

# A Study on the English Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in *The Three-Body Problem* from the Perspective of Manipulation Theory

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**Abstract:** *Written by Liu Cixin and published in 2006, *The Three-Body Problem* is one of the most popular science fiction novels in China. Its English version translated by Ken Liu won a Hugo Award for Best Novel, which has pushed Chinese science fiction to a higher status in the world. Science fiction translation is an emerging topic in the field of translation research. Current studies mainly focus on the translation strategies adopted by the English version of *The Three-Body Problem*, and little research explores how culture-loaded words are translated from the perspective of Manipulation Theory. Employing a case-study approach, this thesis applies Manipulation Theory to the analysis of culture-loaded words in Ken Liu's English translation of *The Three-Body Problem*. The results show: (1) manipulated by ideology, the translator rewrites the culture-loaded words containing political elements and religious elements with translation strategies such as amplification, transliteration and domestication; (2) poetics manipulates the translation of Chinese idioms, old sayings and proverbs, in which domestication, idiomatic translation and literal translation strategies are adopted; (3) to meet the patronage's expectation, the translator adds many footnotes which provide extra information about Chinese culture. These results can shed light on culture-loaded words translation of science fiction and make a positive contribution to Chinese culture going abroad.*

**Keywords:** *The Three-Body Problem, Manipulation Theory, Culture-loaded words*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Research Background

Since the founding of PRC, under the leadership of the Communist Party, China has gained significant progress in economic, scientific, technological, cultural and social development. As a fast-growing modernized country, China plays a more vital role in the world than ever before; as a nation with glorious and time-honored history, it has abundant cultural connotations attracting worldwide attention.

To expand China's influence in culture, science and other aspects, and to let the world know more about it, an increasing number of excellent literary works have been translated and published overseas. *The Three-Body Problem* is one of the successful examples. Written by Liu Cixin and published in 2006, it soon became one of the most popular science fiction novels in China and received the Chinese Science Fiction Yinhe Award. The English version of *The Three-Body Problem* translated by Ken Liu also gained great influence. It won a Hugo Award for Best Novel for the first time for Asian novels and was nominated for the Nebula Award for Best Novel. *The New York Times* cited several endorsements of the book by some celebrities to praise its quality of translation. For example, Kirkus Reviews noted that "in concept and development, it resembles top-notch Arthur C. Clarke or Larry Niven but with a perspective — plots, mysteries, conspiracies, murders, revelations and all — embedded in a culture and politic dramatically unfamiliar to most readers in the West, conveniently illuminated with footnotes courtesy of translator Liu." They praised Liu's use of themes relating to Chinese culture, history and politics which give foreign readers a new perspective to imagine the future and know about China.

With the background of the Cultural Revolution, the book tells the story of the exchange of information, the struggle of life and death between the human civilization on Earth and the three-body civilization as well as the rise and fall of the two civilizations in the universe. In the book, Liu combines his dedication to technology with the great tradition and long history of China, unfolding the construction of the world from a cosmic perspective. However, he is by no means satisfied with the portrayal of

technology, but he is deeply contemplative of the fate of humanity. Liu intended to create a literary style with Chinese cultural characteristics so as to set a monument of Chinese science fiction in the world.

### **1.2. Research Significance**

Without doubt *The Three-Body Problem* has popularized Chinese science fiction around the world. Since the novel combines Chinese culture background with science description, a good translation of cultural expressions or culture-loaded words in it can better promote Chinese culture and facilitate the cultural exchange between China and other countries.

Many studies focus on the translation strategies in the English version of *The Three-Body Problem* from the perspective of different translation theories such as Skopos Theory, Relevance Theory, Functional Equivalence Theory, Eco-translatology, Newmark's theory of semantic translation and communicative translation, etc. However, little research explored how culture-loaded words are translated under the manipulation of three factors, namely ideology, poetics and patronage.

### **1.3. Research Questions and Methodology**

This thesis intends to explore how the three manipulating factors of ideology, poetics and patronage influence the translation of culture-loaded words in *The Three-Body Problem*. To be more specific, this thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

(1) In the English version of *The Three-Body Problem*, how do ideology, poetics and patronage manipulate the translation of culture-loaded words respectively?

(2) In the English version of *The Three-Body Problem*, what translation strategies are adopted in translating culture-loaded words?

