

# Traditional Chinese Ritual Culture Transformed?: A TBC Approach to Joly's and Hawkes' Behaviour in Translating the Honorifics in *Hong Lou Meng*

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**ENG Abstract.** This article compares the treatment of honorifics in English translations of *Hong Lou Meng* by Henry Bencraft Joly, a British diplomat and David Hawkes, a British sinologist, in light of Translator Behaviour Criticism (TBC). The research adopts an integral method that starts with a textual analysis of the translator's construal choices, then examines the translator's behaviour pattern and finally his social motivations. The analysis has led to five major findings: 1) Joly's version intended to preserve the traditional Chinese ritual culture contained in the honorifics and attached great importance to restoring the honorific function of the original address terms. 2) Joly tended to maintain the original honorifics' function even at the cost of readability, which seemed to be a radical "truth-seeking" behaviour. Nonetheless, in effect, he did it to translate and annotate a teaching material for British diplomatic interns, which led to the alignment of his "truth-seeking" behaviour with his "utility-attaining" pursuit. 3) Hawkes' version tilted towards the "utility-attaining" principle by establishing an addressing system according to the target readers' cognitive habits, with the social norms and family relations of the modern English world taken as background domain. He also made use of some creative translation strategies that had enhanced expressivity and influenced the characterization. 4) Hawkes' "utility-attaining" behaviour is sustained by a "truth-seeking" basis because he aspired to reconstruct in modern English the literariness of the classic Chinese novel. 5) The different behaviours of the two translators demonstrated through construal choices in translating the honorifics in the novel conform to their respective social identities and professional habitus.

**Keywords:** honorifics; *Hong Lou Meng*; ritual culture; construal; translator behaviour.

## CH 变形的中国传统礼文化? —— 乔利与霍克思的《红楼梦》敬称英译行为对比与批评

**摘要.** 本文以《红楼梦》敬称英译为研究对象，在译者行为批评理论上对比分析英国外交官乔利和英国汉学家霍克思的翻译行为。文章探索将基于文本的译者识解机制分析与社会视域下的译者行为研究有机结合，由识解模式描绘入手，上升至译者行为分析，再到译者行为社会动因阐释，形成了层层深入的研究结构。研究发现：乔利重视中国传统礼文化认知模式的保留与重建，注重称呼语表敬功能的再现；乔译看似极度求真，甚至为重现原文表敬功能而牺牲阅读效果，实则意图翻译语言教材，帮助本国外交人员学习汉语，求真与务实合二为一；霍译偏重务实，以现代英语文化之社交规范及家庭关系为参照背景，重建符合目的语读者认知习惯的称呼系统，同时进行有度创造，提升译文表情力，调整角色塑造效果；霍克思最大的翻译诉求是重建《红楼梦》应有的文学性，因而他的务实行为亦以求真为基础；两译者在敬称翻译的识解重构过程中展现出不同的行为偏好，符合各自社会身份及职业惯习之要求。

**关键词:** 敬称；《红楼梦》；礼文化；识解；译者行为。

**Contents.** 1. Introduction. 2. Theoretical framework: construal and translator behaviour. 2.1. Research procedure and theoretical framework. 2.2. Conceptualization, reconceptualization and construal. 2.3. Translator behaviour criticism (TBC). 3. Data collection. 4. Construal patterns of the honorifics used in *Hong Lou Meng*. 5. Joly's and Hawkes' construal choices in translating the honorifics. 5.1. Conservation vs. elimination of the prominent distinction between relationships on 'my side' and on 'the other's side'. 5.2. Destruction of the AGE-SOCIAL STATUS metaphor: translation of "老/lǎo" ('old'). 5.3. Conservation vs. elimination of the FAMILY-STATE metaphor: translation of "兄/xiōng" ('elder brother') and "姐/jiě" ('elder sister'). 5.4. A shift of perspective: translation of "老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng" ('old ancestress') and "老太太/lǎotàitai" ('old mistress'). 6. The translator's behavioural tendency. 6.1. "Truth seeking" and "utility attaining" in the translation of honorifics. 6.2. Social motivations of Joly's and Hawkes' translating behaviour. 7. Conclusions. References.

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## 1. Introduction

Honorifics are “the address terms used to show respect or exchange courtesies between interlocutors” of a conversation (Chen, 2019: 21, original in Chinese, translation mine). The traditional Chinese addressing system of honorifics applied in the conversations of the classic Chinese novel *Hong Lou Meng* (*A Dream of Red Mansions*) written by Cao Xueqin in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century represents the social relations in an old ritual society of China, in which there are established social norms to govern the behaviour of different classes of people, namely the superiors and the inferiors, the noble and the poor, the elder and the young, the family and non-family members. Those honorifics are linguistic forms that express Chinese people’s conception of the social relations forged in the traditional ritual culture of China. As the use of honorifics and self-abasing forms (i.e., terms applied to the speaker himself to express modesty) reached its peak in the Ming and Qing dynasties (Liu, 2010a: 111), the aforementioned novel, originated in the Qing dynasty in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, provides a rich source of address terms of this kind. Taking as its background the glory and decline of the illustrious Jia family, the novel depicted vividly more than four hundred characters and their interrelated stories in a highly ritualized feudal society. The diversified honorifics used by the characters in their conversations presents a challenge to the translators of the novel.

Researchers such as Zhou (2007) saw the difficulty in translating the meaning nuances in the address terms in *Hong Lou Meng* while conforming to the social and linguistic conventions of the target language, including the character’s social status, position, educational level, mood, emotion and relationship with other characters (see Roselló Verdeguer, 2018, for a discussion on the influence of the speaker’s sociocultural level, sex, age and habitual language on his use of address terms). The scholarly discussion has focused on the choices and strategies that translators adopted to solve the problem of address terms. Xiao and Liu (2009) examined the domesticating and foreignizing strategies that five translators used in rendering “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’) and “先生/xiānsheng” (‘sir’) into English. Chen (2012) compared Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang’s strategies and those used by David Hawkes in dealing with the honorifics, self-abasing terms and pet names. Wang and Chen (2015) incorporated corpus-based quantitative analysis to describe the differences in the Yangs’ and Hawkes’ strategies for translating the honorifics with “老/lǎo” (‘old’) into English. Further evidence has been supplied by studies on the non-English versions of the novel, including the Korean translation of the address terms in general (Gao, 2009) and the Russian renderings of “姑娘/gūniang” (‘Miss’) in particular (Yang & Niu, 2013). While these studies have given great insights into the translators’ efforts and practical experience in mediating between languages and cultures, they nonetheless leave space for further theoretical and more systematic discussions.

A theoretically oriented study was carried out by Yang (2018) on the address terms in the Russian translations of the novel. The study revealed a dual-orientation of the pragmatic adaptation in the translators’ choices as they were directed towards both the source language and the target language. Despite the predominant focus on language in the previous discussions, Yan (2020) brought the socio-cultural context into the picture by investigating the potential factors that shaped the stylistic features of the paternal kinship terms in the English translation by Henry Bencraft Joly. This novel perspective has inspired the current study, which intends to focus on a vital issue left unaddressed in Yan’s analysis, i.e., the translator’s agency, around which socio-cultural context could influence the translation style via the translator’s perception, conception and production. Moreover, Yan’s description of Joly’s translation style was based on a somewhat disorganized list of textual features obtained using a corpus-based method, which calls for a more rigorous theoretical framework. These are the concerns to be addressed in the article.

