Translation Un/Bound: Transnational Ideologies and Orientalist Forms in Modernist Poetry, 1895-1955

by

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Abstract

Translation Un/Bound discovers the centrality of "translation," construed broadly as a set of transpositional practices from interlingual rendering to cross-cultural adaptation, to the ideological intent and implications of early twentieth-century English poetry. It traces a range of agendas at work in what it terms modernist "political poetry" composed in "Orientalist forms" derived from East Asian materials, in some instances shoring up nationalist and totalitarian imaginaries, in others lending itself to dissident and feminist critique. Translation is examined as an organizing logic of modernist formal invention and as a practice through which transnationalism and Orientalism entered into ideological contestation across four genres: epic, lyric sequence, verse drama, and Poetess poetry.

Attending to both the peril and possibility of this appropriative practice, *Translation Un/Bound* argues that these "Orientalist forms" met divergent needs of ideological reassessment and intervention in English poetry's widened domain of discursive ambition and sociocultural reach after the fin-de-siècle. Ezra Pound's sinological historiography in "Section: Rock-Drill" elaborated an autocratic fantasy of cultural governance; Helen Waddell's retranslation of the Confucian Odes in *Lyrics from the Chinese* voiced a suffragist resistance to state violence; W. B. Yeats refashioned Japanese Noh theatre for a eugenic aesthetic of tragedy in *Purgatory*; and Amy Lowell, along with other American women poets including Mary Fenollosa and Adelaide Crapsey, cultivated a Japonisme-inspired lyricism that strains against the inheritances of literary nationalism and the imperialist tradition of Orientalism.

Translation Un/Bound resists the habitual romanticization of transnational practice as an intrinsically progressive mode of cultural diplomacy, proposing instead that these modernist uses of East Asia constituted ideologically consequential acts of self-revision in Western poetry. It reconsiders "modernist translation," long notorious for its infidelities, as a dialectical practice in which the imaginative reconstruction of the Eastern "other" folds back into and shapes the making of a Western "self." Taken at once interlingually, transculturally, and metaphorically, translation writ large marks a contested arena where collective and individual identities were newly contemplated across national, transnational, and supranational horizons, and where claims to cultural legitimacy and literary authority were formally negotiated in modernist poetry.

Introduction:
Political Poetry in Orientalist Form

> The blossoms of the apricot / blow from the east to the west, / And I have tried to keep them from falling
>
> —Ezra Pound, Canto XIII

> . . . history is made by men and women, just as it can also be unmade and rewritten, always with various silences and elisions, always with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated, so that "our" East, "our" Orient become "ours" to possess and direct.
>
> —Edward Said, *Orientalism*

> The translation zone is a war zone.
>
> —Emily Apter, *The Translation Zone*

When Ezra Pound imagines himself catching apricot blossoms drifting westward, he rehearses a familiar idyll of cross-cultural circulation shared by modernist writers and translators from Laurence Binyon and Arthur Waley to W. B. Yeats and Amy Lowell: an East that wafts, as if by nature's breath, into the orbit of the West. In Canto XIII, this fantasy is enacted through a doubled lyric "I," where the Confucian utterance Pound cites, at once quotation and ventriloquism, licenses his assumption of a Chinese mantle, that of a modernist sage who would steward a classical heritage toward renewal, who would "keep Confucian thought alive and flowing from the Orient to the Occident."[1] This imagined custodianship, a "conscious renovation of learning," takes its bearings from what Pound would later define as "paideuma," the living,

[1] Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 60. Canto XIII, first published in *A Draft of XVI Cantos* (1925), marks Pound's first extended engagement with Confucian materials in the epic. See also Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 64. The image of the "blossoms of the apricot" draws on Chapter 31 of the *Zhuangzi*, which opens with Confucius resting at the Apricot Altar, a site traditionally associated with his teaching.

canon-forming essence of a civilization, conceived as an inheritance requiring recovery and curation by perceptive minds such as his own.[2] "Paideuma" bears, from its inception, a latent political valence that sutures a project of cultural regeneration to the logic of authoritarian rule. Pound invokes it in *Guide to Kulchur* alongside praise of the "genius of Mussolini," who, he notes approvingly, "told his people that poetry is a necessity to the state," a remark offered as evidence of "a higher state of civilization."[3] There, Pound performs his characteristic slippage from aesthetic totality to political totalitarianism, deploying "totalitarian" as a term of approbation that brings together, unsettlingly, the nation state ("achievements of the totalitarian states"), an absolutized notion of poetry ("poetry is totalitarian in any confrontation with prose"), and Confucian doctrine ("Kung is superior to Aristotle by totalitarian instinct").[4] In retrospect, the fictional ease of Pound's gesture in Canto XIII, his performative suspension of the "Oriental" blossoms mid-air, reads more as an idealized image of selective preservation in the service of his "New Paideuma." A cipher for the simultaneous reinvention and repression of cultural difference, Pound's lyrical image romanticizes what Edward Said identifies as the enabling logic of Orientalism, whereby otherness is rendered available as an indefinitely rewritable discursive construct, "with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated."[5] The ideational editing that makes possible the idyllic surface of Pound's imagination resembles the work of ideology itself in Fredric Jameson's terms, an aestheticizing and obscuring by way of a "preliminary preparation of the raw material such that certain questions will never arise in the first place," which circumscribes critical attention outside the "cave" of lyrical innocence it would otherwise illuminate.[6]

