



A Rewriting Theoretic Approach to Ken Liu’s Translation of *Folding Beijing*

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Abstract

Given *Folding Beijing*’s great importance to Chinese science fictions after winning the 2016 Hugo Award for Best Novelette and Ken Liu’s active engagement in promoting modern Chinese literary works to go global, this paper endeavors to explain how the influences of ideology, poetics and patronage are displayed in *Folding Beijing*’s English translation from the perspective of Lefevere’s Rewriting Theory. Instead of focusing on the linguistic elements of the translation, the current study attempts to reveal the cultural, social, ideological, and poetical effects on the translator’s decision-making process and tries to explore the reasons for the novelette’s success. It is believed that this paper can, to a certain extent, not only provide beneficial guidance for future practitioners in this translation field, but also offer some reference for the study of translation of Chinese contemporary science fictions.

Keywords: *Folding Beijing*; Ken Liu; The rewriting theory.

1. Introduction

Since 2016, an award-winning novelette has aroused huge attention and heated discussions from China’s media landscape, the general public and the field of science fiction (henceforth abbreviated as SF). *Folding Beijing*, written by the Chinese female author Hao Jingfang, won the 2016 Hugo Award for Best Novelette at the 74th World Science Fiction Convention. Since then, it has become China’s second SF to receive the highest honor bestowed in its category, after Liu Cixin’s *The Three-Body Problem* took the 2015 Hugo Award for Best Novel. This significant achievement serves not only as a great impetus for the development of Chinese SF but also a showcase of domestic SF’s vitality and potentials. Despite the innovative plot, Hao’s experienced writing skills and the story’s social implications, *Folding Beijing*’s recognition by one of the most prestigious SF awards and its wide acceptance by foreign readers are also largely attributed to Liu’s excellent English translation, which was initially published in a newly founded online magazine, *Uncanny Magazine* in 2015.

Folding Beijing is a contemporary short story composed of a series of fantastical experiences of the character Lao Dao, a waste processing worker living in Third Space in Beijing. In roughly the 22nd Century, the city is physically divided into three spaces, namely First Space, Second Space and Third Space. Such a division within the city is ruled by its people’s social classes, and citizens of each social class enjoy their space, time and social activities with great disparity. Beijing is portrayed by the author as a society permeated with inequality, discrimination, physical and emotional separation, as well as economic and social differences.

Liu is an American-Chinese, a SF author and translator, as well as a lawyer and programmer. He has translated countless SF and literary works from Chinese into English and won the Science Fiction & Fantasy Translation Award. It is noteworthy that his translations have long been well accepted and recognized by Anglophone readers, which can be further proved by his two translated versions of Chinese literary works that facilitate the Chinese versions to win the top award for SF. Owing to his profound cultural and linguistic knowledge, sophisticated translation skills and cross-cultural background, his translations are commonly approved to be precise, fluent and close to perfection.

In the course of traditional translation studies, linguistic-oriented studies have long been the mainstream, while in most cases, cultural-oriented studies have always been marginalized. In the 1980s, a new trend of translation studies has emerged due to the “cultural turn”. It reflected a movement which brought the impact of culture, as well as the wider constraints and demands on translation into focus rather than highlighted a rigidly prescriptive methodology in translation. From then on, in spite of equivalence and fidelity, factors or areas such as history, culture, society, ideology, poetics, and patronage began to be taken into account in the academic discussions of translation. In this sense, Lefevere’s Rewriting Theory was a notable one compared with other introduced theories at that time. When employed to study different translations, it underlines the influences of ideology, poetics and patronage on translators’ translation practices as well as the differences between the source and target texts.

As a matter of fact, it was not until the announcement of the 2016 Hugo Award that Hao's *Folding Beijing* began to be known by many Chinese and overseas readers and started to obtain its popularity both at home and abroad. Nevertheless, some researchers have already set foot in their study of this novelette's translation from multiple angles, attempting to provide different ideas and thoughts for translation studies as well as Liu's translation techniques. Studies concerning the English translation normally focus on the linguistic characteristics as well as the aesthetic elements on the basis of many translation theories such as functional equivalence (He, 2016), translator's style (Tian, 2017), translator's subjectivity (Chen, 2017), Skopos theory (Ren *et al.*, 2018), conceptual metaphor (Li and Zhao, 2019), and so on.

