



METAPHOR TRANSLATION IN SCIENCE FICTION: SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE GENRE

Sum WONG

Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract

This article scrutinises science fiction as a genre and discusses the generic implications for metaphor translation in science fiction. Taking science fiction as an example, it examines three crucial facets of metaphor translation (form, content, and pattern) and demonstrates through concrete examples how the consideration of genre could shed new light on metaphor translation research. It argues that genre as a context, heretofore insufficiently recognised, should be brought to the forefront of metaphor translation research, and suggests how further research could be carried out.

Keywords: *metaphor, translation, science fiction, genre, generic expectations and implications*

1. METAPHOR, TRANSLATION, AND SCIENCE FICTION

Mirroring each other in many ways, metaphor, translation, and science fiction are essentially intertwined. It has been noted that the etymologies of the words *metaphor* and *translate* (the former having roots in ancient Greek *metapherein* and the latter in Latin *translatum*) both bear the sense of “transfer” and “to carry over” (Shuttleworth 53). The etymological (and possibly conceptual) closeness is further reflected in the pair of core terminology used by Metaphor Studies and Translation Studies, i.e., *source* and *target* domains for the former discipline and

source and *target* texts, languages and cultures for the latter discipline. As for metaphor and science fiction, science fiction fundamentally works by the mechanism of metaphor as it prompts the readers to understand alien and unfamiliar settings in terms of earthly and familiar settings (Stockwell 169). To make it more intriguing, given that the language of translation is embedded in the writing of science fiction from the very beginning, science fiction is considered by some as “a genre *in translation*” (Andolfatto and St. André 2-3). Others, conversely, maintain that science fiction is translatable only because translation can be conceived as a kind of science fiction (Hanff 7). Revolving around each other, these “three bodies” possibly make researching the translation of metaphors in science fiction one of the most fascinating yet convoluted topics. However, to my knowledge, very little has been written about metaphor translation in science fiction. It becomes even more surprising if we are reminded that “[t]he whole field of metaphor is centrally important for science fiction poetics” (Stockwell 169). Studying the translation of such a central component is, therefore, key to studying the translation of the science fiction genre in general, not to mention that the outcome of such a three-fold enterprise would be worthy of the attention from the three corresponding disciplines.

Taking the discussions about the effects genre could have on translation practice (Woodstein) as the point of departure, this article surveys several important facets of metaphor and discusses what effects the genre of science fiction may have on these metaphor dimensions during translation. Since the proposal of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson), it has generally been agreed that metaphor means much more than a mere decorative device in literature. Being perhaps the most popular paradigm for studying metaphor and metaphor translation, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), however, is useful but can at times be controversial. Given that people differ on the degree to which they subscribe to some of its central claims, such as “metaphor resides not only in language, but [primarily] in thought” (Kövecses 16), this article considers a somewhat restricted use of it only when discussing the translation of metaphor content. The discussions here are therefore hoped to be of equal relevance to research using alternative paradigms such as Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson; Carston) and Blending Theory (Fauconnier and Turner; Dancygier), to name but a few. Similarly, by “science fiction”, I mainly refer to science fiction text, and the metaphor examples will primarily be based on

novels. However, the results will obviously be illustrative of metaphor translation in other media, such as science fiction movies, comics, and video games, because “genre can cross media” (Abell 28). Metaphor examples and their translations are extracted from the award-winning novel *San Ti* (C. Liu) and its English translation *The Three-Body Problem* (K. Liu), meaning that the language pair and direction are from Chinese to English. Again, the choice of the language pair is purely contingent, and the examples are intended to be explanatory instead of definitive.

The structure of the article is as follows. Part 2 discusses the idea of “genre” and generic implications for translation. More specifically, it explores questions like what the science fiction genre is and how it matters to (metaphor) translation. Part 3 examines different syntactic specifications of metaphor topics in science fiction and the effects of their translations with regard to genre. Part 4 scrutinises the conceptual content of metaphor called mapping and its conversion in science fiction translation. Part 5 analyses the discursive manifestations of metaphor: its textual patterning at the discourse level and its transformation in science fiction translation. Taken together, this article constitutes a study of science fiction’s generic implications for translating the forms, contents, and patterns of metaphor.

