

Original Paper

Translation of Science Fiction in Literary Periodicals in Modern
China: Scientific Enlightenment and Recreational Entertainment

—A Case Study of *Short Story Magazine*, *The Saturday* and

Novel Times

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Abstract

*The publishing industry in modern China experienced a period of vigorous growth, accompanied by the proliferation of literary periodicals. These periodicals played a pivotal role in advancing the localization of science fiction in China through their active engagement in translating foreign science fiction works. This study conducts a systematic review of the translation and introduction practices of science fiction by major modern Chinese literary periodicals, namely *Short Story Magazine* [Xiaoshuo Yuebao], *The Saturday* [Libailiu] and *Novel Times* [Xiaoshuo Shibao]. It reveals that intellectuals leveraged the scientific knowledge, scientific spirit, as well as foreign cultures and ideas embedded in foreign science fiction to enlighten the public, broaden national perspectives, and refine social mores. Simultaneously, they acknowledged the recreational nature of science fiction as a form of popular literature, enabling it to fulfill the dual role of driving social reform while catering to readers' demands for leisure and entertainment.*

Keywords

literary periodicals, science fiction, modern China, social reform, leisure and entertainment

1. Introduction

Modern China's successive defeats in foreign conflicts exacerbated social contradictions to an unprecedented degree, spurring progressive and reform-minded intellectuals to engage in introspection and advocate for the learning of new knowledge, ideas, and cultures from the West. In 1902, Liang Qichao initiated the "Novel Revolution (Xiaoshuojie Geming)", upheld the banner of "to reform the people of a nation, one must first reform its novels" (Yinbing, p. 1), emphasizing the social function of novels. Science fiction, which embodies the effect of "acquiring some knowledge, breaking inherited superstitions, reforming ideas, and supplementing civilization" (Lu, p. 3), emerged from the literary transformation. However, in the actual process of translation and dissemination, as a genre of popular literature, the intrinsic entertainment value of science fiction also constituted a crucial factor for its widespread acceptance among readers, giving rise to a body of translated works primarily intended for recreational purposes. Consequently, the translation of science fiction in modern China exhibited two dominant tendencies: social reform and recreational entertainment. This duality not only enriched the connotation of science fiction but also underscored its intimate connection with the social and historical context as a literary genre. The translation practices of periodicals such as *Short Story Magazine*, *The Saturday*, and *Novel Times* serve as typical manifestations of the diversified value orientations of science fiction translation in modern China.

The continuous advancement of printing technology in modern China fueled the prosperity of the periodical industry, with a large number of literary publications emerging in succession. Endowed with their extensive reach and efficient publishing mechanisms, these periodicals provided a solid foundation for the translation and dissemination of science fiction. This study systematically collects data on science fiction translation in modern literary periodicals by drawing on *Kehuan Wenxue Lungang* [An Outline of Science Fiction] by Wu Yan (Chongqing Publishing Group, 2011), *Zhongguo Bainian Kehuan Wenxue Fanyishi Yanjiu* [One Hundred Years of SF Literature Translation in Chin] by Li Qin (The Commercial Press, 2023), and the Chinese Science Fiction Database (csfdb.cn). Statistics indicate that a total of 29 literary periodicals were involved in translating science fiction from the west in modern times, publishing 114 translated science fiction works altogether as of 1949. Among these, *Short Story Magazine*, *Novel Times*, and *The Saturday* ranked the top three in terms of translation volume, accounting for 54 works, approximately half of the total number of translations published during this period. While the contributions of literary publications to the translation of science fiction have garnered academic attention (Ren & Yuan, 2010; Chen, 2013; Lu, 2016), current research still exhibits certain limitations. In terms of research objects, existing studies have predominantly focused on the four major novel magazines, namely *Xin Xiaoshuo* [New Novels], *Yueyue Xiaoshuo* [Novel Monthly], *Xiuxiang Xiaoshuo* [Embroidered Novels], and *Xiaoshuo Lin* [Fiction Forest] (e.g., Zhang, 2006; He & Xiong, 2003), with relatively scarce discussions on other publications. Moreover, relevant research is often scattered across studies on literary translation and dissemination (e.g., Xiu, 2014; Wang, 2016), offering scant analyses of the themes and motivations behind science fiction translation,

