

A Study on the Translation Styles of Lyell and Lovell from the Perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's Sociological Theory: A Case Study of the English Translations of Lu Xun's Novels

Yang Yuqing

Postgraduate Student, School of Interpreting and Translation Studies, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, CHINA.

Corresponding Author: yqyang96@163.com

ORCID

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5239-7413>



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ABSTRACT

With the sociological turn, the research perspectives in Translation Studies (TS) have broadened. Researchers in TS began to systematically examine the social factors behind translation activities. This article applies Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory to explore the translation styles of Lu Xun's novels translated by William A. Lyell and Julia Lovell. The concepts of field, capital, and habitus from Bourdieu's theory are employed as the theoretical framework for this study. Through sociological and comparative textual analysis, the article finds that both Lyell and Lovell tend to adopt a domestication strategy in their translations. However, due to Lyell's unique language learning experience and extensive academic background, the field and accumulated capital in his career have shaped his scholarly translation habitus. Furthermore, as an expert in Lu Xun's works, Lyell emphasizes fidelity in his translations and employs a strategy of foreignization through footnotes to introduce the cultural context of the source language to readers, resulting in a more complex translation. In contrast, Lovell, who grew up during the period of growing interest in translating Chinese literature abroad, has accumulated capital that has fostered her translation habitus of faithful re-creation. Additionally, as Lovell's aim in translating Lu Xun's novels is to introduce the author to a wider Western audience, her translations prioritize readability and are more concise and accessible.

Keywords- Bourdieu's Sociological Theory; Translation Style; William A. Lyell; Julia Lovell; English Translations of Lu Xun's Novels.

I. INTRODUCTION

Following the linguistic turn and the cultural turn in translation studies, "translation researchers began to systematically draw on sociological theories to discuss translation issues, with the aim of making the system of translation studies more comprehensive and complete" [1]. This led to the emergence of the sociological turn in translation studies [2], and socio-translation studies has gradually established its name and nature.

James Stratton Holmes, the founding father of contemporary Western translation studies, was the first to

put forward the concepts of "socio-translation studies" and "translation sociology" [3], while briefly explaining them in his paper *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies* presented at the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen in 1972. The various turns that have occurred in TS are, in essence, a practice in which TS draws on and integrates theories and methods from related disciplines, aiming to elucidate translation phenomena and the nature of translation from different perspectives as well as providing multifaceted rationale for the development and improvement of TS as a discipline.

Among the various sociological theories that have been introduced into TS, Pierre Bourdieu's reflexive sociological theory has drawn much attention from translation researchers, accounting for nearly half of socio-translation studies. This article draws on the three core concepts of the Bourdieusian theory, namely, field, capital and habitus, to examine the fields that William A. Lyell and Julia Lovell, the two translators and sinologists, belong to and what capital they have accumulated. Based on this, the article analyzes the formation of their translatorial habitus and its influence on translation styles manifested in their translation works, in order to provide references and insights for the study of translators and the translations of Chinese literature abroad.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THE BOURDIEU'S SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY AND THEIR APPLICATION IN TRANSLATION

In 1984, Bourdieu proposed in his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* a brief social analysis framework: [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice [4], in an attempt to answer interconnected fundamental questions regarding social practice such as "Where do the actors practice?", "For what?", and "How?". Field, capital and habitus are the three key concepts of the Bourdieusian theory. Translation, as a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communicative activity, has distinct social attributes. Therefore, as a social activity, translation practice takes place in specific fields, where agents, with their own habitus, compete for capital. Given the significant social attributes of translation activities, exploring translation phenomena from a sociological perspective not only has solid theoretical foundations but also holds practical significance. It can provide a more comprehensive and in-depth research dimension for TS.

2.1 Field and Translation Field

"A field" is "a network, or a configuration of objective relations between positions" [5]. Therefore, a field is a system constituted by objective nexuses, rather than a space in geographical or physical terms. As for its connotation, firstly, society is a "macro-field" filled with various "micro-fields" or "sub-fields", which are both independent and interrelated. Each sub-field operates according to its unique logic, rules, and conventions, which cannot be converted to the governing logic, rules, and conventions in other fields [5]. Secondly, the field is a space full of power struggles. Actors, based on their different positions, employ various means of struggle and engage in games for capital or interests. This kind of game shapes the structure of the field.

The translation field is one of the sub-fields within the macro-field of society. Social agents such as original authors, translators, readers, publishers, sponsors,

clients, and literary and translation critics form the unique network of relationships within the field. The power field is the meta-field of all fields. Power struggles are also a defining characteristic of the translation field. Under the constraints of social institutions and translation norms, translators, as one of the agents in the field, engage in power struggles, leveraging their own translation habitus and translation resources to compete for capital and pursue benefits [6].

