

Proust and the Chinese Translations

2.1 PROUST IN CHINA: AN IDEOLOGICAL TRAJECTORY

Translation, in the context of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century China, fundamentally shaped the Chinese literary language and precipitated its transformation from ‘rigid’ classical or literary Chinese to ‘free’ modern vernacular Chinese. Immediate examples include the use of ‘translationese’ in creative writing,¹ the implementation of (essentially) Western punctuation,² linguistic and literary tools and concepts (such as the linguistic typology developed since Plato) in the ‘new’ kind of vernacular writing, as well as the reformatting and re-examination of Chinese classic texts.³ The Chinese translation and reception of Proust has been particularly determined and overdetermined by the changing political and sociological factors behind each of the following key historical stages of twentieth-century China.

Prior to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, Proust was briefly introduced in two or three popular academic journals and reviews—very often through translated articles written by Western writers such as Aldous Huxley and Jean Cocteau—without generating much interest. Only one extract from *Du côté de chez Swann* and one novella from *Les Plaisirs et les jours*, ‘La Fin de la jalousie’, was translated into Chinese (Huang 2013, 295–296). There was one extensive critical introduction of Proust (around 20,000 Chinese characters) carried out by Zeng Juezhi, published as two journal articles in 1933. But Zeng’s work was almost completely overlooked by his contemporary

scholarly community (ibid.; Tu 2012, 92). Modernist writers such as Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot were met with much more enthusiasm.

Under the Maoist regime (1949–1976), the official slogan ‘literature must serve workers-peasants-soldiers and the proletarian cause’ constituted the only criterion of selection and judgment for translation projects and critical activities, which naturally excluded Proust, who was considered to be a paragon of bourgeois literature. In fact, almost the entire Western literature of the twentieth century was accused of being ‘decadent’,⁴ except for a few ‘progressive’ writers such as Romain Rolland, Aragon, and Barbusse, accompanied by Roger Vailland and André Stil, who are known for their deep sympathy with the communist cause (Zhang 2003, 88). Proust particularly suffered from Soviet scholars’ forceful critique of *La Recherche* as ‘an anti-realist, anti-social novel, which especially sums up the decadent tendency of not only France, but the whole of Europe’ (‘反现实主义、反社会的小说，不仅是法国的、而且也是整个欧洲的颓废倾向的特殊的总结’) (Tu 2012, 92, my translation). Due to the contemporaneous political ideological bond, many Soviet scholars’ criticisms functioned as a decisive lens through which China saw the West. Then, during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), all non-official publications were interrupted.⁵

The immediate period after the economic reform (1978) led by Deng Xiaoping witnessed a major revival of intellectual enthusiasm for translation and the introduction of Western literary and philosophical texts, especially those of the early twentieth century, which directly impacted on what we could perceive as Chinese Modernism.⁶ Various fragmentary translations of Proust’s works started to emerge and were frequently anthologized in the 1980s.⁷ These translation projects were conducive to the eventual publication of the integral translation of *La Recherche* between 1989 and 1991. It must be noted that the intellectual energy of the late 1980s, often discussed under the banner of ‘Culture Fever’, was characterized by a dynamic tension between the opening up to Western cultural production and a rediscovery of Chinese cultural heritage. Again, this historical specificity will leave its mark on the translation and creative reception of *La Recherche*.

However, the relative intellectual freedom of the 1980s, conducive to the pro-democracy movement, was quickly shattered by the event in Tiananmen Square in 1989, and ‘the immediate post-Tiananmen years (1989–1992) saw the collapse of the lively and multi-voiced intellectual space of the late 1980s’.⁸ Restrictions on cinematic and literary

productions were immediately tightened. And yet, in the same years, the Chinese translation of Proust's *La Recherche* appeared.

The exact year might be coincidental, but the *Zeitgeist* was not. The period between 1989 and 1993 witnessed a crucial ideological battleground emerge in contemporary Chinese intellectual, political, and social history. With the new twist of economic reform known as 'marketization', Chinese society rapidly moved on from the Culture Fever of the 1980s to the Market Fever of the 1990s. Proust was translated in the context of a society where bourgeois values were in the ascendant. Since Proust had been primarily seen as an 'apolitical' writer, with a *typical* 'bourgeois' emphasis on 'aesthetic autonomy', it was politically safe for both Chinese intellectuals to translate and the Communist regime to promote his work, while still staying consistent with the overarching ideology of cultural modernization. Indeed, the Chinese Ministry of Culture officially endorsed this translation project by awarding the first prize for the first National Book Prize for Best Foreign Literature to *La Recherche* as soon as its complete translation was published in 1991. So, interestingly, it seems that the reason that Proust's novel was not translated under Mao—because of its status as 'bourgeois literature'—became the *de facto* reason that it was translated under Deng, and the official endorsement of such literature in 1991 symbolically announced a new phase of modern China, understood as '*post-revolutionary*'. Jean Milly, the co-founder of the Centre d'Études Proustiennes and the general editor of the Flammarion edition of *La Recherche*, was invited to the Proust conference organized in Beijing in 1991, and he still vividly recalls the formal and in many ways 'novel' procedures with which he was greeted by Communist Party officials.⁹

In sum, we could observe that Proust was translated for the following reasons: first, the Chinese intellectual and artistic enthusiasm for and commitment to introducing the long-awaited Western canon, in an attempt to fill in the blank; second, the text's political safety, or rather ambiguity, in terms of ideological message; and third, the commercial potential in the new social environment under the so-called 'socialist market economy' or, simply, marketization. The last, commercial aspect is confirmed by one translator's report on the Chinese translation to the *Bulletin Marcel Proust* in 1992, in which he was already envisaging a new translation of *La Recherche*.¹⁰ It is worth pointing out that the market also provided a new space for Chinese intellectuals after Tiananmen to 'find their less restrained articulations'.¹¹ Without the market factor,

the rivalry between the two major Chinese publishing houses for their respective launches of the new translation of *Du côté de chez Swann* in 2004 and 2005, along with their massive media promotions, would have been unforeseeable. One of the two individual translators, Zhou Kexi, publicly talked (with established writer Chen Cun) about his concern over the Chinese book market for Proust's work, explaining how this market factor has affected his translation strategy (Zhou 2012, 210–212).¹²

It is important to acknowledge that the Chinese translation and reception of Proust's *La Recherche* as a high Modernist work seriously clashed with the postmodern context in which the translation appeared.¹³ The great intensity of China's explosive development from modernity to postmodernity was directly influenced by the West, yet was unparalleled there.¹⁴ The 'profound social anomalies and ideological contradictions'¹⁵ which mark Chinese postmodernity will explain, on a micro level, mainland Chinese writers' rather *equivocal* intertextual engagement with Proust, which will be examined in Chap. 3.

2.2 PROUST IN CHINESE TRANSLATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

There is only one integral translation of Proust's *La Recherche* into Chinese to date, but there are multiple incomplete translations and editions. The integral translation, a collective work shared by fifteen Chinese scholars, was first published between 1989 and 1991, and was republished thereafter in different formats, sometimes with minor revisions. In 1992, as part of a much wider translation project entitled 'Twentieth-Century French Literature Series', directed by Liu Mingjiu, Shen Zhiming adaptively translated *La Recherche*, condensing it into one single volume subtitled 'Essential Selection' (henceforth referred to as the *Essential Selection*). It is an 'adaptive' translation because the selection of the passages for this translation, as will be examined in detail, is based on Proust's earlier vision of the overall structure of *La Recherche*. Almost a decade later, two influential Chinese publishers for Foreign Studies commissioned two new, competing individual translations of *La Recherche* (which are still works in progress today); Xu Hejin and Zhou Kexi had both previously been involved in the *First Translation*. Zhou's and Xu's translations of *Du côté de chez Swann* appeared in 2004 and 2005 respectively. In addition to *Du côté de chez Swann*, other available volumes from Xu include *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (2010),

Le Côté de Guermantes (2011), and *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (2014); other available volumes from Zhou equally include *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (2010) and then *La Prisonnière* (2012), mainly due to his previous participation in the translation of the same volume. While Xu continues to work on the rest of *La Recherche*, Zhou has publicly expressed his regret for not being able to pursue his ambition any further due to his senility and poor health (Zhou 2006). Meanwhile, Zhou translated the first two volumes of Stéphane Heuet's comic-book adaptation of *La Recherche*. Additionally, in 2009 he published an abridged version of his own translation of *Du côté de chez Swann*.¹⁶

Whereas discussions on whether *La Recherche* as a whole should be best translated individually or collectively are quite common among readers, translators, and scholars of Proust around the world,¹⁷ the idea of *selectively* translating *La Recherche*, of condensing Proust's work into an 'approachable' size with the good intention of giving the general Chinese reader a quality taster of 'the uniqueness of Proust's literary charm',¹⁸ is indeed quite unique to the Chinese context. Condensation inevitably entails reduction, but, as will be scrutinized, this kind of 'anthological' reduction is fundamentally different from what Margret Gray (1992, 166) terms the 'kitschification' of Proust, whereby Proust's canonical work is reduced to an almost empty signifier, disconnected from its original signified.¹⁹

2.3 FIRST TRANSLATION

The *First Translation* has been most intensely scrutinized by Chinese scholars and writers alike. It exercises the greatest impact on the academic, creative, and popular receptions of Proust in China. Problems with this translation have been well studied by XU Jun (2007), who co-translated the volume *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, and Tu (2010). It would be particularly beneficial for us to recapitulate the following two major critical observations.

First is disparity in translation style. Interestingly, in many ways this major criticism goes against the justification given by Christopher Prendergast—the general editor of *La Recherche's* new English translation published by Penguin—for the decision to retranslate the novel *collectively*; he comments, 'multiple selves, multiple worlds, multiple styles: this, paradoxically, is the quintessence of Proust' (2002, xviii). While this observation is certainly valid, certain aspects of 'stylistic variation' in the

Chinese translation risk rendering Proust's text gratuitously perplexing. For instance, particular inconsistencies arise when different translators are confronted with the task of translating French proper names *phonetically* with Chinese characters (instead of the Roman alphabet). Given the overwhelmingly large presence of people and places and their (in) frequent (re)appearances in Proust's novel, the *First Translation*, and especially its first edition, is often suspected of somewhat 'irresponsibly' creating an onomastic labyrinth for the Chinese reader that is even more tortuous than in the original.²⁰ This problem of stylistic inconsistency is exacerbated by the fact that not all of the first translators had finished reading the whole novel at the time of translation.²¹

Second are technical mistranslations, for several reasons. The linguistic difficulty of Proust's work, many translators' rather disparate knowledge of French culture and language,²² and the lack of collaboration with French or other international Proust scholars all meant that technical mistranslations were quite common. They sometimes included 'basic' errors such as mistaking 'Bretagne' for 'la Grande Bretagne' in the second volume of *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*. As Tu (2010, 146) points out, had the translator acquired a better knowledge of even the preceding volume (translated by someone else), this error would have been easily avoided. Unfortunately, as Tu's analysis shows, while correcting many errors found in the *First Translation*, the new translation by Xu also contains mistranslations which do not exist in the *First Translation* (146–147). The coordinator of the *First Translation*, Han Hulin (1990, 62), remarked in a report that quite a few translators were unsatisfied with their own work and kept sending him notes and corrections by post after publication, so that certain inaccurate renditions could be ameliorated in future editions. But there is nothing unique about mistranslating Proust into Chinese. At a recent international conference in Paris entitled 'Comment traduire Proust?' (2013), many scholars and translators alike expressed their common frustration with 'basic'—yet somehow 'unavoidable' (for both cultural and interpretive reasons)—translation errors in different languages, while acknowledging the courage and the overall quality of those translations. In this respect, it seems that the translations of Proust's *La Recherche*, just like the composition of the novel itself, will always remain an *œuvre inachevée*.

The *First Translation* is based on the old French Pléiade edition published in 1954, which is one technical reason why many scholars feel the need to retranslate *La Recherche*, as the novel underwent two major

textual revisions in France, commissioned respectively by two different publishers: Flammarion (1984–1987) and Gallimard (1987–1989). These two rather competitive revisions in many ways entail the two new, competing Chinese translations of *La Recherche*, respectively commissioned by Yilin and Yiwen.²³

Somewhat paradoxically, whereas the Flammarion edition—directed by Milly and published in 10 volumes in paperback, with limited (but still quite extensive) notes and references—is the basis for the more scholarly hardback Chinese translation by Xu, the prestigious new leather-bound four-volume Pléiade edition—directed by Jean-Yves Tadié and containing an overwhelming amount of notes and textual variants from Proust’s manuscript and typewritten texts—has turned into the more ‘popular’ paperback translation by Zhou, with footnotes being kept to a minimum.

2.4 XU’S TRANSLATION

The first four volumes of *La Recherche* are currently available in Xu’s Translation (i.e. *Du côté de chez Swann*, *A l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, *Le Côté de Guermantes*, and *Sodome et Gomorrhe*). As mentioned before, the physical presentation of Xu’s Translation based on the Flammarion edition manifests a scholarly air. This translation is certainly richer in paratextual materials. Apart from the footnotes, each volume typically contains 140–300 pages of paratexts, which are generically broken down into the following sections:

Illustrations. Each volume includes 16 pages of illustrations printed in colour on glossy paper. They are selected from Proust’s family photos, photos of Combray and Cabourg, and notable artworks mentioned in the novel. Where an illustration corresponds to a specific passage in Proust’s text, the page number is given in the caption.

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Prefaces. This section is limited to the first volume only. Xu’s Translation still keeps André Maurois’s preface, written for the first Pléiade edition of *La Recherche* in 1954, which already features in the *First Translation*. In many ways, this preface is indicative of the main research interests in Proust Studies in the West in the 1950s. As soon as it was translated and included in the *First Translation*, it became the point of reference for the Chinese critical, creative, and popular receptions of Proust. In short, Maurois claims that ‘time’ is the primary theme

of *La Recherche*, and the book begins and ends with it. He continues that the other corresponding and complementary theme is ‘memory’, and Proust’s major contribution is that he has taught us certain ways of remembering the past. Maurois (1954, xiii–xv) also puts considerable emphasis on Proust’s health condition in relation to his monumental yet idiosyncratic work, a point which will widely circulate in the Chinese creative imagination of Proust.²⁴

The first volume notably includes a second preface written by Milly for the Flammarion edition.²⁵ This preface is much more extensive (about 30 pages in the French original). In *selectively* recounting the main plots of the entire *Recherche*, Milly effectively outlines most Proustian themes, which significantly extends Maurois’s thematic scope of ‘time’ and ‘memory’. As we will discuss in the next chapter, had this preface been included in the *First Translation* (1989–1991), Proust might have inspired those mainland Chinese writers’ creative imaginations rather differently.

Chronology. This chronology (also limited to the first volume), which covers Proust’s family history and biography and major events in Proust Studies up until 2009, significantly expands the one in the original Flammarion edition. Xu has evidently consulted the chronology included in the Pléiade edition compiled by Tadié, as well as the one included in Tadié’s biography of Proust (Tu 2010, 144).

Synoptic summary. The Chinese translation follows the wording in the Flammarion edition.

Indexes of characters’ names/place names/artwork names. These three indexes, which do not feature in the Flammarion edition, are variably adapted from the Pléiade edition. The original proper names written in Roman letters are matched by the corresponding names written in Chinese characters phonetically transliterated by this particular translator. This solution could significantly reduce the confusion when readers cross-reference proper names in different translations. These indexes are not included in the *First Translation*.

Postscript. This section takes up pages depending on the volume. It contains a well-researched but succinct critical introduction to a selection of themes in each volume and an account of Xu’s strategy for translating certain problematic French expressions, as well as his acknowledgment of the assistance and suggestions he received from colleagues. Xu specifically compares his linguistic solutions to those in the *First Translation*.

Two points of observation need highlighting: one on Milly's new preface written in 2009, and the other on the 'indexes' (especially compared to the English translation published by Penguin).

First, as suggested in our Introduction, the Chinese critical interest in Proust's work is to a certain extent culturally biased. Milly's preface could potentially benefit even the more seasoned Proust critics in China, as he repeatedly puts emphasis on the centrality of issues such as anti-Semitism and homosexuality, which are too often neglected in the Chinese reception of *La Recherche*. For example, this is how Milly (2009, 16) *thematically* summarizes the volume *Sodome et Gomorrhe I* in three sentences:

Le narrateur fait retour sur sa découverte de l'homosexualité de M. de Charlus et des relations de celui-ci avec l'ancien giletier Jupien. La scène est longuement décrite. Dans un commentaire très oratoire, la condition des homosexuels est rapprochée de celle des Juifs.