The current study compares the translation of the honorifics in *Hong Lou Meng* by Henry Bencraft Joly, a British diplomat and David Hawkes, a British sinologist. These two English versions of the novel, published in the 1890s and the 1970s with very different purposes, are representative of their respective epochs. Joly’s version “reaches the peak of the translation history of *Hong Lou Meng* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has reflected, objectively speaking, the literariness of the original works” (Jiang, 2019: 42, original in Chinese, translation mine). Hawkes’ translation “has a significant influence among professional readers and enjoys high prestige in the literary world” (Jiang, 2019: 98, original in Chinese, translation mine). Our focus of study is set on the translation of honorifics as a distinctive category of address terms representative of the traditional Chinese ritual culture. By exploring the translator’s conception, behaviour pattern, and motivation, the study intends to answer the following questions: 1) What construal patterns can be identified in the traditional Chinese honorifics? 2) What changes have been generated in the construal pattern of the two translated versions? 3) What kind of translator behaviour can be identified in those changes? 4) Could the translators’ different social identities and roles motivate and influence their translation behaviour?

## 2. Theoretical framework: construal and translator behaviour

### 2.1. Research procedure and theoretical framework

To address the four questions raised in the previous section, a stepwise procedure was followed to describe (Tasks 1-3) and explicate (Task 4) the data. Data analysis and interpretation were conducted within an integrated framework that combines the construal theory in cognitive linguistics with the translator behaviour criticism in translation studies. Figure 1 illustrates how the theoretical framework supports each research task:

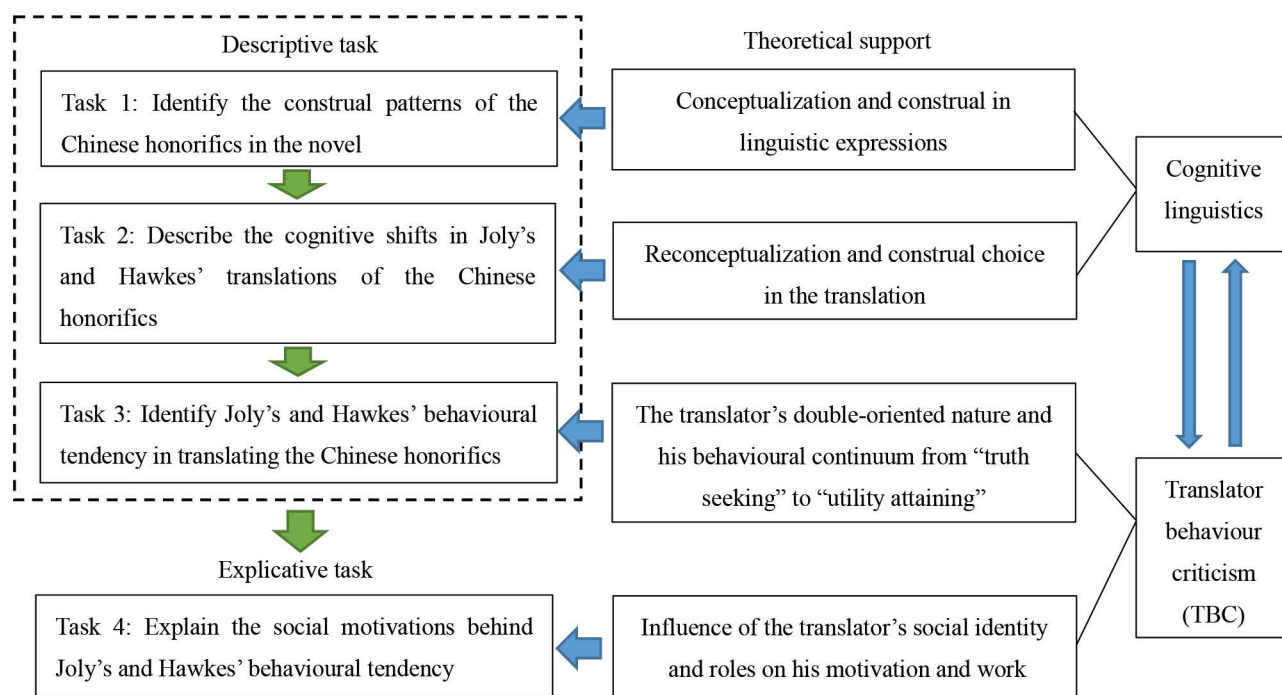


Figure 1. The stepwise procedure and theoretical framework of the study

## 2.2. Conceptualization, reconceptualization and construal

As a product of the human mind, language and its particular ways of expression reflect language users' perception and conception of the world and their experience of living therein. The human experience could be framed in different ways in the language, and "how an experience is framed is a matter of construal" which "depends on how the speaker conceptualizes the experience to be communicated, for the understanding of the hearer" (Croft & Cruse, 2004: 19). As Tan (2012: 243) argues, language is endowed with some entrenched construal patterns, which originated from individuals' use and then got conventionalized and gradually established in the lexical expressions and grammatical constructions. Traditional Chinese honorifics, for example, conceptualize the social relations in the ritual culture of a bygone China with particular construal patterns that reflect the ritual thinking of the Chinese people of that time. Many of these construal patterns could still be found in the actual use of Chinese address terms.

The theory of construal, which describes human beings' "manifest capacity for conceptualizing the same situation in alternate ways" (Langacker, 1998: 4), could also be applied to translation studies. Different translators would always produce distinct translations for the same original text, because the translators reconceptualize the same situation depicted by the original text in different ways.

With regard to construal operations, Langacker (1987: 116-137) proposed three types of "focal adjustments" under the concept of "imagery", which evolved in his later publications into four major dimensions of construal, namely specificity, focusing, prominence and perspective (Langacker, 2013: 55-85). Based on Langacker's proposals, Tan (2009, 2012) elaborated a list of construal operations that may occur in the process of translation, which, I believe, could also be applied to the description of the general phenomenon of conceptualization: base/profile organization, level of specificity (abstraction), categorization, subjectivity and objectivity, perspective construal (viewpoint, mental scanning, foreground/background organization, figure/ground organization, empathy, etc.), metaphoric and metonymic operations. The construal operations, entrenched in language use, could become construal patterns of a specific concept or domain in linguistic expression or established as even more general cognitive patterns of a particular language. The construal theory offers us a valuable instrument to analyze the Chinese honorifics and their translations by Joly and Hawkes to observe the differences in the two British translators' reconceptualization of the original concept.

## 2.3. Translator behaviour criticism (TBC)

Translation is not only an internal cognitive effort of the translator but also a socio-historical activity that serves specific purposes. The social motivations of the translation could leave more or less evident marks in the translated text through the translator's cognitive efforts. Just as Xu Jun, a well-known Chinese translation theorist, argues, enlightened by Michel Ballard's works *De Cicéron à Benjamin: Traducteurs, traductions, réflexions*, "the political, religious, instructional, cultural or aesthetic motivations of the translator working in a particular socio-historical context determine, to a great extent, the translation methods and strategies that he would employ" (Xu, 1999: 3, original in Chinese, translation mine). It is thus reasonable to suggest that the series of construal operations that the translator employs in the process of translation demonstrates

a certain behavioural tendency that could be attributed, in a more or less conscious way, to his linguistic, cultural and social motivations.

To adequately describe and explain Joly's and Hawkes' behavioural tendency in translating the Chinese honorifics in *Hong Lou Meng*, I turn to Zhou's theory on Translator Behaviour Criticism (Zhou, 2014a), which proposes that the volitional translator and his work are dually oriented, addressing both the original text and the society in which he lives and works. Thus, the translator's behaviour varies along a continuum between two extremes that uphold the "truth-seeking" (oriented towards the original author/text) and "utility-attaining" (oriented towards the target readers/society) principles, respectively. "Truth-seeking" refers to the translator's behaviour of conserving all or part of the true meanings of the original text and "utility-attaining" to his adoption of translation strategies that modify to a certain extent the original text to satisfy some practical purposes. They are two inseparable aspects of the activity of translation: on the one hand, no translation is pure "truth-seeking", i.e., oriented solely towards the author and the original text without practical modifications; on the other hand, the "utility-attaining" aspect of translation bases itself on the translator's "truth-seeking" behaviour, without which the practice could hardly be identified as translation. Therefore, the translator's behaviour and product defy a simplistic categorization of 'literal' or 'free' but rather vary along a continuum between the two extremes.

