Collaboration and the Modern Chinese-language Self-translator

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Abstract

This article examines how Chinese-language self-translators have worked with co-translators and collaborators over the last century. The first study of its kind, it surveys a vast terrain, including mainland China and Taiwan, and places further afield. From the analysis of bibliographical sources, published works and their paratexts, letters, and written testimonies, this article details first the complex theoretical and methodological issues to be negotiated when researching these phenomena. It then explores the marked prevalence of collaborative authorship in the self-translation of literary texts in Chinese, noting the visibility or disclosure of the collaborators' work in each instance and across periods generally, giving also an account of their motivations. It explores in depth the case of the Chinese writer, self-translator and Nobel laureate Gao Xingjian, finding that Gao's work challenges a number of received ideas about author-translator collaboration, such as the assumption that the author's involvement necessarily restricts the translator's freedom. By discussing how diverse cases exhibit the various modes of writing in which different parties engage during translation and revision, and how such types of collaboration are disclosed or effaced in the published work, this article seeks to establish clear theoretical terms for the study of collaboration and co-translation in instances of self-translation.

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1. Introduction

If one were to conduct a topographical survey of the recently-emerged field of self-translation studies it would resemble an early-colonial era map of the world; some continents would be coloured by European occupation while others only recently sketched, and vast territories on the map would be empty. Volumes have been devoted to the known hotspots of self-translation in Europe, especially the Iberian Peninsula (Dasilva 2009; Gallén et al. 2011; Gallén and Ruiz Casanova 2018; Manterola 2014), Italy (Rubio Árquez and D'Antuono 2012) and France (Hokenson and Munson 2007; Kippur 2015; Puccini 2015). Initial surveys have been made of Eastern Europe and the former Russian empire (Foscolo and Smorag-Goldberg 2019), Canada (Van Bolderen 2014), and Latin America (Bujaldón de Esteves et al. 2019). Yet no published research in any language has accounted for self-translation across different Chinese-speaking environments, and research on the phenomenon in China is partial in its treatment. It is fair to say that when it comes to self-translation into and out of Chinese, we have only scratched the surface.[1]

In recent years, translation studies scholars have called for less "Eurocentric" approaches (Chan 2004; Cheung 2005; Cheung 2009; Hermans 2006; Hung and Wakabayashi 2005; Ricci and van der Putten 2011; Rose 2000; Susam-Sarajeva 2002; Susam-Sarajeva 2017; Tymoczko 2007; Wakabayashi and Kothari 2009). Yet the notion of Eurocentrism itself has come under scrutiny as a homogenizing term that ignores cultural difference within Europe and the inequalities that indenture the poor to cultural and political elites (Cronin 1995, 85–86; Delabastita 2011, 154; Flynn and van Doorslaer 2011, 116). The instrumentalizing of Eurocentrism has also been critiqued by Nam Fung Chang (2015), who finds the attitudes of some anti-Eurocentric Western translation scholars to be patronizing and contradictory, or to suffer from cultural misrecognition, despite their attempts to speak for those they believe to be oppressed by Western translation theory. Our aim is not to take sides in this debate but to draw attention to a translation zone that resists any attempt to pit an imagined East against a notional West, where Chinese-language authors regularly work with collaborators to produce versions of their work for a foreign readership.

This group of self-translators includes mainland Han Chinese, members of ethnic minorities, and members of historic or newer ethnic Chinese communities overseas; they may be cosmopolitan multilinguals or transnational first-generations. In this article we explore cases of author-translator collaboration in which the author's role extends beyond that of an advisor or consultant; rather, in collaborative self-translation the author assumes the function of a translator and is an integral party to the genesis of the translation.

We offer this overview of a neglected topic in recognition of Martha Cheung's assertion that "if Translation Studies is to break out of the cognitive boundaries set by Eurocentric views, or Sinocentric views, or, for that matter, any ossified views, what is needed is not just a new mindset but more material for study and for comparison" (2005, 39). As we bring

such new material to international attention we investigate, firstly, the complex theoretical and methodological issues that arise in research of such phenomena; secondly, the prevalence of collaborative authorship in the self-translation of literary texts in Chinese; and, thirdly, the disclosure and the visibility of these collaborations.

The diversity of collaborations involving Chinese self-translators offers us, furthermore, the ability to delineate clearly the different roles and functions of co-translator and collaborator, and therefore to clarify certain ambiguities in the theoretical descriptions of collaborative self-translation to date. We concentrate on self-translators from mainland China and Taiwan, and in the period since the founding of the Republic of China. Space dictates that we leave Chinese-speaking self-translators from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and the rest of Southeast Asia, not to mention émigré writers, for another occasion. However, we explore in depth the case of one émigré Chinese-language writer, self-translator and Nobel laureate, Gao Xingjian 高行健. The nature of Gao's collaborations, we argue, indicate the potential for research in this field, when they challenge a number of received ideas about author-translator collaboration current in translation studies.

2. Definitions, methodology, research questions

Collaborative self-translation has sometimes been considered a borderline case of self-translation, with uncertainty as to where allograph translation with authorial collaboration ends and authorial self-translation with collaboration begins (AUTOTRAD 2007, 95). Rainier Grutman cautioned: "Whether teamwork of that sort should also be considered self-translation, is a worthwhile but complex question" (2013, 203n2). The conjugation of collaboration and self-translation once appeared to be a contradiction in terms because it seemed to claim translation for the one and the many, simultaneously. Yet more recently, translation research has responded to literary scholarship that reveals the high prevalence of collaborative writing that is routinely attributed to a single author, literary research that has debunked the Romantic ideal of authorship as solitary genius (eg. Stillinger 1991). Translators too were held accountable to this myth of singular genius; they were expected to aspire to such "authority" by mastering the author's text and imbuing its translation with its singular authenticity or "spirit" (Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2017a). Yet a wide range of translations and self-translations once attributed to a single person have been revealed to be collaborative endeavours (Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2017b; Hersant 2020a; Jansen and Wegener 2013). The myth of authorship as inspired genius has had such a tenacious hold on our preconceptions of self-translation because this practice was believed to be the province of a particularly rare class of literary genius, the likes of Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokov, who created brilliant works in not one but two languages. In recent decades, however, research into the wider phenomenon of self-translation has shown it to be prevalent in Europe from the Middle Ages and far less rare

than once believed (Hokenson and Munson 2007). The "self" in self-translation should not, therefore, necessarily imply a model of singular authorship. In fact, many self-translators are no different from other authors and translators; they seek out other writers, translators, and editors during their writing; they call on spouses, friends, and family for practical, editorial, creative, and intellectual support.