Most of the current researches related to this topic concentrate firstly on the textual analysis of the novelette and then on Liu's successful translation with an aim to sort out his translation strategies or translation methods. In terms of both the quality and quantities of the existing studies, there are certainly more efforts to be made.

In order to probe into *Folding Beijing* more from aspects of cultural and social factors instead of solely from the linguistic angle, this paper will take a step to analyze Liu's English translation from the perspective of the Rewriting Theory and discuss the influences of ideology, poetics and patronage on the translator's translation practices.

2. A Brief Introduction to Lefevere's Rewriting Theory

André Lefevere was a renowned and influential translation theorist in the twentieth century. Well-known for his exceptional contributions to comparative literary studies and translation studies, he is considered one of the foremost scholars who have transformed translation studies into an autonomous discipline. In *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literature Fame* (2004), one of the most representative books to shine a light on translation studies, Lefevere firstly construed the idea of translation as a form of rewriting. In this masterpiece, as defined by Bassnett and Lefevere in the General Editors' Preface, "Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way" (2004: xi).

In addition to Lefevere's above definition of translation as a form of rewriting, he devised three crucial systems—ideology, poetics and patronage as the manipulating factors of rewriting and expounded them in his works.

Ideology is described as "the conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time, and through which readers and translators approach texts" (Hermans, 1985). In this case, ideology plays an indispensable role in the translation activity since the translator is in no way cut off from his or her cultural background and influences. It governs the translator's decision as well as the translator's solutions to certain translation problems.

For Lefevere, poetics is the dominant concept of what literature should be, or can be allowed to be, in a given society (2004: 14). It has two components: one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other a conception of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole. The latter concept plays a significant role in the selection of themes in translation, which can also be regarded as the "functional view" of the translation (Lefevere, 2004).

However, a poetics or any poetics is historical variable because it is not absolute (Sun, 2013). It is always changing and thus in a literary system, the poetics predominant today may be different from that at the beginning of the system. In other words, the translator is going to make appropriate adjustments and modifications in his or her translation work so as to meet the requirements and standards of the poetics prevalent over an age and across the society.

Patronage is defined as the powers (persons, institutions) which can further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature (Lefevere, 2004). He further explained that, "Patrons can encourage the publication of translations they consider acceptable and they can also quite effectively prevent the publication of translations they do not consider so" (Lefevere, 1992). As a result, patronage is a factor outside of a literary system that regulates the publication and dissemination of translations.

The significance of the Rewriting theory was stated in *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literature Fame* at the very beginning:

Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another (Lefevere, 2004).

Therefore, it is well-defined that translation is an activity involving such factors as ideology, poetics, patronage and so forth rather than a pure, simple and transparent linguistic matter.

3. A Detailed Analysis of *Folding Beijing's* Translation from the Rewriting Theory

This chapter will discuss how Liu's translation of *Folding Beijing* took place under the constraints of the three systems in the Rewriting Theory, namely ideology, poetics and patronage. In the course of analysis, Liu's interviews and articles selected online will be exploited in order that the translator's personal backgrounds, attitudes, beliefs, and preferences of translation can be taken into consideration. Related opinions and materials from the author of *Folding Beijing* as well as other scholars will also be involved.

3.1. Translation Manipulated by Ideology

Based on the Rewriting Theory, translators function in a given culture at a given time. The way they understand themselves and their culture is one of the factors that may influence the way in which they translate (Lefevere, 1992). Consequently, it is worthwhile to view translation from the perspectives of social ideology as well as the translator's ideology.

3.1.1. Social Ideology and Its Influence on Translation

Hermans wrote that Lefevere lastly defined ideology as “the conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time, and through which readers and translators approach texts once proposed that ideology is composed of opinions and attitudes” (1985: 126-127). Here, social ideology refers to the opinions, beliefs and attitudes regarded as acceptable by the people in a given society during a long period of time.

