hawai'i Press. Compared to the above two anthologies, *The Mystified Boat* (2003) appears to focus more on enhancing the connections between Chinese avant-garde fiction and Western postmodern literature, thereby removing cultural barriers which might hinder the target readership's acceptance of the source literature. In order to form such a discourse, relevant translation agents collaborated to categorise Chinese avant-garde fiction under the label of 'postmodernism' which, Shu-mei Shih believes, tended to be assumed by literary scholars as 'a universal advanced category' (2004, 25), and used the names of 'Chinese avant-garde fiction' and 'Chinese postmodern fiction' interchangeably. Specifically, Frank Stewart argues in the editor's note that Chinese avant-garde writers, like the internationally-acclaimed Chinese artist Mu Xin, have pursued the transcendence of boundaries between 'the cultures of traditional Asia, of the classical West, and of modernity' (2003, x). In addition, the collection includes the essay, *Into the Labyrinth*, co-written by scholar Yongchun Cai and editor-translator Herbert J. Batt (2003, 49–55). From a critical viewpoint, Cai and Batt illustrate that like Western postmodern writing, Chinese avant-garde fiction 'takes a subversive posture with its anti-authoritarianism, rejection of mainstream expectations, dismantling of binary opposition and intellectual playfulness' (2003, 50).

To further emphasise the transregional and transcultural characteristics of Chinese avant-garde fiction, the selection of the collection features avant-garde authors residing not only in mainland China, such as Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, Su Tong, Can Xue, Yu Hua, and Wang Anyi, but also authors

based in the UK and the US, such as Hong Ying, Ma Jian, and Yan Li. In this way, the collection achieved the goal that the publisher *Mānoa* set out to present to English-speaking readers ‘contemporary writings from the entire Pacific Rim, one of the world’s most dynamic literary regions’ (University of Hawai’i Press 2019, *MĀNOA: A Pacific Journal of International Writing*). With regards to such choices and arrangements related to *The Mystified Boat* (2003), the collection can be interpreted as a discursive product which aimed to find Chinese avant-garde fiction a place in the world literary system and to give it, in Jones’s words, ‘literary parity with the developed world’ (2003, 559).

Here, the corpus of English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction published between 1993 and 2003 testifies to the theory that literary translations are the products of the specific cultural context of the time and also reflect the socio-political and cultural factors that underpin translation activities. Within the Anglophone cultural context of the post-Tiananmen era, the boom in English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction can be understood in two ways. First, as a necessary reaction to the continuing mode of ideological translation of contemporary Chinese literature. Second, as the result of the growing trend of literary globalisation after the Cold War. Under the combined action of the two main contextual constraints, the anthologising and translation events fall into two groups: One group consists of translation anthologies that are inclined to project the image of Chinese avant-garde novelists as experimentalists who were deeply engaged in China’s formalist literary movement, and thereby whetting the Anglophone readership’s appetite for the aesthetic aspect of contemporary Chinese literature instead of its political or sociological content. The other tends to focus on conveying political connotations; thereby projecting an image of Chinese avant-garde fiction that accords not only with the

mainstream Western conception of the subversive nature of avant-gardism, but also the dominant Anglophone ideological view of contemporary Chinese literature.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the socio-political and cultural contexts that enabled the emergence of Chinese avant-garde fiction, and explained this genre's aesthetic and discursive characteristics. After reviewing its critical reception both within China and among international scholarship of Chinese literature, it turns its focus onto the English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction. By examining the historical and socio-political contexts in which the global circulation of Chinese avant-garde fiction took place, this chapter has attested to the significant impact that the Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989 imposed on Anglophone perceptions and expectations of contemporary Chinese literature. As this political event projected China's negative image as a totalitarian and repressive nation in the Western world, the mode of ideological translation that dominated the Anglophone cultural context during the Cold War was reinforced, continuingly constraining the discursive formation of contemporary Chinese literature therein. In addition, because of the expanding group of Chinese literary diaspora as well as the global success of Chinese film industry in the post-Tiananmen era, Chinese literary products were increasingly influenced by the trends of literary globalisation and cultural commercialisation. While these trends promoted the global circulation of Chinese avant-garde fiction, considerations of economic rewards appeared to drive cultural producers to politicise contemporary Chinese writing to meet the needs and expectations of Western consumer audiences.

Facing these contextual factors, a range of translation agents and UK and US publishers actively participated in bringing Chinese avant-garde fiction to English-speaking readers through the medium of translation anthologies. This led to a boom in English translations of Chinese

avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural context in the post-Tiananmen era. Based on an initial analysis of the ten translation anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction published between 1993 and 2003, this chapter has also outlined two categories of ideological frameworks concerning Chinese avant-garde fiction in translation: one category is more literary focused; the other tends to convey political connotations. In light of the translation contexts, the following three chapters examine the paratextual and textual strategies employed to sustain or challenge these ideological frameworks in translation.

Chapter 3: Paratextual Framings in Translations of Chinese Avant-garde Fiction

The previous chapter has analysed the background to the anthologising and translation events of Chinese avant-garde fiction into English, and categorised the resulting translation anthologies into two categories. This chapter focuses on the paratexts surrounding five of these translation anthologies to examine the ways in which source texts were selected and presented to the Anglophone readership. Based on the patterns found, the chapter discusses the ideological use and effects of paratextual materials for recontextualising translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural system.

This chapter consists of three main parts: the first part reviews the area of paratextual studies within the discipline of translation studies, especially those that discuss the role of translation paratexts in ideological struggles. The second part analyses paratextual patterns concerning English translations of contemporary Chinese literature during the second half of the twentieth century, thereby underlining the discursive constraints upon the representation and reception of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural context. The third part concentrates on analysing paratextual frames placed around anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction with relatively overt political connotations, including *Under-Sky Underground* (1994), *Abandoned Wine* (1996), *Fissures* (2000), *Chairman Mao* (1995), and *Tales of Tibet* (2001). Through analysing the paratextual elements accompanying these anthologies, including titles, cover designs, blurbs, introductions, forewords, contents pages, and reviews, this part explores the extent to which the central principle of Chinese avant-garde fiction – de-politicisation (Section 2.2.2) – has been re-constructed at the threshold of translation, and thus affected target readers' interpretations of the ideological forces underpinning the texts of Chinese avant-garde novelists.

3.1 Translation paratexts and ideological framing

The notion of ‘paratext’ is elaborated by the French narratologist Gérard Genette in *Seuils* (1987), or *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997) as the work is known in English. According to Genette, all types of ‘verbal and other productions’ surrounding and supporting the core text constitute paratexts (1997, 1). In terms of its location, paratext can be further categorised into peritext, which is attached to or inserted in the core text, such as covers, blurbs, prefaces, introductions, afterwords, and footnotes; and epitexts, which include all metatextual discussions and explanations lying outside and unattached to the text, for instance, reviews, interviews, or literary criticisms of a specific work. For Genette, paratext ‘constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition, but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public’ (1997, 2, italics original). Marie Maclean (1991) agrees on the importance of paratextual materials in literary studies, and especially concurs with Genette’s view of the great impact that paratext as a threshold can impose on a reader’s interpretation and reception of literary texts. In addition, Maclean stresses that paratext, as a frame relating a text to its context, represents ‘a means of lending the text authority, originally the very attribute of the author’ (1991, 276). By implication, the real effect of paratext lies not only in its authorial or editorial intention, but also the circumstance of textual production and the reader’s interpretation.

While Genette’s discussion of paratext opened up a new area in the field of literary studies, it has also inspired much research in translation studies. The past two to three decades have witnessed a wide range of publications on the function of translation paratext; illustrating its significant influence on the ways in which receiving readers approach and interpret texts translated from different languages and cultures. Examples of this area of studies include,

amongst others, Urpo Kovala (1996), Richard Watts (2000, 2005), Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002, 2011), Keith Harvey (2003, 2014), Mona Baker (2006), Carolyn Shread (2010), Anna Gil-Bardají, Pilar Orero and Sara Rovira-Esteva (2012), Brigid Maher (2016), and Valerie Pellatt (2013, 2018). Caroline Summers describes paratexts as ‘the most easily identifiable site of interaction between the text and its surrounding discourse’ (2013, 13). As translation scholarship has commonly recognised, it is normally through the paratexts that translation agents other than translators, including publishers, editors, reviewers, and readers, participate in framing the translated text with a view to mediating target readers’ horizons of expectation of the source text and culture.

One of the earliest scholars incorporating paratextual analysis into translation studies is Urpo Kovala. In his study of translations of Anglo-American literature published in Finland in 1890–1939, Kovala (1996) concentrates on analysing the uses of paratexts in the publication process of translations and their connections to wider social and cultural contexts. His study reveals a general tendency towards ideological closure through paratextual mediation (Kovala 1996). As Kovala elaborates, paratexts of translations tended to foreground the information content of the works and their educative effect on readers while dismissing the works’ literary quality and context; and to an extent, the paratextual discourse produced therefrom confirmed and reinforced the dominant religious-conservative ideology in the Finnish cultural context of the time (Kovala 1996, 136–140). Kovala’s research is ground-breaking for translation studies, because it not only drew translation scholars’ attention to paratexts whose roles in cross-cultural communication had been previously unattended, but also brought to light ideological issues relating to translation paratexts.

Also appropriating Genette's concept of paratext, Richard Watts (2000) examines a number of ways to package Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays nat* (1939), from its initial publication in Cuba, several versions published in Paris, to the recent translation edition aimed at Anglophone academic audiences. Through analysing the transfiguration of paratexts in different cultural contexts over time, Watt observes that paratexts tend to establish the text into a product which responds to certain ideological imperatives in each 'publishing chronotope'; in particular, to the evolving ideas of the Caribbean and Francophone Caribbean literature (2000, 32). To put Watts's view differently, paratexts to each edition of the *Cahier* provide varied frames within which the text itself is read, leading to divergent experiences of the text in various historical and cultural contexts. In this sense, different paratexts to the *Cahier* 'have served – and continue, to some degree, to serve – as instruments of cultural translation' (Watts 2000, 29). A similar conception of paratext is elaborated in Watts's monograph, *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World* (2005), which extends to examining paratexts of Francophone literature from the colonial to the post-colonial period. Studying paratexts diachronically, Watts (2005) looks at how the content and form of paratexts shift in relation to external cultural and political factors. In Watts's opinion, the diachronic methodology characterising his study enables him to address the changing context that helps to shape paratextual discourses, hence distinguishing his study from Genette's, which 'privileges the synchronic dimension of the paratext' without enough consideration of 'the cultural specificity of the work and the moment of its reception' (2005, 13–14).

A handful of scholars, for instance Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002, 2011), Mary Louise Wardle (2012) and, Caroline Summers (2013), also disregard certain aspects of Genette's theoretical framework in order to apply a pragmatic paratextual approach to translation-related research. With regards

to Genette's argument that 'the paratextual element is always subordinate to "its" text, and this functionality determines the essence of its appeal and its existence' (1997, 12), Tahir-Gürçağlar points out that Genette is too source text-oriented to consider 'how paratexts may enter into a dialogical relationship with their main text and alter it' (2002, 46). Rather than seeing paratext as only being at the service of the presentation and reception of the core text, Tahir-Gürçağlar argues that paratexts to translations can have 'an impact on the sending literary system, and even on source authors' (2002, 46). Furthermore, Tahir-Gürçağlar counterargues Genette in terms of the 'paratextual relevance' of translation practices, especially Genette's idea of viewing translation as a type of paratext serving 'as commentary on the original text' (1997, 405). As Tahir-Gürçağlar explains, viewing translation as paratext 'reinforces the conventional hierarchy between the source text and its translation', and thus conflicts with the critical perspective that a translation can lead a separate life in the target context (2011, 114). On this basis, Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002) focuses on paratextual features surrounding Turkish translations of the Western classics and popular literature to discuss the methodological relevance of paratexts for translation research. Her studies make evident that paratexts to translations can be intended by various agents to serve social and ideological forces in the target culture, and that studies of paratexts can expose 'the conditions under which translations were produced and consumed' (Tahir-Gürçağlar 2002, 59).

Similarly, Wardle (2012) and Summers (2013) criticise Genette for placing translation among paratexts of original publications because this viewpoint assumes the authorial control of the paratext and relegates the translated text to a derivative status. Using Aldo Busi's Italian translation of *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* as an example, Wardle (2012) shows that the reputation of the translator becomes a determinant paratextual element informing the reading of

his translation, which in turn affects the reader's understanding of the original text. Summers (2013) uses English translations of the work of German writer Christa Wolf to demonstrate the varying authorial images projected through paratexts of translations. Therefore, both scholars address the importance of studying translation paratext in the social, political, and linguistic contexts of the receiving culture.

Notwithstanding the theoretical controversies about Genette's concept of paratext, the insights it offers to translation-related studies are unquestionable. As interest in translation paratexts continues to rise, scholars have brought into sharper focus the cultural and political implications of translation paratexts. The variety and richness of the research under this general trend have been explained by Kathryn Batchelor in her review of key themes in paratext-related translation studies (2018, 31–39). Considering this thesis's aim of exploring ideological issues related to English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction, the rest of this section focuses on research concerning the connections between paratext and ideological translation. Specifically, it looks at the studies that have explored how paratextual elements are used by individual or institutional translational agents to shape the target reader's expectations and experience of translated texts; mediating the image of source-language authors and cultures in the recipient culture of the time accordingly. In this way, the study seeks an applicable angle from which to discuss paratexts to English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction as a site of both exercising and exposing ideological framings.

A well-known example concerning the ideological causes and effects of translation paratexts can be found in Keith Harvey's (2003) study of the French translations of three American gay novels in the late 1970s. Within his study, Harvey uses the term 'binding' instead of 'paratext' to refer to the presentational elements around translated texts and argues that the bindings are the

‘key sites for the figuring of translated texts as interferences between competing ideological positions’ (2003, 43). Bearing in mind the gap between the source and target discursive attitudes towards the notions of ‘gay identity’, ‘gay liberation’, and ‘gay writing’ (2003, 49), Harvey has analysed the titles, cover photos, and back cover blurbs attached to the translated novels. As thus found, the form and content of these elements appear to: on the one hand, diminish representing the aspects of American notions of gay that possibly exceed the target horizons of expectation, on the other hand, advocate a new model of American homosexuality to potential French readers. For Harvey, bindings of translations function in an ‘interactional-interventionist’ protocol, registering ‘both the reservations of the receiving culture faced with American difference while also open up small, contestatory spaces for the productive intrusion of the foreign’ (2003, 48–49). Based on these observations, Harvey suggests that translation paratexts can be ‘an ideal place to start to identify the processes of negotiation encoded in translations themselves and to capture essential aspects of the ideological trouble caused by them’ (2003, 68).

Similar arguments are made in his monograph, *Intercultural Movements: American Gay in French Translation* (2014), where Harvey expands the study of translation bindings to include literary review and criticism (epitext according to Genette’s categorisation). As Harvey discovers, literary reviews and criticisms contribute as much as book covers to the rewriting and reception of American homosexuality for the French gaze (2014, 201–210). Harvey thus demonstrates that each type of translation paratext – serving as the interface between the text and its context and between domestic and foreign values – constitutes an essential socio-cultural discourse; accordingly worthy of attention in the discussion of ideological translation.

On a broader scale, the point that Harvey makes about ideological strains and negotiations implies a necessity for studying translation paratexts with a political view of ideology. In recent

years, a range of studies have connected the issues of dominant or competing ideologies in a society with the multiple functions served by translation paratexts in a new context. In order to gain deeper insights into the dynamic role of paratext in ideological translation, scholars have drawn on theoretical frameworks such as postcolonial theory and narrative theory; exploring how paratextual elements are implemented as a part of translation strategy to achieve the goal of domination or resistance.

Consider again Watts's previously cited research. While his discussion is not restricted to the paratext of translation, Watts demonstrates clearly ideological causes and effects of translation paratexts in different historical and cultural backgrounds. According to Watts, the colonial period saw the presentation of colonised literature as 'culturally foreign, exotic, or different' objects for the gaze and consumption of the coloniser (2005, 20), while 'the text's autonomy was virtually elided by the paratext in the name of colonial ideology' (2005, 8). Via forms including cover design, illustrations, prefaces, dedications, and jacket copy, translation paratexts mediated cultural specificity, usually through the stereotypical representation of otherness, so as to serve 'the colonial ideology that sought to adapt and "civilize" the text' (Watts 2005, 20). In contrast, along with the de-colonising process, paratexts to Francophone literary texts by writers from former colonies gradually wield authority over the text and thereby question 'the distinctions between the inside and the outside of text, as well as between the centre (France) and periphery (the postcolonies)' (Watts 2005, 5). The shifting roles of paratexts in colonial and postcolonial cultural contexts show that the dominant ideology of the time shapes the form and content of translation paratexts. These, in turn, feed back into the processes of ideological struggle.

Following Watts's research, Carolyn Shread (2010) analyses the functioning of paratexts in several English translations of Haitian novels, and from this sought a paratextual strategy for her

translation of *Les Rapaces*. Shread criticises the common assumption that a translation's paratext is supposed to 'facilitate access to, and the appropriation of, a foreign language and culture' and the resulting colonising role of conventional translation paratexts (2010, 115). Instead, she pursues a decolonised paratext within a postcolonial theoretical framework, and aims to present the translated nature of the text and the process of 'negotiation of cultural and linguistic complexities via translation' (Shread 2010, 122). Here, from the perspective of a translator, Shread highlights a more active concept of translation paratext, as Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002) once suggested. Using her own practice as an example, Shread demonstrates that paratexts have the potential to bring in different discourses, thereby intervening in the dominant ideological framework underlying conventional translations. A similarly combative stance is taken by Ellen McRae (2012), who calls prefaces to be included in literary translations because of their important role in making the voice of a translator, the key figure in promoting better intercultural understanding, heard.

What Shread and McRae suggest can be interpreted as an interventionist approach at the threshold of translation. In other words, translators can choose to use paratexts to position themselves ideologically and to participate in resisting the dominant ideology, rather than being an invisible agent promoting, in Venuti's words, 'the ethnocentric violence of translation' (1995, 1–42). A practice like this is a verification of Hermans's (1996) view, which argues that the translator is always discursively present, in texts and/or paratexts. More importantly, awareness of the ideological functions of translation paratexts has largely broadened scholars' view of translation practices as power since the advent of the 'power turn' in translation studies in the 1990s. As the research area has developed, discussions about the power of translation in serving activist ends and effecting changes have increased (Álvarez and Vidal 1996; Gentzler and

Tymoczko 2002; Tymoczko 2010; Gould and Tahmasebian 2020), with growing attention paid to the activist role of translation paratexts in ideological subversion and innovation.

Alongside this direction, Mona Baker's research on translation within a narrative theoretical framework is instructive. In *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account*, Baker (2006) argues that features of paratexts can be manipulated to (re)frame a narrative that sustains the interplay between dominance and resistance. Citing a wide range of examples from historical and contemporary conflicts, Baker illustrates that agents perform framing, either actively or passively, in the site of paratexts and use it as a strategic action to 'accentuate, undermine or modify contested aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance' (2006, 105). When the process of framing 'involves setting up structures of anticipation that guide others' interpretation of events', it becomes 'part and parcel of the phenomenon of activism', empowering individuals or groups to undermine dominant patterns and prevailing political and social dogma (Baker 2010, 118). Moreover, Baker attempts to highlight that, due to 'the varied, shifting and ongoingly negotiable positioning ... [of agents] in relation to their texts, authors, societies and dominant ideologies' (2010, 115), different frames might be placed onto the same text, therefore producing 'crisscrossing, even competing narratives' (2010, 117). In some cases, paratexts may construct a narrative that is at odds with the translation it frames. Yet, irrespective of all the complexities involved, Baker suggests that analysing choices of paratextual framing and the narratives activated accordingly can be productive in revealing ideological struggles and the positioning of agents within broader social and cultural contexts.

Apart from associating discussions of ideological causes and effects of translation paratexts with various theoretical frameworks, translation studies scholars provide abundant case studies to illustrate how paratextual elements in individual translations convey ideological messages.

Asimakoulas, for instance, observes that under the trend of publishing translations of ‘serious/problem books’ during the Junta era, Brecht’s works were massively imported into the discursive practice of ‘bringing the reader closer to modern thought, awakening Greek society and kindling desire for democracy’ (2006, 79). Therefore, paratextual components, including the titles, cover images, and introductions, were effectively employed by the publisher to present Brecht as a prominent leftist thinker; an authority whose progressive political thoughts should be channelled to Greek readers to endorse political defiance against the dictatorial regime, as well to resist the prevalent obscurantism of Greek society (Asimakoulas 2006). In her discussion of the relationship between translation and activism, Martha Cheung (2010) draws a similar conclusion on the power of translation paratexts to renovate intended readers’ worldview and to enact social changes. After examining waves of translations conducted by translators who were also actively involved in China’s social movements during the late Qing era, Cheung points out that the successful reception of Lin Shu’s translation of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was largely attributed to the emotionally charged preface, in which Lin made full use of the interactional space to educate the masses, ‘urging people to rally around their country or become slaves’ (2010, 252). As the preface effectively framed the thought content of the source novel, the translation stirred up strong patriotic sentiment among common readers, thus serving Lin’s purpose of bringing radical changes in the public’s consciousness (Cheung 2010).

The above two case studies are clear illustrations of the subversive and innovative power that translation paratexts can exert; particularly their potential to provide powerful interpretative frames to reinforce an author’s emblematic status in the receiving cultural context. In other words, translation paratexts can reshape the mindsets of target readers even before they enter the textual world. To an extent, target readers are driven to take actions ‘to challenge the status quo

(in, for example, the prevailing social norms, embedded practices, policies, and power relationships)’ (Cheung 2010, 240). Taking this dynamic process of framing into account, it can be further argued that translation paratexts have a significant role to play in turning translation practices into activist movements.

Case studies about translation paratexts performing counter-discourse can be found in Christina Delistathi’s (2011) analysis of the re-translation of *The Communist Manifesto* carried out by the Communist Party of Greece in 1993. Delistathi reveals that paratextual specificities, together with translation criticisms, promoted readers’ perceptions of the translation as an authoritative and reliable one and established the party’s ‘monopoly of representation of Marxism in Greece’ (2011, 208). Ultimately, the paratextual strategy served the party’s agenda to counteract its rivals on the Left, as well as the hegemonic ideas of the ruling class. In a similar vein, Neslihan Kansu-Yetkiner and Lütfiye Oktar examine the book covers, title pages, commentaries, and promotion scripts of the *Hayri Potur* series in Turkish, and argue that these paratextual apparatus are ‘the local resistance against cultural imperialism’ brought by the global translation of Harry Potter books (2012, 13). Roberto A. Valdeón’s (2014) study of Nigel Griffin’s English retranslation of *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552) is another illustration of ideological resistance carried out through paratexts. Containing the translator’s interventionist notes and the historian’s introduction, Griffin’s translation provides an alternative reading of the source text and credible historical facts; therefore, contesting not only the content of the original text but also the anti-Spanish narrative presented in earlier translation editions. Valdeón (2014) also takes notice that different paratextual elements are likely to convey varying and even contradictory ideological messages. Whilst Griffin’s translation attempts to move away from the pro-English imperialism and anti-Spanish position

favoured in earlier translations, some paratextual elements, especially the engravings reproduced therein, still carry the ideological baggage of previous translations, and therefore present ‘the discourse of colonial rivalry’ (Valdeón 2014, 12).

With increasing awareness of the multiple ideological functions and effects of translation paratexts, some scholars have raised further questions as to how the image of an author, a specific text, and even the source culture can be reconfigured in and through translation paratexts. Within the domain of postcolonial studies, discussions of these questions have usually been linked to Orientalist discourses and cultural stereotypes. As Watts (2005) and Shread (2010) demonstrate, one way for translations to serve the colonial ideology is to appeal to stereotypical images of foreign cultures through translation paratexts. This approach means that paratextual materials are used not only to intensify those aspects of foreign culture that target readers are familiar with, for instance, exotic and erotic elements, but also to dilute the specificity of the translated text that target readers might be unfamiliar with. A similar translation tendency has been discussed in Cecilia Alvstad’s (2012) study of African, Asian and Latin American literature in Swedish translation, which found that publishers tended to present in translation paratexts exotic and erotic elements of foreign cultures, while stressing the translated text as being part of the broader stereotypical category of world literature. Combining textual and paratextual analysis, Szu-wen Cindy Kung (2013) observes that translators have employed translation strategies, including deletion, simplification, and substitution, to reduce the foreignness of the source culture-specific items, thereby producing a readable and fluent translation falling within Anglophone readers’ expectations. At the same time, Kung (2013) notes that paratextual materials, especially book covers, tend to present a stereotypical representation of Taiwan and Taiwanese culture that may trigger readers’ interest in purchasing

the book. These stereotypical images of writers and literary works reinforced through certain designs of translation paratexts point to a dominant ideological framework in operation in the recipient culture. When foreign elements, especially those contesting dominant ideologies of the target system, are imported through translation, some paratextual materials that comply with target readers' expectations might be necessary. It is arguably in this scenario that translation paratexts carry out cultural stereotyping as a part of ideological negotiation.

Stereotypical representation in and through paratexts can be obvious when the translation involves dealing with a large ideological gap between two cultural contexts. However, numerous studies have shown that such a tendency is not limited to translations of distant cultures but is a common phenomenon with regards to cross-cultural communications. The following are a few of examples. Both Carol O'Sullivan (2005) and Brigid Maher (2016) have studied paratexts accompanying English translations of Italian crime fiction, and discovered that Anglophone publishers emphasised and promoted Italian settings of the fiction as a space of exoticism through paratextual materials. Likewise, Leah Gerber's (2012) research of paratextual features in German translation of Australian children's fiction reveals that mediations of paratextual materials tend to comply with longstanding cultural stereotypes that German readers hold about Australia.

With the expanding global literary market in recent decades, a tendency of cultural stereotyping in and through translation paratexts seems only to be reinforced. Publishers pursuing economic benefits may paratextually frame the translated text in ways that accord with target readers' preconceived views of the source culture in order to gain a wider circulation of the translation. This is especially the case when it comes to contemporary Chinese literary works translated into English. A common criticism by scholars specialising in Chinese literature,

including Yunte Huang (2002), Shu-Mei Shih (2004), Carles Prado-Fonts (2008), Xiao Di (2014), and Valerie Pellatt (2018), is that Anglophone publishers of contemporary Chinese literature tend to construct an Orientalist discourse that Western readers can easily identify through paratextual frames of translated Chinese literature, thus creating an illusion that the translated text contains a truthful account of the reality of an unknown China. This paratextual approach works and sells because it confirms Western readers' stereotypical knowledge of China and contemporary Chinese literature, which, according to Prado-Fonts, 'intensifies during the second half of the 20th century, as a result of the particular dynamics of the Cold War, and can be seen to continue in the parameters of today's global capitalism' (2008, 38). However, as paratexts always provide an interpretative framework excessively focused on Chinese socio-political reality, images of contemporary Chinese authors are restricted to their political stances whereas literary aesthetics represented in their works are generally neglected, a point that is elaborated upon in the following section.

Recognising that literary translation is a practice subjected to ideological mediation and has profound cultural and socio-political implications, translation studies scholars have highlighted the role that paratexts play in ideological translation. In Watts's words, translation paratexts 'can become a lens for viewing the complex ideological struggles within which the text is situated, as well as the ideological appropriations to which it was subject' (2000, 42). More specifically, translation paratexts can shed light on how the images of a particular author or the source culture more generally are reconfigured in different cultural contexts. In spite of the great research value of paratextual analysis, it is worth noting that studies focusing solely on translation paratexts and not on the translations themselves may be insufficient to explain issues such as contradictory translation strategies and the competing positions of agents. For this reason, Tahir-Gürçağlar

proposes that ‘analyses of paratexts are best fit to serve as complementary devices in revealing the actual translation norms observed by translators’ (2011, 115). Miquel Edo’s (2012) study of Carducci’s poetry in Catalan and Spanish literature provides an instructive example of this, as it reveals disparities and discords between text and paratext by combining paratextual analysis with textual analysis. Having similar research concerns, this chapter concentrates on examining paratextual presentations of Chinese avant-garde fiction in English, while Chapters 4 and 5 focus on textual analysis to reveal the strategies that translators adopt to represent source texts for the reception of Anglophone readers.

3.2 Paratexts to English translations of contemporary Chinese literature

This part of the chapter offers an understanding of the way in which contemporary Chinese literature has been paratextually presented to the Anglophone readership in the second half of the twentieth century. An overview of the research of paratextual patterns concerning contemporary Chinese literature during the period being examined underlines the ideological circumstances in which paratextual framings of English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction took place. The ground is then laid for explaining the specific strategies that publishers and other translation agents employ to affect the interpretation and reception of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone cultural context.

Section 1.2.1 of Chapter 1 has discussed how the Party’s ideological control over translation practices led to the selection and exportation of Chinese literary works that complied with the Party’s political values and beliefs throughout the Cold War period. Here, it can be argued that the paratexts accompanying these translations functioned as another important channel by which to promote the dominant official ideology. According to Liu Jiangkai, during the Cultural Revolution the main publisher under the direct supervision of the Party, Foreign Languages

Press, made the most of paratextual materials to strengthen the ideological effects of official translations (2012, 25–29). Therefore, covers of the periodical *Chinese Literature* issued at the time are mostly characterised with revolutionary propaganda art and quotations from Mao with the aim of promoting Maoism around the world (Liu 2012, 27–28). A similar tendency has been observed by Hou Pingping (2013) in paratexts attached to the two official English translations of the *Selected works of Mao Tse-Tung*: one published by Lawrence and Wishart in London, and International Publishers in New York in 1954; and the other by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing in the 1960s. It has been found that traces of Maoist ideology are discernible in various paratextual elements, including the red covers, title pages featuring Mao's name together with his portraits, introductory notes containing ideologically significant judgements, and publication notes voicing concerns over unreliable non-official translations.⁴ Hou thus argues that 'paratextual devices can also serve an ideological purpose by initiating readers into a biased pre-designed reading experience' (2013, 36–37).

Both Liu and Hou have showcased the function of translation paratexts in forcefully promoting a positive image of Mao beyond China and in so doing affecting Western readers' perceptions and reception of Maoism before the 1980s. Taking into account Julia Lovell's viewpoint that 'the Cultural Revolution as an international phenomenon' has greatly impacted 'the counterculture movement of Western Europe and North American during the late 1960s and 1970s' (2016, 632), it can be inferred that translation paratexts of Chinese literary works served as an effective instrument for the global circulation and impact of Maoism at the time. As Liu

4. According to Hou (2013), the distinction between official and non-official translations of the *Selected works of Mao Tse-Tung* is based on whether the Chinese government led by Mao organised the translation activities and selected publishers and translators complying with Mao's revolutionary ideology to bring out the translations. Any publications without the approval of the Chinese government were considered non-official.

Jiangkai suggests, it is likely that the overt Maoist ideology embedded within paratexts ensured the legitimacy of the literary works selected and transported to Western countries, thereby giving an impetus to counterculture movements outside China (2012, 26–27).

Pellatt points out that since ‘Chinese publications are particularly susceptible to politics’, ‘paratext associated with Chinese works and works translated into Chinese has adapted to accommodate these political swings, both in China and abroad’ (2018, 167). Therefore, when Maoist ideology was replaced by Deng’s ‘reform and opening-up’ policy after the Cultural Revolution, paratexts to the literary journal *Chinese Literature* also experienced a change of appearance. Liu Jiangkai notices that cover images designed for issues since 1978 were mainly landscape paintings (2012, 28–29). Geng Qiang (2010) finds a similar pattern of cover images used to package the government-sponsored *Panda Series of Translations* under *Chinese Literature* in the 1980s. In addition, Geng argues that constrained by the norm of promoting contemporary realist literary works to Western readers – namely, ‘those that can fully reflect and represent the development of modern and contemporary Chinese history, society and culture’ – ‘editors of *Panda Books* tended to use the hyper-textual space, such as covers, prefaces, and postscripts, to introduce the content of translations, as well to emphasize Chinese history and reality represented in the works’ (2010, 102, my translation).

Focusing on analysing visual and verbal paratextual features of the *Panda Series* published between 1981 and 2005, Yu Xiaomei (2017) observes the tendency of cover designs to be dominated by scenic images of cold colours and themes unrelated to the content of translated texts. In Yu’s view, ‘this phenomenon of covert ideology in the paratextual site is closely linked to the socio-political and cultural circumstance where the paratexts were created and the objectives of translation patrons’ (2017, 64, my translation). Yu elucidates that government-

backed publishers in Deng's Reform era continued to use literary translations as a form of propagation to create a friendly international environment for China's reforms and economic developments; however, concerned that Western readers might consider translations delivering overt Communist messages to be ideologically problematic, government-backed publishers 'made the official ideology invisible in at least the exterior of *Panda Books*' (2017, 64, my translation). With regards to verbal paratexts, Yu (2017) notices that limited prefaces, introductions, and literary criticisms were used to primarily promote the Chinese identity of writers, while translators appeared almost invisible. Based on these findings, Yu (2017) argues that specific forms of paratextual elements attached to the *Panda Books* Series result from the unified paradigm that government-backed publishers need to follow when translating and introducing Chinese literature to Western readers.

Paratextual strategies that Chinese government-backed publishers employed to package translations of Chinese literary works for Western readers demonstrate the political and ideological control of cultural products within contemporary China. The paratextual materials for literary translations commissioned by Chinese governmental institutions are intended to serve the ideological purposes of the political authority. Consequently, there emerges a public narrative in which the selected Chinese writings are framed as valuable documents reflecting certain aspects of Chinese society that the official institutions consider worthy of the attention of the Western reading public.

Western publishers of contemporary Chinese literature were also inclined to manipulate features of paratexts to construct a narrative of China that could sustain the dominance of Western ideology. As a number of studies including the following cited ones illustrate, the use of paratexts, usually hand in hand with translation selection, serves to promote contemporary

Chinese literature in a way that confirms Western ideological perceptions of Chinese literary products. Sections 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 have partially explained how literary criticism and titles of translation publications in the Anglophone cultural context of the Cold War contributed to the framing of contemporary Chinese literature in a reductive way as texts for social documentation and the exposure of political ideologies. Other paratextual elements such as cover designs, blurbs, forewords, introductions, translators' notes, and reviews serve similarly important roles in framing contemporary Chinese literature for certain ideological beliefs. As Pellatt contends, 'it is largely through the paratexts, particularly blurbs, of translations of these works of fiction that readers are persuaded of the veracity of the accounts and the perceived excellence of the writing' (2018, 167).

Focusing on examining mainland Chinese novels published in the UK and the US in the post-Mao era, Red Chan (2002, 2003, 2015) observes that Anglophone publishers or other translation agents show a tendency towards a homogenised presentation of China and Chinese authors through manipulating paratextual elements of translation anthologies. Chan specifies that a range of anthologies published in the 1980s carry titles that can potentially lead readers to associate the collected works with the value of revealing the social and political realities of contemporary China (2015, 48–49). (See Section 1.2.3 for examples of these titles.) In addition, translation agents tended to use spaces, such as introductions, prefaces, and forewords, to address the sociological and political significance of the selected works and to express concerns over the lives and positions of Chinese intellectuals, rather than providing information about the literary quality of the text (Chan 2002, 2003, 2015). Consequently, a narrative of China characterised by continuous political upheavals and social problems is presented in the paratexts, while contemporary Chinese authors are projected to Anglophone readers as living under the

suppression of the Communist regime and yearning for democracy and freedom (Chan 2002, 2003, 2015). As Chan also illustrates, such a narrative is often reinforced by reviewers of translation anthologies who tend to accentuate that the ‘genuine knowledge of China’ contained within the reviewed works could satisfy Anglophone readers’ expectations about China (2015, 54).

Investigating the ways in which contemporary Chinese poetry is presented and received in America, Yunte Huang points out that translation paratexts, including book titles, prefaces, and journal editorials, often participate in exercising the power of ‘ideological reduction and ethnographic essentialisation’ (2002, 173). This approach of framing with paratextual elements which advocate a ‘contextualised reading’ is likely to reduce contemporary Chinese poetry to expressions of a few political themes and make the translation itself an ethnographic account of the political reality of contemporary China (Huang 2002, 164–182). At the same time, the Anglophone reading public are encouraged to dismiss ‘the irreducible formal – and by no means less social – materiality embodied by the text’ (Huang 2002, 168).

In a similar vein, Prado-Fonts (2008) criticises the fact that Western publishers and literary critics have been presenting and promoting an unsophisticated interpretation of contemporary Chinese literature under the continuing influence of area studies. To a degree, translations of contemporary Chinese writing are seen ‘as a cultural mirror, historical document or sociological fieldwork that provides us with clear, unquestionable truths about an objectivable China’ (Prado-Fonts 2008, 38). Paratextual materials of translations have a big role in forming and perpetuating this simplistic view, since they almost unexceptionally give favourable recognition to national allegorical narratives while relegating artistic manifestation to the background (Prado-Fonts 2008, 42–43). Speaking of ‘*Wildswanised* works’, the type of sensational trauma narratives with

similar storylines to the once best-seller *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (1991) written by Jung Chang, Prado-Fonts reveals that within them ‘a feminised national allegory is hidden – yet quite explicit on book covers that tend to combine exoticism and femininity – behind the promise of bringing the reader closer to the reality of an unknown China’ (2008, 42).

A more systematic study of how translation paratexts help to shape the mode of ideological reception of contemporary Chinese literature can be found in Xiao Di’s (2014) doctoral thesis. Adopting Baker’s narrative theory to chronologically examine patterns of selection, framing, and reviewing concerning English translations of Chinese novels published between 1980 and 2010, Xiao discovers that novels on personal trauma and historical experience centred on the Cultural Revolution and the 1989 Tiananmen Protests have been most favoured by UK and US publishers (2014, 102–146). According to Xiao, most novels translated in the 1980s were supplemented with paratexts that framed the translated texts as sources of information about the recent history and political reality of mainland China (2014, 102–125). Entering the 1990s, a particular paratextual pattern was developed which foregrounded political themes relevant to translated Chinese novels, such as political persecution, governmental censorship, and writers’ dissident identity (Xiao 2014, 125–133). Therefore, many covers of translated novels of this period have blurbs featuring keywords such as ‘banned’, ‘censored’, ‘silenced’, ‘sensitive’ and ‘exile’ or bear endorsement and quotations from reviews by Chinese dissidents (Xiao 2014, 130–133). Chinese literature scholars such as Julia Lovell speculate that, to an extent, ‘the best marketing strategy for Chinese literature is to emblazon “banned in China” on the cover’ (2006, 34). Xiao explains that this framing strategy is frequently taken by Anglophone publishers of Chinese literature because it resonates well with the Western revived narrative of China ‘as an ideological other, especially after the Tiananmen Square event in 1989’ (2014, 126). Such a framing strategy might

have helped Anglophone publishers generate a substantial profit. However, Xiao points out that placing political motifs and significance as the focal point in translated Chinese novels ‘might indirectly (mis)guide readers to expect a story of dissidence and political repression’ (2014, 132).

In addition, Xiao argues that reviewers, especially those scholars specialising in Chinese history or area studies, also participate in presenting a politicised version of Chinese novels at the paratextual site and in so doing mediate public narratives of China in the Anglophone cultural context (2014, 160–206). After analysing book reviews of Chinese novels in English collected in the database she herself set up, Xiao observes that through constructing a narrative of China featuring violence, suffering, oppression and censorship, reviewers appear to draw the attention of Anglophone readers to themes and content about Chinese society and politics in novels, whilst the literary value of translated novels is generally dismissed (2014, 170–206). Although a small number of reviewers appreciate the literary aesthetics of the novels under review, Xiao observes that ‘political relevance continued to outweigh aesthetic value in narratives of Chinese novels elaborated by the reviewers’ (2014, 178). Translated Chinese novels are often endowed with additional political significance when some reviewers foreground ‘adversarial relationships between the Chinese Communist Party and Chinese writers in their reviews’ (Xiao 2014, 174). Consequently, authors under review are projected as victims or dissident voices from a communist state, while their novels appear as counter narratives against that of a harmonious and peaceful China promoted by the Party (Xiao 2014, 186–201).