Dasilva (2016, 25) separates out allograph translation with collaboration from the author from his definition of "semi-self-translation" (*semiautotraducción*), which is defined by a single "fundamental criterion", the author's recognition of their responsibility for the translation as declared in the work's paratexts (epitexts and peritexts). If such information were reliable this may be a valid strategy, however Dasilva (2011; 2016) shows also that such representation of self-translation is often inaccurate, with variable degrees of opacity. Indeed, authors and publishers regularly give a false image of a self-translation's collaborative authorship (Anokhina 2019, 99–101; Manterola 2013, 63; Manterola 2017). Some of the most prominent of self-translators, such as Beckett, Eco, Eliot, Nabokov, and Ungaretti, have each been shown to work collaboratively, and collaboration is common in self-translators of the region believed to be the most active in terms of self-translation today, the Iberian peninsula (Manterola 2017). Manterola concludes her survey of collaborative self-translation by affirming that there are as many potential configurations of collaboration as there are combinations of individuals participating, although texts almost always move from the regional language towards the dominant Spanish or Portuguese.

The Chinese context, however, is vastly different, involving a language with the largest number of L1 speakers in the world and a large diasporic population, but which is typically the source language in self-translation. In this study, we select a number of Chinese-language cases to illustrate the complexity of practices across these contexts over the last century. We focus on the visibility of the collaborations that we discuss, and adapt Dasilva's (2011; 2016) concepts of the relative "opacity" or "transparency" of self-translation, the degree to which it is disclosed as such in the paratexts. We apply these terms to refer to the disclosure of the collaboration, to its opacity, its transparency. We also disambiguate theoretical discussion by applying the terms co-translator and collaborator along the lines suggested by Cordingley and Frigau Manning (2017a); we offer many examples of each, arguing that a co-translator is a self-identifying translator who is recognised as having this role by the parties to the translation. A collaborator, on the other hand, belongs to a broader category, and is one whose decisions and work impact the production of the translated text; authors, (co-)translators, translation revisers, proof readers, editors may all be collaborators to a project, each with differently defined roles. This definition prioritizes the intentions and motivations of each party, the nature of their task, and the collective understanding of how the work is shared. It allows, nonetheless, for cases of misunderstanding, when one person's comprehension of their work or role differs from how it is perceived by others.

This study takes a historical approach. The methodology began by comparing the small body of research on self-translation in Chinese published in European languages with the larger body of research in Chinese. Major discrepancies in the recognition of self-translation involving the Chinese language between Chinese and non-Chinese language research were discovered. Extensive bibliographical research was made to discover instances when the author and translator of a published work is one and the same. Chinese was found to be the source language in the vast majority of cases. If this was anticipated, it is surprising to discover that collaboration is quite prevalent – more, it appears, than is disclosed in published self-translation between European languages. Unable to quantify this intuition, research into the phenomenon was extended by reviewing prefaces and notes to published self-translations, published letters or commentaries by self-translators, editors or their acquaintances. If the opinions in these sources is by nature biased, reflecting their author's point of view, they nonetheless allow one to gauge the intentions and motivations of authors and their collaborators, and thus to define the nature of the collaboration, and the roles assumed by each. Where manuscripts, typescripts, corrected proofs, or electronic files arising from such collaborations have survived, this evidence may be used to corroborate or falsify personal testimony. However, care needs to be taken because, as genetic research has shown – and as discussed below – this evidence can also give a distorted image of the creative process when, for instance, the person holding the pen is relaying the words of another (Hersant 2017; Hersant 2020b). Furthermore, historians and archival scientists have long recognised that interpreting archival evidence necessarily introduces subjective bias as the researcher builds narratives around the relationships between documents, their authors, and the parties they evoke (Ketelaar 2012). Exploring these questions will be crucial to future research into the self-translating practices of individual authors who write in Chinese, particularly in an era of collaborative writing technologies that archive phases of the creative process and the participation of each person. This article is the first attempt to offer a broad context for such research.

We offer this study of collaborative translatorship in the hope of stimulating new avenues of research into Chinese-language self-translation in general, for there is a fundamental need for translation studies to address this blind spot. The *Bibliography on Self-translation* (Gentes et al. 2020), the most up-to-date listing of published research on self-translation used by translation studies scholars, contains just over 50 entries for published research on self-translation in Chinese and 3 PhD theses, less than 3% of the approximately 1800 entries.[2] The CNKI database, the most comprehensive database of research articles published in Chinese, yields 208 articles on the subject, to which can be added 6 monographs, 14 PhD theses and 14 articles from the Airiti database and Taiwan Citation Index, which identify relevant work published in Taiwan. Only 23 of these titles have been communicated by researchers to the editor of the collaborative *Bibliography on Self-translation*. Chinese-language self-translation studies research has made no impact upon any general discussion of self-translation published

in English-language handbook or encyclopaedia entries on self-translation (eg. Anselmi 2012; Cordingley 2018; Grutman 2009; Grutman and Van Bolderen 2014; Montini 2012). In terms of research not in Chinese, although on occasion Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailing 張愛玲) has been mentioned in passing within general discussions of self-translation, and while numerous articles have discussed individual Chinese-language self-translators, there has been no attempt to account for the phenomenon across the Chinese-language or within any one Chinese-speaking region or community – and certainly not from the perspective of how self-translators collaborate with others. Researchers in mainstream translation studies have passed over Lau's (1995) entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Translation: Chinese-English / English-Chinese Translation*; this is a missed opportunity, for not only is it one of the earliest analyses of self-translation published in English but it focuses on Chinese-language self-translators.

