Translation as Social Practice: A Case Study of the Chinese-English Translation Magazine *Renditions*

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2021

Abstract

This thesis is a study of translation as a “socially situated activity” (Wolf and Fukari, 2007; Mason, 2014), taking as example the literary translation magazine *Renditions*, a biannual published by the Research Centre for Translation at the Chinese University of Hong Kong since 1973. This is a cross-disciplinary project that draws from Chinese Studies, Translation Studies and Sociology to discuss the following research question: considering that translation is widely acknowledged to involve a high amount of individual work, how do translators learn if working within a community? Building on a relatively fresh focus on the sociology of translation in Translation Studies, this thesis is also a reaction to the image of the “lone translator” (brought to attention by e.g. St André, 2010), which is challenged in this study of a working environment that naturally creates what educational theorist Wenger (1998) calls a “Community of Practice (CoP)”. The subject is tackled from four interconnected and mutually defining perspectives on the social learning process, as proposed by Wenger: learning by experience (meaning), by doing (practice), by belonging (community), and by becoming (identity). Some related literature (Mason, 2014) suggests that these same four points correspond to the way translators learn. I argue that, even though the activity of translating does indeed involve a considerable amount of individual work, the image of the “lone translator” fades once translators are seen as individuals participating in a community that has an impact on their professional activity.

The magazine chosen as the source of material for this project, *Renditions*, is a relevant and interesting object of study for several reasons. To date, little attention has been paid to literary journals and magazines, partly because their contents are not homogeneous, which makes any attempt at a systematic assessment and study of such a subject “a formidable task” (Gimpel, 1999). For a study focusing on the sociology of translation, however, a magazine is an ideal example of CoP where translators network, collaborate, and re-consider their work in the light of this social contact. Also, given that translation is essentially practice-based, focusing on a magazine allowed me to turn directly to some of *Renditions*’ many contributors for information: methods used include semi-structured interviews and textual analysis of examples from *Renditions*’ catalogue. This case study shows that translators tend to benefit professionally from interaction with a CoP; that translation involves a perpetual kind of learning process; that the format of a translation magazine makes translation more visible, highlighting a profession that has been criticised as invisible (see Venuti, 1995); that magazines may be difficult material to research systematically in terms of contents, but suggest themselves as suitable for the study of naturally occurring CoPs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the generous Doctoral Scholarship funding and academic support from the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies at the University of Nottingham, for which I am very grateful. I am also thankful for funding towards my fieldwork provided by the Universities' China Committee in London (UCCL).

I am extremely grateful for the academic guidance and encouragement received from my supervisors at the University of Nottingham, Dr Sarah Dauncey and Dr Scott Pacey, who have very patiently steered this project through to this final dissertation, and, in the early stages of my studies, Dr Niv Horesh. My thanks to Dr Jeremy Taylor, who as my internal examiner at Nottingham has repeatedly provided invaluable feedback on my research, which has made this a better thesis. I am also indebted to Dr Georges Goormaghtigh for introducing me to *Renditions* and for being the driving inspiration behind my doctoral studies.

My deepest thanks go to all my interviewees for generously making themselves available to answer all my questions during my fieldwork in Hong Kong; this research would not have been possible without their friendly assistance. In particular, thanks to Professor Lawrence Wang-Chi Wong, Executive Editor of *Renditions*, and Alena Chow and Cecilia Ip at *Renditions*, for making me feel welcome at the Research Centre for Translation at CUHK. I would also like to thank Dr Audrey Heijns for her friendship and academic encouragement ever since my first visit to CUHK.

My doctoral studies were made much easier by the boundless emotional support and encouragement received from my friends and family. Thank you all, in particular my wonderfully caring mother Alena without whose support I would never have come this far. Special thanks to my closest friend Dr Klára Pešková, who has been an inspiring fellow PhD companion all along this academic journey, always ready to provide the necessary friendly motivation for my research. Also, I cannot omit my two cats, whose irreplaceable feline company I appreciated every day during my studies.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late father, Richard, whose love and unyielding support for my academic endeavours have accompanied me until his passing in early 2017. To this day, he continues to inspire me.

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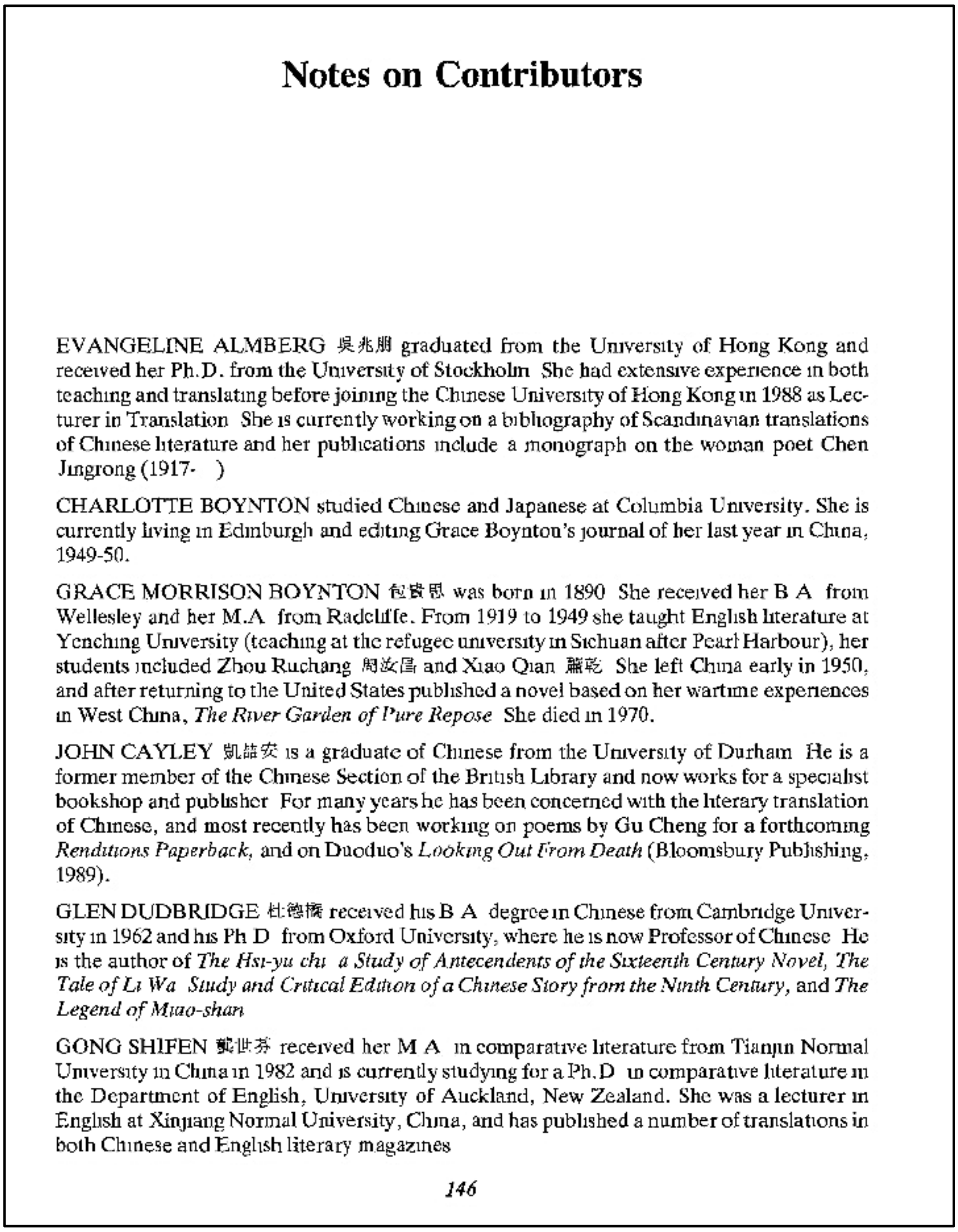
List of Abbreviations

TS	Translation Studies
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text
SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
CT	Collaborative Translation
RCT	Research Centre for Translation
CUHK	Chinese University of Hong Kong

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

Renditions: More than just Translation

My first contact with the translation magazine *Renditions* was through my lecturer Dr Georges Goormaghtigh at the University of Geneva, who placed a copy of *Renditions* No. 6 in my hands back in 2013 upon hearing I had an active interest in translation (to this day, this issue of *Renditions* accompanies me on my academic journey). Did I know this magazine, he asked, but at that time *Renditions* was news to me. I looked at the magazine at home, instantly liking what I saw: its pages appealed to me as a reader in the first place, long before the idea of using it as a resource for research materialised in my mind. The meticulous part of me liked the care that was being put into having the publication look neat and pleasant, and the curious reader in me started realising that I had never really paid much attention to magazines in general, and to the possibilities the format of a magazine opens to editors in particular. Let me explain what I mean by this. A magazine is intended as a read one gets back to repeatedly; consequently, its contents are usually relatively short and scattered, as one might expect with this kind of format. This, if a magazine has to do with translation, makes it quite easy to credit and introduce translators without making the reader feel he or she is being constantly interrupted: in the pages of *Renditions*, I came across the introductory voice of the editor(s), saw that the names and backgrounds of contributing translators were to be found in the "Notes on Contributors" in the final pages (see Figure 1 for an example), a section that later often allowed me to gain some basic information on the background of my interviewees prior to my meeting them, and sometimes also noticed an introductory note of what a translator had to say about the author or about the piece they had worked on for that particular issue.


Notes on Contributors

EVANGELINE ALMBERG 吳兆朋 graduated from the University of Hong Kong and received her Ph.D. from the University of Stockholm. She had extensive experience in both teaching and translating before joining the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1988 as Lecturer in Translation. She is currently working on a bibliography of Scandinavian translations of Chinese literature and her publications include a monograph on the woman poet Chen Jingrong (1917-)

CHARLOTTE BOYNTON studied Chinese and Japanese at Columbia University. She is currently living in Edinburgh and editing Grace Boynton's journal of her last year in China, 1949-50.

GRACE MORRISON BOYNTON 包貴思 was born in 1890. She received her B.A. from Wellesley and her M.A. from Radcliffe. From 1919 to 1949 she taught English literature at Yenching University (teaching at the refugee university in Sichuan after Pearl Harbour), her students included Zhou Ruchang 周汝昌 and Xiao Qian 蕭乾. She left China early in 1950, and after returning to the United States published a novel based on her wartime experiences in West China, *The River Garden of Pure Repose*. She died in 1970.

JOHN CAYLEY 凱諾安 is a graduate of Chinese from the University of Durham. He is a former member of the Chinese Section of the British Library and now works for a specialist bookshop and publisher. For many years he has been concerned with the literary translation of Chinese, and most recently has been working on poems by Gu Cheng for a forthcoming *Renditions Paperback*, and on Duoduo's *Looking Out From Death* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1989).

GLEN DUDBRIDGE 杜德橋 received his B.A. degree in Chinese from Cambridge University in 1962 and his Ph.D. from Oxford University, where he is now Professor of Chinese. He is the author of *The Hsi-yu chi: a Study of Antecendents of the Sixteenth Century Novel, The Tale of Li Wa: Study and Critical Edition of a Chinese Story from the Ninth Century,* and *The Legend of Miao-shan*.

GONG SHIFEN 龔世芬 received her M.A. in comparative literature from Tianjin Normal University in China in 1982 and is currently studying for a Ph.D. in comparative literature in the Department of English, University of Auckland, New Zealand. She was a lecturer in English at Xinjiang Normal University, China, and has published a number of translations in both Chinese and English literary magazines.

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Figure 1: An example of the "Notes on Contributors" to be found at the back of each issue of Renditions, *from* Renditions *No. 32 (1989: 146).*

This for me was the first time to see translation introduced in such a translator-friendly way, and it intrigued me: translated works I had read before this were all book-length translations, and I (as most readers probably do) had paid very little attention to anything the translator might have added in terms of paratextual material (e.g. an introduction), if such material was even present in the first place. *Renditions*, on the other hand, was translation at its most "visible": it was impossible to miss the fact that this was translated material, the magazine clearly welcomed that translators not only translated but also explained, introduced, and thereby kept the reader informed. While this is not unique to *Renditions* and happens to some degree in most similar publications, it did alert me to how the format of a magazine allows for a higher number of paratextual elements to be assembled in one and the same publication. This initial encounter with *Renditions* No. 6 then pushed me to seek out more copies of *Renditions*, and that process of familiarization gradually led ideas together, and shaped them into my PhD proposal. I realised *Renditions* had a dedicated and, to some extent, constant network of contributors who had mostly translated for it repeatedly: the more I read, the more I saw names I had already come across… I was becoming familiar with what I would soon start seeing as a kind of translator community at work.

I had been translating before, albeit only in my university classes: Dr Georges Goormaghtigh was, in fact, the first of my university lecturers to lead us, his students, to have a brush with translation during undergraduate studies at Geneva; this was translation of excerpts from classical Chinese texts, that being what he taught us and one of his several areas of expertise, and translation his preferred way of introducing this challenging material to us; some years later, my MSc course at Sheffield did (unlike Geneva) involve translation classes where we were asked to work on more contemporary texts, which was an entirely different kind of challenge.

As I started working on my PhD proposal, it became clear to me that I wanted to do some translation work alongside such a project: I wanted to gain at least an approximate idea of what I was researching, from a practitioner's viewpoint – my intention was, by and large, to become a participant observer in the profession. This experience also gradually gave me an understanding of how some skills that can be acquired through translator training might not work just as well in literary translation: this, I thought after trying to translate literary language and finding I needed a co-translator to do the source text justice, will be why some speak of literary translation as of a separate layer within translation, as of an art. These were all matters relevant for my thesis, ones which I was not yet fully aware of while thinking about my PhD proposal.

It is known about participant observation that it is a rather abstract method that eludes verbal explanation given that there is "no way to anticipate more than a small proportion of the situations in which investigators will find themselves" (De Walt and De Walt, 2002: 17). Having said this, it is a method that involves taking active part in what one is studying as a way of understanding the subject matter. So, the first such step I decided to take early in my doctoral studies was to engage in Chinese to English translation as often as I could, to ensure that by the time I was ready to carry out my fieldwork I would have a better experiential understanding of the profession. This process was useful, to some extent: what I eventually did was mainly academic translation, rather than literary (unlike my interviewees), seen as this fitted my background and linguistic abilities best, however this experience also showed me in a practical, hands-on way that translation is an inherently social activity. Not only was I regularly communicating with the client I was translating for, which is perhaps the most obvious and common form of social interaction for a translator, but as a novice to this activity I was usually making sure another person proofread my translations after I had finished them; in some cases I also had to resort to contacting someone with specialist knowledge on the topic of my translation to ensure I was understanding the Chinese text correctly.

Undeniably, I was at the same time spending a lot of time working on my own, and the main point I am trying to make in this thesis is certainly not that translation is not at all an individual task, rather that it is not *merely* that: I could not have completed any of my translation tasks without help from at least one or two other people. What later struck me as part of this reality of practice while I was carrying out my fieldwork in Hong Kong was that translation was indeed hardly ever a strictly individual task: almost invariably, my interviewees had at some stage felt the need to seek assistance from someone with skills or specialist knowledge they lacked. Whether that person was then acknowledged as a co-translator or given credit in any way is not relevant at this stage: this showed to me that translation is *not* an individual activity.

I soon found that translators' reasons to seek out contact with others were usually not so very different from my own: this move is mainly driven by a need for specialist linguistic or cultural knowledge where a text requires it. My own participant observation of the profession in such ways was a practice embedded in everything else I was doing to carry out my research; the interviews I did were, of course, a more formal process, officially planned and prepared, and an integral part of my methodological framework. However, it was because I was also observing bilingual Hong Kong in that process, meeting translators, and taking part in various conferences and events on-site, that I started noticing the social aspects of translation first-hand. I saw there was more to the profession than always working in isolation and occasionally communicating with your client or an editor. All literary translators I interviewed were very keen communicators, and many of them had had years of correspondence and friendship with authors whose work they translated more extensively. A lot of what I observed was essentially about interacting with people, about looking for someone with specialist knowledge that was needed to translate a piece, or again about a lively interest in academic or other events that brought translators together and facilitated discussion and exchange of opinions. It was, in other words, the time I had to observe (and participate, where possible) that made me fully aware of the social nature of (literary) translation.

My choice to look at a magazine was, beyond my encounter with *Renditions*, also driven by a research gap I came across in the very early stages of my project: there appeared to be little work published on journals and magazines. The main reason for such publications to be used more as a source of information than as a subject of research is their non-homogeneous format: their contents tend to be miscellaneous,[1] which make magazines a rather tangled type of material that is difficult to study in any systematic way. It is precisely this type of format that attracted me, however, because it also facilitates analysis beyond comparison of the source text (ST) and target text (TT).

I realised only gradually that *Renditions* was, in fact, introducing me to translation as a socially oriented practice, one that, if done in this particular way, links people together on a number of levels, forming what can be called a community. Former *Renditions* Editor Eva Hung suggests that *Renditions* had its specific way of editing translation in issue No. 57: “while most people think

[1] In this respect, Chinese has a very fitting word for “magazine”, *zázhì* 雜誌, literally “miscellaneous notes”.

of literary translation as a solitary endeavour, the *Renditions* approach is more similar to the workshop mode." (2002: 5) People were not just working together on an issue of the magazine, each doing their own part of the job – translators were being connected and, in that process, advice was given, knowledge was shared, collaborative translation was carried out. Translation was a social activity, and *Renditions* appeared to be good at making this work in practice.

In response to the relatively widespread image of the "lone" translator, brought to attention by the criticism of a number of scholars (see e.g. St André, 2010), my project started shaping around the following overarching research question: considering that translation is known to involve a high amount of individual work, how do translators learn if working within a community? In the shape of *Renditions*, I had found an example of a real-life translator community at work that I could use as a case study. In this thesis I argue that, even though the profession of translating does indeed involve a considerable amount of individual work, the image of a "lone" translator does not correspond to the true nature of the profession.

Renditions: A Node in Chinese-English Translation

Renditions is a Chinese-English translation magazine published by the Research Centre for Translation (hereafter RCT) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong since 1973, and widely recognised as the leading publication of its kind. The magazine quickly established a respectable reputation, summed up here in the words of renowned translator Howard Goldblatt: "In its decade or so of publishing, the Hong Kong translation magazine *Renditions* has earned a reputation for elegant eclecticism in the field of Chinese literature, and has, in a number of respects, set the standards – all too infrequently met by others – for translation." (Goldblatt, 1986).

Looking beyond this reputation, and beyond the very long line of well-known scholars *Renditions* can name among its contributors and editors, I will now take a moment to discuss the historical and cultural relevance of the magazine's Hong Kong setting, and explore how *Renditions* differs from other publications of its kind in editing translation. A translation magazine, as a type of physical space through which literature finds its way to readers in a different language sphere, has – unlike book-length translations – a format that allows editors who wish to do so to put emphasis on highlighting their translators' work. This is something *Renditions* is a good example of, given that it finds multiple ways of acknowledging and crediting the work of its translators. As can be seen in Figure 2, in the table of contents translators' names can be found directly following the title of works they contributed with:

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Figure 2: Table of contents (here Issue 57) indicating who has translated each piece.

I will show in the Literature Review that Hong Kong in the Seventies was very much “the right place at the right time” for translation of Chinese literature into English to be happening on a noticeable scale, not least due to a rising need for translators in the city due to the fact that Chinese had just been made an official language alongside English. Until then, “it was only logical that many specialized and technical documents were prepared in English only” (Chuen, in Chan, 2001: 247). Once the Official Languages Ordinance was enacted in 1974, however, this trend changed direction and suddenly there was a much higher need across sectors for translators who could also work into Chinese. This being “an era that saw strong nationalistic feelings focused on the issue of the status of the Chinese language, which [had] finally [been given] official status comparable to English” (Hung in Chan, 2001: 73), in addition to the relatively high level of academic freedom Hong Kong-based scholars enjoyed, were all elements that together created a favourable climate for the emergence of projects like a Chinese-English literary translation magazine rooted in an academic milieu.

Renditions was the brainchild of one of its two founding editors, George Kao, who in 1972 arrived at CUHK to join the RCT. Kao’s initial thought was to make use of his knowledge and experience to establish something new that would be “in accord with [the RCT’s] mission…: a periodical devoted to English translations of Chinese literary writing past and present” (Kao in Hung, 2003: 12). Given that *Renditions* was, in its early days, the only existing journal of its kind, there was naturally a considerable level of interest and curiosity about it both in academic an translatorial circles, and Kao was repeatedly invited to give talks and share his editorial experiences (some notes for these talks were also edited into articles and published, see e.g. Kao 1975).

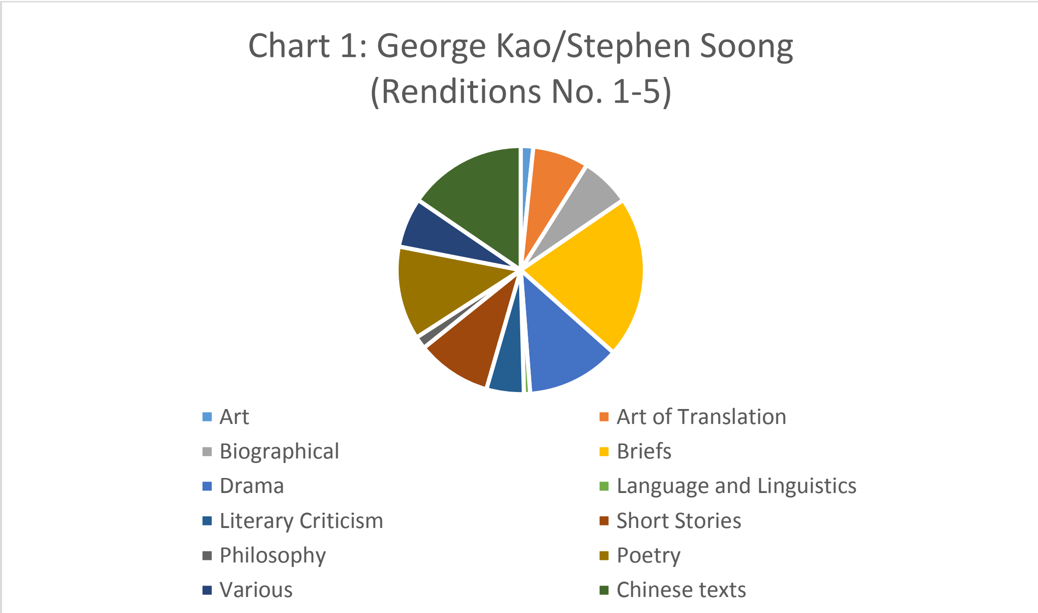
The name for the magazine, *Renditions*, was chosen for a number of reasons, Kao reveals: the new translation magazine could not be named simply “Translation” as other publications of that name already existed. Also, more importantly, there is a connotation in the word “renditions” that is also deeply embedded in literary translation, according to Kao:

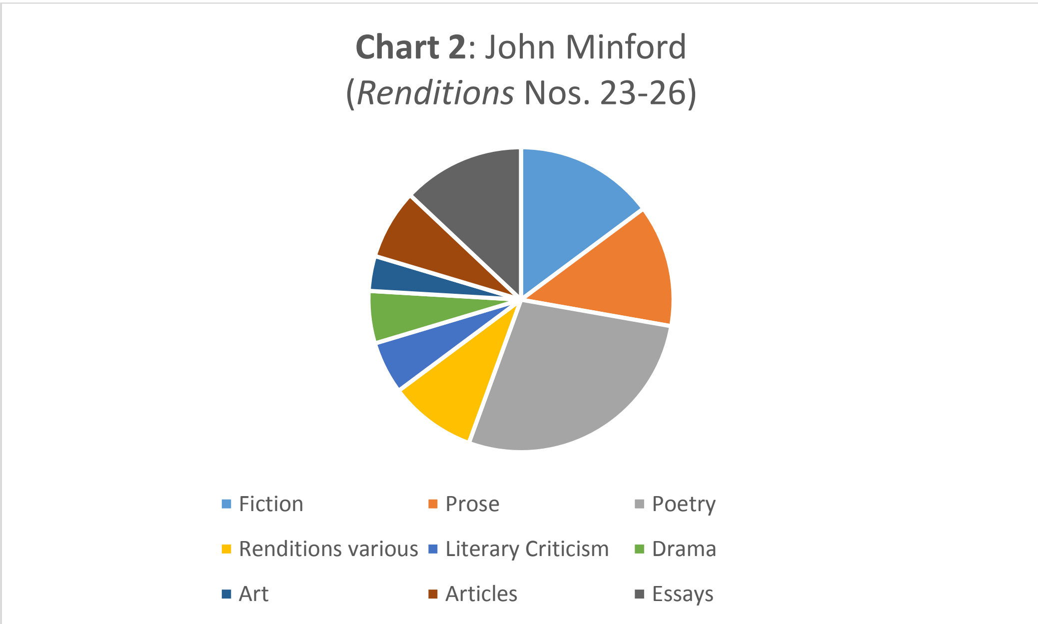
> "I felt that translation of literature is a matter of [personal] interpretation, that there are at least two or more ways to go about recreating a given text in another language. The editor must understand that a line of poetry, for instance, evokes different responses in different [translators], and judge the translation on that basis" (Kao in Hung, 2003: 13).

In other words, therefore, *Renditions* was to contain precisely what its name says: English language renditions of Chinese literary works, the products of many different translators' minds and also, and importantly so, various editorial hands (see pp 108-112 for a focus on the role of the editor).

Renditions' two founding editors, George Kao and Stephen Soong, had a wide-ranging contact network, and this also meant they were able to attract outside funding or private funding for *Renditions* from the very beginning, and secure its financial future before passing the lead to other editors. The first issues of the magazine were financed through grants from the Asia Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and, since 1975, through the Wing Lung Bank Fund for the Promotion of Chinese Culture: acknowledgement of this last source of funding can still be spotted on one of the opening pages of *Renditions* issues at present. The nature of what *Renditions* did was attractive to such funding programmes, according to the senior advisor from the Asia Foundation whom *Renditions* liaised with: "Chinese-to-English and English-to-Chinese translation was a field of Foundation interest… [it] is an efficient way to promote international understanding and cultural exchange… *Renditions* became a logical element in the cluster of translation projects at the time" (Hung, 2003: 16). After leaving the *Renditions* editorial team, George Kao himself also funded a few *Renditions* issues over the years.

"Though the editorial philosophy at *Renditions* has remained basically unchanged, a close look at all numbers published to date would reveal that different editors have set clearly different goals for the journal", so Eva Hung (1995: 245) on editing *Renditions*. The following charts show how different periods of *Renditions'* activity have shaped the magazine under its various editors. I have focused here on the early years of *Renditions*, given that the editorial team was relatively steady in terms of personnel. Chart 1 shows a breakdown of material covered in the first years under founding editors George Kao and Stephen C. Soong; Chart 2 covers issues published under John Minford; finally, Chart 3 reflects Eva Hung's editorship. Issues covered in these charts are only the so-called miscellaneous issues (which is why some issues appear to have been omitted), given that they are best suited for an overview of this kind.





The arrival of John Minford as editor meant an increased focus on contemporary literature, as opposed to Kao and Soong's greater attention to classical literature in the early issues: "[Minford] did bring substantial change in [his] time because he had been in China and was in touch with the latest trend then, in the 1980s, and that was of course the new poetry. That is to say, [the literary journal] *Jintian* 今天 and all that…" Eva Hung explained to me during our interview. This is something the charts above do not necessarily reflect; namely, an editor's areas of expertise and interest. Some of the broader categories like "Poetry" or "Prose" would have to be divided into further subcategories in order to reveal this. In Minford's time we notice, however, that categories in miscellaneous issues are somewhat reduced in number. For example, "Briefs", which was very prominent in the early Kao and Soong years, disappears completely, and given that *Renditions* was already well-established by the time Minford took over, that may be a sign of its editorial team dispensing with a formerly useful means of filling any remaining space at a time when unsolicited manuscripts were still slow to stream in. Other categories appear to simply have been absorbed by another, more general one (e.g. "Art of Translation" merges into "Articles": upon a closer look at tables of contents, one does indeed find contributions on translation under this heading). These are signs of small rearrangements to the categorization of the magazine's contents as *Renditions* was on the way to becoming the well-respected publication it became known as.

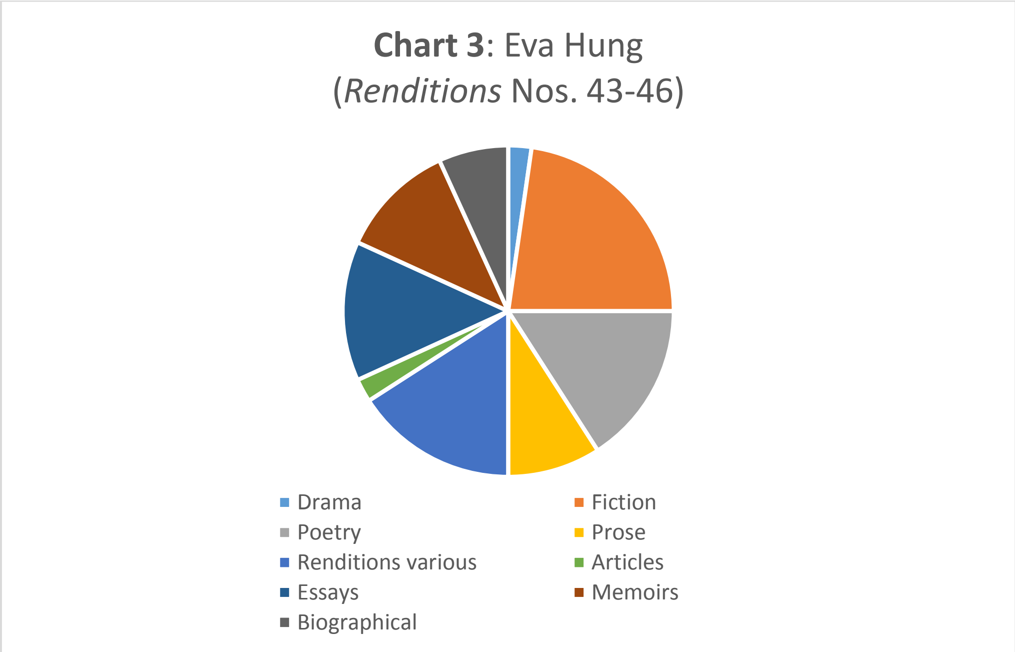


Chart 3 shows the distribution of contents in several miscellaneous issues with Eva Hung as editor: the number of categories remains the same, but there are some changes – we see new ones, e.g. "Memoirs", emerge, which may have to do with some of Hung's own literary interests[2], and others from the Kao-Soong period that had temporarily disappeared under Minford, e.g. "Biographical", re-emerge. It is known that both Kao and Soong were in some ways mentors to Hung[3] and their editorship will have been a likely source of inspiration for her.

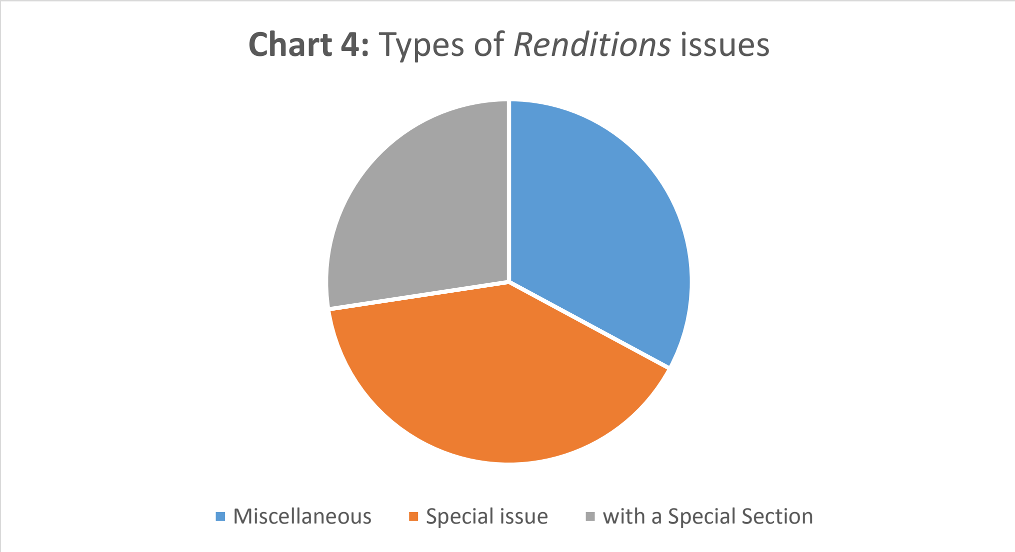


Chart 4 above aims to highlight one of the reasons why *Renditions* is relevant as a case study, namely its similarity to an encyclopaedia: rather than focusing on a specific editorship, Chart 4 spans over the whole lifetime of *Renditions* and shows how the magazine has had a tendency, all along, to focus on quite specific subjects that either made for an entire "Special Issue" or yielded a miscellaneous issue containing a "Special Section". If these two categories are to be considered of the same kind (i.e. issues with a specific focus), Chart 4 shows that this type of issue makes up for roughly two thirds of *Renditions*.

This confirms a statement we find in *Renditions* No 46, in which then editor Eva Hung reveals to readers some behind-the-scenes information on the Editor's Page: "In the last ten years *Renditions* has produced far more special issues and special sections than miscellaneous issues; the actual ratio is 2:1." Hung's statement dates to 1996, but according to Chart 4 (which covers all issues to date) this ratio remains a valid figure for across *Renditions*' active years.

[2] This is not to suggest that an editor always lets his or her own interests take over; he or she may well, however, be likely to look for new material in genres they are most familiar with, or have academic expertise in.

[3] Hung calls both Soong (Hung, 2003: 101) and Kao (Hung, 2015) her "fairy godfathers".

While the very broad scope of Chinese literature *Renditions* covers hardly allows to describe the magazine as a publication representative of any specific literary movement or historical period, it can be said that, together with *Renditions*' proactive approach to tackling previously unexplored areas in Chinese-English literary translation, this tendency to focus on a specific theme gives it a somewhat encyclopaedic character. I mention elsewhere (see e.g. page 153) that several scholars have noticed this, and have likened *Renditions* to an anthology.

As well as being marked, to some extent, by its various editors, *Renditions* was also shaped by its location and by the times it was launched in. My research interviews for this project, in which among other things I enquired on how and why the interviewee had crossed paths with translation, confirm – in the several cases where the interviewee is a Hong Kong native who lived in this same period of time as a young graduate – that the 1970s were indeed a time when the sudden need for translators in virtually all sectors helped launch many a translation career. Several of my interviewees had studied English literature in the first place and, being very comfortably bilingual, naturally ventured into translation, seen as it was in high demand – technical or academic translation, given that this was also a time when translation started to be taught at university level in Hong Kong: the wave of need for translators also meant new courses and degrees in this area were being launched. Echoing what happened with Translation Studies (TS) elsewhere in the world and eventually led to a notoriously controversial gap between TS theory and translation practice (see van Leuven-Zwart, 1991: 6), scholars who designed these programmes usually hailed from modern language departments and had never formally studied, or been trained in, translation, seen as nothing of the kind had been available until then. In most cases they did, nevertheless, have some translation experience to draw on.

Given *Renditions*' geographical location, it hardly comes as a surprise that at various points of the magazine's existence its team took a keen interest in Hong Kong writing. Abbas (1997) points out that making a selection of such texts for publication was probably no easy task, not least because of the variety of material available. "Hong Kong in its amorphousness and diversity often strikes one as being made up of an *anthology* of lifestyles," he writes. "It seems appropriate, therefore, that one of the first attempts to delineate the elusive outlines of a Hong Kong writing should be an anthology, put out by the translation journal *Renditions*" (117).[4] Abbas then dwells on the "elusive" aspect of these endeavours, further pointing out that the quality unevenness of the selected texts showed "both promising directions and blind alleys" for Hong Kong writing. Such a statement is, to some extent, subjective and down to personal taste. A lack of homogeneity in Hong Kong writing, however, may also have blended rather well with a magazine's flexible format, and given that *Renditions*' choices would necessarily have resulted in a mixture of material (connected, in this case, by Hong Kong authorship as a common denominator), this then made for a number of Hong Kong-themed sections or entire issues. Driven by an editorial team led, at the time of these publications, by Eva Hung, *Renditions* paid tribute to Hong Kong authors repeatedly, particularly in two double issues (No. 29&30 and No. 47&48), which focus on Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Nineties respectively, as well as in sections with a special focus in Issue 56 (New Hong Kong Poetry), Issue 66 (Hong Kong Essays) and Issue 73 (Hong Kong Classical Poetry). It can therefore be said that its Hong Kong home allowed *Renditions* to set itself apart by venturing into these (and other) previously unexplored literary translation avenues.

Why, though, does it matter to look at *Renditions* rather than other magazines with a similar mission? After all, at the time it started publishing, *Renditions* was not the only available outlet of Chinese literature in English: Hung (1995) provides a detailed comparative discussion on *Renditions*, the Mainland-based *Chinese Literature*, and *The Chinese PEN* of Taiwan, and compares and contrasts these three best known publications of this kind at the time. Owing to the wide network of useful contacts its founding editors had, *Renditions* could very quickly establish a solid reputation, both for its translation standard and for the material it selected: in the words of one of my interviewees, who observed the initial years of *Renditions* from the outside as a student, "[*Renditions*] was an exciting thing, it was kind of… the place that was responding to… wonderful

[4] Note that the then Governor of Hong Kong, Lord David Wilson, speaks of this as of "*the first* anthology of its kind" (my emphasis) in his Foreword to *Renditions* No. 29&30 rather than "one of the first", highlighting the pioneering character of this publication.

new changes in Chinese literature". This reputation dates to the very beginnings of the magazine's existence: *Renditions* quickly became, to borrow the words of one of its contributors[5], something of a "node", a crossroads through which most well-known China scholars and translators had passed at some stage in their career. This fact, and the bilingual Hong Kong setting, link into the thoughts of Michael Emmerich, who uses the very same word to speak of translation: "if translation can be conceived of as a node (…), then the nature of the node is inevitably defined by the merging of *particular* languages and cultures" (in Allen and Bernofsky, 2013: 51, author's emphasis). This train of thought reconnects to the core focus of this thesis: the "nature" of translation, with a focus on Chinese to English as defining factors.

To conclude this section, let me look into the *Renditions* setting a step beyond Hong Kong: one of the characteristics of *Renditions* has always been that it was firmly rooted in an academic setting. I have mentioned earlier that *Renditions* is published by the RCT at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK); this is where the magazine is still based. The Seventies happened to be an auspicious time for a journal of this kind: both the academic field of Chinese Studies (Sinology) and that of Translation Studies were on the rise, the former very likely to provide a keen readership for *Renditions* in academia, and the latter bringing with it a rise of interest in translation proper as a subject of scholarly attention, and with that also an increase in translation-related academic events and networking (see pp 136-138 for more on how the RCT was known to be very proactive in this respect).

It is hardly surprising that the launch of the RCT, and of *Renditions* as its flagship publication, occurred at CUHK, a university that had as its core mission to "[enhance] the study and dissemination of Chinese culture" (Chan, 2001: 73), at a time when Chinese language had only just been given official status in Hong Kong. At the same time, the changing status of Chinese language in Hong Kong also brought with it a rise in demand for translator training in a variety of sectors, an area in which the RCT played a role of considerable importance via short-term training courses (see Chan, 2001: 75-76).

[5] I refer here to a conversation prior to one of my interviews.

This situation also had another influence on Hong Kong society: intellectual circles were experiencing a rising concern with protecting Chinese language and further enhancing its position locally. *Renditions*' founding editors George Kao and Stephen Soong will have been confronted with this atmosphere first-hand, from their base at CUHK, aware that in this setting they had the possibility to establish some very concrete ways of disseminating Chinese literature. In this context, the bicultural character of Hong Kong turned into an asset: "RCT's literary translation work [benefited] from Hong Kong's linguistic and cultural advantages as well as from free access to material banned in the mainland or Taiwan" (Chan, 2001: 80).

The academic freedoms available in Hong Kong reflect in most of the contents of *Renditions*, which "in the Seventies and Eighties, … [was publishing] the work of writers with different political backgrounds and views from the mainland, Hong Kong or Taiwan". While this may seem as potentially challenging to the dissemination of *Renditions*[6], the current executive editor of *Renditions* Lawrence Wang-chi Wong insists that "the only principle of selection was the literary value of the works [which the magazine published]" (Wong, 2013: 13).

The work undertaken by the RCT in making Chinese literature available to English-speaking readers through translation via *Renditions* and via its book-length publications was therefore also a response to, on the one hand, the intellectual climate following the change of status of the Chinese language in Hong Kong, and, on the other hand, to a growing interest in the study of translation itself. While generally speaking its academic setting at CUHK made it easier for *Renditions* to fulfil its primary aims, the association with CUHK was not always very straightforward[7] (see page 181 for mention of some of the challenges of "belonging" to an academic setting).

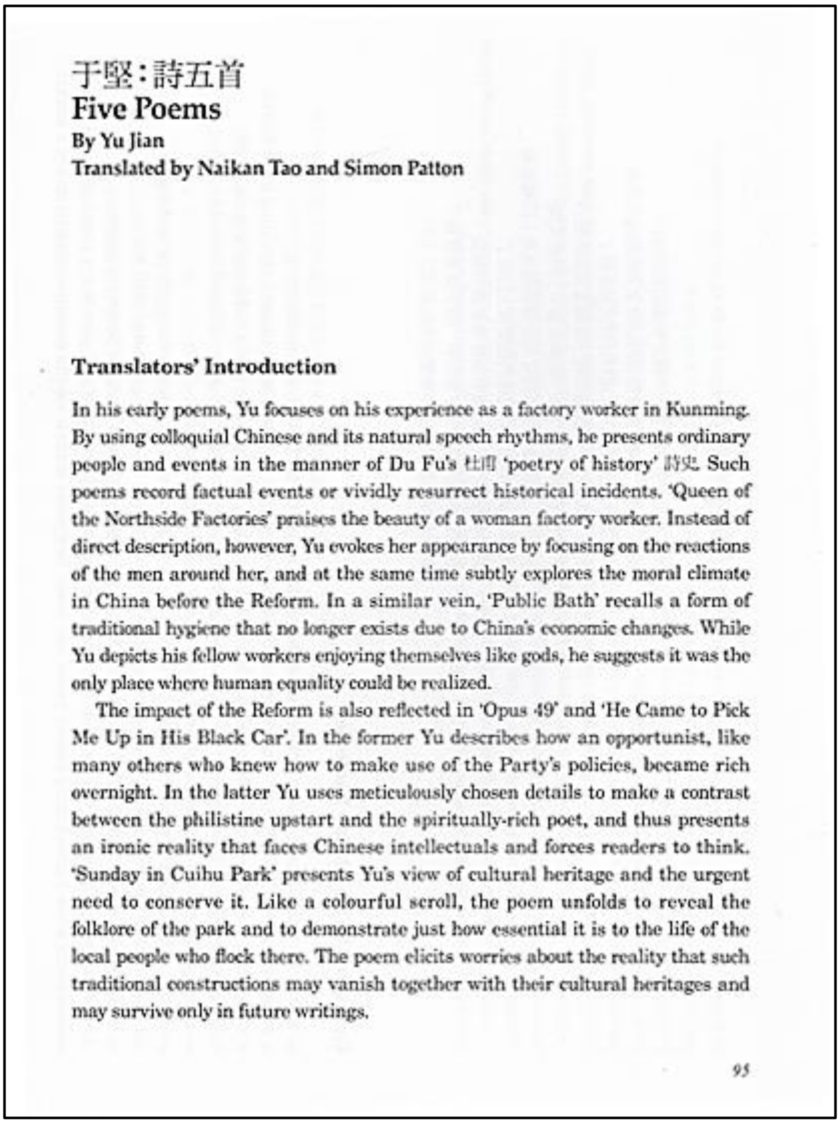
[6] "A diligent avoidance of ideology can be seen as a kind of ideology in itself", concedes former *Renditions* editor Eva Hung, "and *Renditions* has had the honour of being confiscated both in mainland China and in Taiwan" (Hung, 1995: 241). The possibility to avoid ideological constraints was an advantage Hong Kong academics delighted in having; what some saw as sheer provocation, confiscating the materials, *Renditions* took some pride and "honour" in.

[7] Also, particularly during Eva Hung's editorship, during which time Hung was also director of the RCT, the RCT would deliberately not have any ties with the CUHK Press, which in turn made the promoting and distribution of published material more difficult. I am aware of this because several of my interviewees mentioned it in passing as a source of some discontent.

Focus on the Translator

My conversations with translators who have worked with *Renditions* confirmed an impression I had from reading the magazine before embarking on my fieldwork: *Renditions* editors knew to value a translator's efforts, and found ways of showing they did. The most visible sign of this for a reader is the space translators are often given in the magazine. Figure 3 below shows an example of translators' introduction: whether there is such a note or not can depend on the text, or the period it was written in – some pieces ask for an introduction more than others. In some cases, the introduction informs the reader that the translations following are in fact of a specific kind of literature, which in turn explains why the translators worked the way they did and often also where they took inspiration from for the English register. Renditions does encourage translators to provide this kind of material, as stated in the Guidelines for Contributors on the magazine's official website: "… [for] some translations an introduction may be desirable in order to provide background, information on the author etc."[8]

[8] Source: *Renditions*' "Guidelines for Contributors", available online at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/guideline.html [last access date: 25 May 2019]


于堅：詩五首

Five Poems

By Yu Jian

Translated by Naikan Tao and Simon Patton

Translators' Introduction

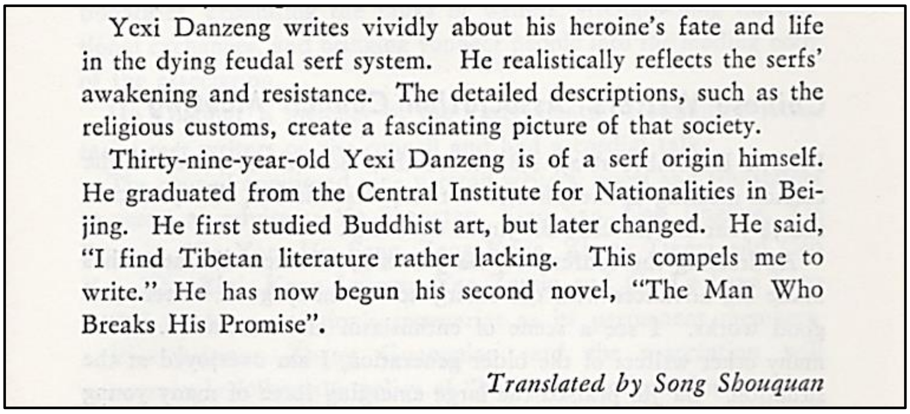
In his early poems, Yu focuses on his experience as a factory worker in Kunming. By using colloquial Chinese and its natural speech rhythms, he presents ordinary people and events in the manner of Du Fu's 杜甫 'poetry of history' 詩史. Such poems record factual events or vividly resurrect historical incidents. 'Queen of the Northside Factories' praises the beauty of a woman factory worker. Instead of direct description, however, Yu evokes her appearance by focusing on the reactions of the men around her, and at the same time subtly explores the moral climate in China before the Reform. In a similar vein, 'Public Bath' recalls a form of traditional hygiene that no longer exists due to China's economic changes. While Yu depicts his fellow workers enjoying themselves like gods, he suggests it was the only place where human equality could be realized.

The impact of the Reform is also reflected in 'Opus 49' and 'He Came to Pick Me Up in His Black Car'. In the former Yu describes how an opportunist, like many others who knew how to make use of the Party's policies, became rich overnight. In the latter Yu uses meticulously chosen details to make a contrast between the philistine upstart and the spiritually-rich poet, and thus presents an ironic reality that faces Chinese intellectuals and forces readers to think. 'Sunday in Cuihu Park' presents Yu's view of cultural heritage and the urgent need to conserve it. Like a colourful scroll, the poem unfolds to reveal the folklore of the park and to demonstrate just how essential it is to the life of the local people who flock there. The poem elicits worries about the reality that such traditional constructions may vanish together with their cultural heritages and may survive only in future writings.