For Xiao, political framing of translated Chinese novels through paratexts is inseparable from the ‘differences in the political systems of China and what is generally referred to as “the West”’ (2014, 208); a point that Tong King Lee (2015) also attests to, through his discussion of the discourses at work in framing contemporary Chinese literature for the reception by the

Anglophone readership. As Lee (2015) observes, circumscribed by the ideological positioning of China and propelled by the consideration of profitability, US and UK publishers often select ideologically overt or sensational titles of Chinese authors for translation. At the same time, publishers and other translation agents tend to provide various paratextual apparatuses to construe translated works as ‘sociopolitical exposé’ that plays ‘the informative-ideological role’ (2015, 258). Accordingly, paratexts that surround the translations of works by authors such as Yan Lianke, Ma Jian, Yu Hua, Su Tong, and Mo Yan commonly foreground the politically sensitive nature of the writing, and steer the attention of target readers towards historical events or political motifs relating to contemporary China that Anglophone readers are familiar with (Lee 2015, 255–263). Such strategic selection and paratextual construction, Lee argues, can generate a narrative of ‘literary victimization, one that locates allegedly politically minded writers in diametric opposition to the Chinese institutional machinery’ (2015, 259). At a higher macro-ideological level, they are likely to perpetuate the dichotomic knowledge structure that imagines China as ‘a repressive, dystopic Other’ compared to the West as a democratic, civilized Self (Lee 2015, 251). Bearing in mind these political-ideological implications, Lee concludes that translation selection and paratextual construction as parts of Anglophone textual practices have played a significant role in shaping ‘the power dialectic between China and the West since 1989’ (2015, 256).

It can be seen from the above studies that translation publications of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context during the second half of the twentieth century show a tendency similar to that discussed by Kovalá; namely, that concerned with ‘ideological closure in paratextual mediation’ (1996, 122). Conditioned by the ideological differences between China and the Western world, paratexts accompanying translations of Chinese literature

have become vital sites for publishers and translation agents to shape Anglophone readers' perceptions as well as the reception of Chinese cultural products. In so doing they have constructed a narrative of China that can serve underlying ideological currents. Thus, features of translation paratexts tend to be manipulated to foreground the function of translated texts as a means by which to inform social and political realities of mainland China, whereas literary forms and quality of Chinese writing are generally dismissed. For those translations commissioned by Chinese authorities, paratextual construction is controlled to serve the interest of political forces, namely, to disseminate Maoist ideology around the Western world during the time of Mao's regime, or to establish a friendly and peaceful international image of China in the post-Mao era. And for those initiated by Anglophone publishers, paratextual devices together with translation selection are employed in ways that appeal to the ideological expectations of Anglophone readers regarding contemporary Chinese literature and their stereotypical knowledge of Communist China. Therefore, it is not unusual to see paratexts of translated literature guiding readers to approach the writing allegorically and to focus on the political stances of writers; to an extent, contemporary Chinese writings are paratextually framed as sociological materials of China or as expository texts of its repressive government. In the global literary market, the trend of using translation paratexts in an ideological manner is further perpetuated. As this trend constitutes a historical and ideological context for translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction into English, it also raises the question of how relevant translation publishers and agents place interpretive frameworks through paratexts to mediate the reception of translated texts by the Anglophone readership.

3.3 Ideologically framing translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction

Section 2.3.3 of the previous chapter has outlined two categories of ideological framework which structures the publication of anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the UK and the US.

Three translation anthologies, including *The Lost Boat* (1993), *China's Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998) and *The Mystified Boat* (2003), were intended by editors to challenge the Anglophone ideological conception of Chinese literature as sociological and political documents by presenting the Anglophone readership with the literary aesthetics of Chinese avant-garde fiction. In comparison, the remaining seven anthologies that fall within the other category show a tendency of foregrounding the political connotations of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Section 2.3.3 has also analysed the selection and some of the paratextual materials of the three anthologies located in the first category, including introductions, prefaces, literary criticism, and my interviews with core translation agents. The ideological interventions that these anthologies form in the Anglophone reception of contemporary Chinese literature has been attested to. The rest of this chapter focuses on five anthologies situated in the second category, and analyses the paratextual strategies that publishers and translation agents use to frame Chinese avant-garde fiction in an ideological way for certain groups of Anglophone readers. This part of the chapter presents examples where paratextual elements of translations promote a politicised vision of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Furthermore, it evidences that competing ideological positions are negotiated in and through paratexts to advance the entry of Chinese avant-garde fiction into the Anglophone cultural system.

3.3.1 *Today's (Jintian)* avant-garde writing

Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 have illuminated the publication background on the three anthologies commissioned by the Today Literary Foundation: *Jintian (Today): Under-Sky Underground*

(1994), *Abandoned Wine* (1996) and *Fissures* (2000). These biennial selections of works in English can be interpreted as the result of the efforts that Chinese diaspora writers centred around the literary journal *Jintian* made to accumulate symbolic capitals in the global literary field of the post-Tiananmen era. At the same time, they reflect *Jintian*'s self-identification as a transregional avant-garde journal that advocates the pluralistic development of Chinese literature. In the process of making the anthologies, the most significant figure seems to have been Zhao Henry Y.H., who was the only editor involved in compiling all three anthologies and responsible for the selection of pieces. John Cayley, the founder of Wellsweep, joined Zhao in editing *Under-Sky Underground* (1994) and *Abandoned Wine* (1996), while Yanbing Chen and John Rosenwald worked with Zhao as the co-editors for *Fissures* (2000). Diversity in terms of the literary genre, the text selection, and the list of translators has been a common feature shared by the *Jintian* series of anthologies. Focusing only on fictional works selected for the anthologies, it is remarkable that Zhao in close co-operation with the other editors gradually expanded the selection of source text authors along with the publication of each anthology: *Under-Sky Underground* (1994) includes nine fictional works by eight novelists, *Abandoned Wine* (1996) includes fourteen fictional works by nine novelists, and *Fissures* (2000) includes fifteen fictional works by fourteen novelists. Whilst the anthologies had served mainly as a forum for Chinese diaspora writers since *Jintian*'s revival in 1990, their selections were inclined to include increasing mainland Chinese authors, especially those recognised by mainland Chinese literary authorities as canonical figures, Ge Fei, Shi Tiesheng, and Han Shaogong for instance. Seen from the notes on authors and translators attached to the anthologies, the team of translators also experienced an expansion along with time. Compared to *Under-Sky Underground* (1994) that relied on a limited number of scholars, students and literary critics

mostly based in London to complete the translation work, *Fissures* (2000) involved several well-known translators of contemporary Chinese literature including Herbert Batt, Howard Goldblatt and Sylvia Li-chun Lin. Considering Zhao's continuous endeavour to promote the interactions between the literary circle within China and that in the West (Section 2.3.2), it becomes understandable that Zhao's selection for this series of anthologies aimed at providing reading experience of the diversified Chinese literary culture.

Nevertheless, the paratextual configurations of these anthologies tend to convey a voice that still highlights *Jintian* as a symbol of political resistance to the excessive state power of China. As analysed in the following, the cover designs, forewords, and reviews of these three anthologies show a tendency to evoke memories of the democracy movements that occurred after the Cultural Revolution and to promote an interpretation of Chinese avant-garde fiction as the political rhetoric of Chinese dissident and exile writers centred around *Jintian*.

In *A Bibliographic Survey of Publications on Chinese Literature in Translation from 1949 to 1999*, Kinkley points out that 'although most of the canonical avant-garde writers still live in the PRC, English anthologies have generally selected works of the 1980s, or works by exiles' (2000, 257). Kinkley's review recalls the label of 'exile' that tends to be indiscriminately placed upon contributors to *Jintian*. Section 2.3.2 has introduced old *Jintian* as an important forum for modernist Misty poets within China between 1978 and 1979, its transformation into an underground publication in the 1980s – due to the political engagement of its key contributors in the 1978–1979 democracy movement, as well as the resurrection of *Jintian* for Chinese diaspora writers after the 1989 Tiananmen Protests. These political vicissitudes once experienced by members of *Jintian* are clearly referenced on the covers of the *Jintian* anthologies (Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3).

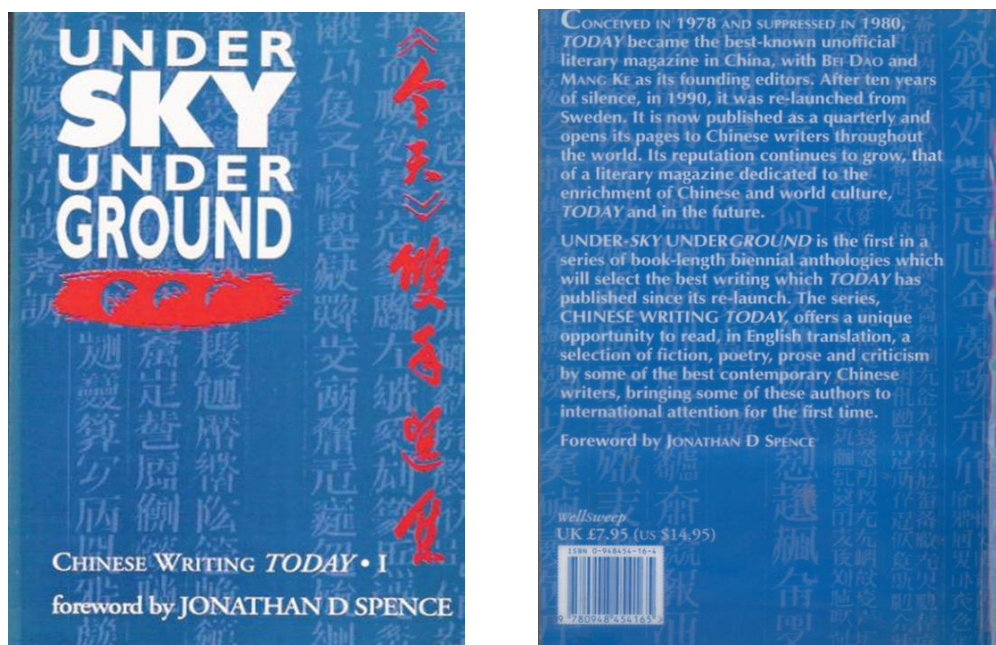


Figure 1: Front and back covers of *Under-sky Underground: Chinese Writing Today 1*, edited by Zhao Henry Y.H. and John Cayley, London: Wellsweep, 1994.

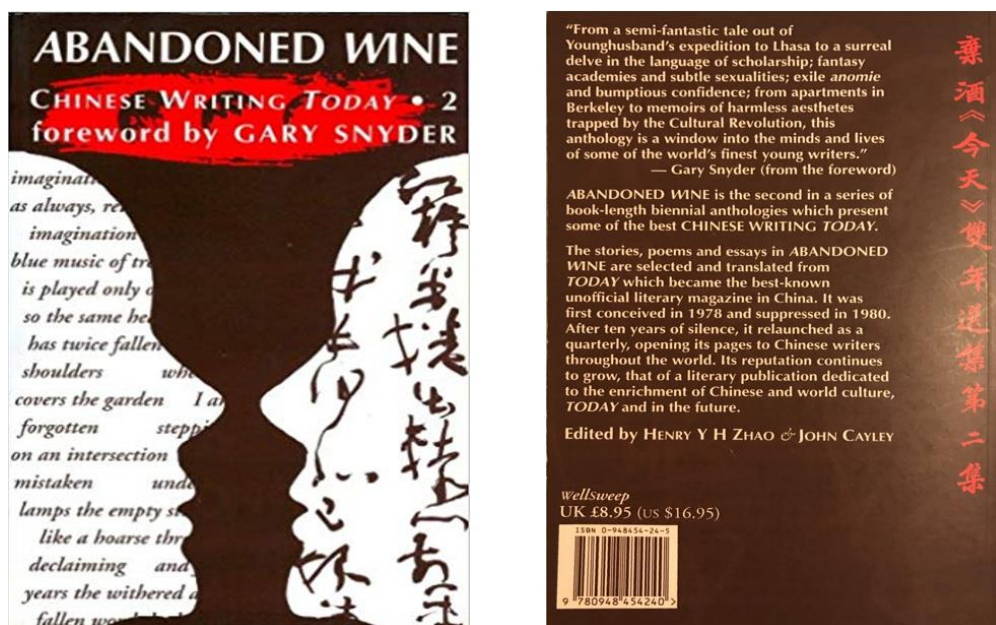


Figure 2: Front and back covers of *Abandoned Wine: Chinese Writing Today 2*, edited by Zhao Henry Y.H. and John Cayley, London: Wellsweep, 1996.



Figure 3: Front and back covers of *Fissures: Chinese Writing Today*, edited by Zhao Henry Y.H., Yanbing Chen and John Rosenwald, Brookline, MA: Zephyr Press, 2000.

Like many English anthologies of post-Mao literature published in the 1980s, the titles of the *Jintian* anthologies also employ figurative language and imagery. In the main titles, words like ‘underground’, ‘abandoned’, and ‘fissures’ which literally mean ‘nonconformists’, ‘being deserted or uninhibited’, and ‘subversive’ are used, and thus imply the unofficial status and political themes of the literary works in the collections. According to Genette, titles, one of the most compelling features of a work, have the functions of ‘designating or identifying, description of the work (content and genre), connotative value and temptation’ (1997, 93). The method of titling *Jintian* anthologies serves to designate the political aspects of the selected works but leaves little space to address their literary aesthetics. Subtitles containing ‘Chinese Writing *Today*’ (italics original) are provided on either front covers or title pages; not only declaring the anthologies as representatives of Chinese new writings, but also promoting the brand of the literary journal *Jintian (Today)*. The front covers or title pages of all three anthologies also

provide titles in Chinese, ‘今天’ (Today), to further signal the cultural specificity of the writings and consolidate their links to *Jintian*.

More details of *Jintian*’s political history are displayed on the back covers of *Under-Sky Underground* (1994) and *Abandoned Wine* (1996) (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Especially emphasised in the historical accounts is the fact that *Jintian* is an unofficial magazine, which was suppressed and had to relaunch outside China. The back cover of *Fissures* (2000) provides a blurb that is an extract taken from the foreword to *Fissures* written by Breyten Breytenbach (Figure 3), which states that ‘China is the last unknown and since it is so old and so rich and so big and so threatening, it is probably the unknown universe. There would seem to be a need for us non-Chinese to have a China of the mind’. Breytenbach, a South African writer known for his opposition to the policies of apartheid and his exile in France, offers via the foreword his view of ‘the nitty-gritty of life’ and ‘the flow and the flux of words describing life’ about China (2000, 14). Considering the possibility that publishers may seek ‘endorsement by anti-establishment figures’ to introduce ‘hints of dissidence’ to the writings (Pellatt 2018, 168–169), the back-cover blurb extracted from Breytenbach’s foreword could persuade readers to assume that Breytenbach is an exile writer speaking for *Jintian* writers who share the experience of being expelled by their home country. Together, the various paratextual elements on the covers of the three anthologies foreground the political context of *Jintian*, thus verifying the dissident identity of *Jintian* writers while projecting their writing as self-reflexive narratives to heroically expose the dark side of Chinese society.

Undeniably, the political struggles of *Jintian* founders, including Bei Dao, Mang Ke, Yang Lian, Duo Duo, and Chen Maiping, constitute an inseparable part of *Jintian*’s past, whether related to the underground within China or to exiles outside China. Yet, since the editorial board

declared the revived *Jintian* as ‘an avant-garde journal for transregional Chinese literature’ (Bei Dao 2008; Cui 2014, 128–134), its contributors have gone beyond writers who fled China right after the Tiananmen Protests to cover diaspora writers who migrated to Western countries for non-political reasons. For instance, the London writer Hu Dong, whose *The Mask Outside the Library* is included in *Abandoned Wine* (1996), and *The Death of Zilu* in *Fissures* (2000), explained during the interview I conducted with him that he chose to move to London for personal reasons before 1989 (2015). Particularly, as China weakened its overt political control of literary activities in the 1990s, *Jintian* also accepted writings by mainland state-approved writers. Taking the example of Ge Fei, whose *Meetings* translated from *Xiangyu* (相遇) is collected in *Abandoned Wine* (1996), the label of ‘underground’, ‘dissident’ or ‘exile’ is untenable. Despite the overall diversified constitution of the new *Jintian*, peritexts attached to the anthologies focus on elaborating the historical past of *Jintian* as political dissidence censored and suppressed by the Chinese government which had, therefore, to re-establish its name as a Chinese avant-garde journal in exile. The peritexts therefore produce a discourse that aptly narrows the scope of Chinese avant-garde writers down to dissident voices of *Jintian*. In a way, the peritexts define *Jintian*’s ‘avant-garde’ as being based solely on its political significance, and nullify the ‘Western historical distinction between an aesthetic and a political avant-garde’ (Koch 2011, 139).

With regards to Western readers’ response to Chinese dissident writers, Owen comments that ‘the international reader is likely to come looking for a reference to the recent struggle for democracy. The struggle for democracy in China is in fashion’ (1990, 29). Similarly, Yang Lian, one of the main exile writers who has contributed to *Jintian*, reflects that ‘of all the Chinese brand-names which sell well in the West, the most conspicuous and bestselling is Chinese

Politics; ... as long as a book fits into the West's conception of Chinese politics ... it qualifies as "serious literature" and boards the China Express' (1998, 18). Further considering the prevailing images of repressive and totalitarian China among Western audiences after the Tiananmen Protests, the way in which the *Jintian* series of anthologies were packaged and presented to the Anglophone world can be interpreted as a strategy to win broader international readership. Using peritextual elements to single out the political context and prodemocratic stance of some *Jintian* writers, the anthologies can appeal to Anglophone readers who hold expectations towards narratives of Chinese dissident voices struggling for democracy and freedom.

Nevertheless, the paratextual frames that *Jintian* chose to place around the anthologies risk overshadowing the achievement of Chinese avant-garde writers in artistic exploration. Peritexts of *Jintian* anthologies accentuate the political backgrounds of selected writers but rarely address their achievements in aesthetic experimentations. Consequently, target readers are likely to be guided to interpret Chinese avant-garde writing from a partial socio-political perspective, and to view Chinese avant-gardism as no more than a resistance to the despotic Chinese government. To some extent, even specialists in Chinese literature like Kinkley cannot be exempted from a politicised interpretation, as reflected in his commentary that 'Zhao and *Today* have given voice to a Chinese avant-garde in the original sense of the term, as a continually advancing phenomenon – though it is unclear whether they are in as close contact with literary undergrounds in the PRC as they are with the far more visible exiles' (2000, 258). Either connected to 'undergrounds' or 'exiles', Kinkley's viewpoint here is based mainly on the significance of *Jintian* in opposing China's excessive political power, whereas aesthetic characteristics which are equally important in distinguishing *Jintian* avant-garde writers are generally neglected.

Similarly revealing of the political tone underlying the *Jintian* anthologies is the discursive trace left by the editor, Zhao Henry Y.H., an ardent defender of Chinese avant-garde aesthetics. In the introduction of *The Lost Boat* (1993), Zhao argues for ‘purely literary value’ of Chinese avant-garde fiction and disavows any social and political interest in compiling the anthology (1993, 16–18). Nevertheless, the *Jintian* series of anthologies do not include Zhao’s paratextual views that support his previous assertion of Chinese aesthetic avant-gardism. It is understandable that Zhao, as the editor of the *Jintian* anthologies, would not offer viewpoints that might undermine *Jintian*’s political orientation at the interface between Chinese avant-garde writing and Anglophone cultural context. As Zhao confirmed in a personal interview held in 2015, that the different ideological frameworks established at the paratextual sites of *The Lost Boat* (1993) and the *Jintian* anthologies did not represent a change in his attitude towards the aesthetics of Chinese avant-garde fiction; rather, the editorial board of *Jintian* reserved the final right to determine how its commissioned anthologies were paratextually presented.

The ways in which the peritexts of *Jintian* anthologies were constructed inevitably compromise Zhao’s initial intention of using Chinese avant-garde fiction as a form of intervention in the Anglophone ideological preconception of Chinese writing. As *Jintian*, which commissioned the three anthologies, was more interested in identifying itself as an institution of dissident literary diaspora in the paratexts, Anglophone readers who were frequently exposed to various dissident writing translated from China might be led to approach the translated texts collected in the *Jintian* anthologies from the same political perspective. To a degree, the Chinese avant-garde genre as a whole could be perceived as being a form of political activism, with its artistic merits relegated to the background. This reception tendency is exemplified in the book reviews that Elisabeth Eide (1996) and Laifong Leung (1996) wrote for *Under-Sky Underground*

(1994), in which both reviewers define the avant-garde spirit shared by *Jintian* writers as resistance to the CCP's control over literature. Furthermore, Leung praises the 'other voices' conveyed through the collection for their exposure of 'the brutality and absurdity of cultural dictatorship' (1996, 300). Given the role of reviews in mediating target readers' perceptions of a translated text, it is possible that Anglophone readers are conditioned to interpret Chinese avant-garde writing in the same way as Eide and Leung reviewed *Under-Sky Underground* (1994).

Whilst Eide and Leung are representative of a trend of imparting a political understanding of Chinese avant-garde writing to Anglophone readers through reviewing the *Jintian* anthologies, a small number of reviewers deviated from this pattern, and refused to read the collected avant-garde works based on the political background of *Jintian*. For instance, Sheng-Tai Chang argues in his review of *Under-Sky Underground* (1994) that 'Today as symbol of political resistance is diminishing while its significance as a source of new sensibilities born of the interactions between Chinese and Western culture is growing steadily' (1995, 644). Similarly, in his review of *Abandoned Wine* (1996), Kam Louie avoids seeing *Jintian* writers as the antithesis of the CCP, even criticising the notion of 'writers in exile' given by Jonathan Spence in the foreword (1994) as 'inappropriate and that of "sojourners" more pertinent' (1996, 657). Considering Pellatt's view that 'each varied paratextual view of a text assists in shaping or changing the reader's perception of the text' (2018, 166), we may suppose that the final paratextual effect depends on how competing viewpoints are produced and negotiated.

The above analysis of the *Jintian* series of avant-garde fiction brings to light a tendency to politicise *Jintian* avant-garde writing through paratextual construction. In a way, paratextual elements including titles, covers, and reviews were mediated to register the political background and objectives of the diasporic institution of *Jintian*, and thus respond to the horizons of

expectation of anticipated Anglophone readerships towards Chinese narratives on censorship and dissidence. Given the international context that the revived *Jintian* had to face, which Gary Snyder summarises as ‘being in the shadow of the non-Chinese literary world’ (1996, 6), the institutional mediation of translation paratexts becomes explainable. When paratextual elements allude to the political tension between China’s central government and Chinese dissident writers in pursuit of democracy, the prevailing ideological assumption that the Anglophone readership holds of contemporary Chinese literary works is likely to be catered for. Paratexts like these serve *Jintian*’s institutional objective of expanding its international readership well, and therefore help sustain its survival in the international literary field. However, as the paratexts tend to foreground only the political aspects of *Jintian*, the avant-gardism that *Jintian* writers seek to identify themselves in the global cultural context can be constrained to political radicalism, whereas the aesthetical avant-gardism essential for experimentation of other representative avant-garde novelists, such as Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, Yu Hua, Su Tong, and Can Xue, might be overlooked by Anglophone readers.

3.3.2 *Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused* (1995), aesthetically or politically driven?

The distinction between aesthetic and political avant-gardism has been a fundamental dimension in critical discussions of the avant-garde ever since the emergence of this genre in the European cultural context (Section 2.1). The foregoing analysis of the *Jintian* anthologies has demonstrated that, as a result of the particular strategy of paratextual framing, the Chinese avant-garde literary genre appears in the Anglophone cultural context more as a form of literary involvement to serve socio-political purposes than as an aesthetic experimentation that advances the separation of art and politics. The shifting concept of the Chinese avant-garde caused by the use of paratexts in literary translation is not unique to literary products sponsored by the *Jintian* institution. As

become clear in the argument below, translation paratexts are widely intended to foreground the politico-ideological dimensions of Chinese avant-garde fiction for Anglophone readers.

In *Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused* (1995), which Kinkley praises for its ‘accessibility’ to Anglophone readers, its ‘slick production values’, and for having ‘a variety of authors and stories – some of which are comic or satirical and do reflect on China’ (2000, 257), the political significance of Chinese avant-garde fiction in terms of its resistance to China’s excessive political power is underscored via diverse paratextual devices. Howard Goldblatt, a celebrated translator who has brought fame to a wide range of Chinese writers from mainland China and Taiwan, was the sole editor of the anthology. Goldblatt selected not only fictional works of the most-noted avant-garde novelists within mainland China, such as Su Tong, Yu Hua, Ge Fei and Can Xue, but also representative works of the older generation authors who gained fame for writing the ‘sent-down’ experiences of the Cultural Revolution, Wang Meng, Cao Naiqian, Shi Tiesheng, Kong Jiesheng and Li Rui, for instance, as well as several pieces by diaspora writers, including Ai Bei in the US, and Duo Duo and Hong Ying in the UK. There were also a diverse team of translators responsible for bringing these specimens of new sensibilities of Chinese literature to intended readers. Apart from Goldblatt responsible for several translations, including *The Brothers Shu* originally written by Su Tong, *The Cure* by Mo Yan, and *Remembering Mr. Wu You* by Ge Fei, none of the other translators translated more than one selected text. (List of selected authors and copy right information of source texts and translations are attached at the end of the anthology.) The selection of texts, authors and translators for this anthology is thus as diverse as that of the *Jintian* series of anthologies.

Seen from the perspective of paratexts, Goldblatt’s anthology also shares the tendency to foreground the oppositional political connotations of the selected writings for its intended

readers. While the anthology's wide selection of authors ensures the global influence that the translated texts can achieve, the editor's well-known name, clearly evident on the front cover (Figure 4), further lends authority to the anthology. Adding to the authority of the anthology is the great name of its publisher, placed on the title page and the back cover (Figure 4): Grove Press, which has been 'recognised as one of the twentieth century's great avant-garde publishing houses' with the most well-known accomplishment of 'introducing American audiences to European avant-garde theatre' (Grove Press Records, n.d.). In particular, Grove's reputation as 'a controversial publisher committed to fighting censorship' and 'introducing groundbreaking works to American readers' (Grove Press Records, n.d.) adds up to an endorsement of the political controversial *status quo* of the chosen stories.

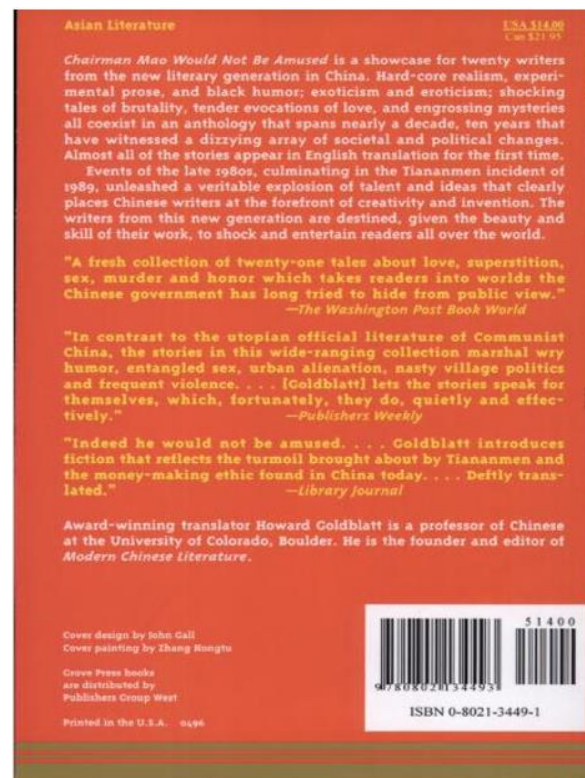
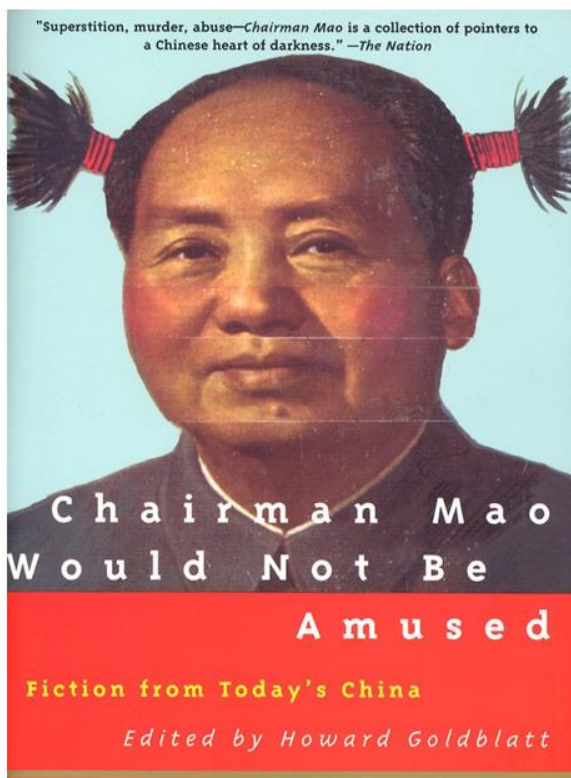


Figure 4: Front and back covers of *Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused*, edited by Howard Goldblatt, Brookline, MA: Zephyr Press, 1995.

The anthology's 'striking title', as Prado-Fonts (2008, 40) describes it, *Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused*, is presented in large font on the front cover, followed by the subtitle in smaller font, *Fiction from Today's China*. Such typographic design prioritises the 'connotative value' carried by the main title instead of the 'description of the literary work (content and genre)' accomplished by the subtitle (Pellatt 2018, 168). A wish to identify political implications can be detected from the title's use of 'Chairman Mao'. Meanwhile, a sense of negativity is linked to the political figure through the expression, 'would not be amused'.

As if to explain why the anthology is titled in this way, the remainder of the front cover is taken up with a caricature of Chairman Mao, which risks provoking the Chinese authorities to criticise the vilification of Mao. The back cover (Figure 4) then reveals Zhang Hongtu as the artist of the front-cover painting. As one of the forerunners of China's 'political pop' movement – which helped to launch contemporary Chinese painting into its current international trajectory, Zhang Hongtu has been well-recognised in Western artistic circles since 1987 (Silbergeld 2007). Some readers may quickly recognise that the satirical image of Mao in the cover painting is adapted from Zhang's *Mao With Pigtales* in *Chairman Mao*, a twelve-unit photo collage series (1989) (Figure 5).



Figure 5: *Mao with Pigtails* (Left), in *Chairman Mao Series* (Right), Photocollage and acrylic on paper, painted by Zhang Hongtu, 1989.

In deconstructing Mao's deified image, Zhang Hongtu has explored within the series the freedom to criticize Chinese authorities afforded to artists living in the West, and therefore attracted enormous attention from the political media (Pan 2016). The use of Zhang's pop-inflected work critiquing Mao's regime on the front cover, together with a title laced with satire, flag up political resistance and protest in order to attract prospective Anglophone readers to the anthology. It may even have created the impression that the fictional works collected in the anthology express the same scathing satire towards Chinese political authorities as Zhang Hongtu attempts to achieve with his avant-garde artworks.

Reinforcing the effect of the front-cover painting, a quote from *The Nation*'s review of this anthology is inserted at the top of the painting, which summarises the main subject matters that the collection grapples with, including: 'superstition, murder, abuse – *Chairman Mao* is a

collection of pointers to a Chinese heart of darkness'. Therefore, with the endorsement of *The Nation*, America's most widely read and politically progressive journal, the socio-political significance of the publication of this anthology is overtly signified. The first impression of the front cover might lead potential Anglophone readers to interpret the whole anthology as another exposé aimed at unmasking the dystopic China under Mao's ruling.

The political connotations that the front cover evokes are further supported by the back-cover blurbs (Figure 4). In the central section of the back cover, reviews by three renowned American publishing institutions are quoted. Similar to *The Nation*, *The Washington Post Book World*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Library Journal* all stress that the stories in Goldblatt's anthology reveal the realities of China; especially those untold in official literature. Together, they elaborate a narrative of contemporary China plagued with issues such as superstition, corruption, violence, and political turmoil that Chinese authorities have long attempted to hide from the public. As these review excerpts are placed at the entrance to the textual world of the stories, they might lead potential readers to form the assumption that the interest of the anthology lies not in its literary value but in its socio-cultural significance.

The back cover also contains a paragraph explaining the contexts and styles of the chosen stories, and concludes with an assurance that 'the writers from this generation are destined, given the beauty and skill of their work, to shock and entertain readers all over the world'. The compliment given to the quality of the selected writings seems to assuage some critics' lament that 'the West is more interested in Chinese literature's social perspectives than its "art" (technical prowess)' (Kinkley 2000, 257). Yet, the paragraph as a whole builds a suggestion that the aesthetic values of exemplary literary works ought to be appreciated in the socio-political contexts where the authors reside. In other words, the variety of themes in the anthology, for

instance, ‘exoticism and eroticism; shocking tales of brutality, tender evocations of love, and engrossing mysteries’ (back cover), are compatible with the ‘societal and political changes’ (back cover) that the writers artistically explore and reflect. By implication, while exemplary stories manifest literary skills that deserve compliments, their real value lies in the authors’ authentic accounts of the socio-political realities of contemporary China.

Additional analysis of the stories is presented in Goldblatt’s introduction to the anthology, but in a similar framework to the introduction on the back cover. From the viewpoint of an expert in Chinese literary studies, Goldblatt made an effort to elaborate upon the socio-political contexts in which these talented and inventive writers were nurtured. Nevertheless, the ironic and sarcastic tone that Goldblatt used to depict the cultural and political turbulence in Maoist China and post-Tiananmen China involuntarily betrays his critical ideological position. To start with, Goldblatt describes Mao’s China as a ‘totalitarian society’ (1995, viii) in which ‘literature and art are subordinate to politics’ (1995, vii). He then reviews literary developments in mainland China since the death of Mao, pointing out that, although various literary trends had emerged in the 1980s to challenge the dominant power of Maoist discourse over literature, they had nevertheless all failed to get rid of the social and political role that literature had to play (1995, vii–ix). In so doing, Goldblatt denies the possibility of an autonomous aesthetic discourse that some literary critics suggest having been achieved by Chinese avant-garde novelists around 1985 (Section 2.2.2). In Goldblatt’s view, only since the ‘Tiananmen Massacre’ in 1989 (1995, x), have new writers managed to stake out ‘territory independent of societal and political pressures’ (1995, ix). Goldblatt further comments that writers these days ‘see themselves as independent artists whose works can and will, appeal to readers and viewers all over the world’ (1995, xi). Yet, in Goldblatt’s eyes, these independent artists ‘describe in graphic and revealing prose a place where

surface stability uneasily masks a society in turmoil, whose work probes the dark aspects of life and human behaviour' (1995, x). Some of these new writers' works are so revealing that they 'do not see the light of day until it is first published in Taiwan or Hong Kong' (Goldblatt 1995, x). To illustrate this point, Goldblatt uses Su Tong, Yu Hua and Ge Fei as examples, and highlights that these writers 'have proclaimed independence from the literary establishment, often publishing abroad to escape ideological and financial pressure, and confidently asserting their artistic freedom' (1995, x).

From Goldblatt's description of the context facing mainland Chinese writers, one can infer that, behind the editor's eager approval of the selected authors, is his critical voice of Communist China. Goldblatt regards the writers as avant-gardists based mainly on their attitudes towards challenging the reigning cultural politics imposed by the Party. The independent artists whom Goldblatt enthusiastically defends appear to have been strongly associated with the enlightenment humanism idea that writers should reveal and criticise the ugly side of Communist China. Accordingly, a narrative is established; alluding to the idea that the newly developed expressions exhibited by the selected writings were not the result of the pure aesthetic experimentation to which Chinese avant-garde novelists committed themselves, but strategies used by Chinese writers to challenge the authority of the Party's cultural politics. While Goldblatt casts a dystopic image of China, the political icon of the Chinese government, Chairman Mao, takes on an image of a human rights violator who was responsible not only for the catastrophic Cultural Revolution but also continued to exert influence upon the governmental control of intellectual thoughts even after his death. In comparison, the selected Chinese writers tend to be identified as political dissidents. Due to 'their truth-telling about contemporary and historical China', these talented young writers enjoy a warmer reception from the international

community, mainly Western democratic countries, than their homeland, just ‘like Yukio Mishima, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and Nadine Gordimer before them’ (Goldblatt 1995, xi).

The efforts to highlight the political connotations of Chinese avant-garde fiction for Anglophone readers can also be detected in the multiple reviews that the anthology has produced. Irrespective of their varying emphases, reviews written by Charles Foran (1995), Anne Jew (1995), and Holly Shi (1997) can each be seen to have paid attention to story themes that are usually considered taboos within mainland China. Revolving around the chosen title of the anthology, *Chairman Mao Would Not Be Amused*, Charles Foran suggests that the collected stories constitute a defiance of the Chinese authorities, because the exemplary talented young writers are committed to ‘relating things as they really are’ in Deng’s regime characterised with ‘hypocrisy and spiritual decay’ (1995, 14). Anne Jew comments that this ‘diverse but uneven collection of contemporary short fiction with few highlights, at least allows some insight’ into ‘the real China’ (1995, 15). Similarly, Holly Shi asserts that the authenticity of the stories lies in their expressions of ‘the authors’ scepticism and contempt for what has happened during the bewildering period of economic reform that began in 1978’ (1997, 138). While using ‘ugliness’ to sum up the varying fictional worlds constructed by the authors, Shi stresses that ‘to Western readers, all of this may seem like the product of a highly creative imagination, but it is actually a part of everyday life for thousands of Chinese’ (1997, 140). Across all three reviews, one can perceive the underlying view of the collected stories as reflections of Chinese realities, set alongside an emphasis on the pessimism and negativity of Deng’s Reform era. Although sporadic comments on the literary merits of specific stories do appear in the reviews by Foran and Jew, the reviewers’ primary objective is to elaborate the value of the anthology in offering insightful information upon China for Western readers.

Deviating from the above-mentioned reviewers, Jianguo Chen refuses to reduce the stories to being a realistic showcase of the mess happening within Deng's China. Yet, Chen pays the most attention to transgressive themes deemed as subversive to the Maoist discourse, and draws the conclusion that the significance of the reviewed anthology lies in the writers' 'undaunted endeavour to "depoliticise" the established institutions with a signifying structure of their own' (1996, 469). As shown in his review, while Chen attempts to approach the anthology from a different perspective, the idea of Chinese avant-garde fiction as a counter-current against the dominant political culture underpinning Chen's reading is no less political than the others. According to the interpretive frames that Chen provides, Anglophone readers of the anthology might expect to encounter a group of self-conscious Chinese avant-gardists who seek to use artistic exploration as a means to serve their activist goals.

My point here is neither to deny the negative aspects of Communist China, nor to negate the tragedies caused by such historical events as the Cultural Revolution or the Tiananmen Protests. Instead, I wish to bring to light the ways in which paratextual materials are used to shape target readers' perceptions of avant-garde fictional works translated from China. As the above analysis illustrates, regardless of the wide selection of the anthology, paratextual devices including titles, cover illustrations, blurbs, book reviews, and the editor's introduction prioritise informative and connotative functions over the literary forms and poetic functions of Chinese avant-garde fiction. To some extent, Anglophone readers are guided by paratexts to read Chinese avant-garde fiction chiefly from a political perspective, which, according to Prado-Fonts, may be 'understood in a very limited sense as the tension between writer and Party/ government' (2008, 40).