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[2] Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (New York: New Directions, 1970), 58. First published in 1938, *Guide to Kulchur* belongs to Pound's interwar phase of writing and articulates "paideuma" as a principle of cultural regeneration closely aligned with his admiration for Mussolini's regime. This formulation provides the groundwork for the Confucian-authoritarian synthesis Pound develops more fully in "Section: Rock-Drill," as shown in the first chapter of this dissertation.

[3] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 186, 249.

[4] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 121, 167, 279.

[5] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), xviii. See especially the "Preface to the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition," where Said reflects on the book's critical reception and political afterlife.

[6] Fredric R. Jameson, "Beyond the Cave: Demystifying the Ideology of Modernism," *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 8.1 (Spring 1975): 5.

To follow instead Emily Apter's insistently inverse characterization of translation as an unpoetic "war zone,"[7] then, is to bring into view the circuits of ideological legitimation naturalized by romanticizing postures such as Pound's. This dissertation proposes that many such acts of carrying-across transpired in a contested historical field, one in which modernist writers reconfigured the terms on which the cultural other, and the imaginaries extrapolated from such otherness, were construed, often by means of literary experiments that presented themselves as neutral vehicles of transmission. The structuring antinomies at issue here—between idealized transcultural mobility and instrumental reduction, between aesthetic transposition and ideological inscription, between the promise of a universal "world literature" and the interpretive violence lodged in its conditions of possibility—underlie the modernist reinventions of East Asia at the center of this dissertation.

Translation Un/Bound takes as its starting premise the centrality of "translation," understood broadly as a spectrum of transpositional activities ranging from interlingual rendering to more speculative forms of cross-cultural reworking, in early twentieth-century Anglophone modernist poetry. Approached in this expanded sense, translation names a heterogeneous field of ideological investments clustered around what the dissertation calls modernist "political poetry" in "Orientalist forms." Such experiments were borrowed, adapted, or strategically mis-rendered from Chinese and Japanese materials, and they proved capable of meeting divergent ends, in some instances shoring up nationalist or totalitarian fantasies of order and authority, in others lending themselves to dissident, feminist, or anti-imperial imaginaries: Ezra Pound's sinological historiography in "Section: Rock-Drill" elaborated an autocratic dream of cultural governance; Helen Waddell's retranslation of the Confucian Odes in *Lyrics from the Chinese* voiced a suffragist resistance to state violence; Yeats refashioned Japanese Noh theatre for a eugenic aesthetic of tragedy in *Purgatory*, his penultimate verse play; and Amy Lowell, along with other American women poets such as Mary Fenollosa and Adelaide Crapsey, cultivated a Japonisme-

[7] Emily Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), xi. Though Apter's study takes its bearings from the terrain of contemporary "language wars" and linguistic imperialism, it advances a critical vigilance toward the consoling rhetoric of cosmopolitan exchange, as well as a view of translation as a scene of frictions and untranslatables, situated in the "epistemological interstices of politics, poetics, logic, cybernetics, linguistics, genetics, media, and environment" (6).

inspired lyricism that strains against both American literary nationalism and the imperialist tradition of Orientalism.

Reassessing the work of canonical male modernists while also restoring eclipsed pieces of their female contemporaries, *Translation Un/Bound* traces ideologically consequential reinventions of East Asia (which are inextricably bound with aesthetically motivated repurposings) across four poetic genres, from the late Victorian period to late modernism: Pound's epic poetry, Waddell's lyric sequence, Yeats's verse drama, and American Poetess verse. These rewriting practices are situated in the longer history of unorthodox translation practices in English poetry, with antecedents in Romantic and Victorian creative renderings and afterlives in later adaptations of "Oriental" materials. I show that modernist experiment in translation, in this context, was a fraught site of ideological meaning-making in English literary culture. Attending to both the peril and the possibility of this appropriative practice, *Translation Un/Bound* discovers that modernist engagements with East Asian materials could serve dissimilar needs of reassessment and intervention, in relation to nationalist, totalitarian, and imperial ideologies, in English poetry's widened domain of discursive authority and sociocultural reach after the fin-de-siècle. Countering the habitual romanticization of transnational practice as an intrinsically progressive mode of cultural diplomacy, this dissertation shows instead that these uses of "Asia" also constituted ideologically consequential acts of self-revision in Western poetry. What comes into view under the name of "modernist translation," long notorious for its infidelities, was a dialectical practice in which the imaginative reconstruction of the cultural "other" folds back into the making of the "self." Understood interlingually, transculturally, and metaphorically at once, translation is shown to be a contested arena where collective and individual identities were newly contemplated across national, transnational, and supranational horizons, and where claims to cultural legitimacy and literary authority were formally negotiated.

