

A Comparative Study of Wording in *Hong Lou Meng*

A Case Study of Yuan Chun's Family Reunion

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Abstract—The study of two translated versions of *Hong Lou Meng*, namely David Hawks' *The Story of the Stone* and Yang Xianyi's *A Dream of Red Mansions*, flourished after the 1970s. Much emphasis was put on their different translating skills. Considering translating skills, David Hawks' translation has the predilection for the domestication while Yang Xianyi's translation tends to foreignization or literal translation. Although they come out nearly at the same time, David's version wins more spotlight among the target reader because his version is more loyal to the reader while the Yang's version keeps more fidelity to the author (cf, Dang: 2012: 3). In this essay, the author will analyze the difference in the wording in the chapter of *Yuan Chun's family reunion* to consolidate Hawks' "three loyalties principle" in translation: A translator has divided loyalties. He has a duty to his author, a duty to his reader and a duty to the text (Hawks: 1973: 20). In the first part, the author will discuss their different strategies and the potential reasons that contribute to such disparity. In the second part, based on their different translating skills, this essay will make a comparative study of wording in *Yuan Chun's Family Reunion*, including some verbs and noun phrase, the appellation translation, such as the kinterm system, appellation translation between different generations and the appellation translation which implies their different status.

Keywords—translating skills; *Yuan Chun's family reunion*; wording

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Yang Xianyi, the famous translator, it is almost at the same time that David and he started their translations. However, they had little knowledge of this occurrence each other. In Yang's opinion, Hawks' translation is something like English novel. In contrast, he keeps more allegiance to the original text (cf., Dang, 2012: 71). While Hawks has ever referred that in his books: "His one abiding principle has been to translate everything, even puns. Although it is an "unfinished" novel by a great artist with his lifeblood, if he can convey to the reader even a fraction of this Chinese novel it has given him, he shall not lived in vain" (Hawks: 1973: 20). Hawks himself also conforms to his own "three loyalties principle" in translation: A translator has divided loyalties. He has a duty to his author, a duty to his reader and a duty to the text (Hawks: 1973: 20).

After the publication of their translation, much emphasis was put on their different translating skills. Considering translating skills, David Hawks' has the predilection for the

Domestication while the Yang's tends to Foreignization or Literal translation. *Yuan Chun's Family Reunion* involves many Chinese feudal traditions. Therefore, based on different translation skills, a comparative study of wording of this chapter is necessary.

II. DIFFERENCES IN THE STRATEGIES OF TRANSLATION

The "loyalties" in David Hawks' opinion does not merely mean translate literally but also keep allegiance to the art of the source text (Dang, 2012: 64). The disparity of their "loyalties" lies in the fact that Yang keeps "imitating" the original text completely, laying emphasis on translating the contents, expressions and Chinese traditions, irrespective of the target English readers. While David Hawks puts the translator's creativity into full play, adopting the strategies of "Translation as rewriting", attaching more attention to the target reader's better accessibility and understanding of his translation (Dang, 2012: 71).

Such disparity was reflected partly in their different translation strategies: Yang has predilection for "imitating" and Foreignization, while David Hawks has the preference to the Domestication and free translation or translation as rewriting (Dang, 2012: 3). But what is Foreignization and Domestication?

Foreignization is a source culture oriented translation which strives to preserve the foreign flavor as much as possible in order to transfer the source language and culture into the target one. Domestication refers to the target-culture-oriented translation in which unusual expressions to the target culture are exploited and turned into some familiar ones so as to make the translated text intelligible and easy for the target readers (Zhao, 2012: Par5).

In general, numerous foreign translators have predilection for Domestication with the primary objective of making the original text more accessible for the target English readers.