The politicised interpretation of the Chinese avant-garde shown in the paratextual materials accompanying Goldblatt's anthology can be interpreted to be a consequence of the persisting

ideological assumptions that Anglophone audiences hold towards Chinese cultural products. Chinese avant-garde fiction is not the only genre subject to this tendency. Koch points out that Chinese avant-garde art exhibited for European audiences has to face ‘a simplistic ideological interpretation’ that disavows ‘the inherently art-related and increasingly autonomous stance that had marked the artistic production of the last decade in China’ (2011, 102). Comparably, Chinese avant-garde fiction translated into English after 1989 is distanced from a place that is ‘overly autonomous, segregated, purely aesthetic’ (Koch 2011, 102), and always perceived as alluding to the political issues of Communist China. Seen from the discourses constructed from paratexts of Goldblatt’s anthology, the distinction between aesthetic and political avant-gardism that Western countries hold towards (post-)modern literature of their own is conceived as not being applicable to Chinese avant-garde fiction.

3.3.3 *Tales of Tibet* (2001) for Tibetan politics

As Pellatt argues, ‘paratext serves ostensibly to explain, elaborate and justify the core text. Its innocent intention is to guide and help the reader to read with understanding, but as a form of interpretation, it can become a powerful medium for persuasion and manipulation’ (2018, 167). With regards to Chinese avant-garde fiction anthologised and translated for the Anglophone reading public, the foregoing analysis has evidenced the use of paratexts in ideological translation. Using various paratextual devices, different translation agents, such as publishers, editors, translators, and reviewers, are actively involved in setting up structures of anticipation that can persuade Anglophone readers to interpret the ideological currents behind the literary production of Chinese avant-garde novelists in specific ways. Therefore, not only target readers’ conceptions of the Chinese avant-garde literary genre, but also the image and identity of contemporary Chinese culture in the Anglophone system are shaped through paratextual

construction of translations. Of the anthologies under study, none is more susceptible to the tendency of paratextual politicisation than *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Wind Horses, and Prayer Wheels* (2001). As illustrated in the following section, the paratextual materials surrounding this translation anthology serve a significant channel by which translation agents engage to guide Anglophone readers to approach Chinese avant-garde fiction themed on Tibet from a socio-political angle, thereby mediating the Anglophone imagination of Tibet and Sino-Tibet relations.

For a considerable number of Westerners, Tibet holds a special meaning (Bishop 1989). Largely attributed to the accounts of travel and exploration in the Himalayan region and the British military expedition to Lhasa, ‘the European and particularly British interest in Tibet gained momentum throughout the nineteenth century and continued right into the twentieth’ (Bishop 1993, 22). In the 1930s, James Hilton’s novel *Lost Horizon* (1933) and the film adaptation of the same name (1937) further captured Western fascination with ‘exotica Tibet’ (Anand 2007, 37–64). Since then, Tibet has become synonymous with the romantic and utopian Shangri-La; the embodiment of a mythical realm featuring beautiful landscape, ‘spirituality and wisdom, as well as a kind of primordial purity, that has already been lost in the West’ (Hladíková 2011, 225; see also Bishop [1989] and Shakya [1991] for the Western traditional perception of Tibet as Shangri-La). While the myth of Shangri-La continues to take hold of Western imagination of Tibet, the Chinese government’s takeover of Tibet in 1951 started to draw the Western public’s attention to Sino-Tibetan relations. Given that the Tibetan government-in-exile led by the Dalai Lama has been active in gaining Western support for their nationalist cause since the 1959 Lhasa uprising, it makes sense to observe the prevailing image of ‘Tibetans as victims of forced modernisation brought about by Chinese rule’ in the Western world (Anand 2007, 98). For Western countries, the image that exile Tibetans use to identify themselves serves

well as an anti-communist ideology. Hence, literary, or other forms of representation treating the PRC as a threat to Tibetans' human rights and criticising the government's forceful cultural assimilation tend to gain a warm reception in Western countries (Anand 2007, 65–85). Following two events in 1989 – the Tiananmen Protests, and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama – Tibet was again put under the spotlight of the global media. Hollywood also showed great interest in Tibet, producing several Tibetan-themed films, such as *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997), *Kundun* (1997), and *Red Corner* (1997), which were censored by the Chinese government after the film releases (Daccache and Valeriano 2012). As Anand (2007) argues, events and cultural representations like these largely shaped the Western essentialist and stereotypical view of Tibet as an exotic land suffering from political suppression. Bearing in mind the prevalent images of Tibet in the Western world, it may be easier to comprehend paratextual strategies employed to present translations of Tibetan-themed Chinese avant-garde fiction to Anglophone readers and the effects on the Anglophone perceptions of the Sino-Tibet conflicts.

The timing of the publication of *Tales of Tibet* (2001) evidences the political implications of the anthology. It may not be a pure coincidence that an anthology displaying the ways in which Tibet had been represented in Chinese literary works was published in 2001, half a century after the Chinese claim of sovereignty over Tibet. One could speculate that the publication was a gesture of remembrance which appealed to international readers to reflect on the impacts of the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1951. Taking into account another publication featuring new fiction, poetry, and essays from Tibet in the same year, the special issue of *Mānoa*, *Song of the Snow Lion: New Writing from Tibet*, the special meaning of 2001 for Tibet and Tibetan culture is underlined.

The background of its publisher, Rowman & Littlefield, also has implications regarding the socio-political significance of this anthology. Being an independent publishing house ‘dedicated to publishing texts and books of general interest in the social sciences’ (Rowman & Littlefield, n.d.), it appears to be Rowman & Littlefield’s intention to publish items that function as sociological or ethnographic materials about Tibet; a topic of interest to many Anglophone readers. Given the significance of 2001, Rowman & Littlefield might have anticipated that a Tibetan-themed publication would catch the attention of prospective Anglophone readers concerned about current debates on Tibet.

Proof of the above speculations can be found in various paratexts accompanying the anthology. Several elements on the front cover (Figure 6) indicate its function as an ethnographic account of Tibetan culture. The anthology title designates Tibet as the narrative subject, while using ‘tale’ to emphasize the stories’ focus on exciting real and imaginary events. The subtitle consists of terms that relate to pivotal elements in Tibetan Buddhism, ‘sky burials’, ‘prayer wheels’ and ‘wind horses’, thereby foregrounding Tibet’s religious culture which fascinates many Western readers. The titles leave the impression that the anthology will fulfil ‘a wide range of perceptions on the historical state and contemporary status of Tibet and its people’, as confirmed by the book reviewer Lussier (2003, 101). To enhance the information contained in the titles, the front cover is illustrated with a photo of a typical Himalayan landscape, in which a woman in Tibetan costume is walking along a barren gravel plain leading a white horse, followed by a child wearing ordinary modern clothes, set against a background characterised with high mountains covered in snow and a pure blue sky. Detailed information of the front-cover illustration is provided at the back cover (Figure 6): *Evening on the Tingri Plain below Cho Oyu* was taken in 1992 by Galen Rowell, an American landscape photographer known

internationally. Additional visual paratexts are inserted within the anthology, such as maps of Tibet at the front of the book, and photos titled *The Head of Buddha Opame at Gyantse Kumbum* and *A Kampa Man*, which display rich details of the geological features and lifestyles on the Tibetan plateau. These verbal and visual paratexts carry images that reflect the common cultural stereotypes of Tibet. Thus, a sense of ‘otherness’ is detectable in the paratexts, and enables a revealing of an exotic panorama of Tibet which seeks to entice target readers to approach the stories as a means to expand their knowledge of the mysterious Tibet.

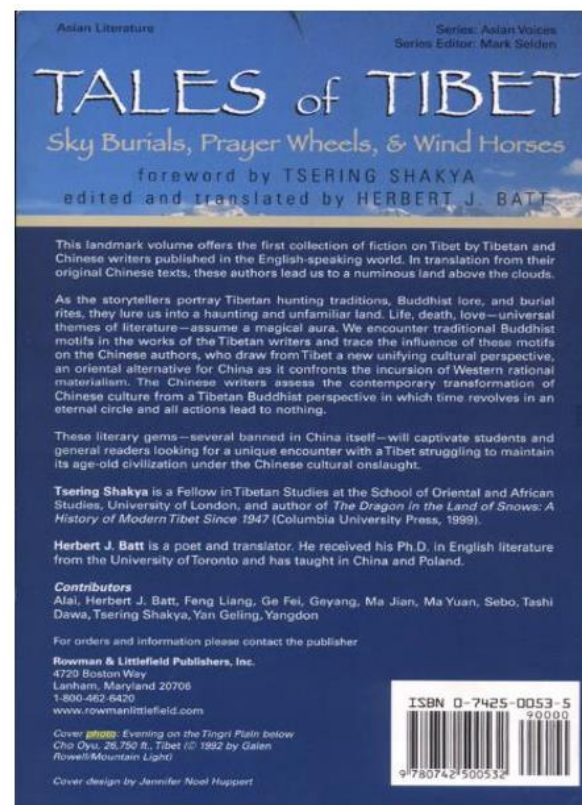
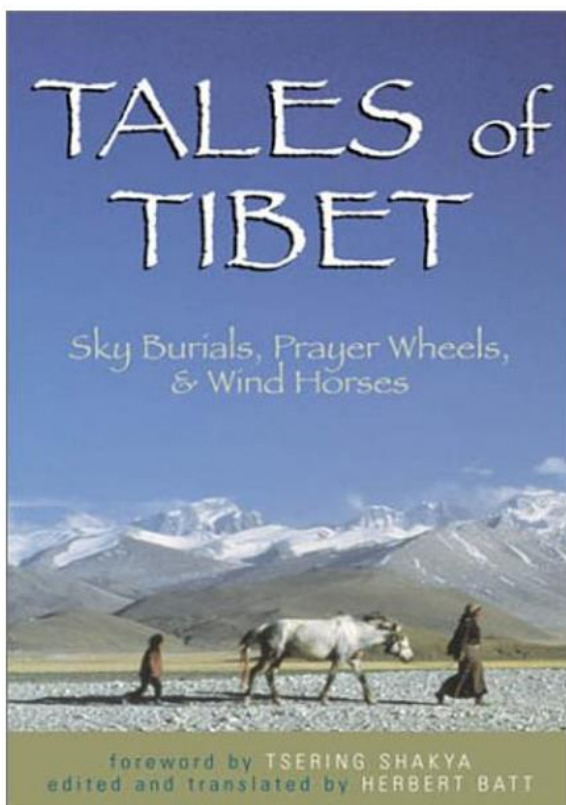


Figure 6: Front and back covers of *Tales of Tibet: Sky Burials, Prayer Wheels, and Wind Horses*, edited and translated by Herbert Batt, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.

On the back cover (Figure 6), a three-paragraph blurb confirms the publisher's expectation to bring out the 'first collection of fiction on Tibet by Tibetan and Chinese writers in the English-speaking world'. The second paragraph further reveals the publisher's wish to lead Anglophone readers to 'a haunting and unfamiliar land', and the anthology's focus on displaying 'traditional Buddhist motifs in the works of the Tibetan writers' and 'the influence of these motifs on the Chinese authors'. The second paragraph describes its contributing Chinese authors as 'draw[ing] from Tibet a new unifying cultural perspective, an oriental alternative for China as it confronts the incursion of Western rational materialism', therefore presenting a narrative about positive aspects of Tibetan Buddhist culture in relation to Han Chinese culture. Also perceivable here is a pessimistic attitude towards modern Chinese culture, that 'the Chinese writers assess the contemporary transformation of Chinese culture from a Tibetan Buddhist perspective in which time revolves in an eternal and all actions lead to nothing'. Seen from a comparative point of view, the publisher's preference for Tibetan Buddhist culture comes into focus in the blurb. The last paragraph, which states, 'these literary gems – several banned in China itself – will captivate students and general readers looking for a unique encounter with a Tibet struggling to maintain its age-old civilization under the Chinese cultural onslaught', appears to be an intended condemnation of the Chinese government's destruction of Tibetan culture. Complying with the approach that Anglophone publishers customarily adopt to frame translations of Chinese literature, the back-cover blurb under discussion also highlights that several selected works are censored within China. Nevertheless, of the total fourteen stories in selection, only Ma Jian's *Stick out the Fur on Your Tongue or It's All a Void* (亮出你的舌苔或空空荡荡) was once published in the literary journal *Renmin wenxue*, and has since then been banned from publishing within China. Given the context in which the Western public tends to show compassion for

Tibetans under the administration of Han Chinese, the blurb is likely to generate a narrative of victimhood, one that points to Tibet's struggle for cultural survival as well as Chinese writers deprived of freedom of expression. In this way, the blurb foregrounds the anthology's sensational value, increases the appeal of the chosen stories to target readers, and also possibly ignites criticism of China's forced assimilation of Tibetan Buddhist culture.

In addition to the blurb that states the historical struggles of Tibetan culture, the back cover also includes introductions to the academic background of the foreword writer, Tsering Shakya, and the translator-editor, Herbert Batt. Pellatt argues that 'dedication and the more personal inscription also contribute to the authority and prestige of a work' (2018, 170). Given the persuasive power of mighty names in influencing readers' perceptions and interpretations of texts, Tsering Shakya, the name of a distinguished historian in Tibetan studies, potentially increases the documentary value of the anthology for Anglophone readers.

Shakya's foreword can be counted as a supportive essay, offering target readers in-depth contextual information about Tibet and Tibetan-themed literature. Simultaneously, it reveals the endeavours of Shakya, as a scholar of Tibetan origin, to speak for Tibet in the international arena. From the beginning, Shakya makes it clear that Tibet is under Chinese colonial rule, with the imposition of Chinese language and the textual representation of Tibet in Chinese as ways of control and domination (2001, xi–xv). Shakya then argues that, despite the colonial situation, Tibetan language, literature, and culture have not been eliminated; instead, they continue to develop and have even positively influenced Chinese literature during the Cultural Fever period of the 1980s (2001, xv–xxii). Here, Shakya pays attention to distinguishing Han Chinese writers from Tibetan writers writing in Chinese. In his view, while Chinese writers like Ma Yuan and Ge Fei portray Tibet in a mythical style that reflects the coloniser's gaze of the colonised, the

Tibetan writers in this collection ‘strive to present an image of Tibet that is “ordinary”’ (Shakya 2001, xx). Shakya thus regards Chinese writers’ literary representations of Tibet as ‘the product of the coloniser’s certainty of his mission’ of conquering Tibet (2001, xxii). On this basis, Shakya criticises ‘the binary opposition between Tibet and China’ (2001, xxii) constructed in Ma Yuan’s *Vagrant Spirit* (游神) (trans. Herbert Batt, 2001), and the usage of ‘Machu village as an allegory for Tibet’ (2001, xxii) in Ma Yua’s *A Fiction* (虚构) (trans. Herbert Batt, 2001).

As Shakya’s foreword unfolds, a narrative on the struggles of Tibetan culture under the domination of Han Chinese in history can be brought to light. Readers of it could be led to look for political allusions within the literary texts rather than the fictionality of the stories. It appears that Shakya is trying hard to convince English-speaking readers that the literary works selected for the anthology are valuable only in terms of their substantial historical reflections on the socio-political circumstance of Tibet. Another aspect of the foreword likely to make the anthology more heavily weighted toward its political end relates to Shakya’s critical view of Chinese writers’ textual representations of Tibet. Shakya criticises the mythical style chosen by Han Chinese writers because it reflects their stereotype of Tibet as colonised. However, when he assumes and then questions Chinese authors’ ideological motivation, Shakya is barely able to conceal his pro-Tibet stance in the debate about Sino-Tibet relations. In this sense, Shakya’s foreword provides far more than contextual information to help target readers to read the stories with understanding. Instead, it appears to seek to guide target readers to approach the selected fictional works from a similar political perspective to the one applied by Shakya himself. Moreover, the criticism of the anthology’s selection that Shakya shows in the foreword is likely to perpetuate among target readers a binary view of the exemplary authors. Consequently, prospective readers may imagine all Han Chinese writers writing from Tibet as foot soldiers who

serve the government's colonial rule in Tibet, whereas all writers of Tibetan origin as victims of Chinese colonisation who write to enlighten Western readers about Tibetan civilisation under the threat of Chinese culture.

Shakya's foreword provides an instructive example of the ideological use of translation paratexts. It can be inferred that the inclusion of Shakya's foreword engages translated Chinese avant-garde fiction in the politics of Sino-Tibetan relations, and the English anthology is likely to be rewarded by attracting a broad readership with an interest in Tibetan sociological and ethnographic matters. It also has deep implications for the geopolitics involving Tibet, China, and the West. Taking into account the Tibetan nationalist cause carried out internationally, the anthology that Shakya explains and justifies could rally support, not only by raising Westerners' awareness of Tibetan issues, but also through helping to launch political critiques of the sinicisation policy that the Chinese government exercises to acculturate minority groups.

In addition to Shakya's foreword, the anthology also contains an introduction written by the sole editor-translator of the included fourteen stories, Herbert Batt. Since 1995, Batt has become a translator specialising in translating into English Chinese literary works associated with Tibet, including several most representative pieces of Ma Yuan, Tashi Dawa, and Alai. It can be inferred from this history that Batt has accumulated sufficient social and cultural capitals to influence the ways in which the intended academic and common readers of this anthology might approach the Tibetan subject in the selected texts.⁵ To facilitate bringing this Tibetan-themed

5. Brief biographic information of Herbert Batt is usually attached to the publications containing his translations of Chinese writing, including *Fissures* (2000), *Song of the Snow Lion: New Writing from Tibet* (2001), *Tales of Tibet* (2001), *The Mystified Boat* (2003), *Children of the Bitter River: A Novel* (2007) and *Ballad of the Himalayas: Stories of Tibet* (2011). Due to Batt's reclusive lifestyle, no other information concerning Batt's academic social networks, thoughts of the Sino-Tibet relationship, or editing and translating styles of Chinese literature set in Tibet could be obtained from reliable sources during the research process of this thesis.

anthology to Anglophone readers, Batt explains and justifies the value of the collected fictional works in the introduction. Distinct from Shakya's foreword, which focuses exclusively on the Sino-Tibet geopolitical tension and criticises Han Chinese writers' colonial literature, Batt's introduction concentrates on the cultural differences between Tibetans and Han Chinese in order to assist Anglophone readers to approach the Tibetan religious culture represented in the selected texts. Nevertheless, Batt's introduction is by no means free from ideological influence. His comparative view of the styles of authors of Chinese and Tibetan origin seems to favour the expression of the Tibetan identity but not the Chinese. For Batt, the spiritual Tibetan land provides positive inspirations for Chinese writers, rather than acting as a passive object for the gaze of the Chinese coloniser as Shakya describes. Specifically, Batt argues that, by adopting Tibetan motifs such as the Buddhist concept of the circular time frame and Tibet's religious nonrationalism, as Ma Yuan did in *Vagrant Spirit* (游神) (trans. Herbert Batt, 2001) and Ge Fei in *Encounter* (相遇) (trans. Herbert Batt, 2001), Han Chinese writers present Tibetan Buddhist culture as an 'alternative model for a China in cultural turmoil' (2001, 4). Different from Shakya, Batt particularly stresses that it is the influence of Tibetan Buddhist culture that nourishes Han Chinese writers, who seem to consciously seek 'a spiritual alternative to their own culture, overrun by rational materialism from the West' (Batt 2001, 1). Whilst the inspiration that Han Chinese writers have gained from Tibetan motifs is unquestionable, Batt's assumption that avant-garde Chinese writers such as Ma Yuan and Ge Fei are driven by the thought of searching for a form of cultural remedy to cure Chinese cultural problems is disputable when referring to the literary critical views of the 'de-politicisation' principle honoured by Chinese avant-garde novelists (Section 2.2.2). In terms of literary techniques, Batt states that 'Chinese writers like Ma Yuan and Ge Fei are influenced by writers of Tibetan nationality like Tashi Dawa, Sebo, and

Yangdon' (2001, 3). Following an elaboration of 'a contrast between a Westernising, materialist China and a Tibet of Buddhist spirituality' (2001, 3), Batt highlights the positive influence that Tibetan motifs exert on Chinese culture, but not the other way around. Yet, all of Batt's efforts to project a positive image of Tibetan Buddhist culture seem to serve as a foil for his regret at 'ancient Buddhist culture threatened with extinction under the Chinese regime' (2001, 1), which Batt addresses at the end of the introduction.

Unlike Shakya's foreword, which constitutes an overt statement of support for Tibetans' nationalist agenda and critique of China's colonial rule in Tibet, Batt's introduction does not convey an overt political declaration. However, this does not conceal the fact that Batt uses the introduction as a channel to engage in debates about Tibet. As the above analysis reveals, Batt's defence of the value of traditional Tibetan Buddhist culture, in comparison with his lament for Tibet's endangered culture under the Chinese regime, is an implicit form of manipulation that has the effect of making Tibet more visible and positive among Anglophone readers. In this sense, Batt's introduction also involves ideological use of translation paratexts to serve the politics of Tibet.

Besides peritexts attached to the anthology, four reviews of *Tales of Tibet* (2001) form another forum to debate issues relating to the concepts of Tibetan literature, Tibetan identity, and the geopolitics between China, Tibet and the West. All can be seen to impact the Anglophone reception of translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Among them, Bhuchung Tsering, vice president of the International Campaign for Tibet, criticises the misleading title of the collection since it 'does not contain tales of Tibet in the conventional sense' (2002, 204). While negating the authenticity of the anthology in representing Tibetan literature, Tsering illustrates the book's function in showcasing 'how some Tibetan and Chinese writers fantasise about Tibet today'

(2002, 25). Specifically, Tsering confirms the positive developments in the Chinese perception of Tibet but also expresses his suspicion of ‘the condescending tone in some of the Chinese authors’ stories’ (2002, 205). In addition, he (2002) shows his doubts about Tibetan writers’ frequent references to world literature and their uncritical adoption of modern writing techniques to deal with traditional subjects in Tibet. As a result, Tsering calls on Tibetan readers not to discard the ‘basic Tibetanness to adapt to a modern way of life’ (2002, 205). Readers of this review are likely to conduct a reductive reading of the chosen stories as Tsering does, therefore interpreting and receiving the literary texts based solely on the background of the respective authors without reference to the literary aesthetics of the selected writing. Mark Lussier similarly asserts the significance of this anthology in providing ‘a wide range of perceptions on the historical state and contemporary status of Tibet and its peoples’ (2003, 101). Agreeing with Shakya, Lussier (2003) regards the reviewed anthology as a significant example of Tibetan literature emerging from the shadow of Chinese censorship. However, in terms of the selected writers’ ideological stances in relation to the official discourse of China, Lussier sees things differently. Unlike Shakya who criticises Ma Yuan and Ge Fei of writing Tibet in support of China’s mission of colonising Tibet, Lussier views these stories by Chinese writers as ‘the most ideologically charged relative to the controlling discourse of the communist authorities’ (2003, 101). In this way, Lussier frames Ma Yuan and Ge Fei as opposition to the official discourse, and approves not only of their subtle and poignant writing styles but also their contribution to the development of Tibetan literature and culture.

Steven Venturino’s insightful review shows his reading of Tibetan literature from the perspectives of world literature and postcolonial studies (2004, 51–56). As Venturino clarifies, the discussion of ‘Tibetan national literature’ is ‘a matter of political debate played out in the

cultural sphere' (2004, 52). Therefore, it is important to read the stories in the anthology against categories, such as 'the language the works are originally composed', and 'the ethnicity of the writer', to explore the position of Tibet in world literature (Venturino 2004, 51). Suggesting the need to consider 'the growing body work written by Tibetans – in Tibetan, Chinese, English and other languages – as a Tibetan national literature', Venturino contends that recognitions of this literature from 'readers of world literature help to acknowledge the integrity of a Tibetanness that has been transformed through historical circumstances' (2004, 52). Nevertheless, in his review, Venturino pays little attention to the chosen stories by writers of Chinese origin. Neither does he comment on the literary qualities or values of the selected writings. As his review demonstrates, Venturino is more concerned with the political significance of the literary texts, particularly those produced by writers of Tibetan origin who seek a national place for Tibetan writing, than the specific narrative methods used by these exemplary writers to tell stories about Tibet. For Western academic readers, Venturino's review undermines the dominant academic convention of marginalising Tibetan culture in favour of the concept of the nation as the foundation of comparative literature. Anglophone lay readers may be guided by the review to investigate the Tibetanness of the literary texts and the different ways in which writers speak for Tibetan minorities. Either way, Venturino's review does not intend to assist Anglophone readers to appreciate the experimental literary techniques that avant-garde novelists endeavour to present to Chinese readers.

A competing voice which delivers interpretations of the chosen Tibetan-themed stories can be found in Zhao Henry Y.H.'s review. For Zhao (2002), it is problematic to label a literary text as Tibetan literature via reference to the author's nationality or the language in which the fiction is written. Therefore, Zhao questions Shakya's viewpoint that the mythical style deployed by Ma

Yuan reflects his ideological framing of Tibet, and regards it as ‘an over-simplified opposition’ (2002, 149). In Zhao’s opinion, the convergence of the two groups of writers ‘came in the experimentation of forms’ (2002, 150). As Zhao (2002) explicates, the selected stories set in Tibet are recommended reading for anyone interested in contemporary fiction because both the Chinese and Tibetan writers have drawn inspiration from Tibetan mysticism to create innovative styles and narrative techniques that pull fictional writing far away from the dominant realist tradition. Although the works collected in the anthology ‘encourage diversified readings, political as well as any other’, Zhao suggests that readers pay attention to the ‘qualities as literature’ (2002, 151). In addition, Zhao implicitly disputes Batt’s single-minded emphasis on the influence of writers of Tibetan origin upon Han Chinese writers in the introduction. Instead, he underlines the mutual influence between the two groups. Zhao’s review can be understood as another demonstration of his standpoint as an advocate of the formalist aesthetics of Chinese avant-garde fiction; one already displayed in the introduction attached to *The Lost Boat* (1993). With the publication of *Tales of Tibet* (2001), which contains several representative works of Chinese avant-garde fiction with the Tibetan topic of interest to Anglophone readers, Zhao probably anticipated the need to subtly divert readers’ attention away from the Sino-Tibet conflicts to the literary features of the translated texts. In this sense, Zhao’s emphasis on the formalist aesthetics displayed by reviewed writers, regardless of their ethnic originalities, can be interpreted as a strategy to avert Anglophone readers from a potential political reading of Chinese avant-garde fiction.

The various reviews surrounding *Tales of Tibet* (2001) evidence the ideological trouble caused by the motif of Tibet in Anglophone readers’ interpretations and receptions of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Each review can be counted as a small but significant event in the target

readership's approaching to literary representations of Tibet and Tibetan identity, and provides interpretive frameworks that guide Anglophone readers to access Chinese avant-garde fiction set in Tibet. Together with other paratextual elements of the anthology, they constitute an ideological interface between source and recipient cultures; an essential site where the processes of discursive construction and negotiation are encoded in translation practices.

The above analysis of paratextual elements, including titles, cover photo, back-cover blurbs, foreword, introduction, and reviews, has brought to light the tendency to underscore the political tone and significance of *Tales of Tibet* (2001). As it turns out, Tibet, which all stories tell about, offers far more than a backdrop. Instead, it seems to trigger translation agents to construct paratexts that can exercise 'ideological reduction and ethnographic essentialisation' (Huang 2000, 173). Exposed to the ideological repercussion of the paratexts, readers might be led to adopt political readings of the literary texts, and even be persuaded of the veracity of the sociological accounts of modern Tibet. Yet, this kind of politicised representation and reception, which takes place in the Anglophone cultural context, does not serve the name of 'avant-garde' earned by Ma Yuan and Ge Fei, as it downgrades the aesthetic merits of their representative works, and forcefully inscribes the subject matter of Tibet within the ideological framework shaped by dominant Western values related to freedom and democracy.

Focusing on the *Jintian* series of anthologies, *Chairman Mao* (1995), and *Tales of Tibet* (2001), this part of chapter has carried out analysis to uncover the selection scheme of the anthologies, as well as the paratextual strategies that translation agents employ to frame translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction for Anglophone readers. It suggests that, in a receiving culture preoccupied with ideological assumptions towards contemporary Chinese literature, a range of agents worked together, supplementing and contradicting each other, to lift

Chinese avant-garde fiction out of its cultural origin and bring it to Anglophone readers. Despite the different backgrounds in which the translation anthologies were situated, and the diverse selections dedicated by the anthologists, the paratexts accompanying them show a common tendency for politicisation, which highlights the political aspects of translated texts while underplaying the artistic aesthetics claimed by original authors. Titles, cover illustrations, blurbs, introductions, forewords, and book reviews are constructed in a way that stresses the socio-political significance of the selected stories, as well as the authors' political intentions and engagements, rather than the literary qualities of the avant-garde fiction. When the paratexts do mention the aesthetic features of the source texts, they are inclined to leave the impression that Chinese avant-garde novelists use literary experimentation as a weapon to serve their ultimate goal of exposing and critiquing the repressive political power exercised by the totalitarian Chinese government. Thus, a narrative of China possessing features that are likely to stir criticisms from Western countries, including political oppression, dissidence, censorship, human rights in China, and the sinicisation of Tibet, are foregrounded through translation paratexts. Before Anglophone readers actually read the literary texts, they are guided by the paratexts to form the presumption that the anthologised Chinese writings are worth reading because the stories reflect the realities of the unknown China, especially their exposition of the negative aspects that the Chinese government attempts to hide from Western readers. This politicising approach applied to the paratexts of the above-analysed anthologies contests the essential de-politicisation principle on which the aesthetic experimentation of Chinese avant-garde novelists is based. As the translation paratexts fail to present the aesthetic merits of source texts to target readers, instead accentuating a few subject matters with strong political implications, Chinese avant-garde fiction could be downgraded in status from a piece of experimentalist literature to

nonfiction exposé and polemic. This paratextual framing strategy does not assist the Anglophone readership to approach the complex narrative world constructed in Chinese avant-garde fiction, but only perpetuates Anglophone ideological assumptions and expectations of contemporary Chinese literature as sociological and political documents.

Being an essential part of translation practices, paratexts constitute rewriting practices in their own right, mediating literary meaning of a specific text as well as the discourse of the source culture represented by the text. As the translation paratexts under discussion exemplify, paratextual framing according to the politicisation tendency affects not only target readers' perceptions of the political force underlying the literary production of Chinese avant-garde novelists, but also the image of China in the Anglophone cultural context. While paratexts reductively frame translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction into a discourse that reflects or reveals China's excessive political power, China falls back into the stereotypical images that Western countries habitually project upon Communist China. Particularly, China is pictured as a threat to the ideology of liberal democracy embraced by Western capitalist countries, and characterised as a totalitarian and repressive regime, whilst the selected writers are portrayed as being a group of literary dissidents fighting for democracy and the freedom of artistic expression in underground China or in exile overseas.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed existent research that combines paratextual analysis with translation studies, with special attention being paid to the studies discussing the ideological use of paratexts in translation events. In particular, it has examined the ways in which contemporary Chinese literature was paratextually presented to Anglophone readerships in the second half of the twentieth century. It did so in order to gain a deeper understanding of the ideological

circumstances in which English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction took place. Thereafter, the chapter has analysed the selection and paratextual strategies that different translation agents used to present Chinese avant-garde fiction to the Anglophone reading public. Relevant paratextual analysis has revealed a politicisation tendency, in which translated Chinese avant-garde fictional works have been framed as texts standing out more for their informative value in reflecting socio-political issues related to contemporary China than their aesthetic merits. As a result, not only the conception of Chinese avant-garde genre, but also the image of China has been re-formulated in the Anglophone cultural context. While this chapter has concentrated on paratextual construction in translation, the next two chapters give full attention to the translated texts to explore the manipulative power of literary translation.

Chapter 4: Translating Historical Experiences Represented in Chinese Avant-garde Fiction

‘De-historicisation’, as illustrated in Section 2.2.2, constitutes one of the underpinning principles of the Chinese avant-garde fiction movement. Adhering to this principle, Chinese avant-garde novelists adopt radical narrative methods to construct within the text an alternative historical discourse featuring subjectivism, fragmentation and irrationality, thereby questioning conventional ways of interpreting and representing history in fictional writing. In a typical case, avant-garde novelists intentionally use settings in the past to lend credence to their stories. Yet, as scholars of contemporary Chinese literature have commonly argued, the past events represented in Chinese avant-garde fiction do not serve as objective reflections of the socio-political realities of China, rather they provide a perspective for Chinese avant-gardists to demonstrate the aesthetics and complexities of narration (Zhao 1992; X. Zhang 1997, J. Wang 1998; Yang 2002; Cai 2003; Choy 2008; Yu 2008). Rejecting the totalising view of history valued by conventional realist writers, Chinese avant-garde novelists embrace a postmodern notion of history, which problematises the realist assumptions of historical fiction while drawing attention to the diverse approaches in which certain past events are reconstructed into facts within texts (Yang 2002; Cai 2003; Wang 2004; Choy 2008). Overall, on the principle of de-historicisation, Chinese avant-garde novelists have configured ‘new ways of looking at history, identity and narration’ (Schweiger 2015, 364).

When Chinese avant-garde fictional narratives are translated into English, one can argue that the historical settings used by original authors are subjected to re-construction and re-interpretation. Translators involved in the production of translated texts are likely to re-narrate historical elements encoded within original texts, and construct narratives that could mediate the ways in which Anglophone readers imagine the past reality of China. In this sense, there are

double dimensions to the rewriting history concerning translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction dealing with actual historical experiences. This chapter concentrates on analysing the textual strategies that translators employ to reconstruct historical experiences represented in original fictional works, as well as the possible impacts upon Anglophone readers' interpretations of the experimental methods that Chinese avant-garde novelists use to write history. Particular attention is given to three major avant-garde writers, Ma Yuan, Ge Fei and Yu Hua, as well as their representative works set against real historical experiences and events. The analysis of translation shifts in terms of narrative devices – including plot, setting, narrator, and characterisation – sheds light on the ways in which translators' textual mediations result in different fictional representations of Chinese history from those of the original texts.

4.1 Translation as a way of rewriting history

History, in a general sense, is related to the past and the lived experience of humans, as well as the accounts and studies of past experiences. Along with the development of historiography, it has been commonly realised that 'the frontier between history and fiction [is] a porous one' (Burke 2007, 125). Chapter 2 has briefly introduced how the superior position of historiography over fiction in China led to the long-lasting literary practice of historicisation from ancient to modern and contemporary times, and also resulted in the prevalent assumption among readers of historical fiction that literary representations of the past can embody historical truth and authentically reflect historical development. This convention of representing history in literary form was questioned around the mid-1980s, as Root-seeking novelists attempted to move themselves away from the grand narrative of official history by unearthing the experiences and memories of marginalised cultural groups. However, a complete break with the totalising conception of history and the historicisation tradition endorsed by realist writers was only

accomplished by avant-garde novelists, when they used experimental narrative techniques to reconstruct Chinese history, as well foregrounding the ‘fictional nature of the narrative’ (Zhao 1992, 92).

4.1.1 The postmodern view of history and writing history

By virtue of its self-reflexive emphasis and its exposure of the mediated representation of history, Chinese avant-garde fiction has parallels in Western postmodern culture. This is largely attributed to the fact that Chinese avant-garde novelists emerging in Deng’s Reform era have been influenced by a wide range of Western thoughts and ideas, including new historicism, deconstructionism, and postmodern theories that promoted a re-thinking of history in the West. Since the Enlightenment, Western culture has been permeated by the philosophical assumption that history can correspond with the reality of the past through knowledge of its content (Jenkins 1991). Therefore, narrative accounts of historical phenomena tend to be ‘regarded as a neutral “container” of historical fact’, where ‘so-called natural or ordinary languages’ are used to directly represent historical events consisting of real or lived stories so as to ‘have their truth recognised immediately and intuitively’ by the reader (White 2001, 375). With these concepts of history and narrative in fashion, classical historical novels in nineteenth-century Europe, those written by Walter Scott, Honoré de Balzac, Charles Dickens, and Leo Tolstoy, for instance, were expected by authors as well as readers ‘to embody truth’ (Maxwell 2011, 385). Hillis Miller also points out that it is common for realist novelists to have ‘the assumption of a historical basis’ (1974, 459). Therefore, Western conceptions of history, including ‘the notions of origin and end’, ‘of unity and totality’, ‘of underlying “reason” or “ground”’, ‘of human nature’, ‘of necessary progress’, ‘of causality’, ‘of gradually emerging “meaning”’, and ‘of representation and truth’, have been transferred to the formal structure of traditional realist fiction (Miller 1974,

459–460). In extreme cases, a novelist has to mask the work of fiction ‘as a form of history’ to affirm ‘for his novel that verisimilitude, that solid basis in pre-existing fact, which is associated with the idea of history’ (Miller 1974, 457).

The modernist views of history founded on the empirical-analytical model were challenged in the twentieth century. A number of historian-philosophers, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Hayden White, amongst others, have expressed scepticism towards the traditional metaphysical system of history; especially its key assumptions of objectivity and the truth-seeking nature of historical narratives (Jenkins 1997; Munslow 1997). Since the 1960s, postmodern historians, among whom Hayden White is the leading voice, have further deviated debates of history and historical representation from the content of the past, and instead focused on the role of language in constructing the meaning of historical events (Munslow 1997). As White claims, the linguistic self-consciousness is what distinguishes postmodern historian-philosophers from traditional ones ‘who think that language can serve as a perfectly transparent medium of representation and who think that if one can only find the right language for describing events, the meaning of the events will *display itself* to consciousness’ (1978, 130, italics in original).

For postmodern historian-philosophers, the mediated nature of history constitutes the foundation of historical interpretation and representation (Jenkins 1997). White (1975) declares in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* that history is best understood not as truthful and objective representations of the past, but as imaginative texts structured by various narrative and rhetorical devices that mediate the understanding of the past and contribute to the production of historical knowledge. On account of the imaginations needed by an historian to organise a chronicle of events into a coherent narrative, White advocates

placing historical texts next to literary artifacts (1978, 81–100). As White explicates (1978), when historians configure historical events in ways that audiences can relate to, choices are made with regards to the aspects of the selection of incidents of the past as raw components of historical narratives, the provision of a plot structure and a paradigm of explanation for a sequence of events, and the option of an ideological model that functions to draw moral and political implications. Depending on the politics of the perspective and the degree of subjectivity, historians textualise history differently; matching up a given series of historical events with a specific plot structure and endowing the story with conceivable meanings (White 1978). This process, in which historians engage in making sense of past events through narratives, resembles how an author uses literary devices and rhetoric to restructure his/her sources and re-organises them into a narrative framework (White 1978, 81–100). Therefore, like literary products, historical works should be seen as ‘a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of explaining what they were by representing them’ (White 1975, 2).