A case-study approach will be used with the application of the Manipulation Theory to analyze the translation of culture-loaded words in *The Three-Body Problem*. Specifically, the culture-loaded words will be collected from the English version of *The Three-Body Problem*. Then the study will analyze the translation strategies used in the examples. Finally, the study will analyze each example how the three factors manipulate the translation of the words.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Culture-loaded Words**

#### **2.1.1. Definition and Classification**

As the carrier of national culture, language can convey culture and information. Some specific cultural terms reflecting unique cultural norms can be called culture-loaded words. Some foreign scholars analyzed culture-loaded words from the linguistic aspect at the beginning. A famous linguist Lado (1972) made a definition in his work, "Culture-loaded words are lexical items which have similar primary meaning in both L1 and the L2, but they are different in connotation." (p.64) <sup>[1]</sup> With the influence of cultural turn in the 1990s, Baker (2000) defined culture-loaded words from the cultural aspect. He presented that:

The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or a type of food. Such concepts, are often referred to as "culture-specific". These headings may be described as "the words, denoting things, concepts, social phenomena, etc., of the source language unfamiliar to people who share the target language" (Baker, 2000, p. 21) <sup>[2]</sup>.

A widely applied definition of culture-loaded words in China is proposed by Liao (2000), who argued that "Culture-loaded words refer to words, phrases and idioms that reflect certain features of a culture. They indicate the unique activities of a nation that accumulated and developed in the long historical period." (p. 232) <sup>[3]</sup>

The most popular classification of culture-loaded words was proposed by Nida (1993). He classified culture into five types: ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture and linguistic culture (Nida, 1993) <sup>[4]</sup>. As culture-loaded words are the language form of culture, they can also be classified into ecological, material, social, religious and linguistic culture-loaded words. Based on Nida's theory, other scholars made some modifications to make it relevant to their study. Newmark (2001)

categorized culture-loaded words into ecology, material culture, social culture, organization and gestures and habits. <sup>[5]</sup>

Although different scholars hold different views on culture-loaded words, there is one thing in common that culture-loaded words contain specific cultural information like history, custom, norm, lifestyle, characteristics and wisdom which is unique to a certain nation and may not have the equivalence in other nations. Small adjustment was made to Nida's theory for scholars to better conduct their research.

### **2.1.2. Previous Studies on the Translation of Culture-loaded Words**

Foreign studies on the translation of culture-loaded words mainly concentrate on the translation strategies and their combination with other aspects. For instance, Mekheimer (2012) talked about the feasibility of English literary texts translation in Arabic and he approved of the use of culture-loaded words in literary texts to translation teaching. <sup>[6]</sup>

In China, the research on culture-loaded words has increased rapidly in recent decades. Enormous research interest can be found on this topic. Previous studies can be cataloged into two types, one focusing on translation strategies and the other focusing on translation theory. The earlier studies paid close attention to translation strategies. The first essay on it was written by Chen Xirong in 1998, named *The Translation of Culture-loaded Words from the Perspective of Functional Grammar*. He claimed that the meaning of culture-loaded words can be translated, but it's hard to preserve the cultural meaning completely (Chen, 1998). And he listed three translation strategies for culture-loaded translation: literal translation, transliteration and annotation (Chen, 1998) <sup>[7]</sup>. Yuan Lingyan (2001) suggested that the foreignization strategy is valuable, but people should also realize the importance of domestication strategies. <sup>[8]</sup>

Later, researchers tended to study culture-loaded words from different theories or by certain cases. The theories related involve Skopos Theory, Relevance Theory, Functional Equivalence Theory, and Eco-translatology, Newmark's theory of semantic translation and communicative translation, etc. Wu (2021) studied the culture-loaded words under the theory of translation shifts. By analyzing the translation conversions and translation strategies, he discovered that people can, to a certain extent, break the language and understanding barriers encountered in the foreign communication of specific cultures and improve the quality of the translation of culture-loaded words (Wu, 2021) <sup>[9]</sup>. Sun and Han (2021) discussed the translation of culture-loaded words from the perspective of Eco-translatology. And the results showed that the theory of adaptive selection in Eco-translatology and the doctrine of multidimensional transformation all provide strong support for the translatability of Chinese culture-loaded words (Sun & Han, 2021). Based on the research results, the author calls for more translators to pay attention to the dissemination and export of contemporary outstanding culture, and to focus on the overall translation ecology of cultural works in translation practice, to create "integrated adaptation" and "choice" in the constant choice of "adaptation" and "choice" so as to create translations with the best degree of "integrated adaptation and selection" (Sun & Han, 2021, p. 93) <sup>[10]</sup>.