The narrator reverts to the discovery of M. de Charlus's homosexuality and his relations with the ex-waistcoat maker Jupien. The scene is described at length. In a very oratorical commentary, the condition of homosexuals and that of Jews are brought together. (My translation)

This kind of insightful remark fulfils more than a synoptic function, as it points out an entire area of Proustian research with which the Chinese readership is rather unfamiliar. Out of one entire page of 'synopsis' at the back of the original volume, Milly chooses to highlight this salient analogy between Jews and homosexuals, which is, incidentally, missing from the 'synopsis' of the Pléiade edition. The final section of this chapter, as a case study, will partly follow Milly's cue and examine the evolving strategies of translating (homo)sexuality into Chinese by comparing exemplary passages across the available translations.

If Maurois's preface is indicative of the relatively restrictive approaches to Proustian themes of the 1950s, still tinged by a moral sense of modesty or propriety, Milly's preface can be considered suggestive of the more 'liberal' and to some extent more 'honest' pluralistic readings of Proust's work from the 1980s onward. It must be noted that Milly does not accidentally stress the importance of the subject of homosexuality in *La Recherche*. Throughout the 1980s there was a flourishing body of critical work that directly dealt with this subject in Proust: J.E. Rivers's

Proust and the Art of Love (1980), Eva Ahlstedt's *La Pudeur en crise* (1985), and Antoine Compagnon's *Proust entre deux siècles* (1989), to name but a few monographs. In other words, there was an ideological shift between the two phases of Proust Studies. Similarly, as will be explored in the last section of this chapter, there was also a discursive shift in (homo)sexuality from the first to the two new Chinese translations of *La Recherche*. Milly's preface should heighten the translator's sensitivity to Proust's sophisticated sexual discourses and make him aware of his own strategy for translating them into Chinese. In fact, Xu (*XT IV*, 704–750) adds a further 45 page postscript to his translation of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, largely recapitulating some of the main points on the issue of homosexuality in Proust formulated by Emily Eells-Ogée (1987, 11–51) and Antoine Compagnon (*RTP III*, 1185–1261).

Second, the decision to include the three indexes in the new Chinese translation again goes against the one taken by Prendergast's Penguin translation. It seems that, in order to attenuate the technical problem of the unstable phonetic rendition of proper names into Chinese, one simply has to compromise the quasi-phenomenology-of-reading approach to Proust's text in translation.²⁶ Roland Barthes sharply articulated the powers of essentialization, citation, and the exploration of Proust's proper nouns in relation to memory. In 'Proust et les noms', Barthes (1972, 124–125) insists, 'le Nom propre est lui aussi un signe, et non bien entendu, un simple indice qui désignerait, sans signifier' (the proper noun is a sign too, it is not, of course, a simple index that would designate a name without giving it meaning'). Both the 'natural' and 'cultural' motivations behind Proust's making of proper names explicated by Barthes—based on Western linguistic theories and the notion of 'Frenchness' (*francité*) respectively (128–131)—are bound to be lost in translation in the Chinese context, which stays outside European cultural referents. Unfortunately, in this case Proust's proper nouns can only be reduced to simple indices (as different from symbols).

Overall, the paratextual material in Xu's Translation aims not only to represent a more 'authentic' Proust, but also to provide Chinese readers, especially academics and students interested in Proust, with lucid guides and useful tools to further their research. In terms of translation philosophy, Xu seems to have adopted a more 'philological' approach to Proust's text (i.e. trying to be morphologically and syntactically 'faithful' to the original),²⁷ similar to that proposed by the Penguin translation, which inevitably reflects a tendency towards foreignizing conception, especially given the significant linguistic gap between French and

Chinese. In the next section and in the final case study, I will demonstrate how Xu's paratextual features and principles of translation noticeably differ from those adopted by Zhou.

2.5 ZHOU'S TRANSLATION

Zhou has also managed to translate three volumes of *La Recherche* (the first, second, and fifth volumes): *Du côté de chez Swann*, *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, and *La Prisonnière*. Different from the *First Translation* and Xu's Translation, Zhou has decided on a more literal rendition of the title *A la recherche du temps perdu*: *Zhuixun shiqu de shiguang* 追寻逝去的时光 (close to the English title *In Search of Lost Time*). In the translator's preface, Zhou ([2003] 2012, 454) uses examples from *La Recherche*'s English, German, Spanish, Italian, and Japanese translations to justify this decision. Just as in Scott Moncrieff's first English title, *Remembrance of Things Past*, the iconic Chinese title *Pursuing the Memory of Time/Years as Water/River*, in Michael Wood's words, 'actually contradicts one of the major claims of Proust's novel: that what we consciously summon up as remembrance is not memory, only a sort of mummified replacement of what is gone' (2013, 232). Zhou ([2003] 2012, 453) specifically mentions the fact that Proust himself followed his mother's advice on literal translation when translating two of Ruskin's works, although, as Elena Lozinsky (2013, 64, my translation) more recently points out, Proust is also keen to 'soumettre l'œuvre aux lois du français' ('subject work to the rules of French') and, with 'l'intuition raffinée' ('refined intuition'), to 'recréer le texte selon les règles de sa propre langue' ('recreate the text according to the rules of his own language'), thus consciously elaborating his own aesthetic through translation.

Zhou's Translation, published in paperback, offers limited paratextual material. Apart from the synopsis, each volume contains one short introduction written either by Zhou himself or an invited Chinese scholar. Compared to Xu's Translation, Zhou uses footnotes much more sparingly. For instance, on the first page of *Du côté de chez Swann*, Zhou makes no footnote, whereas Xu generously uses two footnotes of eight lines in total, in a rather encyclopaedic manner, to provide information on the French king François I and the Spanish king Charles V. A few pages further on, while Zhou simply footnotes 'kinétoscope' as 'early cinematic projector', Xu further adds that it was invented by Edison and his assistant Dickson in 1891. Xu footnotes so pedantically that he even

points out occasional textual differences in the Pléiade edition, although his source is still the Flammarion edition. On Page 9, Xu explicitly states that in the Pléiade edition there is no section break before the paragraph beginning with ‘à Combray’ (*XT I*). Similarly, when Swann replies to Aunt Céline that people should put something like ‘Pensées de Pascal’ in the *Figaro* (*RTP I*, 26), in addition to a brief biographical entry on Pascal, Xu notes that the word ‘Pensées’ is italicized in the Pléiade edition, referring to Pascal’s work. Zhou, by contrast, makes no reference to any of these points. Xu clearly demonstrates a scholarly concern over the variants of the source text and endeavours to extract from Proust’s work as much factual knowledge of Western cultural heritage as possible for the benefit of the Chinese readership. For Zhou, perhaps, reading a Western canonical novel should be, after all, different from reading a Western cultural encyclopaedia.

Zhou’s reformulation of *La Recherche*’s Chinese title may imply that he would advocate a more ‘literal’, ‘foreignizing’, and therefore philologically faithful translation of Proust’s text. In reality, this observation more often than not goes curiously against his actual translation practice, in which a strong sense of domestication prevails. As we will see in the final case study, in order that the Chinese text flow more naturally, Zhou sometimes lengthens Proust’s short sentences by adding or repeating certain adverbial phrases, which in fact changes the staccato rhythm of Proust’s original prose. This is partly due to the fact that the Chinese language does not use verbal conjugation to express temporality, and so the translator may feel obliged to adverbially clarify the temporal situation. In modern vernacular Chinese there is a tendency to avoid sentences which are either too short or too long. Sentences should be made long enough to provide a context in which many homonymic characters and words can be rightly understood (especially aurally); if too long, due to the grammatical deficiency of hypotactical structures (e.g. a total lack of relative pronouns), the internal logical relations among different elements of the sentence will become confusing. Incidentally, the appearance and increased use of long sentences in modern and contemporary Chinese is said to ascribe to linguistic Westernization or Europeanization since the beginning of the twentieth century, which has become a source of worry for many contemporary Chinese linguistic purists.²⁸ But the solution to Proust’s long sentences—shared by all three translations of *La Recherche*—has to be a paratactical one, which inevitably loses the grammatical rigour and suggestive chains of reflection in Proust’s original.

We have seen Xu's scholarly paratextual efforts to represent an 'authentic' French and essentially foreign Proust in his translation. In a way, Zhou's minimization of paratexts favours domestication, as the Chinese reader is less likely to 'get distracted' by any real photos (of Combray and Cabourg) or encyclopaedic notes, which enhance the exotic appeal of Proust's work. Rather than insisting on a strict philological faithfulness, Zhou puts considerable emphasis on the *literariness* of the translated text. More concretely, Zhou often takes recourse to classical Chinese literary expressions to accommodate Proust's elegant French. In a recent conference on translating Proust, the Chinese Proust scholar Tu Weiqun, using *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* as a primary example, meticulously demonstrated how Zhou translates some of Proust's words and expressions in an elegant language appropriated from canonical Chinese literary texts, such as the ancient poem 'The Shadow of Flowers' (花影) by Su Shi (苏轼) and, once again, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (红楼梦), the great classical novel which bears many similarities to Proust's *La Recherche*.²⁹ It is worth pointing out that, for contemporary Chinese readers, the evocation and appropriation of classical Chinese expressions in modern vernacular writing immediately and significantly increase the unfamiliar yet not exactly 'foreign' literariness of the text, a kind of 'autoexoticism'. Translating the foreign canon becomes an opportunity to rediscover Chinese cultural heritage.³⁰ As explained at the beginning of this chapter, classical Chinese (*wenyan*) has remained (along with Europeanization and vernacular Chinese) one of the three forces that keep shaping contemporary literary language today.³¹ Therefore, what Zhou's translation strategy has announced is a dialogic and reconstructive relationship among translated, classical, and modern vernacular Chinese. Translation, in this light, has been 'enlisted in ambitious cultural projects, notably the development of a domestic language and literature' and 'contributed to the (re)invention of domestic literary discourses' (Venuti 2002 [1998], 76). This translation of Proust could be said to function as a coordinator in the internal debate of national literatures and languages and to "offer them an image of themselves they could not otherwise have", but which, we may add, they nonetheless desire" (ibid., 77).³² The recourse to Chinese cultural heritage in Zhou's Translation signals a process of 'mirroring' or self-recognition, as well as misrecognition, and helps shape the formation of modern Chinese domestic subjects (i.e. the reader) (ibid., 76–77). Mary Orr (2003, 160) also utilizes the 'metaphor of transformed articulations

[like butterfly from its chrysalis]' to describe 'Chinese and Japanese views of translation', which prioritize the 'enhancement of its own cultural depths by integrating the other'. Chapter 3 will further examine the extent to which such a translation philosophy would help unleash mainland Chinese writers' creative energy.

2.6 ZHOU'S OTHER TRANSLATIONS OF *LA RECHERCHE*

In addition to the three translated volumes of *La Recherche*, Zhou has published an abridged edition of *Du côté de chez Swann* and translated two volumes of Stephane Heuet's comic-book adaptation of *La Recherche* (published as one volume in China). Indeed, Proust's novel has been frequently adapted to other artistic media. Apart from Heuet's comic-book rendition, the novel—or sometimes certain episodes of it—has been most notably adapted into a play, films, and even ballet (Beugnet and Schmid 2004; Schmid 2013). However, the phenomenon of publishing one novel 'anthologically' (i.e. offering a selection of texts in the same literary medium and, in Zhou's case, from a single volume of the novel) is rare. The selection process is particularly revealing of not only the translator's understanding and intention, but also, to a certain degree, Chinese readers' interests and expectations.

It may be best to start with Zhou's (2009) 'Abridgement Notice', as follows:

《去斯万家那边》，是七卷本长篇小说《追寻逝去的时光》中的第一卷。

这一卷共分三个部分：贡布雷；斯万的爱情；地方与地名：地名。

全卷译成中文，约有36万字。这个节选本，主要对象是有意阅读这卷小说，而又苦于抽不出时间，或者面对这样一卷既不重情节又不分章节的小说，心里多少有些犹豫的读者。为了尽可能地让读者领略到普鲁斯特独特的文体魅力，节本采用“大跨度”的节选方式，即先在全书中选取将近二十个我认为特别精彩的大段，每个大段的文字一字不易，完全保留原书中的面貌，然后用尽可能简洁的文字连缀这些段落，并作一些必要的交代。

节选后的内容，就字数而言约为《去斯万家那边》全书的四分之一

Du côté de chez Swann is the first of the seven volumes of the novel *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

This volume contains three parts: Combray; Swann's Love; Place and Place-names: the Names.

The entire volume has been translated into Chinese, about 360 thousand Chinese characters. The main targeted readers of this abridged edition are those who intend to read the novel but bitterly lack the time, or those who feel rather irresolute about venturing into such a ‘chapterless’ novel which doesn’t place emphasis on plots. In order for the Chinese reader to be able to appreciate Proust’s unique literary charm as much as possible, this abridged edition has adopted a ‘great-leap’ selecting method: selecting nearly twenty [eighteen, to be exact] extensive passages, which I consider particularly exciting, from the original translation, and keeping them as they are; then using the most succinct language possible to link these passages together while clarifying a few necessary details [of the plot].

The content after the abridgement, in terms of the number of words, takes up a quarter of the original translation of *Du côté de chez Swann*.

Zhou’s fundamental intention to attract more Chinese readers of Proust is clearly expressed in this notice. In many ways, the fact that Zhou *can* so confidently truncate Proust’s “‘chapterless’ novel which doesn’t place emphasis on plots’ and almost authorially turn *Du côté de chez Swann* into a coherent narrative of 18 sections linked by a kind of theatrical aside, throws light on Zhou’s perception of a certain particularity of Proust’s literary aesthetic, such as the textual malleability or plasticity that has fascinated genetic critics for many decades. After all, this ‘anthological’ adaptation has not yet happened to other long and/or difficult Western canonical novels such as *War and Peace* and *Ulysses*.

If we check Zhou’s selected passages against the synopsis (provided by the new Pléiade edition), perhaps one of the most striking omissions in Zhou’s selection is the famous prologue. It is only summarized in the following words:

有很长一段时间,叙述者马塞尔睡得挺早。夜间醒来,在周围的一片黑暗中,回忆的闸门打开了。他把夜的大部分时间,用来回想往昔的生活。此刻的思绪回到了巴黎的姑婆家。(Zhou 2009, 1)

For a long time, the narrator Marcel goes to bed quite early. When he wakes up at night, surrounded by darkness, memory opens its door. He spends a large part of the night recalling his past life. At this moment, his thought is directed back to his grand-aunt’s house in Paris.

For many Proust scholars, the prologue is indispensable to the understanding of the architectonics of Proust’s novel as a whole. It is a crucial

point of departure from which to explore Proust's narrative technique, notably the distinction between the narrator's and the protagonist's voices. The fact that Zhou chooses to begin his selection with 'soirée de famille' ('family evenings') (*RTP I*, 1524; *PT I*, 448) almost necessarily implies that the narrative is reconstructed fundamentally from the perspective of the protagonist rather than the narrator.³³ In the 'aside', Zhou clearly blends the identities of the narrator, the protagonist, and the author together, which would irritate many Proust scholars. Zhou may have omitted the prologue out of practical concerns, as the narrator in the prologue makes references to many other 'chambres' ('bed-rooms') he has stayed in throughout *La Recherche*, which may not seem immediately relevant to the subsequent content of the first volume. By the same token, passages which contain extensive references to other volumes of *La Recherche*, such as the reverie of Venice, are often omitted. There seems to be a conscientious effort to make this abridged volume as independent as possible from the rest of the novel, so that readers of this volume may be less disturbed by any apparent sense of 'incompleteness'. Incidentally, seasoned Proust readers may be slightly amused to notice how Zhou's omission echoes, at least superficially, Alfred Humblot's candid remark in his correspondence with Louis de Robert (who acted as an intermediary between Proust and the editor at Ollendorff): 'Cher ami, je suis peut-être bouché à l'émeri, mais je ne puis comprendre qu'un monsieur puisse employer trente pages à décrire comment il se tourne et se retourne dans son lit avant de trouver le sommeil' ('Dear friend, I may be thick as a brick, but I really cannot understand how a gentleman could spend 30 pages writing about how he tosses and turns restlessly in bed before falling asleep') (as quoted in Tadié 1996, 689).

