

**Translation, cultural diplomacy and China's "going out" strategy: official
storytelling through the translation of contemporary Chinese literature
in *Pathlight***

Ran Xu

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School of Translation and Interpretation

Faculty of Arts

University of Ottawa

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Abstract

This thesis focusses on contemporary China. It examines the role the dominant ideology plays in determining the kinds of texts and narratives that are translated for export as part of government-sponsored translation projects. The literary magazine *Pathlight*, launched as an instrument of Chinese cultural diplomacy, is at the centre of this research project. At the turn of the 21st century, the Chinese government stepped up its funding of cultural diplomacy activities in efforts to disseminate Chinese traditional culture and Chinese discourse internationally. This move was fuelled by mounting criticism and negative reporting from the Western mainstream media on China, and China's declining image worldwide. As part of this, the Chinese government initiated a number of projects to enhance the country's image and discursive power through cross-cultural exchanges and cultural diplomacy, and thus forge its own narrative on China in the international community (K. Zhao, 2016).

Drawing upon notions of patronage and ideology from Lefevere's rewriting theory and anchoring on previous research on similar translation projects, this study applies qualitative content analysis methods to pinpoint the recurring themes and narratives in the English translations exported in *Pathlight* from 2011 to 2019. It searches for links between these recurring themes and narratives and current Chinese mainstream ideology as expressed by "the Chinese dream." The findings of this dissertation reveal that, although the dominant ideology in China does put certain limitations on what kinds of stories and narratives are selected for translation and export in government-sponsored translation projects, compared to years prior to the economic reforms of the 1980s, the variety of stories and narratives translated and exported has greatly increased. Arguably, this could be explained by the changes in the country's

dominant ideology over the past 30 years, and by how the Chinese government is turning to “softer” methods of control.

Résumé

Cette thèse vise la Chine contemporaine. Elle examine le rôle de l'idéologie dominante dans la détermination des types de textes et discours traduits dans le cadre des projets de traductions parrainés par le gouvernement afin d'être exportés. Le journal littéraire *Pathlight*, qui a été lancé comme un instrument de diplomatie culturelle chinoise, est au cœur du projet de recherche. Au début du 21^e siècle, le gouvernement chinois a augmenté son financement des activités de diplomatie culturelle dans le but de diffuser la culture traditionnelle chinoise et le discours chinois à l'étranger. Cette initiative fut provoquée par des critiques croissantes et des reportages négatifs sur la Chine dans les médias populaires occidentaux ainsi que l'image réduite de la Chine sur la scène internationale. Le gouvernement chinois a lancé plusieurs projets afin d'améliorer son image et puissance discursive à travers des échanges interculturels et la diplomatie culturelle et ensuite créer son propre discours sur la Chine au sein de la communauté internationale (K. Zhao, 2016).

Cette étude fait usage des concepts de patronage et d'idéologie tirés de la théorie de ré-écriture de Lefevere et est soutenue par des recherches précédentes qui visaient des projets de traduction semblables. Elle met en œuvre des méthodes d'analyse de contenu qualitatives afin d'identifier les thèmes et discours récurrents dans les traductions en anglais exportées dans le journal *Pathlight* entre 2011 et 2019 et cherche aussi des liens entre ces thèmes et discours récurrents et l'idéologie populaire chinoise actuelle exprimée par le concept du « rêve chinois ». Les conclusions de cette thèse démontrent que, même que l'idéologie dominante en Chine limite à un

certain point les types d'histoires et de discours qui sont choisis pour être traduits et exportés par le biais des projets de traduction parrainés par le gouvernement, comparée aux années avant les réformes économiques des 1980, les histoires et discours traduits ont beaucoup plus de variété. Sans doute, cette tendance peut être expliquée par les changements dans l'idéologie dominante du pays pendant les dernières trente années, et la manière dont le gouvernement chinois se penche plus vers des méthodes de contrôle plus « doux ».

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Résumé	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
Abbreviations.....	ix
Tables.....	x
1 Introduction	1
1.1 China is Reaching Out to the World: Chinese “Going-Out” Policy and Cultural Diplomacy .	6
1.1.1 What Is Cultural Diplomacy?.....	9
1.1.2 The Chinese Approach to Cultural Diplomacy	13
1.2 Translation and Cultural Diplomacy.....	21
1.2.1 Use of Translation in the Chinese Cultural Diplomacy	22
2 Translation of Chinese Literature as a Tool of Cultural Diplomacy – Literature Review	29
2.1 Literature Written in Chinese by Chinese Scholarship.....	29
2.2 Literature Written in English by Western Scholarship.....	36
3 Theoretical Framework, Research Questions and Methodology	40
3.1 Notions of Patronage and Ideology.....	41
3.2 Research Questions.....	46
3.3 Research Methodology and Thesis Structure	47
4 Historical Overview of Main Ideological Concepts in China Since 1949 and the Link Between Dominant Chinese Ideology and Government-Sponsored Translation Projects: <i>Chinese Literature Magazine and the Panda Books Series</i>	51
4.1 Socialist Ideology During Mao Zedong (1949–1976).....	54
4.1.1 Chinese Literature Magazine: Before the Cultural Revolution (1951–1965).....	57
4.1.2 Chinese Literature Magazine: Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).....	61

4.2 Ideology of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics During Deng Xiaoping (1979–1989)...	65
4.2.1 Chinese Literature: After the Cultural Revolution (1977–1989)	68
4.2.2 Panda Books Series: 1980–1989	72
4.3 The Deng Xiaoping Theory During Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao (1990–2012)	75
4.3.1 Chinese Literature: 1990–2000	79
4.3.2 Panda Books: 1990–2000	81
4.4 Conclusion	83
5 Ideology in China Today and <i>Pathlight</i>	86
5.1 Xi Jinping’s Ideological Concept of “the Chinese Dream”	86
5.1.1 The Chinese Dream Before Xi	87
5.1.2 How to Translate “中国梦” Into English.....	89
5.1.3 The Chinese Dream vs. the American Dream.....	91
5.1.4 How to Understand the Meaning of the Chinese Dream	93
5.2 All About <i>Pathlight</i>	100
5.2.1 How is Pathlight Different From Chinese Literature and the Panda Books Series?	101
5.2.2 Issue Details of Pathlight.....	103
5.2.3 Featured and Recurring Authors	106
5.2.4 Translators	113
6 Analysis and Discussion of the Recurring Themes in <i>Pathlight</i>	116
6.1 Two-Step Coding Process.....	117
6.1.1 Inductive Coding Process.....	118
6.1.2 Deductive Coding Process	119
6.2 What Stories and Cultural Images Is China Recounting to the English Readers Through Translations in <i>Pathlight</i> ?	122
6.2.1 Main Theme 1: Modern Urban Lifestyle and Modern Chinese Society (25%)	123
6.2.2 Main Theme 2: Existentialist Interrogation of the Meaning of Life and Death (20%)..	135
6.2.3 Main Theme 3: Chinese Society Post-Cultural Revolution (19%)	140
6.2.4 Main Theme 4: Modern Chinese Women (17%)	149
6.2.5 Conclusion: Summary of the Main Themes and Stories Exported Through Pathlight..	157
6.3 Do the Stories and Cultural Images Translated in <i>Pathlight</i> Fit the Current Dominant Ideology?.....	158
6.3.1 Core Values at the National Level (Strength, Democracy, Civility and Harmony).....	165
6.3.2 Core Values at the Societal Level (Freedom, Equality, Justice and Rule of Law)	174
6.3.3 Core Values at the Citizenry Level (Patriotism, Dedication, Integrity/Trust and Friendship/Geniality)	181
6.3.4 Conclusion: Summary of the Findings and How the Themes in Pathlight Fit with the Main Dominant Ideology in China.....	187

7 Conclusion	192
7.1 Limitations	195
7.2. Future Research	197
References	199
Appendix A. List of Recurring Authors	226
Appendix B. List of Recurring Translators.....	227
Appendix C. List of 84 translations analyzed categorized by theme	229

Abbreviations

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CWA.....	China Writers Association
PRC	People's Republic of China

Tables

Table 1. List of All Available Issues of <i>Pathlight</i> From 2011 to 2018.....	102
Table 2. Table of Contents of <i>Pathlight</i> 2013/Autumn (“Lost and Found”).....	103
Table 3. Details of the <i>Pathlight</i> Issues for Analysis.....	113
Table 4. Examples of the Inductive Coding Process.....	115
Table 5. Examples of the Deductive Coding Process.....	117
Table 6. Breakdown of the Main Themes and Sub-Themes Analyzed	119

1 Introduction

The importance of China's role in today's global socio-economic, geopolitical, and cultural development is undeniable. As the world's second largest economy and, as some experts on China predict, the next great super power, China is closely monitoring its global influence and image. As reported by Delvin (2018), a median of 70% of the respondents of the Pew Research Center's Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey (which was conducted in 25 different countries) said that China plays a more important role in the world than it did 10 years ago. In this same survey, a median of only 45% expressed a favorable view of China, whereas 43% of respondents held a negative view. It seems that China's rapid economic and military rise has attracted some attention from other nations but has not been enough to win their hearts. Indeed, China makes the headlines of major daily international media outlets, but in the articles China is often portrayed negatively. Issues regarding the environment, human rights, and freedom of speech in the country are highlighted, along with off-and-on territorial disputes with neighboring countries and, most recently, with Hong Kong.

In light of China's frequent presence on the international stage, Chinese leaders and power experts are convinced that China's image is an important (at times even determining) factor of how other governments behave when dealing with China. As reported by Graham-Harrison (2009), Liu Yunshan, the Politburo Standing Committee member and Central Propaganda Department Director at the time, noted, in his 2009 New Year's essay for the main ideological journal of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), that it was an urgent task for China to ensure that Chinese communication capabilities matched its international standing. He further pointed out that "[i]n this modern era, those who gain advanced communication skills, powerful

communication capabilities, and whose culture and values are more widely spread, is [sic] able to effectively influence the world” (Liu, 2009, as cited in Shambaugh, 2013, p. 209).

With the rise of China’s economic, technological, and military might, China’s role in world affairs is also rapidly increasing. Chinese leadership is seeking to play a more substantial and determining role in the international community. As a result, an “accurate” image abroad has become extremely important for the Chinese government in order to attain political goals internationally. It appears that China wishes to establish a unique national brand for itself, that is, establish an image of a responsible stakeholder with an ancient culture and values that deserve to be heard and admired by other nations and cultures. China has thus launched numerous public diplomacy strategies since the 2000s, including some high-profile, big-budget events, such as the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, the 2014 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, the 2016 G-20 Summit in Hangzhou, as well as Confucius Institutes and classrooms worldwide. Nevertheless, China has seen little success in establishing its own national brand for itself and still feels misjudged and misinterpreted by the international community (Barr, 2015; d’Hooghe, 2015; Shambaugh, 2015; K. Zhao, 2016). Aiming at promoting a positive image internationally, Chinese high-level government officials have called for constructing China’s own international discourse, rather than having to counter negative Western discourse on China, while current Chinese President and general secretary of the CCP, Xi Jinping, has repeatedly emphasized the importance of telling China’s story well and spreading China’s voice internationally in his official speeches (Boc, 2015; Edney, 2012; Thussu, 2017). In November 2014, during the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs, Xi announced that China “should seek

other countries' understanding and support ... increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's message to the World" (Xinhua, 2014).

According to Chinese and foreign researchers on Chinese public diplomacy, it seems that ideological, political, and cultural differences between China and other countries are among main factors that contribute to the negative reporting and unfavorable image of China in international media. Some experts (Barr, 2015; d'Hooghe, 2015; Kang, 2014; Kerr, 2015; Scott, 2015; Shambaugh, 2013, 2015; Z. Zhang, 2012; X. Zhang, 2015) explain that, in China's view, the rapid rise of Chinese military and economic power has left many "Western countries" feeling insecure. This insecurity has caused much criticism from the West and much negative reporting. A great deal of scholarship written in China on Chinese foreign policy claims that "Western countries" have produced many false theories on China, such as the "China threat theory," "China's arrogance theory," and the "Theory of yellow trouble" to counter China's growing power (Kang, 2014; X. Liu, 2020; Z. Zhang, 2012; X. Zhang, 2015; K. Zhao, 2016). Although the authors of these claims do not clearly list which countries fall under the label of "Western countries," it can be assumed from an analysis of various writings on the subject that they mean the United States and its allies in most cases. In order to reverse such misinterpretations, growing suspicion and mistrust towards China among the international community, Chinese leaders and power theorists believe it is crucial that China present itself to the world in its true colours through strengthening Chinese discursive power (Hartig, 2015; d'Hooghe, 2015; Shambaugh, 2015; K. Zhao, 2016; Zheng, 2012) and forge its own strategic narrative through telling China's story internationally (Boc, 2015; Hartig, 2016; Hinck et al, 2018; Lams, 2018).

The international community acknowledges the growing economic power that China is today. However, many experts on China do not see China as a true cultural global power yet. Shambaugh (2015), a Political Science and International Affairs professor, Director of the China Policy Program at George Washington University, and author of multiple books on China, noted that China is in “a ‘discourse war’ with the West, in which Beijing is pushing back against what it perceives as anti-China sentiment around the world” (p. 103). Shambaugh (2013; 2014; 2015; 2016) is critical of Chinese cultural diplomacy activities ever being successful and is skeptical of China becoming a global power in the near future. In his book *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* (2013), Shambaugh claimed that China has no soft power and its cultural products fail to influence others. Again, in his later article “China’s Soft Power Push” (2015), Shambaugh claimed that China “suffers from a severe shortage of soft power” (p. 99), which is why it is pouring a tremendous amount of financial and human resources into supporting its public diplomacy initiatives in an attempt to change the country’s global image and reverse the skewed perceptions of China globally.

Sharing Shambaugh’s perspective, Ingrid d’Hooghe (2015), a Dutch sinologist, independent China strategy advisor, and lecturer and researcher on Chinese relations,¹ explained:

[i]n the eyes of China’s power theorists, building soft power is a way to advance China’s domestic and international agenda, to guard Beijing against foreign criticism, and to boost China’s international standing. China furthermore strongly perceives building soft power as an area of international competition, in which Western countries—particularly the United States—try to contain China’s rise and undermine its government with ‘soft tools.’ (pp. 2–3)

¹ For Ingrid d’Hooghe’s full professional background, see (n.d.). *English*. Ingrid d’Hooghe, China Relations, <https://chinarelations.nl/english-2/>

In this context, d’Hooghe associated *soft tools* with cultural diplomacy instruments used to help China to build and create soft power, tools that have been used by many governments around the world for similar *soft* purposes. With the intention of improving its international image and of increasing its influence in the global discourse, China is also employing the soft tools of Chinese cultural diplomacy. In fact, *culture* has become “the third pillar of China’s diplomacy after politics and economics” (X. Liu, 2019, p. 1), and cultural diplomacy had been repeatedly emphasized as a priority of Chinese public diplomacy by top Chinese leaders and experts in the field of international affairs.

Aside from hosting the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing and setting up Confucius Institutes around the globe for Chinese-language teaching, examples of the recent large-scale cultural diplomacy endeavors China has embarked on since the 2000s include:

- launching the recent high-profile Belt and Road Initiative to promote economic, financial, and cultural cooperation between the Asian, European, and African continents;²
- expanding the country’s news agencies—Xinhua has established over 170 foreign bureaus to maintain its presence both physically and online with audio and video content;
- making English-language editions of government-backed newspapers, like *China Daily* and *Global Times*, available worldwide;
- rebranding Chinese television and radio broadcasting news services—Chinese Central Television (CCTV) is now known internationally as China Global Television Network and broadcasts news in more than 70 countries;

² For the People’s Republic of China’s plan of action on this initiative, see State Council: People’s Republic of China (2015, March 30). *Full Text: Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative*. English.gov.cn., http://english.gov.cn/archive/publications/2015/03/30/content_281475080249035.htm

- expanding China Radio International, which now broadcasts in 38 languages from offices set up in 27 different countries;³
- setting up various grants for academic exchange to attract foreign students and academics to study and teach in China and, at the same time, learn Chinese culture;
- boosting investments into Chinese film, television, and animation sectors;
- investing heavily in the country's Arts Fund; and
- directing a tremendous amount of government funding to support various translation projects, including the translation of Chinese literature and academic works into foreign languages.

The list could go on.

The following sections will be dedicated to a more in-depth look at the topic of cultural diplomacy with the goal of soft power construction and projection. However, before delving into the details and definitions of cultural diplomacy, strategies and instruments of cultural diplomacy, and China's attempts at soft power construction, it is important to look at how China has arrived at this point, in order to understand why China's image has become so important to the Chinese government.

1.1 China is Reaching Out to the World: Chinese “Going-Out” Policy and Cultural Diplomacy

In 1976 (right after the death of the Chinese leader Mao Zedong) the economic, social, and political situation in the country was dire. Thanks to Mao's totalitarian governing style and his closed-door policy in international and economic relations, the country had been deprived of

³ For more on Chinese public diplomacy initiatives, see Albert, E. (2018, February 9). *China's Big Bet on Soft Power*. Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-big-bet-soft-power>

contact with the outside world for decades (W. Chen, 1998; Jeffries, 2006; Kurlantzick, 2007; Q. Luo, 2001; Mengkui, 2012; Shen & Mantzopoulos, 2013). It was time for a change. In December 1978, the leader of China at that time, Deng Xiaoping, implemented a series of (mainly economic) reforms to open China up to the outside world. *Controlled open-door policy* was the term used in the communiqués that announced the launch of the economic reforms which aimed at attracting foreign investments into China and modernizing the country. The reforms were designed to gradually introduce market mechanisms and “increase enterprise autonomy through decentralization” (Q. Luo, 2001, p. 29). Deng Xiaoping’s reforms were viewed as a breath of fresh air by many at the time and are highly praised to this day by the Chinese and foreign experts on China, since these reforms led to China’s current economic and military power (Shen & Mantzopoulos, 2013, p. 122).

With the wild success of Deng Xiaoping’s “opening-up” policy, the world witnessed exponential economic growth in China. The country welcomed foreign joint ventures and direct foreign investments. Special economic zones in southern port cities like Shenzhen and Xiamen were set up to offer immense tax cuts to investors (Q. Luo, 2001). These measures facilitated the flourishing of the private sector, an increase in foreign trade, the emergence and growth of a middle class, and the modernization of China.⁴ The stable inflow of foreign investments led to the revival of Chinese domestic industries and the domestic economy overall, rapidly boosting the country’s export volume.

However, after decades of continuous inflow of foreign capital and high outflow of export goods, the country could no longer keep up with the ever-expanding need for resources to

⁴ “Modernization of China” was one of the ideological slogans at the time of the reforms under Deng. It promoted the development and strengthening of four sectors in China: agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology.

sustain the current rate of economic growth (Shen & Mantzopoulos, 2012). Although by that point China had become an active player on the international stage, it was still mostly known for its low-quality products, cheap labour market, and underdeveloped technology and innovation sector. It was time to further deepen the reforms in the country. In what was an apparently pivotal moment in China's economic development, China set out to change its image in the eyes of other nations. In the late 1990s, the "opening-up" policies were officially supplemented by the implementation of foreign and economic policies of "going out." With these "going out" policies, China was on a mission to widen multi-dimensional economic cooperation, acquire technological and managerial know-how, and find new markets for its goods. The government encouraged Chinese businesses and industries to "go out" and learn how things are done abroad and then bring home new ideas. During the course of the next decade, the "going-out" strategy became the hottest trend and topic among business professionals and scholarly researchers in China.

Undoubtedly, the motivation behind this "going-out" policy was not just an economic one. China was also politically motivated; the adoption of "going-out" strategies was expected to gain China more visibility and power in international affairs. Around the same time that the new "going-out" policy was being promoted, that is, in the early 2000s, China launched its cultural diplomacy campaign in what seems to have been China's first attempt to achieve country's cultural soft power. The top leader of the country at the time, Hu Jintao, officially proclaimed cultural soft power as one of the key elements of Chinese comprehensive national power in a plenary meeting of the CCP in 2007 (Chuwattananurak, 2016; Edney, 2012; d'Hooghe, 2015; Keane, 2010; Lams, 2018, X. Liu, 2020). Chinese official cultural departments, with the government's financial sponsorship, launched multiple cultural initiatives to transform China

into an international cultural centre (X. Liu, 2019, 2020). Since then, it has become clear that China wants to play the role of a rule maker in the international playground and views public diplomacy, especially cultural diplomacy, as a powerful means to achieve this goal (d'Hooghe, 2015).

1.1.1 What Is Cultural Diplomacy?

Cultural diplomacy is not a hard science — a review of the scholarly literature on the subject reveals there is no agreed-upon definition of the term. Without clear-cut definitions of its objectives, practitioners, activities, or timeframe, it is frequently regarded as a subset of traditional public diplomacy (Mark, 2010). Broadly speaking, cultural diplomacy refers to a series of initiatives and activities organized, sponsored, and supported by a government or by non-governmental organizations with the intent to promote and disseminate the cultural values, ideas, and traditions of one nation in a specific receiving culture. These activities often carry certain political underpinnings and are practiced in line with the sponsoring organization's policies and agendas. Cummings (2009) offered a preliminary definition of cultural diplomacy, describing it as “the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding” (p. 1). Generally, this process of exchange is a one-way street; “one nation concentrates its efforts on promoting the national language, explaining its policies and point of view, or ‘telling its story’ to the rest of the world” (Cummings, 2009, p. 1). Offering a similar definition, Cull (2008) described cultural diplomacy as “an actor's attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad” (p. 33). Barr (2015) claimed that “cultural diplomacy is one of the best examples of the broader field of public diplomacy” (p. 181) and asserted that the actors—governments and

organizations—employ tools of cultural diplomacy to “communicate values, policies and beliefs – with the goal of improving their relationship, image and reputation with the publics of other countries” (p. 181). In “Cultural Diplomacy” Goff (2013) posited:

Cultural diplomacy is first and foremost about bridging differences and facilitating mutual understanding. Cultural diplomacy can tell another story about a country ... that differs from what official policy would imply ... cultural diplomacy can offset negative, stereotypical, or overtly simplistic impressions arising from policy choices ... Cultural diplomacy can explain aspects of a culture that might otherwise be difficult to grasp for foreign populations. (p. 421)

Although there are many definitions of cultural diplomacy, they all stress that cultural diplomacy is a vehicle for communicating and exchanging cultural ideas and values, explaining cultural differences between nations through creative expression and intercultural exchange.

Long before the term “cultural diplomacy” arose to describe these practices, different nations exchanged cultural ideas and used culture to promote political agendas. Among the first efforts made to disseminate culture and influence around the world were government-endorsed organizations and institutions, such as the Alliance Française. The Alliance Française was founded in 1883 with the purpose of spreading awareness of the French language and Francophone culture, after the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War. Shortly after, in 1886, the Dante Alighieri Society was established to promote Italian language and culture throughout the world. Since then, the Deutsche Akademische Austausch Dienst (DAAD), founded in 1925, has become the world’s largest funding organization to promote international academic exchange, German studies and the German language abroad, and the internationalization of German universities. And, of course, the British Council, created in 1934,

connects millions of people with the United Kingdom each year by sharing UK art, education, and the English language with the rest of the world.⁵ The United States followed suit in 1938 and created a division of cultural relations in the Department of State in response to Nazi Germany's cultural activities in Latin America (Cummings, 2009; US Department of State, 2005). Clearly, activities of cultural diplomacy are able not only to provide opportunities for two-way communication between cultures to connect people around the world but also to give official governments a platform to explain their foreign-policy decisions and official actions to both domestic and foreign publics (Goff, 2013).

Cultural diplomacy has been viewed historically as a means to bolster a country's *soft power*, a term first coined by the Harvard Professor Joseph Nye in his book *Bound to Lead* (1991). Soft power, argued Nye (2008b), is the ability to influence others without using force; it is the "ability to entice and attract ... soft power is attractive power" (p. 95). Nye (2004) asserted,

the soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority). (p. 11)

According to Nye, in order for a country to strengthen its soft power, all three resources need to be attractive to other cultures. In other words, the source culture needs to be interesting enough for target cultures to want to learn more about it; the political values of the source culture should

⁵ For more information on similar initiatives taken by other countries, see Academy for Cultural Diplomacy. (n.d.) *Historical Acts of Cultural Diplomacy*. http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/index.php?en_historical-acts-of-cd

be admirable enough for other states to want to adopt them; and the foreign policies of the source culture need to be seen as fair, friendly, and non-confrontational.

It is a common understanding in Anglo-American scholarship that it is simply not enough for a country to blindly export its culture (von Flotow, 2018; Nye, 2008a, 2009a, 2009b, 2012, 2017; Rawnsley, 2012; Shambaugh, 2013, 2015, 2016). A country's soft power is directly related to its hard power. Hard power, representing the opposite pole, is often seen being exercised through a country's military might, economic clout or a large population (Edney, 2012). Although it is commonly understood that soft power can be as important as hard power in international relations, it should be made clear that a country's soft power cannot replace its hard power, as these two concepts are deeply intertwined and should be employed simultaneously. Employing both soft power and hard power is what Nye (2009a, 2009b) later called *smart power*.

Many soft power activities are used to implement strategies of cultural diplomacy; for instance, "language instruction, academic exchange, and tours by artists are hallmarks of cultural diplomacy" (Goff, 2013, p. 420). Both long-term and short-term activities can help a source nation showcase its culture in a positive light. An example of long-term initiatives are institutions and organizations set up in host countries to promote culture and language. The Alliance Française, the British Council, and Confucius Institutes offer examples of centres at which students can learn a foreign language and culture at fairly affordable prices. Other cultural activities that can strengthen a country's soft power include (but are not limited to):

- international sport events, such as the Olympic games and the FIFA World Cup;
- world tours of artists, such as Cirque de Soleil and pop artists;
- international exhibitions, including world expos, touring exhibitions of art, and museums;

- scholarships for international students;
- exchanges of students and teachers;
- international media outlets, including TV, radio broadcasting, and print media;
- international festivals, such as film festivals and book fairs; and
- cultural diplomatic events.

Although the concept of cultural diplomacy and the term “soft power” were initially coined in the United States, strategies of cultural diplomacy are practiced and theorized differently in various parts of the world. For the purpose of this study, it is important to distinguish theories of cultural diplomacy in China from those in the Anglo-American world.

1.1.2 The Chinese Approach to Cultural Diplomacy

A literature review on cultural diplomacy with the goal of soft power construction reveals that it is theorized, practiced, and wielded differently in the Anglo-American part of the world than in China. First and foremost, Nye’s concept of soft power entered Chinese political discourse in the late 1990s, but it did not gain real momentum among politicians and academics until the beginning of the 2000s (Lai & Lu, 2012), when the “going out” policy was implemented in the country. It was then that the top leader of the country, Hu Jintao, officially proclaimed cultural soft power as one of the key elements of Chinese comprehensive national power, elevating its promotion to a national strategic height (Chuwattananurak, 2016; d’Hooghe, 2015; Keane, 2010; Lai & Lu, 2012; X. Lui, 2019, 2020; Y. Yao, 2017; K. Zhao, 2016). Hu urged that the country’s cultural soft power was important for promoting national cohesion and creativity as well as for strengthening China’s competitiveness in the world (Barr, 2015, Keane, 2010). Ever since, Chinese political leaders, academics, and professionals have been researching tools of Chinese cultural diplomacy and extensively discussing how to effectively achieve China’s soft

power (Flew, 2016; Geng, 2013; Hu, 2010; Kang, 2014; H. Li, 2016; W. Li, 2016; Qiao, 2010; Sun & Wen, 2015; T. Xie, 2014; Yang & Xiao, 2017; Zheng, 2012). Over the years, high-level Chinese officials have repeatedly emphasized that cultural diplomacy is a priority of Chinese public diplomacy and an important element in the process of building China's international image. As the initial cornerstone of contemporary Chinese cultural diplomacy, the first Confucius Institute was opened in South Korea in 2004. China Daily Newspaper online edition quoting Xinhua News (2017) reported that, according to the Confucius Institute Headquarters, as of September 2017, there were a total of 516 Confucius Institutes and 1076 Confucius Classrooms in 142 countries and regions.

In 2007, during the 17th National Congress of the CCP, the party put emphasis on “deepening international cultural communication, learning from the prominent works of other civilizations, and strengthening the influence of Chinese culture internationally” (my translation) (Yang & Xiao, 2017, p.113). Five years later, during the 18th National Congress, Mr. Xi Jinping as the newly appointed president of the PRC and general secretary of the party, pointed out that the competitiveness of a county's culture helps to builds a country's wealth and strength, and that the competitiveness of Chinese traditional culture is essential to realization of “the Chinese Dream” and to the revitalization of the Chinese nation.⁶ China would thus continue to promote public diplomacy and cultural exchange to encourage the international exchange of public, governmental, local, and civil organizations (Yang & Xiao, 2017). And again, during the 19th National Congress in October 2017, Mr. Xi emphasized the importance of the development and promotion of cultural programs and industries as well as of China's literature and art. He called

⁶ The Chinese Dream and *Revitalization of the Chinese nation* are ideological concepts used in official discourse in modern China. They will be discussed at length in [Section 5](#).

for a further improvement of policies to develop the cultural sector and enhance the country's cultural influence (Xi, 2017).

While some scholars have adopted Nye's definition of soft power and directly applied it to the Chinese context, others have criticized it as being vague, incomplete, and limited in its application to the Western political system (Lai & Lu, 2012; Zheng & Zhang, 2012). Lai and Lu, in the introduction of their book *China's Soft Power and International Relations* (2012), pointed out that "Nye fails to appreciate the difficulty in distinguishing soft power resources from hard power resources" (p. 7) as well as "underestimates the importance of economic resources, humanitarian foreign aid, and technological and scientific capacity for a nation's soft power" (p. 11).

Some scholars contend that the Chinese view of soft power simply does not coincide with the Western view (Edney, 2012; Maags, 2014; Riva, 2016) and have expanded greatly on the topic. Riva (2016) is one such scholar. Extensively deliberating on the Chinese definition of soft power in her doctoral thesis, she asserted that Chinese understanding of soft power construction and projection focuses more on culture. This may be because it is felt that Chinese culture has over five thousand years of continuous history to be celebrated and admired. It may also be because the culture can be seen as apolitical, harmless, and less connected to controversial political issues. China's focus on harnessing its culture in the attempts to achieve its soft power has led to the term "cultural soft power" often being used interchangeably with "soft power" in Chinese discourse.

Riva (2016) further argued that Chinese scholars and politicians have modified Nye's concept of soft power to fit Chinese realities by making soft power "not only part of foreign strategy, but also of domestic strategy" (p. 181). Quoting Chinese scholar Guo Jiemin (2012),

who specializes in Studies of International Relations, Cultural Studies and Chinese Soft Power studies, she explained:

The construction of China's soft power takes place from the angle of cultural strategy: domestically, it promotes "objectives of a soft nature" in terms of Comprehensive National Power, for example by promoting the prosperous development of culture, increasing cultural cohesion, and improving the national image; externally, it focuses on the power of culture to inspire, in order to promote communication and understanding between different countries and peoples, through cultural dialogue and exchange, thereby amplifying China's international discourse power. (Guo, 2012, p. 18, as cited in Riva, 2016, p. 182).

It would appear that by modifying Nye's concept of "soft power", and applying its elements to the country's "going out" policy, China is working towards two goals: 1) the revitalization of a strong cultural foundation in Chinese society and the construction of a positive cultural self-image at home, by providing cultural means for minority groups to identify themselves as a part of Chinese Han culture (Barr, 2015; Y. Yao, 2015) and 2) enhanced communication and understanding abroad through Chinese cultural traditions. In other words, the Chinese approach to achieving soft power indicates that China has different objectives than "those articulated in the American context"; these objectives "include cultural construction" for "a variety of domestic and international purposes" (Riva, 2016, p. 184).

This difference in the objectives set up in the pursuit of soft power construction leads to another fundamental difference in how Anglo-American countries and China approach cultural diplomacy: the difference in the degree of government involvement. Both Chinese and Anglo-American researchers acknowledge that the government should be involved in cultural

diplomacy initiatives, but the opinions diverge when it comes to the degree of government involvement. Western scholars have come to recognize the emergence of new actors, such as non-governmental organizations, civil and advocacy groups, and civil society. Consequently, they also recognized the importance of the roles these entities play in the activities aimed at the exchange of ideas and values in the framework of a country's cultural diplomacy. According to the Western view, these new actors can actively participate in shaping the public relations of a country, engaging in two-way or multidirectional communication and influence amongst each other (Cull, 2008; Hartig, 2014, 2015, 2016; Melissen, 2005; Nye, 2012; Pamment, 2012, 2013, Rawnsley, 2017). The majority of Western experts on cultural diplomacy agree that for soft power initiatives to be effective, they must be (largely) independent of government interference and originate from civil society and non-governmental organizations (Nye, 2009b, 2012; 2017; Shambaugh, 2013, 2015; Rawnsley, 2012, 2014). Effective soft power initiatives include multi-agent participation in a context where government bodies provide a favorable environment for the public, non-state, and private organizations to promote cultural exchange; in other words, the government allows a considerable degree of freedom (of speech, expression, movement, etc.); the government's involvement is limited to avoiding resisting and completely rejecting such activities.

China, on the other hand, practices a government-centred approach to cultural diplomacy (Barr, 2015; Hartig, 2015; d'Hooghe, 2015; X. Liu, 2019, Nye, 2012; Shambaugh, 2013, 2015). Many Chinese scholars see cultural or public diplomacy as an activity that should be directed by the government, perhaps due to the aforementioned dualistic (both domestic and international) application. And according to some scholars, if the government is in charge of this area, it is only natural for cultural initiatives to carry a strong political undertone (X. Liu, 2018). China has

been criticized for heavy government involvement in its cultural diplomacy activities by many Western scholars, including the father of the term “soft power,” Joseph Nye himself. Even target cultures tend to be apprehensive towards any cultural initiative sponsored (and heavily funded) by the Chinese government, because the initiatives are viewed as propaganda of the CCP (Hartig, 2015). It seems that a certain mismatch between the official rhetoric and the actual actions taken by the Chinese government continue to damage China’s credibility and image internationally. A prime example can be found in the recent closures of Confucius Institutes and classrooms (as well as steps taken to close them) in the United States and Canada, because they are perceived as a propagandistic tool for the Chinese government (Poitras, 2019; Redden, 2019). In the short span of 5 years from 2013 to 2018, a total of nine Confucius Institutes were shut down. Of these, eight were terminated by the host institutions (X. Liu, 2019).

Recognizing this challenge, the Chinese government is gradually starting to employ a more varied group of agents in its cultural activities, and many Chinese researchers have begun to accept the multi-agent view on this topic (Jin et al., 2016; Kang, 2014; X. Liu, 2018; Z. Liu, 2019; Z. Wu, 2012). Nevertheless, the fact remains that the role of these non-state groups in activities promoting Chinese culture is still very limited in comparison to that of the government’s, and this reality greatly impedes the success of cultural messages and discredits the legitimacy of any Chinese cultural diplomacy initiatives (d’Hooghe, 2015).

The difference in the objectives of the cultural diplomacy initiatives and what agents are involved in the implementation process naturally leads to another major difference in how China approaches the topic of cultural diplomacy, and that is the focus on traditional culture versus popular culture. Western theories on soft power claim that cultural diplomacy initiatives should primarily come from civil society. The cultural activities are to be organized without any

government influence since cultural expression should be independent from government policies (Barr, 2015; Nye, 2012). However, culture as understood and practiced by the Chinese leadership is far removed from the Western understanding. In China's view, culture is an area that needs to be controlled by the government; clear policies and directives should be set and issued directly from the CCP. Culture is something that should be managed, guided, and used to further the political agenda of the country (Hartig, 2013, Y. Yao, 2015). With this in mind, the traditional (mainstream) culture, officially endorsed by the CCP, is being carefully managed and used in Chinese cultural initiatives both overseas and at home.

The focus on traditional culture can also be explained by the following reasons, which are repeatedly seen in the Chinese academic literature on "going out" strategies and cultural diplomacy. Firstly, the researchers agree that the trade of cultural products has long been one of the main contributors to the overall economic growth indicators of many developed countries and the ability of a country to impact other stakeholders through one's cultural influence has become increasingly important to measure a country's competitiveness. This reasoning is based on the firm belief that all countries in the world are looking for ways to export their unique culture overseas to increase their overall presence in the international arena. All the same, China lags behind in this respect and suffers an imbalance of cultural imports and exports (Edney, 2012; Flew, 2016). The total amount of Chinese cultural imports far exceeds the amount of Chinese cultural exports. Some studies carried out on the export of Chinese printed media have shown that, for every 10 imported books, China exports only 1. Moreover, this 1 book is usually exported to regions such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, or other Asian countries. When it comes to the European or American book markets, the disproportion is much larger; for every 1 book China exports to the United States or Europe, these regions export 100 books to China

(Bao, 2015; Hu, 2015; Keane, 2010; Y. Luo, 2007; Ma, 2013; Y. Wu, 2017; Yu, 2017).

Therefore, the Chinese government is putting its focus on exporting traditional Chinese culture to build a unique Chinese brand in the international arena to compete with other cultures.

Secondly, according to Chinese scholars, the degree that foreign culture has impacted Chinese society has become alarming. Callahan (2012, 2015a) extensively discussed Chinese philosopher Zhao Tingyang's view on China's lack of knowledge production, who urged China to employ Chinese own traditional resources to become a true world power. It seems that the remarkable volume of foreign culture (predominantly pop culture) constantly flowing into China has come to compete with traditional Chinese culture and values; imported foreign culture seems to be threatening the position and cohesion of traditional culture and values in China (Y. Yao, 2015). With today's technological advancements, the lines between countries are increasingly blurred by the relative ease with which their citizens can access the internet. Anyone who has access to World Wide Web can easily access foreign content online. Although Chinese citizens may not always have open access to some online platforms with politically sensitive content published by foreign sources, they can almost always enjoy Western popular culture due to its apolitical nature. Many Chinese scholars point out that Chinese society is highly receptive to Western influence, especially Western pop culture (N. Wang, 2012; Y. Yao, 2015). It is therefore not surprising that the Chinese government chose to use traditional Chinese culture as the focal point of its official cultural activities.

