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# Translating Tenor: With Reference to the English Versions of *Hong Lou Meng*

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## RÉSUMÉ

L'article cherche à montrer comment le ténor chinois, tel qu'il est présenté par des titres et des formules de politesse dans le roman classique *Hong Lou Meng*, est traduit dans cinq versions anglaises. Je comparerai les traductions des dialogues du roman avec une référence spéciale aux traits spécifiques des ténors. En adoptant l'équivalence interpersonnelle de House comme critère pour mesurer la distance et le pouvoir social entre le dyade tel qu'il est décrit dans les conversations en langue-source et leurs versions respectives dans la langue-cible. J'examinerai le rapport entre l'équivalence interpersonnelle acquise dans le texte-cible et les stratégies adoptées pour traduire les dialogues. L'objectif est de produire une traduction qui se lit facilement, et qui retient aussi les traits linguistiques et culturels d'un travail littéraire étranger. L'étrangéisation devrait être adoptée comme principe au lieu d'une stratégie exclusive de domestication des textes.

## ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to see how the Chinese tenor as exhibited by the use of titles and honorifics in the classic novel *Hong Lou Meng* is translated in its five English versions. I shall compare the translations of several dialogues from the novel with special reference to the tenor-markers. By adopting House's interpersonal equivalence as a criterion to measure the social distance and power between the dyads as shown by the tenor in both the SL conversations and their respective TL versions, I shall investigate the relationship between the interpersonal equivalence that is acquired in the TT and the strategies that are adopted to translate the dialogues. The argument put forward here is that in order to produce a translation that not only reads fluently but also retains the linguistic and cultural features of a foreign literary work, foreignising should be adopted as a mainstream rather than exclusive strategy, with assistance drawn from domesticating solutions.

## MOTS-CLÉS

tenor, titles, honorifics, interpersonal equivalence, cultural features, translation strategies, domesticating, foreignising

## 1. Introduction

Generally considered to be the greatest Chinese novel, Cao Xue-qin's<sup>1</sup> *Hong Lou Meng* or *Dream of the Red Chamber*, "is the model for those who wish to acquire the art of dialogue-writing" (Wong 2002: 247). Although it creates a dazzling array of characters (altogether 421: 232 male, 189 female), it portrays them with distinct personalities that are true to life. The author's success in this regard is largely due to his mastery of the varied manner of speaking or tenor appropriate to different personage. In this paper, I shall compare and contrast the five English translations<sup>2</sup> of *Hong Lou Meng* with special reference to their renditions of some address terms that are used

in the Chinese original to convey the manner of speaking of the characters concerned. The objective of the comparison/contrast is to see how far the translators succeed in achieving “interpersonal equivalence” (House 1998) in their respective renditions of the tenor-marking terms. This is significant in that a translator’s endeavour to carry over the source text’s (ST) interpersonal function will enable the target text (TT) reader to have some idea of the linguistic and cultural features of the ST talk exchange with reference to tenor. Based upon the comparison/contrast, the paper proposes the use of foreignising as the over-riding strategy for literary works to be translated but assisted with domesticating solutions where necessary.

Tenor, in the functional-semantic tradition of linguistics, is one of the three variables of register or context of situation (the other two being field and mode) that “link variations of language [use] to variations of social context” (Halliday 1978: 64). It has to do with who are taking part in the transaction as well as “the nature of the participants, their status and roles” (Hasan and Halliday 1985: 12). The general heading *address terms* is used here as an umbrella term to cover both “vocatives, or terms of direct address to call persons by” and “designatives, or mentioning terms, which one uses as part of connected discourse in speaking of a person” (Chao 1956: 217). It includes kinship terms, social titles and honorific expressions. This is so because address terms function more as markers of Chinese politeness than pure vocatives of attention. In fact, “[i]n the Chinese context, politeness exercises its normative function in constraining individual speech acts as well as the sequence of talk exchanges” (Gu 1990: 242), so much so that the dyads have to exploit appropriate address terms throughout the talk exchange. As far as tenor is concerned, the use of a term of address, i.e., a kinship one, a title, or an honorific, depends on the culturally-sensitive variables of social distance and relative power of the dyads involved in the transaction. Whereas social distance refers to the degree of familiarity and solidarity both the speaker and hearer share, power means the degree to which the speaker can impose on the hearer (Fraser 1990: 231).

The theoretical basis of the paper with regard to translating strategies is Venuti’s (1995) dichotomy of domesticating and foreignising. According to him, a domesticating translation is “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home” (Venuti 1995: 20). Such a translation results from a domesticating strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimise the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers. By contrast, a foreignising translation means “an ethnodeliant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (ibid). It comes as a result of the translator’s adoption of a foreignising strategy in which a target text “deliberately breaks target language conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original” (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997: 59).

Venuti argues that the Anglo-American translation theory has been dominated since the seventeenth century by the conviction that the translator should so efface himself, so conceal the labour of transference from source to target language, that the translated text reads as if it had been originally written in the target language. (Willet 2003: 1)

He thus “bemoans the phenomenon of domestication” (Munday 2001: 147), and issues a “call to action” (Venuti 1995: 307) for “one almighty ‘intervention’ that will

change translators' strategies and suddenly overturn the whole lot" (Pym 1996: 167). I would argue that Venuti's call is extreme and that no good translation can and should be black-and-white but rather a mix of the two strategies, with one as dominant and the other as subordinate.

How can one make sure that the interpersonal relationship or tenor as exhibited in the original is "carried over" in the translation? This is where House's (1998) translation criterion interpersonal equivalence comes into play. According to her,

Interpersonal equivalence (which together with ideational equivalence<sup>3</sup> makes up functional equivalence) in translation should be conceived as more comprehensive than merely relating to authorial stance: rather the operation of a number of pragmatic dimensions is to be seen as contributing to interpersonal functional equivalence with politeness being relevant on several of these dimensions. (House 1998: 64)

In this paper, the dimensions of social distance and power will be taken as two key factors, first to establish the tenor or interpersonal profile of a term of address that is used in a transaction in the ST, and then to evaluate the degree of equivalence, that is, the appropriateness, of a TT's rendition of that term in question. This evaluation will then be applied for the argument of the adoption of foreignising as the mainstream rather than the exclusive strategy for a literary translation. Due to limit of space, this paper will focus on the translation of some Chinese titles and honorifics. But it must be noted that some honorifics are in essence a special type of kinship terms.

## 2. Titles

The use of terms to indicate social titles of the dyad pertains to the dimension of social stratification. According to Robinson (1972: 129), in those societies in which a person's status derives from his or her achievements, fewer distinctions in address are made. In such societies people may use only one basic form of address; they rely on other means for signalling the variety of relationships that we must presume still exists. However, in societies where status is ascribed, i.e., derived from birth into a particular social group, we are much more likely to find sets of finely graded address terms, which reflect the social structure of those societies. With regard to the Chinese society at the time when the novel was written two centuries ago, our data from the first twelve chapters of *Hong Lou Meng* confirm this hypothesis and tells us something about the practice of strict social stratification in feudal China. Among the three categories of terms of address (i.e., kinship terms, titles, honorifics) used in the novel, the one used for social stratification registers most instances: 27 entries with 299 occurrences all together (as compared with 36 honorifics terms with a total of 109 occurrences, and 31 kinship terms with 166 instances). This should come as no surprise since the practice was stringently observed even between family members of the Jia House. The dialogue between Lord Jia Zheng and his daughter Yuan-chun,<sup>4</sup> who is now a concubine of the emperor and returns home for a brief family reunion, in Chapter 18, is a case in point:

又有贾政至帘外问安,贾妃垂帘行参等事。又隔帘含泪谓其父曰:“田舍之家,虽齋盐布帛,终能聚天伦之乐;今虽富贵已极,骨肉各方,然终无意趣!”贾政亦含泪启道:“臣,草莽寒门,鸠群鸦属之中,岂意得征凤鸾之瑞。今贵人上锡天恩,下昭祖德,此皆山川日月