If Chinese-language research in self-translation regularly refers to the debates of the international community, the opposite is not the case. The *Bibliography on Self-translation* includes work on 9 Chinese-language self-translators as the primary subject of the research only. Consulting research published in Chinese using the CNKI database, Airiti database and Taiwan Citation Index, this number grows to 19. Further self-translators are cited in general accounts of self-translation, although discussion of collaboration in cases of self-translation is rare across the board, even if work on Eileen Chang often notes that her English texts were revised by C.T. Hsia. Indeed in both Chinese and non-Chinese-language research, over a third of research titles are devoted Chang, the author of fiction, prose essays and scripts who came to prominence in Shanghai's turbulent 1940s and moved to the United States. Yet current research, in all languages, does not accurately reflect the number and variety of self-translation practices in China and Chinese-speaking societies, in its diasporic and emigrant contexts, or how it might play a role for contemporary globalized authors who write in Chinese. Without claiming to be comprehensive, we hope to stimulate future research by selecting the following examples of author-translator collaboration and collaborative self-translation that attest to the variety of practices over the past century.

3. Republican-era self-translators

The history of literary self-translation in China is at least as old as modern Chinese literature, which is generally dated from the founding of the Republic of China (1912-1949). Compared to later periods, we find that collaboration in self-translation in this period is less likely to be formally recognised. Interestingly, we find more examples of this among self-translation between Chinese and Russian or Japanese than between Chinese and the languages of Continental Europe, a fact that merits further scrutiny.

Lu Xun 魯迅, regarded in the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the father of modern vernacular Chinese literature, produced translations that are well-known and much studied

(Lundberg 1989). Predominantly of Soviet and Eastern European literature, they were mostly relay translations via Japanese. Much less well-known are Lu Xun's two self-translations into Japanese. Not rediscovered until the late 1970s, "Kong Yiji" 孔乙己 (Kong Yiji) (1922) and "Tu he mao" 兔和貓 (The Rabbits and the Cat) (1923) were published in a Beijing-based Japanese-language newspaper. In a diary entry from December 1922, Lu Xun notes "translated my own story into Japanese" (戈寶權, 1979, 141). The stories are opaque self-translations: they were credited to a pseudonym more often associated with Lu Xun's brother, Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (戈寶權, 1979, 145). According to the recollections of Shimizu Yasuzō 清水安三, Lu Xun orally translated while Shimizu wrote the translation down. In this instance, there is no record of any further role Shimizu Yasuzō played in the production of the target language text. Yet, as we will soon discover, the job of transcribing an aural translation can involve a degree of reformulating that surpasses the usual redacting of an amanuensis.

The case of Lu Xun is representative of a discernible trend in this period: though Chinese authors regularly self-translated, they often were not recognised alongside their co-translators on the cover, title page or in the paratexts of works published outside China. A typical example is one of China's most successful literary exports from the period, the venerated comic author Lao She 老舍, among the leading literary authors of the mid-century. He taught at SOAS University of London from 1924 to 1929 and spoke and wrote English proficiently. We have not found him formally credited as a self-translator in any of his English-language texts, but it is nevertheless clear that he was deeply involved in the creation of several during his US sojourn (1946-1949).

The genesis of Lao She's *The Yellow Storm* is a particularly romanesque tale of an author's active – albeit *opaque* – participation in an allograph translation of his work. He wrote this ambitious trilogy in Chinese as *Sishi Tongtang* 四世同堂 (*Four Generations Under One Roof*), though initially only the first two volumes were published; the first 12 chapters of the third volume were published in the review *Xiaoshuo yuekan* 小說月刊 from May 1950 to January 1951 (Bady 1974, 304), leaving 13 chapters unpublished. Lao She then talked through the complete manuscript with Ida Pruitt, who was fluent in Mandarin but not literate in Chinese. The resulting text, *The Yellow Storm*, was an abridgement of *Four Generations*, since Lao She apparently deemed the trilogy too long for an American readership—but also a collaboration, since Pruitt's contribution to shaping the text was considerable (So 2017, 580-582). The English edition of *The Yellow Storm* contained abridgements of all three parts of the trilogy, including the 13 chapters that had not been published in Chinese (some 20% of the total manuscript). These chapters, however, were never published in Chinese because Lao She's manuscript was lost. Then, in 1982, a new Chinese edition of *Four Translations* included a Chinese translation of the last 13 chapters based on *The Yellow Storm*, while translators of a "complete" 2017 edition consulted Pruitt's translation manuscript (found at Harvard) to reintroduce other deleted materials. A similar if less complicated fate awaited the unpublished

Chinese manuscript of *The Drum Singers*, which was lost in its entirety and back-translated from the English. As a consequence, "Lao She's collaborative approach to working with his translators […] and the absence of a complete Sinitic-language manuscript for either text [*The Drum Singers and The Yellow Storm*] have forced scholars to treat the English language translation as the most authoritative version of these novels" (Iwasaki 2015, 122).

While the author is not credited in editions of Pruitt's translations, Pruitt recorded his involvement:

> He would come every evening at seven o'clock and we would work until ten…Our method of work was unusual. Lao Sheh would read to me in Chinese and I would type in English. He knew more English than he would own to. As I typed I said what I was typing. Often he would challenge or correct me. Knotty points we discussed. (qu. in Iwasaki 2015, 131).

