

Paratext Analysis of Patronage Factors: An Exploration of Howard Goldblatt's Translation of Mo Yan's *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on André Lefevere's rewriting theory, this paper endeavours to explore how Howard Goldblatt translates Mo Yan's novel *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* (hereafter referred to as *L&D*) with regard to patronage control by way of paratext analysis. Seven categories of patronage factors, including original author, translator, literary cooperative, publisher and editor, market expectancy, literary agent, and target reader, are identified as the objective of paratext analysis. Paratext analysis of these patronage factors provides greater insights into the unique attributes of Goldblatt's translation. The results show that apart from adhering to the target ideological and poetological currents in his translation, Goldblatt also excels in mediating between various patronage factors, striving to seek a balance among external power constraints, and finally producing a translation geared to the reader's expectation.

KEYWORDS

Goldblatt's Translation, Ideological Currents, Manipulation, Paratext Analysis, Patronage Factors, Poetological Currents

1. INTRODUCTION

Lefevere's (1992) rewriting theory argues that translation is a most recognisable form of rewriting; rewriting is also manipulation. When translating, a translator is actually rewriting an original text while being manipulated by three major factors within the target literary system: ideology, poetics and patronage. These three factors constitute the cultural and power constraints behind a translator's rewriting, which will, to a large extent, determine the translation process, and finally shape a work of literature in the target culture, or manipulate the literature to function in the target society.

In the light of rewriting theory, ideology and poetics are two decisive factors that govern the production and reception of the translated work. Both of them play a decisive role in controlling the process of translation. They work in tandem to produce an impact upon the development of the literary system. Patronage, in Lefevere's (1992, p.15) view, refers to "the powers that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature". It exercises authoritative power, imposing the dominant poetological and ideological standards on a translator by force. In other words, patronage represents a hypostatic factor that functions to control a translation process under the manipulation of ideology and poetics. Therefore, examining patronage control over Goldblatt's translation of *L&D* will help better understand how he achieved the success he did as a literary translator, and provide insights into the production, reception, and dissemination of a translated work in general.

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2. PARATEXT AND PATRONAGE

2.1 Paratext Defined

The term “paratext” was coined by French literary theorist Gerard Genette. Originally it was defined as representing a series of extra-textual materials that existed independent of, but were closely related to the literary text itself, such as paper, illustrations, fonts, author’s names, titles, prefaces, forewords, notes, that presented text to readers in a way that helped them accept and enjoy it (Genette, 1991, p. 261). As such, paratext mediates between the literary work and reader to provide the latter with an improved understanding of the former (Genette, 1997).

In this paper “paratext” involves all kinds of referential texts that support the production, reception and dissemination of the translated text, such as the original author’s and the literary cooperative’s interaction with the translator, the translator’s interviews and reflections, and reader feedback, as it were, a series of extra-textual productions made by more public and powerful intermediaries than the translator himself.

Translation theorists have recognised the significance of paratext materials, such as translation reviews, comments, and translator interviews regarding translation studies, because paratext is an important link that binds together the author, the translator, the publisher and the reader (Koçak, 2007, p. 171). Paratext also shares, enriches or even constructs the body text (Xiao, 2011, p. 17). Hence, paratext analysis in translation studies has become increasingly popular. For example, Watts (2000), Koş (2007) and Buendía (2013) all studied annotations as paratextual elements in translated texts; Frías (2012) analysed the role of orthotypographical style in the translation of children’s literature, arguing that orthotypographical translation could help young readers understand the body text. Pellatt (2014) discussed publisher and editor influences on target readership, and found both could manipulate a reader and translator through the layout and presence of paratextual elements.

I obtained some of my paratext materials (Table 1: Summary of paratext sources and titles) from reviews or critical essays about the translation of *L&D*, others from Mo Yan’s works published in newspapers, magazines, academic journals, lectures and talks delivered by Mo Yan and Goldblatt, in addition to reader feedback on the Amazon.com website. All paratext either directly constitutes or indirectly reflects the patronage power that significantly affects the translation and reception of the novel in the target culture.

2.2 Patronage Factors in Paratext

The relationship between paratext analysis and patronage factors is one between means and purpose. Since patronage factors include all forms of power that hinder or facilitate the translational act (Lefevere, 1992), patronage control over translation is often intangible and abstract, much like an invisible hand pulling the strings behind the scene. Hence, the manipulation of patronage factors is hardly identifiable through direct analysis of the translated work itself, but can be tracked using paratext analysis. Patronage factors manipulating Goldblatt’s translation may be overtly or covertly embedded in paratexts. Overt paratext materials can be used for direct analysis, while covert materials need to be extracted and refined for indirect analysis to infer patronage control over translation.

In this paper patronage factors are divided into seven categories: original author, translator, literary cooperative, publisher and editor, market expectancy, literary agent, and target reader. What follows is an analysis of how these seven factors manipulate the translator’s rewriting.