In Zhou's selection, there is a general tendency to favour descriptive passages on the external physical world over passages exploring human intimacy and inner psychology. Five out of the eight selected passages from 'Combray' dwell on natural landscapes and physical objects. In comparison, Proust's psychoanalytic-infused episode of 'le drame du coucher à Combray' ('Bedtime at Combray') (*RTP I*, 1523; *PT I*, 448) is kept at a minimum. The complex development of Swann's obsessive love for Odette is largely truncated. The scenario jumps directly from Swann's first hearing of 'la petite phrase' ('the little phrase') (*RTP I*, 1526; *PT I*, 449) to 'La soirée Saint-Euverte' ('An evening at the Marquise de Saint-Euverte') (*RTP I*, 1527; *PT I*, 450), at the end of which Swann hears the last movement of the

sonata. The nearly 50 pages of Swann's psychological struggle, especially in relation to his jealousy, are summarized in two sentences: '得知奥黛特是个靠情人供养的女人, 斯万感到痛苦、忧郁。威尔迪兰夫人的沙龙, 现在成了斯万和奥黛特约会的障碍' ('informed that Odette is a kept woman, Swann feels unwell and sad. The Verdurins' salon now becomes an obstacle for Swann and Odette's meeting' (Zhou 2009, 116–117). Given such a selection preference, it is not surprising that the Montjouvain passage which features the first description of a homosexual act in the novel has been largely ignored by Zhou. As mentioned before, the importance of homo- and bisexuality in Proust's work is poorly received in China.

Zhou's selection necessarily rearranges the narrative movement and temporality of Proust's original work, which is most systematically elaborated by Gérard Genette in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Genette duly observes four narrative movements in *La Recherche*: ellipsis, descriptive pause, scene, and summary (1980, 94–112). Zhou's selection principles evidently favour those Proustian moments of descriptive pause which reflect 'a narrative and analysis of the perceptual activity of the character contemplating: of his impressions, progressive discoveries, shifts in distance and perspective, errors and corrections, enthusiasms or disappointments, etc.' (ibid., 102) Different from dramatic scenes in traditional narratives, Genette characterizes Proustian scenes as the ones in which 'action [...] is almost completely obliterated in favor of psychological and social characterization' (ibid., 111). The dominance of the scene in the novel's internal organization has been further examined in detail by Jean-Yves Tadié (2003, 372–383). Zhou, by contrast, frequently cuts out extensive details in the already very limited number of selected scenes. Given the role of the Proustian scene as 'temporal hearth' or 'magnetic pole for all sorts of supplementary information and incidents' (Genette 1980, 111), the narrative movement affected by the Proustian scene arguably registers the greatest temporal change in Zhou's selection. Instead, much of the volume's internal organization has to rely on Zhou's added 'asides' to push the narrative forward, as they are used to both sustain a clear temporal frame—Genette's 'explicit ellipses' (e.g. 'long years', 'many years') (ibid., 206)—and provide an acceleration from one section to another—Genette's summary. Thus Zhou's interventions inevitably render Proust's narrative technique much less original. In comparison, as we will soon see, these kinds of 'asides' are completely absent in Shen's *Essential Selection*.

Although Zhou states in the Abridgement Notice that his ‘asides’ are meant to ensure smooth transitions between sections, ‘clarifying a few necessary details [of the plot]’, they frequently serve as a ‘reader’s guide’ to, in Zhou’s words, ‘Proust’s unique literary charm’—far more than a mere synopsis. Consider his clarification ahead of ‘Lecture de George Sand’ (‘A reading of George Sand’) (*RTP I*, 1524; *PT I*, 448):

有一天晚上，妈妈留在小马塞尔的卧室里陪他，这个温馨的夜晚留在了记忆之中。

但叙述者知道，理性的回忆是无法保存往事的。往事隐匿在智力范围之外，在某个我们意想不到的物质对象之中。只有不由自主的回忆，才能让往事从记忆中清晰地浮现出来。小玛德莱娜唤起的无意识联想，就是这样一种不由自主的回忆。(Zhou 2009, 13–14)

One evening, Maman stays with little Marcel in his bedroom. This warm and sweet evening stays in his memory.

But the narrator understands that it’s impossible to preserve the past through rational recollection. The past is hidden outside the realm of intelligence, in some material object that we cannot anticipate. Only involuntary remembering can enable the past to emerge vividly from the memory. The unconscious associations evoked by the little Madeleine are this kind of involuntary memory.

Zhou briefly introduces a central Proustian concept in this passage, namely the distinction that the narrator makes between voluntary and involuntary memories. This effectively makes the following section—from the reading of George Sand up to the tasting of the madeleine—a detailed demonstration of the point Zhou makes in the preceding ‘aside’. Such introductions give the selected passage a clear *purpose*, which many ‘confused’ readers of *La Recherche* perhaps often wonder about.

Does Zhou’s strategy help Chinese readers ‘appreciate Proust’s unique literary charm’? On the one hand, readers are indeed spared the frequent anxiety of getting lost in the textual labyrinth of Proust’s seemingly banal plot, and we can consequently rechannel that energy to Proust’s minute textual details. This kind of literary appreciation, on the other hand, can only stay superficial. A much deeper or more *affec-tive* appreciation of *La Recherche* will have to precisely involve the unsettling experience of reading the novel, which is, to return to Prendergast’s (2002, x) remark, ‘co-extensive with the experience of his narrator-hero

in the novel, namely the repeated pattern of forgetting and remembering, getting lost and refinding one's way, and that detailed "guides" sit uneasily with this important dimension of the work'.

As mentioned before, Zhou also translated the first two volumes of Stéphane Heuet's comic-book adaption of *La Recherche*, published in China as one single volume.³⁴ Heuet's adaption is a highly condensed visualization of Proust's work. Rather than selecting *passages* from *Du côté de chez Swann* like Zhou, Heuet selects Proust's original *sentences and phrases* as the text appearing in balloons and captions.³⁵ Heuet's seventy-page illustration actually covers more plots than Zhou's two-hundred-page selection. Interestingly, Zhou's translation of Heuet's comic-book adaptation—published 3 years before Zhou's own abridged edition—does not seem to have influenced Zhou's choice of passages. Heuet tries to include as many plots as possible, which is, of course, very different from Zhou's intention. However, Zhou would have been aware of the *proportion* that Heuet gives to certain scenes in his adaptation. In many ways, the disparity between Zhou's selection of what he considers to be 'particularly exciting' passages and Heuet's illustrative emphases indirectly reflects a broader cultural and *temporal* difference in the reception of Proust's work, especially in terms of socio-political ideologies, which I briefly touched upon in the Introduction. The Montjouvain passage is an excellent example: whereas Zhou completely cuts it out, Heuet devotes three out of 70 pages—proportionally even more significant than Proust's original—to this first homosexual scene in *La Recherche*. Our final case study of the Montjouvain passage will focus precisely on the gradually evolving translation strategy and reception of Proust's representation of sadomasochism and homosexuality in China.

2.7 SHEN'S ESSENTIAL SELECTION

Zhou is neither the first nor the only Chinese scholar to decide on an abridged version of Proust's work. Shen selectively translated *La Recherche* back in 1992, *seemingly* condensing the entire novel (around 2300 pages according to one edition of the *First Translation*) into a single volume of nearly 550 pages. Shen's *Essential Selection* was published under a rather different framework: it is only one out of seventy contributions to a much wider translation project entitled 'Twentieth-Century French Literature Series', directed by Liu Mingjiu. The publisher's statement on the cover makes the purpose of this series crystal clear:

本译丛以系统地介绍20世纪法国文学为任务, 选择各种倾向、各种流派、各种艺术风格, 有影响、有特色的作品, 以期为中国读者勾勒出20世纪文学的一个比较清晰的轮廓。

The present series undertakes the task of systemically introducing twentieth-century French literature, selecting influential and distinctive works that cover a wide variety of tendencies, schools, and artistic styles. We hope to be able to offer Chinese readers a relatively clear overview of twentieth-century French literature.

This statement is further elaborated in the general preface of the series by Liu (newly written in 2010), in which he surveys the various developments of twentieth-century French literature (and their associated writers): naturalism, psychological realism, psychological modernism, the *nouveau roman*, resistance and left-wing progressive literatures, philosophical literatures (e.g. absurdism, existentialism), and so on. Liu also reveals that this ambitious translation project was in many ways born out of public demand. Numerous established Chinese writers sent in queries regarding the progress of the project, and the series has been ‘particularly beloved of creative writing circles’ (‘特别得到了文学创作界的青睐’) (Liu [1992] 2013, 1). This latter observation will become increasingly important when we discuss the ideological implications of contemporary Chinese writers’ intertextual practices in Chap. 3.

The second preface, written in 1990 by the same author, is dedicated to Proust’s work alone, which once again manifests strong influences from André Maurois’s preface to the 1954 Pléiade edition of *La Recherche*, as well as his critical work *De Proust à Camus* (1963). While dedicating 15 pages to introducing many artistic particularities of *La Recherche*, Liu as the general editor of the book series ostensibly tries to tone down any excessive glorification of Proust’s work: ‘to say that the literature of our century still hasn’t got out of Proust’s shadow is obviously an exaggeration, but it would not indeed be exaggerating if we say that Proust invented something new for the art of the novel’ (‘如果认为我们这个世纪的文学还没有走出普鲁斯特所投射的身影, 那显然是夸大其词, 如果说普鲁斯特在小说艺术中发明了一些新的东西, 那确实并不言之过分’) (ibid.). Liu’s main intention is to critically introduce the ‘grand narrative’ of twentieth-century French literary history; rather than tending to idolize the writer, readers are encouraged to perceive Proust fundamentally in relation to many *other* writers before, around, and after his time—a kind of ‘Proust among the stars’, to borrow the title of Malcolm Bowie’s book.

However, despite the general editor's references to Maurois's preface, the translator of the *Essential Selection*, Shen, specifies that the present translation is based on the new 1987 Pléiade edition of *La Recherche*:

[...] 各章标题除部分采用原著卷目, 其余是选译者参照《七星文库》编者编写的提要段落标题所加的。为了尊重原著, 各段编排、句号分布都未作变动(除了极个别的地方), 另外, 为了不改变句号, 不得不在冗长的句子中扩大分号的用途, 尚希见谅。(ES, 2)

[...] some of the chapter titles are derived from the original volume titles, others are adapted from the synopsis provided by the editor of the Pléiade edition. In order to respect the original, no change has been made about the arrangements of paragraphs and full stops (with only a few exceptions). Furthermore, to avoid changing the full stops [in the original], the translator has to increase the use of semicolon for long sentences [in the translation], and hopes that readers can understand [this decision].

Therefore, an important difference between Shen's *Essential Selection* and the *First Translation* (despite the former's being published only 1 year after the latter) is that of the source text. Moreover, Shen proposes a solution to Proust's long sentences, which may render his Chinese translation syntactically unidiomatic to the degree that he feels obliged to apologize in advance. It is interesting that Shen should show such keen awareness of Proust's original punctuation. As we know, one remarkable difference between the old and new Pléiade editions is the latter's editorial decision to get rid of the commas added by the former editors in their attempt to increase the readability of Proust's complex syntax and unconventional use of French punctuation. But in any case, Shen still has to add more commas and semicolons in his Chinese translation, even though he claims to be 'faithful' to the number of full stops in the original.

However, to say that Shen's *Essential Selection* condenses the *entire Recherche* is actually quite misleading. In reality, the selection is informed by Proust's tripartite vision of the novel in 1913, namely *Du côté de chez Swann*, *Le Côté de Guermantes*, and *Le Temps retrouvé*. Shen's volume comprises seven chapters, which somehow gives Chinese readers an illusion that each chapter may correspond to one volume of the entire *Recherche*: 'Combray' (Shen's translation literally reads 'Combray Night'), 'Du côté de chez Swann' ('The Way by Swann's'), 'Du côté de Guermantes' ('The Guermantes Way'),³⁶ 'Un Amour de Swann'

(‘A Love of Swann’s’), ‘La Soirée chez les Guermantes’ (‘Dinner with the Guermantes’), ‘Le Temps retrouvé I’ (‘Finding Time Again I’) (largely covering ‘Adoration Perpétuelle’ [‘Perpetual Adoration’] and ‘Le Bal de tête’ [‘Masked Ball’]), and ‘Le Temps retrouvé II’ (‘Finding Time Again II’) (the very end of the novel where the narrator decides to write *the book*).

Finally, to pave the way for our following case study, it must be pointed out that, unlike Zhou’s selection, Shen does not omit the Montjouvain passage. But Shen does omit certain details of Mlle. Vinteuil and her lesbian lover’s sexual act, and shows a tendency to tone down or even evade Proust’s sexual vocabulary, which will form interesting comparisons and contrasts with other Chinese translations. Meanwhile, the passages portraying explicit male homosexual acts, notably involving Saint-Loup, Charlus, Jupien, and Morel, which feature prominently in the published volume *Le Temps retrouvé*, are entirely cut out in *Essential Selection*. These passages, much like Proust’s posthumously published volumes from *Sodome et Gomorrhe* to *La Fugitive*, are excised perhaps for technical rather than ideological reasons, since these male homosexual characters (as well as other lesbian characters) do not saliently figure in Proust’s tripartite vision of the novel.

2.8 TRANSLATING MONTJOUVAIN: A SHOWCASE

The Montjouvain scene is an ideal point of departure from which to broach the subject of Chinese sexual discourses for two main reasons: first, its thematic particularity in Proust’s work and its thematic singularity in *Du côté de chez Swann*, notably sadism and homosexuality; second, its wide availability across all major Chinese translations of *La Recherche* (except for Zhou’s abridged translation of *Du côté de chez Swann*), which cover a time span from the late 1980s until now. But before venturing into the area of evolving Chinese sexual discourses, let us take the opportunity to substantiate some of the observations on the different Chinese translations outlined in previous sections, with examples from the passage in question.³⁷

First, all available translations demonstrate a consistent reliance on a *paratactic* approach to Proust’s long and essentially *hypotactic* sentences. In practice, the translators either resolutely break them into shorter and independent sentences, which would seem more natural to the Chinese reading habit, or they significantly increase the use of commas or

semicolons in the translated text, which creates a superficial semblance of Proust's notoriously long sentences. Of course, whether the latter option is syntactically more 'faithful' to Proust's original is very much debatable. Even with an increased use of commas or semicolons, the syntactical structure of the translated text remains essentially paratactic as the various syntactical elements within one sentence do not necessarily bear any *subordinate relations* with each other. Consider the following sentence:

C'était par un temps très chaud; mes parents, qui avaient dû s'absenter pour toute la journée, m'avaient dit de rentrer aussi tard que je voudrais; et étant allé jusqu'à la mare de Montjouvain où j'aimais revoir les reflets du toit de tuile, je m'étais étendu à l'ombre et endormi dans les buissons du talus qui domine la maison, là où j'avais attendu mon père autrefois, un jour qu'il était allé voir M. Vinteuil. (*RTP I*, 157)

It was during a spell of very hot weather; my parents, who had had to leave for the whole day, had told me to return home as late as I pleased; and having gone as far as the Montjouvain pond, where I liked to look at the reflections of the tile of roof again, I had lain down in the shade and fallen asleep among the bushes of the hillock that overlooks the house, in the same spot where I had once waited for my father on a day when he had gone to see M. Vinteuil. (*PT I*, 160)

Proust employs four commas, two semicolons, and one full stop. Let's compare it to Shen's translation in the *Essential Selection*:

这一天, 天气非常热, 我的父母要出门一整天, 对我讲, 我随便多晚回家都行; 我一直走到蒙菇万的池塘边, 我喜欢观看池中瓦屋顶的倒影, 我爬到俯瞰万特伊先生那栋房子的山坡上, 以前有一天我父亲来看望他时我就在这里等候的, 我躺在山坡灌木丛的阴凉处, 居然睡着了。(ES, 75)

Ce jour, il fait très chaud, mes parents sont dehors pendant toute la journée, me disant, que je peux rentrer aussi tard que je voudrais; je marche jusqu'à la mare de Montjouvain, j'aime revoir les reflets du toit de tuile, je monte dans la colline dominant la maison de M. Vinteuil, auparavant un jour [que] mon père lui rend visite j'attends ici, je m'étends à l'ombre dans les buissons du talus dans la colline, en fait m'endors.