2. THE SCIENCE FICTION GENRE: FICTIONAL NOVUM AND COGNITIVE VALIDATION

Philosophers, critics (of art, film, or literature), and linguists alike have long debated the nature of genre (see, for example, Abell; Askehave and Swales; Altman; Chandler; Currie; Friend; Miller; Swales). By way of illustration, it has variously been conceptualised as a “purely abstract object” that has psychological reality (Currie 44), as “social action” that embodies the cultural rationality of a community (Miller 165), and as “a class of communicative events” that share common communicative purposes (Swales 58). Nevertheless, regardless of one’s stance, scholars generally seem to converge on human’s fundamental motivation for defining a specific genre: to classify works and allocate their memberships according to some criteria (Altman 6; Chandler 1; Currie 44). This dimension of genre is profoundly crucial because determining the genre membership of a work affects how it is being interpreted and evaluated (Abell 25), marketed

(Chandler 5), taught (Miller 165), and, of course, approached in translation (Woodstein 5).

In their discussions of the science fiction genre, the various approaches to construing the ontology of genre have been helpfully subsumed into comparable pairs of taxonomy: “Genres-as-Concepts” and “Genres-as-Traditions” (Terrone 17) versus “genres as regions of conceptual spaces” and “genres as historical particulars” (Evnine 1). The first half of these pairs takes a genre as a *set of properties* shared by a body of works (Evnine 3-4; Terrone 17). In the case of science fiction, the core properties or features are arguably “fictional novum” and “cognitive validation” (Terrone 16) because, according to Darko Suvin, the influential literary critic, science fiction is characterised by “a fictional “novum” (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic” (79; emphasis removed). It should be noted that these features are interchangeably referred to as “cognitive estrangement” (15). On the other hand, the second half of these pairs of taxonomy takes a genre to be “temporally extended particulars” (Evnine 4; Terrone 18), especially those traditionally “organised around the production of artistic works” (Evnine 5). This is sometimes reflected in the writing of science fiction history in which the establishment of science fiction as a distinctive genre is associated with the proliferation of pulp SF magazines, such as *Amazing Stories* in America, in the 1930s (Bould 102-129; Bould and Vint 40-60; Luckhurst 50-75). Suffice it to say, these two approaches to genre unavoidably carry their advantages and disadvantages (e.g., Genre-as-Concepts risks essentialising science fiction) and have different explanatory powers as to different circumstances. It is as much a matter of serious philosophising as an ultimate matter of discretion according to, for instance, one’s theoretical upbringing. I subscribe to the “Genres-as-Concepts” approach, or, more precisely, the refined version of it, namely “Genres-as-Clusters” (Terrone 19). Defending against Evnine’s criticism of Genres-as-Concepts for not being able to account for the facts that the conception of science fiction evolves at different stages of its development and that there are borderline cases in which a work does not (entirely) satisfy the features of “fictional novum” and “cognitive validation” but may still be regarded as science fiction, Terrone proposes to cast a genre “as a *cluster of norms* that prescribes certain features to the works that are meant to belong to it” (20; emphasis added). Genre is not about some intrinsic properties in themselves but about the expectations of certain properties.

Regarding science fiction, fictional novum and cognitive validation are the standard features expected to be possessed by works of science fiction. Failing to (completely) meet these expectations does not necessarily preclude a work from being enrolled in the science fiction genre, given that they are not the “necessary and sufficient conditions” (Terrone 26). Besides, it may well be the case that these two core features of science fiction are social artefacts that were not necessarily present in the beginning stage of science fiction and may be subject to change. Still, the governing norms of the science fiction genre have abiding power in shaping our conception and expectation of what a work of science fiction should (roughly) look like (Terrone 20). As such, Terrone eloquently addresses Evnine’s criticism regarding the historicity and inclusiveness of genre and delineates a nuanced yet compelling conception of the science fiction genre, which, above all, takes fictional novum and cognitive validation as its core (expected) features. In the following paragraph, before focusing on the more specific aspects of metaphor translation, I will build on this conception of the science fiction genre and suggest how fictional novum and cognitive validation may affect translation in general.