By "un/bound translation," which names both the archives through which East Asian materials circulated and the practices by which modernist poets refashioned them, I designate a transpositional phenomenon in which receivers of source material became rewriters who privileged invention over fidelity, reimagining rather than replicating. In such instances, translation functioned as a means of cultural reuse that loosened fragments and elements of source materials from one set of historical and cultural coordinates and redeployed them in

another. Evoking the image of a book unbound, of a contained body of writing detached from its original binding, the phrase emphasizes this unorthodox translation practice as a dynamic event of difference-production and form-making. It is considered an apt metaphor, given that modernist poets frequently treated East Asian materials as portable, excerptable pages whose legibility depended on the new bindings supplied by venues of literary and cultural valuation: anthologies such as *Des Imagistes* and Pound's *Confucius to Cummings*; little magazines such as Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*, where Lowell's "Chinese Written Wall Pictures" appeared;[8] the Irish national theatres that staged Yeats's "Celtic Noh" plays; and institutional spaces such as the British Museum, where Arthur Waley curated Chinese art and where Pound and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska studied Chinese characters from calligraphical works on exhibition.[9] The Shelleyan resonance with *Prometheus Unbound* places "un/bound translation" in a longer genealogy of unorthodox translation and rewriting practices, notably the Romantic and Victorian inheritance of liberatory literary impulses, and a nineteenth-century appetite for creative recomposition that shaped both actual translations and pseudo-Oriental poetry, including Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* and Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. In that tradition, adaptation was often authorized by an aesthetic of exoticism that treated distance from origins as a warrant for imaginative freedom. In the modernist engagements with the "Orient" that this dissertation examines, the afterlife of this logic compels renewed scrutiny of the conditions under which creative departure is valued, as well as of the difficulty (perhaps the impossibility) of regarding a translator's or rewriter's presumed aesthetic sovereignty as separable from its ethical or ideological entailments. The typographical slash in "un/bound," accordingly, marks a double motion of the source materials being at once lost and found in cross-cultural translation, at once selectively forgotten and purposefully reconstituted, in the Janus-faced practice of modernist

[8] See Lowell, "Chinese Written Wall Pictures," *Poetry: A Magazine of Verses Edited by Harriet Monroe*, 13.5 (Feb 1919), 233-242. Several poems from this sequence later appeared in Amy Lowell and Florence Ayscough, *Fir-Flower Tablets* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1921).

[9] See Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry: An Ars Poetica." in *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry: A Critical Edition*, edited by Haun Saussy, Jonathan Stalling, and Lucas Klein (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 59. Pound remarks, "Gaudier-Brzeska sat in my room before he went off to the war. He was able to read the Chinese radicals and many compound signs almost at pleasure. … Nevertheless he had spent only a fortnight in the museum studying the Chinese characters."

rewriting, which could unbind dissident agendas yet also nationalist, eugenic, authoritarian ideologies.

This twofold formulation of "un/bound translation" situates this dissertation in the orbit of, but also enables it to press against, the "transnational turn" in what Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz have termed the "New Modernist Studies."[10] By foregrounding rewriting practices whose significance is not exclusively formal-aesthetic but also ideological, I revisit a familiar premise in transnational modernist scholarship: that transnational practices necessarily transcend national or regional frameworks of thought, an assumption that may itself be understood as a retroactively projected critical optimism indebted to late-twentieth-century globalization.[11] I instead treat transnationalism as a form of mediated (re)writing that produces heterogeneous kinds of ideologically intentional content, both established and emergent ones. The resulting works of literature, as becomes apparent, do not so much become seamless embodiments of particular ideologies as register their pressures and unresolved contradictions. In this sense, *Translation Un/Bound* takes modernist translation as a revealing site of corroboration for Nan Da's critique of the "easy idealism" pervading transnational methodologies,[12] as well as