Zhou (2014b) pointed out that the translator's behavioural tendency can be explained by its correspondence to his social identity and roles. The translator may assume one (or two) primary identities and play different roles according to the circumstance. A "pure" translator (oriented towards the author/original text) operates on the "truth-seeking" principle and deals with the relations between the translated and the original text. The translator who takes other social roles in translation, e.g., a cultural mediator or promotion specialist, acts on the "utility-attaining" principle to handle the relations between the translated text and the social demands. As Zhou (2014b: 24) argued, "the translator is always trying to establish a balance between his truth-seeking and utility-attaining appeals. His behaviour changes when he shifts from one role to another: he is never an impartial player". The following diagram gives a clear demonstration of the relationship between the translator's behavioural tendency and his social identity and roles (Zhou, 2014b: 22, original in Chinese, translation mine):

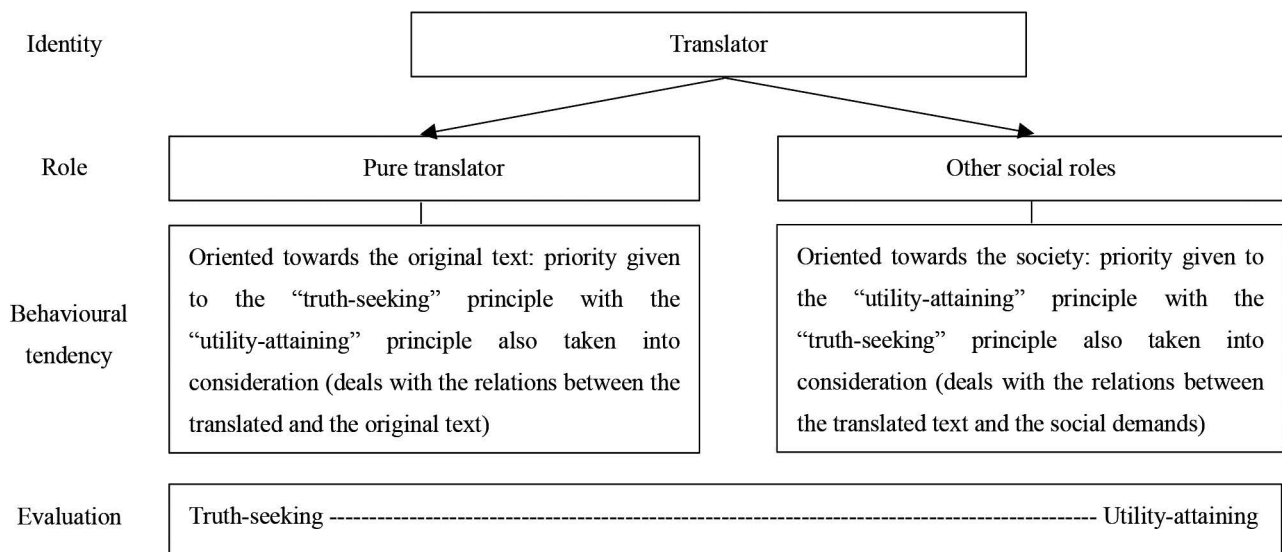


Figure 2. The translator's role shifting

It is worth mentioning that the volitional translator's behaviour in a particular translation event could not be properly judged without considering his working field, and his professional habitus that had been developed through many years of practice and reinforced by the norms and conventions imposed by the working field. These factors, closely related to the translator's social identity and roles, will also be addressed in our discussion.

The current study combines the construal theory and the theory of Translator Behaviour Criticism in a comparative analysis of the translation of honorifics in two English versions of *Hong Lou Meng*. The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. After a description of the data collection and an introspective observation of the entrenched construal patterns of the honorifics in the novel, it presents the major findings of the textual analysis by focusing on the construal choices made by the two translators. Then, the discussion deals with the translators' behaviour patterns and social motivations.

### 3. Data collection

Three steps were implemented in data collection in order to guarantee the representativeness of the data included in our study. In the first step, an exhaustive search was conducted in the first fifteen chapters of *Hong Lou Meng* for honorifics used in the conversations of the original novel as well as their corresponding

translations by Joly and Hawkes. In the second step, according to the definitions given by Cui (1996), Liu (2010a) and Chen (2019), the collected honorifics were classified into three groups: 1) address terms with a prefix of respect, e.g., “令/lìng” (‘your good...’), “尊/zūn” (‘your esteemed...’); 2) kinship terms used to show respect to relatives (e.g., 老祖宗/lǎo zǔzōng ‘old ancestress’) or non-relatives (e.g., 贾兄/Jiǎ xiōng ‘elder brother Jia’, 周姐姐/Zhōu jiějie ‘elder sister Zhou’); 3) social honorifics (e.g., 老爷/lǎoyé ‘master’, 太太/tàitai ‘mistress’).

The search yielded a total of 476 items of valid data (including repeated ones), among which 80 percent were identified as social honorifics, 12.6 percent were kinship terms used to show respect to relatives or non-relatives, and the remaining 7.4 percent were address terms with a prefix of respect. Given the different versions of the original text on which the two translators worked, we compared the Shuangqing Xianguan (Cao & Gao, 2004) and Chengyi (Cao & Gao, 1957) versions of *Hong Lou Meng*, used respectively by Joly and Hawkes as their principal source of the original text. This consideration aimed to locate the differences in translations that were attributable to the discrepancies in the original text, and thus exclude them from the analysis.

In the final step, the honorifics of each aforementioned group were introduced into the software program *Antconc* (Anthony, 2015) to generate word lists. It is observed that the social honorifics of highest frequency in the word lists were “太太/tàitai” (‘mistress’), “奶奶/nǎinai” (‘young mistress’), “老爷/lǎoyé” (‘master’) and “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’), terms employed to address the masters and mistresses of the extended feudal families in the novel; the most used kinship term of respect was “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’) and the most frequent kinship terms used to show respect to non-relatives were “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’) and “姐姐/jiějie” (‘elder sister’); the most recurrent prefixes of respect were “老/lǎo” (‘old’), “令/lìng” (‘your good...’) and “尊/zūn” (‘your esteemed...’). These representative cases of the three groups of honorific expressions, which reflect different aspects of the traditional Chinese ritual culture, constitute the focus of our analysis.

#### 4. Construal patterns of the honorifics used in *Hong Lou Meng*

An introspective observation based on the construal theory allowed us to identify the following construal patterns in the traditional Chinese honorifics used in the conversations of the novel:

1. An emphasized ‘spatial’ distinction between relationships on the speaker’s side and those on the side of the interlocutor. This can be achieved by highlighting the negative qualities of people and things closely related to the speaker (self-abasing terms for ‘my side’) and the positive qualities of those closely related to the interlocutor (honorifics for the ‘other side’). In terms of construal operations, the positive or negative qualities of the subject have been given a prominent position. For example, the prefixes of respect “令/lìng” (‘your good...’) and “尊/zūn” (‘your esteemed...’) were used by the speaker to modify, exclusively, his or her interlocutor’s relatives and possessions with the construct “令/尊 + kinship term or name of possession”.
2. A metaphorical projection from the domain of ‘age’ to that of ‘social status’. A general tendency associated the more aged with greater social respect. For example, the most used prefix of respect, “老/lǎo” (‘old’), could be added to some honorific terms to intensify the admiration expressed to the addressee, as in “老世翁/lǎoshìwēng” (‘old sir’) and “老内相/lǎonèixiàng” (‘old chamberlain’).
3. A metaphorical projection from the domain of ‘family relations’ to that of ‘social relations’. For example, kinship terms like “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’), “弟/dì” (‘younger brother’), “姐/jiě” (‘elder sister’) and “妹/mèi” (‘younger sister’) were used to address both siblings and non-family members. This established use in the Chinese language reflected the traditional political system of China that organized the society as if it were a big family with the emperor and the empress acting as father and mother of the nation. Liu (2010b: 128) termed this phenomenon “family-state integration” or “family-state social structure”.

