The Reception of George Orwell in Taiwan*

Te-hsing Shan
Institute of European and American Studies
Academia Sinica, Taiwan

Abstract
The popularity, reputation, and influence of George Orwell at home and abroad remain phenomenal more than sixty years after his death. In comparison with other foreign literary masters or popular writers, Orwell’s reception in Taiwan, with the many different translations and paratexts of Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm, has been exceptionally warm, long-standing, even “Orwellian.” This phenomenon has much to do with Taiwan’s unique historical background, especially its geopolitical context and ideological position in the Cold War. If translation is an afterlife, as Walter Benjamin’s famous metaphor goes, we cannot but wonder about Orwell’s afterlife in Taiwan—a self-proclaimed bastion of anti-communism during the Cold War and a unique country in the Sinophone world. This paper mainly focuses on the translations and representations of Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm in Taiwan over the past six decades. Whereas the former has often been read as yuyen, meaning both “prophecy” and “allegory,” the latter has been read as political fable and children’s literature, thus extending the author’s readership to schoolchildren. There have been two periods of particularly heightened interest in Orwell: one in the 1950s and the other around 1984. In addition to tracing representative translations of Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm over the years, this paper discusses how Orwell and his works have been represented by translators, publishers, writers, critics, and intellectuals alike. Taken together, they have made Orwell one of the most popular and respected foreign writers in Taiwan.

Keywords
ideology, afterlife, reception history, Cold War, Taiwan

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The popularity, reputation, and influence of George Orwell (1903-1950) at home and abroad remain phenomenal more than sixty years after his death. In The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of “St. George” Orwell, published more than two decades ago, John Rodden observed that “it would be no exaggeration to say that Orwell merits his own fond benediction to Kipling as ‘the most popular English writer of our time.’ Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four have sold almost 40 million copies in sixty-odd languages, more than any other pair of books by a serious or popular postwar author” (16). Rodden further noted, “the popularity of Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four has both made his name familiar across a broad spectrum of the international reading public and has helped generate widely variable popular and critical attitudes toward him” (18). Whereas Rudyard Kipling has been under severe attack since the advent of postcolonialism, Orwell’s fame has been continually on the rise due to his political vision, his criticism of colonialism and imperialism, and the development of a high-tech surveillance state which has made his famous slogan, “Big Brother is watching you,” a daily reality.

In a recent book, Rodden and John Rossi have this to say about Orwell’s legacy: “he has experienced an afterlife not only unique among English authors of his generation, but indeed unprecedented among modern writers in any language. His work has become so deeply imprinted in the cultural imagination that Orwell today occupies a status in the contemporary Zeitgeist comparable to Milton, Dickens, and even Shakespeare in earlier centuries—and, unlike them, a place not confined to the medium of literature or to the English-speaking world” (5). This remark on Orwell’s afterlife readily reminds us of Walter Benjamin’s famous metaphor of translation as an afterlife (254). In response to the Call for Papers “Orienting Orwell: Asian and Global Perspectives on George Orwell,” we cannot but wonder about Orwell’s afterlife in Taiwan, a self-proclaimed bastion of anti-communism during the Cold War—a term coined by none other than Orwell himself in 1945—and a unique country in the Sinophone world.

The reception of Orwell in Taiwan has been exceptionally warm and long-standing, in comparison with that of other foreign literary masters or popular writers. This phenomenon has much to do with Taiwan’s unique cultural and historical background, especially its historical-geopolitical situation within the context of the Cold War. Generally speaking, the reception of a foreign writer in Taiwan follows one of three paths: first, via reception in academic circles, being predominantly read for research papers published in scholarly journals and degree theses; second, via appearances in articles, reviews, and coverage in mass media,
especially newspaper literary supplements; and third, via translation. Whereas the first path might appear elitist, and the second, though pervasive, may be but temporary, translation of the text per se, together with its paratexts, such as the preface, introduction, appendix, afterword, and other related writings, has a more widespread and lasting influence. Close observation reveals that the extraordinary reception of Orwell or “the Orwell legend,” to borrow Rodden and Rossi’s expression (114), in Taiwan has been somewhat “Orwellian,” so to speak.

In the two-volume *Research Bibliography of Western Literature in Taiwan, 1946-2000*, Zhang Jinger (張靜二) lists 116 entries on Orwell: 36 entries on translations, and 80 on essays, papers, and degree theses (I, 985-93). In *Twentieth Century English Literature Studies in Taiwan, 1950-2000*, Yang Limin (楊麗敏) lists 20 journal articles on Orwell (182-96). According to the National Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations in Taiwan, up to December 2013 there were five M.A. theses on *Animal Farm*, nine on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (hereafter abbreviated as *AF* and *NE*, respectively), and one doctoral dissertation on a comparative study of *NE* and Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*.¹ However, the information provided by Zhang, Yang, and the National Digital Library is by no means exhaustive. For up to now there are at least ten M.A. theses on *NE*, six on *AF*, and one on a comparative study of *NE* and *AF*. Be that as it may, the above data do provide a general picture of the reception of Orwell in Taiwan.

A quick survey of these degree theses indicates that they span the period from 1977 to 2012. Among them, eight M. A. theses focus on the political significance of Orwell’s works and their impact on humanity, three on the translations and rewritings of *AF* in Chinese, two on the influence of ideology on the Chinese translations of *NE*, one on the utopian and dystopian thoughts in *NE*, one on *NE* from the postmodern perspective of simulacra, one on *NE* via the Foucauldian concept of discipline, and one comparative study of *NE* and *AF*, whereas the only dissertation is on a comparative study of *NE* and *Brave New World*. However, to the best of our knowledge, these degree theses have never been published in academic or popular journals or magazines. In addition, aiming at documenting and evaluating twentieth-century English literature studies in Taiwan, Yang’s annotated bibliography and critical survey are entirely devoted to articles published in popular journals with general readers as their target audience.² In short, although Orwell is

¹ This somehow confirms Jeffrey Meyers’s evaluation that among Orwell’s works, *AF* is perhaps “the most popular and perfect” and *NE*, “the most powerful and influential” (5).