Factors that shape the ideology of a society are also required to be taken into consideration. Ideology within a society at a given time is principally determined by a combination of factors, such as economy, politics, history, culture, religion, morality, etc., and thus social ideology can reflect the economic, political and cultural conditions within a society in a certain age. When handling problems in translation process, translators are impossibly immune to the ideology within a society.

3.1.1.1. Influences of Social Ideology on the Selection of Source Text

Chinese contemporary SF, although abound with futuristic elements, is in nature the manifestation of Chinese society. The flourishing development of Chinese SF in recent years is partly attributed to China's accelerated transition. Upon Liu's observation, Chinese society is undergoing rapid transformation: there are people in poor villages unavailable for desirable living conditions and citizens in high-tech cities immersed in the tremendous benefits of science and technology (Pandell, 2016). And he found this kind of imbalance in China is most acutely shown in a story like *Folding Beijing*.

Talking about *Folding Beijing*, on top of its genre as a SF, it is indeed a realistic presentation of social stratification and the huge differences among social classes. These differences are manifested in people's economic conditions, social status, the political system, and the unequal distribution of resources. What's more, another theme implied in the later chapters of the novelette focusing on the social problems regarding technological advancements in the futuristic society is exactly what interests the majority of English-speaking readers. A Chinese scholar concluded that, different from Chinese readers' intentions to interpret the political implications of the novelette, Anglophone readers mostly pay heed to such issues as automation, robots and unemployment (He, 2016).

Folding Beijing denotes the serious unemployment issue brought by machinery and automation, prompting readers to reflect on the current circumstances in their society. It gives readers a glimpse of the technological repercussions not only in Beijing but in the entire human society. As a result, the theme of the novelette is in accordance with western people's concerns over the development of automation and technology in modern society. Therefore, the selection of *Folding Beijing* as the source text complies with the ideology in the West and thus is recognized and welcomed by overseas readers.

3.1.1.2. The Manipulation of Social Ideology on Liu's Translation

This section is going to discover how the translator is restricted by the ideology of the target society and thus rewrites the original text in order that certain concepts, expressions and sentences can be well understood and accepted by target readers.

Example-1.	
<p>他听人说，如果将来想往上爬，有过第三空间的管理经验是很有用的。现在几个当红的人物，当初都是先到第三空间做管理者，然后才升到第一空间，若是停留在第二空间，就什么前途都没有，就算当个行政干部，一辈子级别也高不了。</p>	<p>He had been given the advice that if he wanted to <u>climb up the ladder of government administration</u>, some managerial experience in Third Space would be very helpful. Several prominent officials had all started their careers as Third Space administrators before being promoted to First Space. <u>If they had stayed in Second Space, they wouldn't have gone anywhere and would have spent the rest of their careers as low-level administrative cadres.</u></p>

Example 1 can be found in the novelette when the graduate student Zhang Xian enthusiastically conversed with Lao Dao about his political ambitions. The underlined quotations signify there is no future to pursue a career in Second Space. Only by rising to a more prominent social class can one be considered successful in the society. In the target culture, take American culture as an example, the great promise of the American Dream is the ability to rise in social class. It can be seen that the ideology presented in the source text is in accordance with that of American society. Hence, in this example, “往上爬” is translated into “climb up the ladder of government administration”, and “就算当个行政干部，一辈子级别也高不了” is described as “spent the rest of their careers as low-level

administrative cadres”. In this case, Liu has complemented the social context of the original text and made it clearer for western readers to capture the idea of rising from a lower social class to a higher social class.

Example-2.

a) 政策保护？福利？越保护工厂越不雇人。	Enact policies to protect the workers? Better welfare? The more you try to protect workers, the more you increase the cost of labor and make it less attractive for employers to hire people.
b) 咱们当时怎么搞过欧美的，不就是这么规模化搞的吗。	This kind of automation is absolutely necessary if you want to grow your economy—that was how we <u>caught up to</u> Europe and America, remember?
c) 这样还有一个好处，就是每次通货膨胀几乎传不到底层去	There’s another advantage to this approach: The effects of inflation almost can’t be felt at <u>the bottom of the social pyramid</u> .

Example 2 occurs when Lao Ge explained to Lao Dao in plain words about the economic mechanism behind the implementation of automatic processing. Decision-makers in First Space gave priority to economic growth at the expense of the declining living hours of people in Third Space.