In her survey on translation approaches to science fiction, Woodstein is not unjust to note that previous research seems to suggest that, on the one hand, science fiction translation is almost like technical translation when it comes to the technological aspects of the plots, themes, and characters; on the other hand, science fiction translation tends to be rather creative when transgressing linguistic boundaries (55-58). Nevertheless, Woodstein has not linked this seemingly paradoxical nature of science fiction translation to the core features of science fiction as posited by Darko Suvin. According to Suvin, “[science fiction] takes off from a fictional (“literary”) hypothesis and develops it with totalising (“scientific”) rigor” (18). In other words, the narrative of science fiction proceeds by constructing coherently an imaginative framework (a “fictional novum”) that is significantly different from the author and the readers’ reality but at the same time binding it systematically to scientific horizons (“cognitive validation”) (79-86). This is precisely how the effects of scientific cognition and fictional estrangement interact in science fiction and why science fiction translation seems to some to be fluctuating between technical and literary translation, for when translating science fiction, translators are virtually dealing with these dual aspects of it. Furthermore, the cognitive estrangement of science

fiction can be so pervasive that I argue it is exemplified not only by the narrative at the macro level but also very likely by linguistic markers at the micro level. This is provisionally supported by a quantitative study conducted by Nichols et al., which endeavours to profile the science fiction genre by statistical methods. Operationalizing Suvin's notion of cognitive estrangement and putting it to the test through the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software, Nichols et al. (30-38) find that, compared to fantasy and mystery, science fiction does contain higher frequencies of words that fall into LIWC's cognitive mechanisms category, as hypothesised. Although their study is not specifically about metaphor, it is not unfair to envisage metaphor to be such a linguistic marker that also contributes to the overall effect of cognitive estrangement, along with other notable linguistic devices in science fiction, such as neologisms and coined words (Aloisio 98). It becomes increasingly plausible when we consider the definition of metaphor in CMT: "[a] conceptual metaphor is understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)" (Kövecses 13). Like science fiction, metaphor is essentially about cognitively estranging the readers or hearers, the only difference being that, for metaphor, this is done by bringing together two dissimilar domains of experience in a metaphorical lexical unit. It is in this sense that metaphor can be usefully conceived as a miniature science fiction.

Moving on to the translation perspective, if it is agreeable that metaphor in science fiction serves a comparable function of cognitive estrangement as warranted by the genre, then one of the main implications is that when translating metaphor in science fiction opting for solutions that achieve effects of similar magnitude, if not more, in the target text, is usually preferable to reducing such effects, provided that they are attainable in the target language and culture, to meet the expectations of the target readers. This, of course, assumes that genre expectations, to a certain extent, can cross language communities, a claim I do not intend to go into detail here. The idea of "implications", though, is by no means a prescriptive approach to how metaphor should be translated in science fiction, nor is it a rigid prediction about how metaphors actually are in the translations of science fiction because there may be good reasons for violating and transcending genre expectations (Reynolds 78; Woodstein 61). In the following sections, I hope to demonstrate that discussions of generic implications, with reference to the specific examples of forms,

contents, and patterns of metaphor in translation, can provide a starting point for engaging metaphor translation in science fiction in a stimulating way, upon which interesting empirical studies could be carried out.