### **2.2. The Three-Body Problem**

The research on the translation of *The Three-Body Problem* mainly concentrated on translation strategies analysis from the perspective of different translation theories. Zhang (2019) used Relevance Theory to explore the translation methods and strategies in scientific and cultural examples in the book. And the study found that Ken Liu prefers foreignization strategy to domestication strategy, preserving the exotic flavor of the Chinese version and leaving the imagination space for readers (Zhang, 2019) <sup>[11]</sup>. Liu Han (2017) gave her analysis in the paper *On Reframing the Narrative of The Cultural Revolution in Translating The Three-Body Problem*. She analyzed the reframing approach of the English translation of this fiction, discussed the strategies employed in the translation, and also the possible motivation and impact of doing so (Liu, 2017). Through narrative reframing, the paper provided a referenceable version of the historical concept of the Cultural Revolution from a literary perspective and offers a new way of thinking about Chinese culture and Chinese literature going abroad (Liu, 2017) <sup>[12]</sup>.

In recent decades, scholars turned to analyze the translation of cultural contents in *The Three-Body Problem*. For example, Ren and Zhu (2021) explore the culture-loaded words in the book. This paper analyzes the translation strategies of culture-loaded words, using the theory of cultural translation view as a framework, so as to provide reference for future translation practice. The thesis discovers that the translator adopts a number of translation strategies such as literal translation, liberal translation, annotation, and effectively handles the culture-loaded words to achieve the cultural functional equivalence. (Ren & Zhu, 2021) <sup>[13]</sup>.

Analyzing culture-loaded words in *The Three Body Problem* is a relatively new angle. Considering the high reputation of its English version in the world literature, it's worth exploring the translation of culture-loaded words in this fiction to help other Chinese literary works better translated and published abroad. Since little research has analyzed culture-loaded words in *The Three Body Problem* from the perspective of Manipulation Theory, this thesis seeks to figure out the strategies used in translating the culture-loaded words in this fiction from the perspective of Manipulation Theory so as to shed new light on culture-loaded words translation of science fictions and make a positive contribution to Chinese culture going abroad.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, Manipulation Theory will be introduced as the theoretical basis of the thesis. And the three factors of Manipulation Theory, namely ideology, poetics and patronage will be elaborated one by one.

#### 3.1. An Introduction to Manipulation Theory

The emergence of Manipulation Theory dates back to the twentieth century and till now it has occupied a rather significant position in the field of cultural translation research. The traditional translation theory only paid attention to the equivalence between the original text and the translation. Equivalence was the only translation standard and the linguistic aspect of the original was ignored. The traditional school of literary translation was stuck in the dilemma of making breakthroughs, because it focused only on the translation of intra-textual factors and neglected to analyze the influence of extra-textual factors on translation.

Then in 1992, Andre Lefevere (1992) claimed that translation was rewriting to the original in his book *Translation, Rewriting and Manipulation of Literary Fame*. To be more specific, he pointed out:

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. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help the evolution of a literature and a society. (Lefevere, 1992: preface) <sup>[14]</sup>.

According to his argument, translation is not an isolated act but a manipulation action. And the ideology of the translator and the society, the poetics of the target language and the patronage are the three factors that influence or manipulate the translation process.

Lefevere's manipulation theory emphasizes that translation goes beyond the transformation at the level of linguistic text and is controlled by various factors, such as the translator and the society and its culture that the translator comes into contact with. It is a creation formed in a specific social and cultural context, and it is also a rewriting formed by the translator under the control of multiple social and cultural factors. And the forms of rewriting are various which is not limited to a specific genre of text.

In the late 1990s, Lefevere and Bassnett (1998), another scholar of cultural translation, published a collection of essays, including *Translation History Culture*, in which they jointly proposed the concept of "cultural turn". This concept was forward-looking and exploratory, which not only transcended the limits of the language-mediated interaction in the translation process, but also took a broader cultural and social perspective in the interpretation of literary translation theory <sup>[15]</sup>. Bassnett and Lefevere (1998) also explicitly suggested that the way to carry out the "cultural turn" was to discover and analyze how text manipulation was carried out in the process of literary translation. In the context of translation studies guided by the concept of "cultural turn," their research focused on the cultural and historical background of translated texts, exploring the influence of the socio-political, ideological and translator's consciousness on the performance of translated texts <sup>[15]</sup>. Taking cultural studies perspective as the entry point for translation exploration not only consolidates the theoretical foundation of manipulation theory, but also brings new ideas and vitality to the field of language translation research and many schools of translation studies.