Here, Lao She is evidently performing a degree of mental self-translation that relied upon and modified the writing and verbalizing of the translator, *who could not read the original*. He in turn articulated some of his own self-translation which was committed to paper by his collaborator. An active partner to the translation process in real-time, Lao She engaged with and sometimes challenged the translator's decisions, which tended to the literal and direct in the first instance. In a letter to his agent, Lao She worried that Pruitt "would, for example, insist to keep the Chinese flavour as much as she can which makes her sometimes write broken English" (qu. in Iwasaki 2015, 131).

The situation contains elements that Hersant (2017) has shown to be common to author-translator collaboration: firstly, that authors often become involved out of fear that their work will be misrepresented or otherwise betrayed, and, secondly, that the person holding the pen is not always the only one doing the translating. Furthermore, Lao She's comments together with his active participation in the revision of the translation (as witnessed by the manuscripts at Harvard) reveal an element of what Anselmi defines as "editorial self-translation", that is, "translations resulting from a process of revision or supervision or retranslation on the part of the authors prompted by their dissatisfaction with the existing translations" (2012, 61). But this would tell only part of the story, for Lao She was intimately involved in the composition of the translation from the outset, as Pruitt's account above confirms: the process began with him reading each word aloud, shaping each word with his own voice, giving it intonation and stress, and providing a reading performance that in turn influenced the translator's appreciation of the text's poetic and semantic patterning, which he subsequently commented upon. His objections to Pruitt's attempts "to keep the Chinese flavor" show him guiding his translator towards a fluent, domesticated translation. This case is instructive in that it tests the limits of what may be termed "collaborative self-translation", for despite only minimal evidence of Lao She's handwriting on the manuscript, testimonies of both translator and author reveal him to be a co-translator of his own work.

For Chinese Communists in the 1930s, Russian was perhaps the most important foreign language, and the most prominent case of self-translation between those two languages may be that of Xiao San 蕭三 (pen name of Xiao Kesen 蕭克森), also an instance of an opaque collaboration. Xiao, who spoke several foreign languages, also used for his Russian publications the pen name Emi San (in homage to Emile Zola). While studying in Moscow at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, Xiao began to translate his own poetry into Russian, which was published in various journals and collections, sometimes after alterations were made by his friend Aleksandr Ilyich Romm, brother of the famous filmmaker Mikhail Romm (張旭, 2011, 122–131). Xiao is credited as self-translator on numerous occasions, but not when Romm or other Soviet poets are named as the translator. Biographies and memoirs of Xiao's life explain that he would read out loud his Chinese text to Romm and offer a rough translation into Russian, which the native speaker would then rewrite. In such instances it is most likely that Xiao is an unacknowledged co-translator of his own work, for the Russian texts would have been always based on Xiao's own Russian drafts or oral translations, since he spoke fluent Russian and they likely did not speak Chinese.

Curiously, when Xiao's collected poems were prepared by a major Chinese press, they discovered some twenty poems in Russian translation for which no original could be found. In what is perhaps the first documented case of a self-translator appearing blithely unconcerned about the authorship of his "original", or perhaps because this man of state was too busy to ever maintain a record of his own poems, when Xiao was asked to provide Chinese versions for these poems, he simply asked his bilingual secretary to produce them. A few of these may be consulted in Xiao's *Collected Works* (McGuire 2017, 189).

Many writers of the Republican period practised self-translation occasionally, such as Lu Xun, Dai Wangshu 戴望舒, Ling Shu-hua 凌叔華 and Hsiung Shih-I (Xiong Shiyi) 熊式一, or intensively, like Lin Yutang 林語堂 and Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailing). Chang was among the most popular authors of her day and in recent years her reputation has grown in China and abroad. A writer of fiction, prose essays and film scripts, Chang made her reputation in the tempestuous climate of 1940s Shanghai before she emigrated to the United States. Her practice was complex, and for several of her works she generated multiple versions in Chinese and English, resulting not only in major discrepancies but also in substantial uncertainty about which texts should be considered originals, since she constantly "re-evaluates and recontextualises her own works by expanding and even undermining her original formulations" (Li 2006, 99). Not generally considered to be a collaborative self-translator, some of her translations (e.g. "Jin suo ji" 金鎖記 [The Golden Cangue]) were heavily edited by C.T. Hsia (Hsia Chih-tsing, Xia Zhiqing 夏志清). Chang's case is also instructive for delineating the sometimes blurry lines between translatorship, co-translatorship, and other forms of collaboration in the writing process. Because Hsia was not a self-identifying translator but one who understood his role to be that of an editor, and even though his editing did in certain instances require acts of transla-

tion, he was performing the function of an editor and anthologist, and so was a "collaborator" to the translation process without being a co-translator. Thus, in the case of Chang, it is not unusual that she and not her collaborator is the recognised translator.

If it is common not to acknowledge the Chinese self-translator's involvement in publications outside China during this period, within China the Anglophone *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, which ran in Shanghai from 1935 to 1941, was pioneering for its recognition and promotion of local self-translators. Among the earliest literary self-translations from Chinese into English is the three stories published in its April to May 1937 editions by Ling Shuhua (Ling Hsu Hua). Two of these ("A Poet Goes Mad" and "What's the Point of It") credit the collaboration of Julian Bell, Virginia Woolf's nephew, then residing in Wuhan, while the third ("Writing a Letter") credits only the author. These translations occur between Ling Shuhua's translations of other authors and her best-known English work, *Ancient Melodies*, during the course of which "fiction was transformed into autobiography and the fictional characters became extra-textual real people" (Hong 2009, 85), changing third-person to first-person texts. This provokes Hong to suggest that perhaps even then "autobiography [was] the stereotyped genre for a third-world woman to reach the global print market" (87). Other authors who published self-translations in *T'ien Hsia* include the playwright Yao Ke 姚克 (credited as Yao Hsin-nung 姚莘農) and, collaborative self-translation is recognised when the poems of Zau Sinmey (Shao Xunmei 邵洵美) are credited with his name alongside that of the well-known British translator Harold Acton.