之精奇、祖宗之远德钟于一人，幸及政夫妇……贵妃切勿以政夫妇残年为念，懣愤金怀，更祈自加珍爱。” (Cao and Gao 1982: 1, 248)

The terms and expressions with underlines are used by Jia Zheng to refer to himself, his wife and his family (members) while the three bold underlined ones are titles and expressions used to refer to his daughter exclusively. This example illustrates in a dramatic way the conspicuous social stratification between rulers and subjects, which finds expression in the terms of address and reference pertaining to the speaker and hearer respectively. When reference is first made to himself, Jia Zheng employs the status-marking title 臣 “Your subject.” In compliance with the social code of address behaviour, he uses his personal name 政 “Zheng” twice in the successive sentences to refer himself and his wife. As a coherent indication of the address behaviour, two (self-) depreciatory expressions (see the next section for a definition of the term) are exploited with reference to his family and the members thereof, i.e., 草莽寒门 “poor family” and 鸠群鸦属 “species of turtledove and crows.” In contrast, special titles of honour 贵人 and 贵妃 which both mean “Imperial Concubine” are used to refer to his daughter. Consistent with these two titles and his self-denigrating expressions is the honouring association of his daughter’s social status to that of a mythical bird like the phoenix, i.e., 凤鸾, which apparently runs contrary to “species of turtledove and crows.” These titles and expressions thus mark the vast social distance between the speaker and hearer, which are characteristic of Chinese interactions between social unequals. But how do our translators transfer this unique expression of tenor into English? While Chi-chen Wang’s (1958: 114) rendition of this dialogue is unavailable, the other four translators seem to be endeavouring to carry this exotic cultural feature over into English. To save space, only Hawkes’s version of the introductory part preceding the dialogue is provided. The same system as used to mark the ST terms is used in the versions wherever relevant renditions and logic additions are made.

(1) Hawkes:

Then there was her interview with Jia Zheng, which had to take place with her father standing outside the door-curtain of the room in which she was sitting. Now that she was the Emperor’s woman, this was the nearest to her he could ever hope to get. The sense of deprivation struck home to Yuan-chun as she addressed him through the curtain.

‘What is the use of all this luxury and splendour,’ she said bitterly, ‘if I am to be always separated from those I love – denied the tenderness which even the poorest peasant who seasons his bread with salt and pickles and dresses in hempen homespun is free to enjoy?’

With tears in his eyes the good man delivered the following little speech to the daughter he could not see:

**Madam,**

That a poor and undistinguished household such as ours should have produced, as it were, a phoenix from amidst a flock of crows and pies to bask in the sunshine of Imperial favour and shed its reflected beams on the departed representatives of our ancestral line must be attributable to the concentration in **your single person** of the quintessences of all that is most admirable in celestial and terrestrial nature and the accumulated merit of many generations of our forebears, and is an honour and a blessing in which my wife and I are proud to be participators...

It is our earnest prayer that ...**Your Grace** should feel no anxiety concerning the welfare of my wife and myself during our now declining years, but should rather cherish and sustain **your own precious person...** (Hawkes 1973: 1, 362)

(2) The Yangs:

With tears [the Imperial Consort] told him, “Simple farmers who live on pickles and dress in homespun at least know the joys of family life together. What pleasure can I take in high rank and luxury when we are separated like this?”

With tears too he replied, “Your subject, poor and obscure, little dreamed that our flock of common pigeons and crows would ever be blessed with a phoenix. Thanks to the Imperial favour and the virtue of our ancestors, **your Noble Highness** embodies the finest essences of nature and the accumulated merit of our forbears – such fortune has attended my wife and myself...

“...**Your Noble Highness** must not grieve **your precious heart** in concern for your ageing parents. We beg you to take better care of **your own health...**” (The Yangs 1978: 1, 255)

(3) Joly:

“The families of farmers,” [the Chia consort] further went on to say to her father, “feed on salted cabbage, and clothe in cotton material; but they readily enjoy the happiness of the relationships established by heaven! We, however, relatives though we now be of one bone and flesh, are, with all our affluence and honours, living apart from each other, and deriving no happiness whatsoever!”

Chia Cheng, on his part endeavoured, to restrain his tears. “I belonged,” he rejoined, “to a rustic and poor family; and among that whole number of pigeons and pheasants, how could I have imagined that I would have obtained the blessing of a hidden phoenix! Of late all for the sake of **your honourable self,** His Majesty, above, confers upon us his heavenly benefits; while we, below, show forth the virtues of our ancestors! And it is mainly because the vital principle of the hills, streams, sun, and moon, and the remote virtues of our ancestors have been implanted in **you** alone that this good fortune has attained me Cheng and my wife!” ...

“My humble wish is that...**you, worthy imperial consort,** must, on no account, be mindful of me Cheng and my wife, decrepit as we are in years. What I would solicit more than anything is that **you** should be more careful of **yourself...**” (Joly 1892-1893: 1, 273)

(4) McHugh:

“The poor peasants who live on salted cabbage and dress in shoddy cotton are better off than we are,” lamented Beginning of Spring through the screen. “They can foster and satisfy their natural desire for family life to their hearts’ content. But we, on the contrary, though we are made of the same flesh and blood as they, have to endure sorrowful separation. What good to us are all of our splendours and riches?”

Her father too was on the verge of tears, but he spoke words of comfort to her and exhorted her not to quarrel with fate, which had treated her so well, but to acknowledge with gratitude the favour granted to her by the Son of Heaven and to repay it with redoubled dutifulness.<sup>5</sup>

“Who would ever have dreamed that it would be granted to a simple obscure subject such as I to rear **a precious phoenix** in his poor, cold household among ordinary birds of the hen and goose species? Next to the favour of the Emperor and the inscrutable designs of nature, such great good fortune is doubtless also to be ascribed to the blessed and benign influence of our ancestors... Let **the Imperial spouse** – and this is my most earnest prayer – not think so much of the years **she** has wasted in the society of **her**

parents, but rather let **her** dedicate all **her mind and all her strength** to the service of His Imperial Majesty!" (McHugh 1858: 139-40)

If we ignore the McHugh sisters' additional summarising remarks in between the dialogue because of its irrelevance to our focus of discussion, all the four versions of the dialogue basically succeed in representing the manner whereby the dyad, especially Jia Zheng, the less powerful, speak to each other. Upon close comparison, however, it seems that the Yangs' version distinguishes itself as the most equivalent to the ST insofar as both the semantic and formal features of the titles and expressions under investigation are concerned. This observation can be justified from a couple of aspects. On the one hand, only the Yangs offer the closest equivalents for the opposing titles of 臣 and 贵人/贵妃, which are "your subject" and "your Noble Highness" (and twice at that). In contrast, Hawkes fails to render 臣 and his "Your Grace" which is presumably for 贵人 or 贵妃 lowers the imperial concubine to the status of a peerage, a Duchess at most (Beyfus 1992: 317). While the McHugh sisters manage to retain the nature of Jia Zheng status as a "subject" before his seemingly powerful daughter, they fail to present to their readers a true picture of the status of Yuan-chun. Unlike Hawkes who demotes the royal concubine, they promote her to the status of a legal wife: their social title "Imperial spouse" amounts to "the Empress." In Joly's version, the socially remote interpersonal relationship between Jia Zhang and his daughter as marked by Jia Zheng's choice of titles to talk about himself and his addressee is completely lost: here no formal titles of address or reference whatever can be found. What can be observed is the only respectful modifier in the noun group "your honourable self."