#### 3.2. Three Manipulating Factors in Translation

According to Lefevere's words, translation is not equivalent to the original and the translator is not the imitator of the writer. Instead, translation activity could be regarded as a rewriting process, manipulated by a series of elements due to the cultural difference between the target language and source

language. Altogether there are three main factors: ideology, poetics and patronage.

### **3.2.1. Ideology**

In Oxford Dictionary, the word “ideology” means “a set of beliefs on which a political or economic system is based, or which strongly influence the way people behave”. Therefore, this word can represent either a political category or a personal term. And in translation studies, this term is mostly used under the political category.

Compared with other factors, ideology is the most vital one. As claimed by Lefevere (1992) believed that the translator would inevitably be manipulated by ideology in the process of translation, and the effects would eventually be reflected in his translation. Since translators live in a given culture at a given time, how they perceive themselves and understand their culture is also a possible influencing factor in translation.

Thus, he argued that patronage would also influence the ideology. Ideology was imposed by patronage like individuals or social parties and decided the translation method and the contents that the translator translated. In general, patronage can determine the ideology, and ideology will control the translation activity of the translator<sup>[14]</sup>.

### **3.2.2. Poetics**

In the dictionary, “poetics” refers to the literary or philosophical study of the basic principles, forms, and techniques of poetry, or of imaginative writing in general. There are two parts of poetics according to manipulation theory. In his book, Lefevere (1992) said that “a poetics can be said to consist of two components: one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations and symbols; the other a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole” (p. 26)<sup>[14]</sup>. While the first component is not directly influenced by the social system, the second component of poetics is influenced by the social ideology in which the literary system is embedded. In other words, it is more susceptible to the direct influence of factors outside the literary system. Once the environment has changed, the conceptual factor drives the translator to choose a translation theme that is more relevant to social reality. The above statement suggests that if a literary work is to attract attention, the choice of its theme must take the social system into account, and once the poetics is established, it has a significant impact on the far-reaching development of the socio-literary system. In conclusion, there are two parts of poetics: first, a combination of literary techniques, genres, themes, symbols, etc.; second, ideas about the social role literature plays or should have in the whole system.

### **3.2.3. Patronage**

Lefevere claimed that “Patronage can be exerted by persons, such as the Medici, Maecenas, or Louis XIV, and also by groups of persons, a religious body, a political party, a social class, a royal court, publishers, and, last but not least, the media, both newspapers and magazines and larger television corporations.” (Lefevere, 1992, p. 15)<sup>[14]</sup>. That is to say, patronage can be both individuals and certain groups, including political organizations and groups, companies engaged in publishing and distribution groups or literary propaganda media, etc. Patronage also contains three elements. The ideology element restricts the selection and text forms. The economic component means that writers or translators get a paycheck to make a living from the patronage. And the status element refers to the status that the translator complies with the requirements of patronage. Patronage has the ability to promote or restrict the writing of literary works, translation and rewriting. It constantly manipulates the translation activity and plays an important role in the translating progress, its future development, and the social position in which the translator finds himself.

In sum, Lefevere (1992) argued that translated text was not just a linguistic equivalence to the original one, but was manipulated by three main factors: ideology, poetics and patronage. Lefevere particularly emphasized the factors of ideology and poetics<sup>[14]</sup>. Ideology and poetics have a certain influence on the choice of translation methods and on the effects of translation methods through the rewriting of translations. The translation of a text implies the rewriting of the original, and these rewritings will have a peculiar reaction to poetics and ideology regardless of the intention. Manipulated by these factors, the translator revisits the source text and modifies it to make his or her rewritten contents conform to the dominant consciousness.

## **4. The Manipulation in the English Translation of Culture-loaded Words in *The Three-Body***

## **Problem**

This chapter will try to explore the rewriting in the translation of culture-loaded words in *The Three-Body Problem* and the translating strategies adopted by the translator Liu Ken under the manipulation of three major factors: ideology, poetics and patronage.

### **4.1. Manipulation by Ideology**

#### **4.1.1. The Rewriting of Political Elements in Ideology**

As is mentioned in Chapter 1, *The Three-Body Problem* told a story that people living in Earth constantly communicated with the Three-Body civilization, but the Earth civilization was in the period of cultural revolution. Thus, a series of political elements are unavoidably included in the story, which is familiar to Chinese readers but is a new concept for readers in other countries. To make readers of the target language better understand the meaning, Ken Liu who manipulated by social ideology rewrites these political elements by amplification.