4. Self-translators of the PRC

While the early PRC, often known as the "Seventeen Years" (from establishment in 1949 to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966) partook of a "socialist cosmopolitanism" which provided state sponsorship of literary translation both into and out of Chinese (Volland 2017), self-translation in this period seems to have been rare indeed. Needless to say, the Cultural Revolution put an end to all but the most ideological literary translation until the late 1970s. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, the practice of self-translation has to some extent recovered in the PRC, although the cases of foreign-based self-translators are more numerous and prominent. The practice has remained marginal in the PRC, especially when compared to the Republican Era, to Hong Kong or Taiwan, or to Chinese-language writers further afield. Future research will no doubt uncover more examples of collaborative self-translation. Nevertheless, while the Republican authors were deeply concerned with questions of translation, and many of them practised self-translation to a lesser or greater degree, the seven decades of the PRC seem thus far to have produced few comparable projects.

Still, PRC minority authors represent one source of self-translations. Authors in large but non-Han literary languages within China such as Tibetan, Uyghur, and Mongolian, are over-

whelmingly bilingual, often at a high level. Since official patronage and career progression can be enlarged by writing in Chinese, and since readership in Chinese is much wider than in any non-Han language, Chinese is often the preferred medium of literary expression for non-Han minority authors (Maconi 2008, 182). This has also led to numerous instances of self-translation. Most prominent of these is perhaps the contemporary Tibetan author Pema Tseden 萬瑪才旦, who is also well-known as a filmmaker. Contrary to the examples of contributions by Republican Chinese authors being elided from collaborations in works published outside China, minority authors in the PRC may be more likely to be credited by their Western collaborators when the latter are motivated to improve the recognition of minorities abroad and advance their rights and socio-economic conditions at home. Indeed, there is the long tradition of anthropological collaboration in self-translation that underpins a lot of translation of ethnic minority literatures in China, now also coalescing under a "mother tongue" designation (Bender 2017, 946–951). This occurs into Chinese, when speakers of minority languages work together with Chinese scholars/translators on Chinese language versions of native texts, or into other languages, when non-Chinese anthropologists collaborate with minority authors and self-translators. One salient example from this rich tradition involves the Yi poet Aku Wuwu 阿庫烏霧. A member of the Nuosu (Yi) ethnic minority, Aku lives in the Liangshan ("Cool Mountains") region of Southwestern Sichuan, and is an advocate of "mother tongue" poetry; he has sought to bypass Chinese and translate his Yi language work directly into English, collaborating with American Sinologist Mark Bender (Bender 2005). His political affirmation of this ethnic identity was developed recently through a project of indigenous poetics, the collaboration with the Nuosu elder Jjivot Zopqu to write down the oral (and partially written) traditional Nuosu text, *The Book of Origins* (Bender and Aku Wuwu 2019). If Aku sometimes appears as a collaborator with Bender ("translated by Mark Bender, with Aku Wuwu"), in this publication, as in a number of others, the text is promoted as a co-translation with the author ("translated by Aku Wuwu and Mark Bender"). The transparency of their collaboration advances the goals of their project, for the translator brings the credibility of his position and affiliation with a reputable institution of research and teaching (he is a full Professor at Ohio State University), and the author is naturally assumed to have a unique access to the complexities of his source text, authorizing the translation.

5. Self-translators in Taiwan

Modern Taiwanese literature emerged during the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945). While several authors produced Chinese versions of their own Japanese works during and after the colonial period, we have not discovered instances of authors co-translating their own works. Documented cases of self-translators working collaboratively are more visible after 1949, when the Chinese Republican government relocated from Mainland China to Taiwan,

bringing with it the greater part of the educated, cosmopolitan cultural elite. Several of those who were to become the most prominent authors from Taiwan were children when relocated with their families. Having received cosmopolitan educations, many subsequently also moved abroad or to Hong Kong, or sojourned there before returning to Taiwan. One such author was Pai Hsien-yung (Bai Xianyong 白先勇). Pai spent three decades at the University of California Santa Barbara, and a number of his works are set in the United States. He might therefore also reasonably be classed as a Chinese American self-translator, but, given that his reception has overwhelmingly been as a Taiwanese author, and since his best-known work, *Taipei People*, is set among Taipei's post-war Republican elite, we include his work here.

Fluent in English, Pai co-translated a volume of his short fiction between 1976 and 1981 with his UC Santa Barbara colleague Patia Yasin, a collaboration that is rendered highly transparent in the paratexts. Issued as *Wandering in the Garden, Waking from the Dream: Tales of Taipei Characters*, and published in the USA in 1982, these stories were then "carefully redacted; isolated words and phrases [were] revised" ("Preface" 2000, x) for a 2000 Hong Kong bilingual edition entitled, like the 1971 expanded Chinese collection, *Taipei People*. In her translator's note, "A Word from the Co-Translator", Yasin expresses deference towards the author, likening her own role to that of a performing artist: "as far as I was concerned, Pai Hsien-yung was the composer and I was whatever musicians or singers each of his pieces called for" (Yasin 2000, xxviii). The editor, George Kao, on the other hand wrote of his role that it was one of mediation:

> to steer the precious cargo that is the heart of the story between the Scylla and Charybdis of disparate accents and imageries, to help achieve a tone and a texture of language at once natural and precise, intelligible in English and faithful to the original, that will move the reader when the original Chinese does and not cause him to laugh in the wrong place. This means ameliorating an occasional verbal gaucherie and eliminating incongruities that might produce the wrong effect, whether these resulted from over-fidelity to the Chinese text or too free a helping of the riches of the polyglot American tongue. (Kao 2000, xxii)

If the co-translator Yasin projects her self-image as a faithful interpreter directed by the author, here the editor Kao presents his role as that of guaranteeing linguistic and cultural fluency for the target audience. The reedition of the work serves to consecrate its importance, justifying the extra space accorded to the translator and editor to communicate to the reader their role and hand in the writing (less remarkable is way they position themselves as subordinate to the author).