3. THE SYNTACTIC SPECIFICATION OF TOPICS AND ITS TRANSLATION

The study of the conceptual content of metaphor is often prioritised at the expense of the form of metaphor (Brooke-Rose 1; Goatly 327). To remedy the situation, the discussions here purposely start with the form of metaphor and its transformation in translation. Form matters, perhaps even as much as content does, although in a different way, in that varying degrees of marking and specification of metaphor affect how easy or difficult it is to interpret and the amount of processing effort needed (Goatly 169). As for metaphor translation, while smoothing out a complicated form possibly reduces the processing effort needed for the target metaphor, complicating the form likely increases the processing effort. On the whole, altering the form of the target metaphors may result in differences between the source and the target texts in terms of processing effort at the discourse level. This unavoidably affects the overall reading experience of the translated science fiction and deserves more attention. Adapted from Goatly's (200-233) survey of syntactic structures of the topic (i.e., tenor), Stockwell (170-185) presents a typology of five common kinds of syntactic specification of topics in science fiction and demonstrates their ensuing effects based on examples extracted from a collection of science fiction texts. Arranged in ascending order of processing effort as suggested by Goatly (169), these five types are (1) copula-construction; (2) apposition and parallelism; (3) genitive form; (4) premodification, compound, and blend; (5) topic specification across parts of speech. Following Stockwell, I looked into my Chinese-to-English translation data for concrete examples and considered the resulting effects in translation. The examinations here are by no means exhaustive but are considerably a good starting point for discussing forms and syntax of metaphor in science fiction translation, given the limited space.

To start with, constructions based on the copula "to be" (A is B), together with other relational process verbs such as "to become" (A becomes B) and "to make" (C makes A into B), straightforwardly guide the reader to identify the topic A (Goatly 211). Although some consider them to be didactic and banal in poetry

(Brooke-Rose 105), Stockwell envisages them to be relatively frequent in science fiction texts because they contribute to the cognitive estrangement of science fiction (178). The following example is but one manifestation of copular-construction and its translation from my data.

“宇宙是一台**机器**”¹ (C. Liu 110)
[lit.trans. The universe is a machine]

“The universe is a **machine**” (K. Liu 159)

Although it is hard to generalise from one example, it should be safe to say that the copular construction does not seem to present particular difficulty for translators, given its transferability between Chinese and English.

The second form up the scale concerns apposition and other parallelisms such as reformulation and conjunction (Goatly 212-220). Punctuated with commas, semicolons, dashes, or parentheses, metaphor in apposition form demands more processing effort than copular-construction because the syntactic bonding between the topic and the vehicle is minimal (212). Besides, the effort in identifying the topic with the vehicle and inferring their coreference increases as their distance from each other increases (219). The following example shows a scenario in which two sentences in Chinese (a sentence and a “sentence fragment”, each containing a V-term) are merged into one sentence in English, the copular-construction in the latter sentence being turned into apposition or, more specifically, reformulation.

“难道世界的稳定和秩序，只是宇宙某个角落短暂的动态平衡？只是混乱的湍流中一个短命的旋涡？” (C. Liu 19)
[lit.trans. Could it be that the stability and order of the world are just a temporary dynamic equilibrium in a corner of the universe? Are just a short-lived eddy in a chaotic current?]

¹ Following Goatly, Topics (T-terms) are underlined, and Vehicles (V-terms) are in bold. Goatly's usage of the terms *Topic* and *Vehicle* is adapted from I.A. Richards' distinction between *Tenor* and *Vehicle*. According to Richards, the tenor of a metaphor is “what is really being said or thought of”, and the vehicle of a metaphor is “what it is compared to” (96).

“Can the stability and order of the world be but a **temporary dynamic equilibrium achieved in a corner of the universe, a short-lived eddy in a chaotic current?**” (K. Liu 76)

In the Chinese example, given the presence of the T-term in the co-text, readers can rather unproblematically supply the T-term that is seemingly missing in the “sentence fragment” (or 不完全主谓句 “incomplete subject-predicate sentence” in Chinese terminology) and smoothly identify it with the V-term based on the Chinese copula 是 *shì*. As for the English translation, while there is no significant increase in distance between the topic and the second vehicle, one would assume that there is no increase in processing effort. However, the processing effort is arguably raised since punctuated with a comma and without a linking verb, the second V-term can be seen as simultaneously paraphrasing the T-term and the first V-term (in that case, the first V-term is reinterpreted as another T-term), which adds extra ambiguity in drawing the exact coreference.