3. THE INFLUENCE OF PATRONAGE ON THE TRANSLATION OF *L&D*

3.1 The Original Author

The original author is the first manipulative factor in the translation process. Often it is the original author’s attitude toward translating that decides how much and in what way the translator can rewrite

Table 1. Summary of paratext sources and titles

Source	Title
Newspaper & magazine articles	Goldblatt, H. (2002). The Writing Life. <i>The Washington Post</i> . Updike, J. (2005). Bitter Bamboo: Two Novels from China. <i>The New Yorker</i> . Goldblatt, H. (2012). My Hero: Mo Yan. <i>The Guardian</i> . Spence, J. (2008). Born again. <i>The New York Times book review</i> .
Journal articles	Mo Yan. (2000). My three American books: lecture given at the University of Colorado. March 2000, <i>The Fiction World</i> . Xu, S. Y. (2016). Revisiting Goldblatt's translation: A process-based evaluation perspective. <i>China Translator's Journal</i> . Goldblatt, H. (2013a). Mo Yan in translation: One Voice among Many. <i>Chinese Literature Today</i> . Goldblatt, H. (2009). Mo Yan's Novels Are Wearing Me Out. <i>World Literature Today</i> . Hou, Y., & Zhu, H. (2013). Exploration of Goldblatt's reader-oriented translation view: Illustrated with the translation of Rickshaw Boy. <i>Journal of Yanshan University</i> . Lian, Y. J. (2013). Research on Goldblatt's translation thoughts. <i>Journal of Weifang College</i> . Goldblatt, H. (2004). Blue pencil translating: translator as editor. <i>Translation Quarterly</i> . Zhou, L. S., & Zhou, Y. K. (2018). Western editor's influence over translation: A review of Howard Goldblatt's editorial practices. <i>Journal of Foreign Languages</i> . Hutchins, W. M. (2013). Translating Arabic: A personal note. <i>Translation Review</i> . Luo, P. (2015). The translation and publication of contemporary Chinese literature: Illustrated with Moon Opera and Three Sisters. <i>Sci-technology & Publication</i> .
Goldblatt's interview & personal reflections	Berry, M. (2002). The Translator's Studio: A Dialogue with Howard Goldblatt. <i>Persimmon: Asian Literature, Arts and Culture</i> . Sparks, S. (2013). Translating Mo Yan: An interview with Howard Goldblatt. <i>Los Angeles Review of Books</i> . Li, W. J. (2012). Cooperation, consultation and cultural communication in C-E translation—An interview with Howard Goldblatt and Sylvia Li-chun Lin. <i>China Translator's Journal</i> Ge, H. W. (2011). A Mi Manera Howard Goldblatt at home: A self-interview. <i>Chinese Literature Today</i> . Ji, J. (2013). I translate, thus I am: An interview with Howard Goldblatt. <i>Contemporary Writer Review</i> . Stalling, J. (2014). The Voice of the Translator: An Interview with Howard Goldblatt. <i>Translation Review</i> .
Media & websites	Ge, H. W., & Lin, L. J. (2018). The sino-western couple translators: Howard Goldblatt and Sylvia Li-chun Lin's lecture at SISU, http://www.ses.shisu.edu.cn/b3/02/c417a111362/page.htm SLJ's average book prices. (2017). https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=sljs-average-book-prices-for-2017 Goldblatt, H. (2014a, April 22). The abuse of four-character idioms damages Chinese novels, http://culture.ifeng.com/wenxue/detail_2014_04/22/35943426_0.shtml Hua, M. (2017, May 15). The status quo of American literary agents and their views on translated literature: An interview with Gail Hochman, http://ex.cssn.cn/ts/ts_scfj/201705/t20170515_3518188.shtml Chapman, H. (2018). What is the ideal novel length, https://www.novel-writing-help.com/novel-length.html Amazon online customer review of <i>L&D</i> . https://www.amazon.com/Life-Death-Are-Wearing-Out-ebook/product-reviews/B006O1NY6Q/ref=cm_cr_dp_d_show_all_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all_reviews

the original text. Specifically, Mo Yan's manipulation of the *L&D* translation is manifested in his tolerance toward and active encouragement of Goldblatt's rewriting.

In general, an original author usually is protective of their writings, seldom gives thought to difficulties in translation, and strictly prohibits modification by either the translator or editor—at times not allowing as much as the change of one word or one punctuation mark. Even if, under some circumstances, a translator cannot proceed with a translation without making changes to the original, they must still gain approval from the original author. This is true of many well-known writers, such

as Milan Kundera, who is said to “devote almost as much time to overseeing foreign editions of his work as he does to writing” (Goldblatt, 2002, p. 10). Thus, in many cases, translators can do nothing but rigid literal translation, which can both fail to convey the original meaning and destroy the original aesthetic beauty, significantly reducing translation readability.