White’s conflation of fiction and history points to the blurring line between imagination and reality that is central to postmodern understandings of history. It also brings into focus the historian’s mediatory agency in explaining what really happened in the past. Thus envisaged, the historical narrative should be seen not as a truthful account of historical facts but as a mediated representation of reality with cultural and ideological interests (White 1980, 5–27). In White’s words, ‘the reality of these events does not consist in the fact that they occurred but that, first of all, were remembered and, second, that they are capable of finding a place in a chronologically ordered sequence’ (1980, 23). Recognising how mediation plays out when the past is turned into a story via literary and rhetorical devices, White (2005) further problematises the intention of

discovering past realities by examining the content of historical fiction. Speaking of literary representations of the Holocaust, White (2001) argues that a certain past or records of that past (such as documents, eye-witness accounts, and archival evidence) can give rise to a variety of narrative accounts that result in plural historical facts. Conflicts between narrative accounts have less to do with the accuracy of historical evidence bearing upon the past event than the different story-meanings with which the historical facts can be endowed by emplotment (White 2001). White thus suggests that, when approaching literary texts modelled on certain real events or figures of the past, instead of examining the true or false status of the traces of the past, it is more significant for literary critics to investigate the ways in which language and narrative techniques are employed to constitute historical facts 'in order to sanction one mode of explaining them rather than another' (1978, 134).

Taking on the tools of a literary critic, postmodern historian-philosophers have consolidated the consciousness that historians create fiction beyond the stories of realities. On this basis, they have further challenged the claims to truth made by conventional historical fiction writers. Consequently, the assumption of an existent grand narrative which is able to explain historical meaning, experience, or knowledge in a totalising manner becomes problematic, as does the expectation of identifying realistic illustrations of history in fiction.

The postmodern rethinking of history has benefitted greatly from literary studies, which in return promotes the expanding realm of literary theory and practices; an interplay that is well exemplified by a large body of literature and criticisms about metafiction (Scholes 1979; Waugh 1993; Currie 1995; Klinkowitz 2017). Linda Hutcheon argues for historiographic metafiction as a notable product of the 'problematizations of history by postmodern art today' (1988, 94). Hutcheon understands historiography in the postmodern sense, deeming it to be the 'imaginative

reconstruction of that process’ in which ‘past *events*’ are constructed into ‘historical *facts*’ through ‘narrative emplotments’ (1988, 92, italics in original). In this way, Hutcheon distinguishes historiographic metafiction from conventional historical fiction, although both result from the generic interaction between fiction and historiography (1988, 105–123). The core of historiographic metafiction, Hutcheon explains, lies in its self-consciousness regarding ‘the problematic nature of the relation of writing history to narrativization and, thus, to fictionalization’ (1988, 93). As manifested in texts, historiographic metafiction ‘plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record’, and leaves traces of ‘both the collecting and the attempts to make narrative order’ (Hutcheon 1988, 114). Through narrative techniques such as multiple points of view, and an overtly controlling narrator unable to know the past with any certainty, ‘historiographic metafiction shows fiction to be historically conditioned and history to be discursively structured’ (Hutcheon 1988, 120). At a broader scale, historiographic metafiction points to our subjective epistemological inability to know the past by self-reflexively foregrounding narrational mediations involved in historical representation, and investigating therefrom into ‘the cognitive status of historical knowledge with which current philosophers of history are also grappling’ (Hutcheon 1988, 93). Taking into account these key characteristics of historiographic metafiction, Hutcheon advises readers to have ‘a double awareness of both fictiveness and a basis in the “real”’ (1988, 107).

4.1.2 Translating historical experiences across cultures

The postmodern view of history as a narrative consisting of the reconfigured past finds close parallels to the cultural understanding of translation as a form of rewriting. White acknowledges the role of narrative in constructing historical facts, and reckons narrative to be a solution to ‘the problem of how to translate knowing into telling’ in historiography (1980, 5). On some

occasions, White even describes historians' works as 'translations of fact into fictions' (1978, 92). Similarly, Peter Burke compares historians' position to that of translators, arguing that,

If the past is a foreign country, it follows that even the most monoglot of historians is a translator. Historians mediate between the past and the present and face the dilemmas as other translators, serving two masters and attempting to reconcile fidelity to the original with intelligibility to their readers. (Burke 2007, 7)

Literary translation is also closely linked to the concept of 'narrative construction' (Harding 2013, 104). Bearing these similarities in mind, one can speculate that translators of literary works with settings in the past, like their authors, participate in the process of selecting historical details from original texts, and then re-encode them into a narrative framework through which the target culture can make sense of the past of the original culture. In a way, translated texts can be interpreted as a product from double layers of historical construction, with the past reality undergoing mediations in the hands of both original authors and translators. By implication, like authors who narrativise reality, translators of narratives with historical settings cannot avoid dealing with, to borrow Hutcheon's (1988, 122) words, 'the problem of the status of their "facts" and of the nature of their evidence, their documents'. The translators' interpretations of what can be counted as the 'real' parts of the past that target readers should access, as well as the choices of how to encode them within translated texts, are also inseparable from elements of subjectivity and political perspectives. Beyond these, translators are supposed to pay particular attention to the weight of target-cultural factors, especially target readers' historical knowledge as it is related to the source culture and their expectations towards the translated texts. As Burke claims, 'the interlingual translation of historians was at the same time a form of cultural translation, in other words an adaptation to the needs, interests, prejudices and ways of reading of the target culture, or at least of some groups within it' (2007, 133).

The phenomenon of recontextualising source-culture histories through literary translation, and its implications for the constructions of identity and power have been the concerns of scholars in recent decades. Bella Brodzki, for instance, discusses ‘the role of translation in shaping history, culture and memory’ from the perspective of comparative literature (2007, 9). Focusing on literary and historical narratives about slavery, Holocaust writing, and postcolonial novels, Brodzki declares that ‘through the act of translation, remnants and fragments [of cultural memory] are inscribed – reclaimed and reconstituted as a narrative – and then ... altered and reinscribed into a history that also undergoes alteration, transformation, in the process’ (2007, 6). Peter Burke (2007) examines the transformations that historical texts undergo as they move into different languages, and stresses the importance of translation as a means by which to better understand interactions between cultures.

Studies adopting a postcolonial lens have provided a wide range of valuable insights into the politics of translating historical experiences across cultures. Edward Said’s fundamental work, *Orientalism* (1979), laid the ground for analysing cultural representations that Western civilization produced to serve its colonial rule and political domination of the Orient. As Said points out, Orientalists, who claim the authority of ‘translating, sympathetically portraying, inwardly grasping the hard-to-reach object’, tend to construct in writing – such as novels, travelogues, ethnographic records, historical texts, and translations of native works – images of the Orient underscored by otherness (1979, 222). As a result, the Orient is reductively described as irrational, backward, exotic and erotic, and perceived as the opposite of the Western rational, developed, humane, and superior self-images. Extending Said’s discussion of the role of translation in cultural domination, Chittiphalangsri (2014) argues for the virtualization process underlying Orientalist translation. In particular, Chittiphalangsri emphasises that Oriental texts

are conceivable for the Western public only when filtered through the mediation by Orientalists, the cultural agents who ‘exercise their power as experts able to speak on behalf of the Orient’ while keeping their distance from the object of their study (2014, 55). As thus implied, historical experiences of Oriental cultures translated to the Western reading public are discursive reconstructions by cultural agents, which are framed by, and at the same time reshape, the Western presumed knowledge of ‘what’ and ‘why’ the past of the other happened as such.

Following Said, various studies have focused on the colonial practice of translation to discuss the implications of translating historical experiences of the less dominant culture for the politics of cultural representation. As these studies commonly suggest, the establishment of dominance involves gaining access to the past of other civilizations through translation, enacting a representation of a pre-given reality, and ultimately imposing upon the subject a unilinear and teleological model of history. An illustrative example of this relates to Niranjana’s research (1990), in which Niranjana examined paratexts surrounding English translations of Indian texts by the Orientalist William Jones, as well as *The History of British India* (1817) that James Mill composed based on Jones’ translations. Through her examination, Niranjana highlighted translation as the ‘practices which, authorising and authorised by certain classical notions of representation of reality that underwrite teleological models of history, ultimately contribute to the rise of English education in India’ (1990, 778). According to Niranjana, translation among multiple forms of colonial discourse usually functions as a transparent presentation of the Orient, whose knowledge and life are perceived by dominant political institutions ‘as distorted or immature versions of what can be found in “normal” Western society’ (1990, 775). For this reason, translation enables the imposition of ‘linear historical narratives on different civilisations’, which in turn ‘legitimizes and extends colonial domination’ (Niranjana 1990, 775).

Among other studies of translational intervention in other colonial contexts, Juan J. Zaro's (2000) study that compares the original writing on the Spanish conquest of Peru with the three English translations published in 1709, 1864 and 1959 is also illustrative. As Zaro observes, through a diverse range of translation tactics, including paratextual reframing, re-structuring, mistranslations, omissions, compression and additions, translators contributed to reducing the objectivity of the original Spanish historical texts, while reinforcing the 'historical stereotypes of the Spanish conquest of America derived from the Spanish Black Legend' (2000, 118). Zaro hereby demonstrates the contribution of translation practices to the reconstruction of historical knowledge, especially when geopolitics constitute the main dimension of inter-state relations. Alongside, the finding of Zaro's study epitomises the parallels between historical writing and translation: as cultural representations, both are 'grounded in the cultural practices of society and are inextricably related to the exercise of power' (Munslow 1997, 33). In more recent research that focuses on the history of French colonisation in North America, Amélie Hamel (2015) analyses how translation engages in restructuring and reorganising diverse extracts about travel and Jesuit missions in New France (Canada) into a coherent historical text, and then in transferring the text from French into Latin while supplementing it with lavish illustrations. As thus confirmed, translation acts as a way of writing history, through which historical materials were re-constructed into a grand narrative with historical meanings and ideological implications that were in favour of the global expansion of the French colonial culture (Hamel 2015).

Beyond the context of colonial translation, research on translations of writing about other cultures' historical experiences from different ideological angles further affirms that the act of translation involves rewriting history to serve the needs, expectations, and knowledge of target cultures. Maria Sidiropoulou and Özlem Berk Albachten, for instance, explore 'the ways in

which translation shifts reflect and refract the narratives that mediate and construct reality' (2018, 91). To this end, they focus on analysing Greek and Turkish translations of Bruce Clark's *Twice a Stranger* (2006) which, has as its setting the real event, the 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey (2018). As has been found, both translations supplement Clark's text with new knowledge of the event, and present a copy of reality more compatible with the traumatic past still remembered by Greek and Turkish audiences but unable to be shared by the Anglophone readership (Sidiropoulou and Albachten 2018).

In the field of translation studies, Mona Baker's monograph, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (2006), offers abundant examples by which to illustrate the ways in which translation participates in re-narrating histories in the service of political and ideological agendas. Adapting social narrative theory, Baker sketches out the key features of narrativity that translators and interpreters tend to use to participate in re-narration – the elaboration and reconfiguration of narratives, so as to address the very consequences of narrative mediations made in instances of translation and interpreting (2006, 2014). Baker argues that the selective appropriation of a set of events or elements in translation is a means to constitute a particular narrative of source-culture reality (2006, 71–76). Translation agents may choose to 'include or exclude, to background or foreground', certain events or details within events, and identify a protagonist by 'particular attributes rather than others' (Baker 2014, 167), thereby constructing a narrative complying with the values that individuals or institutions subscribe to (Baker 2006, 76). Different temporal and spatial structures may be imposed on the original narrative account to conjure up a past that can better serve the agendas in the present (Baker 2006, 50–54). The relationality of source-language narratives can also be mediated in translation to 'inject a target text or discourse with implicit meanings derived from the way a particular item functions in the

public or meta-narratives circulating in the target context' (Baker 2006, 66). In addition, the original pattern of causal emplotment may be reconfigured in translations in order to weave the same set of events into a new story and to endow the events with different moral and ethical significances from those of the original narrative (Baker 2006, 67–71). Overall, Baker (2006) argues that through the management of core narrative features, including selective appropriation, temporality, relationality, and causal emplotment, translators or interpreters are able to reconfigure the narrative, as well as the history encoded therein. Baker's theories further confirm that translated texts can provide target readers with different historical experiences of the source-language world which are different to those obtained from reading source texts, and that they may also produce versions of reality which conflict with the one narrated by the authors.

A group of researchers have applied Baker's narrative theories to study the function of translation to re-narrate past experiences and events of other cultural groups, as well as its implications for the cultural politics and identity formation (Boéri 2008; Al-Sharif 2009; Harding 2011; Summers 2013; Xiao 2014). In the study of the Arabic translations of Lewis's *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (2003), Abderrahman Boukhaffa (2018) examines (re)framings of narratives on all levels, from meta-narratives, to the geopolitical and cultural contexts in which the source and target texts were produced, disseminated and consumed, to paratextual and textual (re)framing strategies used to produce the translations. His study shows that paratextual elements, as well as textual devices of the translations, are manoeuvred to reframe Lewis's text, so that the Egyptian translations contest Lewis's knowledge of the history of Islam and question his politico-ideological motivation behind activating the narrative of terror in the ST. At a meta-narrative level, the translations help to construct narratives of 'rationalism and progress' in the Egyptian cultural context, and thereby counteract 'the meta-narrative of

terror framed up to Muslims by Lewis' (Boukhaffa 2018, 178). Of more critical importance, Boukhaffa (2018) suggests that a narrative complying with the Islamic worldview is generated through translation, thus contributing to the institution's activist aim of negotiating the position of Arabic culture within the American-led global world.

Boukhaffa's study supports the view that, like dominant cultures using the practice of translation for the maintenance of power, suppressed cultures similarly exploit the tool of translation to evoke a certain past to serve the purpose of cultural resistance to and even subvert the cultural hegemony. This finding may recall Tymoczko's (1999) study of translating early Irish heroic epics into English in the context of emergent Irish nationalism, which has illuminated how a dominated culture turns translation practice into a form of activism in order to claim a history and culture for itself. Specifically, Tymoczko (1999) observed that the textual and cultural heterogeneities of Irish narratives had been transferred to the English cultural context; translation thus helped to excavate heretofore unaware historical experiences and enabled a different imagination of Irish culture. For a nation like Ireland, once subjected to colonial suppression, translations' representations of its past function as a mode of discovery and an assertion of cultural difference, and even a form of resistance 'that would counter English stereotypes and serve Irish nationalist purposes' (Tymoczko 1999, 1). Tymoczko's Irish case evidences translation's essential role in reconfiguring history and identity construction, particularly for the agenda of decolonisation. Alongside the research by Niranjana, Tymoczko, and Boukhaffa, similar arguments about translation's function to enact different visions of historical reality can be seen in the work of Richard Jacquemond (1992), Gayatri Spivak (1993, 179–200), Michael Cronin (1996), and contributors to the collection edited by Álvarez and Vidal (1996), as well as that by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1999). These studies sustain that

the special textual strategies adopted in translation contribute to making visible historical elements that have been obscured or misrepresented. Accordingly, they affirm the function of translation in demonstrating the multiplicity and changeability of human experience, and in permitting the existence of cultural heterogeneities and human subjectivity. In the current globalising era that is characterised with cultural hegemony and homogenisation, an awareness of the activist role that translation plays in configuring historical experiences appears ever more essential.

Seeking a better understanding of the de-historicising practice carried out by Chinese avant-garde novelists, this section has illustrated Western postmodern views on the mediated nature of history, and highlighted metafiction's challenges to conventional literary assumptions about an objective and truthful reflection of history in realist representations. Thereafter, it turns to analysing the impacts of translational interventions upon literary representations of historical experiences. Taking into account the parallels between the postmodern sense of history as reconstructing the past and the concept of translation as rewriting, attention has been given to studies of translating historical narratives into a different language. Studies situated in a broad social and cultural context have shown the intricate ways in which the act of translation complements the recording and development of history. In particular, they have shed light on how translational choices of narrative and rhetorical devices contribute to reconfiguring the history encoded in the ST, thus presenting to target readers a version of historical reality different from that the author constructs for ST readers. As these studies have brought into focus, translating history, as an essential form of cultural representation, is subject to the exercise of power and inseparable from issues of identity.

4.2 Translating contemporary Chinese fiction with historical settings, modes, and issues

Before analysing the textual strategies employed to translate historical experiences represented in Chinese avant-garde fiction, this section focuses on illustrating the interpretation and reception of contemporary Chinese literature with historical settings in the Anglophone cultural context during the second half of the twentieth century. On this basis, it illuminates perceptions and expectations that Anglophone readers tend to hold towards translations of Chinese fictional writing set against real historical events, as well as the ways in which translation agents, translators in particular, tend to recontextualise China's recent past.

With an awareness of the existence of global citizenship, it is not enough to know the self. Instead, there is an urge to gain knowledge about distant localities. Since 'views of identity are in part determined by local place and local histories' (Cronin 2006, 2), reading narratives containing descriptions of other cultures' past has become an essential approach to perceive the other, to understand how the other came to be as it is. This is especially the case for contemporary Chinese literature translated for Anglophone readers. As Goldblatt points out from his experience as a renowned translator, 'those few novels, stories, poems that migrate beyond China's geographical and linguistic borders attract an audience made up primarily of those who wish to "learn about China" in a more reader-friendly format than a textbook' (2000a, 327). A key reason behind this phenomenon lies in the translation history of contemporary Chinese literature and the development of Chinese literary studies in Anglophone countries during the Cold War period, as illustrated in Section 1.2.

The Cold War geopolitical and cultural climate decided, to a large extent, that translations of contemporary Chinese literature would function as a mode of knowledge production about Communist China in the Western world. Through selecting and translating Chinese

contemporary literary works to Anglophone readers, both Chinese government-backed publishers and Anglophone publishers were actively engaged in presenting to the Western world narratives of China that could justify their own ideological and political claims (Section 1.2). As a significant part of this process, publishers in both cultural contexts focused on China's twentieth-century history inscribed in literary forms and endorsed translating relevant literary texts into English. In so doing, they attempted to allow Anglophone readers better access to specific aspects of Communist China's past, and also helped to define Chinese national identities in the Western world.

Affected by the divergent ideological positions of the two cultural contexts, English translations of contemporary Chinese writing set in China's past were produced to disseminate diverging historical meaning, thereby painting different pictures about the realities of Communist China for Anglophone readers. Before the end of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese government-backed publishers under the guidance of Maoism selected a limited number of socialist realist writings for translation and export to Western countries; an approach undertaken in order to advocate a worldwide grand narrative of China based on the 'mode of enlightenment-revolution' (Choy 2008, 7). When Deng came to power, publishers were sponsored by the government to translate contemporary realistic fiction that could project a progressive vision of Chinese history to the Anglophone cultural context. These efforts were made to 'develop a literary and intellectual presence in keeping with its emergence as an economic powerhouse in the world' (Gu 2014, 3). From 1979 to 1989, special attention was given to new literary genres that sprang up immediately after the Cultural Revolution – such as Scar, Retrospective, and Reform literature (Section 2.2.1) – with the aim of demonstrating the efforts of historically engaged Chinese intellectuals in making sense of the tragic events that happened in China's recent

history, as well as justifying ‘the continuity of the emergent nation-state with its past’(Wang 2004, 6). Specific texts were carefully selected for translation to expose the trauma caused by radical Maoism on the one hand, and on the other to reinforce an optimistic view towards ‘Deng’s program of promoting a rational progressive and affluent society’ (Knight 2003, 528). In this way, Deng’s China sought to establish, in the global environment, an alternative national history to that of Mao’s era.

In the most intense period of the Cold War, the historical development of Communist China was also a strategic concern for the Western world. In order to make up for inadequate information about the ideological opponent on the other side of the Iron Curtain, Anglophone scholarship and common readers alike turned to translations of contemporary Chinese literature as a knowledge source. While mistrusting translations organised and produced by Mao’s propaganda institutions, sinologists in the UK and the US participated in selecting and translating contemporary Chinese literary works set in China’s recent past, so as to provide transparent access to the history and social reality of Maoist China (Section 1.2.1). As it turned out, Chinese titles selected by Anglophone publishers were predominantly those depicting the suffering of common Chinese persons and the persecution of Chinese intellectuals living under Mao’s totalitarian leadership. This dystopian image of Mao’s China was reinforced in the paratextual site surrounding the translations, as writers of various paratexts were inclined to evoke China’s past as being characterised by backwardness and violence; a sharp contrast to the Western history of democracy (Section 3.2).

From the late 1970s onwards, with the rapprochement between China and the US and the rapid development of multi-media, there arose the great ‘interest of Westerners in the tremendous changes that had taken place in China’ (Gu 2014, 3). Contemporary Chinese fiction with

historical settings enjoyed increasing popularity among Anglophone readers who desired insightful historical knowledge about China. According to Xiao Di's research, the historical settings of internationally well-known contemporary Chinese fictional works cover the history of the entire twentieth century, ranging 'from that describing major historical incidents to weaving stories of individuals or families' (2014, 128). Whereas Chinese government-backed publishers selected and translated Chinese fiction in an attempt to present to the Western reading public a version of Chinese history that was linear, progressive, and rational, Anglophone publishers held different selection criteria in consideration of target readers' expectations of gaining insights into China's trauma-ridden modern history through reading its literary representations. For Anglophone publishers, Goldblatt points out, 'more critical or darker works are chosen over works that paint a rosier picture of historical or contemporary Chinese society' (2000a, 338). It is, as he further notes, usually the Chinese writing 'selected and translated by [Anglophone] translators' and portraying 'claustrophobic worlds of depravity and bestiality' that 'has struck a chord with readers outside China' (Goldblatt 2000a, 338–339).

Among the various backdrops used by mainland Chinese authors, the Cultural Revolution can be considered one of the most appealing historical settings to Anglophone readers of Chinese fiction. Anglophone publishers have also been enthusiastic about publishing translations of Cultural Revolution-related stories. Among a number of published titles, some have been warmly received by Anglophone readers, including *The Wounded: New Stories of the Cultural Revolution 1977–78* (1979), an English collection of representative Scar Literature written by mainland Chinese authors, and many novels providing graphic accounts of Chinese daily life during the Cultural Revolution, such as Dai Houying's *Stones of the Wall* (人啊人) (trans. Frances Wood 1986), and Zhang Xianliang's *Half of Man is Woman* (男人的一半是女人)

(trans. Martha Avery 1988), as well as more recent novels such as Yu Hua's *To Live* (活着) (trans. Michael Berry 2003), and *Brothers* (兄弟) (trans. Eileen Cheng-yin Chow and Carlos Rojas 2009). These literary works inscribe vivid memories and moral reflections of the nightmarish Cultural Revolution, and thus assist in dispelling 'some of the mystery surrounding the Cultural Revolution' (Knight 2003, 530). The fact that some of these works were written by eyewitnesses or survivors of the atrocities during the Cultural Revolution seems to increase the historicity of these literary representations. For Anglophone readers who have no direct experience of this chaotic period, translations of Chinese writing set against the Cultural Revolution appear to offer a critical instrument by which to both perceive China's trauma-ridden history and identify its implications for present-day China.

Yet, translations of Chinese Cultural Revolution-related fiction that Anglophone publishers produced for Anglophone readers play a more complex role than simply serving as valuable reading materials about China's unknown history. As a part of the Western knowledge production of China, the Anglophone readership's perceptions and receptions of this type of Chinese writing is conditioned by the world literary economy and the geopolitical relations between China and Western countries. As Shumei Shih argues, by packaging Cultural Revolution-related narratives as history and trauma, 'the market potential can be maximised' (2004, 118). At the same time, the miserable historical experiences that Anglophone readers retrieve from translations of Chinese Cultural Revolution-related fiction contest the teleological view of history held by the Chinese government. Therefore, it is likely to deliver among Anglophone readers 'a moralism that upholds Western liberal democratic humanism in opposition to the Chinese Cultural Revolution's dehumanisations' (Shih 2004, 118). With such interpretations of Chinese Cultural Revolution-related fiction prevailing in the Anglophone

cultural context, the narrow Western idea of contemporary Chinese literature, in David Der-wei Wang's (1994, 242) words, 'as a supplement to social history or as a predictable Jamesonian "national allegory" of sociopolitics', might be consolidated.

Another type of Chinese fiction with historical settings that has attracted the interest of Anglophone readers and publishers regards the subject matter of ethnic minorities residing in mainland China, and addresses issues of ethnic identity and cultural representation. Mainly written by Han Chinese or Sinophone ethnic writers, many of these fictional works, as Mark Bender summarises, 'often in a somewhat ethnographic fashion, utilise the imagery of local customs, rituals, material culture, and traditional expressive oral form, as well as the regional environment' (2015, 261–262). Shen Congwen's *Biancheng* (边城) (1934), a novel about the life experience of Miao minorities residing in west Hunan province, was the very first piece of Chinese fiction to gain fame in the Anglophone cultural context, thanks to C.T. Hsia's strong recommendation in *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction 1917–1957* (1961). David Der-Wei Wang speaks highly of Shen's 'lyricization' of minority history, for offering access to the margins of history and dissolving the grand historical narrative constructed by China's central political power (1994, 248–250).

Since the 1980s, a number of authors who had previously been sent down to ethnic minority areas located in China's extensive borderlands during the Cultural Revolution have exploited their experiences of the peripheral culture to create fiction themed on ethnic minorities. Fictional works now available in translation and having earned a warm reception in the Anglophone literary system include: Wang Meng's *The Anecdotes of Section Chief Maimaiti: Uighur 'Black Humor' of the Uighurs* (买买提处长轶事：维吾尔人的黑色幽默) (trans. Zhu Hong 1988), a short story which uses the Western technique of black humour to portray Uighur figures whom

Wang familiarised himself with over his sixteen years in Xinjiang; Zhang Chengzhi's *The Black Steed* (黑骏马) (trans. Stephen Fleming 1990), a novella produced by the Hui Chinese writer as a way to remember his 'sent-down' experience in inner Mongol at the height of the Cultural Revolution; Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* (狼图腾) (trans. Howard Goldblatt 2008), a novel also set in the Mongolian steppe where the Han author was sent, describes the cultural encounters between ethnic Mongolian nomads and Han Chinese farmers; and the more recent novel *The Last Quarter of the Moon* (额尔古纳河右岸) (trans. Bruce Humes 2012), in which Chi Zijian tells the stories of the reindeer-herding Evenki nomads in forested mountains that border Russia.

There are also literary representations of ethnic minorities created by Han Chinese writers based on their experiences in remote territories in the post-Mao era. For instance, several representative fictional works of Ma Yuan were produced during his seven-year stay in Tibet (1982–1989); Ge Fei's *Xiangyu* (相遇) (1994) was written after his two-month trip in Tibet in 1992; and Ma Jian's controversial work *Liangchu ni de shetai, huo kongkongdangdang* (亮出你的舌苔，或空空荡荡) (1987) was written after he returned from his wanderings through the Tibetan plateau. These works portray ethnic minority cultures and represent the local marginalised group from the perspective of a cultural outsider, especially from the gaze of the Han majority. For scholars including Susan Blum (1994), Tsering Shakya (2001), Xu Jian (2002), and Kamila Hladíková (2011), Chinese fiction about ethnic minorities in China is in many aspects an approximation of Western Orientalism. In Luisa Schein's view, Chinese literary representations of ethnic minorities reflect China's 'internal orientalism' (1997, 69–98). Despite the varying literary devices employed to portray the diverse ethnic groups, these fictional works, according to the foregoing scholars, share a common representational approach: namely, the

ethnic minorities described are usually stereotyped as exotic, backward, erotic, and primitive others, and thus serve as a sharp contrast to the image of the self – the modernised and civilised Han Chinese. To an extent, Han Chinese authors appear to construct a homogenous narrative of ethnic minorities so as to reaffirm the domination of the Han over other ethnic groups within the country, and to further justify the measures that the Chinese government has implemented to sinicise minority cultures.

Fiction about ethnic minorities written by Han Chinese authors can be considered part and parcel of the ‘Cultural Fever’ movements that have emerged since the mid-1980s (Zhang 1994; Wang 1996). Echoing Han Chinese authors’ interests in reflecting cultural issues concerning the reforming and modernising China, ethnic minority writers developed a consciousness of understanding the deep structure of their own traditional culture, as well as the wish to seek self-representation of their histories in literary creation. Inspired by Latin America magical realist writing, especially the works of Gabriel García Márquez, Jorge Luis Borges, and Pablo Neruda, ethnic minority authors turned to their native traditions and focused on presenting the mythologies of the indigenous culture as the main approach to ‘identify itself as the subject of a history self-conscious of its own telos’ (Wang 1996, 223). In this literary trend of seeking out their minority roots and giving voices to the cultures located on the periphery of the dominant Han Chinese civilisation, Sino-Tibetan writers including Tashi Dawa, Sebo, Yangdon, and Alai rose to be the most prominent figures (Bender 2015, 269–270). Using the technique of magical realism, and drawing heavily on local lore, ancient Tibetan chronicles, and Tibetan modern history, these Sino-Tibetan authors have produced a number of novels and short stories which, according to Choy, ‘rewrite the local history of the plateau and present alternative models for Chinese historiography’ (2008, 104). Of the many historical fictional works set in the Tibetan

plateau, the pieces that Anglophone publishers have translated and actively promoted to Anglophone readers include: Tashi Dawa's novellas *Tibet: A Soul Knotted on a Leather Thong* (西藏, 系在皮绳结上的魂) (trans. Jeanne Tai 1989; Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling 1990; Batt 2001) and *The Glory of the Wind Horse* (风马之耀) (trans. Batt 2000, 2001), Yangdon's novel *A God without Gender* (无性别的神) (trans. Batt 2000, 2001), and Alai's epic novel *Red Poppies* (尘埃落定) (trans. Howard Goldblatt and Sylvia Li-chun Lin 2002).

As illustrated in Section 3.3.3, the popularity of Chinese Tibetan-themed fiction in the Anglophone cultural context is, on the one hand, closely linked to the Western public's fascination with 'exotica Tibet' (Anand 2007), whilst on the other it is attributed to international debates over Tibet's colonial political status and marginalised cultural identity. In some ways, it can be argued that Anglophone readers' yearning for more knowledge about Tibetan culture and history has facilitated the dissemination and reception of Chinese Tibetan-themed fiction in the Anglophone literary market. As the reviewer of the translated novel *Red Poppies* (2002) has confirmed, such a work not only excites readers' imagination of the romantic distant land, but more importantly offers 'a complex depiction of Tibetan identity that is at odds with the romanticized portrayal of the Tibetan minority in Chinese government media as well as with the standard historical positioning of Old Tibet as feudal and primitive' (Draggeim 2014, 75).

The appeal of Chinese Tibetan-themed fictional works to Anglophone readers, and in particular those selected and translated under the commission of Anglophone publishers, also brings into focus issues concerning Western Orientalist perceptions and representations of Tibetan culture. However, it is not just Chinese fiction themed on Tibet, but Chinese literary representations of ethnic minorities in general, that seem to be circumscribed by this issue in the

attempt to gain recognition from international readers. Speaking of the reception of Chinese writing in English translation, W.J.F. Jenner, a British sinologist specialising in Chinese history and culture and a translator of Chinese literature, pleads for difference – referring to local colour – for a successful marketing of English translations of contemporary Chinese writing (1990). Similarly, the American sinologist Stephen Owen (1990) suggests that contemporary Chinese authors should reflect Chinese history and culture in a way that would distinguish China from other countries before getting recognised by world literature. As both sinologists imply, the cultural difference represented in literary works is an essential precondition for the translations of the writing to acquire attention and recognition from Anglophone readers. Chinese fiction about ethnic minorities, which usually contains exoticising and alienating representations of the unfamiliar indigenous space, appear to measure up well to Anglophone readers' fetishization of difference, as well as their Orientalist imaginations of Chinese local terrains.

A similar issue facing Chinese ethnic minority-themed fiction circulating in the Anglophone cultural context is the dominant mode of allegorical interpretation in the receptor culture. Chinese literary representations of ethnic minorities, by either Han or ethnic minority authors, produce discourses characterised with 'the relation between the "centre" and "peripheries"', which is 'in many aspects analogical to the relation between the colonial centre and colonised territories within Western imperialism' (Hladíková 2011, 204). Such analogical relations contribute to reducing the foreignness of Chinese literary products for Anglophone readers who are familiar with the Western history of colonialism, and thereby facilitates the successful reception of the relevant translations into the Anglophone literary system. However, there is the risk that interethnic relations between the Han and ethnics in Chinese literature might be identified by Anglophone readers as 'an embodiment of the self's past' (Shih 2004, 21). To an

extent, when Anglophone readers come to Chinese fictional writing describing historical details about the interactions between the Han and ethnic minorities, they may expect to identify an allegory of Chinese colonialism within it. With the trend of ideological interpretation of contemporary Chinese literature remaining strong in the Anglophone cultural context (Section 1.2), Anglophone readers are more likely to apply a form of, in Shu-mei Shih's (2004, 21) words, 'allegorical interpretation', to comprehend writers' motivations behind certain historical accounts, as well as the historical meanings and ideological implications that the fictional representations of the past produce for ethnic minorities. This could consolidate the totalising view of Chinese fiction set in the past of ethnic minorities in the Anglophone cultural context, although as Shih points out 'there are spaces and practices that cannot be interpreted by the nexus of colonialism, nationalism' (2004, 22). As a result, Anglophone readers might generalise Han Chinese authors writing about ethnic minorities as the agency appropriated by the Chinese government to construct in its official language stereotypical images of the ethnic other and thereby serve to legitimate 'the Chinese "civilising project" in the minority areas' (Hladíková 2011, 206). In contrast, ethnic minority authors seeking self-representation in literature may be defined as, in Spivak's (1988) term, the 'subaltern'; those suppressed groups who cannot use their own language to articulate their history while the official historiography marginalises, if not consciously misrepresents, their past in favour of the overarching Marxist historical discourse.

Whilst Anglophone readers' allegorical interpretations of Chinese fiction set against historical interactions between Han Chinese and ethnic minorities were brought into being largely through translation, translation's role in advancing this mode of interpretation is rarely acknowledged by either the Anglophone reading public or literary critics of contemporary Chinese writing. This invisible role of translations of Chinese fictional works set against historical experiences of

ethnic minorities in the current Anglophone cultural context echoes the ‘notion of translation that presupposes the transparency of representation’ discussed by Niranjana in relation to the historical context of British colonisation in India (1990, 774). Given this, it is necessary to take into consideration the politics of power between China and the West when seeking to understand the Anglophone presumption that English translations of Chinese fiction set against historical interactions between Han Chinese and ethnic minorities enable an easy access to the transparent reality of Chinese internal Orientalism. More insights into the representation and identity of China’s ethnic minorities in the ‘world literary economy’ (Jones 1994, 171–190) might be shed if relevant studies pay attention to the impact that the distanced point of view of a cultural outsider have on Western interpretations of the interethnic issue within China. It follows that research should focus on exploring translation strategies that the Anglophone agency tends to employ to recontextualise historical interactions between the Han and ethnic minorities used to set up the original Chinese stories. In this way, the research can reveal how translation functions to ideologically re-configure the Chinese representations of ethnic minorities for Anglophone readers, thereby re-framing the narrative of China in the current geopolitical context.

As manifested in the translation history of contemporary literature in the second half of the twentieth century, Anglophone readers have developed a particular interest in Chinese fiction set in the Cultural Revolution, as well as that on the historical experiences of ethnic minorities. It also brings to light the tendency of interpreting Chinese literary works with historical settings as an allegory in the Anglophone cultural context, which encourages the Anglophone reading public to ‘blend reality with fiction, literature with history’ when approaching Chinese historical fiction in translation (Prado-Fonts 2008, 38). At a meta-narrative level, the act of selecting and translating Chinese fictional writing set in China’s past for Anglophone readers provides

references to the reality of the present politics of power between mainland China and the Western world. While translations of Chinese fiction set in historical experiences are susceptible to how China is currently framed in the Western world, it produces discourses that are capable of re-configuring the international narrative of China for the (dis)continuity of present geopolitical relations.

The past two to three decades have witnessed an increasing number of studies on specific strategies employed to translate Chinese fictional writing with historical settings into the Anglophone cultural context. A range of scholars have focused on translation selection, revealing the types of historical settings that get recontextualised alongside the translations of fictional narratives (Sections 1.2 and 4.2). There is also abundant research analysing paratextual materials accompanying the translations so that interpretative frameworks established to guide target readers' initial interpretation of the translated Chinese stories can be understood (Section 3.2). The results commonly show that Anglophone readers are drawn to Chinese fictional works which are backdropped against traumatic events within China's modern history. In addition, the current section of this chapter has outlined the discourses that translations of contemporary Chinese fiction with historical settings tend to construct in the Anglophone cultural context. Mainland Chinese publishers tend to produce and export translations of contemporary Chinese fiction that contribute to presenting a teleological view of Chinese history to Western readers and projecting an optimistic and progressive national image outside China. In contrast, Anglophone publishers are inclined to translate and import Chinese fictional works that testify to China's trauma-ridden modern history and evoke the narrative of a dystopic and repressive China familiar to the Anglophone reading public. These observations provide further evidence of the

tendency for contemporary Chinese fiction to be represented, interpreted, and recognised ideologically in the Anglophone cultural context.

In comparison, far fewer studies have focused on translated texts to explore how the textual strategies applied between the lines shape Anglophone readers' imagination of history in contemporary Chinese fiction. The lack of attention to this research area could reinforce the illusion that the translations are a linguistic equivalence of the original texts. Given the wide awareness in translation studies that rewritings of ST occur at all levels of translation production, it can be inferred that translated texts might be bent on rewriting the history in original fictional works in order to bring out discourses that comply with the knowledge and expectations of the Anglophone readership. Among the few studies that do exist, Xiao Di and Zheng Binghan (2015) focus on the English translation of Mo Yan's *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* (trans. Howard Goldblatt, 2006) to analyse the translational representation of China's national history. Their textual analysis demonstrates that local histories in the original text are reinterpreted and reconstructed through a different portrayal of historical actors in the book (2015). Their findings thus confirm that micro translation changes could transform the history in the original text to cater for Anglophone readers' ideological preference towards politically sensitive Chinese writing. Inspired by Xiao and Zheng's research, the following part of this chapter will examine the textual strategies used to translate for Anglophone readers Chinese avant-garde fiction that has as its settings historical experiences in twentieth-century China.

4.3 Re-narrating histories in Chinese avant-garde fiction through translation

In light of the great interest that Anglophone readers have in Chinese fiction with settings in China's recent past, in particular that related to ethnic minorities, this part of this study concentrates on three major Chinese avant-garde novelists – Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, and Yu Hua –

who ‘deal with the complexity of the cultural and historical subject’ (Yang 2002, 36–37), as well as their representative fictional works set in modern Chinese history. By comparing the original and the different existing translations, translational changes occurring to the following Chinese avant-garde fictional works: Ma Yuan’s *Xugou* (虚构) (1986) and *Youshen* (游神) (1987), Ge Fei’s novellas, *Xiangyu* (相遇) (1994) and *Mizhou* (迷舟) (1987), and Yu Hua’s *Yijiubaliu* (一九八六) (1987), are identified. The relevant fictional pieces are complementary to each other along the timeline of Chinese history from the 1890s to the 1980s. Focusing on key devices, including narrator, plot, setting, and characterisation, this part analyses translational intervention in the representation of history by Chinese avant-garde novelists, with particular attention being given to the impact of translation changes upon Anglophone readers’ interpretations of the views of history and the historical representations held by Chinese avant-garde novelists.

4.3.1 Translating Ma Yuan’s Tibetan experiences in *Xugou* (虚构) (1986) and *Youshen* (游神) (1987)

Fictional writing about history by Chinese avant-garde novelists marks a dramatic change from conventional historical fiction written in pursuit of truth and objectivity. Inspired by Root-seeking writers who went out to the exotic peripheries of China to search for a cure for China’s ailing mainstream culture, pioneering novelists of the Chinese avant-garde movement also conducted their experimentation far from the cultural centre. Among many margins of culture, the mysterious Tibetan landscape served as solid ground for the avant-garde literary innovations. In some ways, Tibetan-themed avant-garde fictional works are ‘regarded as the Chinese variant of magic realism’ (Zhao 2003, 197).