Integration of the ‘family’ metaphor with the ‘age’ metaphor generated the use of kinship terms for elderly members of a family, including those for elder generations (e.g., 姥姥/lǎolao ‘grandmother’, 婶子/shēnzi ‘aunt’) and those for senior members of the same generation (e.g., 兄/xiōng ‘elder brother’, 嫂/sǎozi ‘elder brother’s wife’), to address non-relatives in order to express respect and courtesy. As such, the addressee is not necessarily older than the addressor, which is easily seen when the protégés of the powerful Jia family in the novel called the adolescent boy Jia Baoyu, a young master of the Jias, “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’).

4. Variation of perspective and reference in using different honorific terms to address the same person. For example, the Lady Dowager in the novel, wife of the eldest son of the late Duke Rongguo, the most senior and respected mistress of the Jias, was addressed typically in two alternative ways: the honorific kinship term “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’) or the social honorific “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’). The former conceptualized the lady’s identity from the perspective of the younger generations of the Jia family with the ties of kinship as background and reference, while the latter took the standpoint of the Jias’ servants with the whole micro-society of the Jia house, including both the servants and the served, as reference.
5. The prominence of social honorifics over kinship terms in family addressing. In an aristocratic house like that of the Jias, the most common address terms used by the younger generations on their elders are not the kinship terms used in ordinary families (e.g., 父亲/fùqin ‘father’, 母亲/mǔqin ‘mother’ or 妈妈/

māma ‘mum’). In comparison, they tended to use social honorifics (e.g., 老爷/lǎoyé ‘master’, 太太/tàitai ‘mistress’) to address their elders to highlight the social status of the addressee in the hierarchical ruling system. For example, Jia Baoyu, the young master of the Jia family in the novel, who called his father “老爷/lǎoyé” (‘master’), his mother “太太/tàitai” (‘mistress’) and his grandmother, most of the time “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’), sometimes “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’).

These construal patterns identified in the honorifics used in the conversations of the novel are the representation of the traditional Chinese ritual culture that established distinct social codes of conduct for different people: the superiors and the inferiors, the nobles and the plebs, the young and the elderly, the rich and the poor. It remains to be explored whether and to what extent these cognitive patterns would be conserved or altered in the two British translators’ works. The following section describes the construal choices Joly and Hawkes made in translating the three types of honorifics in the corpus to distinguish the cognitive shifts in their translations and the translators’ behavioural tendencies.

## 5. Joly’s and Hawkes’ construal choices in translating the honorifics

A comparison between the original text and Joly’s and Hawkes’ translations identified four major differences in the two translators’ construal choices in the English translation of the Chinese honorifics. Representative cases of the three types of honorifics mentioned in Section 3 are taken into consideration in Section 5.1 to 5.4.

### 5.1. Conservation vs. elimination of the prominent distinction between relationships on ‘my side’ and on ‘the other’s side’

As mentioned in Section 4, in the verbal communication of the traditional Chinese society, the speaker would use a prefix of respect like “令/lìng” (‘your good...’) and “尊/zūn” (‘your esteemed...’) in the address terms applied exclusively to people or things on the interlocutor’s side. This address form was meant to express respect to the interlocutor by emphasizing (i.e., giving prominent position to) the positive quality of people and things closely related to him, establishing a metaphorically spatial distinction between the group on ‘my side’ and ‘the other’s side’. Table 1 shows that in Joly’s translation, this cognitive pattern was retained by using an evaluative adjective with positive meaning (i.e., “worthy”, “honourable”, “honoured”, or “esteemed”) in the address terms so that the honorific function could be reconstructed.

Table 1. Translation of the address terms with a prefix of respect “令/lìng” or “尊/zūn” in the first 15 chapters of *Hong Lou Meng*

Original text	Joly’s version	Hawkes’ version
令郎/lìngláng 5	your worthy scion 2, your worthy son 1, your honourable son 1, your esteemed son 1	X1, him 1, your son 2, he 1
令甥/lìngshēng 1	their worthy nephew 1	their ‘nephew’ 1
令尊/lìngzūn 1	your worthy father 1	your father 1
令亲大人/lìngqīn dàrén 1	your honoured brother-in-law 1	your relation 1
尊夫人/zūnfūrén 2	your honourable spouse 2	the lady 1, X 1
尊翁/zūnwēng 1	your worthy father 1	your father 1
妹妹尊名/mèimei zūnmíng 1	your worthy name + cousin 1	your name 1
尊府/zūnfǔ 1	your honourable mansion 1	your house 1

Note: 1) The numerals used after each address term and its translation indicates the frequency of mention in the corpus; 2) the letter “X” means that the original address term is eliminated in the translation.

However, without so much care for the honorific function of the address terms, Hawkes did not confer prominence on the good quality of the person or thing in question to show respect. He used a mere second-person possessive pronoun (“your”) to reconstruct in the translation the deictic part of the meaning of the respectful Chinese prefixes, ignoring their honorific function completely and thus reducing the courteous social distance between the speaker and his or her interlocutor.

One exception was found in Hawkes’ translation of “尊夫人/zūnfūrén” (‘your esteemed wife’): the translator turned to the social honorific, “the lady”, instead of his usual strategy of combining the second-person possessive pronoun, “your”, with a common kinship term like “wife”, which, interpreted in terms of construal operations, was a shift of perspective in translation. To contextualize this specific case, we find that the address term “尊夫人/zūnfūrén” (‘your esteemed wife’) was pronounced in the presence of the interlocutor’s wife: Jia Rong conducted the doctor through the inner part of the house to his apartment, where his wife Qin Keqing was; and then the doctor asked Jia Rong whether the woman was his wife (Chapter 10 of *Hong Lou Meng*). In Hawkes’ version, the doctor’s remark “Is this the lady?” used the social honorific “the lady” to express respect, which was not directed at the male interlocutor as was in the original Chinese text, but rather aimed at the female present in the scene. What the translator possibly recalled were western gentlemen’s behavioural codes of being courteous to females.

## 5.2. Destruction of the AGE-SOCIAL STATUS metaphor: translation of “老/lǎo” (‘old’)

In Section 4, it was explained that age is respected in the Chinese culture, and the prefix (or just morpheme) “老/lǎo” (‘old’) used in the Chinese honorifics reflected a metaphorical projection from the domain of ‘age’ to that of ‘social status’. Given the absence of such a metaphorical projection in English, a literal translation may fail to reconstruct the AGE-SOCIAL STATUS metaphor in the target language. For example, literal translations like “a person of her age”, “her...at her age” and “an old person like her” for the back-appellation “(他)老人家/(tā) lǎorénjiā” (‘he, old person’) listed in the second row of Table 2 focus on the advanced age of the subject without showing any special respect.

In comparison, Joly’s treatment of “老/lǎo” (‘old’) was somewhat complicated. On the one hand, Joly was aware of the honorific function of “老/lǎo” (‘old’). Thus, in most cases, he adopted address terms of social status (“sir”, “lady” and “ladyship”) and evaluative adjectives (“worthy”) to restore respect. On the other hand, he also produced some awkward translations intending to keep “老/lǎo” (‘old’) literally in English. In his version, the old goody Liu, who visited the aristocratic Jia family from the countryside called Wang Xifeng, the most powerful mistress of the Jias, “my old friend /old friend” (Chapter 6, *Hong Lou Meng*); Xifeng’s maid Ping’er addressed Mrs. Zhou, an elderly female servant, “my old lady” (Chapter 7, *Hong Lou Meng*). These two translations, not conforming to the social identity of the addressees, gave an incorrect interpretation of the relationship between the addressor and the addressee.