95

Figure 3: An example of "Translators' Introduction" of a common length for Renditions*, from Issue No. 84 (2015: 95).*

To this day, on its very cover, *Renditions* announces it is a "Chinese-English Translation Magazine", and within its pages translators write and are written about in multiple ways. In many issues of *Renditions*, notes of thanks and appreciation, or a brief anecdote on this or the other contributor can be found on the Editor's Page. As we have seen in Figures 1 and 2, already the table of contents gives contributors credit for their work, and we find the translator's name again at the beginning of his or her piece, just under the author's. Quite often, the text is then accompanied by a translator's introduction (see Figure 3), and the occasional footnote. Finally, at the end of each issue, the reader will find the aforementioned section "Notes on Contributors" containing a brief introductory paragraph on the background of every translator whose work appears in that particular issue. This is to show that an explicit mention of translators is very common in *Renditions*, as opposed to, say, its mainland-based contemporary *Chinese Literature*, in which nothing, other than the translations themselves, explicitly suggests its contents are all translations, was it not for a brief note giving the translator's name at the end of each piece (and even this may be entirely replaced by other types of notes, e.g. "illustrated by…", or simply "to be continued"), as shown in Figure 4:



Yexi Danzeng writes vividly about his heroine's fate and life in the dying feudal serf system. He realistically reflects the serfs' awakening and resistance. The detailed descriptions, such as the religious customs, create a fascinating picture of that society.

Thirty-nine-year-old Yexi Danzeng is of a serf origin himself. He graduated from the Central Institute for Nationalities in Beijing. He first studied Buddhist art, but later changed. He said, "I find Tibetan literature rather lacking. This compels me to write." He has now begun his second novel, "The Man Who Breaks His Promise".

Translated by Song Shouquan

Figure 4: Scan from p. 137 in Chinese Literature *No. 4 (April 1982).*

The *Renditions* approach brings translators closer to readers. The interested reader can easily gather a little information on the translators and occasionally their academic affiliation, or some of their other work; more importantly, through these details translators come across as the important agents in the creation of the magazine they are. In contrast, a reader looking through the pages of *Chinese Literature* is less likely to remember, or even notice, any of the translators' names: without any further information, they remain one small line of credit that does not emphasize translatorial work the way *Renditions* does.

A question arises here: why should it matter to let the reader have a look behind the scenes, and notice the role translators play in creating *Renditions*? The fact that it is quite common for this *not* to happen in the publishing industry has sparked many an academic debate in TS, mainly Lawrence Venuti's discussion on translator (in)visibility, in which he criticizes the fact that, in Anglo-American publishing culture, there is too strong an emphasis on making texts read as if they were not translated (what is known in TS as "domestication") which makes translators into an invisible presence. Considering that translation is a profession generally involving very little public exposure for the practitioner (unless he or she becomes someone very prominent), a magazine that focuses on translation works, in fact, in exactly the opposite way of the general publishing industry criticised by Venuti, which makes it an ideal platform to give translators' work a little more spotlight.

This is a possibility given by format: whether or not, or to what extent, to do this is down to the editors and, possibly, to political or other external factors that may have an influence on this. At *Renditions* translation work was valued for the kind of work it is, as some testimonials (e.g. in Hung, 2003) as well as remarks of gratitude to the magazine in my own interviews prove, and so it does not come as unexpected to see that the magazine never shied away from putting its contributors into the limelight on its pages as well. Early issues of *Renditions* even feature the occasional essay on translation, examples of which will be discussed later (see p. 162), before the magazine started handling a higher number of contributions and focused exclusively on publishing translated literature.

As will be shown, the way *Renditions* edited translations and communicated with contributors was, for many a translator, a fresh experience, particularly in its early years when few other sources of Chinese literature in translation existed and often the process of checking against the original text was either not as meticulous, or even impossible, due to the fact that many editors could not read Chinese, or did not employ anyone who did. "In Chinese-to-English translation, no other body has provided as much encouragement and support to translators as *Renditions*", says scholar Bonnie McDougall (in Hung, 2003: 42), whose involvement with *Renditions* followed a period during which she had worked as translator and editor for the Foreign Language Press in Beijing, a time which brought her some useful experience but also much discontent and frustration over the FLP team's lack of linguistic expertise and over editorial interventions that "expurgated texts for English readers that Chinese readers were allowed to read in full" (41).

From very early on, while my initial reading around the subject was starting to suggest that TS was suffering from multiple one-sidedness (too Eurocentric, some complained, and - ironically - researched and theorized by too many who were in fact *not* practicing translators), my intended focus in this project were translators, rather than the product or process of translation. My reasoning for this followed a rather simple logic: to understand a practice, go to its practitioners. At the same time, I had also realised, of course, that most of the names I was seeing on the pages of *Renditions* belonged to people who were still alive, and therefore possibly open to talk to. This was also my initial reason for picking interviews as a data collection method, as I will explain in more detail in Chapter 3 (Methodology).

Translating (in) China: An Overview of Translation Traditions

Why explore China-related translation traditions and practices? Former *Renditions* editor Eva Hung, herself a historian focusing on Chinese translation traditions, reveals in the following quote a personal belief in leading *Renditions* a certain way, following in the footsteps of what is in fact a very long tradition of team translation. "I have always been convinced of the important role teamwork plays in successful cultural transfer. After all, collaborative work had been the norm in China for culturally-oriented translation from the early phases of the Buddhist sutra translation movement down to the early twentieth century" (Hung, 2002: 5). What follows is a brief overview of how translation of China, and in China, has evolved over time; it will show that this is translation with some distinct characteristics and practices which can also be discerned in *Renditions*, demonstrating how it belongs to a certain tradition and plays a distinct role in cultural transfer from China to the English-speaking world at large.

Drawing links between Chinese and Western thought on translation, André Lefevere (1998) makes a comparison between China and Classical Greece: he notes how both cultures considered themselves as central in their respective setting, hardly paid any attention to civilisations outside their own and, consequently, seldom felt the need to translate anything coming from the outside, or to actively develop any thought on translation. Interestingly these examples corroborate the stance in polysystem theory that a "strong" culture with its own literary system tends to rely heavily on the rules its own literary system imposes when translating (Even-Zohar, 1990) in other words, it focuses on itself.

Within TS, China's role in translation history has been acknowledged – if relatively broadly in some cases, due to the wide range of material available – in some seminal works written in English, including Delisle and Woodsworth's *Translators through History* (1995), where the focus is mainly on the transfer of knowledge through translation. Examples of studies on Chinese translation history that have appeared more recently will be mentioned in Chapter 2 (Literature Review). Particularly interesting trends are discussed in two historical studies that look at how translators and their work have, or could have, significantly influenced crucial moments in China. One juxtaposes the role of translators and attitudes towards them on the Chinese and British sides during the First Opium War (Wong, 2007); the other, and unpublished MA thesis (discussed in Chan, 2001: 166-167), detects a "self-Orientalising" trait in Chinese translations of Western Sinological texts conveying a "need for change" in the years preceding the Tiananmen Square Incident. TS, however, is still a relatively new field of academic research, while translation within China and out of Chinese has of course not only been practiced from very early on, but also extensively discussed, particularly in the latter case. This introductory section on such developments is included here to provide a better understanding of translation traditions and practices in which the source material for this project is rooted.

Lefevere's remark on China's lack of interest in exploring any cultures beyond its boundaries suggests that any major wave of translation activity in China should in fact be relatively easy to trace. It is indeed known (see e.g. St André, 2010) that China has engaged in major translation projects only three times in its long history: the translation of Buddhist scriptures (roughly 150 C.E. - 1150 C.E.), the translation of Christian texts (since the sixteenth century), and the translation of Western thought and literary works in the late Qing/early Republican Era. All of these belong, of course, to the aforementioned process of transferring religious or other knowledge through translation. A fourth wave of translation activity has also gained momentum in the decades following the launch of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms: China is currently still experiencing a boost in the number of translations of foreign literature, a process "of strategic value in establishing and affirming its status as a major global power" (Bassnett, 2014: 23). Adopting a more refined focus, Leo Tak-Hung Chan (in Chan Sin-Wai, 2001: 166-167) identifies three separate peaks of translation activity in twentieth-century China, namely the beginning of the century, the May Fourth era and the 1980s-1990s.

While translation was clearly not a matter of foremost concern for China very often in its history, when it did take place this happened on a very extensive scale. The translation of Buddhist scriptures in China was arguably one of the largest translation projects ever undertaken; for more detailed studies on this, see e.g. Hung (2005) and Cheung (2006). As St André (2010) points out, in agreement with Eva Hung quoted earlier in this section, one characteristic feature of translation in China was that, contrary to the still relatively widespread idea in the West that translation is an individual task, it was always a process that involved more than one person. Team translation methods were used widely in Buddhist script translations and continued to occur in China's translation history, often in a pattern involving a small group, or only two, translators with complementary skills. Well-known examples include collaboration between native speakers of both languages, such as James Legge (1815-1897) and Wang Tao 王涛 (1828-1897) (who co-translated throughout the 1860s) or Gladys Yang (1919-1999) and Yang Xianyi 杨宪益 (1915-2009) (active since the 1940s up until Gladys Yang's passing).[9] In other cases a team would involve native speakers of whom only some were versed in other languages, such as Lin Shu 林纾 (1852-1924), who did not speak any foreign tongue, and his team of collaborators.[10] What makes all cases mentioned here stand out is the translators' remarkably prolific activity, which resulted in the availability of a broad range of translated works that in some cases had a lasting impact on the target culture. Lin Shu alone introduced Western literature (e.g. works by Alexandre Dumas, Charles Dickens, Miguel de Cervantes, Walter Scott and Jonathan Swift, to

[9] The Yangs, highly respected translators and a married couple, were among the founders of the magazine *Chinese Literature* (Yang, 2002) and later also worked with *Renditions* on several occasions.

[10] Scholarly research on Lin Shu's work can be misleading, as he tends to be erroneously spoken of as the sole translator (St André, 2010).

name but a few) to a whole generation of readers in China. The practice of team translation is also characteristic of *Renditions*: not only are some translations published in the magazine the joint work of two translators, there are also examples of collaboration between the translator(s) and a member of the editorial team, as will be shown in Chapter 4.

The second wave of translation activity in China, namely that of Christian texts, also marks the beginning of translation of Chinese texts into European language. [11] Information on China started reaching Western audiences systematically in the seventeenth century through the work of Jesuit missionaries, several of whom – including, among those who became well-known, Matteo Ricci – were also the first Western scholars to become proficient in Chinese; in order to facilitate the spreading of Christianity, it was essential for them to gain an in-depth understanding of Chinese tradition and culture. Translation was an important part of this integration process: Ricci committed himself to the study and translation of classical Chinese texts, particularly the Confucian doctrine. His efforts, written in Latin and heavily annotated, were the first part of a comprehensive translation project that was eventually published in 1687 as *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, "the first complete presentation of the life and work of Confucius in the West" (Fontana, 2011: 105).

Up until the beginnings of Jesuit activity in China, and indeed well into the eighteenth century, very few individuals in Europe had any first-hand knowledge of China or Chinese language.[12] Once Sinology started developing as a field of study in the nineteenth century, translation activity naturally intensified and started showing some characteristic features. The need to pass on very detailed knowledge, already mentioned here with reference to Ricci's writings, was omnipresent in the work of sinologists: "lengthy prefaces, footnotes, and appendixes all became staples of Sinological translation" (St André, 2003). A common point reflected in such annotations was also a growing pedagogical concern with language-related issues and with rules on how to

[11] While my project focuses on Chinese-English translation, here I do mention other European languages where relevant.

[12] Information that reached Europe through the Jesuits did, however, prompt a wave of "proto-sinological works … written by European savants whose enthusiasm far exceeded their knowledge" (Mungello, 1989: 15)

translate from the Chinese. Interestingly, however, the range of translated Chinese texts that were in circulation was initially rather small (this is remarkable especially considering the sheer quantity of available material); most of these works were also translated repeatedly.[13] St André's (2003) study of this phenomenon shows that it was prompted, on one hand, by the lack of translators able to work directly from the Chinese, and on the other – especially at a later stage – by rivalry and the urge to correct existing translations amongst efforts to establish the field of sinology.[14] Retranslation is a trend that is still quite common, if on a smaller scale: new translations of Chinese classics including Confucius' *Analects* (translated most recently by Burton Watson, 2007) and the *I Ching* or Book of Changes (a new translation of which by John Minford was awarded a Medal for Excellence in Translation by the Australian Academy of Humanities in 2016) have appeared over the last decade, and looking at the contents of *Renditions* one finds, particularly among translations of classical texts, not only material translated for the first time but also, occasionally, new interpretations of previously translated works.[15]

Another example mentioned in *Renditions* No. 13 (1980: Editor's Page) as perhaps being down to the "universal appeal of this masterpiece" are two complete and almost simultaneously published "new English translations" of the classic 紅樓夢 *Hongloumeng*, both dating from the late Seventies and both by well-known translators: one version entitled *The Story of the Stone* by David Hawkes, and the Beijing-published *A Dream of Red Mansions* by Gladys Yang and Yang Xianyi. One reason for this tendency of older or more complex texts to be retranslated lies in the considerable freedom that classical Chinese leaves to the translator, which in turn can easily result in diverging opinions or even in an urge to correct misinterpretations. Interestingly, on this note, it is not unusual to find in *Renditions* less well-known pieces by famous writers, in line with the idea of circulating previously unavailable, yet relevant material. In one such

[13] St André (2003) also makes an important distinction between retranslation (several translations of the same text) and relay translation (translation into a third language, which is based on a first translation) and discusses these two concepts in a sinological context.
[14] Not only among sinologists in the same country but also between European countries, notably between the philosophically oriented French and the more pragmatic British sinologists.
[15] This also chimes in with the name of the magazine: no two translations are ever the same, even if similar they will be "renditions" of the same ST by different translators.

reference to Lao She 老舍 (1899-1966), then editor George Kao says: "we thought that what might interest our readers is a glimpse into some of Lao She's *pre-1949* writings, his fictions, in English versions not readily available elsewhere. These, after all, were the kind of things that made him famous…" (*Renditions* No. 10, 1978: Editor's Page, emphasis in original). One of the advantages of having a bilingual editorial team comes to the forefront here: this is a comment by an editor who not only reads Chinese but is versed in Chinese literature, and is aware of less well-known pieces by a specific writer which it may be of interest to include. Another way of completing a circle, perhaps, similarly to retranslations, and yet here the issue is not retranslating to somehow improve or correct existing translations: rather, that of adding some less popular, but still relevant, material to an existing English-language portfolio of translated material by a famous Chinese author, thereby increasing the chances of a more complete international understanding of his or her work.

A particularly common occurrence in Chinese translations into English was also the notion of "Chineseness". As a very distant, exotic culture would, China created sensation among readers in the West, and translation strategies tended to further emphasize this trend. In line with readers' expectations (or following their own beliefs), translators therefore worked in ways that would probably be considered very free or even inappropriate by today's standards, taking the liberty to e.g. paraphrase, cut and alter original texts to make them "more Chinese". This could go as far as the development of a "Chinese style" achieved by mimicking language used in earlier translations of Chinese texts, as James St André proves in his meticulous analysis of Ernest Bramah Smith's works (St André, 2006). In terms now used in TS therefore, many early translations were heavily foreignised, i.e. they intentionally emphasised the Chinese tinge – or, in cases like that of Ernest Bramah Smith, what was thought of as a Chinese tinge. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Chineseness was still a desirable trend: by way of example, correspondence between Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) and the Chinese author Ling Shuhua 凌叔华 (1900-1990) shows how Woolf repeatedly urged Ling to keep a foreign flavour in her work when writing in English (Laurence, 2003).

As overall knowledge about the Chinese language improved and translation standards gradually changed, translation from the Chinese remained a topic of heated discussion among European scholars, more so than translation between European languages (on which, on the other hand, most scholarship in TS is now based, as I also discuss in the Literature Review). Related debates are closely connected to issues like the translator's responsibility, both towards the author and towards the readers. I have shown in this section how this could be influenced by a sense of moral or religious duty; later the trend shifted towards a responsibility purely based on literary enjoyment, or again on commercial interests.[16] On one of the rare occasions when he spoke about his translation activity, Arthur Waley pointed to the importance of his readers' ability to identify themselves with the translated text: "the reason [readers] got on all right with Chinese poetry was, I think, that it mainly deals with the concrete and particular, with things one can touch and see (…) and not with abstract conceptions" (Morris, 1970: 135). This concern about the British general reader's perception of a translated Chinese text became, for Waley, a criterion for selecting what to translate, which is arguably one of the key reasons for the immense popularity of his translations.

Let me now turn from the reader back to the translator, who is – supposedly – able to appreciate all nuances of the Chinese text, and seeks to transfer these into another language. The remarkably concise beauty of classical Chinese poetry is often discussed in this respect, if only just for the fact that translating it almost necessarily implies losing some of its nuances and characteristic feel, including what translator Göran Malmqvist (2015) calls its "timelessness". In his essays on Chinese poetry translation of Chinese into French, Jean-François Billeter (2014) illustrates some of the intricacies the task of translating from the Chinese involves, and examines a sinologist's possible ways of proceeding. These studies provide a fascinating in-depth portrayal of how classical Chinese works and an equally meticulous reflection on Billeter's own translation strategies and teaching methods, which along with the aforementioned repeated retranslations of classics only goes to further prove the existence of a sinological translation

[16] See e.g. Stalling (2014) for a conversation on this with Howard Goldblatt.

tradition that is complex, to some extent language-specific, and one that now appears to be giving way to more pragmatic, contemporary topics in the context of higher education.

Renditions*: A Community of Practice?*

This introduction sets the scene for my project, in that it shows how my encounter with Renditions evolved into a familiarisation with, and better understanding of, the magazine, which then led me to think of it in relation to translation as a profession, and Chinese and sinological translation traditions. This exercise made me realise that Renditions was, in fact, an example that allowed me to delve into how translation can work as a social activity (which would, in turn, allow for a better overall understanding of the process of translation as such), which then led me to use Etienne Wenger's research on Communities of Practice (CoPs) as a framework.

Wenger has written extensively on social learning systems and, in particular, on communities brought together by a common aim, in pursuit of which they are united by a type of practice. In doing so, Wenger attempts, in his own words,[17] to understand the connection between knowledge, community, learning, and identity. In what follows, I will take Wenger's ideas as a base to discuss how a) translation is a practice that is intrinsically social, and particularly so in a community like Renditions that gathers around the one multi-layered task of publishing a magazine; that b) if happening in a community, translation will elicit a sense of professionally "belonging"; that c) the experience of working as part of a community is, for a translator, meaningful on a number of levels, and how d) the experience of working within a translation community involves a process of "becoming" which in turn plays a key role in shaping a translator's professional identity. While translator communities are, quite often, discussed as the virtual, online platforms that they now commonly are, Wenger's research is helpful in focusing on translator communities in a real-world context. I discuss the process of translation with focus on Chinese to English in this particular way to show that there are, to borrow St André's (2010) title words, some "lessons

[17] Source: Etienne Wenger's own website, which can be accessed at http://wenger-trayner.com/etienne/ [last access date: 14 May 2019]

from Chinese history" to be learned, and that China is a useful example to explore in order to gain a better universal understanding of how translation works. Renditions can, in other words, help to shed light on translation as a social practice by virtue of working the way it does, a practice that has long been recognised in China, but which seems to still be under-recognised in the West.

Can *Renditions* be defined as, in Wenger's terms, a community that formed by means of a sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise? The existence of a "shared enterprise" of a literary translation magazine that calls itself "the leading international journal of Chinese literature in English translation"[18] is reflected in this very appellation, and the words of scholar and former *Renditions* contributor Kam Louie (in Hung, 2003b: 59) point to the existence of a continued "sustained pursuit": "for any journal to thrive and prosper for [as long as *Renditions*], congratulations are due". We are therefore looking at a long-term, and still ongoing, pursuit of making Chinese literature in translation available to wider, English-speaking audiences.

Can it be said that a Community of Practice (CoP) has formed through this activity? According to Wenger, CoPs are everywhere, and yet we can easily remain unaware of them: "at home, at work, at school, in our hobbies – we belong to several communities of practice at any given time" (1998: 17). If so, then magazines are an openly visible example of naturally occurring CoP that has hitherto been largely overlooked. *Renditions* is clearly a translation-focused "space" that has, over time, shown to possess a community spirit, as will be shown in most of the following chapters, first and foremost in that it has maintained close ties with many of its contributors over the years;[19] it has also often sought, and found, ways to share knowledge with linguists interested in translation and translation editing, and has actively encouraged networking between translators.

18 Source: *Renditions* website. Information from https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/index.html [last accessed on 5 July 2019] Note that the use of the word "journal" was introduced in earlier times to give *Renditions* a more academic-sounding appellation seen as it is based in a university, according to one of my interviewees.
19 In certain periods in the life of *Renditions*, its Hong Kong-based core team has also regularly gathered more informally beyond the office doors to celebrate e.g. Christmas (see Hung, 2003b: 101). While this has little to do with its key activities, it still is a way of interacting socially that points to the existence of a friendly bond in the team.

The core discussion that follows the Literature Review and Methodology Chapters is divided into four further chapters. The order in which these chapters succeed each other broadly follows the same direction this entire thesis is taking: starting from the individual translator, it moves on to a broader focus on the social aspects of translation within a community. Therefore, of the four theoretical components in Wenger's social theory of learning, "learning as doing" and "learning as becoming" come first, seen as they revolve around the more individual-related concepts of "practice" and "identity". Even though the focus here is more on the individual translator, still my examples will show how both practice and identity-building feed in social elements into his or her work at *Renditions*. Next are "learning as experience" which Wenger links to "meaning", i.e. what is meaningful professionally (and what makes the *Renditions* experience meaningful to everyone involved), and finally "learning as belonging" which connects to the idea of "community" and to various "modes" for an individual of belonging to a community.

CHAPTER 2
Literature Review

The gap this thesis seeks to fill is outlined from two different angles in this chapter. One angle is that of Translation Studies (TS); this reveals, broadly speaking to begin with, that TS still has a penchant for Eurocentrism (on questions surrounding the debate on this issue, see e.g. van Doorslaer and Flynn, 2013) which in turn highlights the relevance of a contribution drawing from an Asian context. It then also emerges that academic circles in China (and Asia at large) and scholars in non-Chinese TS are in fact showing interest in each other's work, which makes a thesis linking the two areas of study the more worthwhile. I then turn to my second focal point, namely translators themselves, and the nature of (literary) translation: by exploring these areas, this project builds on existing points of scholarly interest in TS, but also in sociology. Translation, and especially literary translation, is commonly thought of as a solitary task, but as I have pointed out in the Introduction, this is not an image that entirely corresponds to reality and exists everywhere. To explore this further in the context of a community of translators, I take *Renditions* as example and draw on Wenger's theories to illustrate my point.

Moreover, both here and in the Methodology chapter that follows, I cover the developments that have structured and shaped my thesis along the way, showing my approach to investigating the social nature of translation with the help of a sociological framework that has allowed me to better illustrate what happens at *Renditions* in a "social" sense. I thereby contribute to ongoing discussions within what I will introduce here as a relatively recent trend in TS called the "sociological turn", via an example from the hitherto scarcely explored world of translation magazines.

Why a magazine?

I have several reasons for having chosen a Chinese-English translation magazine as source of material and of inspiration for this study. The first and more general reason is that, even though periodical studies has quite recently emerged as a new research area in the humanities (Latham and Scholes, 2006), research involving magazines and journals remains relatively sporadic both in Chinese

Studies (see, for example, Gimpel 2001 or Hockx, 2003) and in TS (e.g. Philpotts, 2012 or Osękowska-Sandecka, 2012). This is probably partly because the contents of a journal are not homogeneous, which makes any attempt at a systematic assessment and study of such a subject “a formidable task” (Gimpel, 1999: 53). It is precisely this abundance and variety of material, however, that made a magazine an attractive choice for my project: my aim was never to assess *Renditions* as a whole, but rather to use a number of examples from it to illustrate how translation can work in such a setting. Moreover, a mosaic made of scattered material from the same magazine can lead to revelatory results, as Gimpel's own work on how literary magazines shaped the image of the West in China shows. This is where paratexts become very interesting material; a section on this type of source will follow after the current section.

A magazine that focuses specifically on translation, as I have pointed out in the Introduction, is also likely to be a rich source of paratextual material (translators' comments, articles, and potentially archived drafts and manuscripts) which together with interviews allows to take a discussion beyond the analysis of the primary sources, i.e. the ST and TT. Paratextual traces of a translator's activity can be a very telling resource for a study on the process of translation, and tend to be difficult or sometimes even impossible to find elsewhere (Munday, 2014). One of the functions of a translation magazine however, beside that of making written material from one culture accessible to another, is also to make the translator's work stand out – make it more “visible” – by discussing and archiving it. Even if the access to archived material cannot be taken for granted, some paratextual material is readily available in the magazine itself, which already provides a good starting point.

My choice of *Renditions* in particular is also driven by several reasons beyond the one printed on *Renditions*’ cover: “A Chinese-English Translation Magazine”. A literary magazine has, historically, had the double role of providing a creative outlet for established and emerging writers and making fresh material easily accessible to readers. In her extended study of the *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* 小说月报, Gimpel (2001: 3) describes how in the increasingly prolific literary scene of late Qing and early Republican China, literary journals established themselves as “the physical spaces … in which new ideas for reform and writing were formulated and tried out, … in which literary careers were forged", and ultimately also "the places in which most readers received their first introduction to new and foreign authors and new and foreign ideas". Translators' comments (see Hung, 2003) not only repeatedly affirm that the same is true in the case of *Renditions*, but also suggest that working with *Renditions* was an enriching experience in their profession – and for several, an early career opportunity. A rarely studied source therefore, that nevertheless provides an excellent example through which to discuss how translation can work as a community pursuit.

It also cannot be overlooked here that *Renditions* as an artefact has an intrinsically social nature, by virtue of containing excerpts of literary texts that are themselves social insofar as they mirror the life and the times they stem from. In addition to that, most of these texts will have been influenced by other writing and other literary styles preceding them, and may themselves in turn have become influential writing. The creation and translation of literature is perhaps not a very noticeably social process; in the bigger picture however, it is social across history, a long succession of messages from authors that relate to past, present and future, followed by other writers' reactions, and more waves of literary production (and translation).

Moreover, it can be said that the format of a magazine enhances this entire social process: the mostly miscellaneous contents will have been authored not by one but a number of different writers, they will (certainly so with enough careful editorial attention, as in the case of *Renditions*) have been grouped together according to a common denominator by editors, and their translations into the TL will have involved the work of at least as many translators as there are texts. An example of such a thematic (in this case ideological) "thread" in common, here in the form of one and the same belief drawing together texts from different eras, was given to me by Eva Hung during our interview:

> I can give you the example of *Renditions* No. 65 (Spring 2006), a special issue called *Three cases of Political Dissent*. The Hu Feng (胡風 1902-1985) material in No. 65 actually came to us over a period of two years. It… was fascinating material. And then, just as

> I was corresponding wit this translator, Gao Er'tai (高尔泰, 1935 -) published his very… by now famous book called *Xunzhao Jiayuan* 寻找家园. When a colleague showed the book to me I looked at it and I thought, oh… it would work… together with Hu Feng… because it's, you know, just… different generations, believing in the same thing. But we needed something to tie them together, because they were just too far apart as generations… at about the same time I was talking to Richard King about a possible special issue that he could do for *Renditions*. He researched Cultural Revolution material and interviewed a lot of writers, and Qin Zhaoyang was one of them. So when he learned we needed some material of a specific kind, he said, well, what about Qin Zhaoyang (秦兆陽 1916 – 1994)? I listened to King's interview with Qin and thought, yes, we could use some of this, but that would not be a rounded picture. And that's why I then found this other piece, which was Qin's own very short memoir about a particular period just before the Cultural Revolution when he was denounced as a rightist and he thought he could be rehabilitated … so it's just a very short piece about that period which would round off the picture of what that period really was like for him.

We can see in this example how ideas for a special issue revolving, in this case, around political dissent, could come together over time, and how essential editorial knowledge of the historical and cultural background was in grouping these texts together in a way that would make sense to readers interested in such historical and ideological links, in a creative process that could stretch over several years. This way, a message that has clearly preoccupied Chinese writers of three different generations for the best part of a century gets passed on to posterity collected in one and the same publication. Magazines also have this important possibility of drawing links between their various contents, thereby bringing to life the social nature of texts.

Packaging Matters: On the Importance of Paratexts

As mentioned earlier, one of the first things one notices about *Renditions* are the small spaces in the magazine through which the presence of translators is flagged up. These elements framing the translation are what is called "paratexts", i.e. any written material other than the TT surrounding and "packaging" the TT. Genette's seminal 1987 publication *Seuils* (the 1997 English title of which translates as *Paratexts – Thresholds of Interpretation*) is arguably the best-known work on this subject. The imagery of this title works very well for paratexts: Genette sees these elements as "seuils", or "thresholds", rather than a boundary (1997: 1): as a passage that makes a text ready to be offered to its readers as a publication, and conversely prepares readers for experiencing the text. I have just referred to paratexts as elements "framing" or "packaging" a text; the former comes closer to the idea of an entrance, an introductory "frame" or "door" into a textual reality. Weightman (2018: 35) speaks about "*channels* which connect the work, the author and the reader, where the content can be presented, or defended, or marketed in a certain way" (my emphasis). The idea of a connecting doorway or passage would seem to appeal to most scholars researching paratexts.

Paratexts have been called "layers of packaging" (Pellatt, 2014), "peripheries" (Gil-Bardaji et al, 2012), or again and perhaps most famously as in the work I pointed out earlier, "thresholds" (Genette, 1987). All of these terms are trying to say more or less the same thing: paratexts are all the elements that are situated at the periphery of a text, that "package" it and help setting the scene in that they mostly provide the reader with informative details about anything from the author's (or, where applicable, the translator's) background to the creative process behind the text itself; they are, unless skipped by the reader (as happens notoriously often with longer, book-length texts), the threshold through which the reader eventually accesses and experiences a text. Not least, some types of paratexts (e.g. the book cover) can also play a key role in marketing the text. In the context of Chinese to English translation, i.e. translation between two linguistic and cultural milieus widely acknowledged as being very different, I like to think of paratexts as, ideally, a kind of "safety net" for readers, in that they can – and should – ensure that the reader is able to enjoy writing coming from a very different cultural context without encountering any misleading difficulties that would hinder his or her correct understanding of the core text.

Let me take a look at the multiple layers of paratext in the translation of Qian Zhongshu's (錢鍾書, 1910-1998) best known work *Fortress Besieged* (*Wei Cheng* 圍城) as example of this. In the foreword to the translation, historian Jonathan Spence gives readers extensive background on the historical context of the book and on the turmoil happening in China at the time of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) during which the story is set. In his own authorial preface, Qian Zhongshu then adds: "In this book I intend to write about a certain segment of society and a certain kind of people in modern China. … The characters are of course fictitious, so those with a fondness for history need not trouble themselves trying to trace them out" (xi). These are all informative details for readers. Among the translators' acknowledgements we then find a nod to *Renditions*' early pioneering efforts in a wish to thank, among others, "Mr George Kao of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for permission to reprint Chapter I, published in *Renditions* (No. 2, Spring 1974)" (xii). The translators of *Fortress Besieged*, Jeanne Kelly and Nathan Mao, had both translated for *Renditions* before, and would have known Kao. Not least, the reader also learns from a note in the 2006 Penguin Classics edition that the author's name appears as "Qian Zhongshu" in *pinyin* on the book cover only "as a cataloguing reference" due to the then already widespread use of *pinyin* on an international scale, but that within the book the translators' use of Wade-Giles (namely, Ch'ien Chung-shu for the author, as well as Wade-Giles for all person and place names) dating back to the first 1979 edition "has been kept intact". This note, most likely added by editors, serves to avoid any confusion on the author's name, and alerts readers with an interest in China and in languages to the existence of several romanization systems for Chinese.

As existing research on the subject quite clearly shows, paratexts can also be considered a physical proof of particularly the last pre-publication stages of translation being everything but a solitary endeavour. First off, decisions concerning paratexts are often in the hands of people other than the author (or the translator), mostly editors or publishers, which testifies to the existence of a network working with or alongside the translator. Given that paratexts envelop a text, they are indeed, as I have mentioned above, peripheral material, but are nevertheless a defining part of the text, and their appearance and contents can determine how well a publication will sell or how it will be received. Negotiations about paratexts therefore involve several parties and sometimes a lengthy networking process, in which the translator participates but is no longer a dominant, decision-making figure.

In the case of someone very well-known, however, like Howard Goldblatt in the case of Chinese-to-English translation, for such a person to be part of the entire publication process can be beneficial to others, as suggested here in a case study on Goldblatt's work: "collaboration with Goldblatt opened up new opportunities for [the literary agent], with translated Chinese literature as an underexplored market." (Zhang, 2019: 201). In other words, therefore, it can be said that in general paratextual elements surrounding a text are mostly the result of some degree of social interaction behind the scenes.

Precisely because of being authored (or influenced by) people with interests other than the author's or the translator's, paratexts were initially often simply overlooked or treated with some level of mistrust, being considered potentially partial and biased. Quite recently, however, some TS scholars including Munday (2014) and Tahir-Gürçağlar (in Hermans, 2002) have highlighted the methodological importance of paratexts for historical research on translation in particular, where such elements can often help uncover occurrences around the translated text which translators are no longer there to reveal.

Importantly, Tahir-Gürçağlar also picks up on one particular detail relevant for research in TS, namely Genette's (1997) reluctance to consider translations as paratextual material, noting that in the context of TS this would actually become a disadvantage since it "imposes a source-oriented and restrictive perspective on translation research" (Hermans, 2002: 59), in that it "introduces a hierarchical relationship between the source text and the target text", and if translation is considered to be a paratext it becomes "a derivative activity always based on another text that is chronologically anterior to it, which makes translation a commentary on the original text, i.e. a paratextual feature presenting the original" (46). Clearly the relevance of paratexts as a valuable source of information for

TS scholars has been established, and several scholars including Weightman (2018) and Batchelor (2018) have started including them in their core research interests. The point I am making here is that paratexts, being often penned by someone other than the translator, can be a tangible proof of particularly the later pre-publication stages of translation *not* being a purely individual endeavour.

A magazine, being a publication that appears in print repeatedly at regular intervals, can be said to have multiple paratextual "entranceways". The first one is what is also called a "peritext", i.e. the paratextual material that envelops the main text, in this case the exterior that defines the identity of the magazine and makes it look familiar to regular readers: the English and Chinese font of the magazine name, and generally all that is part of a set pattern on the cover of each issue; then comes the table of contents, a list that encourages a browse rather than a read from beginning to end; then, the Editor's Page.

In *Renditions* there may also be intermediate passageways, such as a page announcing the beginning of a (sometimes guest-edited) "special section" on a particular literary style or period (see Figure 5, which shows an example preceding the "New Taiwan Poetry" section from *Renditions* No. 61, 2004) or again one particular writer:

Taiwan Poetry at the Turn of the 21st Century

William Tay, Guest Editor

IT IS gratifying to find, while doing the selection for this special forum, that many major poets who started in the fifties are still going strong. Yu Kwang-chung 余光中 (1928–), typically prolific, has recently issued two volumes of new poems. Less prolific and almost hermetic, Chou Meng-tieh 周夢蝶 (1921–) has added a collection of his more recent poems to his name. Luo Fu 洛夫 (1928–) has come up with a narrative poem substantial enough to stand on its own as a book. Even Ji Xian 紀弦 (1913–), now ninety-one, is planning a collection of his most recent poems in 2004. Much younger in age but contemporaneous in his creative career, Yang Mu 楊牧 (1940–) continues to soar with his lyrical voice and narrative skills in new works. Lin Ling 林泠 (1938–), a stylist who found her lyrical idiom early on, has returned with a wide range of different experimentations after a long hiatus.[1]

In the shadow of this group of pioneers a younger generation emerged in the late seventies and early eighties and gradually came into their own in the late eighties. Consistently they have moved away from the diction and rhythm of their predecessors, most of them adopting a more colloquial style with lesser imagistic density. A few have experimented with typography and homonyms with the aid of software programs. Others have aimed at shock effect with subject matters that were taboos in the martial-law days.[2]

The youngest in this selection did not begin publishing until the late nineties. They have, nevertheless, often demonstrated a maturity well beyond their age in their command of poetic skills. Perhaps after half a century of uninterrupted growth, poetry in Taiwan has spun its own norms, tropes, and conventions that no longer require an initial phase of strenuous exploration. On the other hand, striking achievements are clearly more difficult to come by.

[1] Readers interested in finding specific titles and the poets' complete bibliographies with selections of critical accounts may consult Dangdai wenxue shiliao yingxiang quanwen xitong 當代文學史料影像全文系統 at the website of the National Central Library (www.ncl.edu.tw).

[2] Martial law was imposed on 19 May 1948 and lifted on 15 July 1987.

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Figure 5: Scan of page 50, Issue 61, introducing a "New Taiwan Poetry" section.

Then, each translation quite often has its own smaller "frame" or "entrance": an introduction by the translator or by the editors (occasionally by the author), a photo of the author where available, the name of the author and the translator, as in the example shown in Figure 6 (taken from *Renditions* No.32, 1989: 46) that features all of these elements:

張天翼：溫柔製造者

Manufacturer of Tenderness

By Zhang Tianyi
Translated by Stephen L. Smith


Zhang Tianyi in the 1930s

Translator's Introduction

Zhang Tianyi was born in Nanjing in 1906. His father, Zhang Bochun 張伯純, served as education commissioner at Nanjing, and his mother, He Yixiao 何曦孝, was a poet. During Zhang's youth his family suffered straitened circumstances which resulted in their moving several times; this situation provided Zhang contact with people of many social classes and of diverse dialectal backgrounds. He later drew upon this experience when he moved to Peking and turned to writing. Prior to the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) he worked as a school teacher, a journalist, and a minor official. He continued writing during the war, and after the Communist revolution in China he served variously as deputy director of the Central Literary Research Institute, editor of *Renmin wenxue*, and delegate to the National People's Congress [1]

Figure 6: Example of introductory page to a translated text.

What exactly, though, is the purpose of paratexts? Weightman (2018) points out how these bits of writing serve to provide certain kinds of additional information about the text they accompany. Much in agreement with these thoughts, Pellatt (2014), another scholar to have published on paratexts, specifies as follows: "any material additional to, appended to or external to the core text which has functions of explaining, defining, instructing, or supporting, adding background information, or the relevant opinions… of scholars, translators and reviewers." Pellatt also notes that Genette's work largely refers to literature, rather than to "the complementary issues of paratext which is translated, or translation as paratext" (2014: 1) something that has in turn been explored in later studies (see, for example, Batchelor (2018) for a recent book-length study on links between translation and paratexts).

Pellatt's remark may be important in some cases but is not a distinction relevant for me to consider, given that paratextual material in *Renditions* does, on one hand, serve to package translations, but on the other is not in itself translated – it is a case of, to borrow Batchelor's words, "paratexts *of* translations, rather than … translations *as* paratexts to [another text]" (2018: 25). In the *Renditions* context, I like to imagine paratexts (especially introductory ones) as a sort of "cultural safety net", with a function similar to safety nets protecting acrobats from injury: their contents are mostly intended to inform the reader about culture- or language-specific elements that allow for a more complete understanding of the translation proper, as demonstrated in the examples that will follow. Paratexts serve as complementary material that aims to "render the culturally unfamiliar less so" (Watts, 2000: 30) and the relatively regular occurrence of introductions in *Renditions* attests to Chinese literature often being deemed to be "culturally unfamiliar territory" for the English-speaking reader (by the editors).

In some cases, the translator provides guidance to readers who may not be familiar with the author, and shares some of his or her detailed understanding of the ST. "To say that Yang Jiang's writing style is low-key and subtle is in itself an understatement. To say that she skirts the major issues or important concerns of the time is to misread the piece entirely" Howard Goldblatt alerts his readers in the introduction to his translation of Yang Jiang's "Six Chapter from My Life 'Downunder'" in *Renditions* No.16 (Yang, 1981: 7). He then concedes that most of what Yang wrote is "extremely personal and, seemingly, of a commonplace nature" but goes on to point out how precisely "that… is what lends the piece such power [in the long run]."

There are other cases when the time is right to share some details from the translation process, or to give readers with a knowledge of Mandarin some food for thought. Translators Brian Holton and Chu Chiyu reveal in their introduction to Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646)'s collection of popular songs entitled, in translation, "Caught in the Bushes" (Feng, 2002: 78-79) that the occasional humorous comments on the various translations – printed by *Renditions* together with the Chinese originals – are in fact the author's own, and have been translated along with the core contents given that "together these make an extremely enjoyable read" (2002: 79). For the benefit of readers with some command of Mandarin, the two translators also mention their struggle with e.g. the term *yuanjia* 冤家, a word very commonly found in Feng's collection of songs but one that in English, interestingly, has two contradictory meanings, "predestined lover" and "predestined enemy". The translators' solution to this was to gather a "spectrum of alternatives" of which one was chosen each time to fit the context.

As to rendering the culturally unfamiliar less so, a good example of doing just that is to be found in *Renditions* No.44 (Han, 1995: 33-35) where translator Mary Scott introduces the story-telling genre *zidishu* 子弟書 (also known as "Manchu bannermen tales", see Denton, 2017: 139). Publishing some of this material is, as we find out from then editors Eva Hung and David Pollard on the Editor's Page of the same issue, a first for *Renditions*. Scott is therefore given ample space to provide the reader with background information, both on the *zidishu* as genre and on the literary classic these particular *zidishu* are about, namely *The Plum in the Golden Vase* (*Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅). Scott explains the link between the widespread popularization of classics of Chinese literature via stage performances and the *zidishu* genre. The reader then learns that, "although the *zidishu* performance tradition has died out and only a fraction of its repertoire has been absorbed into other styles, *zidishu* texts still exist in substantial numbers." (1995: 34) The translator then goes on to tell more about the authorship of the *zidishu* she translated, and develops on why they are fascinating material. Reading this, it would be difficult not to share some of the translator's enthusiasm, or to disagree with editors Hung and Pollard who acknowledge in their opening words to this issue that "there are still many nooks and crannies [of Chinese literature] which have remained relatively unexplored" even after 22 years of *Renditions*. We can also see here some of how the social aspects of translation function at *Renditions*: the role of translators is in fact a highly communicative and visible one.

The examples above may be dealing with seemingly light-hearted, at times almost trivial details; what they all have in common is that they provide information that can usually only come from the person who is most familiar with the ST: the translator. The relevance of paratexts lies beyond each of these individual examples: they all serve to enhance and complete the read that follows, and at the same time enhance the visibility of the translator. This is also why some translations in *Renditions* do have an introduction while others do not: it is a case-by-case decision, and some texts may not need any enhancing-and-completing at all to still be perfectly understandable to readers. One of my interviewees suggested there was always an awareness of the importance of this role of paratexts while editing *Renditions*: "[*Renditions*] tried to have a certain level of readability and at the same time provide enough information for the reader to begin at least to understand the original context… because you wanted to be able to reach people who are already knowledgeable, as well as people who are not".

Occasionally, one encounters the voice of the editors in paratexts, rather than the translator's, in the lines preceding a translation in *Renditions*; considering that most people who are, and have been, on the magazine's editorial team, are also academics focusing on specific aspects of Chinese literature and culture, specialist knowledge in these areas would have been at hand if space needed filling at short notice.

The Translation Studies Context

The earliest known discussions on the practice of translation date back Romans (Cicero and Horace) and the 4th century CE (St Jerome), but TS has been developing as an academic discipline only from the second half of the twentieth century. Starting from what Susan Bassnett (1991: xi) calls "slightly apologetic beginnings", scholarly research on translation was mostly emerging from within other areas (such as linguistics or modern languages) and was considered a subcategory of these rather than part of an academic field in its own right. This is widely attributed to the fact that translation was traditionally thought of as a practical and derivative activity, an idea which continued to exist until quite recently especially within literary approaches in academia (Bassnett, 2013: 26).

The concern about the low status of translation is a two-way debate, as the laments of some translators clearly show. An activity often considered unworthy of overt recognition, translating can be a "thankless task" for those practicing the profession, as Bonnie McDougall (in Hung, 2003: 42) puts it. In an essay discussing the challenges of translating modern Chinese literature, John Balcom (in Bassnett and Bush, 2007: 119) argues against the ubiquitous perception of a translator's work as being "mechanical" and against the common negative connotation of "translation" as opposed to "the original" (i.e. the source text, ST), drawing from his own experience to prove that translation is "an art that requires both creativity and scholarship". Even with the establishment of TS as an academic discipline, translating "is still often denied parity with other academic research (…) notwithstanding the fact that practice of translation must be an essential experience for the translation theorist and trainer." (Munday, 2001: 14-15).

Chinese translator and educator Liang Shiqiu (1903-1987) reflects on this same issue in an essay translated and published *Renditions* No. 3 (1974), and says: "Translation is not considered scholarly research. That is why it is usually ignored by academic institutions. After translating twenty of Shakespeare's plays, I have come to realise that the translator… has to involve himself in a little research work from time to time." (15) Liang then goes on to mention, as example, the many hours of time and effort it took him to survey the sheer volume of annotations and critical material available on Shakespeare, so that he would understand the ST as best he could. Balcom and Liang appear to agree on the fact that it is incorrect for academia to dismiss translation, and that much of academia is probably unaware of how much in-depth research translation can require.

The sharp rise of degrees and formal training in TS offered through universities or other institutions since the 1980s (Pym, 2009) has also sparked debates on how translation should be taught. Calls to bridge the gap between theory and practice have become increasingly common, along with discussions on the importance of both technical skills, or "translator training", and "translator education" (Bernadini cited in Pym, 2009). Such debates come in response to a widespread lack of conviction about the practicality and effectiveness of formal translator training, which "in a new discipline like translation teaching is healthy and could be ignored, if it did not stem from the very persons for whom everything is designed" (Chau in Chan and Pollard, 1995: 193). Studies by practicing translators such as Sakamoto's (2014) detailed discussion of translators' accounts and their implication for translator training with reference to English and Japanese have taken a step towards bridging this gap. Strictly speaking, this project does not focus on the training of translators, however translation as a *professional learning process* is one of its foci: after all, the birth of *Renditions* more or less coincides with the rise in popularity of formal translator training, and much that there is to say about the magazine can be linked to some form of learning (it being rooted in an academic setting, and – as I will discuss later – its translation editing practices, which encourage learning). Also, the nature of literary translation seems to be particularly at odds with formal training, as I will develop on further in section 1. 1. 3.

By the end of my first year of PhD studies it was becoming increasingly clear to me, from both research and personal experience, that translation was not a solitary endeavour. I was, by then, engaging in academic translation myself, and found myself networking with others quite regularly in that role. Even before I started meeting and interviewing *Renditions* staff in the process of collecting my data, the pages of the magazine had told me that collaborative translation was no rare occurrence at *Renditions* and that to understand this more fully a sociological approach would be fitting, and help explain the workings of what was clear remained a lacuna in the extant academic literature.

Such an approach also chimes with broader developments in TS. As has happened with almost every emerging academic area of study, TS has repeatedly “turned” to other fields for new directions over the initial decades of its existence (see e.g. Snell-Hornby, 2006 for an early overview of these “turns”). Along this line, TS has recently taken a “sociological turn”: all that is social about the process of translation has captured the attention of some TS scholars. Not only because this seems to be the case within the Chinese translation tradition (see e.g. St André, 2010), but also because translation is an activity that, albeit partly solitary, does at some stage necessarily involve networking, whether this means communicating with the editor or receiving advice from someone more knowledgeable, or better informed, on a specific subject than the translator is.

It is only for a little over a decade that there has been awareness of a "sociological turn". In her overview of TS "turns", Snell-Hornby (2006) already mentions the existence of a "'sociological turn' at present under way in Translation Studies", which she describes as "a welcome alternative to the purely linguistic approach", and indeed, "an issue of immense importance with a wealth of material for future studies" (172). Since then, a number of book-length studies have tackled this subject in more depth (see e.g. Wolf and Fukari, 2007, Angelelli, 2014, Tyulenev, 2012 and 2014 or again Blakesey, 2018), further highlighting it as a relevant topic for research. These works suggest that "some of the methodologies developed in the wake of the 'cultural turn' seem to no longer suffice for a thorough analysis of the contributions of translation within [the] multifaceted processes [characteristic for recent world-wide developments, where cultural, social and societal problems… are at stake]" (Wolf and Fukari, 2007: 5-6). A sociological turn in TS therefore clearly exists and is ongoing, and comes in response to the changing role and function of translation in a world where phenomena like globalization and migration happen on a much wider and faster scale than they used to when scholarly research in TS was in its early stages. To me, rather than a response to relatively recent changes, the sociology of translation became a useful tool to discuss a trait that in fact appears to be characteristic for translation.