Ma Yuan, a Han Chinese, started telling Tibetan legends as early as 1984 with his first avant-garde fiction *Lasahe nüshen* (拉萨河女神). Following that, the best works of Ma Yuan's avant-garde fiction, including *Zhihe de sanzong diefa* (纸鹤的三种叠法) (1984), *Xugou* (虚构) (1986), and *Youshen* (游神) (1987), are mostly based on his experiences in Tibet. According to Zhao Henry Y.H., unlike Root-seeking writers, such as Yan Geling, who created fictional works based on their own experiences in the remote Tibetan borderland as a means to present a realistic illustration of Tibet (2003, 205), Ma Yuan, like many of his avant-garde fellows, was obsessed with using enigmatic tales about the eponymous narrator's travels in Tibet to 'develop fictional experiments out of it' (Zhao 2002, 148). With his mischievous construction of the 'narrative trap' (Wu 1987), his playful self-interruption, and his self-referential experimentation with narrative forms, Ma Yuan affirms 'the artificiality of the narrated world coupled with a total rejection of the search for its truth value' (Zhao 1992, 97). In a sense, Tibet in Ma Yuan's writing is 'deliberately rendered enigmatic, even unintelligible, by way of narratives that loop back on themselves or omit crucial pieces of information' (Jones 2003, 558). Ma Yuan's narrative experiment is significant in terms of not only textuality, but also historicity. As manifested in Ma Yuan's fiction, the local history of the Tibetan plateau appears to be non-linear and fragmented, without the historical causality which has dominated Chinese fictional writing; a characteristic referred to by Andrew Jones as 'historical irrelevance', and regarded as a 'hallmark in Chinese literary creation' (2003, 557). While conventional realist fiction about Tibet pursues historicity and gives the illusion of a progressing history of Tibet, Ma Yuan's self-exposure of the process of creating a story based on his own experiences in Tibet harks back to Hayden White's refutation of the possibility of objective reflections of history, and 'present[s] readers with a relentless (and sometimes playful) attack on history' (Jones 2003, 557). Similarly,

Howard Y.F. Choy argues that Ma Yuan's approach to writing Tibet's past 'transcends the idea of Marxist evolution and considers history a mystery rather than a dichotomy between the backward and the advanced' (2008, 109).

Xugou (虚构) (1986), a story about a Han Chinese's strange and amorous adventure in a Tibetan leprosy village called Maqu, exemplifies Ma Yuan's use of the narrative trap, as well as his achievements in exposing the artificiality of fiction and history (Wu 1987). Right at the beginning of the story, the eponymous narrator announces that '我就是那个叫马原的汉人，我写小说' (I am the Han Chinese named Ma Yuan, I write fiction) (Ma Yuan 1986, 176), thereby purposefully disclosing his identity as a fiction writer. This self-conscious narrator leads readers to wonder whether the fiction is a realistic reflection of the real author's Tibetan experiences or a tale fabricated by the fictional Ma Yuan. Thereafter, the narrator, the fictional author himself, confidently acknowledges his intrusive and manipulative role in storytelling, thus unmasking the authorial voice which conventionally conceals its intervention behind the narrative. In addition, through exposing specific methods used by the fictional author to convince his readers of the authenticity of his stories, the omnipotence of the fictional author is put under sceptical scrutiny. These experimental narrative techniques which characterise Ma Yuan's avant-garde fictional works are well exhibited in the following excerpt:

XG ST: 我就是那个叫马原的汉人，我写小说。我喜欢天马行空，我的故事多多少少都有那么一点耸人听闻。我用汉语讲故事；汉字据说是所有语言中最难接近语言本身的文字，我为我用汉字写作而得意。全世界的好作家都做不到这一点，只有我是个例外。

我的潜台词大概是想说我是个好作家，大概还想说用汉字写作的好作家只有我一个。这么一来我好像自信得过了头。自负？谁知道！

这么自信的人**好像应该说些表现自信方面的话**，**好像应该**对自己的小说充满同样信心。**比如绝对不必像我这样画蛇添足硬要在现在强迫我的读者听我自报写过什么东西**。(Ma Yuan 1986, 49)

LT: I am the Han Chinese named Ma Yuan, I write fiction. I like being a heavenly horse roaming the clouds, my stories are more or less sensational. I use Chinese to tell stories; it is said that Chinese characters are the most difficult writing to access language itself. I'm proud of myself for writing in Chinese characters. None of the good writers in the world can do this. I am the only exception.

My hidden words are probably that I'm a good writer, probably that I am the only good writer who writes in Chinese characters. In this way, I seem to be over-confident. Conceit? Who knows!

Such a confident person should probably say words to demonstrate self-confidence, should probably be confident with his novel. For instance, he would never do things as I am doing now, unnecessarily forcing my readers to listen to me enumerating the works that I've written.

XG TT Sun: I AM THE PERSON KNOWN AS MA YUAN, a Han Chinese. I am a writer.

I like to write in a style which is free, unconventional, astounding – like the proverbial 'heavenly horse roaming the clouds'. My stories are always more or less sensational. I tell these stories in Chinese. Reputedly, the characters of Chinese constitute the writing system which is the most difficult to reconcile with language itself. I take some satisfaction in being able to write in Chinese characters. None of the great figures of world literature were able to write in Chinese characters. **None of the great figures of world literature were able to do this.** I am the exception.

The implication seems to be that I would like to call myself a great writer, perhaps even to claim that I am the only good writer who writes in Chinese characters. This sounds like excessive self-confidence. Arrogance? Who knows!

Anyone as self-confident as I should be able to demonstrate **their** confidence by relying entirely on **their** own writings. I shouldn't have to force **you** readers to go through to my list of publications if I have real confidence in myself. (J.Q. Sun 1993, 101)

XG TT Batt: I'm Ma Yuan, that Chinese writer. My stories are all full of sensational material. I like to ride my celestial horse across the sky.

Sounds like I'm implying I'm a great writer. Conceit? **Who knows?**

What a self-confident person says should express self-confidence. So **he** should **never** add a purple patch onto his work, and **stubbornly** force **his** readers to listen to **him** chatter about all his publications. (Herbert Batt 2001, 23)

In this example, the two translators have taken divergent strategies to deal with Ma Yuan's 'self-referentiality' (Yang 2002, 158–167). J. Q. Sun's translation, which is included in Zhao Henry Y.H.'s *The Lost Boat* (1993), tends to be faithful to the form and content of the original narrative and, therefore, most points where the narrator reminds readers of the fictionality of the narrated world are retained in the translated text. At the beginning of Sun's work, the narrator Ma Yuan's oft-quoted proclamation is capitalised. Although other fictional works collected in the same anthology also contain a capitalised beginning sentence, the capitalised form of the narrator's proclamation signifies the importance of the authorial identity in narrative construction.

Following that, Sun further stresses the self-confidence of the narrator by amplifying '全世界的作家都做不到这一点' (None of the good writers in the world can do this) into two complete sentences 'None of the great figures of world literature were able to write in Chinese characters. None of the great figures of world literature were able to do this'. Here, the narrator in Sun's translation draws on the notion of 'world literature' as a reference to show himself off as a Chinese writer in the world canon, thus appearing more self-conscious of his writing in front of Anglophone readers than the narrator in the Chinese text. At the same time, it seems that Sun as one of the translators for Zhao's anthology is making use of the narrator's voice to support the editor's confident claim made in the introduction that Ma Yuan's *Xugou* 'will demonstrate the unique contribution which Chinese writers are now making to twentieth century world literature' (Zhao 1993, 18). The last paragraph of the original excerpt uses only the first personal pronoun '我' (I) to demonstrate in the way of monologue the narrator/ author's self-reflection of his writing. In Sun's translation, the plural third personal pronoun 'their' and the second personal pronoun 'you' are brought in to replace '我' (I/my/me) in the original text, thereby creating the effect that the narrator is literally addressing the readers. Unlike the original narrator who is

immersed in his own stream of consciousness, Sun's changes to the pronouns enhance the narrator's self-confidence in offering good stories to his readers. By all these means, Sun's translation tends to underscore the authorial intrusion in storytelling.

By comparison, Batt's translation which is collected in *Tales of Tibet* (2001) shows a more liberal and critical attitude towards the real author Ma Yuan's experimental techniques, as demonstrated in his choice of deleting the intrusive parts of the narrator's voice to keep the narrative integrated, logical, and realistic. In this example, the narrator in Batt's translation appears less willing to cause discrepancies within the narrative or invalidate the narrative. By deleting the original lines '我用汉语讲故事; 汉字据说是所有语言中最难接近语言本身的文字, 我为我用汉字写作而得意。全世界的好作家都做不到这一点, 只有我是个例外' (I use Chinese to tell stories; it is said that Chinese characters are the most difficult writing to access language itself. I'm proud of myself for writing in Chinese characters. None of good writers in the world can do this. I am the only exception) and '用汉字写作的好作家只有我一个' (I am the only great writer who writes in Chinese characters), Batt's translation reduces how self-confident the narrator sounds when talking about his capability of fabricating convincing stories in Han Chinese for his readers. Furthermore, by replacing the original exclamation mark with a question mark, Batt further questions the narrator's ability to write enchanting stories in Han Chinese. This rewriting of the experimental narration in the original text seems to correspond to what Batt alludes in the editor's introduction to the anthology, especially that about Han Chinese writers' incapability to create insightful Tibet-themed stories had they not drawn inspiration from the Tibetan civilisation that they are putting in danger. As demonstrated by this example, a translation agent can leave ideological imprints in both paratexts surrounding the translation and the translated text, depending on the exact role that he/she plays in the translation process.

Like Sun, Batt also rewrites the pronouns in the excerpt. However, through changing the first-person pronoun ‘我’ (I/my/me) into the third-person pronouns ‘he/his/him’, the narrator’s self-acknowledged gesture of fabricating stories is turned into a criticism of other boastful writers. Such changes by Batt allude to other writers’ unnecessary interventions in readers’ interpretations of fictional stories, implying that the narrator as a fictional writer himself would avoid making unnecessary moves to expose the fictionality of his writing. The evaluative adverb ‘stubbornly’ chosen to modify ‘强迫’ (force) also ensures that Batt’s narrator is unfavourable to the self-referential narrative technique used by other novelists. As these translation shifts reflect, Batt is inclined to reduce the narrator’s intervention so as to relate to Anglophone readers the story with fewer discrepancies and interruptions, whereas Sun attempts to disclose the potential manipulation of the mischievous narrator. The following extract further illustrates how Batt’s translation conceals or even completely omits the narrator’s voice in order to accomplish the absoluteness and integrity of the storytelling.

XG ST: 有人说我是为了写小说到西藏去的。我现在不想在这里讨论这种说法是否确切。我到西藏是个事实。另外一些事实是我写了十几万字有关西藏的小说。用汉字汉语。我到西藏好像有许多时间了。我不会讲一句那里的话；我讲的只是那里的人，讲那里的环境，讲那个环境里可能有的故事。细心的读者不会不发现我用了一个模棱两可的汉语词汇，可能。我想这一部分读者也许不会发现我为什么没有另外一个汉语动词，发生。我在别人用发生的位置上，用了一个单音汉语词，有。

我不讲语言学教程，这个课题到此为止。(Ma Yuan 1986, 49)

LT: Some people say I went to Tibet for my fiction writing. I don’t want to discuss here if such a view is truthful now. It is a fact that I went to Tibet. Another fact is that I wrote hundreds of thousands of words about Tibet. In Chinese characters and Chinese language. I seem to have stayed in Tibet for a long time. I can’t speak one sentence of that language; I only talk about people there, the environment there, stories that might be in that environment. Careful readers can’t miss that I’ve used an ambiguous word, might. I think such readers might not find out the reason why I didn’t use another Chinese verb, happen. In places where other people use ‘happen’, I used a single-syllabled Chinese character, be.

I don't lecture linguistics; this topic should stop here.

XG TT Batt: Some people say the reason I went to Tibet was for my writing. It's a fact I went to Tibet. It's also a fact that I've written hundreds of pages about Tibet. All written in Chinese characters: although it's a long time since I first arrived in Tibet, I still can't speak a word of the language. What I talk about is the people, the setting, and stories that might happen in the setting. (Herbert Batt 2001, 23)

In the original text, the narrator Ma Yuan highlights the importance of his experiences in Tibet for the creation of his fiction. The description is so close to the facts related to the real author Ma Yuan that it creates the illusion that the narrative could be read as a substantially realistic reflection of what Tibet is. Yet, at the same time, the narrator consciously evades commenting on the truth or falsity of such an assertion by saying ‘我现在不想在这里讨论这种说法是否确切’ (I don't want to discuss here if such a view is truthful now). Following that, the narrator expresses a strong sense of irony towards the fact that he writes extensively about what he imagines having happened in Tibet, in his mother tongue Chinese rather than in Tibetan, although he has stayed in Tibet for a long period. Here, the narrator asserts, without hesitation, his position as an outsider of Tibetan culture, and denies the credence of the Tibetan stories told by either the narrator or the real author, Ma Yuan. However, the narrator's self-exposure, or in Xiaobin Yang's (2002, 156) words, ‘self-disruption’, is completely omitted in Batt's translation. Moreover, the original narrator's self-reflection of his thoughts and writing process, for instance, the selection of words between ‘可能’ (might), ‘发生’ (happen) and ‘有’ (be), is removed in Batt's translation. Without all the discrepancies caused by the narrator's intrusive voice, Batt's translation seems to define the novel as Ma Yuan's travelogue in Tibet, as if the narrated world can be regarded as an epitome of Tibetan life and people observed from a Han Chinese perspective. In contrast to the original text that reveals the fictionality of the story, Batt's

omission of the narrator's subjective viewpoint lends some credence to Ma Yuan's Tibetan stories.

Drawing inspiration from the myths of Tibet, Ma Yuan has created enigmatic fictional worlds through narrative techniques that question realist writers' pursuits of truth and objectivity in narration. In addition to exposing the narrator's subjective voice, as well as its contribution to reconstructing a certain set of historical events into different fictional narratives, Ma Yuan also works on the levels of narrative structure and plot to challenge conventional realist writers' beliefs with regards to the possibility of plotting a grand narrative based on the teleological mode of history. According to Xiaobin Yang, in Ma Yuan's experimental writing about Tibetan history, narrative structures and plots show 'fragmentation, lacunae and incoherence' (2002, 154). As Wu Yiqin argues, by playing with the sequence of unfolding events, Ma Yuan demonstrates the structural complexity that a historical narrative could achieve (1997, 114–128). This complexity contests the linear structure of dominant literary discourses in modern and contemporary China; epistemologically, it questions the progressiveness symbolised by the one-dimensional timeline of the grand narrative. In addition, Xiaobin Yang points out, 'Ma Yuan dissolves the rigid model of plot' (2002, 153). By inserting incompatible narrative components, Ma Yuan adds uncertainty and confusion to the plotline, and presents a plot that is 'insufficient and insubstantial' (2002, 155). Overall, the special designs of narrative structure and plot allow Ma Yuan, and many other avant-garde writers, to depart from narrative totality, the essential principle of maintaining the unitary system of the grand narrative.

In *Xugou*, following the narrator's articulation of his identity as the Han Chinese writer Ma Yuan, Ma Yuan narrates his encounters with three major protagonists living in the leper village Maqu: an unnamed Tibetan leper woman, an old mysterious hunchback, and a Lopa man.

Chronologically, the encounter with the leper woman happens before that with the hunchback, yet chapters 2 and 3 take Ma Yuan's meeting with the hunchback forward in time; chapter 2 consists of the hunchback's dramatic monologue, whilst chapter 3 switches back to Ma Yuan's perspective to narrate how the old and feeble hunchback suddenly transforms into a vigorous and vicious bandit. From chapter 4 to chapter 18, the plot evolves in a normal chronological timeline, narrating from Ma Yuan's viewpoint his experiences from the first day he enters the village to the seventh day when he decides to leave the next morning. The plot contains scenes such as those depicting the worthless life status of the leper villagers, Ma Yuan's first unexpected encounter with the hunchback, Ma Yuan's sexual relations with the leper woman, Ma Yuan seeking the hunchback's identity, and his bidding farewell to the Lopa man. Yet, before the narrator Ma Yuan completes the story, the narration is interrupted and the narrator declares that '读者朋友，在讲完这个悲惨故事之前，我得说下面的结尾是杜撰的' (dear readers, before ending this tragic story, I have to say that the following ending is fabricated) (1987, 67). In chapter 19, the narrator Ma Yuan explains what really happened to him in Tibet and why he is going to fabricate subsequent stories about his Tibetan adventure. After this explanation, from chapter 20 onwards, the narrator Ma Yuan goes back to narrate things happening in the leper village; he changes his plan to stay for one more night, deciding instead to leave Maqu on the sixth night after the hunchback uses his own pistol to kill himself. The whole piece ends with Ma Yuan leaving Maqu and going back to the society he is used to, only to be told that Maqu disappeared in the landslide the night before and realising that the actual date does not match with the date of his Tibetan trip. The plot synopsis, as well as the structural analysis of the work, show that the narrative form has been consciously manipulated by the author to create a literary experiment which is praised by Zhao Henry Y.H. as a Borges-style 'labyrinthine time-and plot-

line' (2002, 149). Although a series of events are threaded through Ma Yuan's erratic experiences in Maqu, there is neither a danger-filled and fast-paced central plot, nor a heroic character, in the traditional sense of 'adventure fiction' (D'Amassa 2009, vii–viii). As Xiaobin Yang comments, 'what occurs in the leprosarium is again a "diluted" plot that has no development or climax' (2002, 158). Through such plotting, the author dissolves the integrity of conventional narration, making the narrative incomplete and non-progressive.

In the two translations by Sun and Batt that are collected in *The Lost Boat* (1993) and *Tales of Tibet* (2001), respectively, the narrative structure and plot of *Xugou* are conveyed to English readers differently. Sun's translation continues to show faithfulness to Ma Yuan's formalist design, the narrative structure and plot of the original fiction are maintained. In contrast, Batt's translation departs from the original structural form and plotting methods, and then re-assembles the narrative elements. Specifically, Batt's translation moves the flash-forwarding in time to the hunchback, in chapters 2 and 3 in the original, to the right place in the chronological timeline, that is, after Ma Yuan's encounter with the leper woman. Moreover, Batt uses double quotation marks to signify the hunchback's monologue, however, unconventionally, only the first halves of the quotation marks are used in each paragraph and the second half of the quotation marks appear at the end of the monologue. Ma Yuan's self-explanation in chapter 19 of the original text is re-located to the final part of the work, after the narrator Ma Yuan completes the whole story of his adventure in the Tibetan leper village. Therefore, from the first day when Ma Yuan enters the leper village to the day he leaves Maqu, all events related to Maqu are enclosed in one complete section and unfold chronologically. The original narrative ends while the narrator is still playing the role of a character in the story, the moment when he senses that time has gone wrong; whereas Batt's translation ends with Ma Yuan's epilogue which declares that the tragic

story about the Tibetan leper village is all made up, although Ma Yuan has indeed been to Tibet.

Batt's translated text thus finishes with the following extract, which corresponds to the part about the narrator's self-explanation in chapter 19 of the original work of fiction.

XG ST: 我还得说下面的结尾是我为了洗刷自己杜撰的，我没别的办法。我这样再三声明，也许会使这部杰作失掉一部分光彩，我割爱了。我说了我没有别的办法。我自认晦气，我是个倒楣蛋。谁让我找上这个倒楣的素材？找上这个倒楣的行当？当然没别人。我自认倒楣就是了。

下面我还得把这个杜撰的结尾给你们。说一句悄悄话，我的全部悲哀和全部得意都在这一点上。(Ma Yuan 1986, 68)

LT: I also have to say that the following ending is a whitewash for myself, I have no other options. Repeating this statement might make this masterpiece lose some shiny points, but I'm ready to give in. I said I have no other choice. I accept my bad luck. I am an unlucky bastard. Who let me choose this damn theme? Choose this damn profession? No one, of course. I will just accept my bad luck.

In the following I still need to give you this fabricated ending. Tell you a secret, all my sorrow and satisfaction lie here.

XG TT Batt: I've added this epilogue to exonerate myself. My masterpiece might lose some of its luster from **all these explanations**. Of all the bloody luck! But what can I do? Just grin and bear it. Who made me seek out this damned material, this stinking profession? Nobody, of course. I'll just have to put up with the stink.

So now that I've presented you with this fabrication, just between you and me I'll tell you a secret. In its fiction is all my sorrow, all my satisfaction. (Herbert Batt 2001, 61)

Considering Hayden White's arguments about the significant impact of emplotting upon readers' interpretations of historical narratives (Section 4.1), the changes that Batt makes to the plot of Ma Yuan's *Xugou* could affect the ways in which Anglophone readers perceive and interpret Han Chinese writers' literary representations of Tibet. Ma Yuan attempts to construct a formalist narrative characterised with incompleteness, incoherence, and uncertainty so as to deconstruct the lineal and progressive historical model of grand narrative. In comparison, Batt's translation re-constructs the original insubstantial and insufficient plotline into a coherent and unified one.

Through so doing, the story of Ma Yuan's adventure in the Tibetan leper village is recounted fully without disruption. The original narrative structure is simplified in translation when Batt re-assembles events during Ma Yuan's stay in Maqu into a complete sub-narrative, which is then interposed in the middle of Ma Yuan's meta-narration. Compared to the labyrinth plotline in the original fictional work, Batt's translation re-constructs the fragments of the past into a narrative totality which appears more understandable to Anglophone readers. Yet, elements of formalism characterising Ma Yuan's avant-garde fiction are undermined in Batt's translation, so is Ma Yuan's endeavour to challenge the teleological historical model of grand narrative through experimental writing. Ironically, Batt's translation somehow confirms the linearity of grand narrative, which Western supporters for Tibetans' nationalist cause tend to assume Han Chinese authors generally impose upon their object of representation, ethnic minorities. Referring back to Shakya's critical view of the fictional representation of Tibet by Ma Yuan and other Han Chinese writers alike (Section 3.3.3), it can be argued that Batt's translation of Ma Yuan's fiction might justify Shakya's critique of China's colonisation in Tibet, and thus rally support for the international movement of Tibetan independence.

Xugou is not the only instance in which Batt attempts to turn Ma Yuan's experimental fiction into a conventional Tibetan story told from the perspective of a Han Chinese writer. As demonstrated in the following, in Batt's translation of Ma Yuan's *Youshen – Vagrant Spirit* which is also collected in *Tales of Tibet* (2001), similar strategies have been applied to flatten the experimental narrative features of the source text so as to ensure the logical plotline of the translated text. Here, Caroline Mason's translation of *Youshen – A Wondering Spirit* which is collected in Jing Wang's *China's Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998) – is also cited to contrast the rewriting that Batt's translation involves.

YS ST: 我并非无意地注意到哑仆房间旁边的一扇小门。……

这门锁了很久了，时间留下了痕迹。

我不想让哑仆知道我对小门的关注，我做出漫不经心的样子继续喝茶。当我又一次漫不经心地转到小门前面，我极意外地发现门扇和门框结合处是贴了封条的，是一种奇怪的加了印章的圆形帛织品，已经半霉烂了，可是依然完整。它和黑黝黝的小门已经浑然一色，不细看完全看不出了。

那条大黑狗是在我伸出手去摸丝质封条时低吠的，声音暗哑可怖充满威胁，我及时把手垂落到身体一侧，动作及其自然。(Ma Yuan 1987, 11)

LT: Not unintentionally, I noticed a small door next to the deaf-mute servant's room....

The door had been locked for a long time, and time had left some traces.

I didn't want the deaf-mute servant to know my attention to the door, so I went on drinking my tea casually. When I casually came near the door again, I was very surprised to find that the junction of the door and the frame had been pasted all over with sealing strips. Made of a kind of silky fabric stamped with circles, the strips had half rotted away, but [the circle patterns were] still intact. They had become the same black colour as the door, which couldn't be noticed without a scrutiny.

The big black dog growled as I reached out to touch the strips of silk. The growl was scarily threatening, so I dropped my hand to my side in time, very natural moves.

YS TT Mason: Completely by chance, I noticed a small door next to the deaf-mute servant's room....The door had been locked for a long time, and time had left its mark.

I didn't want the deaf-mute servant to know that the door had caught my attention, and I went on drinking my tea very casually. When, casually again, I passed near it, I was very surprised to see that long sealing strips had been pasted all over the door and the frame. They were made of a kind of silky fabric stamped with circles, and although this had half rotted away, the strips were still intact. They had become the same black color as the door, so that if you didn't look carefully, you wouldn't have been able to see them at all.

The big black dog growled as I reached out to touch the strips of silk. It was a scary sound, full of menace, and I dropped my hand to my side at once, and acted natural. (Caroline Mason 1998, 278–279)

YS TT Batt: Not at all accidentally I was **staring at** a small door next to the dumb servant's room.... **The door was sealed with strips of silk paper, stamped *all over* with someone's personal seal. The silk paper that sealed the door was covered in**

mildew, rotting, but still sealed the door tight. The seal bore the marks of the passage of time.

I didn't want to let the servant know how much **the door fascinated me**, so I went on casually drinking my tea. When, still casually, I strolled near it, I saw that the silk paper that sealed the door had turned the same shiny black as the door itself. The paper was beginning to rot away, **but to my surprise I noticed that the seal marks were still intact, and you could read them if you looked carefully. As I leaned down to try to read the date**, the big, black dog growled menacingly, so I immediately **stood up straight** and acted as naturally as I could. (Herbert Batt 2001, 18)

This example exemplifies the thematic quest for truth in Ma Yuan's *Youshen* (1987). The original work of fiction narrates a story about a futile search for the truth about an ancient Tibetan coin. Lacunae and irrationality frequently occur in its plot not only to nullify the anticipation of a teleological quest, but also to understate and trivialise the archetypal heroic characters essential for traditional adventure fiction. Unlike Mason's literal translation, Batt's translation *Vagrant Spirit* (2001) alters the narrator's point of view, the acts of the character, and the pace of the narration of the original story, thereby generating a mysterious atmosphere in the resulting narrative. In the original text, the narrator incidentally pays attention to the door, whereas the translation implies the action to be an intentional quest, 'not at all accidentally'. Further, by replacing the original verb '注意' (notice) with the verb 'staring at' that implies the observer's intensive attention, and later changing the original '关注' (my attention) to 'fascinated me', the translation highlights the excitement triggered by this remarkable discovery. After substituting the original generic verbs with more specific verbs, the narrator in Batt's translation focuses his point of view on the silk paper that seals the door. Batt's translation also adds extra descriptions of the date on the seal, 'you could read them if you looked carefully. As I leaned down to try to read the date', which does not exist in the original text. The narrator's discovery of the date is then linked to the big black dog's menacing growl to which the

protagonist immediately ‘stood up straight’. In contrast, the narrator in the original text is less driven by his curiosity when he slowly moves his focus from other objects to the seal. With these textual changes, Batt’s translation advances the plot more quickly, and attempts to draw readers’ attention to the actions of the character within a more adventurous setting. Anglophone readers, fascinated by stories set in the mysterious and unfathomable Tibet, might well be enthralled by a tale of Tibetan adventure with the dramatised sense of danger that Batt creates in his translation *Vagrant Spirit* (2001).

4.3.2 Translating Ge Fei’s nihilistic view of history in *Xiangyu* (相遇) (1994)

While Ma Yuan refers to Tibetan history only implicitly in his narrative experimentation, Ge Fei relies heavily on the models and standards of historical fiction to expound his nihilistic view of history (X. Zhang 1997, 163–200; Choy 2008, 113–117; Yu 2008, 279–392). A representative piece relates to Ge Fei’s novella *Xiangyu*, which was published in the mainland Chinese literary journal *Dajia* (大家, Master) in 1994. Grounded in the real history of the British expedition to Tibet and imperial diplomacy in Tibet at the turn of the twentieth century, *Xiangyu* presents unprecedented historical actuality. Not only are exact dates, locations, and real personages relevant to the historical events used to establish the story, but real historical documents are also cited to evidence the historic accuracy and source base of the narrative.

The resemblance of *Xiangyu* to conventional historical fiction might easily leave the impression that Ge Fei is presenting in fiction the teleological mode of Tibetan history, as many Han Chinese writers write about the peripheral Tibet from the perspective of a cultural centre. It may even trigger critical voices of scholars on the issue of endangered Tibetan identity. An exemplary voice can be found in the foreword to *Tales of Tibet* (2001), in which author Shakya

comments that writings on Tibet by mainland Chinese authors, including *Xiangyu*, ‘are the product of the coloniser’s certainty of his mission’ (2001, xxii), relying heavily on the ‘exaggerated characterisation’ (2001, xvi) of ‘the differences between coloniser and the colonised’ (2001, xvii). Similarly, Christopher Payne criticises that ‘Ge Fei’s narrative re-imagining of the Younghusband expedition is so overtaxed with the visibly propagandistic Histories produced in the PRC that it unfortunately reinforces the government’s one-sided interpretation of the event’ (2013, 68). However, scholars including Andrew Jones (2003, 558), Howard Y.F. Choy (2008, 113–117), and Yangdon Dhondup (2012) counterargue that Ge Fei’s *Xiangyu* is only disguised as a historical narrative; in it, Ge Fei adopts a cynical tone to construct alternative modes of historical writing, thus dispelling the seriousness of writing history, while challenging the totality and absoluteness of the grand narrative of history formulated by the official discourse in mainland China. In Xiaobin Yang’s (2002) analysis of Ge Fei’s avant-garde fiction, he points out that the potential of Ge Fei’s historical writing lies in his formalist narration. Yang thus argues for understanding Ge Fei’s fictional works ‘as rewritings or even parodies, of the prototypical/stereotypical mode of representation of the historical past’ (2002, 169). As Yang further explains, key elements of the prototypical mode, such as settings and central characters, usually fail to contribute to the significance that they would normally produce in Ge Fei’s experimental fiction (2002, 174–179). Referring specifically to the Sino-Tibetan-British relations represented in *Xiangyu*, Choy makes similar comments that ‘Ge Fei’s nihilism is absolute in his antihistorical fiction, which eradicates all successes and failures in the past. As a Han writer, he ironically undercuts any merits or demerits of colonization, be it British or Chinese’ (2008, 117). With regards to these critical views, this section examines how Ge Fei’s *Xiangyu* about the historical episode of the British expedition to Tibet has been translated into

English, and the impact of translation shifts on Anglophone readers' interpretations of Tibetan history, as well as on Tibetan identity in the global cultural context.

In the foreword written to *Abandoned Wine* (1996), which includes Deborah Mills's translation, *Meetings*, American poet Gary Snyder describes the fiction as a 'semi-fantastic tale out of Younghusband's expedition to Lhasa' (1996, 5). This description is, to some extent, substantiated by Mills' translation, as Mills maintains a fair balance between the supernatural and realistic factors appearing in the original fiction. In general, Mills is faithful to the original text, in terms of narrative structures and content, as shown in her literal way of translation. Nevertheless, careful comparative analysis reveals that the translation has been imprinted with the Western critical view of colonialism in Tibet. Consciously or unconsciously, Mills's translation begins to judge the British expedition as unjust and savage, as Mills supplements extra information to underscore the hostility that existed between the British expedition troops and the Tibetan force. For example, Mills adds 'for the invasion of Tibet' (1996, 15) to specify the nature of the expedition, and 'bold' (1996, 29) to describe the British march towards Lhasa; in describing the British troops, Mills replaces the original adverb '浩浩荡荡' (in a great procession) (1994, 74) with more specific adjectives 'vast and mighty' (1996, 26) that tend to emphasise the British military power; relatively, more emotionally-negative adjective 'miserable' (1996, 27) is used to replace '破败的' (dilapidated) (1994, 75), a change showing sympathy towards the weak Tibetan side. In addition, Mills's translation exaggerates the casualties of the Tibetan force during the warfare by changing '三十名左右的康巴人' (thirty or so Khamba men) (1994, 84) into 'three hundred or so Khamba tribesmen' (1996, 41); whilst, in her rewriting of '战局出现了根本性逆转' (the battle had a fundamental reversal) (1994, 84) into 'the situation began to show real signs of deterioration' (1996, 41), Mills's translation

foregrounds the catastrophe that war has brought to Tibet instead of the victory for the British side in the original text.

In Batt's introduction to the anthology *Tales of Tibet* (2001), which includes his translation *Encounter*, Batt argues for *Encounter* as an allegory of 'the contrast between a Westernizing, materialist China and a Tibet of Buddhist spirituality' (2001, 3). More importantly, through comparing 'modern Western scientific rationalism' to 'Tibet's premodern, religious nonrationalism' (2001, 2), Batt asserts the superiority of the latter, thereby implying that Tibetan values centred around nonrationalism and nonviolence could provide a spiritual alternative to Chinese culture which has been overrun by Western materialism since the 1980s. While this understanding of the Tibetan motif in Ge Fei's fiction has been made clear in the translation peritext written by Batt himself (Section 3.3.3), it also finds its way into Batt's translated text.

Compared to Mills, Batt takes more liberal strategies to relate to Anglophone readers Ge Fei's representation of the Tibetan history. Consequently, not only the original narrative structure and content, but also the historical implication of the fiction has been rewritten in Batt's version. In terms of Ge Fei's particular attention to the 'technical, or formalistic, potential of narration' (Yang 2002, 168), Batt chooses to discard narrative components that might prevent readers from gaining a complete and lineal picture of the historical events. One of Batt's most conspicuous interventions relates to narrative order. While the original text recounts various events and characters in a somewhat erratic and indeterminate sequence, Batt's translation re-organises the plot so that the historical events unfold in a more logical and coherent order. As a result, sections of background information about central characters, including Major Bretherton and the Chinese official He Wenqin, are moved so that they follow the initial introduction of these characters. In section 2 about the abbot's encounter with the Scottish missionary John Newman outside

Younghusband's tent, Batt moves the abbot's recollection of his negotiation with Younghusband to the beginning of the section, so that the two events are told in a chronological order. Similarly, Batt moves two paragraphs about Newman's previous missionary experiences in Tibet that are originally placed in section 6 forward to section 4 to serve as a background to Newman's first meeting with He Wenqin. In section 7 about the intensifying hostility between the British troops and the Tibetan troops, Batt once more changes the narration sequence to fit the chronological timeline, a change which also implies that Younghusband's decision to raid the Karo mountains is more a result of his careful military planning than a spontaneous choice. With all these adjustments to the plotline, Batt's translation increases the coherence of the narrative to permit the fluent and complete narration of a series of historical events. In this way, the translated text complies more closely with the linear structure of conventional historical fiction. In contrast to the original narrative which relates relevant events and actions out of order to break the prototypical division between central plot and subplot, or primary and secondary characters, Batt's translation appears to dispel the playfulness that Ge Fei displays in writing Tibetan history, while showing the gesture of objectively reflecting the confrontation between Tibetan Buddhist culture and Western modern civilisation.

In light of Batt's discursive voice in the anthology introduction, as well as his translational intervention in re-ordering a series of historical events into a chronological timeline, it is possible to suggest that Batt treats the practice of representing Tibetan history with the utmost seriousness. Similar earnestness can also be detected in Batt's act of reconstructing historical personages into images that historians normally portray in historiographies. A typical example of this can be found in Batt's translation of the battle scene in which the British troops under the command of Younghusband launch the first strike against the Tibetan troops stationed on the

canyon. A scene like this epitomises the confrontational relationships between British imperialists and premodern Tibetans. Although Ge Fei's text portrays the British attack as '对“那些天真淳朴的牧羊人”进行残忍的杀戮' (a cruel massacre of "those simple innocent shepherds") (1994, 74), it does not focus all its attention on the brutality of the British military operation. Rather, Ge Fei consciously depicts the absurd behaviours of the Tibetan troops, as these expressions show: '西藏人在一片混乱之中，乱哄哄地你推我搡' (the Tibetans were in a chaos, noisily pushing and shoving each other) (1994, 73), '那些藏军一边低声地抱怨着，一边很不情愿地被解除了武装' (those Tibetan troops complained in low voices and reluctantly disarmed) (1994, 73), '他[来自拉萨的代本]感到战争已经将自己冷落在一边' (the Lhasa Depon felt that the battle had already left him out in the cold) (1994, 73), and '西藏军队以令人不解的缓慢速度朝树林中散逃' (the Tibetans dispersed incomprehensibly slowly in the direction of the woods) (1994, 74). In these descriptions of the Tibetan troops' performances in the battlefield, Ge Fei adopts 'a cynical tone' (Choy 2008, 130) to create a sense of the irrational and logically inexplicable. Possibly finding Ge Fei's characterisation of Tibetans derogatory, Batt either rewrites, or completely omits expressions, that appear to ridicule the Tibetans, while focusing on dramatising the aggressive military actions taken by the fully-armed British troops against the innocent Tibetans. To accentuate the Tibetan victim narrative *vis-à-vis* the British imperialist victimiser narrative, Batt's translation starts by adding words 'the British troops advanced in a broad line up the canyon' (2001, 85). Batt goes on to attribute the chaos among Tibetan troops to British attacks, 'pushed and shoved by the British troops, the Tibetan soldiers were in chaos' (2001, 85), instead of it being caused by the Tibetans themselves as described in the original text. Batt's translation uses 'powerless' to depict the Tibetan side, while 'under

orders from Lhasa not to attack the British first' (2001, 85) is added to explain the powerless circumstance which the Tibetan troops face. This additional information enables the projection of the Tibetans as non-military peace-pursuers who happen to have fallen victim to war. As if to prove the savage act of the British troops, Batt supplements the name of the English war correspondent, 'Henry Naylor', as 'a witness of the ensuing massacre' (2001, 85). Since Henry Naylor exists in the history of the British expedition, explicating the real historical personage increases the historicity of Batt's translated text. In addition, speaking through Major Bretherton, Batt adds and emphasises information on the expedition's objective, 'negotiation' (2001, 85). Therefore, the seemingly peaceful objective serves as a foil to Younghusband's bloodlust on the battlefield. Following this, the more concise but sharper comments made by Younghusband in Batt's translation further highlight his image as a ruthless British imperialist. The actions of the two military sides present a strong contrast in Batt's translation, which could easily evoke criticism of colonialism in Tibet from Anglophone readers.

In other instances, Batt omits Ge Fei's lines that might be read as parodies of Tibetan historical past, so as to reinforce the positive image of Tibetans. For instance, the following extract which exposes the absurdity of the Tibetan soldiers and thereby potentially damages the image of Tibetans as brave fighters defending their beloved homeland has been removed in Batt's translation.

XY ST: 布雷瑟顿注意到，一名藏族伤兵对于没有麻醉的截肢手术竟毫无畏惧，他脸上流露出来的令人难以置信的镇定和英国伤员痛苦的叫喊形成了强烈的对照。

布雷瑟顿走近他。通过翻译，他第一次和一名藏人进行了交谈。

“医生将我的腿锯掉并不是一件坏事。” 那名藏兵对他说。

“为什么？”

“因为下次打仗的时候，我就无法逃跑了。”

他的这一回答使站在一边的荣赫鹏上校也忍不住笑出声来。(Ge Fei, 1994, 85)

LT: Bretherton noticed, a Tibetan soldier fearlessly having his leg amputated without anaesthetic. His face showed incredible calmness, forming a striking contrast to the moans of pain from the wounded British soldiers.

Bretherton went over to him. Through an interpreter, he had his first conversation with a Tibetan.

‘Having my leg sawn off is not a bad thing,’ the Tibetan soldier said to him.

‘Why not?’

‘Because next time we fight, I won’t be able to run away.’

When he heard this reply, Colonel Younghusband, who was standing to one side, couldn’t help laughing.