2.2 Capital and Translation Capital

Bourdieu's concept of "capital" is an extension of Marxist political economy. Bourdieu categorizes "capital" into economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital, all of which are mutually convertible. Among them, symbolic capital is the transformation of economic, cultural, and social capital, while cultural capital can be further divided into three types: embodied, institutionalized, and objectified [7]. He views "capital" as a tool for social practice that determines the position and power of agents within a network of social relations in a specific field.

In the translation field, the economic capital influencing translation practices can be divided into other-sponsored capital and self-sponsored capital. Social capital of translation refers to the social resources mobilized through the translator's social network, including relationships with original authors, publishers, and governments. Symbolic capital of translation, being the type most closely associated with translation among various forms of capital [6], is manifested in the reputation and prestige accumulated by translators through power struggles and translation practices. Embodied cultural capital of translation includes a translator's linguistic comprehension and expression abilities, as well as familiarity with relevant fields. Institutionalized cultural capital of translation may consist of degrees, titles, and certifications obtained by original authors and translators within the translation field or related fields. Objectified cultural capital of translation often refers to translated works and the evaluations they receive.

2.3 Habitus and Translator's Habitus

Bourdieu considers "habitus" to be the generative capacity of creative processes which is deeply embedded within the actor's system of dispositions that guide his actions [8]. Habitus can be divided into social habitus and professional habitus, the latter being the result of individual participation in learning, training, and practice. Habitus is a structure that is both "structured" and "structuring". [9] - on the one hand, it is a system of dispositions shaped by social structures in the long term; on the other, this system constructs new social structures by guiding agents' practices. The objective structure of a field, including operational logic, rules and agents within it, influences the formation of agents' habitus, and the habitus of agents, in turn, impacts the objective structure of the field. Habitus differs from habit, which is often spontaneous, repetitive, mechanical, and inertial, lacking

the creativity, constructiveness, and regenerative qualities of habitus [8].

Translator habitus refers to the overall system of thinking and behavioral dispositions that are formed and exhibited by translators during social practices such as learning, training, and working. It includes their understanding of the nature of translation, their tendencies in selecting translation texts, strategies, methods, and techniques [10], and their propensities for adhering to or deviating from various translation norms and rules. It can impart relatively consistent characteristics to translation outcomes (usually translation works) and it to some extent reflects the patterns of translators' behaviors.

III. THE LIFE TRAJECTORIES OF LYELL AND LOVELL AND THEIR ANALYSIS FROM THE BOURDIEUSIAN PERSPECTIVE

To understand the factors behind the processes and outcomes of translators' translation practices, it is necessary to review the translators' life trajectories. This allows for an analysis of the fields in which they are situated, the capital they possess, and the habitus they have developed. Additionally, it is also essential to examine how these three elements influence the formation of the translators' unique translation styles.

3.1 William A. Lyell

3.1.1 Life Trajectory

William A. Lyell, born in 1939 in Rahway, Union County, N.J., is a renowned sinologist, translator, and scholar of studies of Lu Xun in the United States. In 1951, Lyell completed his bachelor's degree in French and English literature at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. During the Korean War, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force with aspirations of becoming a pilot. Instead, he was selected for the Air Force Language Program at Yale University, where he excelled in Mandarin Chinese. He served in Korea as a Chinese interpreter, earning several medals for his service.¹ After his military service, Lyell pursued graduate studies in Chinese at the University of Chicago. He was awarded a fellowship to study Chinese philosophy and literature in Taiwan for three years, attending classes at National Taiwan University and achieving native fluency in Chinese through hard work. Lyell began his Chinese teaching career at Chicago Teachers College North in 1962, the year when he obtained a master's degree with a thesis on pre-Qin philosophical thoughts in China. The following year, he went to Ohio State University, where he received