Wolf, whom I quote above, is an Austrian scholar whose name frequently appears in connection with the research area now called "sociology of translation". Wolf suggests that a number of well-known TS scholars have already worked extensively on the sociology of translation without calling it such, in that translation as a social practice became an idea central to their work (examples include the pioneer of Polysystem Theory, Itamar Even-Zohar, as well as André Lefevere whose name is mostly associated with the "cultural turn" in TS). This remark of Wolf's suggests that translation *does* in fact have an essentially social character which in turn has inspired some of the major theoretical developments in TS. This only goes to confirm that sociology is indeed an avenue well worth exploring in a translation context, and allows me to do so for the hitherto unexplored Chinese-to-English literary translation context via a largely unexplored kind of resource: a magazine.

Looking beyond the West: TS and Asia

The contents of key introductory works to TS (e.g. Bassnett's *Translation Studies* or Munday's *Introducing Translation Studies*) suggest that the great majority of existing theories and studies in TS are based on translation between European languages. Not until the end of the twentieth century has there been an active interest in looking beyond these Eurocentric boundaries and putting existing research into perspective, which particularly in TS is still slowed down to some extent due to the global importance of English. Looking at more recently published theoretical overviews of the discipline, however, there is a strong consensus that it is now "no longer possible" (Williams, 2013: 2) to focus solely on TS theory originating in Western Europe and North America. As Bassnett (2013) points out in the preface to the fourth edition of *Translation Studies*, contributions to TS from countries with a colonial past play an important part in this development; a comment echoed by Williams, who in addition to that remarks on the growing amount of studies from China available in English.

These are all signals for new directions opening up in TS, and yet research in English with specific reference to Chinese or other Asian languages is a relatively recent development. China only started appearing in Western literature on TS in the 1990s; we find mention of Chinese translators in major works such as *Translators Through History* (Delisle and Woodsworth, 1995), *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1998), and later also the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies* (Baker and Saldhana, 1998), which features a separate entry on Chinese translation tradition (co-written by former *Renditions* editors Eva Hung and David Pollard). More extensive research often comes in the form of TS-related publications by scholars with a primary interest in China, including James St. André's historical studies on translations of Chinese texts and *On Translation* by Jin Di and Eugene Nida (2006). Recent language-oriented publications such as Pellatt, Liu and Chen's *Translating Chinese Culture: The Process of Chinese-English Translation* (2014) have also started providing practical examples set within a Chinese context and questioning whether and to what extent the process of translating from Chinese actually differs from that of translating from a European language.

If TS has taken a step towards Asia, the latter has clearly also taken up interest in TS. There has recently been a significant rise of contributions to TS by Chinese researchers, many of whom – both Chinese and not – are based in Hong Kong and appear to be the driving force behind many publications in TS coming from China. Also comprehensive works such as anthologies and encyclopaedias on Chinese-English and English-Chinese translation (e.g. Chan and Pollard, 1995 or Minford and Lau, 2000) have started appearing, followed by several key publications in English that focus on translation-related issues in wider Asia or in a specific Asian country. Most notably, these include *Asian Translation Traditions* (Hung and Wakabayashi, 2005) and *An Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation* (Cheung, 2006). Comments by Western researchers show that, in light of the need for widening the horizon beyond European languages, such "ground-breaking" contributions to the field (Tymoczko in Cheung, 2006) comes as a much awaited development in the field.

Looking at developments in China, Hung (2005) also remarks that an exchange of this kind is just as beneficial for researchers from Asian countries as it is for Western TS theorists, since the former still mostly hail from foreign language departments in their home country and tend to mainly have a background in Western translation theory. Studies from mainland China pointing to similar concerns (e. g. Tang, 2007) also make reference to this situation. This only emphasizes the particularly strong role Hong Kong has played in Chinese-English and English-Chinese translation since the 1970s (and, not least, also in researching China's own translation history), as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Such bilateral awareness of the need for academic communication is paving the way towards new research and international channels facilitating the exchange of ideas on Asia within TS already seem to be growing in numbers, most notably in the format of conferences (one recent example is 'East-West in Dialogue' held at the University of Nottingham in May 2014, and aimed at "[contributing] towards a reshaping of our understanding of intercultural encounters and engagement").[20] Considering that Asia, and China in particular, are now clearly a platform that offers a counterpoint to Western TS and the image of the translator therein, and thus opens some opportunities for contribution, focusing on Chinese-English translation suggests itself as a worthwhile and timely task.

The Translator in the Foreground

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, TS has succeeded in establishing itself as an increasingly thriving interdisciplinary research area; nevertheless, it remains highly fragmented (Munday, 2001: 190). The focus on language and text that characterised TS in the 1950s and 1960s (some of the important names from this period include Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958 and Catford, 1965) later shifted to studies adopting a cultural or historical perspective, best known through the work of Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere. This change of direction caused a major split which is still dominant in TS; importantly, the move away from issues related purely to language has allowed scholars from a variety of backgrounds to put translation into a wider context by approaching the subject from a number of new perspectives. These include the study of translation history, of translation as a process, and of a figure so clearly central and yet, for a long time, almost entirely ignored in TS research – the key player in all that translation is about, including and particularly in its inherently social nature: the translator.

The scholar perhaps best known for putting the translator into the spotlight is Lawrence Venuti. Making specific reference to 20th century Anglo-American culture, Venuti (1986) introduced the concept of 'invisibility' to point out how publishers' expectations draw attention away from the translator's work: the less the translator's intervention is noticeable, the more a translation is considered acceptable for publication. His work is directly linked to a dichotomy rooted in Friedrich Schleiermacher's ideas dating from the early nineteenth century, two interrelated translation methods now called domestication and foreignization.

[20] Source: conference programme, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/ctccs/documents/translation-and-comp-cultural-program.pdf [last access date: 2 June 2019]

Translator (in)visibility is still a rather broad notion; once Venuti (1995) proposed it, it was further refined by some, for example into the three categories of visibility put forward by McLaughlin (2008). In her linguistic study of translations from the French, McLaughlin proposes three different types of visibility, as summed up in the table below – overt, covert and invisible – and argues that to some extent the presence of the translator will necessarily be discernible in any of his or her work. McLaughlin's point is convincing and supported by abundant evidence, but the categorisation of visibility is not central to her research and was therefore not developed in more detail than was necessary.

Visibility type	McLaughlin (2008: 62)
Overt	"When the translation is marketed as such"
Covert	"Where it is obvious to the ideal reader that the translation is a translation"
Invisible	"Where the translator's voice has volume that is only 'audible' through linguistic analysis"

It is clear that these categories are perfectly valid and plausible also for examples of translation from languages other than French: if one was to redefine the above categories in sinological terms, examples of "overt" visibility in the sense intended by McLaughlin would not be many, because translators working from the Chinese are not so many and consequently even fewer are those whose translations would be marketed as such, except perhaps those of Mo Yan's works by Howard Goldblatt, given that it is, of course, public knowledge that Mo is a Nobel Prize-winning author and that Goldblatt translates his works.

In terms of covert visibility, translations from the Chinese (particularly early sinological translations) tend to be full of signs indicating to the ideal, even the not so attentive, reader that the translation is a translation: in early sinological translations, as St André has it, "the translator is manifestly, insistently, present to the reader, and the utter foreignness of the text is displayed by the need for introduction, footnotes and a large number of transliterated terms" (2003: 76). The urge to explain things non-Chinese readers may be unfamiliar with mentioned here has not disappeared from more recent translations, but on the one hand modern and contemporary Chinese literature is often thematically closer to what readers can easily relate to than classical or philosophical texts early sinologists would have worked on, and on the other hand the emphasis is on making a translation accessible and letting it flow easily, all of which brings the amount of annotation down to a minimum that is absolutely necessary.

As to McLauglin's third category of visibility, "invisible visibility", typically these are changes that are made during the translation process or in the editorial stages, changes that are deemed irrelevant for readers to know of, and are conveniently absorbed by the editorial process. Nevertheless, they too can be a result of social interaction, if the editor consults the translator before making them. Such changes are commonly called omissions: Dimitriu (2004: 163) notes that omissions "pass unnoticed by ordinary readers, and [are] rarely acknowledged by the translators themselves". Omissions are often caused by what could be called a sense of responsibility towards one's readers and a commitment to their correct appreciation of the translated text. On this, Howard Goldblatt explained in an interview: "what [target readers] don't need is to be force fed a text that would be easily swallowed by Chinese and would stick in the throat of an American or an Englishman (…) who doesn't read Chinese" (Stalling, 2014).

Other studies are more concerned with the translator's role and position. Bassnett (2013: 5) describes a dual image that emerged in the 1990s: a translator was either seen as "a creative artist who ensures the survival of writing across time and space, an intercultural mediator and interpreter … whose importance to the continuity and diffusion of culture is immesurable", or, often in a postcolonial context, as someone engaged in a "highly suspect activity" involving inequality of power relations. Building up on existing discourse, reflections on the role of the translator are developed on in this project by juxtaposing the role of literary translators working for *Renditions* and other types of translation activity. There are also some highly paradoxical aspects to the translator persona, some of which I explore in the following sections.

In Chapter 5 I focus on a subject related to the role of translators, namely the process of their professional identity-shaping, which then in turn defines who they interact and network with. The concept of self-fashioning, which comes to mind in this context, has been explored in great depth and detail in the context of Renaissance literature by Stephen Greenblatt; some of his introductory words, while applicable more generally, also cover the ways translators are presented in this thesis: "fashioning may suggest the achievement of a less tangible shape [than physical shape]: a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving" (2012: 3). As Venuti and McLaughlin suggested above, the translatorial profession naturally has a penchant towards not being openly visible, and yet it can be said especially of literary translators that they are individuals with a passion for languages and literature who over time develop a recognisable way of addressing their readers (as seen e.g. in the example of Burton Watson's distinctively smooth use of language in his approachable translations that carry very little annotation, for more on this see Chapter 7), and usually have a consistent way of perceiving literature and of approaching their work.

This has, until recently, failed to attract the attention of TS scholars, notwithstanding the fact that those engaged in translation know that it is all but traceless, Morini explains: "translator trainers have always insisted on the individuality of each translation process and product – but scholars have only very recently begun to give more than a passing thought to the exact nature of that individuality" (2013: 64). Through his research, Morini has been able to prove that translators do develop an identifiably individual writing style, choosing in some of his work to "[look] at several translations penned by the same [person] – a sure way of discovering that even the most anonymous practitioners have some sort of personality of their own, if only in the form of a studied impersonality" (73). Again, as in any study of this kind, the conflicting nature of translation cannot but stand in the foreground: the translator is, all along his or her journey, impersonating the author in another language, which to some extent effaces any notion of self.

As Burton Watson's example (in Chapter 7) illustrates, a translator's personal style shows in his or her use of the TL. Morini makes another important point on this: "since the Renaissance was an era of greater liberties for the translator, the style of a sixteenth-century translator is more easily identifiable than that of a modern one… often made of smaller, less visible interventions" (73). While this comment on the one hand opens into a rather different, historical area of study, on the other hand brought together with my example of Watson it also suggests that Morini's point is probably universally valid. Several other examples in this thesis likewise suggest that literary translators working from the Chinese will have, just as translators elsewhere, a distinctive personal style – one that may be more difficult to notice now than in early translations – but is nevertheless in place and its user, like Watson, is aware of it.

While authorial personae are generally better visible and more widely researched than the translatorial self (for more on this, see e.g. Demoor, 2004), the above discussion has just shown that a less obviously noticeable, yet quite similar process is happening for translators. While authors become celebrities of the literary world more often than translators do and tend to shape their career and public image accordingly, for translators marketing the self happens as well – albeit more covertly. Either (like in the aforementioned case of Howard Goldblatt) they too become very well known to the public during their early years of professional activity which in turn influences the rest their career, or they can make use of magazine style publications like *Renditions* through which they are able to introduce themselves to a readership (and to potential new clients) quite openly, as I will show later in this thesis in the context of translator identity. In other words, periodicals are a type of publication that helps early career translators market themselves and display some early examples of their work.

Work that Cannot Be Seen

The nature and purpose of translation work evoke the idea of elusiveness and invisibility in various ways. It is not unusual for writers to publicly comment on translation; the following often cited quote by author and Nobel prize winner Günter Grass, which aptly describes the elusive nature of translation, is one such example: "Translation is that which transforms everything so that nothing changes". Some others agree with these thoughts, among them Irish TS scholar Cronin (2008: 27) who states: "the better the translation… the more invisible the mediator" or again one of the foremost Spanish writers Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), widely quoted as saying that translation is like the other side of a tapestry. Interestingly this image appears to be of a somewhat universal nature:

in a lecture she gave at the University of San Francisco in 2014, American translator Andrea Lingenfelter compared translation from the Chinese not to a tapestry, but to the very complex and fine art of *shuangmianxiu* 双面绣, Chinese double-sided embroidery, where the embroidered image appears identical on either side of a finished piece, just like – and similarly to the other side of a tapestry – a translated work becomes almost like a mirror image of the original in the receiving culture. The more accomplished the translation, the less visible the translator's work, in that the idea is that the reader will ideally not be aware that what he or she is reading is a translation. Not quite equal to the original, but almost, as suggested in the title of Italian author Umberto Eco's (2012) book on his experiences with translation: *Dire Quasi la Stessa Cosa* – or, to say *almost* the same thing. Invisibility seen as an intriguing, altogether positive notion, perhaps even an accomplishment, is one side of the coin.

A less positive side of this same idea has been extensively discussed by translator and TS scholar Lawrence Venuti in his seminal work *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995) in which he raised the issue of traces of foreign flavour in a translated text being intentionally eliminated, through excessive domestication, by editors and publishers, which leads to translation work being overlooked by critics, and as a consequence unrecognised by many. If, however, we consider a translation "good" whenever the text reads perfectly natural in the target tongue, and is not noticeably stilted and at odds with its target context, one probable consequence is that the translation work will indeed be overlooked, which could almost be taken as a compliment by the translator – a proof that his or her work is not visible.

Renditions is, of course, all about translation, it focuses on the profession and many translators feel the editorial team understands the effort it takes to translate. The early years of *Renditions* saw the magazine focus on translation as a profession a little more, possibly as an occasional way of filling its pages: some of the initial issues published articles on translation written by practitioners. Readers could find some advice on potential translation-related difficulties from well-known translators like Arthur Waley, who in *Renditions* No. 5 reveals he believes that "the translator must use the tools that he knows best to handle"

(1975: 29), a reflection that immediately reminds Waley of the Chinese translator Lin Shu who, in agreement with Waley's opinion, "when he was asked why he translated Dickens into ancient Chinese instead of into modern colloquial, [replied]: 'Because ancient Chinese is what I am good at'" (1975:29). Or again, reflections on the difficulties of the profession, like those offered by calligrapher and Professor of Chinese Wang Fang-yu in *Renditions* No. 4 (1975: 46-48), informing readers that, "generally speaking, problems in translating Chinese poems are similar to those met in translating any other literature" (46), problems Wang then proceeds to break down into "levels of difficulty" and develop on. The translator-inclusive presence of such articles *highlights* translation, and not least, all contributors are introduced to the reader towards the end of each issue, in a written extension of the copious amount of social networking translation encompasses. *Renditions* therefore does precisely the opposite of what Venuti is complaining about: it makes translation visible – it informs its readers about translation, allows contributors to reflect about their profession on its pages, and shows awareness of the difficulties translation involves, as told here in the words of founding editor George Kao in the opening to *Renditions* No. 5: "for any piece of literary writing there could be three or four or more equally acceptable translations. There are, to be sure, differences from one version to another… but it is in the nature of translation to be tentative and not final. That is why we have chosen to give our magazine the rather flexible name 'Renditions'." (1975: 5). It would seem that, in the world of translation magazines, Lawrence Venuti's research is out of context – it does, however, allow me to highlight one side of the debate on a controversial aspect of literary translation here.

A Solitary Profession?

There is no doubt about the fact that translating involves a substantial amount of individual work, and yet I take the liberty to use a question mark in the title for this section, given that the case study my thesis focuses on challenges the question of translation being a solitary endeavour. The image of the so-called "lone translator" is one that once possibly corresponded to reality, but is seen as dated in contemporary times by several TS scholars. Wilss (1999: 177) flags this issue up as follows: "the lone translator is somewhat out of place in modern technological society, where collective effort is deemed more important than individual enterprise." Pym echoes this, and highlights a research gap in doing so: "unfortunately, studies that deal only with the 'lone translator' do not take into account this growing tendency toward teamwork in professional translation." (Pym, 2001:173) What Pym criticises here has been rectified since: St André (2010) does precisely this, and uses this contemporary tendency towards popularising team translating in professional translation to highlight that translation nowadays is, in fact, quite often a highly collaborative activity. Wagner offers additional insight on this from an international angle: "translators working for the EU institutions should forget any idea of… putting a personal imprint in their translations. In all but a few exceptional cases: when we translate here, we are members of a team." (2014: 56).

The "lone translator" is therefore clearly under fire: "The *myth* of the lone translator…" (Alvstad et al., 2017: 11); "the *antiquated image* of a lone translator, armed only with a pencil or typewriter" (Austermühl, 2001: 1); or again, "A *quaint assumption* underlying much translation theory is the *myth* of the lone translator" (Wagner, 2010: 265). An antiquated image, a quaint assumption, or a myth altogether: at best, the "lone translator" comes across as debatable in these recent publications. Having said this, it is also important to note that the debate about the demise of the lone translator is in fact about technological progress, and about a rise in the professionalisation of translation (via a wealth of new training programmes and university degrees) all of which has dramatically changed the ways how translators are now able to work, and has brought about new translation tools (e.g. in the form of translation software). Given that this phenomenon encourages the use of collaborative translation practices, the idea of the lone translator inevitably fades.

As St André (2010) and others have noticed, however, collaborative translation is not only a recent trend caused by the advancement of technology and the wider availability of translation training. Collaborative translation is no rare occurrence at any point, and certainly not a trend unique to China. Kiraly (2000) points out how "even in the pre-professional world, there are already many examples of translators working collaboratively." Šarčević (2006: 332) brings in a well-known example of this on European soil: "the collaborative work of

Bible translators working into German under Luther's guidance in the 16th Century and into English in the 17th Century (King James version 1611) is well documented."

To what extent is the image of the "lone translator" still watertight, then? Of course there are reasons for it to exist in the first place, and I have outlined here what they are – including, of course, the undeniable fact that (literary) translators do indeed spend a considerable amount of time working on their own. Also, given that there is an area of research for which translators are central, TS, more has been written about them and, insistently (or possibly only as a matter of convenience), most scholars tend to use the singular and refer to "the translator" (see St André, 2017) which in itself is also believed to be influencing the image of translators and pushing it towards the idea of just the one person doing the job. Moreover, as I also show in this thesis, much of the socialising this profession involves happens behind the scenes and is seldom mentioned anywhere afterwards, and so is consequently not something that is in the foreground often enough to cause the isolation associated with translators to take a back seat. Summing up, then, it would seem that the "lone translator" image corresponds to reality only partially, and has emerged as a result of several routines that are a matter of convention.

As Gouadec concedes, "the most familiar set up in the translation industry is when the… translator carries out the whole translation process single-handed. This means that the translator receives the material … searches for relevant information on key concepts… translates, proof-reads, revises… delivers" (2007: 108). Gouadec's list contains what most people *know* happens; having said that, there are stages listed here (e.g. the process of researching key concepts before starting to translate, or again the proof-reading stages) when a translator is likely to reach out to someone for some degree of assistance, an occurrence someone not involved hands-on in the translation project (including the client) will probably never know about, unless it is agreed that a second person be openly given credit as a co-translator.

It could therefore be said that a lot of what is social about translation is also covert in nature, it is something a translator's clients (and the world at large) need not be aware of; it is, nevertheless, important to acknowledge this within this discussion, because the more social aspects of translation are also connected to some of the more demanding and time-consuming stages of the translation process.

Blakesey states that “translations do not take place in a vacuum, and even a scholar holed up in his or her study will be involved in a whole range of social and cultural interactions before the translation is published.” (Blakesey 2018: 11) What Blakesey seems to suggest here is that “lone translators” have never really existed, since even the more solitary ones do interact and network with others during the translation process. This, of course, is also a statement that links into the sociology of translation, a topic on which Blakesey’s publication focuses. With that in mind, it is probably correct to say that the lone translator is an illusion generated by the admittedly strongly solitary nature of translation work (possibly more so for literary translators, as opposed to e.g. Wagner’s example of team-working EU translators), and is an image that never entirely corresponded to reality. Also, in agreement with my above assumption about literary translators, Vienne (1994: 57) concedes: “The image of the lone translator in front of a typewriter, surrounded by all the necessary documentation, devoid of contact with colleagues during the translation process, may possibly still apply to the literary translator.”

The above discussion suggests that translation is sometimes, and erroneously so, portrayed as a solitary undertaking. In other words, the rather high amount of individual work the task of translating involves is only one side of the coin. My thesis focuses on a community of translators in which collaborative translation is a relatively common practice: this will be discussed later (see pp 87-106) in which the example of poetry translation is given as often particularly conducive to collaboration.

The Art of Literary Translation

After a long time of almost complete neglect of the existence of translated literature as a separate entity, both in Comparative Literature and in TS, several scholars have drawn urgent attention to the matter: one well-known example is the idea of literatures as systems in Polysystem Theory and the application of it to discuss the position and role of translated literature within a literary system (Even-Zohar, 1990). Concern was also raised about the lack of attention to translation in literary studies, leading to the question whether literary translation and the very concept of "translated literature" may even need a separate framework within TS, an idea which would challenge "an either/or way of approaching translations (…) i.e. the *linguistic* vs. the *literary* approach" (Lambert, 1995: 20, author's emphasis).

What, then, does the work of a literary translator involve that is different? As opposed to technical translation, literary translation is often called an art or craft that requires a specific set of skills, of which only some can be acquired through training. Abilities such as inventiveness and creative imagination, on the other hand, are often considered to be innate: "some people have this capacity, and others simply do not have it." (Nida, 1981: 402). A number of existing translator accounts reiterate this statement in their own terms by stressing the importance of having e.g. a good 'ear' (Rabassa, 1984) or the ability to listen to the 'voice' of a text (Hoggard, 1998), again pointing to a kind of individual talent beyond the scope of a translation course. In an interview for the *Journal of Specialised Translation* (*JoSTrans*), Harman (2010) also mentions the necessity to read as widely as possible and "absorb the language", adding to the list a commitment to translation driven by personal passion for languages and literature.

Relatively few practicing translators are concerned with translation theory in the academic sense (in the words of translator Margaret Sayers Peden: "I simply can't get close enough to [theory] to know how it affects or doesn't affect anything I do. I do believe, however, and I've heard many authors say this in regard to their own writing: the text leads to theory, not vice versa. Theory is deduced from extant writing." See Hoggard, 1998), or only take interest in it at a later point in their career (one such example being former *Renditions* editorial team member Chu Chiyu, who went on to become a researcher and professor in TS). This is perhaps especially true in the case of literary translators, for whom the fascination with their profession is first and foremost rooted in their own personal interest in language, literature and culture. Theory is something to occasionally follow and maintain an interest in, that nevertheless does not usually interfere in one's own work in any way. Questioned on this, one of my interviewees reacted as follows:

> I have theory in the back of my mind when I work… I find some theories about translation are really useful to think about. How much is it important that the translator creates a voice of their own, how much do they try to intuitively guess what the intention of the author was? Translation theory is a good thing to have; while it does not actually guide my practice, it is reflective, it is food for thought.

This does not mean, however, that a literary translator does not work according to "an organised set of principles pointing the way of finding proper solutions" (Jin and Nida, 2006: 7). He or she also has considerably more room for experimenting with choices and innovative translation procedures than a technical translator would have (Venuti, 1995: 41). How this freedom is organised into a personal theoretical framework is up to the translator. This is also why, as I briefly mentioned earlier, literary translation tends not to be compatible with formal translator training.

Detailed accounts on this by translators themselves are rather scarce, and – unsurprisingly perhaps, given the overall Eurocentric orientation of TS – most of them make reference to translation between European languages. We have seen how literature in particular presents quite demanding challenges for a translator: to some extent these are language-specific. Balcom (in Bassnett and Bush, 2006) points to two major issues which he illustrates with examples from his own Chinese-English translations: that of "[bridging] the culture divide between two so dissimilar cultures", and that of employing creativity to produce "a work of art that can stand side by side with the original (…) while bowing to the demands and expectations of … readers and the … publishing industry" (119-120) at the receiving end. The literary translator is on one hand a cultural mediator and on the other bows to demands at the receiving end, which can, in turn, cause the kind of discontent highlighted by Venuti. Some of these tasks and skills would appear to be universal (like the creative process Balcom mentions) while others will necessarily be language- and culture-specific.

Illustrating this further, Snell-Hornby (2006: 80-82) discusses several examples from "the Far East", specifically China and Japan, with particular reference to the translation of nonverbal communication. She then draws a comparison with German, stating that differences related to gestures or facial expressions – albeit less obvious – certainly also occur between cultures that have more in common. However, while the challenge in German is mainly down to a correct choice of vocabulary, the obstacle in Japanese or Chinese can lie in the fact that a gesture has a completely different connotation in the target culture, or may not even have an equivalent. Another point often raised by translators from Chinese (e.g. Lingenfelter, 2014) is the temptation to over-use footnotes when dealing with words or concepts unknown to the target readership, something that would arguably happen to them much more frequently than to someone working from German. These and other examples will be used as focus points to explore the process of literary translation from Chinese to English. It is also important to note here that literary translation is an example that by virtue of its contents is highly social, which makes it a suitable focus for this study. In itself, "the written text is a social situation… it has its existence … in the participations of social beings whom we call writers, [translators], and readers, who constitute the writing as communication of a particular kind, as 'saying' a certain thing" (Classe, 2000: 323).

Wenger and Communities of Practice as Framework

It is widely acknowledged that the term "Communities of Practice" (commonly shortened to CoPs) was coined by Lave and Wenger (1991), who have subsequently done more extensive research on this particular type of community. What they describe is a relatively malleable idea, which, being such, turns out to be applicable in a variety of contexts wider than Lave and Wenger themselves had imagined. The term CoPs, so Wenger (1998), "should be viewed as a unit" that, by associating two terms, "defines a special type of community" (72). In other words: a neighbourhood community is also a *community*, but usually not a CoP; *practice* is intended here in quite a flexible sense as the intricate net of what we learn through interaction with each other and by pursuing joint goals, rather than simply the act of practicing something over and over to perfect a skill, seen as this kind of activity does not necessarily give rise to a community.

Wenger (1998) then points out that "the concept of community of practice... is neither a specific, narrowly defined activity or interaction nor a broadly defined aggregate that is abstractly historical or social" (124-125). A way in the middle, neither too narrow nor too abstract, that is flexible and applicable in multiple ways. This concept has indeed been picked up frequently, and has developed into directions questioned even by Lave and Wenger themselves.

In a later publication on CoPs, Wenger (1998) outlines the possible indicators that a CoP has formed, among which he lists: shared ways of engaging and doing things together; the absence of introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an ongoing process; knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise; a shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world. (125-126) Subsequently, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) have explored the various forms CoPs can take (giving a number of examples from firms including DaimlerChrysler, Shell, and the World Bank), a step that only further highlights how wide and flexible a concept CoPs are: they can be small or large, long-lived or short-lived, collocated or distributed, homogeneous or heterogeneous, inside and across boundaries, spontaneous or intentional, and unrecognised to institutionalised (24-27). Nevertheless, "[CoPs] all share a basic structure... and a common primary purpose: that of developing knowledge" (41).

CoPs are essentially a specific combination of three fundamental elements, namely "a *domain* of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a *community* of people who care about this domain; and the shared *practice* that they are developing to be effective in their domain" (Wenger et al., 2002: 27). According to Wenger, CoPs are based on collegiality rather than a hierarchy of reporting relationships: a subtle and informal, and yet productive, layer to be found at the workplace. I have outlined in the Introduction how *Renditions* works: much of this reconnects to what Wenger says here – we clearly have a domain of knowledge, a group of people who care about it, via a shared and developing practice – based on which I have considered *Renditions* as an example of Community of Practice in the chapters that follow. In this light, CoPs become a helpful notion to discuss the ways in which translation is social, ways in which this can become a source of professional know-how for translators; what is interesting and different from most existing research on translator communities is that *Renditions* is not an online community (on which existing research mostly focuses – this trend responds to the same changes which I have discussed earlier in relation to the "lone translator"); it is an example of community of practice that is real, operates in the real world much more than in cyberspace, and produces tangible materials through its activity. Applying Wenger's ideas allows me to demonstrate in what ways *Renditions*, with its working practices and its geographical base in Hong Kong facilitating social interaction in several ways, encourages the social nature of translation.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Thematically this project spans across several academic fields: Chinese Studies, TS (more precisely, Descriptive Translation Studies, known as DTS), Sociology and Cultural Studies. Methodologically, it adopts a qualitative approach and explores translation as a social process through a sociological lens. The rationale for adopting this perspective is explained in what follows.

This chapter divides into several sections. The first three introduce the dual focus of this project, what follows is an introduction to the theoretical framework used for my thesis, and finally I give details of the data collection process, along with some concerns related to this process and solutions to address these.

A Dual Perspective on Translation

In response to debates between scholars who focus solely on detailed linguistic aspects of translation and those who support a cultural approach at a macro level, Tymoczko (2002) points to the advantages of taking both of these extremes in consideration and states that, "if one's hypothesis is valid, the different perspectives associated with different orders of magnitude should *mutually reinforce each other*, acting as confirmation and substantiation of one's conclusions" (24: my emphasis). I found that if comparing a source language (SL) and a target language (TL) as culturally distant as Chinese and English, the idea of two dimensions could be particularly helpful in exploring their respective contexts, as I have to some extent already done when demonstrating the relevance of a specific time and place (translation in Hong Kong in the Seventies) for this project; such a dual perspective approach is not new, see e.g. Mok (1998). Also considering that, broadly speaking, the focus on Chinese literature in this research is also intended as a response to the issue of TS still being rather Eurocentric, a dual perspective becomes even more relevant: it remains important to stay aware of the bigger picture while discussing the social aspects of translation in detail, and explore the universality of what is being said, and (where relevant) its wider applicability. This study uses a mixed method approach – detailed in what follows – to connect macroscopic and microscopic perspectives on translation work in the *Renditions* community.

The Macroscopic Perspective: Renditions' Spaces

Reasons behind my choice of a Hong Kong-based magazine have been discussed at some length in the Introduction and the Literature Review. The setting in which material used in this study originated plays an important role for *Renditions*' existence and in turn its ability to disseminate Chinese literature in English translation to a wider readership (for example, in that Hong Kong could give editors ample freedom in the selection of, and access to, material to publish) and so has been introduced in some length. Having said this, however, Hong Kong's multicultural and multilingual environment only provides a backdrop for my research rather than being one of its foci: Hong Kong has previously been the subject of thorough scholarly attention,[21] and some of this research has provided useful background information for this project. A helpful study in this respect is Guo's (2000) overview of the publication of translated literary works in Hong Kong during the second half of the 20th century. Also, Leo Tak-hung Chan (2006) points to the lack of attention to epistemological and ontological questions surrounding translated literature, in relation to which he proposes some directions for further study. Two of the points he makes have, to some extent, been addressed in this thesis: the need to research journals publishing translations, and, more marginally, the role of translated fiction in education, given the fact that *Renditions* is a magazine also intended for, and quite widely circulated in, academic circles (see Hung, 1995).

The Microscopic Perspective: Translation as a Social Practice

By contrasting examples of facts widely taken for granted within TS with some counterexamples from scantily researched language combinations, Tymoczko (in Hermans, 2006) draws attention to flaws in existing paradigms in TS, convincingly proving that "these are presuppositions that are in need of rethinking if translation theory is to be extended to non-Western situations, as is increasingly the case" (15). Some of these truisms in TS (e.g. that of translation being an individual task, or that of the translator being someone who has received formal training) have since been discussed further, but for the time

21 See, for example, Cheung (1998), Ho (2000) or Chan (2002) for discussions related specifically to language and literature in Hong Kong.

being studies dealing with a non-Western context are still rather scarce. For a study with reference to China, see e.g. St André's (2010) article on the importance of team translation and relay translation in China's history and on the value of applying such practices in translator training programmes.

Before challenging existing ideas in TS I found that the first necessary step was for me to gain a better understanding of how translation between two very different languages can work and whether greater differences between languages can influence the social nature of translation. My attention was especially drawn to practice-oriented studies, like Leppihalme's (1997: 196), who rightly observes that translation is a process involving real-life individuals and as such it is particularly important that theoretical issues are "viewed at all times against the reality of translation practice". Leppihalme's work focuses on the translation of allusions or, as she calls them, "culture bumps", i.e. culture-specific elements in the ST that can present an obstacle for translators because they just do not exist in the target culture. What she says about the reality of translation practice was relevant to me in that it suggested that viewing theoretical issues against this reality was somehow *not* happening "at all times", but it was what I intended to do – research translation as a social process through conversations with translators. Also, some practitioners, such as translator Nicky Harman (2006: 29), echo Leppihalme's words by pointing out that for translation theory to be relevant, it should "be *informed by* translation practice" (my emphasis). In order to assess, therefore, how this applied to the *Renditions* case and the Chinese-English translation practice context, interviews with editors and translators on-site in Hong Kong were the most appropriate data collection method: after all, most of the people behind *Renditions* whose names I had grown familiar with through my reading were mostly still there, and were probably contactable. My pool of material clearly opened the opportunity to speak to translators and editors in person.

Theoretical Framework

Renditions: A Community of Practice

As I mentioned in the Literature Review, sociology has started crossing paths with TS only quite recently, and to my knowledge until now no one has worked on magazines in this context, the probable reason for this being that in general relatively few people research periodicals in the first place. To me, however, a magazine seemed a fascinating subject to tackle from this sociological angle, especially given the fact that the fact it is typically a miscellaneous publication, and the process through which it comes into being, naturally draws together various agents (editors, referees) and a certain number of contributors around each issue, who then all work along each other in quite a specific kind of community. They are a team linked by common professional interests that works towards a common final aim. Starting from these observations and my own repeated spontaneous use of the word "community" to refer to *Renditions*, I took interest in Etienne Wenger's concept of "Communities of Practice (CoPs)", which seemed to provide a suitable overarching theme for my work because it allowed to bring to light some of the aspects of my dual macro- and micro-perspective in interesting and meaningful ways.

Focusing on Wenger has, however, also given me reason to read into what scholars who are in disagreement with his work have to say, and thereby question the applicability of his theories to my own case study. Most commonly, Wenger's research is criticised as being too broad, only providing loose and rather fuzzy definitions of his core ideas. Later in the thesis (see pp. 155 and 177) I discuss some of this criticism in relation to specific issues arising within respective sections; overall, however, this flexibility in Wenger's work which critics tend to see as a shortcoming can also become useful in that these ideas are applicable, at least to some extent, to a variety of examples (of which *Renditions* is one), all of which can then contribute to defining the term "CoP" more clearly. Admittedly, there is a downside to this partial applicability of Wenger: this shows at one point of my thesis where I have had to reconsider Wenger's ideas (particularly in the section "Meaning in what sense?", page 155) because my own example of translation offered a different angle that was not quite aligned with Wenger's views.

However, in the bigger picture, using Wenger's social theory of learning as overarching theoretical framework has allowed me to organise my data systematically into specific categories, using a theory that provided me with original perspectives from which to discuss the key aspects of one particular example of CoP, which in turn allows to illustrate the shared process of learning in one specific context where translation happens as a socially regulated process.

Microhistory: Focusing on the Micro-perspective

Microhistory is a qualitative historical approach which has gained increasing popularity in the 1990s and mainly consists in “the reduction of the scale of observation, on a microscopic analysis and an intensive study of the documentary material” (Levi in Munday, 2014: 75). The idea developed in response to large-scale historical studies that typically documented the general course of events without much attention to experiences of individuals. In a recent article, TS scholar Munday (2014) explains how microhistory “[brings] focus to what might be a fuzzy trend at the macrohistorical level” (67) and strongly argues for its relevance in TS.[22] Some of the points Munday raises are considered later in this section because they informed the way I conducted my interviews. Microhistory provided to me a lens through which to focus on the details of translation work. While this is not a purely historical study, the application of Wenger (1998)’s four aspects of learning through social participation onto translation allowed to focus on some micro-dimensions and issues in translation.

Already Adamo (2006) discusses the application of microhistory in TS, pointing out how the reduction of scale – the most characteristic feature of this method – allows to put a finger on some as yet largely unexplored issues: her examples include translation strategies and practices that were never incorporated into translation theory but are in fact widespread, translators’ own experiences (often underrated and overlooked), and interactions between production, circulation, and use of translations (88). To some length this project explores similar types of examples, particularly the first two mentioned above.

Adamo’s and Munday’s work told me that microhistory was not only applicable in TS, but in some cases even highly suitable for researching translation. My

22 For more on microhistory, see e.g. Levi (1991), Szijártó (2002) or again Ginzburg's widely quoted microhistorical study *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (1976, translated into English in 1980 as *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*).

reasons for drawing on this approach mainly build on Munday's (2014) detailed discussion of the use of primary sources (other than the ST and the TT) in writing what he calls a “microhistory of translation and translators” (64). Munday highlights the relevance of sources under-used in TS (including interviews, archives and translators' notes) for a discussion of translation in a specific cultural-historical context. I intended to make use of such sources, given that *Renditions* was making some available; the subjective nature of this type of source does, however, require some caution, and in what follows I will discuss these concerns with specific reference to this study.

First, Munday observes that the longer the time between the translation process and an interview, the less accurate the references to specific translation strategies may be. This has been considered while planning interviews for this project; preferably, contact was made with translators whose work had either appeared in *Renditions* repeatedly or quite recently, as it was more likely they would have a relatively good recollection of the text they had translated and, more generally, of their working experience with the magazine. An additional way of reducing this risk would have been to ask translators to re-read the Chinese text and their English translation prior to the interview; since I could easily bring the relevant copies of the magazine with me to interviews, eventually I did not need to do this.

Second, Munday uses some examples to illustrate how finding and accessing material in archives can be time-consuming (in that documents may be scattered, may not be classified as translation, etc.) and problematic (access may be controlled by gatekeepers). This is a warning that was not wholly relevant for my work because fieldwork did not involve archival research. Nevertheless, an article by one of *Renditions*' former editors mentions a substantial loss of archive material in 1997 (Hung, 2003: 102); I therefore knew there was, or had been, an archive, and expected documents from before this date to be very scarce, or not available at all. Some (if very few) manuscripts were generously made available to me by interviewees, and I have used them repeatedly for illustration purposes. I also anticipated that gatekeepers – in this case *Renditions*' editorial team – would probably be unable to provide open access to said archive due to agreements concerning the privacy of translators;[23] asking individual translators for consent directly at the time of their interview was my solution to this. I also explicitly stated to interviewees that because quotes from their interview may appear in connection to a specific piece in the magazine, the identity of interviewees cannot always be kept fully anonymous (also because *Renditions* keeps a detailed online index of translators and their work[24] which is openly accessible).

The Data Collection Process

In what follows I give details of the data collection process for this project. This too can be said to have a macro- and micro- aspect to it, as I outline below; I then explain my reasoning behind the preparation for the series of interviews I did with former and current members of the *Renditions* team.

The Macroscopic Perspective

My initial reading into my subject suggested that both editors' and translators' experiences could potentially become sources of useful information: remarks and comments written for *Renditions* on the magazine's thirtieth anniversary (in Hung, 2003) are, perhaps not surprisingly given the occasion, overwhelmingly positive, but if read in full they also suggest that contact with *Renditions* had often made a difference for those on its team on a professional and sometimes also a personal level. Similar individual experiences as collected in my interviews are then set against Etienne Wenger's ideas on Communities of Practice, which in turn helps to understand and discuss them in a wider social context.

Data collection through interviews and occasional participant observation at relevant events and conferences (mostly in Hong Kong) had a twofold purpose: it helped placing and studying *Renditions* in its Hong Kong context.

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23 I was aware of the existence of such rules based on previous e-mail correspondence in which *Renditions* has made it clear that while they have no objection to me going ahead with this study, the magazine has privacy regulations in place that do not allow it to pass on translators' contact details.
24 Available at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/biography/index.html [last accessed on: 10 October 2019]

The Microscopic Perspective

In the process of developing a set of questions to explore in interviews, my most direct source of inspiration were existing translators' accounts. Issues raised by several renowned translators of Chinese literature formed the initial foundations and directions for inquiry, including Howard Goldblatt (in Stalling, 2014), Andrea Lingenfelter (2014) and Göran Malmqvist (2015), along with some of the few existing scholarly publications in this area, most importantly Harman (2006), as well as Mok (1998/2001) and Tsai (2014).

In her paper "Foreign Culture, Foreign Style" (2006), translator Nicky Harman discusses Chinese-to-English translation via concrete examples, and is probably also one of the first practising translators to discuss links between existing notions in translation theory and their applicability to Chinese in some length. She divides her findings into three main categories:

- Linguistic differences
- Features of style and modes of expression
- Style and content issues and differing literary conventions

Drawing on her own experience as a translator, Harman further splits these points into subcategories and illustrates her choices with abundant evidence from her own and other translators' work. This procedure allows her to reach some conclusions on issues that are characteristic for Chinese to English translation, namely:

- Chinese is often ambiguous (e.g. in the expression of tense and number), causing the translator to face choices not found in European languages;
- Some linguistic (e.g. enumeration) and cultural (e.g. reference to political movements in abbreviated form) features of Chinese do not exist in English and the great distance between the two languages increases the difficulty of finding a suitable equivalent;
- Stylistic choices (e.g. repetition as a means of emphasis) and literary conventions (e.g. sentimentality) that are different from English may, if translated closely, achieve an effect which is not the same as that experienced by readers of the source text.

Some of these issues are also found in translation between European languages[25] which in turn reconnects with the aforementioned notion of universality, but even so Harman's examples feature characteristics that are very specific to Chinese language and culture. Further to Harman's examples, I have included below an additional list of points mentioned by other translators:

- The copious use of footnoting, often particularly tempting or even inevitable in a language as different from English as Chinese;
- Translation loss, especially with reference to ancient Chinese poetry;
- The limitations of formal training, particularly when translating literary texts;
- The translation of names (Tsai, 2014);
- Strategies related to retaining an element of "Chineseness" (Mok, 2001) in translation.[26]

Remarks like these served as initial guidance on the obstacles translators seemed to come across quite frequently, and possibly ones that could be explored in interviews. In some cases, this also guided me in selecting examples from texts to discuss with individual translators.

The Interviewing Process

Interviews for this project were mostly conducted on-site in Hong Kong between March 2016 and July 2017 and inform both the macro- and microscopic angle of the thesis. My interviewees – 13 in total – are all among *Renditions*' past and present editors and contributors. All interviews were semi-structured, i.e. loosely structured around lines of inquiry set in advance. My plan was to schedule no more than fifteen[27] interviews; I estimated this number was likely to allow for enough depth of inquiry within the time available for evidence of links between the individual interviewees' stories to begin emerging, and for me to have

25 See e.g. Leppihalme's (1997) aforementioned study on the translation of allusions between Finnish and English.
26 This can be a particularly contradictory point, and as such certainly one worth exploring in interviews. In Chan's (2006) view, a successful translation would "seek to reduce incongruous elements to a minimum", and yet such elements tend to be precisely the culturally-specific ones that Mok (1998) argues should be retained.
27 This figure includes both editors and translators. Note that most (if not all) of *Renditions*' editors also count among the magazine's translators.

enough material to complete this project. On this Saldanha and O'Brien (2014) suggest continuing to interview until a point of saturation is reached in which hardly any fresh information still emerges, at which stage collecting more data becomes superfluous. I felt I was close to reaching this point once I had completed ten interviews, which eventually prompted me to stop at thirteen.

Interviews as a method are quite often criticised as being time-consuming and easily subjective, given that different interviewers may interpret the same set of questions in different ways; also, they tend to cover too small a number of participants for it to be representative of a larger group of individuals being studied. Even though in TS the use of interviews has until recently not been as common as in research on interpreting, still – and particularly in the sociology of translation – interviews are becoming an increasingly favoured method, justified precisely by the "sociological turn" in translation, Saldanha and O'Brien (2014: 168) explain:

> "Interviews… are as applicable to the field of translation as they are to the field of interpreting, and they are becoming increasingly important in all domains of translation studies. This tendency is expected to continue… as the discipline… takes upon itself the task of integrating the sociological dimension of translation."

My interviews were designed as semi-structured, meaning that I was following a number of lines of inquiry I had identified as relevant to my project, but not a rigorous set of questions, rather aiming at asking open-ended questions. The idea was for each question to encourage my interviewee to elaborate, in line with one of Kvale's (2009) criteria for interview quality, whereby the interviewee's answers should definitely exceed the interviewer's questions in length and detail. If I was not satisfied with the depth an answer, I tried to make sure I had a number of examples from some of the interviewee's translations for *Renditions* ready to help tease out further detail on what had just been said. This was often a helpful tactic that has provided many an example used in my thesis, even though at all times I had to remain aware of the fact that in most cases many years had passed between their translation work and my interview.

The semi-structured pattern was best suitable for this study in that it allowed to follow one and the same general interview structure consistently, but also left some room to adapt part of the questions to the interviewee's background, or to a specific translation I was enquiring about. Because I anticipated that my interviewees would mostly not be familiar with TS terminology, I used a descriptive approach in my questioning where needed instead of any direct use of TS-specific vocabulary. To give a simple example, instead of speaking of "source-" or "target language" I would simply say "Chinese" or "English". This is a process that Kvale – quite suitably in the context of this study – calls "the translation of thematic research questions (…) into interview questions that could provide thematic knowledge" (2009: 132).

Before each interview I prepared carefully by reading all I could find about my interviewee and looking at all their translations for *Renditions*, as well as any other publications they had (where applicable); this allowed me to tailor my interview to the person I had in front of me as much as possible, and in some cases to avoid unnecessary questions that I could easily find an answer to elsewhere. My questions were mainly revolving around five separate themes, always making sure I covered all five, if not necessarily in the order given below:

(a) *Renditions* as a working environment (in comparison to other similar working environments, where possible)

(b) My interviewee's professional background; their translator career and *Renditions*' role in it.

(c) The system my interviewee used to work: did they have a routine, the way they approached a text, how they usually worked

(d) Recurrent issues in Chinese-English translation practice.

(e) More marginally and where applicable (only some of my interviewees also have professional links to academia), the use of *Renditions* in teaching and higher education.

All questions I asked my interviewees were linked to these five themes: I had realized, by the time I flew to Hong Kong to carry out my fieldwork, that *Renditions* was in fact more of a community centred around translation than other less systematised, more individual assignments a translator may engage in, and so it was relevant to enquire (a) how translators had felt about working with *Renditions* and, where I knew they had translated for other magazines, how their experiences compared. I was also interested in their role there, what it involved, when and in what situation they communicated with the editors, or – if they had been on the editorial team – how everything worked at various stages of the editorial process.

Another set of questions revolved around what is in fact the formation of translator identity: I would ask (b) how and why translation had come into my interlocutor's career path, how and why they had been introduced to *Renditions* and come to work with it, and what (if anything) they had taken away from the experience. As I have shown earlier (see p. 43), individual translators develop a system, or even their own translation style by which in some cases they become recognizable, which was interesting particularly for Chapter 5 which discusses "learning as becoming"; this is why I also wanted to know from my interviewees (c) whether they had a routine in their work (e.g. of any things they always did when approaching a text), how they learned and from whom (hardly anyone among my interviewees had had formal translation training as is available nowadays through higher education institutions, this I had known in advance).