[10] Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, "The New Modernist Studies," *PMLA* 123.3 (2008): 745. Formal-aesthetic concerns predominate in scholarship on the repurposing of Oriental materials in modernist literature. See, for instance, Zhaoming Qian, *Modernism and Orientalism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995); Yoshinobu Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Christopher Bush, *Ideographic Modernism: China, Writing, Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Robert Kern, *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[11] See, in particular, Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009); and *Poetry in a Global Age* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2020). Although Ramazani's work, often seen as representative of a turn beyond nation-bound literary histories, insists that the global and the national remain "interdependent gyres" (*Poetry in a Global Age*, 20) and that transnational poetics must "straddle nation and world" (*Poetry in a Global Age*, 10) without lapsing into a vacantly globalist model, it continues to privilege a vocabulary of connectivity—the "web[s] of dialogic interconnections" (*A Transnational Poetics*, 49) or "cross-national molecular structure" (*A Transnational Poetics*, 13)—that tends to aestheticize transnational passage by emphasizing relational plenitude over the limits of such crossings. For an incisive critique of Ramazani's tendency to prioritize aesthetic and formalist concerns over the political and material problems of globalization, see Anahid Nersessian, "Global Poetry and Provincial Poetics," *American Literary History* 33.4 (Winter 2021), 823-831.

[12] Nan Z. Da, *Intransitive Encounter: Sino-U.S. Literatures and the Limits of Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 8.

for Josephine Park's protest against the habitual "layering of an emancipatory politics" onto transnational literature.[13]

My first chapter considers Ezra Pound's use of Confucian philosophy and Chinese writing in his creation of a distinctly modernist combination of Orientalism and activist poetry in Canto 85. Pound's pursuit of a universally legible visual poetry relied on a politically motivated appropriation of Chinese script and Confucian thought. In privileging masculinist epiphany and closure over the possibility of multiplicity or dissent, the utopianism of Pound's "paradiso / terrestre" hardened into a totalizing design, marked nonetheless by fissure and contradiction. The hospitable openness of his early internationalism, over time, reverted to an aesthetics and a politics of exclusivity that veer, with perilous clarity, toward fascism.

Pound's case is placed in tension with that of Helen Jane Waddell's *Lyrics from the Chinese*, which the second chapter reads as a feminist practice of "transcreation." Working through Victorian sinology (notably James Legge's scholarship) rather than direct knowledge of Chinese, Waddell rewrote the Chinese odes into taut, urgent lyrics that bring into the open women's utterances once muted by Confucian moralism, and did so in the plural. Performing a masked allegation against the British government's neglect of women's suffrage, her strategic rewriting turned translation from a minor practice into one capable of making room for feminist autonomy and reclamation. Waddell's deliberate "false stitches" as a "mistranslator" enabled a transhistorical possibility of affective solidarity, which offers a feminist alternative to the detached role of facilitation implied in T. S. Eliot's catalysis metaphor.

The remaining two case studies turn to modernist reinventions of Japan. The third chapter examines Yeats's adaptation of a crazed female specter archetype from Japanese Noh theatre in his penultimate verse drama, *Purgatory*. It considers how this figure, imported to support Yeats's theorization of the tragic sublime and seemingly captive in his eugenic and totalitarian imagination, proves instead to be corrosive of that imagination. The Noh-derived specter, in other words, becomes *Purgatory*'s ideological fault line. Most legible as a Nietzschean "Yes-Sayer," she fails to be maneuvered into eugenic vocabularies of pollution and correction, and thus reads as an anti-eugenic ghost whose silent persistence unsettles Yeats's late thinking about how, or whether, life can be purged into order.

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[13] Josephine Park, "The Transnational Turn," *The New Ezra Pound Studies*, edited by Mark Byron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 186.

The final chapter recovers a Japonisme-inspired strand of Poetess verse by early twentieth-century American women poets, including Amy Lowell, Mary Fenollosa, and Adelaide Crapsey. In identifying an "Orientalist lyricism" at work in these Poetess performances, it suggests that the genre's taint of unoriginality, its often-disparaged imitative tendency, was, in these instances, employed as a deliberate strategy, one responsive to the commercial logic of Japonisme, the feminized conventions of nineteenth-century women's poetry, and the pressures of American literary nationalism. These poets' imitations of Japan offered a means of challenging the nationalist imperative that lyric serves as the expression of a singular, internally coherent identity. They also unsettled the imperial tradition of Orientalism dependent on regimes of knowledge regulation. By using Japonisme to trouble the lyric "I" and its fiction of unmediated interiority, they recast the Poetess persona from a cipher of sentimentality into an unexpected source of originality, one in which imitation operates, obliquely and imperceptibly, as intervention.