² According to PerioPath: Index to Taiwan Periodical Literature System, the only “academic” publication on Orwell, “The Falsehood of Communism as Revealed in George Orwell’s *Animal
one of the most popular foreign writers in Taiwan, his importance and diversity have not been sufficiently acknowledged by the academy. As a result, his popularity and reputation in Taiwan rely heavily upon translations and related paratexts.

In *Translation, History and Culture*, Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefeve remind us that “translation . . . is never innocent. There is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed” (11). Furthermore, in their discussion of translation and ideology, Basil Hatim and Ian Mason make a distinction between two closely related issues: “the ideology of translating” and “the translation of ideology” (143). The former comes from the realization of the embeddedness and agency of a translator in his/her social context, which is permeated with different kinds of ideologies, with some appearing as dominant. The latter has to do with the content translated and the translator’s strategy. To Hatim and Mason, “[t]he extent of the translator’s mediation is itself an ideological issue, affecting both” (143). Elsewhere, Hatim further enumerates several factors related to translation and ideology:

1. The role of the critical establishment, both in the choice of what to translate and how to translate.
2. The kind of interventions which translators make.
3. The economics of the exercise.
4. The influences which translations exert on or receive from the dominant poetics or ideology. (129)

Seen in this light, the various representations of Orwell in Taiwan, especially in the Cold War era, are never innocent. After all, the critical establishment and cultural agency do play an important role in translating Orwell; different translators try to intervene one way or the other; the publication of Orwell seems to have become a blooming industry; and the translations of Orwell’s works both affect, and are affected by, the dominant ideology. In comparison with those engaged in translating and representing other foreign writers, Orwell translators and representers are much more implicated in ideology. It is accurate to say that in the translation history of Taiwan, we seldom come across such an ideology-laden case

*Farm,* by Liao Qie (廖切), appears in *Fuxinggang Xuebao*, an academic journal published by Zhengzhi zuozhan xuexiao (a literal translation of its Chinese name is Political Warfare College, also known as Fu Hsing Kang College) under the auspices of the Ministry of National Defense. Curiously, this article was published in two installments, in June 1991 and June 1992, totaling more than one hundred and ninety pages.
as the “Orwell phenomenon.” It is, indeed, a very special case of cultural translation worthy of in-depth investigation. Instead of emphasizing “the inequality of languages” between “dominated and dominant societies” (Asad 164) as expounded by anthropologists such as Talal Asad, “cultural translation” will here mean primarily the representation of “the contemporary Zeitgeist” (Rodden and Rossi 5) embodied by Orwell to the Sinophone world, not only by translating Orwell’s own works but also by providing information surrounding the author, his works, and his historical, social, and cultural context.

An overview shows that although there has been sustained interest in Orwell over the past six decades, there have been two periods of particularly heightened interest: one in the 1950s, and the other around 1984. It is interesting to note that Orwell was not represented as an overtly political writer by two of the earliest Chinese translators of *AF*. In “About the Author” written in Cambridge, Massachusetts in August 1947, Ren Zhiyu (任穉羽) made the following disclaimer: “This is a book of literature. It would be wrong if the reader viewed it as a political novel” (1). Given the political turmoil in mainland China and Taiwan at that time, this disclaimer was understandable, if not very convincing.

Another early translator of *AF*, Liang Shiqiu (梁實秋), offered a more balanced view. Best known as an essayist and the translator of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, Liang was one of the most famous Chinese students of Irving Babbitt. He was said to be a proponent of the so-called capitalist class literature criticized by Mao Zedong (毛澤東) in his Yan’an lecture in 1942, a longtime opponent of Lu Xun (魯迅), and an English professor at National Taiwan Normal University. His translation *Baishoutu* (《百獸圖》, *A Portrait of One Hundred Animals*) was published in November 1956 by the Nationalist Party-owned Zhengzhong Bookstore under the pseudonym of Li Qichun (李啟純).

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4 Focusing on the reception history of Orwell in Taiwan, this paper does not intend to compare different translations of *NE* and *AF*. For comparative studies of different translations of *NE* and *AF*, see the M.A. theses by Li Mingzhe (李明哲) and Zheng Yuxin (鄭郁欣), respectively.

5 According to Sharon Tzu-yun Lai (賴慈芸), Ren’s translation was first published in Shanghai in 1948 and reissued in Taiwan (Lai, “Jieyan” 66).
without any preface or afterword. Probably out of fear that readers might fail to get the message of the translated fable, Liang adopted another strategy. In “AF and Satiric Literature” published two months later in Free China (《自由中國》) as a review of Li’s translation, Liang wrote, “If the term ‘anti-communist art and literature’ could stand, AF should be recommended, without doubt, as a most excellent piece of anti-communist art and literature” (44). Yet he hastened to add that “its penetrating description of human nature makes it a wonderful piece of art” (44). By comparing AF with Gulliver’s Travels and Candide, Liang pointed out that although it depicted Russian Communists and the Russian people, the real target of its satire was “human follies in general” (45). To him, communism placed too much emphasis on the animal aspect of human nature and AF was the best portrayal of this. Liang thus concluded: “A master of satire is like a surgeon. We see him operate with ease and composure. After the surgery, we cannot but help say, ‘It is a benevolent art.’” Similarly, the reader of AF feels that “the author is investigating human nature and getting rid of its ‘defects and defilements’” (45).

However, most prefaces, reviews, and commentaries read AF and NE as political satires and allegories, aiming at a criticism of totalitarianism and especially in its communist form. The political antagonism between Taiwan and mainland China during the Cold War era created a sense of urgency and a justification for this kind of reading. Indeed, Orwell has even been portrayed as a prophet of anti-totalitarianism and anti-communism, and his name has become almost synonymous with political allegory and political satire.