III. POTENTIAL REASONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

Starting simultaneously in the era of 1970s though, Yang and David had different nations and cultural backgrounds. Yang's version came out at the turn of China's great transformation as there is still a great cerebral influence of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution ranging from 1966 to

1976. Furthermore, some rigid and stern Chinese traditional ethic and moral has deeply taken its root in Yang's mind, especially the social feudal hierarchy, which turns out to make his translation quite conservative and inflexible, let alone to add some points and details beyond the original text which makes it more accessible to the foreign readers. While Hawks are Britain-born and Britain-bred, he is more innovative because westerners' pursuit of freedom, equality, philanthropic rooted in their Christian beliefs (Jia, 2012: 125).

On the other hand, translation is defined as a specific activity between two countries of different history and cultural background, translator's different acquaintance with which will have direct influence on their understanding about the original text from another country and their tendency for translating strategies. Hawks' preference for the domestication depends largely on his English identity, which can bridge the cultural gap, increasing the accessibility and acceptability of Ho-Lou Meng abroad (Jia, 2012: 125).

IV. DIFFERENT WORDING IN YUAN CHUN'S FAMILY REUNION

A. Some Verbs and Noun Phrase

Source Text:

若老太太叫你进去,就不得展才了。人人都说,你才那些诗比世人的都强。今儿得了这样的彩头。该赏我们了...众人道:"谁没见那一吊钱!把这荷包赏了罢。说着,一个上来解荷包,那一个就解扇囊,不容分说,将宝玉所佩之物尽行解去...少时袭人倒了茶来,见身边佩物一件无存,因笑道:"带的东西又是那起没脸的东西们解了去了(Gao, 1987: 123).

Yang's version:

Otherwise she'd have sent for you and you wouldn't have had this chance to shine. Everybody said your poems were the best. "Today's your lucky day, so give us a tip"... Swarming round without so much as a "by your leave," they stripped him of his scented pouch, fan-sheath and other pendants...

When presently Xi-Ren handed him tea, she noticed that no one of his pendants was left. "So those shameless wretches have taken all your things again," she remarked with a smile (Yang, 1978: 244).

Hawks' version:

If we hadn't done that, you wouldn't have had the chance to show off your poems, everyone says they were better than all the others. What about sharing your good luck with us... "Who wants a merely string of cash? Give us that little purse you're wearing!" And without a 'by your leave', they began to despoil him. Beginning with the purse and his fan-case..."Where have the things from your belt gone?" she said. "I suppose those worthless pages have taken them again" (Hawks, 1973: 170).

Yang translated "该赏我们了" into "give us a tip", while David translated it into "what about you sharing your good luck with us". Apparently, Yang conforms to his "literal translation", while David complies with his "free translation"

or "translating as rewriting". Tip is paraphrased as "a relatively small amount of money given for services rendered (as by a waiter)". For example, when you have dinner in a restaurant, you give a tip to a waiter who serves you in the restaurant (Hornby, 2008: 2121). Obviously, 'tip' is inappropriate here because the servants just longs for sharing his luck as Baoyu stood out in the poetry- game. Also, the servants asked for scented pouch and pendants rather than money. Therefore, the author hold the philosophy that the David's rewriting is quite good. "Share your luck with us" is a typical example of "translating as rewriting" which can convey to the reader a fraction of the pleasure this Chinese novel has rendered to the Hawks.

David Hawks translated "荷包" into "purse". Here he uses "domestication". It's universally acknowledged that "scented pouch" is indigenous to China. The perfume of which comes from Chinese traditional herbs, the effects of which can refresh and pacify our minds, console our soul. David Hawks uses "purse" to take the place of the "scented pouch". This is the typical example of Domestication and free translation. So far as the author knows, whether it is expedient or not depends on the target-reader.

As for the "没脸的东西", David Hawks translated it into "pages", while Yang translated it into the "shameless wretches". At first, it is necessary to analyze Aroma's tones of speaking. The author holds the philosophy that Aroma did not really get angry. This is just a paradoxical speech. Considering that Aroma is just a maid, she had not been endowed with the right to interfere with the master's business. Also, according to the Oxford's advanced Learner's English-Chinese dictionary, "wretch" means:

(a) a person that you feel sympathy or pity for

(b) (often humorous) an evil, unpleasant or annoying person (Hornby, 2008:2331).