This day, it is very hot, my parents are outside for the whole day, saying to me, that I can come back as late as I'd like; I walk as far as the Montjouvain pond, I like to look at the reflections of the tile of roof again, I climb up to the hill dominating M. Vinteuil's house, previously on a day

my father visits him I wait here, I lie down in the shadow of the bushes of the embankment on the hill, actually fall asleep.³⁸

As we know, Shen claims to be most ‘faithful’ to Proust’s use of full stops—but full stops *only*—and he also apologizes for his overuse of semicolons (in this sentence he actually uses fewer semicolons than Proust’s original). So, in his translation there are nine commas (as opposed to four in Proust’s original) and one semicolon (instead of two). Parataxis often implies a greater flexibility to rearrange syntactical elements, which is shown in the reordering of the second half of the sentence. Other translations demonstrate similar rearrangements. However, it is quite intriguing as to why Shen so absolutely prioritizes full stops over other punctuation such as commas and semicolons in his ‘respect’ for the original. Reading the translated text, one would hardly perceive any change of prosaic rhythm if we replaced at least one or two of the commas with full stops, since Proust’s original rhythm—heavily dependent on hypotactical constructions—is already broken once the relative pronouns have been removed.

In sharp contrast to Shen’s ‘full-stop fidelity’ is Zhou’s sinicized repunctuation:

那天挺热，家里的大人有事外出，整天不在家，所以对我说爱玩多久都行。我一路来到蒙舒凡的那个池塘，我爱看那小乌瓦顶的倒影。看着看着，我躺在灌木的阴影里，不知不觉睡着了；这个斜坡正对着凡特伊先生的屋子，我跟父亲一起去看凡特伊先生那回，我曾经在这儿等过父亲。（*ZTI*, 160）

Ce jour-là [il] fait assez chaud, les grandes personnes de la famille sont engagées dans des affaires dehors, pendant toute la journée absentes, donc me disant de jouer aussi longtemps que je voudrais. Je marche jusqu’à la mare de Montjouvain, j’aime revoir les reflets du toit de tuile. En regardant, je m’étends à l’ombre de buissons du talus, m’endors à mon insu; cette colline fait face à la maison de M. Vinteuil, j’accompagne mon père pour voir M. Vinteuil autrefois, un jour [que] j’attends ici mon père.

That day is quite hot, the big people of the family are out on some business, for the whole day not at home, so telling me that I can play for as long as I like. I walk as far as the Montjouvain pond, I like to look at the reflections of the tile of roof. While looking at them, I lie down in the shadow of the bushes of embankment, fall asleep without my knowing it; the hill faces M. Vinteuil’s house, that time when I and father visit M. Vinteuil together, I wait for father here then.

Zhou breaks Proust's original sentence into three, with eight commas in total and one semicolon which does not correspond to either of the two semicolons found in Proust's original. If we compare the above two translations, a similar paratactic rhythm—whether marked by commas, semicolons, or full stops—is perceivable. The distinctive grammatical and semantic values ascribed to each of these punctuation marks are less rigid in Chinese than in most of their European counterparts. And Zhou's repunctuation of the translated text clearly reflects Chinese reading habits. In his discussion with the established writer Chen Cun on Proust, Zhou suggested that he would seriously consider breaking up sentences which contain more than twenty-four Chinese characters as he would try to be more 'considerate' to the reader.³⁹ In fact, Zhou not only breaks up Proust's long sentences, he also takes the liberty of breaking up Proust's long paragraphs. Elsewhere in his translation, Zhou notably turns all the long conversations within one paragraph into independent paragraphs according to the speaker. Zhou's emphasis on the notion of *fluency* in the target language, which aims to facilitate the Chinese reader's cognitive processing of the text, is further reflected in his frequent utilization of Chinese idiomatic expressions: 'the big people of the family' ('家里的大人') for 'mes parents' ('my parents'), 'out on some business' ('有事外出') for 's'absenter' ('go out'), 'jouer' (玩, 'play') instead of 'rentrer' ('get back'), and the added Chinese adverbial expression 不知不觉 ('without my knowing it', or more literally, 'without either knowing or sensing').

Meanwhile, in translations other than Shen's *Essential Selection*, there are infrequent cases in which Proust's short paratactical sentences are technically *lengthened* by a change of punctuation from full stop to comma or semicolon. For example, the sentence 'bientôt son amie entra' may have been considered 'too short and simple' or 'too plain' as an independent sentence in Chinese. Both Zhou and the translators of the *First Translation* take the liberty of changing Proust's full stop to a comma, so that the sentence as one element can paratactically flow into the next sentence, forming a chain of actions: 'bientôt son amie entra[,] Mlle Vinteuil l'accueillit sans se lever, ses deux mains derrière la tête et se recula sur le bord opposé du sofa comme pour lui faire une place' ('Soon her friend came in[,] Mlle Vinteuil greeted her without standing up, both hands behind her head, and moved to the end of the sofa as though to make room for her') (*RTP I*, 158; *PT I*, 161; *FT I*, 118; *ZT I*, 161).

Another syntactic feature worthy of our attention is the translator's frequent insertion of additional adverbial phrases as well as conjunctions. This is particularly the case in Zhou's Translation. For example, as he translates Proust's sentence 'elle était en grand deuil, car son père était mort depuis peu. Nous n'étions pas allés la voir [...]' ('she was in mourning, because her father had died a short time before. We had not gone to see her') (*RTP I*, 157; *PT I*, 160), Zhou specifically repeats the phrase 'during the period of mourning' ('丧父期间') at the beginning of the second sentence. Presumably, the added adverbial phrase approximately reflects Proust's use of the pluperfect tense in the original, as the Chinese language does not use verbal conjugations to express temporality. Another example is found in the paragraph beginning with 'dans l'échancrure de son corsage de crêpe Mlle Vinteuil sentit que son amie piquait un baiser' ('Mlle Vinteuil felt her friend plant a kiss in the opening of her crêpe blouse') (*RTP I*, 160; *PT I*, 162), before which Zhou adds the expression 'as soon as the phrase ends' ('话音刚落') (*ZT I*, 163), repeating the word 'phrase' from the last sentence of the precedent paragraph. This 'phrase', which refers to 'Mademoiselle me semble avoir des pensées bien lubriques, ce soir' ('Mademoiselle seems to have rather libidinous thoughts this evening') (*ibid.*), is already a repetition from their previous experience, 'qu'elle [Mlle. Vinteuil] avait entendue autrefois dans la bouche de son amie' ('[which] she [Mlle. Vinteuil] had heard before on her friend's lips') (*ibid.*). By linking the two paragraphs with an added expression, Zhou effectively enhances the logical progression of Mlle. Vinteuil and her girlfriend's erotic foreplay from words to actions, from a 'phrase' to a 'kiss'. Such adverbial (temporal, spatial, and sequential) additions are consistently applied in Zhou's Translation. To a certain extent, they also contribute to the elongation of Proust's sentences in translation.⁴⁰

However, despite all the scholarly and collaborative efforts, technical mistranslations persist in all the available translations. We do not even have to look beyond the Montjouvain passage for examples.

Errors in the *First Translation* have not necessarily been corrected in the new translations. For example, when Mlle. Vinteuil tries to seduce her girlfriend to join her on the sofa, she seems to 'lui [her girlfriend] imposer une *attitude* qui lui était peut-être importune. Elle pensa que son amie aimerait peut-être mieux être loin d'elle sur une chaise' ('be forcing her friend into a *position* that might be annoying to her. She thought her friend might prefer to be some distance away from her on

a chair') (*RTP I*, 158, *PT I*, 161, my italics). 'Attitude' in this context leans towards the meaning of 'bodily position or posture' rather than 'a settled way of thinking or feeling', although the former *could* potentially reflect the latter. Nevertheless, the Chinese word used in both the *First Translation* and Xu's Translation, *taidu* (态度), only refers to the latter, which appears strange in the translated text. *Zitai* (姿态), literally 'posture and attitude', would be a near equivalent of 'attitude' in this case. When translating the sentence 'elle [the narrator's mother] éprouvait un véritable chagrin et songeait avec effroi à celui *autrement amer* que devait éprouver Mlle Vinteuil tout mêlé du remords d'avoir à peu près tué son père' ('she was moved by real sorrow and thought with horror of the *far more bitter* sorrow that Mlle Vinteuil must be feeling, mingled as it was with remorse at having more or less killed her father') (*RTP I*, 158; *PT I*, 161, my italics), both Xu and the translators of the *First Translation* misunderstand the construction 'autrement + adjective + que' as '(utterly) different from', which almost reverses the meaning of the original text.⁴¹

Meanwhile, both Xu's and Zhou's individual translations also contain mistakes which do not feature in the *First Translation*. For instance, when the narrator spots Mlle. Vinteuil's room after waking up from an afternoon slumber, he remarks, 'en face de moi, à quelques centimètres de moi, dans cette chambre où son père avait reçu le mien et dont elle avait fait son petit salon à elle' ('opposite me, a few centimetres from me, in the room in which her father had entertained mine and which she had made into her own little drawing-room') (*RTP I*, 157; *PT I*, 160). Zhou mistranslates 'le mien' ('mine', i.e. the narrator's father) as the protagonist-narrator himself, and throws in extra information on the nature of Mlle. Vinteuil's room by rendering 'son petit salon à elle' ('her own little drawing-room') as 'the little drawing room she now uses to receive her secret friend' ('这个房间她现在改作接待密友的小客厅了') (*ZT I*, 160), hence being more explicit about Mlle. Vinteuil's lesbian relationship with her friend. Likewise, the narrator observes the family trait of blue eyes passing on from the grandmother to the father and to Mlle. Vinteuil as follows: 'c'était la ressemblance de son visage, les yeux bleus de *sa mère à lui* qu'il lui avait transmis comme un bijou de famille' ('[it] was the resemblance between her face and his, *his own mother's* blue eyes which he had handed down to her like a family jewel') (*RTP I*, 162; *PT I*, 165, my italics). Proust's use of pronouns can indeed appear rather confusing. The first 'lui', which is the stressed pronoun for the masculine third-person singular, in fact refers to the father, and so does the 'il' after the relative pronoun

‘que’; the second ‘lui’, which is the indirect object that can be either masculine or feminine, should refer to the daughter in this context. Xu mis-translates this family heritage as ‘the blue eyes of *her* mother’ (‘她的母亲的蓝眼睛’) (*XT I*, 164) rather than the grandmother on her father’s side, which misses Proust’s subtle portrayal of Mlle. Vinteuil’s complex sadist psychology in relation to her antagonism to the father, concretized in her spitting on the father’s portrait as part of the ‘profanations rituelles’ (‘ritual profanations’) (*RTP I*, 160; *PT I*, 163) to gain sexual pleasure with her girlfriend. In Douglas B. Saylor’s (1993, 93) words,

[...] spitting on the replication of her father’s appearance is like spitting on herself [due to the resemblance of their faces and blue eyes]. The father’s portrait serves as an image of the father, but also an exteriorization of the ego. Through identification with the father, spitting on the portrait becomes a rejection of her own self.

As mentioned before, both errors are absent from the *First Translation*.

Of course, lesbianism or homosexuality in general is not necessarily a comfortable subject. It is one of the areas of *La Recherche* which frequently received vehement criticism in Proust’s lifetime, and certain translations of the novel are still censored for that reason today. A concrete example is found in the passage we have already touched upon:

Mademoiselle me semble avoir des pensées bien lubriques, ce soir’, finit-elle par dire, répétant sans doute une phrase qu’elle avait entendue autrefois dans la bouche de son amie.

Dans l’échancrure de son corsage de crêpe Mlle Vinteuil sentit que son amie piquait un baiser, elle poussa un petit cri, s’échappa, et elles se poursuivirent en sautant, faisant voler leurs larges manches comme des ailes et gloussant et piaillant comme des oiseaux amoureux. (RTP I, 159–160, my italics)

—Mademoiselle seems to have rather libidinous thoughts this evening, she said at last, probably repeating a phrase she had heard before on her friend’s lips.

Mlle Vinteuil felt her friend plant a kiss in the opening of her crêpe blouse, she gave a little cry, broke free, and they began chasing each other, leaping, fluttering their wide sleeves like wings, and clucking and cheeping like two amorous birds. (PT I, 162, my italics)

The translator of the *Essential Selection*, Shen, notably cuts out the sentence in italics and combines the two paragraphs together:

“我觉得小姐今晚春情大发，”她终于迸出这么一句，大概是重复以前从她女友口中听来的一声，赶紧躲开，于是两人跳跳蹦蹦追逐起来，宽大的衣袖像翅膀似的飞舞，她们格格地笑着，喳喳叫着，活像两只调情的小鸟。⁴²
(*Essential Selection*, 77-78)

For someone who claims to be faithful to Proust's use of full stops, this change of paragraph and punctuation has to be an exception. Shen is evidently not being entirely honest when he affirms in the translator's note that the selected passages or paragraphs are 'absolutely complete, without any expurgation' ('所选章节或段落全是完整的，没有任何删节') (*ES*, 2, my translation). As can be seen, the concrete action of the 'lesbian kiss' is left out, leaving only the more figurative part of the 'foreplay'. How the Proustian themes of homosexuality and sadism are translated into Chinese is our next investigation.

2.9 DE-PATHOLOGIZING PERVERSION: PROUST'S SEXUAL DISCOURSES AND THEIR CHINESE TRANSLATIONS

As has been argued at the beginning of this chapter, since the 1980s, which marks the proper beginning of Proust Studies in China, Chinese critical interests in Proust's works have revolved almost exclusively around traditional Proustian themes such as time and memory, and the Modernist literary style commonly known as 'stream of consciousness'. These aspects of Proust's work seem to resonate particularly well with the long line of Chinese aesthetic and philosophical traditions, as emblemized by the Chinese title for *À la recherche* as, literally, *Pursuing the Memory of Time/Years as (Flowing) Water* (追忆似[逝]水年华). In the West, in comparison, perhaps partly reflecting the wider political and cultural movement of sexual liberation since the 1960s, a rich body of critical works that directly deal with the subject of 'deviant sexuality' in Proust's works have flourished since the 1980s: J. E. Rivers's *Proust and the Art of Love* (1980), Eva Ahlstedt's *La Pudeur en crise* (1985), and Antoine Compagnon's *Proust entre deux siècles* (1989), to name but a few monographs. In the next decade, Proust became a major point of reference in the writings of literary scholars working in queer

theory and studies of gender and sexuality. Notable examples include Eve Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Douglas B. Saylor's *The Sadomasochistic Homotext: Readings in Sade, Balzac and Proust* (1993), and Leo Bersani's *Homos* (1995). Indeed, the sexological aspect of Proust's work has been so thoroughly explored that *À la recherche* is nowadays recognized as the 'first major literary work in France to take on the issue of same-sex sexual relations directly and in an apparently objective manner' (Ladenson 2014, 115), and 'has remained into the present the most vital centre of the energies of gay literary high culture, as well as of many manifestations of modern literary high culture in general' (Sedgwick 2008, 213).