and thus failing to elucidate the characteristics and diversified value orientations of science fiction translation by literary periodicals. In light of this, this paper centers on the translation practices of *Short Story Magazine*, *Novel Times*, and *The Saturday*, which have published a significant number of science fiction translations in modern China, so as to illuminate the contributions made by modern literary periodicals to the translation of foreign science fiction in China. Additionally, it endeavors to draw greater academic attention to studies on periodical translation, providing a reference for research on science fiction translation and dissemination.

2. *Short Story Magazine*: Disseminating Knowledge and Enlightening the Public

Short Story Magazine served as the most prolific literary periodical in translating science fiction in modern China, with a total of 34 works (as shown in Table 1). Founded by the Commercial Press in 1910, it holds a pivotal position in the history of modern Chinese literature, and its translation of science fiction was concentrated primarily between 1912 and 1920. From 1921 onwards, influenced by the New Literature Movement (Xinwenxue Yundong), the journal shifted its focus to “realism” (Gao, pp. 109-110) and its efforts in translating science fiction came to a halt. In terms of translation motivation, the journal’s engagement with science fiction translation bore both the historical mission of popularizing knowledge and the literary function of enlightening the public. It not only responded to the era’s call for disseminating new knowledge by upholding scientific enlightenment but also provided ideological inspiration and guidance for readers.

First and foremost, in adherence to its editorial tenet of “translating renowned works, recounting historical anecdotes, imparting new theories, and enhancing common sense” (Wang, 1), *Short Story Magazine* prioritized the transmission of scientific knowledge, striving to achieve scientific enlightenment and broaden readers’ intellectual horizons through translating science fiction. For instance, *The Submarine’s Triumph* [Qianting Zhisheng Ji], translated by Gan Zuolin from Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Danger! Being the Log of Captain John Sirius*, offers a detailed depiction of the overall characteristics of submarines, in which the translator appended annotations to explain the operational principles of naval mines, helping readers distinguish between mines and torpedoes. *The Poison Belt* [Du Dai], translated by Yuan Ruoyong from Conan Doyle’s another science fiction *The Poison Belt*, integrates knowledge spanning physics, astronomy, and chemistry. In addition, Yun Tiejiao, the journal’s editor-in-chief, also participated in science fiction translation, including *Two Carps in the Arctic Ocean* [Bingyang Shuangli], translated from *MS. Found in a Bottle* by Edgar Allan Poe, presenting the story of a maritime adventure narrative grounded in the hollow Earth theory.

Short Story Magazine steadfastly upheld the literary functional view of “taking social reform as its purpose” (Guan, p. 5), leveraging science fiction translations to achieve the goal of enlightening the public and fostering spiritual edification among readers. In such translated works, scientific knowledge and technology are employed as tools to solve problems and propel the development of plotlines. For example, Huizi’s *Regeneration Technique* [Zaisheng Shu] narrates the story of a doctor reviving a man

through surgery. Although the descriptions of cardiac resection and skin grafting are somewhat sketchy, the dialogue between Dr. Lao and the protagonist regarding the definition of death and the legitimacy of resurrecting the deceased provokes readers to reflect on the ethical dilemmas brought about by scientific and technological progress. Furthermore, some translations incorporate elements of military warfare and spy suspense to cultivate a patriotic spirit of safeguarding the nation. For example, *Ena Garnier* [Yinajiani], co-translated by Xiaodie, Wuwei, and Yun Tieqiao, from Conan Doyle's *The Prisoner's Defence* by, is set against the backdrop of the Anglo-German War and recounts how British officer killed his lover, a spy for the enemy state, upholding "patriotism to the highest degree" (Xiu, p. 135). *Torpedo Boat No. 39* [Sanshijiu Hao Yuleiting], co-translated by Lin Shu and Chen Jialin, from Headon Hill's *The Battle of the Boys*, tells the tale of two young British naval cadets outwitting French spies and the French navy. The translation concludes with the line: "Readers of this work should recognize that our naval cadets possess such intellectual acumen even before graduation, can Britain ever be deemed vulnerable?" (Lin & Chen, p. 5) which articulates the translators' aspirations for the younger generation.