Take, for example, the first Chinese translation of NE, which appeared in 1950, just one year after the English original. (To be exact, it was published on June 8, 1949 during the early stage of the Cold War which continued through the 1980s). Its quick appearance in the Chinese-speaking world was quite unusual, given the geographical distance and cultural gap, or lag, between Taiwan and the English-speaking world at that time. In spite of, or rather because of, the Nationalist government’s removal to Taiwan in 1949 after losing the civil war to the Chinese Communists, the translation and publication of NE inevitably carried strong political implications. The translator, Wang Heyi (王鶴儀), was the daughter of Wang Yunwu (王雲五), a famous publisher as well as an important figure in the

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6 According to Bai Liping (白立平), Liang felt ambivalent about translating Animal Farm. On the one hand, he regarded communism as being against human nature; on the other hand, he rejected the conception of literature as political propaganda. So, he translated Animal Farm out of a sense of mission, but did not want to be identified as the translator of a book to be used as propaganda.
Nationalist Party. In the preface, written in Taipei in August 1950, she quoted the remark of “a great contemporary English philosopher,” Bertrand Russell, about the anti-totalitarianism of the book and cited his regard for Orwell as “a master of satire and genius of imagination” whose works were “much more moving than any formal critique of totalitarianism” (1-2). Probably to avoid being read as anti-communist propaganda, Wang did not mention anti-communism, though her target audience would readily interpret “anti-totalitarianism” as “anti-communism,” especially “anti-Chinese Communism.”

The translation could be produced as quickly as it was because its source text, the version published in Reader’s Digest, consisted only of a major proportion of Part One (Wang, Heyi 2). In other words, the first Chinese translation of NE was immensely abridged through the mediation of an internationally renowned and popular American journal whose “internationalism served official U.S. interests” (Klein 69). Short as it was, this preface not only set the tone for reading NE and AF as satire (establishing Russell as the “Ur-critic” of Orwell), but also highlighted the author’s critique of totalitarianism—two main points that have been adopted by almost all later translators and critics of NE in the Chinese-speaking world. Most subsequent translations were similarly incomplete (a common practice was to omit the essay-like “Appendix: The Principles of Newspeak”) and publishers did not bother to obtain the official copyright. This helps to explain why there have been so many different translations in Taiwan.

Whereas Wang avoided mentioning the anti-communism of the work, later translators and critics did not hesitate to stress this aspect of the text. One of the most obvious examples was the translation by Niu Xianzhong (鈕先鍾), who had a military background. Published in January 1953, his foreword praised NE as “a world renowned allegorical novel” and associated life as depicted in the novel with the life of persons living behind “today’s Iron Curtain” (n.p.). Two things were of special interest: (1) Niu revealed that this translation was based on an earlier version broadcast by the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC 中國廣播公司), the official broadcasting company at that time, and (2) he hoped that his translation would “further strengthen the reader’s determination to fight against Communism and the Soviet Union (n.p.). This aim was shared by the author of the preface, Zeng Xubai (曾虛白), the Chairman of the BCC Board of the Directors, who

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7 With regard to the ideology embodied by this journal, Christina Klein points out that “Reader’s Digest carried the residual traces of right internationalism: it represented the right wing of the Cold War historical bloc and made anticommunism the core of its internationalist vision” (71).
Zeng ranked Orwell alongside three English writers already well-known to the Chinese-reading public: Russell, George Bernard Shaw, and H. G. Wells. To him, _NE_ was a powerful weapon in the arsenal of humanism in the “anti-totalitarianism, anti-dictatorship, and anti-slavery” campaign. He compared the war against Communism to that between “God and Satan,” and described _NE_ as “an atomic bomb powerful enough to blast totalitarianism in the thought war,” a term which ironically reminds us of the Orwellian newspeak (n.p., emphasis added).

Among all the translations of _NE_ in Taiwan, Niu’s was one of the most explicitly anti-communist; it was on a par with the translation by the soldier-poet Peng Bangzhen (彭邦楨) under the pseudonym of “Bangzhen,” which was published by Liming Cultural Enterprise Co. under the sponsorship of the Ministry of National Defense. Significantly, Peng’s translation of _NE_, together with the translation of _AF_ by someone under the pseudonym of “Gengyu” (耕雨), was included in the Communist Studies Series (which also included _Dr. Zhivago_) and both were published on October 31, 1974, the last birthday of President Chiang Kai-shek. In other words, these translations were published as “birthday presents” to Chiang, who was honorifically dubbed mingzu jiouxing (“the Savior of the Chinese People) and fangong juzen (the Giant of Anti-Communism) for decades. The anonymous editor’s preface stressed how Orwell’s political attitude changed completely after his traumatic experience in Spain, explaining that he had been a stout anti-communist writer ever since. Special emphasis was placed on 1949, the year when “East Europe was locked behind the Iron Curtain and the Red Disaster spread to mainland China and Korean Peninsula.” According to the editor, Orwell’s “greatest purpose is to awaken the world so that they will not harbor any hope and illusion for communism” (n.p.). However, the editor’s authority was severely undermined by an anachronistic remark: _Reader’s Digest_ introduced _NE_ in its “October 1945 [sic] issue,” which made this novel “a sensation in the world’s literary forum” (n.p.).

If we look at the over-all pattern of the reception of _NE_ in Taiwan, these two translations mark one extreme. Generally speaking, most prefaces, introductions, reviews, and commentaries try to present a more balanced and nuanced...

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8 In his autobiography, Wang Dingjun (王鼎鈞) recalled that “Niu’s version of _NE_ broadcast by the BCC must have been the first novel translated for the purpose of being broadcast in China” (80). In his opinion, “Taiwan disliked Orwell’s _NE_, [Arthur] Koestler’s _Darkness at Noon_, and Zhang Ailing’s [張愛玲] _Yangge_ [秧歌 _The Rice Sprout Song_], which were seen as being Cold War propaganda promoted by the United States Information Service” (142).
representation of Orwell and his works. Most often in the paratexts such as prefaces and introductions, an account is given of the author’s life, his attitudes toward imperialism, colonialism, socialism, communism, and totalitarianism, his significance as a writer of satire, allegory, and dystopia, and sometimes even the importance of his status as a herald or prophet of anti-totalitarianism and anti-communism. In a couple of cases, Orwell’s famous essay “Why I Write” was invoked to illustrate the author’s motivation and sense of mission.