##### Example 1

ST: 略 (刘慈欣, 2008, p. 59) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: At the edge of the city, on the exercise grounds of Tsinghua University, a mass “struggle session” attended by thousands had been going on for nearly two hours. This was a public rally intended to humiliate and break down the enemies of the revolution through verbal and physical abuse until they confessed to their crimes before the crowd. (Liu, 2014, p. 11) <sup>[17]</sup>

In this excerpt, a distressing scene during the Cultural Revolution was described. Ye Zhengtai, a former professor of physics, was regarded as a representative of reactionary academic authorities and was compelled to commit his crime. “批斗会” was a special political term in a certain period in China. If the translator directly translates “批斗会” into “struggle session”, foreign readers will certainly fail to understand the essence of this activity under their ideology of freedom of speech and equality of rights. Manipulated by the social ideology in the target language, the translator uses amplification to translate “批斗会” into “struggle session” and adds a sentence to explain the details. He describes the activity as a public rally full of verbal and physical violence, which implies the madness of the parades and the inequality of rights for the condemned people. In this way, his translation helps readers with different ideology better understand the cruelty of the struggle session.

##### Example 2

ST: 略 (刘慈欣, 2008, p. 58) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: The more than two hundred Red Guards of the April Twenty-eighth Brigade were mere greenhorns compared with the veteran Red Guards of the Red Union, which was formed at the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in early 1966. The Red Union had been tempered by the tumultuous experience of revolutionary tours around the country and seeing Chairman Mao in the great rallies in Tiananmen Square. (Liu, 2014, p. 10) <sup>[17]</sup>

The excerpt is extracted from Chapter 7 *The Madness Years*. This chapter describes the first half life of Ye Wenjie who also suffered a lot from the Cultural Revolution. The excerpt describes a microcosm of partisan fighting in the Cultural Revolution. People were grouped into different parties and each party was struggling and fighting with the other. The Red Union had been attacking the headquarters of the Red Guards for two days. This sentence explains the background of the Red Union, which is related to China’s national condition. If the translator translates the literal meaning of the words, readers may fail to understand the madness of people and may regard them as positive figures. Since it’s the first time when “大串联” and “大检阅” appear in this book, the translator, considering the ideology of the target language, translates them into “revolutionary tours” and “great rallies” respectively and adopts amplification to explain the process of these two actions. The translator describes the tour as “a tumultuous experience” implying the irrationality and madness of people. And he points out the destination of “revolutionary tours” and “great rallies” is seeing Chairman Mao at Tian’anmen Square. As foreign readers know about the status of Chairman Mao in China, it may be easier for them to understand these activities. These two words appear three times in the book. Since Ken Liu explains them at the first time, he simplifies the translation into “revolutionary tours” and “great rallies” in the following two times.

#### **4.1.2. The Rewriting of Religious Elements in Ideology**

Religion is also part of social ideology according to Lefevere. In the book, a couple of words and phrases are originated from three major religions: Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Because some religious beliefs have become an essential part of Chinese culture, people will naturally use them in daily communication. However, readers of the target language usually regard Christianity, Catholicism and Islam as their beliefs. Apparently, the religious elements between the source language and the target language differ. When it comes to the translation of religious expressions in the text, the translator under the influence of social ideology uses transliteration and domestication to rewrite them so as to properly convey the meaning.

#### Example 3

ST: 周文王说着,抽出青铜剑,在火炬照到的地板上画出了一对大大的阴阳鱼,然后以令人目眩的速度在周围画出了六十四卦,看上去如同火光中时隐时现的大年轮。(刘慈欣, 2008, p. 44) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: King Wen took out his bronze and drew a yin-yang symbol on the floor, dimly lit by the fire. Then, he carved the sixty-four hexagrams of the *I Ching* around the symbol, the whole composition resembling a calendar wheel. (Liu, 2014, p. 104) <sup>[17]</sup>

“阴阳” and “六十四卦” are typical terms of Taoism. They all come from *I-Ching*. Yin and Yang are abstractions of the opposites and unity forces in the universe. It can be regarded as a symbol that shows a balance between two opposites with a portion of the opposite element in each section. It can also be used to refer to divination, because people rely on the five elements of yin and yang to predict their fortune. The 64 hexagrams of the *I Ching* are a combination of 64 trigrams to reflect 64 different matters, situations, phenomena, philosophies of life in specific environments, and the laws of nature. Since readers of the target language are not familiar with Taoism, the translator adopts a transliteration strategy to translate “阴阳” as “a yin-yang symbol” and translate “六十四卦” as “the sixty-four hexagrams of the *I Ching*”. By relating them to *I Ching* and the divination symbol rather than directly translating the Taoism terms, the translator helps the readers better understand the original text.