XY TT Batt: Bretherton noticed a wounded Tibetan soldier displaying no emotion as his leg was being amputated without anaesthetic. (Herbert Batt 2001, 98)

Xiangyu epitomises Ge Fei’s rethinking of history from the perspective of postmodernism. Based on real historical events and referring to primary historical sources, Ge Fei creates in his fiction a seemingly realistic illustration of the historical episode of the British expedition to Lhasa.

However, by telling the historical events in an erratic and nonlinear order, and by endowing historical personages with a sense of absurdity, Ge Fei turns the traditionally serious practice of writing history into a playful narrative experimentation, thereby ridiculing the rationalistic conception of history and questioning the possibility of knowing and making history. Mills’s translation, *Meetings* which is collected in *Abandoned Wine* (1996), has retained the original narrative form, but shows some changes to the details of the historical events, thereby conveying to Anglophone readers criticisms of British imperialism in Tibet. In contrast, Batt’s translation, *Encounter* which is included in *Tales of Tibet* (2001), removes most of the narrative features expressing Ge Fei’s nihilist view of history, even though postmodern fictional writing created for

‘problematizations of history’ (Hutcheon 1988, 94) is a well-established literary trend in the Western cultural context. Batt’s translational intervention, to the form and structure of the narrative as well as its content, has converted the original work of fiction into a prototypical historical story about the British imperialist invasion of the sacred Tibetan land, and features a positive characterisation of nonviolent Tibetans as opposed to the negative image of British troops under the command of Younghusband. Furthermore, Batt’s translation enacts a narrative about Tibet’s ancient Buddhist culture being under threat from Western modern civilisation, a fallen Shangri-la in the hands of aggressive imperialist colonisers. In this way, Batt’s translation substantiates his own allegorical interpretation of *Encounter* as he explicates in the introduction to *Tales of Tibet* (2001), while accentuating the prevalent anti-colonialism discourse of the Western world. More specifically, *Encounter* is injected with that implicit meaning that Han Chinese author Ge Fei writes about Tibet from the perspective of a coloniser and imposes upon Tibet a teleological mode of history, therefore confirming the ideological assumption that Anglophone readers tend to hold towards contemporary Chinese writing.

4.3.3 Translating Ge Fei’s nihilistic view of history in *Mizhou* (迷舟) (1987)

The above section has shown how translational changes to the narrative structure and content of Ge Fei’s experimental fiction *Xiangyu* could undermine Anglophone readers’ perceptions of Ge Fei’s nihilistic view of history. This section focuses on Ge Fei’s *Mizhou* (迷舟) (1987) to further analyse how Ge Fei’s postmodern ways of narrating China’s past have been rewritten in two English translations: *The Lost Boat* translated by Caroline Mason and collected in *The Lost Boat* (1993); and *The Mystified Boat* translated by Herbert Batt and collected in *The Mystified Boat* (2003).

Mizhou (迷舟) (1987), the novella that established Ge Fei as one of the most talented avant-garde novelists in mainland China, has been praised for presenting alternative modes of historical writing against the grand epic narrative advocated by Communist propaganda (Wang 1996, 242–259; X. Zhang 1997, 183–190; Huot 2000, 19–20; Yang 2002, 175–179; Choy 2008, 221–227). Like *Xiangyu*, *Mizhou* is set against a real historical event – the Nationalist Party’s Northern Expedition of 1928, and employs real historical time, locations, and historical personages to create a seemingly authentic historical story. To increase the sense of historical actuality, the story begins with a summary of the real historical moment and a prologue which introduces the historical role of the central protagonist, Xiao, Commander of the 32nd Brigade under Sun Chuanfang (a historical character of the warlord period). Even a military map, composed of the names of two rivers, the Lan and Lian, and three towns, Qishan, Yuguan and Linkou, is printed at the beginning to ‘serve both as a guide in the fictive world and as coordinates for a narrative analysis’ (X. Zhang 1997, 185). The beginning of this story complies closely with the form of historiography and thus helps to set up a spatial-temporal frame for the fictional work. Nevertheless, as Xiaobin Yang points out, the historical episode narrated in Ge Fei’s fiction can only be a ‘re-imagined/re-envisioned history’, with its objective being to ‘challenge the totality of grand history formulated by the master discourse’ (2002, 168).

The rest of the story is broken up into sections under the temporal headings from *Day One* to *Day Seven*, and revolves around Xiao’s experiences during this period. After receiving news of his father’s death, Xiao slips into his home village of Little River with his bodyguard to reconnoitre the military terrain while also attending the funeral. Once there, Xiao encounters his old love, Xing. Although Xing has married a fisherman named Sanshun, the two embark on an affair. However, their relationship is soon discovered by Sanshun. Sanshun mutilates Xing’s

genitals as punishment and sends her back to her family's home in Yuguan, an area occupied by the enemy force – the Northern Expeditionary Army under Jiang Jieshi – under the command of Xiao's brother. Xiao decides to risk going to Yuguan to see Xing. In the last scene of the seventh day, Xiao returns safely from Yuguan, but is shot down by his bodyguard who is under orders to execute Xiao once he enters enemy territory.

As this synopsis shows, the main body of *Mizhou* consists mainly of Xiao's thoughts and actions. Xiao's personal history intertwines and runs parallel with national history; the latter remains as only a shadow over the personal stories throughout the work. Most of the time, accidental factors impose a decisive influence over Xiao's fate, driving the development of the event. Xudong Zhang thus describes the historical story as 'unfold[ing] itself as a Borgesean puzzle of coincidence and recurrence' (1997, 183). As a primary character who is supposed to play a big historical role in the official historiography, Xiao dies tragically at the end, not while carrying out his military duty, but instead killed by a secondary character for political treason – an accusation that has yet to be confirmed. In view of this, Xiaobin Yang comments that 'the historical irony thus arises from the "role misplaying" by the individual hero and heroine in the historical drama' (2002, 179). A mystery regarding the historical figure and the truth of national history is presented to the readers, as Ge Fei seems to address from the beginning, '萧旅长的失踪使数天后在雨季开始的战役蒙上了一层神秘的阴影' (the disappearance of Brigadier Xiao led to a mysterious shadow over the battle that began a few days later in the rainy season) (1987, 96).

Like his translation of Ma Yuan's *Youshen* (Section 4.3.1), Mason's translation, *The Lost Boat* which is collected in Zhao's *The Lost Boat* (1993), is faithful to the original text, with regards to both the narrative structure and the work's content. However, one of the biggest changes that

Mason made to the original text is worth discussion. In Mason's translation, the military map (Figure 7) that Ge Fei consciously includes in the opening of the original story is removed. This change hardly affects target readers' understanding of the story's content. However, the symbolic meanings that Xudong Zhang and Howard Y.F. Choy argue that Ge Fei gives to the map are missing in Mason's translation. According to Choy, Ge Fei's cartograph for Xiao's movements, like the map of Bolívar's itinerary that Gabriel García Márquez sets up in the opening of *El General En Su Laberinto* (*The General in His Labyrinth*) (1989), contributes to creating a 'labyrinthine narrative' that symbolises the 'labyrinth of history' (2008, 223–224). In particular, Choy points out that Ge Fei's map shows the contrast between the absence of Little River – the central stage of the historical drama in the map, and the presence of Yuguan – a secondary important location in the story, and 'suggests a nihilism that denies the knowability of a total history' (2008, 224). The absence of Ge Fei's map in Mason's translation is likely to undermine Ge Fei's attempt to use experimental narrative techniques to convey to readers his nihilist view of history.

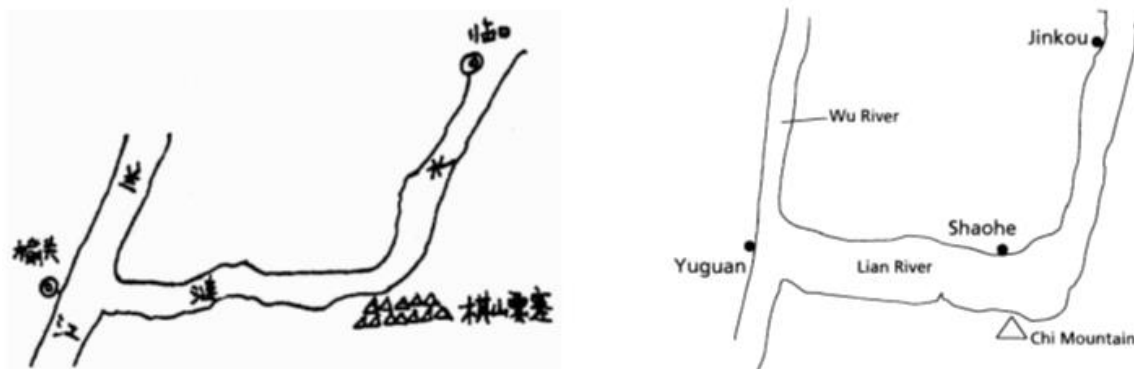


Figure 7: (Left) military map in Ge Fei's *Mizhou*, in *Shouhuo* (收获, Harvest), 1987, no. 6: 97; (Right) military map in Batt's translation *The Mystified Boat*, in *The Mystified Boat: Postmodern Stories from China*, edited by Frank Stewart and Herbert J. Batt, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003, 142.

Compared to Mason's translation, Batt's translation shows a higher degree of intervention in Ge Fei's representation of historical events. In the introduction to *The Mystified Boat* (2003) which Herbert Batt co-authored with Yongchun Cai, Ge Fei's *Mizhou* is interpreted as a postmodern masterpiece in deconstructing history, in 'subverting every authority (including literary authority) and shattering the conventions that presume the relevance of any "text" to the "real world"' (2003, 49). Yet, this interpretation does not appear applicable in Batt's translation, since Batt has rewritten the original text into historical fiction which, in form and content, is more familiar to readers of conventional realist writing.

The most noteworthy intervention that Batt carried out relates to the temporal-spatial setting of the original work of fiction. His changes have the effect of configuring the historical figure in straightforward causality with grand circumstances. Several dates of the Northern Expedition have been changed in Batt's translation, for instance, the beginning date has been changed from '一九二八年三月二十一日' (21 March 1928) (1987, 96) to '23 March 1928' (2003, 142); the date when Xiao receives the order to defend Little River is altered from '四月七日' (7 April) (1987, 96) to '4 April' (2003, 142); and the deadline that the headquarters order Xiao to slip into Little River has been changed from '九日' (9 April) (1987, 96) to '7 April' (2003, 142), one day ahead of Xiao receiving the news of his father's death, 8 April. The original text leaves an absence regarding whether the actual purpose of Xiao's departure to Little River is military reconnaissance or personal, whereas the re-set timeline in Batt's translation asserts that the real reason that Xiao slips into Little River on 8 April is to attend his father's funeral, since Xiao makes no move to go there then, even though the headquarter orders him to carry out the military reconnaissance before 7 April.

Batt also conspicuously modifies the geographic setting of the story to assure the historical episode unfolds in locations better known to Anglophone readers. His translation starts with an ‘Author’s Note’ which contains more specific geographic information (2003, 96). In fact, although the geographic names employed by Ge Fei exist in real life, they do not represent the real geography, rather are more like names that Ge Fei has selected randomly from distant provinces and collaged together to create an imagined realm for the story. Batt has made a great effort to locate these places, and offers extra information about the location of Yuguan, ‘in the lower Yangzi Basin, several hundred miles west of Shanghai’ (2003, 142). Batt also changes ‘兰江’ (Lan River) to ‘Wu River’, ‘临口’ (Linkou) to ‘Jinkou’, and ‘小河’ (Hsiaohe, Little River in translation) to ‘Shaohe’, the locations of which have all been clearly marked on the map accompanying his translation (Figure 7).

The cartograph in Batt’s translation shows the central location of Little River, thereby removing the narrative gap that Ge Fei consciously leaves. Compared to the historical nihilism that Ge Fei attempts to impart through the experimental form of storytelling, Batt’s translation appears more interested in facilitating Anglophone readers’ access to the story’s content. Similar translation changes to Ge Fei’s topography can also be found in Batt’s *Encounter* (2001), wherein the cartograph for Younghusband’s expedition to Lhasa is supplemented to accompany Batt’s textual translation and assist English-language readers to visualise the geography of the Tibetan plateau and the real history of the British expedition. In both cases, the interventions to the original cartographs tend to increase the historicity of Ge Fei’s fictional works about past events, thereby enhancing the realistic effect in the translated texts. Consequently, through translations of Ge Fei’s works, Anglophone readers may be enabled to access Chinese fictional

worlds conforming to their knowledge of real China and Chinese realist fiction; however, they are simultaneously deprived of a chance to approach the labyrinthine narrative created by Ge Fei.

4.3.4 Translating the history of violence in Yu Hua's *Yijiubaliu* (一九八六) (1987)

The preceding three sections have discussed the ways in which Ma Yuan and Ge Fei experiment with narrative techniques to express their postmodern views on the fictionality and unknowability of history, as well as the translational changes to the representations of historical experiences that Ma Yuan and Ge Fei adopt as the settings of their stories. This section turns to analysing Yu Hua's *Yijiubaliu* (一九八六) (1987) and its English translation in order to explore how the translator's textual strategies lead to a rewriting of the Chinese traumas caused by the Cultural Revolution in the Anglophone cultural context.

Concentrating on portraying violence in his nightmarish narrative of torture and execution in Chinese history, Yu Hua distinguishes himself from other Chinese avant-garde novelists. As Choy describes, Yu Hua stands out for narrating 'the performance of violence' (2008, 204). In his essay, *Hypocritical Works*, Yu Hua (1989) openly addresses the fact that he is obsessed with violence, 'because its form is full of passion and its force comes from the desire deep within humans' (Yu Hua 1989, 45, my translation). For Yu Hua, only by depicting violence in the most graphic and grotesque way can the suppressed history come to the surface, and reality or truth be found. To maximise this effect, Yu Hua chooses to combine fantasy or madness with violence, so that an irrational and subjective voice can present the complexity of personal experience in the most direct and accessible way, without any constraints being imposed by common knowledge or moral judgement. Of the many avant-garde fictional works depicting violence in history and thus illuminating the violence of history, Yu Hua's *Yijiubaliu* has evoked the most discussion

amongst literary critics (Zhao 1991a, 1991b; Wang 1996, 242–259; Wu 2000; Yang 2002, 56–73; Jones 2003, 558; Choy 2008, 201–207; Huot 2012, 23–29).

Yijiubaliu traces the violence that marks Chinese history. Set against the background of the Cultural Revolution, the story tells of a history teacher interested in the brutal tortures of ancient China who disappears during the Cultural Revolution and reappears in 1986 to look for his wife and daughter. Traumatized and disfigured, he becomes a madman whose memories remain locked in the past. When he approaches people of the town where he lived, hardly anyone recognises him, including his re-married wife and his grown daughter. The madman starts to practice the tortures he once studied and fantasied about upon himself. His performance of violence attracts the attention of the public, yet these callous people only look on as the madman cuts off his nose and calf, castrates himself, and mutilates his own body, until his performance reaches the climax of his own death. Madness and violence thus stand as the most distinctive features of this story. Madness is shown in not only the actions of the madman but also the narrator's narration. Since the narrator's viewpoints frequently correspond with those of the madman, the narrator perceives and narrates in the same irrational way. Xiaobin Yang suggests that this narrator is 'a displaced irrational narratorial subject', whose voice 'indicates the subversion against absolute representation and denies the illusion that the reality we are confronted with can be comprehended and redeemed in a rational and complete way' (2002, 43). Zhao Henry Y.H. regards this work as 'antihistory', considering that Yu Hua's deadpan depictions of extreme violence free the narrated world as well as the narrative from the logical and rational rigidity required by conventional realist fiction (1991a, 418). In the merging of history, hallucination, and reality, causality is rejected, the division of the real/ unreal is displaced, and the once dominant historical discourse is stripped of supreme meaning and power.

The uncanny refinement of unmotivated violence in *Yijiubaliu* can also be interpreted as a ‘refusal of historical humanism’ (Jones 2003, 558). In Jing Wang’s view, the ‘pure assumption of violence as an aesthetic form’ exhibited in Yu Hua’s fiction opens up a ‘dangerous narrative space’ that ‘shatters the ‘the myth of “man”’ (1998, 4). The antihumanist imagination of brutality is a severe offence against the humanist and enlightening principles of conventional historical fiction writers. Although *Yijiubaliu* is set against the backdrop of the Cultural Revolution, it is by no means a realistic representation of the traumatic experiences of this period. Unlike the preceding Scar or Retrospective literature which is grounded on exposing and reflecting traumas caused by the Cultural Revolution in order to call for the resurrection of humanism, *Yijiubaliu* adopts a shockingly detached tone to narrate the most violent and inhuman scenes. Therefore, Yu Hu’s obsession with the performance of violence peels away at the trappings of humanity and civilisation, a particular style that Jing Wang defines as, ‘Yu Hua’s prank against the humanism the older generation of writers has held so dear’ (1996, 256). Andrew Jones similarly comments that avant-garde fictional work like *Yijiubaliu* is characterised by ‘collapsing the humanistic emphasis on character depiction in realist fiction’, therefore, the narration ‘lingers clinically over the surface of things, denying readers even the illusion of realistic, psychologically well-rounded characters’ (2003, 558). Marie Clair Huot claims that the refusal of humanism dissolves the traditional binary distinctions in realist writings, such as ‘victim and victimiser’, ‘beautiful and ugly’, ‘moral or immoral’, and ‘sane and mad’ (2012, 27). As a result, readers are prevented ‘from feeling compassion, the only feeling other than sheer horror is occasional laughter’ (2012, 28). On account of these features, Wu Liang (2000) suggests that although *Yijiubaliu* and other similar works of avant-garde fiction arise from the memories of the horrifying Cultural Revolution, they go beyond historical judgement of this

particular tragedy. In some ways, this fictional style even poses a direct challenge against the moralising mechanism of conventional realist fiction.

The refusal of rationalism, causality, and humanism displayed in Yu Hua's depiction of extreme violence in *Yijiubaliu* is acclaimed by proponents of Chinese avant-garde fiction. However, this experimental style in Yu Hua's fiction seems to pose problems for translators, as manifested in the following excerpt from Andrew Jones's translation – *1986*, which is included in Jing Wang's *China's Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998).

YJBL ST: 往那些敞着的窗口看看吧，沿着这条街走，可以走进两边的胡同。将会看到什么，将会听到什么，而心里又将会想起什么。

十年前那场浩劫如今已成了过眼云烟，那些留在墙上的标语被一次次粉刷给彻底掩盖了。他们走在街上时再也看不到过去，他们只看到现在。(Yu Hua 1987, 66–67)

LT: Look through the open windows. Walking down this street until both sides turn into lanes. What can be seen, what can be heard, and what can be recalled.

The disaster ten years ago has now turned into passing clouds that have gone away. Those slogans on the walls have been painted over again and again until they are completely covered up. When they walk down the street, they can no longer see the past, all they can see is the present.

YJBL TT Jones: Look through the open windows. Walk along the main streets until **you** get to the narrow residential lanes lined by courtyard homes. What will **you** see? What will **you** hear? What will **you** be reminded of when **you** get there?

The **disastrous years of the Cultural Revolution** have faded into the mists of time. The political slogans **pasted again and again on the walls** have all been painted over, **obscured from the view of pedestrians strolling through the spring night, invisible to those for whom only the present can be seen.** (Andrew Jones 1998, 83)

The excerpt here provides an illustrative example of translators' ethical reflections of the texts that contain graphic descriptions of violence in Chinese history. Undoubtedly, as the sole translator to introduce Anglophone readers to the first English collection of Yu Hua's avant-garde fiction, *The Past and the Punishments* (1996), Jones is an ardent supporter of Yu Hua's

experimental career. His passion towards Yu Hua's avant-garde fiction, and in particular the representative piece, *Yijiubaliu*, is also demonstrated fully in his introductory essay, *Avant-garde Fiction in China* (2003, 554–560). Yet, his translation strategy as shown in this example reveals the contradiction between his translational practice and theoretical position in terms of Yu Hua's refusal of causality and humanism in his experimental representation of historical violence.

One of the most obvious translation changes in the excerpt is the one affecting the narrator's point of view, which has been changed from the original third-person to the second-person. In Jones's translation, the second-personal pronoun, 'you', is used five times. The narrator's repetitive addressing of the audience as 'you' creates a highly interactive speech mode, in which the narrator speaks with full emotion, as if directing the audience to join in a public reproach against the specific traumatic past. This denouncing effect is further enhanced by the replacement of the original declarative sentences with interrogative sentences. In the last paragraph of the excerpt, by turning the last complete sentence of the original text into two non-restrictive relative clauses to modify the subject 'political slogans', Jones's translation foregrounds the imagery of the Cultural Revolution, and thus entices Anglophone readers to focus on the scene of Chinese frantic devotion to political propaganda during this period. In addition, the relative clauses in Jones's translation emphasise political slogans as the focus of the narrator's storytelling, thereby implying that an invisible actor is exerting some force to ensure the political slogans are 'obscured from' and 'invisible to' people living in the present. In this way, Jones's translation implies that Chinese people's traumatic memories of the Cultural Revolution are forcefully repressed and erased. In contrast, the original text focuses on describing the *status quo* of the town residents: although it indicates that they are immersed in

busy modern life and oblivious to the past, it shows no intention of stressing the causality between the particular past event and the present.

Translational changes detected in this example have shed light on the dilemma facing translators of Chinese fictional writing about China's traumatic past. On the one hand, Jones approves of Yu Hua's literary experimentation, particularly the author's clinical depiction of violence and the narrator's detached tone. Therefore, speaking from the perspective of a scholar, Jones posits that Yu Hua's *Yijiubaliu* would disappoint a 'reader's desire for an unambiguous, neatly political allegory' (2003, 558). On the other hand, Jones's translation presents an emotion-leading narrative voice and foregrounds the details of the past event and its continuity to the present, thereby leaving Anglophone readers with the impression that Yu Hua created *Yijiubaliu* as a means to 'comment on the depredations of Maoism and the excesses of the Cultural Revolution' (Jones 2003, 558). In so doing, Jones's translation constitutes a historical discourse with moral and political implications which are more compatible with Anglophone readers' expectations of gaining insights into China's trauma-ridden history from translations of Chinese Cultural Revolution-related fiction.

As shown in the above analyses, there is a tendency to reconstitute historical elements encoded within the original text into storytelling based on the teleological mode of history. This translational intervention suppresses or loses, to a degree, the narrative and rhetoric devices that Chinese avant-garde novelists such as Ma Yuan, Ge Fei and Yu Hua experimentally use in order to problematise the conventional totalising view of history and the expectation of identifying realistic illustrations of history in fiction. By means of re-shaping the narrator, adjusting the narrative order and plotline, re-imagining historical settings and historical characters, and inserting moral and political implications, not only the formalist features but also the content of

original narratives has been rewritten in the translated texts. Consequently, through the act of translation, Chinese avant-garde fictional writing with settings in China's recent past has been converted into works of conventional historical fiction with linear structures and realistic historical details. As a result, they present a transparent representation of China's trauma-ridden modern history that the Anglophone reading public is familiar with and expects to gain more knowledge of. With this type of translational intervention in Chinese avant-garde novelists' representations of history, Anglophone readers seem to be encouraged to blend reality with fiction, and literature with history, and to approach Chinese avant-garde fiction for its historical documentary value. Consequently, textual modifications in the translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction may reinforce, rather than undermine, the dominant pattern of ideological interpretation and reception of contemporary Chinese writing in the Anglophone cultural context.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the postmodern view of history, in particular, the idea of history as a constructed narrative of historical events. Drawing parallels between historical representation and translation, and referring to various case studies of translations of historical narratives, it has argued that the act of translating literary representations of historical experiences into a different cultural context is a way of rewriting history in the politics of power. Thereafter, it has analysed the ways in which contemporary Chinese literature with historical settings was translated into the Anglophone cultural context in the second half of the twentieth century. The analysis shows Anglophone readers' particular interest in Chinese fiction set against the backdrop of the Cultural Revolution, as well as that which focuses on the subject matter of ethnic minorities. In addition, it brings to light the tendency of interpreting Chinese literary representations of historical events as an allegory in the Anglophone cultural context. It then focuses on avant-

garde fictional works by Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, and Yu Hua to analyse translational interventions in the representations of Chinese historical events in original texts. As observed, translational changes to narrative devices, including narrator, plot, setting, and characterisation, result in the loss of narrative features that Chinese avant-garde novelists rely on to question the totalising view of history. Consequently, the translations show a return to conventional historical fiction based on the teleological mode of history. With historical experiences represented in Chinese avant-garde fiction being re-narrated in this manner in translation, the tendency to approach contemporary Chinese literature to learn details of China's traumatic past might be reinforced in the Anglophone world.

Chapter 5: Translating the Style of Chinese Avant-garde Fiction

The preceding two chapters have examined the discursive strategies employed to rewrite translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction into political commentaries and documentary narratives. Specifically, Chapter 3 probes the interpretative frameworks that paratexts accompanying the five translation anthologies provide to shape Anglophone readers' perceptions of the ideological forces behind the literary production of Chinese avant-garde novelists. Chapter 4 delves into narrative elements, including: plot, setting, narrator, and characterisation employed in the translations of avant-garde fictional works set against historical events of twentieth-century China by Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, and Yu Hua. Analyses in these two chapters have revealed translation changes undertaken to recontextualise Chinese avant-garde fiction into the Anglophone cultural context: whereas Chinese avant-garde novelists endeavour to highlight formalist features and the aesthetic value of their literary creation, and consciously distance their fictional narratives from orthodox realist writing produced to serve the dominant political and ideological discourses in China; English translations of their experimental fiction tend to strengthen the relationship of literary texts to the ideological function of exposing and criticising the socio-political realities of contemporary China.

Based on the findings above, the present chapter shifts the analytical focus to subtler textual elements: the linguistic choices of Chinese avant-garde novelists and translators. In view of original authors' artistic use of language, this chapter explores translators' strategies to re-create the aesthetic effects of the original fictional language in translation, as well as the impacts of the translation changes on Anglophone readers' perceptions and receptions of translated Chinese avant-garde fiction. A stylistic approach was applied to observe the linguistic realisation of style and aesthetic construction in both STs and TTs. This sort of descriptive and comparative analysis

of the linguistic choices helps to show stylistic shifts that happen in translation production, as well as translators' strategies used to mediate the poetic creativity claimed by source-language authors. Furthermore, the discussion of the 'translational style' of Chinese avant-garde fiction, to borrow Kirsten Malmkjær's (2004, 13–24) term, is placed within the broader cultural context in which the translations are produced, so that implications of the translation changes for the reception of contemporary Chinese fiction in the Anglophone cultural context can be brought to light.

5.1 Translating style in fiction

Style, traditionally recognised as 'the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse' has been a central subject of literary analysis since the rise of Russian formalism in the 1950s (Abrams 2005, 312). Leech and Short (1981) have illustrated various parameters defining the style in English fiction prose, and promoted the application of stylistic analysis of literary texts even further. It is no longer a new idea that 'stylistics can help both translators and translation critics to understand the effects of features in the source text upon its reader' (Boase-Beier 2011, 155). Yet, it is only in the last two decades that scholars have drawn connections between translation studies and literary stylistics to systematically investigate the role that translation plays in conveying the style of original writing to target readers.

Mona Baker (2000) has proposed a methodological framework for investigating the question of style in literary translation. Instead of attending to 'whether the style of the original author has been adequately conveyed in the relevant translation', Baker shows more interest in describing the style of translators, namely, 'what might be distinctive about the language they produce' (2000, 241). In addition, seeing linguistic expressions as manifestations of social activities,

Baker commits herself to explaining a translator's preferred or recurring patterns of linguistic options 'in terms of their social, cultural or ideological positioning' (2000, 248). Although the corpus-based analysis conducted by Baker may not apply to every study of translations because of their lacking an appropriate-scale corpus, her stylistic approach to literary translation assists in consolidating the link between the translator's linguistic choices at the micro-level and the cultural production and construction of power relations within macro-contexts. Furthermore, it potentially supports the prevailing view about literary translations as creative activities that 'shape the reception of a work, an author, a literature, or a society in a culture different from its culture of origin' (Lefevere 2017, 83).

Responding to Baker's call, a range of scholars including Kirsten Malmkjær (2003, 2004), Jean Boase-Beier (2004, 2006, 2011), Catherine Claire Thomson (2004), Carmen Millán-Varela (2004), Josep Marco (2004), Jeremy Munday (2008), David Horton (2010), Huang Xiaocong (2011), Gabriela Saldanha (2014), Massimiliano Morini (2014), John West-Sooby (2016), and Shen Dan and Fang Kairui (2018), to name just a few, have promoted combining stylistics and descriptive translation studies. Special attention has been given to translation changes happening to aesthetic and thematic effects of the marked use of linguistic devices in source texts. Mainly through close textual analysis, scholars have sought answers to the question of 'why, given the source text, the translation has been shaped in such a way that it comes to mean what it does' (Malmkjær 2003, 39), along with that of what implications do the stylistic shifts have for the issues of ideology and identity.

In an article from the first issue on translation and style published by *Language and Literature*, Malmkjær (2004) proposes 'translational stylistics' as a suitable approach to answer the above-mentioned question. Malmkjær's methodology has foregrounded the special role of

translators in ‘creating a text that stands to its source text in a relationship of direct mediation as opposed to being subject to more general intertextual influences’ (2004, 15). To illustrate her viewpoint, Malmkjær (2004) uses Dulcken’s translations of Andersen’s fairy tales as an example to examine the effects of the translator’s alternative patterning of expressions on the reading mind and the reasons for the translation rewriting. Based on the textual evidence collected through ST-TT analysis, such as Dulcken’s avoidance of religious terminologies and the change of tense preferred by the ST, Malmkjær speculates that ‘Dulcken’s understanding of that audience and of what would seem to them acceptable reading to share with children influenced his translational decision’ (2004, 22).

Another important contributor to the study of style and translation is Boase-Beier. However, Boase-Beier’s stylistic approaches to translation are different to the stylistic perspectives of the large group of scholars who stress the significant impacts of target cultural context upon translators’ re-writing. Boase-Beier (2004, 2006) emphasises literary translation as a meaning-making process, which influences not only the linguistic form of expression, but also the reader’s recognition of the world beyond language. Her research pays more attention to the translator’s role in the process to address ‘the style of the source text as perceived by the translator and how it is conveyed or changed or to what extent it is or can be preserved in translation’ (2006, 5). To showcase her stylistic approaches, Boase-Beier demonstrates her own experience in translating into English a German poem about Holocaust by Volker von Törne. Particularly, Boase-Beier (2004) explains her way of interpreting the ambiguity caused by the missing auxiliary in the poem and her strategy of recreating the intentions and choices of the original author in translation.

A variety of case studies carried out by Boase-Beier in *Stylistic Approaches to Translation* (2006) also show that her study of the relationship between style and literary translation tends to be source-text-orientated. However, not all scholars interested in applying stylistics to translation studies agree with Boase-Beier's orientation. For instance, Saldanha, while commenting that Boase-Beier's view of the stylistic value of translation is 'not as narrowly source-oriented as Tim Parks' (for details of Parks' stylistic approach, see Parks 2007), disagrees with the view of 'style as reflection of a subjective interpretation of the world that explains the choices made by the writer and translator' (2014, 99). For Saldanha, and Malmkjær alike, translators possess the freedom to invent a translated text; nevertheless, more general extra-textual factors influencing the stylistic traits of the translation come from the TT context (Malmkjær 2004; Saldanha 2014). Therefore, Saldanha (2014) suggests that translational stylistics should concentrate on the role of translators as creative artists and attribute the stylistic features of the translation to the translators working in certain contexts. In other words, it is important and necessary to look for factors related to the TT context to explain stylistic shifts in translation.

Munday (2007, 2008) has also made a significant contribution to the aspect that Saldanha and other scholars endeavour to explore: paying close attention to the shifts of linguistic features between ST and TT, and viewing prominent items in the TT as indications of the ideological concept of voice, particularly the translator's creative fingerprints. More specific details on the translator's realisation of style in translated texts are demonstrated in his (2008) study of a range of English translations of Latin American fiction, in which Munday finds that the linguistic choices preferred by different translators, such as syntactic calquing, syntactic amplification, creative or idiomatic collocations, profoundly affect the interpersonal, ideational and textual functions of the translated texts. Munday then links the findings about the translator's stylistic

choices on a lexicogrammatical level to a broader discursive framework. Taking into account the role of relevant institutions, the political and cultural relationships between the countries of Latin America and the United States in the twentieth century, and the existing cultural images which potentially affect subsequent cultural transfer, Munday has provided in-depth insights into the connections between style, translation, and ideology.

The above arguments regarding stylistic shifts in translation are a further confirmation of the manipulative essence of translation activities. The influence of the shifts, as stylistic analysis can demonstrate, has gone beyond the textual level – where translated texts gain or lose the linguistic characteristics of original writings – to produce broader socio-cultural implications. The linguistic choices that translators make to produce the TT reveal and reflect how the translators perceive the aesthetics and poetics represented in the ST and what image of the ST culture they wish to project into the TT's cultural context. At the same time, as Malmkjær claims, the choices indicate the translator's freedom 'in selecting from the options offered by a given language system [to] elicit a certain response in the reader' (2004, 15). Therefore, stylistic shifts made possible by translators also reveal the general way in which target readers perceive literary texts coming from the ST's context.

Insofar as stylistic analysis is employed in studies of literary translation, it is worth mentioning the significance of applying this methodology to study translations of avant-garde literature. In avant-garde literary works, writers are committed to the innovation of linguistic forms to increase aesthetic effects upon readers and potentially recover readers' sensations of the artfulness of literature (Hutchinson 2011). When translation is needed to introduce avant-garde literary works to readers in a different cultural context, the innovative linguistic forms within the STs may pose great difficulties to translators. Being the first reader of the ST, a translator has

first to perceive and interpret the author's linguistic choices and the connotations conveyed in the text; then as the rewriter of the TT, the translator must make linguistic choices from the target language system. According to Lefevere, the degree of intended effect a translator can achieve in the translation is constrained by not only 'the difference between the language of the original and that of the translation ... [but also] the translation poetics' of the time (2017, 76). The translation of a distinctive style like that in avant-garde fiction requires translators to be highly perceptive and creative during translation production, a process which may result in obvious stylistic shifts between the original writing and the translated text. In these cases, a descriptive analysis of stylistic shifts is likely to produce fruitful results in terms of how translators work under context-specific constraints and play with their creativity to construct a derivative style in the translated text.

With regards to the translation of avant-garde literature, Lefevere (1998) illustrates how translators rewrote the works of the German avant-garde playwright Bertolt Brecht in order to acculturate or canonise him in the Anglophone cultural context. Although Lefevere does not concentrate on stylistic analysis of translations alone, the comparison of Brecht's *Mütter Courage* (1939) to its three English translations reveals that translators have altered the style of Brecht's avant-garde play to make the English scripts fit 'the concept of theatre symbolised by Broadway' (1998, 114). In order to make Brecht comprehensible to English-speaking audiences, the translators chose the 'means of the excessive use of hyphens and italics' (1998, 115), thereby removing the ambiguities that Brecht foregrounds in his plays to allow his audiences to piece together the plots of the plays on their own. Another stylistic change pertains to the texts of the songs that Brecht uses to create an alienation effect: the original songs, which are jarring and concrete, are made to rhyme in the translations so that 'the texts of the songs conform more to

the style and register of the musical' that Broadway theatre audiences are familiar with (1998, 116). Based on the observation of these stylistic shifts between STs and TTs, Lefevere (1998) argues for the essential role of translation in establishing or invalidating Brecht's fame as an avant-garde artist among English-speaking audiences (1998).

Other studies have also explored stylistic shifts that take place in the translation of avant-garde literature and sought out factors within the target cultural context to explain such translation choices. For instance, Millán-Varela's (2004) study of the Galician translation of James Joyce's *The Dead* (1914) reveals that Joyce's skilful use of free indirect speech and oral tone in characterisation, as well as the presence of irony and subtlety in the narrator's voice, have been generalised in translations. Referring the stylistic shifts back to the socio-linguistic situation of translators, Millán-Varela (2004) points out that the existing urge in the Galician cultural context to emphasise the Galician identity is the main cause of prioritising the content over stylistic characteristics of Joyce's story in translation. Likewise, employing the method of stylistic analysis, Morini (2014) investigates the differences in deictic shifts between Virginia Woolf's experimental fiction *To the Lighthouse* and its Italian translation. As thus revealed, Woolf's distinctive idiolects defining her narrative experiment are compromised in order to produce a 'highly polished' narrative text conforming to the Italian idea of 'high literature' of the time (2014, 139–140). Such translation changes have significantly affected Woolf's image in Italy, where she is recognised by Italian-speaking readers and critics for the 'heightening of register', which could actually be attributed more to her translator's rewriting than Woolf's own avant-garde narrative techniques (2014, 139).

Regardless of the variant aspects of literary style that researchers focus on, the above studies testify to the effectiveness of combining stylistics with translation studies. Focusing on tracing

the stylistic shifts between ST and TT, and exploring the impacts of translation changes on target readers' perceptions and interpretations of the ST, translational stylistics has been established as an effective methodology to investigate the complexities of translation phenomena. In particular, studies about translating distinctive stylistic features of avant-garde literature into different languages heighten the active role of translators as creative artists who construct a derivative style of the original author to achieve the intended stylistic effects in the target cultural context.

Berman has realised that 'translation is the trial of the foreign [and exhibits] ... the most singular power of the translating act: to reveal the foreign work's most original kernel, its most deeply buried, most self-same, but equally the most "distant" from itself' (2012, 240). Aware of this, Berman locates twelve 'deforming tendencies' that cause a translation to deviate from its essential aims (2012, 240–253). Among them, specific tendencies such as 'rationalization', 'clarification', and 'rhetorization' contribute to shaping a translated prose into a readable text characterised with orderly syntactic structures, clear textual meanings, and transparent styles (Berman 2012, 244–247). As Berman suggests, style, in the formalist sense the most fundamental element to define a literary text, is put under trial when a literary text is uprooted from its original language ground and transferred into a different language. Stylistic shifts between ST and TT are an inevitable consequence of translation. For researchers exploring the essence of translation, identifying and analysing stylistic shifts against relevant socio-political and cultural contexts are a fundamental practice. Therefore, the rest of this chapter focuses on the linguistic devices that contribute to the distinctive style of Chinese avant-garde fiction. It then compares STs and TTs to investigate the stylistic shifts that occur in translation. Finally, through referring to the translation situation and the cultural contexts of the time, deeper analysis is conducted to identify the impacts of the stylistic shifts on Anglophone readers' interpretations

and receptions of Chinese avant-garde fiction, as well as their ideological presumption of contemporary Chinese literature in general.

5.2 De-familiarised language in Chinese avant-garde fiction

Prior to locating and analysing stylistic shifts in the English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction, an in-depth understanding of the creative and artistic use of language by source-language novelists is necessary. Therefore, this part of the chapter analyses Chinese avant-garde novelists' conceptions of literary language and their characteristic linguistic choices. This ST-oriented analysis is intended to present a clear picture of the distinctive styles in Chinese avant-garde fiction and the aesthetic effects that can be perceived by Anglophone readers when representative works of avant-garde novelists are translated into English.

Chapter 1 has discussed the historical and socio-cultural contexts from which Chinese avant-garde novelists emerged, and also explained the contextual effect on these writers' evasive and irreverent attitudes towards political power and literary norms. Unlike conventional writers in Chinese literary history whose creations were designed to serve the dominant socio-political ideology, avant-garde experimentalists endeavoured to reinvent the *raison d'être* for literary creation, thereby pursuing an autonomous role for literature that was free from the control of political power. Their fiction experimentation was further instigated after the idea of aestheticism advocated by Western (post-)modernist writers flew into China. While largely appropriating Western (post-)modern literary theories and techniques (Wang 1992), Chinese avant-garde novelists successfully shifted the focus of literary creation from 'what to write' to 'how to write' (Chen 1991, 121, my translation), so that they 'wrote for the sake of writing, as a pleasant, non-referential, atypical experience encased in the history of literature' (Wu 2000, 135).