a Distinguished Teaching Award. Years later, he returned to the University of Chicago to pursue a Ph.D. under the supervision of Professor D.T. Roy, where his academic interest was formally established in the study of modern Chinese literature. During his Ph.D. studies, he compiled *A Lu Hsiün Reader* (《鲁迅读本》). In 1971, he completed a thesis, *The Short Story Theater of Lu Hsiün*, earning a Doctorate in Chinese Language and Literature; later, it was published under the title of *Lu Hsiün's Vision of Reality* (《鲁迅现实主义观》) by the University of California Press in 1976. This is also the first systematic and authoritative study of Lu Xun. The monograph and his translation work, *Diary of A Madman and Other Stories* (《狂人日记及其他小说》) [11], established Lyell as an expert in Lu Xun studies in the United States. The latter also marks the most significant and influential work in his translation portfolio. In 1972, he joined Stanford University's Department of Asian Languages, dedicating three decades to teaching Chinese language and literature and East Asian civilization, etc. His scholarly contributions include authoring or translating six books,² with a focus on modern Chinese literature and prominent authors like Lu Xun and Lao She [12]. In 1987, Lyell served as a visiting professor at Beijing University, where he taught modern Chinese literature in Chinese, further solidifying his international reputation in the field. Although officially retired in 2000, he continued to teach classes on Chinese literature. Lyell passed away on August 28, 2005, at the age of 75, due to complications from esophageal cancer.³

3.1.2 Fields: Politics, Literature, and Translation

The political field shapes the cultural field, for it often uses various policies to guide the direction of cultural development, thereby better utilizing symbolic resources within the cultural field for the construction of legitimacy and ideological dissemination. In June 1989, the Bush administration announced severe sanctions against China, plunging Sino-American relations to their lowest point since the establishment of diplomatic ties. During this period, the field of Chinese literature translation in the United States was undoubtedly greatly constrained by the political field, making the translation and dissemination of Chinese literary works in the U.S. exceedingly difficult. Therefore, Lyell's translation of Lu Xun's stories published in 1990 objectively lacked timeliness and opportunity, which may partly explain why its sales were lower than Lovell's.

From Lyell's life trajectory, it is evident that much of his life was intertwined with literature. Lyell majored in literature during his undergraduate studies and

¹ https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/178647962/william_alfred-lyell. (Retrieved on 04/01/2025).

² They are: 1) monographs: *A Lu Hsiün Reader* (Yale University Press, 1967) and *Lu Hsiün's Vision of Reality* (University of California Press, 1976); 2) translation works: *Cat Country: A Satirical Novel of China in the 1930's* by Lao She (Ohio State University Press, 1970), *Shanghai Express: A Thirties Novel* by Zhang Henshui (University of Hawaii

Press, 1997) and *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories* by Lu Xun (University of Hawaii Press, 1990); and 3) co-translation work: *Blades of Grass: The Stories of Lao She*, by Lao She (University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

³ https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/178647962/william_alfred-lyell. (Retrieved on 04/01/2025).

began a systematic Chinese literary education at the age of 26 in a Chinese-speaking environment. During his doctoral studies, he not only set his research focus on modern Chinese literature but also compiled *A Lu Hsiün Reader* and translated Lao She's satirical novel *Cat Country: A Satirical Novel of China in the 1930's* (《猫城记》), which helped him enter the fields of American Lu Xun studies and modern Chinese literature translation [13]. His subsequent publication, *Lu Hsiün's Vision of Reality*, further established his status as an expert in Lu Xun studies in the U.S.. In addition to Lu Xun's works, Lyell also translated novels by Zhang Henshui, Zheng Qingwen, and other Chinese writers, continuously increasing his participation in the field of literary translation.

3.1.3 Capital: Cultural, Social, and Translational

Lyell demonstrated, during his enlistment in the military, a certain linguistic talent, which is foundational and crucial for being a translator. This reflects the embodied cultural capital in translation. Lyell's educational experiences in language and literature were very rich. First, he studied English and French literature as an undergraduate. After graduation, he joined the military and participated in a specialized language training program at Yale University, where he completed Chinese language courses with excellent grades. Subsequently, he studied Chinese philosophy and literature at National Taiwan University, during which his Chinese proficiency improved significantly. He later pursued a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, focusing on modern Chinese literature, particularly Lu Xun's works. Evidently, Lyell had accumulated substantial cultural capital in Chinese and American language and literature. Lyell's deep research on Lu Xun provided him with profound and thorough insights into Lu Xun's creative ideas, literary styles, and linguistic characteristics, which undoubtedly constituted his specialized cultural capital for translating Lu Xun's stories.

Throughout his life, Lyell was educated and worked at multiple universities, forming close relationships with some university presses. The successful translation of Lu Xun's stories and the publication of *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories* (《狂人日记及其他小说》) were supported by the editors at the University of Hawai'i Press. Lyell also taught and conducted academic activities at Beijing Foreign Studies University, establishing social connections with agents in related Chinese fields. "During the translation process, he consulted with experts from a Lu Xun research institution, such as Peng Xiaoling from the Beijing Lu Xun Museum, to learn about the naming traditions for infants in Shaoxing (Lu Xun's hometown) and its surrounding areas" [14].