"Page" means:

(a) a student who works as an assistant to a member of US congress.

(b) a boy or young man who worked for a Knight while training to be a knight himself.

Apparently, compared with "page", the "wretches" can fully express the sense of humor in this context, which is more suitable for the Aroma's tones of speech.

Source text:

"因生了这位姑娘自小多病,买了许多替身儿皆不中用,到底这位姑娘亲自入了空门,方才好了,所以带发修行,今年才十八岁,法名妙玉"(Cao, 1987: 124)

Hawks' version:

"As a child she was always ailing and her parents paid for any number of "proxy novices" in the hope that she would get better. But all was of no avail in the end there was nothing for it but for the young lady to take the great step herself - though as a lay sister, without the shaving of hair. And sure enough her illness got better immediate (1973: vol.2, 170).

Yang's version:

There's another girl, too, who had entered holy orders without shaving her head. She comes from a Suzhou family of scholars and officials. She was delicate as a child, and although they bought many substitute novices for her it was no use-her health didn't improve until she joined the Buddhist order herself. That's how she became a lay sister. She's eighteen this year and her name in religion is Miao Yu (1978: 246).

"Proxy" has several meanings in the Oxford Advanced learner's English-Chinese Dictionary:

(a) the authority that you give to sb to do sth for you, when you can not do it yourself.

(b) a person who has been given the authority to represent sb else

(c) something that you use to represent sth else that you trying to measure or calculate (Hornby, 2008: 1597).

Novice:

(a) a person who is new and has little experience in a skill, job or situation

(b) a person who has joined a religious group and is prepared to become a monk or a nun

(c) a horse who has not yet won an important race (Hornby, 2009: 1364).

"Substitute" means:

(a) a person or thing that you use or have instead of the one you normally use or have.

(b) a player who replaces another player in sports game.

These are the whole meaning of proxy and novice on the oxford Advanced learner's English-Chinese Dictionary. David Hawks has his own unique and proper understanding of "替身儿", and he uses the word "proxy", instead of "substitute novice". Since Miao Yu comes of a highly educated official family from Soo-chow. Her parents paid for the novices who have been given the authority to represent Miao Yu. This epitomizes the strict social hierarchy in the ancient Chinese Feudal society. The proxy novice is far better than the "substitute novice" here.

As far as David Hawks is concerned, "translation" is just as "rewriting" rather than "imitating". Here, "到底这位姑娘亲自入了空门" was translated into "there was nothing for it but for the young lady to take the great step herself-though as a lay sister" (Hawks, 1973: vol.2, 170), instead of "her health didn't improve until she joined the Buddhist order herself" (Yang, 1978: 246), which seems to be more similar to the original meaning. Obviously, "take the great step herself" possesses more connotations than Chinese "亲自". However, as far as the author is concerned, "take a great step" epitomizes the Miao Yu's consecration to the Taoist must have been a really hard choice for a ten-year-old girl, the only child from a family of official and scholar (Song, 2010: 243).

B. Appellation Translation

1) *Definition and classification*: Appellation system in Chinese has been mainly divided into two parts: kinterm system and social appellation system. Kinterm system refers to the terms used among family members and relatives, including the peer appellation and the appellation between different generations, while social appellation system refers to the terms indicating the social relationship (Yang, 2004: 12).

2) Kinterm system

a) The peer appellation

Source text:

黛玉见如此，越发气起来，声咽气堵，又汪汪的滚下泪来，拿起荷包来又剪。宝玉见他如此，忙回身抢住，笑道："好妹妹，饶了他罢！"

Yang's version:

Choking with anger Dai-Yu into tears. She picked up the pouch meaning to cut it into pieces as well. But he rushed back to stop her, begging, "Dear cousin, spare it (Yang, 1978: 245)."