Since the Policy of Economic Reform and Opening Up in 1978, 2 years after Mao's death, Chinese society has undergone drastic changes, not least in its perception of sexuality. However, despite the influx of Western cultural productions and the intensity of translation activities, the Chinese translators of the *First Translation* were hardly sensitized to Proust's complex sexual discourses. In fact, while Proust's depiction of 'deviant sexuality' is morally ambiguous, early Chinese translations of *La Recherche* manifest strong moral condemnation and pathological treatment of the subject, and they additionally indicate a lack of lexical variety and conceptual understanding to accommodate Proust's different use of a wide range of vocabulary regarding 'homosexual(ity)' and his nuanced formulation of 'sadisme/sadique'. However, the de-pathologization of Proust's sexual discourses is evident in later Chinese translations, and it takes place along with the exponential increase in the translation and (re)introduction of influential Western sexological texts in post-Mao China. By comparing and contrasting exemplary passages (from *Du côté de chez Swann*, *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, *La Prisonnière*, and *Le Temps retrouvé*) across the available Chinese translations, this section aims to demonstrate the evolving strategies of translating (homo)sexuality and sadomasochism into Chinese, and the extent to which such an evolution refracts changing and largely de-pathologizing discourses on, and attitudes to, these subjects in China from the late 1980s until now.⁴³

In the PRC, it was only in the 1980s that modern and contemporary Chinese sociological works on homosexuality started to emerge, and the social practices of homosexuality—such as the formation of homosexual group identity and the occurrence of cruising venues, as well as the development of a certain codified common language—appeared only towards

the end of this period.⁴⁴ The Chinese intellectual landscape of the 1980s, under the banner of ‘Culture Fever’, was marked by a revived enthusiasm for translating Western texts, including many Western discourses of sexuality—‘revived’ because Western discourses of sexuality *were* briefly introduced in Republican China (1912–1949). However, their development—appropriation and recontextualization—came to a premature end with the establishment of the PRC in 1949, as the Communist regime under Mao consistently imposed sexual puritanism, and an overt display of sexuality would have been seen as Western contamination and corruption. That is to say, modern sexology did not properly commence until the 1980s in the PRC, and the Chinese translation of modern Western sexual discourses was and has been an essential component of that development. The *People’s Daily*, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party which wields special authority over the voicing of official government policy, published its first formal article with a positive take on the issue of sexuality in 1986. In the same year, the newspaper reported the establishment of the first Chinese sexological organization in Shanghai. In 1988, sexology as a discipline was formally introduced in Chinese universities. By the end of the 1980s, official as well as popular attitudes to Freudian theory, for example, were said to have evolved from total negation to general recognition (Li 2014, under ‘性行为规范的变迁’/‘The Evolution of the Norms of Sexual Behaviour’ and ‘性研究’/‘Research in Sexology’). One of the initial tasks of this section is to reveal how the translators of the *First Translation* in the mid-1980s responded to the significant lexical as well as epistemic challenges they faced when unravelling Western sexual idioms and concepts in Proust’s work. An extensive list of sexual vocabulary needed to be (re)invented and adapted into modern vernacular Chinese to accommodate Proust’s sexual discourses. It should be further stressed that, as far as sexology is concerned, it was those Western theories popular in the first half of the twentieth century that received primary attention, and the list of translated and/or (re)introduced authors (other than Freud) included Magnus Hirschfeld, Havelock Ellis, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and Edward Carpenter.⁴⁵ Many intellectuals working in translation in the 1980s regarded their project as both a recapitulation and continuation of their predecessors’ work from the early twentieth century, which was brutally interrupted under the Communist regime. The more revolutionary or radical Western discourses of sexuality from the 1960s and 1970s, perhaps most importantly those advocated by Foucault, were not properly introduced in China until the 1990s.⁴⁶

For instance, the first book-length study of male homosexuality in mainland China, titled *Tamen de shijie* (他们的世界, *Their World*) and co-authored by Wang Xiaobo and Li Yinhe, only came out in 1992, after 3 years of research, which coincided exactly with the first Chinese publication date of *La Recherche*. The sociologist Li subsequently went on to publish one book-length study on sadomasochism (1998a) and another on the (homo)sexuality of Chinese women (1998c). In terms of explicitly and often sadomasochistically gay-themed Chinese cultural productions, notable early cinematic works include *East Palace, West Palace* (*Donggong xigong*, 东宫西宫) (Zhang 1996) and *Happy Together* (Wang 1997), both of which appeared in the second half of the 1990s.

It should be noted that, in China, although the social phenomenon of same-sex eroticism has been well documented since ancient times,⁴⁷ systematic scholarly works on homosexuality in mainland China, as mentioned before, did not take off until the late 1980s. In mainland China, although homosexuality is not a criminal act, in a Chinese Classification of Mental Disorder passed as late as 1994 by the Chinese Psychiatric Association, homosexuality was still considered a mental disorder (Chou 2000, 111). This pathological designation of homosexuality was finally removed from the official list in 2001.

Those sociological enquiries and artistic productions emerging in the 1990s meant that, by the time the first volumes of the two new translations came out in 2004 and 2005, the Chinese scholarly and popular discourses on and social attitudes to the subjects of sadomasochism and homosexuality had significantly evolved.

2.9.1 Proust's Sexual Discourses

Proust's conceptualization of homosexuality, as has been widely acknowledged, reflects the dominant theory of homosexuality of his time—the *Zwischenstufen* or man-woman theory formulated by the German sexologist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs in *Memnon* (1868) (Rivers 1980, 262–278)—and is, in Lucille Cairns's words, 'flawed by the limitations of this theory' (1997, 43). This theory is 'predicated not on the idea of same-sex attraction per se but rather on the *anima muliebris in corpore virili inclusa* (the soul of a woman trapped in the body of a man)' (Ladenson 2014, 118), which explains Proust's preference of the designation 'invert' or 'inversion' to 'homosexual' or 'homosexuality'. Homosexuality in Proust, states Leo Bersani, is 'nothing but disguised or mistaken heterosexuality'

(1995, 134), although Eve Sedgwick's close analysis of Proust's 'metaphorical models' does suggest how Ulrichs's doctrine of sexual inversion is also constantly destabilized in the novel ([1990] 2008, 219–223). Proust himself clarifies the conceptual differences he makes between 'inversion' and 'homosexuality':

D'ailleurs il y a une nuance. Les homosexuels mettent leur point d'honneur à n'être pas des invertis. D'après la théorie, toute fragmentaire du reste que j'ébauche ici, il n'y aurait pas en réalité d'homosexuels. Si masculine que puisse être l'apparence de la tante, son goût de virilité proviendrait d'une féminité foncière, fût-elle dissimulée. Un homosexuel ça serait ce que prétend être, ce que de bonne foi s' imagine être, un inverti. (*RTP III*, 955)

Moreover, there is a nuance. As a point of honour, homosexuals do not consider themselves to be invertis. According to the theory, which I'm still sketching out here, there wouldn't be any homosexuals in reality. However masculine the appearance of the 'auntie' can be, the taste for virility would derive from a fundamental femininity, even if it's disguised. A homosexual, as it is thought to be in good faith, would just be what an invert claims to be. (My translation)

Interestingly, Proust also seems to consider the word 'homosexual' to be too German and pedantic, linking it to the notorious Eulenberg affair⁴⁸:

Mais le lecteur français veut être respecté' et n'étant pas Balzac je suis obligé de me contenter d'inverti. Homosexuel est trop germanique et pédant, n'ayant guère paru en France [...] et traduit sans doute des journaux berlinois, qu'après le procès Eulenberg. (*RTP III*, 955)

But the French readership want to be respected and, without being Balzac, I'm obliged to be content with 'invert'. 'Homosexual' is too Germanic and pedantic. The word has hardly appeared in France [...] and probably translated from the newspapers in Berlin, and it's appeared only after the Eulenberg trial. (My translation)

However, these unambiguous and unguarded lines apropos of homosexuality, rather uncharacteristic of Proustian digression, come from Proust's notebook (*Cahier 49*) which contains draft material for *Sodome et Gomorrhe*. This passage is marked as an extensive note that Proust is ostensibly making to himself where he outlines his theory of sexuality.

But it is largely obliterated in the published text. And when the ‘traces’ of this theory appear in the novel, they are not articulated through the narrator but rather the character Charlus (*RTP III*, 810). There would seem to be a certain epistemic danger, were we to uncritically accept this theory as Proust’s view. The infrequent insertion of an indeterminable ‘je’ (‘I’)—the author? The narrator? Charlus?—in this passage, and the deliberate obliteration of this material could suggest that ‘queer textual practices in Proust have precisely to do with certain kinds of objectivity being in crisis, with a contingent need claiming a right to expression, with a nearly intentional metaleptic failure to respect distinctions between the real world and literary characters, a failure that produces borrowings and sharings among characters as well as between real people and characters’ (Lucey 2006, 208). For Michael Lucey, the development of the novel from its avant-texts itself reflects a complicated negotiation among the ambient ideological currents concerning homosexuality in Proust’s time (240–241).

In addition to ‘homosexual’ and ‘invert’, Proust employs ‘man-woman’ (‘homme-femme’), ‘sodomite’, ‘auntie’ (‘tante’), and ‘hermaphrodite’, to name but a few other terms, with specific implications and emphases in their different contexts. As will be explored later in detail, translators have struggled to find terminological variants in modern vernacular Chinese to accommodate Proust’s wide range of vocabulary regarding ‘homosexual(ity)’.

It is worth reiterating that, even in France, the issue of ‘deviant sexuality’ in Proust’s work was largely neglected, or perhaps deliberately ignored, by critics up until the 1980s. André Maurois (1954, xiii–xv), in his preface to the old Pléiade edition of *La Recherche*, claims that time and memory are the only two central themes of Proust’s novel. Indeed, it is almost inconceivable nowadays for anyone to ignore the thematic centrality of time and memory, which is even reflected in Proust’s initial—up until 1913—tripartite structural envisioning of the novel, revolving around a time ‘lost’, ‘sought’, and ‘regained’ in and through memory. However, as his novelistic conception evolved, Proust spent the rest of his life expanding the inner volumes of the novel, which comprise a separate volume of *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* and what is known as the *Sodome et Gomorrhe* cycle (including *La Prisonnière* and *La Fugitive*), covering Charlus’s homosexuality and Albertine’s lesbianism (Schmid 2006, 67). In fact, in several crucial avant-texts of *La Recherche* from as early as 1909—notably *Cahiers* 6 and 7 of what we know as the

Sainte-Beuve series—the homosexual theme was already emphasized, especially in the fragment ‘La Race des tantes’ (literally, ‘the race of aunts’, or in Schmid’s translation, ‘the queer race’) where the author ‘classifies’ different types of male homosexuals (61–62). After the publication of *Du côté de chez Swann* in 1913, Proust, facing strong criticism from influential readers such as Paul Souday, defended his decision to keep the Montjouvain passage in this first volume, where the protagonist first witnesses sadism and same-sex acts, as it both thematically and structurally echoes later volumes of the novel (i.e. *Sodome et Gomorrhe* and *La Prisonnière*, as well as the sadomasochistic scene of flagellation involving Charlus in the last volume) (Proust 1990, 464). Therefore, as Ladenson highlights, the Montjouvain scene ‘bridges the perceived structural binarism between the serious outer volumes addressing the nature of time and memory and the trivia-infused inner volumes that deal with deviant sexuality’ in *La Recherche* (1999, 62). What follows then is some concrete analysis of this discursive evolution across the available Chinese translations of *La Recherche*.

2.9.2 Translating Sadomasochism

As we know, the vocabulary of sexuality was in great flux during Proust’s time. Sadism and masochism, as medical terms and concepts, had only recently been proposed by the German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing around 1900, especially in his *Psychopathia Sexualis*, and sadomasochism was understood as essentially a manifest form of sexual perversion. Although Proust might have been aware of Krafft-Ebing’s influential theory, the word ‘sadisme’ or ‘sadique’ is employed hardly in its clinical sense. In fact, Proust’s use of the word seems rather out of line with Krafft-Ebing’s clinical categorization as it overlaps with what we now usually understand as masochism. With references to Georges Bataille’s essays on Sade and Proust (1957a, 108–157), Hendrika Freud (2013, 108) describes both Sade and Mlle Vinteuil as ‘bogus sadists’ because ‘the true sadist is cruel and does not explain his actions’, or, in Bataille’s words, ‘les méchants ne connaissent du Mal que le bénéfice matériel’ (‘the wicked know only the material benefits of Evil’) (1957b, 154, 154, my translation). As H. Freud further demonstrates, in the Montjouvain passage, Proust ‘tries to clarify the difference between sadism as sexual perversion and actual cruelty’ (101) by characterizing the sadists of Mlle. Vinteuil’s kind as ‘purement sentimentaux’ (‘purely sentimental’)

and ‘naturellement vertueux’ (‘naturally virtuous’), ‘ce qu’une créature entièrement mauvaise ne pourrait pas être’ (‘something that an entirely bad creature could not be’) (*RTP I*, 161–162; *PT I*, 164–165). In Proust’s example, as H. Freud continues:

Mlle Vinteuil can only reach an erotic climax by transgressing the impediment of the social conventions that are so restrictive to her. She is a straitlaced girl who is able to experience pleasure and lust only when she furtively succumbs to sadistic excesses. [...] the proclivity for sadistic phantasies originates in its opposite: an oversensitivity that prevents excitement. (2013, 99)

Instead of establishing a clinical diagnosis, Proust repeatedly highlights the theatricalized expression of human intimacy while considerably deflating the abnormality of sadistic acts by comparing the scenario to commonplace ‘théâtres du boulevard’ (‘popular theatre’) with ‘l’esthétique du mélodrame’ (‘aesthetics of melodrama’) (*RTP I*, 161; *PT* 164).

In early translations (i.e. the *First Translation* [1991] and the *Essential Translation* [1992]), it is the Chinese word *shi-nüe-kuang* (施虐狂) that is consistently used. It can refer to both the concept of sadism and the person who practices sadism. *Shi-nüe-kuang*, literally meaning ‘abuse craze’, sounds far too colloquial, judgmental, and emotional to be an accurate conceptual term for sadism or sadists, but it has largely remained in use today and can still be frequently found in many contemporary retranslations of, for example, Freud’s or Ellis’s works, in predominantly clinical contexts.⁴⁹ The character *kuang* clearly denotes a form of mental disorder or pathological disease, which was subject to modification when the word and the concept of ‘sadism’ was gradually transposed from medical to sociological and literary frameworks in the 1990s. Y. Li in *The Subculture of Sadomasochism* (1998a, 174) clarifies that the Freudian premise of sadomasochism being pathological is rather outdated, especially in comparison with Foucault’s pioneering view, according to which sadomasochism is an ‘un-pathological’ form of pleasure, and no pleasure is abnormal.⁵⁰ The pathological elements in sadomasochism formulated by some of the early- and mid-twentieth-century Western sexologists find distinct echoes in Chinese sexological works coming out in the 1980s. Probably due to the still relatively rigorous sexual morality of the time,⁵¹ some of the newly trained Chinese

sexologists' writings demonstrate a prejudicially crude and morally simplistic understanding of 'sexual perversions' like sadomasochism, rhetorically inviting moral condemnation. Despite the author's formal acknowledgement of Ellis's (1933) work,⁵² one of the most popular books, *Sexual Sociology* (*Xing shehuixue*) by Dalin Liu (1988), defines *shi-nüe-kuang* and *shou-nüe-kuang* (for 'masochism') as the urge to 'reach sexual satisfaction through violence committed between the two sexes', and the example he cites is Hitler, who is said to be 'both a sadist and a masochist' because he 'sometimes maltreated his lovers very cruelly and sometimes asked them to flagellate him soundly' (83, my translation), further highlighting the monstrous qualities associated with sadomasochism. By the end of the 1980s, sex psychology clinics had appeared in the PRC, offering help to 'patients' suffering from 'sexual perversions' such as 'exhibitionism', 'voyeurism', and 'transvestism' (Y. Li 2014, under '性生活'/'Sex Life').

In the context of the Montjouvain passage, 'abuse craze' would sound too strong to most Chinese readers to describe an act of spitting on M. Vinteuil's portrait. However, both the *First Translation* and the *Essential Selection* explicitly refer to Proust's 'sadisme' as a 'mental illness' and 'sadiste' as a 'patient' or 'sufferer' (*RTP I*, 161; *FT*, 120; *ES*, 79),⁵³ which is, of course, a significant addition to the source text. Spitting on the deceased father's portrait while still in mourning may be severely condemnable according to the fundamental Confucian teaching of filial piety, which is deeply rooted in traditional as well as contemporary Chinese thought, but it is highly unlikely that an ordinary Chinese reader—or indeed any reader—would automatically connect this particular act to mental illness. The translators' decision to deliberately pathologize the concept of sadism is most likely to have been affected by contemporaneous popular medical opinions in China, or at least the clinical use of the term in Chinese. Therefore, there seems to be a reapplication of dominant medical discourses on sexuality from Proust's era which were not necessarily in line with Proust's own conception, to the translation of Proust's work in the Chinese context.

In the sadomasochistic passage from the end of the novel, often considered to structurally mirror the Montjouvain passage, where the narrator witnesses Charlus being chained and whipped in a male brothel, the word 'sadique' appears again and is translated (by different translators) as *xing-nüe-dai-kuang-(zhe)* ([the person of] sexual abuse craze, 性虐待狂[者]). Although my literal English translation of the term seems to

have only added the adjective ‘sexual’ to the previous term used in the Montjouvain passage, their corresponding Chinese characters are actually quite different in terms of specificity. Whereas the previous term, *shi-nüe-kuang* (abuse craze), clearly indicates the active role of the agent and may not be specifically related to sex, *xing-nüe-dai-kuang* (sexual abuse craze) is explicitly sexual but rather vague about the roles of the abuser and the abused. In fact, when the word ‘sadique’ reappears in other volumes of *La Recherche* (with different translators), it almost always has a slightly different wording in Chinese. Given the number of translators involved in the *First Translation*, such terminological inconsistencies are somewhat expected. More significantly, it suggests that there is a lack of a coherent ‘theory’ or common acknowledgement of sadism or masochism in Chinese (until today). But this lack of a uniform lexical and epistemic approach to Proust’s sexual discourses and other Western as well as indigenous literary and sociological works also means that the translators could potentially enjoy a special ‘freedom to cite and appropriate certain materials rather than others’, in the process of which ‘we witness the possibility of cross-cultural understanding and coalition’.⁵⁴ Whereas an English or German translator is able to systematically translate ‘sadique’ as ‘sadist’ or ‘Sadist(in)’ due to their common etymology, a Chinese translator finds no equivalent of the term and has to translate it according to the context. The words ‘sadism’ and ‘masochism’, which respectively derive from two literary figures (i.e. Sade and Sacher-Masoch), are not translated etymologically or phonetically.⁵⁵ The closest Chinese ‘conceptual equivalents’ are *shi-nüe(-zhe)* (sexual abuse[r], 施虐[者]) and *shou-nüe(-zhe)* (the sexually abused, 受虐[者]). Unlike in the West where sadism and masochism could be seen first as *literary* phenomena which were then developed as medical and pathological discourses through Krafft-Ebing, and perhaps even more influentially through Freud and Ellis, their Chinese translation recognizes only the latter development. In the passage, Charlus is called ‘un sadique’ (*RTP IV*, 403) but is actually the abused (i.e. more of a masochist), which seems to contradict our current usual understanding of the term, hence the vague Chinese variation *xing-nüe-dai-kuang* instead of *shi-nüe-kuang* (which unequivocally refers to the active agent).