This dissertation adopts a historical-materialist approach to transcultural appropriation, treating both the borrowing Western "self" and the borrowed Eastern "other" as historical constructions co-produced through the act of appropriation.[14] I deploy a dialectical view in a deliberately non-synthetic sense, specifically against the version advanced by Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa, whose vision of East-West fusion influenced Ezra Pound's and W. B. Yeats's engagements with East Asian materials. Fenollosa imagines the self-other, East-West relation as culminating in a Hegelian synthesis—a redemptive merging of two halves of the same world that promises a transcendent, universalist unity, a "world literature" narrative iterated, in varied forms, by the poets examined here.[15] Rethinking that speculative idealism, I attend instead to the

[14] For an account of why neither the Western "self" nor the Eastern "other" possesses ontological stability, see Said, *Orientalism*. Said argues that both are historical constructions "made up of human effort" (xviii), produced through imaginative geographies that divide the world into "ours" and "theirs" (54). The Orient functions as the Occident's "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (2), while European culture gains "strength and identity" by defining itself against this constructed other (3), a relation sustained through knowledge practices and a "flexible positional superiority" that ensures the West's discursive and political upper hand (7).

[15] For Fenollosa's experience teaching Hegel and German idealism while in Japan as a philosophy professor, see Haun Saussy, "Fenollosa Compounded: A Discrimination," in *Chinese Written Character: A Critical Edition*, 11. Fenollosa's Hegelian worldview finds explicit articulation in "The Coming Fusion of East and West," in *Chinese Written Character: A Critical Edition*, 153-165. For an analysis of Fenollosa's global vision as "a Pacific antithesis to the Mediterranean basin," see Josephine Nock-Hee Park, *Apparitions of Asia: Modernist Form and Asian American Poetics*

historically specific pressures and countervailing imperatives that animate these modernist acts of rewriting. Rather than sublation (*Aufhebung*) into a higher-order unity, the clashing logics and intentions in these literary-cultural formations often remain non-synthetic, non-progressive, and non-teleological, even where the poets themselves pursue overtly teleological aims (more explicitly in Pound and Yeats than in Waddell and others). Take Pound, who borrowed Confucian philosophy to construct a utopian social order, yet found that same borrowed material fracturing the coherence of his political poetry, or Yeats, whose purification experiment in *Purgatory* depended on an imported figure from Noh theatre who strangely resisted incorporation into the eugenic tenet she was meant to serve. In the cases examined here, transcultural borrowing was less a means of synthesis than a passage of exposure through which contradictions internal to these literary productions are inadvertently laid bare. Literary form may work at cross-purposes with ideological expectation, political radicality may coexist with entrenched habits of imperial appropriation, and modernist experiments in female subjectivity, such as those found in the Japonisme poems of Lowell and others, may emerge from incompatible conventions of originality and imitation, expressivity and self-cancellation in women's poetry, held together by the gendered ideologies that render such contradictions difficult to resolve.

Translation Un/Bound therefore insists that ideologies are not seamlessly embodied in literary forms, least of all in the "Orientalist forms" central to this dissertation. Such forms instead constitute a reflective terrain on which ideological intentions and ambitions are contested, negotiated, strained into visibility, and frequently made to fray. The case studies have been selected to illuminate this complex dynamic from four distinct angles, drawing on figures both canonical and obscure, and to foreground moments in which the stakes of transcultural borrowing become especially acute and the ideological complexity of modernism's engagement with cultural difference comes into sharper focus. These instances complicate prevailing accounts of modernist Orientalism that treat cross-cultural borrowing as inherently benign,

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(Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8. Fenollosa's idealism also recalls what Tejaswini Niranjana identifies, in Renaissance translation theory, as the fantasy of a "unity of human consciousness" and a "transcendent impulse of humanism," in *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 61-62.

reparative, or otherwise self-evidently liberatory. I return to these debates in the next section of this introduction.

To set the stage for the chapters that follow, this introduction is organized into four sections. The first, "On Modernist Transnationalism and Internationalism," situates the dissertation in the "transnational turn" and the expanding field of "New Modernist Studies," and revisits the less explored relationship between modernist transnational poetry and politics. It proposes approaching transnationalism as historically situated practices in which national and supranational imaginaries can be reasserted as well as made provisional. The second, "Form, Aesthetics, Politics," explains the dissertation's method as an ideologically attuned formalism. It draws on Marxist aesthetic theory to develop my central claim that these modernist "un/bound translations" became sites of activity for ideological intent. The third surveys key approaches to modernist Orientalism, from influence-focused scholarship to post-Saidian critique and more recent work centered on translation and global circulation. It considers how an expanded notion of translation has been used to access the stakes involved when East Asian materials were taken up as resources for modernist innovation, and how, in this vein, the ideological implications of such transpositional rewriting practices are comparatively underexamined. The final section identifies "mediated retranslation" as a shared convention through which modernist poets approached East Asian materials and places the modernist phase of such practice in a longer genealogy of unorthodox adaptive translations in English poetry. It also lays out methodological considerations for reading archives of mediated retranslation, in relation to questions of indeterminacy and gendered histories of canon formation in modernist literature.