At the beginning, the original text intends to demonstrate the internal relations between different parties involved in this issue through colloquial language. In this sense, Chinese readers can easily understand the underlying intention and the logic of the context but for some western readers, they might find it difficult to digest the implied meanings. For example, if “政策保护？福利？越保护工厂越不雇人” is translated literally as “Protection of policy? Welfare? The more you protect factories, the more you cannot employ people”, it would be difficult for them to figure out the logical connections between these measures and the problem under discussion. However, Liu has articulated the hidden messages in his translation, and thus the difficulties in understanding the source text have been reduced. Furthermore, the translation boosts western readers to think of these economic concepts in their social ideology, for instance, the welfare systems in the capitalistic society.

Secondly, “搞过” is a verb used in spoken language, which means “win over, surpass or exceed”. The original sentence contains certain important meaning if given direct translation—“That was how China surpassed Europe and America by scaling”. Considering the ideological factor, Liu paraphrased the verb into “caught up to” in order to avoid westerners’ unnecessary misconceptions about China, like “China threat” theory. In this translation, Liu emphasized the economic outcomes of “automation” and “scaling”, that is, their great contributions to economic growth. He also chose the verbal phrase “caught up with” to elucidate China’s development in the context, which flexibly escaped ideological conflicts and made it more acceptable for western readers.

In addition, the last underlined word “底层” in this context refers to “the bottom of the society”. Here, Liu rendered it as “the bottom of the social pyramid”. A definition of “social pyramid” given by Psychology Dictionary is “a hierarchic distribution of power seen in social structures that are in a pyramid shape” (Nugent, 2013). This is a model of social relationship frequently used in western countries. As a matter of fact, “the bottom of the social pyramid” specifically and accurately portrays the class stratification in western society, fitting well in westerners’ conceptions of class differences.

In the final analysis, illustrations in this section all examine the impact of social ideology on *Folding Beijing*’s translation. To begin with, the long-existing worries in western society about the issues pertinent to scientific and technological development largely govern Liu’s decision to translate *Folding Beijing*. Moreover, in the translation activity, it is necessary for the translator to make decisions when encountering ideological differences between two different social systems. When confronted with ideological conflicts in some aspects, to name a few, political factors, social beliefs and perceptions of another country, Liu has chosen to filter or alter some elements in the source text. While provided that the translator finds common beliefs or ideologies held by people from the original and the target society, conformity seems to be a favorable choice if the translator anticipates the translation to be accepted and recognized. Therefore, in some cases, Liu has complemented the original meaning of a phrase or a concept that is familiar to westerners.

3.1.2. The Translator’s Ideology and its Impact on Translation

Apart from social ideology, translator, as an individual in a society, will also exert his or her ideological influence on translation. Ideology of individuals can be regarded as “a set of beliefs, especially one held by a particular group, that influences the way people behave” (Hornby, 2014). Besides, it is worth mentioning that Liu’s translation thoughts, which can be considered part of the translator’s ideology, also exert a critical impact on his rendering of the story, particularly on his translation of culturally-loaded words.

3.1.2.1. Translation Influenced by the Translator’s Individual Value Judgment

“Value judgment” is interpreted like this: “If you make a value judgment about something, you form an opinion about it based on your principles and beliefs and not on facts which can be checked or proved” (Collins Dictionaries, 2014). In the translation of *Folding Beijing*, it is discernible that Liu’s value judgment regarding the story plays an important role. Here are some quotations from the source text and detailed demonstrations.

Example-3.

他第一次轻吻她一下，她躲开，他又吻，最后她退无可退，就把眼睛闭上了， <u>像任人宰割的囚犯</u> ，引他一阵怜惜。	The first time he tried to kiss her, she had moved her lips away shyly. He had persisted until she gave in, closing her eyes and <u>returning the kiss</u> .
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Example-4.