Thirdly, in recent years, traditional values have made a come-back in China as a way to solve indigenous problems in the country. The focus on traditional Confucianism and the Chinese value system, emphasis on strong family relations and state/society bonds "serves to fan nationalist and patriotic feelings at home, ... is also designed to advance an alternative 'Beijing

Model' of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics'" (Lams, 2018, p. 395). Furthermore, promotion of Chinese traditional culture aligns with current mainstream ideology of the "Chinese dream," proposed by the current president Xi Jinping. Under this ideological slogan, Xi promotes Chinese cultural sovereignty, by "maintaining the cultural, ethnic, and national identity of the people" (Y. Sun, 2016, p. 233). By making Chinese traditional culture a key instrument in Chinese cultural diplomacy and "going out" strategies, China seemingly wants to "kill two birds with one stone" - on the one hand, accentuate Chinese cultural roots and promote Chinese identity at home and on the other hand, accelerate the process of building a unique Chinese ideological system (Socialism with Chinese characteristics) and Chinese discourse, where China can shape its own version of the narrative about itself, away from the influence of Western countries (Boc, 2015; Callahan, 2016; Hartig, 2015; K. Zhao, 2016).

1.2 Translation and Cultural Diplomacy

As described above, there are many tools of cultural diplomacy that can serve to promote a country's image and unique brand. These tools involve communication and exchange between different countries, cultures, and languages. Therefore, significant attention should arguably be given to translation as an important instrument involved in cultural diplomacy. As was emphasized in the text "Cultural Diplomacy. The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy" (2005) – a Report produced by the US Department of State Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy– translation is crucial to any cultural diplomacy initiative and can help resolve misunderstandings between different nations when it enables them to study each other's literary and intellectual traditions. Recognizing the power of what it terms "high culture," the report recommended that the US secretary of state fund translation projects into and out of the English language of "the most important literary, intellectual, philosophical, political, and spiritual works" (p. 18):

Translation is an inexpensive form of exchange, the fruits of which - the dissemination of information and ideas, the inculcation of nuances [sic] views of foreign cultures, increased empathy and understanding, the recognition of our common humanity – will be on display for a very long time. (p. 12)

Translation can be studied, referenced, and preserved over time. Moreover, “[t]ranslation carries a work across time and space into global context” (Qian, 2017, p. 311). Through translation, source countries have a platform to tell their stories to other nations, to share their values and traditions, their hopes and aspirations. Translation can provide an insightful picture of the source culture, bring understanding by explaining cultural differences, and bridge the gap between the cultures by highlighting cultural similarities.

1.2.1 Use of Translation in the Chinese Cultural Diplomacy

Long before the cultural diplomacy initiatives launched in the 2000s, Chinese government leaders had already widely used translation to communicate with the rest of the world. Through translation, the newly founded PRC aspired to connect with the world by telling stories about peoples’ lives in China and about China’s communist party and political ideologies. It aimed to re-establish itself and build a new image of China in the eyes of all international players (Ni, 2012; Zheng, 2012).

In 1951, 2 years after the birth of the PRC, the country launched its first foreign-language periodical, *Chinese Literature*. This periodical featured collections of translated Chinese literary works into several foreign languages as well as reviews of Chinese art and literature. It was published by the state department Foreign Language Press, the country’s only publisher of written material in foreign languages at the time (He, 2013; Zhang & Hu, 2015; Zheng, 2012). This was a government-led translation project, used as an instrument of cultural dissemination

and ideological propaganda by the party's propaganda department (Ni, 2012; Zheng, 2012). For over 50 years, this project systematically translated Chinese literature and reviews on Chinese art into English, French, German, Russian, and other languages. During the years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), *Chinese Literature* underwent a difficult period of stagnation and extreme censorship, often struggling to find appropriate cultural content for publication. Although the magazine reverted to its normal activities after the Cultural Revolution, its image had greatly suffered in the eyes of the foreign readership. Often times perceived as propaganda for the CCP, *Chinese Literature* finally ceased publication in 2001 due to difficulties of distribution and financial burdens (He; 2013; Zhang & Hu, 2015; Zheng, 2012).

The next translation project that aimed at exporting Chinese literature abroad was launched in the late 1980s by the same state department, Foreign Language Press. Arguably the most symbolic, this project was known as Panda Books. The editor and translator of *Chinese Literature* at the time, Yang Xian Yi⁷ also became the editor-in-chief of the Panda Books series (B. Wang, n.d.; Zheng, 2012). In total, 217 translated books were published under the Panda Books series during a short time span of only 20 years. Of these, 149 books were translated into English, 66 books into French, 1 book into German, and 1 book into multiple languages (Chinese, English, French, and Japanese) (Geng, 2010). Only some of the translated books were well received by the target audiences and many of them could not find proper distribution channels. For these reasons, this project was terminated in 2000 (Geng, 2013; Xie, 2014). Despite its misadventure, many Chinese scholars still believe that the Panda Books series played a key role in the process of launching the Chinese “going out” strategy, and they praise the

⁷ Yang Xian Yi (Wade-Giles: Yang Hsen-yi) was a highly recognized Chinese-English translator, who together with his wife, Gladys Yang, translated such Chinese classics into English as *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, *The Scholars*, and *The Travels of Lao Can*. The Yangs were jailed and held separately for four years during the Cultural Revolution.

collection for setting an example for future translation endeavors as well as for all future Chinese cultural export activities (Hu, 2010; Z. Wu, 2012).

In the 1990s, another key state-sponsored translation project, the Library of Chinese Classics, was launched. A comprehensive list of traditional Chinese literature was translated and presented in a side-by-side format with the Chinese original and its English translation. More than 50 categories and over 100 volumes of classical Chinese literature were included in this list,⁸ which covered history, philosophy, literature, science, technology, economics, and military texts (Sun & Wen, 2015; Yu, 2017). The Chinese government has been very supportive of this project, providing ever more funds to expand the translation of Chinese classics into more languages. The second part of the Library of Chinese Classics project was approved and launched in 2014. This time, the organizers chose to translate five different categories of Chinese classic literature into French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, German, Japanese, Korean, and other languages, in the same side-by-side form. This project, involving about 18 Chinese publishers, has received some criticism from translation scholars, who claim that—despite its grandiose scale, its meticulously chosen texts from classical traditional Chinese literature, and the high praise it has received from prominent literary scholars—some of these translations have never been distributed outside of China (Xie, 2014).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, when cultural diplomacy became the Chinese government's key means of strengthening the country's cultural influence and international image, the resources dedicated to this cause have increased dramatically. Translation-related projects mushroomed after the establishment of special government bodies that manage the “going-out” strategy. Chinese universities and research institutions have given much attention to

⁸ For a list of translated Chinese classics, see Library of Chinese Classics. (n.d.). Books in Library of Chinese Classics. Retrieved March 24, 2018, from <http://www.libraryofchineseclassics.com/>

translation issues and strategies that arise during the process of exporting cultural products.

Various higher education and research institutions regularly organize seminars and meetings to discuss problems of translating Chinese classics. Moreover, more graduate students are enrolling in the universities to conduct research on the translation of Chinese classics, and a number of research centres are also being established to study this area of translation. Among them are the Classics Translation Research Center at Shantou University (2001), the Dalian University of Science and Engineering Classics Translation Center at Dalian University of Science and Engineering (2003), and the Classics Translation Center at Suzhou University (2012) (Yu, 2017).

From 2004 onward, the Research Center for International Communication, newly established by the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration, now also known as China International Publishing Group (CIPG), launched a series of translation and publishing projects, such as China Book International (2004) and the Translation and Publication Project of Chinese Cultural Works (2009). This centre also provides subsidies to mainstream publishing houses in China and overseas for the translation and publication of Chinese books abroad. A similar project was launched by the China Writers Association in 2006. It was titled the International Translation Project of 100 Prominent Works of Contemporary Chinese Literature. It aimed at providing financial support for the translation of 100 pre-chosen prominent works of contemporary Chinese literature and their publication by foreign publishers over a period of 5 years. Many of these projects and fundings encouraged a joint production and publication model, where Chinese translation and publication companies are required to find a foreign partner, a party that already has local publication and distribution channels. For example, the Culture and Civilization of China Series, launched between 1990s and 2012, was a project jointly undertaken by CIPG and Yale University Press. This project involved high-ranking Chinese and American

officials such as former US President George H. W. Bush and former Vice President of China Rong Yiren (Honorary Chairs); former US Secretary of State Dr. Henry A Kissinger (the Chair of the US Advisory Council); former Vice Chair of the Standing Committee of the PRC's National Congress Huang Hua (the Chair of the Chinese Advisory Council) (Bai, 2020). The goal of the series was to present cultural traditions of China to the general readers and specialists. Under the joint patronage such volumes were published: *Chinese Silks*, *Chinese Ceramics*, *Chinese Calligraphy*, *Chinese Sculpture*, *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, *the Formation of Chinese Civilization: An Archaeological Perspective*, etc (Bai, 2020).

In 2009, the PRC's State Administration of Press Publication, Radio, Film and Television opened a major government fund, the Classic China: International Publication Project Fund, which was established to encourage the translation and publication of outstanding Chinese works from both academic and literary series. The same year, the National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science opened a Chinese Social Science and Humanities Fund for Translation Projects of Academic Works to encourage the translation and publication of outstanding Chinese academic works overseas. Echoing the CCP's push for dissemination of Chinese narrative internationally to forge Chinese own discourse, this project is designed to inject Chinese academic discourse into foreign academic circles. Both of these projects had a list of pre-selected overseas publishers, with whom the authors and translators are encouraged to cooperate with, as a prerequisite before applying. Similar cooperation and publication model was also used in the translation project named CPG Chinese Library, launched in 2014 by the most influential publishing group in China, China Publishing Group, that undertook translation of 500 scholarly and literary Chinese works with leading Western publishers such as Cambridge University Press (Bai, 2020).

Among long-term translation projects, recently undertaken by the Chinese government, some literary magazines and journals deserve a special mention. In 2010, *Chinese Literature Today* journal, funded by China's National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (the same institution that funded Chinese Confucius Institutes worldwide), was officially established. Jointly hosted and edited by Beijing Normal University and University of Oklahoma, this biannual journal is the sister publication of already well-established *World Literature Today*, which in turn is published by University of Oklahoma. Submissions of the originals from China are first peer-reviewed at Beijing Normal University, then translated and sent to University of Oklahoma for vetting and revising, before finally being produced and published by Routledge. This English-language journal comprises translations of Chinese fiction and poetry, interviews with authors, and articles of an academic nature, essays and pieces written in English (Laughlin, 2013). The founding editor of *Chinese Literature Today* is Jonathan Stalling, a professor from University of Oklahoma, specializing in Comparative Chinese-Western Poetics, Literary and Cultural Theory, Translation Studies, etc. The journal also boasts having the prominent Chinese-English translator Howard Goldblatt listed as one of their editors (Laughlin, 2013).

In October 2011, the English version of *People's Literature* (the oldest literary magazine published in China) was launched. This magazine, known as *Pathlight*, which is also the focus of this study, aims at disseminating translated contemporary Chinese literature abroad. In contrast to some of the abovementioned translation projects, which are much shorter in nature, *Pathlight*, and *Chinese Literature Today*, are long-term translation projects that systematically translate and publish Chinese literature in English. However, in terms of content, *Pathlight* is considered a literary magazine, more comparable to *Chinese literature* or the Panda Books series in its scale

and format. It is published by the China Writers Association, which in turn is sponsored by the Chinese State Propaganda Department, later renamed in English the Department for International Communication (Rawnsley, 2012). *Pathlight* is the first periodical literary magazine organized and published inside China. Since the cancellation of China's first foreign-language magazine, *Chinese Literature*, in 2001, this is the second big-scale translation project that systematically translates and exports collections of contemporary Chinese writing in a periodical magazine. In a sense, *Pathlight* is *Chinese Literature 2.0*, with many upgrades. Since the initial launch of *Pathlight* in English in 2011, readers could subscribe to *Pathlight* in French, German, Russian, Italian, and Japanese by 2015. With a bigger expansion in mind, the editors plan to eventually publish the periodical in 15 languages, including Spanish, Arabic and Korean (Mei, 2016).

Three years later, in 2014, Chinese Arts and Letters (CAL) was established. CAL's inaugural issue was launched at the 2014 London Book Fair. Sponsored by the International Cultural Exchange Association of Jiangsu Province, Jiangsu Provincial Writers Association, the Provincial Federation of Literary and Art Circles, Nanjing Normal University and Jiangsu Phoenix Publishing & Media Inc., this biannual journal features translations of Chinese literature in English, interviews, short stories, as well as articles and pieces on Chinese calligraphy, painting, gardens, architecture and other culturally specific content written in English (Hu, 2015).

It seems evident that the Chinese government has cast a wide network of translation projects world-wide, aimed at exporting various cultural products to disseminate its own narrative in hopes of asserting China's discursive power and position internationally. In China, these cultural diplomacy initiatives are studied as a part of China's "going out" strategy, which would appear to be analogous to soft power initiatives in the Western sense.

2 Translation of Chinese Literature as a Tool of Cultural Diplomacy – Literature Review

The influx of various translation projects launched since the 2000s has sparked a great interest among Chinese scholars in the topic of the translation of Chinese literature as an instrument of cultural diplomacy in the Chinese context. However, it seems that this topic is still under-researched among Western scholars, and the available literature published in English is quite limited. My focus in this section will be a review of literature written on the topic of the translation of Chinese literature under the patronage of the Chinese government as a tool of Chinese cultural diplomacy to develop Chinese cultural soft power, a strategy known in China as the Chinese literature “going out” strategy. The review will be divided into two parts, one from the point of view of Chinese scholarship and the second from the point of view of Western writing on the topic.

2.1 Literature Written in Chinese by Chinese Scholarship

Soon after the adoption of new foreign-policy goals in the early 2000s, there was a notable surge in published scholarly works on issues related to China’s cultural soft power, cultural diplomacy, and “going-out” strategy. The government’s ongoing mandate to all departments to steer the country towards becoming a global cultural super power has ignited heated debates in Chinese academia across all disciplines. The study of Chinese literature as another way for China to “go out” and translation’s role in the process of exporting Chinese literature has surfaced in the scholarly circles of Translation Studies, Chinese Literary Studies, Linguistics, Comparative Linguistic and Translation Studies, Communication Studies, and Studies of International Relations as well as in the writings of literary writers, publishers, politicians, and professional translators in China (Li & Wang, 2018). Most of the works on this topic in China are written in Chinese as opinion pieces, providing generic overviews of the

translation practices used in China's external communication and summarizing issues of linguistic transfer. Many authors are eager to provide suggestions to the Chinese government on how to improve cultural diplomacy through translation policies and strategies that aid the success rate of the exports of Chinese literature overseas. Overall, the literature lacks a systematic and in-depth look into the historical development of either government-sponsored or privately funded Chinese literature in translation.

A review of the literature written in Chinese on the translation of Chinese literature as a tool of Chinese cultural diplomacy shows that available literature on this topic is very results-oriented and generally focused on policy-setting solutions. The reviewed literature can be categorized into texts that deal with: 1) current issues and obstacles in the process of Chinese literature "going out"; and texts that provide 2) suggestions for the improvement of the "going-out" strategy and policies for translated Chinese literature.

One of the most often listed obstacles in the process of exporting Chinese literature is attributed to different political and ideological backgrounds between the source and target cultures (Deng & Ma, 2018; Z. Liu, 2019; Liu et al., 2018; Z. Wu, 2012; D. Xu, 2017a, 2017b; X. Zhou, 2017; H. Zhu, n.d.). Historically, Chinese literature has been used to fulfill political agendas, and, after the founding of the PRC, the course of the development of Chinese literature was mostly dictated by the government (Ni, 2019). Thus, in most Chinese scholars' opinion, it is not surprising that Western readership is resistant to Chinese literature in general (Deng & Ma, 2018; Zhang & Shi, 2018). Government-sponsored translations especially are perceived as communist propaganda by Western readers. Many Chinese scholars claim that only banned works or dissident literature are accepted as authentic Chinese literature with true artistic value and thus welcomed by overseas publishers and readers (Deng & Ma, 2018; Fang & Wang, 2016;

Hu, 2015; Ma, 2013). Some scholars (Han, 2016; He & Chen, 2017; Liu et al, 2018; Ma, 2013; X. Zhang, 2015) view this Western suspicion of and resistance towards Chinese works as a major obstacle to the “going-out” strategy of Chinese literature as well as of Chinese cultural diplomacy initiatives. Chen Wei, an expert on translation and cultural soft power from Tianjin University for Foreign Languages in his interview with He, for instance, expressed concerns over the popularity of translated Chinese dissident literature overseas and suggested its success may have potential negative effects on China’s international image and soft power construction (He & Chen, 2017). He claimed that literary works that depict the dark side of Chinese society will lead to target readers (especially from other cultures) further misinterpreting and misunderstanding China. As a way to bridge the cultural and ideological gap between writers, translators, and readers the scholars suggest that intercultural communication between China and other countries be deepened (Z. Li, 2013; Z. Liu, 2019; Liu et al., 2018; Xie, 2013, 2014, 2016; B. Zhu, 2014).

The next big concern among Chinese scholars not only in the field of cultural diplomacy, but also in the field of translation, is the existing imbalance between the volume of translations imported into China and exported from China to Western countries. According to the statistics collected by the National Copyright Administration of the PRC, the difference in the number of American book copyrights bought by Chinese publishers and the number of Chinese book copyrights bought by American publishers is sevenfold (Y. Wang, 2018). This imbalance exists not only in terms of the quantity and quality of imported and exported translations but also in terms of their degree of influence on target audiences (Bao, 2015; Gao & Xu, 2010; Liu et al., 2018; Ma, 2013; Y. Wang, 2018; D. Xu, 2017a, 2017b; Xie, 2016; Zhang & Shi, 2018). Xie Tian Zhen (2013, 2014), a well-known translation studies and comparative literature scholar from Shanghai International Studies University in China, explained that the imbalance is caused by a

“time gap” and “language gap” between China and Western countries. China has in-depth knowledge of the West and has been learning about and translating Western works since the Qin dynasty; however, Western countries still know very little of China and became interested in China only about 2 or 3 decades ago, after China opened up to the world (Liu et al, 2018; Xie, 2014; N. Wang, 2012; Y. Wang, 2018). Because of this “time gap”, as explained by Xie (2014), Chinese readers understand and accept Western literature and ideas based on their accumulated knowledge about the West, while Western readers, due to their unfamiliarity with Chinese culture, have significant difficulty grasping the nuances and peculiarities of Chinese culture. The “language gap” further prevents Western cultures from getting to know China. N. Wang (2012) and Xie (2013, 2014) elucidate that the number of Chinese scholars or non-scholars studying the English language or Western culture (including Western literature) far exceeds the number of sinologists or other Chinese-language and -culture learners in Western countries. This reality is also reflected in the small number of translators that can translate from Chinese into their mother tongue, which in turn affects the quality of the translations. To address this concern, Chinese scholars call for wider promotion of a closer collaboration between Chinese and foreign translators (Gao & Xu, 2010; Hu, 2010; Liu et al., 2018; Song, 2017; Xie, 2014, 2016; D. Xu, 2017a, 2017b). Most of the reviewed literature encourages the involvement of at least two translators in the translation process with one translator being Chinese and the other foreign. This collaboration would help prevent foreign translators from misunderstanding culturally specific nuances and help prevent Chinese translators from producing translations with poor target-language quality.

Chinese scholars also note that a lack of efficient cooperation with overseas publishers and poor overseas channels of distribution and promotion can lead to poor reception of translated

Chinese literature by target audiences (Fang & Wang, 2016; Gao & Xu, 2010; Liu et al., 2018; Ma, 2013; Z. Wu, 2012; D. Xu, 2017a, 2017b; X. Zhou, 2017). Due to the small overseas readership of Chinese literature, promotion is limited and channels need to be improved and widened for translated literature to gain acceptance and play a determining role in China's "going-out" strategy. These scholars also point out that the lack of extensive and systematic market research, and the lack of promotion through mainstream media contribute to poor sales of Chinese literature abroad (Ma, 2013; X. Chen, n.d.). In his dissertation, Geng (2010) took Panda Books as a case study and explored the distribution and reception of this series overseas. He noticed a mismatch between the materials selected and the target readership's interests. Geng (2010, 2013, 2014) argued that, in order to assess the degree to which the "going-out" strategy of Chinese literature is successful, one must consider not only linguistic transfer but also many other factors like the ideological differences between the source and target audiences, the selection process of the original works and translators, as well as the channels of distribution and promotion. To remedy this, Chinese scholars propose to create new distribution and promotion channels by working with mainstream publishers overseas (X. Chen, n.d.; Geng, 2010, 2013, 2014; Z. Li, 2013; Z. Liu, 2019; Liu et al., 2018; Xie, 2013; B. Zhu, 2014). Employing mainstream foreign publishing or marketing agents to promote translated Chinese literature will better ensure that "going out" products meet the demands of the target readership. In her dissertation, Zheng (2012) explored the process of production and distribution of the Chinese literary magazine *Chinese Literature* and its reception in different countries. Her research showed that Chinese literature was not favorably received, with its reception heavily dependent on government policies, the diplomatic relationship of the receiving country with China, the receiving culture's ideology, distribution channels, etc. (Zheng, 2012).

Lastly, Chinese scholars emphasize that translator training, translation policies and strategies all play a very important role in the process of Chinese literature “going out”. The most common concerns are that: a) there is a lack of qualified translators; and b) the practitioners strongly differ on translation strategies and struggle with the different cultural backgrounds between China and receiving cultures (Fang & Wang, 2016; Gao & Xu, 2010; Y. Liu, 2019; Z. Liu, 2019; Ma, 2013; Song, 2017; Xie, 2014; Liu et al., 2018; D. Xu, 2017a; Zhang & Shi, 2018). D. Xu (2017a) pointed out that, unlike in the Western world, in China translators still translate mainly into languages that are not native to them. The poor translation quality makes the translations unidiomatic as well as very hard for the target readership to read and understand. This group of scholars link the poor translation quality to the mediocre success of Chinese literature “going out” strategy so far and call for re-evaluation of the translation strategies employed in the translation projects, discussing topics such as domestication/foreignization, adaptation, and deletion, etc. In the debate on translation strategies, there is another group of scholars that deserves special mention. This group of scholars holds the view that translations should be as foreignizing as possible to preserve the characteristics of Chinese culture and literature (He & Chen, 2017; Song, 2017; X. Zhang, 2015; Z. Zhu, 2015). These scholars claimed that through domestication, Chinese literature loses its “Chineseness” and artistic beauty. Chen Wei, in his interview with He, went one step further and elaborated that domestications and adaptations that cater to the readers’ interests damage the Chinese image overseas and create “negative” soft power (He & Chen, 2017).

With this said, providing better translator training in the country from Chinese into other languages becomes an important next natural step to improve translation quality as a part of Chinese literature “going out” strategy. In order to attract considerable interest from both

teachers and students to teach and study translation, some scholars also urged the government to provide better financial pay and rewards to the translators (Bao, 2014; Fang & Wang, 2016; Hu, 2010; Xie, 2013). Another way to improve translation quality was proposed through changes in translation policies and improvements in the suitability of original works by revisiting the selection process of the original works (Cao & Xu, 2016; Fang & Wang, 2016; Ma, 2013; Q. Wang, 2015; J. Xu, 2009; Zhang & Shi, 2018). In her dissertation, Bao (2014) explored the selection, translation, and distribution strategies used for Goldblatt's translations of Mo Yan's works. She concluded that, for Chinese literature to effectively "go out", all the steps involved in delivering the final translation product to the target audience must be considered (Bao, 2014).

Much of the literature analyzed above focuses on identifying the fundamental political and cultural differences between China and the West, providing suggestions and possible solutions to help Chinese literature to "go out" under patronage of the Chinese government. It looks at translation as one of the moving parts in the bigger scheme of the grand strategy to promote Chinese literature "going out" and achieving cultural soft power, and offers areas where translation processes need to be improved and ameliorated. Chinese scholars seem to be seeking the golden rule that will guarantee the success of these translations abroad, and some specifically advise that despite the target readership's resistance, Chinese translated literature aimed for export should be foreignizing to preserve characteristics of Chinese culture.

Meanwhile, there has been very little to no research conducted on the content of literary translations, systematically exported by the Chinese government, to explore the kinds of stories and narratives being selected and translated in the framework of Chinese cultural diplomacy.

2.2 Literature Written in English by Western Scholarship

When it comes to Western scholarship, it can first be noted that there is a general lack of interest in Chinese literature, perhaps due to the difficulty of the Chinese language and vast cultural differences. Secondly, if there are scholarly works written in English and published by Anglo-American sinologists, most of them focus on introducing different forms of Chinese literature or providing literary criticism of a Chinese work. The topic of Chinese literature's "going out" strategy, or translation of Chinese literature for export under the patronage of the Chinese government does not seem to arouse much interest in Western scholars.

A few sinologists writing about Chinese literature in translation in the Western world can be listed here: Bonnie McDougall (2011, 2014), Howard Goldblatt, Andrew F. Jones (1994, 2016), C.T. Hsia (1988), W. J. F Jenner (1981), Michael Duke (2015), Leo Ou-fan Lee (1985), Carlos Rojas (Jin & Rojas, 2018), and Julia Lovell (2012a, 2012b). These sinologists are interested in the Chinese literature, actively translate Chinese works into English and rarely concern themselves with Chinese literature in translation as a part of a bigger government strategy to export Chinese literature overseas. They simply love to translate Chinese literature and translate those Chinese works that, in their opinion, would be interesting to an anglophone readership (Jin & Rojas, 2018; Q. Zhang, 2019). Many of them have their translations successfully sold in Western markets, such as renowned translator of Chinese literature Howard Goldblatt, who has translated into English many novels by the 2012 Nobel Prize winner Mo Yan. Some of these sinologists have deliberated, perhaps in an interview or conversational piece, on the involvement of the Chinese government in the process of translating Chinese literature for export or on issues regarding the reception of Chinese literature in the Western world. Overall, however, the topic of the translation of Chinese literature in the framework of Chinese cultural

diplomacy and the “going-out” strategy of Chinese culture is essentially non-existent among Western scholars.

Nonetheless, there are a few positions worth mentioning on the translation of Chinese literature into English. These involve comments, suggestions, and criticism made by Western scholars of Chinese literature in translation. Most of the translations discussed are published by private publishers and not as a part of a government-sponsored translation program.

Leo Ou-fan Lee, in his article “Contemporary Chinese Literature in Translation – A Review Article” (1985), provided an overview of translated Chinese literature in the 1980s. Specifically, he offered a critical review of the translations published by the Panda Books series under Foreign Language Press. He concluded that Panda Books lacks dedicated and experienced sinologists, as well as translators in the field of Modern Chinese literature.

Meanwhile, Hsia, in “Classical Chinese Literature: Its Reception Today as a Product of Traditional Culture” (1988), discussed the issues of the reception of Chinese traditional or classical literature among the American public. He showed that the main audience of Chinese classical literature consists of students and teachers, who must read and study classical texts as a part of their studies. For the general population, more contemporary Chinese literature might be more enjoyable, since the topics and experiences are more relatable. With this in mind, it is unrealistic to expect a vast interest from a large American public in Chinese classic literature.

A decade later, A. Jones, in his essay “Chinese literature in the ‘World’ Literary Economy” (1994) analyzed the (low) standing of Chinese literature in world literature and looked at the ways it could be improved. He discussed the translation of Chinese poetry and pointed out to the existing cultural hegemony of Anglo-European traditions, which dictates the norms of the translation and the translatability of the Chinese poetry in general. Deliberating on

the topic of Chinese literature in the world literature market, A. Jones (1994) used two articles, both written by translators of Chinese fiction: one by W. J. F Jenner (“Insuperable Barriers? Some Thoughts on the Reception of Chinese Writing in Translation”) and another one by Michael Duke (“The Problematic Nature of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Fiction in Translation”) to point out that for Chinese literature to stand out it must display local colour and be unique, rather than always playing catch up with Western literature. A. Jones quoted Jenner’s plea to Chinese writers to produce literature that is different and with Chinese target readers in mind. “In Short, he [Jenner] asks that Chinese writers ignore “our” demands precisely in order to satisfy them [tastes of Anglophone readers]” (A. Jones, 1994, p. 185). While analysing Duke’s article, A. Jones (1994) emphasizes that for the international markets to become interested in reading Chinese literature, Chinese writers need to focus on the artistic value, rather than political themes. At the end of the article A. Jones (1994) reminded us that “[i]t is essential that we break that vicious circuit, that U.S. critics of Chinese literature not only pay consistent and meticulous attention to what Chinese critics have to say, but also that we begin to envision ways in which we might promote dialogue and even “communal action” directed against the perpetuation of a system mired in unidirectionality” (p.189).

Lovell (2012a) in her article “Finding a Place: Mainland Chinese Fiction in the 2000s” weighed in on the changes in the Chinese literary scene in the 2000s and the Chinese government’s concerns about the apparent difficulty of Chinese writers to produce quality works to win the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature, thus elevating Chinese literature to the ranks of world literature. Lovell (2012a) went on to investigate the works produced by three different generations of writers: “authors born since the late 1970s and 1980s; mainland China’s most established, critically acclaimed novelists (born in the 1950s and 1970s; and the so called ‘New

Generation' of authors, born in the later 1960s and 1970s (p. 8). Although this article is a very engaging piece on Chinese literature in the 2000s, the topic of translation of Chinese literature as a part of the Chinese literature "going out" strategy was not discussed.

Perhaps the article most relevant to the topic of translation and Chinese cultural diplomacy is Bonnie S. McDougall's "World Literature, Global Culture and Contemporary Chinese Literature in Translation" (2014), published almost 2 decades after Jones's essay. In her article, McDougall pointed out that anglophone readers are resistant to foreign literature in general. China therefore should not feel prejudiced against when some translated Chinese works are not received well in the target culture, especially after Mo Yan was awarded the 2012 Nobel Prize in literature. McDougall (2014) concluded that one cannot definitively say that translation is a contributing factor to the poor reception Chinese literature experiences among anglophone readers; the "evaluations of cultural products are subjective; they fluctuate without apparent cause ... A good translation of a well-written novel may lead to international critical acclaim, while a poor translation of a badly written novel may be wildly successful, even if critics dislike it" (p. 64). This is to say that the effects of cultural diplomacy initiatives are hard to measure in general; one cannot say for certain, that the consumption of cultural products can change attitudes or opinions of the target audience, nor can one claim a clear causal connection between the dissemination of source country's cultural products overseas and improved international image of the source country.

3 Theoretical Framework, Research Questions and Methodology

Prior to the decade 1950–1960, when Translation Studies started to form as an independent discipline, translation was researched from a strictly linguistic point of view (Brisset, 2010). The debate on translation was dominated by structuralism and concerned with language. Even after the Second World War, when the need to translate between cultures grew, the study of translation continued from a mostly linguistic perspective that strove to find so-called correct or perfect equivalence. Although scholars like Jakobson (1967), Mounin (1963), and Nida (1959) undertook to explain the cultural aspects of translation in the 1960s, it was not until the decisive moment in the 1970s when Holmes (2002) urged translation scholars to change the discipline's outlook that these scholars started to look for other ways to approach the study of translation. Since then various "turns" have emerged in Translation Studies. In particular, the cultural turn shifted the paradigm, turning the focus of researchers away from the source text to the target culture. Their attention was drawn to the importance of cultural factors in translation, social background, the translator's subjectivity, the influence of institutions, the agents involved in the translation process, gender inequalities, and power struggles. This research will look at translation from a cultural and sociological perspective, focusing on how the institution and government can influence translation content.

Much of the recent scholarship produced in Translation Studies since the cultural turn has shown that translation is a complex activity, produced under a multitude of constraints, including but not limited to political, ideological, societal, and economic pressures:

Translating means processing a text through the mind, emotions, and personal and public history of another intelligence, which is never neutral and always also subject to the vagaries of ideology, political pressure, funding problems, time

constraints, and even indifference and negligence. (Nischik & von Flotow, 2007, p. 2)

The translation of literary works for the purpose of cultural diplomacy not only involves a great deal of emotional, ideological, political, and financial pressure (regardless of whether so-called high or low literature is being translated), and it also entails power struggles at different stages in its production and distribution process.

3.1 Notions of Patronage and Ideology

To study English translations of Chinese literature in the framework of Chinese cultural diplomacy, this research draws upon Lefevere (1992a, 1992b)'s rewriting theory and his notions of patronage and ideology. In his book *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Lefevere (1992a, 2017) builds on Even-Zohar's (1990) polysystem theory to argue that translation (or rewriting) is a form of manipulation constrained by power relations. Sharing Even-Zohar's view on systems theory, Lefevere (2017) asserts that any literary system, like any other system and subsystem, exists within a larger system known as culture or society (p. 11). The systems and subsystems influence and interact with each other according to the rules and norms established and regulated by the culture (or society). In the same vein, translation can be viewed as a system or a subsystem within a culture or society, interacting with and influencing other systems and subsystems. Translations are usually produced through the literary and translational norms of a (receiving or source) culture and are circulated as a literary product within the literary system of either the source or receiving culture.

According to Lefevere (1992a, 1992b), literary productions (including translations) are influenced by controls from both within and outside the literary system. The controls from within are exercised by "professionals." Critics, reviewers, teachers, and translators can manipulate

literary works to fit the dominant mainstream literature or ideology. In other words, translators acting as professionals can manipulate an original text that may be seen to oppose the mainstream literature and rewrite it to fit the ideology they are serving. These professionals are in turn constrained by controls from outside the system, that is, those exercised by the “patrons,” who too shape the mainstream literature and ideology.

As with other translated works, translations produced as instruments of cultural diplomacy are influenced by the translators (controls from within the literary system) and by the source of their funding whether it be the government or other sponsoring organizations (controls from outside the literary system).

“Patronage,” in Lefevere’s (1992a, 1992b) terms, comprises three components: ideology, economy, and status. The ideological component controls the selection and content of a literary system; in other words, writings (literature) and re-writings (translations) will largely adapt to support the dominant ideology of the patron. The economic component of patronage ensures that “writers and rewriters are able to make a living, by giving them a pension or appointing them to some office” (Lefevere, 2017, p. 13). The status element manifests itself in a symbolic and prestigious level of social standing in the culture, such as acceptance in certain circles as well as prestigious rewards and titles given by the patron. Lefevere asserts that these three components can exist and interact in various combinations.

Patronage can be classified as either differentiated or undifferentiated. Undifferentiated patronage has centralized power over all three elements of patronage. The “patrons’ efforts are directed at preserving the stability of the social system as a whole, and the literary production that is accepted and is actively promoted within that social system will have to further that aim” (Lefevere, 2017, p. 13). Meanwhile, differentiated patronage has a decentralized power; the

economic component does not depend on ideological components and “does not necessarily bring status with it” (Lefevre, 2017, p. 13).

When Lefevre’s concept of patronage is applied to cultural diplomacy, two examples can be singled out as models of differentiated and undifferentiated patronage. An example of undifferentiated patronage occurs when translation projects are undertaken for the purpose of cultural diplomacy in China; the government is heavily involved in the process of their inception, throughout their production, and all the way to their channels of distribution. This means that the translation process is undoubtedly subjected to ideological, economic, and political pressures. For example, when selecting texts for translation, translators most likely are obligated to follow the translation policies of the institution for which they are working in exchange for financial benefits and a certain societal status (McDougall, 2011). Conversely, an example of differentiated patronage occurs with the British Council. Although it receives financial support from the British government, the British Council is also funded by revenue earned from teaching English worldwide or administering IELTS tests and can avoid being viewed or labelled as a mouthpiece for the government. At arm’s length from politics and embassies, this semi-autonomous institution promotes British national interests and values through culture (Flew, 2016). With a prestigious international status, it is viewed as one of the successes of British cultural diplomacy.

It is worth pointing out that regardless of whether patronage is differentiated or undifferentiated, the goal of patronage is usually to influence the systems and subsystems within the target society at large. Therefore, the mainstream ideology, values, and rules within a society tend to change over time according to the political and ideological direction of the patrons in

power. Applying this statement to literary and translation systems, Lefevere (2017) explains that patrons:

. . . operate by means of institutions set up to regulate, if not the writing of literature, at least its distribution: academics, censorship bureaus, critical journals, and by far the most important, the educational establishment. Professionals who represent the “reigning orthodoxy” at any given time in the development of a literary system are close to the ideology of patrons dominating that phase in the history of the social system in which the literary system is embedded. (p. 12)

Patrons will try to exert their power on the literary system through their institutions and societal regulations. Too often, translators operating under financial constraints must conform to the translation policies and norms of the institution to which they belong. In doing so, they may manipulate the original text to align the translation with the ideological requirements of the institution. In a society with undifferentiated patronage, the mainstream literature is manufactured—sometimes forcibly—by the reigning power to fit its ideology. In a society with differentiated patronage, the interactions between the systems happen more organically, and it is harder (but not impossible) to impose a certain ideology upon the agents involved.

Regardless of whether the patronage is differentiated or undifferentiated, whether a work of literature is mainstream or peripheral depends on who is in power in that culture (or society) at a given time. In other words, a literary work considered mainstream literature or a classic under one patronage at one time may be considered low or even dissident literature under a different patronage at a different time. For example, the teachings of Confucius were once condemned by Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution but since have been elevated to the level of a cultural treasure under the leadership of President Xi Jinping. Xi’s government is adopting

Confucian principles to solve “the ills of modern society” (Barr, 2015, p. 181) and is using Confucius’s name to seemingly attract positive attention by exporting the image of China as a harmonious and peace-loving society. In other words, it is the patronage in the source country that decides what texts are to be exported to the target culture. According to polysystem theory, canons are not necessarily composed of good literature, they are composed of literature that fits certain norms. As society and culture evolve, the position of the canonized and non-canonized literature can shift, especially when such change is encouraged by the political institutions in power at a certain moment (Even-Zohar, 1990). That said, the literature selected by the source country for translation might not be well received in the target culture at one time and then highly successful at another.