My aim in looking into (d) recurrent challenges in Chinese to English translation was to venture in more depth into this particular language combination and identify any issues that were either universally valid, or alternatively specific to the SL. Finally, if I knew my interviewee was, or had been at some point, both a translator and an academic, I enquired (e) whether they had ever used *Renditions* as teaching material, or knew of anyone who had, and asked how they perceived the mission and function of such a translation magazine. My aim here was to explore the relevance of a formal translator training as opposed to a background in modern languages for a practitioner of (Chinese-English) literary translation, considering that literary translation is largely seen as one part of an existing division in translator training (the other being technical translation), the part for which there is not really any concise how-to way of training translators; the question of how it is best to train literary translators has been explored by some (see e.g. Boase-Beijer in Bush and Malmkjær, 1998: 33-42). What role if any, I asked, can a publication like *Renditions* play in translator training?

Certainly, a magazine can have an influence on early career translators via its function as a career-launching platform as I have mentioned in the Literature Review, but it can also have a formative role if, like *Renditions*, it is based at a university that offers degrees in TS, and if editors decide that there are ways in which the two may be combined.

The choice of interviews as data collection method inevitably led to a considerable amount of direct contact with Hong Kong and, along with that, a period of what was in fact participant observation of translation within this cultural space. Most of my interviewees asked me to come and meet them somewhere – be it their office, a café, or even their home – this I always left up to them to decide (except that I asked for the place to be quiet, for recording quality purposes) given that they were, without exception, being very generous with their time for my interview, and given that my fieldwork was what I was there to do, I was flexible and ready to adapt my schedule to theirs. Of course, this could also mean that I often found myself traveling all across the city, every separate interview like an additional tile in my own imaginary portrait of *Renditions* via its personnel past and present, a mosaic that was gradually taking shape in my mind.

Before starting to contact interviewees, however, it was important to consider two issues. One was the risk that not everyone would respond to my request for an interview and the number of interviewees would not be enough. I took the liberty to assume, however, that since the study was not going to involve any major ethical issues (all ethics processes were completed according to university guidelines in advance of the commencement of fieldwork) and, given that the number of contributors to *Renditions* is so large, that recruiting interviewees was not likely to become a major obstacle. Moreover, testimonials about working with *Renditions* I had read made me aware that my interview topic was not one translators had any reason to avoid. Particularly on this last point, my assumption was correct, and I did not encounter any problem in contacting interviewees. My way of doing so was to either e-mail them directly where this was possible, or to ask someone who I knew had worked with them to forward them a message from me, so as to leave it up to the person I was trying to contact whether to respond. In all cases did I get a response, and in all but one an agreement to an interview.

The other issue I was concerned about was that through some of my reading I had become aware that many translators, whether or not they have received formal training, do not usually refer to their work by theoretical jargon widely used in TS. Some translators do take an interest in following developments in the field of TS (e.g. Goldblatt, in Stalling 2014) and others do not relate to TS theory at all (Hoggard, 1998), but due to the aforementioned lack of communication between TS scholars and practising translators, I decided to make sure to adopt a descriptive approach where necessary rather than making direct use of any TS terminology during interviews, to avoid loss of clarity.

Let me provide here, also, a quick overview of my pool of interviewees. In the previous pages, I have given my rationale for choosing semi-structured interviews in particular as the most suitable method for this study; in what follows, I will provide an introduction to my final list of thirteen interviewees without compromising their anonymity. In contacting interviewees, I aimed at picking a group of individuals whose encounter(s) with *Renditions* dated from right across *Renditions*' lifetime, and who ideally had either worked with *Renditions* repeatedly or over a longer period of time, in order to broaden the potential scope of each conversation as much as possible.

Interviewee	**Gender**	**Ethnicity**	**Age group**	**Native tongue**
A	Male	White	70-80	English
B	Female	Chinese	50-60	Chinese
C	Female	White	60-70	English
D	Male	Chinese	50-60	Chinese
E	Male	White	50-60	English
F	Female	Chinese	70-80	Chinese
G	Female	White	40-50	English
H	Female	Chinese	40-50	Chinese
I	Male	White	40-50	English
J	Female	Chinese	70-80	Chinese
K	Female	Chinese	70-80	Chinese
L	Female	White	50-60	English
M	Male	White	60-70	English

The table above portrays my interviewees based on four different categories and shows that I have, as much as was possible in the time available, aimed for an evenly balanced pool of interviewees, in order to ensure that the data obtained would show some degree of continuity and consistency. This is particularly relevant when it comes to ethnicity and native tongue, given that the focus of my interviews is a profession that requires the use of languages: the ratio is almost exactly 50% for ethnically Chinese/White and 50% for English/Chinese native speakers respectively, a proportion that can also be said to be valid for *Renditions*' translators and editors more generally, considering the way *Renditions* worked and that it was open to contributors from either background, as well as the emphasis on always having a bilingual editorial team in place.

In the above table, I have not specified ethnicity beyond "White/Chinese", because doing so would reveal the identity of some of my interviewees; however, "Chinese" in the table can be taken to generally mean Hong Kong native, or again "Cantonese" rather than "Mandarin" in terms of native language. Nevertheless, all thirteen interviewees are also fluent users of Mandarin: individuals of "Chinese" background had grown up using Mandarin alongside Cantonese, and those of "White" background mostly hail from a Chinese Studies background and translate from the Chinese.

It can be seen in the "Age group" column that most of my interviewees are aged between fifty and eighty at the time of interview; except for one or two cases in which interviewees were in the *Renditions* team when we met, a number of years had passed between their collaboration with *Renditions* and their conversation with me, and so in the early stages of data collection I realised that it was essential for me to bring along to the interview copies of the pieces the interviewee I was meeting had translated for the magazine.

What the "age group" column also allows me to point out here is that several of my interviewees (those aged over 70, and of Chinese origin) belong to a generation that has witnessed the early days of academic interest in translation in Hong Kong, that is, the times shortly before *Renditions* began publishing, and were in some cases involved in e.g. in the founding some of the first TS programmes, or TS departments, at Hong Kong's universities. Given the bilingual milieu and the considerable demand for translation services, to Hong Kong graduates in modern languages translation quite often offered itself as a career path, whether academic or not: some of my interviewees had worked as translators for e.g. the government before returning to academia, and before encountering *Renditions*.

“Gender” is the only category here that had no direct influence on my picking interviewees: there was no reason for me to set any priorities related to gender, first because gender is unrelated to my research aims in the present thesis, and secondly because, as I noticed in the early stages of my PhD, in the case of *Renditions* either gender is represented almost equally among the magazine’s contributors and editors. My interviewees can be said to represent a cross-sectional sample of the *Renditions* community, and looking at this translator community in the light of the “gender” category, similarly to ethnicity and native tongue here too we notice a relatively balanced ratio, where women translators appear to be slightly more numerous. Similarly, as I point out elsewhere (see e.g. the section on the role of the editor, page 108), *Renditions* has been in capable editorial hands both male and female along the years. Together with these facts, my research foci caused me to disregard gender entirely in my selection of interviewees. The category does, nevertheless, help focus in some more depth on my group of interviewees.

CHAPTER 4
A Spiralling Practice: Learning as Doing in Translation

Communication with authors is helpful in some cases more than in others. Each text is a separate learning process! Experience is what matters most.
(Brian Holton on translating, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2015)

In this chapter I juxtapose Etienne Wenger's concept of "learning as doing", or learning through practice, to what, and how, *Renditions* "does". In a translatorial context, the idea of practice (learning as doing) has, as Scottish translator Brian Holton suggests in the opening quote above, a somewhat circular nature: in this particular professional context, every new task involves a separate learning process for the translator – a translator's learning curve could therefore be seen as spiral-shaped, in that each new text adds a layer to the translator's existing knowledge and experience. Also, "learning as doing" assumes a *collective* meaning in Wenger's (1998: 45) community-oriented approach, which implies that we learn by pursuing certain enterprises *together* and in so doing we "interact with each other and with the world and we tune our relations with each other and with the world accordingly". The idea of sharing is embedded in Wenger's collective view of "learning as doing", and is equally important for translators: the sharing of resources, of practices, of specialist knowledge.

This kind of joint undertaking brings about practices that can become established and characteristic for a community that forms by means of a sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. The fact that such practices do develop is the very reason for Wenger to have proposed the appellation "communities of practice" for his subject, i.e. a group of people that gathers around a common goal, and develops specific ways of going on about pursuing this goal that *define* the group, so to speak. According to Wenger, there is a virtually infinite range of practices that can develop this way, and engaging in them comprises participation; we can also see these same ideas reflected in a number of studies on translation. Linguist and translator Nida is in agreement with Wenger's thoughts when he states that "translators learn to translate by translating, because the process of translating is essentially a skill and not a content-learning process" (2003: 77); in other words, what Nida says here is that translators quite literally learn their trade by "doing". Robinson, some of whose work highlights the importance of the social aspects of translation, adds a more concise layer to this: "good translators are *always in the process* of becoming translators – which is to say, learning to translate better, learning more about language and culture and translation" (2004: 56, my emphasis). Such words by translation scholars suggest that there is indeed a continual, circular motion that defines a translator's professional activity.

Speaking of this learning process in the context of translation studies degrees at British universities, Shih describes how "trainee translators learn by doing translation, reflecting on translation, forming principles about translation, planning (for future) translation and finally going full circle back to doing translation" (2018: 293): once again the cyclic nature of this translatorial learning curve emerges here. For an experienced hand like Brian Holton to mention the same phenomenon suggests that what Shih says here may not be true only for trainee translators, but is probably valid for every translator at any point of his or her career, even though some of the stages Shih mentions will be more relevant for a novice than for someone already quite experienced. When exactly, then, does learning by doing actually occur, and do translators at *Renditions* learn by doing "collectively" (in Wenger's sense)? In what follows I respond to the first question by discussing situations in which we can say learning as doing certainly occurs, and then move on to the second question by looking at examples from translatorial activity at *Renditions*.

Through the example of *Renditions*, my analysis will show how the entire team of the magazine gets pulled into some degree of "learning by doing" at various stages of the editorial process: be it translators, whose learning trajectory travels, as I have shown above, in a circular fashion, or editors, who also acquire certain skills and abilities on-the-job. This will also bring me to reconsider Wenger's assertion that learning no longer happens once "doing" no longer involves any fresh experience. This statement is not quite applicable in the case of literary translators, however, given that what they work on is hardly ever repetitive: as I have shown above, fundamentally every new text offers a possibility to learn something, and becomes a fresh challenge.

I will also show how *Renditions* as a whole displays another cyclic aspect of community "learning by doing" by nature of how it functions along with the equally cyclic learning trajectories of all the individuals on its team. In other words, in the bigger picture the professional learning process happens afresh with every new issue of a magazine – where learning happens through being part of a wider collective undertaking, by interacting on various levels, by sharing, networking, publishing, experiencing, in order to then improve professionally. In addition, I will use the example of collaborative translation (CT) to show how these ideas can apply to team translation. CT will help focusing in on learning as doing as a one-to-one type of translatorial interaction. I will also be highlighting the central role of the editor to establish what is important for editors to "do" to ensure *Renditions* continues its activity in a timely fashion and to enable the team to carry on learning by doing as a community.

When Do We Learn by Doing?

From very early on in life most of us are told how important it is to learn and to practice what we learn: we mostly first hear this via popular sayings like "practice makes perfect". Also in well-known quotes by someone famous for their wisdom, we can often notice an emphasis on practice, whether the wisdom stems from China ("Is it not a pleasure to study and practice what you have learned", said Confucius) or from a non-Asian milieu ("For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them", so Aristotle). The concept of learning by doing is quite often seen as linked to "making new experiences" – much the same way someone knowledgeable due to having been active in his or her profession over a longer period of time is called "experienced". By way of example, Kiely (in Evans, 2015: 219), whose work focuses on teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and draws on Wenger, has the following understanding of this: "learning through a focus on the practice, learning as doing, can be understood as experiential learning". From the point of view of his subject, Kiely further points out that, in TESOL, social practices involving group work, discussion and communication are now increasingly valued as a way of pushing the creativity of teachers. His example shows how Wenger's ideas are being applied elsewhere to highlight the importance of the social.

The question is, then: if it is so common for people to learn by doing (and repeating), under what circumstances does learning by doing happen? Are these two always connected, or is there a point of saturation when we only "do", but no longer "learn" in the process? If one does something new repeatedly for long enough, like an employee in a company who is responsible for assembling one and the same product all day every day, one eventually must come to a point when there is no longer any learning involved in the doing. The employee then knows all there is to know about his or her task. The "new experience" factor is therefore inherent to the concept of "learning by doing"; that of practice and repetition too, but only until we manage to perfect the skill we are acquiring.

In literary translation, ideally for the translator to continue learning, the new experience factor should keep returning with every text he or she tackles. Given that this discussion is on a specific way of learning, and that translation training is now widely offered via long-term courses in higher education (on this see e.g. Pym, 2009), what are the thoughts on learning by doing of those who *teach* translation? "The sublimated intelligence that makes it possible [for translators] to translate rapidly, reliably and enjoyably is the product of learning – which is to say, of *experience* stored in memory in ways that enable its effective recall and flexible and versatile use" (Robinson, 2004: 50, my emphasis). Again, here, an emphasis on the importance of experience for a translator. Some of my interviews with *Renditions* contributors suggest they would agree with Robinson on the importance of experience. One of my interviewees reflected on translating from the Chinese as follows:

> It's a difficult balance, you've got to get as near a likeness of the original as possible, but at the same time there are certain practices, certain habits… of Chinese writers, especially classical Chinese, that are natural to them. I mean, say they write an essay on this garden out here, right? So… they would have all their phrases and all their structures in mind, and it's purely natural to them, it's just the way that they would handle the description, whereas if you copied them in, say, sentence structure, that would seem unnatural to an English reader. So, to take… parallelisms, for one thing, in Chinese classical writing it's very difficult to find pieces that don't have parallel

passages… and it helps with the interpretation of course, the grammar, the structure, the syntax, that parallelism gives you a lot of help. You can see the structure of a sentence, if it's repeated, see, the structure is so much more apparent. But if you translate that bodily into English, then it would seem very boring, very superfluous. Why repeat the structure when you can add to it some other way? So there are some practices, certain conventions, especially in classical Chinese, that are perfectly regular and unexceptionable in the original, but seem very forced if you translate them – translate in the sense of move them directly…

Experience, therefore, stored in memory, facilitating an awareness of the characteristics of classical language which in turn leads to an awareness of specific ways of approaching the translation process and the classical language. One other translator I interviewed for this project also elaborated on experience being necessary for what might be called a slightly bolder professional attitude:

> Maybe it is part of the process that you go through, that you are able to accept the discipline of the sort of… critic looking over your shoulder, who is comparing the texts [ST and TT], and says, well actually the Chinese does not say that, and refuses to listen to your argument that no, it does not say that, but creatively it might say that if the author had written in English in the first place. I think it takes a long time to build the confidence and the experience to actually attempt that way of translating.

Both of these quotes contain quite specific kinds of knowledge and skills that can only be acquired through a certain amount of experience that results from "doing", from practicing the trade. When it comes to experience, then, both translators can also be said to be in agreement with Robinson's quote above.

Johnston's (in Washbourne and Van Wyke, 2018: 31) thoughts on teaching literary translation further stress the idea that for skills to develop, it is practice that matters: "literary translators need to be able to actually translate novels, poems and plays, and to do so well… a literary translator's skill fundamentally relies on effective practice". Experience, practice, and the continuous "doing" involved: all these comments on translation and translation teaching take much the same direction as Wenger does, in addition to which we find that particularly in literary translation the nature of "learning by doing" appears to spiral and to be cyclic, every text being a different challenge.

In further agreement with this, upon my asking whether they found *Renditions* had shaped them in any way as translators, most of my interviewees pointed to the diversity of texts they had been asked to translate, and mentioned the challenges of the many different kinds of Chinese the contact with *Renditions* made them come across: all of this was repeatedly acknowledged as invaluable professional experience. This finding further reinforces the key importance of that element of newness, of diversity, and interestingly these are answers to a question on learning. As opposed to a translator whose task it is to work on technical material with repetitive contents and who over time may end up "doing" this but no longer "learning" (similarly to the aforementioned factory employee), these replies of my interviewees suggest that the "doing" happening within a team of literary translators working for a magazine who are being asked to translate a range of very different kinds of Chinese style and register, is a process where some amount of learning always continues to happen.

This is so not least because of the fluidity of personnel at *Renditions*, which meant that the dynamics and skills available within the team changed somewhat with each issue, sparking more "learning by doing". This in turn corroborates Wenger's basic assertion, and shows that we do indeed learn by doing – for as long as, of course, there is something to learn from what we do, making literary translation a valid example to illustrate Wenger's point – and also that this "doing" involves much social interaction with others. It can therefore be said of translators who we now know are continuously learning throughout their professionally active years, that they are essentially learning socially, learning from each other. Therefore, in the example of *Renditions*, we can clearly see how translation is a social activity as a result of being carried out in a Community of Practice.

Learning and Interaction within the Renditions Community

Translation is therefore, as shown in this chapter, a very good example to illustrate the occurrence of "learning by doing". As such, Wenger's thoughts on "learning by doing" lend themselves rather well as a starting point for discussing a translation-focused example like *Renditions*, assuming that there must be specific actions – that is, specific *Renditions* ways of "doing" everything *Renditions* does – that allowed the magazine to quickly become a well-known and highly respected publication of Chinese literature in translation. What, then, would these regular practices be that can be said to be "characteristic" for *Renditions*?

Interactions that happen with a certain regularity at *Renditions* are mainly of two kinds: one kind are interactions between translators (be it "insiders" within the core team, or other translators an "insider" knows from elsewhere and who may become temporarily involved and work on e.g. a specific issue of *Renditions*), which also includes outreach to, and encouragement of, novice translators. The other kind of interaction is the communication with audiences at large that have an interest in China and its literature (i.e. *Renditions* readers, academics, sponsors, and other well-wishers of the magazine with a general interest in Chinese-English translation). While the first kind of interaction is key to how *Renditions* works behind the scenes as a community, the second kind is important for the reputation and public profile of the magazine, and for reaching out to those at the outskirts of the CoP: readers, students, academics, and others who are interested. In line with my focus on the process of translation and the figure of the translator, the examples I provide in this chapter mainly concern interactions within the core *Renditions* team.

There are several possible forms of interaction between translators: collaborative translation (also called CT) is one pattern quite often seen at *Renditions*, and is not only a practice worth exploring here (by virtue of being a practice frequent enough to be "characteristic" for *Renditions*), but also one that is now increasingly the subject of scholarly interest, as I will explain in more detail below. Through the example of collaborative translation, I zoom in to explore the idea of learning as doing via a one-to-one type of translatorial interaction.

Collaborative Translation: An Age-old Translation Practice Rediscovered

Because CT is an area of study that has only recently seen an upsurge of interest, much of what TS scholars have said specifically on translation as a joint endeavour has only been published over the past years. Only in 2010, St André (2010: 80) still wrote "in translation studies, the fact remains that very few studies explicitly treat collaborative translation, while most either explicitly reject it… or adopt a linguistic convention that implicitly erases it". In the past few years, however, a wave of new material on Collaborative translation (CT) has started appearing in print: this includes a book-length publication entitled *Collaborative Translation from the Renaissance to the Digital Age* (Cordingley and Frigau Manning, 2017) as well as a book chapter entitled "On Collaborative Translation" (Vinokur and Réjouis, 2017). While the former work does indeed deal with collaborative translation in various forms as the title promises, Vinokur and Réjouis' paper has in fact a lot more to do with TS theory and with the core theme of the book it is to be found in – untranslatability – than with collaborative translation.

Also Bistué's (2016) book-length study on collaborative translation in Early Modern Europe should be named here, as an example of work that shows collaborative practices were in fact quite commonly used in Europe. I have mentioned in the Literature Review how some researchers have pointed to China as the place where the practice of collaborative translation is rooted, and that CT does indeed have a long tradition in China. On the other hand, mainland Chinese TS scholars – most of whom have a background in foreign languages – are generally trained in Western TS theory and thereby influenced by the "lone translator" image I am challenging in this thesis, says Hung (2006: 157): "with the new, twentieth-century Chinese fervour for learning foreign languages, the need and respect for team work was replaced by the belief that translation is, or should be, done by one person".

Existing Europe-focused research like Bistué's, then, proves that CT has, in fact, historically been a rather global occurrence. Another point made by St André (2010: 80) is also that collaborative translation is now, in fact, a "common component of translation" given that "[some types of] translations are being produced increasingly by group or collaborative processes, managed by translation companies that routinely employ an increasingly complex combination of translaters/editors/proofreaders/ project managers for maximum efficiency, quality, and profit" (87). Such developments, St André then notes, deserve scholarly attention, because they indicate a new direction: they suggest that collaborative translation is clearly essential, and is likely to continue playing an important role in the future of the profession.

That CT is becoming a topic of academic interest also shows in the emerging of events focused on the subject, including a specifically CT-themed international symposium organised at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) in 2016, probably one of the first such events to focus specifically on CT, as well as a recent call for papers for a special issue of the biannual TS journal *Target* that encouraged transdisciplinary exchange on collaboration: "Exploring Collaboration in Translation and Translation in Collaboration" (Alfer and Zwischenberger, 2017). This call for papers laments that "proper transdisciplinary collaborations between Translation Studies and other disciplines continue to prove an elusive goal" and highlights the need for more "concrete insights from the study of interlingual translation to bear on uses of the translation category in other disciplines". While CT is used in my thesis as an example of "learning by doing" so as to help illustrate the idea of "collective learning by doing", it being the subject of an emerging academic debate as yet lacking "concrete insights from the study of interlingual translation" (Alfer and Zwischenberger, 2017) as well as it being a very common occurrence at *Renditions* makes of it a topic well worth exploring in the context of how translators "learn by doing".

With CT now very much out there in the spotlight, it would seem a suitable time to acknowledge that translation is in fact (and historically so, as Bistué (2016) and others have proved) very often a collaborative act, moving away from the image of the "lone translator", which – as I have mentioned earlier in the Literature Review – is now being quite widely described as redundant. Flagging up its widespread use as problematic and unsuitable in the light of how translation mostly works, scholars have repeatedly called the "lone translator" a "myth" (e.g. Wagner, 2001 or Alvstad et al., 2017), implying that it is not, or no longer, an image true to reality. Others have argued that while this image is now indeed dated, or that it may "possibly still apply to the literary translator" (Vienne, 1994: 57). My interview data leads me to largely agree with this statement: all translators I have interviewed in connection with my thesis are literary translators, and most of them do spend at least some time working on their own. Having said that, however, what can be seen in *Renditions* as final product is to some degree always a result of collaborative efforts.

Collaboration is often an elusive presence and does not always have to come to surface somewhere on paper, as the following example coming from one of my interviewees shows:

> Co-translating this piece did not actually save us any time because there was so much discussion involved. We also had input from a third person who sat in on the discussions which was good, and we did this collaboratively… [my co-translator] gave me a lot of insights about the background which I might not have picked up because there are political events alluded to in the piece that are from early Revolution times, 1923, and so it was helpful in this sense to work together.

We can see here how there is a third (not openly credited) person sitting in during the two co-translators' discussions, whose input may at some points have surfaced in the final translation, but whom I (as a person external to the translation process) would have not known about had my interviewee not mentioned their presence. We also see how my interviewee (who is not of Chinese background) was being filled in on historical information by a Chinese counterpart, which in turn improved the degree of accurateness of the final translation. This is where CT can function well, even though – as my interviewee also states – it does not necessarily save time, and yet the two people collaborating have constructive discussions that improve the overall accurateness and precision of the translation.

Vinokur (in Vinokur and Réjouis, 2017) speaks of CT as of a process "in which different people with different relationships to the source and target languages must assume, negotiate, and reconcile their roles" (21). This statement is interesting for two reasons: firstly because it comes from a practicing translator and refers to the process of CT in general, and thus may have some universal validity; it is also, by and large, in agreement with what follows in this discussion. This is illustrated particularly well in my second example later in this chapter, that of the collaboration between translators Mary Fung and David Lunde for *Renditions*, which is very much a case of different people with different relationships to the source and target languages.

Since my subject is a literary translation magazine, I have limited the overview of what has appeared in print on CT so far to works discussing literary translation,[28] and of these to material written by practicing (co-)translators sharing their experiences, given that it is mainly directly from practitioners that I am gathering my information. To this day, given that CT is a recent point of academic interest to emerge, hardly any of these publications focus on Asia: however, the part of the CT-related discussion that does touch upon China shows some rather interesting dynamics. While the usage and functioning of CT in language spheres more widely accessible to Western scholars is now being vigorously debated on, scholars who have published on CT and are either Chinese or have a background in Chinese studies tend to point to China as a place to learn from on CT (see e.g. St André, 2010 and Hung, 2005), and almost invariably see CT as a practice rooted in China's translation tradition.

One interesting example of a less scholarly type of publication is provided by Liu, who explores in her article how CT works in the context of in-flight magazines, finding that "translation is a collaborative effort" (2011: 213) and that not only translators proper are pivotal figures in this type of magazine, but that also the doings of editors and page designers deserve equal attention because they all have a major influence on how the finalized text comes across. I would agree with Liu insofar as editors are concerned, and I will be highlighting their role later in this chapter; I do not explore the role of page design in this thesis because while *Renditions* too is rich in images that illustrate the textual messages presented, they do not necessarily always serve to somehow "amplify" the

[28] There are scholars who have looked at the possible role of CT in translator training (see e.g. St André, 2010 or Olvera-Lobo, 2009), or again in the context of contemporary protest (see Baker, 2015).

message carried in the text the way they often do in the leisure industry – in most cases they accompany it, and in so doing enrich the visual appearance of the magazine for the reader.

So far, to my knowledge, no one among researchers who have published on CT but have no links to China has in any way engaged with the China-focused streak of the discussion, even though the China-related works I cite here have all been published in English. It may still be too early for that to have happened, given that works discussed here have all been published more or less within the span of the last decade (or even within a shorter time) and may not have cross-influenced each other yet.

Defining Collaborative Translation

On 7 and 8 April 2016, I sat listening to conference presentations on CT at Hong Kong Baptist University and it occurred to me almost at once how unclear ideas on basic CT-related terminology still were. Described in an accompanying conference handbook as "aiming to provide a platform for researchers to exchange experience" in their explorations of an "emerging" area of research, the pioneering nature of this conference showed in that perhaps the most frequently discussed question was that of a suitable definition: what exactly is it we speak of when we say collaborative translation, in the first place?

Cordingley and Frigau Manning (2017) open the introduction to their book on CT by asking exactly the same question, which suggests there is probably no satisfactory, widely accepted answer yet. Eventually, they rather observably conclude: "if all translation is collaborative, not all collaborators are translators" conceding that "the point may seem somewhat obvious, yet the distinction needs to be made so that the term 'collaborative translation' is not used indiscriminately" (2017: 23). These thoughts indicate that there is still a layer of insecurity surrounding a scholarly definition of collaborative translation. That said, Cordingley and Frigau Manning's conclusion further asserts that "there are evidently different degrees of collaboration between different agents in the continuum of the collaborative processes that accompany the publication and reception of a translation, some justifying claims to co-translatorship, others not" (24), a statement which acknowledges the existence of a continuum of collaborative processes that accompany translation, and so in other words the authors concede that all translation is in fact to some extent collaborative. It would make little sense, nevertheless, to attempt to force any definition that is still very fuzzy upon a specific context like *Renditions*: I have therefore taken my own path and explored through two separate examples what exactly *Renditions* does with CT to try and offer a definition of CT.

Very broadly speaking, collaborative translation is a process that involves an "exchange of ideas and feedback" (Pellatt and Liu, 2010: 17) between more than one translators working together on the same text. What of this and *Renditions*? Of the magazine's approach, then editor Eva Hung wrote: "While most people think of literary translation as a solitary endeavour, the *Renditions* approach is more similar to the workshop mode. Though generally the editorial team plays the part of a sounding board or the devil's advocate, in some cases its function is closer to that of co-translator" (2002: 5). This opens up a new dimension for my attempted definition of CT: for *Renditions*, the element "more than one person" comes to include the editorial team. (This being the reason why I agreed with Liu above on the relevance of the role of magazine editors in the translation process). Further in this chapter I focus on the editor and explain in what ways *Renditions*' editors can be considered to be co-translating; it will also emerge that the "workshop mode" is, at the same time, a useful learning experience for everyone involved in the process – and is, of course, in itself also a collaborative process.

Another question now arising is: who can be called a "collaborator" in translation? People like editors and reviewers who may influence the text to some extent are mostly not translating, strictly speaking: as Hung also suggests in the above quote, they are often acting more as "advisors" seen as the main job of putting the text into the target tongue has already been completed at the stage when a text requires reviewing. However, the long and meticulous approach to editing translation at *Renditions* calls for making an exception here: the magazine did, in fact, have a "formula"[29] according to which an editor could be credited as co-translator in print, Eva Hung revealed to me in conversation:

> If the changes were under forty percent by our team, then we would just let it go, and publish under the translator's name… but if the changes amounted to over forty percent then we thought it would be… sort of unfair, even to the translator… so occasionally, you would actually see: so-and-so *with* a member of our team…

This approach to joint translation therefore clearly includes editors in the collaborative process. An example of regular communication between editor and translator at *Renditions* is given in the following section.

Collaboration with the Core Team: Translator-Editor Interaction

I will now cast a look behind the scenes to reveal in more detail how guidance from editors at *Renditions* could work. In order to do so I discuss here two examples of editorial feedback[30] on the translation of poetry. Both can be considered examples of "usual" *Renditions* editing, given that while they are examples of a specific kind of collaboration, in neither case has a co-translator been named in print.

Renditions is known for having a very long and meticulous editorial process; several interviewees described how manuscripts would circulate among the various members of the editorial team and were commented upon and initialled in the process by way of a specific system (see Figure 11 in Chapter 7 for an example of a similar circulation system).[31] Subsequent communication with translators would usually involve several rounds of discussion: "it would be their suggestions, my reactions, their reactions to my reactions, and a final agreement" one of my interviewees specified. The following is an example of such correspondence between *Renditions* and a contributor, which shows how

29 This likely refers to Eva Hung's time only and is probably no longer the case at present, given that names of current editors now seldom appear along with that of a contributor.
30 Generously made available to me by the translators, with the editor's permission.
31 I was not given direct access to such manuscripts, but to my knowledge a similar routine is still in place, as far as I could tell from manuscripts I was shown while in Hong Kong. I was not, however, allowed to consult them.

discussions would pick up on quite detailed nuances in the text that could, if not corrected, have compromised clarity.

A closer look at exchanges between translator Nicky Harman and the then editors of *Renditions* about a 1986 poem by Han Dong 韓東 (1961 -), "写这场雨 *Let Me Describe the Rainstorm*", reveals how such conversations could unfold. I have included this as one of two such examples because it provides a very direct way of illustrating how the "doing" at *Renditions* worked. Below is the full Chinese text and the translation as published. The expressions marked in blue were all subject of some debate between translator and editor.

Chinese text:

写这场雨

写这场雨
它是极其普通的
并且已经停息
昨夜雨打在宽阔的叶子上
使得整棵**梧桐**都颤动起来

我经历了无数个这样的夜晚
有时候还在路上
老远
看见窗户上的灯光
向着黑暗中的风雨打开
可走到窗下
还要好长的时间

昨夜我坐在房子里
我的窗户也已关闭
我的灯光熄灭了
雨打在叶子上
又清脆的落到地上
这是一场春雨
花儿不会因此凋零
只有喜悦的啜泣声
在周围的世界里此起彼伏的
看来这样的雨还要再下几场
才能吐尽各人心中的悲欢
而真正的幸福降临
是一道阳光
照在林中空地上

Translation (see Han, 2010)**:**

Let me describe the rainstorm

Let me describe the rainstorm
It is nothing out of the ordinary
And in fact, it’s already stopped
Last night, the rain beat down on broad leaves
Making the whole **plane tree** quiver

I’ve been through countless nights like this
Sometimes I’m still out in the street
Far away
I see lights in a window
Shining out into the darkness of the wind and rain
But it will take a long time
To walk over to the window

Last night I sat at home
My window shut
The lights turned off
The rain beat on the leaves
Then pinged onto the ground
This is spring rain, it will not make
The flowers wither and fall
In the world around, there’s only
The rise and fall of joyful sobbing
Looks like a few more rains will have to fall
To express all joys and sorrows from every heart
While real contentment comes
With a ray of sunlight
Shining in a woodland clearing.

Renditions proposed to change “Rainstorm” in the title to “Rains”, since “the poem is about 春雨 *chunyu* [spring rains] which are supposed to be relatively mild”. The translator did not agree with the change, explaining: “From my British standpoint, a rainstorm is exactly what you have in spring, and by contrast, ‘rains’ sounds tropical (though I have used it later once)”. Indeed, a quick look at a dictionary reveals that “rains [pl]” is defined as “the season of heavy continuous rain in tropical countries” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 1995: 959), which backs the translator up; eventually “rainstorm” was kept in the title.

The next comment concerns a type of tree, the 梧桐 *wutong*, which was initially translated as "parasol tree" (unsurprisingly perhaps, as it is a rather uncommon word and the translator will probably have had to look it up, and "Chinese parasol tree" is what a *wutong* is mostly called in dictionaries and online resources). *Renditions* suggested "plane tree" instead, which is a broader concept in botanical terms since several species of plane tree exist – to which the Chinese parasol tree does not belong, interestingly. This would seem to suggest that "parasol tree" is perhaps a more accurate solution, however eventually the translator agreed to "plane tree" after doing some research and comparing photographs of the plants.[32]

The third editorial comment picks up on two consecutive lines where Han Dong puts an emphasis on possessives, "**my** window" and "**my** light/lamp" (**我的窗户**也已关闭，**我的灯光**熄灭了); the translator chose not to repeat this in English and translated as "**My** window shut, **The** lights turned off". *Renditions* insisted on "**my** lights", however in this case the translator argued against, saying: "'my lights' sounds really odd – I think it is obvious it's the lights in his room, as we already have 'my window'". *Renditions* then went with this solution.

This exchange shows how *Renditions* gives translators ample opportunity to react to feedback and provide reasons for their choices. Here the translator uses a personal (in this case British) perspective to offer justification for one of the choices, which of course also mirrors the perspective of a certain amount of the magazine's readers – the aim is to get the sense right with the readers in mind, whereby the use of "rainstorm" brings about a similar image of a rather strong spring shower for a British reader as 春雨 *chunyu* does for a Chinese reader. We can see here that the discussion goes into minute details so as to ensure the correct sense is conveyed in English, which is a standard way of editing for *Renditions*.

[32] Note how in an earlier issue of *Renditions*, No. 64 (2005), in the title of a piece that involves the same kind of tree, the name has been left in *pinyin*: "Written on a *Wutong* Leaf from the Luoyang Palace Garden". As there is mention of a "leaf" and a "garden" here, it is clear the *wutong* must be a kind of plant in this context, so the translator may have chosen not to translate the tree name. On the other hand, rendering the line in Han Dong's poem as "Making the whole *wutong* quiver" might have compromised clarity in a context that gives no further reference to plants.

My second example of translator-editor interaction focuses on a poem by contemporary Taiwanese poet Chen Kehua (陳克華, 1961 -) which further illustrates what *Renditions* "does" and reinforces what has been shown in the previous example, showing how the editorial team – and, in some cases, a referee[33] - and the translator would interact with each other.[34] In this case I only refer to specific lines of the poem that have been commented on and are therefore directly relevant to this discussion.[35]

The edited manuscript clearly shows how feedback from editors who can read the SL helps a translator meander through the subtleties of Chinese and achieve greater accuracy and precision. The title of the poem, "夢見一個晴天 *Mengjian yige Qingtian*", was first translated as "Dream of Fine Weather", which the editors picked up on, suggesting: "a/<u>one</u> fine day" and further explaining, "晴天 may be fine weather but 一个晴天 is definitely a day. You don't use 量词 (classifiers) to qualify weather in Chinese." In response to this remark, the title was then changed to "A Dream of One Fine Day". This line of feedback in itself is almost a miniature Mandarin lesson: not only does it pick up on a spot requiring more precision from the translator, but it also helpfully explains the "why so".

The weather-related discussion then continues: the first line of the poem, 雲蝕之日 *yunshizhiri*, was translated as "a cloud-eclipsed sun", of which "sun" was changed to "day" by the editors. We then obtain "a day eclipsed by cloud" in the final printed version. A similar issue reappears once more towards the end of the poem, in the line 但你仍堅持擁有完整的冬晴 *dan ni reng jianchi yongyou wanzhengde dongqing*, first translated as "but still you insist on possessing intact the winter's fine weather". Again, the editor circled "fine weather" and reminded: "a fine winter day", which was then accepted by the translator as final version.

33 The editor's opening note on the feedback reveals that a referee's suggestions have already been included. There is no way for me to differentiate with certainty between editor and referee feedback here, but this is of no relevance. Any reference to feedback or to the editor in this section may therefore possibly mean the referee.

34 The full English text along with the poem in Chinese can be found in *Renditions* No. 58 (Autumn 2002), p 143.

Considering this process is all part of an ongoing dialogue with the translator who is then given time to rework his or her draft based on editorial suggestions, the care editors are taking not only to give feedback but also to be constructive in doing so shows how much precision matters to them, which in turn also explains why *Renditions* became well-known for its approach to editing translation, and why translators generally appreciate this approach.[36] Indeed, almost mentor-like comments such as "you don't use 量词 to qualify weather in Chinese" are certainly useful for a translator who is often also, at the same time, still a learner of Chinese, albeit one at an advanced level. During our interview, this same translator commented appreciatively on the way *Renditions* worked: "I think [in working with another similar publication] I missed the fact that there was no real intensive checking of my translation against the Chinese. I think that is something that *Renditions* did very well." The analysis above illustrates what is intended here.

More editorial comments were made on the meaning of specific characters and phrases in the same poem: by way of example, the line 斜簽在顫抖的地球上 *xieqian zai chandoude diqiu shang*, eventually published as "planted askew in this shivering planet", was first submitted by the translator as "obliquely inscribed on this trembling planet" where "inscribed on" was underlined by an editorial hand which then added a suggestion by the margin: "'inserted into'. (簽 *qian* =籤 *qian* = 插 *cha*)". An examination of both English versions (i.e. the translator's draft and the final version printed in *Renditions*) and a look through the changes the translator had made reveals that this suggestion should, once more, be understood as a *Renditions* way of subtly pointing a translator-learner in the right direction, something I could only decipher after examining both English versions and looking through the changes the translator had made: the second "=" (in "= 插 *cha*") is probably not to be read as "equals", but rather as a "➔", i.e. "meaning", so this editorial note is in fact suggesting that: 簽 *qian*, or another traditional form of it, 籤 *qian*, usually a noun, rather than indicating

[36] As shown in the quote that follows, and in a number of testimonials in Hung (2003).

something that is "inscribed" as you suggest,[37] does in this context relate to something that can be "inserted" somewhere, as in 插 *cha* (note how in Chinese the component 簽 *qian* is indeed often found in words for small elongated objects such as a toothpick 牙簽 *yaqian*, a bookmark 書簽 *shuqian*, or a divination slip 求簽 *qiuqian*). This feedback eventually shows in the final version, where the translator has changed "inscribed on" to "planted in" and has thereby come closer to conveying the correct sense of the Chinese 插 *cha*.

This meticulousness in the translator-editor interaction also shows the importance for *Renditions* of having a bilingual team of editors able to check the translation as carefully as this against the original text and give detailed feedback that leads the translator to reconsider a number of choices, and improves the overall quality of the translation to the level *Renditions* became well-known for. One of my interviewees tells of this same high level of care in editing in a different way, in an anecdote dating from roughly the same time as the editorial comments discussed above:

> I remember this wonderful, terrible… moment where… Tam Pak Shan[38] had… there's some character I can't remember, it's written with one simplified character but it derives from two non-simplified characters… he had picked the wrong one, and there was this kind of massive… scene, you know, about… 'You've chosen the wrong character here!' And that sort of… showed me how it mattered so deeply. It really was important to get it right…

Not "getting it right" could clearly trigger waves of tension within the editorial team at *Renditions*. The relevance of bilingual cross-editing lies in being able to spot and rectify small, and yet important, details, and according to several of my interviewees this was also an invaluable learning experience. This shows how not only translators, but Chinese and non-Chinese editors alike had something to learn from a "workshop-like" process of, in fact, co-translating all along.

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37 Someone whose native language is not Chinese may first have come across the character 簽 *qiān* in expressions related to writing, such as 簽字 *qianzi* or 簽名 *qianming*, to sign/to autograph, whence possibly the initial "inscribed".

38 Then a member of the core *Renditions* team.

Collaboration with a Fellow Translator: Sharing Expertise via Renditions

Some of the evidence emerging from my interviews with translators during my data collection process suggests that, based on their experiences, translators tend to believe collaboration in literary translation can either work very well, or not at all. As will be shown in this section, generally speaking at *Renditions* the former seemed to be happening, thanks to the thought editors put into occasionally directing contributors towards a suitable co-translator. In reading around *Renditions*, my attention was drawn to repeated encounters with texts on which a non-Chinese poet and a native Chinese speaker had worked together. In fact, as soon as I mentioned collaborative translation in an interview, the example of poets collaborating with someone else would come up.

I questioned former editors Eva Hung and David Pollard about this practice, who at their time with *Renditions* saw collaboration more as a "necessity" than an intention of the editorial team, particularly in cases where e.g. experience was an issue; when there had been, Pollard explained,

> "... a submission from a novice, (…) someone writing in English who couldn't work on his own, you know, they would *need* cooperation. And the same way around, you know, so … so you would have more of knowledge on one hand and more of… literacy, shall we say, on the other hand." (emphasis added)

This statement adds another factor to my CT definition, namely the lack of skills or of specialist knowledge, which I would argue are elements that trigger the need for CT.

I interviewed one such team of co-translators who have by now collaborated on several projects over the years and have met directly through *Renditions*, Hong Kong scholar Mary Fung and American poet David Lunde. In a break from the usual proactive pattern whereby *Renditions* would try and find a collaborator, Lunde – who has a keen interest in Chinese poetry but no command of Chinese – made himself known to *Renditions* by submitting his translations of a few Chinese poems into English, ones he found should be "tested" and passed through the hands of a Chinese-speaking editor after they had already been accepted for publication in the USA by editors who "could not judge their faithfulness to the original" (Lunde in Hung, 2003: 75). Somewhat to his surprise, *Renditions* accepted his work, and later put him in contact with several co-translators to work on further poetry translations; of these collaborations, Lunde says that "[they] have not only been great fun but wonderful learning experiences" (see Hung, 2003: 76). Mary Fung has spoken on a similar note of her work with Lunde in conversation with me, seeing it mainly as an "invaluable learning experience". Again, we see here how learning is an ongoing process, here in the case of two experienced scholars and translators: the example of Fung and Lunde shows there are ways in which translators with any level of experience can profit and learn from co-translating.

What also stands out here is a recurring appearance of poetry in the context of CT. Drawing on Eugene Nida's model of the translation process (see Figure 7 below) in her discussion of Ezra Pound's translations, Ieong (2009) remarks that in the final, "crucial" phase of restructuring "a gifted poet is indispensable and more urgently needed than a 'faithful' translator in the production of good poetry for [an] English-speaking audience" (116). The collaborative translation case discussed here is in full agreement with this statement, as is the more detailed analysis of Fung and Lunde's work about to follow.

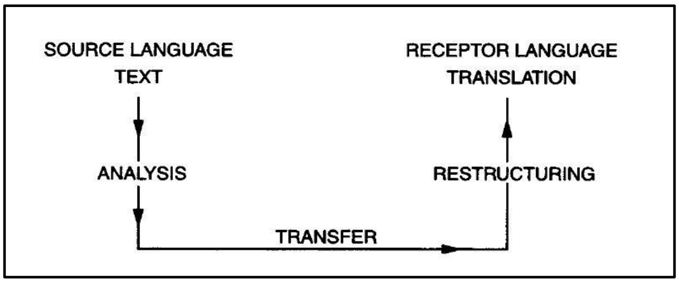


Figure 7: Nida's schematic representation of the translation process.

Fung told me on starting to work with Lunde: "[after a number of years spent in Canada translating from Chinese into English], I thought that I might be able to do a translation of Bian Zhilin's 卞之琳 (1910-2000) poems, and I wanted to do this very much because I had studied [Bian] for eight years before this project started… but then, I know Bian Zhilin is a perfectionist, and I wanted to have the translations done really well, ones that could preserve his poetic quality. So that's why I wanted to have a collaborator who is a poet, and I told Eva [Hung] that I was looking for a collaborator for such a project, and she introduced David [Lunde] to me. That's how we started collaboration, and I have to thank *Renditions* for this". This echoes Ieong's words very strongly, and again demonstrates that a feeling one is lacking the right skills or knowledge is a strong driver for CT.

Lunde and Fung later continued working together and collaborated on further pieces for *Renditions*, and also completed several book-length projects. Currently they still co-translate, and if we read paratexts, we find they do not make a secret of the translation process involved: it is presented to the reader in considerable length and detail by both translators in the introduction to *The Carving of Insects,* a Renditions Books publication of a collection of Bian Zhilin's poetry (Bian, 2006). Most of this collaboration took place online: seen as Fung was based in Hong Kong and Lunde in the USA, this was the only possible way to communicate.

On the process of working collaboratively on poetry, Fung reveals how she would prepare two documents to help Lunde get a detailed idea of the Chinese text: a word-for-word explanation of the poem, with more detailed notes on bits where she found some further background of linguistic, literary or other nature was necessary, along with one draft translation of her own. Based on this Lunde would then provide his own version of the poem, which was then mostly subject to further negotiation until there was a final version both translators were satisfied with. Not having any knowledge of Chinese is the reason why Lunde prefers to call himself a "re-translator" from the Chinese rather than a translator,[39] and knowing that in this collaborative process the first English draft would have been done by Fung, this certainly sounds accurate. As mentioned above, the collaboration process has been described in full detail elsewhere, so I am not going into too much depth here, other than borrow one example for the purpose of illustration (Bian, 2006: 25-29):

39 Lunde points to this repeatedly, e.g. in the introduction to *The Carving of Insects* (Bian, 2006: 35) or earlier in his contribution to *The Renditions Experience 1973-2003* (Hung, 2003: 75).

This is what the first stanza of a Bian Zhilin poem, in this case “長途 *Changtu*”, “*Long Road*”, would have looked like as prepared by Fung for Lunde in the first round of work:

First stanza	**Fung’s word-for-word explanation**	**Fung’s first draft translation**
一條/白熱的/長途 *Yitiao bairede changtu*	A (one + classifier *tiao*) white hot long road	A long white hot road
伸向/曠野的/邊上 *shenxiang kuangyede bianshang*	stretches toward wilderness’s edge	stretches toward the edge of the wilderness
像一條/重的/扁擔 *xiangyitiao zhongde biandan*	like a (one + classifier *tiao*) heavy flat pole	like a heavy flat pole
壓上/挑夫的/肩膀 *yashang tiaofude jianbing*	pressed on carrier’s shoulder	pressed against the carrier’s shoulder

As Fung then points out, the challenge for the translator here is that Bian Zhilin uses 條 *tiao*, a common classifier for something elongated in Chinese and a grammatical element unavailable in English, to merge the image of a wearying long road still ahead of the traveller on a very hot day, with that of the weight of a long, heavy carrying pole on someone’s shoulder. “As a word,” Fung explains, “*tiao* means ‘a long narrow strip’, but when used as classifier for ‘road’ the native speaker is normally unaware of this meaning” (28). In this poetic context, however, it was of course important to point the parallelism created by the use of *tiao* out to Lunde (and we can see in the second column above that Fung had indeed done so), who as a poet may have had fresh ideas on possible ways of dealing with this. In this particular case however Fung and Lunde eventually decided to stick to Fung’s first draft as it was, and submit that version to *Renditions*.

This is when another phase of the CT process started, namely that of interaction with the editorial team, which I have discussed in the previous section. In this case editor Eva Hung made two remarks on this first stanza, Fung reveals: “first, she felt that the rhythm of [the] translation was at times too relaxed to convey the relentlessness of the heat and the toughness of the journey; second, she found the word ‘carrier’ inadequate in its non-emotive sense” (28). Fung then reflects on the Chinese word 挑夫 *tiaofu* and on the reasons why a possible equivalent in Western eyes, “coolie”, seemed inadequate for use in the poem due to its derogatory connotation. She refers to the *Collins English Dictionary* and its definition of “coolie” as “cheaply hired unskilled Oriental labourer” and concludes her thought by putting herself in the shoes of the author: “Bian would never have described his compatriot as a coolie”. In reply to editorial feedback, the stanza was therefore reviewed as follows:

A long, white, hot road stretches
toward the edge of wilderness,
like a heavy, flat, carrying pole
bearing down on the porter’s shoulder.