Lyell's translation career began alongside his military service when he served as a translator of Chinese

during the Korean War. During his doctoral studies, Lyell translated six of Lu Xun's stories for his dissertation, promoting a steady development of his translation career. Prior to *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, Lyell's major translations included *Cat Country: A Satirical Novel of China in the 1930's* and *Shanghai Express: A Thirties Novel* (《平沪通车》). Howard Goldblatt [15] praised the former as a vivid, faithful, and linguistically natural translation, like a rare exotic bird in the field of modern Chinese literature translation. *World Literature Today* commended the latter as an excellent translation that captured the essence of the original work, successfully recreating the sights and atmosphere of 1930s China, with its cultural notes leaving a lasting impression.⁴ These two translations not only earned him a high professional reputation in the translation field but also provided him with a wealth of relevant experience, forming symbolic and embodied translational capital for the successful translation of Lu Xun's stories.

3.1.4 Habitus: Academic Translation Style

A translator's choices regarding "what to translate" and "how to translate" are invariably influenced by his/her habitus. From his doctoral studies to his retirement, spanning over 30 years, Lyell primarily engaged in the study and teaching of Chinese literature. Translation was just his secondary endeavor, as his translation works served to support the teaching and research of modern Chinese literature in the U.S.. For Lyell, a scholar-type translator, research, teaching, and translation were the three facets of his career. His first published translation, *Cat Country: A Satirical Novel of China in the 1930's*, has already exhibited a scholarly translation orientation, laying the groundwork for the basic style of his later translations [13]. Lyell decided to re-translate it for two reasons: "First, the interest in Lao She's life and works grew following his persecution and death during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution; second, Lyell was dissatisfied with James E. Dew's omissions and misinterpretations of the original text, which reduced its value as a social and literary document" (ibid.). All of Lyell's translations were initiated by himself and published by academic presses. In other words, Lyell's selection of texts for translation was deeply influenced by his research interests and needs, demonstrating a clear translator subjectivity.

Lyell's life trajectory gradually shaped his academic-oriented translator habitus, which in turn characterized his translation style as follows: A) strict fidelity to the original text, not only accurately conveying the original thoughts but also meticulously preserving its stylistic and linguistic features to ensure that readers could experience the unique flavor of the original; B) a preference for interpretative translation methods [16], such as providing detailed and thorough annotations for culturally loaded terms including dialects, to offer English

⁴ <https://book.douban.com/subject/2674391/comments/?sort=time>. (Retrieved on 11/01/2025).

readers rich background knowledge and cultural context, which helps them understand and appreciate the deeper meanings of the original; C) a tendency to adopt domestication strategies, skillfully adapting foreign cultural elements and expressions into language familiar to English readers, retaining the original thoughts while enhancing readability and acceptability; D) a frequent use of capitalization, italics, and other forms of emphasis to highlight key information from the original, creating a degree of defamiliarization that draws readers' attention.

3.2 Julia Lovell

3.2.1 Life Trajectory

Julia Lovell is a rising star in British sinology and translation, often regarded alongside American sinologist and translator Howard Goldblatt as one of the "twin stars" of Chinese literature translation in the contemporary U.K. and U.S. [17]. Born in 1975 into a family of scholars, Lovell's parents encouraged her to learn foreign languages from an early age, and she developed a strong love for reading novels. In 1994, Lovell entered the University of Cambridge to study history before switching to Chinese studies, where she began her formal study of the Chinese language. She was soon captivated by various aspects of Chinese culture. In the year. Before her graduation, Lovell spent a year at the Johns Hopkins University - Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies, where she studied under Professor Gao Hua, earning a diploma in modern Chinese studies. There, she received a systematic education in Chinese and academic training in Chinese literature, laying the foundation for her future work in Chinese language studies and literary translation [18]. She later returned to Cambridge to pursue her postgraduate studies, earning her Ph.D. in modern and contemporary Chinese literature in 2002. Lovell has taught Chinese history and literature at both the University of Cambridge and the University of London, and she currently serves as a professor at Birkbeck, University of London.⁵

Lovell officially began her translation career in translating Chinese literature in 2003 with her translation of Han Shaogong's *A Dictionary of Maqiao* (《马桥词典》). Since then, she has translated works by contemporary Chinese (or overseas Chinese) authors.⁶

3.2.2 Fields: Power, Culture, and Translation

At the macro level, with the rise of China's national power and international influence, Britain's interest in Chinese culture and literary works has increased, and the restrictions on the translation of Chinese literature into English have gradually eased [19]. At the micro level, of the translation of *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* (《鲁迅小说全集》) and its

dissemination, the role played by Penguin Press was crucial to its success, as it holds substantial influence and authority within the publishing world. The backing of such a reputable institution allowed the works to gain the attention and recognition they deserved on the global literary stage.