Pai also separately produced a single story in English "Hong Kong 1960", which he subsequently self-translated into Chinese. Like Chang, to whom he is often considered a stylistic heir, Pai thus belongs to the very restricted class of Chinese-language bidirectional self-translators. Their projects nonetheless offer a salient point of comparison in terms of illustra-

ting the different roles that collaborators assume within the genesis of a self-translation: while Chang remained more resolutely individual during the process of translation, Pai integrated a co-translator into his own self-translation process; and though the translations of each involved editorial intervention, in Chang's case C. T. Hsia took a more active role. With another Taiwanese author who resided in the U.S.A., Yü Li-Hua 於梨華, Hsia acted as a co-translator and he is credited as such, transparently. Hsia's case illustrates that just as authors engage different modes of writing when exercising different functions in the collaboration (author, translator, reviser, proof-reader), the reality of the editor's work and how they understand their role should determine their classification in the collaboration as a co-translator or not. Having said that, just as is the case with the author, whose translating is often the occasion for a degree of re-writing, designating the editor's exact role can become more complex when there is slippage between their modes of engagement with the text.

The penchant in recent works for collaboration to be rendered transparent (evident in the paratexts) reflects the contemporary trend for promoting the involvement of the author with the expectation that the translation will be more marketable because it will be perceived as more authentic. If there might be a temptation on the part of the publisher to efface the translator entirely and pass the work off as a new "original", the formalisation of translators' contracts and the concomitant delineation of translators' responsibilities discourages such erasure.

6. Gao Xingjian: challenging orthodoxies in author-translator collaboration

The Chinese writer, self-translator and Nobel laureate Gao Xingjian, self-exiled in France since the 1980s and a French citizen since 1988, once said in an interview: "I loathe Chinese who write like westerners – including grammatically! You'd think you were reading bad translations…" (Bretonnière 1993, 136; our translation).[3] Gao's early theatre has often been said to introduce a European, absurdist style into Chinese, yet he nonetheless rejects the emulation of a "Western" literary style or syntax in Chinese. The point underscores the substantive differences between Chinese and European languages, which render choices about translation even more complicated than when translating between European languages. Bridging this wider separation of cultures and languages has motivated many collaborations between a Chinese author and a European-language translator. Future research in this domain may determine if the increased distance between Chinese and European (or other) languages and cultures encourages greater freedom or risk taking by the collaborators. This would challenge the view that the author's involvement inherently restricts the translator, a view regularly affirmed, from one of the earliest examinations of author-translator collaboration – "In accepting active interference from the author, the translator reduces his own freedom and the potential for his own reading of

the source text" (Vanderschelden 1998, 28) – to one of the most recent – "In author-translation collaborations, the translator's freedom to make decisions is much more limited than usual" (Manterola 2017, 191). For now, we offer one such example, a collaborative self-translation between Chinese and European languages that has the potential to disrupt the assumptions of translation research that is premised upon translation between European languages.

Gao has written plays, novels, poems and essays in French and Chinese. His known self-translations include four plays written first in French and self-translated into Chinese: *Au bord de la vie* (1993) / *Sheng si jie* 生死界 (2001), *Le Somnambule* (1995) / *Yeyoushen* 夜遊神 (2001), *Quatre quatuors pour un week-end* (1998) / *Zhoumo sichongzou* 周末四重奏 (1996), and *Le Quêteur de la mort* (2004) / *Kouwen siwang* 叩問死亡 (2004). In 1989 Gao and Michèle Guyot co-translated from Chinese his play *La Fuite*, although his own participation is not recognised in the peritexts when it was published in 1992. On the other hand, Gao's most intensive collaboration has been highly transparent, namely his work with the French translator Noël Dutrait, who translated with his wife, Liliane, for many years before her passing in 2010. Their collaborative translations include the celebrated novels *La Montagne de l'Âme* (1995) and *Livre d'un homme seul* (2001), the volume of short stories *Une Canne à pêche pour mon grand-père* (1997) and non-fiction works *Pour une autre esthétique* (2004), *Le Témoignage de la littérature* (2004), and *La Raison d'être de la littérature* (2008). Together they also translated three plays published in a single volume *Le Quêteur de la mort, L'Autre rive et La Neige en août* (2004).

The working method of Gao and the Dutraits has been discussed in the preface and/or translator's note to the published work (eg. Gao 2016); it has been explored in numerous interviews with author or translator/s; and each has written on the subject in separate publications. They worked as a trio: Noël Dutrait, a Sinologist with a stronger command of Chinese, would make a first rough draft that was as faithful as possible to the source text; Gao would be invited to read Noël's draft, which he would revise, making suggestions, which Noël would integrate, adapt or reject; then Liliane, who had experience as a professional copy editor of French, would revise the text for fluency and natural expression. Their work reflected Gao's attitude to self-translation, which he once described when commenting on the self-translation into Chinese of his own theatre:

> But for a new version in Chinese, what I do is an invention. I want no trace of the translation to remain, as if it were an original: it is a new creation. The Chinese version is a rewriting of the same play. In no way is it a translation. (Gallo 2018; our translation) [4]

For Gao self-translation should be creative rewriting, which leads him to encourage the translators with whom he works to take liberties they would not normally allow themselves. He is typically not credited as a co-translator of the French translations, rather he assumes the role of a reviser within the process. Yet Noël Dutrait has made it clear that Gao has been an integral

partner in the creative process:

> As always with Gao Xingjian, the translation took place by means of a constant back and forth of various suggested versions. In the first instance, the author assures the translator of his absolute faith [in the translator], *pushing him to dare to depart from the original text and be linguistically inventive*. Then he annotates the translation, suggesting this or that correction. This climate of trust between author and translator allows the translator to enjoy the real pleasure of writing in the knowledge that the author will always find a solution, one that is often better than the translator's own.[5] (Dutrait 2011, 8; our translation and emphasis)