Although much research has been done, especially in China, on how to make translation projects in the framework of Chinese cultural diplomacy more effective and more influential, it seems obvious that the success of cultural diplomacy activities is hard, if not nearly impossible, to measure from the target cultures’ attitudes toward China. Meanwhile, the translation projects listed in previous sections arguably have portrayed China in various colours and recounted various narratives, no one can ever be sure that a change in attitude towards a country was directly related to a certain cultural diplomacy initiative. With this in mind, and drawing upon Lefevere’s theoretical notions of patronage and ideology, the present research will not seek to evaluate the effects of the translation projects under the patronage of the Chinese government, but rather look at the content of these translations and analyze whether and how they fit what appears to be the current dominant ideology in the country.

3.2 Research Questions

While the literature review and the theoretical framework seem to suggest that the positive outcome of a translation project in cultural diplomacy initiatives can never be guaranteed, they do indicate with more certainty that the dominant ideology in the source country plays an important role in *what* is being translated and exported, and in *how* it is being translated. The sponsoring organization often has a significant control over the content of the translated material. The overview of the Chinese translation projects seems to indicate that the majority of the translation projects in China are either fully, or partially funded by the Chinese government. Depending on the agenda of the governing leadership, what is being selected for translation at one time could be rejected at a different time. Grounded in the understanding that the content in Chinese literary works translated for export for the purpose of self-representation and building a unique image of China internationally will change according to the mainstream ideology in China at the time, and drawing upon the findings from previous research conducted on similar government-sponsored Chinese translation projects, my research will analyze the content of the latest government-sponsored Chinese translation project: *Pathlight*, a quarterly literary magazine that circulates English translations of contemporary Chinese authors. My research question will be two-fold: **1) what stories and cultural images is China recounting to the English readers through translations in *Pathlight*? 2) do these stories and cultural images fit the current dominant ideology in China?** My research findings will help to further prove (or disprove) the theory of the role of the patronage and ideology in the government-led translation projects in China. Furthermore, by answering the second part of my research question, I will be able to add more insights to better understand the current Chinese ideology and offer further interpretations of the new ideological concepts in contemporary China, which

are incorporated under the new political slogan of *the Chinese dream (or the China dream)* introduced by Chinese president Xi only a couple of months into his office as the new leader of the CCP in 2012. Soon after *The Chinese Dream (or the China dream)* was introduced into the political discourse by current president Xi Jinping, it gained popularity in Chinese politics and has become the country's dominant ideology. Despite its popularity and wide use, as I will show in later sections, the concept of the Chinese Dream remains relatively vague to political experts and the general public both in and outside of China today. Repeatedly quoted by high-level Chinese party leaders and widely used by average Chinese citizens, it lacks clear definition. Foreign experts, too, have a divided understanding of the notion, despite the fact that the Chinese dream (or the China dream) has become a buzz word in Chinese foreign policy. The answer to both research questions will help to get more clarity on the meaning of the concept the Chinese dream (or the China dream) and to pinpoint the main narrative of "the Chinese story" and as it is told by the Chinese government - in English and through *Pathlight*.

3.3 Research Methodology and Thesis Structure

This research will lend itself to a mixed research method, which will mainly consist of a qualitative, exploratory study, with elements of quantitative analysis. To answer my research questions, I will use a descriptive, phenomenological approach. Since the research questions of this study inquire into the stories and cultural images shown in the literary translations exported under the patronage of the Chinese government, and as Professor Luise von Flotow points out in her book *Translating Canada* (2007), "stories travel through translation; they are the raw material of the translation process" (Nischik & von Flotow, 2007, p. 9), the focus of this thesis will be on the translated texts rather than the original texts. Furthermore, Roselle, Miskimmon, & O'Loughlin (2014), among other scholars, argue that "strategic narrative is *soft power* in the 21st

century” (p. 71) and a story, carefully and strategically injected and told in the new communications ecology, can equally exert desirable soft influence (Nye, 2008a; Roselle et al., 2014). Since this study is aimed at not only finding the main narratives and stories translated in *Pathlight*, a literary magazine launched as a tool to promote Chinese contemporary literature overseas, as part of China’s larger “going out” strategy, , but also to pinpoint the connection of these narratives to the Chinese current ideology, I chose content analysis as my research method, often used to study strategic narratives in the international media and political discourses in International Relations studies. More specifically, qualitative content analysis will be most appropriate, because this method mainly “describe[s] the content found in texts, or [they may] summarize[s] the key themes in texts” (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 85). This method goes beyond a simple analysis of the word frequency in texts, but is focused on providing reductive summaries of inferences from latent content (Drisko & Maschi, 2015).

In the following [Section 4](#), I will present a historical overview to trace the evolution of Chinese ideology under different generations of leadership since 1949 and describe how the dominant ideology during each generation of leadership affected literary production in the country. I will draw upon previous research conducted on two major government-sponsored Chinese-English translation projects since the founding of the PRC – *Chinese Literature* magazine and Panda Books series –and summarize the changes in the content of these translations during each major political change in the country. This will allow me to gain in-depth knowledge of subtle changes in the evolution of Chinese ideology and government guidelines for literary production in China. This will also help me obtain some insights for the qualitative content analysis I will perform (in [Section 6](#)) of translations published in *Pathlight* magazine to find out what stories and narratives are being exported through *Pathlight* by the

Chinese government in English and interpret the findings to illustrate if and how they fit the ideological concept of the Chinese dream.

I will start [Section 5](#) with a detailed overview of the current generation of Chinese leaders and the changes they have brought to the dominant ideology in the country. I will also provide in-depth analysis of the ideological concept of the Chinese dream, its translation into English and its interpretation both in and outside of China. I will conclude Section 5 with an introduction to *Pathlight*, its past issues, most frequently featured authors and translators to provide an overall understanding of recurring authors' and translators' backgrounds in *Pathlight*.

In [Section 6](#) I will perform the content analysis of translations published in eight issues of *Pathlight* (one issue per year), during the timespan from 2011 to 2018, using a combined inductive and deductive coding approach to qualitative content analysis.

As suggested by Drisko & Maschi (2015), inductive coding allows the researcher to “identify relevant categories and label them descriptively” (p. 104). Following this method, I will be able to formulate my own sets of themes based on the analyzed translations without the influence of any existing categories of themes. I will provide both qualitative and quantitative findings of the key themes featured. Once the recurring themes and narratives are identified, I will provide a narrative analysis of each key theme and sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes will answer my first research question: what stories and cultural images is China telling the English readers through translations in *Pathlight*?

In order to answer my second research question - whether these stories and cultural images fit the current dominant ideology in China? – I will employ a deductive coding approach, by performing the analysis of the translations based on categories or themes from existing theories or literature (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Mayring, 2000). The existing theories and

categories on the current dominant ideology in China will serve as the code base in this part of my analysis. I will perform the coding based on the existing key ideological concepts that are characteristic to the Chinese dominant ideology of the Chinese dream, and thus be able to prove (or disprove) the link between themes and narratives in *Pathlight* and the current ideology in China. If the themes coded inductively coincide (more or less) with the themes coded deductively, this will prove the existing link between the two.

Finally, in [Section 7](#) I will conclude the thesis with the summary of my findings, limitations of the research and future research possibilities to which this current study can contribute.

4 Historical Overview of Main Ideological Concepts in China Since 1949 and the Link Between Dominant Chinese Ideology and Government-Sponsored Translation Projects: *Chinese Literature Magazine and the Panda Books Series*

The term ideology was first coined in the early eighteenth century by Destutt de Tracy, a French revolutionary aristocrat, as a philosophical term for the “science of ideas” (Freeden, 2006; Williams, 1977). Despite its long history of existence and development, the term “ideology” (often viewed as a pejorative term) is still vague to this day. One definition claims that “ideology can be seen as a kind of thought system that is dominant in society and has regulative effect on social activity” (Huang, 2012, p. 236). Another definition asserts that “ideologies ...map the political and social worlds for us. We simply cannot do without them because we cannot act without making sense of the worlds we inhabit” (Freeden, 2003, p. 2). In Marx and Engels’ understanding of the term, ideologies “were defined as the prevailing ideas of an age” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 3). In this sense, ideology is closely associated with notions of power and dominance. The dominant social group or, as it is labelled by the followers of Marx and Engels’ theory, the ruling class, controls the means of production and distribution of ideas and ideologies. The ruling class is able to make these ideologies accepted by the ruled as “the undisputed knowledge of the ‘natural’ ways things are” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 3).

Terry Eagleton in his book *Ideology: An Introduction* (1991) listed a number of different definitions of ideology, among which the following are worth mentioning here:

... a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class ...

ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power ...

false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power ...

forms of thought motivated by social interests ...

socially necessary illusion ...

the conjuncture of discourse and power ...

the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world . . . (p.1–2)

Later, in his book *Ideology*, which was first published in 1994, Eagleton provided an extensive summary of definitions of ideology and what the term means to different theorists:

For some thinkers, like the later Karl Marx, ideology is less a matter of thought or discourse than of the very objective structure of class society itself. For others like Althusser, it is less consciousness than unconsciousness; for others again, ideology is less a ‘tool’ of a ruling power than an effect of a social and political situation as a whole, a complex field in which different groups and classes ceaselessly negotiate their relations rather than a well-bounded form of consciousness . . . For Theodor Adorno, ideology is essentially a kind of ‘identity thinking’, erasing difference and otherness at the level of the mind . . . For . . . Martin Seliger, ideology is best seen as a set of action-oriented beliefs . . . (p. 14–15)

Eagleton (1994) pointed out that there are many contradicting and confusing definitions of ideology among theorists; there are “almost as many theories of ideology as there are theorists of it” (p. 14). He stated that, for the moment, we can understand ideology as “a set of discursive strategies for legitimating a dominant power, and enquire more precisely into what these strategies consist in” (p. 8).

Kerry Brown, in his article “The Communist Party of China and Ideology” (2012), highlighted that, in recent theories of ideology, the notion is linked to “the key,

discreet areas of power, language and social practices and institutions” (p. 53). Brown drew attention to how ideology is used in two ways in all cultural, social, and political realms. Firstly, it is used as a way to exert control over key vocabularies in order to achieve political ends in a country. Secondly, ideology is used by institutions and official organizations to legitimize their key objectives. This is to say, all the governments in the world (democratic or otherwise) use ideology through language to justify their dominance, and, in this sense, the term ideology can be viewed as a neutral term. In his book *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, Teun A. van Dijk (1998) also demonstrated that “[l]anguage use, text, talk and communication . . . are needed by group members to learn, acquire, change, confirm, articulate, as well as to persuasively convey ideologies to other group members” (p. 5). He claimed that the best way to study and trace how ideologies are created, reproduced, or changed in a certain social group is to take a closer look at discursive manifestations.

Each generation of political leaders in China employs language in the form of slogans and strategic narratives to assert the legitimacy of the CCP as the country’s ruling party. Although Marxist-Leninist thought has remained at the centre of CCP’s main ideology since 1949, it has had to adapt as the Chinese society changed over time. From the revolutionary slogans about the great victory of the Chinese nation through class struggle during the Mao Era to “invigoration of China” and “socialism with Chinese characteristics” during Deng Xiaoping’s rule to the most recent political concept of the “Chinese Dream” promoted by current Chinese president Xi Jinping, all these ideological concepts have carried a narrative, a main leitmotiv that justifies CCP’s political position in the country (Brown, 2012; Lams, 2018; Z. Wang, 2014).

Since the focus of this study is on the stories and narratives exported in English translations of Chinese literature as a tool of ideological influence in a different, if not completely opposite, social group and culture, in this section, I will highlight the existing connection between ideological projection and government-sponsored translations from 1949 to the most recent generation of leaders. Anchoring my work on existing studies, I will summarize the themes of two major government-sponsored translation projects—the literary magazine *Chinese Literature* and the Panda Books series—and show how these themes coincide with the dominant ideology in the country at each time.

4.1 Socialist Ideology During Mao Zedong (1949–1976)

Many scholars writing on Chinese politics and ideology argue that Chinese ideology is closely linked with that of modernity and development (Brown, 2012; Huang, 2012; N. Wang, 2012; Denton, 2016). This link can be traced back to the May Fourth Movement, which took place in the country in the 1910s-1920s, more than 4 decades before the founding of the PRC in 1949. Many scholars in political science and literary studies view the May Fourth Movement (more often called the New Culture Movement) as a defining moment in Chinese history since it put China on the track towards modernity and development (Brown, 2012; Huang, 2012; T. Y. Li, 1959; N. Wang, 2012). The May Fourth Movement was an anti-imperialist, cultural, and socio-political movement that started shortly after the disintegration of the last Chinese Qing dynasty. The movement reached its culmination on May 4, 1919, resulting in massive demonstrations by students in Beijing and, later on, demonstrations by merchants and workers in major Chinese cities (Denton, 2016). The May Fourth Movement criticized traditional Chinese views and values and fought for political, cultural, and social reforms in the country. In terms of politics, the

May Fourth Movement enabled the 1921 birth of the CCP, the party that is still leading China today. In terms of literature, the May Fourth Movement brought in the Chinese Renaissance (T. Y. Li, 1959, p. 91), which started to replace the classical language in literary writings with the vernacular writing style and language.

After the PRC was established and the CCP took office as the ruling party with Mao Zhedong acting as chairman, the country continued its pursuit of modernity and development, which was characterized by the rejection of old traditional ideas. The Chinese government officially adopted socialism based on Marxism as the dominant Chinese ideology (Huang, 2012). In order to pursue development and modernity in the country, Mao applied “the class nomenclature of Marxism to the predominantly rural economy of China” (Brown, 2012, p. 54), and also adapted these class labels to fit “unique conditions prevalent in a China emerging from agrarian to semi-industrial production models” (Brown, 2012, p. 55).

With this dominant ideology, Mao led China into an economic and social reform called the Great Leap Forward (1958–1962), which aimed at rapidly transforming the country into a socialist society through industrialization and collectivization. After this initiative failed, bringing great famine to the country, Mao’s omnipotent position in the CCP was shaken (W. Zhang, 1996). He further adapted Marxism-Leninism for the Chinese situation, which was still very agricultural and pre-industrial, and now also had an extremely deprived, starved and impoverished population. He thus developed Maoism (or Mao Zedong Thought), which he used to attempt to reclaim his position and power in the CCP, resulting in the onset of the Cultural Revolution under Mao in 1966.

Mao led the Cultural Revolution (also known by the longer title “the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”) from 1966 to 1976. From its launch, it set out to fight against the “rightists” and “revisionists” through violent class struggle and pushed the country further into recession. Anyone standing in slight disagreement with Maoism was purged or exiled. The whole country was affected by the activities of the Cultural Revolution: urban intellectuals were sent to the countryside for re-education; universities and schools were shut down; many party officials were accused of being revisionists and consequently persecuted, imprisoned, purged, or exiled (even Deng Xiaoping, a future president of China, was exiled in 1969 to Jiangxi province). The CCP rejected history, tradition, and religion, labelling them as superstition, and launched a campaign attacking the “four olds” – old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits (Denton, 2016). Without doubt, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution brought economic deprivation and social suffering to the Chinese people (W. Chen, 1998).

During the Mao era, social realism was the guiding principle for all writings in China. Mao’s famous “Talks at the Yanan Forum on Art and Literature” were used as a guideline for all artists and writers in China (Denton, 2016, Ni, 2019). Mao had a special purpose for arts and literature in the revolutionary blueprints he had prepared for China; in his view, art and literature should unite and educate people to achieve the goals of revolution, transforming the working people to adopt the spirit of socialism. “Literature, as Mao understood it, should be intended for, and serve the needs of, the workers, the peasants, the soldiers, and the urban petty bourgeoisie with its intelligentsia” (T. Y. Li, 1959, p. 94). He encouraged spreading literature among the masses and raising the people’s level of literary appreciation, and while he did not directly oppose writings that

exposed the dark side of this society, he held that it was more important to write about the positive side (T. Y. Li, 1959, pp. 94–95). For literature to be considered good, it had to first be true to life and, second, be ideologically correct. He believed writers should always expose the enemies of the people, rather than the people themselves. The main themes in the literature of this time were those that aligned with the political and ideological themes of Communist China. The CCP mandated that creative industries were to work against imperialism and modern revisionism; criticize the bourgeois theory of human nature and humanitarianism; and promote the artistic method of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism (Denton, 2016; Gu, 2019). The government demanded that the creative industries conform to these guidelines in every aspect of the creative process. Literary form, content, theme, and criticism needed to strictly follow the policies issued; any deviation from the government policies could lead to the party criticizing the literary work and the authors. In the worse cases, deviation meant the imprisonment and even death of the author.

4.1.1 Chinese Literature Magazine: Before the Cultural Revolution (1951–1965)

The literary magazine *Chinese Literature* was founded in 1951. It published Chinese literary works in translation and was funded by the Chinese government, which paid for its translation, production, and overseas distribution costs. The editors responsible for the selection of the original texts for translation followed the requirements and policies set by their patron—the government of China. Consequently, only those texts that fit the ideology and poetics of the state (and had been elevated to the level of classics) had a chance to be selected for translation and export.

As outlined in [Section 4.1](#), after the PRC was founded, the Chinese government rushed to launch a series of political activities to centralize and unify the ideology of the intellectuals in the country. In order to create and establish what would be considered the classical works of the new China, the central party issued a unified program and policy for creative industries (Ni, 2019, Keane, 2007, 2016; Zheng, 2012). The government assigned literary works to the country's canon in two ways. The first way involved introducing new interpretations of old classics; depending on how their content fit the ideology of the CCP, the work was either criticized or canonized. The second way involved producing new literary works that fit the CCP's and Mao's ideological requirements. Through the publishing houses it controlled, the government published a series of collections and selected works from traditional and contemporary Chinese literature (Zhang & Hu, 2015; Zheng, 2012).

According to the existing research conducted by Zheng (2012), the *Chinese Literature* magazine did not accept original writings directly from the writers during this period; rather, it selected its original texts from those that had already been published in other literary magazines in the country. The reasoning behind this was that, if a literary work had already been published and made available for mass consumption, it must have passed certain levels of censorship during the publication process and therefore must have been considered fitting to the ideological requirements of the government (Ni, 2019). This reasoning made sense, since, during that time in China, the only way to legally publish anything was through government-owned publishing houses (Denton, 2016). It was very rare for the editors to ask a specific writer to write something to be translated in *Chinese Literature* during that time. Sometimes the editor himself would

draft an original piece for translation. It is most likely that, in many cases, the editors scrutinized the literary works already published in literary magazines to select material for translation. *Chinese Literature* translated original works published in various contemporary magazines at the time, including such publications as *People's Literature*, *People's Daily*, *Shanghai Literature*, *Art and Literature*, *Liberation Daily*, *Red Rock*, and *Red Flag* (Zheng, 2012). Because the editors of *Chinese Literature* used mostly works that had already been published in other magazines, they had time to observe and evaluate the Party's feedback of certain literary works, before they were selected for translation in *Chinese Literature*. If the published piece was not critiqued or labelled as anti-communist, and did not have a negative resonance within the society and the Party after some time had passed, the editors could then regard it as fitting the CCP's ideology, and consider translating and publishing it in the *Chinese Literature* magazine. This selection process protected the editors of *Chinese Literature* from making a political faux pas by selecting an original piece that might have been deemed unacceptable to the authorities. This selection process also guaranteed continued funding of the magazine by the CCP.

During the period before the Cultural Revolution, *Chinese Literature* received, without doubt, very strict directives from the Chinese government on how to select texts for translation. Literary works were categorized into contemporary (literature written after the founding of the PRC), modern (literature written after the May Fourth Movement), and classical works (Ni. 2019; Z. Wu, 2012; Zheng, 2012). Certainly, these categories were defined not only by the time period during which the works were written but, more importantly, also by their political and ideological underpinnings.

Contemporary works catered to the needs of the workers, peasants, and soldiers. The post May Fourth works selected for translation in *Chinese Literature* always carried leftist views and were based on socialist realism, which involved “perfect unity of socialist thinking and realistic depiction of literature” (T.Y. Li, 1959, p. 96). Classic works had to conform to the current requirements of form, content, and ideology to be selected.

According to research by Zheng (2012), during the first 17 years of the CPR, about 35% to 45% of the works published in *Chinese Literature* were new contemporary works from Communist China, 10% to 25% were post May Fourth works, 15% to 20% were classical works (and folklore), and the remaining 25% were essays and commentaries on Chinese art and artists.

The main themes translated during this time were the following:

- war and revolution;
 - land reform;
 - industrialization and agricultural collectivization;
 - the struggle against revisionism and rightist thought;
 - the construction of socialism in the country;
 - the heroism of the workers, peasants, and soldiers;
 - the noble spirit of the Chinese people during wartime as they resisted suppressors and during peace as they searched for happiness; and
 - the contributions of the Chinese people towards the unity of the country
- (Zheng, 2012; T. Y. Li, 1959).

According to Zheng’s (2012) research, about 65% of the translated works published in the so called “first seventeen years,” which covers the period from the founding of the

PRC in 1949 until 1966, which marks the start of the Cultural Revolution, depicted the lives of workers, peasants, and soldiers; 18% portrayed the Chinese people fighting against suppression during the anti-Japanese war; and the remaining works were short stories describing nature, various sceneries in the country, and visual art. Interestingly, during this period, the works translated for export introduced only superficial and generalized information about the anti-Japanese war the Chinese people fought, predominantly focussing on the socialist meaning of being an enthusiastic worker, peasant, or soldier. Meanwhile, the works avoided exploring the suffering, misery, and death that the anti-Japanese war (which the Chinese people survived) brought with it. Works that acknowledged the dismal side of civil and anti-Japanese war had surfaced in China; however, they did not pass the ideological censorship of the editors and were thus not translated for export. The same applied to some romance novels and works illustrating the realistic, ugly side of the Chinese society.

4.1.2 Chinese Literature Magazine: Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)

In 1966, following the talks on the development of the literary and art industries, the CCP issued a report, which denied that any progress had been made in the past 17 years. Chairman Mao accused a number of literary writers of working against the communist party's beliefs and against socialism. The same year, the CCP passed a document officially notifying the people of the PRC that the proletarian Cultural Revolution was to commence in the country, with the goal of exposing those with anti-communist, anti-socialist, and capitalist views. This anti-capitalist sweep reached far and wide, covering educational establishments, the publishing and media industries, and beyond.

One of the main ways in which the CCP started the Cultural Revolution was to label all classics and literary works from the 1930s as superstitious and to condemn all literary productions written since the founding of the PRC as revisionist and reactionary (Ni, 2012, 2019). This automatically put classics, works from the May Fourth Movement, and all the works produced in the past 17 years under scrutiny and off limits for the editors of *Chinese Literature*. When most domestic literary magazines ceased to publish, *Chinese Literature* lost its sources for original texts. Consequently, most of the works translated by *Chinese Literature* at this time were contemporary works, essays on art and literature written by Mao Zedong himself, or other re-worked essays promoting the Cultural Revolution. *Chinese Literature* had become the CCP's tool for exporting propaganda, promoting Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, socialist revolution, socialist construction, and the struggle of revolution (Zheng, 2012).

Chairman Mao and class struggle were two main themes translated in *Chinese Literature* during this 10-year period. Although the Cultural Revolution condemned any progress made in the literary industry during the first 17 years of the PRC, some of the materials produced during that time were allowed to circulate during the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution. These works included such themes as the construction and revolution of socialism; the revolutionary struggle; the heroism of revolutionaries; optimism; and the heroic image of the workers, peasants, and soldiers. All these works avoided painting a somber view of the struggle, pain, and dark side of the revolution. Whether characters were depicted positively or negatively in the storylines, the class struggle narrative had to be present in these works. Emphasis was placed on the working class; they were the heroes that needed to be praised. Another common trait of the works

circulated during this time was open praise for and admiration of Chairman Mao. In fact, many literary works produced during the Cultural Revolution had quotes taken directly from Chairman Mao's *Little Red Book*. One peculiar note deserves a special mention here; it was common during this time to have a team of literary writers work together to produce works fitting the Cultural Revolution ideology. These works, mainly using Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong Thought as the main narrative, were produced by "Propaganda team of Mao Zedong Thought," "Shanghai Cultural Revolution Critical Writing Group," "Students, workers, peasant and soldiers of Beijing University Chinese Language Faculty -class 1970," etc. (Zheng, 2012). The only explanation for this seems to be that due to extreme censorship, groups of literary workers could censor each other to avoid being purged.

Other main themes translated and published in *Chinese Literature* during this time were:

- Cultural Revolution;
- Resistance towards the United States in the Korean War;
- Revolutionary socialism;
- The life of workers, peasants, and soldiers; and
- Praise of CCP and especially Mao Zedong himself. (Ni, 2012; Z. Wu, 2012; Zheng, 2012)

The content of *Chinese Literature* during the Cultural Revolution had to conform to the strict ideological policy coming from the central government; the magazine had to translate original works that reflected the class struggle and revolutionary qualities.

According to Denton (2016), Ni (2019), Zheng (2012), the novels of this period can be

divided into four categories: a) The “model theatre,” promoted and mostly written by the Gang of Four⁹ (of which Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, was a member), which served as models for the creation of ultimate heroes of the Cultural Revolution and perfectly fit the ideology of the time; these were “Peking operas and ballets designed to embody the class-struggle values of the radical leftist position” (Denton, 2016, p.15); b) novels that did not fall under model theatre, but were politically charged and packed with the dominant ideology; c) apolitical novels that tried to distance themselves from politics and avoided ideological elements; and d) underground works openly criticizing the dominant ideology. The content of this last category does not portray optimism or heroism; on the contrary, these works reflect the dark side of the revolution, illustrating the hardships and pain the people were going through (Denton, 2016; Gu, 2019; McDougall, 2011).

Chinese Literature translated from the first three categories and predominantly chose works from the second and third categories. Since the fourth category consisted of underground works that circulated only in hand-written form, never having a chance to be published inside China (ex. *Misty Poetry*), it was never translated and published in *Chinese Literature* (Ni, 2019; Zheng, 2012).

The number of original literary works that fit the dominant ideology produced during this time dropped considerably. There was not enough material to fill the pages of *Chinese Literature* during the ten-year period of the Cultural Revolution, and thus the editors of the magazine had to increase the number of non-literary works and literary critiques they published. According to Zheng (2012), about 28% of works published during this time were novels, 35% of poems (mainly praising Mao and the Cultural

⁹ The Gang of Four was a political faction formed during the Cultural Revolution, consisting of four Communist Party members, the leading figure of which was Mao’s last wife, Jiang Qing.

Revolution), and 23% represented other works (including non-literary works, speeches, literary reviews, literary criticisms, etc.).

4.2 Ideology of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics During Deng Xiaoping (1979–1989)

After the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao in 1978, China welcomed a series of changes that brought the country back on track in its quest for modernity. Already discouraged by the suffering brought on by the CCP during the first three decades following the founding of the PRC, Chinese people had developed distrust in the CCP's ability to lead the country (W. Zhang, 1996). Deng Xiaoping knew that economic reforms were the first step needed to guide the country towards modernity and development. He took the opportunity to advance the economic reform of “opening up” and implemented the removal of class struggle, leading the country to unprecedented economic growth and wealth. China was no longer following the examples of other socialist countries and ventured into uncharted territories by adopting a capitalist economy and implementing de-centralized marketization (W. Chen, 1998; X. Li, 1999).

Against the backdrop of growing distrust and discontent among the people towards the Chinese government and in order to protect the party-state's interests, the second generation of Chinese leaders led by Deng “perceived a crisis-induced ideological change as inevitable if the Party was to regain the trust of the people” (W. Zhang, 1996, p. 21). Although it was clear that Marxist-Leninist Thought no longer fit Chinese realities, the new government could not completely negate the Marxist-Leninist ideology as the CCP had to remain in power to see through the economic reforms. W. Chen (1998) explained the ideological dilemma for the Chinese party-state:

... although Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought has indeed failed in practice in China's development from 1957 to 1978, as elsewhere in the Communist world, the superstructure created for that ideology remains... The legitimacy of the existence of the party-state in China necessitates ideology, while the ideology that remains after the death of Marxism-Leninism, liberalism in this case, is antithetical to the Chinese party-state. Despite the fact that ideas of liberalism have been adopted in China's economic reform, liberalism cannot fill the void left by Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought as it would undermine the legitimacy of the Chinese party-state." (p. 266)

Deng also knew that in order to regain people's trust, the Party had to provide tangible benefits and results. Without too much deviation from the dominant socialist ideology, he introduced "Socialism with Chinese characteristics," a new ideological concept to explain the introduction of the capitalist economy into a socialist country. During the Deng period, China's main goal was poverty eradication and the rejuvenation of the economy, which they strived for by strengthening four main sectors in a country-wide program known as Four Modernization: agriculture, industry, defence, science and technology (W. Chen, 1998; Denton, 2016; Huang, 2012). Later on, this ideology, which built upon and modified Maoist and Marxist ideology, became known as the Deng Xiaoping Theory and was written into the Chinese Constitution after Deng's death in 1997 (W. Chen, 1998).

When the Cultural Revolution ended, Mao died, and Deng Xiaoping came to power, Chinese literature entered a new era. When the strict party policies controlling cultural workers loosened up, humanism revived and became the thematic core of all

writings in China. A series of literary trends appeared one after another: Scar Literature and Literature of Reflection, Root-Searching Literature, Reform Literature, Avant-garde Literature, etc.

For examples, Scar Literature (or Literature of Trauma) is a genre of literary works that “portray [an] individual’s sufferings brought by the Cultural Revolution, as well as the search for ‘subject consciousness” (Gu, 2019, p. 440). Literature of Reflection, in contrast to Scar Literature, “places individuals’ material and emotional fulfillment over collective responsibilities and societal norms. Its emphasis on humanistic values is often coupled with the implicit or explicit criticism of decades of class struggle and collectivization” (Gu, 2019, p. 446). Root-Searching Literature and Reform Literature emerged in response to the more recent economic changes in the country brought on by the radical open-door policies and the government’s modernization initiatives. Reform Literature mainly focuses on the aftermath of the economic reforms of the 1980s. The fictional works within Reform Literature depict changes in both urban and rural China. Finally, Root-Searching, or Root-Seeking Literature, which explores the roots of one’s culture, draws its material from:

classical literature, ancient religion, philosophy, history, folklores, and ethnography. Natural landscape, local customs and traditions uncontaminated by modern civilization... The root-seekers also mined and critiqued what they called the sediments of national psyche and cultural heritage in contemporary society in a quest for breakthroughs in philosophy and aesthetics (Gu, 2019, p 455).

Then later on, in the late 1980s, the new emergent Avant-garde fiction in China (also labelled as experimental fiction or new wave fiction), although short lived, was identified

as “post-modern fiction that questions modernity’s basic discourse of self, progress, realism, and enlightenment in a language self-consciously denuded of Maoist tropes” (Denton, 2016, p. 16). These Avant-garde writers received their literary education from the translations of Western literature that flooded China after the opening of the country (A. Jones, 2016). Clearly, after almost 30 years of tight control and extreme censorship, the repressed Chinese creative industries felt the need to catch up with the rest of the world, and they actively searched for different ways to express themselves. Chinese writers eagerly assimilated Western literary thought, forms, and techniques. In *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Chinese Literature* edited by Gu (2019), this period is described as follows:

. . . not only were the old Western styles of critical realism, romanticism, symbolism, futurism, and expressionism reintroduced, but practically all Western schools of literary thought, creative methods, and artistic forms, such as surrealism, stream of consciousness, absurd drama, magical realism, Black Humor, Imagism, Modernism, New Realism, and postmodernism were assiduously learned and applied in the literary creations in this period. (p. 435)

4.2.1 Chinese Literature: *After the Cultural Revolution (1977–1989)*

In 1979, three years after the death of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, the vice-president of the CCP, issued a new policy on literary works. He suggested that the party did not require the creative industries to work for political purposes. Although Deng professed that literary creations were to be multifaceted, literary theory and criticism were not to be conformist, and the creative industries should be free from politics (Ni, 2019; Zheng, 2012). Nonetheless, new policies were still put forward that circumscribed

the new literary creations. Zheng (2012) elucidated in her research that literary creation were required to

- continue to serve the needs of the workers, peasants, and soldiers;
- eulogize the enthusiastic and optimistic qualities of the people in the construction of contemporary socialism;
- depict vividly and realistically the rich life of citizens of socialistic society;
- show the nature of the people in various social relations;
- illustrate the tendencies of historical development and advancement;
- educate people through socialistic thought;
- criticize anarchism, extreme individualism, bureaucracy, etc.; and
- provide a real contribution to the Four Modernizations.

During this period, literary workers were encouraged to write about every aspect of the Chinese society, both the bright and the dark side of the realities people lived in. People were encouraged to liberate their minds from the old ways of thinking. There were seemingly (almost) no taboos in terms of themes or forms in writing (aside from the policies described above); literary workers were free to create their own characters, as the government saw them reflecting both the positive and negative sides of human nature. Needless to say, these expectations and guidelines put forward for literary workers were misleading, confusing and vague.

As politics loosened its grip on literature, this period saw a diversification of literary themes in China. Official, monotonous, political works shifted to aesthetic works. The themes of workers' and peasants' revolutionary work were replaced with novels about the consequences of Cultural Revolution and hard rural life. This period witnessed

a great amount of work depicting the life and fate of young intellectuals and officials during the Cultural Revolution, especially their sufferings and pain, works criticizing the Cultural Revolution and calling for the analysis of its aftermath, or works calling for the modernization of the rural and urban areas. Writers began to slowly open up and tell stories about the damages caused by the Cultural Revolution. Since these works had received approval from the top leaders of the country, it is during this time that they were first selected for translation in *Chinese Literature*. According to Zhang & Hu (2015) and Zheng (2012), as there was no single unified policy regarding the ideology or theme of literary works during this time, *Chinese Literature* was allowed to re-instate the status of classic and modern literature, and there were no restrictions imposed on the content of the original texts to be selected for translation. However, paradoxically, the percentage of art and literary reviews it published increased, reaching 33% of total translations published in *Chinese Literature* between the years of 1977–1989 (Zheng, 2012). The biggest group of literary works translated remained contemporary works (55%), followed by classical literature, with modern literature and poems making up the smallest percentage of works published.

The themes translated in Chinese Literature during this time were largely:

- the suffering of young intellectuals, artists, and cadres during the Cultural Revolution and their spiritual state after surviving it;
- criticism of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four;
- the individual's material and emotional fulfilment; and
- the Four Modernization program in the country. (Gu, 2019; Zheng, 2012)

Although officially this was a no-taboo period with freedom of expression, the ideology of Marxist-oriented socialism still remained as the official ideology in the country, meaning that a certain degree of censorship was applied to *Chinese Literature's* selection of original works.

In the early 1980s, several political movements in the country were organized by the government to remind the creative industry to remain close to the dominant ideology and stay away from Western humanism and the concept of alienation. The liberation of thought, freedom of expression and the eagerness to learn from Western schools of literary thought by the creative industries during this period led to the production of works that were critical of the CCP (Lovell, 2012a). Deng's government sensed growing hostile sentiment towards the Party. Thus, in 1983, the Movement Against Spiritual Pollution took place, soon followed by the Movement Against the Liberation of the Bourgeoisie in 1987 (Denton, 2016; W. Zhang, 1996). All of these events aimed to criticize Western modernism; expressions of pessimism, solitude, and frustration; and self-expression that went against the ideology of socialist China. These movements further reminded the Chinese people of the repressive years of the Cultural Revolution, which eventually led to the tragic events at Tiananmen Square in 1989 (Denton, 2016, Gu, 2019). Gu (2019) aptly described those years as:

...[w]hile gradual liberation from political control helped to facilitate a semi-autonomous discursive space for intellectual discussion and artistic freedom, a rapid integration into the world order of commodification and into the international language of modernism defined this space. On the home front recurring memories of a repressed past, growing corruption within state-

bureaucracy, abortive reforms, widening gaps between the rich and the poor and recurring political campaigns began to destabilize the taken for granted support for reforms, and added to these was a widespread social disillusionment that eventually erupted in the Tiananmen demonstrations and blood bath.” (p. 479)

4.2.2 Panda Books Series: 1980–1989

The Cultural Revolution greatly damaged the reputation of *Chinese Literature* overseas. It was mainly seen as a propagandistic tool of the CCP, which greatly decreased the number of subscriptions. In response to this, the Panda Books series was launched. As another major government-sponsored translation project aimed at the export of Chinese literature with a similar goal to that of *Chinese Literature*, the Panda Books series’ mission was to tell the Chinese story to the world in order to bolster China’s soft influence (Geng, 2010, Jin et al., 2016).

The famous Chinese-English translator Yang Xianyi was the founder and the editor-in-chief of the Panda Books series. In 1978, two years after the end of the Cultural Revolution and six years after the charges against him for being a British spy were dropped by the CCP, Yang was appointed editor-in-chief of *Chinese Literature*. During the Cultural Revolution, Yang spent four years in prison and returned to his work at the Foreign Language Press in 1972 (Ni, 2019; Geng, 2010; B. Wang, n.d.). After China implemented “opening up” policies following Mao’s death, he approached Foreign Language Press to suggest launching a translation project that could translate contemporary Chinese works for export in order to showcase Chinese culture and boost Chinese image internationally.

The series' name was purposefully chosen for its symbolic meaning. As Geng (2010) explained, the name "Panda Books" mimics the famous American series Penguin Books (Lee, 1985); both series start with letter "P," and are named after an animal. With the animal that symbolizes China internationally, the title of the Chinese series also draws upon an apolitical Chinese national treasure—panda bears. Through these implicit symbols, the Chinese government hoped Panda Books could give China a fresh new image overseas.

The official launch of the Panda Books series took place in 1981. For the first few years, Panda Books re-issued translations previously completed but not published by *Chinese Literature* for ideological reasons (He, 2013; Geng, 2012). Because Panda Books' sales were comparatively successful, once that material ran out in the mid-1980s, the Chinese government decided to establish the Chinese Literature Publishing House to handle publishing of both *Chinese Literature* magazine and Panda Books series, to ensure that the translation and publishing needs for the Panda Books series could be met.