男人搂住依言的腰，吻了她嘴唇一下。 <u>依言想躲，但没躲开，颤抖了一下，手挡在身前显得非常勉强。</u>	The man grabbed Yi Yan around the waist and kissed her on the lips. <u>Yi Yan seemed to give in to the kiss reluctantly.</u>
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The above sentences depict Yi Yan's distinctive reactions to two men's kisses: to her lover Qin Tian and to her husband Wu Wen. In these two cases, Liu decided to skip some details in the source text, which consequently reinterpreted the original meaning in the context and influenced the portrayal of the character. In [Example 3](#), Liu omitted the simile “像任人宰割的囚犯，引他一阵怜惜” in the original context and translated Yi Yan's action into “returning the kiss”, which seemed to go beyond the original meaning—“accepting the kiss”. In [Example 4](#), the underlined description in the Chinese version that signifies Yi Yan's unwillingness to accept her husband's kiss was simplified as “Yi Yan seemed to give in to the kiss reluctantly”. In this way, the degree of Yi Yan's reluctance is undermined. It is possible that these omissions are made due to Liu's personal judgment of Yi Yan's personality.

According to Qin Tian's introduction in the novelette, Yi Yan has a superior background and strict family education. Based on the conventional ideas held by a certain group of people, such a lady brought up in First Space is supposed to be reserved and demure. Nonetheless, for western readers, Yi Yan's image in the story has been influenced in Liu's translation on the account of the translator's ideology.

It is also possible that in [Example 3](#), Liu's value judgment is contradictory to that of the author. Here, Liu tried to convey a playful image of Yi Yan who is seemingly teasing her lover, while in the Chinese version, readers' impressions of Yi Yan tend to be timid and gentle. This manifests the translator's ideological manipulation of the original text.

Example-5.

依言推出钱的样子就像是早预料到他会讹诈，这让他受不了。	The way Yi Yan had taken out the money seemed to suggest that she had been anticipating an attempt from him to blackmail her, and he could not accept that. <u>This is what they think of Third Spacers.</u>
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[Example 5](#) shows Lao Dao's psychological activities when he was given another large sum of money because Yi Yan wanted him to conceal her marriage from Qin Tian. Noticeably, Liu has added “This is what they think of Third Spacers” to the translation with an intention to point out First Spacers' general impression of Third Spacers who are considered inferior to them. This addition intends to stress people's consciousness of class differences and to inspire readers' interpretation of the underlying critique in the story.

3.1.2.2. Choice of Words Dictated by Liu's Individual Ideology

Liu's value judgment and his own understanding of a given context also highly affect his selection of some words, as illustrated by the examples below.

Example-6.

男孩坐在地上的被子和袜子中间	the young man was sitting on the floor in a pile of blankets and <u>dirty socks</u>
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Example-7.

老刀在 <u>万籁俱寂的街上</u> 跑了一公里，很容易找到了要找的小区。	Lao Dan ran about a kilometer through <u>the deserted streets</u> until he reached the residential district containing his destination.
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Example-8.

散场的舞厅器物凌乱，像女人卸了妆。	The <u>deserted banquet hall</u> after the party looked messy and grubby, like a woman who took off her makeup after a long, tiring day.
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Example-9.

<p>年轻一代不喜欢做垃圾工，他们千方百计在舞厅里表现自己，希望能找到一个打碟或伴舞的工作。在服装店做一个店员也是好的选择，手指只拂过轻巧衣物，不必在泛着酸味的腐烂物中寻找塑料和金属。</p>	<p>The younger generation <u>looked down on</u> the profession of the waste worker. They tried to <u>show off</u> on the dance floors of nightclubs, hoping to find jobs as DJs or dancers. Even working at a clothing store seemed <u>a better choice</u>: their fingers would be touching thin fabric instead of scrabbling through rotting garbage for plastic or metal.</p>
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In [Example 6](#), the word “dirty” in the translation lends a derogatory meaning to the socks of Qin Tian’s roommate, but this negative sense does not exist in the original context. This is because the translator tried to show a disapproving attitude towards the graduate student’s lifestyle as implied in the original description.