Although Orwell and his works have been read and deployed against totalitarianism in general and Chinese Communism in particular, this does not preclude alternative interpretations. A case in point is the reading provided by Yin Haiguang (殷海光), a philosophy professor at National Taiwan University, under the pseudonym of “Haiguang.” A liberal advocate for democracy, Yin was deprived of his teaching position and kept under surveillance by national security units for years. In “A Critical Introduction to NE” published in Free China, in July 1951, as a book review of Wang Heyi’s translation, he praised this work as “the most moving and interesting non-theoretical and fictional book against totalitarianism to the best of my knowledge.” As an intellectual and political activist, Yin was keenly aware of the importance of knowledge as a weapon against all forms of totalitarianism and regarded the discovery of “Ignorance Is Strength” in NE as being on par with Isaac Newton’s discovery of the law of gravity and Sigmund Freud’s discovery of psychoanalysis (30). In his opinion, “Lenin, Trotsky, Hitler, Mussolini and their imitators are good at making and using this kind of strength. So long as they can cheat and drive people to fulfill their desire for power, democracy will not be realized and world peace will be beyond reach” (31; emphasis added).

Yin did not hesitate to criticize “totalitarian parties, such as the Communist Party and its allies” for cheating their people with beautiful lies and fanciful promises. He seems to have invoked John Stuart Mill’s famous dictum, “better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied” when comparing the crass utilitarianism of “the philosophy of socialism” to “feeding pigs” (13), and then went on to question the life of “the American pigs” as well as the meaning and value of such a materialist culture (31; emphasis added). Given Yin’s political stance, many readers would not fail to associate his critique of totalitarianism not only with the Chinese

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9 Apparently Yin did not know that although a diehard opponent of totalitarianism, Orwell was a firm supporter of “democratic socialism,” as he claimed in “Why I Write” (319). This provides a foreign example of John Newsinger’s observation that “[i]n his last days, he [Orwell] was already aware that both Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four were being confiscated by the right in Britain and America. His socialist satires of revolution betrayed and totalitarianism were being used to attack socialism itself” (xi).
Communist Party, but also with the Nationalist government in Taiwan, which relied heavily on the U.S. for its national security, economic prosperity, and social development. In short, in the hands of an intellectual like Yin, NE was wielded as a double-edged sword against the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Party, for he identified both as imitators of totalitarian regimes who were reliant on Big Brother superpowers, either communist or capitalist.

As 1984 approached, a number of articles appeared in local newspapers and magazines. Notable among them were those published in daily newspapers like the China Times (《中國時報》) and the United Daily News (《聯合報》), and journals such as The China Tribune (《中國論壇》), many of which were written by well-established writers, critics, and translators. Among these, Zhang Xiguo’s (張系國) critique was somewhat unusual. In “The Last Unicorn—A Brief Comment on George Orwell” published in the China Times on December 3, 1983, he characterized NE as the “literature of political confession,” placing it in the same category as Koestler’s Darkness at Noon. A famous novelist from Taiwan and IT expert based in the U.S., Zhang asserted that NE was at once an allegorical political novel and a fairy tale for adults, but its originality as a work of political science fiction was no match for Yevgeny Zamyatin’s We, to which Orwell was greatly indebted. Moreover, NE can hardly claim to be a literary success, for the characters are flat and the plot is not unusual. However, Zhang was greatly impressed by Orwell’s “moral courage and sense of justice” and “his ability to create new diction.” It was this, together with the international context of the Cold War, that made NE so popular and influential (8).

Taking a different tack, Wang Wenxing (王文興), an eminent modernist novelist and professor of foreign literature at National Taiwan University, compared Orwell favorably with Huxley in “Unity and Conflict—A Comparison of the Political Position of Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four” published two days later. An advocate of slow reading, Wang cited textual details to prove that NE was better than Brave New World because it was able to “overcome the common defect of political novels: the inconsistency of the political attitude.” Although Orwell was “by no means a great artist,” nor NE “a great piece of art,” this author’s warning against totalitarianism was already “a great contribution to humankind,” and the “unique intrinsic value” of NE made him “probably the most renowned political novelist of this century” (II, 8). This emphasis on writing techniques and intrinsic value not only stemmed from Wang’s personal experience as a literature professor and novelist, but also reflected the strong impact of New Criticism, which had dominated the Taiwan literary community since the early 1970s.
While Wang spoke highly of Orwell as “a great humanitarian” who also presented a “warning” (II, 8), the poet-scholar Yu Guangzhong (余光中) emphasized the importance of this warning, describing him as “an eminent prophet,” much like an “oracle” (8) in “Come! 1984!” published in the China Times on January 1, 1984, the very first day of the year Orwell had singled out in his prophetic novel more than three decades earlier. Yu mentioned that his introduction to Orwell had come thirty years before, through two of his college teachers: Wu Bingzhong (吳炳鍾) and Liang Shiqiu. The former had given him a copy of NE in 1950 and explained to him the meaning of “doublethink” and “newspeak,” while the latter had been a translator of AF. Attacking the collectivism and communism of mainland China, Yu showed how words could be twisted to serve the ruler by substituting “people” for “party.” He concluded by lamenting that many intellectuals in mainland China and around the world were not heeding the lessons of Orwell, Koestler, Stephen Spender, John Muir, Raymond Aron or, more recently, Simon Leys. The result was intellectuals who possessed intellect but lacked insight, and did not have the moral courage to expose the bare political reality to the world (8).