According to Geng's (2010) research, the approximately 20-year existence of Panda Books can be divided into three periods:

- **1981 to 1989:** This period saw a rapid rise in the popularity of the series and was the most fruitful in terms of the number of translations published.
- **1990 to 2000:** During this period, there was a rapid decline in and shift from an international-market orientation to domestic consumption.
- **2001 to the middle of 2000s:** There was a faint attempt revive the series amid the buzz of the "going-out" initiative in the country, but the series eventually ceased to be published.

As described in [Section 4.2](#), after the Cultural Revolution, the government loosened up policies that previously restricted the creative industries; in alignment with the policies of the new Deng government, the updated policies encouraged creativity in a variety of literary and artistic expressions to match the ongoing economic “opening up” reforms in the country (Keane, 2007, 2010, 2016; Ni, 2019; Zhang & Hu, 2015). Like *Chinese Literature* in the 1980s, the Panda Books series had relative freedom in selecting original texts for translation and publication (Lee, 1985). With this perceived freedom, the editor-in-chief, Yan Xianyi, who was passionate about introducing Chinese literary works overseas, ensured that the selection represented Chinese literary achievements distanced from politics (Geng, 2010, 2014). However, although there was some freedom of expression in the creative industry, the mandate to follow the party line and socialist ideology persisted. As Geng (2010) pointed out, Yan often had to negotiate when it came to controversial pieces he wanted to translate for Panda Books and, from time to time, he had to compromise. Overall, the literary content of Panda Books was distanced from politics, but even this distancing can be interpreted as a way of aligning with the country’s main ideology. The Chinese government wanted to cast a new image of post-Mao China. As reflected in the Four Modernization campaign promoted by Deng, China wanted to present itself as a new, post-revolutionary, and modern country. Distancing literary expression from politics was one way the country could pursue this goal.

During some 20 years, the Panda Books series published around 200 titles in various languages, including English, German, French and Japanese, with about 145 of these titles being fiction. Geng (2010) estimated that out of 145 fiction titles, more than 129 translations published were contemporary works, with only 16 titles being classics.

Geng (2010) noted two main characteristics in the Panda Books series. First, the series featured a great number of female writers over the years, perhaps due to the increasing attention to Chinese women's writing both in China and overseas, starting in the 1980s (M. Jiang, 2020). The second characteristic was that most contemporary fiction translated and published in the series reflected Chinese modern history and realism, so that the readers could have an inside look into the development of Chinese modern history and Chinese society, all while enjoying the aesthetics of Chinese contemporary literature. Geng (2010), B. Wang (n.d.) acknowledged that while the series tried to translate the latest literary trends in China at the time, it could not avoid ideological constraints imposed by its patron, Foreign Language Press, which was directly funded by the Chinese government. As Panda Books did not have complete freedom in terms of what it selected and translated, consequently, some new, more popular but controversial works did not make it into its list of translations. For example, neither Scar Literature nor Literature of Reflection, nor the more politically controversial Misty Poems, were selected for the series. This absence may be due to the editor-in-chief's own literary taste, but it could also be explained by the desire of the government to steer away from certain reflections of the Cultural Revolution (Geng, 2010).

4.3 The Deng Xiaoping Theory During Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao (1990–2012)

Two decades into Deng's reforms, signs of social degradation and ideological erosion started to surface. The critics often listed: "the money worship" mentality, structural corruption at high levels of the party, low moral values, extreme individualism, and cultural nihilism among some rampant issues of this time (W. Chen, 1998; W. Zhang, 1996; Zheng, 2012). Alarming social issues demanded attention from government

leaders, especially in the years following the crackdown on demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 (W. Chen, 1998; Fewsmith, 2001; W. Zhang, 1996; D. Zhao, 2001). It was another critical time for an ideology adjustment to lift the Chinese people's spirits. Although the Deng Xiaoping Theory was put in place to legitimize the party-state and allow the country to continue its economic growth, it alone was not convincing enough to bind Chinese society. The rapid growth and wealth accumulation of non-state and civil society became the main challenge for the CCP as the Chinese people started to lose faith in the country's dominant ideology and the socialist path (Brown, 2012; Z. Wang, 2014; Huang, 2012; D. Zhao, 2001). The next two generations of Chinese leaders had to further modify and add to Deng's socialism with Chinese characteristics to stay relevant and in power.

Jiang developed his own theory to justify Chinese realities in the 1990s and formulated the theory of Three Represents. In his speech at the Party's 16th Congress, Jiang (2002) summarized what the CCP was to represent:

- the development trends of advanced productive forces;
- the orientation of an advanced culture; and
- the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of China (Brown, 2012, p. 56).

The theory of Three Represents was later written into the CCP's constitution as a guiding ideology for the party. It was noted that this theory led the CCP towards becoming a more democratic and inclusive party. Part of this change involved "the private sector [being] recognized in the Party Constitution and entrepreneurs [being] finally allowed to join the CPC [CCP]" (Brown, 2012, p. 56).

In 2002, when Hu Jintao took office as the president of the PRC, the main issues presented to his administration remained the extreme polarity between the rich and poor, social imbalance, environmental issues, and injustice, among others. “Inequality has been one of the greatest challenges of the Hu Jintao era, and one of the core targets of ideological campaigns” (Brown, 2012, p. 57). In his official speeches, Hu stressed that his administration aimed at building a party that serves the people and puts the people’s interests front and centre. Recognizing the successes of the CCP since the founding of the PRC and addressing the issues that those successes brought, he pledged that the CCP would continue to lead the country towards modernity. Therefore, the Hu administration continued in line with the previous generations of CCP leadership; their main task was “to offer refinements and improvements, to build . . . on the work of Mao, Deng and Jiang” (Brown, 2012, p. 60). Building upon the ideological foundations of his predecessors, Hu introduced the new ideological concepts of “scientific development” and “harmonious society” to address the contradictions and imbalances in Chinese society as well as environmental and sustainability issues (Callahan, 2012; Z. Wang, 2014). These concepts were used to promote social stability in both urban and rural areas, as well as economic sustainability, while building a political system with socialist values and socialist culture. In Brown’s (2012) view, the CCP justified its central governing position in the country and its new ideology in the following:

In essence, the Party embodies progress, giving a framework in which the forces of productivity can be unleashed, continuing the historic project started in 1949 of building a “new, strong country”. There is space in this to discuss developing democracy, but one within the framework supplied by the Party, which represents

the interest of all people, and which remains the sole guardian of modernity in the PRC.” (p. 59)

Scientific development and harmonious society narrative built upon the ideology of socialism with Chinese characteristics allowed Hu’s government to address the pressing issues brought to light by most of the groups of Chinese society, at least for the time being.

During this time period, China also implemented its “going-out” policy to complement the “opening up” reforms. The market economy in the country was booming. Many government-sponsored enterprises that did not bring in profit were semi-privatized or shut down. The government also implemented fundamental changes to the cultural sector, slashing the financial funding of various literary magazines and publishing houses and decreasing the number of professional writers in various writers’ associations. China entered a postmodern era filled with “epithets such as ‘New Realism’, ‘New History’, ‘New Conditions’, ‘New Generation of Writers’, ‘individualized writing’, ‘literature of desires’, ‘female writings’, etc. ...to categorize literature” (Gu, 2019, p. 515). With the marketization of the economy, Chinese writers wanted even more expression of thought that reflected the consumerist environment, and a greater multiplicity of themes and forms emerged in Chinese literary circles to depict people’s daily experiences and emotions characterized by “deep distrust in grand narratives, subversion of existing cultural order and values, indulgence in carnal desires and sensual escapism, and the eradication of the demarcation line between elite and popular literature, high and low tastes” (Gu, 2019, p. 515).

Commercialization of literature at the turn of the century forced literary writers to play by the rules of the marketplace. Contemporary urban fiction was another genre that emerged in response to the rapid pace of urbanization in the country. Labelled as “new urbanite fiction,” “new-state-of-affairs fiction” or “belated generation” literature, in these works, the urban writers use their everyday experiences as material to depict their struggles, individual ethics and purpose of life (Visser & Lu, 2016). More and more young writers use the tools of the 21st century to appeal to their readers. “Beauty writers” (mostly young female writers, who use topics like the female body and female sexuality to call attention to their works) and “youth writers” (usually referring to writers born after the 1980s or 1990s) using urban narratives start to appear on the horizon, competing for readers’ attention. These younger writers often use social media, such as blogs, video promotions, etc. to manage their image and enhance their fame. Visser & Lu (2016) recount that

Youth writers emerge at a moment when the marketization of education forces them to define and express a unique experience under the weight of an education system that aims to reduce them to nothing more than a career path. In such a system, youth need an outlet to speak; lonely and alienated, they hunger for literature that gives expression to a new existential state” (p. 392).

4.3.1 Chinese Literature: 1990–2000

The main institution responsible for funding *Chinese Literature* was the Foreign Language Press, the biggest publisher of foreign-language books in the country. Since it was government-owned, it had also been affected by the new policies governing the

cultural sector. The funding for *Chinese Literature* was decreased and eventually, due to the project's unprofitability, the magazine ceased publication in 2000.

Before it ceased to publish, the magazine received no clear direction regarding what content was to be exported during this period; the selection process mainly followed market rules. *Chinese Literature* was not prepared for such changes; the selection of works during this time was irregular and random. In her doctoral research, Zheng (2012) pointed out that, before 1992, original texts were selected according to the policies that focussed on contemporary works. After 1992, the publication of contemporary works started to decline as the publication of classic works rose. In 1997, an equal number of contemporary and classic works were published in *Chinese Literature*, but this soon changed. After 1997, there was a sudden decline in the number of contemporary and classic works being published, as the magazine made room for more essays on literary theory. This change was perhaps fuelled by the growing number of overseas readers interested in Chinese literature from a scholarly point of view.

Novels remained a focus for *Chinese Literature*, but the themes of the translated works continued to distance themselves from politics due to growing marketization in the country. *Chinese Literature* translated and published works on a variety of themes, including rural life, neo-realism, and kung-fu, among others (Zheng, 2012).

Some of the published translations still followed the selection policies and strategies used during the 1980s. First of all, *Chinese Literature* had selected a number of works written in the 1980s for translation. Due to ideological or other restrictions, they had not been published when they were written. With the new market-led policies, *Chinese Literature* enjoyed a certain freedom in selecting these original works. The

magazine was also able to publish translations of the most influential works and authors during the 1990s. These included stories of young intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution, as well as new realistic novels critical of socialistic and capitalistic society. Meanwhile, authors with a minority background began to be translated and published in *Chinese Literature*, and Chinese women writers also received some attention. However, some works that clearly criticized the dominant ideology did not make the list during this period. Experimental literature is an example. Many classics that had not previously been published due to ideological restrictions were now published in *Chinese Literature* for the first time.

4.3.2 Panda Books: 1990–2000

After a decade of popularity in the 1980s, Panda Books experienced a decade of decline. This decline could be explained by the major two-month political storm in 1989. The political upheaval started with the student demonstrations on April 15, 1989 (Zheng, 2012; D. Zhao, 2001). Unhappy with the slow pace of the political reforms against the growing number of economic and societal issues the economic reforms brought with them, the demonstrators were convinced that faster implementation of political reform could solve all the problems China was facing at the time. Amongst other demands, the students called for economic liberalization, democracy, freedom of press, and an end to corruption (Jenner, 1981; W. Zhang, 1996; D. Zhao, 2001). Although the government requested the students to end the demonstrations multiple times, they remained in the streets. Meanwhile, the number of students joining the demonstrations grew, not only in Beijing but also in other major Chinese cities, where serious riots broke out. The students walked out of classes to join the riots, and the whole country was shaken in this political

unrest. Following a failed dialogue between the student and government leaders, the demonstrations continued with both sides firmly holding their ground. This course of events solidified the government's decision to declare martial law (D. Zhao, 2001). The aftermath of this political turmoil was chaotic and violent; thousands of students and soldiers were wounded and killed (T. Jones, 2014, Lim, 2016).

After the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, the Chinese government was condemned by the international community (W. Zhang, 1996). Western countries froze all dealings with China, and an embargo was imposed on Chinese products, including Chinese cultural products (Geng, 2010; Zheng, 2012). Consequently, the Panda Books series saw a sharp drop in sales overseas and was forced to look for other markets (Ni, 2019).

Another likely major factor contributing to the series' decline was an investigation by the CCP's dismissal of the series' editor-in-chief, Yang Xianyi, for his open support of the students during the 1989 demonstrations (Geng, 2010).

After Yang Xianyi's removal as the Panda Books series' editor-in-chief, the works translated and published for the Panda Books series during this post-1989 period carried apolitical themes. They included writings by Chinese women, traditional poems, and folklore. Realist works were still Panda Books' first choice for translation during this time, but they did not carry political undertones. The works selected for translation no longer revolved around historical changes in Chinese society or socialist revolution. Instead, they mainly focussed on folk culture with local flavour and avoided ideological or political issues.

According to Geng's (2010), He (2013) after the 2000s, Panda Books' sales steadily declined, especially after the reforms implemented in the public cultural sector.

Panda Books was in a constant state of financial loss. Hoping to improve the financial state of the series, the new management partnered with Beijing Foreign Language and Teaching Publishing and published a series of translations in a side-by-side format, targeting Chinese students learning foreign languages (Geng, 2010; He, 2013). It seems the Panda Books series, starting in the 2000s, could no longer serve Chinese cultural diplomacy goals to promote Chinese literature to the world. Moreover, there were no new translations produced during this time, and indeed, many of the books published were re-prints of previous translations, which could also be due to the adverse times the series faced. There were a few more attempts to revive the series by publishing re-prints of previous translations in 2005, 2006 and 2007, and on top of this, in 2009, Panda Books showcased 40 re-prints of previously popular translations, all without much resonance in the target readership (Geng, 2010; He, 2013; Jin et al., 2016; Zhang & Shi, 2018).

4.4 Conclusion

From the available existing research conducted on the two major long-term, large-scale translation projects exported overseas under the patronage of the Chinese government, *Chinese Literature* magazine and Panda Books series, it is clear that there exists a link between the country's dominant ideology and the content being translated and exported in literary works for soft power construction purposes.

Chinese Literature magazine, as one of the oldest foreign language literary magazines published in China for export, followed the government ideological directives in terms of selection, publication and distribution (He, 2013; Ni, 2012, 2016; Z. Wu, 2012; Zhang & Hu, 2015; Zheng, 2012). Perhaps this could also explain why it stayed in publication for almost 50 years. Throughout these 50 years of uninterrupted publication, the *Chinese Literature* editors

ensured the material selected for translation reflected the dominant ideology of that generation's leaders, so they could continue to receive the government funding. After China opened up to the world and transitioned to the market economy, many public sector organizations changed their structure to be run as private businesses based on profitability. Any government-owned organization or business that did not bring profit was either semi-privatized or shut down. Due to its unprofitability, *Chinese Literature* ceased its publications in 2001.

The Panda Books series, which was launched as a translation project for the dissemination and introduction of Chinese literary traditions, seemingly could not steer clear of the political and ideological influences of its patron—the Chinese government. Its editor-in-chief Yang Xianyi tried to push through some important controversial works for translation over the years, but compromises had to be made (Geng, 2012; B. Wang, n.d.). The mainstream ideology and patronage clearly still played a major decisive role in the process of selecting works for translation.

Both *Chinese Literature* and Panda Books translation projects were forced to end their publications due to lack of demand and both had a limited impact on their readership; they seemingly have not been able to help Chinese literature to “go out”. As the literature review in the previous sections shows, this is when the Chinese government decided to step up its cultural diplomacy efforts and launched numerous translation projects. Many of them have been run under joint patronage to improve the translation quality and channels of distribution. In the following sections, I will analyze in detail one of the later translation projects, organized and launched as a China's on-going effort to introduce Chinese literature overseas to gain more cultural influence internationally. I will investigate the different themes translated and published in the literary magazine *Pathlight*, launched in 2011, and explore if these themes fit the Chinese

current dominant ideology. Similar to the structure in this section, I will begin Section 5 with the exploration of Chinese dominant ideology and then proceed to in-depth narrative analysis of the themes of *Pathlight* magazine and whether (how) they fit Chinese dominant ideology today.

5 Ideology in China Today and *Pathlight*

5.1 Xi Jinping's Ideological Concept of "the Chinese Dream"

When the fifth generation of Chinese leadership came to power in 2012, with Xi Jinping as the president and general secretary of the CCP, they were faced with similar challenges as the previous generation of leaders: the widening gap between rich and poor, the extreme contradiction between urban and rural life, social inequality and injustice caused by rapid economic growth—all while the CCP members and bureaucrats abused power for their personal gain, the rich became richer and the poor became poorer (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Lams, 2018; Zheng & Gore, 2015). These continuous societal issues, unresolved by previous generations of leaders, further caused extreme dissatisfaction among the Chinese people towards the CCP. It had become increasingly difficult for the Chinese leaders to define the ideological message to be communicated to the Chinese people (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Callahan, 2015a; Mohanty, 2013). To stay relevant, like every previous generation of leaders, Xi had to adapt the party's ideological message to maintain political and social stability in the country. Shortly after Xi Jinping officially took office in 2012, he introduced his new ideological concept of “中国梦” (pronounced as “zhongguo meng”, translated into English literally as “the China dream”). Xi's new ideological concept is regarded as a composite ideology to address these mounting political, social and economic issues in the country (Callahan, 2016). Although the term of “zhongguo meng” was not new and had previously been

used in the writings of other politicians and scholars both in China and overseas,¹⁰ it was only after Xi's introduction of the term that "zhongguo meng" gained popularity and attention both in China and internationally. Since then, the term and concept of "zhongguo meng" have transformed into the "signature ideology for Xi's term" (Z. Wang, 2014, p. 1) in office, a political slogan and the country's official mainstream ideology.

There are many debates in scholarly circles in China over the correct translation of the term into English and over the proper understanding and interpretation of its meaning. For this thesis, I will use "the Chinese dream" to refer to this ideological concept, and my reasons will be explained in following sections. However, while we look at various writings on "the Chinese dream" before it became an official ideology, I will use both translations of the term ("the China dream" and "the Chinese dream"), according to how each scholar and author used this term in their writings. From here on, my reference to the Chinese dream in this thesis will not have quotation marks, while any reference to the Chinese dream by other authors will be mentioned in quotation marks.

5.1.1 The Chinese Dream Before Xi

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the term the Chinese dream is not new. It was used in the writings of both Chinese and foreign scholars, political experts and civil intellectuals long before it became a buzzword in the Chinese political discourse.

In 2006, Li Junru (2006), who at the time was vice-president of the Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC, published his book *The China Dream: China in*

¹⁰ The term "the China Dream" was proposed and discussed in China's Senior Colonel Liu Mingfu's (2010) book *The China Dream: The Great Power Thinking and Strategic Positioning of China in the Post-American Age*.

Peaceful Development, where he deliberated on how China was in an important historic period of realizing its dream of peaceful development, industrialization and modernization. Li Junru's version of the Chinese dream is focussed on China's peaceful economic growth and rise, whereby the nation is realizing its own dream together with the rest of the world (Mohanty, 2013).

Years later, China's Senior Colonel Liu Mingfu (2015), in his book *The China Dream: The Great Power Thinking and Strategic Positioning of China in the Post-American Age*, first published in 2010, described a different version of the Chinese dream, where China will compete with the US in military, economic and comprehensive power. This version of the Chinese dream, echoing Mao's Great Leap Forward ambitions and narrative, focussed on China's military race with the US and is centred on the China-led world order (Callahan, 2015a).

In the same year, Helen Wang (2010), a Chinese immigrant living in the US who is now an award-winning author, international keynote speaker and expert on China, published *The Chinese Dream: The Rise of the World's Largest Middle Class and What it Means for You*. In her book, Wang gave an account of rapid economic growth and societal changes in China in the two-decade period after the economic reforms. Through interviews with executives, party members and ordinary Chinese people, she provided deeper understanding of Chinese peoples' daily lives, their hopes and dreams. Her version of the Chinese dream had a lot in common with the individual dreams of the ordinary American people to attain a better, happier life (Mohanty, 2013; Zhang & Ge, 2015).

Thomas Friedman (2012), sharing his version of “the Chinese dream” in his article titled “China Needs Its Own Dream” published by the New York Times, spoke about his concerns over the economic and environmental sustainability of China. Friedman says that “the Chinese dream” needs to realize “people’s expectations of prosperity with a more sustainable China” (Friedman, 2012, par. 9).

In the same year, Gerard Lemos, a senior scholar in social policy who chaired the board of the British Council between 2008 and 2010, published his interpretation of “the Chinese dream.” In his book *The End of the Chinese Dream: Why Chinese People Fear the Future*, he provided a critical account of the Chinese future, detailing ordinary people’s fears in terms of social and health problems (Mohanty, 2013). During a four-year period from 2006 to 2010, while working at Chongqing Technology and Business University in China as a visiting professor, Lemos conducted an independent survey to explore ordinary Chinese people’s dreams and fears, and chronicled his findings in this book. This book recounted controversial topics of the Chinese dream as well as challenging issues within Chinese society, and through the surveys, the author identified what real Chinese people’s dreams might look like.

It becomes clear through a review of above writings on the Chinese dream that before the official endorsement of the term by Xi, both “the China Dream” and “the Chinese dream” were used in English.

5.1.2 How to Translate “*中国梦*” Into English

A literature review of the recent articles on the Chinese dream, both inside and outside of China, shows that the majority of the authors tend to use “the Chinese dream” when writing on the subject in English. There has been some debate on the translation of

the term itself into the English language, and it seems finding a unified translation has become problematic (R. Liu, 2014). Callahan, in his article “Identity and Security in China: The Negative Soft Power of the China Dream” (2015b) has pointed out that until 2013, before the term became part of official political discourse, this term was translated as both “the China Dream” and “the Chinese Dream.” However, after an article on the subject was published in 2013 in the *Chinese Translators Journal*, the most-influential, peer-reviewed journal on translation in the country, the frequency of the use of “the Chinese dream” to translate this term has increased. The article, titled “The Analysis of the translation of ‘The Chinese Dream’ into English” (my translation), written by a professor of the Research Center for Foreign Languages at Sichuan University, Yang Quanhong (2013), gave three reasons why the term should be translated as “the Chinese dream.” Firstly, from the English linguistic point of view, “the Chinese dream” matches the structure of “the American dream”; secondly, “the China dream” could lead Western countries to misunderstand the Chinese dream for “the dream of a strong military” or “the dream of a hegemonic country,” thus creating more China threat theories; thirdly, since Xi’s concept of the Chinese dream is not limited to the dream of the Chinese nation alone, but also encompasses the dreams of individual Chinese citizens, “the Chinese dream” would be the most appropriate translation for this term (T. X. Li, 2017; Yang, 2013; Zhang & Ge, 2015). After this article was published in 2013, some Chinese scholars criticized Yang’s view, calling for the use of “the China dream” as the most appropriate translation of the term into English, as they believed the concept of the Chinese dream, as it was proposed by President Xi, to be first and foremost a dream of the Chinese nation for a stronger country, and only secondarily the dreams of individual

citizens. They claimed that the dreams of individual Chinese citizens could be fulfilled only once the dream of the Chinese nation is realized; thus, putting the individual dreams first and translating the term as “the Chinese dream” would not be appropriate (T. X. Li, 2017; R. Liu, 2014). Furthermore, they argued that using “the Chinese dream” may be misleading, as it makes readers associate and equate the Chinese dream with “the American dream,” which would be fundamentally wrong from political, societal and cultural standpoints (T. X. Li, 2015, 2017).

For the purpose of this thesis, I chose to use “the Chinese dream” to reference this ideological concept for two reasons. First, because the majority of the literature written in English on this subject uses “the Chinese dream” when referring to the concept of “zongguo meng.” Secondly, since I want to explore the individual dreams of the Chinese people through literary translations in *Pathlight*, rather than through translations of the political discourse, “the Chinese dream” would be the most appropriate term to use going forward in this thesis.

5.1.3 The Chinese Dream vs. the American Dream

Scholars from China and overseas, in efforts to decode the meaning of the Chinese dream, have often compared it to the American dream, some even see a resemblance between Xi’s Chinese dream of rejuvenating the Chinese nation and Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again”—both slogans have been explained as the governments’ reactions to a crisis in the country (Callahan, 2017). Callahan argues that both dreams (the Chinese and the American dream) are reflections of the realities of society, and concludes that both dreams are: “1) familiar expressions of nationalism and national belonging, and 2) ongoing self/Other coherence-producing performances that

help us to question received notions of nationalism and national belonging” (Callahan, 2017, p. 248). David S. Pena (2015), an independent researcher on Marxist-Leninist philosophy from Palm Beach State College articulated eight basic differences between the Chinese dream and the American dream in his article “Comparing the Chinese Dream with the American Dream” and claimed that “the Chinese Dream is a socialist dream” (Pena, 2015, p. 282). Pena argued that in contrast to the American dream, which arose from the desolation of the Great Depression, the Chinese dream arises at a time of progress and prosperity in China and includes such themes as national rejuvenation, common prosperity, (Chinese) democracy, and people’s happiness (Pena, 2015).

Chinese scholars have also written extensively on the topic of the Chinese dream in comparison to the American dream. The major difference, according to the Chinese scholars, is the difference in the core value of the two dreams (Y. Zhou, 2014). The focus of the American dream is the fulfilment of the individual dreams of each American citizen, while the Chinese dream is focussed on the fulfilment of the Chinese nation’s collective dream as a country (Zhao & Li, 2014). The cultural, historical, societal and political backgrounds in the two countries are also listed as main differences between the two dreams (Meng & Ding, 2017; Zhao & Li, 2014). From the cultural and historical point of view, the difference between the two dreams lies in the understanding that the American dream is based on the immigrant culture, where every immigrant can achieve maximum materialistic wealth and success through hard work, equal opportunities and economic mobility, while the Chinese dream is built on thousands of years of Chinese cultural tradition shared by all Chinese citizens (Meng & Wang, 2016; Meng & Ding, 2017). This leads to different goals for the two dreams—the individual success vs. the

success of the whole nation (Y. Zhou, 2014). The difference in the political systems, social structure and ideological beliefs in the two countries are also highlighted by Chinese scholars. The Chinese dream emphasizes Socialism with Chinese characteristics as the main ideological guide in achieving the common goal of revitalizing the Chinese nation, and calls for a balance among collective and individual aspirations (Meng & Wang, 2016; Meng & Ding, 2017; Pena, 2015; Zhao & Li, 2014), whereas the American dream is rooted in capitalist ideology, dominated by individualism, competition, private interests and ambitions (Meng & Wang, 2016; Pena, 2015; Wu & Zhang, 2015).

According to Chinese scholars, although there are many differences between the Chinese dream and the American dream, the Chinese dream does not negate the American dream, nor will it replace the American dream. The Chinese dream is proposed as a Chinese model, open for any country to emulate or follow (Wu & Zhang, 2015). Moreover, there are commonalities between the two dreams. Both dreams respect the individual dreams of their citizens, and wish to see their nation's citizens lead a happy, healthy life through hard work and equal opportunities. The fulfillment of both dreams requires a stable domestic and international environment as well as strong national cohesion (Meng & Wang, 2016; Y. Zhou, 2014).

5.1.4 How to Understand the Meaning of the Chinese Dream

After Xi took office, he continued the rhetoric of the previous CCP leader, emphasizing that the CCP is a pragmatic party that will do what is best for its people; the CCP learns from its mistakes, and as the new leader of the country, he was determined to continue leading the PRC following the party line. With this in mind, the “Chinese dream” has taken the place of the old slogans as a new symbolic phase in China's

ideological road to development and modernity. In Xi's speech at the First Session of the 12th National People's Congress in 2013, he further expounded on the Chinese dream as the path to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation; it embodies the goal of national prosperity and of the happiness of individual citizens (Background: Connotations of Chinese Dream, 2014). In more concrete terms, Xi put two deadlines for the realization of the Chinese dream. By 2021, Xi stated that China will become a "moderately well-off society" – a term best known as the narrative used by Hu Jintao, Xi's predecessor, to describe functional middle class society, where all citizens, rural or urban, enjoy high standards of living; and by 2049, China will become a fully developed nation (Callahan, 2016). These two dates are also known as "two centenary goals", as 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the CCP and 2049 marks the 100th anniversary of the PRC.

This concept of the Chinese dream has been extensively studied both by Chinese and foreign political science experts and has been widely interpreted as having both domestic and international dimensions. As reported by *China Daily Online* (2014), domestically, Chinese dream means "to let people enjoy better education, more stable employment, higher incomes, a greater degree of social security, better medical and health care, improved housing conditions and a better environment" (Background: Connotations of Chinese Dream, 2014). Many scholars have argued that these are strategic narratives injected into Chinese society under the slogan of the Chinese dream to legitimize the CCP and to bind the Chinese nation to work towards a common goal, i.e. to achieve the Chinese dream (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Hartig, 2015; Lams, 2018; Z. Wang, 2014). Some scholars (Boc, 2015; Kerr, 2015; X. Zhang, 2015) have seen the Chinese dream as having historical, developmental and political significance to

the people of China. By using the common historical experience of the Chinese people, Xi appeals to citizens' emotions and aspirations to work toward achieving the Chinese dream. Kerr (2015) quoted Xi's speech during his 2012 visit to the Road to Revival exhibition in Beijing, which is a case in point:

... Before modern times the Chinese nation faced heavy suffering and paid many sacrifices, rarely seen in all the world's history. But the Chinese people never yielded, at long last mastered their own destiny, and began to build their country's great progress, amply displaying that patriotism was the core of the great national spirit . . . After reform and opening we refined historical experiences and continued difficult exploration, and at long last found the correct path to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation . . . This path is that of socialism with Chinese characteristics . . . After 170 years of continuous struggle since the Opium Wars, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation displays bright prospects . . . the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of the Chinese people in modern times (Xi, 2012 as cited in Kerr, pp. 1–2)

To understand what is meant by the term *rejuvenation* in Xi's speech and in the Chinese context, one must look deep into Chinese history and national experience. China (“zhongguo”) translated word-for-word from Chinese means “Middle Kingdom,” or “Central Country”, and during imperial times, it was believed to be literally situated at the centre of the world, both geographically and politically (Callahan, 2012, 2016). Therefore, the rejuvenation narrative is seen as an appropriate natural course for the

development of China to return to its rightful place. In Xi's 2012 speech, the reference to heavy suffering and sacrifices was to invoke the shared historical background of the Chinese nation. The speech was filled with "humiliation discourse" that describes the difficult times in China from the First Opium War (1839–1842) to the end of the Sino-Japanese War (1945), which has been labelled the "century of national humiliation" (Boc, 2015; Callahan, 2015a, 2016; Z. Wang, 2014). As it is taught in history classes in China, this time period was the time when the nation "was attacked, bullied, and torn asunder by imperialists" (Z. Wang, 2014). According to the CCP's ideological discourse, developed and moulded since the founding of the PRC, only by following the Marxist-Leninist ideology was China able to achieve the economic and political position it enjoys today. Furthermore, the CCP claims that this process of development, modernization and rejuvenation is not yet complete, and it is only through uniting the whole Chinese nation that China will be able to attain its ultimate goal—the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Boc, 2015; Brown, 2012; Kerr, 2015). In producing this discourse, Xi seeks to construct a collective identity based on a common past and a collective future. At the same time, he has left the idea of the people's happiness to the imagination of the individual Chinese citizen. Xi emphasizes that the Chinese dream is not only a collective dream for the whole nation but also the dream of every individual, leaving the idea of the Chinese dream vague and open to many interpretations (M. Feng, 2015; d'Hooghe, 2015).

On the other hand, the Chinese dream concept used in terms of foreign policy has been adapted to address international audiences. The various cultural and historical backgrounds make the humiliation discourse and rejuvenation narrative used to promote the Chinese dream domestically hard to understand and irrelevant to the international

audience (Z. Wang, 2014). For this reason, from a foreign policy perspective, Xi's Chinese dream is about changing the global landscape by promoting peaceful development and win-win cooperation between countries, with China playing a greater global role. The Chinese dream in the international context thus becomes a shared World dream, where its realization can benefit not only the Chinese people, but all people around the world (Background: Connotations of Chinese Dream, 2014). On multiple occasions, party leaders have expressed the idea that China is still in the period of strategic opportunities, with its main focus on resolving domestic societal issues and deepening economic reforms, and from a foreign policy standpoint, it is pursuing a path of peaceful and harmonious development together with the rest of the world (Hinck et al., 2018; Kerr, 2015; X. Zhang, 2015). In this context, the Chinese dream is presented as a model of the World dream for other developing countries to imitate, especially by working with China in regional economic and cultural activities, like in the Belt and Road Initiative (Boc, 2015; Hinck et al., 2018; X. Zhang, 2015).

Much research has been done in the field of International Relations to further understand the Chinese dream concept through the analysis of language and strategic narratives used in official discourse and media discourse (Boc, 2015; Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Hartig, 2015; Hinck et al., 2018). Many scholars agree that Xi's administration is using the Chinese dream as an ideological slogan to build Chinese national identity through a common experience of the past, present and future, but the core ideology has not changed. M. Feng (2015) analyzed socialism, scientific development, traditional Chinese culture, equality, freedom, and democracy, among other core values of the Chinese dream concept, and explained that China "has already fallen

away from traditional socialism, with the abolition of the planning economy” (p. 173). He asserted that China is determined more than ever to follow the “way of socialism with Chinese characteristics” (M. Feng, 2015). Gow (2017), in his article “The Core Socialist Values of the Chinese Dream: Towards a Chinese Integral State” argued that Xi’s ideology “emphasizes the primacy of cultural power over economic development” (p. 109) and analyzed different propaganda materials as part of a larger narrative of the Chinese dream. Gow (2017) defined 12 core socialist values and provided interpretations of each core value based on three different categories: 1) national values, comprised of prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony; 2) societal values, comprised of freedom, equality, justice and the rule of law; and 3) citizens’ concerns, comprised of patriotism, dedication, integrity and geniality. These same 12 key terms, identified as “strength, democracy, cultured/civilized, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, patriotism, dedication, trust and friendly” by Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) in their article “Ideology in the Era of Xi Jinping.”, were described as significant and representative of Xi’s ideology today. The authors believe that these keywords, repeatedly promoted by Xi’s government, are the main tool used to unify and guide the whole nation towards the “modernization with Chinese characteristics”¹¹ (Brown & Berzina-Cerenkova, 2018, p. 338).

In a 2013 article written for People’s Daily Online by the vice minister of the Publicity Department of the CCP Central Committee and Director of International Communications for the CCP Central Committee Cai Mingzhao explained that “socialism with Chinese characteristics is imbedded in the... Chinese culture, ... it meets

¹¹ These 12 core values will be used as a basis for the analysis in [Section 6](#). A detailed definition of each of them will be provided in that section.

the development requirements of China and the new era” (M. Cai, 2013, p. 22). He further called the Chinese propaganda departments to make clear to the world “that the uniqueness of China’s cultural tradition, its unique historic mission, and its national condition determine that China must walk the development path that fits its own characteristics” (M. Cai, 2013, pp. 22-23) and “present good information about China ... use facts to show the reasonableness and legitimacy of China’s political system, its economic policy, and people’s everyday living” (M. Cai, 2013, p. 23). Cai (2013) also put forth his suggestions and interpretations on how to promote the Chinese dream overseas to gain soft influence internationally, “spread Chinese voice, ... build an international discourse system” (M. Cai, 2013, p. 24) where the international audience can interact positively with China.

In alignment with the points mentioned in previous sections, Chinese cultural diplomacy, being an integral part of the Chinese government’s larger “going out” policy, has a goal of telling Chinese stories to the world by injecting China’s own discourse and uses culture as the main tool to achieve this goal. Arguably, *Pathlight*, jointly produced by the Chinese government and the civil group Paper Republic. Org, is one such cultural instrument in the Chinese government’s cultural diplomacy toolbox. In the same vein, the translations published in *Pathlight* are strategically selected to tell the Chinese story and the Chinese dream to the world, and in the case of this study, to the English-speaking world in particular. In the sections that follow, I will analyze the content of the government-sponsored literary magazine *Pathlight* and explore the main themes and narratives being exported into English-speaking countries through the translation of contemporary literary works.

5.2 All About *Pathlight*

Pathlight: New Chinese Writing (or best known as just *Pathlight*) is the English edition of the first Chinese-language literary magazine in China—*People's Literature* (人民文学).

People's Literature, established in the same year as the PRC itself, in 1949, was personally endorsed by Mao Zedong and is still considered one of the most influential literary magazines (published in Chinese language in China) today. *People's Literature* magazine is published monthly in China by Chinese Writers Association. It introduces fictions, short stories, poems, literary reports, etc. in their original Chinese language to their Chinese-language readership.

Pathlight, is the English version of this literary magazine. *Pathlight*, first released in November 2011, was originally scheduled to be published on a quarterly basis, but due to various reasons, the issue output was reduced to only one or two issue per year after 2016. Selected translations in each issue concentrate on one specific theme, featuring short stories, poems, excerpts from novellas, interviews with the authors and translators' notes. *Pathlight*, just like *People's Literature*, published by Foreign Language Press, is managed by China Writers Association, which is in turn sponsored by the Chinese propaganda department (Lovell, 2012b). In China, *Pathlight* is often compared to *Chinese Literature*, another government sponsored English literary magazine published inside China, which has been out of print since 2001 due to poor distribution results. Viewed as the successor of *Chinese Literature* magazine, *Pathlight* is given a similar position in the government's mission to disseminate Chinese narrative overseas in another attempt to build China's soft power and has been praised for being "the most comprehensive vehicle for the publication of contemporary Chinese literature in English translation" (Laughlin, 2013, p. 213). In interviews about *Pathlight*, the editor-in chief of the *People's Literature* magazine, Li Jingze, emphasized the importance of directly reaching

overseas readership by promoting translations of Chinese contemporary literature, and stated that telling Chinese stories through literature could help the county's soft power construction and projection (Lovell, 2012b; X. Wang, 2017; R. Zhang, 2018; Y. Zhang, 2012). After the English version of *Pathlight* was first published in 2011, issues in other languages have also started to come out. In 2014, the French and Italian versions were launched, and in 2015, the Russian, Japanese and German versions of *Pathlight* made their first appearance. By the end of 2017, *Pathlight* was publishing translations of Chinese contemporary writing in nine different languages.