In [Example 7](#) and [8](#), “万籁俱寂的街上” and “散场的舞厅” are both described in the translation to be “deserted” and thus carry negative connotations. “Deserted” is an adjective derived from the noun “desert”. If you refer to a place or situation as a desert, you think it is bad for people because it is not interesting, exciting, or useful in any way ([Collins Dictionaries, 2014](#)). “万籁俱寂” in [Example 7](#) is a neutral idiom in Chinese, referring to “absolute silence and quietness”, but it is now given such a disapproving meaning to present the desolation of the streets in First Space. In [Example 8](#), after adding “deserted” before “the banquet hall”, this place is tinged with a sense of depression to show the emptiness of people’s celebration. Hence, Liu’s choice of this word is attributed to his perception of the unfavorable environment in the story and the satirical elements in the context.

In [Example 9](#), “不喜欢”, “表现自己” and “好的选择” are respectively translated into “looked down on”, “show off”, and “a better choice”. These English phrases all highlight the reputation-seeking nature of the young generation’s outlook on career choice and thus reflect Lao Dao’s miserable and arduous occupation as a waste processing worker. Liu here made a negative commentary about the young generation’s outlook on career choice. This ironic message can be easily sensed by a Chinese reader but not necessarily by a westerner.

3.1.2.3. Translation of Culturally-Loaded Words Determined by Liu’s Translation Thoughts

It is common that a translator has to deal with culturally-specific terms in the course of translation and Liu is no exception. In an interview *SF Author, Lawyer, Programmer—and Translator? More from Ken Liu*, Liu articulated that his pleasure of translating SF usually derives from “encountering these deeply culturally-loaded nuggets that encode an entire way of life and seeking to give them new life in a novel linguistic soil that may not be prepared to nourish them” ([Brady, 2016](#)). As an American-Chinese, Liu is well-acquainted with both Chinese and western culture. In *Folding Beijing*, the translation of culturally-loaded terms is thus affected by his thoughts on translation, which can be exemplified by the following sentences.

Example-10.

<p>在他们身后，清理队已经缓缓开了过来，像秋风扫落叶一样将人们扫回家。</p>	<p>The city cleaning crew was almost upon them, and <u>the crowd scattered like autumn leaves in a wind.</u></p>
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In [Example 10](#), the Chinese allusion “秋风扫落叶” literally means “like autumn wind sweeping away the fallen leaves”. Here, Liu vividly conveyed the original meaning by describing the scene as “the crowd scattered like autumn leaves in a wind”. While reading the translation, foreign readers may not notice the origin of the allusion due to their different cultural background and knowledge, but most people do share similar concepts concerning the law of nature in human society, for instance, in this case, the features of season changes. Liu here did not explain the reference in his translation on the account that the origin of the allusion has little interference with the understanding of the sentence. With a simple and direct translation, readers can easily restore a scene in their minds in which people on the streets are disturbed by the appearance of the city cleaning crew.

Example-11.

<p>两个小机器人将他的两条小腿扣紧，抬起，放在它们轮子边上的平台上，然后异常同步地向最近的房子驶去，平稳迅速，保持并肩，从远处看上去，或许会以为老刀脚踩风火轮。</p>	<p>Their movements were so steady, so smooth, so synchronized, that from a distance, it appeared as if Lao Dao was skating along on <u>a pair of rollerblades, like Nezha riding on his Wind Fire Wheels.</u></p>
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In [Example 11](#), “风火轮” is a culturally-loaded word. To “give new life” to this cultural term, Liu firstly rendered it as “a pair of rollerblades” which is familiar and tangible to western readers and then added an explanation containing its cultural connotation as a simile to introduce a perhaps new concept to target readers. Obviously, this rewriting is made based on Liu’s personal preferences of translating culturally-loaded words, not

only arousing readers' interest in this unfamiliar and unique term, but also introducing a Chinese cultural term which is novel to non-Chinese readers.

Judging from the above analysis, in *Folding Beijing's* translation, the translator's ideology will give rise to omission and addition, and affect the choice of specific words as well as the treatment of culturally-loaded words.

3.2. Translation Constrained by Poetics

Translation is also performed under another controlling system in the Rewriting Theory—poetics. As the Rewriting Theory suggests, a translation is controlled by both the inventory components and the functional value of it in the literary system. The latter concept is influential in the selection of themes that must be relevant to the social system if the work of literature is to be noticed at all (Lefevere, 2004). Thus this section will firstly take a look at how Liu has modified his translation of the original text to comply with the dominant poetics in western society, and then delve into the functional value of *Folding Beijing* in the society.