But Joly does retain and represent Jia Zheng's humble manner when references are made to his wife and himself in a collective manner. Here lies another tricky feature of the Chinese politeness: although both the speaker and hearer have been introduced using correct terms of address, (e.g., titles or kinship terms) at the outset of the transaction, no personal pronouns can be adopted to substitute the terms in question in the successive speech. This accounts for the Chinese use of the same sets of terms as references or designatives (Chao 1956: 217). As far as our example is concerned, even though Jia Zheng and his wife are the addressee's parents, he is obliged to avoid the *ad hoc* term (i.e., 你爸妈 "your mom and I") in compliance with the codified distinction of ruler-subject hierarchy in speech and writing, thus the two instances of the noun group 政夫妇 "the Zheng couple." Given the tenor-sensitive feature of the expression in question, Joly can be regarded as the most faithful and successful of the four translators (or translating teams): only he transfers the speaker's self-references by personal name. The next most successful is Hawkes who renders both collective references in a clear and sound way, i.e., "my wife and I" and "my wife and myself." Comparatively, both the Yangs and McHugh's replacement of the ST term with "your/her parents" violates the cultural taboo of flaunting one's familial or age seniority to one who holds higher official ranks.

The other index to the Yang's high equivalence to the ST in terms of tenor lies in their treatment of the metaphors Jia Zheng employ: that is, 草莽寒门, 鸠群鸦属 and 凤鸾. These terms can be interpreted in a two-fold manner. Pragmatically, the first two expressions are used to describe the speaker's family and his siblings, the third to flatter the addressee. By definition, they all fall into the category of

expressions linguistically termed as honorifics: the former being called self-deprecatory and the latter other-elevating (Chao 1956: 219-30; Gu, 1990: 245ff; see definitions below). Semantically, 鸠群鸦属 and 凤鸾 refer to one category of things, and 草莽寒门 another. With these interpretations in mind, we are able to see the differences between the four versions with references to their renditions of these terms. While all the translators bring forward the respective semantic meanings of 草莽寒门 and 凤鸾, they differ greatly in their interpretations and consequent renditions of 鸠群鸦属. The ST expression is an obvious coordinate phrase referring to the same category of wild birds that can fly: turtledoves or pigeons for 鸠 and crows for 鸦. Their compounding here serves not only for natural contrast but also for cultural symbolism. As far as the natural contrast of the two types of birds is concerned, while the turtledove grows a white-edged tail and sings with a pleasing soft voice, the crow is covered with shiny black features and cries with a low loud noise. The cultural implications associated with the two birds come as a logic consequence of their natural contrast: the former is regarded as an auspicious symbol, the latter as a sign of bad omen. This idiomatic coordination runs consistent with the speaker's forthcoming use of the other-elevating metaphor 凤鸾: if all his siblings are bad birds, how can Yuan-chun turn into a phoenix? The Yangs' renditions match our analysis perfectly. Hawkes's choice of "pies" in place of 鸠 loses some of the commendatory cultural connotations of the ST word since a pie means a noisy bird, thus the figurative sense of a chattering or saucy person. And if we add this sense to the word's "proverbial" sense of the bird's "pilfering and hoarding" habits and its "popular[ity] as a bird of ill omen" (*OED* online), Hawkes's "a flock of crows and pies" becomes a double negation which runs contradictory to the author's intention. Compared with Hawkes, both Joly and McHugh make more conspicuous misinterpretations of the expression. In Joly, the problem lies only with 鸦 which is mistaken as "pheasants." What is a pheasant then? Colourful as they are, the long-tailed bird has three features that render the translator's choice incompatible with that of 鸠, i.e., "pigeons." Apart from their large size and inability to fly, pheasants cannot be associated with anything unlucky or ominous. In McHugh's translation, a problem arises with their renditions of both 鸠 and 鸦. Here, both birds become female poultry: 鸠 as "hens" and 鸦 "geese." While the average English reader has no way of seeing the translators' unfaithfulness, s/he cannot conjure up further metaphorical implications of hens and geese in the context beyond the eggs and meat the two kinds of poultry provide.

The above Chinese example depicts a true picture of how status-marking titles and relevant expressions are employed in a closely related or interactive manner to highlight the unequal tenor relation between the dyad. Its corresponding English versions demonstrate that, if a translator overlooks this linguistic and cultural feature, s/he will fail to represent, in part or in whole, this formal tenor adequately. Of course, this failure has a lot to do with the translator's orientation and the strategy he subsequently adopts to serve this orientation. If a translation is primarily intended as a reproduction of the ST communicative message, it will be produced along a domesticating strategy whereby fluency of language and intelligibility of content constitute the sole concern of the translator. Consequently, artistic and cultural features of the ST are lost. In contrast, if a translation is oriented not only as a production of the ST's communicative message, but also as a window to the foreign

culture contained, a foreignising strategy will prevail to retain and represent as much as possible both the linguistic and cultural features of the ST.

The next excerpt from Chapter 27 exaggerates a tenor-conscious speaker's mastery in the exploitation of correct but varied titles to various referents concerned. The speaker Hong-yu (红玉, i.e., "Crimson" in Hawkes, "Hsiao-hung" in the Yangs and "Hsiao Hung" in Joly), one of the protagonist Bao-yu's second-degree maids, is now reporting to Xi-feng (凤姐, i.e., the Yangs' "Hsi-feng" and Joly's "Lady Feng" respectively), one of the chief female characters, about her bond maid Ping-er's (平儿, i.e., Hawkes's "Patience" and Joly's "P'ing") treatment of some affairs when her mistress is absent:

.....红玉...将荷包递了上去, 又道: "平姐姐教我回奶奶 (a1): 才旺儿进来讨奶奶 (a2) 的示下, 好往那家子去。平姐姐就把那话按着奶奶 (a3) 的主意打发他去了。" 凤姐笑道: "他怎么按我的主意打发去了?" 红玉道: "平姐姐说: 我们奶奶 (a4) 问这里奶奶 (b1) 好。原是我们二爷不在家, 虽然迟了两天, 只管请奶奶 (b2) 放心。等五奶奶 (c1) 好些, 我们奶奶 (a5) 还会了五奶奶 (c2) 来瞧奶奶 (b3) 呢。五奶奶 (c3) 前儿打发了人来说, 舅奶奶 (d1) 带了信来了, 问奶奶 (b4) 好, 还要和这里的姑奶奶 (e1) 寻两丸延年神验万全丹。若有了, 奶奶 (b5) 打发人来, 只管送在我们奶奶 (a6) 这里。明儿有人去, 就顺路给那边舅奶奶 (d2) 带去的。"

话未说完, 李氏道: "噯哟哟! 这些话我就不懂了。什么 '奶奶' '爷爷' 的一大堆。" 凤姐笑道: "怨不得你不懂, 这是四五门子的话呢。" (Cao and Gao 1982: 1, 142-3)

It is this report that wins the speaker's promotion from serving her master Bao-yu to serving Xi-feng who is the more powerful, manipulatory figure of the big Jia Family. Her speech characterises the redundant politeness of Chinese discourse whereby the speaker has to mind his/her business of tenor: no matter how many persons are referred to in the context, and no matter how many times they are mentioned, appropriate terms of reference designating their social or patriarchal statuses (e.g., titles and kinship terms) rather than their names must always be in place if the referents are senior to the speaker. As for Hong-yu's speech, six people are concerned and the status quo whereby Hong-yu evaluates her relation to them is Xi-feng. Of these people, the first is maid Ping-er whom Hong-yu correctly and cleverly addresses as 姐姐 "Elder sister," which has three occurrences underlined as bold. The other five, which are underlined and numbered with English letters a, b, c, d, and e in round brackets, are all related to Xi-feng pertaining to the social class of masters as compared to Hong-yu. These persons are all called with the key title 奶奶 "Mistress" or "Lady," a term of honour for the wife of a young master in a rich or official family. The first person (i.e., referent a) is of course the addressee Xi-feng. The second is relatively more obvious than the other three in the immediate context with the help of the directional modifier 这里 "here," which together with the title *per se* refers to Widow Li Wan, sister-in-law of Bao-yu and Xi-feng, Hong-yu's next addressee who admits to be confused by the long list of referents sharing the same title before Hong-yu concludes. The third referent, i.e., referent c via 五奶奶 "the Lady of the Fifth Master," is the widowed mother of Jia Yun. Her deceased husband is a near descendant of the Jia clan. In accordance with the hierarchical ranking of the clan, he pertains to the same generation as Xi-feng's husband Jia Lian, and ranks fifth in order of birth among the men of the same generation. Since they live near the Jia premises, "not necessarily to the west" (Cao 1982: 319, 330), the widow is addressed as such. The fourth and fifth referents are both Xi-feng's aunts, with referent d 姑奶奶 "one's