5.2.1 How is Pathlight Different From Chinese Literature and the Panda Books Series?

Drawing upon experiences gained from similar translation projects, including *Chinese Literature* and the Panda Books series which were discussed in previous sections, *Pathlight* has made some adjustments to its operational and organizational structure.

Firstly, the translation and production of *Pathlight* is carried out through a partnership between the Chinese editorial team of *People's Literature* magazine (indirectly funded by the Chinese government agencies through the China Writers Association) and a non-profit organization called Paper Republic: Chinese Literature in Translation¹² (M. Yao, 2016a; X. Wang, 2017). Paper Republic (paper-republic.org) was originally formed by a group of translators as an online platform for translators of Chinese literature to share information and resources on Chinese publishers, new Chinese writings and translation. Since its founding in 2007, this online platform has gained a large online community of translators and writers interested in Chinese contemporary writing and has become a facilitator of various translation projects from Chinese into English (M. Yao, 2016; X. Wang, 2017). The Paper Republic website

¹² Visit paper-republic.org for more information on Paper Republic: Chinese Literature in Translation.

hosts an extensive online database that provides information on works by Chinese contemporary writers and their English translations. This website also provides a virtual platform for people to talk about Chinese contemporary works and their translations. Paper Republic commissions, edits and publishes translations of Chinese contemporary writing online for free. Since the mission of both the Chinese government and Paper Republic is to promote Chinese literature in (English) translation, the partnership seemed to be a perfect fit. Furthermore, since Paper Republic is a civil, non-profit organization, its involvement in the promotion and production of *Pathlight* could provide more credibility in the eyes of the target English readership.

Secondly, *Pathlight* has wider and more varied distribution and dissemination channels than its predecessors *Chinese Literature* and the Panda Books series. The magazine is available both in print and digitally. New issues are promoted on social network platforms such as *Pathlight's* own Facebook or Twitter accounts (which have around 2000 followers to date), the Paper Republic website, international book fairs, etc. For example, *Pathlight* was taken with Chinese literary worker representatives to the 2012 London Book Fair and 2015 BookExpo America, where China was the guest of honour on both occasions (Y. Wu, 2017). The in-print editions are available in select bookstores inside China only, while the e-book editions of *Pathlight* are available for annual subscription to university libraries and sold through e-commerce platforms such as Amazon or Apple IBookstore to both domestic and overseas readers. The decision to focus on the digital format seems to come from the organizers' concerns about shipping costs (X. Wang, 2017; Y. Wu, 2017).

Thirdly, according to Y. Wu's (2017) findings on the dissemination and translation model of *Pathlight*, about 95% of all translations published are translated by native English speakers or Chinese translators who grew up in an English language environment. A cooperative translation

model is used for less than 5% of the translations, where both Chinese and foreign translators are involved in the translation process, and only a very small number of translations are completed by native Chinese translators (Y. Wu, 2017). The translators working for *Pathlight* either have lived in China for long periods of time, or are still living in China currently, and hold a degree in Sinology or studied Chinese at higher educational institutions in or outside of China, some with well-established reputations as translators or writers in literary circles (X. Zhang, 2017; Y. Zhang, 2012). Some well-established translators deserve special mention here, such as Nicky Harman, Eric Abrahamsen, Lucas Klein, and Cindy Carter, who have years of Chinese-English translation experience and have won multiple prizes and grants for translation outside of China (Laughlin, 2013).

Finally, *Pathlight* selects young voices from China and focusses on contemporary literature, rather than traditional literature. According to the editorial team of *Pathlight*, the majority of works being selected for translation are written by writers in their 30s, who were born after the Cultural Revolution (Marsden, 2012). These young writers have a different perspective, often are not widely translated, and are therefore not well-known outside of China. They have a strong, individualistic voice and a unique outlook on the changes and problems of modern Chinese society (Lovell, 2012b).

5.2.2 Issue Details of Pathlight

Since the first publication of *Pathlight* in November 2011 until the end of 2018, a total of 21 issues were published, with an average of three to four issues per year until 2017. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, there were only three issues published per year, while in 2015 and 2016 there were four issues published each year. Since 2017, the publication schedule of *Pathlight* has slowed down considerably, with only two issues published in 2017 and one issue published in

2018. The 2019 issues have been severely delayed due to the novel Coronavirus epidemic that suddenly broke out in China at the end of 2019, which eventually developed into a global pandemic. At the time of writing this section of the thesis, the 2019 issues of *Pathlight* have not yet been officially made available to the readers. Table 1 below consists of the details of all 21 issues of *Pathlight* from 2011 to 2018 with the name of the theme featured in each issue.

Table 1

List of All Available Issues of *Pathlight* From 2011 to 2018

Year	Issue	Theme featured in the issue
2011	1	The Eighth Mao Dun Literature Prize 2011
2012	1	The London Book Fair 2012
2012	2	(no feature theme)
2012	3	Mo Yan Wins the Nobel/Urban Lives
2013	Spring	the Future
2013	Summer	Speed
2013	Autumn	Lost & Found
2014	Spring	Peoples
2014	Summer	Gender
2014	Autumn	Myth & History
2015	Spring	Nature
2015	Summer	Book Expo America
2015	Autumn	The 6th Lu Xun Literature Prize
2015	Winter	Influence
2016	1	Growing Up
2016	2	Recovery
2016	3	On the Road
2016	4	Scent
2017	1	Seasons
2017	2	Other Worlds
2018	1	Sense of Place

Each issue is concentrated on a feature theme, according to which the short stories, novellas and poems are selected for translation, with a list of eight to ten recommended books and a short biography of the translators at the end. Some of the issues also include translator's

notes following each translation, interviews with the authors, or editor's notes discussing why the feature theme has been selected for the issue. For example, each translation from the 2013 Autumn Issue with a feature theme of "Lost and Found," (details can be found in Table 2) is followed by a short note from the translator about the piece translated, the difficulties they came across while translating the work, and at the end of the issue, an elaborate note from the English editors on the feature theme of that issue and what narrative and stories of contemporary China they were hoping to tell in this issue is included.

Table 2

Table of Contents of *Pathlight* 2013/Autumn ("Lost and Found")

No.	Author	Title	Translator
1	Tie Ning	Night of the Spring Breeze	Cara Healey
	Translator's Note by Cara Healey		
2	Li Rui	Well Sweep	John Balcom
3	Li Rui	Plow Ox	John Balcom
	The Uses of Chinese Characters: A conversation with Li Rui (interview by Shao Yanjun, published in <i>Shanghai Literature</i> , 2011)		Roddy Flagg
4	Su Tong	Sweetgrass Barracks	Josh Stenberg
	Translator's Note by Josh Stenberg		
5	Akbar Mijit	Mountains and Grasslands	Jim Weldon
6	Akbar Mijit	How I Wrote "Mountain and Grasslands"	Hunter Gordon
7	Wei Wei	The Story of Hu Wenqing	Katharine Poundstone Han
8	Lao Ma	The Disappearing Bean Curd Girl	Roddy Flagg
9	Lao Ma	1.50 Yuan of Love	Roddy Flagg
10	Shi Shuqing	Negatives	Philip Hand
11	Shi Shuqing	Old Wooden Bed	Philip Hand
12	Wang Ke	Seawatch	Joel Martinsen
13	Hu Shu-wen	To My Boyfriend's (Ex) Girlfriend	Amanda Halliday
	Translator's Note by Amanda Halliday		
14	Deng Anqing	The Greengrocer	Andrea Lingenfelter

15	Chen Xianfa	the Verdant Forests	Tammy Ho
16	Chen Xianfa	the Lost Four Taels	Tammy Ho
17	Chen Xianfa	Re-Reading Karl Marx's Das Kapital	Tammy Ho
18	Chen Xianfa	To Dies Because of an Old Book	Tammy Ho
19	Chen Xianfa	Golden Sparrows	Tammy Ho
20	Qin Xiaoyu	Pastoral Idyll	Canaan Morse
21	Qin Xiaoyu	Settled Nomads	Canaan Morse
22	Qin Xiaoyu	Mountain Music	Canaan Morse
23	Qin Xiaoyu	Li Bai and Du Fu	Canaan Morse
24	Lan Lan	Carpenter in the Thick of Wood Shavings	Fiona Sze-Lorrain
25	Lan Lan	Unfinished Voyage	Fiona Sze-Lorrain
26	Lan Lan	Death of a Cobbler	Fiona Sze-Lorrain
27	Lan Lan	Meditations	Fiona Sze-Lorrain
28	Lu Weiping	He doesn't get it	Brian Holton
29	Lu Weiping	Miscue	Brian Holton
30	Lu Weiping	The Mists of Time Slowly Disperse	Brian Holton
31	Yang Ke	The People	Eleanor Goodman
32	Yang Ke	Windy Beijing	Eleanor Goodman
33	Yang Ke	Self - Portrait, 1967	Eleanor Goodman
34	Yang Ke	The Silhouetted Papok Tree	Eleanor Goodman
35	The English Language Editors	The Anxiety of Loss	

5.2.3 *Featured and Recurring Authors*

Pathlight has published translations of works by over 200 writers and poets, many of whom have won multiple prizes and considerable recognition for their work in literary circles inside and outside of China. Many authors have had their works repeatedly featured in different issues of *People's Literature Magazine* in the original Chinese language before their works were selected for translation in the English version. The majority of these authors belong to the so-called "Belated Generation" or "New Generation Writers," a new emerging group of writers that

appeared in China after the 1990s (Gu, 2019). These writers, using their personal perceptions, depict the changes of values and lifestyle in Chinese society brought about by the reforms of “opening up” and marketization. The vast majority of the authors translated and published in *Pathlight* are mainland authors and poets, with the exception of a small number of Taiwanese and Hong Kongese authors.

It is also worth mentioning that many of the featured authors are active members of the China Writers Association at either national, municipal or provincial levels. The China Writers Association (CWA) is a mass group voluntarily formed by writers from all over China, guided and funded mainly by the CCP. In 2018, there were a total of 46 provincial and municipal writers’ associations registered with CWA. It also manages and produces nine different literary magazine publications and is an organizer of four prestigious literary awards in China. These include the Chinese version of *Pathlight*, *Chinese Literature* magazine, as well as the highly prestigious Lu Xun Literary Prize and Mao Dun Literary Prize in China. It appears that when these prizes are proposed, they must be submitted to the propaganda office of the CCP for review and approval; thus, they can be considered to carry an ideological significance with respect to the Chinese party-state (Yan, 2016). The bylaw of CWA clearly indicates that the CWA is guided by the principles of Marxist-Leninist ideas, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the main ideas developed by all previous generations of the CCP leaders. It also stipulates that the CWA is to work towards helping the CCP to build a strong cultural socialist nation and to realize the Chinese dream of rejuvenating the Chinese nation.¹³ Most authors featured in *Pathlight* have received either the Lu Xu Prize or the Mao Dun Prize (or both) at some point in their literary careers, and are well established in Chinese literary circles.

¹³ See the full CWA Bylaw here: <http://www.chinawriter.com.cn/403936/403957/index.html>

Among some well recognized mainland authors featured or translated in the issues of *Pathlight* are: Mo Yan (莫言), Can Xue (残雪), Tie Ning (铁凝), Jia Pingwa (贾平凹), Bi Feiyu (毕飞宇), Liu Cixin (刘慈欣), Zhang Wei (张炜), Su Tong (苏童), etc. Among the miniscule number of Taiwanese and Hong Kongese authors featured in the issues of *Pathlight* are Hu Shuwen, Yu Kwang-chung, and Wu Mingyi from Taiwan, and Wong Leung Wo, Tammy Ho, and Ge Liang from Hong Kong.

For the purposes of this study, I have categorized authors whose works have been published in more than one issue of *Pathlight* as recurring authors. The results of the analysis show 40 recurring authors, whose translations were selected and published in several issues of *Pathlight*.¹⁴ Several authors deserve a special mention.

Alai (阿来) is a prominent Tibetan writer who is famous for writing about Tibetan heritage. His works are full of local Tibetan folklore, customs and semi-agricultural life. His novel *尘埃落定* (*Red Poppies: A Novel*, translated into English by Howard Goldblatt and Sylvia Li-chun Lin, 2002) won him the prestigious Mao Dun Literary Prize in 2000, and made him the first Tibetan writer to receive this prize (Leung, 2016; Gu, 2019). He is a member of the CWA.

Bi Feiyu (毕飞宇), also a CWA member, is one of the key figures in the contemporary Chinese literary scene, who is known for his subtle portrayal of women characters in both rural and urban settings (Gu, 2019; Leung, 2016). He currently serves as vice-chairman of the Jiangsu Writers Association (which in turn is registered as a member of CWA) and holds a teaching post at Nanjing University. His short story *哺乳期的女人* (literal translation “the nursing woman”) won him the First Lu Xun Literature Prize in 1997 and his novella *青衣* (*The Moon Opera*,

¹⁴ For the full list of recurring authors, see [Appendix A](#).

translated into English by Howard Goldblatt, 2007) won a prize from the Chinese Novel Association in 2001. He also won the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2011 for his novel 玉米 (Three *Sisters*, translated into English by Howard Goldblatt and Sylvia Li-chun Lin, 2010), and in the same year was awarded the Mao Dun Literary Prize for his novel 推拿 (*Massage*, translated into English by Howard Goldblatt, 2014). Bi Feiyu depicts the life of marginalized people in rural China, capturing their lives during the drastic changes brought on by the economic reforms and also “places his urban intellectuals, prostitutes, teachers, singers and blind massagers in moral dilemmas” (Leung, 2017, p. 25).

Chi Zijian (迟子建) is a professional writer in the Heilongjiang Writers’ Association (which is also a member of CWA). Heilongjiang province is a region in China that borders Russia, which could explain why most of her fiction is set in North-eastern China. She is known for her distinctive writing style that does not follow any literary trend. Her fiction tends to show the good side of human nature and her unique point of view (Leung, 2017). Her story 世界上所有的夜晚 (literal translation “all the nights in the world”) won her the 2007 Lu Xun Literary Prize.

Di An (笛安) is a prolific writer of contemporary China who belongs to the category of writers born after the 1980s. She is also the daughter of two well-known Chinese authors, Li Rui (李锐) and Jiang Yun (蒋韵). Translations of her well-known father Li Rui’s works have also been featured in *Pathlight*. Di An’s works have been published in *Harvest* magazine and *People’s Literature*, and in 2009, she became a best-selling author for her trilogy 龙城 (literal translation “city of the dragon”). She was the recipient of the China Novel Biennale Prize in 2008 and earned a Newcomer Award at the Chinese Literature Media Awards. Di An’s works

reflect the complex relationships between people living in city settings, in which her characters, usually urban youth, living away from their hometowns develop a special attachment and love to the places where they grew up.

Ge Fei (格非) is a representative of the 1980s avant-garde writers in China, who received higher education during the 1980s, when China opened up to the world. He currently holds the post of the chairman of the Chinese Literature Department at Qinghua University in Beijing and is the recipient of multiple prestigious prizes such as the Lu Xun Literary Prize, the Mao Dun Literature Prize, the Best Novel of the Year Award, etc. In his works, Ge Fei explores “alternative ways of situating individual experience with respect to larger historical frameworks” (Gu, 2019, p. 592). His experimental style is full of unpredictability and incomprehensibility, interrogations of the normal and abnormal, “[h]is literary innovations are accompanied by a philosophical probing into the reality of life” (Leung, 2017, p. 96). He is also a member of the CWA.

Liu Cixin (刘慈欣) can be considered the most popular science fiction writer in China today. His science fiction 三体 (*The Three Body Problem*, translated into English by Ken Liu, 2014) was nominated for the Nebula Award for Best Novel in China in 2014 and won the Hugo Award for Best Novel in the United States (Yao, 2016b). In Liu’s science fiction, he often depicts human-alien encounters and portrays the aliens as harmless and friendly. He is a member of the CWA.

Liu Zhenyun (刘震云) is a recognized writer of New Realism and a prolific Chinese writer best known for his vivid depictions of peasant-soldier characters, rural and urban life under economic reform and a variety of other subjects. Born during the period of the Great Famine

(1959–1961) in China and growing up in rural China, Liu writes with deep insight about peasant life and poverty.

Su Tong (苏童) is hailed by the critics as one of the main writers of the Chinese avant-garde movement of the 1980s. Su Tong's characters are full of hate, vengeance and destruction. His fiction deals with the dark side of human nature, growing up during the Cultural Revolution, and the complexity of human relationships. Su Tong is a member of the CWA and has won many awards, among which are the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2009 for his novel 河岸 (*The Boat to Redemption*, translated into English by Howard Goldblatt, 2010) and the Mao Dun Literary Prize in 2013 for his novel 黄雀记 (*Shadow of the Hunter*, translated into English by James Trapp, 2020). In 1992, the renowned Chinese film director Zhang Yimou's film “大红灯笼高高挂” (English name “Raise the Red Lantern”) adapted from his novella 妻妾成群 (Raise the Red Lantern, translated into English by Michael Duke, 2004), was nominated for the Best Foreign Film Oscar. It is interesting to note that Su Tong, who often writes about the dark sides of China's history and of the Chinese old society has been highly recognized in both Chinese and Western literary circles. It is also worth mentioning that his works turned into film have made resonance not only in the Western film industry, but also are highly acclaimed in China.

Tie Ning (铁凝) is the first woman writer to hold the position of Chairperson of the China Writers Association and is a prolific contributor to Chinese contemporary literature. Tie Ning writes about both rural and urban life, mostly from a woman's perspective. Due to her career in the government, her writings do not touch on politics, but her writings on women can be characterized as subverting dogmatism and convention.

Zhang Wei (张炜) is a prolific writer with an individual style that does not cater to the commercial market. His style is a “blend of lyricism and psychological realism” (Leung, 2017, p. 306). He is chairman of the Shandong Writers Association, and vice-mayor of Longkou City. He writes family sagas, showing suffering and the tragic fate of generations as historical-political critique. While detailing the politically inflicted family tragedies, Zhang includes images of nature and folklore, infused with local history. His ten-volume mega-saga 你在高原 (literal translation “you are on the highland”) won him the Mao Dun Prize in 2011.

Wei Wei (魏微) is another CWA member belonging to the Guangdong Writers’ Association. Wei Wei has a very distinctive writing style, different from the writers of her generation, who are labelled as writers born after the 1970s. Wei Wei’s writing focusses on feelings of loss, respect towards oneself and disappointment. She endows her characters with a critical view of the reality of the modern marketized society, and depicts them facing difficult choices in everyday life. Her works are full of the duality of the Chinese modern life, where she shows the contrast between people’s modern lifestyle and old worldviews. Wei Wei has won major literary prizes in China including the prestigious Lu Xun Literature Prize and her works have been translated into English, French, Japanese, Korean, Italian, Polish and Greek languages (Paper Republic).

From the above, it may appear that *Pathlight* is mainly focussed on featuring and publishing writers who are well-established in China and have won prestigious prizes recognized by the CCP. Although other less famous mainland Chinese authors, and authors from Taiwan and Hong Kong have been translated in *Pathlight* over the past nine years, that number is comparatively low.

5.2.4 Translators

The translators employed to translate for *Pathlight*, as mentioned in the previous section, are mainly English native speakers who have received formal training in Chinese linguistics or Sinology inside or outside of China (Yao, 2016a, 2016b; Y. Zhang, 2012). Many of them hold teaching positions in Sinology in post-secondary institutions or are currently studying Sinology at graduate level, and most of them are associated with Paper Republic. Since the publication of the first issue of *Pathlight* in 2011, over 80 translators have translated for *Pathlight*. There is about 10 of them who seem to translate for *Pathlight* more often than others. Similar to the recurring author, for the purpose of this study, I have categorized any translator, who has translated more than once for *Pathlight* as a recurring translator¹⁵. Among the few translators who frequent the *Pathlight* publications are Brian Holton, Canaan Morse, Dave Haysom, Eleanor Goodman, Karmia Olutade, Roddy Flagg, etc.¹⁶

Both Dave Haysom and Karmia Olutade are part of *Pathlight*'s editorial team. Dave Haysom is a literary translator and editor who has been residing in Beijing since 2007 and Karmia Olutade, is a Chinese Canadian play-write and translator who studied English Literature and Creative Writing at Stanford University. She currently teaches, writes and translates from Beijing.

Alice Xin Liu is a writer and translator. She was born in China but grew up in England. She studied English Literature at Durham University. After moving back to Beijing in 2008, she worked as a researcher for Guardian's Beijing Bureau, editor and translator for a popular English-language Financial Times-affiliated Danwei.org, China editor for Index on Censorship, a

¹⁵ For the full list of recurring translators in *Pathlight* (2011–2018), please see [Appendix B](#).

¹⁶ For more information on the biographies of *Pathlight* translators, please see issues of *Pathlight*. At the end of each issue of *Pathlight*, there are brief biographies of the translators who completed translations in that specific issue.

nonprofit that publishes works by censored writers and artists. She acted as the managing editor for *Pathlight* together with Eric Abrahamsen when *Pathlight* just started out in 2011. Since then she has translated two books – *The Letters of Shen Congwen* and *The Problem with Me: And Other Essays on Making Trouble in China* (by Han Han). Currently, she is the translation director at NüVoices, a network created for young women writers through the Young China Watchers (YCW), a group that provides a platform for young professionals to engage in discussions of the most pressing issues in China today.

Brian Holton is a translator of Chinese poetry into English and Scots. He studied Chinese at the University of Edinburgh and Durham, where he also taught Chinese language and literature years later. He taught Chinese-English translation and cultural studies at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University from 2000 to 2009. Currently he is taking a break from teaching to work with W. N. Herbert on a major new anthology of contemporary poetry for Bloodaxe Books.

Canaan Morse is a Boston-based translator, editor and a poet. He obtained his MA degree in Classical Chinese Literature from Peking University. He was the first poetry editor and a co-founder of *Pathlight*, as well as an original member of Paper Republic. He is also the winner of the 2014 Susan Sontag International Prize for Translation.

Eleanor Goodman's fascination with Chinese-English translation started when she was studying in Peking University on a Fulbright Fellowship. Her interest does not just end at translating Chinese poetry and short stories though—she also writes her own poetry. A collection of her own poetry, *Nine Dragon Island*, published by Zephyr Press in 2016, was shortlisted for the Drunken Boat First Book Prize. She is also the recipient of a 2013 PEN/Heim Translation Grant and winner of the 2015 Lucien Stryk Prize for her book of translations *Something Crosses*

My Mind: Selected Poems of Wang Xiaoni. She is currently a Research Associate at the Harvard Fairbank Center.

6 Analysis and Discussion of the Recurring Themes in *Pathlight*

Due to time and space constraints, from the total 22 issues of *Pathlight* published over the past nine years, eight random issues (one issue per year from 2011 to 2018) were chosen for in-depth analysis. Details of each issue selected for analysis are in Table 3:

Table 3

Details of the *Pathlight* Issues for Analysis

Year	Issue	Feature
2011	1	The Eighth Mao Dun Literature Prize 2011
2012	1	The London Book Fair 2012
2013	Autumn	Lost & Found
2014	Summer	Gender
2015	Summer	Book Expo America
2016	2	Recovery
2017	1	Seasons
2018	1	Sense of Place

These eight issues contain 84 short stories, nine excerpts from novels, 113 poems, four interviews with the authors, 10 author statements and one note from editors. The analysis is focussed on short stories and excerpts from the novels, which make about 40% of the total titles published during these eight issues. The author statements, interviews and notes from the editors were excluded from the analysis as they are conversational pieces on the authors' life and work, which are not the focus of this thesis; the poems were also excluded from the analysis due to their highly expressive and subjective nature, as well as the complex method of interpretation required.

6.1 Two-Step Coding Process

The analysis is based on 84 titles (75 short stories and 9 excerpts from novels) written by 84 different authors and translated by 83 translators. Since my research question is two-fold, I have used a combined inductive and deductive coding approach. To answer my first research question—What stories and cultural images is China recounting to the English readers through translations in *Pathlight*?—I used an inductive coding process in my content analysis to identify relevant themes and sub-themes. These themes were developed and labelled descriptively based on the analysis of the context and latent meaning inferred from the translations. Through this coding method, I have analyzed and produced my own set of themes and narratives based on the in-depth reading of the translations in the eight issues of *Pathlight*. To answer my second research question—Do these stories and cultural images fit the current dominant ideology in China?—I adopted a deductive coding process in my content analysis. This second coding method allowed me to analyze and label the data based on existing themes and narratives of Chinese ideology and perform a comparison of the repeated themes translated in *Pathlight* with the core values of the Chinese current ideology discussed in previous sections. I believe this mixed approach to coding and analysis has allowed me to 1) discover and elaborate on the narratives and stories in *Pathlight* without being influenced by any existing themes in the literature; and 2) pinpoint and compare the narratives where the content in the translations published in *Pathlight* may overlap with the government's current ideological narrative, as well as explore narratives that may be absent in *Pathlight* for various economic or sociopolitical reasons.

6.1.1 Inductive Coding Process

Before I commenced the inductive coding process, I read all 84 titles to familiarize myself with the context and nuance of these translations. Once I had become informed about the overall topics, and developed an awareness of the latent content and context in these translations, I began the first step of the coding process to identify main patterns and repeated themes. First, I coded the translations by writing out a short synopsis of the texts based on the manifest and latent content. This was the stepping stone needed to proceed with a further reduction of the storyline to themes and sub-themes, which I accomplished by answering some simple questions such as: Who is the main character of the story? When (what time) is the story taking place? Where is the story taking place (urban/rural China)? What are the main issues? This process allowed me to reduce the titles to a more manageable number of themes, and produce data as in

Table 4:

Table 4

Examples of the Inductive Coding Process

Author name	Title	Synopsis	Main theme	Sub-theme
Qiu Huadong	Friend of the Moon	A story of a rich man who is sick of modern life in China. He owned his real estate business in a big city. In order to grow his business, he has been entangled in various illegal activities and corruption. He gave up everything to live alone in the mountains of Tibet, herding sheep for living. He found peace and serenity in those mountains	Chinese society post-Cultural Revolution (aftermath of modernization and the policy of “opening up”)	Corruption and money worship

		and became satisfied with simple life.		
Tie Ning	Night of the Spring Breeze	A story of the life of migrant workers. A married couple—migrant workers—have to live apart from each other and their children in order to support their family. They feel pain at being separated from their loved ones. The story depicts the tragedy of tens of thousands of migrant workers in China and also shows the poor, backwards rural China. It also shows the integration of these migrant workers into the urban lifestyle, and the changes in their habits and mentality as they go through the process of urbanization.	Modern urban life style and modern Chinese society	Urbanization and the life of migrant workers
Kong Yalei	If I Fall Asleep on the Plane That's Going to Crash	A story about a lonely young woman who has a special, dark connection to this world. Being different from other people, she is not able to maintain regular relationships with people. This makes her very weary of life. She contemplates life, death, and love.	The meaning of life and death	Philosophical ponderings on life, death, loneliness, hopelessness

This multi-step coding exercise allowed me to reduce and categorize all 84 translations to several manageable main themes and sub-themes, which will be analyzed in detail in sections below.

6.1.2 Deductive Coding Process

Once the main themes and sub-themes were organized and coded, I then proceeded to the second step of the coding process, deductive coding, to find answers to my second research question. This method involved the use of a prior set of codes or categories that were already

generated from a previous study (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). Drawing upon the 12 core values of the current Chinese ideology and the ideological concept of the Chinese dream discussed in previous sections, I further categorized and labelled these themes based on their association with these 12 notions. This coding method yielded useful data and results on the link between the themes in *Pathlight* with these core socialist values of modern Chinese ideology and the Chinese dream. An example of this process can be seen in Table 5:

Table 5

Examples of the Deductive Coding Process

Author name	Title	Prosperity/ strength	Freedom	justice	dedication
Qiu Huadong	Friend of the Moon	The story shows the fast economic development of China after the reforms of “opening up”, which signifies its growing strength as a country as a whole.	Based on the Chinese understanding of freedom, this story shows the freedom of Chinese people to own houses, cars, and prosperous businesses, as well as their freedom of mobility in the country.	Although this story reveals the corruption, money worship, and other dark sides of the modern society, it also condemns these immoral actions, which is representative of the government’s actions to fight it. It aligns with the CCP’s goal to find justice for every individual in an effort to fix societal issues.	
Tie Ning	Night of the Spring Breeze	This story shows the fast pace of urbanization due to economic	Based on the Chinese understanding of freedom, this		This story shows dedication to family

		reforms. This is in line with the CCP's call to build a strong country in order to achieve a well-off society.	story shows the freedom of Chinese people to own houses and cars, as well as their freedom of mobility in the country.		and hard work, which is the first step for Chinese citizens in the common path towards the Chinese dream.
Kong Yalei	If I Fall Asleep on the Plane That's Going to Crash	Although this story mainly concerns internal feelings of a young woman, the latent content is showing Chinese modernity and economic prosperity (the young woman is very educated and references Western culture frequently)			

Since the deductive coding method is performed based on the existing set of codes, my starting point for this second step of the analysis was the 12 themes of core socialist values. This step allowed me to discover what core social values were repeatedly featured in the translations in *Pathlight* and reflect on why certain themes were not included.

6.2 What Stories and Cultural Images Is China Recounting to the English Readers Through Translations in *Pathlight*?

Out of 75 short stories and 9 novel excerpts analyzed, there are four main themes that make up more than 80% of all the translations, and are worth special mention and further categorization. The biggest category is the modern urban lifestyle and modern Chinese society; there are 21 translations (25%) that fall under this theme. The second biggest category is classified as philosophical pieces inquiring about the meaning of life and death, which consist of 17 stories (20%). The so-called Reform Literature, which is famous for its storylines depicting the aftermath of the “opening up” reforms in the country, make up the third biggest category, comprising of 16 translation in total (19%), and finally the fourth category with 14 translations (17%) can be labelled under the theme of modern Chinese women. The remaining five themes are less frequently seen in the translations analyzed, and combined, they make up the remaining 19% of the translations. Table 6 demonstrates the results of the inductive analysis and shows the breakdown of the main themes derived from the analyzed issues of *Pathlight*. Each main theme can be further broken down into sub-themes.

Table 6

Breakdown of the Main Themes and Sub-Themes Analyzed

Themes	# of works	%
1. Modern urban lifestyle and modern Chinese society	21	25%
1A. Stress and Complexity of modern life		
1B. Poor Spirituality and Immorality of Modern Chinese Society		
1C. Corruption and money worship		
1D. Urbanization and the life of migrant workers		
2. Existential interrogation into the meaning of life and death	17	20%
3. Chinese society post-Cultural Revolution (the aftermath of modernization and the policy of “opening up”)	16	19%

3A. Life in Urban China After the Cultural Revolution and Economic Reforms		
3B. Life in Rural China After the Cultural Revolution and Economic Reforms		
4. Modern Chinese women	14	17%
5. Life and customs of ethnic minorities	5	6%
6. Fantasy	4	5%
7. Science fiction	3	4%
8. Life and struggles of immigrants in a foreign land	2	2%
9. Chinese society pre-/during the Cultural Revolution	2	2%
Grand Total	84	100%

The descriptive analysis that follows will give an in-depth look into each main theme and their sub-themes.

6.2.1 Main Theme 1: Modern Urban Lifestyle and Modern Chinese Society (25%)

After China opened its doors to the world and welcomed the market economy, Chinese society became rich overnight. The first to notice this change were the city people. The ruthlessness of market competition and the sudden availability of multitude of goods and services, compared to pre-reform years, caused the so-called “money worship mentality” in Chinese society. People have lost sight of their morals, family bonds and in many cases themselves, in the process of pursuing the indulgence of everyday pleasures and financial gains. There are several sub-themes that fall under this bigger umbrella narrative of modern urban lifestyle and modern Chinese society. The main narratives that can be traced through the short stories analyzed can be generalized into sub-themes in the following sections.

6.2.1.1 Sub-Theme 1A: Stress and Complexity of Modern Life. A frequent sub-theme of modern urban life and modern Chinese society is the fast pace and complexity of urban life. The constant competition at work places for higher pay and higher positions; the competition with neighbours for better apartments and better cars; city people have their own set of problems they face every day. Although people do not openly discuss it, everyone is doing everything they

can to get ahead. This constant competition with each other and continuous search for something better becomes a trap for urban citizens: there is always someone, somewhere who is better than them in some way. Overly worried about their external image in front of other people, these urbanites often forget about the importance of inner balance and nurturing their relationships with family and friends.

The short story by Cai Dong (2014), “The Holiday Monk Returns,” is a story about this constant search for happiness and peace for both city men and women, who use the success of people around them as a marker for their own happiness. This group of men and women, internal searchers, who are doing fairly well for themselves already, are insatiable for more money, higher positions, better houses, better friends, etc., putting themselves under more and more pressure to achieve the unattainable. Unfortunately, instead of looking for the root cause of why they are unhappy with the many blessings they already have, they foolishly fall into the trap of organizations that exploit human greed and jealousy for their own benefit. “The Holiday Monk Returns” reveals the vicious circle of such an insatiable attitude:

Mei was in a foul mood when he got home that evening, going on about Li Weihong again. They’d gone to a party at her house last month. The hostess had been the very picture of glamour as she’d greeted them: stood in the good light by the window, polka-dot dress, hair piled high, the stem of a long slender wine glass held lightly between long slender fingers.... Even the platter of beansprouts, piled fresh and moist, looked like it might have been borrowed from an art gallery. ... When not exhibiting the bounty of her painstakingly cultivated lifestyle, Li Weihong was a successful career woman and beneficiary of what the sociologists call the Matthew Effect: those that have, get more.

(Excerpt from “The Holiday Monk Returns” by Cai Dong, from *Pathlight* 2014/Summer, p.1688, translated by Roddy Flagg)

Hardly able to compete with the picture-perfect life of her colleague, the protagonist enrolls in a course that will teach her to be more successful. The husband, Jun, had similar insecurities:

“He’d never told his wife, but he lived under constant threat from the male versions of Li Weihong. The friends he had in real life, the successful people he heard of – they were all just depressing reminders, or chilling warnings, of how little he had achieved” (excerpt from “The Holiday Monk Returns” by Cai Dong, from *Pathlight* 2014/Summer, p.1736, translated by Roddy Flagg).

Another story exposing human insecurities is Dong Xi’s (2018) short story “Old Zhao Two-Times.” This story taps into a man’s fear of loss: everything he owns has to come in twos, in case he loses one, so he will still have a backup. This habit appears to have been cured by the birth of his daughter. His wife has noticed that there are no more doubles of everything in their house. However, as it turns out, it was not that he had stopped buying things in pairs, but that he was putting the second set in an identical alternate reality he created for himself. In other words he was leading a double life all this time. His secret is unveiled when his wife walks into an apartment that is a mirror image of the one she is living in, and finds a woman who looks just like her with her husband. The insecurity that the main protagonist has is of a different kind; it results from the fear of loss, but it is also a reflection of the aftermath of the economic reforms, and their impact on modern Chinese society. The rapid changes in the country made people feel insecure and vulnerable. Their desire to fill their lives with materialistic things is a psychological illness caused by modern society. The inability to enjoy and treasure the uniqueness of each moment in life has made people turn to things that bring temporary joy and pleasure. In the end,

people's lives have become just a shell filled with materialistic things, without any spiritual substance.

Another example of the source of stress in modern society is the complexity of workplace politics and the dynamics at home. The short story “Fishbone” by Sheng Keyi (2012) is another typical story of daily life in an urban setting in Chinese society. The protagonist is unhappy in his married life, often feeling disconnected with his wife and son, and is also having trouble at work. His life is compared to a lazy Susan, spinning around and round, going through the motions day after day, week after week, but not able to really enjoy life. Disengaged and unable to build genuine connections with his wife and son, the protagonist is also mediocre at his position as a director in a small company. To him, these things are just a part of life, and every other family is living like this. He is tired and numb, and nothing can excite him anymore. The only time he is able to feel joy and excitement is when he is with his mistress, who works in the same company as him. His life is full of complex choices he has to make, just like millions of other people living in the cities in China. The daily pressure of fast-paced city life is weighing on people just like a fishbone in the main protagonist's throat—no one can see it, but the people living it can feel it.

The short story “Night/Day” by Liu Ting (2016) is another story about the daily routine of city inhabitants, but this short story exposes it from a different angle. This story, with a tragic ending, is a reminder, a wake-up call to modern Chinese society, that life in the city can also bring unexpected friendships and spontaneity:

Then the sun came out.

It had already been several years since Lao Hang had really watched a sunrise, and moreover, he was viewing it from the open expanse of the highway. The large, rising sun was red and lit the earth. Its light was not at all dazzling; it was pale yellow, but a very different pale yellow than the headlights, it was the yellow of something washed with seawater, a clean bright light. Lao Hong could not help sighing in surprise. He felt like there was a poem or a song on the tip of his tongue to match the scene before his eyes. But he could not think of it. (Excerpt from “Day/Night” by Liu Ting, from *Pathlight* 2016/2, p.120, translated by Cara Healey)

It reminds the readers that life is short and unpredictable, and everyone needs to actively look for the bright side in daily life, instead of succumbing to the pressures and stress of modern society, and the best way to live it is to enjoy every day to the fullest.

The common narrative of this sub-theme is the competitiveness, complexity and diversity of modern Chinese society. Like many people in other societies, Chinese urbanites are also struggling to find a balance between work and family life. Lost in the fast city rhythm, people find it hard to find true connections and enjoy life. In some cases, these anxieties and pressures can lead to certain obsessive behaviours.

6.2.1.2 Sub-Theme 1B: Poor Spirituality and Immorality of Modern Chinese

Society. With the rapid economic growth in urban areas, without doubt, Chinese people’s quality of life in the cities has improved. Modern Chinese citizens now have access to a wide variety of goods and services, and enjoy a materialistic lifestyle, but spiritually, people have remained very poor. Greed, selfishness, vanity, and impatience are just some of the many vices that are descriptive of modern Chinese society. Many struggles and much of the suffering that city people in China have to endure is caused by their own poor spirituality and foolishness.