On Modernist Transnationalism and Internationalism

The cases of Waddell, Pound, Yeats, Lowell, and others examined in this dissertation are meant to test a premise that travels too easily with the "transnational turn": the idea that transnational circulation, by virtue of being transnational, necessarily entails greater openness, diminished nationalism, or an expanded cosmopolitan generosity. *Translation Un/Bound* proceeds from the opposite suspicion. Translation and transnational circulation, which Mao and Walkowitz identify as central to the "transnational turn," do not license an image of culture as

free-floating or denationalized mobility.[16] It instead demands closer scrutiny of the "cultural, political, and economic transactions" through which transnational aesthetics are produced and made legible. The question, then, is no longer whether modernism is international or cosmopolitan (a formulation that is now a critical commonplace) but how transnational movement registers at the level of poetry's form (a loaded word I will later unpack), and how form, particularly in its appropriative modes, becomes a site of manifestation for what Dougal McNeill points to as the still insufficiently examined relation between "literary form, political possibility, and social alignment."[17] Modernism's transnational practices, as McNeill points out, bear the mark of modernism's "notoriously contradictory" politics, in which similar or closely related formal innovations could be aligned with vastly divergent projects, such as Bertolt Brecht's socialist commitments versus Eliot's reactionary tendency or Pound's fascist sympathies.[18] These transnational practices are not confined to the Orient alone: Pound's assimilation of Guido Cavalcanti to modernist ideals of "positivism and linguistic precision," for example, accompanies an agenda of cultural restoration that, as Lawrence Venuti notes, simultaneously underwrites "a rabid anti-clericalism and racism."[19]

It is in this sense that *Translation Un/Bound* critically engages the threefold expansion of "New Modernist Studies" in temporal, spatial, and vertical terms, by pressing on an implication that follows from such expansion but is not always fully reckoned.[20] This implication is that if modernist internationalisms could sponsor democratic or progressive projects, they could also consolidate exclusionary or authoritarian ones. Temporally, by tracing case studies from the late Victorian period through late modernism, I emphasize a longue durée, ideologically complex investment in East Asia that crossed conventional boundaries of literary period and was taken up by figures both canonical and marginal, both modernist and protomodernist, including poets more often relegated to the category of not-quite-modernist, such as Adelaide Crapsey. Spatially, I bring a transnational lens to these Orientalist engagements with attention to the localized

[16] Mao and Walkowitz, "New Modernist Studies," 739.
[17] Dougal McNeill, "Postcolonial and Transnational Modernism," in *After Said: Postcolonial Literary Studies in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Bashir Abu-Manneh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 150.
[18] McNeill, "Postcolonial and Transnational Modernism," 150.
[19] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 190.
[20] Mao and Walkowitz, "New Modernist Studies," 737-738.

historical and political contexts from which they arose, such as Pound's expatriate career, Yeats's involvement in the Celtic Revival and Irish nationalism, and Waddell's interventions as an Ulster woman writer protesting the British state's neglect of suffragism. Along the vertical axis of modernist cultural production, I read together practices routinely coded as "high" Orientalism (Pound's use of Confucius and Yeats's engagement with Noh) with the work of women poets whose writing has often been dismissed as feminine, middlebrow, or regressively Victorian. This makes visible "un/bound translation" as a phenomenon operating across both elite and popular modes of transcultural rewriting. Taking seriously Paul Saint-Amour's observation that modernism has become "a strong field—populous, varied, generative, self-transforming—in proportion as it has relaxed its definitions of modernism," and resisting older narratives captivated by "muscular idol smashing and warrior masculinity,"[21] my dissertation treats "weaker" genres such as middlebrow lyric, Poetess verse, and the gendered rewriting practices of figures like Waddell and Lowell as central rather than peripheral to the history of modernist Orientalism.

Although this is a dissertation about transnational modernism, it is equally about the nation's haunting of, and its afterlife in, transnational practices. These poets' acts of "un/bound translation" enabled a diverse range of ideological work. They underwrote new or recalibrated claims to national and supranational authority (as in Pound and Yeats, and, in a different register, Waddell), facilitated escape from provincial or constraining identities (most notably in Waddell's feminist appropriations of the Confucian Odes), or made possible the strategic suspension of stable identification altogether, as in the deliberately self-effacing, mimetic subjectivity cultivated in the Japonisme poems of Lowell and others. In Benedict Anderson's terms, Pound and Yeats performed something akin to "official nationalism," binding authoritarian or ethno-nationalist visions to traditions of cultural prestige associated with "dynastic power," albeit through the mediation of foreign traditions such as Confucianism and Noh.[22] Waddell and Lowell, on the other hand, enacted something closer to "vernacular" or feminist counter-nationalisms. What may be described as their acts of "cultural translation" frequently shade into transcreation, and that zone of slippage is where we can observe the ideological intention and