#### Example 4

ST: 略 (刘慈欣, 2008, p. 59) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: Compared to other “Monsters and Demons”, reactionary academic authorities were special.

Translator's note: Originally a term from Buddhism, “Monsters and Demons” was used during the Cultural Revolution to refer to all the enemies of the revolution. (Liu, 2014, p. 12) <sup>[17]</sup>

“牛鬼蛇神” is a Buddhism term, which means various evil guys. Under the background of the Cultural Revolution, this word here refers to the enemies of the Revolution. If the translator literally translates it into “evil people”, the lack of Buddhism knowledge and the difference in ideology make it difficult for foreign readers to understand the original meaning and the satire it conveys under the background. Considering the ideology of target language, Ken Liu stands in the shoes of foreign readers and adopts a domestication strategy to translate it as “Monsters and Demons”, which can let readers associate with the Bible and Christianity in order to better understand the concept. Moreover, he adds a translator's note introducing the historical background to help foreign readers better understand the deeper meaning.

## 4.2. Manipulation by Poetics

As is mentioned in Chapter 3, poetics is the theory of literary forms and literary discourse. In the translating process, the translator will first comply to the dominant poetics of the source language. To make the literary works easily accepted by readers of the target language, translators may consider the difference in cultural background and historical and social conditions and rewrite the translation according to the poetics of the target language. This section will analyze the manipulation of poetics in the translation of culture-loaded words in *The Three-Body Problem*.

#### Example 5

ST: “.....讲个礼貌打个招呼你还当成驴肝肺了。”(刘慈欣, 2008, p. 29) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: “I chose to be polite and stop to greet you. You're making being nice a thankless task.” (Liu, 2014, p. 83) <sup>[17]</sup>

“好心当成驴肝肺” is a traditional Chinese saying, referring to that one's good wish or kind intention is misunderstood and treated as a bad one. In the story, this dialogue began when Da Shi was greeting Wang Miao as they came across in the street. However, Wang said: “Are you following me? Don't you have

anything better to do?” For Da Shi, he was misunderstood by Wang Miao and was treated with an unfavorable tone, so he used this Chinese expression as a joke to show his grievance. If the saying is directly translated, readers of the target language may have difficulties in understanding the meaning. Therefore, the translator sacrifices some of the linguistic features of the original text and adopts a domestication strategy. The translation points out the disappointment of Da Shi and the misunderstanding of Wang to take Da Shi’s “good behavior” as a spying task.

#### Example 6

ST: “千里之行始于足下,”那人说,“关键是要找对目标。”(刘慈欣, 2008, p. 183) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: “The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. The key is finding the right target.” (Liu, 2014, p. 259) <sup>[17]</sup>

In this excerpt, the Trisolaran Interstellar Fleet is about to begin the expedition to set out for the closest star to the Trisolaran system. The destination is approximately four light-years away, and those spaceships can reach one-tenth the speed of light. Although this is a great accomplishment, it still seems too slow for interstellar flight. The commander used this Chinese saying as his answer. This saying comes from Tao Te Ching, and is often used to describe that things are done from the beginning, starting from small things and proceeding gradually. Even if something is difficult, people will make it as long as they persist in their actions. The commander used this to represent the situation of the Trisolaran Interstellar Fleet and show their ambition of marching. Manipulated by the poetics of the target language, Ken Liu adopts a literal translation strategy to translate the original text into a similar form. The “journey” and “step” can be regarded as a metonymy to the march of the Fleet. He uses the active voice rather than the passive voice to express their ambition, which also ingeniously shows the meaning of the original text.

#### Example 7

ST: 一些同志现在是一叶障目,有大环境的原因,也有很多人是自以为是。(刘慈欣, 2008, p. 122) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: Some comrades cannot see beyond the ends of their noses, possibly because of the greater political environment, possibly because of their arrogance. (Liu, 2014, p. 177) <sup>[17]</sup>

This excerpt comes from Chapter 14 *Red Coast III*, which talks about the arguments and decisions made in executing the plan to search for the possible existence of extraterrestrial intelligence called “Red Coast Project”. And this sentence criticized comrades who disapproved of the project in order to show the importance and foresight of the plan. “一叶障目” means that one’s eye is blocked by a leaf, referring to someone who is confused by a partial or temporary situation so that he can’t recognize the whole picture or essence of things. If the idiom is directly translated, the deeper meaning can’t be understood by readers in foreign countries, nor can the allegory as a poetic feature be conveyed. In order to let foreign readers understand this idiom, the translator manipulated by poetics in the target language uses idiomatic translation to domesticate the translation. “See beyond the end of one’s nose” is also a frequently used English proverb, meaning someone lacks foresight, envisioning only immediate events or problems. By the compromise between the poetics of the original language and target language, the deeper meaning of the original is conveyed and more suitable for foreign readers to understand.