The selfishness, ugliness and immorality of modern Chinese society is depicted in the short story “Where Are You” by Li Er (2015). The story is told by a male fetus who has seen enough of the world’s ugliness from inside the womb that he does not want to be born. Sharing the same womb with his sister, this male fetus tells the story of people’s flawed characters from different levels of society. He depicts the impotence and weak character of the higher classes, and the coarseness, immorality and cruelty of the lower classes of Chinese society. At the end of the story, ironically, the male fetus’ suicide plan does not work and his sister Y dies instead, with him then forced by induction to come into this ugly and cruel world:

We miscalculated. She wanted to live, and I wanted to die. Now I would be the one to leave this place alive, and she is gone, all because of my hunger strike. If I had instead wrestled her food from her and eaten it, I would have died in her place. ... I keep watch over Y’s body. She will never again vent her frustrations to me. There is no one to kick my knees. I begin to lose hope. ... In the morning the doctor gives her two shots to induce labor. ... She is sitting in the rocking chair with her legs spread wide, pushing me out. If I lose hold for one second I’ll pop out. I shove Y out first, then move myself into a horizontal position, bracing myself into a horizontal position. ... I want to put up a good fight, make them wait, give them a taste of my strength. ... After all, what else can I do? (Excerpt from “Where Are You” By Li Er, from *Pathlight* 2015/Summer, p. 61, translated by Joshua Dyer)

Poor spirituality can also be expressed through the superficial indulgent lifestyle of the Chinese society. The short story “The Animal-Shaped Firework” by Zhang Yueran (2017) is a story about an artist who has led a life full of indulgence and selfishness, until he loses his inspiration, his marriage, his fame and the meaning of life. By accident he finds out at a party

that he may have a daughter. Taking this as a sign of a second chance in life, he decides to take his daughter far away from the city and start a new life, where he can make new, more meaningful choices. To his surprise, his plan fails and he finds himself trapped in a car garage. This story highlights that often times, life does not give us second chances and we have only one chance to live, so without spirituality and morality, we are all doomed to become empty shells:

He began to fritter away his time sleeping around and going to parties. He'd get drunk a couple times a week at the wine-tasting sessions his friends organized. This hazy half-life went on for a while, then finally he owed too much work and had no choice but to return to the studio. Eventually these paintings stopped selling at auction. Several girlfriends dumped him. Galleries closed their doors to him. After these reversals, his life grew quiet again, just like when he'd first arrived in Beijing. The only difference was he'd become a drunkard. (Excerpt from "The Animal-Shaped Firework" by Zhang Yueran, from *Pathlight*, 2017/1, p. 52, translated by Jeremy Tiang)

In Lao Ma's (2013) short story "The Disappearing Bean Curd Girl," the author mocks the attention deficit of modern Chinese society. Daily life in the cities is monotonous and weary for many, and in order to catch the masses' attention, the media collects everyday stories and blows them out of proportion for sensational stories. However, this attention is only momentary, with the readers focussed on the good deed of the Bean Curd Girl only for as long as it takes the media to come up with the next sensation. City people do not have time to stop to fact-check or care about the stories and lives of other people around them; they have lost the ability to connect with each other on a personal level. Far too many kind actions from our everyday life are interpreted in a way that benefits the media and helps propagate their agenda. In the end, it is the real ordinary people in those stories that suffer, being scrutinized and criticized. Callous society

becomes more distrustful and disengaged from each other, relying on a third party (social media) to dictate how they should think or feel.

6.2.1.3 Sub-Theme 1C: Corruption and Money Worship. The rapid economic changes in the country have also brought a money worship mentality to modern society. The corruption, and the complexity of relationships in government settings are becoming more of a norm and are simply a part of how things work in government agencies. In the story “Visa Cancelling” by Xu Kun (2012), the author depicts how government officials, under the guise of official government business, travel abroad for their own personal pleasure. The story shows the complex relationships between government officials of different ranks and the political games that these officials need to play to remain in their positions or to climb up the ranks in government institutions:

Xiao wouldn't have many more chances to blow tens of thousands of yuan of government money on a tour of Europe... Xiao still had influence though – his former assistants and protégés were in powerful posts in the key ministries and commissions. A starving camel, after all, still stands taller than a horse. Years of experience in official circles told Fan that he could not risk offending this old comrade, not under any circumstances. Fan still had ladders he wanted to climb – he was bound to need a leg-up at some point. (Excerpt from “Visa Cancelling” by Xu Kun, from *Pathlight*, 2012, 1, p.p.1288-1294, translated by Roddy Flagg)

In the short story “Friend of the Moon” by Qiu Huang Dong (2012), the issues of corruption and money worship are shown through people's desire to make a fortune no matter the legality of an activity, or no matter how many officials they need to bribe. This story is about two friends who have graduated from the same class, but have followed different paths in life. The main

protagonist described the dealings of his businessman-friend as follows: “I knew there were plenty of illicit land deals between government officials and developers, and I wondered if he had done anything under the table, if he had offered or accepted bribes. But I never asked him about it” (excerpt from “Friend of the Moon” by Qiu Huang Dong, from *Pathlight*, 2012, 2, p. 1828, translated by Joel Martinsen). At the end, the main protagonist finds peace in the mountains of Tibet herding sheep, living a simple life, far away from the city lights. This shows that the Chinese way of living in an urban setting is tiresome and stressful, and after a while people start to lose sight of what is really important in life.

6.2.1.4 Sub-Theme 1D: Urbanization and the Life of Migrant Workers. With the introduction of economic reforms in China, as mentioned in the previous section, the speed of urban development far exceeded that in rural locations. The farmers in remote rural areas still live in great destitution, relying mainly on their land to feed their whole family. Highly dependent on the quality of the harvest, the income of farmers is usually very unstable. This has resulted in a great number of farmers moving to the cities to pick up odd jobs to make money and supplement their income. These farmers are called migrant workers and they have become a social phenomenon, a separate social group, characteristic of modern Chinese society.

Migrant workers often times travel to big cities to find odd jobs as factory workers, servers in restaurants, maids in hotels or for rich families, truck drivers or construction workers. Their life in the cities is not without struggle and hardship. Often looked down upon, they desperately try to fit into the big cities’ lifestyle and rhythm. The stories translated in *Pathlight* highlight the hardships migrant workers have to go through, their struggles in the cities, and the minute changes in the way they see themselves and other people, down to the way they talk,

dress and behave. After working in the city for long periods of time, they start to talk and act like city people, their view on life changes and their characters become more complex.

“Night of the Spring Breeze” by Tie Ning (2013) is a story about the everyday life of a couple—both migrant workers—who have left their village to make money to support their family. The husband is a truck driver and the wife is a maid for a rich household in Beijing. The couple do not see each other very often, and, furthermore, had to leave their children behind in their village with their grandparents. With both of their monthly earnings, they can budget to save enough money for their children’s education and once in a while send some presents for their relatives. The short story is a sad reminder that these migrant families have to live separated from each other every day. Also, it deals with the feeling of homesickness or nostalgia experienced by the migrant workers who are away from their home and family all year round. The main female protagonist, being a live-in caregiver for a rich family in Beijing, without even realizing herself, is starting to pick up a Beijing accent, which her husband notices right away during their brief meeting at a hotel in the outskirts of Beijing. The couple desperately try to catch up in the short period of time they have. They tell each other about all they have seen and experienced while away from each other and shyly hint at how much they missed each other:

[T]hey spoke of many things they had not had a chance to discuss before: their children, the savings they had tucked away in their cupboard at home, whether their daughter would take the exam for graduate school, and whether they needed to grease anyone’s palm for favors. They also spoke of their parents and about buying a house, if they kept working this hard, within five years they should have saved up enough to buy a two room house in the country seat back home. They made plans for the whole family’s future, and

planned where they would finally settle down. (Excerpt from “Night of the Spring Breeze” by Tie Ning, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, p. 437, translated by Cara Healey)

The migrant workers who work together in the cities are also depicted as a big family. Working together in the city, they form special bonds and become each other’s big sisters and little brothers, taking care of each other while away from their blood relatives.

“Bonnie’s Faces” by Xie Hong (2016) is the story of a country girl who comes to the city to work as a waitress, leaving her family and boyfriend behind in the village. After being in the city for over two years, she has moved up from a waitress position to managing the waiting staff in a small restaurant. She adapted quickly to what she needs to do to make it in the big city and, now making decent money, is able to send some to her family in the village. Her boyfriend, whom she had left behind, comes to the city to visit her, and is also thinking of perhaps staying in the city to make some money, since it has become harder and harder to make a living by just farming back at home in their small village. However, upon his arrival, he realizes just how much his girlfriend has changed; it almost feels like they are from two different worlds. Now he feels she is becoming one of them, one of “those city people.” She seems to understand how city life works, and lives by their rules, no matter how humiliating and unfair the city people’s behaviour may be towards the poor and the peasants. This story also shows how much humiliation, hardship and emotional torture the migrant workers have to endure while trying to find their happiness and reach their dreams in the big cities.

The short story “The Multimeter” by Su Tong (2016) is another example of such changes that migrant workers go through in the city. This dream of becoming rich in a big city is a main driving force behind the migration of the workers from rural areas. Mostly coming from remote villages, far away from the glamorous cities, these workers often times have not even finished

high school. They are exposed to things that they have never seen or heard of in their villages, and they have to adapt to city life, living and behaving in a certain way to fit the city norms. Unknowingly they fall into a state of depression and self-loathing, feeling alone, trapped and lost. They become ashamed of who they are and where they come from. They become detached from their families and estranged from their spouses. Many families are ripped apart by migrant work every year, forced to see each other only once a year during the Chinese Spring Festival holidays. After living in such a dark mental state for long periods of time, these migrant workers start to lose themselves, get entangled in criminal activities, etc. This story helps us to see the sufferings and changes in character some migrant workers go through while trying to find a better life in the city.

Sun Huifen's (2017) short story "The Handwarmer" develops around the main theme of home and the sense of warmth the home gives. It is about the homesickness of the migrant workers on the one hand, and on the other hand, it is a story about the unfair treatment of the migrant workers in the cities, and the hardships of some migrant workers, who are unable to adapt to the city rhythm and city living. The protagonists are brothers; both work in the city all year around, coming home for a visit only once a year, during the Chinese Spring Festival. This is the only time of year they get to rest and feel the familiar warmth of home. The little brother and his fellow migrant workers are constantly being looked down upon and being treated as second class citizens, and the migrant workers in this short story endure both physical and emotional abuse from their employers (superiors). This story depicts the migrant workers' poor living conditions in the winter in particular. After multiple requests from the workers to their supervisor to turn on the heater at night during the coldest winter months, the request is denied

again. Feeling there is nowhere to go to get justice and no one to turn to for help, the little brother kills his supervisor.

The worker's dorms were too cold, and the foreman wouldn't allow us to use the stove. None of us could sleep because our hands and feet were numb, so we sent out to buy some liquor. ... It wasn't a big deal that he was spying on us. But he was in a fancy car with the heater on, messing around with a girl... (Excerpt from "The Handwarmer" by Sun Huifen, from *Pathlight*, 2017/1, p.13, translated by Matt Turner and Weng Haiying)

This story brings a serious societal issue to light. Aside from the emotional suffering caused by being away from home and loved ones all year around, the migrant workers are also being poorly treated, working and living in dire conditions, discriminated against and humiliated.

6.2.2 Main Theme 2: Existentialist Interrogation of the Meaning of Life and Death (20%)

The stories with a philosophical theme about the meaning of life and death make the second largest group of translations analyzed. About 20% of the total stories probe into existentialist themes such as the meaning of life and death, absurdity, dread, boredom, nothingness, etc. These philosophical stories often depict the hopelessness of humans in the face of fate or death. These stories expose the darkness, selfishness and ugliness of human nature, and they all ask one question: what is the point? Why do we create and live in such a hostile environment/society, if at the end we will all face death?

In Su Tong's (2015) short story "Early One Sunday Morning," the main character is accidentally killed by an oncoming truck as he chases the butcher for two cents that he thought the butcher had cheated him out of:

All of sudden, Mr. Li lost his temper, he swore coarsely, rudely, then he rapidly got on his bike and rode off after the meat guy, he decided to have it out with this treacherous and repulsive jerk. Without a thought for anything else, Mr. Li sped through the intersection, it was a moment of ineluctable disaster, a frozen fish truck was crossing, and just as the driver hit the brakes he heard a wild cry, followed by the crisp, dreadful sound of the bicycle being run over. (Excerpt from “Early One Sunday Morning” by Su Tong, from *Pathlight* 2015/Summer, p. 113, translated by Josh Stenberg)

The fatal accident was brought on by greed, narrow-mindedness and a distrust of human nature. The story tells us of the insignificance and hopelessness of human actions in the face of death.

In the same vein, in his two stories “Well Sweep” and “Plow Ox,” Li Rui (2013a, 2013b) tells the tragic stories of two families who tried to trick fate and avoid death, but little do they know that, like all humans, all of their actions move them a few steps closer to the inevitable. The inability to know the future makes life more worth living. The stories make the readers think of how we should enjoy every living day we have on earth, as death may just be around the corner. What really matters in the end are the connections we have built while on earth, the families we loved and the good deeds we have left behind.

The story “Well Sweep” narrates the tragic accidental death of Big Man, while he is raking coke off a moving train with his little brother Little Man. Following the older brother’s death, the little brother assumes the role of main provider to the family and their elderly parents, and marries his big brother’s fiancée, instead of going to school as previously planned, thus changing the course of his destiny.

When Little Man returned home that evening, he didn't bring any coke, just his brother's corpse. ...A year later, Little Man got married in Big Man's new house. The bride was still Kingfisher. ... Since the betrothal gifts had all been delivered and everything was readied, the two families were already related by marriage. ... It all made sense for Little Man to marry Big Man's fiancée.

On the wedding day, Little Man, stinking of wine, entered the bridal chamber and embraced the bride. Little Man said, "Kingfisher, you ought to have been my sister-in-law....."

Kingfisher nodded and said, "I know."

Little Man said, "Kingfisher..... I miss my brother....."

Kingfisher once again nodded her head and said, "Little Man, I miss him too."

The two of them wept in each other's arms. (Excerpt from "Plow Ox" by Li Rui, from *Pathlight* 2013/Autumn, pp. 656-669, translated by John Balcom)

Li Rui's (2013b) second short story "Plow Ox" conveys similar hopelessness, helplessness and the insignificance of human beings in the face of nature. Hongbao and his ox, Huangbao, set out to leave their village, Wurenping, to hide from the authorities. A disease is spreading among the oxen in the village and an order was sent out to kill and bury all the oxen. Hongbao is determined to keep his beloved animal safe. He gathers some supplies and hides with his ox in a cave located in a deserted village where his grandfather once lived. Unfortunately, he leads them to their demise, and instead of saving his ox by hiding in this deserted cave, Hongbao has unknowingly killed both himself and his beloved animal.

The Wurenping villagers are mystified. All the oxen of the village have been destroyed and buried by the authorities. Where had Hongbao and Huangbao gone? A month goes by and there is no sign of them. Six months go by and still there is no sign of them. After a whole year has gone by, still there is no news of them.

No one in the whole wide world knew or had seen the cave at the Qiliban collapse. The summer grass and wild creepers had long since covered the fresh yellow earth. (Excerpt from “Plow Ox” by Li Rui, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, pp. 807-812, translated by John Balcom)

A more somber narration of the meaning of life is given in “If I Fall Asleep on the Plane That’s Going to Crash,” written by Kong Yalei (2014). This is a short story about a young woman, overwhelmed with a feeling of isolation and detachment from this world, who is planning to commit suicide. Being different from other people, the main character has the ability to see all disasters and tragedies happening in this world. She is not able to share this secret with anyone for fear of being misunderstood and taken for being insane, or worse, being blamed for them. She lives a lonely life, weighed down by her nightmares and her inability to prevent them. Having to carry the burden of knowing every disaster, she is questioning the meaning of life on earth, and decides to end her life by getting on a plane that she knows will crash, having seen it in one of her visions. Feelings of loneliness and hopelessness can be sensed in every sentence of this story:

I don’t belong here, I told myself. But, in that case, where do I belong? I don’t know. I don’t know where I belong...

... But maybe it was just because I was tired of this world. Yes, I was tired and weary. Nothing could stir my interest. For me, the world had too many disasters... (Excerpt from “If I Fall Asleep on the Plane That’s Going to Crash” by Kong Yalei, from *Pathlight* 2014/Summer, pp. 60-153, translated by Allan H. Barr)

Despite making efforts to find love and ways to stay connected to this world, she is not able to run away from her curse. Just a day before her wedding, she finds out that she is not able to carry the child she is pregnant with. The doctor lists several possible reasons for this, but she knows what the real reason is. She blames herself for this and leaves her fiancé. The only other thing that could make her consider staying in this world is her little dog Heipi, but even he dies from accidentally ingesting the rat poison that someone put down in the maintenance of her building.

I don’t feel I need anyone. There is nothing I want. This is not normal. It’s out of synch with the age in which we live. But this is not my fault – it’s not that I want things to be this way. I have no choice.

And I don’t feel that there is anyone who really needs me in the world. Who is going to feel that I am the only one in the world for him? Nobody. (Excerpt from “If I Fall Asleep on the Plane That’s Going to Crash” by Kong Yalei, from *Pathlight* 2014/Summer, p. 236, translated by Allan H. Barr)

This short story is a pessimistic view of current modern society full of disasters and bad things happening every day, and it also reveals the author’s detached view of it all.

Unlike previous philosophical existentialist stories, “Beyond the Western Pass” by Di An (2015), is a story about the acceptance of death. It is about the celebration of life and greeting death. The protagonist is a writer in the last years of her life with Alzheimer’s disease. She

spends her days half delusional and half in clarity, reminiscing about the full life she had and the legacies she has left behind. She is also ready to face death, not out of loneliness or isolation, but out of a love for life. Unlike other stories described above, this story is telling its readers that no matter what each one of us is going through at the moment, life is beautiful, and we need to enjoy it and find the bright side of the only life we have, so when the time comes, and when death is coming to take our life, there are no regrets, but only wonderful memories left behind. This story provides a bright outlook on life and death and provides a glimpse of hope for readers in a busy and often monotonous life. Death appears to the protagonist as a horse in her dream and summons her:

Every time I fall asleep, the blue horse enters my dream and summons me to go. I follow it, and we run together; for this old body of mine to feel that light, floating step is exhilarating almost to the point of terror. I have always reacted to ecstasy with fear.... [i]t was the blue horse that said to me at the end of my dream: "If you want to get out, you have to learn not to hold on to the illusion of 'I'." I am no longer I; I am a beam of light. (Excerpt from "Beyond the Western Pass" by Di An, from *Pathlight* 2015/Summer, p. 39, translated by Allan H. Barr)

6.2.3 Main Theme 3: Chinese Society Post-Cultural Revolution (19%)

From the total 84 works analyzed, 16 can be grouped under the theme of Chinese society post-Cultural Revolution: aftermath of modernization and the policy of "opening up". These works depict the changes both rural and urban China have undergone during and after the reforms of "opening up" starting in the 1980s. Often time labelled as Reform Literature, these works can be further grouped into stories of urban China and stories of rural China.

6.2.3.1 Sub-Theme 3A: Life in Urban China After the Cultural Revolution and Economic Reforms. The economic reforms of “opening up” have brought many rapid changes in urban areas; sky scrapers seem to be erected overnight and big corporations are taking over the urban areas to reap the economic benefits of the “opening up” policies, but the societal changes are still lagging behind the economic ones. Although the economic reforms are bringing rapid changes in the country, the extreme polarity between rich and poor is continuously dividing society, with the rich becoming richer and the poor become poorer.

“The Greengrocer” by Deng Anqing (2013) is not only a simple story about a greengrocer’s life, business and family in industrialized urban China, but it is also a story about the changes that happened to the farmers and peasants in the countryside during the economic reforms of “opening up”. The economic reforms promoted industrialization of the country by increasing the production capacity for goods and services. Farmers were forced to sell their only source of income—their land—to the government. Many of them had to become migrant workers in the factories or find other ways to support their families. “Their villages razed, the peasants were relocated to government housing, and because they no longer had any land to till, they went to work in the factory town as unskilled laborers” (excerpt from “The Greengrocer” by Deng Anqing, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, p. 2889, translated by Andrea Lingenfelter). As the economic reforms deepened, the industrialization sped up the rate of urbanization. More farmers were forced to sell their land to accommodate the urbanization and industrialization in the country.

Not only had the original seven or eight villages by the Grand Canal disappeared, villages lying only a little farther away were also razed. If you stood atop a tall building in the centre of the factory town, there was nothing but factories as far as the eye could see.

Electronic factories. Clothing factories. Food processing factories. (Excerpt from “The Greengrocer” by Deng Anqing, from *Pathlight* 2013/Autumn, pp. 2899-2904, translated by Andrea Lingenfelter)

The story provides insight into the changes in the city landscape over the years after the 1980s. The greengrocer’s small business is affected by the reforms; with the hypermarkets and farmer’s markets coming into the neighbourhood, the greengrocer has to adapt to stay open:

The first big blow came when, to the west of the original factory zone, right in the middle of the intersection of a few housing complexes, a giant supermarket moved in. ... the ground floor of the new supermarket had chain outlets like KFC and Granny’s Dumplings. The second floor was all vegetables, and people who lived in the neighborhood began to do their shopping there. ... The real threat to the greengrocer was the arrival of the new farmer’s market. ... Even the grocer’s old customers started shopping at the farmer’s market. (Excerpt from “The Greengrocer” by Deng Anqing, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, pp. 2969-2979, translated by Andrea Lingenfelter)

This story shows the other side of the successful victory of the economic reforms of “opening up” in China, the story of ordinary people who still remain poor and who are still struggling to make ends meet. This story has an open ending, providing a glimpse of hope for a better tomorrow. As the reforms deepen, the city landscapes change, and the future is unknown:

The whitewash is flaking off the walls of the two rows of one-story shops that house the little grocer’s... The nearby factory zone was moved in its entirety to Suqian two years ago, and the developers have already taken over this tract of land. Word has it that they are going to build a gated community of Italian-style villas. (Excerpt from “The

Greengrocer” by Deng Anqing, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, pp. 2985-2990, translated by Andrea Lingenfelter)

A similar story depicting the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution and changes in China after the economic reforms is “The Story of Hu Wenqing” by Wei Wei. The young protagonist, Hu Wenqing was one of the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. Although he did not personally kill anyone during the Cultural Revolution, he was involved in many policy decisions that affected the fate of entire families. After the Cultural Revolution, he is pardoned by the state, but despised and hated by his neighbours for what he represents—the rebels and Red Guards. Although Hu Wenqing regrets his past actions, and is disappointed by the ideology he believed during the Cultural Revolution, he knows that nothing he does can fix the damage done to those families, and he has to live with the mistakes he made in the past. He strongly believes in the good intentions he had, and whatever the consequences of those beliefs, he bravely faces them.

This story attempts to show that all Chinese people, despite being on the “wrong side” are equally victims of the Cultural Revolution. There were no winners: just like those innocent people who were prosecuted, imprisoned or killed during that time, the people who inflicted the pain are also suffering. Hu Wenqing, as a representative of the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, describes his suffering as:

I had nothing left. I really would have been better dead! Some of us did die from this. My middle school friends, some of them were very smart. At the beginning they believed everything, but then they had their doubts. They lost everything. They made mistakes in the midst of what happened. There was no way of looking back; no way of correcting mistakes. And so they killed themselves. I’m also one of them. It’s just luck that I am not

dead now. (Excerpt from “The Story of Hu Wenqing” by Wei Wei, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, pp. 1753-1759, translated by Katharine Poundstone Han)

Years later, Hu Wenqing moves to the south of China and becomes one of the first group of private company owners to make a fortune for themselves due to favourable “opening up” policies in the country. Of course, not all people were lucky enough to make a fortune and some lost everything. Those first decade of the reforms were described as follows:

There were those who quit their jobs, and those who went on unpaid leave. Then there were others who went to work and had some private business on the side. There were those who went south for a few years and came back to their work unit. There were those who took the plunge and very nearly didn’t make it, and those who nevertheless, didn’t become rich. There were so many different stories. (Excerpt from “The Story of Hu Wenqing” by Wei Wei, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, p. 1804, translated by Katharine Poundstone Han)

As the reforms deepened, more changes were happening in Chinese society. The extreme polarity between the rich and poor is described by the author as follows:

The poor were very poor, like those workers who had lost their jobs, whilst the rich were very rich. Once they started to get rich they were rich for one decade, then two and then they just got richer and richer. They were particularly respected because of it. ... The rich lived in villas in the suburbs, with guards and dogs. They had drivers and maids... [T]he majority of people ...were living the life they had lived before. They scraped by, worried about every penny and fought for every inch. (Excerpt from “The Story of Hu Wenqing”

by Wei Wei, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, pp. 1804-1815, translated by Katharine Poundstone Han)

This story shows that the ideology of the Cultural Revolution made everyone a victim, and its ideology made people turn against each other. Even the Reforms of “opening up” and the modernization policies brought pain and suffering to people, causing more disparity between rich and poor. This seems to be the nature of a country’s progress and the process of modernization.

The story ends with an existentialist crisis of the main protagonist. Hu Wenqing, now in his early 60s, contemplates the life choices he has made and the life he has lived so far. He seems to have been in search of a perfect utopian ideology to follow all his life, but at the end, what ideology did he follow? Was it communism? Socialism? Capitalism? Buddhism? Regardless of which one he chooses, they all seem to bring nothing but pain.

6.2.3.2 Sub-Theme 3B: Life in Rural China After the Cultural Revolution and Economic Reforms. Development and modernization of rural China has been one of the hot topics among contemporary writers. The backwardness of rural China, the immense gap between city living and rustic living in China is one of the main sub-themes of the translations in *Pathlight*. With the reform of “opening up” and the push for modernization, Chinese cities have been growing in leaps and bounds, assimilating a Western lifestyle. Rural China, on the other hand, is slow to catch up. As the cities become more developed and the urbanites lead a wealthier, modernized lifestyle, life in the villages is stagnant and impoverished. The younger generation born in the villages is working hard to move to the city for a better life, while leaving the older generations behind.

“Autumn Harvest Chronicle” by Liu Ting (2017) is a story showing the immense gap between rural and urban life. A lonely widow living in a village with her dog after her husband died, she has to harvest the crops all by herself, with no relatives willing to help. She cannot count on her two sons either. Her older son is in prison, and the younger son lives in the city, busy with his own family and career. Another societal issue brought up in this story is the filial piety and the growing elderly population in rural China. Many elderly people are left behind in poor villages, while their children either move to the cities permanently, or work in the cities as migrant workers for long stretches of time. With the children busy with their own set of everyday struggles such as finding a good job, or buying an apartment in the city, the elderly people are left behind to care for themselves:

Erhu hasn't written in months, I don't know what's going on. Maybe he is angry with me? In his last letter – a long time ago – he said he wanted to buy a place in the city with his wife but that he was still 20,000 short. I don't have that much money so I thought about selling the donkey. But if I do, how will I get the harvest in? I rely on this old animal for everything: spring planting, autumn harvest, going up the mountain to do little work, and for transport....

Erhu has changed, when he was studying, he never wanted to leave, and when he came back to visit he would stick to me like glue, saying, “Mum, when I've graduated and found work, I am going to bring you to stay in the city with me for a few months,” he's been working for the last few years and has even made it to associate professor, but he hasn't mentioned that promise again. It's not that I want to go to the city, I am just sad that my child has forgotten me, that he won't tell his own mother what's on his mind.

(Excerpt from “Autumn Harvest Chronicle” by Liu Ting, in *Pathlight*, 2017/1, p. 126, translated by Emily Jones)

This story shows the tenacity, and the hard-working, strong character of the peasants, while also exposing the tragic fate of those in rural China—they are left behind and forgotten in China’s economic growth. Years after the economic reforms of “opening up”, Chinese rural areas are still poor and undeveloped, similar to the parents left behind in the villages.

Similarly, in “Going to Tang Village to Build a Coffin” by Cao Kou (2018), the author depicts rural China as extremely poor and desperate. The family hires a carpenter to come to their village to build a coffin, but the family wants to save money on the building materials, and asks the carpenter to use untreated wood that is at least a decade old. Based on the carpenter’s observations, the whole village is so poor that they all have gaps in their doorframes—either they have very unskilled carpenters there, or they are just so poor that the cracks in the doorframes are the least of their concerns:

“ [W]hen he connected all the boards together, so that the coffin finally began to look like a coffin, he found that crevices remained between the boards through which lamplight penetrated like leaking water. This naturally reminded him of the doors he saw on his way into village. Those doors also seemed to be leaking light into the outside world. Such miserable luck, that the people of Tang village should live their whole lives in houses that leaked light, only to lie in caskets of the same quality once they had died.”

(Excerpt from “Going to Tang Village to Build a Coffin” by Cao Kou, in *Pathlight*, 2018/1, p. 245, translated by Cannan Morse)

The satirical short story “Stephen’s Back” by Li Er (2011) directs the reader’s attention to a crude lifestyle in the countryside, infused with old customs and traditions, post Cultural Revolution and during the early years of the economic reform period in China. The story is filled with symbolic names given to the characters, like Great Leap Li, Red Army Zhang, Iron Egg, Two-Donkey Li, or expressions like “serve the masses,” and “comrade,” which reference pre-Cultural Revolutionary China, as a way to show that rural China is still stuck in those times, and has not been able to ride the rich wave of the economic reforms and modernity.

This story shows the backwardness of rural life, filled with domestic violence, ignorance, prejudice and superstition. It revolves around the farce created by the second visit of the foreigner Stephen, a soccer coach from England, to the village of Whitebluff. The rumor is that his goal this time, just like last time, is to recruit talented young athletes to join his soccer team. This news stirs up a series of events and memories, making the competitive parents, who dream of sending their children to big cities for a better life, willing to do anything, including bribery or sexual favours:

“‘To go out for soccer, it’s not enough to have good physique, you also have to have an economic foundation.’ Coach Shen admitted all this freely. It made Rule-Peace grit his teeth in contempt, but all he could do was take it out on Bean-Bean. He picked an argument with her and laid into her so hard that her buttocks swelled together. Whoever heard of a real man that does not beat his old lady?’” (Excerpt from “Stephen’s Back” by Li Er, in *Pathlight*, 2011/1, pp. 3511-3516, translated by Denis Mair)

The crudeness of rural life and the ignorance of the uneducated villagers are expressed through the narration, giving an account of minute details in the villagers’ everyday lives, their

customs and their reaction to new things. The following paragraph shows the villagers' reaction at seeing a woman from a foreign land with a different skin colour:

“Now he understood what those people were gawking at: it was not so much Stephen as the woman with him. She was a black woman, the first black woman who had ever come to Whitebluff. She even gave all the people a smile. One of them said her face was really black, “blacker than charcoal.” Another added, “But her teeth are white, whiter than snow.” (Excerpt from “Stephen’s Back” by Li Er, in *Pathlight*, 2011/1, p. 3370, translated by Denis Mair)

The story also reveals some of the poor living conditions in rural areas, like the lack of easy access to clean water in each household; the following excerpt from the translation suggests that it is not habitual to wash daily:

As soon as he got in the door he filled a basin with water. “Washing your face?” Rule-Peace asked. “The teacher wants us to wash,” said Iron-Egg. “We’re supposed to wash our necks too, and not just today. We’re supposed to wash again tomorrow. (Excerpt from “Stephen’s Back” by Li Er, in *Pathlight*, 2011/1, p. 3573, translated by Denis Mair)

6.2.4 Main Theme 4: Modern Chinese Women (17%)

About 17% of the stories analyzed from *Pathlight* are told through women protagonists, and written by women writers. These translations tell the stories of both rural and urban women. Although Chinese women in modern Chinese society have risen from the low social status they had during the pre-May Fourth period (before 1914), there are still faced with many prejudices and biases carried over from old traditions. Viewed as men’s possessions according to the old societal structure prior to the May Fourth Movement in 1914, “[m]any reformers in republican

China attributed China's weakness to the inferior status of Chinese women, consequently, they promoted women's rights as a means of strengthening the nation" (Du, 2013, p. 482). With the emancipation of Chinese women since the May Fourth period, the narrative about women in Chinese literature has also been refined and evolved since modern Chinese women's literature first began in the late 19th century (Du, 2013). The narrative of women in Chinese literature has since gone through several stages: 1) during and immediately after the May Fourth period, literary works about women dealt with emotional changes in women, and the clash between the traditional and modern values of Chinese women; 2) during the Mao era from the 1950s to the 1970s, women were depicted as "energetic, hard-working female farm-hands, factory workers, soldiers" (Du, 2013, p. 485), labelled as "strong woman image"; 3) starting in the 1980s, after the reforms of "opening up", literary works about women focussed on themes of love and romance, marriage and divorce, negating the strong woman image, and with an emphasis on the inner world of women; 4) since the 1990s, with the continuous growth of the market economy in China, women in this modern Chinese society have become more open-minded and independent, and are no longer confronted with the conflicts between tradition and modernity. Many young writers have emerged who, while still writing about the inner world of modern Chinese women, also depict the complexity of women's lives in the increasingly consumerist economy.

The stories translated in *Pathlight* portray the life of modern Chinese women as they confront everyday pressures from modern society and in the established hierarchy of the still very male-dominated society. While modern urban Chinese society is slowly shedding its old views on the inferior status of women, some rural areas of China still maintain old habits and customs in this regard. Before the modernization of China, Chinese society was highly patriarchal and agrarian, and Chinese families had a preference for sons over daughters; they

believed that men were physically stronger than women and could not only help more around the house and with farming, but also due to the higher societal position of men, they had more privileges, such as the opportunity for education or to hold official positions. The short story “Song in the Night” by Li Dongliang (2018) recounts that these prejudices are still present in China today, especially less developed rural areas:

Qingmu felt sorry for his wife, who was under a lot of pressure in the village, where people still joked about her taking five years to get pregnant. His parents had at one point told him he should get a divorce if she didn’t conceive. (Excerpt from “Songs in the Night” by Li Dongliang, from *Pathlight*, 2018/1, p. 326, translated by Luisetta Mudie)

Wives were viewed and treated as servants to their husbands and merely vessels to procreate in old Chinese society, with their position in a family often determined by their ability to produce a son or a daughter. This custom seems to still exist in many families in China, especially in rural areas: “Before Dong’er gave birth to her son, she had always been very submissive and quiet around her husband. She wouldn’t have said boo to a goose. ... ‘Women’s power lies in their sons,’ Qiaohong thought” (excerpt from “Songs in the Night” by Li Dongliang, from *Pathlight* 2018/1, p. 344, translated by Luisetta Mudie). Later on in the story, this is again made explicit: “‘Come on, then,’ he said. ‘You have status now; you have a son. No wonder you have such a temper now. I don’t want to provoke you’” (excerpt from “Songs in the Night” by Li Dongliang, from *Pathlight*, 2018/1, p 353, translated by Luisetta Mudie).

Similarly, the main protagonist in Di An’s short story “William’s Tomb” has been called “son” by her father while growing up, making her feel she will never be good enough for her father. This coming-of-age story depicts the main character’s struggle and complex relationship with her father. She spends her whole life trying to live up to her father’s expectations. The

feeling of hatred, humiliation and being underestimated by her own father has followed this young woman all her life, eventually becoming the sole motivation in her life:

“Dad,” I smiled peacefully, “I grew up a long time ago. Don’t call me your son anymore. I’ve always been your daughter. I don’t want to play the same game as when I was a kid.”... I am not a son, I am not a son... He can go to hell. I am a woman even though I liked wearing boy’s clothes as a child and refuse to put my hair into ponytails and hold dollies. Even today, I wear my hair short and dress like a tomboy. ... That was until I met Jiang Fan. Then I knew I was a woman, 100%. I am not my father’s son, I am not some else’s lesbian, and I am not homosexual that I has suspected I might be. I am a woman, I am a woman who only loved one man. (Excerpt from “William’s Tomb” by Di An, from *Pathlight*, 2011, 1, pp. 1745-1751, translated by Alice Xin Liu)

The story shows her inner struggle and conflict when she finds out that her father is ill and needs a transplant from her to save his life. Her hatred and anger towards her father for putting her through tough years, and for making her feel miserable and insecure while growing up, are mixed with strong feelings of filial piety, and the obligation as a daughter to save her father. She is searching for inner peace and strength to come to terms with who she is and what makes her happy, rather than letting the past determine her happiness. At the end, the main protagonist decides to help her father by donating a piece of her liver to him, because she knows that although it seemed like her father was always tough on her and always had higher expectations from her, he did those things out of love. It was his way to prepare her to face this world and mould her into the person she has become:

“Dad, you wanted to have a son, but do you think that I would have been like you if I were a boy?” I remember this clearly: love had made me brave, and it made me say to

him finally: “This isn’t a question of a son or a daughter. Even if I were a boy, I would still be like I am now. You don’t really want a son. You want a winner, a winner just like you. (Excerpt from “William’s Tomb” by Di An, from *Pathlight*, 2011, 1, p. 1767, translated by Alice Xin Liu)

Wei Wei’s (2018) short story “Dressing Up” is another story showing the tremendous psychological pressure and stress put on modern Chinese young women by modern Chinese society. The main character of this short story is a poor young student who had an affair with a married man whom she briefly worked for as an intern. This married man, seemingly once deeply in love with her, cannot put her above his family and career as a judge. He seems quite content splitting his time between his family and his love affair with the main protagonist. So when she graduates and her internship is completed, their relationship also ends. Her lover, just before they bid farewell to each other, tries to give her some money. This gesture makes the poor young student feel humiliated, ashamed and used. She feels objectified and degraded. The following excerpt shows the inner thoughts and rationalizations of the main character about love and her relationship with her lover:

“Money wasn’t the issue here. The issue was he didn’t love her – that was the reality. He may have spent a bit of money on her, out of obligation. But if you went to a prostitute, you’d need to spend money. She worked out that what he’s spent on her in six months was the same as it would cost to visit a prostitute three times. Three times! How many times had he done it with her? Jiali cried – she cost less than a hooker.” (Excerpt from “Dressing up” by Wei Wei, from *Pathlight*, 2018/1, p. 43, translated by Poppy Toland)

This short story shows what poverty and societal stereotypes do to women's psyches. Although the main protagonist of this short story eventually makes it as a successful lawyer in the big city a decade later, she still cannot forget and forgive the past. She becomes an independent, successful, and influential woman, but deep inside, she is still that poor, shy student she once was:

She couldn't forget her poverty; this poverty played a more important role in her psychological make-up than anything else. She had to constantly remind herself to eat simply, wear basic clothes and live a dignified life.... She hated it, but she also loved it; she worried she'd always be caught inside poverty's net. (Excerpt from "Dressing up" by Wei Wei, from *Pathlight*, 2018/1, p. 40, translated by Poppy Toland)

The story reveals the misogyny and money worship mentality of Chinese society, and also criticizes the materialistic nature of modern romantic relationships. Since the implementation of the economic reforms, China has seen a great polarity between super rich and poor, and being a mistress seems to have become a new profession for some poor young women in China. Young women trade their youth and flesh for materialistic comfort, by agreeing to date rich older men. These societal conventions have affected the psychological make-up of the main protagonist. Despite her fight against these conventions, by walking away from her lover and building a successful law firm in a big city, certain stereotypes and labels put on women still follow her. The damage already done to her psyche is something she cannot seem to run away from.