At any rate, the translators of the two new translations of *La Recherche*, Xu and Zhou, have both tried to modify the Chinese rendition of ‘sadism’ and, crucially, both Xu’s and Zhou’s translations remove the decidedly negative reference of sadism as a pathological disease,

which features in earlier translations. Accordingly, Xu changes the pathologically inflected character *kuang* (狂) to *yin* (淫), so *shi-nüe-kuang* (abuse craze) becomes *shi-nüe-yin* (literally ‘abuse excess’). This term is more literary as the character *yin* carries multiple meanings: (1) excessive; (2) wanton; and (3) illicit sexual relations. This choice of word seems to be able to capture at once different aspects of Mlle. Vinteuil’s relationship with her girlfriend, and indeed most other lesbian relationships portrayed in the novel. The language of pathological condition is thus transferred to that of sexual desire. However, the rather negative value judgment is still evident.

Zhou’s terminological proposal also comes out of careful research: *nüe-lian-pi* (虐恋癖). *Nüe-lian*, literally ‘abusive love’, is currently one of the most commonly accepted Chinese terms for ‘somasochism’.⁵⁶ The word is accorded privilege due to its relatively positive connotation; ‘love’ is less judgmental than ‘craze’ or ‘excess/wantonness/illicitness’. More importantly, as Y. Li points out: ‘the word has a specific implication: this [somasochistic] tendency is relevant to human love behaviour, much more than to abuse or to be abused’ (‘表达一层特殊含义: 这种倾向与人类的恋爱行为有关, 而不仅仅是施虐和受虐的活动’) (1998a, 1, my translation). The term was already coined and consistently employed by Pan (1987 [1946]) in his translation of Ellis’s *Psychology of Sex* (1933). Accordingly, ‘sadism’ is rendered as *shi-nüe-lian* (execution of abusive love) and ‘masochism’ as *shou-nüe-lian* (reception of abusive love). But the term *nüe-lian* for ‘somasochism’ was recovered and popularized only in the 1990s, strongly advocated by pioneering sociologists such as Y. Li. Perhaps in an attempt to make *shi-nüe-lian* and *shou-nüe-lian* sound more objectively descriptive, Li changes the *lian* (love) in these two terms into *qingxiang* (倾向, tendency), and *nüe-lian* is also frequently extended to *nüe-lian-qingxiang*.

Informed by Y. Li’s sociological works, Zhou further modifies these terms and opts for a more literary and morphologically concise synonym for *qingxiang*: *pi* (癖). In modern Chinese, *pi* is predominantly used to mean ‘addiction’, ‘hobby’, or ‘natural inclination’.⁵⁷ Both the etymology and the concept of *pi* have a very rich history in classical Chinese culture. For one thing, the character does have a rather pathological origin, as implied by the character component 疒 (*nè*) meaning ‘illness’. In classical Chinese, 癖 is frequently interchangeable with its homonym 痞, referring to a kind of lump in the abdomen which may cause serious indigestion in Chinese medicine. For another, the ‘sense of pathological blockage’

has also subsequently been extended to mean ‘obsession or addiction’, as Judith Zeitlin explains: ‘something that sticks in the gut and cannot be evacuated, hence becoming habitual’ (1993, 62–63). As Zeitlin duly observes, the concept of *pi*, or what she chooses to translate as ‘obsession’ (but free from the technical psychiatric sense), was ‘mated with connoisseurship and collecting’ from the late Tang dynasty, and reached its height in the Ming dynasty, during which ‘obsession had become a *sine qua non*, something the gentlemen could not afford to do without’ (69), and ‘the objects of obsessions became increasingly standardized as indexes of certain virtues and personalities’ (71). In the sixteenth-century *Pidian xiaoshi* 癖癡小史 (*Brief History of Obsession and Lunacy*) by HUA Shu, homosexuality is actually listed as one of the ‘highly conventionalized obsessions’, along with ‘books, painting, epigraphy, calligraphy, or rocks; a particular musical instrument, plant, animal, or game; tea or wine; cleanliness’ (71). In modern Chinese, *pi* is utilized in a variety of character combinations to signify human proclivities for certain specific things or activities. It is a near equivalent of the suffix ‘-philia’, which, depending on the word combination and its context, can be negative, positive, or non-judgmentally descriptive. In this respect, the intrinsic semantic ambiguity of *pi* seems to suitably capture Chinese social attitudes to sadomasochism. This use of *pi* in the context of sadomasochism seems to have gained further currency in philosophical and literary discourses.⁵⁸

2.9.3 Translating Homosexuality

Earlier translations expose a distinct lack of Chinese terminological variety for ‘homosexual(ity)’. In the vast majority of cases, *tongxinglian*—literally ‘same-sex love’, designating both the concept and the person—is consistently applied throughout the novel, regardless of the local terminological variations in the source text. The word was one of the many ‘medical neologisms’—such as *yichang* (abnormality) and *biantai* (perversion)—propagated by Chinese intellectuals in the Republican period in their translation and introduction of contemporary Western ‘modern science’ (Sang 2003, 24). It has nowadays become the standard and arguably the least ambiguous Chinese translation of ‘homosexual(ity)’. ‘Inversion (sexuelle)’ is rendered as *xingyü daocuo* (性欲倒错 or 性欲倒置, literally ‘sexual desire reversal’), and, if we cut out ‘sexual desire’ in the Chinese expression, ‘inversion’ is also understood as a Proustian

aesthetic concept (Tu 1999, 114–115).⁵⁹ However, ‘invert’ as the person is indiscriminately translated as *tongxinglian* (same-sex love [person]) rather than *xingyü daocuo zhe* (性欲倒错者, sexually inverted person), which happens to be the term endorsed by Proust. According to Étienne Brunet’s *Le Vocabulaire de Proust*, the word ‘inverti(e,s)’ appears forty-two times in *La Recherche*, whereas such words as ‘homosexualité’, ‘homosexuel(s)’, and ‘lesbiennes’ appear altogether only 25 times (qtd. in Fladenmuller 2015, 83). *Tongxinglian* sometimes also covers ‘sodomie’, as in the phrase ‘incriminer la sodomie’ (‘incriminate sodomy’) (*RTP III*, 33; *FT II*, 1142; *PT IV*, 35).

The dominant Chinese scholarly view on homosexuality in the 1980s (and well into the 1990s) was, to cite one sexologist’s comment, that it was ‘a psychological illness [...] an abnormal behaviour that should be penalized’ (Zhang 1994, 17).⁶⁰ Some translators of the *First Translation* seem to have been strongly influenced by such a dominant view and choose to explicitly pathologize Proust’s description of homosexual characters in the novel. In *Sodome et Gomohrre II*, at one of the Verdurins’ dinners where Charlus’s ladylike femininity is discussed, the gradual feminine ‘transformation’ of Charlus’s body is translated as *biantai* (perversion), and the ‘origine spirituelle’ (‘spiritual origin’) of this transformation is translated as *jingshen de binggen* (having a psychopathological root) (*RTP III*, 300; *FT II*, 1340). As expected, in his new translation of the volume, Xu replaces these pathological expressions with more neutral ones (*XT IV*, 326).

In both old and new translations, we also occasionally discover examples of Chinese appropriation of Proust’s homosexual vocabulary. For instance, Proust’s ‘homme-femme’ (‘man-woman’) is rendered as *yin-yang-ren* (阴阳人, *yin-yang* person) (*RTP III*, 23; *FT II*, 1136; *XT*, 3; *PT IV*, 25), a term which evidently derives from traditional Chinese cosmology, notably found in Daoism. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that *yin-yang*, which refers to two primordial, mutually complementing, and generative forces, is by no means a discourse specifically *on/of* sexuality per se, although it is often reductively and abusively applied to Gender and Sexuality Studies in modern and contemporary China and becomes at times indistinguishable from Western biological, medical, and sociological discourses. The concept of *yin-yang*, which can be traced back to one of the oldest classic Chinese texts, *Yijing* or the *Book of Changes* (around the first millennium BCE), encompasses a much wider cosmological vision than merely sexual acts. Another related example is the

Chinese translation of ‘viril(ité)’ (‘virile’ or ‘virility’) as *yang-gang* (阳刚)—*yang* as in *yin-yang*, and *gang* meaning ‘hard’ as opposed to *rou* (soft) in *yinrou* (阴柔).⁶¹ The character *qi* (气, air), signalling the primordial energy and active principle forming all things in classical Chinese thought, is often used to complement *yang-gang* (as *yanggang zhi qi*) to form a more elaborate translation for ‘viril’, which further indigenizes Proust’s homosexual vocabulary.⁶²

Moreover, the translators of the *First Translation* extend their terminological application of *yin-yang* to the translation of the adjective ‘androgynous’ (‘androgynous’), which appears only twice in Proust’s novel (*RTP III*, 313, 370; *FT II*, 1349, 1391). What is even more interesting is that the translators feel the need to add supplementary qualifiers in their rendition of ‘androgynous’, which points to the modern Chinese bio-scientific categorization of sex and sexuality (imported from the West in the early twentieth century). Thus ‘Vénus androgynous’ is translated as *yinyang Weinasi liangxing zhuanbian* (阴阳维纳斯, yin-yang Venus capable of changing between the two sexes) (*RTP III*, 313; *FT II*, 1349); the ‘androgynous’ race is *yinyang erxing(zi)* (阴阳二性子, yin-yang with two sexes) (*RTP III*, 370; *FT II*, 1391).⁶³ Most English- and French-Chinese dictionaries do list the two entries, *yin-yang-ren* and *liang-xing-ren* (two-sex person), side by side for the translation of ‘androgynous’ (as a noun referring to the person). The juxtaposition between traditional Chinese and Western-imported contemporary Chinese bio-scientific terms in this example reflects, in fact, the translators’ lingering epistemic uncertainty over Proust’s sexual discourses more generally in the 1980s. However, Xu in his new translation chooses to stick with a decidedly bio-medical designation, *liangxing jixing* (两性畸形, two-sex abnormality), for ‘androgynous’. Not only does the term sound incongruous in the mythological and metaphorical context in which it appears, its usage also intriguingly goes against Xu’s otherwise largely de-pathologizing (re) translation of *La Recherche*.

We could perhaps further advance this observation on the tentative employment of *yin-yang* discourse in the Chinese translation of Proust’s sexual vocabulary. In the context of sex and sexuality, *yin* is predominantly woman and *yang* is man. But as Charlotte Furth (1988, 3) stresses:

There was nothing fixed and immutable about male and female as aspects of yin and yang. [...] They are interdependent, mutually reinforcing and

capable of turning into their opposites. This natural philosophy would seem to lend itself to a broad and tolerant view of variation in sexual behavior and gender roles.

Chou (2000, 18) further clarifies: ‘yin and yang are not ontologically binary, as what they produce are not generic women and men, but persons in specific relations such as mother and father, husband and wife, brother and sister, emperor and favorite’. In other words, *yin* and *yang* are fundamentally relativistic and conceptually distinguished from Western biological determinism, through which gender differences are naturalized and, quite literally, embodied.

Proust in *Sodome et Gomorrhe I* may have demonstrated a keen interest in appropriating contemporary bio-scientific vocabulary to ‘naturalize’ homosexuality, but this naturalization is also profoundly metaphorical. As Marcel Muller (1971, 472, my translation) remarks: ‘êtres composites, Charlus et Jupien sont les produits d’une biologie métaphorique qui est à la vie ce qu’est à l’art la vision d’un Elstir’ (‘as composite beings, Charlus and Jupien are the products of a metaphorical biology for life as much as Elstir’s vision for art’). Far from essentializing gender identities, the conceptual richness of ‘Proustian *inversion*’ lies precisely in its ability to ‘[blur] the boundaries of male and female, and encompasses bisexuality, male homosexuality and lesbianism’.⁶⁴ In this light, the *yin-yang* discourse tentatively articulated in the Chinese translation constitutes a refreshing cross-cultural prism through which the linguistic and philosophical locus of the target text can potentially reaffirm, reshape, and reconfigure the source text, encouraging more lateral thinking about the source text.

It is worth pointing out that there is, indeed, a long list of classical Chinese words and expressions that describe the phenomenon of same-sex eroticism. But they are mostly metaphors or contain explicit references to specific classical tales and anecdotes and have almost never been formulated in a rigorous conceptual or analytical language, which would have been required to accommodate Proust’s text.⁶⁵

Compared to the early translations, the new translations of *La Recherche* demonstrate an epistemic effort to adopt more varied and theoretically informed expressions of homosexuality in Chinese.⁶⁶ The most obvious evidence is Xu’s aforementioned extensive postscript to his translation of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*. Informed by Eells’s and Compagnon’s critical works, Xu synthetically explains a wide range of issues concerning

homosexuality in Proust's *œuvre*: the biblical background of Sodom and Gomorrha; the expression 'la race maudite' ('the cursed race') that Proust employs to link homosexuals' conditions to those of Jews; Proust's appreciation of Balzac's designation of homosexuals as 'tante' ('auntie', translated as *guma*, 姑妈 in Chinese); the botanic sexual metaphors; the codified and secret language circulated among homosexual characters such as Charlus; the mythological origin of 'androgyny' and hermaphrodite (described in Plato's *The Symposium*); and finally the theoretical observation of Proust's conceptual discrimination between 'homosexuality' (*tongxinglian*) and 'inversion' (*xingyu daocuo*)—which has led the translator to make systemic terminological changes to the *First Translation*. Xu (XT IV, 747) additionally acknowledges his consultation of certain Chinese sexological works, as well as the Chinese translation of the works that Proust himself consulted while composing the novel, such as Maurice Maeterlinck's *L'Intelligence des fleurs* (1907), Jules Michelet's *La Mer* (1861), and Titus Lucretius Carus's *De rerum natura*.

The other translator, Xexi Zhou, is one of the three collaborators who translated *La Prisonnière* for the *First Translation*, and he then translated the same volume independently. We are thus able to gain a very concrete and specific perspective on the evolving Chinese homosexual discourse by examining how this translator's intellectual development over a decade has shaped his perception of a similar text.⁶⁷

Two most striking examples are found in the passage where guests at the Verdurins' are openly discussing homosexuality. First, the Latin chant which Brichot recites to please Charlus contains the line 'Sumus enim Sodomitae' ('Because we are Sodomites', my translation) (*RTP III*, 807; *FT III*, 1719; *PT V*, 280). In the *First Translation*, the word 'Sodomitae' is directly translated as *jijian* (鸡奸), a rather pejorative term for a homosexual act. It literally means 'chicken lewdness', referring to 'the belief that domesticated fowls commonly engage in same-sex acts' (Chou 2000, 23). Although most dictionaries consider *jijian* to be the standard translation of 'sodomy', the image of lewd chickens seems quite incompatible with the biblical reference to Sodom. There is no Chinese word that can express the biblical city of sin and the homosexual act at the same time. Proper nouns such as 'Sodom' and 'Gomorrhah' can be rendered phonetically as *suo-duo-mu* (索多姆) and *ge-mo-er* (戈摩尔), but these nouns have not developed any sexual sense in Chinese.