We can see the stanza now contains new elements that are probably the result of Lunde’s reaction to Hung’s feedback (although I cannot be sure of the details of who of the two translators suggested what). “Porter” certainly reads better than “carrier” and also works perfectly well in terms of meaning: the sense of *tiaofu* as intended by the author is not lost, given that an English-speaking reader would still understand the word as “someone employed to carry heavy items” without any trace of an insinuation that this person may be “cheaply hired”, “unskilled” or “Oriental” (all of this a *tiaofu* may or may not be, but this kind of information is, as Fung rightly remarked, certainly not what the poet means to convey). We also notice how the pace of the stanza has now changed, with commas inserted between adjectives, which now helps to mirror the parallelism in the Chinese version and makes for a slower, more regular pace that yields the image of someone trudging along a road, still with a long way ahead.

The above discussion illustrates Fung’s and Lunde’s productive and balanced collaboration, where we can see how the co-translators complement each other’s skills and expertise to gradually obtain a rendition that is satisfactory for both. While Fung has an in-depth knowledge of Bian’s work and person, having corresponded with Bian Zhilin for years and having also met him in person on several occasions, Lunde has abundant experience in studying and writing poetry in the target language. This appropriate combination of skills allowed the team to try and retain, where possible, the poetic form and intended sense of Bian’s work, and also to handle the intricacies of his “metrical ingenuities” owing to “[Lunde]’s fine mastery of the art of English poetry” (Fung in Bian, 2006: 26). All along, the crucial role of the editor in introducing the co-translators and in carefully editing their drafts cannot be overlooked.

Lunde’s and Fung’s system is, in fact, not a previously unknown CT pattern. Ieong (2009) makes mention of a practice that writer Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978) and his son Guo Shuying called “pair-work” (“两道手”). This refers to a poetry translation process that is almost exactly the same as that used by Lunde and Fung. In Guo’s judgement, says Ieong (who makes no reference to *Renditions*), the ideal translator for poetry translation is one who not only excels in the source and target languages and literatures, but is also an accomplished poet (110). Lunde’s translations from the Chinese are based on “cribs” (as he says himself in Bian, 2006: 35), or notes accompanying each character that other people provide him with. The term “cribs” is borrowed from Ezra Pound who, much like Lunde, did not speak any Chinese and worked in a very similar fashion to him on his own translations of Chinese poems for *Cathay* (in fact Ieong does discuss *Cathay* as an example of CT). This time a direct link is available, given that Lunde acknowledges Pound as the author to have led him to first explore the world of Chinese poetry (Hung, 2003: 74) and reveals how he follows Pound’s example when translating.

Both examples discussed here, the translations of Chen Kehua and Bian Zhilin poems with the interaction between their translators and editors at *Renditions*, illustrate well how editors can play quite a decisive role in the process of shaping a text. A role appreciated by translators, Fung suggests: “we found it helpful to have the input of a fresh point of view on the translation we had been working on for a long time (…) which in the end contributed to the production of a better version” (Bian, 29). In both cases editors can be said to become part of the translation process itself, and do engage in a two-way exchange of ideas between them and the translator.

A number of voices then populate the final result, as Fung says of the English version of Bian’s work: “this Bian Zhilin comes through the consciousness of both David and myself, at times with the voice of Eva [Hung] speaking through as well” (34). This statement sums up the collaborative aspect of translation very nicely: CT is when more than one "voice" speaks through the final result, ideally a fact only known and "visible" to the team of translators involved. As long as skills in the translator team are complementary and all parties involved are satisfied with the finalized version, as appears to be the case here, collaborative translation can work very well. "Collaboration can work wonders," Holton (2015) agrees. "If a team that works well comes together, two plus two equals five."

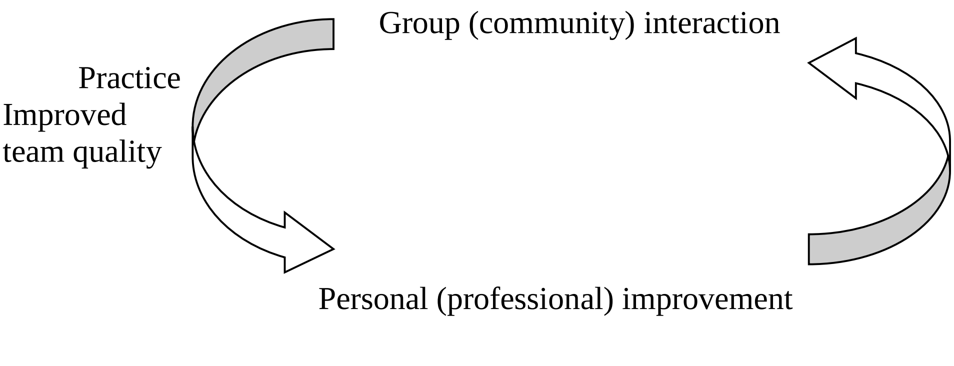
The choice of a co-translator can be quite a delicate and perhaps occasionally even unwelcome matter, with various factors to consider, and yet *Renditions* appears to have handled such situations in a tactful and successful manner, and may well be one of the only outlets of Chinese literature in translation to have actively and successfully used collaborative translation in a number of ways, aware of when and how it works well. In both examples provided here, also an ongoing process of "learning by doing" comes to light: not only do the translators involved see CT as a source of new knowledge, the same goes for the editorial team. It can therefore be said that learning through the practice of translation occurs on multiple levels when it comes to CT.

Two Sides to "Learning as Doing"

My discussion of CT shows how, in this context, *Renditions* achieved its editorial aims by finding ways of bringing the "right" (differently skilled) people together: this is also amply illustrated by the several known examples of *Renditions* proactively connecting translators with complementary skills or knowledge and encouraging them to work together on a specific piece, as in the case of Fung and Lunde examined here. At *Renditions*, it has (to my knowledge) nearly always been the editor who brought together two people to collaborate in translation – not necessarily both practicing translators (note the intriguing example of poetry translations calling for the presence of a talented poet on the team), and yet people with the "right" set of complementary skills, knowledge or level of experience adequate for the work to be completed.

Of course every magazine, and every editorial team, will have its own specific ways of editing translation and of going on about its various tasks, and some such practices would have been easily recognisable for those used to working with *Renditions*: regular contributors knew they could expect a prompt response with the kind of meticulous feedback I have provided examples of above; the "decorum" typical for *Renditions* as one of my interviewees put it; attention to detail and to house style; and finally, also a certain degree of flexibility which scholar and translator Maghiel van Crevel (in Hung, 2003b: 88) called "a combination ... of solid anchorage in tradition and outings after curfew" - all these elements, and possibly others, were part of a *Renditions* way of "doing" literary translation, of being the magazine it is. Even all that shapes the appearance of the magazine is part of a set practice, including features like font and format: in other words, the visual elements that became part of an image immediately recognisable to people familiar with *Renditions*.

The concepts of "practice" and "learning as doing", named by Wenger as one of four key facets of learning in a social context, are helping to illustrate here how knowledge can be generated and shared in the spiralling learning process characteristic for translation: practice emerges here as a source of personal (professional) improvement gained from interaction with others, which in turn allows to improve on overall team quality and feeds back into community interaction. This is a cycle somewhat different from the one mentioned earlier in the introduction to this chapter, namely the learning cycle of an individual translator (who translates ➔ learns ➔ improves professionally ➔ translates). I have sketched this collective learning cycle graphically below:



Let us imagine that several translators have become a team of *Renditions* contributors for a specific issue of the magazine: this may be an entirely new experience to some, and working with them will be new to editors. Through interaction with the editors, and perhaps with fellow contributors, this team of translators works according to some set practices, which may in turn be beneficial to them as professional experience. The more the team learns through this work experience, the better its members should become at interacting with each other. This is not to idealise and say that everything is always smooth in the various stages of the process: no one knows this better than editors. Founding *Renditions* editor Stephen C. Soong (1984) suggests in *Renditions* No. 11&12 that there are always "cross-currents" to deal with, and expresses his thanks to "all [his] contributors… for their cooperation and patience in spite of [his] constant prodding"; this is later echoed by editor Eva Hung (2003a: 5) who also hints at intra-team controversies in her editor's page for *Renditions* Issue 59&60: "to all the contributors who have joined in this project and withstood varying degrees of harassment from me, I am deeply grateful."

We have seen in this entire section on CT how there seem to be two sides to "learning as doing", namely the individual and the social aspect: every team member interacts with colleagues (the community) and on a personal level takes away what coincides with his or her professional interests from this interaction. Then there is the collective aspect of "learning by doing", the one Wenger focuses on and which in this case involves being part of a publication process and actively participating in the translating and editing of Chinese literature. While practice happens both individually and collectively, it is not necessary to define a clear line between the individual and the social in translation: both do happen to some extent, even in a collaborative effort, and both are interconnected aspects of the profession. To what extent and whether at all some "learning by doing" happens in CT is also down to the skills of those on the team, and *Renditions* is an example where people involved in collaborative translation usually found that engaging in CT in this particular professional setting was worthwhile, despite the occasional tensions I have mentioned earlier.

Focus on the Leading Figure: How an Editor "Learns by Doing"

In the case of a translation magazine (or any magazine for that matter), much of the "doing" that brings the publication to life happens because of the existence of an editorial team functioning around the central figure of a chief editor. In Wenger and Snyder (2000) such a leading role is described as one taken up by someone they call a “manager”: “managers cannot mandate communities of practice. Instead, successful managers bring the right people together, provide an infrastructure in which communities can thrive, and measure the communities’ value in non-traditional ways” (140). In other words, all that is “doing” in a team originates from its core, and given that – as I have just discussed in the context of CT – there is a collective dimension to learning by doing, then of course to some extent the editorial team must also be “learning by doing”: I will explore more in detail how this happens in what follows. Eva Hung (2003a) says on her editorship at *Renditions*: “Editorial experience is not just about untangling words on paper - far from it. The best and worst I remember are all about people and interaction.”

Some relatively recent publications on editing echo the ideas on a leading managerial role in Wenger and Snyder. Morrish (1996) suggests that “the key to leading a successful team is to release the ideas and talents of others” (12); also in agreement is Evans (2004) who says “one goal of every serious editor is to build close relationships with several talented, dedicated, and hardworking writers [or translators]… rather than training a new crop of [translators] with each issue” (131). These comments all support what Wenger and Snyder say; is the same also mirrored in the *Renditions* experience? Eva Hung’s quote above reveals her view on the “doings” of the editor; her words can be linked to accounts by, and about, George Kao, one of *Renditions*’ two founding editors. What does Kao’s initial *Renditions* experience say about being an editor, and a successful one at that? In the above quote, Hung describes editorial experience as being, more often than not, about people and interaction with them rather than about the written word. This attests to the existence of a continuous cycle of interaction with others. What exactly does an editor need to be able to *do*, then, other than “untangle words on paper”?

In a tribute to George Kao, Hung (2015) reflects on what it takes to be a good editor, giving Kao as example: starting from a mention of the perhaps more obvious qualities of an editor for a publication in Chinese-English translation, like a good knowledge of, and taste in, Chinese literature, strong writing skills in English, and a feel for new developments in the relevant literary circles, she then goes on to point out how, if one does not have a solid international academic contact network, one will eventually not receive enough contributions; how if one lacks rigour and regularity, one will cause the publication to fall behind schedule; how if one lacks inspiration, this in turn will cause the publication to become dull; if one lacks the ability to combine, it becomes challenging to find a common theme for a very diverse set of contributions; if one does not have the confidence to rethink a translation and produce something readable, or even something admirable, out of a slip-up, he or she will hardly succeed at turning mediocre translations full of mistakes and omissions into publishable material.

After this exhaustive list of editorial qualities drawn together based on her watching Kao work, Hung then adds that, given that coming across someone who translates entirely flawlessly is extremely rare, it is also the task of the editor, and very importantly so, to be able to *guide* the translator towards a better result, rather than merely that of doing a final check. This reminds of my discussion of CT, and of the idea of "bringing the right people together": Hung revealed to me during or interview that she had made efforts to do just this during her time as *Renditions* editor, a remark she then illustrated with the following example:

> I looked at [one] translation and thought, well, there are bits in it that are very promising… sometimes in a descriptive paragraph you could really see this translator's ability to write well in English. And then, you look at completely dead dialogue! So what can I do? I can't really rewrite… so I sent an e-mail – by then, there were e-mails – and suggested to the translator: 'maybe you would like to read John Sandford (1944 -)?' John Sandford writes detective fiction… and I saw some of the descriptive paragraphs as, you know, showing some qualities not dissimilar to Sandford. So I thought, you know, if this translator could, sort of… free herself by reading something that's completely un-Chinese, it may really generate something interesting. And it did! The second draft was just completely different, and really read like an English story."

This kind of guidance in moments when it was needed, Hung (2015) then goes on explaining in her article on Kao, has to be fast and accurate; however, she also stresses that after publication the editor must not steal the limelight intended for the translator and the author. In the case of smaller publications like *Renditions*, the editor must also be able to decide on matters like the overall layout and the cover page. Last but not least, another crucial editorial skill is of course the ability to secure financial backing for the publication – failing that, the material one has gathered will never get published, as good as its quality may be. This impressive list of desirable editorial skills only reinforces the idea that editors, just like translators, must be learning along the way by "doing".

Hung's overview shows a great variety of "doings" of an editor, or rather of the "doings" of an ideal editor. Summing up, he or she will be someone knowledgeable in the relevant area of literature, and have a *feel* for what is new in literary circles.[40] Hung then provides a list of potential obstacles an editor is likely to encounter, and of the skills and qualities he or she needs to have (or learn to have) in order to overcome these obstacles. In Hung's view, an editor must have a "feel" not only for literary movements, but also for people (in this case translators) and for the way they work, and has to be able to steer them in the direction that he or she knows is right for the publication. What Eva Hung clearly saw in, and learned from, George Kao, is the same ability Wenger and Snyder point to, that of "bringing the right people together" to get a job done well. Some boldness in deciding what the publication will look like, and in securing funding that will guarantee continuity for the publication process, is also an editor's must-have.

Other material written on and by Kao only seems to confirm various parts of Hung's portrayal of him. Ip (2008: 15), translator and scholar also formerly on the editorial team of *Renditions*, tells how, "like the many bilingual men of letters of his generation, Kao wrote, edited, and translated into both Chinese and English". A man of letters with strong writing skills in both languages required – for a start, this would seem to make Kao just the right kind of person for the role of editor of a Chinese-English literary translation magazine.

What of the other qualities listed as desirable for an editor? In her salute to Kao following his passing, Ip reveals how, together with the other founding editor of *Renditions*, Stephen C. Soong, Kao "started [*Renditions*] by reaching out to

40 According to some of my interviewees, this was something John Minford excelled at as editor.

potential contributors, donors, as well as advisors (…) who eventually became members of the Editorial Committee or the Advisory Board" (14). Here was the network that brought in those much-needed contributions, along with some useful advice and support for a new-born magazine. Kao (1974: 4) himself also points to the importance of networking, stating in Issue No. 2 that *Renditions* "would have been impossible were it not for the help of many friends and a number of fortuitous circumstances". The first issue of the magazine was followed by "favourable reviews" and by a flow of "unsolicited submissions" (Ip, 2008: 14), before the onset of a pressing need for submissions, or what Kao himself called "pulling in copy" (拉稿 *lagao*) (Kao, 1975: 5).

What of financial health? The future of *Renditions* was secured shortly after its launch by means of "a generous donation from Wing Lung Bank Fund for Promotion of Chinese Culture" (Ip, 2008: 15). Considering all these moves, Kao certainly comes across as a highly competent and thoughtful editor, even though the sheer length of Hung's list and indeed the rareness of the combination of all these qualities occurring in one single person, suggests that not every editor at *Renditions* would have been able to meet all of them.[41]

Conclusion

What emerges from the discussion in this chapter is on the one hand an illustration of the concept of learning through practice, or "learning by doing", as a result of community interaction: first through an introduction to Wenger who defines "practice" as any regular activity that is a direct result of interaction between people with a common aim, and goes on to list practice as one way of learning in a group. Then, the example of *Renditions* shows how *all* of its team members were pulled into "learning by doing" at various stages of the editing process: translators, whose learning trajectory travels in a spiralling fashion, and editors, who must also acquire certain skills and abilities on-the-job. In Shih's

41 Indeed, some of my interviews confirm this – there were times when *Renditions* was publishing heavily behind schedule, when the editorial team struggled to find a linking common theme for the next issue, or when the number of spontaneous contributions dropped to a worrying minimum. Whether the editor was always to blame for this remains questionable, even if all these situations do fall into Hung's discussion of what the ideal editor should *avoid* letting happen.

(2018) words quoted earlier on, therefore, translators learn by doing translation… and finally going full circle back to doing translation.

From this, I have also deduced that Wenger's assertion that learning no longer happens once "doing" no longer involves any new experience is not entirely valid for (literary) translators, for unless what they work on happens to be repetitive, every new text will offer them a way to learn something, a source of fresh information. The type of activity may be more or less the same every time, but the material changes. *Renditions* also allowed me to discuss another, similarly cyclic aspect of collective "learning by doing", where the learning process happens again and again with every new issue of a magazine – learning happening by being part of a wider undertaking, by interacting on various levels within a team, by networking, publishing, experiencing, in order to improve professionally – all of which corroborates Wenger's ideas, and calls back to mind Robinson's (2004: 56) statement cited earlier in this chapter, which states that good translators are *always in the process* of "becoming" translators: learning to translate better, learning more about language and culture and translation.

The case of CT has, through two different examples, helped to show how this applies to team translation. I have also paid special attention to the central role of the team leader – the editor, and to their individual qualities, to establish what it is important they "do" to steer the magazine forward and enable the team to continue "learning by doing" as a community. In this context, a good "feel" for "bringing the right people together" has emerged as a particularly desirable quality for an editor. Importantly, what is shown here is also that all of the above correlates with the notion of developing and improving professionally, and none of it could be done individually.

By highlighting a collective side to translation, this chapter also challenges the image of the "lone translator". I have shown here that even what is apparently solitary about translation easily becomes social once the translator sees the need to turn to someone for assistance, be it openly acknowledged assistance or not. The example of CT is of central importance in debunking the idea of translatorial isolation. While CT is still a relatively unexplored field of study, its subject clearly rather evasive when it comes to defining it, I have – in addition to an overview of the related literature – given two examples of how CT can work in the context of a translation magazine, and that it is in fact omnipresent in such circumstances. Thereby, I have shown that CT can be considered to permeate the process of translation to various degrees. In addition to this, the social interaction intrinsic to CT stands out as an element essential for "learning by doing" to take place: as I have pointed out earlier in this chapter, translators essentially learn from each other or from other people around them – in particular, I have discussed here the key role an editor can play in this process.

CHAPTER 5
Crossing a Landscape of Practice: Learning as Becoming

> *As relationships evolve – new members join, and external conditions change – the internal coherence of a group will indeed subtly adjust to small disturbances to its normal patterns of behaviour, but what is remarkable about well-established collaborative groups is the extent to which they are able to resist challenges to their way of doing things. (Richards, 2006:27)*

The above quote refers to what Richards (2006) calls "collaborative identity". Given the considerable length of its publication lifetime, a time spent "becoming" what it is, *Renditions* could easily be referred to as a "well-established collaborative group" that has stood the test of time. This chapter will discuss the collaborative dynamics between translators' professional identities and the collective identity of *Renditions*. Hostová (2017) notices how there has been a rise of interest in the subject of translator identity in TS since the late 1990s, and that this interest revolves both around the identity of translators and around the identity of what is being translated.

This chapter is mainly a discussion on the former, (translator) identity, or, as Wenger has it, "learning as becoming". Wenger links the idea of "identity" to this kind of learning process, as the way in which "learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (1998: 5). "Becoming" is intended in this chapter in a professionally formative sense, a process placed within the boundaries - geographical and not - of *Renditions*. In what ways do translator identity and the *Renditions* community interact and influence each other? Also, how does professional identity define a translator's work? What all is part of one's "professional identity" – what role can their native tongue and their culture play in it? Examples relating to these questions will be provided in this chapter and illustrate some of the ways identity works and develops in the context of translation. I am mainly focusing on translators and the way they work in this project, rather than on texts and intertextuality, hence the intended focus on translators here.

In which ways do translators "become" through involvement with *Renditions*, then? It can certainly be said that all of *Renditions*' contributors will gather experience in the process, and that some may find they are "becoming" better translators through this interaction. Translators can also (if informally) "become" part of a community, by virtue of all engaging in one and the same practice and using one and the same language combination. They can also be considered to "become" several other things in the process: contributors to *Renditions*, and consequently contributors to, in the bigger picture, a shift of some of China's literary heritage into another cultural sphere, and indeed also the key movers whose work makes this shift happen.

In relation to identity, Wenger et al. speak of "landscapes of practice", in other words networks that consist of many different communities of practice, and the boundaries between them: "if the body of knowledge of a profession is a living landscape of practice, then our personal experience of learning can be thought of as a journey through this landscape" (2014: i). The metaphor of a "landscape" ensures that we pay attention to boundaries, Wenger and his co-editors believe, to boundaries of our multi-membership in different communities through which we "become" who we are professionally, as well as to the challenges we face as our personal trajectories take us on a journey across these multiple boundaries. The idea of a "landscape of practice" is also quite useful for me as a point of reference, seeing as my example of *Renditions* is not about translators' (multi-membership in) many different communities of practice, but rather revolves around one central landscape of practice, namely literary translation from Chinese to English, the boundaries of which are a little different for every translator and will be discussed in what follows.

For Wenger, the concepts of "identity" and "practice" are closely interconnected and almost mirroring images of each other, as he tries to illustrate in the following table (Wenger, 1998: 150):

Practice as...	**Identity as...**
• Negotiation of meaning (in terms of participation and reification) • Community • Shared history of learning • Boundary and landscape • Constellations	• Negotiated experience of self (in terms of participation and reification) • Membership • Learning trajectory • Nexus of multi-membership • Belonging defined globally but experienced locally

Looking at the above table which sums up Wenger's mirroring ideas on practice and identity, it can be said that most bullet points on identity are equally applicable to, and valid for, the profession of translation. If I compare the two in a table similarly to what Wenger does above, it results in the following:

Wenger on Identity (for all quotes in this column see Wenger 1998: 149)	**Translation**
Identity as negotiated experience, in the sense that "we define who we are by the ways we experience our selves through participation"	I will show in this chapter how this happens in a very similar way for translators; all individuals in my examples find ways of learning and adding to their (professional) identity through their *Renditions* experience.
Identity as community membership, in that "we define who we are by the familiar and the unfamiliar"	The boundaries of a translator's professional identity have similar familiar/unfamiliar dynamics that define the translator's professional identity, and its function within a community.
Identity as learning trajectory, given that "we define who we are by where we have been and where we are going"	Some of my examples that follow illustrate how translators too define their professional self by who they are culturally/geographically.
Identity as nexus of multi-membership, in that "we define who we are by the ways we reconcile our various forms of membership into one identity"	In the context of translation, this reconnects to Mason's (2014) concept of a translator's "CoP profile", i.e. the list of CoPs a translator is, or has been, a member of.
Identity as a relation between the local and the global: "we define who we are by negotiating local ways of belonging to broader constellations and of manifesting broader styles and discourses"	Throughout this thesis, we can see that a lot of what happens at *Renditions* are efforts to connect to broader constellations (of individuals and circles with an interest in Chinese literature) via the local reality of Hong Kong, and manifesting this through the magazine's "literary lighthouse" function of "projecting" Chinese literature out there and giving it a wider international recognition.

The chapter focuses on translator identity, and on a two-way process taking place within a specific community: namely, how translator (and editor) identity forms through contact with *Renditions* over the years, and how in turn working within a community like *Renditions* can shape translator identity. The concept of identity is not fixed, and while a number of works are being used for reference in this chapter, the guiding ideas used to frame this section are Etienne Wenger's (1998 and 2014) understanding of identity, or "learning as becoming". We have already seen in the section on CT in Chapter 4 how members of the *Renditions* community learn from this particular experience. In TS, studies that focus on translator identity quite often discuss a translator's *cultural* identity (rather than his or her professional identity as a whole) and how this reflects in their work and their understanding of intercultural communication (see e.g. Snell-Hornby et al. 1995, or Muñoz-Calvo et al., 2009).

Since I am not focusing on one single text or author, but rather on a community of people who all engage in translation for one and the same publication, Wenger's ideas on identity lend themselves better as a framework for this study than the perhaps too narrow focus on cultural identity markers. Having said that, I am not trying to downplay the importance of studying this aspect of translation (which in some cases also goes hand in hand with well-researched and widespread publishing practices like censorship). Culture certainly is a prominent part of any translator's professional identity, however the scope of discussion that identity offers in the context of translation is broader, and the fact that Wenger leaves his ideas relatively open to interpretation is only helpful in this respect.

Wenger's own field – sociology – is, as I have indicated in the literature review, now openly acknowledged as a useful resource for research in TS, and thereby also a possible starting point for looking at identity in the area of TS. "One thing we can be sure of," Hanna (2016) develops on the importance of sociology, "is that the meta-discourse developed within translation studies to capture the complexity of translation has remarkably been reshaped, thanks to the potentials opened up by the sociological approaches to translation" (2016: 1). The study of translation as essentially a socially regulated practice is still a relatively new direction. "One of the fruitful discussions on the translator's identity that started in the 1990s was inspired by sociological models of thinking. Becoming a translator came to be seen as socialisation, and [in terms of] acquiring a specialised habitus in a Bourdieusian sense" (Hostová, 2017: 9). Bourdieu's work has had considerable impact on TS, given that his ideas have opened new avenues for the study of translation; Wenger's ideas, albeit also Bourdieu-inspired (see e.g. Bourdieu's work on practice, 1977), are, according to Mason (2014: 40) more flexible and less "hermetic" than Bourdieu's,[42] and thereby better suitable as a starting point to explore the social experiences of translators.

On Renditions and Identity

As I have shown in Chapter 4, if a professional team is in place, practice-based learning occurs at multiple levels depending on the amount of experience and type of skills and knowledge those who are interacting have, in a process of learning to "become" knowledgeable about how this particular team works. *Renditions*' complex network of members and over four decades of shared history have generated a) practices that have made of the magazine a pioneer at various points of its existence, and b) practices that have survived into the next editorship and continued to work well and shape the way the magazine worked in very much a practice-based way. The network of relationships the magazine builds on is both a long-term one, which includes translators who contribute to *Renditions* quite regularly and other people in the field who have acted in different roles (e.g. referees) over a long time, and short-term, say that of a team drawn together through work on a single issue.

Considering Lave and Wenger's notion of each CoP having a "core team", we immediately see a parallel - this kind of core nucleus of personnel exists at *Renditions* too, and essentially ensures the magazine continues publishing on a regular basis. This nucleus is not fixed however, it has quite a high degree of fluidity: changes of personnel as well as changes of job titles are not at all infrequent at *Renditions*. Generally speaking, there have nearly always been several editors and assistant editors, a production manager, and a web manager;

[42] Most research that brings Bourdieu and Wenger together on the same page finds ways of comparing and contrasting their work (see e.g. Williams, 2010 or Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009) with a tendency to find weaknesses in Wenger's "lack of rigour", as opposed to Mason whom I mention above (see e.g. Gunter, 2005: 82).

other roles have existed along the way, and disappeared again. Editors who stepped into the shoes of the founding editorial team of George Kao and Stephen Soong expanded the team as they saw necessary, occasionally even formally testing candidates for their suitability.[43]

As to translators, the key players on the *Renditions* team, it has been suggested that their identity is partly defined by a "community profile", a profile consisting of the range of clients and companies they work for (Mason, 2014: 41), however as I will show later in this chapter translator identity is also an individual matter defined by factors like one's cultural and linguistic background. There are also practices or ways of using language a translator might recognise as their own, and yet there is a duality about this which the following example helps illustrate. When I asked about the way he conveyed one Cantonese expression in one of his translations for *Renditions*, translator Simon Patton replied: "that's a very Patton way of handling [it]. But I wouldn't have known that expression, someone would have pointed it out to me… my Cantonese wouldn't have been [at a level to understand this]." On one hand, there is an individual approach here – a "Patton" way of handling the expression – nevertheless a tool only applicable once a "someone" – in this case, presumably, a native speaker of Cantonese - helped the translator understand the meaning of the expression. The individual and the social-collaborative quite often go hand in hand: as in this case, the one easily makes the other possible (or even necessary), which in turn has an influence on a translator's professional identity (in that they might decide on translating in a way recognisable as their own).

We can also see here how an individual translator is, within a specialized community, quite easily able to make contact with someone who can fill in specific knowledge where necessary. Patton, now a proficient speaker of Cantonese, also suggested that his several stints spent in Hong Kong on *Renditions*' editorial team and the fact that texts he was asked to translate and review contained Cantonese did in turn foster his personal interest in Cantonese, and made him aware of how different it was from Mandarin. The individual part of one's professional identity can therefore be down to how one feels about

[43] Two of my interviewees underwent a formal interview and test for the post of Assistant Editor.

language and about approaching a text - two of my interviewees mentioned they, for example, prefer to write out their first translation drafts by hand, which suggests that there are individual practices that shape their work and their identity - while what I call social and collaborative here stems directly from contact with others and may become a personal interest that is, in this case, profession-related (as happened for Patton with his active interest in Cantonese). One could say that here Cantonese, now very much part of Patton's identity as a translator (to my knowledge he now continues to translate from Cantonese), is an example of an element that was integrated into someone's professional identity through a specific community of practice. This offers evidence that *Renditions* sometimes did, if perhaps not knowingly, shape its contributors' professional identity, thereby influencing their "becoming" more experienced and versatile professionals.

There are cases when this process of identity-shaping also happened more intentionally: an example of this are perhaps the *Renditions* Fellows, a position that no longer exists, which was usually filled by well-known China scholars including Burton Watson, Göran Malmqvist, David Pollard and Cyril Birch, who all spent a period of time at the RCT as translators-in-residence. *Renditions* actively encouraged their work and provided editorial assistance (see Hung, 2003 for a number of testimonials of this); most of these scholars were already working on translating a major Chinese literary work, and were able to complete the full translation during this fellowship, in most cases also seeing part of their work published in *Renditions* in the process (as happened, for example, with Burton Watson's translation of the *Records of the Grand Historian* 史記 and Cyril Birch's rendition of *Peony Pavilion* 牡丹亭, of which Birch says that the opportunity to have part of his work printed in a "distinguished journal" like *Renditions* encouraged him to carry on and complete the translation in full).[44]

In other words, the translator-friendly setting the *Renditions* offices provided ("translating, you might say, at its very best", says Burton Watson in Hung, 2003: 29) allowed for many a *major* translation work to come to completion and thereby "become" part of a published corpus of Chinese literature in English; by

[44] For both Watson's and Birch's accounts on this, see Hung (2003).

the same token, each of these works will have been a considerable task for the translator, and will very likely have been a milestone in his or her career, which in turn is part of the translator identity-forming process. So, how does this translational context relate to Wenger's idea of "identity" and "learning as becoming" within a community? It is easy to see here how the process of becoming a more experienced translator through an opportunity to spend time in a highly motivating environment in which to carry on working allows to accumulate fresh experience, and how this then becomes part of one's professional identity. This process is illustrated by the words of one of my interviewees, who had worked under founding editor George Kao:

> The meticulousness would develop with your work: I was not so meticulous before I joined *Renditions*. It just came through my work there. Also, George Kao worked this way – he was older than I, more well-read, and consequently could be more generous to translators than I tended to be. He always had the final say. He had taught Chinese, had worked as a journalist, and so he could draw from a very varied background.

In other words, every translator, with any amount of experience, undergoes a process of professional "becoming". As part of its quest to make Chinese literature available in English, *Renditions* offered such opportunities for translators of a wide variety of backgrounds and levels of experience, and thereby simultaneously shaped the available corpus of translated Chinese literature, and partly also shaped the way these translators worked.

A very similar process to the one just described above was in fact happening with Chinese authors, which offers an additional example of the formative function *Renditions* had. Particularly during Eva Hung's time as Editor, authors were quite often invited to the RCT for brief periods of time. *Renditions* offered what appears to have been an inspiring space, and often also an output channel, for these writers' work; the magazine gave them a voice abroad, became a way to alert more readers to their writing. "*Renditions* really was a congenial workplace," former Managing Editor Janice Wickeri told me during our interview. "Han Shaogong 韓少功 (1953 -), Shu Ting 舒婷 (1952 -), Bei Dao

北岛(1949 -),[45] were all among the authors invited by *Renditions* to spend about a month at the RCT and work; that was quite a regular practice continued by Eva [Hung].” Another now internationally acclaimed author to have spent time at the RCT early in his career was Nobel Prize winner Mo Yan 莫言 (1955 -), whose work appeared in *Renditions* No. 32[46] (this being the first time any of Mo Yan’s work was being published in English).

One of my questions to translators was whether they thought *Renditions* had influenced them in any way professionally. The reply I received most frequently was that my interlocutor said he or she would probably never have translated as many different kinds of literary texts and as many varieties of Chinese had it not been for their work with *Renditions*. This was one case where answers seemed to reflect something in common that several members had taken away from the experience of being part of, and actively participating in, the community that had formed around *Renditions*. Being taken through many different forms of the source language, as seen earlier in the example of Patton and Cantonese, is a learning process that is just as identity-shaping for translators as it is for the magazine’s editors (most of whom are prolific translators themselves), as one of my interviewees who is also a former editor explains here:

> Inevitably, there’s something that saturates into you, or seeps into you, when you’re so often sitting down discussing translation, judging a translation, that something gets across into your own practice. So, although... it’s all unconscious, the more you talk to others and judge others’ translations of various different kinds, the more sort of... savvy you get in your sense of what the best way is to do something, and that would influence your own practice, and hopefully improve and enlighten you.

We can see here the “profound connection between identity and practice” Wenger talks about, in the sense that “practice entails the negotiation of ways of being a person in the context [of a community that has formed around this practice]” (1998: 148). More specifically, in this case, editor identity and

[45] Shu Ting and Bei Dao are both authors associated with the Misty Poets; Han Shaogong is a novelist of the same generation.

[46] Mo Yan, “The Cat Specialist”, tr. Janice Wickeri, in *Renditions* No. 32 (Autumn 1989).

translation practice: the above statement illustrates how, at least to some extent, one defines the other. This also touches upon the idea of participation and non-participation (see Wenger, 1998: 164-172), in that “non-participation is, in a reverse kind of fashion, as much a source of identity as participation” (164). Practices we engage in shape our identity just as much as practices in which we do not engage directly: this interviewee points to how his professional experience as editor - a role that did not necessarily involve translation as such - actually had an impact on him as a translator.

This kind of learning process is a useful identity-shaping experience: having worked on a wide variety of texts enhances a translator's versatility in the multi-faceted world of the Chinese language. Several of my interviewees also stated that *Renditions* had more or less launched their career as translators by being the first place to publish some of their work. There are several translators now well-known in Chinese-English translation circles who started their professional career via *Renditions*. British translator Nicky Harman commented during our interview on how *Renditions* launched her translating career, with her first published piece appearing in Renditions Books’ two-volume Hong Kong literature collection *To Pierce the Material Screen*. Also translator Richard King notes that “[his] first published translation of Chinese fiction” was with *Renditions* (Hung, 2003: 45). So does Howard Goldblatt (Hung, 2003: 35), whose first translated piece appeared in *Renditions* No. 4.

Opening up opportunities for new translatorial talent is another way *Renditions* shaped - or rather, started to shape - some translators’ professional identity. One of my interviewees who had experienced this commented:

> …it would give you a sense of yourself as a translator, and of the importance of the activity… and of the relevance of being in the company of some of the great names, people that you’d read about, and learned from. One would hope that [*Renditions*] could continue to play that role, and that it might nurture more translators.

This comment shows how the founding editors’ efforts to “line up a lot of big guns in Chinese studies to give [*Renditions*] a good send-off” (Pollard in Hung, 2003: 53) straight from Issue No. 1 not only did give the magazine a good send-off, but also had an educational value for a younger generation of translators who were still new to the trade, and were in fact following the example of well-known scholars by submitting their work to *Renditions*. Being associated with "big names" by having your work appear in one and the same publication would have meant very much to any novice translator; even if they may not have met one another in the process, there would be a sense of almost being colleagues and *becoming* part of one and the same batch of professionals: "translators whose work was published in *Renditions*". Learning becomes, here, "the vehicle for... the inclusion of newcomers while also... the vehicle for the development and transformation of identities" (Wenger, 1998: 13). This reconnects to the idea of "becoming" happening to all translators, and the various forms "becoming" takes for individuals with different levels of professional experience.

On Translator Identity

Generally speaking, translator identity is not a very clear-cut subject. For a start, Sela-Sheffy (2014) points out that "translatorial competence is largely undefined": that is to say, what the skills demanded from an expert translator may be is not something very easy to put a finger on. Speaking of Israeli literary translators, Sela-Sheffy then goes on to explain how they "believe they must be profoundly knowledgeable, creative, devoted and non-conventional, whereas commercial translators are inclined (...) to claim a wider range of personal traits, including in addition to knowledge and creativity, also punctuality, efficiency and flexibility." (45) Elements like punctuality, efficiency and flexibility are none the less important for a centralised team of literary translators like *Renditions* has than they are for a commercial translator working in a world dominated by tight deadlines. Flexibility clearly also plays a key role in the examples from the previous section mentioning the variety of texts and types of Chinese language someone working at *Renditions* needed to tackle; while punctuality may not always have been on top of the agenda for every editorial team at *Renditions* (on a few occasions known to me the magazine was publishing behind schedule), the voluminous list of *Renditions* publications[47] shows that efficiency certainly was. Therefore, Sela-Sheffy's statement is just

[47] Details of which are available at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/ [last accessed on 25 September 2019]

as valid for freelance translators as it is for literary translation happening around a central organizing team.

Having said this, professional identity does not always bring only positive input into one's work: it can even become a kind of obstacle. My interview with one former *Renditions* editor showed how there were cases when a translator's already well-established identity could to some extent interfere with editorial duties, and consequently require some tactful interaction with the translator in question:

> I had to deal with… you know, big names in sinology, who'd send us a translation and say – 'don't you touch it'. People born in, say, Britain, or America… and then I would send it back and underline certain words, and say… you know, I would put another word on top of what I'd underlined and… question mark...? These interventions are all to do with English usage. So even people who are supremely confident of their command of their mother tongue slip up because they get caught by the Chinese… either syntax, or just an individual word. I can give you an example of such a word… like, if you see a sentence saying 另一个 *ling yige*… so, just because of the *ling*, you know, somebody had come up with 'further' something. And when you look at the English, you ask yourself, why 'further'…?

Again, we can see how this for an editor would have been a learning process, different and yet no less identity-shaping from the earlier example showing how editors could have an impact on one's translatorial practices. What this second example coming from a different person shows, is an aspect of the learning process useful mostly for honing people skills in one's editorial role (even though one would hope more confident and experienced translators may have had something to learn from subtle editorial feedback, too).

Identity, according to Wenger, refers to how we grow and "become" in terms of belonging to a community: an experience of self in a community context. Wenger also points out that "the experience of identity in practice is... not equivalent to a self-image... it is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities" (1998: 151). In Wenger's eyes, then, the idea of identity is linked to the individual but does not focus solely on the individual, but essentially on his or her experience within a specific circle of people. Did members of the *Renditions* team perceive their time with *Renditions* as of them assuming such a specific professional identity for that particular time? The high number of agreeable comments on the interaction with *Renditions* one comes across while reading through testimonials and accounts of translators who have worked with the magazine, suggests that there was indeed a sense of community: certainly, a sense of being made welcome, and being motivated in your work.

Traveling Identities: Geographical and Cultural Identity

In the context of *Renditions*, looking into the geographical and cultural environment the magazine thrived in for so long comes naturally, as does exploring the role and importance of cultural identity. *Renditions* is widely acknowledged as being the first to make an attempt to anthologise Hong Kong literature (by focusing on this area repeatedly in special issues, and later in a double volume entitled *To Pierce the Material Screen I and II*), and make it better known and more widely available in English. In that process, not only did the magazine publish Hong Kong literature in translation, it also guided readers less familiar with the place by using paratexts, or what I like to call "safety nets" for readers, i.e. brief explanatory introductions to translations in which it was central to have an awareness of the times the text had emerged from.

One of my interviewees was involved in much of this work on Hong Kong literature and told me of how in one particular case it was decided that a text should have an introduction.

> I found this text had something special that made it worth collecting in this anthology... I really liked it, and so did Eva [Hung]: it shows a very strong Hong Kong identity. (...) At some point [Eva and I] were both saying that it might be necessary to give readers the background because... if you are from Hong Kong you will know what it is about, but if not...

Not only does it matter to include an introduction because of the Hong Kong identity of the text: the piece is also about a very specific period of time for Hong Kong which readers elsewhere may simply not know of at all. Such paratexts also show that Hong Kong has an identity its people are well aware of, and were (at least at *Renditions*) keen on highlighting it along with the local literature as a key feature of the place. In a way, then, some translators were also quite openly and intentionally showing their Hong Kong identity through their work. There is no intention to somehow foreignize the translations by including this information; the function of a device like paratexts is essentially that of providing useful information and enhancing the reading experience without burdening the translation itself. Through paratexts, in other words, (translated) texts too undergo a process of "becoming" more accessible to readers from a different cultural background.

Cultural identity intended as that of the city where *Renditions* is based is one side of the coin; *Renditions* as a publication was certainly aware of the importance of promoting Hong Kong literature at specific points in time, as the following quote from its editors shows (Hung and Pollard, 1997: 7):

> There is no denying that the impending change in Hong Kong's political status has brought considerably more exposure to all aspects of life here, including our literature. China's interest in Hong Kong's literary scene is certainly noticeable: whether as an effort to understand local culture or because of a need to define the place before it returns to Chinese rule, Hong Kong literary histories and Hong Kong authors' series have sprung up in China in the last few years. The quality of the books is variable, but one limitation is in common: they have not taken into consideration the most up-to-date works. This would not have been a handicap if the literary scene were stagnant, but that is far from the case for Hong Kong in the 1990s.

We notice here an awareness of changes preceding the historical episode of Hong Kong "becoming" a city returned to Chinese rule, as well as an awareness of developments in the publishing industry and of gaps these were leaving for

Renditions to fill, thereby creating an opportunity for the magazine to "become" an up-to-date reflection of Hong Kong literature true to the latest developments on the local literary scene.

The other aspect of cultural identity is the cultural identity of an individual translator, a subject that has been studied to some extent in TS, as I have mentioned earlier. It may not seem a very good idea for me to focus in on individuals, however, particularly because the magazine I am looking at has a house style and has editors who stick meticulously to that house style regardless of whether contributors sit in England, America, Australia or elsewhere in the world, in a process that probably does away with displays of cultural identity where there are any. In one particular case, however – the only time when *Renditions* did not publish Chinese literature in English – such a display was in fact welcomed on the pages of the magazine, in the shape of Brian Holton's translations of some of Du Fu's poetry into Scots. For Holton, probably the only translator currently translating from Chinese into Scots, this use of his native tongue (which, he states, he only took interest in later in his life once he came to realise Scots was a language in its own right; see Holton, 2016 for details) is very much an expression of his geographical roots: Holton's identity as a translator has been defined by the use of Scots as a TL for most of his career. This also shows that it is possible for the cultural identity of a translator to feed something new back into the community of practice he or she is engaging with.

After some earlier work for *Renditions* in English, partly co-translated with his then colleague Chu Chiyu (who had already been on the editorial team of *Renditions* for several years before he met Holton), some of Holton's work in Scots was also accepted for publication by *Renditions*' current Chief Editor, Theodore Huters. Scots functioned as a marker of identity, and led to an important finding for Holton: his initial brush with Chinese and with translation was at a time when he was living in Scotland in a rather isolated fashion, and by discovering *Renditions* and coming into contact with then editor John Minford, and reading and hearing more about what they were doing, he discovered that there was a community of people out in Hong Kong doing precisely what he was interested in doing – "community" being the exact word Holton used in my interview, which suggests some contributors did in fact see *Renditions* as a community.

The example of Scots reminds of Wenger's mirroring table in which he juxtaposes practice and identity, in which one of the bullet points refers to “community – membership”: here a community exists that is centred around a practice an individual happens to be engaging in as well, and this naturally results in his involvement in this community (i.e. in his temporarily becoming a member of this community). This experience may only be one of several listed on a translator’s “CoP profile”, but it still is a professionally formative experience that contributes to “becoming”, to building translator identity. The process of an individual merging into a community and gradually *becoming* its member is closely interconnected with the practice of translation, without which none of the activity within the community would be happening, so in other words the existence of a community and the possibility of one's membership in it depend on the existence, and the dynamics of, the practice that is central to this community.

Cultural identity does not necessarily have to be that of the translator, however, it can also be that of an author that then permeates through to readers in other languages via translation, as in the case of Howard Goldblatt's translations of Taiwanese writer Huang Chun-Ming (黃春明, 1935 -) whose work is, in Goldblatt's words, typically set in rural Taiwan and focused by and large on uneducated, disadvantaged characters, those on the lower end of the social ladder; this is a milieu Huang has grown up in and knows well, as Goldblatt explains in his introduction to the publication of some of Huang’s writing with *Renditions* Books (Huang, 2013: pp 7-8). The display of the author’s origins spreads across his writing, and at such a scale it would be difficult (and probably pointless) to try and eliminate it altogether in translation. One of my interviewees mentioned how some people who read translated literature do in fact *expect* to come across something foreign in the book, and even gave this as the very reason for these readers to seek out foreign literature in translation. If there are such readers, then there is indeed no point in domesticating a translated text and making authors with a specific flavour to their writing like Huang Chun-

Ming sound like locals in the target culture - a paratext containing this background information will allow to leave the foreign elements in, and provide the necessary explanations.

This is as much a display of the writer's cultural (Taiwanese, rural...) identity as it is of his linguistic identity, where, says Goldblatt, "it is lamentable, though unavoidable, that one of the hallmarks of Huang Chun-Ming's fiction, the conscious, liberal use of dialect, cannot be captured in translation"; the translator then comes in defence of some characters in the book who are from an older generation and "cannot comprehend what is being spoken around them", and explains that this is because they only speak the indigenous Taiwanese dialect and not the "official" Mandarin language. The reader thereby receives some very helpful information that mitigates their cultural unawareness as they explore the book itself. Readers familiar with China and its culture will often be able to immediately identify a translated text as Chinese, but for those who are not, paratexts like the one Goldblatt provides here give important background knowledge on the author and on the setting of the stories, and can help readers understand why some characters react in a seemingly unfamiliar way.

Translators need to find such ways to transpose the author's cultural identity into the receiving culture, because the works being translated require them to do so. Identity can, in this way, acquire an ability to "travel" via literary works: the same is true in the earlier example of Hong Kong identity coming across in Hong Kong writing. Identity thereby "becomes" a window for readers into the source culture of the text. Examples like the ones shown here of Hong Kong and Taiwan identity peering at the reader from pages of translated texts have, of course, also become part of a wider spectrum of the cultural and linguistic variety of literary China that *Renditions* introduces to its readers.

I have mentioned above how some contributors did seem to think of *Renditions* as of a community; could membership in this community become in any way tangible? If someone was contributing to *Renditions,* he or she could certainly say "some of my material has been published in *Renditions*" or "I have worked with *Renditions* for a period of time on a special issue" but not that they have a permanent position with *Renditions* or possess some kind of item that shows them as being part of a group in Hong Kong, e.g. a membership card. Such a real object is not necessary for translation in a team to work well and make it into print: one is a member by virtue of having participated in the enterprise at some point in time. We are looking at a community that, in the wider sense, has become a large invisible web of professional, and in many cases friendly, links between translators, formed around a core team where it may well occur at any time that the team will reach out and contact a specific member in a situation when this person's knowledge and skills are needed. These knowledge-sharing resources are vast and varied in the case of *Renditions*, given that its catalogue covers, in their own words, “over 2000 years of Chinese literature from classical works of poetry, prose, and fiction to recently published works by writers representing the rich variety of contemporary Chinese literary expression”.[48] Knowing this, one can roughly imagine the many areas of specialist knowledge a large pool of contributors can cover.