[21] Paul K. Saint-Amour, "Weak Theory, Weak Modernism," *Modernism/modernity* 25.3 (September 2018), 441.
[22] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 83-86.

consequences of such literary reinvention. Alongside modernism's "transnational turn," scholarship has increasingly noted the "heteroreferentiality" of national cultures and literatures, the proposition that nations emerge from constitutive relations to what is imagined as foreign.[23] I similarly treat the "transnational" as a root condition of cultural formation rather than as a derivative or supplementary category that presupposes the prior coherence and self-sufficiency of ideas about the nation. As Laura Doyle argues in "Transnational History at Our Backs," transnational processes of movement and encounter, their "migrations, economies, and impulses," constituted the "shuttling activity" that preceded and enabled modern constructions of national identity rather than issuing from them.[24] The "transnational" is best understood as a relational field that does not necessarily transcend the national yet is not subsidiary to it either. Attention to the nebulous category of "transnational poetry" thus necessitates attention to the concrete processes of circulation and rewriting, to the ways poetry variously wrestles with or complicates monologic ideological narratives or projects of nationalist consolidation.

The significance of "trans-" studies in modernism lies not only in tracing the transnational or transcultural movements of writers and texts (in the literal sense of "moving across") but also in theorizing the forms of "carrying across" that define translational, transpositional practices, always in relation to the material conditions of such motion. As Damion Searls puts it, "no translation is either free or faithful" once attention is given to "the figure of the translator—the living, breathing, embodied person making their way through a world that also contains the text they translate."[25] Extending Jessica Berman's argument that the "trans-" in transnational should name not only what moves "across, over, and beyond," but also what "disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates and makes visible" the relation between modernist literature and the nation-state,[26] I read the Orientalist poetry by Pound, Yeats, Waddell, and others as sites where the apparent naturalness of national and civilizational categories became disrupted, revised, but also violently reinstated. Modernist rewritings of East Asia are among the means by which Anglo-American poets imagine "transnations or internations," tilted toward an

[23] Mao and Walkowitz, "New Modernist Studies," 741.
[24] Laura Doyle, "Transnational History at Our Backs: A Long View of Larsen, Woolf, and Queer Racial Subjectivity in Atlantic Modernism," *Modernism/modernity* 13.3 (2006), 532-33.
[25] Damion Searls, *The Philosophy of Translation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2024), 184-185.
[26] Jessica Berman, *Modernist Commitments: Ethics, Politics, and Transnational Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 10-11

Oriental elsewhere that they both construct and hinge their imaginations upon.[27] Indeed, rather than treating transnationalism and translation as discretionary gestures of "reaching out" from one intact cultural tradition toward another, I propose that foreignness was already at work, structurally and a priori, in the notions of selfhood and nation that modernist writers inherited and refashioned. These modernist encounters with East Asia belonged with other such entanglements long misrecognized as marginal but now understood as constitutive. One thinks, for instance, of the transatlantic slave trade, retrospectively legible as the suppressed economic and racial condition of possibility for the domestic moral economies of Jane Austen's novels, or of the argument Virginia Jackson advances in *Before Modernism*, where racialization proves integral to the processes by which "lyric" came to be delimited and stabilized in American poetry.[28] A similar logic can be found in imperialism's systematic forgetting of what Gayatri Spivak names "worlding," the process by which the Third World is produced as a field of "distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English translation," which enabled literary studies as a discipline to expand its "empire" while disavowing the interpretive violence that made such expansion possible.[29]

Taking transnationalism philosophically, Doyle draws on Merleau-Ponty to name intercorporeality as a "dialectical axis of transnationalism," along which the subject appears as "a being of two leaves," at once sentient and sensible, and persistently marked by an "écart"—a "lag, a dehiscence, or slippage," a constitutive "noncoincidence" by which the body never fully meets itself.[30] This doubled, vulnerable condition of human subjectivity, which is the pivot of what Merleau-Ponty calls "existence-in-the-world," is kindred to the contingent constructions of selfhood I have observed in these modernist poets' inhabiting and reinventing of "Oriental" personae. Pound's Confucian sage, Yeats's spectral Noh madwoman, or Lowell's Japonisme Poetess speaker took shape in such chiasmatic structures of identification, where the Western poet's relation to selfhood is opened to and indeed troubled by imagined others who were neither

[27] Laura Doyle, "Toward a Philosophy of Transnationalism," *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 1.1 (2009). http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/T811006941
[28] Virginia Jackson, *Before Modernism: Inventing American Lyric* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2023).
[29] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (Autumn 1985): 243
[30] Doyle, "Toward a Philosophy of Transnationalism."

simply external nor securely assimilable. Read contrapuntally, these ambivalent "un/bound translations" disclose both the habits and patterns by which modernists represented or appropriated the Orient, and the accidental yet arguably inevitable recourse to foreignness in their negotiations with ideals of cosmopolitan universality or national-cultural distinctiveness.