In the case of Goldblatt’s translation, Mo Yan was extremely tolerant of Goldblatt’s rewriting, as if he was aware of the painstaking efforts to which Goldblatt had gone to circulate his works in a different culture. Not only does Mo Yan not block Goldblatt’s rewriting, but he energetically supports it:

Some people, with dubious motives, have told me he (Goldblatt) has added things absent in the original, such as descriptions of sex. These people were ignorant of the fact that he and I have an agreement that he’ll translate sex scenes in ways that will appeal to American readers... (Mo Yan, 2000, p. 473).

In return, Goldblatt also affects Mo Yan through retro-editing (section 3.4), which enhances the quality of the original writing.

Mo Yan and Goldblatt began to collaborate in the late 1980s when Goldblatt stumbled upon *Garlic Ballads* (天堂蒜薹之歌) and offered to translate it. Their cooperation and friendship has grown since and they mutually admire and respect each other’s work. In correspondence they even address each other affectionately as “老葛” (Lao Ge) and “老莫” (Lao Mo) (in Chinese context such appellations indicate very close relationship) (S. Y. Xu, 2016, p. 90). Mo Yan seems particularly confident in Goldblatt’s competence and entrusts him with his work, authorising him to rewrite them as he pleases. “Do whatever you want. I can’t read what you’ve written. Since I give you my writing, it’s yours” (Mo Yan in Goldblatt, 2013a, p. 9).

Mo Yan also attaches great importance to Goldblatt’s revision suggestions. For example, when translating *Garlic Ballads*, Goldblatt and the editor at Viking Publishing found that the story “lacks an inspirational ending” (Berry, 2002, p. 20), because the original ended with a series of bland reports about the treatment of corrupt officials, which would probably fail to pique reader interest. So, Goldblatt informed Mo Yan of this and asked him to give the story a more memorable ending. Mo Yan responded by writing a new ending more suitable for western readers, and the translation was successfully published. As imagined, the new version evoked strong reactions among western readers. From this we can see that Mo Yan’s positive attitude is a prerequisite for Goldblatt’s rewriting, and is in fact an important premise of the publication and circulation of the novel. With Mo Yan’s permission, Goldblatt could adapt an original to gear it to western ideological and aesthetic standards, facilitating publication.

Mo Yan once praised Goldblatt’s flexibility for changing original longer sentences into shorter ones to cater to western reading habits, and for omitting redundant descriptions, or political and historical contexts (Mo Yan, 2000). What’s more, Mo Yan is aware of deficiencies in his own works, and hopes that Goldblatt might improve on them in western iterations: “I have a previous agreement with Goldblatt. I hope that he can make up for my deficiencies in sexual descriptions, because I know that Americans are always better than Chinese in sexuality” (Mo Yan, 2000, p. 170). Here Mo Yan openly encourages Goldblatt’s adaptation of the original to agree with American ideological currents.

3.2 The Translator

The influence of the translator as a patronage factor is mainly reflected in their personal translation views, as well as their efforts to promote an original author and their translated works in the receiving culture. The translator’s views on translation are discussed in two aspects: one being Goldblatt’s perception of the nature of translation; the other, his reader-centred translation view. Other factors that affect the reception and circulation of a translation, such as translator reputation and status, and efforts to promote an original author in the receiving culture, are also discussed.

Goldblatt holds the view that the essence of translation is rewriting, that “it’s been my experience that most writers at least tolerate the men and women given the task of rewriting—for that is surely

the nature of translation—their work into other languages” (Goldblatt, 2002, p. 10). In his opinion, translation is but an advanced stage of writing, and the translated work is a certain completion or perfection of the original. He regards the translation process as representing rewriting or re-creation, and claims “the translator’s work is more subtle, more civilised than that of the writer: the translator clearly comes after the writer. Translation is a more advanced stage of writing” (Goldblatt, 2002, p. 10).

Goldblatt deems rewriting will make a novel more popular among western readership. He quotes George Steiner’s observation that most translations are “inadequate,” and that a translation serves to revive an original work across time and space (Goldblatt, 2002, p. 10). Hence, rewriting is absolutely necessary, as it aims to attract a larger audience and prolong the life of the original in another culture. It is the “rewriting” nature of translation that makes it artistically parallel to, or even superior to, the original in the case of “inadequacy.” It is Goldblatt’s perception of the nature of translation that has oriented him towards the adaptive rewriting of Mo Yan’s works.

Goldblatt’s reader-centred translation view also deeply affects his translation practice. He has repeatedly asserted that his translation goal is to translate for readers:

Should we aim to please a writer who knows nothing about target language, and keep faithful to his original work? The answer is negative. The writer writes not for himself, neither for the translator, but for readers. We, the translators, also translate for readers ... I believe a translator sustains heavy responsibilities. He must be worthy of the writer, the original text, and the target reader, but it is the reader, not the writer, who is worthy of the most serious attention (Goldblatt in Y. Hou & Zhu, 2013, p. 94).