Hawks' version:

"come, cuzzy dear!" he said with a laugh. "Have mercy on it" he said with a laugh (Hawks, 1973: vol.2, 169).

Here, David Hawks uses "cuzzy" while Yang uses "cousin". Apparently, Hawks uses the strategy of "domestication" or "free translation". We find that "cuzzy" is the nickname of "cousin". However, it's more colloquial. Here, Bao Yu nicknamed Dai-yu as "cuzzy" instead of "cousin", which epitomizes their close relationship. It is obvious that "cuzzy" is more proper than the "cousin". Yang chose to translate literally which is often called "imitating". David Hawks are for "Free Translation" or "Domestication". If the "cuzzy" here is replaced by the "cousin", how can the English readers get a better understanding of the close relations between the Bao Yu and Dai Yu.

b) The appellation between different generations:

There is a prominent example in the story, the most influential and highly-honored character, the "Lady Jia", lady Dowager or "Grandmother Jia". The author really appreciates David's loyalty and his loyalty, Sometimes, "rewriting" can be one of the best way for the maintenance of reader, author and text, In David Hawks' version, the loyalties to the characters, their personalities, their relations are well combined. The translation of "Grandmother Jia" is one of the best examples. David Hawks calls the one who is the most-aged and honored female in the Rong - Guo "Lady jia". However, in this chapter, he uses "Grandmother jia" more frequently, which, as far as the author is concerned, is much more better than the Lady Dowager in the Yang's version. "Grandmother Jia" suggests the close relationship between the grandmother and grandson.

The source text:

前面贾母一片声找宝玉。众奶娘丫鬟们忙回说："在林姑娘房里呢。"贾母听说道："好，好，好！让他姊妹们一处顽顽罢。才他老子拘

了他这半天，让他开心一会子罢。只别叫他们拌嘴，不许扭了他。”众人答应着。

Hawks' version:

Meanwhile in the front room Grandmother Jia was calling loudly for her beloved grandson.

"Master Bao is in the back with Miss Lin," they told her.

"Ah, good!" said the old lady let us leave them alone together. It will be a nice relaxation for him after the strain of being so long with his father-as long as they don't argue (1973: 169-170).

Yang's version:

Meanwhile the Lady Dowager had been asking where Bao-yu was. Hearing that he was with Dai-yu she said. "That's good. Let them amuse themselves together for a while. He deserves a little relaxation after being kept so long under check by his father. Just see that they don't quarrel. You must not upset him." And to this the servants agreed (Yang, 1978: 246).

These two mini-plots express the grandmother's innate love towards her two young grandchildren. The translation "Grandmother Jia" is more appropriate in this context than the "Lady dowager". One point is that we can easily tell their relationship at a glance. The other point is that it is more harmonious with the human nature.

The "dowager" is paraphrased as:

(a) a woman of high social rank who has a title from her dead husband

(b) an impressive, usually rich, old woman (Hornby, 200: 600).

The "lady Dowager" is just a title conferred by the son-of-heaven, a dry word engraved on the rigid ancient feudal hierarchy, which is a synonym of aristocrat. It cannot convey any other close relations and deep love between the grandparents and grandchildren. In other words, "Grandmother Jia" is a word concerning consanguinity and kinship while the "Lady dowager" can only reflect her family status and social rank.

"Lady dowager" is more proper than the "lady Jia" in other chapters of Hong Lou. The reason has been discussed hereinbefore. However affable and lovable she may seem, "Grandmother Jia" is a widow of a highly-rank husband and she had been conferred by the imperial. In that case, "Grandmother Jia" is a dowager, we'd better translate it as "Lady dowager" rather than just "Lady Jia". Under such circumstance can the target readers have acquaintance with the stern feudal hierarchy system of ancient China and the high social or family status of this old lady more easily.