Chinese avant-garde literary experimentation contributed to the collapse of the dogma of ‘art for people’s sake’, a principle that had dictated literary creation in Communist China (Link 2000). Instead, young avant-garde novelists upheld the ideal of ‘art for art’s sake’, and foregrounded formalist aesthetics of autonomous language in fictional narratives (Wu 1997, 35, my translation). A range of literary critics, including Li Jie (1988), Chen Xiaoming (1989, 109–112), Li Tuo (1989, 1993), Wang Ning (1992), Wu Yiqin (1997), Chen Sihe (1999, 291–301), and Cai Yongchun (2003, 2011), argue for the subversive and transcendent nature of avant-garde fictional language. From a historical point of view, these critics indicate the contribution that such an experimental language has made to the transformation of literary language, as well as Chinese writers’ pursuit of an independent literary identity. There are also an increasing number of studies interested in the concrete linguistic expressions of avant-garde language. By offering examples of the creative linguistic choices of Chinese avant-garde novelists and analysing aesthetic effects produced therefrom, scholars such as Chen Xiaoming (2004), Zhai Hong (2004), Cai Yongchun (2003, 2011), Chen Lixuan and Zhang Hengjun (2011), and Wang Yongbin (2012) have attempted to figure out the specific aspects of the avant-garde language style. Their literary analyses and criticisms of the experimental language cover various levels, from the choice of words and syntax, to rhetorical devices, and their semantic and discursive functions. Nearly all these scholars attribute the avant-garde stylistic language to the increasing awareness of the ‘subject-position of language’ in 1980s China (Wang 1996, 245).

With the arrival of avant-garde fiction, the principal role of language in fictional narratives started to get widely recognised in the Chinese literary field. Reviewing the development of literary language in modern and contemporary China, Li Tuo criticises the conventional ‘superstitious belief in the absolute clarity and truthfulness of language and their equally

superstitious belief that only when language has given expression to some “truth” in the objective world can it be called “art” (1993, 70). Jing Wang notes that traditional Chinese aesthetics tended to ‘deny the linguistic signifier its own integrity’, thus resulting in the prevailing belief that ‘once meaning is grasped, the linguistic sign can be forgotten’ (1996, 149). The subordinate position of literary language was exacerbated when China was swept by ‘Marxist aesthetics’, which conceived that the value of literature lay in its reflection of the objective conditions of life, and placed the emphasis of literary criticism on content over form (Abrams 2005 155–161). Following Mao Zedong’s Talks at the *Yan ’an Forum on Literature and Art* (1942), which called writers to serve the proletarian revolutionary cause, literary creation was subject to stricter socialist-realist conventions prescribed by the Party (Denton 2003b). Especially during the Cultural Revolution, the linguistic dimension of almost all artistic and literary works was reduced to variant forms of Maoist style; a predominant discourse derived from Maoist ideology (Li 1993, 73–74). As Yongchun Cai comments, when Maoist language exercised total control over literary production, there was ‘no room left for the creative exercise of language... [and] any deviation in language [wa]s interpreted as doing linguistic violence to the political reality’ (2003, 254). Speaking specifically about the genre of fiction in China, Ge Fei points out that the language of fiction is conventionally taken as ‘a tool to tell the story’ (2002, 84, my translation), with readers seeing only its ‘referential and expressive value’ (2002, 85, my translation). There prevails the belief that fictional language is ‘secondary to the themes and content of fiction’, and should ‘serve the function of fiction to reflect real life’ (Ge Fei 2002, 85, my translation).

The absolute dominance of Maoist style was challenged immediately after the Cultural Revolution. As discussed in Chapter 1, writers rising to fame in the literary movements of the

1980s, such as Scar Literature, Retrospective and Reform Literature, and Root-seeking Literature, were bent on innovating the ways of literary creation to criticise the hegemony of Maoist discourse. Whilst these movements offered new aesthetic experiences for Chinese readers by excavating themes suppressed by Maoist discourse, they rarely called into question the utilitarian view of literary language, or the referential relation between linguistic signs and meanings. As Zhao Y.H. Henry explains, new literary waves preceding avant-garde fiction, despite wide-range differences, shared the concept of language as a linguistic instrument to convey to readers certain themes and content so as to set up for them a specific correspondence between the literary text and the real world (1993, 9–18).

Avant-garde fiction represents a real rebellion and subversion against literary conventions and norms. As Li Tuo argues, avant-garde fiction marks an unprecedented success of contemporary Chinese writers in ‘breaking down the conventions of literary language and undermining the cultural order prescribed by the linguistic code’ (1993, 68). Li Tuo highlights the value of the subversive and transcendent language created by avant-garde novelists in the following words:

These young writers have offered a new approach toward writing, an attitude that basically refutes the view of language as a transparent medium capable of portraying reality, and instead regards what is called “truth” as no more than the order imposed on things by a particular set of symbols. Consequently, they believe that the primary mission of literature should be to revolt against the established linguistic order and the mode of reception, and to create new languages and literary forms in order to provide new meanings for society. (1993, 76)

Likewise, Jing Wang praises the radically-new language of avant-garde fiction, because it provides ‘a means of articulating the withering of reality’ while emancipating language from ‘the continuum of the sign-representation-reality’ (1998, 9). Moreover, it foregrounds ‘the floating signifier that called for the critical assessment of the new fiction as a mere linguistic maze’ (J. Wang 1998, 9). Sharing Jing Wang’s view, Lu Jie also contends that the de-familiarised

language such as that in Yu Hua's avant-garde fiction 'is to both foreground the autonomy of language (its autonomous system and its ontological split with the real) and to affirm its constructive and creative possibilities' (1998, 118).

As the above literary criticisms suggest, avant-garde writers take the experimentation of language as a key field to rebel against the conventional and dominant literary thoughts and practices, thereby realising the transformation from 'what to write' to 'how to write', and from 'art for people/ life's sake' to 'art for art's sake'. In fact, as Wu Yiqin indicates, language experimentation can be so radical that 'only linguistic signs can be spotted from the text, whereas plot, characters, and subject matters all become vague and even invisible for readers' (1997, 109, my translation). Since all essential elements to construct the so-called 'real world' in conventional realist fiction are removed, readers are forced to concentrate on appreciating the aesthetic and literary effects brought about by the creative use of linguistic devices, rather than 'perceiving and interpreting anything else outside the language' (Wu 1997, 109, my translation). All these linguistic choices made to promote readers' perceptions of the literary texts would ultimately improve the reader's awareness of 'the linguistic artificiality and the ontological status of language' (Cai 2011, 345).

In practice, avant-garde writers use creative deformations to estrange the reader from the familiar narrative language. To a degree, fiction is turned into what Jing Wang calls, 'a pure energy field, and an aesthetic game of narration' (1998, 9). De-familiarisation or the estrangement of language happens on various levels. Wu Yiqin observes that 'the strangeness and novelty that readers perceive from the fiction come right from the perceptions of the de-familiarised language sense, syntactical structures and lexical choices' (1997, 109, my translation). Therefore, Wu suggests that 'in order to perceive and appreciate the distinctiveness

and novelty of the avant-garde language, we ought to care about not only the syntax, but also the lexis, and even the punctuation' (1997, 109, my translation).

It is worth pointing out that the distinctive features of Chinese language also facilitate Chinese avant-garde novelists to carry out their experimentation of language. Differing from Western languages that are based on a phonetic or alphabetic system of writing, Li Tuo argues that the Chinese language based on ideographs is less constrained by grammatical rules (1993); specifically:

There is no set pattern for establishing the boundaries and nature of words, phrases and sentences, or unit of meaning, it is possible to form an infinitely rich vocabulary out of the random collisions among characters and words, as well as to combine, break down, repeat and aggregate word groups at will, with the result that this kind of writing is suffused with an intense subjectivism. (Li 1993, 70)

Due to these peculiarities of Chinese language, Chinese avant-gardists could be freer to create new forms of expression or to endow existing linguistic signifiers with new connotations. Given this circumstance, semantic ambiguity is favoured in Chinese avant-garde fictional works, leaving readers rare chances to decide the exact meaning of texts.

5.3 Chinese avant-garde aesthetics in English: stylistic shifts

With a radically new concept of literary language, Chinese avant-garde novelists have paid unprecedented attention to the aesthetic effects that a special arrangement of linguistic elements can elicit in readers. Their experimentation with language covers various levels: phonologically, syntactically, and semantically, which ultimately contributes a rich repertoire of distinctive styles to Chinese avant-garde fiction. The rest of this chapter focuses on one of the most outstanding features in Chinese avant-garde fiction; semantic ambiguity, or in Yu Hua's (1989, 47–48, my translation) words, 'uncertain language'. This part of the chapter identifies the linguistic choices

made by translators to transfer this stylistic feature of Chinese avant-garde fiction, as well as the different aesthetic effects the translated texts might have on target readers. More importantly, the analysis of stylistic shifts is related to the discursive framework in which the Anglophone image of contemporary Chinese fiction is constructed, thereby reflecting the impact of translators' linguistic choices upon target readers' interpretations and receptions of the radically-new literary works originating from China.

5.3.1 The uncertain language of Yu Hua, Ge Fei, and Su Tong

Yu Hua (1989) summarises his own experience of experimental writing in *Xuwei de zuoping* (虚伪的作品, *Hypocritical Works*). In this important piece of critical work, Yu Hua, on behalf of the entire avant-garde school, emphasises the intention to demarcate the boundaries between the artistic language used in his fiction and the standard forms of language used in everyday life. In view of uncertainty, or ambiguity and indeterminateness, as the core of truth and reality, avant-garde experimentalists refute the possibility of using 'rational' and 'innocuous' standard language to construct a certain form of fictional world that can stand as a model of extralinguistic realities (Schweiger 2015, 362). Yu Hua clearly conveys his opposition to the ultimate view that realist writers hold of the ordinary referential and truth-reporting function of language. Instead, he proposes that what fiction can offer is at most an illusion of real experience, the form of which varies according to how individuals perceive the world.

To promote a non-referential view of the relation between reality, fiction, and language among readers, Yu Hua chooses to de-familiarise the standard form of fictional language by what he terms 'uncertain language' (1989, 47–48, my translation). This, he defines as:

Uncertain language is an expression to pursue truth. For a truthful expression, language needs to break the confines of our common knowledge to pursue an

expression that can simultaneously present more than one possibility and level; grammatically, the language should be able to juxtapose, dislocate, and reverse syntactic elements, without the constraint of conventional syntactic rules.... The biggest difference between an uncertain language and the mass language is that: the former highlights the perceptions of the world, while the latter is about judgement. (Yu Hua 1989, 47–48, my translation)

Here, Yu Hua indicates the fundamental idea underlying uncertain language that he attempts to register in literary creation, that is, to consciously make the language vague, ambiguous and uncertain by overstepping the limits of common knowledge and deforming grammatical norms that standard expectations and language are based on. A process like this is close to what Leech and Short describe as ‘foregrounding’, which creative users of language apply to ‘produce original meanings and effects ... against a background of more normal or expected expressions which could have occurred’ (1981, 138–139). Yu Hua’s practice of foregrounding uncertain language has significance that goes beyond the textual level, because underlying the characteristic literary language is his shifting attitude towards fiction writing. As Wang Ning comments, ‘the phenomenal linguistic expressions overflowing the texts by avant-garde novelists indicate that they are dismissive of the practices of writers who undertake the mission of modernist enlightenment, in replacement, they are employing distinctive methods to depict individual conception of reality’ (1992, 147, my translation). After emancipating himself from any onerous burden, Yu Hua, like other Chinese avant-garde novelists, turns writing into an activity of entertainment, committed to expressing personal perceptions and feelings. Their new ways of thinking about and practicing fictional language also have effects on readers. As Lu Jie argues, Yu Hua’s language style ‘has disrupted the habits of readers accustomed to the relative straightforwardness and stylistic homogeneity of realistic literature, and alerted them to critical responsible reading instead of simple and automatic acceptance of the author’ (1998, 118). By exposing their readers to alien linguistic expressions, Chinese avant-garde novelists facilitate in

readers ‘special acts of interpretation in order to make sense of what would otherwise appear strange and unmotivated’ (Leech and Short 1981, 39).

To maximise the aesthetic effects of uncertain language, Yu Hua enthusiastically attends to innovative rhetoric devices. His fictional narratives manifest a preferential employment of figures of speech, such as similes, metaphors, personifications, and hyperboles, which, according to Yu Hua, are potential tools ‘to seek innovative language that can display a world without repetition’ (1989, 48, my translation). Sharing Yu Hua’s view, Ge Fei explains that the creative use of figures of speech is an effective strategy by which novelists de-familiarise everyday language that constrains readers’ imaginations and their awareness of the multi-possibility of the world (2002, 87–90). Literary critics of Chinese avant-garde fiction including David Der-wei Wang (1994), Lu Jie (1998), Chen Xiaoming (2004), Zhai Hong (2004), Ma Jing (2010), Yongchun Cai (2011), and many others, also confirm the distinctive aesthetic effects and metaphysical significance achieved therefrom. Yongchun Cai notes that ‘Yu Hua is obsessed with analogy and trope in presenting seemingly palpable picture-like images through associations and memory’ (2011, 337). For Lu Jie, Yu Hua’s ‘use of idiosyncratic analogies and images simultaneously deconditions the reader and makes her to view certain familiar phenomena with novel sensibilities’ (1998, 122). Ma Jing also argues that ‘the condensed use of figures of speech by Yu Hua largely strengthens the expressive function of language, thus assisting in presenting the forms, actions and images intended by the author in a way unfamiliar to readers’ (2010, 13, my translation). As these critical views commonly show, avant-garde novelists prefer to use alien and strange figures of speech to emphasise literary representation in a figurative sense, which does not remain objective and certain but varies subjectively. In this way, avant-garde novelists not only liberate the text ‘from the iron prison of referential

determinism to make its own figurations of the real' (Wang 1994, 250), but also reshuffle readers' 'inherent aesthetic and ideological expectation' (Wang 1994, 249).

Yu Hua is not the only experimentalist who foreground exceptional linguistic devices to attribute uncertainty and unclarity to fictional language. Ge Fei and Su Tong also consciously present unusual patterning of words and structures associated with violations of syntax and semantics in order to expand readers' perceptions of the fictional world. It is not uncommon for readers of Ge Fei's avant-garde fiction to encounter alien lexical and syntactic items or familiar linguistic elements employed in unexpected places. However, the strange and unmotivated effects resulting from Gei Fei's special use of linguistic devices help to display a kind of uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity related to the fictional world, in terms of personality, psychology, morality, worldview and so on, thereby encouraging multiple interpretations from different perspectives.

Likewise, Su Tong refuses to use transparently clear and logical language which would lead readers to form a specific interpretation. Instead, as Wu Yiqin observes, Su Tong opts for 'objectively neutral and uncertain vocabularies and negative syntactic structures' to illustrate the incapability of the narrator or author to know the real world (1997, 190, my translation). Due to the sense of uncertainty rising from Su Tong's linguistic choices, readers of his fictional works tend to be placed in an equal position to the author as onlookers detached from the world of characters. In this way, Su Tong endows readers with the maximum freedom to form their own understanding of the story, based simply on their perceptions of the intrinsic characteristics of the textual elements rather than the established links between linguistic symbols and the external world in which the author and readers reside.

Individual avant-garde novelists may foreground variant aspects of language to achieve the style of uncertainty in their fiction. Yet, they share the goal of eliciting readers' responses to interpret the strange linguistic experiences that they undergo from multiple perspectives whilst remaining within the limits of the fictional world. As Zhai Hong argues, the uncertain language pursued by avant-garde experimentalists – whether in the form of deliberately misused word classes, unconventional collocations of words, or syntactic structures appearing dislocated, elongated, shortened, inversed, and distorted – evidences the capacity of fiction writers in providing an artistic reading experience for their readers (2004, 72–111).

5.3.2 Translating the stylistics of uncertain language

With uncertainty as a core stylistic feature in Chinese avant-garde fiction, it becomes more of an issue for translators to transfer to Anglophone readers what they read in the source texts. The almost impossible task of determining the correct interpretation of the ST is just one part of the obstacle translators have to face. The other part is related to the choice between fidelity to the author, and readability for target audiences. Therefore, this section presents representative examples to illustrate the linguistic choices made by Chinese avant-garde novelists to create uncertainty within fictional narratives. By comparing the forms and stylistic effects in translated texts to those in the original texts, this section discusses the stylistic shifts that result from translators' variant interpretations and linguistic choices. To assist these analyses, sequence numbers are assigned to each example.

The initial three examples are taken from avant-garde fictional works by Yu Hua. They evidence the de-familiarised vocabulary and syntactic patterns in Yu Hua's uncertain language, and illustrate the strategies that translators employ to convey Yu Hua's distinctive style to English-speaking readers.

[1] 他就用手去摸摸堂弟的脸，那脸像棉花一样松软。他禁不住使劲拧了一下，于是堂弟“哇”的一声**灿烂地**哭了起来。(Yu Hua 1988, 5)

LT: He touched the cousin's face with his hand, which was as soft as cotton. He couldn't help pinching hard, consequently his cousin burst into a **brilliant** cry.

TT1: With both hands he **stroked** his cousin's face, which felt as soft and gentle as cotton wool. He couldn't help **pressing harder**, and with a magnificent 'wa' his cousin **began to cry**. (Helen Wang 1993, 147)

TT2: The boy brushed his hand against his cousin's face and found it soft and fluffy, just like cotton. Then, seized by an uncontrollable urge, he gave one cheek an energetic pinch. With a loud wail the baby **began to cry**. (Jeanne Tai 1994, 24)

In the first sentence extracted from Yu Hua's *Xianshi yizhong* (现实一种) (1988), the most pronounced linguistic item is the adverbial modifier '灿烂地' (brilliantly), which Yu Hua employs to describe the action of '哭' (burst into tears). A combination like this produces an effect of synaesthesia when the qualities of brightness and colour are attributed to the sound and action of a crying baby. Synaesthesia is a technique commonly adopted by writers. However, the adverb-verb collocation therein is alien and unusual since '灿烂地' (brilliantly) – implying a sense of happiness and gorgeousness – is linked to the status of crying which is caused by distress or pain (the possibility that the baby is crying out of excitement is excluded here). Such a word combination is uncommon in Chinese, nevertheless, it enables readers to directly perceive the thoughts and feelings of the young male protagonist, and allow them to imagine the shocking pleasure the boy attains from abusing his defenceless baby cousin.

In the existing two versions of translation – one by Helen Wang and included in Zhao's *The Lost Boat* (1993) and the other by Jeanne Tai in David Der-wei Wang's *Running Wild* (1994), the original adverb-verb collocation is similarly replaced with a standard expression, 'began to cry'. After losing the adjunct 'brilliantly' which signifies the multiplicity of the textual element, the two translators produce more readable texts. Compared to Jeanne Tai, Helen Wang leaves a

more visible fingerprint, since the onomatopoeic ‘wa’ she applies is a clear calque of the Chinese onomatopoeia, ‘哇’ (wa). Also revealed in Wang’s translation is her attempt to compensate the loss of effect caused by the missing lexicon ‘brilliantly’, for she not only inserts adjuncts such as ‘with both hands’ and ‘magnificent’, but also dramatizes the actions of the character by replacing the original verbs ‘touch’ and ‘pinch’ with ‘stroke’ and ‘press’ to indicate the boy’s violence towards his little cousin.

[2] 我就这样从早晨里穿过，现在走进了下午的尾声，而且还看到了黄昏的头发。
(Yu Hua 1987, 4)

LT: So I went through the morning, and now have entered the epilogue of the afternoon, and seen the hair of dusk.

TT1: I walked through the morning, now it’s the tail end of the afternoon, and it won’t be long until I see the tip of dusk. (Andrew Jones 1996, 3)

TT2: I walked through the morning, now it’s the tail end of the afternoon, and soon I’ll see the hair of dusk. (Andrew Jones 1995, 485; 2007, 439)

The above example from Yu Hua’s *Shibasui chumen yuanxing* (十八岁出门远行) (1987)

displays the exceptional lexical and syntactic structures that Yu Hua frequently applies to set up fictional timelines. Unlike conventional realist writers who use concise standard language to set up a specific temporal framework for the plot to evolve, Yu Hua tends to make his language vague and substantial so that the special-temporal elements become uncertain and meaningless. Here, the strangeness originates from the unusual collocations. Nominal phrases such as ‘下午的尾声’ (the epilogue of the afternoon) and ‘黄昏的头发’ (the hair of dusk) dissolve the common concept of time after Yu Hua rearranges standard linguistic categories and turns the abstract concept of time into physical objects. Further, Yu Hua places these strange nominal phrases in place of objects to present non-standard verb-object structures. The violation of Chinese grammatical rules, however, contributes to Yu Hua’s flowery rhetorical expressions, and helps to

sketch out a visual domain consisting of novel images for readers to engage with. The linguistic choices made by Yu Hua to represent the passing time are a challenge to the conventional recognition of the flow of time as well as writing methods. Yet, the sense of strangeness provided by them demonstrates, to a large extent, the irrationality and absurdity of the fictional world. Beyond the textual level, these non-standard expressions weaken the referential function of language worshipped by realist writers, as if making a clear indication of time is no longer important for fictional narratives.

Andrew Jones has translated a series of Yu Hua's short fiction, including the piece from which the above example is excerpted. His translation, *On the Road at Eighteen*, was featured in the English collection of Yu Hua's avant-garde fiction, *The Past and the Punishment* (1996), and *The Columbia Anthology* (1995, 2007) where it appears with some slight changes. Jones persevered in his choices to transfer the original odd verb-object structure in the second clause, thus '现在走进了下午的尾声' (and now have entered the epilogue of the afternoon) remains the same in the two versions of translation as: 'now it's the tail end of the afternoon'. As the strange linguistic form of the second clause was omitted, the alienating visual effects produced in the ST were removed, giving way to a more readable and logical sentence to clarify the present time of the story in Jones's translations. The difference between the two translations of the excerpted sentence lies in the varying approaches to translating the last clause, which contains the odd nominal structure, '而且还看到了黄昏的头发' (and seen the hair of dusk). In the more literal translation collected in *The Columbia Anthology* (1995, 2007), the original unconventional collocation is kept. However, in the translation published in 1996, Jones translated the nominal structure into 'the tip of dusk', thereby removing the strangeness caused by the original metaphorical expression. He also replaced the formal and emphatic expression, 'and soon I'll

see', with the more colloquial syntactic structure in the 1996 translation, 'it won't be long until I see'. A revision like this can be interpreted as Jones's efforts to further rewrite Yu Hua's alien expression 'the hair of dusk' to meet the linguistic standards that Anglophone readers are familiar with.

In *Shibasui chumen yuanxing*, Yu Hua depicts the absurd and chaotic experiences of a young boy when he travels alone for the first time. Xiaobing Tang argues that 'Kafkaesque absurdity' arises from Yu Hua's depiction of 'random yet methodical violence' (2000, 200). Examples discussed here demonstrate that Yu Hua also relies on manipulating the language itself to represent the restless and paradoxical inner world of the character. The character's incapacity in interpreting the reality he is facing is represented by the distinctive language used by Yu Hua, as the following example about the character's psychological activities similarly illustrates.

[3] 我奇怪自己走了一天竟只遇到一次汽车。**那时**是中午，**那时**我刚刚想搭车，但**那时**仅仅只是想搭车，**那时**我还没为旅店操心，**那时**我只是觉得搭一下车非常了不起。(Yu Hua 1987, 4)

LT: I wondered that I had only run into one car in the whole day. It was noon, **when** I just wanted to take a ride, but **when** I only wanted to take a ride, **when** I didn't worry about the hotel, **when** I just thought it was great to take a ride.

TT2: I think it's weird that I've walked all day and only seen one car. That was around noon, **when** I'd just begun to think about hitchhiking. But all I was doing was thinking about hitchhiking. I hadn't started to worry about finding an inn – I was only thinking about how amazing it would be to get a lift from someone. (Andrew Jones 1995, 485; 2007, 440)

The above example is iconic, representing Yu Hua's practice of juxtaposing syntactic elements to provide readers with an opportunity to perceive by themselves the sense of indeterminacy, fragmentation, and irrationality related to the fictional world. Here, the demonstrative '那时' (when) indicating a distant and specific moment is repeated five times in one single Chinese sentence. The unusual parallel coordination of adverbial clauses of time results in an expression

that clearly deviates from a reader's experience of everyday language, and makes the syntactic structure redundant and dull at first sight. However, this type of strange and alienating language effectively denotes the anxious and conflicted mental state of the character at that moment, providing readers with direct access to the character's complex perceptions.

An exceptional linguistic form like this endows Yu Hua's avant-garde fiction with stylistic significance, and contributes to a vivid representation of the character's inner world. However, an opposite deforming tendency functioning in the translation can be uncovered when the original text is compared to Jones's translation in *The Columbia Anthology* (1995, 2007). As shown in this example, Jones is not tolerant of the formal excess in the original text. Therefore, Jones gets rid of the original redundant patterning of adverbial temporal clauses and expands the original single sentence into four sentences. By lengthening the expression and augmenting the gross mass of the text, Jones manages to render the original text more readable, rational, and coherent. However, the clarity and concreteness featuring in the translation come at a price. After changing Yu Hua's expressions, Jones also discards the original method of signifying that relies on the exceptionally clumsy syntactic structure, and thence obscures the deeper meaning contained in the linguistic form. While Jones removes the rhythmic and fragmented flow of the character's psychological activities and flattens Yu Hua's strange language, there are less opportunities of presenting to English-speaking readers the author's idiosyncratic style.

After analysing the translation shifts which occur with regards to the aspects of the lexical choices and syntactic structure that Yu Hua focuses on to construct uncertain language, the following example illustrates Jones's means of dealing with Yu Hua's condensed use of figures of speech for a graphic depiction of violence.

[4] 此刻他放弃了对逃跑的太阳的追逐，而走上了一条苍白的路。因为两旁梧桐树枝紧密地交叉在一起，阳光被阻止在树叶上，所以水泥路显得苍白无力，像一根新鲜的白骨横躺在那里。猛然离开热烈的阳光而走在了这里，仿佛进入阴森的洞穴。他看到每隔不远就有两颗人头悬挂着，这些人头已经流尽了鲜血，也成了苍白。但他仔细瞧后，又觉得这些人头仿佛是路灯。他知道当四周黑暗起来后，它们会突然闪亮，那时候里面又充满流动的鲜血了。(Yu Hua 1987, 67)

LT: At this moment, he gave up chasing the sun, and walked down a **pallid road**. **Because** the branches of the *wutong* trees lining the two sides of the road densely interlocked, and the sunlight was blocked outside the leaves, the concrete road looked pallid, **like a fresh white bone lying there**. He walked suddenly out of the bright sunlight and into here, **as if** entered a **gloomy cave**. He saw **human heads** suspended in every few paces. The heads, drained of blood, also became pallid. However, when he carefully looked at them, he also felt that these heads were **like road lamps**. He **knew** that when it got dark around, they would suddenly flash. At that moment, they would be filled with **fresh flowing blood** again.

TT: He lost interest in the chase and began to walk down a road **enveloped in pallid shadow** by the *wutong* trees lining its flanks, whose densely interlocking branches blocked the intense sunlight overhead. He walked suddenly out of the bright daylight and into what seemed like a dark, gloomy cavern. The road **unfolded** ahead of him like a **carpet of whitened bones**. Every few paces, human heads hung suspended **from poles on either side of the road**. Drained of blood, they too had grown pallid and white. When he began to examine them closely, though, he found that they also looked something like street lamps. He **sensed** that these heads would begin to churn with gleaming blood at nightfall. (Andrew Jones 1998, 85)

This Chinese paragraph extracted from Yu Hua's *Yijiubaliu* (一九八六) (1987) exemplifies the author's preferential employment of similes and metaphors to emphasize 'linguistic indeterminacy and ambiguous referentiality' (Schweiger 2015, 361). The story tells, in the most graphic detail, the performance of self-mutilation of a traumatised madman who returns to his hometown to look for his wife and daughter ten years after the Cultural Revolution. Whereas conventional Cultural Revolution-related narratives depend on a reliable narrator to communicate traumatic experiences to readers, Yu Hua frequently uses the madman's unnerving and illogical narrative fragments to interrupt the viewpoints of spectators within the story. One of the most effective techniques of many used to foreground the irrationality and perversion that

characterise the madman's perceptions and narration is to apply figures of speech based on bizarre connections between the thing being described (tenor) and the figurative language used to describe it (vehicle). As shown in this example, Yu Hua likens '苍白的路' (a pallid road) to '新鲜的白骨' (a fresh white bone), '树荫' (the shade of trees) to '阴森的洞穴' (a gloomy cave), '路灯' (road lamps) to '悬挂着的人头' (human's heads hung suspended from poles), and '闪亮的路灯' (lamplight) to '流动的鲜血' (fresh flowing blood). These figures of speech present a range of gruesome images that Chinese readers rarely link to everyday objects, leading readers to imagine the forms of violence and death in the madman's mind. At the same time, as the structure '像/ 仿佛.....' (like...) is widely employed throughout the madman's narrative, a shocking surreal scene is created. The vehicle images within the scene effectively demonstrate the lunatic's futile efforts to make sense of his surroundings. As the products of his hallucination, these vivid images seem to exist alone within the fictional world, unexplainable according to the commonly known. The similes and metaphors that rely on alien figurative language to realise the descriptive function are also underlined with indeterminacy and ambiguity, unable to give a precise representation of the irrational mind of a traumatised man. Such incapacity to rely on linguistic elements to narrate the aftereffect of historical trauma further acts as a symbol which invalidates the possibility of realistic narrating the past while articulating Yu Hua's postmodern notion of history (Schweiger 2015, 358–364).

According to Larson (1984) and Newmark (1988), interlingual translations of similes and metaphors are a challenging task. As Dobrzyfiska argues, depending on the choice of translation tactics, 'a translation may represent the sense exactly while blurring at the same time the cultural specificity of imagery that is the metaphorical vehicle, or it may deliberately bring into

prominence the semantic exoticism of the original by transferring a metaphor in its surface form' (1995, 599). With regards to the abundant use of novel similes and metaphors in Yu Hua's avant-garde fiction, translators have had to face more challenges. The linguistic indeterminacy and ambiguous referentiality featuring in the ST hinder the translator from interpreting imagery presented through original figurative expressions, as well as from finding English equivalences that can communicate both the meaning and the linguistic form to intended readers.

Comparison between the ST and Jones's translation *1986* which is collected in Jing Wang's *China's Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998) shows that, to render the similes and metaphors in the excerpted paragraph, Jones chose to retain the images used by Yu Hua, but added further explanatory information to the images to clarify the meanings of the translated figures of speech for Anglophone readers. For instance, the lunatic narrator in Yu Hua's text perceives the pallid concrete road, which is compared to '一根新鲜的白骨横躺在那里' (a fresh white bone lying there). According to common knowledge, there is little comparability between the tenor and the vehicle. Yet, in the madman's hallucinatory vision of his surroundings, objects can exist in the most irrational forms. However, Jones's translation does not allow this extent of irrationality and illogicity. Therefore, in explaining why the concrete road looks pallid, Jones avoids using a strange noun phrase like 'a pallid road' to describe the narrator's view.

Furthermore, Jones re-arranges the sentence order, so that the narrator's perception of the white bone image is explained by the suggestion that the narrator has moved out of the bright daylight into the dark shade of a tree. With these changes, the image of 'a carpet of whitened bones' in Jones's translation does not appear as bizarre as that in the ST. In dealing with the image of '人头悬挂着' (human heads suspended), the translation provides additional location information,

‘from poles on either side of the road’, thereby forecasting the tenor of lamplights represented in the subsequent sentence.

The ways in which Jones projects the vehicle images, and reconstructs the surreal scene reveal his attempts to rationalise the narrator’s uncanny sensation of his present reality in Yu Hua’s text. After adding explanatory information to the original similes and metaphors, Jones manages to pass on more definite and transparent semantic meanings to Anglophone readers. Nevertheless, a translation tactic like this also clarifies the boundaries between hallucination and the reality that Yu Hua wishes to conceal in the madman’s irrational narrative. The madman narrator in Jones’s translation is more capable of making sense of the objects surrounding him and narrating his points of view in rational and transparent language. A certain degree of clarity may be achieved at the level of semantic meaning after reducing linguistic indeterminacy in Yu Hua’s fiction. Yet, the translational intervention in Yu Hua’s employment of similes and metaphors also alters the author’s methods of signifying the unrepresentable traumatic experience.

The foregoing examples containing Jones’s translations illustrate the sacrifice of images, rhythms, and rhetoric devices essential to the original uncertain language that a translator has to make for the translations to be accessible to their intended Anglophone readers. Interestingly, Jones confesses the inevitable loss of Yu Hua’s style in the ‘translator’s postscript’ attached to the translation collection of Yu Hua’s works (1996, 263–274). Such a loss does not mean that Jones’s translation is inadequate. Rather, following Yu Hua’s instruction that the most suitable translation of his work would be the one that can ‘get the images and the rhythms of my language down on paper’, Jones tries his best to reproduce his experience of reading Yu Hua’s experimental fiction in English (Jones 1996, 272). However, Jones, like most translators who are

‘trapped between the tasks of conveying the literal sense of a literary work and capturing its essence’, admits that his translations, which he carries out with his best efforts, can only be a ‘rough analogue of his utterly distinctive style’ (1996, 272). The way in which Jones translates Yu Hua’s uncertain language echoes, to some degree, the strategies undertaken by Helen Wang and Jeanne Tai. All three exemplary translators are literary critics who recognise the experimental value of Yu Hua’s linguistic style. However, comparative analysis of their translations and Yu Hua’s original works shows that his English translators tend to replace the original unconventional vocabulary patterns, syntactic structures, and figures of speech with expressions that comply with the conventional senses of reality of the target readership.

Yu Hua is not the only Chinese writer whose uncertain language, essential to his experimental fiction, has been impoverished after being rendered into English. Other avant-garde novelists who also employ exceptional and alienating linguistic elements to construct a fictional world characterised with uncertainty and irrationality have experienced similar deforming tendencies when their works have gone through the hands of translators to reach the intended Anglophone readers. To illuminate the strategies adopted to re-create Ge Fei’s distinctive style in translations, the following two examples containing texts extracted from Ge Fei’s *Qinghuang* (青黄) (1988) and their English translations are presented.

[5] 悲伤的阴影重叠在他脸上，使他的皮肤看上去像石头一样坚硬。(Ge Fei 1988, 18)

LT: Sorrowful shadows overlapped on his face, making his skin look as hard as stone.

TT: Shades of sorrow had etched heavy lines on his face and caused the skin **on his face** to appear hard as stone. (Eva Shan Chou 1998, 24)

[6] 枯黄的树叶和草尖上覆盖了一层薄霜，鸟儿迟暮地飞走了。在它孤单的叫声中，空气变得越来越干燥。(Ge Fei 1988, 25)

LT: The withered leaves and grass tips were covered with a thin layer of frost, and the birds **in a twilight way** flew away. In their lonely voice, the air became drier.

TT: There were withering yellow leaves and a thin layer of frost on the grass. Some birds had not yet left for the south, and amidst their lonely cries, the air seemed to have become drier. (Eva Shan Chou 1998, 37)

The two sentences exemplify Ge Fei's anomalous use of poetic language to build what Zhao Henry Y.H. calls 'an unreal or even anti-real reality where the imaginative overwhelms the apparently real, evoking in these works a powerful dream-like atmosphere' (1992, 94).

Expressions such as '悲伤的阴影重叠在他脸上' (sorrowful shadows overlapped on his face) are singularly remarkable, as Ge Fei attributes human emotion to an inanimate object. When viewed alone, a nominal phrase such as '悲伤的阴影' (sorrowful shadows) might be interpreted as the result of applying the technique of pathetic fallacy to increase the vividness of the image of 'shadow' in description. Yet, seen in the context of where the expression comes from, the whole sentence is intended to convey the literal meaning of the sorrowful look on the character's face, '悲伤' (sorrow), and thereby serves as an abstract nominal subject for the subsequent clause '使他的皮肤看上去像石头一样坚硬' (making his skin look as hard as stone). In other words, the whole sentence literally means that the sorrowful heavy expression in the old man's face made the skin of his face appear tight. Ge Fei's method of describing the appearance of the old man not only blurs the boundaries between abstract and concrete lexical categories, but also goes beyond the conventional imagination of the effect of sadness on a person's appearance. An incongruous sentence like this requires readers to make efforts to understand its semantic meaning as well as the role played by the linguistic elements. Simultaneously, it offers readers an opportunity to appreciate the expressive power of language in creating an enigmatic fictional world, in which abstract feelings can gain the concrete form of a shadow, shadows can come

alive and possess the human emotion of sadness, and shadows can make a person's skin look like hard stones.

Another method that Ge Fei uses to trigger readers to adopt a view of things that is different from the usual perceptions of the real world is to express these things in novel linguistic forms, as the expression ‘鸟儿迟暮地飞走’ (in a twilight way flew away) does in example 5. Here, Ge Fei's depiction of the movement of birds appears original, as a Google search shows no instance of ‘迟暮地飞’ except for the one in Ge Fei's *Qinghuang*. ‘迟暮’ (twilight) is a noun usually used to refer to a specific period of time during the day. Instead, it is here used against its usual semantic category to produce an alien adverbial ‘迟暮地’ (in a twilight way) to modify the verb ‘飞’ (fly). While the verb indicates the visible and concrete qualities of birds, the newly-created adverbial modifier is lexically abstract and indeterminate. The improbable collocation of two lexis falling into two distinct groups contributes to a mingling of the realistic and the fantastic, thereby imparting a sense of myth into the fictional world, as if what the narrator is describing exists outside the real and commonly-known world.

Compared to the original text, Eva Shan Chou's translation – *Green Yellow* which is collected in Jing Wang's *China's Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998) – does not present the extreme strangeness and obscurity of the above two examples. In example 4, after rearranging the word classes of ‘悲伤’ (sorrow) and ‘阴影’ (shadow), Chou removes the human characteristic that Ge Fei attributes to the inanimate shadow, and reinstates the subject role that the noun, sorrow, plays in the sentence. Moreover, by replacing the original verb ‘重叠’ (overlapped) with ‘had etched heavy lines’, Chou makes the semantic meaning concrete and logical, thus rationalizing the impact of sorrow upon the human's appearance. Chou also clarifies that the skin described in the

second clause specifically refers to ‘the skin on his face’, thereby improving the connection between the two clauses. Compared to Ge Fei’s obscure and incongruous sentence, Chou’s translation explicates a literary meaning that is not apparent in the original expression and rationalizes the content of the story. Whilst Chou provides a more accessible text to English-speaking readers, the imaginative effect, and the surreal feeling that Ge Fei attempts to invoke in his work get lost in translation; unable to be conveyed into the Anglophone cultural context.