Table 1. Overview of Science Fiction Translations in *Short Story Magazine*

Year	Translated Title	Translator(s)	Author(s)	Original Work
1912	<i>The Secret Chamber</i> [Mimi Shi]	Xu Zhuodai	Unknown	<i>A Long Slumber</i>
1912	<i>The Nameless One</i> [Wumingshi]	Bao Tianxiao	[France]Jules Verne	<i>Famille-sans-nom</i>
1913	<i>Two Carps in the Arctic Ocean</i> [Bingyang Shuangli]	Yun Tieqiao	[US]Edgar Allan Poe	<i>MS. Found in a Bottle</i>
1913	<i>The Great Revenge</i> [Da Fuchou]	Wu Tao	[Japan] Oshikawa Shunro	<i>Heroic Novel: The Great Revenge</i>
1913	<i>The Primeval Beasts</i> [Honghuang Niaoshou Ji]	Li Weixiang	[UK]Arthur Conan Doyle	<i>The Lost World</i>
1913	<i>The Female Heroine</i> [Xia Nülang]	Wu Tao	[Japan] Oshikawa Shunro	<i>Adventure Novel: The Female Heroine</i>
1914	<i>The Pilot's Revenge</i> [Jishi Fuchou Ji]	Bao Tianxiao and Zhang Yihan	Unknown	Unknown
1914	<i>The Strange Tale of the Golden Beetle</i> [Jin Chong Shuoyi]	Xu Da	[US]Edgar Allan Poe	<i>The Gold-Bug</i>

1914	<i>The Microscope</i> [Xianweijing]	Bao Tianxiao	Unknown	Unknown
1914	<i>The Mental Power Station</i> [Xindian Zhan]	Bao Tianxiao and Zhang Yihan	[US]Arthur Reeve	B. <i>The Sybarite</i>
1915	<i>The Submarine's Triumph</i> [Qianting Zhisheng Ji]	Gan Zuolin	[UK]Arthur Doyle	Conan <i>Danger! Being the Log of Captain John Sirius</i>
1916	<i>The Poison Belt</i> [Du Dai]	Yuan Ruoyong	[UK]Arthur Doyle	Conan <i>The Poison Belt</i>
1916	<i>The Capture of the French Torpedo Boat</i> [Faguo Yuleiting Shouqin]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	[UK]Headon Hill	<i>The Troopship and the "Destroyer"</i>
1916	<i>Lincoln Saves the Nation</i> [Linken Jiuguo]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	[UK]Headon Hill	<i>The Key of the Mine Shed</i>
1916	<i>The Margate Balloon</i> [Magedi Qiqiu]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	[UK]Headon Hill	<i>How Margate Saved Sheerness</i>
1916	<i>The Coal Mine Strike</i> [Meikuang Bagong]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	[UK]Headon Hill	<i>How Ella Rhys Stopped the Coal Strike</i>
1916	<i>Torpedo Boat No. 39</i> [Sanshijiu Hao Yuleiting],	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	[UK]Headon Hill	<i>The Battle of the Boys</i>
1916	Second Lieutenant <i>Shalesmith</i> [Shaowei Xialeishite]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	[UK]Headon Hill	<i>How the "Vengeur" Came to Bournemouth</i>
1916	<i>Two Aircraft</i> [Shuang Ji Lu]	Jingfu	[UK]Wylie	Unknown
1916	<i>Digging a Tunnel</i> [Wa Didao]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	Unknown	<i>The Peril of London</i>
1916	<i>The Wireless Telegram</i> [Wuxian Diànbao]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	[UK]Headon Hill	<i>The Wireless Telegram</i>
1916	<i>Ena Garnier</i> [Yinajiani]	Xiaodie, Wuwei and Yun Tieqiao	[UK]Arthur Doyle	Conan <i>The Prisoner's Defence</i>
1916	<i>The Strange Crystal</i> [Yi Jing Ji]	Shi Jiucheng	Unknown	Unknown
1917	<i>Aerial Oddities</i> [Hangkong Yiwèn]	Changjue and Xiaodie	[UK]Arthur Doyle	Conan <i>The Horror of the Heights</i>