The third form is the genitive form, a syntactic pattern that involves the *of*-construction to specify the topic (B of A), in which the V-term usually precedes the T-term, resulting in “[a] momentary delay in specifying the Topic [which, in turn,] intensifies the reference in the Vehicle” (Goatly 220). An alternative, perhaps more complex, construction (A = the B of C) is also noted by Brooke-Rose (146), in which the topic A is, in some cases, left completely unmentioned. This is linked to metaphor’s function of filling the lexical gap created by inexpressible abstract concepts in science fiction and is therefore considered central to its speculative nature (Stockwell 182). The equivalent of the genitive form in Chinese would be a construction involving the structural particle 的 *de* to specifically indicate possession (A 的 *de* B = A’s B). However, unlike the *of*-construction in English, the T-term precedes the V-term in the *de*-construction, which suggests that *de*-construction in Chinese usually requires less processing effort than *of*-construction in English.

“那手传达出的心灵的颤抖，与她产生了共振。” (C. Liu 68)

[*lit.trans.* The tremors of the soul, conveyed by that hand, resonated with her.]

“The tremors in that hand revealed a heart that resonated with hers.” (K. Liu 21)

The absent and abstract topic expressed by the *de*-construction 心灵的颤抖 *xīnlíng de chànǒu* (“tremors of the soul/heart”) could be approximately glossed as “some vulnerable emotional states”, which is signified by the caressing hand of a male character. While in Chinese, the “tremors” are originally attributed to an abstract entity “soul” and are metaphorical, in English, they are attributed to the physical “hand” of the male character and are turned literal by the translator. It is puzzling why the translator made such a move when the *de*-construction has a readily available equivalent in English.

The fourth category consists of premodification, compound, and blend, structures within the grammatical boundaries between a noun phrase and a noun (Goatly 225-228). The difference between these three comparable forms can be illustrated by the noun phrase “urban brain”, the compound “urban-brain”, and the lexical blend “urbrain” (Stockwell 184). Due consideration should be given to applying this category to metaphor in Chinese because, unlike English, Chinese is a morphosyllabic language in which a Chinese character corresponds to a morpheme and a syllable simultaneously (DeFrancis; Hoosain). Given the less clear-cut word delimitation in Chinese (Wang et al. 247) and the rarer use of hyphens to indicate compound, there seems to be little point in differentiating between premodification and compound in Chinese. Besides, since, in principle, a character in Chinese cannot be further divided and blended with another character, blend theoretically does not feature in Chinese (cf. Aloisio 109), although there may exist such possibility for metaphor in other modalities such as image and sign language. Therefore, I suggest that these three forms can be reduced to the compound form in Chinese, while a noun phrase that includes the *de*-construction would amount to genitive instead of premodification. A helpful way to understand a compound metaphor in Chinese is to think of it as an “[n+n] metaphor”, with examples such as 金鱼眼 *jīnyúyǎn* (“goldfish-eyes”) and 樱桃嘴 *yīngtáo zuǐ* (“cherry-mouth”) (cf. Ahrens and Chung 365).

“旷日持久的批判将鲜明的政治图像如水银般注入了他们的意识·将他们那由知识和理性构筑的思想大厦彻底摧毁” (C. Liu 59)

[lit.trans. The protracted struggle sessions injected vivid political images into their consciousness like mercury, completely destroying their mind-buildings that are built of knowledge and rationality]

“The constant, unceasing struggle sessions injected vivid political images into their consciousness like mercury, until their minds, **erected** upon knowledge and rationality, **collapsed** under the assault” (K. Liu 7)

When translated into English, the V-term of the Chinese compound metaphor 思想大厦 *sīxiǎngdàshà* (“mind-buildings”) is removed. Although one would be prompted to conclude that this is a typical case of smoothing out, I would argue the opposite. The reason is that to make sense of the metaphorically used verbs “erected” and “collapsed”, one has to supply a subject colligate that is conventionally tied to them, in this case, “building”, and compare the construction and collapse of a building with the construction and collapse of the mind. This process is called by Goatly vehicle-construction (83). The effect presumably becomes more nuanced because, by leaving only some minimal realisations of “building” in the translation, readers are left with more possibilities to choose from and more interpretive works to complete (e.g., whether it is a building, a bridge, or a barrier that is being erected).