Hawkes did not seem to have made any effort to conserve the honorific function of “老/lǎo” (‘old’) in the original Chinese address terms. In most cases, he used second-person pronouns in English (“you”, “your”, “yourself”) to translate the Chinese honorifics “你老(人家)/nǐlǎo(rén jiā)” (‘you, old person’). In other cases, he elevated the specificity of the address terms translating them into “mother” or “Mrs. Zhou” according to the relationship between the addressor and the addressee (as shown in Table 2).

Table 2. Translation of the address terms with “老/lǎo” in the first 15 chapters of *Hong Lou Meng*

Original text	Joly’s version	Hawkes’ version
你老/nǐlǎo 7 你老人家/nǐlǎorénjiā 8	you 3; sir 3, worthy sir 1; you old lady 1, old lady 1, my old lady 1; my old friend 2, old friend 1; mother 1, ma 1	you 9, your 1, yourself 1; mother 3; Mrs. Zhou 1
他老人家/tālǎorénjiā 1 老人家/lǎorénjiā 2	the old lady 1, an old person like her 1, her ladyship 1	a person of her age 1, her... at her age 1, the (greedy) old thing 1

Note: This table includes address terms with the morpheme “老/lǎo” (‘old’) as the only element to express honorific meaning. Respectful kinship terms (e.g., 老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng ‘old ancestress’) and social honorifics (e.g., 老爷/lǎoyé ‘master’, 老太太/lǎotàitai ‘old mistress’, 老先生/lǎoxiānsheng ‘old sir’) with the prefix of respect “老/lǎo” (‘old’) are excluded.

In the following case of the translation for “老人家/lǎorénjiā” (‘old person’), Hawkes’ creativity formed a contrast with Joly’s solemnity:

凤姐未等王夫人开口，先说道：“老太太昨日还说要来着呢，因为晚上忽看见宝兄弟他们吃桃儿，老人家又嘴馋，吃了有大半个，五更天的时候就一连起来了两次……” (Cao & Gao, 1957: 128)

Lady Feng did not wait until madame Wang could open her mouth, but took the initiative to reply. “Our venerable lady,” she urged, “had, even so late as yesterday, said that she meant to come; but, in the evening, upon seeing brother Bao eating peaches, the mouth of the old lady once again began to water, and after partaking of a little more than the half of one, she had, about the fifth watch, to get out of bed two consecutive times, ...” (Joly, 2010: 171)

“Up to yesterday,” Xi-feng put in hurriedly, not waiting for Lady Wang to reply, “Grandmother had been intending to come. Then yesterday evening she saw Bao-yu eating some peaches and the greedy old thing couldn’t resist trying one herself. She only ate about two thirds of a peach, but she had to get up twice running in the early hours, ... (Hawkes, 1973: 230)

In this case, Joly used the social honorific “the old lady” to translate “老人家/lǎorénjiā” (‘old person’), giving prominence to the social status of the subject, Lady Dowager of the Jia family. Hawkes, in contrast, opted for a humorous address term “the greedy old thing”, which confers prominence on Lady Dowager’s action of momentary gluttony by using the adjective “greedy” that describes a permanent feature of personality. As granddaughter-in-law of Lady Dowager, the speaker Xifeng ought not to have been allowed to address her grandmother-in-law as a “greedy old thing”, which would be considered sacrilegious behaviour in the traditional ritual culture of China. However, this translation doesn’t seem awkward in Hawkes’ version of the novel, but rather brings out the spicy and witty style of Xifeng’s language because the patriarchal hierarchy has been considerably weakened in the general cultural atmosphere created in Hawkes’ translation. In translating Chinese honorifics with the morpheme “老/lǎo” (‘old’), Hawkes opted again to abandon the source language’s cultural canons and get closer to the target culture.

## 5.3. Conservation vs. elimination of the FAMILY-STATE metaphor: translation of “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’) and “姐/jiě” (‘elder sister’)

We have mentioned in Section 4 that some Chinese kinship terms could be used to address non-family members, which forms a FAMILY-STATE metaphor with projections from the domain of ‘family relations’ to that

of ‘social relations’. In this extended use of kinship terms, people would choose terms of an elder generation (e.g., 大娘/dàniáng ‘aunt’) or more senior members of the same generation (e.g., 兄/xiōng ‘elder brother’, 姐/jiě ‘elder sister’) to express respect to their interlocutor. Although such metaphorical projections are rare in English, they could be understood by native English speakers. In Reverend Bramwell Seaton Bonsall’s unpublished translation of the novel (*Red Chamber Dream*), for example, the translator opted for a literal translation of honorific kinship terms, e.g., “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’) and “姐/jiě” (‘elder sister’). He explained his choice in his “note on some special terms” at the beginning of the manuscript: “the terms ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ are used very loosely, sometimes denoting cousins and sometimes persons between whom there is no blood relationship” (Bonsall, 2004).

The acceptability of the FAMILY-STATE metaphorical projections in English justifies Joly’s option for conserving the use of kinship terms with non-family members literally. As shown in Table 3, Joly tended to translate the honorific kinship terms “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’) and “姐/jiě” (‘elder sister’) as “brother” and “sister”. By contrast, Hawkes usually used pronouns, the addressees’ names or social address terms in the translation, with just one exception in the case of “石兄/shíxiōng” (‘Brother stone’) which implies a religious context. Hawkes opted for a literal translation in this case (“Brother stone” in the first row of Table 3) because the use of “brother” to address another member of a religious order was deemed a highly accepted canon in the target culture.

It helps the speaker cut the social distance in communication but performs no honorific function by addressing the interlocutor as “brother” or “sister” in English. Therefore, to reconstruct the honorific function, Joly sometimes added an evaluative adjective (“worthy” or “honourable”) to the address terms to give prominence to the interlocutor and thus express the speaker’s respect for the addressee.

In his translation of honorific kinship terms applied to non-family members, Hawkes did not conserve the FAMILY-STATE metaphor, nor did he try to restore the honorific function of the original address terms. Table 3 shows that only one social honorific was used in his translation of “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’) and “姐/jiě” (‘elder sister’): “Madam Fairy” for “神仙姐姐/shénxiānjiějie” (‘divine sister’). In the other cases in Table 3, Hawkes put no effort into reconstructing the honorific function of the Chinese address terms. In some cases, he used second-person pronouns, and in others, the speaker greeted his interlocutor by name (e.g., 好姐姐/hǎojiějie ‘good elder sister’ → Aroma, 周姐姐/Zhōujiějie ‘sister Zhou’ → Zhou). In addition, he also substituted some Chinese honorifics with English pet names (e.g., 好哥哥/hǎogēge ‘good elder brother’ → old chap). Hawkes’ creativity was the most evident in his translation of the address terms used by a local gentleman named Zhen Shiyin for his poor friend Jia Yucun (兄/xiōng ‘elder brother’ → young fellow, dear boy). The age gap between the two characters was given prominence in the translation, which led to a subtle change of the image of Shiyin from a considerate friend to a generous patron (Chapter 1, *Hong Lou Meng*).