3.2.1. Liu's Translation Related to Rhetoric

Although *Folding Beijing* is a scientific literary work, it also manifests the literary beauty in modern literature. It can be found that the novelette is replete with various rhetoric devices, particularly simile and metaphor, which enrich the quality of linguistic expressions as well as aesthetic elements of the original text.

Peter Newmark, a prominent scholar in translation studies once elaborated his theories on metaphor translation and proposed the corresponding translation principles in *A Textbook of Translation* (2008). According to this book, there are six types of metaphors: dead, cliché, stock, adapted, recent, and original metaphors. Among them, the original type is the most common one in *Folding Beijing* since most metaphors in the original text are created by the author to achieve certain artistic and descriptive effects. Oliynyk explained that Newmark considered original metaphors to be individual author's metaphors used by the author individually and are not common in everyday usage (Oliynyk, 2014). Newmark held that original metaphors should be translated literally since: "a) the author's metaphor manifests individual style and personality of the author and b) the author's metaphors contribute to the enrichment of the vocabulary of the target language" (Newmark, 2008).

In terms of the translation of original metaphors in the source text, Liu mostly applied direct translation. But in the following cases, Liu rewrote the original text so as to meet the requirements of poetics within the target literary system.

Example-12.

“我……”老刀头脑嗡嗡响。	“I...” Lao Dao's head felt <u>like a droning beehive</u> . He couldn't think.
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Example-13.

阿贝的声音尖而脆，划得空气道道裂痕。	Ah Bei's voice was sharp and brittle, and it <u>cut through the air like a knife</u> .
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These two Chinese texts are both original metaphors used to strengthen the sensory effects of the descriptions. Liu adapted his translation by completing the images which are unclear in the original metaphors. The expression “老刀头脑嗡嗡响” in Example 12 is relatively easy for Chinese readers to comprehend. Its meaning is just as what has been translated by Liu in the English version—“Lao Dao's head felt like a droning beehive”. Liu also pointed out the hidden image “knife” in the translation of Example 13 to establish an impression of a “sharp and brittle” voice. These two changes made in the target text are both in accordance with Newmark's translation principles of original metaphors.

Interestingly, metaphors in the above examples are both rendered into similes in the target text, allowing the translation easier to be understood and successfully conveying the similar images to the target readers.

3.2.2. *Folding Beijing's* Functional Value in Society

For many decades, cultural communications and exchanges between China and western countries used to be unidirectional as a result of their unbalanced economic and political positions. Countless translated literary works as carriers of different western thoughts and ideas were constantly flooded into China. On the contrary, China's influence on the West in terms of cultural export was too weak to be noticed partly for the reason that many western readers failed or refused to comprehend and accept China's ideological dissimilarities. However, the current situation has greatly improved. Nowadays, thanks to the national rejuvenation and prosperity of China, the ideological gaps in ethics and value between China and the West have been increasingly bridged (Chen, 2015). Therefore, China is unprecedentedly paid with more attention, which prompts the translation of Chinese literature.

With China's rapid development, the western world gradually centers its attention to this fast-growing nation. For more than a century, the best-selling science fiction was usually produced in the West and then exported to China (Liu, 2018). However, the success of Liu Cixin's *The Three-Body Problem* and Hao's *Folding Beijing* has reversed this trend. The increasing global attention on and appreciation of Chinese SF has resulted in a greater market demand for SF literature originating from China (Junker, 2019).

“Chinese SF has indeed evolved into a new global phenomenon” (Wang, 2016), said by a Chinese female fiction writer and winner of Chinese Nebula Awards. In one of her articles—*A brief introduction to Chinese science fiction*, she pointed out that, since 2015, a company named Storycom in China dedicated to turn SF into movies, comic or games has been supporting the Hugo-winning magazine *Clarksword* to host a Chinese SF translation project, since which the magazine has been making monthly publications of Chinese SF in translation (Wang, 2016). From what is mentioned above, Chinese contemporary SF is expected to carve out a larger share in overseas market than ever before.