The last category is topic specification across parts of speech, in which the specification of the topic, usually a noun, is done by a metaphorical verb or adjective (Goatly 229). This form is exemplified by using the verbs “erected” and “collapsed” to specify the noun “minds” in the previous example. Again, readers are more prone to go through the vehicle-construction process to colligate a cross word-class collocation (“minds” “erected” and “collapsed”) that would be otherwise considered nonsensical (Stockwell 185). The translation of this form does not seem to pose much difficulty for translators unless, in some rare cases, the collocated verb or adjective has a highly improper connotation in the target culture. Of course, readers might be aware that the second verb in the previous example is slightly altered in translation, but it is probably motivated by the subject change.

I shall end this section by reiterating and adapting Stockwell in saying that these five typical forms of metaphor are not necessarily exclusive to science

fiction but are only characteristic of it (195). Nevertheless, justly recognising the cline of metaphor forms and the possible transformation they may go through in translation can be valuable because different stages of science fiction seem to associate with certain types of metaphor and, therefore, different degrees of interpretive difficulties and possibilities, e.g., early science fiction that is more explanatory in tone tends to use more explicit forms of metaphor like copular-construction (cf. Stockwell 12-46). Second, changes of metaphor form in translation, whether with regard to genre or not, should not be taken at their face value because “in practice the co-text and context would always interfere with the measurement [of ensuing effects]” (181). Third, one should avoid over-interpretation by recognising the fact that changes of form may sometimes be due to differences in word formation, grammar, and syntax between the concerned language pair instead of deliberate choices made by translators. Having said that, form transformation in metaphor translation becomes particularly relevant, perhaps when it closely interacts with the content of metaphor. In the following section, I will shift the focus to the cognitive content of metaphor and the generic implications for its translation. Incidentally, this aspect of metaphor has been the focus of most metaphor translation research.

4. CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AND THEIR TRANSLATION

The preoccupation with the cognitive aspects of metaphor is evidenced in the frequent use of “cognitive approach (or study)” in the titles of the bulk of metaphor translation research. Recently, the proliferation of such research adopting a cognitive approach in the past few decades has even been termed “the cognitive turn” of metaphor translation studies (Hong and Rossi). Typical research adopting a cognitive approach evokes CMT’s central claim that metaphors in the linguistic sense are manifestations of our underlying conceptual systems (i.e., conceptual metaphors) that systematically structure how we think (Lakoff and Johnson 3). For example, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is instantiated by many metaphorical expressions that are evidenced in English, for example, “Your claims are *indefensible*”, “I *demolished* his argument”, etc (4). The idea that linguistic metaphors represent some superordinate structures in our mind adds an extra cognitive dimension to the analysis of metaphor translation. For instance, the translatability of metaphor

becomes a problem not entirely about equivalence at the linguistic level but a matter of equivalence of conceptual metaphor between source and target cultures (Schäffner 1258). It is perhaps this cognitive appeal to which most translation scholars are attracted, especially when research adopting such an approach can be seen as corroborating “Cognitive Translation Studies”, a burgeoning subfield in Translation Studies (cf. Muñoz et al.). Though vast in number, it is hardly surprising that not many of these kinds of research are particularly relevant to studying metaphor translation with regard to genre (but see Merakchi and Rogers for discussions about the translation of culturally bound pedagogical metaphors in the popular science genre). The reason is that focusing on the cognitive and (near-)universal dimensions of metaphor tends to keep us from addressing works of a specific genre that are always discursive, situated, and contextualised. This weakness of CMT is so inherent that even Kövecses, an eloquent proponent and defender of the theory, acknowledges that “CMT researchers do not pay sufficient attention to the discourse and social-pragmatic functions of metaphor in real discourse” (24). In elevating metaphor to the air, one sometimes finds it hard to bring it down to earth. While still honouring the cognitive aspects of metaphor translation, an approach more attuned to the specific roles of metaphors in different genres and their respective articulation in translation is much needed, if only to restore the balance. Given the complexity of the task at hand and the limit of space, I will modestly suggest one possible way to closely align analyses of metaphors’ cognitive contents with the genre event (science fiction) in which they are participating and, of course, the translation aspect of them, as an initial foray to this seldom-charted land.