Table 3. Translation of the honorific kinship terms “兄/xiōng” (‘elder brother’) and “姐/jiě” (‘elder sister’) applied to non-relatives in the first 15 chapters of *Hong Lou Meng*

Original text	Joly’s version	Hawkes’ version	Speaker → Interlocutor/Addressee Speaker → Interlocutor → Addressee
石兄/shíxiōng	Brother Stone	Brother stone	Reverend Void → the magic rock
兄/xiōng 贾兄/jiǎxiōng 尊兄/zūnxiōng 雨村兄/Yǔcūnxiōng	you, your; your worthy self; you my worthy brother, honourable brother, dear brother Chia, Brother Yü-ts’un, you + brother mine, my brother; my dear Yü-ts’un	you, your; Yu-cun; dear boy, you + young fellow	1) Lin Ruhai (Salt Commissioner) → Jia Yucun (tutor of Ruhai’s daughter); 2) Zhang Rugui (former colleague of Yucun) → Jia Yucun (a former colleague of Rugui); 3) Zhen Shiyin (local gentleman, generous friend of Yucun) → Jia Yucun (poor friend of Shiyin)
老兄/lǎoxiōng	you	my dear fellow	Jia Yucun (old friend of Zixing) → Leng Zixing (curio-dealer, old friend of Yucun)
世兄/shìxiōng	worthy brother, our worthy brother	your, our young friend (+ you boy)	1) protégés of Baoyu’s father → Jia Baoyu; 2) protégés of Baoyu’s father → Jia Zheng (Baoyu’s father) → Jia Baoyu
哥哥/gēge	brother	old chap	Jia Baoyu (young master) → Li Gui (servant, son of Baoyu’s wet nurse)
姐姐/jiějie 姐姐们/jiějiemen	sister, sisters, you sisters	her; Aroma; my dears	1) Baoyu (young master) → Xiren (chief maid of Baoyu); 2) Daiyu (young lady) → Xiren and Yingge (maids); 3) Qin Keqin (young mistress) → maids of Baoyu
袭人姐姐/Xírénjiějie 周姐姐/Zhōujiějie	sister Hsi Jen, Sister Chou; dear Mrs. Chou, my dear Mrs. Chou	Aroma, Zhou, Zhou dear; her	1) Baoyu (young master) → Qingwen (maid) → Xiren (maid) 2) Wang Xifeng (young mistress), Baochai (young lady) and Baoyu (young master) → Mrs. Zhou (senior servant)
神仙姐姐/shénxiānjiějie	my divine sister	Madam Fairy	Baoyu (mortal) → Goddess of Disenchantment (immortal)



**5.4. A shift of perspective: translation of “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’) and “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’)**

As mentioned in Section 4, the honorific address terms “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’) and “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’) represent two different perspectives of construal in the conceptualization of Lady Dowager’s identity. Joly’s and Hawkes’ translations of these terms demonstrate different tendencies in the choice of perspective and referential domain. These two are representative cases, because “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’) is the most frequently used kinship term of respect in the novel and “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’), a social honorific of high frequency. The translation strategies adopted for the last one by Joly and Hawkes were similar to those for other social honorifics such as “老爷/lǎoyé” (‘master’) and “太太/tàitai” (‘mistress’), which were also frequently used in the novel.

As shown in Table 4, when translating “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’), Joly conserved, in some cases, the original perspective of construal of the Chinese honorific. That was the perspective of the ‘younger generations of the family’, conferring prominence on the addressee’s seniority in the family by using words like “ancestor” or “senior”. In other cases, Joly changed into a non-relative perspective substituting the kinship term of respect in Chinese with the social honorifics “ladyship” and “dowager lady”. Hawkes’ translation (“grannie” and “grandma”) adhered to the perspective of ‘younger generations of the family’ without giving so much prominence as it did in Joly’s diction (“ancestor”) to the seniority of the addressee in the family or the honorific function of the address term. The unequal status of family members from different generations, established as a norm in the traditional ritual culture of China, was deconstructed in Hawkes’ translation. The referential system for Hawkes’ version of “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’) and “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’) is the social norms and family relations in the contemporary English culture.

Table 4. Translation of “老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng” (‘old ancestress’) in the first 15 chapters of *Hong Lou Meng*

Original text	Joly’s version	Hawkes’ version
老祖宗/lǎozǔzōng 11 好祖宗/hǎozǔzōng 1	your venerable ladyship 3, your old ladyship 1, your ladyship 1, our dowager lady 1; our worthy ancestor 1, our venerable ancestor 1, my venerable ancestor 1, my dear ancestor 1; her worthy senior 1, our worthy senior 1; you 1	you 4; Grannie dear 2, Grannie 1, Dearest Grannie 1, Grandma 1; she 2, her 1

Table 5. Translation of “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’) in the first 15 chapters of *Hong Lou Meng*

Original text	Joly’s version	Hawkes’ version	Speaker → Interlocutor/Addressee Speaker → Interlocutor → Addressee
老太太/lǎotàitai	your venerable ladyship, our old lady, her ladyship, her venerable ladyship, our dowager lady	Grandma	<b>Kinship (close):</b> Xifeng (Lady Dowager’s favourite granddaughter-in-law) → Lady Dowager; Xifeng → Baoyu (Lady Dowager’s favourite grandson) → Lady Dowager; Keqin (one of Lady Dowager’s favourites, wife of her great grand-nephew-in-law) → Xifeng → Lady Dowager; Xifeng → Keqin and Youshi (Keqin’s mother-in-law) → Lady Dowager
	our venerable lady, our dowager lady, our old lady	Grandmother, your grandmother	<b>Kinship (close):</b> Xifeng → Jia Zhen and Youshi (Lady Dowager’s great-nephew and his wife) → Lady Dowager; Xifeng → Lady Wang (Xifeng’s mother-in-law, Lady Dowager’s daughter-in-law) → Lady Dowager
	her venerable ladyship our old lady, our venerable lady, our dowager lady	Lady Jia	<b>Non-kinship:</b> maids → Daiyu (Lady Dowager’s granddaughter) → Lady Dowager; maids → Lady Wang and Daiyu → Lady Dowager; Mingyan (Baoyu’s servant) → Baoyu → Lady Dowager; <b>Kinship (not close):</b> Jia Zhen and his wife → Lady Xing, Lady Wang (Jia Zhen’s aunts-in-law), Xifeng (Jia Zhen’s cousin-in-law), Baoyu (Jia Zhen’s cousin), etc. → Lady Dowager; Jia Qiang → Jia Rui (a distant uncle of Jia Qiang) → Lady Dowager; Youshi → Lady Xing, Lady Wang (aunts-in-law of Youshi’s husband), Xifeng (cousin-in-law of Youshi’s husband), Baoyu (Youshi’s cousin-in-law), etc. → Lady Dowager
	her venerable lady, our venerable lady	Her Old Ladyship	<b>Non-kinship:</b> maid → Mrs. Zhou (senior servant) → Lady Dowager; Mrs. Zhou’s daughter → Mrs. Zhou → Lady Dowager

Table 5 shows that in Hawkes’ translation of “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’), the construal choice in the translator’s conceptualization of Lady Dowager’s identity was influenced by the perceived relationship between the speaker, the interlocutor and the addressee. In cases where all the three parties were family members and the speaker and the addressee were close to each other (connected by family ties, e.g., Xifeng and Lady Dowager, her grandmother-in-law, or emotionally close, e.g., Keqin and Lady Dowager, her great grandaunt-in-law), Hawkes adopted the common kinship terms “grandma” and “grandmother” that reflected the perspective of the ‘younger generations of the family’. In cases where one of the three parties was not a family member, the translator would use the social honorific “Lady Jia” or a term of higher respect “Her Old Ladyship”. In cases where the speaker and the addressee were relatives but not quite close to each other

(e.g., Jia Zhen and Lady Dowager, his grandaunt-in-law), the translator applied the social honorific “Lady Jia”. In a word, Hawkes made a clear distinction between the addressing norms within and out of the family: he dissolved the Chinese ritual hierarchy between family members by using common kinship terms in English and established a social distance between distant relatives or non-relatives by using social honorifics.

Dissimilar to Hawkes, Joly retained the original non-relative perspective of construal in all cases of translation for “老太太/lǎotàitai” (‘old mistress’), which indicated that he was not sensitive to the relations between the speaker, the interlocutor and the addressee. Instead, Joly’s attention was focused on the reconstruction in English of the honorific function of the Chinese address terms. His frequent use of the evaluative adjectives “worthy” and “venerable” to confer prominence on the addressee helped intensify the respect conveyed by the address terms and contributed to a formal and redundant style in the translation.