The short story "That Damned Thing She Said" by Fu Yuli (2014) also paints a story of a woman who finds herself in an adulterous relationship, not because of love, but because of something she said and something the other person assumed. The story is written in the form of an interior monologue of a married woman, who too often feels more alone than ever. Yet again,

due to certain societal expectations and afraid of being judged as a failure, she chooses to stay in her unhappy marriage and live a boring, monotonous life, until, in a moment of weakness, she shares her secret with the wrong person. Her words are misunderstood as an invitation to start an adulterous relationship, one thing leads to another, and she allows herself be seduced by a man she does not even like. Chinese women are still viewed as inferior to men, and are expected to be good wives to their husbands and good mothers to their children, while at the same time having their own careers. The burden of being a perfect homemaker and successful career women is weighing on modern Chinese women, making them extremely unhappy and lonely. Examples can be seen in two excerpts below, taken from the short story:

“She made sure everyone knew just what a happy family they were. Xiangxiang’s own husband had held them up as example, in the hopes that she would behave more like his aunt and stop nagging him all the time. Now, suddenly, Xiangxiang realized that it wasn’t like that at all. Women like her aunt-in-law are just better at pretending. That was why they were happy.” (Excerpt from “That Damned Thing She Said” by Fu Yuli, from *Pathlight*, 2014/Summer, p. 1604, translated by Nicky Harman)

“Her father made no secret of the fact that he had wanted a boy. “Girls! A waste of space,” he used to grumble. “They are gone in a puff of smoke with the wedding firecrackers, taking your money with them.” Xiangxiang always felt she was a source of conflict in her parents’ marriage. She was living proof of her mother’s failure to produce a son.” (Excerpt from “That Damned Thing She Said” by Fu Yuli, from *Pathlight*, 2014/Summer, p. 1454, translated by Nicky Harman)

Unlike the stories described above, the short story “Hands” by Su Yang (2014) is about the vanity and superficial materialism of women in the Chinese society, which is in turn caused

by unrealistic expectations put on women by societal conventions. The protagonist's desire to preserve the beauty of her hands is symbolic of the extreme vanity of modern women. The protagonist is obsessed with the beauty of her hands, and spends all her time and energy to find new ways to take care of her hands, sacrificing her relationship with her boyfriend:

Initially he barely glanced at her, Later, when the alcohol was placed on the table, she took it upon herself to pour him a glass. ... That was the moment he saw her hands. He was temporarily taken aback, looking at her hands for a long while, his gaze fixed. When he turned to look at her face, she noticed his eyes now had a tender sheen. She had looked down at her hands and given an inward laugh. (Excerpt from "Hands" by Su Yang, from *Pathlight*, 2004/Summer, p. 2325, translated by Poppy Toland)

This society's conventions about a woman's beauty are putting pressure on young women to the point of obsession. Achieving perfection has become the ultimate goal for many young women, losing sight of what is really important in life. The beautiful hands of the main character were what caught the attention of her ex-boyfriend, and her beautiful hands also became the reason he left her:

She was sixteen when she became aware of the value of her hands. From that day forth she had not washed a single dish or a single item of clothing. ... She everything possible to protect her hands, and was certainly not going to allow them to come into contact with chemical products like detergent and washing powder.... She knew that if she lost these hands, she would lose her edge. If a woman did not possess one attribute with which to tempt men, then what was the point of living? (Excerpt from "Hands" by Su Yang, from *Pathlight*, 2004/Summer, pp. 2325-2330, translated by Poppy Toland)

There is one common narrative for all these woman protagonists: externally they put up a façade of success and happiness, but internally, these women are lonely, lost and conflicted. Their happiness is highly dependent on how society perceives them. Far too often, these women fall into a trap of modern society's skewed conventions and find themselves in situations they regret.

6.2.5 Conclusion: Summary of the Main Themes and Stories Exported Through Pathlight

The content analysis done using an inductive coding method of the translations from the eight selected issues of *Pathlight* yielded some interesting findings. The preliminary findings revealed that multiple themes and narratives can often times manifest in one single text. Therefore, a further, more in-depth, analysis was performed to reduce and categorize various themes to four main narratives: 1) the modern urban lifestyle and modern Chinese society; 2) existentialist interrogation of the meaning of life and death; 3) Chinese society post Cultural Revolution; and 4) modern Chinese women. These main themes can be then further divided into sub-themes that deal with a particular subject matter under the bigger umbrella of the main narrative¹⁷. In summary, from all the themes exported through the analyzed translations in *Pathlight*, one can paint a picture of China's bumpy road towards modernity, filled with the everyday struggles of ordinary people, both urban and rural, dealing with the country's rapid changes in the economic landscape and ever-growing number of societal issues.

The inductive analysis has brought to light a myriad of societal issues in both urban and rural China that seem to be troubling contemporary writers in China. While China has been showing record-breaking results in terms of economic growth since the beginning of the 1980s,

¹⁷ For the full list of the works categorized under each theme, please see [Appendix C](#).

when the Chinese government implemented the economic reforms of “opening up” and the policy of “going out”, social progress was mostly ignored, stagnant and lagging behind economic development. Chinese society was overwhelmed with the financial freedom brought by the rapid capital accumulation and wealth, which, as a result, led to fast spiritual degradation, extreme consumerist mentality and proliferation of social inequality in urban and rural areas. The life and inner world of modern Chinese women, the stress and complexity of modern life, the poor spirituality and immorality of modern Chinese society, widespread official corruption and money worship and the lives of migrant workers are among the main sub-themes prevailing in the analyzed translations. The sharp contrast between the ultra-urban rich and super-rural poor has become a normalized phenomenon in modern China. The analyzed translations in *Pathlight* also exposed social inequalities, and revealed the helplessness and hopelessness of ordinary people’s daily struggles in modern China. This hopelessness is expressed through the translation of numerous philosophical works questioning the meaning of life and death in *Pathlight*. These translations expose the dark side of Chinese society and depict the flaws of human nature, shaped and moulded by modern consumerist mentality in China, often leading to the protagonist ultimately expressing a weary attitude towards this world and to main characters’ existentialist crises.

6.3 Do the Stories and Cultural Images Translated in *Pathlight* Fit the Current Dominant Ideology?

As described in the coding process section ([Section 6.1](#)), once the translations were analyzed and inductively coded, I used a deductive coding method to further analyze the existing link between the repeated narratives in *Pathlight* and what seems to be the mainstream ideology

in modern China (as defined by the experts on China)—Xi Jinping’s ideology of the Chinese dream. Gow (2017) claims that

there is clear evidence that the CCP is, through its propaganda infrastructure, pushing a range of consensus-building activities under the umbrella of the “Chinese Dream” discourse. Most prominent amongst these is the “Core Socialist Values” campaign, which lays out the CCP’s vision through four goals at each of the national, societal, and citizenship levels. (p. 93)

In similar fashion, M. Feng (2015) attests that the CCP has developed and proclaimed this set of core socialist values to support the realization of the Chinese dream, the ideological slogan promoted and endorsed by Xi himself. Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) defined these values as “the keywords of the Xi era” (p. 332) that underscore the ideology of modern China.

Since these core socialist values have been defined as closely linked to the Chinese dream and Chinese modern ideological discourse, and since deductive coding usually employs previously developed codes from existing literature to formulate coding categories (Drisko & Maschi, 2015), I have used the 12 core socialist values as the starting point in this part of my coding process to check to what degree the stories in *Pathlight* display them. This deductive method of comparing the themes found in the translations in *Pathlight* with the notions defining core socialist values will also serve as a reliability check for the previous categories produced. In other words, drawing upon the existing codes (i.e. the 12 core socialist values), the findings in this section will produce reliable results to indicate the existing link (or lack thereof) between the translations in *Pathlight* and current Chinese ideology of the Chinese dream.

According to Gow's (2017) analysis of the 12 core socialist values, they can be organized into three levels: national values (prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony), societal values (freedom, equality, justice, rule of law), and values of the citizens (patriotism, dedication, integrity and geniality). The findings of the deductive analysis in this study indicate that the majority of the themes of the 84 translations in *Pathlight* touch on all three levels of the core values in one way or another, with the prosperity value being the most frequently shown, followed by harmony, freedom and patriotism. Although certain narratives in these translations depict the dark side of society caused by the government policies, including extreme poverty in rural China, corruption in various government bodies, social injustice, damages and suffering brought by the Cultural Revolution, there is no direct open criticism of the CCP. Rather, in many of them, there is hope for a brighter future for China and its people. This narrative seems to be in line with the Chinese government's current rhetoric. According to some experts on Chinese ideology (Brown, 2012; Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Han & Zhang, 2018), the CCP, as a pragmatic party, does not deny that certain issues exist in Chinese society today and takes responsibility for past mistakes, acknowledging the pain and suffering the Chinese people have gone through. Through the promotion of the 12 core socialist values, the Chinese government seems to give hope to and boost confidence in the Chinese citizens for a better and brighter future for the Chinese nation (Han & Zhang, 2018; Gow, 2017). For example, with the anti-corruption campaigns recently launched by the current president Xi Jinping, the Chinese government is not refuting the existence of corrupt officials within the CCP, and is calling on the whole nation to work together in the fight against corruption in all levels of the party and government (Han & Zhang, 2018).

There is another possible explanation why, despite the many narratives of societal problems in the translations of *Pathlight*, including some caused directly by the CCP-approved policies, there is no anti-CCP narrative or sentiment found in these translations: it is self-censorship (by the writers, editors and publishers themselves), developed over the years of working in the institutions functioning under the CCP (Lovell, 2012a; Tan, 2015; Wong, 2017; Yan, 2016). “There is no doubt that the censorship of books, including translated books or books for translation, has always been an important part of government – or rather the Communist Party’s – control of ideas since the founding of the socialist state of the PRC in 1949” (Tan, 2015, p. 319). While there is a certain freedom of expression in contemporary China, especially as the country becomes more open to the outside world, many establishments continue to exercise self-censorship, as a way of ensuring that their material complies with censorship and publication laws (Wong, 2017). Topics that are a common taboo for publishers, writers, editors and translators include: a) content related to the works, articles, lives and working conditions of former or current leaders; b) content that could endanger national unity (or ethnic cohesion), sovereignty or territorial integrity (including topics related to the country’s borders); c) content that damages social stability or public morality, harms good traditions and culture, etc. (Tan, 2015; Wong, 2017). This could explain why many of these translations reveal societal issues such as social inequality, corrupt party officials, poor rural areas and the emotional and physical struggles of everyday Chinese people, but overall, they do not touch on other sensitive and taboo subjects, such as obscene materials, or explicit and detailed descriptions of sex scenes, topics related to conflicts and issues between Chinese ethnic groups, topics involving religious issues, materials that provide important information about former and present leaders of the government, Chinese border issues (such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet), etc. (Tan, 2015; Wong,

2017). Coincidentally (or perhaps not), only a handful of Taiwanese or Hong Kongese writers were featured in *Pathlight* over the entire nine-year period of publication. This could be explained by the unresolved territorial, political and sovereignty issues between the three parties involved.

As described in the theme analysis in the previous section, many facets of Chinese society are addressed through these translations, unveiling many drawbacks/problems of contemporary Chinese society. However, we can also argue that for the purpose of changing the international opinion about itself, the Chinese government's goal is not to hide these issues, but rather highlight the existing issues to evoke understanding and empathy in the readers, thus making the experiences of Chinese society relatable to other cultures. The Chinese people in these translations may have different historical backgrounds and cultural traditions from the target readers, but as human beings, just like people from any other culture, they are dealing with their own set of issues, be they societal, economic, or ecological, etc. A more rhetorical approach to emphasize the relatable experiences of the Chinese nation was taken by Han & Zhang (2018) in the preface of their co-authored book *Contemporary Value Systems in China*. They introduced the socialist core values, among other more traditional ones, as

values that emphasize the pursuit of happiness, the welfare, civilization, and progress of society, which have a lot in common with the values of other nations and peoples around the world. The Chinese people are no different from any other peoples. They eat when they are hungry, sleep when they are drowsy, and take a rest when they feel tired. They also long for a life of liberty, have emotions such as happiness, anger, sadness, and sorrow, and have their own value ideal and value pursuit. (p. x)

Given this situation, when categorizing the themes under these 12 core socialist values, the *implicit* meaning of the translations becomes the main indicator. Explicitly, a translation may seem to be an open criticism of the dark side of Chinese society, or a depiction of poverty or corruption, but the *implicit* meaning of the same translation may be viewed as aligned with one of the core values of the CCP. Furthermore, the socialist core values are all interwoven one with another; therefore, in many instances, one translation may reveal and align with more than one value. Thus, I will provide an interpretive analysis to explain how a certain value is implicitly embedded in the analyzed translations.

In the sections that follow, I will provide a brief explication of each socialist value and then show if (how) these values were hidden in the latent text of *Pathlight*. It is imperative to note that the explication of the socialist values in the following sections relies on the interpretations produced mainly by several experts on the topic (both Chinese and overseas scholars) and draws on ideas summarized from their works, among which is the article “Ideology in the Era of Xi Jinping” by Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018), published by Springer Publishing in the *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, a peer-review academic journal on Chinese political science, included in the collection catalogued by the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). Both authors are scholars on Chinese politics living outside of mainland China. Kerry Brown¹⁸ is a professor of Chinese Studies and Director of the Lau China Institute at King’s College (London), who writes extensively on the topics of the Chinese politics, the CCP and the Chinese leadership; and Bērziņa-Čerenkova¹⁹ is a Latvian scholar, specializing in Chinese political discourse and

¹⁸ For more information on Kerry Brown, please see <https://www.kerry-brown.co.uk/kerry-brown-biography/>

¹⁹ For more information on Bērziņa-Čerenkova, please see <https://www.fpri.org/contributor/una-aleksandra-Bērziņa-Čerenkova/>

Chinese contemporary ideology, who heads the Riga Stradins University China Studies Centre and the New Silk Road programme at the Latvian Institute of International Affairs.

Another frequently referenced source is the article “The Core Socialist Values of the Chinese Dream: Towards a Chinese Integral State” by Gow (2017). This article is published by Taylor and Francis in *Critical Asian Studies* (formerly *the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*)²⁰, a peer-reviewed high-ranking journal on societal issues in the Asia-Pacific regions with a comparatively high impact factor. The author of the article, Michael Gow²¹, is a lecturer in International Business at the School of Strategy and Leadership at Coventry University, UK. Prior to teaching at Coventry University, he held a position as a teaching fellow in the Humanities and Social Sciences at Xi’an Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU)²², the first independent University in China approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education and founded by joint efforts of Xi’an Jiaotong University, China and University of Liverpool, United Kingdom. Gow was also an Inaugural Global Postdoctoral Fellow at New York University (NYU) Shanghai, the third degree-granting campus in NYU’s global network from 2013 to 2015. Gow’s experience working in mainland China allows his interpretation of the core socialist values to incorporate a critical view on China both as an outsider and as an expert from inside of China.

The insights into the Chinese official interpretations of the social core values which are presented below are mainly derived and quoted from the book *Contemporary Value Systems in China* by Han & Zhang (2018), printed jointly by Springer Publishing and China Social Science Press. Both Han and Zhang²³ are professors of philosophy from prestigious Chinese Universities.

²⁰ For more information on the CAS Journal, please see <https://criticalasianstudies.org/home>

²¹ For more information on Gow, please visit his blog <http://www.thedaxue.org/p/about-m-i-gow.html>

²² For more information on XJTLU, please visit <https://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/about/overview>

²³ For more information on Han, please see <https://www.springer.com/us/book/9789811323928#aboutAuthors>

Han served as the President (2012-2014) and later as a secretary of the CCP Committee (2014-2018) of Beijing Foreign Studies University, former Vice President of Beijing Normal University, commissioner of the Central Marxist Theoretical Research and Construction of the Advisory Committee, and has written extensively on the Chinese socialist core values. Zhang currently is a professor at the Research Center for Value and Culture from Beijing Normal University and the director of Institute of Chinese Philosophy and Culture.

6.3.1 Core Values at the National Level (Strength, Democracy, Civility and Harmony)

At the national level, the four core values—strength, democracy, civility and harmony—are the national characteristics that China hopes to achieve as a part of the two centennial goals of the Chinese dream. By 2049, the CCP hopes to completely rejuvenate the nation and complete building China as a strong, democratic, civilized and harmonious country (Gow, 2017).

Interpretations of each of the individual values can be expanded and summarized as follows:

Strength/prosperity, introduced by the CCP as one of the core ideological concepts in the contemporary Chinese value system, refers to building a rich country with a strong economy and society. As elucidated by the experts on China mentioned above (Gow, 2017; Han & Zhang, 2018), this core value is tied to advocating for increasing national prosperity and wealth by developing productivity and building a shared future and benefits. This includes maintaining a healthy and sustainable economy to construct a moderately prosperous society, modernizing agriculture to narrow the gap between urban and rural development in China, and strengthening China’s global position and competitiveness (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Boc, 2015; Gow, 2017; Han & Zhang, 2018).

Democracy in the context of the Chinese dream can be interpreted and understood as a “people’s democracy” with Chinese characteristics, rather than a democracy in the Western

sense (M. Feng, 2015). Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) explain that the Chinese sense of democracy means “democracy for the Party, by the Party, on behalf of the Party, all of which act as servants of the people they serve” (Brown & Berzina-Cerenkova, 2018, p. 332). Furthermore, according to the CCP, only the CCP can unite the Chinese nation to develop democracy: “in face of existing achievements and inadequacies, the CPC [CCP]... remains its political determination and insightfulness, ... doing its utmost to combat corruption, remaining committed to take its own path” (Han & Zhang, 2018, p. 127). The current generation of Chinese leaders is vowing to improve the democratic system and the people’s representative system for the Chinese citizens, “improve multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of CPC [CCP], consolidate and develop the broadest possible patriotic united front” (Han & Zhang, 2018, p. 128).

Civility, according to both domestic and international experts on Chinese ideology, is a core value promoted by the Chinese government as a significant symbol of Chinese social progress. This notion is built on the contrast of the old, backward Chinese society and the modernized, rejuvenated nation (Brown & Berzina-Cerenkova, 2018; Gow, 2017). This core value, as endorsed by the CCP, is closely linked with the development of materialistic civilization for social development, which promotes economic development, the improvement of people’s livelihoods and the achievement of prosperity for the Chinese nation (Han & Zhang, 2018), which can be linked back to the value of prosperity/strength.

Harmony is promoted by the Chinese leadership as a call for unity not only at home but also abroad, and can be understood as the government’s invitation for the public to work together towards achieving the common goal of national rejuvenation, and internationally, to peacefully coexist with other nations (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Gow, 2017). According to Han

and Zhang (2018), domestically, issues brought about by changes in the economic system are causing imbalances in social harmony, for example, environmental issues, unemployment, low social security, unequal income distribution, education quality, healthcare, housing, etc. These, seemingly, are all issues that need to be addressed to attain social harmony (Han & Zhang, 2018). Globally, China is promoting regional cooperation between the countries to find “win-win” solutions for the problems and “form a community of common destiny” (Han & Zhang, 2018, p. 141).

The analysis shows that at the national level the translations in *Pathlight* promote three out of four of these core socialist values, with prosperity and harmony being the most recurring narratives in the 84 translations analyzed, and democracy being the one value that was not found in the recurring themes. The latent content in translations that feature economic prosperity and progress, positive changes and improved quality of life in the country are categorized as linked to the value of prosperity. The economic reforms of the 1980s have brought significant changes to Chinese people’s lives. Although many rural areas are still struggling, having limited access to the abundance of benefits these reforms brought in comparison with the urban Chinese, overall the livelihood of Chinese citizens, both rural and urban, has notably improved. The prosperity and strength of the country is shown in the translations through the narratives of materialist richness. With marketization, Chinese people can live in their own homes, drive their own cars, have decent disposable income and enjoy basic social benefits.

An example of this is the main character from “China Story” by Jiang Yitan (2011). Mr. Na, a retiree, who can now enjoy living in his own apartment, has a decent pension to live on and spends his daily leisure time having tea with his other retiree-friends. These are the things that Chinese people could not enjoy during the Mao era when housing belonged to the government,

as did most of the products and produce. Food was rationed, with only limited amounts allotted to each family. Bicycles were the main mode of transportation and sometimes people had to ride several kilometers to collect the needed produce for the family. Those days are over and Chinese citizens can enjoy many of the conveniences of modern life, including owning their own property, going to their favourite tea shops, or having breakfast right around the corner from their condo. These types of stories depict the prosperity brought by rapid economic development and these positive changes in Chinese people's lives can be found in the following passage from "China Story":

The sixty-square-meter two-bedroom apartment in which Mr. Na currently lived was old, but it was in a great location. It would be worth about 120,000 yuan on the local housing market. That plus his savings, should be enough for a down payment on his son's future apartment. ... He decided to tell his wife about his decision to sell the apartment. ... "I want to sell our apartment and use the money to help him buy an apartment in Beijing, though it might not be as big as this one... With my monthly pension over a thousand yuan, I can afford to rent a small apartment." (Excerpt from "China Story" by Jiang Yitan, from *Pathlight*, 2011/1, pp. 1460-1465, translated by Eric Abrahamsen)

Other translations in *Pathlight* also show the prosperity narrative through the convenience and innovation that economic growth has brought to Chinese citizens. In "The Story of Hu Wenqing" by Wei Wei (2013), we can trace the story of the Chinese economic reforms and how positively people's lives have changed due to these reforms. People can enjoy simple things like having a colour TV, an automatic washing machine, or an electric kettle in their homes. The story also shows that although Chinese people have gone through some tough times during the Cultural Revolution due to mistakes in government policies, the times have changed

and the CCP is adjusting its policies to ensure that Chinese citizens will continue to have the opportunity to make their own fortunes and enjoy having these conveniences in their lives.

“But relatively speaking, their lives are much better than before. They were not so different from the rich. What could the rich eat that they couldn’t? Delicacies? Bird’s nest? Shark fin? The groceries and markets sell everything now! Rich people might live in the larger homes, but Juren Lane has become so convenient.” (Excerpt from “The Story of Hu Wenqing” by Wei Wei, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, p. 1815, translated by Katharine Poundstone Han)

These rapid changes are shown to be happening not only in the cities, but also in the rural areas. In the short story “The Greengrocer” by Deng Anqing (2013), we can see the depiction of the cities’ rapid expansion into the nearby rural areas. The building of infrastructure in the rural areas to accommodate continuous industrialization and urbanization in this story shows the country’s growing strength and increased prosperity.

In the 1980s, when the Nation first opened its doors, lumber tycoons from Hong Kong took a shine to this patch of land. Right on the Grand Canal and close to the National Highway, it was logistically convenient, and with Shanghai practically next door, it was a fine site indeed. With the stroke of a pen, they bought it all up and built a new town devoted to the lumber industry. Where once there was farmland they erected row upon row of white factories. (Excerpt from “The Greengrocer” by Deng Anqing, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, pp. 2884-2889, translated by Andrea Lingenfelter)

The government began to build roads here because of the factory zone, several of which cut through the original motley assortment of farmhouses and ran straight downtown. An

elevated highway followed shortly after. Small factories started moving into the areas surrounding the industrial township. (Excerpt from “The Greengrocer” by Deng Anqing, from *Pathlight*, 2013/Autumn, p. 2899, translated by Andrea Lingenfelter)

Although the changes in rural China are comparatively slow and some remote rural areas still remain impoverished, these stories show the villagers’ positive attitude towards life. They depict the hard life of peasants and villagers in China, but also show how their lives have improved.

The analysis shows that civility can be found in these translated texts when they contrast old Chinese society with backward traditions and modern China. Usually these translations tell stories that span several decades to show the progress in Chinese society. One can argue that the purpose of these stories is not only to showcase the kind of progress Chinese society has made so far, but also to remind readers of ancient Chinese culture and traditions. Some customs (ex. special New Year greetings, wedding ceremonies, etc.), carried over from older Chinese traditions, are passed from generation to generation, and are still being followed today. Since this core value mainly promotes progress and the modernization of Chinese society and civilization, it can arguably be identified in the narratives related to prosperity and strength of the country, even if explicitly, the story depicts backwardness and poverty. For example, some of the old traditions that are no longer followed by modern Chinese families, such as kowtow, when the younger generation in the family is expected to kneel in front of the older generation and press their forehead to the ground in a show of respect during the Chinese spring festival celebration:

I hadn’t seen her in more than a decade, back when it was still the norm for New Year’s greetings to involve a kowtow – you’d have to kneel down when elder got anywhere near you, wishing them good fortune and long life ... she’d say good boy, so respectful,

kneeling to me before you've even said a word, here, come, have a sweet. (Excerpt from "Remembering Qin E" by Xu Zechen, from *Pathlight*, 2016/2, pp. 61-62, translated by Jeremy Tiang)

Similarly, some wedding customs followed during the traditional Chinese wedding can be used as an example of such customs that show the contrast between modern and old China:

The firecrackers started at dawn. The various wedding preparations are all in place, and now the drivers, labourers, bridesmaids and chefs – almost fifty people – began their frenzied work. ... Xu was so flustered that he made a laughing stock of himself, hurrying outside with a green blanket. According to Hailing tradition, before the bride emerges from the carriage, the red curtains shielding her from view should first be replaced by a red satin blanket, which is then lifted to reveal her – but Seventh Xu got too excited and rushed out with a green one instead. (Excerpt from "Remembering Qin E" by Xu Zechen, from *Pathlight*, 2016/2, pp. 65-66, translated by Jeremy Tiang)

The short story "Autumn Harvest Chronicle" by Liu Ting (2017) implicitly shows such a contrast between urban and rural life in China. Although explicitly, the story provides a vivid depiction of hard rural life, poverty and isolation, implicitly, it shows that in urban China, life has improved and progressed in leaps and bounds, achieving modernity and materialistic civilization. In a similar vein, "Remembering Qin E" by Xu Zechen (2016) and "Stephen's Back" by Li Er (2011) all show the backwardness of rural China in contrast to the urban life. In a way, by depicting certain old Chinese traditions and customs, these translations not only introduce Chinese civilization and tradition to English readers, but also show the huge strides China has made towards building a modern (Chinese) civilization in both rural and urban China.

Harmony is another frequently recurring value in the narratives of *Pathlight*. The science fiction story “Taking Care of God” by Liu Cixin (2012) is a case in point. The story is set in the future, when aliens calling themselves “God” come to the planet earth for refuge among humans. Through the fictional story, the author shows how humans can be more tolerant and benevolent towards each other:

“ ... I am not a very nice person. I shouldn’t have made you the target of all the bitterness I’d saved up my whole life. It’s just as Qiusheng said, I’ve behaved as if I don’t have a conscience...”

“Actually, we came to Earth not only because we wanted to survive. Having already lived for two, three thousand years, what did we have to fear from death? We just wanted to be with you. We like and cherish your passion for life, your creativity, your imagination. ... We are leaving not because of how you treated us, the fact that you took us in and allowed us to stay was enough.” (Excerpt from “Taking Care God” by Liu Ci Xin, from *Pathlight*, 2012/1, pp. 3480-3488, translated by Ken Liu)

By revealing the disharmonious aspects of society, the story also shows the eagerness of the Chinese people for harmony. The depiction of the dark side of society in the translated texts I analyzed is a reflection of what needs to be done to achieve harmony in the Chinese society. We may see many narratives that seem to express the opposite of harmony, but identifying this disunity seems to be the first step on the path towards harmony. The misunderstandings between different groups in society, the search by various groups in Chinese society for the true meaning of life—all of these are narratives and strategies that seek harmony.

To both the previous generation of leaders and current leaders in China, harmony is an essential value to bring social stability into the country (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018). Han & Zhang (2018) claim that aside from policy changes to solve environmental issues, unemployment, low social security, unequal income distribution, quality of education, healthcare, housing, etc., the party insists that people need to have internal harmony:

[A] harmonious socialist society is not a society without any problems. With the reform entering its critical stage, many internal problems occur among people, and it is hard to avoid when the society undergoes profound changes. Problems are ubiquitous and we can neither ignore and shrink them, nor incur and escalate them. ... [W]e also need to foster a good social atmosphere where people can trust each other, work hand by hand, be united as one, practice integrity and act vigorously... (pp. 142–143)

Narratives that touch on topics of morality or philosophical ponderings on life and death were categorized under the value of harmony. Without the inner peace and harmony of each Chinese citizen, finding harmony in society will not be possible. While people have become materialistically enriched, spiritually, many of them are impoverished, empty and lonely. Such translations as “The Animal-Shaped Fireworks” and “The Weird Auntie” by Zhang Yueran (2017, 2014), “Where Are You” by Li Er (2015), and “The Disappearing Bean Curd Girl” by Lao Ma (2013) all show the deterioration of moral values in modern society brought on by a lack of balanced and harmonious economic and societal development. By the same token, there is a sense of yearning for balance and harmony in all these translations. The latent content shows that the protagonists in these stories are searching either for that inner peace and harmony or the real meaning of life.

6.3.2 Core Values at the Societal Level (Freedom, Equality, Justice and Rule of Law)

At the societal level, as outlined by Han & Zhang (2018), the values promoted by the CCP are designed to improve how Chinese society functions in everyday life. Freedom, equality, justice and rule of law are presented as a “reflection of the nature of a socialist society, an embodiment of the cultural-ethical elements of socialism with Chinese characters, a voice from contemporary Chinese people’s heart and a revelation of the values pursued in the contemporary society of China” (Han & Zhang, 2018, p. 145). After the implementation of the reforms in the 1980s, the rapid economic growth brought great imbalance to Chinese socialist society. Promotion of these values, according to the CCP, will help the country attain the ultimate goal of national rejuvenation (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; M. Feng, 2015; Gow, 2017; Han & Zhang, 2018).

Freedom, just like the value of democracy described above, is another term that the scholars caution not to misinterpret in the Western sense (Han & Zhang, 2018; M. Feng, 2015). In contrast to the liberal meaning, where the independence of the individual in relation to the society is emphasized, the Chinese understanding insists on putting public interests over personal ones to avoid self-centredness (Han & Zhang, 2018). Experts in Chinese ideology and culture claim that this core value is derived from traditional Chinese culture and Confucianism, and is referred to as the symbol of the free spirit of the Chinese nation. Due to the collectivist nature of Chinese culture, the freedom of an individual citizen is looked at only in terms of his/her role in the society as a whole (Gow, 2017; Han & Zhang, 2018). According to this interpretation, socialism with Chinese characteristics is presented as the path that China needs to take to free the Chinese people, and the CCP is the only party that can accomplish this task (Gow, 2017; Han & Zhang, 2018)

[The CCP] overthrew the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, completed the transformation of socialism, achieved independence and liberation, and helped people become masters of the country. ... The socialist economic system with public ownership as its mainstay ensures the real freedom of people. ... Equality in economy basically decides and ensures that socialist freedom is freed from manipulation of capitalism. Socialist freedom, different from the freedom enjoyed by a small number of people who own the means of production, is a genuine freedom enjoyed by the majority of people. (Han & Zhang, 2018, pp. 149–150).

Han & Zhang (2018), providing the official interpretation of the value of freedom in their book *Contemporary Value Systems in China*, further explain that the degree of socialist freedom depends on the development and productivity of the society. The more productive and developed the country is, the freer the people are. Han & Zhang (2018) claim that with this freedom, the living standard of the people will improve, better legal and social security systems will develop and peoples' cultural life will be enriched.

Freedom, in the narratives found in translations in *Pathlight*, arguably, can be understood as “the freedoms of the Chinese to own their own homes, travel where they wish and have new status in the outside world, in response to the way in which the country has not been respected and admired in the past” (Brown & Berzina-Cerenkova, 2018, p. 333). This includes the freedom to have more choices for a variety of commodities, a diversified lifestyle, more free time for personal development, free mobility of people, etc. Thus, this value, seemingly, is closely connected with that of prosperity; it is only with economic growth in the country, with the overall higher quality of life that people can afford to travel to other countries.

Equality, according to the official interpretation of the value, is understood as “the fundamental feature of a socialist society” (Han & Zhang, 2018, p. 160). Based on the interpretations provided by Han & Zhang (2018), this value is closely linked to the value of justice, and in socialist society, equality means equal human dignity, equal rights, and equal opportunities. As cited in previous sections, the rapid economic growth in China since the economic reforms in the 1980s created huge disparities in the society; the widening income gap between the urban and rural populations has continued to grow, creating huge societal inequalities, which goes against the socialist commitment of collective achievement. Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) assert that the inclusion of this value in the core socialist values is taken to mean that the Chinese government recognizes the existence of these issues. Han & Zhang (2018) echoing similar sentiments claim that the CCP has launched initiatives and campaigns to expand the social safety net through increased coverage by the welfare state to provide equal opportunities to all Chinese people. It appears that the fact that the CCP itself acknowledges the existence of societal inequality, arguably gives writers more freedom to write about these issues. As discussed in [Section 6.2.1](#), the theme of inequality in modern Chinese society seems to be one of the major concerns of contemporary writers.

Justice is promoted by the CCP as a core value of the contemporary China. As noted by many experts on the topic, this value is tightly linked to the value of equality and serves as the foundation of a socialist society (Gow, 2017; Han & Zhang, 2018). Han & Zhang (2018) further comment that “[f]airness and justice are the inherent requirement of socialism with Chinese characteristics” (p. 171). On the same subject, Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) and Gow (2017) attested that in order to maintain social order, the CCP needs to ensure that people feel justice is served in Chinese society, and that the protection of individual rights is observed. It

appears that similar to the value of equality, the end goal of social justice is to achieve a harmonious socialist society with a balanced income distribution system, improved living standard in both rural and urban areas and the safeguarding of citizens' rights (Han & Zhang, 2018; M. Feng, 2015).

Rule of law, is another term that is not being studied and interpreted by the scholars in the field in the liberal Western sense. The value of the rule of law, a core socialist value endorsed by the CCP, is viewed by the scholars and the Chinese officialdom as *socialist* rule of law (Han & Zhang, 2018; M. Feng, 2015). Gow (2017) explains that this value is closely linked to the values of justice and equality, and clarifies that the socialist rule of law implies that the CCP is responsible for creating a legal system that is beneficial for the social order, and “serves the teleological modernization project constitutive of the Chinese Dream” (p. 104). According to Han & Zhang (2018), rule of law has become one of China's four goals in building a moderately prosperous society, along with the improvement of judicial credibility, the protection of human rights and the establishment of law-based government and as acknowledged by some scholars, this core value became another step taken by the Chinese government to combat issues within Chinese society involving officials abusing power, corruption, misuse of laws, etc. (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Gow, 2017, M. Feng, 2015).

The analysis shows that the translations in *Pathlight* promote three of the four core values at the societal level, with freedom being the most recurring narrative in the 84 translations analyzed, and rule of law being the one value that was not found in the recurring themes. With the improved quality of life since the 1980s, Chinese citizens are becoming richer, and thus able to afford their own apartments, cars, and travel outside of China for business or pleasure. The freedom narrative is shown through stories about Chinese people travelling to other countries on

vacation, for business, or for education opportunities. Freedom is also shown through narratives about people's freedom in their personal lives. In the short story "Irina's Hat" by Tie Ning (2012), the author also shows the freedom of Chinese women in terms of marriage, with both the narrator and her sister being recently divorced, and her sister finding a new love during their touristic trip to Russia together. The following passage explicates one facet of the socialist ideology of freedom:

...my cousin and I would have a lot in common, both being recently divorced. We no longer had the support, or better yet the burden, of a husband, and we could curse our exes without holding back. But, shockingly, my cousin – practically on the plane to Moscow – began a new romance. (Excerpt from "Irina's Hat" by Tie Ning, from *Pathlight*, 2012/1, p.50, translated by Patrick Rhine)

Many similar narratives can be found in the other translations published in *Pathlight*. "Majong" by Feng Tang (2012) shows the freedom of Chinese citizens to travel outside of the country for education and love. This short story reveals the journey of a young woman in search of love while she is studying abroad:

Shang Shu had made up her mind: she was going to get married as soon as she could, before she became a shengnü – a leftover woman, and old maid, married to her career.

"I am going to marry money," she added, "whatever it takes."

"What do you mean by 'money?'"

"I mean enough money that if I want an ice cream cone I can eat an ice cream cone,"

Shang Shu said. "Enough money to buy three pounds of top-grade lychees if I'm in the

mood for lychees. Enough so if I see a dress I like that comes in three colors, I can buy all three without feeling it in my wallet.”

“I just want to get married and have children and raise them and get old and die happy. I want to find a man I like and be all lovey-dovey with him.” (Excerpt from “Mahjong” by Feng Tang, in *Pathlight*, 2012/1, pp.1550-1574, translated by Brendan O’kane)

All the same, it recounts the free and independent life of modern Chinese people to choose their life partner, away from old traditions of arranged marriages, seemingly to show the degree of freedom modern Chinese women enjoy nowadays:

“I broke up with him today,” Shang Shu said.