(In)Visible Identity

It is quite common to differentiate between naturally occurring CoPs and artificially created ones given that once the concept of “community of practice” had been put into words by Lave and Wenger, then found widespread practical use in business organisations, government organizations, educational institutions (e.g. in teacher training, see Wong et al, 2006) and associations seeking ways to focus on learning through reflection on practice. In other words, after Lave and Wenger had published their ideas, CoPs were often intentionally *created*, which in turns implies that participants were *aware* of the CoP's existence and of their membership in it. Consequently, there have been scholars like Pyrko et al. (2017: 390) who have pointed out that “attempts to purposefully design CoPs face a critique for losing sight of the original emphasis placed on learning entailing an investment of identity in the social context, as well as losing sight of the spontaneous nature of CoPs”. Indeed, at an earlier stage, Wenger’s initial co-author on CoPs Lave had already noticed this tendency, stating (in Amin and Roberts, 2008: 283):

[48] Source: *Renditions* website, https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/index.html [last accessed on 20 March 2019]

> The [CoP] label stuck, the book [*Situated Learning*] brought the concept to the table, and it has travelled to places, and for purposes, that we did not envision at the time... many who use the concept of "communities of practice" now seem ignorant of the original intent (and its limitations), and simply assimilate it into conventional theory.

What troubled Lave to the point of prompting her to revisit *Situated Learning* and its findings, appears to be precisely the same issue criticised by Pyrko: "purposefully designed" CoPs as opposed to CoPs in fact being more of a "spontaneous" occurrence.

As to *Renditions*, the magazine could not possibly be seen as artificial CoP, given that it pre-dates Lave and Wenger's publications on the subject. Reflection on practice is certainly something the *Renditions* team did as well, if not in a systematic, regular way as an intentionally created CoP would, but rather spontaneously and informally when there was an occasion to do so. A testimony by translator and *Renditions* contributor Karen Kingsbury (in Hung, 2003: 80) tells of one such situation: "at one point we were gathered around a table, seminar-style, telling translator's tales. (…) We all laughed, and marvelled too, at the variousness of English," Kingsbury remembers, conveying both the informal nature and the academic setting of the exchange. As to learning from the experience, she then adds:

> That laughter loosened, ever so slightly, my own attachment to ingrained grammatical habit, and helped open my mind to the varieties of English used around the world. In my work as an English teacher in Taiwan, I still correct errors (…), but I do so with a bit more humility and humour, thanks to that brief but memorable encounter with a roomful of translation experts all laughing about [prepositions].

Such anecdotal evidence of procedures Wenger considers typical for a CoP, where a common interest facilitates said procedures, offers proof that *Renditions* is indeed an example of naturally occurring CoP.

Lave and Wenger do make a point of saying, however, that CoPs are virtually everywhere and have existed ever since human beings have started learning from each other. One could therefore say that CoPs are in fact not always obvious and visible communities, it is only because these two scholars put their theories down in writing (1991) and Wenger has kept developing them since (see e.g. Wenger, 1998 and 2014) that we have a better awareness of the existence and potential of CoPs. Essentially, however, what Lave and Wenger are suggesting is that communities of practice develop naturally along with the rise of activity around a common purpose, without people engaged in this activity necessarily noticing the CoP. Neither is visibility a strongly characteristic trait for translation and translators.

Any piece of writing on translator identity would not be complete without a nod to Lawrence Venuti (1995) and his well-known debate on translator invisibility, which according to TS scholar Susan Bassnett "has become the standard work on translator identity" (2011: 9). Venuti complains of how excessive domestication practices often seen in the Anglophone publishing industry have brought about an increase in the degree of invisibility of translators in their work, and also laments, in that context, the lack of credit openly given to translators. Venuti himself advocates the strategy of foreignization, reconnecting to words by Friedrich Schleiermacher who argued there are only two ways of translating: either "sending the reader abroad" (foreignize) or "bringing the author back home" (domesticate).

Looking at what I have said so far, there appears to be more to invisibility in relation to identity (at least in the context of a magazine) than what Venuti is concerned about. In the first place, translators will certainly *not* be "coerced" into invisibility in a publication that calls itself a translation magazine and has as one key purpose that of highlighting the art of translation. In addition to *Renditions* giving translators credit in print in multiple ways, we have seen how there is a certain rather abstract sense of being part of a community among its contributors, and how this in turn shapes their identity. It can be said that a CoP like *Renditions* does in fact enable translators to *become* professionally visible as translators.

So, while Venuti suggests that some major publishers may not be doing much to boost translators' professional identity, a translation magazine can do its share of this. Considering that translation is, more often than not, a freelance activity, and that it is acknowledged that most translators have a kind of professional "profile" in that they are in fact members of multiple work-related communities (Mason, 2014), every translator's "CoP profile" is quite likely to include some more distanced and formal and some other more welcoming and collegial experiences. Paradoxically, if a translation magazine does in fact enhance translators' visibility, it does so in rather invisible ways: I have discussed here how membership in a CoP like *Renditions* is not necessarily tangible, it remains a covert link happening mainly through personal contact. Translation *is* openly visible and discussed inside the magazine, but it is not shown anywhere who all is on board within this community (for that information, one needs to be aware that *Renditions* keeps a detailed and openly accessible online index of all its contributors past and present, both authors and translators, linked to on their website[49] but somewhat hidden) and yet invisible links of a friendly, collegial nature last over a long time, and show whenever contributors are contacted again further along the way with a request to translate another piece. This is likely where one feels a sense of belonging to the community, when it is the community that reaches out to them for assistance. Periods of non-participation in between do not seem to cut these links off.

That much of this identity-shaping is not openly visible is because most of it rests on communication within the community itself, and yet these are the ties that hold the community together, given that any significant financial incentives can be ruled out. It now becomes more difficult to reconnect to Venuti, given that translation magazines (or, at least, *Renditions*) seem to sail through his arguments unhurt. They are an environment that fosters translation, gives support to those who carry it out, and, not least, foreignizes translation (see the example of Huang Chun-Ming above); *Renditions* itself suggests so by describing itself as "presenting... materials *originally intended for Chinese eyes*"

[49] This can be found at: https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/biography/index.html [last accessed on 2 August 2019]

(my emphasis), in other words as close as possible to the versions to which readers in China had access. In the words of Eva Hung (1995: 248):

> There is a major difference between the *Renditions* approach to translation-editing and that practised by some commercial publishers. While the latter would often give priority to the preferences and taste of target-language readers and would therefore approve of omissions, additions and translation shifts tailored to appeal to these readers, *Renditions* is concerned with presenting an accurate view of the original work. The effort which goes into polishing the English translations … is done in response to the deceptively simple question asked by readers of translations: if the original is written in good Chinese, should the translation not be in good English?

These words, on one hand, acknowledge the existence of the same trend criticised by Venuti, and on the other give *Renditions*' straightforward rationale behind presenting texts accurately, "as intended for Chinese eyes".

Becoming Informed, Becoming Versatile: Improving within a Community

If we link the concept of "identity" to that of "learning as becoming" in the context of translation, we might ask to what extent do translators "become" through involvement with *Renditions*? They certainly gather experience in the process, and possibly some of them find they are becoming better at what they do (particularly the contributors who stated that they found it beneficial to have been asked to work on many different kinds of Chinese texts, and benefited from editorial guidance in the process). We have seen how translators also become part of a community by virtue of engaging in one and the same practice and using one and the same language combination. It can be said they also "become" several other things in the process: contributors to *Renditions*, contributors to the projection of the literary heritage of one country into another cultural sphere, and indeed the key agents who make this projection happen (by doing the actual translations). What they then take away from this has been described in overwhelmingly positive terms, both in conversation with me and in writing (see Hung, 2003), so it is safe to say that participation in the *Renditions* team has in most cases brought something useful and enjoyable to who these translators were (or are) professionally. This suggests that professional contact with a community which on one hand is rather strict – in that it has a meticulously precise editorial team – but which on the other hand praises and encourages the very activity translators do for a living, certainly is a worthwhile stopover in the career of a literary translator from the Chinese.

One thing that can, more broadly, be seen as a way for the RCT to be actively encouraging a community spirit is that it regularly organised conferences and events on various aspects of Chinese-English translation over the years. Hung (in Chan, 2001: 78) confirms: "The [RCT] was one of the first local academic units to organize conferences and seminars on translation, and also the first to bring international scholars of translation studies to address the local academic community". We notice that what is described here is, in fact, the gradual process of *Renditions* "becoming" an important crossroads for China scholars and translators.

I have attended two such events, both in December 2015: a talk by translator Brian Holton which was part of the Renditions Distinguished Lecture Series hosted by the RCT, and the RCT's biannual "International Conference on Chinese Translation History". This was, for me, also a way of actively "becoming" part of my research and following my own trail of experiences within the "landscape of practice" and the milieu my project was focusing on: this was my first visit to CUHK, my first direct contact with the RCT and some of its staff, whose names I was already very familiar with due to my explorations of earlier issues of *Renditions*. I was made to feel welcome at CUHK, and some contact details were exchanged at these events. Further to my direct experiencing some of the *Renditions* space, this was also a way of making first contacts prior to a period of data collection planned for the following year, which later greatly facilitated contact with most of my interviewees. There was still something at these academic events of the community spirit I had become aware of through my early readings on *Renditions*-related material.

Founding editor George Kao drew parallels between such events and *Renditions*, and reflected on how the *Renditions* team's experience could be put to good use in discussion with translators and scholars at such international events. Of the Chinese-English Translation Conference held in Hong Kong in August 1975, Kao (1975: 13) says that several of the invited participants "were associated in one way or another with *Renditions*" and remarks that "many of the problems discussed at the conference are regularly encountered by the editors of *Renditions* from one issue to another", concluding that "[the *Renditions*] experience will be valuable, not only to Chinese-English translators but also to workers in other languages". Kao's trail of thought shows that knowledge exchange on Chinese-English translation was clearly one of his intended directions for *Renditions*; already in very early stages, Kao knew that the experiences his team had with editing and publishing the magazine could be useful to any translator if shared, not only to people working from Chinese into English. This can also be seen as an identity-shaping initiative, on a larger than individual scale: participants at these events share, network with colleagues, and "become" better informed on the translatorial profession.

Another angle from which to discuss "becoming" is also the translator-author bond. It was quite common for *Renditions* contributors to already know personally, or to seek to meet, the writers or poets whose works they were translating; knowing the author personally, or even corresponding with him or her for years, as was the case with translator Mary Fung and poet Bian Zhilin 卞之琳 (1910-2000) (Fung, 2006: 23), is not an uncommon scenario.[50] Some translators are also known to have "their" preferred author so to speak, in that they feel more comfortable translating the work of one specific author.

It is interesting to note, however, that there appears to be a line between being friendly with an author and actually consulting him or her on the translation work. There are some specific translation issues where a translator might particularly appreciate access to the author and where this access can prove very helpful, e.g. when translating dialect, when the author may be the most direct and reliable source of information, so Nicky Harman during our interview.

[50] Note that this may not apply to *Renditions* contributors in general; my interviewees are, perhaps except for Nicky Harman, people who were quite close to the *Renditions* editorial team or were even part of it for some time, and may have been more likely to be in touch with authors through the magazine.

Several of my further conversations with translators suggest, however, that there are some clear limits as to them seeking to involve the author, in what could be called a two-directional respect for one another's work. By way of example, translator Simon Patton said on his correspondence with poet Yu Jian 于坚 (1954 -): "I do check [with the poet, if I suspect there is a typing error in the manuscript]. And that's nice, to have that access, but I try not to abuse it because it is… it is extremely dull, in many ways. You know, 'what did you mean by that, exactly?' I don't think any writer likes to be pestered with those boring translation questions, especially when they don't know the [target] language themselves…" Trying to define where this line lies is not a straightforward matter: this can change case to case. As Patton points out above, one relevant factor for a translator to consider is, of course, the author's command of English; in addition, if the writer does have a fairly good command of the TL, what matters is also his or her level of interest in knowing what the translation will read like. Another of my interviewees confirmed these thoughts by commenting as follows:

> I feel there are things I don't want to ask, or I shouldn't ask the author, or should not even expect an answer to. This is quite hard to put a finger on, but they are things that go deep into the writing… why did you write it in such a way instead of in such another way… I don't think it is fair to ask the author this. Unless there is an author who actually really wants to talk about his or her style… but most authors are much more interested in their own language and creativity, and that is as it should be. Some authors are interested in how their work is going to come out in the English translation, but that is mostly because their English is good in the first place. It can be that they may have studied Western literature as well as Chinese literature… most authors have this kind of internal creative process, and… what really matters is what I get from their writing, so long as I feel that I have understood it to the best of my ability.

Generally most translators seem to agree that familiarity with the author as a person can, albeit not always, be helpful in understanding some of his or her writing, and through that the translator can learn ways of "becoming" the author as if he or she was writing in the TL, so to speak.

Conclusion

This chapter has allowed to reflect on the idea of "identity – learning as becoming" put forward by Wenger (1998) as one of four learning patterns in the context of CoPs, on how identity shapes a practice gradually allowing the practitioner to "become" an experienced professional, and more precisely on the dynamics the role *Renditions* plays in the shaping of translator identity. I started by noting that seeing the activities of CoPs as a "landscape" is an image that helps framing my discussion because the example I draw from is concerned with only one practice (translation) and explores the boundaries of translator identity and of "learning as becoming" within this particular practice. It has emerged that translator identity is a somewhat elusive topic, and has been discussed here both in its individuality (what a translator might take away from a CoP professionally) and from a broader social perspective (the idea of translators having a "CoP profile", and networking at conferences as a way of "becoming" professional).

I have shown how identity-shaping is in fact a two-way process, in that translator identity establishes to some extent how *Renditions*' editors work and what they choose to publish, and by the same token *Renditions* has intentional and not-so-intentional ways of leaving an imprint on the professional identity of its contributors. I have also ventured into a discussion of identity in a spatial sense, in that I have given examples of how identity can be geographical or cultural and how this can influence author-translator dynamics (in the case of Goldblatt and Huang) or the way a translator might act out his or her cultural identity professionally (Holton), or again how geographical and cultural identity emerge as a crucial element that requires explaining and highlighting in paratexts to avoid confusing readers who are new to it.

Finally, I have pointed to the tangible and the intangible aspects of translator identity, and given a parallel with Lawrence Venuti's work in that context, suggesting that a translation magazine is in fact a kind of publication that has almost the opposite effect on translator identity than the issues in the publishing industry Venuti complains about. I believe Venuti is right in highlighting what he does, as this is a trend that certainly exists, but this will only be part of a literary translator's "CoP profile" and may not be as significant a problem as Venuti would have us believe, at least not in the world of translation magazines. That said, some of Venuti's criticism is also directed towards newspapers and magazines and their ongoing lack of attention to the fact that the reviewed text is in fact a translation in most reviews of translated literature. Also the aforementioned parallel between translation and acting emerges again in this chapter. Translators do indeed play a number of roles in their profession: that of an attentive reader, that of a careful cultural mediator, and finally also that of author of the translated text, in which the translator impersonates the author.

Bringing back to mind Wenger's table in which he compares practice and identity (see page 105), most of the points Wenger makes in his table have been discussed in this chapter, validating the comparison in my own table that links Wenger's thoughts on identity to translation as a profession: the idea of a "negotiated experience of self" mirrors in the examples of identity-shaping interaction with editors; the idea of actively participating in a project that is expanding the volume of translated Chinese literature available internationally; contributor "membership" comes across as a long-lasting, yet somewhat abstract and informal notion in the case of *Renditions*. During the stopover at *Renditions* during their career, I have shown how translators advance in their "learning trajectory"; the examples illustrating how both translator and author identity travels via literary translation are also examples of "belonging defined globally but experienced locally" in Hong Kong itself. The existence of a "nexus of multi-membership" giving rise to a wave of professional networking is shown in the example of conferences and academic events the RCT organises. The fact that all of Wenger's points are to some degree reflected in this chapter goes on to suggest that Wenger's table also works for the specific example of translator identity. Furthermore, even if strictly speaking identity is a concept that relates more to the individual than the collective journey through a landscape of practice, still a discussion on identity with reference to a translation magazine continuously reconnects to the idea of something collective, of community and networking, i.e. to the social aspects of translation, indicating that these aspects really are inherent to translation as a profession.

CHAPTER 6
The Multiplicity of "Meaning": On Learning as Experience

> *The whole thing was based on networking – on friendships and ongoing exchanges of information. There was no real "School" of theoreticians, but there was a nucleus of people … who were eager to share whatever information and writings they had. It was a very meaningful period for all of us. It gave us a sense of community, and a setting in which to have our say.*
>
> (Schlesinger, 2000)

In the above quote from an interview with linguist and TS scholar Miriam Schlesinger, Israeli translation scholar Gideon Toury, one of the pioneers of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), reminisces on the very beginnings of Translation Studies as a field of academic study. His way of wording these thoughts shows that TS is in fact rooted in what we might call a community of practice. What mattered back then, Toury explains, was the ongoing networking and exchange of information, the readiness of a number of scholars with common interests to share knowledge, and a setting "in which [they] had [their] say". All this made these first attempts at theorizing translation a "meaningful" experience for them.

Wenger's category of social learning I explore in this chapter is that of "meaning", or "learning through experience", for which Toury has provided a fitting opening statement. When discussing "learning through experience" in the context of translation, however, the first question to explore however is whether one still intends to say the same as Wenger. Translation working the way it does, on the one hand we have Wenger's "meaning" intended as "purpose", but there is also the linguistic "meaning" in terms of "sense; what one intends to say", something translators deal with on a daily basis in their work.

The discussion in this chapter will cover multiple layers of "meaning", starting from Wenger and his ideas on the subject, then moving on to the linguistic, perhaps more obviously translational sense for "meaning" in the context of *Renditions*, which reveals ways in which meaning travels with a translated text. The discussion will show that an important part of what makes the *Renditions* experience "meaningful" to everyone involved has to do with social interaction and networking, again suggesting that translation is a process with a strongly social nature. Some examples from *Renditions* and related press reviews will be analysed here to elaborate on these layers of "meaning". We will find that translators find meaning via collaborative practices in their profession, which in turn enables them to act out their role. Moreover, a translator's quest to achieve the "equivalent" or "best" translated meaning in a literal sense is also a process that often involves social interaction with others.

The "Meaning" of Professional Recognition

Moving on from "becoming" to "meaning (learning as experience)", we find that Wenger (1998: 51) links "practice" and "meaning" in the following way: "practice is, first and foremost, a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful." Wenger's ideas concern our life and the way we experience the world in a rather broad sense. In the *Renditions* context, can we therefore take this statement of Wenger's to suggest that translating as a practice and the engagement with an environment that quite openly considers this practice to be relevant and worthwhile allows contributors to experience their work as meaningful? What exactly is it in this particular context that gives the act of translating Chinese literature into English a "meaning"?

Remuneration can probably be ruled out as answer: *Renditions* does not usually pay its translators, or only very little. In earlier times, as Eva Hung mentioned to me during our interview, "there was a very small honorarium, but… really just an honorarium to say, we thank you… we know it took a lot of work". One of my interviewees also confirmed that this is so, and had reservations about the practice:

> My main gripe is that *Renditions* does not pay translators and seems to assume that you are an academic who has a highly paid other job, which is just not always the case… in the old days though, academics were really considered to be *the* people to translate, because after all they knew the language…

A financial incentive thus safely eliminated, what is it that pulls in contributions, then, if the fact that there is little or no pay for *Renditions* contributors is presumably open knowledge in Chinese-English translator circles? Or, seen from another angle: what, to a translator, is the "meaning" of getting published in *Renditions*? What professional satisfaction does this bring, or how does it enhance their career? It is important here not to forget that literary translators are, more often than not, themselves keen readers, and sometimes also active poets and writers: interest in the type of material being translated – Chinese literature – therefore also likely plays a certain motivational role.

Work is commonly understood to be an activity that is "a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash" (Terkel, 2011: xi). Work, some agree, "is a universal setting in which to pursue our universal search for meaning" bearing in mind that "work takes the lion's share of our time and energy" (Ulrich et al., 2010: 2). Given that most people do indeed spend most of their day engaging with work-related issues, if we all have a universal urge to find meaning through work, it would seem logical that some elements at our workplace feeds back into this process. From an employer's point of view, on the other hand, "making employees feel ... that what they do and think is important, increases staff morale and goodwill and creates more open communication that can only help to benefit the (…) system" (Canadian Education Association, 1988: 1).

This also reflects in my own case study: I have included in this thesis various anecdotes and descriptions of how this happened at *Renditions*, where, for example, someone new on the editorial team realised how important it was to get every detail right during the editorial process; this in turn reflected in the detailed feedback given to translators, a way of showing them that editors were checking their work thoroughly and took it seriously. Naturally, a workplace that finds ways of showing respect for your profession and shares the aforementioned fondness for literature most (if not all) literary translators have, will be appealing to work in: your work becomes the more meaningful. What is also attractive about *Renditions* is, on the other hand, the magazine's public profile, that is to say its fame and reputation: for their name to be associated with a prestigious publication appeals to novice translators and more experienced but perhaps not yet so well-known translators alike. I have mentioned earlier how one of my interviewees recalled that it meant a lot to be associated with "some of the great names, people that you'd read about, and learned from." We see in this comment a younger generation of translators seeing “meaning” in learning from those who preceded them. Not least, the way *Renditions* worked appealed also to these “great names”, that is, the more experienced professionals in the field. This fact is not unrelated to a translator’s cyclic learning curve: we have seen how translators “learn by doing” throughout their professional career (see Chapter 4). *Renditions* is, therefore, an example of CoP that is meaningful to every translator participating in it by virtue of every translator’s continuous search for professional excellence that accompanies the ongoing pursuit of the joint aim of the CoP.

Recognition can also certainly be given and received through other than monetary channels: translators are quite visibly given credit and repeatedly named in print in *Renditions*: usually, as I have shown earlier (see e.g. Figure 2) in the table of contents, at the beginning of their translation, and towards the end in the “Introduction to Contributors”. On rare occasions, as in the example below in Figure 8, credit is even to be found on the magazine’s very cover: in this case a nod to a well-known scholar and translator, Chi-Chen Wang 王際真 (1891-2001), appears clearly visible on the cover of the magazine (see Figure 8), in connection with his translations of new material by author Chen Ruoxi 陳若曦 (1938 -). Translators are also sometimes asked to write an introduction for *Renditions* readers if and where one is deemed necessary.

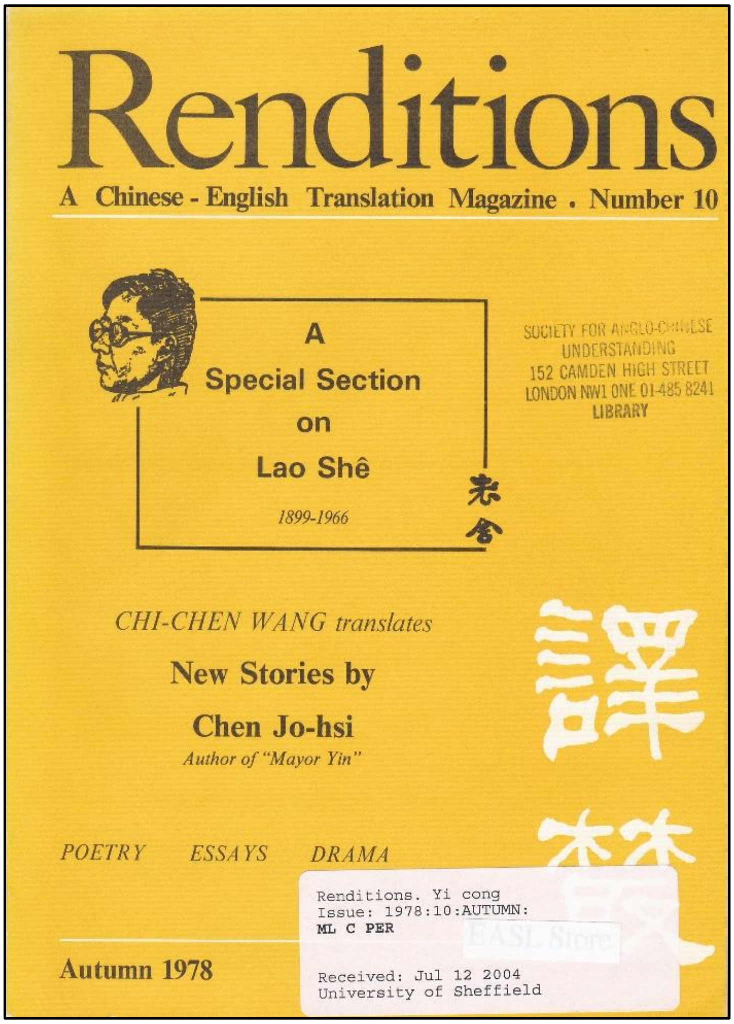


Figure 8: The front page of Renditions *No. 10 (Autumn 1978).*

Moreover, remuneration, it has been found, is perhaps not always a very meaningful way to enhance professional experience for employees. Wenger et al. (2002) mention as example how technicians at Xerox were, in fact, put off by a proposal to create small financial incentives for their contributing to the company's knowledge base. The bosses were told that the very fact technicians had a way to make such contributions was what made their presence meaningful, and were given a clear refusal to receive pay for this kind of service. "That would cheapen the whole thing" (182), the technicians responded. The real reward for their contributions to the knowledge base, Wenger points out, was to have their name posted as author of an idea before anyone else. That in turn leads to open recognition by peers, something Wenger and his co-authors then identify as "the primary motivator for community participation", the more so if there is quite a prominent and visible way for this to get recognised within the organization (e.g.

an annual event where such contributions are mentioned in public). Likewise, if *Renditions* was, as my interviewee had it, able to give contributors "a sense of themselves as [translators]", remuneration may not have always been a priority over being published in *Renditions*, in a similar way as it was not a priority for the Xerox technicians.

Wenger's example of Xerox is applicable to many other professions, to some extent: what makes a profession meaningful is essentially what one achieves in it. In agreement with this, lawyer Louis D. Brandeis (1856-1941) is known to have told graduating students that "[a profession] is an occupation in which the amount of financial return is not the accepted measure of success" (Tiryakian, 2013: 125), be the measure of success a contribution to the Xerox knowledge base or the production of a translated literature that adds to an existing corpus. One way of revealing how *Renditions* is meaningful, in terms of its contribution to the dissemination of Chinese literature, is to move away from the question of why translators see *Renditions* as meaningful and take a broader look into what wider (academic, media) circles have to say about the magazine. I have discussed above how *Renditions*' reputation is meaningful for contributors. What reputation exactly are we looking at, according to, say, the press?

Renditions *as Seen by the Press: Hong Kong no longer a "Cultural Desert"*

Looking at press reviews,[51] we do find a variety of comments that illustrate in what ways *Renditions* was seen as "meaningful" for Hong Kong, and for the English-speaking world at large. Taiwan-based British freelance writer and book reviewer Bradley Winterton introduces *Renditions* to his readers as follows (South China Morning Post, n.d.): "*Renditions* is a great Hong Kong institution. For 30 years it has been spearheading translation from Chinese into English and has now accumulated an incomparable array of material." Still *Renditions* is praised as a leader in its field here, thirty years from its beginnings. On a similar note, South China Morning Post journalist Kwong (1993) writes, in a subtitle: "A unique band of translators is keeping English readers in touch with Chinese literature". The article goes on to quote then editor David Pollard on how he

51 These are archived materials kindly made available to me by the RCT. Not always was a full reference available or traceable, which is why occasionally references in this section are incomplete.

perceives the importance of accuracy, an intervention which to some extent explains Kwong's use of "unique": "The vital difference between us and other translators [is that] the works we receive are read by three to five [editors]. Some concentrate on the English while others look at the correctness in Chinese." I have shown in Chapter 4 how detailed a process this was and how it mattered to editors that this cross-checking was done thoroughly and correctly.

Another journalist, Mak (1998), echoes Winterton and Kwong's praises in the *Hong Kong Standard* by stating that "the West has an increasing awareness of classical and modern Chinese writing, thanks to the scholarship at the Research Centre for Translation." The Hong Kong press clearly took a certain pride in being able to claim *Renditions* as a local literary translation outlet. On taking a closer look, their focus is often on the pioneering and unique aspects of *Renditions*' work. Editor Eva Hung is quoted as telling Mak that compared to other similar publications "*Renditions* is the only magazine which regularly publishes translations of classical Chinese literature." Only three years prior to Mak's article appearing, Hung (1995) had published an article comparing and contrasting *Renditions* with two similar publications that were then its contemporaries, *Chinese Literature* of the Chinese Mainland and Taiwan's *The Chinese PEN*, where she discusses this and other issues in more detail: her research for this will likely have been the source of her comment for Mak. Later *Renditions* became the only publication of its kind to include Hong Kong writing, or again the only publication to feature some diasporic writing (e.g. by Singaporean Chinese poets in *Renditions* No.55). A collection of Hong Kong writing was particularly meaningful, seeing as Hong Kong was generally not considered fertile ground for literary and cultural creation:[52] the publication of such a collection was physical proof of such views being inaccurate. On this, Hoo (1994) said in *The San Francisco Review of Books*: "The breadth and depth of the Hong Kong works collected… show that the barren rock has become a gem… and has achieved a distinct voice of its own."

52 Eva Hung writes in the preface to the double issue on Hong Kong writing (Hung, 1988: 8-9): "Over the last few decades, Hong Kong has been consistently referred to as a 'cultural desert'. Perhaps the time is now ripe to assert that the territory boasts as many cultural activities as any other Chinese society, and that includes literary creation … if Hong Kong is a cultural desert, it is one dotted with a myriad oases."

The "barren rock" image confirms the existence of a perception of Hong Kong as a "cultural desert": Hong Kong literature making an appearance in the spotlight surprised many, and this gave it a new readership and an enhanced role and meaning on the international literary scene. "With the passing of colonialism in Hong Kong, it is especially necessary for the West to understand Hong Kong and China from their inhabitants' point of view. Which gives the [RCT] all the more reason to continue its work." Hoo then concludes. This overview of what mainly Hong Kong journalists had to say, over time, about the RCT and *Renditions* as its flagship publication, gives a sense of how the magazine in particular was thought of as an outlet projecting a literary image of China to the West, and as an outlet representative of Hong Kong culture and identity. It also shows how the work *Renditions* contributors were doing was not just meaningful to them, but also to the broader Hong Kong community. The same goes for an even broader community of *Renditions* readers.

Wenger (1998: 51) gives a creation of a painting as example to illustrate his point on "meaning", in that the process of producing a painting involves "all sorts of mechanics…: a canvas, brushes, colour pigments, and sophisticated techniques. The image itself is but a thin veneer. *Yet in the end, for the painter and for the viewer, it is the painting as an experience of meaning that counts*" (my emphasis). In other words, it is the final product that matters. This analogy works well for the example of translation too: the process involves a number of different stages, of decision-making, of ways of using language and cultural knowledge, and of editing, most of which the general reader is never going to know about – readers will hardly be aware of the amount of work put into the finished translation they are reading (if they realise at all that it is a translation). For the translator, the final product is meaningful professionally as a printed sample of his or her work; for the reader, it is ideally meaningful as a source of enjoyment and information about Chinese literature and culture.

The Negotiation of Meaning: Participation and Reification

In his discussion of "meaning", Wenger identifies a process he calls the "negotiation of meaning" in which meaning as he sees it is embedded. Two other processes constitute this negotiation, namely "participation" and "reification", which Wenger interprets as forming a kind of yin-and-yang duality pattern (see Figure 9 below) fundamental to the human experience of meaning (1998: 52). "I intend the term *negotiation* to convey a flavour of continuous interaction, of gradual achievement, and of give-and-take…" Wenger explains. "The negotiation of meaning is a productive process, but negotiating meaning is not constructing it from scratch. Meaning is not pre-existing, but neither is it simply made up. Negotiated meaning is at once both… contextual and unique." (1998: 53-54) What is emphasized here is the location of meaning: it exists in the dynamic relation of us living in the world. Wenger therefore interprets the "meaning" in life through our interaction with the world in general, in a wider sense than is applicable to *Renditions* and the translator's profession as analysed here in this project.

Still, it can be said that any experience of translating takes place in a specific context and involves a whole series of factors and of types of interaction, in other words situations that are in some way contributing to the translator's professional experience. A piece that is to be translated comes with an author and a history of having been written and possibly also already published in its source culture, and now it waits for the translator to help it cross into a different cultural context. If we follow Wenger's defnition, it will be in the convergence of the translator working and the translation materialising that the negotiation of meaning takes place. However, if applied to the process of translation, Wenger's ideas will align, to some extent, with the other sense of the word "meaning": the translator is transferring a text into a different language and culture – and it can become a considerable challenge for him or her to ensure the text is fully understandable to a reader outside the source culture, i.e. that its original meaning has been preserved.

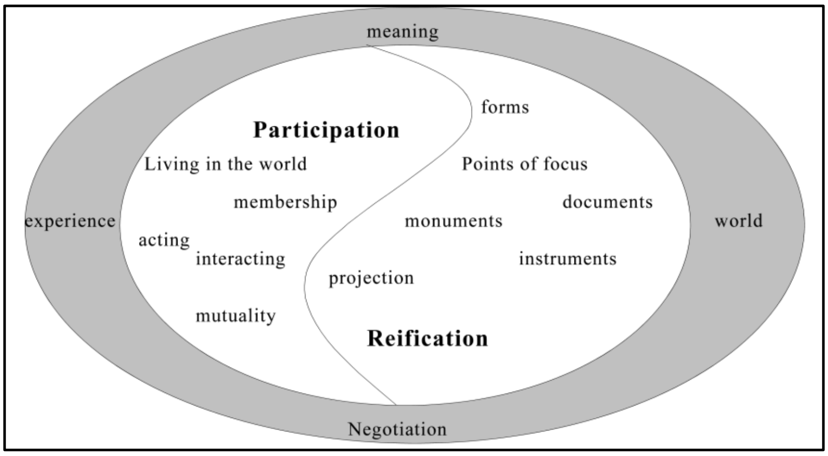


Figure 9: Wenger's graphic representation of the duality of participation and reification

Sharing Expertise: Participation

Participation in *Renditions* as a translator is both individual and social, similar to Wenger's own understanding of the term: "participation… suggests both action and connection" (1998: 55). Participating as a translator does involve a certain amount of individual work (the "getting the job done" part) and a certain amount of liaising, revising, and negotiating with editors and potentially with someone else, for example, with an assistant or a co-translator. Wenger then adds an important element, namely that participation involves mutual recognition. In a rather unusual illustration of this, he suggests that a fish in its bowl in the living room does not "participate" in family life, in that it does not get involved in any way, as opposed to a family dog whom Wenger considers able to participate in a real, albeit peripheral, way (1998: 56).

In this experience of mutuality, Wenger explains, participation is a source of identity: for a translator, professional identity is likewise shaped by participation. By virtue of participating, acting out their role, translators may find this experience to be meaningful. Wenger speaks of developing an "identity of participation", i.e. an identity constituted through relations of participation. This is to say that participation is more than engagement in practice: while the solitary time a translator spends working on the text to be translated is important, it is not a participatory activity as such. By the same token, participation is not the same as collaboration (neither is it the same as collaborative translation). Collaborative translation can be seen as a form of participation, but the latter has a wider sense. In Wenger's understanding, the concept of participation is intended to capture the profoundly social character of our experience of life: an important part of this is of course our professional activity, and the discussion here will show that it is essentially social too. Translating becomes meaningful for translators *through* social participation, because that is what enables them to act out their professional identity.

Towards the Real and Concrete: Reification

Etymologically, "reification" means "making into a thing". Wenger sees it as a useful concept to describe our engagement with the world as productive of meaning. "Whereas in participation we recognise ourselves in each other, in reification we project ourselves onto the world, and not having to recognise ourselves in those projections, we attribute to our meanings an independent existence." (1998: 58) This differentiation between mutuality and projection is an important distinction between participation and reification. In translation, reification comes mainly in the shape of printed translated material. Somewhat paradoxically, translators produce a written text that is and yet is not their own: this is essentially what their job involves. Again this idea connects to the often used parallel in TS between translators and actors, which I have pointed to earlier: "…the translator and the actor [have] to have the same kind of talent. What they both do is to take something of somebody else's and put it over as if it were their own" (Venuti, 1995: 7).

Wenger uses reification to mean "the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into 'thingness'. In so doing we create points of focus around which the negotiation of meaning becomes organised." (1998: 58) The range of examples of aspects of human experience and practice objectified into fixed forms covers everything "from poems to encyclopaedias" (1998: 59) which appears to include the "products" of literary translation: after all, *Renditions* has repeatedly been likened to an anthology, or included in publications thereon (see e.g. Hung, 1995 or Abbas, 1997). The very product of these translation efforts – all that we find in print in *Renditions* the magazine, and in *Renditions* books and paperbacks – are, however, only the most obvious examples of such a reification process. They are achieved by means of skills but also through a number of tools – a pair of languages, computers – and these tools play a role in what the finalized translations will look and read like.[53]

One question arises at this point: how, then, does *Renditions* "project itself onto the world"? What is its mission? On its official website, the magazine maintains to offer something for every reader: "the general reader will be entertained and informed, finding in *Renditions* a unique and fascinating gateway to Chinese culture. The specialist will find careful scholarship and a commitment to excellence in the fields of Chinese literature and translation."[54] Some of the reminiscences of (former) contributors and editors published for *Renditions*' thirtieth anniversary prove the magazine's readership did include both. "[*Renditions* was] a magazine that had beguiled, enlightened and inspired me so much when I was still an ignorant undergraduate…" writes translator Simon Patton (in Hung, 2003: 77). David Pollard, who by the time *Renditions* had started publishing was already an experienced lecturer in Chinese, found nevertheless that "the description of 'general reader' … fitted [him]… very well, as [he] was truly in that position with respect to large tracts of Chinese culture" (Hung, 2003: 53). *Renditions* therefore catered for a rather wide spectrum of interested readers.

The magazine also promised, in the foreword to its first issue provided by then CUHK Vice-Chancellor Choh Ming-Li, to be "presenting [to the reader] materials originally intended for Chinese eyes".[55] This on one hand is a promise that, at least in the Seventies, only someone based in Hong Kong had the possibility to make; only there would it have been possible to edit literature without prioritising the preferences set by a political agenda. On the other, it is also a commitment, a promise to translate and edit in quite a specific way, and produce material in English just as it was "intended for Chinese eyes" – leave nothing out, as it were. By 1982, Editor George Kao was preparing to leave

53 Wenger suggests that "reification can refer both to a process and its product" and that "the process and the product always imply each other" (1998: 60). If, however, one was only looking at the final, printed form of *Renditions* in the context of reification, one would be leaving out the translation process altogether, whereas *Renditions* is, as it were, also the reflection of a specific way of editing translation and of understanding Chinese literature.

54 Source: *Renditions* official website https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/index.html [last accessed on 28 July 2019]

55 Available online at: https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/pdf/e_outputs/b01/v01p003.pdf [last accessed on 28 July 2019]

Renditions, remarking with satisfaction in his introduction to double Issue No. 17&18 that the magazine "may be said to have carved out a small niche in the world of Chinese studies. This was in fact what we had set out to accomplish in 1972, neither more nor less" (Kao, 1982).

Wenger stresses the fact that the ideas of participation and reification form a duality, rather than a dichotomy: as the diagram in Figure 9 also shows, participation and reification are not opposites, they are two complementary dimensions that interact but cannot substitute for each other. They are a way of describing an interplay, rather than classificatory categories. Wenger sees this duality as a "framework to analyse the various ways in which they are always both at once." (1998: 68) A mountain-and-river image completes his illustration: "the river only carves and the mountain only guides, yet in their interaction, the carving becomes the guiding, and the guiding becomes the carving." (1998: 71) These ideas are not dissimilar to what late Hong Kong translation scholar Marta Cheung called a "pushing-hands approach" to translation history, an approach she never got a chance to fully develop due to a rapidly advancing illness, which she had named after a term borrowed from the martial art form *taijiquan* 太极拳, where research involves mutuality and "continuous interaction" between past and present (see Robinson, 2018). Similarly to the duality in the abovementioned mountain and river interaction, in a community of practice like *Renditions* no translated material would ever reach readers without the involvement of a wider team in the creation the magazine, and the existence of such a process implies the "reification" of the publication itself, which as an object can in turn shape the creative process behind it: editors past and present have these already published materials to turn to and take inspiration from whenever necessary.

"Meaning" in What Sense?

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that practice is the experiencing of meaning. In the case of a translator, this is particularly true, perhaps more than for other professions that do not involve languages and words; it is true in a slightly different sense than the one intended by Wenger. Beyond translators facilitating, and thereby experiencing first-hand, the transition of meaning from one language and cultural sphere to another, I have already touched upon the fact that it is also meaningful for them when they are being made to feel (for example, through communication with the editorial team) that their work matters, and that it matters it is done well. This way of experiencing meaning comes directly from within the community. So, does working for *Renditions* feel more like engaging in a meaningful activity rather than in a “thankless job”, as translation is sometimes described? (See e.g. Kao in Hung, 2003: 15) It also matters that the editorial team of *Renditions* are themselves practising translators who know from their own professional experience what all the work of their contributors involves; they can relate to it and are able to interact with contributors as translator-to-translator, as I have illustrated through examples of editorial intervention in the section on collaborative translation in Chapter 4.

Professional experience therefore plays a role in the experiencing of meaning, and this is always a two-way process (in that not only contributors get to know how *Renditions* works, but editors also need to familiarize themselves with the habits of their contributors). Perhaps the most obvious way to the outside world for *Renditions* to come across as a meaningful enterprise is the now decade-long contribution it has made to the corpus of Chinese literature available in English. Having said this, it then becomes interesting that Wenger takes the idea of reification a little further: “engagement in practice gives us certain experiences of participation, and what our communities pay attention to reifies us as participants” (1998: 150). In other words, by engaging in a certain activity we adhere to a “participant” or “contributor” label, so to speak, and that is how we project ourselves and how others in the community perceive us: we experience this participation through a specific working environment that has its own structure, rules and workplace hierarchy, and its own set of reasons for doing things a certain way. It could be said, along this same train of thought, that translators “renegotiate” the meaning of their profession in the light of their experience of a work context: at *Renditions*, being a translator is meaningful by virtue of the increased level of visibility a translation magazine offers.

There are therefore several ways in which Wenger’s own ideas on “meaning” apply to *Renditions*. We have seen how meaning is generated through specific kinds of incentives (other than monetary – e.g. professional recognition), the way in which these same incentives can shape the relationship between contributor and editor; also how, on a personal level, it matters that a community of practice finds translation work meaningful and demonstrates this is various ways through its interaction with translators, for contributors to find meaning in being part of the entire enterprise.

It is perhaps somewhat unusual to be looking at "meaning" in the sense of "purpose, significance" in a context typically involving the use of two languages, where "meaning" more often than not refers to what these languages intend to convey in a text being translated and where meaning in this sense is at the very centre of a translator's activity. On the importance of getting meaning across, Allen and Bernofsky note: "the ability to speak and be understood, to write and be read, is one of the great desiderata of the human spirit. Meaning is a slippery fish, but all of us – and translators and writers more than most – prefer to live in a world where people [try] to be intelligible to one another" (2013: xviii). Turning back to Wenger's intended sense for "meaning", both TS scholars and practicing translators seem to agree on the point that translators too learn by experience (see e.g. Mason, 2014: 39, and the discussion on experience in Chapter 4). Some publications have prompted translators themselves to ponder over the meaning of their profession (see e.g. Allen and Bernofsky, 2013), which indicates a scholarly interest in the issue and in bringing translators into the spotlight, so to speak – a worthwhile undertaking in the present times, Allen and Bernofsky find: "at a point in the history of globalization when literary translation strikes some as on the verge of being definitively outmoded … the essays in this book, all written by translators, address the vital necessity of literary translation not only as a subject for theoretical pronouncements but also as an ongoing *practice*" (xix, emphasis in original). Interestingly, through works like these, we also learn that some earlier translator communities were in fact drawn together by the need to share concerns dictated by the profession that were far from being linguistic ones, as the following example shows. In the same collection of essays, translator Eliot Weinberger tells how "translators [in the USA, some thirty years ago] began to come out of their isolation and anonymity to form groups … where they could share the tales of misfortune of their underpaid, entirely unrecognized, and often exploited occupation" giving as example the Translation Committee of the PEN American Center (Allen and

Bernofsky, 2013: 26) which is operational to this day.[56] We can see that this publication gives some consideration to both senses of "meaning", in terms of linguistic meaning being a "slippery fish" on the one hand and the meaning of translation "as an ongoing practice" reflected in the entire publication.

Not least, from a geographical point of view, it is also the space in which *Renditions* is based that makes its existence and activity meaningful: Hong Kong is probably the only place that could enable *Renditions* to make Chinese literature accessible to the public all along since the early Seventies; particularly at a time when access to the Chinese Mainland was closed to the rest of the world, *Renditions* offered a platform through which to explore the work of China's writers. While the when and where of *Renditions* may well be the result of a unique set of circumstances and a case of the right place at the right time, this partly also being what allowed it to quickly become a widely known publication, what it does is perhaps not as unique. After all, as I mentioned earlier, publications with a similar mission did and do exist, the biannual *Chinese Literature Today (CLT)* being a contemporary example. Yet, as I have discussed in Chapter 4, it can be said that there is a "*Renditions* way" of editing and publishing translation that was not happening the same way elsewhere in the Chinese translation magazine world.

Several layers of "meaning" can therefore be said to emerge from the context of translation. Starting from the microscopic and language-specific sense, most of a translator's day to day work involves transferring meaning from one language to another. One layer further, this translated meaning – still in the linguistic sense – is reviewed at editorial level, a stage that involves communication, rewording, interaction between translator and editors, in other words an exchange within the *Renditions* community, which in turn generates a process of negotiation of meaning and, ideally, a sense for contributors that their profession and efforts are taken seriously, which in turn reconnects with Wenger's own interpretation of "meaning": contributors may find that they are engaging in something professionally meaningful. Further, in a wider understanding of meaningfulness, comes the overall contribution of such a magazine towards the dissemination of

[56] Information on the Translation Committee and its activities is available online at: https://pen.org/current-members/translator-resources/ [last accessed 1 August 2019]

Chinese literature to a wider, international readership – here the existence and mission of *Renditions* come across as purposeful, because literary translation, as translator Mabel Lee (in Hung, 2003: 85) puts it, "takes the author's work beyond the confines of [a] specific language into a second-language domain and hence encourages greater understanding across cultures in the world".

"*Renditions* began publishing in 1973 and has played an important part in introducing the literatures of China to an English-speaking audience ever since", writes Bailey (1996) in a review of *Renditions* in *The China Quarterly*. She then goes on to say: "*Renditions* has made a valuable contribution to the field, surpassing its nearest rival, *Chinese Literature*, in depth, quality and variety". This "contribution to the field" is, in turn, connected to the geographical setting of *Renditions*: Hong Kong has allowed the magazine to operate the way it did, and to publish a wealth of material "covering over 2000 years of Chinese literature from classical works of poetry, prose, and fiction to recently published works by writers representing the rich variety of contemporary Chinese literary expression"[57] and, not least, has supplied the wide range of material for *Renditions*' pioneering work in giving Hong Kong authors a voice in world literature. I will return to this point through the example of a piece entitled "Air Granny" later in this chapter.

I have mentioned earlier that many literary translators in particular are authors in their own right and usually have a passion for literature, and how this is an important element that fuels their professional interest and motivation, and gives meaning to what they do. "I'd almost say I feel a need to translate every day", so one of my interviewees. "Play around with words … you know". This, of course, is an individual view that may not be true for every translator, but many literary translators do share a deep passion for language and experience a certain urge to use and understand it. As we have seen earlier with Weinberger's example from America, there tend to be reasons for a certain level of professional discontent and frustration which in the case of translators is a

57 Source: *Renditions* website http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/ [last accessed on 31 July 2019]

seemingly ubiquitous issue worldwide[58] and has sparked many an academic debate, not least Lawrence Venuti's objection to what he terms "translator invisibility" (developed mainly in Venuti, 1995), in which he calls for a higher level of open recognition for translators' work, e.g. in reviews of translated literature that typically have a tendency to ignore the fact that the book being reviewed is in fact a translation. Renowned American translator Gregory Rabassa summed this situation up in an interview, in one simple statement: "While the translator's role remains the same, the acceptance of that role has changed some and must change some more" (Hoeksema, 1978). The wording here suggests that Rabassa too had some reservations about the attitude towards his profession, but subtly identifies this very attitude as the problematic issue, rather than the way translation works.