Looking at Lovell's life trajectory, she has been fond of reading novels from an early age and has received early literary education. During university, she began to study Chinese and developed a keen interest in Chinese culture. Her subsequent study and research experiences in China deepened her understanding of Chinese literature and culture. Lovell has also written articles on Chinese literature, history, and culture for influential British newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Economist*, and *The Times Literary Supplement* [20]. She has called for a shift in the narrow Western view of Chinese literature and has encouraged the incorporation of global cultures. It is evident that before translating *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, Lovell had already immersed herself in the field of Chinese literature and culture, accumulating relevant capital.

Although Lovell did not receive formal training in translation and had only taken basic translation courses as part of her foreign language studies, her life experiences made her transition into the field of translation a natural process [21]. She views translation as a hobby and enjoys the process, consistently achieving success in the field of translation. *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* (《阿Q正传及其他中国故事：鲁迅小说全集》) was included in the renowned Penguin Classics series. American sinologist Wasserstrom [22] commented that "the book could be considered the most significant Penguin Classic ever published."

3.2.3 Capital: Cultural, Social, and Translational

Lovell's early family education, her experiences of learning Chinese and studying in China during her undergraduate years, her pursuit of a Ph.D. in Chinese literature, followed by subsequent visits to China for academic exchanges, all contributed to deepening her understanding of both Chinese and English literary traditions and cultures. This life journey laid a solid foundation for accumulating substantial cultural capital. Furthermore, Lu Xun was the first Chinese author Lovell encountered during her university years. She admired his characters and writing styles, and she recognized his iconic status within Chinese literature and culture [17]. This profound comprehension of Lu Xun significantly enhanced her accumulation of specialized cultural capital,

⁵ <https://www.bbk.ac.uk/our-staff/profile/8006435/julia-lovell>

⁶ *A Dictionary of Maqiao*, by Han Shaogong (Columbia University Press, 2003); *Sky Burial: An Epic Love Story of Tibet*, by Xinran (Nan A. Talese, 2004); *I Love Dollars and Other Stories of China*, by Zhu Wen (Columbia University Press, 2007); *Lust, Caution and Other Stories*, by Zhang Ailing (Penguin Classics, 2007); *Serve the People!: A Novel*, by Yan Lianke (Constable and Robinson, 2008); *The Real*

Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun, by Lu Xun (Penguin Classics, 2009); *The Matchmaker, The Apprentice and the Football Fan*, by Zhu Wen (Columbia University Press, 2013); *Monkey King: Journey to the West*, by Wu Cheng'en (Penguin Classics, 2021).

which was instrumental in translating *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*.

Penguin Random House, one of the “Big Five” English-language publishers, has a global influence with considerable economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. Penguin Classics is one of its internationally renowned imprints. Initially, Lovell had no connection with Penguin, but in 2007 and 2009, Penguin reissued her translations: *I Love Dollars* (《我爱美元》) and *Lust, Caution and Other Stories* (《色·戒及其他故事》), with the latter included in the Penguin Classics series. As a result, Lovell gradually built up a relationship with Penguin, which became an important part of her social capital, ultimately benefiting her translation of *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* and its subsequent publication and dissemination. Additionally, her relationships with colleagues and friends contributed further social capital to this project. Lovell noted that the draft translation of *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* was polished and revised by several friends, including renowned sinologist B.S. McDougall [23].

Before translating *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, Lovell had already published several translations that received positive feedback, gaining a certain reputation within the field of Chinese literary translation and thus accumulating both symbolic capital and objectified cultural capital. For instance, her debut translation, *A Dictionary of Maqiao*, was praised as “one of the best Chinese novels published in English since the Mao era” [24]. The experience gained from translating these works also contributed to her accumulation of embodied cultural capital. Furthermore, her childhood experiences in foreign language learning and literary reading, along with her subsequent education and translation work related to Chinese culture, provided her with a solid linguistic foundation and familiarity with Chinese literary translation. These experiences transformed into her embodied capital in translation, facilitating her successful translation of *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*.

3.2.4 Habitus: The Translation Style of Faithful Recreation

In terms of text selection, Lovell primarily considers “her own preferences rather than the tastes of the readers” [21]. She also takes into account the intrinsic value of the text - whether it is worth translating for the target language readers. On top of these, other social actors, such as publishers and sponsors, also influence the choice of texts to be translated. For instance, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* was the result of a mutual interest between Penguin and Lovell, with both parties quickly agreeing to collaborate.