A person of 'suo-duo-mu' is literally understood as an inhabitant of this biblical place, without any sexual overtone. One simply cannot use 'inhabitant of Sodom' to mean 'homosexual' in Chinese. When translating the word 'Sodomite', the Chinese translator has to choose either a *literal* rendition of the term, which is biblical but not homosexual, or an *explicit* rendition of the term, which is homosexual but not biblical. The context of the chant clearly refers to the burning of Sodom: 'Sumus enim Sodomitae/Igne tantum perituri' ('Because we are Sodomites/And must perish by fire', my translation) (*RTP III*, 807; *FT III*, 1719; *PT V*, 280).⁶⁸ In the new translation, Zhou replaces *jijian* with a contemporary Chinese slang word, *jilao* (基佬), a term of Cantonese origin which has gained huge popularity in recent years, especially with the new meaning and use of *ji* (基) in contemporary Chinese to indicate homoeroticism among men. This second *ji* corresponds to a different Chinese character and bears no relation to 'chicken'. Interestingly, due to the relative novelty of the Chinese term, the translator feels obliged to explain what *jilao* means in the footnotes: '[contemporary Chinese] slang for male homosexual, which comes from the pronunciation of the English word "gay", See Yinhe Li's *The Subculture of Homosexuality*' (*ZT V*, 314). Additionally, *lao* is a slightly pejorative word for 'man', so *jilao* is really the equivalent of 'gay man'. In this case, the translator explicitly takes recourse to an indigenous sociological source and applies contemporary new knowledge of gender and sexuality to the translation of *La Recherche*, ascribing—perhaps unintentionally—a new 'gay' identity to the text in its Chinese context. However, translating 'Sodomitae' as 'gay man' still does not settle the issue of the biblical reference. This fundamental cultural and theological dissociation of homosexuality from resonances of 'sin' and 'divine punishment' that it holds in the biblical tradition will always cause problems when we translate Proust's homosexual discourse into Chinese.⁶⁹

The second example, which is found two pages later, confirms once again Proust's view of 'homosexuality' (as distinguished from 'inversion') as a German conception, as Charlus remarks: 'mais j'avoue que ce qui a encore le plus changé, c'est ce que les Allemands appellent l'homosexualité' ('But I will admit that the thing that has changed most of all is what the Germans call homosexuality') (*RTP III*, 810; *PT V*, 282). Rather surprisingly, Zhou renders 'homosexualité' as *deguobing* (德国病, German disease) in italics and provides the following footnote:

二十世纪初，德国同性恋人数众多，一说柏林当时有二万名男妓。因此法国人称同性恋为“德国病”。此处原文，直译应为“德国人所说的同性恋”。但因原文中前后多处，各以不同的词来指同性恋，为避免行文过于费解，译文稍作了变通。(ZT V, 317)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany had a great number of homosexuals [*tongxinglian*] ; one source states there were 20,000 male prostitutes in Berlin. Therefore, the French called homosexuality the ‘German disease’. The original text here should be more literally translated as ‘what the Germans call homosexuality’. But because different words for homosexual are used before and after the passage, in order to avoid making the text too difficult to understand, the translated text has made some changes. (My translation)

What the translator forgets to mention is that this piece of information is also adapted from his anecdotal reading of Y. Li’s work (2009, 15). Zhou clearly feels uncomfortable about repetitively using the same word, *tongxinglian*, for Proust’s ‘different words for homosexual’ and makes a scholarly attempt to adopt a new term with justification from a Chinese source text, which reinforces—but also medicalizes—Proust’s view of ‘homosexuality’ as a German phenomenon.

However, what needs to be further clarified is that Proust himself does not hesitate to employ the analogy of physician and patient to depict many of his characters’ considerations of homosexuality. But, as Eve Sedgwick acutely points out, the figure of the physician under the medical discursive system appears only ‘metaphorically’ in this context, rather than being there to assume pathological jurisdiction over the homosexual characters in the novel, because ‘since the late nineteenth century it was by medicine that the work of taxonomy, etiology, diagnosis, *certification* of the phenomenon of sexual inversion was most credibly accomplished’ and ‘even the vestibular attendance of the medical consultant ratifies a startling, irreversible expropriation’ (2008, 225). In fact, it was the very existence of medical and popular ‘expertise’ that allowed *anyone* to articulate the issue of homosexuality whilst being ‘momentarily insulated from the edginess of “It takes one to know one”’ (225). When Proust was given Hirschfeld’s book by his friend Paul Morand in 1921, he was reportedly dismayed by this medical approach to homosexuality: ‘c’est épouvantable. [...] Toute la poésie de la damnation disparaît. Le vice est devenu une science exacte!’ (‘it’s appalling. [...] All of the poetry of damnation disappears. Vice has become an exact science!’) (Morand 1954, 54).

Zhou's reading of Y. Li's work on homosexuality is worthy of further attention as it plays a crucial role in the evolution of the Chinese homosexual discourse reflected across Zhou's translations. Li is known to be sympathetic to issues of gay rights and gender equality. In *The Subculture of Homosexuality*, Li notably dedicates her last chapter to the right and appropriate ways in which one should treat the phenomenon of homosexuality in China. In fact, after homosexuality was removed from the official list of mental illnesses in China in 2001, Li has vowed to propose the same-sex marriage act to the National People's Congress almost annually since 2003. Li's influence may well be one of the main reasons why Zhou has shown a palpable attempt to tone down a number of negative references to homosexuality in Proust's text and to *de*-pathologize its perception. The word 'vice' is most frequently associated with homosexual acts in *La Recherche*. In both early translations and Xu's Translation, 'vice' is consistently translated as *exi* (恶习, evil habit) or *chou'e* (丑恶, ugly evil) (*FT I*, 121; *FT II*, 1720; *ES*, 80; *XT IV*, 17), which clearly expresses a firm moral condemnation.⁷⁰ Notwithstanding this perception of homosexuality as something inherently evil, as earlier translations imply, Zhou consistently changes all the 'vices' of homosexuality into *pi-xi* (癖习). *Pi*, as explained earlier, means 'proclivity' and *xi* 'habit'. In many ways, this is not necessarily a deliberate softening of tone purely based on Zhou's 'learned sympathy' towards homosexuality (i.e. the cultural change brought about by, for instance, Li's works). Proust's narrator himself states on several occasions that the word 'vice' is only used for the sake of convenience: 'le vice (on parle ainsi pour la commodité du langage)' ('vice [I put it thus for the sake of linguistic convenience]'), and he questions the validity of this conventional designation of homosexual acts: 'leur vice, ou ce que l'on nomme improprement ainsi' ('their vice, or what is improperly so called') (*RTP III*, 15, 19; *PT IV*, 17, 21).

Rather different from the Chinese context, Proust's English translators seem to have been well aware of Proust's subtle homosexual vocabulary since the beginning. Scott Moncrieff, who carried out the first—but incomplete—English translation of *La Recherche* (1922–1930), is said to champion the adroit use of homosexual slang in English. As Terence Kilmartin, who 'revised' Moncrieff's translation in 1981, points out, Moncrieff's rendition of Proust's expression 'ce "chichi" voulu' (*RTP III*, 717) as 'this deliberate "camping"' (*Moncrieff and Hudson II* 2006, 619) to describe Charlus's affected habit of homosexual chatter may well

be the ‘earliest appearance of this word in print, preceding the lexicographer Eric Partridge’s tentative date of 1935 by 6 years’ (1981, 144). This expression is subsequently changed to ‘this purposely “camp” manner’ (PT V, 195) by Clark. In fact, Moncrieff seems to have grasped the subtlety of Proust’s homosexual discourse better than Clark in this case. For example, for Proust’s ‘invertis qui s’interpellent en s’appelant “ma chère”’, Clark directly renders it as ‘homosexuals [...] [who] call out to each other—“darling!”’ (PT V, 194), while Moncrieff translates it as ‘inverts who refer to one another as “she”’ (*Moncrieff and Hudson II* 2006, 619). By highlighting the feminine gender in the appellation (i.e. ‘she’ for ‘ma chère’), Moncrieff’s version clearly suggests the man-woman theory behind Proust’s preference for ‘invert’ over ‘homosexual’ as discussed earlier in this section.⁷¹ In contrast, the *First Translation* almost completely misses Proust’s homosexual slang, very vaguely translating ‘ce “chichi” voulu’ as *niuni zuotai* (忸怩作态) (FT III, 1651), a rather literary expression meaning ‘to behave coyly’ or ‘to be affectedly shy’. In his new translation of the same volume, Zhou, while keeping *niuni zuotai* somewhere else in the passage, finally adds the expression *zhe guzi niangniangqiang* (这股子娘娘腔), literally ‘this blast of effeminate tune’ (ZT V, 213). In contemporary Chinese, the word *niangniang qiang* strongly implies the idea of homosexuality. Although not translating the same passage, Xu’s footnotes and postscript of *Sodome et Gomorrhe* also inform the reader of his gender-sensitive translation. For instance, the translator specifically stresses homosexual characters’ tendency to change the gender of the adjectives they use and their preference for feminine nouns in the novel, such as Charlus’s ostensibly grammatical insistence on ‘la petite personne’ and ‘Son Altesse’ (XT IV, 714; RTP III, 12, 19).

In sum, this evolution of the Chinese sexual discourse from the early to new translations of *La Recherche* not only reflects an enhanced understanding of Proust’s work, but more significantly signals an *epistemic* shift in the way contemporary Chinese society perceives gender and sexuality from the 1980s to now. For one thing, as we have seen in the discussions of prefaces and postscripts, attention to the theme of homosexuality and to Proust’s sexual vocabulary is vehemently encouraged by authoritative Western Proust scholars such as Milly, Compagnon, and Eells-Ogée. For another, translations and introductions of Western sexological texts, which largely determine and overdetermine the development of modern and contemporary Chinese sexual discourses, evidently find their literary reincarnations in the translations of Proust’s text. The different

translation strategies adopted by Xu and Zhou, and their respective resorting to Western and Chinese epistemic resources, should be best regarded as mutually complementary.

However, despite the strong implication of the ‘improved’ new Chinese translations of Proust’s sexual discourses, the empirical findings outlined in this section do not primarily aim to provide a general affirmation of the well-known Retranslation Hypothesis in Translation Studies: the assumption that ‘reiterative (and therefore progressively accomplished) force of retranslation will bring about a recovery of the source text and its specificities, be they linguistic or cultural’ (Deane-Cox 2014, 4). Not only is my critical angle very specific, but my more important emphasis is on the increasingly varied Chinese expressions and differential (e.g. paratextual, extra-textual, and intertextual) strategies employed to accommodate, (re)interpret, and (re)translate Proust’s sexual discourses, which mark a sociological evolution in mainland China. As the two new translations are still works in progress, the evaluation of their general translation qualities compared to the *First Translation* must still wait. But perhaps contrary to our expectations of a retranslation, both Tu (2010, 146) and I have spotted technical mistranslations in the available volumes of the new translations, which do not exist in the *First Translation*. In fact, the continuous re-editions of the *First Translation*, which should serve as ‘a good index of public demand’ (Pym 1998, 83), show that this collaborative work still wields considerable authority. It has never been Xu’s or Zhou’s ultimate goal to challenge the extant translations. Their respective individual translations may be ‘motivated by no more than the retranslator’s personal appreciation and understanding of the foreign text, regardless of transindividual factors’ (Venuti 2004, 30). And this discursive evolution regarding sadomasochism and homosexuality across the Chinese translations of *La Recherche* has demonstrated the (re)translators’ changed ‘appreciation and understanding’ of the sexological aspect of Proust’s work.

To better conceptualize discourses of sadomasochism and homosexuality in certain French texts, Douglas Saylor in his study strongly advocates the term ‘sadomasochistic homotextuality’. The concept of ‘homotextuality’, more precisely, suggests ‘the way in which homosexuality is interwoven in a text’, and ‘it is not’, Saylor continues, ‘the transference of an actual sociological phenomenon into the literary plane. Rather, it is the creation of a discourse, as all written discussions of sexuality invent, rather than mimic actual realities’ (1993, 2–3). The Latin

suffix ‘-textus’ further points out the problematics of language in literary representations of ‘deviant sexuality’. In his chapter on Proust, Saylor convincingly argues:

Homosexuality itself is unnameable, natural yet secretive, and has a peculiar relationship with language. The ‘vice’ of homosexuals is not their sexuality, but the perversion of language. [...] the only real perversion is linguistic. [...] Special languages, lies and distinct signs: these are the elements of homotextuality within the text. It is not the actions of the characters which are important, rather, it is the rerendering of words. (101)

Such homotextuality *in translation*, however, requires a shift of critical focus. It is no longer so much about the textual fabrication and, indeed, complication (especially given the instability of Proust’s manuscript and narrative technique) around the unnameability and secrecy of homosexuality. In my analysis, I have demonstrated the Chinese translators’ evolving reliance on dominant social and cultural discourses, as well as their personal epistemic efforts to describe and understand homosexuality and other ‘sexual perversions’, and to illuminate the sexual secrecy by ways of paratexts and intertexts, and by supplementing and even overcompensating the source text. In a way, the translators are effectively undoing what homosexual characters in the novel are trying to do—the former are textually outing the latter.

Nevertheless, ‘the perversion of language’ doggedly persists in the Chinese translations of *La Recherche*, but in this case it is the Chinese socio-historical conditioning of ironclad clinical opinions from the 1980s that has linguistically ‘perverted’ Proust’s sexual discourses in translation. It must be noted that, although in theory both the judicial system and psychiatric establishments have officially relinquished their regulatory power over homosexuality in mainland China since the end of the 1990s (Sang 2003, 169), pathologically inflected discourses on homosexuality and other ‘sexual perversions’ are still widespread in clinical circles, and even in the sphere of higher education.⁷² In this light, Xu’s and Zhou’s decision to move away from medical discourses and to resort to, and actively participate in, alternative sociological and literary discourses on/of sexuality in their respective translations signals a de facto political stance, indirectly challenging pathological views of sadomasochism and homosexuality. Their palpable epistemic exertion has brought the active agency of the translator to the forefront, as they are seen to ‘use

language as cultural intervention, as part of an effort to alter expressions of domination, whether at the level of concepts, of syntax or of terminology' (Simon 1996, 9). In a way, this engaging translation process is not fundamentally different from Proust's own linguistic appropriation and conceptual refashioning of the dominant sexological theories of his time, as the sexologist Ellis (1936, 174–175) acknowledges in his chapter on Proust that literary masters 'often possessed within themselves a plastic force by which, for good or for evil, they were impelled to mould language afresh, to invent new words, to spell old words afresh, to bend language into new constructions, and to make it possible to express what had never been expressed before'. If 'linguistic perversion' essentially defines Saylor's 'sodomasochistic homotextuality', this concept in Proust's Chinese translations must then be further characterized by the translators' 'rendering of words' to de-pathologize perversion.

NOTES

1. 'Translationese' designates the deliberate use of unidiomatic language in a translated text, as Venuti adds: 'what is unidiomatic in one cultural formation can be aesthetically effective in another' (Venuti 1995, 98). For a recent discussion of the role of 'translationese' in modern and contemporary Chinese creative writings, see J. Wang (2013).
2. Interestingly, as will be discussed, when translating Proust's long sentences into Chinese, due to the grammatical absence of relative clauses, one of the solutions is a significantly increased use of commas—their usage being far less strict than in English, French, or German (Xu 1993, 13–14). For a comparative study of Chinese and English punctuation, see also K. Sun (2006).
3. This advocacy of a new modern vernacular Chinese (*baihua*) to replace classical Chinese (*wenyan*) as the legitimate literary medium is at the heart of the so-called 'Chinese Literary Revolution', which was formally proclaimed in 1917. It was an essential component of the broader New Culture Movement (1915–1921), which aimed to renew Chinese culture based on Western (and Japanese) cultural standards and values. Classical or literary Chinese is a traditional style of *written* Chinese which had developed very rigid rules of composition by this time. Written vernacular Chinese, on the other hand, had already existed since the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), but 'literature written in the vernacular or even in mixed styles was held in low esteem and considered incapable of conveying morality and higher principles' (Kaske 2004, 269). What the Chinese

language reformers then endeavoured to achieve was not only to respond to the modern demands for the ‘unification of the written and spoken language’ (Kaske 2004, 272), but also to improve and reinvent a modern vernacular written style which could be made sophisticated enough to challenge and even replace classical Chinese as the dominant literary language. Against this background, translation of foreign works into vernacular Chinese became an indispensable way to raise the literary prestige of the ‘new’ language. Translation itself became a field of linguistic, aesthetic, and stylistic experimentation for writers of modern vernacular Chinese (Wang 2008, 124–127), and the relationship between translated texts and literary creations in vernacular Chinese became almost inextricable (Min 1997, 32). In fact, classical Chinese, vernacular Chinese, and the Westernized/Europeanized language (*ouhuayu*, 欧化语) are the three forces that continue to shape modern Chinese today.