The United Daily News also invited some famous writers to take note of this Orwellian year of 1984. For instance, “Heaven and Hell—Orwell the Man and His Books” by Chen Zhifan (陳之藩), a renowned essayist and scientist living abroad and one whose articles had been included in Taiwan’s high school textbooks, came out on December 31, 1983 and January 1, 1984. A more thought-provoking piece was “The ‘Newspeak’ in Orwell’s Prophetic Novel” by George Gao (喬志高), which appeared on January 1-3, 1984. A seasoned journalist and translator living abroad, Gao cautioned his readers that the world Orwell had prophesized thirty-five years ago “had already become a reality more or less, sooner or later, in the East or the West” (I, 8). He asserted that Orwell opposed “any form of totalitarianism, Right or Left, as being against human nature” (I, 8). By combining “political thought and the art of the novel,” Orwell was able to produce “two literary classics of the twentieth century”—AF (“an allegorical novel” and “modern Aesop’s Fables”) and NE (“a prophetic novel”) (I, 8). Gao mentioned the novel Darkness at Noon, the non-fiction book The God That Failed (III, 8), and 1984 Revisited: Totalitarianism in Our Century edited by Irving Howe (II, 8). He further quoted Robert C. Tucker, who said “Hitler, Stalin, and Mao could be regarded as the embodiment of the ‘Big Brother’” (II, 8). Significantly enough, he ended his article by illustrating that the Chinese language contains at least two characteristics of Newspeak: first, a word can be used as any part of speech; and second, a word can be changed into its
opposite meaning by simply adding a prefix (III, 8). A careful reader would surmise that Taiwan, under martial law, was most likely also a target of his criticism.

The most knowledgeable and penetrating discussion of *NE* was probably that offered by Hsia T. C. (夏志清), a senior literature professor at Columbia University and the author of the landmark *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (1961). In “Rereading *Nineteen Eighty-Four*,” published in the January and February 1984 issues of *The United Monthly* (《聯合月刊》), Hsia called readers’ attention to the often neglected role of Orwell as a literary critic (I, 60). He also mentioned in passing that *AF* was in the tradition of political allegory established by Jonathan Swift, and commented, quite meaningfully, that “one day when *AF* loses its sense of political satire and, like *Gulliver’s Travels*, becomes a piece of children’s literature, that will be truly a peaceful and prosperous world in which people of every nation can enjoy their good life” (I, 61).

Other approaches also emerged, apart from the literary perspective adopted by creative writers and literary critics. For instance, among the four articles published in the December 1983 issue of *The China Tribune* (《中國論壇》), Chen Zhongxin (陳忠信) quoted Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* to stress Orwell’s critique of bureaucratic and technocratic totalitarianism, while Liao Renyi (廖仁義) drew from Erich Fromm’s *The Fear of Freedom* to highlight the dark side of bureaucracy. In an article published in the January 1984 issue of *The United Monthly*, Jin Yaoji (金耀基), a sociologist in Hong Kong, also cited Fromm to criticize the robotism of this pessimistic novel, yet insisted that independent thinking would allow humanity to overcome the domination of Big Brother’s doublethink.

It might not be an exaggeration to say that translation has played the most important role in disseminating and popularizing Orwell in Taiwan. The circulation of many non-copyrighted translations in the book market both contributed to Orwell’s visibility and created some confusion. In his M.A. thesis on the Chinese translations of *NE* in Taiwan, Li Mingzhe identified as many as eleven translators from 1950 to 2009 (62). However, as Joseph S. M. Lau (劉紹銘) stated in the preface to the Dongda edition of his translation, some translators simply followed earlier translations and reproduced previous mistakes.

Among the various *NE* translators, Qiu Suhui (邱素慧), Lau, and Dong exemplify the complexity involved in disseminating translations. Qiu’s translation

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10 Li missed at least one translator from mainland China, Dong Leshan (董樂山), whose translation was first published as “an inside reading” with limited circulation in mainland China in 1985, and published in Taiwan six years later.
was used by at least seven publishers: Guiguan (1974), Huaxin (1979), Yuanjing (1981), Shuhua (1986), Wanxiang (1993), Jinxu (1999), and INK (2009). Consequently, this translation has probably become the most popular version in Taiwan. It was not until 2013 that Lai discovered that Qiu’s version actually was based on the 1957 Hong Kong version by Huang Qili (黃其禮) with the peculiar title Twenty-Seven Years from Now (《二十七年以後》), and that it adopted Niu’s version as well (Lai, “Jieyan” 10, 65). Sometimes the same publisher also produced different editions, which further complicated the situation. Take Qiu’s translation for example: the first Guiguan edition contained both Yin’s above-mentioned article and Huang Ling’s (黃陵) essay on Orwell and his works. However, when included in the Guiguan World Literary Masterpieces Series twenty years later, the general editor Wu Qiancheng (吳潛誠) invited Fan Guosheng (范國生), his colleague at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of National Taiwan University, to write a new introduction. In Fan’s opinion, Orwell’s dark vision was not prophetic in that it did not come true. Instead, *NE* was simply a warning against totalitarianism (xvi).

Moreover, the first Yuanjing edition of Qiu’s translation, published in 1981, contained an anonymous preface and a chronology on Orwell. This preface compared him favorably with Kipling, claiming that *NE* inherited “Swift’s witty symbolism, Dickens’s sober resistance, and Shaw’s penetrating satire” (5-6), and ranked *NE* with *Brave New World* as “two treasures of the twentieth century modern novels which boldly exposed dystopia” (6). Attacking Stalinism as “the enemy of the people” (8), this preface asserted that what distinguished *NE* from other anti-communist and anti-totalitarian literary works was that “Orwell was able to grasp the universality of real life and the commonality of true human nature which, combined with dramatic skills and artistic structures, perfectly represent a fearful yet not desperate humanistic experience,” and, by so doing, to profoundly move people and sustain them in their fight for dignity (9). However, this anonymous preface was replaced by Chen Zhifan’s aforementioned article when another edition was issued in 1984. When Qiu’s translation was published by Wanxiang, the preface and Orwell’s chronology appeared in two different editions (1993 and 1999), yet both claimed to be the “first edition.”

It was not until the INK edition, published in 2009 to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of *NE*, that a translation of *NE* that did not infringe copyright finally appeared in Taiwan. The editor found that Qiu’s translation committed numerous “sins of omission,” most notable among them the omission of “Appendix: The Principles of Newspeak,” and made an effort to produce a complete version.
This explains why two persons (both Qiu and Zhang Jingzhi [張靖之], the pseudonym of the editor Zhang Zilan [張紫蘭]) were listed as translators. A comparison shows that this version is a great improvement on Qiu’s earlier versions. In my introduction to that commemorative edition, I treated NE as yuyen (a Chinese homonym for “allegory” and “prophecy”) and discussed the reception of Orwell and NE in Taiwan, the novel’s relevance to the contemporary world, and its influence on other literary works, including Haruki Murakami’s (村上春樹) then forthcoming 1Q84.