The reader-centred view inherently leads Goldblatt to rewrite in a way that suits the readers’ tastes, which has been well attested by his insistence on maintaining high readability in translation. Goldblatt takes the readability of the translation seriously; he deems it on a par with “faithfulness” in translation. Berry (2002, p. 20) observed Goldblatt’s view on readability as “if a translation lacks readability or only has limited readability, then it means unfaithfulness. I would be very sorry if anything other than readability could be taken as the overriding translation principle.” Therefore, he opposes inserting annotations or footnotes into the translation, leaving them in the preface or endnotes, or integrating them into the story. In his view, annotation or footnotes should never obstruct smooth reading. This is demonstrated by the fact that no in-text annotations or footnotes occur in his translation. In fact, in the *L&D* translation, Goldblatt’s large-scale omission of culture-loaded words, expressions, and the original cultural images, reflects his indulgence in the readability of the translation. Given this, the entire translation process is actually reader-centred. Accordingly, the reader-centred translation view assures the translator’s adaptation of the original in favour of target ideology and poetics, signifying the translator’s control over the translation process.

Goldblatt also contributed to the reception and circulation of the translation. Goldblatt’s own reputation and status, as well as his active promotion of Mo Yan, played a significant role in facilitating recognition and dissemination of the novel. Prior to publication of *L&D*, Goldblatt was already a renowned scholar and translator of contemporary Chinese literature. He has now published translations of dozens of novels and short stories written by over 30 Chinese writers, and has enjoyed wide popularity among western readership. His position as the premier English language translator of contemporary Chinese literature (Sparks, 2013), the midwife of modern Chinese literature (Updike, 2005), and the most active and accomplished translator in the history of English translation of modern Chinese literature (Shu, 2005), establish and endorse his status in sinological studies.

Goldblatt’s many devotees tend to purchase his publications when they come onto the market, and potentially boost sales through their recommendations. This virtuous cycle increases Goldblatt’s following, reputation and status. It is also easier for a renowned translator to publish a translation in a prestigious publishing house, serving to further boost sales. Mo Yan’s first American publisher, Viking Penguin, is an internationally recognised publishing company, and its parent, the Penguin

Group, is a globally leading book trader. Before Mo Yan, five of Viking's authors had been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature: John Steinbeck (1962), Saul Bellow (1976), Patrick White (1973), Nadine Gordimer (1991), and John Coetzee (2003). Such a world-class publisher attracts readers; its publication and distribution channels are well established, facilitating sales and dissemination, and further elevating the translator's reputation.

Due to western publishers' lack of knowledge of Chinese language and culture, they usually cannot judge the quality of Chinese literary works, and they may base a decision to publish upon a reputed translator's recommendation. Accordingly, Goldblatt's favourite writers and translation themes will be more likely to get published, and become known to western readers. When Goldblatt first became aware of Mo Yan's *Garlic Ballads*, and wrote to him for his permission to translate it, Mo Yan was not particularly well-known. Through Goldblatt's unremitting efforts, Mo Yan today is an internationally celebrated writer.

Goldblatt's personal efforts to promote Mo Yan also contributed to the reception and circulation of Mo Yan's works. For example, Goldblatt made the most of Mo Yan's winning the Newman Prize for Chinese Literature in 2009 to expand the influence of the author and his works. Capitalising on this favourable opportunity, Goldblatt consulted with the University of Oklahoma to facilitate Mo Yan's coming to the United States for the prize, and helped organise promotional activities in which Mo Yan would participate. Interestingly, the title of Goldblatt's award speech was *Mo Yan's Novels Are Wearing Me Out*, a parody of the novel *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*. What's more, Goldblatt invited Mo Yan to travel with him to many countries to publicise his works, and actively promoted Mo Yan, singing his praises at interviews, media briefings, and in the preface of his translations. For instance, in the prologue of *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, Goldblatt wrote, "No writer in recent memory has contributed more to the imagination of historical space in China or a re-evaluation of Chinese society, past and present, than Mo Yan, whose *Red Sorghum* changed the literary landscape when it was published in 1987" (Goldblatt, 2011, p. 8). Goldblatt even wrote several letters of recommendation to the Royal Swedish Academy nominating Mo Yan as a candidate for the Nobel Prize. After winning, Goldblatt then published in *The Guardian* an article eulogising Mo Yan as "China's most prolific, popular and widely respected novelist" ("My hero: Mo Yan").

3.3 Literary Cooperative

Goldblatt's literary cooperative—his co-translators—also contributed to his achievements as a literary translator. Sylvia Li-chun Lin, Goldblatt's wife, has made as many contributions as Goldblatt in their joint efforts to translate Chinese literature. It is due to Goldblatt's relationship (both professional and personal) with Lin that he has been able to produce as many quality translations as he has over the years.