Besides, inequality, the prevailing theme in this novelette, is in reality a troublesome problem in both Chinese and western society that bothers the vast majority of people. Unsurprisingly, the praise and recognition from the general public won by the novelette are in part ascribed to the story’s impressive depiction and disclosure of such a long-standing topic in literature. Just as Hao put it in an interview with *Uncanny Magazine*, “Some small countries or city-states which stand near the top of our global economic value chain have indeed mostly achieved equality, but down the value chain live many larger populations still mired in poverty” (Hao, 2015). Inequality and disparity among social classes is a phenomenon resonating across the globe, and this fiction can definitely offer a chance for western readers to rethink and reflect on the modern society.

To sum up, the increasing demands from the western community for English translations of Chinese contemporary SF, the translator’s personal deliberation, together with the implied theme of the original story have substantially shaped the functional components of *Folding Beijing*.

3.3. Translation Influenced by Patronage

The Chinese version of *Folding Beijing* was originally posted on a bulletin board run by Tsinghua University in 2012. For gaining much popularity from the internet, it was later published on two local magazines in China and soon caught Liu’s attention. Its English translation was first published by *Uncanny Magazine* in 2015. One year later, the story was included in the first English-language anthology of contemporary Chinese SF, *Invisible Planets*, which was edited and translated by Liu and published by Tor Books.

The patronage discussed in this paper is *Uncanny Magazine*, which is an online SF and fantasy magazine. It has been publishing numerous award-winning SF authored by global writers and allows online submissions from any potential story provider. It can be inferred that Liu’s submission of the translated version to the magazine has made the publication of *Folding Beijing* possible.

The patronage has little influence on Liu’s translation activity, since the translation is finished before its submission. Therefore, Liu has the ultimate control over his translation process. The rewriting of the source text is highly determined by his translation thoughts and translation motives.

4. Conclusion

This research provides a new perspective—not simply centering on the linguistic styles when studying the translation products but to explore more about extra-textual factors that affect the translator’s translation process.

It ends with the following findings. As to social ideology, the source text was selected by the translator on the basis of western people’s ideology. On top of that, Liu chose to complete the context or paraphrase some specific words, concepts and sentences in the translated version to avoid ideological conflicts or to accord with the target ideology. Under the constraint of the translator’s ideology, including individual value judgment and translation thoughts, Liu has taken some measures such as deletion of detailed descriptions, addition of sentences and translation of culturally-loaded words to produce an acceptable and readable translation. In light of the poetical effect, Liu translated the original metaphors in *Folding Beijing* in a direct and clear manner so as to conform to the conventions of the target literary system. Talking about the functional value of the novelette in society, factors such as popularity of Chinese contemporary scientific works, Liu’s translation motives as well as the story’s realistic implications have made *Folding Beijing* an appropriate source text to translate. Lastly, it was found that the *Uncanny Magazine* had little interference on his translation activity, therefore, Liu could translate the novelette according to his own will. To conclude, the success of *Folding Beijing*’s English translation is not groundless, instead, it is attributed to such factors as mentioned above.

In general, this paper may offer some implications and reference for the following three groups of people. First, readers who are interested in fathoming translations of Chinese scientific works may have a better understanding of translators’ translation activities. They may try to focus more on extra-textual aspects that affect the translated versions and obtain special experiences in their reading process. Second, the present study can be regarded as a detailed observation of Liu’s translation of Chinese contemporary SF. Translators dedicated to this field may find some useful messages and constructive experience from Liu’s translation of Chinese SF and then utilize these practical skills in their own translation practices. Furthermore, translators may also enhance their awareness of extra-textual elements when handling similar problems in their translation activities. Third, the emphasis of cultural, ideological and poetical influences shown in this analysis can, to some degree, inspire and encourage future researchers who are devoted to the *Folding Beijing*’s translation as well as the translation study of Chinese contemporary SF.

Above all, the author has two expectations. On the one hand, it is hoped that the present study can provide some insights for those who are interested in this research subject, and more scholars’ attention can be drawn by such factors as ideology, cultures or literary systems in their research of Chinese contemporary SF to conduct better and more comprehensive studies. On the other hand, it is anticipated that the translator’s translation practices in *Folding*

Beijing can shed light on the translation field of contemporary Chinese scientific works so as to push forward the prosperity and development of Chinese SF in foreign countries.

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