1917	<i>Spirit Possession</i> [Hunling Futi]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	Unknown	<i>The Squire's Tale: Cambuscan</i>
1917	<i>Dr. Dream</i> [Meng Boshi]	Dansheng and Guanyi	[US]Arthur B. Reeve	<i>The Dream Doctor</i>
1917	<i>The Searchlight Lens</i> [Tanhaideng]	Lin Shu and Chen Jialin	Unknown	<i>The Lens of the Search-Light</i>
1917	<i>Vivid and Lifelike</i> [Yousheng Youse]	Yun Tieqiao	Unknown	<i>The Photographs</i>
1918	<i>The Electric Ear</i> [Dian Er]	Biwu and Zhou Shoujuan	[US]Arthur B. Reeve	<i>The Black Hand</i>
1918	<i>The Fountain of Youth</i> [Fanlao Huantong]	Xuanhua	[US]Nathaniel Hawthorne	<i>Dr. Heidegger's Experiment/The Fountain of Youth</i>
1918	<i>The Invisible Creature</i> [Wuxing Zhi Shengwu]	Xuanhua	[US]Fitz-James O'Brien	<i>What Was It? A Mystery</i>
1919	<i>Fossils</i> [Huashi]	Zhang Yihan	[US]Paul Palmerton	<i>Phyolitic Perlite</i>
1919	<i>Life Restored by Borrowed Blood</i> [Jiexie Huanhun]	Meimeng and Bonan	Unknown	<i>Doctor Charles</i>
1920	<i>Regeneration Technique</i> [Zaisheng Shu]	Huizi	[US]Qulanyi	Unknown

3. *The Saturday*: Leisure and Entertainment

The Saturday was founded in 1914 and translated 10 foreign science fiction works over the subsequent two years (Table 2), establishing itself as one of the major periodicals that translated a considerable number of science fiction works in the late Qing and early Republican periods. Following the establishment of the Republic of China, the turbulent political landscape of warlord separatism left the public disillusioned with politics, and a social climate pursuing recreational entertainment gained prominence, catalyzing the rise of literary periodicals affiliated with the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School, which pursued the recreational characteristics of literary works (Xiu, p. 31). Science fiction, with its popular appeal, found new development opportunities within the periodicals of this school. Wang Dungen, the editor-in-chief of *The Saturday*, which is a representative publication of the school, articulated the journal's editorial philosophy of entertaining readers with novel and engaging content (1), providing a clear direction for the translation of science fiction in the journal.

The recreational attributes of science fiction published in *The Saturday* are particularly salient, characterized by the utilization of scientific knowledge as an auxiliary device to enrich narrative

backgrounds to enhance appeal. For example, Qian Fangding's translation of *The World of Keys* [Yaoshi Shijie] portrays a Western world permeated by locks and keys, written in a lighthearted and witty style that caters to readers' curiosity about exotic cultures, and is categorized as a "comic novel". Zhou Shoujuan's *Electricity* [Dian] integrates scientific elements with suspense, set against the backdrop of the Anglo-German War. It narrates how a detective solves the mystery of a German sailor's death by virtue of electrical knowledge and is labeled as a "military detective novel" to align with the prevailing trend of detective fiction at that time. Penghun's *I've Got It!* [Wu De Zhi Yi] recounts the story of Archimedes, who was inspired while bathing, devised the water displacement method to verify the gold content of a crown. This translation combines education with entertainment, introducing Archimedes' principle through an engaging scientific anecdote. Its title is derived from the protagonist's exclamation of sudden realization, which foreshadows the positive trajectory of the story and stimulates readers' interest. Benefiting from its positioning as a popular literary periodical, *the Saturday* gained significant popularity among readers, with a circulation once reaching 20,000 copies (Xu 70), enabling the works published therein to reach a broader readership.