This further shows that some of the negotiation of meaning in the translatorial profession is influenced by how the outside world perceives translators. This is where an experience like *Renditions* can alleviate such concerns within the profession – if the problem for literary translators is the overall attitude towards their professional activity and a lack of recognition for it, then any editor or publisher who shows understanding and respect for the time and effort a translator puts into his or her work will likely be perceived as a positive experience by translators.

Reconnecting now to the opening quote for this chapter, the community spirit at *Renditions* would appear to function on fairly similar principles as those described by Toury: a readiness to network and share knowledge and expertise in an environment accepting of translators' suggestions, and a willingness to allow translators to have their say and react to feedback. Looking at *Renditions* as a community of practice allows to focus on translators and on the way they work from a social perspective, and examples begin to emerge that show translation proper is in fact a highly social and networked profession.

58 Note that this may have country-specific nuances in some cases, as here in Bonnie McDougall's example of working for the Foreign Language Press in Beijing: "it was… frustrating because of the often poor quality of the material to be translated, the lack of expertise on difficult points of context and language, and editorial interventions which expurgated texts for English readers that Chinese readers were allowed to read in full." (Hung, 2003: 41)

TS scholars have a tendency to focus more on global, wider "outer layers of context" of translation that no longer have much to do with translation proper – and in so doing, says Mason (in House, 2014: 38) "[they] may occasionally lose sight of the core issues: translators at work and how they are affected in their decision-making by (cross-)cultural trends, pressures, movements." Mason engages with some of Wenger's critics in his essay, most notably Barton and Tusting (2005) who, in a book-length study, argue that "Wenger's model underrates the role of language in communities of practice", in that "it is through talk exchanges that meaning is negotiated and the dynamics of Wenger's key concepts can be observed" (Mason, 2014: 43). The two different ways to use "meaning" start merging here. Note how the sense of "meaning" used by Barton and Tusting is no longer the same as Wenger's, whose work they are criticising, but rather the same as I have flagged up as being inherent to translation: "meaning" as "what is intended by what we say". Mason, following up from Wenger's use of vignettes in which communication between people illustrates how participation in his own case study (claims processing) is experienced and negotiated, goes on to remark: "[also] translations are responses. The way the translator responds to what is said/written is [partial] evidence… of take-up. The treatment of a [source text] by the translator is evidence of how he or she responds to it and decides to present it to anticipated readers" (44). This is an interesting comment, given that translation is generally an art that, it is often said, cannot be seen. Yet again, it is widely acknowledged in translator circles that no two translations of the same text by different translators are ever exactly the same, and this is what Mason is getting at here. George Kao agrees with this idea of every translator "responding" to a text in a different way in the Editor's Page of *Renditions* No. 16 (see Soong, 1981), where he is quoted as saying of literary translation: "There can be, and often are, as many different versions of the original as there are translators to do the job. To put it simply, translation is a rather subjective exercise." A subjective exercise, but no less a social experience for that.

One of the issues Mason highlights in his study is the same I have repeatedly drawn attention to in this chapter, namely that what Wenger intends by "meaning" is not the kind of "meaning" translators mostly deal with. This need not be a hindrance, however, seen as Wenger simply does not hail from a TS background and might never have conceived that later scholars would draw on his ideas in such a way. By this same logic, Barton and Tusting's remark on Wenger underrating the role of language in his research weakens: language is just not central for Wenger.

Mason (2014: 52) then suggests that, given that "re-contextualisation is… a core feature of translation, we have to envisage the 'contextual connections' of both source and target context" and any effect communication on these may have had on translator decision-making. Interestingly, Mason then comes in support of this project in a way, stating that "research in the sociology of translating already adds a useful empirical dimension to theoretical accounts by means of interviews and accounts/narratives of stakeholders… such studies could also challenge the community-of-practice construct as it applies to translating". Mason then offers some examples but given that they are not on translation, what he is doing is, in his own words, "[offering] a paradigm that future research can scrutinise, refine or dismiss."

Equivalence, Re-contextualizing, and "Proper" Translating

Perhaps the first much-discussed concept that comes to mind when placing "meaning" in a TS context is that of "equivalence", a concept that has been debated on at length by a large number of scholars as a means of evaluating the quality of a translation. One of the scholars well-known for tackling this particular subject, Juliane House, explains that "equivalence is related to the preservation of 'meaning' across two different languages and cultures. Three aspects of that 'meaning' are particularly important for translation: a semantic, a pragmatic, and a textual aspect." (House, 2014: 248). Having said this, House maintains that for pragmatic and semantic equivalence to occur, the target text should have a function equivalent to that of the source text. It can certainly be said that this is the case for *Renditions,* where the translated material is mostly literature – writing appearing on the Chinese literary scene that the *Renditions* team considered interesting and worth translating – a text thereby intended for reader enjoyment in Chinese and in English alike, its function similar at origin and at the receiving end, the more so given that *Renditions* also has embedded in its mission the idea of not editing material intended for Chinese eyes. While I am not taking House's ideas for granted, it is tempting to test them with a language pair that is widely acknowledged to have considerable linguistic and cultural differences. What ways do translators find to obtain a functionally "equivalent" text in English, starting from its Chinese version?

My data suggest that translations certainly are a kind of response, supporting Mason's theorisation. They are, in their raw, unedited form, the translator's own version of a text. In my case study there is one additional agent – the editor(s) – who is likely, as shown in Chapter 4, to have a considerable degree of influence on the final outcome of a translation. "Meaning" often becomes a hurdle which the translator has to find a way to re-contextualize for readers: the translator is familiar with what is being said and with the source culture, but what the author wrote may not have an equivalent in the target culture. Translators who are native Chinese speakers also undergo a different process than translators who are not, as the following example shows. A piece I touched upon in one of my interviews contains the phrase "秋老虎的天气 *qiulaohude tianqi*". This of course is a set expression in Chinese, and while a non-native speaker of Chinese will likely be familiar with all the characters but may not have seen them in this combination, for the Chinese speaker the animal in this expression gets instantly lost. My interviewee elaborated: "you have to play around with it and be concise, convey the sense. You… don't see that tiger at all as a native speaker. The immediate image in my mind is one of 'late summer stuffiness' as it has been translated in *Renditions*." Still, even a non-native speaker who has not come across this expression before will probably realise at once that this may be a set phrase referring to a specific kind of *tianqi* (weather), given that set expressions are a very common occurrence in Chinese. A translator who is a native speaker, on the other hand, as my interviewee explains here, will skip this stage altogether: they will instantly "see" the sense for what it is. Swiss sinologist Billeter (2014) has described this same ability to "see" or "imagine" a Chinese text, then forget about the SL and describe the same image in the TL as a "stepping stone from one language to the other", as the best way to truly understand the meaning of what is being translated before actually starting to translate. One of my interviewees also revealed that they find it purposeful to lead students in their translation classes to this same way of reasoning:

> When I teach translation, I tell my students to form a picture, or a video, of the original in their mind. You read the original until you understand it well enough to form this image. And then, use the target language – forget about the source language – to describe what you see. That is how you become creative… you create the equivalent visual effect, and oral effect.” As a teacher, I know this ability can be gradually acquired.

Eva Hung further illustrated these challenges of negotiating meaning and conveying equivalence in the following example she gave to the press as *Renditions* editor (Mak, 1998), in response to a question on the challenges of translating Hong Kong for the West, or even for anyone Chinese unfamiliar with life in Hong Kong: “in a passage, an author wrote about a girl who often went up to the ‘roof’ of her home. In Hong Kong the ‘roof’ is usually the concrete platform on top of a block. But in Western countries ‘roof’ usually means it is slanted and it just sounds strange to Westerners. The translator of that passage could hardly find the right equivalent of that word in English – should he use ‘balcony’, ‘verandah’ or what?”

From the examples above, it would appear that Chinese literature asks for quite an amount of re-contextualization in translation. When *Renditions* was selecting and collating works of Hong Kong literature in its multiple efforts to gain Hong Kong writers a wider readership, the idea was that the pieces selected had to, according to one of my interviewees who at the time was involved in the editorial process, “have something representative enough to be worth collecting in an anthology” – in other words, an anthology meant to introduce Hong Kong to readers through writing with local traits. Translators would then presumably have had to find ways to re-contextualize, and would have encountered the difficulties described in Hung’s example above. One of the ways to get past such obstacles, namely through the use of paratexts, is illustrated in the following section.

Packaging Translation: Paratextual Layers of Meaning

I will now take a closer look at one example of short story published in *Renditions* No. 63, entitled "Air Granny (空中亞婆)", about which I spoke with one of its two translators. "This one has a very strong Hong Kong identity," the translator commented to me on why the piece was selected, which it indeed has, regardless of the fact that the author, a Hong Kong national, lives in Paris. She writes under the alias Lüqishi 綠騎士 (real name Chan Chung-Hing 陳重馨, 1947-), and refers in this story to a situation very familiar to any Hong Kong resident at quite a specific time, in the 1980s-1990s. The translator, Chi-Yin Ip, explains in her introduction to the English version how, in the years after the Sino-British Agreement signing in 1984 to stipulate the handover of Hong Kong to China, in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident "Hong Kong people experienced a 'confidence crisis' concerning the future and many, especially the middle-class, started looking for opportunities abroad." (Ip, 2005: 83)

We then meet Mrs Situ, the central character of the story, an elderly illiterate Chinese lady who speaks no English and yet does little else than jetting all over the world – America, Canada, France, Britain, South Africa – to visit her eight children, most of whom have moved away from Hong Kong. We follow her as she meets other equally well-travelled senior Hong Kong citizens in airports and on flights, people whom she is familiar with through her traveling, which makes for some company: "on the flight to Paris, Mrs Situ runs into old Mrs Yu. Aha! An old neighbour in a strange land. How delightful! Mrs Yu left Hong Kong not long ago and spent a week with her son in Buffalo. Now she is rushing to the Netherlands to see her daughter…",[59] and as the story unfolds we gather that this trend of having to travel quite far to visit family is quite a common occurrence in Hong Kong, or was in Mrs Situ's times. "This was a very frequent situation,

59 Ip also explains how people who chose to stay in Hong Kong while part of their family lived abroad were commonly dubbed "astronauts" (太空人) in Hong Kong everyday talk – perhaps because of the amount of time they literally spent "in the air" visiting family every year, or possibly also as a language pun on the place of a wife (太太) by their side actually being empty (空), as it sometimes was their spouse who had chosen to move abroad.

at the time… a lot of people were leaving," Ip, herself familiar with this moment in Hong Kong's history, commented in our interview.

One the one hand, this story does have strong ties to Hong Kong and its history and society, as is rather characteristic for Hong Kong literature. One of Taylor's (2003: 52) sources reveals that "the geographical realities of urban Hong Kong … [have] resulted in a specific genre of writing that focuses primarily on the city's built environment and streets for its expression". This suggests a preference for a focus on Hong Kong among the city's writers; in addition, the example in Chapter 5 of translator Simon Patton needing to seek assistance from someone with local knowledge to convey the meaning of a Hong Kong expression also shows how translating Hong Kong could be conducive to collaboration and sharing of expertise, and thereby become social.

The Hong Kong-specific layer of context in "Air Granny" is therefore conveyed through Ip's introduction rather than the translation itself, which thereby acts as "safety net" by introducing the situation to the reader first, in which Ip explains that there were waves of people leaving Hong Kong in the 1980s-1990s due to specific reasons that had unsettled the local society at the time. As Gérard Genette (1987: 197, my emphasis) has it, "the… authorial preface …has as its chief function to *ensure that the text is read properly*." While strictly speaking this is not an authorial preface, its function is the same as that intended by Genette. Also, the translator who has written it has authored the translation, and felt there was a reason to provide readers with an introduction to the cultural and historical context. In this case the translator has had no need to re-contextualize, given that through the introduction she had already packaged the translation in a way that brought the reader closer to Hong Kong before their plunging into the actual story. Ip's role of translator and mediator merges with her Hong Kong identity in this example.

The San Francisco Review of Books also picks up on these issues in a review of the double Hong Kong-focused issue of *Renditions*: "ambivalence and anxiety of Hong Kong identity is fully conveyed in this issue", the journalist states, and having read some of the pieces in Chinese, also acknowledges that "certain works require substantial cultural and contextual background in order to be fully appreciated" (Hoo, 1994) which backs up *Renditions*' choice to include translator forewords to set the scene for some of the pieces.

Making a translation of a text from the Chinese literary sphere meaningful for English-speaking readers is nearly always a challenge: still referring to translating Hong Kong popular fiction, translator Roberta Raine (2008: 24) states that "both the linguistic and cultural divides are so great that the translator has little choice but to make certain alterations to the source text". Reconnecting to Wenger's image of a painting being created and how in the end it is the final product that becomes a meaningful experience for both painter and viewer, both the translator and the reader (and, in this magazine context, the editors too) will experience the translation – the final product, once published – in a meaningful way. For both the translator and the editors there is a sense of fulfilment to see their work in print, and for readers the experience is completely new, a kind of cultural enrichment seen as the text comes from somewhere else and probably reads culturally unfamiliar, to some extent.

This does not appear to be an obstacle for some readers, however: "some people who read translated literature whom I've asked about this all tell me the same thing," said one of my interviewees, who used to be on *Renditions*' editorial board. "They *expect* such a text to read foreign; that is the reason why they explore translated literature in the first place". It is of course hardly possible to pinpoint exactly what readers will or will not appreciate in foreign literature, however the examples used here suggest literature from the sinophone sphere appears to require some degree of imaginative reinterpretation from translators if its meaning is to be "read and understood properly".

This point is further confirmed by Richard King, who guest-edited *Renditions* No. 50, an issue that focuses on his research area, namely 知青 *zhiqing* (rusticated youth) literature. King reveals in a press interview (Forestier, 2002) how translating Chinese literature can be meaningful from yet another perspective:

> Dr King believes that *if properly translated and introduced*, this [*zhiqing*] literature will have a more general appeal beyond China and universities in the West. … It was the response of his

> undergraduates to Zhang Kankan's story 'Sandstorm' about shooting eagles, which they translated as a course exercise, that made him decide to concentrate on her work for his next project. 'The students had no sense of the history but *still found the stories perfectly accessible*,' he said." (My emphasis)

"Proper" reading and "proper" introduction to a text assume an importance here: they are seen almost as a translator's responsibility. That is to say, a translated text might require some additional information (which may need to be obtained from others within a CoP) to be included as a kind of reader safety net to avoid leaving readers who are non-Chinese hanging in a cultural vacuum so to speak, something the translator as someone familiar with both source and target culture should be able to judge.

Meaningful **Renditions***: A Literary Lighthouse?*

Once I had embarked on this project, from very early on the image of a lighthouse would emerge time and again while I was trying to frame my subject – that is, the usual tower-like structure standing by the sea with a strong beam of light on top to guide seamen, its light often signalling the presence of a dangerous shoreline, or in any case the presence of land, of a destination, of a point of reference. A lighthouse is mostly operational by night or in adverse weather conditions; in that sense, there is a somewhat clichéd connection between this image and *Renditions*' beginnings in the early 1970s, a time when the neighbouring PRC was immersed deep in a very secluded period of its history, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

I only realised this connection could be made later; in the first instance, the metaphor of a "literary lighthouse" appealed to me for a magazine that was, quite literally, sending out to the Anglophone world issue after issue full of translated Chinese literature from Hong Kong, a major sea port and well-known harbour – in other words, a place where one would almost expect to find a lighthouse – in a concentrated effort to place Chinese literature on a global map at a time when hardly any of it was openly available, let alone being translated. This was happening precisely between two periods of an inward flow of foreign literature in the Chinese Mainland, the first being the early Republican Era (1910s and

1920s), and the second later in the 1980s-1990s (as identified by Xu and Liu, 2004: 786).

There have been periods of acceptance and indeed of welcoming translations from abroad, however translators were not always seen as a positive influence. Echoing the age-old Italian adage "traduttore – traditore"[60] that so often surfaces in TS scholarship, a journalist for *Asiaweek* (anonymous, 1987) says of the role of translators in China: "a century and a half ago, Chinese linguists were suspected of sorcery and liable for prosecution as *traitors*. They were accused of collaborating with 'foreign evil-doers' to demolish language barriers and of *betraying* China's cultural identity to the West. The status of translators has changed since, thanks largely to the efforts of missionaries and local literati" (my emphasis). Translation was treated with suspicion and translators were suspected of treason. In fact, some things have not changed so much, according to John Minford, who is quoted in this same article as saying: "openness to the study of culture and literature is [still an] explosive issue in China".[61]

The image of a lighthouse alerts those interested about the presence of something important, a body of literature from a different culture that is worth putting out there, worth reading and sharing more widely. Some of *Renditions*' readers, including translator and former *Renditions* Assistant Editor Simon Patton, who was, back then, an undergraduate student based in Australia, saw and appreciated these signals: "I was using *Renditions* at the University library when I was doing my Honours thesis, and I was always keeping in touch with it; it was an exciting thing, it was kind of… *the place that was responding to the wonderful new changes in Chinese literature*", Patton recalled during our interview (my emphasis).

Patton himself has a keen personal interest in languages and in poetry, which probably explains why as a student he would already have known of *Renditions* and followed it quite closely, but the fact that he did also makes him a good example of what I call the magazine's lighthouse effect: the material was sent

60 Literally: "translator – traitor"

61 This situation is lasting, with President Xi Jinping's recent initiative of resistance towards Western sources: "Chinese publishers have reportedly received orders that the number of foreign titles being printed must be cut to prevent an 'ideology inflow'." (Haas and Phillips, 2017)

out, found, and appreciated by someone who was in the early stages of learning Chinese. These thoughts also convey a sense of the *Renditions* community itself being attractive for novice translators by virtue of its commitment to high quality translation – attractive as a place to progress in a professional sense, and attain meaning through this influence on their translator identity.

I mentioned earlier how one of my interviewees commented on his experience of the role of a translator with *Renditions*, on how having a piece published with *Renditions* would give them a sense of professional identity, a sense of themselves as a translator, and a sense of the importance of this activity. In addition to *Renditions*' own prestige as a publication, the association and interaction with well-known sinologists was a source of "meaning" for any novice Chinese-English translator.

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter addresses the "meaning" of *Renditions* in terms of the magazine's overall contribution, its mission of introducing the people of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and occasionally some other Chinese-speaking areas to the English-speaking world the way they are, in the light of the experiences they live. By the same token, *Renditions* provides an enhanced literary profile to authors from specific sinophone backgrounds whose experiences are in some way culturally or historically interesting or at least not entirely unfamiliar for someone from a different cultural background (e.g. *zhiqing* literature). I have explained earlier how CoPs form around a common aim – in this case literary translation from the Chinese – and this chapter illustrates how participation in CoPs is meaningful to translators. Wenger's concept of "meaning – learning as experience" has linked into the (un)importance of various forms of professional recognition, and helped better illustrate the "meaning" of working with *Renditions*, while at the same time quite comfortably merging with another sense for "meaning", more characteristic for the work of a translator: "meaning" intended at "sense".

These multiple layers of "meaning" further to that posited by Wenger offered ways of exploring what else is intended as "meaning" in a translator's world, and again led to the importance and responsibility of translators and editors to “properly” prepare readers for an unfamiliar context. Here the use of paratexts (e.g. introductions) in particular stands out as an important illustrative tool. Last but not least, I have used the “literary lighthouse” metaphor to highlight *Renditions*’ meaning for Chinese literature; this also connects to the status of translators, and has shown that the lighthouse metaphor has several possible interpretations which, if applied to *Renditions*, correspond to the magazine’s reality.

CHAPTER 7

Learning as Belonging: A Community Experience

"Certainly, translators belong to and work in a social, culture-bound environment. Accordingly, translation epitomises the result of multiple processes of mediation and negotiation of cultural differences."
(Foglia in Khalifa, 2014: 21)

On the concept of community as he sees it, Wenger says for a start: "community [is a] way of talking about the social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognisable as competence" (1998: 5). The mention of "competence" brings "profession" to mind, even though Wenger tackles the subject from a broader perspective ("our enterprises" covering everything we do in our life, rather than just our profession). In this chapter I introduce Wenger's thoughts on "learning as belonging" in a community environment and the three "modes of belonging" (engagement, imagination, and alignment) he proposes, and then set parts of this framework against the example of *Renditions* and the translator's profession. In Chapter 5 I have introduced an image of "professional landscape" with its "boundaries"; this concept continues to apply here to some extent, as I will point out later in this chapter.

By looking at ways both *Renditions* and its translators "belong" and at the boundaries of their "belonging", I explore the question of when it is one can speak of "belonging" in some way, to what extent these ways of "belonging" still connect to learning, and of how translators themselves recognise and either stay away from, or choose to challenge, the boundaries of an area of expertise that is familiar to them. It is shown here how an interplay of two (out of three) concepts coined by Wenger, which he calls "modes of belonging", namely engagement and alignment, appears to make the day to day practicalities work at *Renditions*, while the third of these concepts, imagination, mainly proves useful as a tool for translators while they work, and feeds into their work methods.

According to Wenger, communities learn by refining their practice and ensuring they have new generations of members; the dimensions of one's competence within a community, Wenger (1998) says, become dimensions of identity within that community. If we are competent, "we are in familiar territory" and "can handle ourselves competently"; we also "know how to engage with others" and we "understand why they do what they do because we understand the enterprise to which participants are accountable" (152). Hereby our (professional) competence becomes our (professional) identity within a community, as I have already discussed to some extent in Chapter 5. Wenger connects interaction ("engagement") with identity, a view also adopted by Erving Goffman, whose work on the self focuses on small, everyday interaction between people. "Goffman views identity as the socially constructed results of all our engagements with others," says van den Berg (in Fischer-Hübner et al., 2010: 63), where the self "is created in interaction and communication with others" (Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2014: 132).

From his community perspective, Wenger (1998) offers three separate dimensions to this:

- **Mutuality of engagement.** In a community of practice, one learns certain ways of interacting with others, and develops certain expectations about how to interact and how to work together. I have explored these dynamics through various examples of translator-editor interaction. "We become who we are by being able to play a part in the relations of engagement that constitute our community" (1998: 152)
- **Accountability to an enterprise.** Doing the job, we give us a certain way of looking at the world and at our working environment. "An identity in this sense manifests as a tendency to come up with certain interpretations, to engage in certain actions, to make certain choices, to value certain experiences – all by virtue of participating in certain enterprises." (153) Likewise, I will be pointing out here, participating in the *Renditions* community involves a set of duties and expectations on both the translators' and the editors' side.
- **Negotiability of a repertoire.** "Sustained engagement in a practice yields an ability to interpret and make use of the repertoire of that practice. We recognise the history of a practice in the artefacts,

actions, and language of the community" (153). This is something I have already discussed in the context of two translators with complementary skills collaborating: the combination of their respective repertoires makes the enterprise possible.

Interestingly, Wenger then inverts this image to discuss its limitations, and notes that "the boundaries of our communities manifest as a lack of competence along the three dimensions [listed above]" (153), in that we consequently get to a point where we stop knowing how to engage with the community, when we do not have as good an understanding of how it works. This lack of familiarity then delimits the boundaries of our (professional) identity: "in practice, we know who we are by what is familiar (…); we know who we are not by what is foreign" (153). In other words, Wenger here states that belonging to a community of practice generates an identity which has its boundaries wherever it is that we encounter the unfamiliar.

Three Modes of Belonging

Wenger uses what he calls "modes of belonging" to talk about the process of community and identity formation. He distinguishes between three of these modes: engagement, imagination and alignment. He illustrates this graphically as follows:

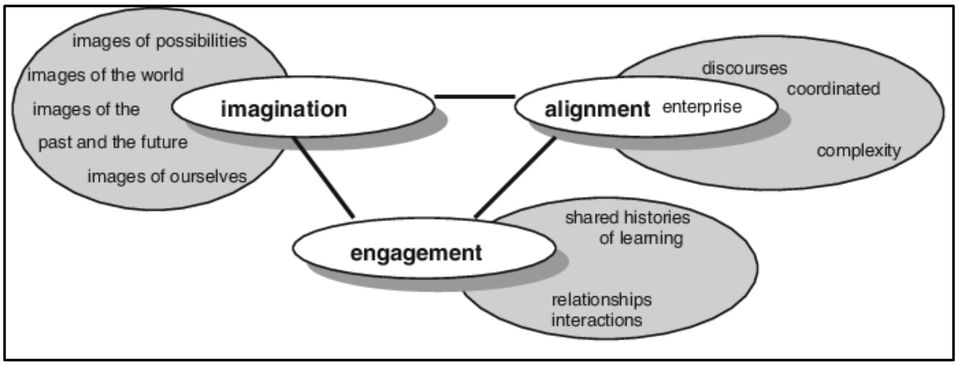


Figure 9: Modes of belonging according to Wenger (1998: 174)

Engagement is, in contrast with the two other modes of belonging, physically limited by time and space: "we can only be in one place at a time and dispose of only a finite number of hours per day" (Wenger, 1998: 175). There are also "physiological limits to the complexity that each of us can handle, to the scope of activities we can be directly involved in, and to the number of people and artefacts with which we can sustain substantial relationships of engagement". According to Wenger, it is in the synchrony of the ongoing negotiation of meaning (which I have discussed in Chapter 6), the formation of trajectories, and the unfolding of histories of practice that engagement becomes a mode of belonging and a source of identity. Engagement as a mode of belonging generally involves interactions, practices, relationships, and shared histories of learning.

Imagination is illustrated by Wenger through an example of two stonecutters who are asked what they are doing. One says "I am cutting this stone in a perfectly square shape" while the other says "I am building a cathedral". Both answers are correct and do not necessarily imply that one stonecutter is better at his job than the other. They simply "reflect different relations to the world" and suggest that "their experiences of what they are doing and their sense of self in doing it are rather different". As a result, Wenger notes, both stonecutters may also be learning very different things from the same activity. Wenger's use of the term imagination, he explains, "emphasizes the creative process of producing new "images" and of generating new relations through time and space that become constitutive of the self" (1998: 177). By using this term Wenger points to "a different kind of work of the self – one that concerns the production of images of the self and images of the world that transcend engagement". Imagination is therefore a tool that extends beyond direct engagement and allows one to think beyond what is immediately visible or perceivable.

There are ways in which imagination as seen by Wenger links to translation: "by bringing the exotic to our doorstep and carrying us into foreign lands, imagination can make us consider our own position with new eyes" (Wenger, 1998: 178) if "imagination" was replaced by "translation" in this sentence, the sentence would still make sense. Imagination, however, also has its fragile side, Wenger warns: "as a way of belonging, imagination is … a delicate act of identity because it plays with participation and non-participation… and [therefore] runs the risk of losing touch with the sense of social efficacy by which our experience of the world can be interpreted as competence." (178)

Similarly to imagination, **alignment**, the third mode of belonging proposed by Wenger, is not confined to mutual engagement. It involves the coordination of our actions and practices into the bigger picture, a larger scale so to speak – the aligning of these with e.g. the demands of an institution we work for. “In connecting and thus magnifying the effects of our actions [and amplifying our sense of the possible], alignment is an important aspect of belonging, [giving it new dimensions]” (180). Alignment involves an investment of personal energy (often across vast distances) and thereby tends to have a less defined character than engagement does, and yet be more focused than imagination. In short, “engagement, imagination and alignment each create relations of belonging that expand identity through space and time in different ways” (Wenger, 1998: 181).

Having considered these three modes of belonging, Wenger puts emphasis on the mechanisms of community formation: “rather than classifying communities under fixed categories, modes of belonging … provide a framework for understanding how these communities are constituted” (1998: 182) “Given a community”, Wenger suggests, “one might wonder what the possibilities for mutual engagement are, what material supports imagination, and how alignment is secured” (183). This leads to more precise ideas on what specific ways of synchronizing and functioning the community might have, and how they transform and evolve over time. Consequently, most of what we do will involve a combination of all three modes of belonging, and more emphasis on either of them will define our actions and their meanings in a certain way. On how the modes of belonging work, Wenger (1998: 238) goes on to sum up the following way:

Work of engagement	Work of imagination	Work of alignment
Requires the ability to take part in meaningful activities and interactions…, and in the negotiation of new situations. It is, in fact, the formation of a CoP.	Requires the ability to disengage and look at our engagement through the eyes of an outsider. “It takes imagination in order for learning to encompass and deal with a broader context.”	Requires the ability to coordinate perspectives and actions to direct energies to a common purpose.

"Communities" or "Spaces"?

Wenger, of course, has his critics, whose thoughts generally tend to be less open to interpretation than Wenger's own. Gee (2005) puts in question Wenger's insistence on communities, preferring instead to focus on the idea of a "space in which people interact"; he finds issue with the fact that the concept of "community" appears to carry connotations of "membership" and "belongingness". The problem in Gee's eyes is that Wenger's ideas leave almost too much room for interpretation, which weakens them: "'membership' means such different things across different sorts of communities of practice, and there are so many different ways and degrees of being a member in some communities of practice that it is not clear that membership is a truly helpful notion" (214).

So, according to Gee, while Wenger "has tried to be careful in delineating just what is and what is not a community of practice," the concept has then spun into all kinds of directions in that it "has been used by others to cover such a wide array of social forms that we may be missing the trees for the forest" (214-215). While I am in agreement with Gee in that Wenger's material is almost too easily adaptable to many different moulds, which may not always be very constructive, it does work if used as scaffolding for a discussion on a specific example of community of practice like I am doing in this project. I believe Gee himself may be, to borrow his own words, missing the trees for the forest, because he appears to be critical of a problem that has *followed* the publication of Wenger's research on CoPs (the over-use, and intentional creation of, CoPs in many firms and institutions), rather than of Wenger's research per se.

Wenger and his mentor and co-author on CoPs, Lave, did eventually notice that their work had caught the attention of rather unexpected audiences and was being applied in a broad variety of real-life contexts, which in turn prompted the two scholars to react and revisit some of what they had already published on the subject. Gee goes on to suggest that the problem here is "trying to start with a label (Community of Practice) which looks like a label for a group of people, a group which must then be identified in terms of its 'members'" (216). The focus on space Gee proposes as analytical angle may indeed dismantle some of the issues and categories he finds burdensome in Wenger's work, however which of these two perspectives is more useful is easier to decide on a case to case basis.

In my example of *Renditions*, it is more convenient to stay focused on "community" since it is an example that directly draws from a community, and from the way this community works (including, of course, the space it exists in). Focusing on "space" might also not lead research very far – even though Gee does make the point that "space" need not just mean physical space, and that newcomers and more experienced individuals share the same space (which does away with detailed matters like where precisely in the community one sits, and to what extent he or she is its member).

In What Ways Does **Renditions** *"Belong"?*

Taking the concept of "belonging" as a focal point, then, what can be said about *Renditions*? For one thing, that translators-contributors actively "belong" to the *Renditions* community while working on a specific issue by virtue of engaging in this activity, while the entire CoP also "belongs" at a number of levels: it is part of an institution (the Chinese University of Hong Kong), of Hong Kong as wider physical space, it can also be said to "belong" to Chinese Studies circles, Translation Studies circles, and even to categories like "translation magazines" and "foreign language Chinese literary outputs" (except that fellow publications are perhaps quite far removed from the "community" context and closer to the idea of "competition", the nature and purpose of what they do being quite similar to that of *Renditions*).

For a translation magazine to "belong" to a bilingual and, back in *Renditions*' early days, colonial space like Hong Kong is, as I have already discussed (see Chapter 3), an advantage in a number of ways. Not only does a bilingual milieu bring with it an awareness of the importance to have a bilingual editorial team on board, and not only did this team have relatively open access to other sinophone regions and thereby to a wide range of otherwise unavailable material. Current *Renditions* executive editor Lawrence Wong Wang Chi says of this: "*Renditions* has done its best to publish and promote, alongside Chinese mainland literature, Hong Kong literature and Taiwan literature. Free from political pressure [unlike the Chinese mainland and Taiwan], the RCT has undoubtedly been able to show a more diversified Chinese contemporary literature" (Wong, 2013: 25).

The growing awareness of the existence of a considerable wealth of literary creativity in Hong Kong itself led to repeated efforts to put this flow of new writing into the spotlight: as then editor Eva Hung states in the introductory essay to *Renditions*' two-volume anthology of Hong Kong 20th century literature *To Pierce the Material Screen*, "whatever happens in the future, we will live in the knowledge that in the 20th century, through a tortuous route that sometimes seemed to be leading nowhere, Hong Kong managed to find her literary identity." (Hung, 2008: 5) The magazine's proactive way of engaging with Hong Kong literature was met with a positive response. "What is interesting", says one review of *Renditions* No. 29&30 in *The China Quarterly*, highlighting the particularities of Hong Kong's characteristic bilingual setting, "is that this first anthology of Hong Kong literature is in English: nothing of its kind is available in Chinese" (Zhao, 1989).

This shows how Hong Kong as a space was, in fact, instrumental in the existence of *Renditions* in that it was generating material that was of direct interest to such a translation magazine: the existence of a corpus of local literature brought *Renditions* forward by a number of publications, both of issues of the magazine and of *Renditions* books. There is an element of reciprocity in the idea of "belonging" here: *Renditions* is based in Hong Kong, and Hong Kong in turn has become a steady part of *Renditions*' catalogue.

A question arising here is: clearly we can identify something happening in terms of "belonging" here, but how does this kind of "belonging" still connect to learning? It does in several ways – to begin with, the fundamental idea behind *Renditions* is that readers also learn (about new literature, and from reading it), and of course this inflow of fresh material from Hong Kong with its own style, contents, and characteristics would have triggered such a learning process – for editors and translators, as well as readers. Moreover, the foreword to *Renditions* No. 29&30 by then Governor of Hong Kong, Lord David Wilson (1988: 6), reveals the existence of more layers of learning and of the aforementioned sense of reciprocity connected to the publication of this literary material: "works reproduced here give us a feeling for the emotional and intellectual reactions of a variety of Hong Kong writers to a changing world, and of transient men of letters to a changing Hong Kong. We see something of the impact of art on Hong Kong and Hong Kong on art". In short, the literary creativity in Hong Kong resulted from intellectuals reacting to changes in the society surrounding them – thereby learning, creating, becoming part of, and belonging to a specific cultural space.

I have mentioned earlier how important having a solid connection network was for the first issue of *Renditions* to receive a strong send-off: a network comprising a significant number of well-wishers with an interest in Chinese literature, sinologists already active as translators (or ones aspiring to do so), and other potential contributors and sponsors: a network which the founding editors already had at hand. CUHK provided (and still provides) the physical location where *Renditions* happens; this, too, evokes a sense of belonging for those who are based at the RCT. Physical details of this space seem to return to mind any time editors think back of their time with *Renditions*: "installed in an elegant office above an inner court and goldfish pond, I was given a desk piled high with [material]…" says George Kao (in Hung, 2003: 12) of his early days at the RCT. "Who could imagine a better building to work in, organized around a fish pond and open to the skies," echoes translator Simon Patton (Hung, 2003: 77), reminiscing of a time when he later arrived to join the editorial team. Internally, therefore, *Renditions* could be said to "belong" to this quiet, scholarly, and clearly evocative working environment at CUHK (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: the courtyard of the RCT as I found it in 2016,
still very much as described by some of its earlier occupants.

Of course, *Renditions* as a team also is, and was, aware of – and reacting to – the ups and downs of "belonging" to an academic milieu. This setting may well have played a role in making *Renditions* attractive to Chinese Studies scholars who then became its contributors, being a setting very much like the one they already belonged to professionally, even at times when *Renditions* was still not very widely known. During our interview, Eva Hung pointed out how matters of appellation were also influenced by belonging to this kind of space: "*Renditions* was seen as… they call it a magazine, right? Which tells you a lot, but… for it to work in a university setting, you have to say that this is actually a journal". These words reveals a rather creative moment behind "belonging" to CUHK – a moment of "alignment", too, as this was possibly a way to ensure *Renditions* could continue operating in its home setting over a longer time.

Engagement, Alignment and Imagination at Renditions

"Practice," so Wenger (1998: 73), "(…) exists because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another". "Engagement" in the sense proposed by Wenger is a very central element for *Renditions*: in a project that essentially depends on regular liaising, discussing, interacting, and knowledge-sharing, engagement is on the agenda all day every day on a number of levels, and is driven by a shared interest in translating Chinese literature, an interest that is sufficiently meaningful for contributors and editors to continue translating and publishing (eventually, much the same type of interest can motivate readers to read *Renditions*). Some results of this "engagement" become tangible to readers (in the shape of what is eventually published), some other parts of it occur behind-the-scenes and are not openly visible, and yet are just as important in that they are what Wenger calls "community maintenance work": the work that helps building up a good working atmosphere and facilitates a healthy team spirit. This may reflect in small gestures, like a metal thermos of tea at the office doorstep every morning, allowing those on the editorial team to "measure out a day of work in teacups" (Patton in Hung, 2003: 78). People outside the team will not know about these details unless word finds a way out to them as in this example, however it is mainly these levels of "engagement" happening backstage, so to speak, that keep the community alive.

Another example of "engagement" are the less pleasant moments for an editor: those of giving feedback to, and discussing translations with, contributors who show little interest in receiving feedback, when at the same time it is generally in the best interest of the magazine to maintain amicable ties with its contributors.[62] "Most situations that involve sustained interpersonal engagement generate their fair share of tensions and conflicts", Wenger too concedes (1998: 77). Not least, the aforementioned physical limitations to "engagement" Wenger points to inevitably become apparent in times that are in some way beyond the physically feasible: an example of this is a missed deadline, e.g. a situation when the magazine is publishing behind schedule. All of these seemingly minor elements are certainly all part of a bigger "engagement" flow at *Renditions*.

What Wenger calls "alignment" is likely a strong element in the *Renditions* story, if only because of the nature of *Renditions*' work: such a publication requires a considerable amount of forward planning while at the same time its editors need to stay abreast of what is happening on the sinophone literary scene, and try to spot any gaps worth filling in Chinese-English literary translation, as discussed in the section on the role of editors in Chapter 4. Editors would therefore spend a certain amount of their time working on details and reviewing manuscripts while always keeping the bigger picture in mind and "aligning" it with

[62] For an example of this, see page 115.

Renditions' plans (i.e. thinking of new directions for the magazine, of ways of maintaining or possibly enhancing its profile and reputation, of whom to contact in preparation of working on upcoming issues,…) and steering the various tasks and actions towards the team's one common aim.

An interplay of mainly these two "modes of belonging", "engagement" and "alignment", seems to be what guides *Renditions* through issue after issue: the "engagement" flow is the engine that makes all the necessary day to day work happen, and the required "alignment" (i.e. all that involves forward planning: securing funding, securing the availability of contributors and supply of new material, taking on board ideas for the publication agenda …) ensures the "engagement" work can continue to happen. What of "imagination", then? In this example of translatorial CoP, imagination is mainly an element inherent to the translators' work. Translators are agents with one foot in the source language and culture and the other in the receiving language and culture. Their work *requires* imagination, as translator Nicky Harman confirms in an interview for the Journal of Specialized Translation (Shuttleworth, 2010): "Inventiveness, imagination, and creativity are necessary to try and keep any effects used by the author in Chinese (as in any language) in the translation, as far as possible." "The art of literary translation, more than anything," Jin (2014: 89) agrees, "is the art of vivifying the author's creative imagination in a new language"; having said that, he further develops: "it takes imagination to appreciate the creative imagination of the author". Jin's words appear to suggest that literary translators have a multiple need to use imagination: it allows them to understand and appreciate the original work in the first place, and then in a second phase to transpose these creative elements in it into the receiving language for readers to appreciate.

Seleskovitch and Lederer's concept of deverbalization (see Seleskovitch and Lederer, 2001) refers to the ability of translators to perceive the true (possibly underlying) meaning of a text and then creatively convey its message in the TL, as opposed to what Seleskovitch calls transcoding, or word-for-word translation that may not necessarily convey the true sense of the ST. The idea of deverbalization is a useful tool for translation from the Chinese, where a rigid adherence to the SL almost never works; this, too, has to do with the ability to use imagination creatively in order to tease out the sense of the ST in the TL (see Chapter 6 for examples of this process). A translator, as someone fluent in both SL and TL, should be able to imagine and transpose a culture-specific scenario based on his or her familiarity with the reality of not just the two languages but of both cultures. He or she has to do so in a way that makes this scenario intelligible to the receiving culture, which is thereby able to better picture the unfamiliar of the source culture. Literary translation in particular can become a fascinating vehicle for imagination, because the translated material itself is generated through the use of creative imagination: the translator is of course tied to the ST, and yet he or she too has to use imaginative thinking to bring this ST to his or her target audience.

Considering what Wenger calls mutuality of engagement, namely acquiring ways of interacting with others in the CoP, and developing certain expectations about how to interact and how to work together, the people having an active role in ensuring *Renditions* could continue its activity (roles ranging from editors to referees, contributors, assistants) encourage this mutuality by playing a certain key part in the relations of engagement that constitute the *Renditions* community (e.g. translating, proofreading, refereeing, printing, sales and publicity…). The necessity of becoming familiar with all this engagement involves is always a mutual, two-way process: by way of example, both an editor and a contributor will have certain tasks and deadlines, but also some expectations of each other, and require some time to become acquainted with the way both sides work.

This may develop in a variety of patterns depending on how both parties understand the situation (in what sociologist William I. Thomas called "defining the situation", see Rousseau, 2002:103-115): a translator will communicate with an editor differently if he or she is a novice to the profession, or again, if he or she is someone towards the other side of the spectrum, perhaps a highly experienced translator of Chinese literature who would rather not have any changes done to his or her work. Since this process is mutual, the editor, too, will react according to how he or she has "defined" the situation from their point of view, while bearing in mind that it is in both his or her and in *Renditions*' interest to maintain lasting working relationships with contributors whenever possible.

In what ways does *Renditions* align, and create layers of shared history, for the use of those working for it? One of the openly accessible examples of this is its house style, which – as we can see below – directs translators to certain resources, and provides guidelines. This has evolved over the years, as response to problems encountered along the way that then led to awareness of the need to be uniform in matters of house style. Occasional exceptions are made e.g. when the contents of an issue focus on literature from an area that uses a style of Romanization other than *pinyin*. The house style guidelines are a common rule for everyone involved, and to some extent also make publications look neater to readers. Below is part of *Renditions*' current house style, used to illustrate this point:

House style[63]

British spelling and punctuation are used throughout: see the *Oxford English Dictionary* for guidance.

The *Renditions* house style is based on *New Hart's Rules* (2005), *The Chicago Manual of Style* (2003), and the *New Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors* (2005). Translators of plays may get guidelines on formatting from the *Renditions* editor.

Please note that *Renditions* contributors may choose whether or not to use the 'Oxford comma' before 'and' and 'or' to separate the last item in a list, i.e. either 'x, y, and z' or 'x, y and z'. Cf *New Hart's Rules*, p. 71.

For guidance on syllable separation see the *Oxford Colour Spelling Dictionary* (1996).

For numbers and dates see *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Please note:

OK: *not* O.K. or Okay
Mr, Mrs, Dr: no full stop

Quotations within paragraphs and the titles of short works (single poems,

63 Source: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/guideline.html#style [last accessed 10 August 2019]

short stories, one-act plays etc.) should be enclosed within single quotation marks. Use double quotation marks for quotations that occur within quotations.

Dialogue between characters should be within single quotation marks, and each change of speaker should be indicated by a new paragraph.

Quoted matter from other works that is longer than a few lines should be given as indented material, without quotation marks.

Use square brackets [ ] for insertions into translated text, e.g. 'Lin'an [modern Hangzhou]'.

All practices that bring some degree of rigour and regularity to the workplace help with alignment work on the long run. Setting a house style is part of this process: looking at early issues of *Renditions*, we notice this was not in place yet, and in terms of romanization several systems would be used freely alongside each other in one and the same issue. "In defence of conformity," states McKay (2013: 161), "it is argued that you don't realise how much adherence to a house style contributes to a magazine's image until you look at a publication that doesn't follow one". While McKay is unable to offer evidence of this, she further notes that the absence of a house style can irritate readers; I have also shown earlier how long-term adherence to a certain recognisable appearance mattered at *Renditions*. This, too, is a matter of "alignment" and long-term planning for the magazine.

Another practice that has been passed down from team to team from the early days on is the way of circulating manuscripts (at various stages of the manuscript flow) and any other documents everyone needed to have read (e.g. news reports mentioning *Renditions*): a practice adopted, tested, found useful, and maintained alive since. Figure 11 below shows part of a photograph I have taken at the RCT, of a news article that had been circulated across the team, and an example of the team's simple but practical way of checking that the document had been through everybody's hands can be seen on the top right of the image:

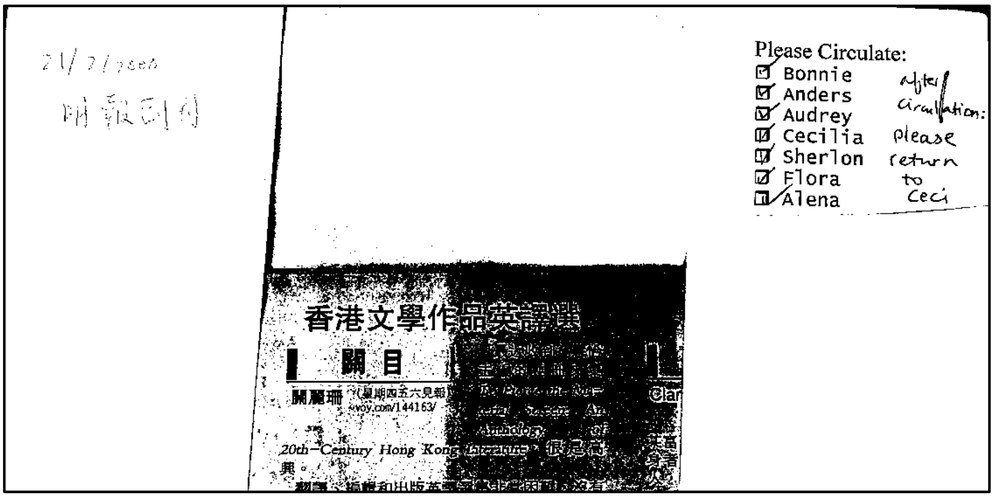


Figure 11: in the top right corner, an example of a "Please Circulate" note on a press article mentioning a Renditions *publication, dated 2008.*

Turning to China's own history, Eva Hung (2006) is among the first to have pointed to the fact that translation seldom is an individual act – noting how "in the historical Chinese tradition… the process of translation *always* involved more than one person, and each person's responsibilities and contributions were clearly defined and acknowledged" – she thereby reminds of the existence of a translation tradition that *Renditions* shares historically, can learn from, and continues to put in practice (see Chapter 1 for an introductory discussion of this).

This, too, is a way of "belonging", a historical and region-specific belongingness to a translation tradition that further widens the range of what all "belonging" can refer to. On the other hand, *Renditions* can also be rather difficult to categorise. "If I may be permitted an oxymoron," George Kao says (in Hung, 2003: 14), the *Renditions* team "have tried invariably to publish original translations". By this Kao refers to the pioneering spirit driving *Renditions* to publish mostly material that had previously never been translated into English. This is perhaps one characteristic by which *Renditions* can hardly be described as "belonging" anywhere.