Translation is time-consuming, and physically and mentally gruelling. A translator working alone can be fast and efficient, but two translators working together is even better, because one can use the other as 'a sounding board' (Ge & Lin, 2018). Lin actively participates in translation, often as the primary translator. According to her, they often work together to translate and revise several times before reaching a final draft.

The first draft is completed by Lin; it focuses on the general sense, disregarding the detail. The second draft is reviewed by Goldblatt, who revises it, contrasting it with the original. The third draft is a joint undertaking: Goldblatt reads it aloud and Lin, sentence by sentence, checks it against the original; Lin stresses the importance of reading aloud, especially the dialogue between characters, because this way a translator can sense if word choice in the translation is appropriate, and make adjustments where necessary. The fourth draft focuses on the translation's stylistic consistency, during which the original text is put aside, unless ambiguities remain that need to be checked against the original. The first three drafts focus on "faithfulness" while the fourth emphasises "the reader's acceptance." The draft is never submitted to an editor until after the fourth revision (Ge & Lin, 2018).

Goldblatt does not work alone. Lin, as a crucial part of the literary cooperative, even takes control of the translation. Goldblatt's translation represents a process in which he rewrites the original on

the basis of a balanced consideration of “faithfulness” and “acceptability.” Lin represents another influential manipulative factor, which plays an indispensable role in production.

An example of the couple’s teamwork is apparent in their consideration of the first sentence of Bi Feiyu’s *The Moon Opera* (青衣), which reads “乔炳章参加宴会完全是一笔糊涂账。” Here the translation of “糊涂账” posed a problem, not simply because no corresponding English term (for example, “muddle-headed”) existed, but because it was not clear why Qiao Bingzhang was confused about whether he should attend the banquet. After consulting with the original author, Goldblatt and Lin realised that Qiao was unsure who else would attend the banquet, hence his hesitation. How to express this complex situation in a simple phrase at the beginning of the novel was a test for translation. After much deliberation Goldblatt and Lin finally settled on “for Qiao Bingzhang the dinner party was like a blind date.” This concise, rhythmic translation did, according to Lin, faithfully convey the original meaning, and restore the original style and expressive effect (Ge & Lin, 2018).

3.4 The Publisher and the Editor

Both the publisher and editor have significant influence over the production, reception and circulation of a translation. This section discusses the large-scale deletions from the original novel requested by the publisher and editor, and explains Goldblatt’s “retro-editing” (Shao, 2016, p. 106) editorial practice.

The media and academics savaged Goldblatt because of the extent of the deletions from Mo Yan’s text. For example, nearly one eighth (approximately 12.5%) of *L&D* was deleted from the original, and large-scale text deletions were also apparent in *Red Sorghum*, *The Republic of Wine* (酒国), and *The Garlic Ballads*. Goldblatt’s translations of other writers have also undergone major modification, for example, Alai’s *The Song of King Gesar* (格萨尔王) is almost deleted by a half, and Jiang Rong’s *Wolf Totem* (狼图腾) by one third. However, the accusations against Goldblatt’s random adaptations are unjust, because most decisions to downsize the original works were made by the publisher and editor. In an interview in 2012, Goldblatt maintained that the publisher and editor were primarily concerned with rendering a novel more attractive once a translation was submitted, and their preference was to delete and adapt. Goldblatt responded to his critics by saying “I must set the record straight, or otherwise how can I stand being wronged again and again!” (Li, 2012, p. 59).

Obviously, substantial deletion by the editor resulted in significant deviations from the original, which goes against the “faithfulness” criterion in translation. However, the editor’s act is justifiable, for they work on behalf of a publisher, whose goal is to produce an economic return from publishing. Therefore, an editor must be critical of potential publications, as they must consider market forces also. An editor is more than just a word processor or proofreader, being also a market planner and a gatekeeper whose suggestions play a critical role in publication of a translated work.

In many cases, if a literary work is published verbatim, it will attract no readers and will have no economic return. Therefore, an editor must impose strict standards on potential publications, especially translated works, which are generally considered marginalised literature with a limited audience, which is not welcome in the US (Goldblatt, 2014a). Publishers seem reluctant to publish translated works, and when they occasionally do, they do not promote them. Accordingly, an editor has to adapt an original to the reception habits of the target readers, which typically involves reduction in C–E literary translations for two reasons, as follows:

Complex Chinese narrative structures must be simplified to establish clear plot development, especially for full-length novels with hundreds of thousands of words. For example, in *L&D*, the author uses a multi-layered narrative structure and complex intertwined plots in which the narrative perspective alternates between past and present. Such a complicated narration might confuse native Chinese readers, to say nothing of western readers. At the behest of the publisher and editor, Goldblatt deleted most of the minor plots to facilitate understanding. Even cuts of this magnitude were not enough for many readers, whose feedback referred to the translated tome’s length and complexity (Reader comments from Amazon.com webpage, section 3.7).