The recreational function of science fiction translations in the journal is also manifested in their romantic plotlines. For instances, Tian Fang's translation *The Iron Tower Beneath the Earth* [Dizhong Tieta] tells the adventures of the protagonist on an island. In the postscript, the translator acknowledges that the work was translated into Chinese out of a "fondness for the exotic" and praised the protagonist's loyalty to love and perseverance in searching for his lover despite hardships at the end of the story (p. 62). Beyond entertaining readers, the translated works in the journal also contribute to broadening readers' horizons and critiquing social vices, promoting the transformation of social outlooks and ideological concepts. For example, Youxin's *Female Authority* [Ciwei] depicts the protagonist's bizarre experiences in a futuristic New York, a matriarchal society where men face legal sanctions for rejecting women's marriage proposals. This work implicitly satirizes the oppression of women in patriarchal societies and prompts readers to reflect on issues such as gender equality and human rights. Kongkong's *The Man of the Sea* [Haizhongren], translated from *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, presents the marine adventures of Professor Aronnax, extolling the spirit of exploration into the unknown world.

Table 2. Overview of Science Fiction Translations in *the Saturday*

Year	Translated Title	Translator (s)	Author(s)	Original Work
1914	<i>Female Authority</i> [Ci Wei]	Youxin	Unknown	Unknown
1914	<i>The Airship</i> [Feiting]	Songli	[UK]Walter	Unknown
1914	<i>The World of Keys</i> [Yaoshi	Qian	Unknown	Unknown

	Shijie]	Fangding		
1915	<i>The Iron Tower Beneath the Earth</i> [Dizhong Tieta]	Tian Fang	Ariosto	Unknown
1915	<i>Electricity</i> [Dian]	Zhou Shoujuan	Unknown	Unknown
1915	<i>The Man of the Sea</i> [Haizhongren]	Kongkong	[France]Jules Verne	<i>Vingt mille lieues sous les mers</i>
1915	<i>Ten Years Later</i> [Shi Nian Hou]	Zhou Shoujuan	Unknown	Unknown
1915	<i>The Omnipotent Doctor</i> [Wanneng Yisheng]	Xiaocao	[Germany] Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm and Wilhelm Carl Grimm	<i>Doktor Allwissend</i>
1915	<i>Interesting Talks on Microbes</i> [Weishengwu Qutan]	Shi Jiucheng	Unknown	Unknown
1915	<i>I've Got It!</i> [Wu De Zhi Yi]	Penghun	Unknown	Unknown

4. *Novel Times*: Education and Entertainment

Established in 1909 as a derivative publication of the renowned modern newspaper *The Times*, *Novel Times* primary focuses on publishing fictional works. It has been instrumental in advancing Chinese popular literature through translating foreign novels (Zhang & Zhao, p. 66), and published a total of 10 science fiction translations (as shown in Table 3). The works featured in *Novel Times* possessed both instructiveness and narrative appeal, a characteristic shaped by the emphasis placed by its editors-in-chief, Chen Jinghan and Bao Tianxiao, on the educational function and aesthetic interest of novels. Chen Jinghan argues in his essay: a novel must be engaging and instructive; “a novel that is engaging yet devoid of instruction remains merely a novel, bearing no relevance to the advancement of social ethos; a novel that is instructive yet lacking in engagement, while admirable in its intent to reform society, fails to fulfill the fundamental purpose of fiction” (Chen, 1905). Bao Tianxiao also emphasizes that novels should embody the value of being “most beneficial to physical and mental well-being and most captivating in narrative” (p. 1).