father's sister" referring to Lady Wang, wife of Sir Jia Zheng and mother of Bao-yu, and referent e 舅奶奶 "the lady of one's maternal uncle" referring to the wife of Xi-feng's mother's brother. To indicate the total instances of occurrence of each referent, Arabic numbers are used following the English letters in the brackets. All together, Hong-yu uses the title 17 times in her report. Understandably, these titles of reference pose great challenges to our translators. In a sense, an adequate transfer of the semantics of these tenor-registering titles and faithful representation of their formal essence, marks a yardstick of the translators' strategies and skills. In order to demonstrate how the translators fare in the process of translating, the same marking system is applied to their English versions. In addition, the symbol + will be attached to an English letter to register the translators' additions to make their respective versions read grammatically fluent and logically coherent. Where a translator somehow changes the intended referent to another, the symbol → will be used to highlight this change. Unfortunately however, translations of the report are unavailable from Wang and McHugh's adapted versions.

## (1) Hawkes:

Crimson ...now produced the purse and handed it to Xi-feng.

Then she added:

'**Patience** told me to tell you (a1) that Brightie has just been in to inquire what your (a2) instructions were for his visit, and **she** said that **she** gave him a message to take based on the things **she** thought you (a3) would want him to say.'

'Oh?' said Xi-feng, amused. 'And what *was* this message "based on the things she thought I would want him to say"?''

'**She** said he was to tell them: "Our lady (a4) hopes your lady (b1) is well and **she** says that the Master is away at present and may not be back for another day or two, but your lady (b2) is not to worry; and when the lady from West Lane (c1) is better, our lady (a5) will come with their lady (c2) to see your lady (b3). And our lady (a+) says that the lady from West Lane (c3) sent someone the other day with a message from the elder Lady Wang (d1) saying that she (d+) hopes our lady (b4 → a+) is well and will she (b+ → a+) please see if our Lady Wang (e1) can let her (d1) have a few of her Golden Myriad Macrobiotic Pills; and if she (e+) can, will our lady (b5 → a+) please send someone with them to her (a6), because someone will be going from there to the elder Lady Wang's (d2) in a few days' time and they will be able to take them for her (d+) —'

Crimson was still in full spate when Li Wan interrupted her with a laugh:

'What an extraordinary number of "ladies"! I hope you can understand what it's all about, Feng. I'm sure *I* can't!'

'I'm not surprised,' said Xi-feng. 'There are four or five different households involved in that message.' (Hawkes 1973: 2, 30-31; original emphasis)

## (2) The Yangs:

[Hsiao-hung]...handed the pouch to Hsi-feng and continued, "**Sister Ping-er** asked me to tell Your Ladyship (a1): Just now Lai Wang came to ask for your (a2) instructions before setting out to the mansion where you (a+) sent him, and **she** sent him off after explaining Your Ladyship's (a3) wishes."

"How did she explain my wishes?" Hsi-feng smiled.

"**She** said, 'Our lady (a4) sends her compliments to Her Ladyship (b1). Our Second Master is away from home now, so Her Ladyship (b2) shouldn't worry over a couple of days' delay. When the Fifth Mistress (c1) is better, our lady (a5) will come with her (c2) to see Her Ladyship (b3). The Fifth Mistress (c3) sent a servant the other day to report

that our lady's sister-in-law (d1) had inquired after Her Ladyship (b4) in a letter, and hoped her sister-in-law (e1) here would oblige her (d+) with two longevity pills. If Her Ladyship (b5) has any to spare, please send them to our lady (a6), and the next person to go that way will deliver them to her sister-in-law (d2)."

"Mercy on us!" cut in Li Wan with a laugh. "I've lost track of all these ladies and mistresses."

"I don't blame you. Hsi-feng smiled. "There are five families involved." (TheYang 1978: 1, 393-394)

(3) Joly:

...Hsiao Hung...produced the purse and presented it to [lady Feng]. "**Sister P'ing** bade me come and tell your ladyship (a1)," she added, continuing, "that Wang Erh came just now to crave your (a2) orders, as to who are the parties from whom he has to go and (collect interest on money due) and **sister P'ing** explained to him what your (a3) wishes were and sent him off."

"How could she tell him where I wanted him to go?" Lady Feng laughed.

"**Sister P'ing** says," Hsiao Hung proceeded, "that our lady (a4) presents her compliments to your ladyship (widow Li) (b1) here – (*To lady Feng*) that our master Secundus has not in fact come home, and that albeit a delay of (a day) or two will take place (in the collection of the money), your ladyship (b2) should, she (a+) begs, set your (b+) mind at ease. (*To Li Wan*). That when lady Quinta (c1) is somewhat better, our lady (a5) will let lady Quinta (c+) know and come along with her (c2) to see your ladyship (b3). (*To lady Feng*). That lady Quinta (c3) sent a servant the day before yesterday to come over and say that our lady (d1), your worthy maternal aunt (d+), had despatched a letter to inquire after your ladyship's (b4) health; that she (d+) also wished to ask you (e1), my lady (e+), her worthy niece in here, (e+) for a couple of 'long-life-great-efficacy-full-of-every-virtue' pills; and that if you (e+) have any, they should, when our lady (b5 → a+) bids a servant come over, be simply given her to bring to our lady (a6) here, and that any one bound to-morrow for that side could then deliver them on her way to her ladyship (d2), your aunt yonder (d+), to take along with her."

"Ai-yo-yo!" exclaimed widow Li, before the close of the passage. "It's impossible for me to make out what you're driving at! What a heap of ladyships and misters!"

"It's not to be wondered at that you can't make them out," interposed lady Feng laughing. "Why, her remarks refer to four or five distinct families." (Joly 1892-1893: 2, 40-1)

Upon comparison, it seems safe to say that the Yangs' version, with the most straightforward rendering of both social titles 奶奶 and the generalised kinship term 姐姐 but the fewest grammatical and logical additions, appears to be the most formally faithful representation of the ST's interpersonal function as exhibited in tenor. In their version, we see most 奶奶 are rendered as "Your Ladyship," "Her Ladyship" or "our lady" while one 平姐姐 into "Sister Ping-er." Semantically however, the reader can make the least sense from their version as to whom the 奶奶 are respectively referring to. For instance, while the ST noun group 这里奶奶 ("the lady /your ladyship here") and the context makes it explicitly clear that the term and its relevant references (i.e., b2-b5) all concern Widow Li Wan who is also present when the report is being made. The Yangs' renditions *Her Ladyship* (b1-b5) does not come with such explicitness. Furthermore, serious problem also exists with *our lady's sister-in-law* (d1). From the source text we know that the title 舅奶奶 ("the wife of one's maternal uncle") (i.e., d1-d2) refers to the wife of Xi-feng's mother's brother. The

Yangs' translation however, downgrades this lady to be the wife of Xi-feng's brother, becoming thus Xi-feng's "sister-in-law." As a consequence, Lady Wang referred to by e1 姑奶奶 ("one's father's sister") also gets one generation removed by the presumed translation "her-sister-in-law," who also becomes Xi-feng's "sister-in-law" rather than "aunt." Besides, their rendition "the Fifth Mistress" for referent c五奶奶 is prone to associate the referent as "the fifth of the several secondary wives or concubines of a master." As mentioned above, the ranking 五 "Fifth" in the ST title clearly indicates the order of birth of the master proper, rather than his secondary wife. We would rather take this association as an unfortunate consequence of the translators' "localised" literal rendering of the term of reference. If only they remembered that at the beginning of Chapter 23 they have made the referent crystal clear by rendering Jia Lian's reference to the same lady as "Fifth Sister-in-law who lives in the West Lane" (西廊下的五奶奶) (The Yangs, 1978: 1, 328)! Doubt can also be raised about the nature of the term "Sister" in "Sister Ping": is it a kinship term or a religious title? While some Chinese kinship terms, such as 哥哥 and 姐姐 "Elder brother/sister," tend to be extended to relatives of the same generation and friends as endearing terms of address, the same is not true in English where "Brother/Sister + FN (First name)" is usually employed to address "a member of a religious group" (*OED*).