Repetition and digression in the original text are often viewed as redundant, requiring trimming. Regarding these redundancies in detail and scene descriptions, Goldblatt quotes the editor's notes that "there are too many repetitions in Mo Yan's works, and that must be deleted. We shall never give the readers a false impression that the book was written by someone who does not know how to write at all" (L. S. Zhou & Zhou, 2018, p. 111). Many simplifications in the *L&D* translation are the result of editorial requests to omit or compress text to improve readability, or satisfy market expectations.

As few editors in western commercial publishing houses understand Chinese literature, Goldblatt himself often assumes the role of editor (Goldblatt, 2004). As such, editorial manipulation as a patronage factor can be clearly traced to Goldblatt's own editorial practices, something Goldblatt (2004) referred to as 'retro-editing'—a practice he maintains brings a body of work into line with an admittedly arbitrary literary standard set by an author. Goldblatt adds that the reasons for retro-editing in translation of contemporary Chinese literary works are threefold: the quality of writing, the role and status of Chinese editors, and publishing economics.

An example of the editor's assuring writing quality is found in the translation of the last part of *Garlic Ballads* (section 3.1), which demonstrates that Goldblatt has helped Mo Yan improve his writing through retro-editing—further proof of editorial manipulation of the translator, and even the original writer. Goldblatt's high esteem for the editor is apparent as follows:

No matter how experienced or well-known a writer may be, he cannot remain objective about his own works. Therefore, there must be another pair of eyes to help the writer find out possible problems, and to provide new perspectives in the general direction of writing to make it a perfect work (Goldblatt, 2014b).

The editor is the first, and a devoted reader of the translated work. Their fault-finding is not a hostile exercise, but an act of friendliness to the translators. The editor automatically judges a translation by the dominant ideological and poetological standards of the target culture, and then decides whether or how to revise a translation draft.

Regarding the role and status of Chinese editors, Goldblatt (2014b) contends they have no real power, performing little more than the task of a proofreader. It is the writer who makes the final decision whether to revise or not. According to Goldblatt, however, in the American publishing industry the editor plays a most important supporting role as a gatekeeper, whose revision suggestions exert authoritative influence over a publication. The translator has to revise the work as required prior to publishing. Therefore, as Chinese editors' have such a low profile and status, Goldblatt must retro-edit original works to improve reader engagement; he laments the shortage of high-profile editors in China:

... no greater editors than Maxwell Perkins can be found in China to help Fitzgerald, Thomas, Woolf, or Hemingway turn out immortal works. As an objective observer, such a good editor like him can show a writer the surface or structural flaws in his work, and help find solutions to problems of creation skills, thus giving full play to the writer's potentials (Goldblatt, 2014b).

As mentioned, Goldblatt has been criticised for over-editing and heavy deletions of text from translated Chinese novels, and rebuked for imposing western literary standards on Chinese literature with the long-established colonial mentality. However, his retro-editing strategy is not what a translator wishes to do, but an exercise aimed at improving market response (publishing economics). His retro-editing has been endorsed by literary experts, critics, and readers, unanimous in their criticism of Mo Yan's verbosity. Criticism is particularly harsh given reader comments of the already-heavily streamlined version on Amazon online customer review of *L&D*:

the book is heavy with so much rambling, over-dramatic prose (Patty, 2013)

confusing, lack of clarity, dumb. I would not recommend this book to anyone. After only a few pages I erased it from my Kindle (Steve, 2014).

Mo Yan's original text, had it been rendered without modification, would have been far less acceptable to target readers. As such, Goldblatt's surgical retro-editing removed considerable redundant detail and simplified plots, tailoring it to western reading expectations and improving its market expectancy.

3.5 Market Expectancy

Market expectancy refers to a publication's potential market response, and it is closely related to the economic value of a translation. The higher the market expectancy, the more profitable a translation may be. Market expectancy is the most important patronage factor to manipulate production, reception and circulation of a translated work "outside the literary system" (Lefevere, 1992, p. 16).

With market expectancy determined by the reader, in seeking to provide readers what they want, a publisher will release works geared to their reading habits and aesthetic preferences, at low prices to improve the value-for-money experience, thereby increasing the number of purchases a reader makes. In the case of Goldblatt's translations, the publisher identifies two key factors to appeal to readers to maximise economic return: the length of the novel, and its price.

Driven by economic considerations, the publisher requested that Goldblatt delete considerable text from the original novel to improve its clarity and coherence, and the reading experience. Regarding its price, the paperback of *L&D* translation was US\$16.26 (see Table 2), comparable to that of a typical-length English novel.