Guided by its editorial philosophy of "disseminating Western culture and transforming social mores" (Zheng & Tan, p. 222), *Novel Times* attached great importance to the educational function of science fiction. By translating science fiction, it aims to provoke readers' reflections on social realities and customs, while valuing the philosophical insights conveyed by science fiction and the aesthetic appeal of such works. It tended to arouse readers' interest through intricate and twisting plotlines, ingenious suspense design and vivid linguistic expressions. For instance, Yang Xinyi's translation *The Future World* [Weilai Shijie] pictures a highly mechanized and ultra-utilitarian London, where people are

mired in the swamp of money worship, satirizing the social ethos of pursuing fame and fortune. Bao Tianxiao's *The New Method of Creating Humans* [Xin Zaoren Shu], translated from *Mr. Broadbent's Information* by Henry A. Hering, analyzes the ethical dilemmas that humanity would face if artificial beings are endowed with intelligence and emotions. Through the stark contrast between a novelist and a doctor regarding the treatment of artificial creatures, it triggers readers' contemplation on artificial beings, humanity, and civilization.

Meanwhile, *Novel Times* also introduced a number of informative and entertaining readings. For example, Bao Tianxiao's *The Secret Party Leader* [Mimi Dangkui], translated from *Michel Strogoff: De Moscou à Irkoutsk* by Jules Verne tells the story of a Russian imperial envoy who endures numerous hardships to deliver a confidential letter to the Duke, integrating elements of adventure, war, and romance, and incorporating rich geographical knowledge complemented by illustrations to immerse readers. Another work translated by Bao Tianxiao, *The Tale of Tubercle Bacilli* [Jiehejun Wuyu] uses vernacular Chinese as the translation language. From the perspective of tubercle bacilli, it introduces the health hazards posed by tubercle bacilli and corresponding prevention and treatment strategies, serving to popularize medical knowledge while combining intellectual value with entertainment.

Table 3. Overview of Science Fiction Translations in *Novel Times*

Year	Translated Title	Translator(s)	Author(s)	Original Work
1910	<i>The Secret Party Leader</i> [Mimi Dangkui]	Bao Tianxiao	[France]Jules Verne	<i>Michel Strogoff: De Moscou à Irkoutsk</i>
1910	<i>The New Method of Creating Humans</i> [Xin Zaoren Shu]	Bao Tianxiao	[UK]Henry A. Hering	<i>Mr. Broadbent's Information</i>
1911	<i>A Strange Journey</i> [Qiguai Zhi Lüxing]	Yun Tieqiao	Unknown	Unknown
1911	<i>The Future World</i> [Weilai Shijie]	Yang Xinyi	Unknown	Unknown
1911	<i>The Nihilist Airship</i> [Xuwudang Feiting]	Yang Xinyi	Unknown	Unknown
1912	<i>A New Dream of Yellow Millet</i> [Huangliang Xin Meng]	Liao Xuren	[France]Albert	Unknown
1912	<i>The Tale of Tubercle Bacilli</i> [Jiehejun Wuyu]	Bao Tianxiao	[Japan]Hirosawa Toyosaku	<i>The Tale of Tubercle Bacilli</i>
1912	<i>The Explosive Device</i> [Zhayao Jiguan]	Yang Xinyi	Unknown	Unknown

1916	<i>The Electric Thief</i> [Dian Zei]	Yihong and Biwu	[UK]Fred. M. White	<i>The Sundial</i>
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5. The Impacts of Science Fiction Translation in Modern Chinese Literary Periodicals

5.1 Promoting the Development of Science Fiction in China

A large number of modern literary periodicals have actively published science fiction translations, which have enhanced the recognition of science fiction as an independent literary genre in China and fostered its germination in the country. The first work explicitly corresponding to the term "science fiction" was *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* [Haidi Lvxing] (Wu, p. 8), translated by Lu Jidong and Hongxisheng from *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, and published in the inaugural issue of the literary periodical *Xinxiao Shuo* in 1902. Even before the launch of *Xin Xiaoshuo*, its editor-in-chief Liang Qichao explicitly designated "philosophical and science fiction [Zheli Kexue Xiaoshuo]" as one of the journal's primary genres (*Xin Xiaoshuo* Press 1), and he published translated science fiction work *The Last Day of the World* [Shijie Moriji] in the journal. Later on, science fiction appears with increasing frequency in literary periodicals, and some publications even explicitly listed science fiction as a major genre for solicitation. For example, the solicitation advertisement of *Xiaoshuo Lin Press* stated: "This journal solicits various original and translated novels, including family, social, educational, scientific, speculative, detective, and military novels..." (p. 1); the "Manuscript Solicitation Advertisement" by the Translation and Compilation Department of *Yueyue Xiaoshuo* also noted: "All excellent manuscripts of novels related to science, speculation, philosophy, education, and politics submitted to this society will receive generous remuneration upon acceptance" (p. 1). This series of initiatives increase the visibility of science fiction and confirmed the growing social recognition of this genre.