The Yangs' version, despite some of its misinterpretations and problems, can be seen in Venuti's (1995) term as a true foreignisation due to the exotic or foreign nature of the repetition of the tenor-registering titles. By contrast, Hawkes's version is a typical case of domesticating translation since preference is here given to naturalness of expression or fluency rather than formal linguistics features. Unlike the source language text which is fraught with heavy distribution of confusing titles, his translation reflects the English way of reference in speech in which references can be subsequently made by means of (personal) pronouns once they are introduced at the outset. It goes without saying that only low interpersonal equivalence with reference to tenor is achieved in the domesticated treatment. Expectedly, with the clearest references, especially to the third, fourth and fifth lady respectively, Hawkes's reader can make out who are being talked about by the maid and what the kindred relations involved are in a much easier manner. Such communicative effect is gained, however, at the expense of the ST's features of tenor: in no way can the TT's reader be expected to get a clear and correct picture of the cultural implications of both the complicated personal relationships and stringent social respect of the Chinese society at the time.

Joly's version, on the other hand, speaks volumes for his helplessness, either with Chinese titles, or with the two opposing translating strategies, or with both. Here it is interesting to find what compromises he makes in order to make his production intelligible to his reader on the one hand, and formally faithful to the ST's interpersonal function on the other hand. Two conspicuous manifestations of his compromises are (1) the seven additions he makes (especially the five titles and kinship terms) to render his version coherent and fluent, and (2) the three directional indications by means of italics in brackets to show to the reader who is being spoken to in turn. What deserves mentioning are the kinship terms "your worthy maternal aunt" (d1+), "her worthy niece in here" (e1+) and "your aunt yonder" (d2+). Strictly speaking, they can only be seen as domesticating complements added to their respective preceding titles. But they help to show more clearly whom the respective titles refer to, despite

the fact that Joly endeavours to make the kinship terms “your worthy maternal aunt” and “her worthy niece in here” sound foreign by means of the honorific modifier “worthy.” Besides, the Latin-looking title “lady Quinta” (i.e., c1, c+ and c3) for 五奶奶, avoids not only the misconception of the Yangs’ literal rendition (i.e., “the Fifth Mistress”) but also the insipidness of Hawkes’s domesticating solution (i.e., “the lady from the West Lane,” which is semantically correct). These measures are significant in that they coordinate to retain the formal features of the ST on the premise that the intelligibility of the production is not compromised. These creative endeavours result in a work produced along the lines of a dominant foreignising orientation with necessary support drawn from domesticating solutions. This might be the ideal production that is expected of a translator, whether it concerns the transfer of the ideational or interpersonal function of the ST to the maximum degree of equivalence possible.

### 3. Honorifics

Honorifics are special expressions “applied to phrases, words, or forms of speech, used, especially in certain Oriental languages, to express respect...substituted in Chinese and Japanese for the possessive pronouns of the second and third person” (OED online). Honorifics in Chinese are further distinguished into self-deprecating (i.e., terms “that function as pronouns, kin terms or combinations thereof” used when the self and people or things on the self’s side are referred to while speaking to superiors and friends (Skewis 2003: 177)) and other-elevating ones (i.e., expressions that are used to address the other or to refer to the other’s family members, relatives, properties, physical and mental conditions, etc., to show respect). Honorifics, like other types of terms of address (such as kinship terms and titles), perform an important function in asserting or affirming the nature of the relationship between the speaker and the addressee and/or referent, and are frequently used in the Chinese classic *Hong lou meng*. The following is a conversation taken from Chapter 10 where a doctor Zhang is invited into Jia Zhen’s house to diagnose the ailment of his son Jia Rong’s doomed wife Qin Ke-qing. After some greetings, the doctor is introduced by Jia Rong into the patient’s bedroom, and hence the dialogue between the doctor and Jia Rong:

[张先生] 到了贾蓉室, 见了秦氏, 向贾蓉说道: “这就是尊夫人了?” 贾蓉道: “正是。请先生坐下, 让我把贱内的病说一说再看脉如何?” 那先生道: “依小弟的意思, 竟先看过脉再说的为是。我是初造尊府的, 本也不晓得什么, 但是我们冯大爷务必叫小弟过来看看, 小弟所以不得不过来。如今看了脉息, 看小弟说得是不是, 再将这些日子的病势讲一讲, 大家斟酌一个方儿。可用不可用, 那时大爷再定夺。” (Cao and Gao 1982: 1, 151)

Even in this short conversation nine honorific expressions are exchanged between the dyad. While the four bold-faced and underlined ones are other-elevating, the five underlined ones are self-deprecatory. This suggests the reciprocity of the use of Chinese honorifics. To be specific, they are (1) Jia Rong’s denigrating reference to his wife by 贱内 “the lowly (one) of the interior” (Chao 1956: 219), i.e., “my wife,” reciprocates Dr Zhang’s respectful 尊夫人 “your honourable lady”; (2) Dr Zhang’s four self-references via 小弟 “your little brother” acknowledge Jia Rong’s reference to him by the title 先生 “Mr.” or “Doctor,” which is later returned via the more

respectful title 大爷 “Sir” or “Mr..” Of course, Dr Zhang’s honouring reference to his host’s house 尊府 “your respectable mansion” appears alone since Jia does not talk about it. This symmetry or reciprocity in the use of honorifics is what Gu (1990) calls “the self-denigration maxim.” According to him, the maxim consists of two clauses or submaxims: (a) denigrate self and (b) elevate other. As a linguistic means “extrinsic to the language [i.e., grammatical] system,” it “absorbs the notions of respectfulness and modesty” and constrains the use of language in people’s interactions (Gu 1990: 246). As an integral part and parcel of the deep-rooted Chinese behaviour of politeness, this maxim was and continues to be observed in both face-to-face and written communications. It is only that such a phenomenon was more identifiable than it is now, and that it is more conspicuous between the learned men than between the average breadwinners. In any case, a breach of submaxim (a), i.e., to deprecate other, is perceived as being impolite or rude whereas a breach of submaxim (b), i.e., to elevate self, is construed as being arrogant, boasting, or self-conceived (ibid). Therefore, as “the basic principle of Asian politeness,” “it is necessary to have always in mind, the extended self, the self and its close connections, distinguished from others and the connections of others” (Brown 1996: 46). Socially, the self-deprecation phenomenon defines the assimilative relationship between the self (who is the observer) and the other (who is the observed). And here lies the difference in interpersonal relations between the egalitarian, individualistic and autonomous western cultures and the relational, communal and collectivistic Asian cultures (ibid: 39): Whereas “western culture is based on the distinction between the observer and the observed, on the opposition of the self versus the other,” Asian culture and sentiment “show a strong tendency to overcome this distinction by having the self immerse itself in the other” (Suzuki 1978: 145). As far as translation is concerned, this observation serves to distinct a domesticating translation that is produced at the cost of the interpersonal equivalence in terms of the special Chinese politeness behaviour of address, from one that results from a foreignising orientation to represent as much as possible the interpersonal function of the ST. While relevant versions of the above conversation from Wang and McHugh’s adapted translations are inaccessible, we focus our comparison on the three complete versions of the dialogue. From the foregoing discussion of Hawkes’s work, we can take it for granted that his rendering might constitute a consistent domesticating enterprise, and this assumption is confirmed by his version below:

Jia Rong conducted [the doctor] through the inner part of the house to his own apartment where Qin-shi was.