## 6. The translator’s behavioural tendency

### 6.1. “Truth seeking” and “utility attaining” in the translation of honorifics

We’ve found that Joly and Hawkes made different construal choices in translating the traditional Chinese honorifics in the novel *Hong Lou Meng*. On the translator’s behavioural continuum, Joly’s choices tended to locate him very close to the “truth-seeking” end, while Hawkes’ choices were inclined towards the “utility-attaining” end.

Joly’s “truth-seeking” behaviour was reflected in his efforts to reconstruct in the translation the honorific function and the cognitive pattern of the traditional Chinese ritual culture contained in the original honorifics: he conserved the FAMILY–STATE metaphor in translating the respectful kinship terms applied to non-family members; he also maintained the clear distinction between relationships on the speaker’s side and those on the side of the interlocutor by giving prominence exclusively to the good quality of people and things related to the interlocutor; to solve the translation problem caused by the unacceptability of the AGE–SOCIAL STATUS metaphor in English, he chose to reconstruct the honorific function of address terms with “老/lǎo” (‘old’) by using social honorifics (shift of perspective in construal) or adding a positive evaluative adjective to the addressee (prominence given in construal). This last choice of Joly’s is a “utility-attaining” behaviour (abandonment of unacceptable cognitive patterns from the source language) with a “truth-seeking” purpose (reconstruction of the honorific function of the original address terms). Joly’s frequent use of a limited number of evaluative adjectives (e.g., “venerable”, “worthy” and “honourable”) and his inclination towards formal and archaic words in translating the Chinese honorifics resulted in a solemn and redundant style of translation. On the surface, he seemed to be driven by a very strong “truth-seeking” intention that he would even choose to reconstruct the honorific function of the original address terms at the cost of readability. However, a further discussion on Joly’s social motivations should be carried out before the final conclusion is drawn (see Section 6.2).

Hawkes adopted the social norms and family relations of the target culture as background for his translation of the Chinese honorifics in the novel. The traditional Chinese ritual culture was deconstructed in his translation of the honorifics, with the AGE–SOCIAL STATUS and FAMILY–STATE metaphors eliminated, the hierarchical distance shortened between family members of different generations and no special distinction established between relationships on the speaker’s side and those on the side of the interlocutor. In a word, the translator adjusted the social distance between people in their verbal communication in the novel according to the addressing system of the target language, which shows a clear inclination towards the “utility-attaining” end on the translator behaviour continuum.

Some of Hawkes’ creative translations may have worked to exert an influence on characterization (see Gregori-Signes, 2020 for a discussion about the influence of the address terms on the characterization). For instance, the humorous address term “the greedy old thing” that Xifeng used with Lady Dowager highlighted the speaker’s spicy character (see Section 5.2); the use of the address terms “dear boy” and “young fellow” (兄/xiōng ‘elder brother’ in the original Chinese text) by Shiyin on Yucun (two friends) lent prominence to the age difference between the two, changing Shiyin’s image from a considerate friend in the original text to a generous patron in the translation (see Section 5.3). The creation of Hawkes in these cases is not arbitrary because the case of “greedy old thing” helped with the characterization of the spicy Xifeng and the translation of “dear boy” and “young fellow” derived from the information of age difference hidden in the context. The translator’s “utility-attaining” behaviour is sustained on a “truth-seeking” basis and could be considered rational and reasonable.

Why did the two British translators demonstrate different behavioural tendencies in translating the traditional Chinese honorifics in *Hong Lou Meng*? Why would Joly sacrifice readability to reconstruct the honorific function of the address terms while Hawkes chose to rewrite the addressing system in the translation substituting the traditional Chinese ritual culture with the social norms and family relations of modern English society as cultural background? The following section discusses the historical background of the two translation events and the influence of Joly’s and Hawkes’ social identities and roles on their translating behaviour, with the norms of their working fields and their professional habitus taken into consideration.

### 6.2. Social motivations of Joly’s and Hawkes’ translating behaviour

As Zhou pointed out in *A Theoretical Framework for Translator Behaviour Criticism* (Zhou, 2014a: 216–217), the translator’s behaviour varies according to the translator’s social identity and social roles. On the translator behaviour continuum, he may incline towards the “truth-seeking” end, emphasizing the fidelity of the

translation to the original text, or go closer to the “utility-seeking” end, pursuing social uses of the translated text. When the pursuit of fidelity serves as one of the translator’s social purposes, the two ends may meet. To examine the influence of Joly’s and Hawkes’ social identities and roles on their translating behaviour, it is necessary to review the historical background of their translations of *Hong Lou Meng*.

In 1892 and 1893, Kelly & Walsh from Hong Kong and Typographia Commercial from Macau published respectively the first and second volumes (56 chapters in total) of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* translated by Henry Bencraft Joly (1857-1898), then vice-consul of Macau. This version of *Hong Lou Meng* was re-edited and published again in 2010 by Periplus Editions from Hong Kong.

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1891, Joly wrote down these words in the preface of the novel: “I shall feel satisfied with the result, if I succeed, even in the least degree, in affording a helping hand to present and future students of the Chinese language” (Joly, 2010: xxv). In Joly’s times, the diplomatic interns sent by the British Foreign Office to British Embassy in China should complete two years’ study of Chinese in the embassy before starting their diplomatic career. As the Mandarin Chinese in which *Hong Lou Meng* was written was very similar to the working language used by the Chinese officials of the Qing dynasty, the novel became an essential resource for the British diplomatic interns to learn the language. The popular novel *Hong Lou Meng* from the 18<sup>th</sup> century of China was not a literary classic for Joly, and he translated it to elaborate a language teaching material. In this translation event, Joly played double roles: translator and textbook compiler. His “truth-seeking” efforts to conserve the original cognitive pattern and cultural elements in translating the Chinese honorifics, essential knowledge for the diplomatic communication, are aligned with his “utility-attaining” pursuit (helping British diplomats learn Chinese and Chinese customs), which served as the primordial motivation for his translation activity. It explains why Joly made every effort to reconstruct in the translation the function of the Chinese honorifics without caring so much about the redundant style that it might generate.

Joly played the two temporary roles of translator and textbook compiler under his social identity as a British diplomat in the translation event of *Hong Lou Meng*. He was not a common novel translator submitting to the norms of the literary field but rather a translator of teaching materials serving the field of diplomatic education. Born into a British diplomat’s family, Joly dedicated his whole professional life to the diplomacy and the major part of his career trajectory was located in China. According to Ji (2019: 152-155), Joly learned Chinese during his internship in the British Embassy in China (started in 1880), since the year 1882 he began to work for British Consulates in different Chinese cities and got promoted step by step. When his *The Dream of the Red Chamber* was published (1892-1893), Joly held the post of vice-consul in the British Consulate in Macau (1890-1894). As a senior diplomat and Chinese learner, he felt obliged to transfer his valued experience to new British diplomatic interns. The adoption of a faithful and redundant translation style represents a special habitus of language learner and textbook compiler that conforms to the norms guiding the translation of Chinese teaching materials in Joly’s epoch (See Jiang, 2019: 48-57 for a discussion on the “strange norm of fidelity” upheld by four British translators of *Hong Lou Meng* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

Eighty years after the publication of Joly’s translation, in the 70s and 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the renowned publishing house Penguin Books presented to the modern readers *The Story of the Stone* translated by two eminent British sinologists, David Hawkes (the first 80 chapters) and John Minford (the last 40 chapters). In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Hong Lou Meng* was no longer the popular novel circulating in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries of China: it had evolved into a literary classic of China and the world. Considering the translation of the novel as a lifetime achievement, Hawkes decided to resign from the chair of Chinese at Oxford University to focus exclusively on his translation (Jiang, 2019: 104). The translator and Penguin Books had planned to give the general readers a complete version of the Chinese classic of very high quality.