Modern Chinese literary periodicals have provided a publishing platform for the translation of science fiction and constructed a communication space for science fiction writers, translators, editors, and readers to discuss the nature, connotation, and themes of science fiction, injecting vitality into the germination of science fiction in China. For instance, Dingyi discusses the relationship between philosophical fiction and science fiction and presents that "when science flourishes, philosophy will surely thrive; when science fiction multiply, philosophical novels will follow in large numbers" (p. 32). Xu Nianci regards works of science fiction, military fiction, and adventure fiction as novels "beneficial to one's conduct in life", arguing that they possess the efficacy of "fulfilling national duties, exploring the strategic importance of geological landscape and elucidating the essence of academic knowledge" (Juewo, p. 8). Guan Daru advocates that science fiction has two important features: facts-based [Zhishi] and imaginative [Lingxu] (p. 3). Xu Yucheng emphasizes the development of "sinological science fiction" and proposes expanding the themes of science fiction: "it should be crafted as geographical novels in the style of travelogues and as historical and Confucian classics novels in the style of notes. Humor should be the main focus, for otherwise, it cannot arouse interest" (Xu, pp. 1-2), "undoubtedly contributing significantly to the development of the science fiction genre and the refinement of its

theoretical system”(Li, p. 131).

5.2 Cultivating Forces for Translating and Writing Science Fiction

Various literary periodicals have cultivated and assembled a team dedicated to the translation and dissemination of science fiction. Standing at the intersection of old and new ideologies, these individuals engaged in both translation and creation, jointly promoting the spread and development of science fiction in China. According to statistics in this paper, there were over 70 translators of science fiction in modern literary periodicals, including literary translators such as Lin Shu, Chen Jialin, and Wu Tao; novelists such as Bao Tianxiao, Zhang Yihan, and Zhou Guisheng; journalism practitioners such as Yun Tiejiao, Xu Nianci, Chen Hongbi, and Chen Wuwo; and politicians represented by Liang Qichao.

These translators often hold multiple roles, and while translating foreign science fiction, they also strive to write science fiction themselves. For example, Bao Tianxiao, who once served as the editor of many literary periodicals such as *Xiaoshuo Dagan* [The Grand Magazine] and *Xiaoshuo Huabao* [Fiction Illustrated Magazine], has translated ten science fiction works through literary periodicals and also written science fiction, with his works published in various literary publications, such as *The Last Day of the World* [Shijie Moriji] and *the Future of Air Warfare* [Kongzhong Zhanzheng Weilaji] in *Yueyue Xiaoshuo*; *The Country of Two Sexes* [Liangxing Zhi Guo] and *the Village Without Infants* [Wuying Zhi Cun] in *Short Story Magazine*. Xu Nianci, known as the pioneer of Chinese science fiction, was also the editor of the famous modern literary periodical *Xiaoshuo Lin*. In the inaugural issue of the journal, he published *the Origin of Xiaoshuo Lin*, affirming the positive role of science fiction in promoting social development (Xu, p. 4). He also translated the science fiction work *The New Stage III* [Xin Wutai San] from the Japanese science fiction writer Oshikawa Shunrō, and wrote science fiction, including *New Tales of Mr. Faro* [Xin Faluo Xiansheng Tan] as “China’s first complete science fiction” (Xiao, p. 133).