Dutrait's comments align with the sentiments that Gao has expressed about his creative attitude to self-translation and the freedom he encourages in his own translators. The downside of this for Dutrait is that taking such risks left him feeling exposed to accusations, from Sinologists in particular, of committing errors or distorting the original (Gentes 2017, 409). This anxiety would presumably be assuaged somewhat when Gao's attitude is publicised in the book's peritexts, or when Dutrait explains their working method in a translator's note, as in the 2011 *Œuvre complète* of Gao's poetry. If Gao was not acknowledged in some early collaborations, this contribution of a Nobel laureate is now celebrated. Indeed, when the author commands significant cultural and symbolic capital, publishers today are more likely to acknowledge their participation, often publishing the translation with the common epithet "revised by the author", or even allocating space for collaborators and co-translators to recount the process and render the collaboration transparent (as seen with Pai). This contrasts with the dominant mode of contemporary publishing, which regularly downplays, even occludes, a work's status as translated.

Unlike cases of authorial surveillance of the translator, the Gao-Dutrait collaboration is founded upon a relationship of mutual trust and respect. The author licences the translator/s to continue their writing project in another language within a relationship that resembles what the Cuban writer Guillermo Cabrera-Infante termed his "closelaboration" with Suzanne Jill Levine (1991, 47), a practice that exemplifies "mediated self-translation, or of four-handed translation, in which the final text sometimes appears as the joint work of the author and his or her translator" (Hersant 2017, 95). Many French translations of Gao's works have come to have the status of second originals. For instance, his intimate relationship to the genesis of the French version of *Lingshan* [Soul Mountain] helped justify relay translations into Greek, Spanish or Brazilian Portuguese from the French *La Montagne de l'Âme* rather than from the Chinese original. In fact, Gao himself encouraged the French version of his works to be used as the source text when an accurate translation from Chinese could not be guaranteed (Dutrait 2011). Little research exists into such mediated self-translation by Chinese-language writers, and it is surprising that the self-translation practice of China's most recent Nobel Prize winning author has received so little scholarly attention in China. [6] Certainly, Gao's encouragement

of his translators to take risks and transgress the constraints of allograph translation challenges received views that an author's involvement limits the translator's imaginary.

In the quotation above, Dutrait affirms that knowing that Gao will revise his translation, but being encouraged to follow his own intuition, liberates him "to enjoy the real pleasure of writing". This idyllic vision is nonetheless somewhat clouded by the translator's comment that he "know[s] that the author will always find a solution, one that is often better than [his] own". On such an account of collaboration, whatever freedoms the translator may enjoy in the moment of creation, the author will get the final word. This echoes Gao's belief that the second version is no translation but "an original […] a new creation" (quoted above), which implies that a newly-authored solution holds priority over a conventional translation, and the author over the translator. The capacity for authors to assert their authority, all the while pro-claiming the originality of the translation (because it is more than a translation), reinforces the image and discourse of the translator's subservience, which underscores how situations of author-translator collaboration can jeopardise the "translator creativity" or "translation as rewriting" regularly celebrated in current translation theory. And if, in the case of Gao and the Dutraits, this is less sinister or controlling than we have just made it seem, research into author-translator collaboration has shown that some translators are more effective in defending their own interpretations while others are more easily persuaded by the author (see Castro et al. 2017; Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2017; Hersant 2020a). Indeed, the psychological mechanisms of affiliation, friendship and loyalty are highly complex, and personal testimo-nies should always be viewed with a critical eye. Researchers can become more confident of their conclusions when such evidence is supported with close textual comparison of source and target texts, and if possible a study of the translation's genesis to help discern the role of each party during its composition.

Furthermore, Gao is a highly talented artist who has translated himself not only between different genres but into different media. As a visual artist, he has collaborated on works of cutting-edge electronic literature. This new frontier for research into collaboration in self-translation has opened up with the advent of digital authorship and the internet. Digital self-translation in Chinese literature transcends geographic limits and can be thought of as self-translation for electronic literature, only it does not limit itself to the literary. Electronic lite-rature regularly involves collaboration between multiple authors, and one salient example of collaborative self-translation in Chinese is one in which Gao played a modest part. The Chine-se poet Yang Lian 楊煉 and John Cayley, a pioneer of electronic literature, who is also literate in Chinese, made a digital adaptation of Yang's long poem *Dahai tingzhi zhi chu* 大海停止之 處 (*Where the Sea Stands Still*), which was written in Sydney in 1993 and published in 1995 by Cayley's Wellsweep Press in a bilingual Chinese-English print edition (see Baynham and Lee 2019, chap. 7). That English text was not produced by Yang but by Scottish translator Brian Holton (who regularly consulted the author), although Yang was intimately involved in

its adaptation, fragmenting and reworking the bilingual text for recomposition in HyperCard, HTML, and live performance. One recent analysis of this collaboration categorised the piece as a hybrid modernist text that shows "Cayley's approach to programming was profoundly influenced by his understanding of parallelism in classical Chinese poetry and by Poundian modernism, which was itself shaped by Pound's reading, or misreading, of classical Chinese texts" (Edmond 2019, 95). Furthermore, this electronic work, a transparent and truly global collaboration, contained images produced by John Cayley and none other than Gao Xingjian. Gao's role in this collaborative self-translation is defined by his visual art practice, which can nonetheless be considered a creative and intersemiotic translation of Yang and Cayley's work. The final electronic text, with its algorithms that self-perpetuate the poem, render it impossible to say whether Chinese, English or machine code provides the source text; rather the poem is continuously reborn in translation, with each intervention by the medium autonomously and incrementally affecting each collaborator's contribution.