The story behind Lau’s translation of NE is also complicated. Born in Hong Kong, he received his B.A. degree from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of National Taiwan University and his Ph.D. degree from Indiana University, taught at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and was already a well-known scholar and translator in the Chinese-speaking world when his translation of NE was first serialized in Xinpao (《信報》) in Hong Kong in 1984, and later in Huangguan Magazine (《皇冠雜誌》)—one of the most popular literary monthlies in Taiwan. The monthly serialization was brought to an abrupt end when the publisher decided to publish the book in May 1984. In addition to a preface written by the scholar-cum-translator, the Huangguan edition included the aforementioned articles by Zhang Xiguo, Wang Wenxing, Yu Guangzhong, and George Gao as appendixes, making it much richer than other editions.

To Lau, NE was a work of anti-Nazism, anti-Stalinism, and anti-solipsism (“Rijian” 15). With the advent of the year 1984, Lau suggested that we should change our views of NE and AF by reading them as political allegories rather than prophecies. With Orwell’s warning about the power of language in mind, people would better understand the true nature of life under a totalitarian government. Thus, he remarked, “For extremely obvious reasons, there is no translation of NE in mainland China” (17). Lau concluded: “If someone asks me to list ten books that changed my life, I will place NE on top of my selection without any hesitation” (18).

Taken as a whole, the Huangguan edition sought to situate NE in the Chinese historical and political context of 1984, and was by far the richest representation of this novel; however, “The Principles of Newspeak” was misplaced, appearing immediately after the translator’s preface as a summary in this self-proclaimed “only complete Chinese translation” of NE at that time. This mistake was corrected in Lau’s Dongda edition in 1991. In his preface for the Dongda edition, Lau

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11 When we met on January 10, 2014, Lai told me that this title is pronounced the same as NE in Japanese.
criticized the two main shortcomings of other Chinese translations: omissions and mistranslations (“Dongda” 2). He revealed that he had translated *NE* out of a “sense of mission” (3) and that his translation strategy was one of domestication. By so doing, he hoped that his readers would not feel they were reading a translation (4) and the impact of his translation could be maximized. Lau managed to obtain a copy of Dong’s translation, published in Canton, China in 1988, of which only 420 copies were printed with a very limited circulation. Writing after the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, Lau lamented the ongoing political and social regression in mainland China. However, when his translation was published in Beijing, China in 2010, only the text itself remained, although “Appendix: The Principles of Newspeak” was represented in its entirety so that it could rightly be claimed that this was a complete translation.12

Dong wrote a preface for the Taiwan edition when his translation appeared in Taiwan in 1991. Writing in Beijing, he admitted at the outset that “it would be much easier to introduce Orwell to the Taiwan audience than to that of mainland China, simply because there are far fewer political considerations here” (1). Although unfamiliar with his potential audience due to “man-made barriers erected during the past few decades,” he regarded *NE*, together with *We* and *Brave New World*, as one of “the anti-utopian trilogy” and highlighted Orwell’s critique of totalitarianism in such various forms as Fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism (2). He not only warned his readers that the totalitarian regime Orwell depicted had become a reality before 1984 (2), but concluded that “this nightmare has not gone yet!” (4). Since his translation was published mere two years after the Tiananmen Massacre, the meaning of his suggestive remarks was more than clear to his audience in Taiwan.

It is interesting to note that when Dong’s translation was reissued in Shanghai in 1998, he argued in his introduction that Orwell was not an anti-communist writer nor was *NE* simply an anti-Soviet Union work, as they had been generally thought to be (“Yibenxu” 1). He subscribed to Hannah Arendt’s, Carl Friedrich’s, and Zbigniew Brzezinski’s definition of totalitarianism as an attempt to totally control every aspect of life, including people’s personal thoughts and privacy (“Yibenxu” 8). To Dong, *NE* was a vivid “prophecy of anti-totalitarianism” (“Yibenxu” 2). A devout socialist, Orwell believed that only by defeating totalitarianism could socialism triumph. Similarly, Dong concluded that “only by a downright rejection

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12 In my interviews with him in November 2013, Lau said that “The publisher in Beijing contacted me directly [concerning the possibility of publishing this book in mainland China]. I looked at the book after its publication. They did not change anything, which is not easy. This shows that mainland China takes *NE* very seriously.”
of totalitarianism such as the Cultural Revolution, could we who have been struggling for socialism all these years bring about a truly worthy socialism!” (“Yibenxu” 10). His statement reflected the dominant political ideology at the time: the need to critique the Cultural Revolution and support the establishment of a so-called socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The translations and various editions by Qiu, Lau, and Dong not only made clear the complexity of the reception of NE, but also demonstrated how the same source text might be differently represented under different conditions of cultural production and, in Lau’s and Dong’s cases, in different political and cultural contexts across the Taiwan Strait. It would need another paper to discuss the merits and shortcomings of these three translations of NE. Let it suffice to say that Lau’s is the best among the three in terms of fidelity and intelligibility, whereas Qiu’s commits a number of sins of omission, especially the omission of the essay-like “The Principles of Newspeak,” and Dong’s does not sufficiently fulfill the requirements of adequacy and accuracy while also omitting the Newspeak section.