“Distance relationships don’t work. Things just don’t go right when the other person isn’t there beside you. Love is about being there for each other.”

“But you are about to go to America,” Bu Youde said. “So you’d be together then, right?”

“But I already arrived at the conclusion that it wasn’t going to work out.”

“I am interested in someone else, all right? I just feel like my boyfriend is too young, too immature.” (Excerpt from “Mahjong” by Feng Tang, in *Pathlight*, 2012/1, pp.1616-1624, translated by Brendan O’Kane)

In the same vein, the short story “Summer of My Dreams” by Zhang Huiwen (2017) depicts the life of an immigrant woman who travelled from China to the US for school and chose to settle there. These stories depict the freedom of Chinese people to pursue love and marriage, and show the degree of freedom that Chinese citizens are able to enjoy in contemporary China.

The translations “Night of the Spring Breeze” by Tie Ning (2013), “Night/Day” by Liu Ting (2016) and “To Shenyang, to See Snow” by Diao Dou (2018) also depict the freedom of mobility Chinese citizens have. They can move anywhere they wish inside China. In “Night of the Spring Breeze,” although the main storyline revolves around immigrant workers and their struggle to adjust to the urban rhythm, the story implicitly shows the freedom of Chinese citizens to travel anywhere in the country and their access to an abundance of different commodities that they could not enjoy before the CCP’s reforms. While “Day/Night” and “To Shenyang, to See Snow” focus mainly on the unpredictability of human nature, they also implicitly show the positive changes in China and Chinese citizens’ freedom of movement.

Paradoxically, the core values of equality and justice are manifested in the narrative of inequality and injustice in *Pathlight*, as the promotion of these two values must derive from the existing social inequalities and injustice in modern China. The narratives depicting the wide income gap, social security issues, judicial injustice, corruption and abuse of power by the authorities, and the educational gap among different regions in China can all be classified under this category. For example, the mistreatment of migrant workers is highlighted in “Bonnie’s Faces” by Xie Hong (2016) and “The Handwarmer” by Sun Huifen (2016), the drastic contrast among the lifestyles of various social classes is part of the narrative in “Sweetgrass Barracks” by Su Tong (2013), and corruption is a theme in “Friend of the Moon” by Qiu Huadong (2012), “In the Penal Colony” by A Yi (2015), and “Visa Cancelling” by Xu Kun (2012). These all show the existing issues of inequality and injustice in Chinese society. In this context, I argue that these narratives fit the core values of contemporary ideology in China, as they, similar to the CCP, criticize the existing issues and call for their eradication.

6.3.3 Core Values at the Citizenry Level (Patriotism, Dedication, Integrity/Trust and Friendship/Geniality)

At the citizenry level, patriotism, dedication, integrity or trust, and friendship or geniality are the four core values elaborated and emphasized by the CCP (Gow, 2017). According to Han & Zhang (2018), in the common goal to achieve national rejuvenation, the CCP encourages every citizen to start with themselves. Along the same line, Gow (2017) highlighted that the CCP's rhetoric states the importance of every citizen, and each citizen can help to build a great country by cultivating these traits and becoming a full, useful member of the socialist society. As mentioned previously, there is no over-emphasis on individuality in a socialist society, every citizen is subordinate to the nation and to society, and individual actions are vital to the realization of the Chinese dream at those levels (Han & Zhang, 2018).

Patriotism is a core socialist value strongly advocated under the Xi Jinping administration, and is underscored in the works of Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) and M. Feng (2015) as closely related to the current Chinese ideology and the concept of the Chinese dream. Han & Zhang (2018) poetically defined the value of patriotism as a “deep attachment to and love of one’s country ... love of the beautiful lands of one’s country, love of one’s compatriots, love of glorious culture of one’s country, and love of its social systems (p. 199), and expounded that being patriotic in China means to follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and become an integral part in aiding the CCP build socialism in the country. This also means, as Han and Zhang (2018) put it, that there should be no distinction between love towards the country and socialism:

A true patriot should understand that the destiny, prospect and socialist road of the motherland are closely related to the leadership of the CPC. The erroneous view of

making a distinction between loving the motherland and upholding the socialist road led by the CPC is neither in accordance with historical evidence, nor in accordance with current social scenario (p. 203).

The authors (Han & Zhang, 2018) also emphasized that a patriot in socialist China means accepting the CCP as the ruling party and acknowledging that only socialism with Chinese characteristics can make China into a prosperous and powerful country.

Dedication is interpreted as a term closely linked to the value of patriotism by some experts, and according to Gow (2017) and Han & Zhang (2018) is another trait the CCP expects from good Chinese citizens. Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) argue that dedication to the CCP's mission is expected from every Chinese citizen in order to create a stable, sustainable country and a prosperous nation – this also includes dedication to one's profession. Han & Zhang (2018) expressed that a dedicated citizen will help to “enhance the competitiveness in all sectors and the whole society... a just and decent society will come into being only with the dedication of all members in the society” (p. 210).

Integrity (trust) as a core socialist value promoted by the CCP in contemporary China has received several interpretations by the scholars. Han & Zhang (2018) understand this core socialist value as “the foundation for being a good citizen... [Integrity] is what it takes to sustain trust between people and maintain normal social order” (p. 211). Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) interpreted this value as the CPP's “need to repair the damage done by corrupt officials within the party, and to close the gap between the rulers and the ruled” (p. 334), thus Chinese citizens are, on the other hand, expected to trust the CCP and the path it chooses for the country. Although in the past, there has been some distrust between the Chinese people and the ruling party, Brown and Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018) claim that Xi's administration is working to reduce

the differences between the Chinese people and the CCP, and to inspire “confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of a socialism with Chinese characteristics” (p. 334). Many scholars admit that the market economy has caused many social problems in China, including a crisis of moral values. The CCP’s emphasis on this value of trust is an attempt to restore a sense of responsibility, morality, kindness and honesty in the Chinese society and to deal with continuous degradation of moral values (Brown & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2018; Han & Zhang, 2018).

Friendship is a core value developed by the CCP that seems to be closely linked to the notion of harmony. According to Han & Zhang (2018), domestically, a friendly attitude can bind citizens to live harmoniously in the society; this implies mutual respect, understanding and inclusiveness. Han & Zhang (2018) went a step further to clarify that a friendly attitude and humility are the first step to solving social conflicts, “therefore, in social interactions, one should not only understand and tolerate other’s weaknesses without demanding perfection from them, but also understand other’s advantages” (p. 219). According to Brown & Berzina- Cerenkova (2018), in terms of international relations, the friendly attitude of Chinese citizens abroad is a way to show the world the non-violent nature of the Chinese nation; China is not a threat to other countries and the notion of “friendly” “lies at the heart of cultural diplomacy campaigns that the central government has supported since the 2000s” (Brown & Berzina-Cerenkova, 2018, p. 334). This value, as agreed by the experts on China, is largely related to the values of prosperity and strength, because the realization of a harmonious society and positive image internationally can both help China to become stronger as a country (Han & Zhang, 2018).

The analysis shows that the translations in *Pathlight* promote three out of four of these core values at the citizenry level, with patriotism being the most recurring narrative in the 84 translations analyzed. The other recurring two core values were imbedded in the implicit text of

the translations, but were not prevalent; and the value of integrity/trust was not found in the latent text of the translations analyzed. The narrative of love for one's country can be found in many of the translations. Such stories as "Visa Cancelling" by Xu Kun (2012) and "Summer of my Dreams" by Zhang Huiwen (2017) reveal the protagonists' feeling of pride at being Chinese. These stories have a common narrative, with a focus on the newly obtained status of China in the international arena as a fast developing country with the world's second largest economy, Chinese people feel proud to be citizens of China, being able to enjoy many of the conveniences of modern society, have access to education and health care, and travel abroad for vacations. The common trait of the protagonists in these stories is a sense of confidence that they have in China as a great country to live in. For example, a distinct feeling of "us" against "them" can be traced in the following excerpt from "Visa Canceling" by Xu Kun (2012), recounting the pride of Chinese identity:

European devils are using collective punishment now, are they? It's blatant prejudice and suspicion against us Chinese. I am not going; they can do what they want. Who do they think they are? (*Pathlight*, 2012, 1, p. 1261, translated by Roddy Flagg)

From now on he would only travel on his government passport – with an identity, with status, representing the nation. Just money – without status, without a country behind you as a guarantor, as back-up – was nowhere near enough.

"Motherland" – an idea so common he'd never really thought about it. Now it seemed it had hissed red-hot into his back, branding him. (Excerpt from "Visa Cancelling" by Xu Kun, from *Pathlight*, 2012, 1, p. 1537, translated by Roddy Flagg)

Although these stories reveal some dark sides of the society that could be improved, they express some hope that things will change and improve in the future.

The short story “Summer of my Dreams” by Zhang Huiwen (2017) implicitly and indirectly exposes the common misconceptions about the glamorous and rich life of immigrant Chinese overseas, seemingly to draw attention to a better life in their own Motherland. The life story of an old friend from the same home-town was told by the main protagonist, providing his version of his friend’s immigrant life in the US to the readers:

She was two years old[er] than me and so two years ahead of me in the same high school. When I arrived in Beijing as a graduate student she was already working in a bank there. We’d meet often, for a meal and a stroll. With her kind of beauty, everyone in our small town knew her, and even in a huge city like Beijing she stood out. ...

We saw each other more rarely, and our friendship faded. I never met her boyfriend. Later I heard she’d gone overseas.

So we were told she was living on a big ranch in Texas, wed to a rich and generous gentleman farmer, with their own dairy and mixed-race baby. Gossip always makes things so much more exciting. (Excerpt from “Summer of my Dreams” by Zhang Huiwen, from *Pathlight*, 2017/1, p.84, translated by Roddy Flagg)

Soon after the introduction of the main characters, the narrator reveals that although it may seem that all the Chinese immigrants are living a perfect life overseas, it is never completely true. Often times, their lives are filled with hardships and regrets:

But now I drew closer to the reality of her life, all rumors and post-dinner tittle –tattle became distant, foolish. ... [W]hatever the truth of it, this was no place to find the rich

farmstead her mother had boasted about. There were farmers living here, sure enough, but the muddy pick-ups and tractors in the yards indicated they were farmers who worked the land, and as many were poor as not. (Excerpt from “Summer of my Dreams” by Zhang Huiwen, from *Pathlight*, 2017/1, p.84, translated by Roddy Flagg)

“You have no idea. Sometimes I feel my life’s already over. It’s the same every day – busy, tired, stressed. You make it through one day and know you have to do it all again the next. There’s just no point to life anymore. Of course, that’s my own fault.”

... I sipped my tea, hoping I have appeared calm, or at least not shown my shock. I’d never believed what her mother or anyone else had said about her life in America, but I hadn’t expected this. (Excerpt from “Summer of my Dreams” by Zhang Huiwen, from *Pathlight*, 2017/1, p.90, translated by Roddy Flagg)

Other translations praise the beauty of the Chinese land. An example of this is the excerpt from the mega-novel *You Are on the Highland* by Zhang Wei, who belongs to the root-seeking school (Gu, 2019). The excerpts from *You Are on the Highland* translated in *Pathlight* focus on the natural landscape of local uncontaminated highlands, exploring the vast and abundant national culture.

The narrative of dedication towards one’s profession in order to be a useful member of society can be found in such texts as “The Sky Walkers” by Liu Xinglong (2011), a story about teachers in rural China who are dedicated to educating rural children regardless of unfair treatment from the government. The stories about migrant workers dedicated to their professions, living away from home in order to build the future China all add to this narrative. “The Story of Hu Wenqing” by Wei Wei (2013) is a good example of such a dedication. Although the story

openly criticizes the Cultural Revolution, showing the sufferings that it brought to the people, it also depicts the main character Hu Wenqing as an example of a true citizen of the country, dedicated to the CCP's ideology and policies. Hu Wenqing is a true patriot and exemplary citizen who believes in the CCP's ideology and follows it all his life.

The friendship value appears through the narrative of the Chinese as friendly and peace-loving people. "China Story" by Jiang Yitan (2011) reveals Chinese "going out" initiatives through the publication of a journal in English called "China Story" that tells everyday stories of Chinese people. "Irina's Hat" by Tie Ning (2012) relates the simple friendly gesture of the main character, who helps save a woman from what could be a tragic outcome of her marriage. Stories and narratives of the life of minorities—particularly Tibetan people—which appear in "The Hydroelectric Station" and "The Threshing Machine" by A. Lai (2012) and "Green Tara" by Tsering Norbu (2016), can also arguably be linked to the promotion of the friendship value, by which the government wants to show the harmonious coexistence of Han and Tibetan people.

6.3.4 Conclusion: Summary of the Findings and How the Themes in Pathlight Fit with the Main Dominant Ideology in China

The findings from the deductive method content analysis indicate that there is a correlation between the main themes exported through the translations in *Pathlight* and the core values promoted through the Chinese dream discourse, the dominant ideological concept of Xi's China. This correlation may not be obvious at first glance. The findings of the previous section suggest that translations in *Pathlight* paint a gloomy picture of a Chinese society riddled with issues of inequality, corruption, and extreme polarity between the rich and poor, caused by the fast-growing economy. The translated texts at times express the hopelessness of citizens, both rural and urban, towards the future, but the main narrative in these translations tells a story of the

stronger modernized country that China is today. There are several reasons to claim that this link exists between the main ideological values and the narratives in the translations in *Pathlight*.

First and foremost, the majority of the socialist core values, such as prosperity/strength, harmony, freedom, equality, patriotism and dedication can be found in the storylines of the translations in *Pathlight*. These values are well depicted in these texts and help paint a positive picture of China and Chinese people for Anglophone readers. An image of a developed and modernized China is presented to the readers, where Chinese people enjoy much more freedom, and many of the modern conveniences of the 21st century. From the latent context in these translations, readers can see a stark difference between the situation in China before and after the policies of “opening up” and “going out”.

The second reason the link between the translations in *Pathlight* and the dominant Chinese ideology is evident is that controversial topics are absent in the translations of *Pathlight*. Controversial and taboo topics can include, but are not limited to topics related to ethnic or religious issues that endanger national unity, topics involving borders of China (for instance issues with Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet) that threaten territorial integrity and sovereignty, or topics involving top leaders of the CPP and their living and working situations, anti-Marxist (anti-socialist) claims that are opposed to the Chinese constitution (Tan, 2015; Wong, 2018). As noted in the analysis, the fact that such values as democracy, rule of law or trust (in the CCP), which concern highly sensitive political matters, were not found in the *Pathlight* translations could be taken as another indicator that translations have had to be compliant with the dominant ideology of the current government. It seems the ideological constraints imposed by government patronage prevented the translation of works carrying strong political undertones. Highly sensitive political matters like democracy, trust, dedication to the CCP, and the rule of law

automatically label stories as taboo topics for *Pathlight* translations. This could be explained by the existing censorship on literary production in China (Lovell, 2012a; Yan, 2016). Lovell, writing about Chinese modern fiction, laments that

although the influence of Party orthodoxy might be far less crudely visible in contemporary Chinese culture than it was during the 1950s –80s, it is no less present, and certain topics (such as the massacre of 1989; or probing and questioning the overarching structures of CCP power and control) are clearly out-of-bounds. (Lovell, 2012a, p. 24)

Yan Lianke, a controversial contemporary Chinese writer who also teaches creative writing at Renmin University in Beijing²⁴ explains this relaxation of the censorship policy as part of the evolution of the CCP's governance style, and calls it a shift from the hard censorship system to the soft censorship system in China (Yan, 2016).

The current generation of leaders in China, including President Xi Jinping, have been faced with mounting societal issues and growing distrust from the Chinese people in the CCP's path, and seem to have formulated the core socialist values as a way to address these pressing issues in modern Chinese society. As state borders are blurred by the technological advances of the 21st century (internet and international/transnational communications), China is being constantly pressured by the international community to solve its urgent domestic issues. It is getting harder with each day to censor the great volume of information that goes beyond the Great (Fire) Wall in China. It seems the CCP is well aware of the international scrutiny, and is attempting to use other, less visible, forms of censorship to contain narratives that do not coincide with the Party's main ideology and directory. Therefore, the main themes repeatedly

²⁴ For more on Yan Lianke see <https://www.ft.com/content/83b25396-7358-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

featured in the translations in *Pathlight*, in contrast to the themes translated in previous similar translation projects under the patronage of the Chinese government, include a variety of issues depicting the darker sides of society in modern China. This appears to be the CCP's new strategy. Yan (2016) describes this shift as the process of reform and "opening up" of literature in China, where the government occasionally has an open mind regarding the publication of works that "are at best neutral with respect to power, nation, and the ruling party" (p. 265). As long as the literary works do not directly criticize the CCP as the leading (and the only) party in China, and its high-ranking leaders are not under attack, the government censorship departments will show tolerance towards those works:

Because ideology wants to show the world its tolerant and enlightened approach and demonstrate the liberated and advanced attitudes of its ruling party, it has taken the opportunity to relieve the condition of oppression and darkness into which the censorship apparatus had previously brought writers and intellectuals. As a result, in contemporary China the state's censorship of literary production has been gradually transformed from an approach grounded in violence to one focusing on intent and sentiment (Yan, 2016, p. 265).

Yan (2016) further expands that it is the intent and sentiment that restricts the content of the literary production; while an anti-corruption narrative is tolerable, the intent has to be to be benevolent and good-natured in order to spread positivity:

"[I]f you tried to write about Party officials... [t]he highest cadre you could mention in these sorts of works are one at the sub-provincial level, and ideally the critique should be of a deputy governor rather than a deputy party secretary; furthermore, the work should emphasize that justice necessarily prevails. (Yan, 2016, p. 265)

The overall sentiment of the translations in *Pathlight* seems to be a positive one. The narratives can at times make the readers feel very concerned about the Chinese people and their well-being, but the authors almost always leave the readers with hope for a better future for the protagonists, which falls in line with the CCP's guideline on positivity.

7 Conclusion

Translation for export under government patronage in the PRC has been used since the early years of its founding as a channel to disseminate Chinese ideology, culture and tradition to the outside world. The volume of translations produced for export grew exponentially starting in the early 2000s, when the Chinese government put emphasis on cultural promotion to counteract the negative effects of the country's growing hard power. In response to the government's efforts to increase China's cultural presence internationally and to encourage Chinese culture and literature to reach a wider audience abroad, by the end of 2013, 65% of all translation services in China reported that they translated more from Chinese into foreign languages than vice versa (Bai, 2018). This would suggest that the Chinese government is utilizing translation as an important instrument in the country's cultural diplomacy toolkit to achieve foreign policy goals.

Literary translation, similar to literary production, has been under the mandate and control of the CCP to help promote socialist ideology and educate the masses in China since the founding of the PRC in 1949. Literary translation for export has served as a channel through which China can disseminate its own story and control its official outward image. With the increasing visibility of China in the international arena and with growing negative reporting on China in the international media in recent years, it has become even more urgent for the Chinese government to manage the messages exported to the outside world in the 21st century. With the cultural diplomacy strategies implemented by the previous generation of Chinese leaders, the fifth generation of leaders under President Xi Jinping, who came to power in China in 2013, have taken all the lessons learned from previous cultural diplomacy strategies and are focussing on strengthening Chinese discursive power internationally.

This research is anchored on the results of previous research conducted on the *Chinese Literature* magazine and the Panda Books series, and shows that there is a certain correlation between the dominant ideology in China at the time and the content of each large-scale government-funded translation project carried out between 1949 and 2001. The role of patronage has arguably been instrumental in *what stories* have been exported through the translations and *what kind of narratives and cultural images* have been forged for consumption by the English-speaking readership over a time period of over 50 years. The themes and narratives translated for export in the *Chinese Literature* magazine and Panda Books were largely guided by the dominant Chinese ideology and the country's policies on literary creation at the time of publication. Ironically, it is this very fact that seems to have also impeded the success of these translation projects abroad, leading to the cancellation of both in the early 2000s. Perceived as propaganda for the Chinese government, these translation projects could not find workable distribution channels or a varied readership abroad. Drawing upon the notions of patronage and ideology from Lefevere's rewriting theory and anchoring on the results of previous research conducted on large-scale translation projects in China, the focus of this research was to explore the narratives and stories exported through translation in *Pathlight* magazine into the English-speaking world, and trace the links between the dominant ideology in China and the content of *Pathlight*.

Two different coding methods were used to find answers to the two main research questions. The inductive coding method with content analysis helped to answer the first research questions: **what stories and cultural images is China recounting to the English readers through translations in *Pathlight*?** The deductive coding method with content analysis helped

to answer the second research question: **do these stories and cultural images fit the current dominant ideology in China?**

The research findings show that firstly, with globalization and the integration of Chinese economy into the larger world economy, the themes of the exported translations under the patronage of the Chinese government are becoming more varied and cover a range of pressing issues in contemporary Chinese society. The narratives in these translations are no longer limited and restricted to only those reflecting the positive side of Chinese society, but also cover the pressing societal, cultural and psychological issues of modern Chinese life. There seems to be a direct and timely link between the narratives of the translations in *Pathlight* and the lives of the Chinese people in modern China. Secondly, the analysis has also shown a correlation between the narratives in the *Pathlight* translations and the dominant ideology in China as the stories interpret the core socialist values of the Chinese dream promoted by the current generation of CCP leaders in China.

Since 1949, each generation of CCP leaders, after taking office, has worked to develop a unique ideological concept that can help explain the current Chinese realities, resonate with Chinese citizens and call the Chinese nation to continue on the path of Socialism with Chinese characteristics. The current generation of Chinese leaders, with President Xi Jinping at their head, is no exception. Shortly after taking office as the new president of China in 2013, President Xi Jinping adopted the Chinese dream concept to unify the Chinese nation in a common goal of achieving the great dream of rejuvenating the Chinese nation. This dream embodies the goal of prosperity and happiness for the whole nation. The concept of the Chinese dream is elaborated through the promotion of the 12 core socialist values that will ultimately help make the Chinese dream come true. These values are 1) at the national level: prosperity, democracy, civility, and

harmony; 2) at the societal level: freedom, equality, justice and rule of law; and 3) at the citizenry level: patriotism, dedication, integrity and geniality (Gow, 2017). Even though the first part of the analysis in this research has concluded that the narratives in the translations of *Pathlight* portray modern Chinese society as laden with mounting societal issues such as misogyny, inequality, corruption, poverty, injustice, etc., the second part of the analysis points to the existing link between these narratives with the dominant ideology of present-day China, which is positive. I justify this finding with two arguments: a) Regardless of the issues evoked in the translated texts, they do not include narratives critical of the CCP or its leaders, and furthermore, the stories avoid such sensitive issues as democracy, rule of law, etc.; b) The narratives analyzed touched each level of the core socialist values, including prosperity, harmony, patriotism, etc. It could be interpreted that despite the societal issues that appear in the translations, arguably, as long as the Chinese citizens live up to the core socialist values, they will be able to work together to achieve the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation. It appears that these core values are serving as the ultimate guide for the party state to govern the country and achieve national rejuvenation, for the Chinese society to find unity and live in harmony, and for the individual citizens to find their own happiness in socialist China.

7.1 Limitations

There are several limitations to this research. The first limitation is that time constraints did not allow the analysis to include more translations. Only one issue of *Pathlight* per year was chosen for analysis, instead of all 22 issues available to date. More time and a larger data pool could have yielded more themes. However, due to a tremendous number of different themes introduced in the translations, and considering that one translation could narrate several stories

and include multiple themes, it would have been extremely difficult to complete a detailed analysis within the given timeframe.

The second limitation was the availability of the *Pathlight* magazine. A search in the University of Ottawa database did not yield any findings for *Pathlight*, and nor were they available in the local libraries. An inquiry was made to the local Confucius Institutes, but it came back negative. The Paper Republic website did have some free E-books and PDF versions, but of early issues only. I was able to find only some of them through Amazon books in Kindle edition, and some hardcover editions through Chinese used book websites. The most recent 2017 and 2018 issues were eventually obtained by email from the very helpful and kind current editor of *Pathlight*. Through the emails exchanged with the current editor of *Pathlight*, I also found out that in the past few years, publication of *Pathlight* slowed down in general and has been reduced to only one issue per year. Now with the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019 issue is still not yet published, and we are well into the last quarter of 2020 at the time of writing this section. This naturally begs the question of how this magazine will reach its North American readership, if I had such a hard time finding it while actively looking. How can a North American reader interested to know more about Chinese literature, without any idea of what is available out there, find *Pathlight* without it being readily and easily available?

The third limitation of this research is the interpretive nature of the analysis. The analysis is performed based on my own interpretation and understanding of the latent content in the translations, and may not be replicated if performed by a researcher with a different background.

7.2. Future Research

This research has laid a solid foundation for possible future research into the translation projects of Chinese literature, or translation as a tool of Chinese cultural diplomacy. They include, but are not limited to, the following possible areas:

- the research questions of the current study could be used to investigate another long-term translation project (government-led or otherwise) to examine the degree of involvement of the patron in the translation, publication and distribution processes;
- a systematic research into the available translations published by private publishing houses in China could be done as well as a comparison of the themes exported by these private publishers with those exported by *Pathlight*. The comparison could yield findings on the similarity/difference of the themes/narratives exported by the publishers under various types of patronage;
- an in-depth research on the authors repeatedly featured in *Pathlight* in comparison with the authors not featured in *Pathlight* could be done. Through this investigation, one could find the reasons why some authors are repeatedly featured and translated in *Pathlight* while others are not;
- research into *Pathlight's* translators' field and habitus could yield interesting findings regarding how networks such as Paper Republic work and how the translators associated with these networks build their habitus and the rule of the translation field;

The above-mentioned are just some of the possible further research ideas to which the current thesis could contribute. Further, although the research touches translation and cultural diplomacy

in China, this research framework could be used to study translation projects under the patronage of any country.

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Appendix A. List of Recurring Authors
(Authors published in more than one issue of *Pathlight*)

Author name	Frequency (published in issues of <i>Pathlight</i>)
A Yi	4 (2012/2; 2013/Summer; 2015/Summer; 2017/1)
Ah Yu	2 (2014/Autumn; 2016/2)
Alai	3 (2012/1; 2014/Autumn; 2016/2)
Bi Feiyu	4 (2011/1; 2013/Summer; 2014/Summer; 2016/1)
Cai Dong	2 (2014/Summer; 2016/2)
Cao Wenxuan	2(2016/Summer; 2016/1)
Chen Qiufan	3 (2013/Spring; 2016/2; 2017/2)
Chi Zijian	2 (2012/1; 2015/Summer)
Di An	2 (2011/1; 2015/Summer)
Diao Dou	2 (2015/Winter; 2018/1)
Feng Tang	2 (2012/1; 2015/Summer)
Ge Fei	3 (2012/2; 2014/Autumn; 2015/Autumn)
Han Dong	2 (2012/1; 2016/1)
Han Shaogong	2 (2016/Spring; 2014/Spring)
Hai Nan	2 (2014/Summer; 2015/Autumn)
Lan Lan	2 (2013/Autumn; 2015/Summer)
Li Er	2 (2011/1; 2015/Summer)
Liu Cixin	3 (2012/1; 2013/Spring; 2015/Summer)
Liu Ting	2 (2016/2; 2017/1)
Liu Zhenyun	2 (2011/1; 2015/Summer)
Mai Jia	3 (2012/2; 2015/Summer; 2016/1)
Shen Wei	2 (2012/1; 2015/Winter)
Su Tong	3 (2013/Autumn; 2015/Summer; 2016/2)
Tie Ning	3 (2012/1; 2013/Autumn; 2016/1)
Tsering Norbu	2 (2012/1; 2016/2)
Wang Gang	2 (2012/1; 2015/Summer)
Wang Anyi	2 (2012/2; 2013/Summer)
Wang Ke	2 (2013/Autumn; 2016/4)
Wei Wei	3 (2012/2; 2013/Autumn; 2016/1)
Xi Chuan	2 (2011/1; 2015/Summer)
Xu Zechen	4 (2012/1); 2014/Autumn; 2015/Autumn; 2016/2)
Ye Zhou	2 (2015/Spring; 2015/Autumn)
Ye Mi	2 (2015/Spring; 2015/Autumn)
Yi Sha	2 (2013/Spring; 2013/Summer)
Yu Youyou	3 (2013/Spring; 2015/Winter)
Zhang Chu	2 (2015/Autumn; 2016/4)
Zhang Wei	3 (2011/1; 2014/Autumn; 2015/Spring)
Zhang Yueran	2 (2012/1; 2014/Summer)
Zhang Huiwen	2 (2016/1; 2017/1)
Zhou Xiaofeng	2 (2015/spring; 2015/Autumn)

Appendix B. List of Recurring Translators

Translator names	Frequency
Eleanor Goodman	28
Canaan Morse	20
Roddy Flagg	19
Brian Holton	15
Karmia Olutade	12
Alice Xin Liu	10
Jim Weldon	10
Tammy Ho	10
Dave Haysom	9
Eric Abrahamsen	8
Kyle Anderson	8
Brendan O'Kane	6
Cara Healey	6
Darryl Sterk	6
Emily Goedde	6
Emily Jones	6
Joel Martinsen	6
Ken Liu	6
Poppy Toland	6
Fiona Sze-Lorrain	5
Hallie Treadway	5
Jeremy Tiang	5
John Balcom	5
Nathaniel Isaacson	5
Sarah Stanton	5
Helen Wang	4
Joshua Dyer	4
Lucy Johnston	4
Nicky Harman	4
Philip Hand	4
Tao Naikan and Tony Prince	4
Amanda Halliday	3
Andrea Lingenfelter	3
Annelise Finegan Wasmoen	3
Bryan Davis	3

Denis Mair	3
Josh Stenberg	3
Lucas Klein	3
Alexander Clifford	2
Anna Holmwood	2
Austin Woerner	2
Bruce Humes	2
Charles A. Laughlin	2
Dinah Gardner	2
Jane Weizhen Pan and Martin Merz	2
Katharine Poundstone	2
Laura Tucker	2
Natascha Bruce	2
Nick Admussen	2
Nick Stember	2
Petula Parris Huang	2
Rachel Henson	2

Appendix C. List of 84 translations analyzed categorized by theme
(With author and translator details)

<i>Theme 1. Modern urban life style and modern Chinese society</i>
1. 1.50 Yuan of Love
Written by Lao Ma
Translated by Roddy Flagg
2. A Thousand and One Nights
Written by Zhang Yueran
Translated by Anna Holmwood
3. Bonnie's Faces
Written by Xie Hong
Translated by Alexander Clifford
4. China Story
Written by Jiang Yitan
Translated by Eric Abrahamsen
5. Fishbone
Written by Sheng Keyi
Translated by Shelly Bryant
6. Graduation Trip
Written by Zhou Jianing
Translated by Tse Hao Guang
7. In the Penal Colony
Written by A Yi
Translated by Eric Abrahamsen
8. Mahjong
Written by Feng Tang
Translated by Brendan O'Kan
9. Night of the Spring Breeze
Written by Tie Ning
Translated by Cara Healey
10. Night/Day
Written by Lui Ting
Translated by Cara Healey
11. Old Zhao Two-Times
Written by Dong Xi
Translated by Dylan Levi King
12. Pear Blossoms and the Moon
Written by Li Yunlei
Translated by Jeremy Tiang

13. Snow Deep, I Will Be Waiting for You at Mei Nong
Written by Pan Xiangli
Translated by Jennie Chu
14. Sweetgrass Barracks
Written by Su Tong
Translated by Josh Stenberg
15. The Animal-Shaped Firework
Written by Zhang Yueran
Translated by Jeremy Tiang
16. The Disappearing Bean Curd Girl
Written by Lao Ma
Translated by Roddy Flagg
17. The Handwarmer
Written by Sun Huifen
Translated by Matt Turner and Weng Haiying
18. The Holiday Monk Returns
Written by Cai Dong
Translated by Roddy Flagg
19. The Multimeter
Written by Su Tong
Translated by Josh Stenberg
20. To Shengyang, to See Snow
Written by Diao Dou
Translated by Roddy Flagg
21. Where Are You?
Written by Li Er
Translated by Joshua Dyer
<i>Theme 2. Existentialist interrogation of the meaning of life and death</i>
22. A Horse and Two People
Written by Chi Zijian
Translated by Karmia Olutade
23. A Sheep Released to Life
Written by Tsering Norbu
Translated by Jim Weldon
24. Beyond the Wester Pass
Written by Di An
Translated by Canaan Morse
25. Crows
Written by Cao Wenxuan

Translated by Helen Wang
26. Early One Sunday Morning
Written by Su Tong
Translated by Josh Stenberg
27. Excerpt from A Word is Worth Ten Thousand Words: An Italian Priest and A Chinese Butcher
Written by Liu Zhenyun
Translated by Dinah Gardner
28. Excerpts from You Are On the Highland: From The Clans, A Letter to the God of the Sea
Written by Zhang Wei
Translated by Andrea Lingenfelter
29. If I Fall Asleep on the Plane That's Going to Crash
Written by Kong Yalei
Translated by Allan H. Barr
30. Memories of the Mortal Plane
Written by A Yi
Translated by Poppy Toland
31. Mountains and Grasslands
Written by Akbar Mijit
Translated by Jim Weldon
32. Plow Ox
Written by Li Rui
Translated by John Balcom
33. Pregnant
Written by Wei Meng
Translated by Emily Jones
34. Seawatch
Written by Wang Ke
Translated by Joel Martinsen
35. Snow by the Sea
Written by Zheng Wei
Translated by Alexander Clifford
36. Sugar Blower
Written by Qi Ge
Translated by Joel Martinsen
37. The Leopard Keeper
Written by Chai Chunya
Translated by Dong Li
38. Well Sweep
Written by Li Rui

Translated by John Balcom
<i>Theme 3. Chinese society post-Cultural Revolution (the aftermath of modernization and the policy of “opening up”)</i>
39. Autumn Harvest Chronicle
Written by Liu Ting
Translated by Emily Jones
40. Did You Remember to Keep Smiling? (Excerpt from Holy Heaven's Gate)
Written by Liu Xinglong
Translated by Roddy Flagg
41. Friend of the Moon
Written by Qiu Huadong
Translated by Joel Martinsen
42. Going to Tang Village to Build a Coffin
Written by Cao Kou
Translated by Canaan Morse
43. Negatives (Waterlily Duvet, Old Wooden Bed)
Written by Shi Shuqing
Translated by Philip Hand
44. Outdoor Film
Written by Xu Zechen
Translated by Eric Brahmansen
45. Recollections of the Hunan Cemetery
Written by Wang Gang
Translated by Martin Merz and Jane Weichen Pan
46. Song of Coarse Clothes
Written by Cai Dong
Translated by Darryl Sterk
47. Stephen's Back
Written by Li Er
Translated by Denis Mair
48. Synopsis: The Sky Walkers
Written by Liu Xinglong
Translated by Roddy Flagg
49. The Gift of a Cut
Written by Tian Er
Translated by Jim Weldon
50. The Greengrocer
Written by Deng Anqing
Translated by Andrea Lingenfelter

51. The Story of Hu Wenqing
Written by Wei Wei
Translated by Katharine Poundstone Han
52. Three Grassworms
Written by Alai
Translated by Dave Haysom
53. To Longtang with a Bamboo Sword
Written by Li shen
Translated by Jim Weldon
54. Visa Cancelling
Written by Xu Kun
Translated by Roddy Flagg
<i>Theme 4. Modern Chinese Women</i>
55. A Jar of Lard
Written by Chi Zijian
Translated by Chenxin Jiang
56. Brocade
Written by Chen Mengya
Translated by Joel Martinsen
57. Dressing Up
Written by Wei Wei
Translated by Poppy Toland
58. Hands
Written by Su Yang
Translated by Poppy Toland
59. Irina's Hat
Written by Tie Ning
Translated by Patrick Rhine
60. Let Us Talk About Something Else
Written by Zhou Jianing
Translated by Hallie Treadway
61. Pregnant Woman With Cow
Written by Tie Ning
Translated by Denis Mair
62. Skylark
Written by Jin Renshun
Translated by Xujun Eberlein
63. Songs in the Night
Written by Li Dongliang
Translated by Luisetta Mudie

64. That Damned Thing She Said
Written by Fu Yuli
Translated by Nicky Harman
65. The Runaway Game
Written by Hai Nan
Translated by Roddy Flagg
66. To My Boyfriend's (Ex) Girlfriend
Written by Hu Shu-wen
Translated by Amanda Halliday
67. Weird Auntie
Written by Zhang Yueran
Translated by Hallie Treadway
68. William's Tomb
Written by Di An
Translated by Alice Xin Liu
<i>Theme 5. Life and customs of ethnic minorities</i>
69. Green Tara
Written by Tsering Norbu
Translated by Bruce Humes
70. The Hydroelectric Station
Written by Alai
Translated by Derryl Sterk
71. The road to the Weeping Spring
Written by Li Juan
Translated by Lucy Johnston
72. The Threshing Machine
Written by Alai
Translated by Derryl Sterk
73. The Winter of 2009
Written by Li Juan
Translated by Brendan O'Kane
<i>Theme 6. Fantasy</i>
74. A Rare Steed for the Martial Emperor
Written by Xiang Zuotie
Translated by Brendan O'Kane
75. An Incident at Dr. Greene's
Written by Zhu Yue
Translated by Nick Admussen

76. Raising Whales
Written by Xiang Zuotie
Translated by Brendan O'Kane
77. The Northern Border
Written by Lizishu
Translated by Roddy Flagg
<i>Theme 7. Science fiction</i>
78. A Future History of Illnesses
Written by Chen Qiufan
Translated by Ken Liu
79. Taking Care of God
Liu Ci Xin
Translated by Ken Liu
80. Xiao Ming
Written by Feng Tang
Translated by Brendan O'Kane
<i>Theme 8. Life and struggles of immigrant in a foreign land</i>
81. Shepherding
Written by Shen Danqi
Translated by Dave Haysom
82. Summer of My Dreams
Written by Zhang Huiwen
Translated by Roddy Flagg
Theme 9. Chinese society pre-/during the Cultural Revolution
83. God's Chosen Photographer
Written by Xue Yiwei
Translated by Roddy Flagg
84. Remembering Qin E
Written by Xu Zechen
Translated by Jeremy Tiang