‘Is this **the lady**?’ asked the doctor.

‘Yes, this is **my wife**,’ Jia Rong replied. ‘Do sit down! I expect **you** would like me to describe **her** symptoms first, before **you** take the pulse?’

‘If you will permit **me**, no,’ said the doctor. ‘I think it would be better if **I** took the pulse first and ask you about the development of the illness afterwards. This is the first time **I** have been to **your house**, and as I am not a skilled practioner and have only come here at our friend Mr Feng’s insistence, **I** think **I** should take the pulse and give you **my** diagnosis first. We can go on to talk about **her** symptoms and discuss a course of treatment if you are satisfied with the diagnosis. And of course, it will be up to **you** to decide whether or not the treatment **I** prescribe is to be followed.’ (Hawkes 1973: 1, 224-225)

Looking at Hawkes's production, we cannot find the slightest trace of the ST's humble tenor with which both conversees are talking. What is left in the place of the ST's respective honorifics are nothing but common personal pronouns which contemporary English speakers use when they refer to people, themselves included. As a result, the reader is deprived of the opportunity of glimpsing the peculiar Chinese manner of politeness in action. The Yangs' version below, by contrast, succeeds in conveying some of this manner:

Chia Jung accompanied the doctor to Ko-ching's bedside.

"Is this **your worthy wife**?" asked Dr. Chang.

"Yes, **sir**," said Chia Jung. "Do sit down! Would **you** like me to describe **her** symptoms to you before **you** take the pulse?"

"May I suggest that I take **her** pulse before you enlighten me?" countered the doctor. "This is **my** first visit to **your honourable mansion**, and being quite unqualified I would not have come but for Mr. Feng's insistence. Let **me** take **her** pulse, and you may gauge the correctness of **my** diagnosis before you describe **her** condition recently. Then we can devise an efficacious prescription and submit it to the discretion of **His Lordship**." (The Yangs 1978: 1, 149)

Compared with Hawkes's pro-English treatment of the ST honorifics with pure pronouns, the Yangs are seen here retaining the exotic nature of the Chinese other-elevating expressions, at least insofar as the first instance of such expressions are concerned. Therefore, the reader is likely to know that when a Chinese talks about the addressee's spouse, he would adopt a strangely polite term such as 尊夫人 "your worthy wife" at the outset of the topic. Of course, when it comes to talk about the hearer's house (or a mansion, if it happens to be one?), the reader is not necessarily to make sense as to why it should be described as "honourable" as a person is. But at least the exquisite address behaviour strikes the reader as something unusual. Whether or not s/he might set out to find out more about the cultural phenomenon is another matter. For a translation, if it works out like this, it can be regarded as a successful production, both communicatively and pragmatically. However, the Yangs' version, can at best be accounted as achieving partial interpersonal equivalence since it only renders three of the nine honorifics, the third of which, i.e., 大爷 "His Lordship," is in fact a misinterpretation.<sup>6</sup> Like Hawkes, the Yangs ignore the doctor's repeated use of the self-deprecatory term 小弟. As a result of the intensive use of personal pronouns, their version looks more as a result of domesticating than as one of foreignising. It is Joly's production that appears more foreignised:

When they reached the inner apartment, and [Dr Zhang] caught sight of Mrs Ch'in, he turned round and asked Chia Jung, "This is **your honourable spouse**, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is," assented Chia Jung; "but please, **Doctor**, take a seat, and let me tell **you** the symptoms of **my humble wife's** ailment, before **her** pulse be felt. Will this do?"

"**My mean idea** is," remarked the Doctor, "that it would, after all, be better that I should begin by feeling **her** pulse, before I ask you to inform **me** what the source of the ailment is. This is the first visit I pay to **your honourable mansion**; besides, I possess no knowledge of anything; but as our worthy Mr. Feng would insist upon **my** coming over to see **you**, I had in consequence no alternative but to come. After I have now made a diagnosis, **you** can judge whether what I say is right or not, before **you** explain to **me** the phases of the complaint during the last few days, and we can deliberate together upon some prescription; as to the suitability or unsuitability of which **your honourable father** will then have to decide..." (Joly 1892-3: 1, 156-157)

By rendering six of the nine ST honorifics literally, Joly may be seen as achieving the highest interpersonal equivalence. Given the fact that it is of first importance for any translator to give an intelligible and fluent account of the communicative message of the ST, Joly's rendering is admirably quite successful. There are two things worth mentioning about his translation here. First, he avoids the Yangs' one-sided or partial treatment of the Chinese self-denigration maxim. Instead of misleading the reader to, or giving him/her an incomplete picture of the Chinese politeness phenomenon, he reproduces both the other-elevating and self-depreciating terms of the dyad with regard to the patient. Hence, the reader has a rough idea of symmetrical expressions in the Chinese tenor between two social equals not familiar to each other. For instance, 尊夫人 "your honourable spouse" is reciprocated by 贱内 "my humble wife." Second, Joly makes creative synthesis of the ST adjunct 依小弟的意思 "in the opinion of your little brother." Instead of rendering it in a redundant way as such, he transfers the humble tenor of the speaker from referring to himself to his opinion. This is not only advisable in translation but also in accordance with the Chinese self-denigration maxim. This is because "the [Chinese] concept of 'self' and 'other'... ha[s] wide extensions" to "self and other's physical conditions, mental states, properties, values, attitudes, writing," even "some acts such as visiting, reading, etc." (Gu 1990: 246-247). But can he really render the self-deprecatory term 小弟 in an explicitly foreignising way? The answer is not only "yes" but a big one at that, since he can overdo it, as in the following dialogue occurring immediately after the diagnosis:

……一个婆子端了茶来。贾蓉道：“先生请茶。”于是陪先生吃了茶，遂问道：“先生看这脉息，还治得治不得？”先生说：“看得尊夫人这脉息……据我看这脉息，应当有这些症候才对。或以这个脉为喜脉，则小弟不敢从其教也。” (Cao and Gao 1982: 1, 151-152)

...A matron having served tea; "Please take a cup of tea, **doctor**," Chia Jung observed. When tea was over, "Judging," he inquired, "**Doctor**, from the present action of the pulse, is there any remedy or not?"

"The action of the pulse, under the forefinger, on the left hand of **your honourable spouse**," proceeded the Doctor, "...From my diagnosis of these pulses, there should exist these various symptoms, before (the pulse and the symptoms can be said) to harmonise. But should perchance (any doctor maintains) that this state of the pulse imports a felicitous event, **your servant** will not presume to give an ear to such an opinion!" (Joly 1892-3: 1, 157-158)

Compared with his version for the above dialogue, Joly's production here secures total interpersonal equivalence since all the four honorific terms get direct representation in the TT. While the two "doctor" might be easy and accommodates domestic mode of expression in similar situations, the expressions "your honorable spouse" and "your servant" are definitely foreign to the average English reader. Focusing on Joly's rendition "your servant" for 小弟, we hope to make two points here. On one hand, when we look at the silver lining of the term, Joly's treatment can be said to have formally rendered the foreignness of the ST term visible to the English reader where Hawkes and the Yangs' domesticating personal pronoun "I" fails to do so. Semantically, Joly's foreignisation conveys, to some extent, Dr Zhang's modesty, a cultural cream that is not contained in Hawkes and the Yangs' impressionless "I." However, if we look at Joly's rendition in context, we find, to our disappointment, that his term over-interprets the cultural element of courtesy. In fact, by letting Dr Zhang degrade himself to the status of a servant, Joly may be just accomplishing the

opposite of his desire. Upon seeing the doctor's "use" of this term, the reader would likely be confused as to the social status of a medical practitioner in old Chinese society. If this is not the case, s/he would at least wonder whether the doctor is being modest or hypocritical. At the same time, however, it can be argued that given the cultural difference in Chinese and English concerning the use of 弟, Joly's transfer from a potential "little/younger brother" to "your servant" might just as well constitute an ideal solution. After all, the tenor is kept intact.