According to Kövecses, “[a] conceptual metaphor is a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience” (14). These conceptual mappings between two domains, or structure-mappings in Gentner’s terminology, can be roughly divided into two types according to their internal-structural characteristics (Gentner 113-118). Structure-mappings with high *clarity* are those that are clearly defined, and they result in explanatory metaphors that are “intended to explain and predict”, while structure-mappings with high *richness* are those that map dense numbers of properties into the target domains and they result in expressive metaphors that are “intended to evoke or describe” (118). By nature, explanatory and expressive metaphors are featured in scientific and literary discourse, respectively. However, let us assume Stockwell (200-204)

is correct in saying that science fiction metaphors have the potential to combine these two functions to manipulate the readers' idealised cognitive models (Lakoff 68-76) and that all science fiction metaphors are, in a sense, constitutive to the fictional novum in a way comparable to the role theory-constitutive metaphors play in science (Boyd 486). In that case, this makes it all the more reasonable to preserve the corresponding conceptual metaphors in translation whenever possible. Moreover, this provides a rationale for accessing how conceptual metaphors are being handled in translation and the ensuing effects of reconstructing the science fiction narrative in another language.

“文明的种子仍在，它将重新启动，再次开始在三体世界中命运莫测的进化” (C. Liu 48)

[*lit.trans.* The seed of civilisation is still here, and it will restart and begin its unpredictable evolution in the world of *Three Body* again]

“The **seed** of civilisation remains. It will **germinate** and again progress through the unpredictable world of *Three Body*” (K. Liu 118)

As we can see in the above example, when the linguistic metaphor 启动 *qǐdòng* (“[for a machine] to start”) in the source text is replaced by “germinate” in the target text, the conceptual metaphor CIVILISATION IS MACHINERY (instantiated by 启动 *qǐdòng*) is transformed into the conceptual metaphor CIVILISATION IS PLANT. As a result, the fictional novum of the alien Trisolaris civilisation being an evolving organism-cum-machinery, conjured up by the source conceptual metaphors CIVILISATION IS PLANT (instantiated by 种子 *zhǒngzǐ* “seed” and 进化 *jìn huà* “evolution”) and CIVILISATION IS MACHINERY, which goes through centuries of reincarnation and self-reinvention in a rotating manner, is impaired in the target text because the latter conceptual metaphor no longer remains. This demonstrates the importance of conceptual metaphors in constructing the science fiction narrative and the influence translation may have on it.

5. THE TEXTUAL PATTERNING OF METAPHORS AND ITS TRANSLATION

Having discussed the form and content of metaphor, the last but not least aspect of metaphor is the textual patterning of metaphors. Not only do metaphors

embody a form at the linguistic level and, when consolidated, represent a conceptual mapping at the cognitive level, but they may also demonstrate patterns with a certain degree of systematicity at the textual level. It is because when metaphors function in text, more often than not, they work together in groups instead of alone, for example, in creating cohesion in a text via metaphoric chains (cf. Koller 117). This textual phenomenon of metaphors is captured by the phrase *textual patterning of metaphors* (Semino 22-30; Dorst) or *the interplay of metaphors* (Goatly 262-290). Situated between the micro-linguistic and the macro-cognitive, this “middle” aspect of metaphors potentially interacts very closely with genre (cf. Deignan et al. 307) and is particularly relevant to the present study that looks at generic implications for metaphor translation. However, while this aspect of metaphor translation has currently been looked into in the context of popular science (Shuttleworth et al.), research on the translation of textual patterning of metaphors in other genres, including science fiction, has largely not taken place and remained under-investigated. The present discussion thus serves to illustrate how the translation of textual patterning of metaphors could be examined at the textual level with regard to genre.