In the introduction to *The Story of the Stone* (Volume I), Hawkes wrote down these words expressing his “truth-seeking” pursuit (Hawkes, 1973: 46): “My one abiding principle has been to translate everything – even puns”, “it was written (and rewritten) by a great artist with his lifeblood. I have therefore assumed that whatever I find in it is there for a purpose and must be dealt with somehow or other.” His translation, nonetheless, was not a literal copy of the original text but instead a creative artwork. In his handling of the Chinese honorifics in the novel, for example, Hawkes eliminated all awkward expressions in English and presented some creative translations that exert a certain influence on the characterization. It could be partly explained by his intense attention paid to the readers of the target language and the readability of the translated text. These concerns were expressed various times in his introductions to the novel:

“If I can convey to the reader even a fraction of the pleasure this Chinese novel has given me, I shall not have lived in vain.” (Hawkes, 1973: 46)

“I make no apology for having occasionally amplified the text a little in order to make such passages intelligible. The alternative would have been to explain them in footnotes; and though footnotes are all very well in their place, reading a heavily annotated novel would seem to me rather like trying to play tennis in chains.” (Hawkes, 1977: 17-18)

Under his social identity as a sinologist, Hawkes played various roles in the translation event of *Hong Lou Meng*: translator, cultural mediator and guide for the target readers to an aesthetic journey throughout the novel. He aspired to translate “everything” that helps reconstruct the literariness of the Chinese classic in English. Understandably, he should have eliminated the honorific expressions that look somewhat awkward in modern English and constitute an obstacle to his literary pursuit.

The construal choices made by Hawkes in translating the honorifics in the novel also led to the transformation of the Chinese ritual culture contained in the address terms into western family ethics and social norms. It should be noted that Hawkes interpreted the Chinese novel of the 18<sup>th</sup> century from the

perspective of a British sinologist in modern times. It was a perspective of ‘the other’, inevitably resulting from the identity of the translator and the historical gap between him and the author.

From this perspective of ‘the other’, Hawkes’ conscious or unconscious rewriting of the Chinese ritual culture in the novel is not limited to his handling of the honorifics but could also be perceived in his interpretation of the characters. Some of his descriptions of Miss Lin Daiyu’s mental and physical actions, for example, do not conform to that of a young lady from an eminent family brought up in the traditional Chinese ritual culture. In one case, on the first day of Daiyu’s arrival at the Jias’ house, she went to see her uncle Jia She, who did not receive her in person but sent a servant to convey to her his good wishes and instructions. In the original novel, Daiyu reacted very politely without any expression of discontent: she stood up and agreed to abide by all the instructions. But Hawkes’ translation gives out clear signs of the young lady’s discontent: “Dai-yu stood up throughout this recital and murmured polite assent whenever assent seemed indicated...” (Hawkes, 1973: 94). In another case, Lin Daiyu got annoyed with her cousin Jia Baoyu (young master of the Jia family) for one of his jokes when they were resting in bed talking with each other, so she scrambled over and pinned Baoyu down with her hand to complain. In Hawkes’ translation, instead of pressing down her cousin just with her hand, Daiyu “got up on her knees and, crawling over, planted herself on top of Bao-yu” (Hawkes, 1973: 398). These physical actions would be considered indecent for a young lady educated by traditional Chinese ritual codes. With these descriptions, Daiyu’s rebellion is highlighted in the translated text, read from the perspective of Anglophone culture.

It could be inferred that in his translation of *Hong Lou Meng*, Hawkes did not pursue a superficial fidelity to the form of the source language but followed instead “the principle of fidelity to the artistry of the original works” (Dang, 2013: 100, original in Chinese, translation mine), which allows for rewriting in the translation to enhance readability, aesthetic effects and empathy with the target readers. This translating behaviour conforms to Penguin’s corporate mission to bring canonical literature to the mass market and facilitates the reception of *Hong Lou Meng* in the Anglophone literary system. As an eminent sinologist specialized in Chinese classic literature, Hawkes had developed an extraordinary literary sensibility. Rather than accepting passively the norms set by Penguin Books, his pursuit of artistry and literariness in translation formed essential part of his internalized professional habitus, which was revealed in his comments on other translators’ works:

[On William Hung’s translation of Tu Fu’s poems] “Perhaps the flatness of these translations is due to an excessive desire to be helpful, with consequent loss of vividness.” [...] “But how to translate Chinese poems without either flatness or footnotes and yet retain some of the original beauties is perhaps a question that few can answer.” (Hawkes, 1952: 164)

[On Burton Watson’s translation of Han-shan’s poems] “Of the English translations I have seen I confess to an irrational weakness for Snyder’s. He is rather inaccurate, and he occasionally falls into that peculiarly wanton kind of silliness which leads translators to turn gold and jade into diamonds and mink. But his translations read like poetry.” (Hawkes, 1962: 596)

In a word, observed along the translator behaviour continuum, Hawkes’ translation of the honorifics was inclined towards the “utility-attaining” end (highlighted pursuit of readability and expressivity in the translation), while Joly’s extreme “truth-seeking” efforts (sacrifice of readability to maintain the fidelity) were aligned with his “utility-attaining” pursuit (helping the British diplomatic interns learn Chinese). As the target readers of Joly’s version and the “utility” that he pursued are very different from the case of Hawkes, it’s not fair to judge Joly’s translation with the criteria aimed at general readers. It must be accepted that Joly’s version of *Hong Lou Meng* fell far behind that of Hawkes’ in artistry and literariness. Nevertheless, as Edwin H. Lowe, lecturer in Chinese studies at Macquarie University, commented in his introduction to the new edition of Joly’s *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, the translator’s “attention to detail and faithfulness in his translation of *Hong Lou Meng* makes this revised edition [...] an excellent book for the student of modern Chinese” (Joly, 2010: xxiv).

## 7. Conclusions

This study incorporated an integral research framework that combines the construal theory of cognitive linguistics with the Translator Behaviour Criticism to conduct a textual analysis of the construal choices made by the translator and explore the translator’s behaviour pattern and social motivations. It compared the English translations of honorifics in *Hong Lou Meng* by the British diplomat Henry Bencraft Joly and the British sinologist David Hawkes. The study findings reveal an evident influence of the translators’ social identities and roles on their translating behaviour, which also conforms to their professional habitus.

Joly endeavoured to preserve the traditional Chinese ritual culture contained in the honorifics attaching great importance to restoring their honorific function. It seemed that he had put so much emphasis on fidelity in the translation that he would even sacrifice readability to maintain the respectful function of the original address terms. Joly’s purpose was to translate and annotate a teaching material for British diplomatic interns, which led to the alignment of his “truth-seeking” behaviour (maintaining fidelity to the original text) with his “utility-attaining” pursuit (compiling language teaching materials). Under his social identity as a British diplomat, he played two temporary roles of translator and textbook compiler in the translation event of *Hong Lou Meng*. All his “truth-seeking” efforts served the purpose of helping British diplomats learn Chinese, which was the primordial motivation for his translation activity.

Hawkes’ behaviour in translating the Chinese honorifics locates him closer to the “utility-attaining” end on the translator behaviour continuum: he destructed the traditional Chinese ritual culture in the translation and

established an addressing system adapted to the target language readers' cognitive habits taking the social norms and family relations of the modern English world as reference. Some of his creative translations had even provoked subtle changes in the characterization. Under his social identity as a sinologist, Hawkes played various roles in the translation event of *Hong Lou Meng*: translator, cultural mediator and guide for the target readers to ride on an aesthetic journey throughout the novel. He eliminated awkward honorific expressions and used address terms conforming to the characters' personalities and their social relations perceived in the target culture, because he aspired to reconstruct in modern English all the artistry and literariness of a Chinese classic that is distant in time and culture. His "utility-attaining" behaviour as a translator was sustained by a "truth-seeking" basis.

With this research framework, we have been able to integrate the text analysis of construal choices made by the translator with a study on the socio-historical motivations of a translation activity, which has brought new insights into the research of translators' behaviour.

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