The self-denigrating and other-elevating honorifics involved in the above two excerpts are relatively small in number and thus easier to translate. Most often, Chinese dialogues involve more honorifics, either as addresses or as references, throughout the interactions. This is the norm rather than the exception. The following conversation taken from Chapter 3 illustrates how tenor functions when references are primarily made to the dyad's family members and relatives.

次日, [雨村]面谋之如海。如海道:“天缘凑巧,因贱荆去世,都中家岳母念及小女无人依傍教育,前已遣了男女船只来接,因小女未曾大愈,故未及行。此刻正思向蒙教训之恩,未经酬报,遇此机会,岂有不尽心图报之理。……弟已预为筹划至此,修下荐书一封,转托内兄务为周全协佐,方可稍尽弟之鄙诚,即有所费用之例,弟于内兄信中已注明白,亦不劳尊兄多虑矣。”雨村一面打恭,谢不释口,一面又问:“不知令亲大人现居何职?只怕晚生草率,不敢骤然入都干渎。”如海笑道:“若论舍亲,与尊兄犹系同谱,乃荣公之孙:大内兄现袭一等将军,名赦,字恩侯;二内兄名政,字存周,现任工部员外郎,其为人谦恭厚道,大有祖父遗风,非膏粱轻薄士宦之流,故弟方致书烦托。否则不但有污尊兄清操,即弟亦不屑为矣。”(Cao and Gao, 1982: 1, 36-37)

The conversation takes place between Jia Yu-cun and Lin Ru-hai. Yu-cun, a deposed magistrate, is now a tutor to Ru-hai's daughter Dai-yu. He, upon learning that Ru-hai's late wife's brothers hold high official posts, is, at this moment, asking for Ru-hai's recommendation to the brothers-in-law so that he can be reinstated. Ru-hai, a kind-hearted gentleman in nature, satisfies his request. Since both Yu-cun and Ru-hai are scholars, their conversation thus represents the redundant and cultivated nature of Chinese rhetoric of the time. This is marked by the formal style of their speech in which a total of 18 honorific terms are used. To give a clear picture of them, we tabulate them with gloss in a classified form below:

Speaker	Other-elevating Hearer	Self-deprecatory		
		Self	Family member	Relative
Ru-hai	尊兄 (3) <i>respectable elder brother</i>	弟 (5)	小女 (2)	家岳母
		<i>(your) little brother</i>	<i>my little girl</i>	<i>my family's mother-in-law</i>
				舍亲
				<i>my hut's relative</i>
				内兄 (2)
			<i>my interior elder brother</i>	
			大内兄	
			<i>my eldest interior brother</i>	
			二内兄	
			<i>my 2nd elder interior brother</i>	
Yu-cun		晚生	令亲	
		<i>later born (than you)</i>	<i>your refined relative</i>	

Of the five English versions, Wang omits this episode, both Hawkes and McHugh make the boldest domesticated representation of this conversation, while Joly and the Yangs render a few of the honorifics. From these four, we pick Joly and the Yangs' for a close contrast since they represent nearly the type of translation, that is, a dominant foreignisation. For Hawkes's (1973: 1, 85) all-rounded domesticating translation, nothing seems worthy of special attention here. Imaginably, his version is full of common kinship terms supported by necessary personal pronouns referring to the respective persons concerned. This treatment is consistent with his over-riding translation strategy of domestication. Unlike other translators, Hawkes sticks firmly to his chosen strategy, not deviating in the slightest measure. Other translators, for instance McHugh and Wang, are the most foreignising at one moment but the most domesticated at the next.<sup>7</sup> Of course, no interpersonal equivalence whatever is achieved in Hawkes's version since the strange and stringent Chinese way of politeness is all but lost. Perhaps this is the price a translator has to pay for the adoption of an exclusive or extreme strategy for his enterprise. And this impels us to propose the use of foreignising as the mainstream strategy to cope with a literary work to be translated but assisted by domesticating solutions where necessary. Joly's version below for the above dialogue justifies this proposal to some extent:

... [Yü-ts'un] had on the next day a personal consultation with Ju-hai.

"Providence and good fortune are both alike propitious!" exclaimed Ju-hai. "After the death of my wife, my mother-in-law, whose residence is in the capital, was so very solicitous on my daughter's account, for having no one to depend upon, that she despatched, at an early period, boats with men and women servants to come and fetch her. But my child was at the time not quite over her illness, and that is why she has not yet started. I was, this very moment, cogitating to send my daughter to the capital. And in view of the obligation, under which I am to you for the instruction you have heretofore conferred upon her, remaining as yet unrequited, there is no reason why, when such an opportunity as this presents itself, I should not do my utmost to find means to make proper acknowledgement. I have already, in anticipation, given the matter my attention, and written a letter of recommendation to my brother-in-law, urging him to put everything right for you, in order that I may, to a certain extent, be able to give effect to my modest wishes. As for any outlay that may prove necessary, I have given proper explanation, in the letter to my brother-in-law, so that you, my brother, need not trouble yourself by giving way to much anxiety."

As Yü-ts'un bowed and expressed his appreciation in most profuse language, –

"Pray," he said, "where does your honoured brother-in-law reside? And what is his official capacity? But I fear I'm too coarse in my manner, and could not presume to obtrude myself in his presence."

Ju-hai smiled. "And yet," he remarked, "this brother-in-law of mine is after all of one and the same family as your worthy self, for he is the grandson of the Duke Jung. My elder brother-in-law has now inherited the status of Captain General of the first grade. His name is Sheh, his style Ngen-hou. My second brother-in-law's name is Cheng, his style is Tzu-chou. His present post is that of a Second-class Secretary in the Board of Works. He is modest and kindhearted, and has much in him of the habits of his grandfather; not one of that purse-proud and haughty kind of men. That is why I have written to him and made the request on your behalf. Were he different to what he really is, not only would he cast a slur upon your honest purpose, honourable brother, but I myself likewise would not have been as prompt in taking action." (Joly, 1892-3: 1, 35- 36)

Tenor-wise, Joly not only renders visible the graceful literary style of the dialogue, especially Ru-hai's meticulously phrased speech but with regard to the honorifics used in the ST, Joly also succeeds in representing four significant ones. By significant we mean those honorifics that can best characterise the speakers' humility and accomplishments in address behaviour. In this respect, the Chinese self-denigration maxim gets reflected in Joly's renditions of Yu-cun's polite reference to Ru-hai's brother-in-law by 令亲 "your honoured brother-in-law" on the one hand, and Ru-hai's three respectful designatives concerning Yu-cun via 尊兄, namely "you, my brother," "your worthy self," and "your honest purpose, honourable brother," on the other hand. It was pointed out above that Joly's creative synthesis of the ST adjunct 依小弟的意思 into "in the opinion of your little brother" serves to kill two birds with one stone. Here he manoeuvres this skill to new territories and heights. He first transfers Ru-hai's respect to his addressee as exhibited by the other-elevating term 尊兄 "you, my honourable elder brother," to Yu-cun's personality, i.e., "your worthy self." This is significant in that it averts a repetition resulting from the potential literal rendition, too many of which sound both linguistically redundant and consanguineously or ethically unnatural to the reader. While Joly does render Ru-hai's address to Yu-cun literally, he treats it as something of an after-thought, which renders the address "honourable brother" to rhyme with the preceding "honest purpose" in an appealing and artistic manner. Suffice to say that Joly's transferred rendition of the latter adds colour to the formality of his version since the ST term 清操 "your honour," though commendatory, is not specifically used as an honorific.