Regarding translation strategies and methods, Lovell tends to use flexible domestication approaches while adhering to the basic meaning of the original text, a consideration which is primarily based on the reading habits of the target language audience. She is aware that

Chinese literature occupies a marginal position in the West, so her translations are aimed at reaching as many general Western readers as possible. This implies that her translations should cater to the reading habits of Western audiences, ensuring the text is more economical, graceful, and readable, thus enhancing the reader’s experience. Therefore, when dealing with literary allusions, dialects, and cultural terms, she employs methods such as annotations (both within the text and in footnotes), simplifications, and omissions. However, she shows great respect for the original work and its author(s). In cases where literal translation is not feasible due to its potential harm to the readability for target language readers, and after seeking approval from the original author (if the author is still alive), Lovell sometimes makes substantial modifications to the text. The method she adopts is, in her own words, “faithful recreation” [23], meaning that, while not strictly adhering to the literal form or exact meanings of the original, staying true to its spirit and core essence [24]. Lovell began to learn Chinese only at age 20, and even with her experience studying in China, the period was relatively brief. Chinese is one of the world’s most difficult languages, and Chinese culture is vast and profound, so Lovell has acknowledged facing many linguistic and cultural challenges in translating Chinese literature. To ensure accuracy and avoid mistranslations, she has developed a translation habitus of consulting reference books, seeking advice from friends, and referencing pre-existing translations. Therefore, Lovell values both the readability and the accuracy of her translations. However, when fidelity to the original compromises the fluency or acceptability of the text, she opts for creative solutions while staying true to the original’s essence [25], this is what she describes as “faithful recreation”.

IV. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATIONS BY LYELL AND LOVELL

This article selects several of Lu Xun’s novels [26] and their translations in *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories* by Lyell and *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* by Lovell, and compares these two translations to analyze the different translation styles of the two translators.

Example 1 ST: ——一阵脚步声响，一眨眼，已经拥过了一大簇人。那三三两两的人，也忽然合作一堆，潮一般向前进；将到了十字路口，便突然立住，促成一个半圆。（鲁迅《药》）

Lyell’s Translation: Now there is a chaotic flurry of footsteps, and in the twinkling of an eye a small crowd forms. The people who had been pacing back and forth in twos and threes suddenly flow together to form a small human tide that rushes toward the intersection. Just before reaching the head of the T, the tide breaks and forms a semicircle. (Lyell 1990: 50)

Lovell's Translation: Then a rush of footsteps: the crowd surged forward, its units of twos and threes suddenly coalescing into a tremendous mass that pulled up and fanned out into a semicircle just before the junction. (Lovell 2009: 39)

The original text is from *Medicine* (《药》), which depicts the curiosity, indifference, and numbness exhibited by the masses while witnessing a criminal's execution. In Chinese, verbs and short sentences are commonly used, and the original text creates a strong visual impact through a series of verbs and verb phrases, such as “拥过” (throng), “合作一堆” (gather into a bunch), “突然立住” (suddenly come to a standstill), and “促成半个半圆” (form a semicircle). According to the statistics from Microsoft Word 2010, the original consists of 2 sentences and 66 characters. Lyell's translation uses 3 sentences and 61 words, while Lovell's translation condenses the short sentences into a single sentence with 34 words. In Lyell's translation, verbs or verb phrases like “forms”, “pacing”, “flow”, “rushes toward” and “breaks” vividly portray the dynamic changes of the crowd, allowing the translation to maintain the sense of tension and flow in the original. Additionally, Lyell translates “丁字路口” (the T-shaped intersection) as “the head of the T”, using the letter “T” to visually represent the shape of the junction, offering a vivid and concrete image to the readers. In contrast, Lovell's translation omits the phrase “一眨眼” (in the blink of an eye) and uses verb phrases like “surged forward”, “coalescing into”, “pulled up”, and “fanned out into” to translate the original verbs. The phrase “fanned out into” particularly captures the scene of the crowd spreading out into a semicircle, resembling the opening of a fan, enabling readers to visually imagine the scene. Lovell's translation is concise and accurately conveys the dynamic sense of the crowd in the original.