With no fixed rule as to how many words a good text must contain, the standard length of an English novel serves as an approximate measure. An internet search for "average novel length" produced results from 80–100,000 words (Chapman, 2018). A shorter or longer novel will significantly lose reader engagement; Atwood (2017) maintained that it was ideal when "long enough to tell the story but short enough to consistently hold the reader's interest."

Thin novels might be cheaper to produce, but buyers will not feel they are getting their money's worth, because a 150-page book does not sell for half the price of a 300-page book. Thick novels are more expensive to print. And because a 600-page novel is not twice the price of a 300-page novel, more units will have to be sold to reach the same amount of profit (Chapman, 2018).

Regarding novel pricing, Mill City Press reports that "for a 375-page novel (approximately 94,000 words), it is reasonable to ask \$16.95 for it (Table 2). Most average-sized trade paperback novels fall into the \$13.95 to \$17.95 price range." This pricing strategy is widely implemented in the US, as is evidenced in School Library Journal's figures ("SLJ's average book prices," 2017) supplied by Follett, revealing average paperback fiction prices in 2016 (\$15.85) and 2017 (\$15.98).

Market expectancy also determines how a novel is circulated. Despite its length, the *L&D* translation was competitively priced. Evidently the publisher sought a low-profit-but-high-turnover strategy. Accordingly, a publisher's marketing strategy also determines the manner in which a translation is circulated.

3.6 The Literary Agent

The literary agent is a further important manipulative factor affecting the publication and circulation of Goldblatt's translation. A literary agent acts as an intermediary between an original author and a publisher. They discover literary works with a potential market value, and ensure that the author maximises their return on their work.

Table 2. Word count and price of a typical English novel and the *L&D* translation

Average length of typical English novel	80,000–100,000 words
Length of <i>L&D</i> translation	~ 250,000 words
Average price of typical English novel	US\$13.95–17.95
Price of <i>L&D</i> translation on Amazon.com	US\$16.26

As an intermediary, a literary agent is responsible for recommending a writer's works to a publisher, and negotiating with them over such things as royalties and contracts. Because literary agents were often once literary editors, they have unique insights on the literary and commercial value of a writer's work, so their recommendations are more likely to be considered by a publisher. If a writer has a good literary agent, the chances of their work being published are increased greatly. This is particularly true of translators, as Hochman (cited in Hua, 2017) asserted American publishers were not interested in translated works, unless the original author was a world-class writer, a Nobel laureate, or an influential figure who has won major prizes in their own country.

Given Goldblatt's prestige in the field of Chinese literary translation, some Anglo-American publishing companies have taken the initiative and approached him for translations, and offered to buy the copyright. For example, Goldblatt's translation of Bi Feiyu's novels *The Moon Opera* (青衣) and *Three Sisters* (玉米) were initiated by two British commercial publishers (Telegram Books and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, respectively). Commercial publishing companies do not always approach the translator actively, nor do big commercial publishers accept individual submissions. In many cases the translator is dependent on the literary agent to bring their work to the market.

Goldblatt and Lin attach great importance to the role of the literary agent, and through their agent's recommendation, many of their translations have been published, and their royalty payments higher. In the 1990s when Goldblatt first read Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* at a friend's home, he enjoyed it so much so that he translated several chapters of it and submitted them to Viking, which then offered him a handsome price to buy the rest of the manuscript. When this became known to a friend of Goldblatt's, Amy Tan, she introduced Sandra Dijkstra, her agent, to him. Sandra renegotiated with Viking and secured a royalty four times greater than had first been offered (Ge & Lin, 2018). The publication of *Red Sorghum* marked the entry of translated Chinese literary work into the American commercial market. Other translations by Goldblatt would be submitted to literary agents, who then submitted them to publishers for consideration for publication.

According to Hochman (as cited in Hua, 2017), the Chairman of the Association of American Author's Representatives, if a translation is to attract an agent's attention, it has to meet two basic conditions. First, because very few publishers and editors are multi-lingual and familiar with the original culture, the English copy must be fluent and cater to market demand. Second, the writer must be a literary big shot, and the writing outstanding, or an agent will likely be uninterested. An unpopular translation may damage the reputation of a publisher, and reduce the publisher's trust in both the agent and the translator.

These requirements might manipulate a translator's rewriting in two ways: i) the translator will adapt the original language and culture into a fluent version for the target readers, and ii), to satisfy market demand, a translator will likely choose topics that suit the tastes of western readers, and translate them based on their ideological standards. Goldblatt's translations of Mo Yan's works meet these two conditions.