Consider the science fiction poetic of cognitive estrangement not as a scattering but as a totalising phenomenon. Such a rhetorical goal of science fiction is highly likely to be achieved and structured by metaphoric chains throughout the text, or at least clustered around specific passages of the text. This has an effect on metaphor translation in that a top-down approach is needed to translate metaphors involved in such chains because of their integral nature. A (metaphoric) chain is defined by Semino as “[t]he occurrence of several related metaphorical expressions throughout a text” that typically involves the combination of the textual patterning of repetition, recurrence, and extension (226). Addressing metaphor patterns at different levels, these three patterns could be understood as the repeated use of a metaphorical lemma, the recurrent use of different lemmas belonging to the same source domain, and the extended use of lemmas invoking the same conceptual metaphor, respectively. By definition, there is some overlapping between these three patterns because they may as well be triggered by the same metaphor key, as in the following example.

“我们是虫子！即将灭绝的虫子 [...] 把人类看做虫子的三体人似乎忘记了一个事实：虫子[蝗虫]从来就没有被真正战胜过” (C. Liu 295-296)

[lit.trans. We are bugs! Bugs about to become extinct [...] The Trisolarians, who regarded humans as bugs, seemed to have forgotten the fact that bugs [locusts] have never been truly defeated]

*We're **bugs!** **Bugs** that are about to go extinct [...] They think so little of us that they don't even bother to disguise their plans for us, telling the Adventists everything. It's like how you don't need to hide the bottle of **bug spray** from the little **critters** [...]* The Trisolarians who deemed the humans **bugs** seemed to have forgotten one fact: The bugs [locusts] have never been truly defeated” (K. Liu 420-422; emphasis added)

In the Chinese text, the metaphor key 虫子 *chóngzi* (“bugs”) repeats multiple times across a stretch of text in which humankind is consistently compared to bugs. However, other than the lemma 虫子 *chóngzi*, no other lemmas related to the source domain BUG are being used. The textual patterning thus involves repetition only. On the other hand, when translated into English, the translator adds two extra sentences to an interlocutor’s speech when there is no linguistic motivation in the source text. These sentences, containing two further metaphorical lemmas related to BUG, complete a metaphoric chain that echoes the metaphor key “bugs” and elaborates on the HUMANS ARE BUGS metaphor, conceptualising Trisolarians’ plans of destroying humankind as using bug spray to kill bugs. It thus intensifies the pathos that humanity, facing the invasion of Trisolarians, is in a similar position to bugs and the ultimate epiphany that, like locusts that humans have long wanted to extinguish, there is still hope for humans as bugs to survive.

6. CONCLUSION

Starting with the contentions that genre is about expectations of certain features in a group of works and the science fiction genre, in particular, has to do with the expectations of fictional novum and cognitive validation, this article examines generic implications for three critical facets of metaphor translation (form, content, and pattern) and demonstrates how the translations of these facets could be said to (de)actualise the science fiction readers’ expectations of cognitive estrangement in the target language. It has demonstrated through

concrete examples that adequate consideration of genre can shed new light on metaphor translation research, which has perhaps grown all too “cognitive” over the years. Furthermore, it argues that genre should be brought to the forefront of metaphor translation research inasmuch as recent research in figurative language, particularly metaphor, has shown that “[its] use varies according to genre, both at the level of linguistic expression and at the level of communicative function” (Deignan et al. 307). It thus remains curious whether translations of figurative language, including metaphor, in different genres also differ in their regularities. Taking the above discussions as examples, further research could, for instance, investigate the extent to which forms and patterns of metaphors in the original text(s) are replicated in the target text(s) and interrogate the translation data in the light of genre specificities and expectations as illustrated. In sum, metaphor translation should be seen as an activity situated in a specific genre instead of simply operating in a (cognitive) vacuum. If this article is, to some degree, deemed successful in drawing attention to this often-neglected matter, its intention has been met.

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BIONOTE

Sum WONG is pursuing a PhD in Translation Studies at the Department of Translation, Interpreting and Intercultural Studies of Hong Kong Baptist University, where he focuses on metaphor translation in contemporary Chinese science fiction. His research interests cut across the disciplines of Metaphor Studies, Literary Studies, and Translation Studies, including but not limited to metaphor translation, literary translation, translation criticism, bibliometric research, and digital humanities. He is also a poet and a literary translator.

E-mail: sam_sumwong@life.hkbu.edu.hk