"Belonging" to Renditions*: Role, Place, Hierarchy*

Now, if the focus is shifted onto translators from *Renditions* as a publication, in what ways can contributors be said to "belong" to a team? Several of my interviewees have implied, or even mentioned directly, that they felt there was a kind of workplace hierarchy at *Renditions*. This would have contributed towards the feeling of having a well-defined place in the team. Each individual involved would have their specific set of tasks that made of them the person to go to in a given situation, their set of skills that made them the usual point of reference for e.g. a specialist area of linguistic knowledge, their set of responsibilities that kept them occupied and also contributed to carrying *Renditions*' work forward, all of which in turn defined each person's workplace identity. Perhaps the most obvious place to look for signs of a workplace hierarchy are interpersonal relations. Consider this description of the RCT by former Assistant Editor Audrey Heijns (in Hung, 2003: 97):

> "… [let us] visit the offices where new ideas for *Renditions* are conceived, conceptualized and planned. These are the connecting rooms of Eva Hung and Alena Chow. (…) Alena does magic with the website of the journal. Walk through the office of Alena into the light of Dr Hung's office. (…) Here's where the whole process of a *Renditions* publication is incepted and monitored…"

Ways of addressing colleagues here hint to an existing hierarchy: Eva Hung, then Editor and also Heijns' line manager at the time, becomes Dr Hung in what follows, while the web manager, Alena Chow, whom Heijns would to my knowledge have called by her first name, is addressed by her first name here too. Notice also the crescendo indicating that Hung's office was the central point for all things *Renditions*. This in turn puts Heijns at her then "Assistant Editor" place in the hierarchy, in function of which she would have perceived Chow as her equal, and Hung as her superior. Heijns's post, just as several other roles on the *Renditions* team, was usually short-lived (some of my interviewees had been Assistant Editors over a period ranging from a few months to a year or two), and changed subject to the availability of the person in the post, or again subject to the needs of the RCT.

Regardless of its changeable nature, a workplace hierarchy partly shapes one's professional identity and is, in this particular case, a way of formally belonging to *Renditions* for every individual on the team at any given time. A hierarchy is also a structure within the workplace that leads every individual to define each situation in a specific way, like Heijns does in the example above, and assume a specific attitude accordingly (consider an informal one-to-one meeting to discuss progress on a task with a colleague as opposed to a meeting with the team leader and the whole team where one is to formally report on progress).

During an interview for this project, translator Simon Patton shared some workplace memories from his own time as Assistant Editor for *Renditions* which offer further proof of the presence of a workplace hierarchy and also of the occurrence of professional learning through *Renditions*. Again, the impression Heijns gives in the above statement is reinforced here, in that Eva Hung comes across as an authority, and notice towards the end how the editorial tasks at *Renditions* are seen by Patton as a meaningful way to learn as a translator:

> I was reading through translations and just meticulously making sure that there were no problems with the *pinyin*, the Romanization of any of the names or anything like that. A lot of that was really time-consuming, especially when I was looking at classical stuff, or something where I was out of my depth. I spent a lot of time… there's always something, there's always something. And I really didn't want Eva [Hung] banging on my door and saying, oh Simon you've missed this, you know, rather obvious mistake. That's my personality, I don't like to make mistakes, so I was conscientious in checking things very carefully. And I also thought that was a good way for me to learn. I would see something in the Chinese text and think, OK what have they done with that? And I could learn something that way.

In the opening quote for this chapter, Foglia (in Khalifa, 2014: 21) describes the status of translation from a sociological point of view, seeing it as "the result of multiple processes of mediation and negotiation of cultural differences". I have noted earlier while discussing the concept of imagination how translators stand between two linguistic and cultural spaces and become mediators between these spaces through their professional activity. One of the best known names in Chinese to English translation, Burton Watson (1981: 36) reflects on this as follows: "Ideally, a translation from [great Chinese historical] works should be designed so as to satisfy all types of readers." Watson's translations are known and appreciated by many for their smoothness and relative sparseness of annotation, which he admits can become a drawback for some: "I have been sufficiently scolded for my paucity of annotation to know that many readers take a much sterner view", he concedes. With growing cultural differences grows also the temptation to explain every minute detail, whence comes the tendency to heavily annotate translations of the type of material Watson is discussing here. Still, his decision is never to do so: "in my own translation… I [attempt] to concentrate on the literary appeal of the works, keeping annotation to a minimum and trying to translate a commensurably larger volume of material instead". This is likely also the reason why Watson's translations are often considered more approachable than other translators', and as such tend to be recommended to readers not very familiar with Chinese literature.

Watson's method, however, does not come without obstacles, he admits by making a parallel with other classics: "I failed to consider that 'popular' translations of Greek and Roman historians are acceptable in English because scholarly and heavily annotated translations of such works already exist…, whereas that of course is not the case with most Chinese historical works". Not yet, or certainly not at the time this was written – which again is a reason why some readers keen on detailed explanations would have criticised the lack of annotation – even though Watson himself, as pedagogue as well as translator, saw the importance of an English version of Chinese canonical works being available: beyond their literary value, such texts traditionally have an educational purpose, and so "for the Western student of Chinese culture it is as important to know something about the content of such works as it is for the student of traditional Western culture to familiarize himself with Classical mythology and the Bible" (38-39).

This observation serves as illustration of some less obvious reasons for a translator to be a negotiator and mediator between cultures: broadly speaking, he or she feels "at home" in, and familiar with, both cultures (quite literally so for Watson, who spent most of his later life in Japan and China) and this kind of cultural "belonging" allows to bring the one culture closer to readers rooted in the other. Doing this with China as the source culture can be a task that defies any translator, complains Watson, seen as the Chinese language has some characteristics that tend to confuse readers. One such example are Chinese names, he points out, which "reduced to romanized form… can be maddeningly similar, and even the most attentive reader of the translation will find himself losing track of who is who" (36).[64]

Other than having links to language and culture, can "belonging" also be connected to a specific moment in time? Generally speaking every piece of literature will to some extent be a product of its times; translators too live in "their" time, and this "belonging" can be seen as an advantage and facilitate translation. By way of example, Chu Chiyu, who joined the *Renditions* editorial team under John Minford, revealed to me in conversation how he was approached by *Renditions* when he was no longer on their editorial team, and asked if he would join the team of translators working on an issue focusing on *zhiqing* literature (*Renditions* No. 50, guest-edited by expert on *zhiqing* literature Richard King) because he "used to be a *zhiqing*", or a sent-down youth,[65] in earlier times and would therefore have "belonged" to this historical period and have first-hand contextual knowledge of it.

Still, occasionally translators take interest in, or are asked to translate, a text that is historically out of their depth, a piece of writing not rooted in the era they are most familiar with. Finding the right words or the right register to use can then become a challenge. Chu Chiyu, who following his time with *Renditions* went on to make a living as a scholar and teacher of TS, got reminded during our interview of an example from one *Renditions* translation that he later often used in his classes as example of expression that he had found challenging to put into English for these reasons. This short sentence is to be found in *Renditions* No. 41&42, a double issue focusing on classical letters, where Chu had translated among other correspondence a piece by Qing dynasty diplomat Xue Fucheng 薛福成 (1838-1894), an answer to a letter Xue had received which opens with the phrase 辱惠書 *ru huishu* (Xue, 1994: 184). The English translation for this says "I was honoured to receive your letter" (140) which only conveys part of the meaning. A native Chinese speaker, however, would also perceive a subtle insult

64 I would agree with Watson here, having often observed this on informal occasions upon receiving comments from friends or relations on a Chinese literary work they had read in translation: "I've found this book rather hard to follow, the names all seem the same" is, in my experience, quite a common type of complaint.
65 That is, one of the "rusticated" educated urban young people sent out to live and work in rural areas following Mao Zedong's "up to the mountains and down to the countryside" policy in the late 1960s- early 1970s.

in this phrase (the character *ru* meaning both "to be honoured" in courtly register and "insult, disgrace") so the phrase is in fact also an insult to the letter Xue had received. The choice made here is not to try and convey this in translation: doing so may confuse the reader, and nevertheless the rest of the introductory paragraph reveals that Xue was "greatly surprised" by what he had read in the letter and excuses himself to his correspondent for "[venturing] … a presumptuous opinion concerning what [he] said in [his] letter". Eventually, therefore, this negative nuance concealed in the character *ru* was abandoned in translation without its sense being completely lost in what follows.

David Pollard has, in conversation with me, also elaborated on the issue of register as a frequent problem for translators, and sometimes an obstacle for editors:

> The question of register, of course, is central to a translation. And some types of register in the original are very hard to match, say, a lot of formal language, a lot of flattering language, and so on, courtly language, or… whatever. There are modes of speech and writing that have largely disappeared from the world that we live in, so that would be one problem area which you need to look out for while editing. That is, people trying to use a high register, say, or a polite register for a courtly register of the Tang which is in the original, but has largely disappeared from communication between living human beings. It could also be the other way around, that the translator might use vulgarisms… or too much slang than necessary, you know… this question of register is always with us, you can't write anything without writing to fit a certain mode, a certain convention, and a certain level of language. That would be something editors would always have to look out for, and if possible improve it, but in some cases of course from the translator's point of view there is a way out or there is some help at hand, in that you can look in the receiving language, in this case we're talking about Chinese-English, right, so in the English language, the history of writing in English in some period, or for some particular audience, and find… if you're very lucky you can find something which more or less corresponds with the type of register you

> are after, that kind of level of language, and if that fits, you know, you're very lucky.

Pollard is, here, replying to my question on his role as editor at *Renditions*, but note how in doing so he never ceases to also be a translator: the whole second half of his answer is, in fact, given from a translator's point of view, and also the plural "us" (e.g. in "this question of register is always with *us*") can be seen to mean "us editors" just as much as "us translators". Both these roles are very much part of Pollard's professional identity. What his answer also reveals is one of the ways a translator can proceed if unsure of the register to adopt in his or her work: seek help in the target literary system. This may sound like a very long search, unless one is a well-read translator; however, as shown in my example in Chapter 4 of Eva Hung directing one of her translators towards books by John Sandford so they could rework a draft translation, and the translation improving considerably as a result, an informed editor can also be very helpful in such a situation. The quest for a suitable register in which to anchor a certain piece again leads to translation becoming social – it is often the interaction with someone else that solves the problem.

Returning to the focus of this discussion, it can therefore be said that translators "belong" somewhere in space and in time, linguistically and culturally (as well as in other ways), but they quite often also translate texts that come from an entirely different context than their own. Let me remind of the comment earlier in this chapter in which Patton remarked on how time-consuming editing for *Renditions* became for him "when [he] was looking at… something where [he] was out of [his] depth", referring to pieces he would possibly not have accepted to translate had he been given the choice. Even revising and editing someone else's translation of such a text was demanding precisely because of this sense of unfamiliarity which, as mentioned earlier on in this chapter in relation to Wenger's research, delimits the boundaries of one's professional identity.

It is also worth noting that this is not something limited to unfamiliarity with areas of the SL. Another of my interviewees recognised how his problem in once attempting to translate a specific genre was, in fact, his native tongue rather than his knowledge of the SL: "I don't usually translate poetry. I have no confidence in my sense of meter… so it's a question of my English rather than my Chinese. It's the type of text, the genre, which I've never really been comfortable with." This particular translator does not (to my knowledge) write poetry himself, which only goes to reinforce the idea I have discussed in connection with CT: that someone who does not write poetry should probably not attempt to translate it either. In this context, let me remind also of the example of David Lunde (also in the section on CT, Chapter 4), who, being a poet, managed to produce re-translations of Chinese poems (without any knowledge of Chinese) that were good enough for *Renditions* to consider publishing them.

Given the fact, however, that some areas of Chinese literature are becoming increasingly remote, and while "still part of a normal education, [classical Chinese] has dwindled in importance, both as an educational requirement and still more as a medium of communication" (Ci, 1994: 69), Chinese as a SL happens to provide translators with some very helpful tools. One of my interviewees touched upon this in the following way:

> I was purely modern up to the time of getting into translation. Now the last few things I've done, it's mostly been classical Chinese that I've been translating, and I was able to do that because of all the availability of *baihua* 白话 versions – so (…) the original, of course, would be included, and then not only would you get a lot of footnotes in modern editions, but you'd also get the *baihua* translation.

Almost any well-known classical Chinese text can now be easily found in this annotated and "explained" format in Chinese bookshops, and, as Ci's words above suggest, nowadays most native Chinese speakers will themselves need to consult one in order to fully understand the original text. Also for a translator more familiar with contemporary language, these books become a very useful tool. "There used to be a kind of snobbery though," my interviewee added with a chuckle. "Real genuine scholars, sinologists, would never use the *baihua* translation, it's… below their dignity". We get a sense of a sinological translator community here, one that has its unwritten guidelines and sensitive areas when it comes to the knowledge and usage of the SL. In the case of Chinese, nevertheless, a tool like *baihua* translations allows translators who may not be strictly part of the sinological tradition to stretch their professional boundaries to a somewhat more flexible degree of "belonging".

The boundaries of one's professional identity would therefore appear to be delimited by the degree of a translator's familiarity with the languages he or she works with; problems can emerge at a level of genre, of register, or even with finding a voice for a specific author. Asked about the way they would approach a text, most of my interviewees said they have to like the text to want to translate it in the first place, or at least feel some level of affinity with it. Similarly, a translator may feel more comfortable working on one specific author than he or she does with other authors, and would then feel he or she can translate that author with more ease. This is accurate in that, if we look for well-known examples, it is true that some translators become famous for having widely translated one specific author, as in the case of Howard Goldblatt and Mo Yan in the Chinese literature context.[66] In *Renditions* circles, we also find several such cases where a certain translator would bring a specific author to mind, as with Simon Patton and poet Yu Jian, Brian Holton and poet Yang Lian 楊煉 (1955 -), or again Eva Hung and Hong Kong author Xi Xi 西西 (1938 -).

At times, *Renditions* also encouraged translators to follow their own preferences, former Managing Editor Janice Wickeri revealed during our interview: "Eva [Hung] sometimes suggested material, as she tended to know the kind of thing that people might be interested in doing". I received an initial cue about this translator-author bond when I first visited Hong Kong at the beginning of my PhD studies. On that occasion I attended a talk by translator Brian Holton at CUHK, after which a member of the audience asked the translator what he thought the differences were between translating prose and poetry. Holton replied: "it is rather a question of author: whom can the translator 'make work'?" All these examples serve to illustrate how a translator

[66] Other examples of notable translators connected with one particular author include Gregory Rabassa (best known as translator of Gabriel García Márquez), and Jay Rubin (one of the main translators into English of Haruki Murakami's works).

(or editor) learns and “belongs” via the boundaries of his or her professional competence.

Metaphorically Speaking…

The world of translation tends to attract a considerable number of parallels and metaphors, several of which are in fact rather plausible, even though some scholars believe that using such images influences our thinking about translation in rather erroneous ways (for examples of this, see Tan, 2006 or St. André, 2017). Metaphorically speaking, do translators “belong” anywhere? One of the most popular images is that of a translator-actor. Tyulenev (2014) develops on the translation-acting parallel and suggests that translators “act in settings of interlingual and intercultural interaction” and, within such settings, “‘put on’ their translator appearance and act according to their translator manner” (151).

This is an interesting way of wording such ideas, because translators are often said to have an invisibility about them (rather than having an own “translator appearance and manner”), i.e. that they act out the role of an author in a different language sphere and thereby obliterate their self. Tyulenev uses the image of acting throughout his book, however the metaphor of acting for translation is not a new thing (see e.g. Allen and Bernofsky, 2013: xix or Nelson and Maher, 2013: 15), and Tyulenev’s perspective does not seem to capture the full depth of the translation-as-acting analogy. Rather than acting out a “translator manner”, translators tend to be seen, or even to see themselves, as acting out the role of the author in another language, renowned American translator Gregory Rabassa confirmed in an interview (Lowe, 2007):

> The translator is very much the actor, because we are taking on the role of the writer… and the idea is that we are trying to write the book that this other person would have written had he or she written it in [the TL]. (…) What you do is you say: here I am, I am [the author], I am writing this novel – but I am writing it in [the TL], so how shall I say it… it is very good if you know the writer and have some inkling on how he or she thinks, but even just from the book you can probably get an idea about the writer… and as an actor put yourself into his role...

Rabassa's remarks suggest that the literary translator's profession revolves, or should ideally revolve, around attempting to write as the author would have, had he or she been writing in the TL. That way, he or she starts "belonging" to a very particular sphere of the TL that is defined by the writer and thereby becomes unique to the translator.

The very fact that a translator's work results in printed matter, however, and that it is presented to the public as such rather than, say, being performed on stage, only accentuates the whole paradox of translators being "invisible": the smoother their work, the less obviously noticeable their presence. Considering Erving Goffman's (1999) way of seeing society as a theatre and people as actors,[67] an image upon which much of his work is based, it can be said that by the same token translators (being people) also have a role to play in society (opinions on that role range from the rather negative, suspicion-filled image of the translator-traitor to more positive impressions of translators as instrumental individuals, as cultural mediators).

This translatorial role in society is also what Tyulenev tries to focus on, but while this is a logical trail of thought, it only shows one side of the coin. In the context of my own case study, the format of a translation magazine can assume a function similar to a prompter at the theatre: a magazine contains excerpts of literature rather than full-length literary works, thereby offering a patchy read which can motivate the reader to then pick up literary works they might like to read in full, and also alerts the reader to the presence of translators. The reader comes across introductory notes, footnotes and explanations, possibly also other elements like footnotes; all of this material serves to guide the reader, suggesting to him or her the meaning of passages that might not be as easy to digest without these prompts. This being so, I would certainly agree that there is a theatrical element to translation and that translators have a way of "belonging" to this metaphorical milieu.

67 Interest in Goffman and in dramaturgical analysis has continued since, see e.g. Shulman (2016) for more recent work on the presentation of self in society, and parallels with acting.

Conclusion

Taking Wenger's ideas on learning as belonging as a perspective from which to consider *Renditions*, this chapter shows that there are a number of ways in which we can speak of "belonging" in the context of a translation magazine. In the case of *Renditions*, translators involved in working on a specific issue or publication "belong", in the span of time it takes to finalise this publication, to *Renditions*; probably at the same time and in a similar fashion, they also "belong" to other literary translation outlets, online forums, or other employers requiring their services (constantly networking with what Mason (2014: 41) calls a translator's "CoP profile": that is, all the various CoPs the translator engages with at said time). I have also discussed where, and how so, my example of CoP "belongs", noting beside spatial-geographical elements that *Renditions* also "belongs" to a wider category of "outlets of Chinese literature in English translation", a belonging that shows in some degree of networking and interaction[68] with other similar outlets, and certainly in a keen awareness of what such outlets do (on this see e.g. Hung, 1995). I then went on to explore the binary nature of "belonging" and discussed how translators themselves "belong", in terms of professional competence, to two or more linguistic and cultural spheres depending on the languages they use for work.

The discussion of the possible boundaries of professional "belonging" has yielded some interesting points on the fine lines of linguistic competence, and on the issue of professional confidence. Not least, translators – and not only ones working with *Renditions* – appear to "belong" to a theatrical sphere, metaphorically speaking. What this shows in the bigger picture is that the process of translation is a socially situated process – given that a translator will professionally "belong" somewhere at any time of his or her career, belong to a workplace, to a linguistic sphere, to an era, to an area of expertise, and given that "belonging" implies some degree of engaging with others and "understanding why they do what they do", that translators "belong" also means they interact socially. This is as true for translators now as it was e.g. for

68 More so with Taiwan than the PRC. Only very recently (in 2015-16) *Renditions* serialised part of the autobiography of the former Editor-in-chief of The Chinese PEN Quarterly (Taiwan), Chi Pang-yuan 齊邦媛, a publication *Renditions* has had friendly ties with over the years.

Chinese translators working on Buddhist scriptures in a workshop fashion several centuries ago: “when a scripture was to be translated, there had to be a symposium presided over by a chief translator, with a number of assistants and hundreds of attendants. Of course, the attendants were monks and Buddhist disciples, who only lent a willing ear to the chief translator” (Chan and Pollard, 2001: 376). Of course the accepted standards, and with them the modus operandi, for translation have changed considerably over time, however the element of social interaction has remained a steady part of the process.

CHAPTER 8
Conclusion

This thesis has systematically attacked the image of the “lone translator”; this image, along with the singular “the translator” commonly used to refer to translators in academic research, has been a matter of concern to some scholars, who criticised it for not truly reflecting the reality of the profession. With regards to existing research, some regret that, “unfortunately, studies that deal only with the ‘lone translator’ do not take into account [the] growing tendency toward teamwork in professional translation” (Laygues, 2014).[69] Other scholars add that times have now changed and that “the lone translator is somewhat out of place in modern technological society, where collective effort is deemed more important than individual enterprise” (Wilss, 1999: 177). Further to these observations, what I have shown here is that there can hardly be talk of a “lone translator” at all, given that translation and the professional identity formation it involves are, in fact, rarely as solitary an endeavour as this illusory image suggests. Admittedly, however, the image still rings true in the case of literary translators (see page 53).

I will open this final chapter by revisiting the core research questions that have driven my work; I then discuss how this project has addressed these questions, and highlight the key findings and contributions of this thesis. There are of course also some limitations to be pointed out, and finally suggestions for further study will be made.

Core Research Questions

First of all, let me remind of my overarching research question: considering that translation is known to involve a high amount of individual work, how do translators learn if working within a community? This reconnects directly to what I have quoted Gouadec (2007: 108) as saying earlier, namely that “the most familiar set up in the translation industry is when the salaried or freelance translator carries out the whole translation process single-handed”; if that is so,

[69] Note that Laygues misses St André’s paper on this (2010), which does engage with the growing tendency towards teamwork, and offers ideas for translator and interpreter training that address this tendency.

to what extent is the “lone translator” trope actually true in practice? The relativization of the image of the “lone translator” was one of the first issues I have addressed in the Introduction, an image that I have shown to only partially correspond to what a translator’s profession actually involves. I have reiterated above and at various stages in this thesis how this trope is, in fact, a debatable image. If, then, we agree that translation is really an activity of a highly social nature, what are the advantages of the translation process being social? I have answered this question by looking at the various ways in which literary translators learn their profession within a community of practice, an experience that involves a whole network of social interaction.

The very fact that there is now a “sociological turn” in TS also proves that there is a rising interest in something that had possibly been somewhat obfuscated by the idea of translation being a “lone” endeavour: namely, interest in the understanding of translation in an altogether more complete way, and seeing it as a “socially regulated activity” (Hermans, 1997: 10), essentially as a “form of social behaviour which requires a degree of interaction, of cooperation, among those involved” (Hermans, 1997: 7). In other words, the study of all there is social about translating, along with a shift of attention away from approaches focusing on the admittedly more individual, linguistic part of a translator’s task (i.e. the actual process of transferring a text from one language to another – and yet, even this stage will involve a considerable amount of social interaction, as I have shown in a number of examples in this thesis) towards the idea that translators, as everyone else, belong to, and interact with, a social system around them, making the image of the “lone translator” become rather obsolete.

Having established this, my discussion on how translators learn within a community revolves around a culture-specific, real-life example of translator community: the translation magazine *Renditions*. I have used the initial part of this thesis to provide my rationale for this choice of material: not only are magazines still a source largely overlooked in academic research, they also provide an excellent example of teamwork-centred working environment if one is to explore the sociology of translation. I have repeatedly referred to my object of study as to a “community”: *Renditions* is a case that fits this description well because of the close-knit, meticulous way it functions, and because of its long-lasting ties with its contributors.

From the introduction of *Renditions* as focal example, I have developed on how translators learn in four separate chapters, building on the theoretical work of Etienne Wenger, whose four perspectives on the process of learning have served as "scaffolding" for these four core chapters, in which I have looked at learning by doing (practice), learning by becoming (identity), learning by experience (meaning), and learning by belonging (community), and in the context of translation in a community. With each of these four directions, my discussion adopted a different angle. Discussing learning by doing (practice) allowed me to look into the details of what it is *Renditions* "does" and why that way, in other words, how it is that translation can function as a team effort. The chapter on learning by becoming (identity) has allowed me to look into examples of ways in which a workplace can shape translator identity, how translators "become" who they are professionally via the people and work environments they find themselves involved with. With learning by experience (meaning), I have looked at what kind of environment allows translators to experience their work as meaningful, and in what ways the act of translating Chinese literature into English becomes professionally significant in the context of a team effort. Finally, through "learning by belonging (community)" I have outlined a number of ways of "belonging", not just "belonging" professionally but also culturally and geographically, and I have highlighted ways in which a translator "belongs" within the boundaries of his or her professional competence.

These four components of Wenger's social theory of learning have, in other words, been my guiding points towards a number of paths I then used to discuss how translation functions when it happens in a community as the result of a team effort, and how in turn individual translators learn and develop professionally as a result of this, which then illustrates ways in which translation is a social activity, rather than a solitary profession. I will sum up the main findings and contributions of this thesis in what follows.

Key Findings and Contributions

Wenger's theory of learning asserts that individuals learn and become who they are *through* engagement with social practice. Using Wenger as framework made it possible to reconsider the image of the "lone translator" in the light of translation as a socially regulated process, possibly with the exception of literary translation. I have mentioned earlier (see page 161) how Mason (2014) agrees with Wenger's views, and states that the way translators learn is similar. I have taken this assertion under the microscope: building on how Wenger defines and describes each of these four aspects to learning, my own analysis has shown how translators experience work within a CoP, the shared process of learning in a social environment, how learning happens through experience, doing, belonging and becoming, and how this flow of negotiations in turn enables translators to improve professionally.

Translation: A Socially Embedded Profession

What the *Renditions* example also amply illustrates, more importantly perhaps, is that translation is indeed a "socially embedded" process, and that the idea of it being a solitary profession is misleading. Not only does this emerge from the evidence provided by my examples of how the magazine functions and of how translators connect and work with each other and with editors, but also from some of the literature supporting each of the chapters, in that most of these sources consider translation to be a social process.

Of course professionally for each translator *Renditions* is not everything – *Renditions*' contributors would likely be working on other projects simultaneously. My focus on this particular example of work environment also means that much of the "social" I highlight in this project is social precisely because *Renditions* is what it is, works the way it does and draws together an oftentimes large, geographically spread, but well-oiled team; nevertheless, some of my examples certainly also apply to translation more in general. The translation of poetry stands out as one particular case that seems to almost lead to collaboration in translation, with one of the two parties very often being a practicing poet.

Also, more generally, a SL that has as diverse a range of facets to it as Chinese does (of which I have only had space to explore few in this project) can be said to be highly conducive to social interaction. If for example a translator is confronted with a text written in a Chinese dialect, they will almost certainly need to consult either the author or a native speaker of the dialect about parts of the text where specialist knowledge is needed for them to continue working. This is a kind of social interaction that does not necessarily come to anyone's attention and knowledge, unless the translator makes mention of it in a paratext packaging the translation; I also only knew of examples used in this project through such paratexts, or directly via interviews with translators. In other words, there is more social interaction happening in translation than is commonly known, and this may partly be the reason for a solitary translator image to have emerged in the first place: an image of what translation *appears* to be. A translation magazine like *Renditions* has, however, a format that offers the possibility to highlight translation and the work it involves (including collaborative translation) in various ways, and by doing so make translation better approachable and understandable to the outside world.

It can become challenging to make use of Wenger's ideas without getting entangled into how closely they correlate; the four key points Wenger makes about social learning are all mutually defining and interrelated, thereby forming a close-knit network; still, the focus on Renditions as one specific example has allowed me to single out a number of relevant issues in the context of translation by looking at each of these four ways of learning individually. Application to just one specific context is probably one way of handling material like Wenger's, which, as some have argued (see Chapter 7 for more details on this), leaves almost too much room for interpretation. In adopting this approach, my data could bring to surface any discrepancies between the Renditions example and Wenger; in most cases, however, this was clearly a constructive association, where one helped explain the other in more detail.

My analysis has yielded discussions on the following points related to translation as a social activity: on the meaning of being a literary translator and thereby actively contributing to a culture-specific corpus of translated literature in the receiving language sphere; on the importance of professional recognition in the translatorial context; on translation as a result of interaction with other professionals in the same field; on the fact that learning occurs on multiple levels in the context of a translation magazine, both among contributors and among editors; on the experience of temporarily belonging to a specific social environment, and the negotiations and mediations this involves; on building up a "profile", or professional network, of clients with whom a translator interacts regularly; on how a translator's professional identity builds up and on how, in turn, those he or she works and interacts with contribute to shaping this identity. Wenger has, in short, provided very useful and interesting theoretical links between translation and what is social about it, which I have used to show how social interaction is in fact deeply embedded in every stage of the process of translation. In doing so, I have expanded on the notion of learning (professionally) within a community, and on ways in which this becomes formative (for a translator).

Describing the Translation Process in Periodicals

Not least, this project has brought to light some interesting, and hitherto unexplored, points on the process of translation itself, thereby making a contribution to DTS. Examples in the section on "learning as doing" have shown that the learning process of a translator is in fact a spiralling, perpetual one, one that starts anew with every new text he or she tackles. It is important to note here that this particular project deals with literary translation, and this learning cycle is perhaps particularly valid for literary translators, because for them – as translator Brian Holton (2015) has it – "each text is a separate learning process" (as opposed to technical translators, whose material is often, according to Hervey et al (2006: 140), "exceedingly repetitive", which in turn suggests that there will be a point of saturation in technical translation when a translator "does" but no longer "learns from doing").

This learning curve is also illustrated by my interview data, in which several translators affirm they learned to become better translators through *Renditions* because of having been asked by the magazine to translate a very broad variety of texts and of variations of Chinese, and with each of these texts came a different register, a different subject, a different way of using the SL and TL: new elements to take in with each text, therefore, which in turn shaped the translator professionally and added to his or her "experience package". Note that strictly speaking this is a learning curve that travels in a spiral rather than circles: it shows a continuity and an increase in professional experience. A new text is a whole new beginning every single time, and the process of reading, understanding, and translating therefore never starts from exactly the same point as before.

This thesis has shown magazines and periodicals to be a highly suitable example for the study of CoPs, as well as a useful source for understanding how translation works in practice. I have mentioned earlier that magazines are an under-researched type of publication, and because of their … subject range they tend to be used as a source of supporting information rather than being an actual object of study: "while individual scholars… might be able to mine [the broad range of subjects in a periodical] for a narrow range of materials relating to their fields, they are rarely in the position to say much about the periodical as a whole" (Latham and Scholes, 2006: 517). Statements about periodicals like this one are not uncommon: magazines are a difficult source to categorize in any meaningful way, too diverse, too scattered in contents.

Nevertheless, this study has brought to light an important characteristic of the translation magazine, namely that this particular publication format makes translation more overtly "visible" (in that they are *about* translation, and therefore naturally contain a wealth of material about it and their miscellaneous contents only emphasize this further), thereby highlighting a profession that epitomises not one, but several widely quoted and often-discussed paradoxes (translators produce texts that are and yet are not their own; the better a translator's work, the less obviously noticeable it will be; and others), a profession that, as I have mentioned at several points across this thesis, has been criticised as "thankless", "underrated" and even "invisible" – with practicing translators often using such words to describe their work, translation does perhaps not seem particularly appealing a professional path to take.

When it comes to periodicals, I have also pointed out early on in this project how they are often the "physical spaces… in which literary careers [are] forged and consolidated" (Gimpel, 2001: 3), and I have shown this to be true in the case of *Renditions* as well, in that it has often been the first literary outlet to publish translators and authors who were little-known, or still entirely unknown to the English-speaking world, and who now count among names familiar to anyone with an interest in Chinese literature in translation (to remind of some examples here, authors Mo Yan and Ding Ling, and translators Nicky Harman and Howard Goldblatt).

I have also shown how, not so overtly perhaps, *Renditions* has been encouraging dialogue about Chinese-English translation over the years; it has done so not only via its contents but also through academic events, and by inviting renowned translators and authors to work in Hong Kong, and publishing parts of their work in the magazine – excerpts that were eventually to become book-length publications of translated Chinese classics. All this activity helps illustrating in what ways translation magazines can support translatorial talent and encourage the spreading of translated literature, hence facilitating translator visibility and enabling a CoP to form.

It has been shown here that the format of a magazine and the variety of material in it – in short, all that makes periodicals a challenging subject to study – allows to make translations in a magazine easier to notice. While the pages with a translator's foreword in a book are often overseen or dismissed by readers, in a magazine this foreword appears alongside a translation of rather similar length, which makes it hardly possible not to notice the presence of translators (having said this, it can also be assumed that readers of a publication that calls itself a "translation magazine" will probably *expect* to be coming across translators' voices). So, it can be said that a key function of a translation magazine is also that of opening access to translation as a profession and of supporting translators, in turn creating opportunities for them to learn the trade in the ways I have shown following Wenger, seen as its very existence depends on its contributors.

Moreover, Gimpel's assertion cited above suggests that periodicals more in general function as career stepping stone for novice writers, whom they can help getting their name noticed more widely and gain a readership. I have discussed some of *Renditions*' contemporaries in the Introduction, and while that is a rather short section that serves to illustrate my choice of *Renditions* over other similar publications, it is also clear from it that any generalisation on this "first platform" role of periodicals has to be done with caution, in that not all magazines make use of these possibilities in the same way, and some even do not appear to make use of them at all.[70] One reason for this may be that *Renditions* is the only one of the three main outlets of Chinese literature in translation that then existed alongside one another to be rooted in an academic setting and edited by academics, which likely also leads to a higher awareness of ways of facilitating learning and education for translators.

The following part of my interview with one of *Renditions*' former editors also proves that this is correct, and shows how the academic milieu could link directly into work at *Renditions*:

> I think there was a first phase to collaboration with the arrival of John Minford, who was teaching a course, a MA degree in Translation, and one of the requirements was for these students to translate a piece. So he came up with this very clever idea – because at that time *Renditions* was also publishing way behind schedule: if I make some of these students' translations publishable, you know, bring them up to *Renditions* quality, we can actually have a new source of material; good for the student, good for *Renditions*. So he started doing that, and it sort of worked on and off for a number of years, because David Pollard later collaborated with some of his MA students as well.

We can see here how at least two former *Renditions* editors found in collaboration with translators-in-training at CUHK a pedagogical strategy from which both these novice translators and *Renditions* could benefit.

[70] Having said that, I am not implying here that other literary translation outlets with a mission similar to *Renditions*' do not function in a similar way. Only that they will have different ways of making translation "visible", which in turn can reflect in the degree to which their team will develop into a CoP.

A Bond of Reciprocity with Hong Kong

The geographical context of this project has been instrumental in highlighting the importance of my findings. Through the example of *Renditions,* I have also discussed the role translation played in Hong Kong in the Seventies, and have pointed out how important this location was for such a project to develop, and become successful. Being the colonial setting that it was, Hong Kong had become a bilingual milieu that produced versatile translators: several of my interviewees who are Hong Kong natives of a now senior generation stated that they feel equally comfortable translating in both directions, Chinese-English and vice versa, given that equal weight was put on both languages in their training or early employment (in some cases their first job was in quite specialised areas like legal translation, and, given that Chinese only became an official language at a later stage, this mainly involved translating from Chinese into English).

In Chapter 6, I have discussed an analogy for *Renditions* that had formed in my mind during the early stages of research for this project, namely that of a "literary lighthouse"; this image struck me as viable for a magazine that was, quite literally, sending out to the Anglophone world issue after issue of translated material from Hong Kong – a major port and well-known harbour, a place where one would almost expect to find a lighthouse – in a concentrated effort to place Chinese literature on a more global map at a time when hardly any of it was openly available, let alone being translated.

Hung (in Chan, 2001: 80) provides the following overview of the situation in Hong Kong in the times the RCT was founded:

> Hong Kong's unique history [offered] academics [there] several advantages unavailable to their colleagues in other Chinese communities. In terms of language and cultural environment…, Hong Kong did provide the opportunities for the nurturing of bilingual and bicultural individuals, albeit in no great numbers. … In terms of academic freedom, Hong Kong has a strong edge in the investigation of all topics that [were] taboo in China. In terms of information access, Hong Kong [was] ideally situated to acquire knowledge of the latest developments in the West as well as in China.

> For several decades, Hong Kong has also enjoyed similar advantages over [other] major Chinese communities.

An advantageous position, therefore, not only for historical reasons, because of the availability of bilingual translators and open access to a wide range of material, but also because Hong Kong offered a degree of academic and other freedom other Chinese-speaking communities did not.

I have also pointed out that there is an important element of reciprocity between Hong Kong and *Renditions*. On the one hand, historically and culturally the situation in Hong Kong made it possible for *Renditions* to grow and thrive at a specific time. The establishment of the RCT, which harbours *Renditions*, was, "[to a large degree,] a reflection of the social and intellectual climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was an era that saw strong nationalistic feelings focussed on the issue of the status of the Chinese language, which was finally given official status comparable to English in 1973" (Hung in Chan, 2001: 73). On the other, many issues of *Renditions* feature work by Hong Kong authors, and entire special issues and double issues were dedicated to Hong Kong literature (No. 26, No. 29&30, and No. 47&48), all published under Eva Hung. "What is interesting", says a review of *Renditions* No. 29&30 in *The China Quarterly*, in reference to the particularity of Hong Kong's characteristic bilingual setting, "is that this first anthology of Hong Kong literature is in English: nothing of its kind is available in Chinese" (Zhao, 1989).

Renditions*: A Real-Life Example of Community of Practice*

This dissertation is, to my knowledge, the first to study a translation magazine as an example of Community of Practice, and as such it offers new insights on researching both translation and periodicals, insights that help advancing the study of translation in a social context (which as I have pointed out earlier is currently one of the more recent focal points in TS). More broadly speaking, this project also advances the study of the role of translation periodicals and of the way they function. The many details and examples given here that all contribute to this discussion illustrate how periodicals in fact suggest themselves as rather suitable material for the study of naturally occurring CoPs because they gather a whole team of people. In the case of a translation magazine this team tends to grow over time, given that (ideally) the numbers of regular translators-contributors keep growing. While of course there will always be reasons for a publication to start existing, the idea of artificially creating a CoP is very unlikely to be the dirivng force behind the launch of a translation magazine. This is what I mean by calling periodicals an example of naturally occurring CoPs, i.e. the type of CoPs that are to be found almost everywhere, and that inspired Wenger's work in the first place.

Perhaps the biggest difference between this thesis and other existing research on translation that draws on Wenger and CoPs is that this is a project which examines a real-life situation, unlike other existing studies on translator CoPs (see section "Beyond the Printed Page" below for examples) which mostly focus on virtual, online communities, given that, of course, ever since it became widely available, the internet has quickly become an invaluable resource for translators, not only as a tool for work but also as a networking and socialising platform, which now in turn attracts scholarly attention, as I have mentioned earlier.

Beyond the Printed Page

In its own way, research focusing on virtual CoPs also takes Lave and Wenger's ideas a step further, applying their thinking to a new reality which is certainly not without importance for translators, who now rely heavily on online communication. When asked about this, one of my interviewees felt that "nowadays translators are all over the place, and they are always meeting each other. Usually they do so online, but they do communicate". The internet has become a busy meeting and communication platform, and also (as I will show in what follows) an important source of language-specific information.

Despite the advancements of technology, however, translation is essentially still a deeply human and, as shown in this study, also highly interactive and social process that connects well with Wenger's equally human-centred ideas. Given that *Renditions*' lifetime bridges the pre-internet era and the era of everyday online communication, the magazine is an interesting example of CoP, considering that (regardless of whether online communication existed or not) at no point of its lifetime was geographical proximity essential for the *Renditions* team to continue functioning. Nevertheless, online CoPs are an important new direction in the translatorial profession.

I have mentioned earlier that research on translator CoPs focuses largely on such online translator communities.[71] Online communities are, of course, quite easily approachable and often also better accessible than real-life examples. Moreover, the impact of everyday use of the internet on the translatorial profession can hardly be overlooked: I have regularly encountered references to this during my interviews with translators for this project, all of whom were regular internet users and in some cases used, or were involved in running, some online networking platforms for translators, of which I will mention several below. Even if I have focused on the printed word in this project, also some of the situations I have used for illustration here were greatly facilitated by the existence of the internet (see, for example, the collaboration between David Lunde and Mary Fung in Chapter 4, most of which happened as e-mail correspondence between Hong Kong and the USA).

Online translator communities that are quite well-known are often ones aimed at freelance translators, like ProZ.com and TranslatorsCafe.com. In most cases these websites will require users to register as members, and will have a forum or similar interactive space where members can discuss work-related issues. Both ProZ and TranslatorsCafe have specific sections of their website that offer a possibility of posting freelance jobs, and of contacting translators or translation agencies. See Figure 12 below for a representation of this: we can see there are sections which offer work, the opportunity of making contacts, as well as several spaces to discuss translation (the “discussion forums” on the left hand side menu and “community” on the menu at the top of the page, which leads back to the “discussion forums” section), along with spaces that offer other types of assistance with language and terminology (“terminology help” and “how-to articles” on the left):

[71] See, for example, Mihalache (2007) or Yu’s thesis on China’s largest online translation community Yeeyan (2017).

Figure 12: Partial screenshot of the welcome page of TranslatorsCafe.com

It is easy to see from the profile of members on these websites that there is a strong drive towards having as versatile and qualified-looking a member profile as possible: many members make a point of showing that they have a degree in TS, that they are affiliated with one or several well-known translator associations, or that they specialise in several subject areas or language combinations. Emphasis, as can be seen in Figure 13, is on being "reliable", "professional", "qualified", and "certified" (although it is not always immediately clear what is intended by the latter two). Potential clients will also automatically see a member's TranslatorsCafe membership duration in a search, which may add to credibility:

Figure 13: The results of a search for Chinese-English freelance translators on TranslatorsCafe.com

This tendency to highlight certification, fast turnaround time and professional quality is less openly advertised in literary translation, where some degree of speed-quality balance certainly also matters but a translator's experience reflects in other, perhaps less obviously accessible, ways (e.g. in how many works a translator has already had published, which authors' work they have translated, and how their work was received), even though it should be mentioned here that discussions on the concept of "translator brand" are now surfacing in literary translator circles. In Chinese-English translation this mostly connects with arguably the best known name for this language combination, Howard Goldblatt, whose profile has been sharply enhanced through his association with Nobel Prize-winning author Mo Yan and who, as some argue, has defined an own "brand" by virtue of the way he translates Chinese literature (to the point that sinologist and literary critic Wolfgang Kubin suggests, on the basis of numerous omissions in Goldblatt's translations, that his translations should in fact have double authorship);[72] this would seem to be a market-focused extension of the existing notion of "individual translator style" in Morini's work (which I discuss on page 43, Literature Review). What is being called "brand", however, is not

[72] The full interview with Kubin is available here: http://www.chinanews.com/cul/2013/03-19/4657239.shtml [last accessed 13 October 2019]

only a matter of style, but also of tangible success, translatorial prestige and public image.

Platforms dedicated to literary translation have also emerged online, some are run specifically by and for literary translators and often focus on a particular language combination. One such example for Chinese literature in English translation, based in the United Kingdom but known of or used by several of my interviewees (which shows it has a wider international reputation), is Paper Republic.[73] Within the same language combination, another platform that should be mentioned here is the Leeds Centre for New Chinese Writing, which functions in partnership with, among others, Paper Republic.[74] These are spaces that are more focused on literature, linked to its translation, often to specific publishers, and other related information, and are less competitively profession-oriented than ProZ and TranslatorsCafe. That literary translation should have created an online niche for itself in the shape of such websites only proves it is a type of translation that is distinct from other areas of translation (for which the more competitive edge is typical), something I have pointed out in the Literature Review (see section "The Art of Literary Translation").

It is, of course, also possible to contact the members or organisers of these more literary-minded spaces (as I have done successfully in two cases in order to contact potential interviewees), however another fact showing these platforms are of a different sort is that their purpose is, in fact, more similar to that of *Renditions* than to that of the likes of ProZ and TranslatorsCafe. This is clear from a look at the aims these websites have set for themselves. In the case of Paper Republic, we learn on its webpage that its mission is, broadly speaking, "to promote Chinese literature in English translation" for both readers' and translators' benefit, while the Leeds Centre for New Chinese Writing informs the visitors of its website that it "[provides] a hub for research into all aspects of Chinese literature and Chinese-English literary translation". Here too, there is a clear intention to network and exchange knowledge, but altogether of a more scholarly kind than can be observed within technical translation communities.

[73] Can be accessed at: https://paper-republic.org/
[74] Can be accessed at: https://writingchinese.leeds.ac.uk/

The similarities of such websites with *Renditions* are in fact numerous: the focus on literary translation, the proactive promoting of Chinese literature in translation to an English-speaking audience, and, in the case of Leeds, also the academic milieu, except that none of the translated material they make available is printed on paper and distributed by post. Another key function of such websites is also shared with *Renditions*: they too regularly feature excerpts of new writing deemed of interest, and highlight the work of emerging authors and translators – in this sense, they function much the same way as a translation magazine would. They too offer an opportunity for writers and literary translators to get better known in their professional circles, and – in the case of authors – better known beyond the sinophone language sphere. I have discussed all of these situations in the context of *Renditions* in this project: these online spaces are, in a way, virtual magazines.

Given that such online platforms now exist, and thrive, it would not be an overstatement to say that this is now becoming a fresh way for literary translation to find a readership, one that extends beyond the printed page into cyberspace, and also one that nevertheless remains highly social, as I have shown above. Both of my literary translation examples here, Paper Republic and the Leeds Centre for New Chinese Writing, not only connect writers, translators and readers online, but also encourage personal connections and networking via a busy agenda of translation- and literature-focused events that bring those with an interest in Chinese literature in translation together: readings, talks, symposia, and other such events leading to social interaction where participants can meet (fellow) authors and translators in person – another similarity with the modus operandi of the RCT (see Chapter 5 for more details on the RCT's activities in this domain). It therefore makes sense to also see such platforms as naturally occurring CoPs, and study them as such in a similar way to what I have done with *Renditions*: I point this out because these websites are of course also operated and populated by a real team of literary translators and academics united by common aims and interests, whose activity attracts a wider circle of individuals who share these interests, and in fact encourages all that is social about translation.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

While this thesis breaks new ground in numerous ways, it does of course have some limitations that should be acknowledged here. I have not in any proactive way taken into account the concrete impact *Renditions* has had on readers, which (had it been possible to gather)[75] would probably have provided some interesting cross-evidence to the practitioner accounts from my innterviews used here. Such data would also, in a way, have completed the loop of the journey a translated text makes from one culture to another, from the beginnings of its existence through the work of a translator and its taking shape through his or her interaction with other translators, and with editors, until its reaching the intended audience.

Not least, I am aware that my focus on one single example is relatively narrow; this is one of the common limitations of case studies. Nevertheless, I have also shown here that a lot of what can be said about learning and social interaction in the context of a translation magazine also applies more widely to the context of translation (two examples that fall into this category are the significance of their profession to translators, as someone making a contribution to a much larger purpose of disseminating literature from one language sphere into another; then, also the process of building up of a professional profile and network a translator uses and turns to regularly throughout his or her career) which in turn broadens the validity and applicability of my findings on how translators learn and progress in their professional careers.

Looking past my own study, there seem to be several ways in which further research could branch off this thesis. The connection between people, learning and translation made in this thesis opens a possible avenue for studying the sociology of translation, one that focuses on the importance emphasized in this thesis of talking to translators and finding ways of observing them in practice in order to understand translation proper. For this particular direction, magazines

75 It would have been difficult and very time-consuming to do so, even with the assistance of *Renditions*; two of my interviewees have pointed out how there was not always a clear overview of who the magazine's readers were, even within the editorial team, given that except for subscriptions from universities it was difficult to gain such an overview. So, while insights from readers would have been an interesting way of enhancing the discussion, this kind of data would not have been possible to collect within the available time frame.

and periodicals certainly offer a fascinating subject of study, because they are run by people (editors, contributors) for people (readers), and are therefore prone to become an epicentre for translation as a social activity. Close comparisons between *Renditions* and other similar publications could be made in this respect, and further contribute to existing research on both the sociology of translation and on periodicals.

Along much the same lines, I believe that also Wenger's research could be applied more extensively to real-life CoPs than to artificially created CoPs, seen as after all the emerging of the latter is not what Wenger's work was intended to cause (see discussion on pp. 112-113). Of course a considerable number of artificial communities of practice now exists, and discusses topics around which they were created. Yet, it hardly seems purposeful to delve into researching the benefits and shortcomings of such CoPs when naturally occurring CoPs can be instrumental in enhancing our understanding of how some specific professions function, as done here in the case of translation.

The ideas raised here about the ways translators learn their profession could also be developed on further; one way of doing so is to discuss them with practicing translators who could help confirming or further refining them. There has been some rise in material written on translation by translators, and in my understanding it is only logical for knowledge on translation – be it scholarly knowledge, or information aimed at a more general audience – to be passed on by those who know the profession best: translators themselves. Not least, such testimonials would be invaluable material for any aspiring translators and translators in training, and as such could eventually be compiled into useful material for higher education degrees in TS. Possibly, examples of CoPs found in other translation-related contexts could further prove that translation is truly, and cross-culturally so, a social activity, even if some contexts may allow more room for its social nature than others.

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