Comparatively, the Yangs' (cited below) straightforward rendition of the address 尊兄 as "brother" lacks the formal and poetic beauty of Joly's treatment. While the Yangs also retain the formal feature of Yu-cun's reference to Ru-hai's brother-in-law (i.e., "your respected brother-in-law"), they transfer Ru-hai's second address to Yu-cun to his ancestral clan (i.e., "your honourable clan"), both of which are logically inappropriate. The former treatment is inadequate in that it constitutes Ru-hai's first respectful address to Yu-cun because his first address (i.e., 尊兄 in the middle of the dialogue) is substituted by a pronoun "you." An advisable treatment, which is also the common practice in such occasions, should be to render the first honorific address directly as such and substitute the following repetitions with respective pronouns. Such a solution serves to introduce the nature of the foreign tenor while securing both clear references and a fluent text. Seen this way, the Yangs' direct translation of 尊兄 as "brother" at the closure of the dialogue comes too late and too abrupt. The problem with their transferred rendition "your honourable clan" is that it could be construed as implying that his brother-in-law's clan, which is identical to that of Yu-cun, is also "honourable."

The next day [Yu-tsun] laid his case before Lin Ju-hai.

"What a lucky coincidence!" exclaimed Ju-hai. "Since my wife's death my mother-in-law in the capital has been worried because my daughter has no one to bring her up. She has sent two boats with male and female attendants to fetch the child, but I delayed her departure while she was unwell. I was wondering how to repay you for your goodness in teaching her! Now this gives me a chance to show my appreciation...I foresaw this possibility and have written a letter to my brother-in-law urging him to do all he can for you as a small return for what I owe you. You mustn't worry either about any expenses that may be incurred – I've made that point clear to my brother-in-law."

Yu-tsun bowed with profuse thanks and asked: “May I know **your respected brother-in-law’s** position? I fear I am too uncouth to intrude on **him**.”

Ju-hai smiled. “My humble kinsmen belong to **your honourable clan**. They’re the grandsons of the Duke of Jungkuo. My elder brother-in-law Chia Sheh, whose courtesy name is En-hou, is a hereditary general of the first rank. My second, Chia Cheng, whose courtesy name is Tsun-chou, is an under-secretary in the Board of Works. He is an unassuming, generous man who takes after his grandfather. That is why I am writing to him on **your** behalf. If he were some purse-proud, frivolous official, I’d be dishonouring **your high principles, brother**, and I myself would disdain to do such a thing.” (The Yangs, 1978: 1, 33-34)

#### 4. Conclusion

I have compared and contrasted the English translations of several dialogues from the Chinese classic *Hong Lou Meng* with reference to the use of titles and honorifics. The purpose of the comparison and contrast was to see how the translators manage to represent the Chinese politeness exhibited by the use of titles and honorifics as tenor-makers. By adopting House’s interpersonal equivalence as a criterion to measure the social distance and power between the dyads as shown by the tenor in both the source language conversations and their respective target language versions, I investigated the relationship between the interpersonal equivalence that is achieved in the TT and the strategies that are adopted to translate the dialogues. The strategies adopted as theoretical basis here are Venuti’s dichotomy of domesticating and foreignising.

As adapted versions of the Chinese novel, McHugh and Wang’s versions for the passages in question are mostly unavailable. From what we do have access to, which is mainly from the complete versions of the novel, that is, Hawkes, the Yangs and Joly, it is found that the degree of interpersonal equivalence of a TT is closely related to the translating strategy a translator adopts. Specifically, if a domesticating strategy is used to cope with the ST tenor-registering titles and honorifics, we are most likely to see a version that is full of personal pronouns in place of the ST’s titles and honorifics. While such a translation reads fluently and looks crystal-clear as to who the referents are, it filters out the exotic features of the Chinese politeness where social distance and power are conspicuously marked. Of the English versions of *Hong Lou Meng*, Hawkes’ work undoubtedly falls into this type of translation. By contrast, if a translator is inclined towards a translation that reproduces and represents not only the communicative message, but also the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the ST, s/he would adopt foreignising as the over-riding strategy for his/her task. While high interpersonal equivalence is achieved in such translations, compromises have to be made to secure the intelligibility of the TT. Under such circumstances, help will be drawn from domesticating solutions. While both the Yangs’ and Joly’s versions pertain to this category of translation, Joly, by retaining more of the ST titles and honorifics in a more skilful manner, generally acquires higher interpersonal equivalence. The above findings support my argument for the adoption of foreignising as a mainstream rather than an exclusive strategy in translating foreign literary works.

## NOTES

1. The standard 120 chapter Chinese classic is a combination of eighty chapters of what has been deemed Cao Xue-qin's (1724-1764) original manuscript entitled 《石头记》 “*The Story of the Stone*” and forty chapters of continuation believed to be written by Gao E when the novel was first published in 1791-92.
2. The five English versions are, in the order of their publication: (1) Joly, H. Bencraft (1892-1893), (2) Wang, Chi-chen (1958), (3) McHugh, Florence and Isabel McHugh (1958), (4) Hawkes, David and John Minford (1973-1986), and (5) Yang, Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (1978-1980). Of them, Joly's is an uncompleted translation of the first 56 chapters, both Wang and the McHugh sisters' are adapted translations of the 120 chapter novel. Only Hawkes (and Minford) and the Yangs' translations are complete 120 chapter productions.
3. The ideational function of text is concerned with the mapping of “reality” of the world around us, i.e., who is doing what, when, where, why and how. It reflects differences in field, another variable of register.
4. As will be seen below, Hawkes employs transliteration, by means of *pinyin*, the standard Chinese spelling system, to render the names of the masters and officials in the novel, but gives semantic translations to the names of all servants. While both Joly and the Yangs adopt the Wade system for all the characters in a systematic way, the Yangs' spelling can only be seen as quasi-Wade, since some symbols in spellings such as ‘uang and ü are dropped. In Wang and McHugh it is another story: they transliterate the names of male characters, but semantically translate most of the female names, both masters and servants alike. Wang, however, “depart[s] from the accepted system of transliteration in a number of instances in order to avoid confusing the general reader” (Wang 1958: xviii).
5. This addition seems unfaithful to the parallel Chinese passage cited. However, given the fact that their version is based upon the German adaptation of the Chinese novel, the McHugh sisters should not be held as responsible here.
6. This error can be determined from the preceding context where Jia Rong's father Jia Zhen welcomes the arrival of the doctor. In their dialogue there, Jia Zhen addresses the doctor with 先生 (the same term as his son uses), and refers to himself as 小弟 (the same one as the doctor uses when he later interacts with Jia Rong). The doctor, in return, addresses the senior host as 大人 “Your Lordship” (since the addressee holds an official position) but prostrates himself as 晚生 “born later (than you)” or “your junior or student.” Therefore, the doctor's title of honour 大爷 applies to his immediate hearer Jia Rong, rather than his father. However, the Yangs are not the only ones who misinterpret the term. Joy, too, makes the same error by rendering it more implicitly as “your honourable father.”
7. This observation is primarily made with reference to their renditions of titles. For Wang, he adopts a consistent foreignising strategy, transliterating, with literary explanations in footnotes, the titles 太爷 (“grand sire”) as *Tai-yeh*, 老爷 (“old grand sire”) as *Lao-yeh*, 太老爷 (“grand old sire”) as *Tai Lao-yeh*, 太太 (“lady”) as *Tai-tai*, 老太太 (“old lady”) as *Lao Tao-tai*, 奶奶 (“mistress”) as *Nai-nai*, 姑娘 (“younger girl”) as *Ku-niang*, etc. The McHugh sisters, however, transliterate 太太 (“lady”) as *Tai tai*, 老太太 (“old lady”) as *the old Tao tai*, but translate other titles semantically, i.e., in a domesticating way.

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