Chou’s choices of diction also deform Ge Fei’s linguistic features. With regards to example 5, Chou renders the unusual expression ‘鸟儿迟暮地飞走’ (in a twilight way flew away)’ into a more understandable English sentence, ‘some birds had not yet left for the south’, thus successfully capturing the literal meaning of the sentence. After deleting Ge Fei’s neologism and explicating the originally alien expression into standard English, Chou renders what is abstract and indeterminate in the original into something more concrete and definite. As if paraphrasing Ge Fei’s neologism is still insufficient to present the desired clarity for Anglophone readers, Chou also re-arranges the sentence to place relevant syntactic constituents together. Therefore, imageries such as ‘yellow leaves’, ‘grass’, and ‘frost’ are put together in the former sentence, while the description of ‘birds’, originally located in two sentences, is re-grouped and merged into one. These two examples reveal that Chou chooses a more general and transparent language to render Ge Fei’s text into English, thereby re-constructing his fictional world into one that fits more closely with readers’ common understanding of the real world. When this practice of deforming is significantly and consistently applied to the distinctive linguistic choices of the original text, the translation can decisively efface the signifying process and modes of expression that speak Ge Fei’s avant-garde fiction to English-speaking readers.

After analysing how the translator recreates, in English, her reading experience of uncertain language which Ge Fei employs to construct a dreamlike fictional realm, the following example examines the extent to which the ambiguity conveyed in Su Tong's experimental language is preserved in its English translation. Further, it investigates how the translator's strategy affects the representation of intricate and contradictory meanings in Su Tong's avant-garde works, particularly the author's deconstructionist view of objective realism embraced by conventional Chinese writers.

[7] 而且他们住在同一栋房子里。香椿树街十八号。十八号是发黑的老楼，上下两层。舒家住楼下，林家住楼上。他们是邻居。十八号的房顶是平的，苫一层黑铁皮。那房顶上伏着一只猫，这是十五年前我站在桥头眺望时留下的印象。

印象中还有那条河。河横贯香椿树街，离十八号的门大约只有一米之距。我的叙述中会重复出现这条河，也许并无意义，我说过这只是印象而已。(Su Tong 1989, 106)

LT: And they lived in the same building. **Number 18 Fragrant Cedar Street.** Number 18 was a blackened old building, two-story. The Shu family lived downstairs, the Lin family lived upstairs. They are neighbours. The roof of Number 18 was flat, coved by a layer of black metal sheet. There was a cat crouching on the roof, **the impression left for me when I was standing at the bridgehead fifteen years ago.**

There is also that river in my impression. The river ran across Fragrant Cedar Street, about one meter from the gate of Number 18. The river will appear repetitively in my narration, which may not make sense, **I said** it is just an impression.

TT: They shared a building: 18 Fragrant Cedar Street, a blackened two-story structure, where the Shu family lived downstairs and the Lins above them. They were neighbors. Black sheet metal covered the flat roof of number 18, and as I stood at the bridgehead, I saw a cat crouching up there. At least that's how I remember it, fifteen years later.

And I remember the river, which intersected Fragrant Cedar Street a scant three or four feet from number 18. **This river will make several appearances in my narration, with dubious distinction, for as I indicated earlier, I can only give impressions.** (Howard Goldblatt 1998, 173)

These paragraphs, excerpted from *Shujia xiongdì* (舒家兄弟) (1989), help to set up the spatial and temporal coordinates of subsequent stories about residents in Fragrant Cedar Street. Due to his adolescence having been spent in Fragrant Cedar Street in a southern town of Suzhou, this street has become a landmark setting in a range of Su Tong's nostalgic stories (Choy 2008; Zhang 2012). This street is frequently employed as a backdrop to the protagonists in Su Tong's fiction. To a degree, Su Tong (2016) notices that some readers mistake the stories as retrospection and reflection of Su Tong's own experiences. Yet, as Su Tong (2012, 2016, 2018) explains on various occasions, he frequently visits his childhood or adolescence within a fictional recreation so that he can use his uncertain and indeterminate memories of the past as an effective instrument to illustrate the power of imagination and fabrication, whilst enabling his readers to come to their own understandings of the irreducibly complex and unstable meanings within the text. Howard Choy also argues that Fragrant Cedar Street provides only a 'nostalgic path' that Su Tong has taken to escape the official call on writers to realist writing and to explore creative ways to represent 'the bizarre sensationalism and refined aestheticism of decadence' (2008, 137). Su Tong's recognition of the relationship between real space and narrated space underpins his special way of reconstructing the past and memories. As a way to signify the vague boundaries of the imaginary environment that is hard to localise in the real world, Su Tong uses language featuring semantic ambiguity to establish the story's setting, thereby bringing about a narrated world characterised by its oscillation between clear memories and imagination.

Here, the picture of Fragrant Cedar Street is depicted by the first-person narrator, who is also the implied author. The narrator explains at the beginning of the fictional work that he was born and lived in the street. Then, by stating that '所以我要说的也许不是故事而是某种南方的生活 (therefore, what I am going to tell may not be a story but a form of southern life)' (Su Tong 1989,

106), the narrator gives the impression that the following narrative will be an episode from his past experience of living in the street. However, the narrator emphasises that ‘关于香椿树街的故事，已经被我老家的人传奇化’ (many stories about Fragrant Cedar Street have been legendised by the town people), and ‘这只是印象而已’ (it is just an impression) (Su Tong 1989, 106); therefore negating the absolute factuality of the narrative. From the very beginning of the fiction, the narrator places himself in an ambivalent position: explicitly saying that he aims to reflect the past of the street as he remembers it; whilst also implying to readers that the stories he will tell may not authentically reflect the past events of the street due to his vague memories or other people’s fabrications. The narrator’s ambivalent role in reconstructing the local environment contributes to the idiosyncratic style of the whole work of fiction. To further support the narrator in re-presenting his ambiguously (in-)authentic memories of the past, Su Tong foregrounds the narrator’s uncertain language, characterising it with all forms of binary oppositions – objective versus subjective, complete versus fragmentary, clear versus unclear, and significant versus insignificant – until the opaque narrative language enables readers to gain enough distance to reconsider the connection between the narrated world and the real world.

Linguistically, the narrator’s depiction of the two families living in Fragrant Cedar Street, especially that in the first paragraph of the cited example, shows a preference for short and loose sentences with simple lexical and syntactic structures. Full stops are employed as the main form of punctuation, even though structures such as ‘香椿树街十八号’ (Number 18 Fragrant Cedar Street) consist of only one phrase. In addition, there is a marked absence of abstract nouns and adjectives, as well as verbs of perception. These linguistic features project the camera-eye perspective of the narrator. Although his perspective is limited, the narrator’s simple and neutral language gives the feeling that the readers are being offered an objective and factual description

of Fragrant Cedar Street. It appears that the reality which the narrator remembers is being transcribed so that readers can perceive it directly. However, lacking defining details, the narrator's depiction leaves the impression that the street has been completely erased from his memory, with only a few faint images popping randomly into his mind. This type of sketchy description implies that readers cannot depend on the narrator's vague memories of this place. To further reduce the credibility of the narrative, the narrator consciously emphasises the length of time that has passed between the past and the present by pointing out that '这是十五年前我站在桥头眺望时留下的印象' (this was the impression left for me when I was standing at the bridgehead fifteen years ago). In addition, by repeating '我说过这只是印象而已' (I said it is just an impression), the narrator further highlights his subjective and limited view. Then, in a seemingly paradoxical structure, '我的叙述中会重复出现这条河，也许并无意义' (The river will appear repetitively in my narration, which may not make sense), the narrator implies the uncertain significance of what he will narrate, thus reminding readers of their need not to overinterpret the content of the story. These simple, neutral, and ambiguous linguistic expressions, Zhang Xuexin argues, are key elements to 'present the sense of uncertainty in the geographic setting of Su Tong's fiction'; 'a background environment that is beyond conventional realistic expressions' (2012, 67–68, my translation).

The uncertain descriptive language used by Su Tong shows 'his accomplishment in applying innovative artistic expressions to represent the past and memories' (Zhang 2012, 68, my translation). It has become an effective tool by which Su Tong encourages his readers to freely imagine the constitution of the drifting narrated world and to rethink its difference from the real world that they are familiar with. In this way, the ambiguity and uncertainty inherent in linguistic forms and content constitute Su Tong's unusual stylistic design and his central intention of

questing for the essence of reality. More importantly, the geographic setting that reads as ambiguously objective and subjective, reminds readers to maintain their interpretation of the story on the surface of the textual level rather than taking the story as a realistic reflection of Fragrant Cedar Street; where Su Tong spent his adolescence.

With a knowledge of Su Tong's uncertain language, the analysis shifts focus to examine the translator's approaches to retrieving Su Tong's memories of his hometown and creating a representation of Fragrant Cedar Street in China for English-speaking readers. *Shujia xiongdi* has been translated by Howard Goldblatt into *The Brother Shu*, which was first collected in *Chairman Mao Would Not be Amused* (1995) and then re-collected in *China's Avant-Garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998). Compared to the Chinese text, Goldblatt's translation of the excerpted paragraphs improves the coherence and clarity of the descriptive language and recreates a narrator who is more eager to influence Anglophone readers' perceptions and interpretations of the narrated world. The original short and loose sentences are merged into longer compound sentences that appear more complex and grammatical. The alteration of the original syntactic structure helps to remove the feeling of fragmentation and collage conveyed in the original text, and causes the disappearance of the camera-eye point of view possessed by the original child narrator. As a consequence, the translated text creates the impression that the narrator can recall from memory the street scene without much effort, as if his knowledge of the place is far more than a collection of vague images.

Repetitive use of the personal pronoun 'I' is another linguistic choice that Goldblatt makes to create a sense of eagerness in the narrator and to clarify to his audiences what he remembers. Due to 'the characteristic minimal use or often, non-use, of pronouns in Chinese' (Pellatt and Liu 2010, 16), as well as Su Tong's intention of maintaining the narrator's objective position to

avoid interfering with readers' perceptions of the narrated world, the original narrator seldomly uses the pronoun '我' (I) to indicate himself. In contrast, Goldblatt's narrator frequently uses 'I' to identify himself as the person who is telling the stories based on his first-hand experiences of living in Fragrant Cedar Street, although English translations of some Chinese sentences, such as '那房顶上伏着一只猫' (there was a cat crouching on the roof) and '这只是印象而已' (it is just an impression), do not need the pronoun 'I' to make the sentences comprehensible. Since personal pronouns function to determine 'the interpretation of utterances ... in relation to the identity of the speaker' (Lyons 1981, 170), the repetitive use of 'I' in Goldblatt's translation underlines the identity of the narrator, who is also the implicit author, as someone who not only belongs to Fragrant Cedar Street, but also has relatively clear and complete memories of it. Whereas Su Tong uses uncertain language to distinguish the imagined Fragrant Cedar Street from the one where he spent his adolescence, Goldblatt's representation of geographic setting does not embody the indeterminate memories of the narrator. Since Goldblatt chooses a more coherent and certain language to illustrate the temporal and spatial coordinates of the translated narrative, what Anglophone readers receive is a transparently fluent text containing vivid images of Fragrant Cedar Street.

The fluent and accessible translation that Goldblatt applies to Su Tong's fiction conforms to his usual practice and ideas on translation. As the top English-language translator of contemporary Chinese fiction who has brought international fame to many noted Chinese writers, including Mo Yan, and Su Tong, Goldblatt holds the strong belief that translation should perform as creative writing (2002). In various places, Goldblatt defines himself first as a stylist, a 'closet novelist', 'one that ought to lead to something better' (2002, BW10); therefore, the translation practice for him is a process of reading in Chinese and writing in English (2002,

2008, 2011, 2014). Although fully aware of the tension between creativity and fidelity, he affirms that the translator's primary obligation is to the reader, not the writer (Goldblatt 2009, 2012, 2014). Therefore, when his translation is needed to bring Chinese authors to English-speaking readers, Goldblatt tends to 'make the language as clean and idiomatic and accessible' as he can (2000b, 25), 'happily turning Chinese prose into readable, accessible, and even marketable English books' (2002, BW10). In the situations where Goldblatt thinks that the cultural or stylistic difficulties created in the original text might confuse readers of the translated fiction, he will 'do things to the texts to make them more palatable without dumbing them down' (2014, 9).

With regards to the excerpt from *Shujia xiongdi*, due to Su Tong's fragmentary and ambiguous style, both the narrator and his readers are placed far away from the narrated Fragrant Cedar Street. While the original narrator possesses a limited view of the environment, readers are required to make a greater effort to imagine the appearance of the geographic setting and to interpret its underlying significance in Su Tong's stories. Yet, Goldblatt's sensitivity to Anglophone readers does not allow any form of ambiguity and uncertainty in the translated text to affect readers' view of the foreign land. To deal with problems of ambiguity in the Chinese text, Goldblatt chooses to rewrite Su Tong's style so that Anglophone readers can easily access the environmental depiction in the translated text. After re-arranging linguistic elements into complete and coherent sentences, Goldblatt manages to make the translated text convey more definite semantic meanings, pulling down the barriers that prevent the narrator from recapturing the clear memories of his hometown and providing his readers with a distinct perspective by which to view Fragrant Cedar Street. The way in which Goldblatt re-sets the temporal and spatial coordinates of Su Tong's story creates intimacy between the narrator and Anglophone readers,

and gives the impression that the Chinese narrator is telling Anglophone audiences in fluent English about his memories of Fragrant Cedar Street in the south of China.

The style that Goldblatt re-creates in his translation helps to focus the attention of Anglophone readers on the backdrop of Su Tong's story, intriguing them to read further. However, since the ambiguity and uncertainty constituting Su Tong's idiolect disappear in the translated text, Su Tong's experimental intention of retrieving images from his past to construct a fictional world far more spacious than the street in which he spent his adolescence may not be perceived or appreciated by Anglophone readers. Furthermore, since the narrator is placed in a position closer to the narrated Fragrant Cedar Street, the receiving readers are likely to wonder if Su Tong has written the story in a nostalgic realist mode so that the fictional narrator will be able to act on Su Tong's behalf to tell readers the author's real-life experiences.

The linguistic and discursive effects that Goldblatt's translation produces confirm what Tymoczko observes to be 'the norm for translating the native texts of minority and non-Western cultures ... [namely] 'through the silences of the positivist editor and translator, the ambiguities and difficulties of the marginalized text, as well as the fallibilities and uncertainties of the translator, are equally erased' (1999, 269). Goldblatt might have the well-meaning intention of making Su Tong's nostalgic narrative less intimidating for English-speaking readers by compromising Su Tong's artistic use of language. However, after failing to capture the aesthetic significance generated by the stylistic devices in the original, this translated Chinese avant-garde fiction is hardly able to provide target readers with the aesthetic experience that the original experimental text offers to Chinese readers. Moreover, the rewriting undertaken by Goldblatt may lead to the loss of perspectives that Anglophone readers can obtain to appreciate the network of signification underlying Su Tong's exceptional linguistic choices, and thence the

value of Chinese avant-garde fiction in deconstructing the conventional realist way of representing the past and memories. As this example illustrates, a fluent and domesticating translation of Su Tong's avant-garde fiction attends to target readers' attention to fictional reality but not the novelist's formal experimentation. When fictional content is placed over formalist features, the translation risks downgrading the status of the original text from a piece of belletristic literature to a work more familiar to Anglophone readers; a nostalgic realist narrative in which the novelist reflects his/her personal experiences and realities of China.

The uncertain language characterising Chinese avant-garde fiction is full of unusual lexical choices, unconventional collocations, ungrammatical sentences, and novel figures of speech. Via de-familiarised linguistic forms, avant-garde novelists such as Yu Hua, Ge Fei and Su Tong foreground semantic ambiguity in fictional narratives. The sense of indeterminacy and ambiguity arising therefrom contributes to breaching Chinese readers' habitual thinking about literary Chinese and facilitates their perceptions of the aesthetic effects produced in the authors' artistic uses of language. Beyond the linguistic level, the radical transformation in the formation and meaning of narrative language disallows the service of literary production to politico-ideological discourses, thereby contributing to Chinese writers' pursuit of an independent literary identity.

Aware of the features and significance of experimental language, cultural agents such as Zhao Henry Y.H., David Der-wei Wang, and Jing Wang actively participated in compiling translation anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Representative works by leading Chinese avant-garde novelists were introduced to Anglophone readers in the hope of promoting a reading mode more oriented towards literary forms and aesthetic effects than sociological and political content or themes. In this sense, translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction were intended to shape the

reception of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context, and establish new images of Chinese novelists outside China.

However, the stylistic features which define the original literary works are put under trial when translation is required to bring the source texts to readers in different cultural contexts. Stylistic shifts are an inevitable outcome of translation processes. Depending on the individual translator's interpretation of the author's linguistic choices and the intended response of the target readership, the translator will choose certain strategies to recreate a style in translation. The extent to which the original styles are realised in translation is also subject to the contexts in which the translator works. The translator's stylistic choices might not be easily detected, especially when the translation reads well, but they produce profound effects, affecting the reception and recognition of both the author and the literature in different cultural contexts.

In the case of Chinese avant-garde fiction, the foregoing close readings and textual analyses affirm that a deforming tendency is operating in the process of transferring the style of Chinese avant-garde novelists to Anglophone readers. Therefore, what Anglophone readers perceive from the translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction is a style that deviates from the expectation of anthology compilers. Uncertain language is an essential style that Chinese avant-garde novelists create to distinguish their fictional language from the standard language used by conventional realist writers. Novelists such as Yu Hua, Ge Fei and Su Tong consciously break linguistic rules and impart a sense of indeterminacy and ambiguity to linguistic elements, thereby disallowing readers a homogenous understanding of their fictional worlds. In comparison, translators of their representative works tend to make linguistic choices that are familiar and easily-accessible to English-speaking readers. Specifically, analyses of the above examples illustrate the translation tendency of rearranging syntactic structures and the sequence of sentences according to English

grammatical norms or what is commonly known. In addition, translators are inclined to improve the clarity of translated texts at the levels of lexis, tense, cohesion, and types of narrator. These translation patterns exist side by side, resulting in the removal of semantic ambiguity favoured by Chinese avant-garde novelists, and thence the translations that are more transparent, rational, and readable than the original fictional works.

Under this deforming tendency, Anglophone readers eventually receive translated texts that prioritise definite meaning and clear content over the formal construction of de-familiarised language. Thereupon, compared to readers of Chinese avant-garde fiction, Anglophone readers of the translated texts will only have a partial experience of the aesthetic effects originally created by Chinese avant-garde novelists. When stylistic shifts happen in this way, the prospect of changing the reception of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context by bringing into the target system a new literary genre no longer looks as hopeful as anthology compilers would wish for.

Conclusion

In view of the language experimentation to which Chinese avant-garde novelists commit themselves, this chapter has examined how, and to what degree, the distinctive style of original writing has been realised in English translations of their works. A stylistic approach was applied to analyse the strategies used by translators to transfer to Anglophone readers the aspects of uncertain language, a key style which defines Chinese avant-gardists' quest for literary aesthetic autonomy. The analysis of stylistic shifts between STs and TTs suggests that a general deforming tendency is functioning in the translation process, serving to rationalize, clarify, and rhetorise the original narratives by removing the indeterminacy, ambiguity, and irrationality featuring in the linguistic choices of Yu Hua, Ge Fei, and Su Tong. As a consequence of this,

Anglophone readers are presented with more readable and stylistically transparent texts, which tend to prioritise the content and literal meanings of the fictional works over their alienating linguistic forms. Translations in this pattern affect not only target readers' perceptions of the aesthetic effects promoted by Chinese avant-garde novelists, but also the discursive existence of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context. Where Chinese avant-garde fiction is introduced to Anglophone readers in order that the aesthetic effects inherent in source texts can provide them with a different reading experience from that which they are used to, the loss of original styles in translations can impair, to a great degree, the realisation of that aim.

Conclusion

This thesis has studied the translational path of Chinese avant-garde fiction into the Anglophone cultural context by focusing on translation anthologies published in the UK and the US between 1993 and 2003. Particular attention is given to the analysis of the strategies employed to recontextualise the translations for the reception of the Anglophone readership, thereupon revealing the extent to which the main characteristics of Chinese avant-garde fiction have been rewritten to accord with the ideological patterns pertaining to contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone cultural context. Based on observed translation shifts, this study addresses the role of ideology and rewriting in the international transfer of Chinese contemporary literary culture, and its impact upon configuring the inter-literary relationships between China and Western countries.

As confirmed by the analysis of the history of translation and scholarly criticism of contemporary Chinese fiction in the second half of the twentieth century, the ideological differences and struggles between China and the Western world in the contemporary period have fundamentally conditioned the inter-literary relationships between them. As a result, ideological translation of contemporary Chinese literature became a dominant mode in the Anglophone cultural context of the Cold War, and continued to exist in the post-Cold War era. Under its influence, the Anglophone reading public tended to approach literary works translated from mainland China as transparent sociological and political documents by which to both learn about Chinese societal realities and criticise its repressive political system. It was in these geo-political and cultural contexts that a range of Chinese avant-garde fictional works were enthusiastically anthologised and translated for the Anglophone readership within a short period of time.

Literary studies of the Chinese movement of avant-garde fiction in Deng's Reform era have illustrated that this literary genre signalled Chinese intellectuals' pursuit of literary autonomy, as well as their desire to be integrated into the world literary system. Drawing inspiration from Western modernist and post-modernist ideas, key members of the avant-garde school, including Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, Yu Hua, and Su Tong, committed themselves to aesthetic experimentation with narrative techniques and languages, thereby expressing their subjective experiences of the fragmented realities of modern existence while detaching literary creation from the dominant social-political discourses. Scholars including Zhao Henry Y.H., Jing Wang, Xudong Zhang, and Yongchun Cai particularly stress that, compared to Western avant-gardists who tend to regard aesthetics as an activist means for ideological subversion, Chinese avant-garde novelists resort to aesthetic exploration to evade using literature as an agency for political opposition. However, as shown in the study of this thesis, this image of Chinese avant-garde fiction as the specimen of pure literature established in the original context was complicated, and even challenged, when its representative works were transferred to the Anglophone cultural system through translation anthologies to serve varied purposes.

The study's bibliographic survey of English anthologies of contemporary Chinese fiction published from 1979 to 2020 has affirmed the critical importance of the 1990s for the global dissemination of Chinese avant-garde fiction. Intense anthologising and translation activities were carried out during the period of 1993–2003, which resulted in a boom in English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the Anglophone world. As also uncovered in the survey, whereas mainland Chinese publishers in Deng's Reform era tended to promote realist writing about Chinese everyday life outside China to establish China's benign international image, UK and US publishers showed a particular interest in anthologising and translating

Chinese avant-garde fiction in the post-Tiananmen era. While UK and US publishers in the 1980s still focused exclusively on realist Chinese writing characterised by strong sociological and political content, the significant attention given to Chinese avant-garde fiction in the 1990s implied an intention to intervene in the canonical constitution of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone literary system.

Further examination of the backdrop against which the translation boom of Chinese avant-garde fiction took place has unveiled underlying factors that made 1989 a watershed year for the genre's global circulation. With the Tiananmen Square crackdown unfolding throughout Western media, Western public perceptions of a totalitarian and repressive China, and the imagination of a confrontational relationship between the Communist state power and Chinese intellectuals, were re-evoked. At the same time, the expanding group of Chinese literary diaspora, especially those centred around the revived avant-garde journal *Jintian*, enhanced the visibility of Chinese avant-garde writers as a whole in the West. This, in turn, led to subsequent efforts of anthologising and translating Chinese avant-garde fiction for the Anglophone readership. The political background of some *Jintian* writers who went into exile after the event happened to conform to Anglophone readers' expectations of accessing the history of Chinese intellectuals' political opposition to the Communist regime through reading translations of subversive Chinese avant-garde works. In addition, as a number of post-Tiananmen diaspora writers followed the trend of writing about China's traumatic history, and the violent state repression of dissent voices, in order to gain fame and economic rewards in the global literary market, the Anglophone politicised conception of contemporary Chinese literature was further reinforced. Another factor that promoted the global circulation of Chinese avant-garde fiction, but equally constrained Anglophone readers' interpretations and receptions of this literary genre, related to

the global commercial success achieved by film adaptations of contemporary Chinese novels. These film adaptations helped gain international fame for Chinese novelists including Mo Yan, Yu Hua, and Su Tong. However, they also encouraged Western audiences to view Chinese cultural products in general as national allegories. To an extent, Chinese avant-garde fiction featuring experimental aesthetics and its detachment from socio-political engagements might also have been interpreted as allegories of China's traumatic past. On top of these factors, the development of Chinese literary studies into an independent discipline in Western academic institutions in the 1990s turned out to be an important impetus for the cross-cultural transfer of Chinese avant-garde fiction. The first-hand contextual information that this thesis collected from key translation agents has shown that a number of individuals and institutions actively involved in anthologising and translating Chinese avant-garde fiction into English shared a conceptual grid about the artistic aesthetic values of Chinese avant-garde fiction. This resulted in the establishment of translation networks which enabled publishers, editors, translators, authors, and literary critics to closely work together to bring representative works of Chinese avant-garde novelists to Anglophone readers. As can be envisaged, these economic, social, and political factors interplayed and interacted with each other to condition the selection and configuration of English anthologies of Chinese avant-garde fiction.

A preliminary analysis of the publication outlets of the ten anthologies that resulted from the translation boom has shed light on two categories of ideological frameworks concerning Chinese avant-garde fiction in translation. One category, consisting of *The Lost Boat* (1993), *China's Avant-garde Fiction: An Anthology* (1998), and *The Mystified Boat* (2003), was intended to display the radical literary aesthetics featuring in the selected works of Chinese avant-garde fiction to Anglophone readers. The editors of these three anthologies used the space of paratexts

surrounding the anthologies – and in particular editors’ introductions – to strongly argue in favour of Chinese avant-garde fiction’s focus on formal experimentation and its separation from socio-political discourses. Furthermore, the editors prioritised the selection of representative works by key avant-garde novelists, especially those pieces characterised by radical formalist features. In comparison, the other category, including the remaining seven anthologies studied within this thesis, has underscored the social and political commitments of Chinese avant-gardists, in particular their opposition to the state in terms of totalitarian rule, ideological control, cultural hegemony, and the destruction of Tibet’s geopolitical identity. As a result, the anthologies are presented as complying with the oppositional political nature of the avant-garde as defined in the European-American cultural context.

To have a deeper understanding of the reading experience that Chinese avant-garde fiction in translation tends to provide to the receiving readers, Chapter 3 has analysed the selection and paratextual framings of the five anthologies alluding to Chinese avant-garde fiction as a form of politico-ideological opposition: *Under-Sky Underground* (1994), *Abandoned Wine* (1996), *Fissures* (2000), *Chairman Mao* (1995), and *Tales of Tibet* (2001). Despite the different translation backgrounds in which these translation anthologies were compiled and the wide selection of authors, analysis of the paratextual materials accompanying them, including titles, covers, introductions, forewords, and reviews, has demonstrated a common tendency for politicisation that resulted in a narrative of Chinese avant-garde fiction favouring the authors’ political and ideological concerns over artistic considerations.

The act of politicising Chinese avant-garde fiction, as observed in this chapter, is evident in the ideological use of figurative language and imagery in the paratexts to identify both the political significance and the sociological content of the translation anthologies. For instance, the

titles of the *Jintian* series of anthologies and *Chairman Mao* (1995) serve to designate the political oppositional nature of the writing in selection, while *Tales of Tibet* (2001) has a title that enables to identify the anthologised works of Tibetan-themed fiction as ethnographic accounts of Tibetan culture. Other elements on the covers of the anthologies including front-cover images and blurbs follow a similar ideological pattern of framing the selected writing as examples of self-reflexive narratives which heroically expose the dark side of Chinese society. In addition, the five anthologies have been found to share the trend of seeking endorsement of anti-establishment figures, as exemplified by the foreword to *Fissures* (2000) written by the political activist and exile writer, Breyten Breytenbach, the front-cover image of *Chairman Mao* (1995) adapted from Zhang Hongtu's pop-inflected painting, and the foreword to *Tales of Tibet* (2001) provided by Tsering Shakya – the critic of Chinese colonial rule in Tibet. Despite the diverse backgrounds of included writers, the peritexts attached to the anthologies show a tendency of directing Anglophone readers' attention to the socio-political motifs of the collected writing and the authors' oppositional political stances. A similar trend has been detected in the reviews of these anthologies; the majority of reviewers interpret the anthologies as symbols of political resistance to the Party's totalitarian control over literature and the repressive rule of Han Chinese over Tibetans. Only a small number of book reviewers, including Sheng-Tai Chang (1994), Kam Louie (1996), Jianguo Chen (1996), and Zhao Henry Y.H., have been identified as deviating from this trend, warning against reading the collected avant-garde works as realistic showcases of political issues in Communist China whilst encouraging Anglophone readers to pay attention to the aesthetic merits of Chinese avant-garde fiction.

Chapters 4 and 5 consist of close analysis of translated texts in order to explore the images of Chinese avant-garde fiction that translators have created for the receiving readers. Chapter 4

focuses on examining the textual strategies used by translators to deal with the narrative devices – including plot, setting, narrator, and characterisation – in Chinese avant-garde fictional works expressing the authors’ postmodern senses of history. Avant-garde fictional works set against real historical experiences by three major avant-garde writers, Ma Yuan, Ge Fei, and Yu Hua, and the translations included in the anthologies were chosen for the comparative analysis here. As has been observed, Herbert Batt, who has been the main translator for works associated with Tibet – including Ma Yuan’s *Xugou* (虚构) (1986) and *Youshen* (游神) (1987), as well as Ge Fei’s *Xiangyu* (相遇) (1994), which are collected in *Tales of Tibet* (2001), tended to reduce the narrator’s intrusive voice, re-construct the original labyrinthine plotline into a lineal and complete one, and re-establish archetypal heroic characters in his translations. These translation changes enable Batt to provide Anglophone readers with more readable and realistic Tibetan stories, which unfold within a chronological structure and convey absolute historical meanings, therefore meeting the Western public’s imagination of Chinese literary works that treat Tibetan minorities as an object for the gaze of the Han majority. Beyond the textual level, the re-configured Tibetan stories function to deliver the translator’s lament for Tibet’s endangered Buddhist culture under the repressive Chinese regime. Considering the large amount of social and cultural capital acquired by Batt in the process of translating Tibetan-themed writing to Anglophone readers, Batt’s translations of these fictional works may further perpetuate target readers’ biased perceptions of the Sino-Tibetan relationship. Together with the overt criticisms of Chinese colonial rule in Tibet present in the paratexts (Chapter 3), *Tales of Tibet* as a translation anthology of avant-garde fictional works could serve to rally international support for the Tibetan nationalist cause.

The changes that Batt made to the Tibetan-themed avant-garde fiction of Ma Yuan and Ge Fei also reflect his attempt to increase the historicity in translation to comply with target readers' stereotypical conception of the Chinese historicisation literary tradition. This translation pattern has also been detected in Deborah Mills's translation of Ge Fei's *Xiangyu* (相遇) (1994), the two translations of Ge Fei's *Mizhou* (迷舟) (1987) by Caroline Mason and Herbert Batt, as well as Andrew Jones's translation of Yu Hua's *Yijiubaliu* (一九八六) (1987). These translations are all included in the anthologies that function as the representatives to introduce the aesthetic novelty of Chinese avant-garde fiction to Anglophone readers. However, textual analysis of them revealed that translators' interventions with the narrative components in the original fictional works resulted in displaying linear historical narratives with moral and political implications more compatible with the prevalent critical view of China's trauma-ridden history found in the Anglophone cultural context. At the same time, Chinese avant-garde novelists' postmodern senses of history and historical representation were filtered out, and thus may not be appreciated by the actual readers of the translations. A translation tendency like this is likely to consolidate Anglophone readers' perceptions of Chinese avant-garde fiction as documentary fiction, further obstructing their recognition of the aesthetic value of contemporary Chinese writing.

Chapter 5 focuses on analysing the linguistic realisation of style in both STs and TTs, with particular attention given to the aspect of semantic ambiguity featuring the de-familiarised language in Chinese avant-garde fiction. The analysis has brought to light the existence of a deforming tendency, in which translators prioritise conveying the literal sense of a literary work over its distinctive style. As a result, the stylistic language of Chinese avant-garde novelists has been standardised into transparent fictional language that appeals to Anglophone readers' expectations of having direct access to the details of Chinese daily life through reading

translations of contemporary Chinese writing. It follows that the chances for Anglophone readers to perceive the aesthetic effects of linguistic features in the original avant-garde fiction are likely to be reduced.

Having analysed the selection, the paratextual frames and textual strategies in relevant translation anthologies, it can be concluded that the genre of Chinese avant-garde fiction underwent a large set of transformations when it was lifted from its cultural origin and entered a different cultural system. In the genre's international transfer, the fundamental aesthetic characteristics that established the fame of Chinese avant-garde novelists within the original cultural system have been considerably undermined. What have been received by Anglophone readers are texts that highlight the subversive nature of avant-gardism widely recognised in the Western cultural realm. Translation changes like these attest that a mode of ideological translation has been applied to Chinese avant-garde fiction.

Given the historical and socio-political contexts in which English translations of Chinese avant-garde fiction took place, it can be affirmed that ideological patterns developed during the Cold War profoundly informed the ways in which Chinese avant-garde fiction was anthologised and translated in the Anglophone cultural context. In the post-Cold War era, the ideological differences between China and Western countries remained one of the most important parameters to constrain the entry and configuration of Chinese cultural products in the Anglophone cultural system. Particularly after the Tiananmen Protests of 1989 – which have significantly changed the public narrative of China in the Western world – individuals and institutions working within the ideological constraints of the Anglophone cultural context might have been encouraged to rewrite Chinese avant-garde fiction into texts that comply with the dominant Anglophone ideology.

However, with Chinese avant-garde fiction also subject to the mode of ideological translation, anthologists' expectation towards intervening in the Anglophone ideological assumptions of contemporary Chinese literature through introducing a new genre into the Anglophone literary system was somehow frustrated. Translation agents advocating the entry of Chinese avant-garde fiction into the Anglophone cultural system asserted the potential impact that this aesthetically radical genre could have on Anglophone readers, in particular the predominant Anglophone view that contemporary Chinese literature possesses sociological or political content rather than literary value. Yet, what has barely been noted by Chinese literary scholars and critics is the reality that the aesthetic features which earned source texts their literary fame could not be translated without loss. The loss might be the inevitable result of the linguistic and cultural untranslatability. As Andrew Jones admits, 'translations can never aspire to represent a perfect or authoritative representation of Yu Hua's fiction' (1996, 272). A more significant reality, as unveiled in this study, is that translation agents under the influence of the Anglophone ideological assumptions of contemporary Chinese literature may, consciously, or unconsciously, reduce the formalist features in the original text while re-construct it into an allegory of the societal and political realities in China. These reconfigurations which might be explicitly present in the paratexts surrounding the translations function to frame the items included in the anthology as politically and ideologically subversive texts, while projecting representative avant-garde novelists in images of activists who dedicate their experimental writing to opposing China's excessive political power. In addition, the reconfigurations are implicitly embodied in the translated texts, where translators may steer the attention of target readers towards political motifs or historical events relating to contemporary China, and convey their political and moral judgements of Chinese realities. When Chinese avant-garde fiction is reconfigured in these ways

during the anthologising and translation processes, Anglophone readers' literary and ideological prejudices of contemporary Chinese literature are likely to be perpetuated rather than precluded. In this sense, the process of rewriting original writing in and through translation matters, because it affects not only the way the specific text is perceived by intended readers, but also the discursive existence of the source-language culture in the receiving system.

By reflecting the tendency of politicising and ideologicalising Chinese avant-garde fiction during the genre's international transfer, this thesis is not suggesting that the translation of Chinese avant-garde fiction can be ideological free. Admittedly, even the claim staked by Zhao and Jing Wang to compile anthologies featuring literary aesthetics rather than sociological and political content is political, given the fact that the claim is driven by their own beliefs and constrained by the shared values of the Western world at the time. What this study tries to emphasise is the interpretation, communication, and knowledge construction underlying the translation anthologies. Moreover, by analysing the prominent translation changes – the fingerprints of relevant agents – and the consequent implications, this study attempts to highlight the notion of rewriting, or 'secondary authorship' as described by Seruya, D'hulst, Rosa and Moniz (2013, 7), in the understanding of translation and translation-related phenomena. As demonstrated in this study, once representative Chinese avant-garde fictional works were selected, translated, edited, published, and received in another cultural context, they entered a new relationship and were given new meanings. Translation anthologies can thus be interpreted as a means of lending the text authority. The real effect of Chinese avant-garde fiction in translation lies not in the original authorial intention, but the motives and criteria held by those involved in the translation process, as well as the circumstances of textual production and target readers' interpretations. Considering the little engagement of Chinese avant-garde novelists in

the translations of their representative pieces, questions such as ‘is this kind of ideological free translation what these writers actually want’ are no longer a matter of issue in this study.

Among the innovative aspects of this thesis is the fact that it has presented case studies that demonstrate the usage and value of translation anthologies for the research into the construction of inter-literary relations. Theoretically, translation anthologies have the vantage of revealing cultural politics exercised through literary translation in more systematic ways than studies of isolated translation. Yet, the review of the current scholarship in the field of translation studies shows that the deeper structure and socio-political significance of this cultural medium have not received much academic attention as they deserve. This limitation is particularly obvious when seen from the perspective of contemporary Chinese literature. It is a fact that contemporary Chinese literature relies heavily on translation anthologies to reach international readers and to find a place in the system of world literature. Nevertheless, very few studies have focused on translation anthologies of a specific genre to systematically study different phases pertaining to the translation, or to place the discussion of textual translation within the larger geopolitical and cultural contexts to explore the knowledge production underpinning translation activities. By choosing translation anthologies as the research focus, this thesis has filled in a gap in translation studies, and provided some methodological implications for the research of the translation and reception of contemporary Chinese literature outside China.

Another original aspect of this study relates to the findings. The fundamental logic of the international transfer of Chinese avant-garde fiction can be summarised as: the dominant political and ideological visions of contemporary Chinese literature were such in the Anglophone cultural context as to drive relevant agents to reflect, in their selection and arrangements, Chinese avant-garde novelists’ commitment to aesthetic experimentation or political activism. Alongside

this, the study unveiled contradictions that testify to the diversity and complexity of literary translation. Taking the contradiction between anthologists' expectations and translators' textual configurations for instance: whereas anthologists show the intention to intervene in the canonical constitution of contemporary Chinese literature in the Anglophone literary system through including aesthetically radical Chinese avant-garde fiction into the system, careful translation analysis has revealed translators' fingerprints in rewriting source texts to accord with Anglophone readers' habitual ideological assumptions of the socio-political functions of contemporary Chinese literature. Contradiction has also been found exist between the paratextual frames applied to the anthologies and the textual strategies used to translate a specific text included in the anthologies. Contradictions like these affirm that translation anthologies are underpinned by a deeper structure formed through variable interactions between the participants of the communication process. Methodologically, they also imply the importance of taking into account the networks of translation agency to have a deeper understanding of the socio-political nature of literary translation.

This study has opened up several avenues that future studies can work on. Along the line of enquiry of translation anthologies, future research could examine the inclusion of Chinese avant-garde fiction in anthologies of contemporary Chinese literature published in other languages, such as German and French over the same period. The findings from such additional studies would then allow for comparative analysis into whether contemporary Chinese literature was perceived and represented in the same ideological way as was in the Anglophone cultural context.

This study may also provide reference for future studies focusing on translation anthologies of other Chinese literary genres or subject matters. Apart from several translation anthologies of

Chinese ethnic minority writers which were discussed in some parts of this thesis, translation anthologies of Chinese women's literature are also worth studying. During this research, it was noted that Chinese government-backed publishers published in English a series of anthologies of Chinese women's literature. It might be interesting to compare these anthologies with those compiled and published by Anglophone publishers.

In addition, as this study has not fully explored the reception of Chinese avant-garde fiction in the UK and the US, future studies can investigate Anglophone readers' reading experience of the translations by means such as interviews and questionnaires with British and American students enrolled in the module of contemporary Chinese literature.

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