As for the Chinese translations of AF, the title itself has undergone several changes. Ren’s title Dongwu nongzhuang (《動物農莊》) was a literal translation and has become the standard with only two exceptions. Li’s title Baishoutu was a much freer translation, emphasizing the bestiality of the various animals represented in the text. But when the publisher repackaged it as part of the Light Classic Series in 2001, the title was changed to Dongwu nongzhuang, and the whole series was recommended as good extra-curricular reading for elementary and high school students in 2002 by the Government Information Office in Taiwan. Gengyu’s first Liming edition in 1972 adopted Li’s title, but when it was reissued by the General Political Warfare Department of the Ministry of National Defense two years later, the title was changed to Wanshengyuan (《萬牲園》), “A Garden of Ten Thousand Beasts,” to magnify the extent and bestiality of the world described. Different

13 The most recent translation of NE by Xu Liyen (徐立妍), published in September 2012, is a product of the New Translation Project of Classical Literature, a joint project of the Yuanliu Publishing Co. and the Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation (GITI) of National Taiwan Normal University. This demonstrates NE’s continuing popularity in post-Cold War Taiwan. In her general introduction to the series, Lai, then the chairperson of GITI, laments Taiwan’s somewhat chaotic translation history—largely the result of Cold War ideology and the implementation of martial law—of which the present paper is just one example. In addition to urging a complete and faithful translation of literary classics, she also emphasizes the visibility of the translator and the necessity of getting rid of the earlier translationese and adopting a linguistic style more accessible to the target audience in contemporary Taiwan.

14 According to Lai’s email to the author dated July 8, 2013, the latter title, Wanshengyuan,
though they appear from all these titles, each translation maintains AF’s critique of
the animal and bestial aspects of human nature.

The reception of AF has been, paradoxically, both simpler and more
complicated than that of NE: simpler, because as a political allegory it has often
been used to support the “more serious” NE as a warning or indictment of
totalitarianism; more complicated, because as a fairy tale and animal fable it has
been read as children’s literature and, like Gulliver’s Travels, reached a much wider
audience. In the reception history of Orwell in Taiwan, before 1984 AF was
overshadowed by NE, but after that year more and more editions of AF have
become available. In fact, the situation has been even more complicated. For one
thing, the paratexts of the two earlier translations by Ren and Gengyu represent two
ends of the spectrum: literary and non-political vs. political, anti-totalitarian, and
anti-communist. Moreover, as AF originally was given the subtitle “A Fairy Tale,”
many critics readily associated it with Aesop’s Fables and tried to delve beneath the
surface meaning to get at the lessons that the author was supposed to be conveying.
Indeed, Orwell’s life has often been invoked to substantiate a political-allegorical
reading, and some have associated AF with the Russian Revolution and made an
effort to draw correspondences between the characters in the story and actual
historical figures or political stances. This kind of reading matches that of NE and
both serve to reinforce each other.

Another reading is also pervasive and, in the long run, might be more
influential. Like Gulliver’s Travels, AF was read both as a political satire and as a
piece of children’s literature whose readers included both parents and children. This
tendency has become steadily stronger over the years, both due to the improvement
of the political situation in Taiwan—including the lifting of martial law in 1987—and to the growing market for children’s literature. Consequently, there have
been dozens of versions in the Taiwan book market, many of which are abridged or
rewritten. Adding to the variety, some versions added zhuyin fuhao, a Chinese
phonetic system, so that children who have difficulty reading Chinese characters
can read the story by themselves (Taiwan Dongfang, 1993; Yusheng, 1998;
Guangtian, 2001; Huifeng, 2002; Youfu, 2003); some included illustrations by local
artists (Taiwan Dongfang, 1993; Renguang, 1997; Yusheng 1998; Xidai, 2000;
Guangtian, 2001; Huifeng, 2002; Chenxing, 2002; Maitian, 2010); a cartoon

was adopted from a 1950 Singapore translation by Wang Shaokang (王紹康), and Gengyu’s
translation partly adopted Li’s. This shows how anti-communist sentiments were spread widely in
Asia via translation, and marks the interaction between different Sinophone regions during the
Cold War era.
version was published without specifying the translator (Niudun, 1991); and there is even one retranslation from a Korean version (Xinshou fumu, 2006).

Another interesting phenomenon in the history of these texts is the appearance of bilingual versions. Since English proficiency is increasingly considered a key to success, many English-Chinese bilingual versions aim to facilitate the improvement of readers’ language skills (Jiuyi, 1998; Renben ziran, 1999; Changyu, 2000; Weilai, 2002; Lide, 2002; Xingyuei, 2003; Jitian, 2003; Fangxiang, 2008). To that end, Shen Mo’s (沈漠) bilingual version (Jitian, 2003) also provided footnotes to explain some of the more difficult vocabulary, and was recommended as suitable extra-curricular reading for elementary and high school students by the Government Information Office in 2003. In a couple of cases, CDs were also provided in order to cultivate listening comprehension and speaking ability (Weilai, 2002; Xingyuei, 2003; Fangxiang, 2008 which includes an interactive CD and MP3). Such developments have considerably expanded Orwell’s readership and explain why three out of the four M.A. theses on AF in Taiwan discussed its Chinese translations and rewritings.

Whereas the above description offers a general picture of the various representations of AF in Taiwan, three versions merit special mention here. Cai Chengwei’s (蔡承維) “Taiwanese translation” in November 1997 was part of a series of translations, known as “5% Translation Project of Taiwanese Languages,” produced by persons concerned with the “subjectivity” of the Taiwanese language. Combining the Taiwanese dialect and Romanization, it exemplified the translator’s endeavor to challenge the dominant cultural politics, language policy, and reading habits in Taiwan. Although the general public might find it difficult to read, the aim of this series—“to find a new way for the Taiwanese language by translating masterpieces of world literature” (n.p.) as the advertisement pronounced—was clear.

Due to the nature of AF, a number of translations have prefaces or introductions that are much shorter and simpler than those accompanying NE. One of the very few exceptions was the one translated by Huang Youhua (黃友華, Xidai, 2000). In order to distinguish it from other versions in the market, this edition included three quite different prefaces. The first, written by Qiu Yi (邱毅), an economist and congressman, offered an allegorical reading and made references to contemporary political phenomena in Taiwan in order to support Orwell’s keen observations and reinforce his universal appeal. The second, by Feng Pinjia (馮品佳), a foreign literature professor at National Chiao Tung University, offered an alternative postcolonial reading, associating the work with Myal by the Jamaican
female author Erna Brodber. The third, by Peng Shuangjun (彭雙俊), a Ph.D. in Germanic language and literature, elucidated Orwell’s art of political language in the novel by providing a detailed semantic analysis of one of its famous slogans: “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.”