7. Conclusions

This essay represents a first pass at a promising subject. We have scanned the globe for Chinese-language self-translation, grouping authors by their historical period or geographic limits, ascertaining trends in collaboration and its disclosure. As the first survey of the field, its lacunae and limitations are many. It is likely, for instance, that pre-20th century self-translation pairings with Latin, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Manchu, or Mongolian have escaped our attention. [7] We have concentrated on literary translation only, and have therefore excluded other forms of self-translation that are likely to reveal instances of collaboration (eg. children's literature or theatre and film subtitling). The very extensive practice of self-translation by Chinese academics (Chan 2016) merits further attention, for it is often conducted in collaboration, even if for many reasons – not the least of which are the author's desire for professional advance and pressures generated by the institution – the work of co-translators and collaborators is often uncredited or simply thanked (sometimes vaguely) in the acknowledgments.

Remarkably, in every one of the periods or regions studied we encounter relatively high instances of co-translatorship and collaboration in self-translation. In looking for reasons for this, it is noteworthy that in terms of self-translator biography we are speaking mostly of those who are originally from China or Chinese-speaking regions. They seek to make their work accessible either because they have migrated (eg. Chang, Pai) or because they live in multilingual or multi-ethnic societies outside of Mainland China (eg. Gao). The most obvious non-Han group are those writing in minority languages such as Tibetan and translating into Chinese for the purpose of reaching a wider audience in the PRC and the broader Chinese world. The other direction—of Western, Russian, Japanese, or Southeast Asian authors translating *into* Chinese—seems rare, therefore future discoveries in this domain and information about the

nature of any collaborations will be worth pursuing.

In terms of visibility we find that in the Republican period the self-translator's contribution to the translation is frequently not recognized in published translations outside China. We have documented cases of "opaque" collaborations in the language pairs of Chinese-Russian and Chinese-Japanese; future research may resolve whether or not this phenomenon is indeed more prevalent than in the English language pairing, or between European languages in general, and what historical factors account for this. In collaborative self-translation from Chinese into European languages since the 1980s we find that authorial co-translation is typically recognised in the paratexts, reflecting the high value accorded today to the perceived "authenticity" that the author adds to the translation. Furthermore, in Western societies, factors such as the emergence of "migrant literature", public policies of multiculturalism (which aim to accommodate pluralism and cultural difference), not to mention interest in hybrid, transnational or globalised identities has each contributed to an environment that welcomes and valorizes the participation of the Chinese-language author in the translation of their work.

Gao Xingjian has affirmed that one of the reasons that compelled his creative approach to self-translation is the great difference between the languages and cultures of China and France (Gallo 2018). This insight resonates with the motivation frequently expressed by self-translators working in Chinese, namely their desire to collaborate with a native speaker to ensure the fluidity of their work in the target language – which might otherwise be termed its domestication. This is notable given that due to migration and English-learning by Chinese speakers across the world the body of Chinese-foreign (especially English) bilinguals is very large. Yet the evidence suggests that the prevalence of collaborative self-translation in Chinese-language self-translation arises not from a relative paucity of competent translators working from or into Chinese but from substantial differences between Chinese and non-Chinese literary languages, cultures, and readerships. This hypothesis remains to be tested; it may be confirmed or disproven with the constitution of a corpus of wide ranging, fine-grained studies that compare source and translation texts and their individual geneses. Indeed, only when translation studies has given Chinese-speaking self-translators sufficient attention will it be able to affirm with confidence whether or not moving between Chinese and other languages necessitates more active rewriting than between European languages, and whether or not this in turn stimulates greater innovation and creativity in self-translation strategies.

Notes

[1]   We use "Chinese-language" rather than "Sinophone". While acknowledging the important stakes of the Sinophone turn (e.g. Shih 2007), the result has also been to make it difficult to use "Sinophone" to simply denote language use. For one thing, the term has become geographically ambiguous, sometimes excluding and sometimes including the PRC;

for another, it proposes a "precarious and problematic relation to China" (30), making it inappropriate to many of the self-translators we are considering. The authors consider "Chinese-language" an adequate description of the texts examined here, since the great diversity of spoken Chinese languages (Cantonese, Wu, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, etc.) has had limited albeit fascinating effects on literary writing in modern Chinese, the diversity of which is not greater than that of written English, and which largely remains close to a Mandarin-based standard.

[2] Two works are listed "[in Chinese]" are actually in English, and the article "Possibilities and limitations of self-translation" by Wook-dong Kim is in Korean (so we excluded it from our count).

[3] "Je déteste les Chinois qui écrivent à l'occidentale – y compris grammaticalement ! On croirait lire de mauvaises traductions..."

[4] "Mais pour une nouvelle version en chinois, ce que je fais est une invention. Je dois faire disparaître toutes les traces de la traduction, comme si c'était une version originale : c'est une nouvelle création. La version chinoise est une réécriture de la même pièce de théâtre. Il ne s'agit en aucun cas de traduction.")

[5] "Comme toujours avec Gao Xingjian, la traduction est effectuée avec un aller et retour incessant des différentes versions proposées. Dans un premier temps, l'auteur assure le traducteur de sa confiance absolue, il le pousse à oser s'éloigner du texte original et à faire des trouvailles de langage. Puis il annote la traduction en proposant telle ou telle correction. Ce climat de confiance entre l'auteur et le traducteur permet un véritable plaisir d'écriture pour ce dernier qui sait que l'auteur trouvera toujours une solution, souvent meilleure que la sienne."

[6] While two articles exist in French, the CNKI database gives no evidence of Chinese-language research on this aspect of Gao's writing, partly due to Gao's alienation from the PRC cultural establishment and the resulting chilling effect on related research.

[7] Italian Jesuit scholar Matteo Ricci's *On Friendship* 交友論 *(Jiaoyou lun)* furnishes a good example of early Chinese-Italian self-translation.

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