#### Example 8

ST: 如果宇宙中真的还有其他的人和社会,那也很好嘛,旁观者清,千秋功罪,可真的有人评说了。(刘慈欣, 2008, p. 126) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: How wonderful it will be if the universe really contains other intelligences and other societies! Bystanders have the clearest view. Someone truly neutral will then be able to comment on whether we’re the heroes or villains of history. (Liu, 2014, p. 182) <sup>[17]</sup>

This excerpt also comes from Chapter 14. Here the sentence shows an outlook of the Red Coast Project to wish a good result of the plan. “旁观者清” comes from *Old Books of Tang*. It means a bystander sees the same thing more clearly and comprehensively than the person concerned. The full idiom is “当局者迷,旁观者清” which use antithesis as the poetic element in the original language. However, considering the genre of this story and poetics in the target language, the translator chose a direct and distinct way to translate it. Literal translation method is used and poetics in the original language is rewritten so as to make foreign readers understand what the author tries to convey without difficulty.

### 4.3. Manipulation by Patronage

According to Lefevre’s theory, patronage is also an important manipulation component in the

translation process. From the contents and styles of the source text to the selection of translation methods, the whole translation process can be manipulated by patronage. This section will analyze the manipulation of patronage in the English version of *The Three-Body Problem*.

The Chinese version of *The Three-Body Problem* was first serialized in *Science Fiction World* in 2006. In 2008, it was published as a standalone book and has become one of the most successful science fiction novels in recent decades. Over the years the novel received the Chinese Science Fiction Yinhe Award and many others. Suffice it to say that *The Three-Body Problem* is the most popular sci-fi novel in China at that time. However, most English-speaking science fiction readers knew little about the Chinese science fiction, because most Chinese science fiction novels had not been translated into English yet. In the past few years, only some short science fiction was translated by volunteers or renowned American science fiction writers. China's science fiction hasn't been a hot topic in the conversation of Western sci-fi fans before *The Three-Body Problem*. The success *The Three-Body Problem* has achieved among English-speaking sci-fi fans owns to the patronage's support and efforts from Tor Books and Ken Liu's editor Liz Gorinsky.

Tor Books is the primary imprint in New York City, publishing science fiction and fantasy books. Owing to the sheer scale and authoritative status of Tor Books, the press successfully opened a door for Ken Liu's English version of *The Three-Body Problem* going into the English science fiction market.

When asked why Tor Books took the risk to publish the English version of *The Three-Body Problem*, Ken Liu's editor, Liz Gorinsky said that this book is an epic science fiction story which gives an insight into Chinese history. It covers from recent history to upwards five hundred years in the future, and adventures far to the galaxy. And this kind of story does not exist in western culture. Although this book requires time and attention to be understood, the reviews received so far have been extremely positive. Thus, it can be known that the major purpose of Tor Books and Liz Gorinsky introducing *The Three-Body Problem* into the western world is to meet readers' curiosities about Chinese culture.

For this purpose, in the process of translation, Ken Liu rewrites some of the culture-loaded words by adding more than 30 footnotes and extra information to the translated text, even though he said that "I've tried to keep the number of explanatory footnotes to a bare minimum by, wherever possible, filling in the necessary knowledge for non-Chinese readers by the judicious addition of a few informational phrases in the text." (Liu, 2014, p.397) Footnotes are added in order to show foreign readers more about the Chinese cultural background. And the description in the footnotes is so clear that it can be easily understood by English-speaking readers. Thus, it can be concluded that these footnotes are aimed at better conveying the Chinese cultural background and the rewriting is the result of the manipulation from patronage.

#### Example 9

ST: “二斤爆肚,一瓶二锅头!”大史喊道,头也不抬,显然对这儿很熟悉了。(刘慈欣, 2008, p. 94) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: “Two orders of quick-fried tripe, and a bottle of er guo tou!” Da Shi shouted, without even looking up. He was obviously a regular here.