Finally, a new translation by Chen Yiqiao (陳栢樵) was published in January 2010 by Maitian Publishing Co. and underwent four printings in half a year, testifying to the enduring popularity of this text. In addition to an introduction and a chronology of Orwell’s life, there are two special features: first, it is the only translation of this work in Taiwan authorized by the copyright holder, the Estate of the late Sonia Brownell Orwell; and second, it includes “The Freedom of the Press,” Orwell’s original preface, omitted from the first English edition and earlier Chinese translations.

Although Orwell has been well-known as an essayist in the English-speaking world, this dimension of his work has been obscured by the popularity of his novels in Taiwan. Up to now, only two versions of Down and Out in Paris and London have been published in Chinese, one translated by Wang Yiqun (王帙群, Taiwan Xuesheng, 1968), and the other by Zhu Naichang (朱乃長, Shulin, 2003). A collection of Orwell’s essays, entitled Why I Write, was translated by Zhang Hungyu (張弘瑜, Wunan, 2009) and includes Nan-fang Shuo’s (南方朔) introduction and five essays: “Why I Write,” “Bookshop Memories,” “Reflections on Gandhi,” “The Lion and the Unicorn,” and “Politics and the English Language.” Additionally, Kung Fanyun’s (孔繁雲) edition of AF contained three essays as appendixes: “Shooting an Elephant,” “A Hanging,” and “How the Poor Die,” translated by Li Yunzhi (李永熾), a professor of Japanese history at National Taiwan University. According to the catalogue of National Central Library, there is no Chinese monograph on Orwell in Taiwan and only one translation of Orwell’s “critical biography,” namely Zhao Changzhi’s (趙長智) translation of Raymond Williams’s Orwell.

Whereas “Why I Write” is Orwell’s oft-quoted manifesto, his best-known essay in Taiwan is probably “Shooting an Elephant.” For years, this essay has been included in the English reader of National Taiwan University. Moreover, its appeal goes well beyond college campuses. For instance, Deng Hungshu (鄧鴻樹) found that Shi Shuqing (施叔青) imitated Orwell in the water buffalo-shooting scene in the second of her Hong Kong trilogy Bauhinia All over the Mountains (《遍山洋紫荊》) to highlight the colonial presence, a fact the author herself admitted. Furthermore, a passage from “Shooting an Elephant,” chosen by Yu Guangzhong, was one of the two English texts selected for the translation segment of Liang
Shiqiu’s Literary Awards competition in 2009. Hundreds of Sinophone contestants from all over the world submitted their translations. The inclusion of the translations by five winners—together with the English original, my 9,000-word comment, and other award-winning essays—in a book further enhanced Orwell’s visibility in the Sinophone world.

Another instance further bears witness to Orwell’s popularity in Taiwan. Both *AF* and *NE* were recommended by Li Jiatung (李家同) in *Uncle Li’s 40 Favorite Books* in 2005. Li—an eminent professor of electronic engineering, pious Catholic and volunteer, public intellectual, story-writer, and advisor to the Presidential Office—has been advocating for social justice and emphasizing equality in education. To him, reading is of paramount importance, especially for children living in rural areas. Orwell was one of the four authors, each represented by two works, that he recommended (the other three being Agatha Christie, John Steinbeck, and Charles Dickens). A further example of the continuing interest in Orwell in Taiwan is the publication of the Chinese translation of Emma Larkin’s *Finding George Orwell in Burma* in 2012.

In short, Orwell was introduced to Taiwan at a particular historical conjuncture, a fact which both enhanced his popularity and somewhat limited more nuanced readings of his works. However, much has changed with the coming and passing of 1984, the end of the Cold War, the lifting of martial law in Taiwan, the changes in the political climate, and the rapid advancement of science and technology, including the pervasiveness of things like CCTV.

The above review of Orwell’s reception in Taiwan shows that besides academic papers, degree theses, and articles published in newspapers and magazines, translation has contributed much to his popularity and reputation among the Chinese reading public. It can be clearly seen that given Taiwan’s special political and historical situation, a number of bilingual intellectuals at home and abroad have tried to intervene in Taiwan’s public sphere as translators, critics, and sometimes both. If translation is an afterlife, as Benjamin’s metaphor goes, Orwell’s works, with so many different translations and paratexts, have enjoyed many more afterlives than most people would realize. Critical essays and academic studies have also brought fresh blood to these afterlives from time to time. All these efforts have made Orwell one of the most popular and respected foreign writers in Taiwan over the past six decades.
Appendix 1: Representative Chinese Translations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in Taiwan (in chronological order)


Since many publishers did not pay due respect to copyright, a number of translations imitated or even copied previous ones and the publication data were sometimes very confusing. The appendixes here only list representative translations and are by no means exhaustive. The chronological arrangement intends to offer a historical picture of the texts translated.
Appendix 2: Representative Chinese Translations of *Animal Farm* in Taiwan (in chronological order)


Li, Qichun 李啟純 (the pseudonym of Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋), trans. *Baishoutu* 百獸圖 (*A Portrait of One Hundred Animals*). Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1956.


Li, Shuzhen 李淑貞, adapt. *Dongwu nongzhuang* 動物農莊 (*Animal Farm*).
Huang, Youhua 黃友華, trans. *Dongwu nongzhuang* 動物農莊 (*Animal Farm*).
Appendix 3: Translations of Other Works by Orwell in Taiwan (in chronological order)


Appendix 4: The Only Chinese Translation of a Book on Orwell in Taiwan


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About the Author
Te-hsing Shan (單德興) is Distinguished Research Fellow of the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, and Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Humanities, Department of Translation, Lingnan University, Hong Kong. In addition to journal articles, his publications include Inscriptions and Representations: Chinese American Literary and Cultural Criticism, Translations and Contexts, Transgressions and Innovations: Asian American Literary and Cultural Studies, and Edward W. Said in Taiwan. He has also published two collections of interviews and translated nearly twenty books from English into Chinese, including Representations of the Intellectual, Gulliver's Travels, and Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said. His research interests are Translation Studies, Comparative Literature, Asian American Literature, and Cultural Studies.

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