Example 2 ST: “辫子呢辫子？丈八蛇矛。一代不如一代！皇帝坐龙庭。破的碗须得上城去钉好。谁能抵挡他？书上一条一条写着。入娘的！……”（鲁迅《风波》）

Lyell's Translation: *Where's your queue, where's your queue? ... A spear eighteen feet long ... One generation's worse than the last! The Emperor's ascended the Dragon Throne. "I'll have to take the broken bowl to town and have it riveted." Can you stand up to him? ... Written down in a book, as plain as can be. "Motherfuckers!"* (Lyell 1990: 87)

Lovell's Translation: 'Where's your queue? Eighteen-foot lance - the youth of today! The emperor's back. Get it mended in town. No one! All the books. Damn it all to hell ...' (Lovell 2009: 70)

This paragraph depicts the inner thoughts of the protagonist, Qijin, in *Passing Storm* (《风波》). Based on the context of the novel, it is clear that the words spoken by others earlier are now fragmented and interwoven into Qijin's current inner monologue. According to the statistics from Microsoft Word 2010, the original text consists of 8 sentences and 58 characters.

Lyell's translation also consists of 8 sentences, using 56 words, while Lovell's translation uses 7 sentences and 29 words. First, in terms of form, Lyell distinguishes between “what others say” and “what ‘I’ think”, intentionally using italics for the words previously spoken and quotation marks to highlight the current inner thoughts. Lovell's translation does not reflect this distinction. Furthermore, the sentence “皇帝坐龙庭。” (The emperor sits in the dragon court.), a metaphor for “the restoration of the Qing court”, is translated by Lyell as “The Emperor's ascended the Dragon Throne.” (in ancient China, the dragon or loong is a symbol of imperial power), which is a faithful, literal translation that preserves both the form and meaning of the original. In contrast, Lovell simplifies it to “The emperor's back.”, a free translation that makes it easier for readers to understand the basic meaning of the original. Finally, regarding the translation of the swear word “入娘的” in the original text, the translation “Motherfuckers” by Lyell is very literally close to the original and more intense in tone compared to “Damn it all to hell” by Lovell. It also has stronger aggression and insult, so its emotional connotation is closer to that of the original text.

Example 3 ST: “阿呀呀，你放了道台了，还说不阔？你现在有三房姨太太；出门便是八抬的大轿，还说不阔？吓，什么都瞒不过我。”（鲁迅《故乡》）

Lyell's Translation: “Come off it. I know you're a big official—a Daotai, they say.⁶ And you're gonna stand there and tell me you're not rich? You've got three concubines and an eight-man sedan chair team to carry you around wherever you wanna go. Not rich? Hah! You can't put anything over on me!” (Lyell 1990: 95)

Lovell's Translation: ‘What are you talking about? You work for the government – I bet you've three concubines, and travel everywhere in a sedan car with eight carriers. Ha! You won't pull the wool over my eyes.’ (Lovell 2009: 75)

Example 3 presents the words spoken by Yang Ersao, the “Bean Curd Beauty”, to “me” in *Hometown* (《故乡》). The repeated use of the rhetorical question “还说不阔？” (Telling me you're not rich?) vividly portrays Yang Ersao's image as someone who is greedy for small gains and penny-pinching. According to the Microsoft Word 2010 statistics, the original text consists of 3 sentences and 53 characters. Lyell's translation breaks the original text into 7 sentences, using 51 words, while Lovell's translation makes it into 4 sentences with 35 words. In Lyell's translation, the rhetorical repetitive questions in the original are retained as “and tell me you're not rich?” with the repetition of “not rich”. In Lovell's translation, however, it is rendered as a single question, which weakens the sharpness of Yang Ersao's sarcastic and bitter tone. Additionally, the phrase “你放了道台了” is in the Shaoxing dialect. As a native of Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, Lu Xun wrote most of his

works with Shaoxing as the background. The phrase “放了道台了” literally means “someone has become a high-ranking official”. Lyell translates it as “I know you’re a big official - a Daotai”, using Chinese pinyin to spell “道台” and providing a footnote to explain its cultural background to the readers. In contrast, Lovell translates it as “You work for the government”, which conveys the notion of holding a government position, but fails to reflect the specific rank implied in the original.