5.3 Shaping the Dual Connotations of Science Fiction

With their self-referentiality, openness, continuity, and periodicity (Beetham, p. 98), periodicals have constructed an open and flexible form of translation collections, enabling the selection of translated works in periodicals to be continuously adjusted according to the needs of the target language community (Wong, p. 828). As the modern historical context evolved, literary periodicals developed two translation tendencies of social reform and leisure entertainment, in the process of translating foreign science fiction, which in turn led to the germination of two narrative traditions in Chinese science fiction of enlightenment and entertainment (Zhan, p. 128).

Firstly, when selecting original texts, literary periodicals often have to follow their respective established editorial philosophies. An analysis of the editorial tenets of *Short Story Magazine*, *The Saturday*, and *Novel Times* shows that the translation of science fiction in modern literary periodicals was driven both by patriotism of national salvation and survival, and by the literary pursuit of the inherent nature of novels. Therefore, the translated works published in these periodicals have to cater to

the two social trends of social reform and leisure fashion.

Secondly, the emergence of the dual connotations of enlightenment and entertainment in science fiction is inevitable. Although modern intellectuals hope to spread scientific knowledge and concepts through science fiction to improve the depressed social ethos, under the historical condition of relatively underdeveloped science and technology, literary works rich in profound scientific knowledge and theories were difficult to be accepted by target language readers due to obscure terminology and complex content, whereas recreation-oriented foreign science fiction was more likely to attract public attention.

5.4 Promoting the Construction of Modernity in Modern China

The translation of science fiction by modern literary periodicals not only promoted the development of Chinese science fiction but also advanced the construction of modernity through the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the exploration of ethical values. Firstly, science fiction translations published in modern literary periodicals are rich in knowledge and concepts in fields such as physics, chemistry, medicine, and geography, contributing to “writing and constructing material modernity with modern science as the core” (Xie, p. 134). Secondly, by integrating elements such as military warfare, adventure, and utopianism, these translated works express patriotic sentiments, convey the idea of strengthening the country through science and technology, and criticize unhealthy social mores, promoting the cultural values of advocating national defense modernity, freedom and equality, and the spirit of exploration.

6. Conclusion

This study examines the translation activities of science fiction in literary journals, analyzes the diverse value orientations of foreign science fiction translation in modern China, and traces the localization process of science fiction within the social and cultural context of modern China. The research indicates that *Short Story Magazine*, *Novel Times*, and *The Saturday* and other literary periodicals constructed a broad platform for the dissemination of foreign science fiction in modern China, rallied translation personnel, and promoted the spread and development of science fiction in China. Firstly, guided by their respective editorial philosophies and selection criteria, these journals have responded to the era’s call for social reform and upheld the inherent pursuit of popular literature in the process of translating science fiction, leading to the emergence of two intertwined developmental paths for science fiction of enlightenment and recreation in modern China. Secondly, modern literary periodicals brought together prominent figures from various fields, such as Lin Shu, Bao Tianxiao, and Xu Nianci, who formed the vanguard of the science fiction translation team and nurtured an indispensable force for the dissemination and development of science fiction in China. Furthermore, in addition to publishing translated science fiction works, these periodicals also released solicitation notices and theoretical articles related to science fiction, enhancing public acceptance of the genre and facilitating its evolution into an independent literary genre. Finally, the translation practices of science fiction in literary

periodicals not only fostered the emergence and evolution of Chinese science fiction but also drove innovations in the form and content of Chinese literature, exerting an impact on the construction of modernity in modern China.

As an important medium of communication, periodicals contain a wealth of information closely linked to social change and serve as a key tool for analyzing translation activities within a specific historical context. Research on science fiction translation in periodicals deserves further attention from academia. Compared with books, periodicals establish more immediate and intimate interactions with writers and readers through their publishing and operational mechanisms, enabling them to wield a more rapid influence over the literary field. Therefore, the academia needs to strengthen translation research centered on periodicals, opening up new avenues for the study of science fiction translation. This endeavor will help map the translational trajectory of science fiction in specific historical periods and deepen our comprehension of how media influence the translation and dissemination of science fiction.

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