3) Social appellation system

a) *The name translating*: This is the first time Miao-yu makes her own presence, David Hawks adopts paraphrase in translating the maid's name while Yang adopts transliteration. "Miao-yu" in Yang's version and "Admantina" in Hawk's version is one of the typical

examples (Ru, 2011: 24). Most of the readers and scholars prefer Admantina. On the one hand, Admantina is a Latin word for religious use. Miao-yu is a lay sister, "Admantina" implies her Taoist identity. What is more, this Latin religious word bestows this Taoist girl a classical deposition (Jiang, 2005: 96).

b) *The appellation of social status*: In this chapter, there is an important female character, Yuan-chun, She has been married to the son - of - heaven. It is said that the prototype of Yuan-chun is Cao Yin's elder daughter, Cao Xue Qin's aunt who was one of the concubines of a royal highness (Wang, 2005: para24). Yuan-chun has made her own presence for the first time. David Hawks addressed "Yuan-chun" as "the imperial concubine", while the Yang and Gladys Yang addressed Yuan-chun "the imperial consort".

As a result, the male tends to be more and more important in the social status while the female become subordinate to their husband even one of the possessions for dealing. On the other hand, since Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), the Emperor Wu of Han adopted the Dong Zhong Shu's advice: worship Confucianism alone while abandoning all other schools of thousand. Since then, China gave preeminence to the Confucius theories. Confucius said: "Girl and inferior men are hard to raise. If you get familiar with them, they lose their humility: If you are distant, they resent it."

In the western country, they advocated "monogamy", which rests upon a long history of evolution of human culture directly determined by the nature of human person and inspired by the light of the divine revelation received in a religious experience (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: 6.2.Religious,para,6)...Christ emphasized the primordial beauty of monogamic spousal love described in the Book of Genesis 1:26-31, 2:4-25, whereby a man and woman by their nature are each ready to be a beautifying, total and personal gift to one another (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 6.2. Religious, para 4). Here, this thesis does not make the further study. Look up the dictionary.

The "consort" means the husband or wife of a ruler, while the "concubine" means a woman who lives with a man, often in addition to his wife or wives but who is less important than they are. Therefore, the author can tell which one is better here. David Hawks addressed Yuan-Chun as "imperial concubine", while Yang and Gladys Yang called "Yuan-Chun" as the imperial consort. Maybe you will say it is difficult for the westerners to understand the concept of "concubine" who is a "less-important" wife. The notion of "concubine" is non-existent in their mind. It may seem astonishing for them to accept the fact that "why Yuan-chun is willing to marry to a man without marriage fidelity and why the family can become so happy to celebrate a family re-union for a girl who is just a concubine or less important wife of the royal family."

In conformity to the Western culture and westerner's cognition, David Hawks should have adopted "domestication" translating strategy here. However, it is

obvious David Hawks here keeps allegiance to the author and Chinese culture. He does not always tend to the "Domestication". As far as the author is concerned, David Hawks' "imperial concubine" is far better than the "imperial consort". In the era of the 20th century, the westerners have some acquaintance with the oriental culture. Next, there are so many other countries besides china agreeing with the "polygamy". What is more, does a western woman and man dare to say he or she has never have a secret lover? If so, what did the Lady Chatterley's Lover of D. H. Lawrence come from? Did the Henry VIII separate from the Roman papal just because he wants to get divorced?

V. CONCLUSION

All in all, Hawks' loyalty to the author, reader and source text is quite great a success, making *The Story of the Stone* terribly accessible to the westerners, which will do a good turn to bridge the cultural gap and deal with the cross-cultural conflict between the oriental and the occidental. Both *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *The Story of a Stone* have reached their acme. In the chapter of Yuan-chun's family reunion, in the most cases, Hawks' loyalty is more congenial to the western readers and the source context. He truly conveys to the westerners a fraction of the pleasure this Chinese novel has given him.

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