Example 4 ST: “……我‘文不像誊录生，武不像救火兵’……”（鲁迅《端午节》）

Lyell’s Translation: “... ‘For martial things he hath no knack / Civilian skills doth he also lack.’ ...” (Lyell 1990: 182)

Lovell’s Translation: ‘... I don’t write well enough even to be a copyist; if I joined the army, I wouldn’t scrape into the fire brigade.’ (Lovell 2009: 157)

Example 4 is a quote from the protagonist Fang Xuanchuo in *Dragon Boat Festival* (《端午节》), which is an ancient proverb. The original meaning refers to “a person who is neither good at civil affairs nor military affairs and has no real skills”. The sentence is balanced and symmetrical, with “文” (civil) and “武” (martial) serving as opposites, as well as “誊录生” (transcriber) and “救火兵” (fire-fighting soldier) forming another pair. The structure has a harmonious flow and phonetic beauty. Lyell’s translation wisely chooses the archaic English words “hath” (for “has”) and “doth” (for “does”), which not only rhyme but also align stylistically with the original ancient proverb. Similarly, the words “knack” and “lack” create a rhyming pattern, giving the sentence rhythm and melodic beauty, making it catchy and easy for readers to remember and pass on. In contrast, Lovell’s translation does not adhere strictly to the original structure, opting for two parallel clauses, with the second clause employing a subjunctive mood contrary to present reality. Additionally, Lovell selects more modern terms, using “copyist” and “fire brigade” to translate “誊录生” and “救火兵” respectively, making the translation more relatable to contemporary readers.

Example 5 ST:

今敦请
尔础高老夫子为本校历史教员每周授课四
小时每小时敬送修金大洋三角正按时
间计算此约
贤良女学校校长何万淑贞敛衽谨订
中华民国十三年夏历菊月吉旦 立

鲁迅《高老夫子》）

Lyell’s Translation: Lovell’s Translation:

Be It Respectfully Requested That:
The Venerable Schoolmaster
ORKY GAO

Serve as HISTORY INSTRUCTOR at this Academy
to
Teach FOUR HOURS PER WEEK at exactly
THIRTY CENTS PER HOUR, Salary to be
Calculated
Strictly According to Time.
With all Due Deference and Courtesy,
HEWAN SHUZHEN
Principal
Academy for Young Ladies of Character and Ability
Summer of this Thirteenth Year
of
The Republic of China
Auspicious Day, Chrysanthemum Month
Effective Immediately⁵

The services of Gao Erchu are cordially requested for tendering instruction for the extent of four hours of history a week, for which he will be respectfully reimbursed at thirty cents an hour, in exact accordance with the number of hours taught.

In solemn agreement with Howan Shuzhen, Principal of the Academy of Virtuous Female Talent.

Salutations
On the Felicitous First Day of the Month of the Chrysanthemum
In the Summer of the Thirteenth Year Of the Republic of China*

(Lyell 1990: 300) (Lovell 2009: 281)

The original text comes from a letter of appointment in *The Venerable Schoolmaster Gao* (《高老夫子》). The structure and message of this letter of appointment are clear, including the employment target, the post and salary details, with formal and standardized language, reflecting distinct characteristics of the era. Lyell’s translation not only adheres to the original writing format but also deliberately uses capital letters, italics, and other methods to highlight key information in the letter, such as the appointing party (“*HE-WAN SHUZHEN*”), the appointee (“*ORKY GAO*”), the position (“HISTORY INSTRUCTOR”), and the salary (“THIRTY CENTS PER HOUR”). The language is overall formal, dignified, and archaic (e.g., “Be It Respectfully Requested That”, “With all Due Deference and Courtesy”), which reflects the characteristics of old-fashioned written English and meets the formal language requirements for such letters. Lovell’s translation also retains a certain degree of formality (e.g., “tendering instruction”, “be respectfully reimbursed at thirty cents an hour”), but reformats the letter into a standard English letter style. Compared to Lyell’s translation, the format and content of Lovell’s translation are more compact and concise. Although the overall expression is more coherent, it lacks the clarity and prominence of Lyell’s translation in terms of information presentation.

V. CONCLUSION

With the guidance of Pierre Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, this article examines the life trajectories of William A. Lyell and Julia Lovell from the perspectives of field, capital, and habitus. It argues that the translators' unique life trajectories shape their distinctive translational habitus, which in turn define their unique translation styles. Lyell's academic translation style and Lovell's style of "faithful recreation" are both shaped by their translational habitus, which are influenced by the accumulation of different forms of capital in their respective fields.

When translating Lu Xun's novels, both Lyell and Lovell generally preferred a domestication strategy. However, their approaches diverged in form and content. Lyell tended to reproduce the original text's style as faithfully as possible, preserving its form and adhering closely to its content. He often employed annotative methods that leaned toward foreignization to introduce the source culture's background to readers, resulting in translations that were comparatively more intricate than Lovell's. In contrast, Lovell frequently broke free from the original form. While conveying the fundamental meaning of the source text, she simplified the cultural background information to some extent, producing translations that were more concise than Lyell's. Moreover, Lovell often used language aligned with the reading habits of the target audience, prioritizing readability and acceptability to spark the interest of a wider readership in Chinese literature.

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