Translator's Note: Er guo tou is a distilled liquor made from sorghum, sometimes called “Chinese vodka.” (Liu, 2014, p. 131) <sup>[17]</sup>

#### Example 10

ST: “你好,我是墨子。”他自我介绍道。(刘慈欣, 2008, p. 102) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: “Hello,” the man said. “I'm Mozi.”

Translator's Note: Mozi was the founder of the Mohist school of philosophy during the Warring States Period. Mozi himself emphasized experience and logic, and was known as an accomplished engineer and geometer. (Liu, 2014, p. 140) <sup>[17]</sup>

#### Example 11

ST: “不行!”周文王断然说道,“我也是勉强吃饱,要保证我能走到朝歌,而不是你。”(刘慈欣, 2008, p. 39) <sup>[16]</sup>

TT: “Absolutely not.” King Wen's tone brooked no disagreement. “I barely have enough for myself. We must guarantee that I make it to Zhao Ge, not you.”

Translator's Note: Zhao Ge was the capital of Shang China, where King Zhou held court. (Liu, 2014, p. 97) <sup>[17]</sup>

In these examples Ken Liu used annotation to clearly introduce the related Chinese cultural

background to western readers. To be more specific, in Example 9, the first word “爆肚” was translated into “quick-fried tripe”. The translator didn’t use annotation for this word because “quick-fried tripe” was widely accepted by readers of the foreign countries. Many recipes and Chinese restaurants translate it in this way. However, readers may not know “二锅头”, so the translator uses pinyin of the word and adds a footnote to explain the meaning—a well-known kind of liquor in China. In Example 10, this dialogue happened when Wang Miao entered the virtual game of *The Three Body*, coming across the scientist and ideologist Mozi in Civilization number 141. The setting of the character Mozi in the game is based on ancient China history. Therefore, adding a footnote to provide relevant background information of Mozi can help foreign readers combine it with the plot; otherwise, they may not figure out the foreshadowing of the character’s name without his historical background. In Example 11, “朝歌” is the capital city of Shang Dynasty, so it also has special meaning to King Zhou for the destination of the journey if related to the history of Shang Dynasty. The footnote complements the background knowledge of “朝歌” and lets foreign readers understand the cultural setting of this civilization in game.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Major Findings

Thanks to the popularization of the English version of *The Three-Body Problem*, Chinese science fiction has established a good reputation in the world. The wonderful scientific description combined with Chinese culture and history as well as the authentic translation have attracted lots of science fiction fans in English-speaking countries. A couple of studies have analyzed the English translation of *The Three-Body Problem* with translation theories. However, few studies focused on the translation of culture-loaded words from the perspective of Manipulation Theory. Therefore, this thesis analyzes how the three manipulative elements, namely ideology, poetics and patronage, manipulate the translation of the culture-loaded words and how the translator adopts translation strategies in the rewriting process to bridge the differences between the source language and target language. The major findings of the thesis are as follows.

Firstly, from the perspective of ideology, manipulated by ideology, the translator rewrites the culture-loaded words that contain political elements and religious elements. Strategies such as amplification, transliteration and domestication are used to overcome the differences in the political and religious background between the source text and target text and better convey the meaning of the original.

Secondly, from the perspective of poetics, poetics manipulates the translation of culture-loaded words such as idioms, old sayings and proverbs, etc. Domestication, idiomatic translation and literal translation are adopted to let readers taste the flavor of the original.

Thirdly, from the perspective of patronage, as an external power, patronage manipulates the translator into better introducing Chinese culture to English-speaking readers. Thus, Ken Liu uses many extra notes to clearly describe Chinese culture, thus giving foreign readers a glimpse of Chinese culture.

### 5.2. Limitations and Implications

The thesis has two major limitations. Although the Manipulation Theory has defined the three factors, the demarcation among the three is not quite clear. In other words, the translation of culture-loaded words can be manipulated by two or more factors. For instance, some culture-loaded words on religion translated with footnotes can either be regarded as the manipulative result of ideology because foreign readers lack the religious background or the result of patronage because readers are curious about Chinese culture and the translator adds the explanatory footnotes to meet the patronage’s expectation. Another limitation is that the analyses in Chapter 4 is not systematic enough, because the thesis analyze the some examples rather than all the translation of culture-loaded words in the story.

There are two implications for further studies. First, researchers should give a clearer division of the three manipulative factors. In addition, further studies may use quantitative research methods to make a comprehensive study of culture-loaded words in *The Three-Body Problem*.

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