4. In the context of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, the most widely accepted word for ‘decadent’ is *tuifei* (颓废), which is not unrelated to the European literary and artistic movement of the late nineteenth century. But *tuifei* as an adjective is loosely used to describe the artistic and literary mood that conveys pessimism or indulgence in physical desire—much broader a notion than *tuifei zhuyi*, literally ‘decadentism’, which specifically refers to an artistic and literary movement both in Europe and China. See H. Wang’s (2012) doctoral thesis on twentieth-century Chinese decadent literature.
5. In terms of Chinese literary production in general during this period, Julia Lovell observes that there was an average of eight increasingly socialist realist novels being published each year between 1949 and 1966, and that figure shrank during the Cultural Revolution. She further adds that an independent relationship between a mainland Chinese writer and a Western translator (or vice versa) was virtually impossible (Lovell 2012).
6. This is sometimes referred to as ‘residual modernism’ (Tang 2000, 198–200) because Western Modernism *was* extensively introduced and developed in China at the beginning of the twentieth century—but Proust did not receive much attention—and was only severely interrupted after the establishment of the PRC in 1949.
7. For a list of extracts and novellas selected for translation, see Huang (2013, 297).
8. It is difficult to assess the general impact of this event on ordinary Chinese people throughout China. Western and Chinese media, both calling on witnesses, tend to offer polarized views on the subject. But the Chinese intelligentsia was certainly hurt most deeply, and the event decidedly changed their relation with the state. See X. Zhang (2001, 14–15).

9. Personal communication effectuated on 16 November 2012, on the Proust Study Day organized by Mireille Naturel, entitled 'Le Centre de Recherches Proustiennes de la Sorbonne nouvelle: historique et perspectives'. See also Milly (1991). Milly is still in close collaboration with the translator Xu Hejin, who is responsible for one of the two new translations of *La Recherche*. Milly's new extensive preface interestingly mentions the theme of homosexuality several times, in sharp contrast to André Maurois's preface included in the first translation of *La Recherche*. The importance of *La Recherche*'s Chinese prefaces will be fully explored later in this chapter.
10. 'Je crois que, avec le développement de cette recherche et compte tenu de la multiplicité des éditions de *la Recherche* en France, il apparaîtra dans quelques années une nouvelle traduction chinoise, moins commerciale, plus littéraire et de meilleure qualité' (Xu 1992, 180).
11. For an insightful account of Chinese intellectuals' position after Tiananmen, see X. Zhang (2001, 14–24).
12. I will return to Zhou's remark in Sect. 2.5.
13. There have been important scholarly works that explore the 'postmodern elements' in Proust's work, perceiving Proust as a proto-postmodern writer. However, this is not the way Proust was received in China. My focus here and later in Chap. 3 is on certain 'postmodern characteristics' reflected in mainland Chinese writers' use of Proust. See Gray (1992).
14. The theoretical legitimacy of discoursing on Chinese postmodernism was most famously initiated by Frederic Jameson's guest lecture at Peking University in 1985. It was later published in Chinese as 'Postmodernism and Cultural Theory', which exercised a profound influence on many Chinese intellectuals far into the 1990s.
15. The quotation continues: 'Chinese *postmodernism* is the most forceful expression of these anomalies and contradictions in the realm of art and culture' (Lu 2001, 66).
16. Full publication details of all the above-mentioned editions are given in the bibliography.
17. For an example, see Christopher Prendergast's (2002) preface to the Penguin translation of *La Recherche*.
18. The quoted phrase is taken from Zhou's 'Abridgement Notice' (2009). In Shen's *Essential Selection*, similar remarks are made by the general director of the book series, Liu, in the preface. In the Western context, however, such a 'taster' approach to Proust in translation tends to appear in the audiobook version, but the choices of the passages are often made by the producer (rather than the translator) from the available translation in print. See, for example, Wimmer (2010).

19. The tendency to ‘kitschify’ Proust’s work in the Chinese *creative* reception of *La Recherche* will be examined in the next chapter.
20. However, the editor of the *First Translation* does specify that there were indeed attempts before and during the translation process to unify proper nouns.
21. This is an important anecdote recounted by the translator Zhou himself. See K. Zhou (2012, 193).
22. It is worth reminding ourselves that the reform and opening up policy of China was in place for barely 10 years by then and the field of Proust Studies was still in its embryonic stage.
23. The Yilin translation carried out by Xu Hejin will be referred to as ‘Xu’s Translation’, abbreviated as *XT I-IV* in the in-text citations. The Yiwen translation undertaken by Zhou Kexi will be referred to as ‘Zhou’s Translation’. Note that the publisher Yiwen bought the copyright of only the first volume of *La Recherche*, and Zhou subsequently published his translation of *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* with People’s Literature Publishing House, and then all three volumes he has translated so far (including *La Prisonnière*) with East China Normal University Press. All these translations are based on the new French Pléiade edition published in 1987 and will be referred to as ‘Zhou’s Translation’, abbreviated as *ZT I, II, V* in the in-text citations. To avoid referential confusions, I will stick to those editions published by East China Normal University Press.
24. I will examine the ‘exact’ influence of this preface on mainland Chinese writers in the next chapter.
25. This preface was originally written in 1987 but rewritten for the new Flammarion edition in 2009. I use the new edition of Xu’s Translation, published in 2010, which includes Milly’s revised preface. Milly’s central points do not change, but certain paragraphs, especially those at the beginning of the preface, are considerably reformulated. Instead of using section breaks as in the original preface, Milly gives a new subtitle to each section in the revised preface, which helps clarify his analysis.
26. Prendergast justifies the editorial decision not to include the indexes as follows: ‘the experience of reading Proust’s novel is co-extensive with the experience of his narrator-hero *in* the novel, namely the repeated pattern of forgetting and remembering, getting lost and refinding one’s way, and that detailed “guides” sit uneasily with this important dimension of the work’ (2002, x).
27. This point will be illustrated in our case-study section ‘Translating Montjouvain’.
28. See F. Wang’s (2008, 126) remark on the ‘bad example’ of Europeanized Chinese syntaxes. For a discussion on the linguistic ‘normality’ and ‘abnormality’ of modern and contemporary Chinese, see G. Yu (2002, 151–168).

29. Tu Weiqun, 'Les possibilités du chinois contemporain face à la richesse langagière proustienne', presented at the conference entitled 'Comment traduire Proust? Problématiques traductologiques et réflexions théoriques', which took place in Paris on 28–29 November 2013. The conference proceedings have not been published.
30. I will notably examine Zhou's lexical adoption of the modern, classically informed character *pi* 癖 (proclivity) in his translation of 'sodomasochism' in Sect. 2.9.
31. See Note 3.
32. Venuti was quoting Berman's (1992, 65) remark of Goethe's thinking. I have largely adapted both Venuti's and Berman's words to my discussion of Proust's translation in the Chinese context.
33. Zhou's final section does, however, include the last few pages of *Du côté de chez Swann*, where the narrator's voice re-enters.
34. Four volumes of Heuet's adaption are currently available, but only two volumes were available in 2006.
35. In a recent interview, Heuet frankly admits that there were cases in which he was obliged to 'correct' Proust's text in order to make it more comprehensible. 'Stéphane Heuet et Daniel Mesguich' on *Radio Française Internationale* (RIF) broadcasted on 5 February 2014. <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20140205-2-stephane-heuet-daniel-mesguich>. [Accessed on 3 December 2014].
36. It refers to the section included in the first volume, *Du côté de chez Swann*, as different from the title of the fourth volume, *Le Côté de Guermantes*, which appears later.
37. In this section, I will adopt a more conventional *prescriptive* approach to the various Chinese translations of Proust's passage, which may appear to be 'an invariably source-oriented exercise' that 'constantly [holds] the original up as an absolute standard and touchstone' with 'the implicit norm being a transcendental and utopian conception of translation as reproducing the original, the whole original and nothing but the original' (Hermans [1985] 2014, 9). But it *is* my purpose in this short section—and in the interests of many readers' expectation of some kind of 'translation quality assessment'—to illustrate what exactly happens syntactically and lexically in the Chinese translations of *La Recherche in practice*. A much more theoretically informed *descriptive* approach to the translation of Proust's sexual discourses will be adopted in the next section, which aims to uncover the evolving ambient ideological current behind translation choices and to link them with broader socio-political discourses on sexuality in the Chinese context.
38. I have retranslated this sentence—and hereafter—from Chinese back to French and English to help clarify my points, especially for the benefits of

those readers whose knowledge of the Chinese language is limited. The retranslation tries to be as ‘literal’ as possible—lexically and syntactically as close as possible to Proust’s translated text in Chinese. However, in terms of verbal conjugation, only the present tense is consistently used, as the Chinese language does not employ this grammatical feature to indicate temporality. Likewise, relative pronouns are added only out of grammatical necessity and are indicated accordingly. Finally, the use of punctuation in the retranslation corresponds exactly to that in the Chinese translation, which may not at all conform to its usual French and English usage.

39. This is Zhou’s original remark: ‘I’m being a bit considerate, because I hope that the book I’ve been translating will still have readers. I translate for the reader’ (‘我是有点仁, 因为觉得我翻译出来的书还是希望有读者读的。我是为读者翻译的’) (Zhou 2012, 196, 198).
40. Remarkably, a few details of this erotic foreplay appear to have been taken out in Shen’s *Essential Selection*. I will soon return to this observation.
41. ‘当然苦涩之情完全不同’ (FT I, 117); ‘只是痛苦得并不相同’ (XT I, 160).
42. I have underlined the change of punctuation from full stop to comma.
43. In many ways, my critical approach is quite similar to Siobhan Brownlie’s (2006) take on the five British (re)translations of Zola’s *Nana*, where the comparison of the treatment of sensual material is used to map the changing ideologies in British society since Victorian times.
44. See Sang (2003, 166–169) for a more detailed bibliographic survey on this topic.
45. Among them, Freud’s and Ellis’s writings have arguably exerted the longest-lasting impact on contemporary Chinese sexual discourses until today. I will therefore mainly cite the Chinese translation of these two authors’ works while making links to the evolving sexual vocabulary used by Proust’s Chinese translators.
46. The Chinese translation of Foucault’s *Histoire de la sexualité* first appeared in 1988, followed by *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* in 1990, but they proved to be intellectually inaccessible for the Chinese public then.
47. Major works of reference include Gulik (1961), Xiong (1984), and Hinsch (1992).
48. Philippe, Prince of Eulenburg-Hertefeld, was accused of homosexual conduct which would have potentially involved the emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II himself. This scandal is often seen to have provoked the first major public discussion of homosexuality in Germany (Schmid 2004, 363–364).
49. Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) and *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* (1916–1917) and Ellis’s *Psychology of Sex* (1933) are among the most frequently retranslated sexological works.

- For Freud, see Gao (1985), Lin (1986), L. Zhou (2014), Liao (2015), and Y. Xu (2015); for Ellis, see Pan ([1946] 1987), Chen et al. (2011), and Jia (2015). *Shi-nüe-kuang* is consistently used in all these translations except for Pan's and Jia's. Some translators such as Lin (1986, 36) frequently replace *kuang* with an even more explicitly pathological term, *zheng* (症), meaning 'disease' or 'illness'.
50. Ellis (1933, 113, 147), too, considers sadomasochism to be a 'sexual deviation' and advocates 'the scientific and medical approach' to 'sexual anomalies, and if necessary to treat them, but not to condemn them'.
 51. For a detailed discussion of the ambient ideological currents in the 1980s, based on official discourses on sexuality in the PRC, see Y. Li (2014, under '性行为规范的变迁').
 52. Ellis (1954 [1933], 112–113) specifically disqualifies the suitability of the word 'perversion' (*xing biantai*)—hence his suggestion of 'sexual deviation'—to designate 'sexual activities entirely and by preference outside the range in which procreation is possible'. Ellis's most celebrated Chinese translator, PAN Guangdan (1987, 182), is also explicit about Ellis's advocacy of the term, which he translates as *xing de qibian* (sexual divergence and change). Pan's translation was originally published in 1946 and was reprinted many times in the 1980s. In fact, it continues to be reprinted today, especially due to the epistemic values manifested in Pan's notes that prompted the revaluation and reinvention of traditional Chinese scholarship on sexuality (Guo 2016, 48). In this light, Liu appears to have deliberately *chosen* to clinically pathologize and morally condemn non-procreative sexual activities.
 53. The original expression from the *First Translation* is 施虐狂患者 (the patient of abuse craze), and the one from the *Essential Selection* is 施虐狂的病例 (the clinical case of abuse craze).
 54. As we will see, this particularly holds true for Xu's and Zhou's new translations. The quotation is borrowed from Sang (2003, 101), although the author is engaging with the Chinese translation of Western sexological discourses in the Republican period.
 55. Some translators and sociologists do explain the etymologies of 'sadism' and 'masochism' and have attempted to translate them phonetically, but only in passing. Pan (1987) and Jia (2015) employ *sa-de xianxiang* (Sade phenomenon) and *ma-suo-ke xianxiang* (Masoch phenomenon); Chen et al. (2011) even coin the terms *sa-de-kuang* (Sade craze) and *ma-suo-ke kuang* (Masoch craze). These phonetic renditions have never gained popularity even within professional circles. Incidentally, Sade's and Sacher-Masoch's works still remain largely untranslated in Chinese today.
 56. Both *nüelian* and the acronym 'SM' have gained huge popularity in China thanks to sensationalist Internet media. But they are generally used to

- describe the kind of mental—rather than physical—somasochism frequently found in Chinese and Korean TV drama series.
57. In order to mark the literary register of *pi* for the purpose of comparison with *qingxiang* (tendency), I have chosen to translate it as ‘proclivity’.
 58. For an example, see MAI Yongxiong’s (2013, 69–70) recent discussion of Deleuze’s essay on masochism.
 59. For a recent book-length study of Proustian inversion as a literary aesthetic, see Fladenmuller (2015).
 60. For an extensive list of similar pathological remarks on homosexuality made by mainland Chinese sexologists and psychiatrists in the 1980s and 1990s, see Chou (2000, 111–113).
 61. Interestingly, *yinrou* is one of Wei’s perceptions of Proust’s work as a whole. See Chap. 3.
 62. Main homosexual characters such as Charlus and Saint-Loup in *A la recherche* are portrayed as victims of the ‘ideal of virility’. See Proust (RTP IV, 323–325) for his explicit discussion of homosexuality and virilism.
 63. For a short discussion of the emergence of the new bio-scientific meaning of *xing* (originally meaning ‘nature’ or ‘human nature’) for ‘sex’ or ‘sexuality’ in the early twentieth century, see Sang (2003, 103). A more extensive exploration of this semantic transformation can be found in Rocha (2010).
 64. See Eells (2002, 24–26) for a more detailed illustration of this point.
 65. For example, *fen/yu tao* (分/余桃, split peach), *duan xiu* (断袖, cut sleeve), *long yang* (龙阳, proper name of a ruler), and *qi xiongdi* (契兄弟, contract brothers) for (different kinds of) male homosexuals; words for female homosexuals are fewer but far from non-existent: *jinlan* (金兰) and *zishu nü* (自梳女, self-combing girl) are two examples. For a fascinating account of these terms and their contexts, see Chou (2000, 26–42) and Li (2009, 9–20).
 66. At this stage, it is technically impossible to gain a global view of the evolving discourse on homosexuality across translations because both new translations are still works in progress. The following observations are based on the (re)translated volumes of *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (by Xu) and *La Prisonnière* (by Zhou).
 67. As mentioned before, whereas Zhou’s new translation is based on the new Pléiade edition published between 1987 and 1989, the *First Translation* is based on the old Pléiade published in 1954.
 68. This verse in the *Chinese Translation* is rather forcedly translated as ‘就是我们鸡奸，/要毁只有被火毁’.
 69. The nonetheless sizeable Christian community in China is very diverse. They do not, however, share a common discourse on homosexuality, and the subject of homosexuality has rarely topped the priority list of their

- theological teaching. Christian discourses have seldom been explicitly used to condemn homosexuality in China.
70. Xu does elucidate the ambiguity of Proust's use of the word 'vice' in his postscript (*XT IV*, 736).
 71. Conversely, as Eells (2002, 190) remarks, Proust himself often 'appropriates English words, encoding them with meaning and placing them almost systematically in a context relating to homosexuality'. See also Hayes (1995). The kind of interpenetration between English and French with regards to homosexual characters' codified language in Proust's novel poses further challenges for Chinese translators.
 72. The legal action recently taken by a lesbian student from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, demanding the removal and correction of the pathological reference to homosexuality in one of the national psychology textbooks, has again sparked off public debates and attracted international media attention. 'Fighting the views of homosexuality in China's textbooks', Stephen McDonnell, BBC News, last modified 12 September 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-37335802>.

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