Given the selection of translation themes, Goldblatt's vision is unique and acute, and his topics are basically consistent with dominant western ideological thoughts. Since the translation of *Red Sorghum*, Mo Yan has won many international literary awards. Goldblatt's subsequent translations of *Big Breast and Wide Hips* (丰乳肥臀), *The Republic of Wine* (酒国), *The Garlic Ballads* (天堂蒜薹

之歌), and *L&D* have all attracted positive responses. Mo Yan's ascension to being a Nobel laureate owes much to the cumulative effect of these novels in the west. All of them include a strong sense of critical realism, implying political criticism, together with ridicule and resistance of an autocratic system. For example, Mo Yan (2000, p. 476) said of *Big Breast and Wide Hips* "if you like, you can skip my other novels, but not *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, because in it I wrote about history, war, politics, hunger, religion, love and sex." Yim (2016, p. 44) described *Garlic Ballad* as a "realist novel telling a story about a group of deprived peasants fighting against the corrupted government," while Spence (2008, p. 8) argued that *L&D* depicted politics as "pathology, unremittingly hostile to the communist system." All of these criticisms have been consistent with American readers' inclination to criticise the government, and their firm belief in the pursuit of freedom. Added to these extraordinary topics are various graphic scenes interspersed with descriptions of violence, sex, religion and history—subversive elements making the novel amusing and entertaining, and more agreeable to an audience.

3.7 The Target Readers

The target reader represents an important patronage factor in the reception and circulation of a translated work. While positive responses boost sales and promote reception in a target culture, mediocre or negative responses can limit sales, and impede dissemination of the work, while similarly damaging the 'translation genre' in the target culture.

To determine the effect of the target reader on translation, the feedback and rating (a scale of 1–5, with 5 being best) of 120 respondents on the Amazon.com online bookstore was collated. Amazon.com claims a product's star rating is based on a machine-learned model that takes into consideration factors such as rater age, whether the ratings were from verified purchasers, and factors that establish reviewer trustworthiness, instead of simple raw data averages. As such, these ratings are reasonably objective, and serve as a metric of novel popularity.

With 4- and 5-star ratings accounting for 71%, and 3-star ratings 11% of all responses, the top three ratings comprise 82% of reviews. *L&D* proved to be a popular novel among target readers. Reader comments focused on two aspects: i) ideological interpretation of the translation, and ii) criticism of the novel's complexity and length.

With regard to ideological interpretation, many readers in their comments denounced the Communist regime's disruption of China's rural society. For example, Blumenfrucht in 2012 wrote "A must read. Amazing and epic novel combining sharp wit, a deep understanding of human comedy and tragedy and most surprisingly, an uncensored window into a dark and violent period of the Chinese Communist regime immersed in intrigues, excesses and rampant corruption," and Chris commented in 2013 "A literary masterpiece worthy of a Nobel Laureate. A wonderful portrayal of the Chinese people and their unique culture ... All the spiteful story grubbing media who tried to belittle Mo Yan on his winning the Nobel prize for not speaking out on human rights in China have evidently not read a page of any of his books or simply tried to whip up a sensational story and damn the facts."

Such comments reflect ideological influence over the novel's reception and dissemination. Reader ideological interpretations, together with the novel's exposition of traditional Chinese cultural phenomena, have garnered favourable feedback. As a patronage factor, the target reader's ideology obviously manipulates the reception of the translation.

Reader discontent with the complexity and length of the novel is discussed in section 3.4. For example, Roth maintained "Hard for a non-Chinese speaking Westerner to keep track of the rapidly multiplying characters in a story that rushes along in jolting speed. ... I was in awe of the genius of the author. Hard reading work!" Carolina was confused by plot complexity: "Tedious to read and confusing to have multiply [sic.] reincarnated animals as first person narrators. The cultural differences that I didn't understand made for slow going and re-reading to re-evaluate chapters." Plot complexity is another prominent complaint in feedback.

It should come as no surprise that readers found themselves exhausted by the length of the translated *L&D*, because their poetological aesthetics differ considerably from those of their Chinese

counterparts. Native Chinese readers are accustomed to complex narrative structures, while westerners may deem this style confusing and unacceptable. To cater to western reader preferences, Goldblatt excised complicated plots and descriptions, condensing the original—an example of how the target reader manipulates the translation through a poetological channel.

Goldblatt has balanced the constraints of potential patronage factors and rewritten the *L&D* ST in favour of market expectations. Structural adjustment, large-scale deletion, and retro-editing all are deliberate acts intended to enhance market acceptability, consistent with Goldblatt's (2013b) assertion that marketability matters most in translation. The final translated version of *L&D* is a compromise between various patronages.

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, patronage factors significantly affect Goldblatt's rewriting and keep it in check, trying to bring it close to the parameters they set. Paratext analysis of patronage factors has identified ideology and poetics (as forms of patronage) exerting substantial influences over the translation process. Because all patronage factors are, in the final analysis, dictated by the dominant target ideology and poetics, the influence of the target ideological and poetological standards on the translation process is not only reflected in the choice of translation materials and strategies, but, more covertly, in the translational act through various extra-textual constraints. While adhering to target ideological and poetological standards in his translation, Goldblatt has excelled in his mediation of various patronages, ultimately producing a translation—a compromise between translator and patronage—geared towards reader expectations.

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