To analyze those operations without collapsing them into either celebration or condemnation calls for a method capacious enough to treat translation as a medium of ideological work. In this regard, I share Rebecca Beasley's view that descriptive translation studies, with its emphasis on the cultural and institutional conditions that shape translators' interventions, provides a useful way of approaching modernist rewritings that often blur the line between transmission and original composition.[31] On this view, modernist translators appear less as benign intermediaries than brokers of power whose acts of carrying-over were also acts of manipulation. Descriptive translation theorists such as Gideon Toury and André Lefevere (the "Manipulation School") supply the foundational provocation that translations are rewritings answerable to historically specific arrangements of patronage, prestige, and ideological constraint.[32] Hence Toury's argument that translations must be treated empirically as "facts of a 'target' culture," which are "determined first and foremost by considerations originating in the culture that would host it."[33] Yet I also seek to complicate the assumption that rides along with this account, that a translator's agenda will tend, more often than not, to predictably follow the grooves of existing ideologies—a view implied in Lefevere's formulation that "rewriters adapt, manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time."[34] The cases I gather in *Translation Un/Bound* do not sit so comfortably inside this expectation, for their relations to dominant ideologies are various, oftentimes neither straightforward complicity nor explicit resistance, and may at once solicit prevailing terms of thought and unsettle them.

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[31] See Rebecca Beasley, "Modernism's Translations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, edited by Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 551-570.
[32] See, in particular, André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies - and Beyond* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995).
[33] Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 17-20.
[34] Lefevere, *Manipulation of Literary Fame*, 8.

Maria Tymoczko's account of translation as a "cluster concept" offers a way of naming this multiplicity without flattening it prematurely.[35] Descriptive translation studies, she argues, challenge "definitions of translation as a closed and circumscribed concept" by foregrounding cases that show "radical differences from their sources, differences that are not currently tolerated in mainstream definitions of translation."[36] Rewritings, in short, demand to be studied descriptively rather than prescriptively and, crucially for this dissertation, symptomatically, as indices of what a given cultural situation demands translation be, as a historically contingent practice that registers the pressures and desires of the receiving context. This is also where my approach intersects with yet departs from Jahan Ramazani's influential theorization of transnational poetry. In both *A Transnational Poetics* and *Poetry in a Global Age*, Ramazani emphasizes that transnational poetry emerges from "multiple intersecting histories and cultures" and resists methodological nationalism, and that they generate hybrid forms marked by what he calls "cross-cultural knotting," relations that are neither unidirectional nor reducible to a "Foreign Form/Local Content" paradigm.[37] Where I diverge is in reading such "counterdiscursive frictions," in which foreign materials are assimilated "incompletely and disjunctively," less as openings toward reciprocity than as structural effects of mediated retranslation, as symptoms of the ideological investments and political fantasies that motivate the Orientalist forms in question.

Because the archives assembled in this dissertation, as well as existing scholarship on modernist Orientalism more broadly, contain both romanticizing and ideologically self-conscious attitudes toward transnational and transcultural practices, they demand an analytic stance capable of holding such differing and competing interpretive frames. It requires something close to what Fredric Jameson terms "metacommentary," a "historical and dialectical reevaluation of conflicting interpretive methods."[38] On the one hand, for instance, Yunte Huang's concept of "transpacific displacement" yields a useful account of the textual migrations through which

[35] See Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).
[36] Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation*, 60.
[37] See Ramazani, *Poetry in a Global Age*, 9, 11, 119; and Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics*, 12.
[38] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 208.

modernist writers "appropriate, capture, mimic, parody, or revise" cultural otherness.[39] On the other, an approach centered on the aesthetic ambitions of cross-cultural appropriation alone may not fully register the overt and tacit ideological deployments that modernist Orientalism enables in many cases. To think adequately about these migratory literary activities therefore needs, as Berman argues, treating the "transnational" as not merely a descriptive record of cosmopolitan movement or aesthetic influence, but as a critical optic attuned to the "ethical, social, and political domains in which texts arise and circulate."[40] In particular, in complicating the familiar narrative of an "old international modernism" predicated on universalist generosity or cosmopolitan openness,[41] this dissertation argues that such complication is inseparable from the problem of translation itself, in both its literary and cultural senses. As Niranjana reminds us, the "liberal humanist ideology" endorsed by the "civilizing mission of colonialism" persists in discourses of literary criticism, an ideology sustained by notions of "fidelity and betrayal that assumes an unproblematic notion of representation."[42] Put another way, an unquestioned celebration of internationalism may serve less to undo imperial logics than to rehouse and rearticulate them, to offer an ethical alibi secured through gestures of rhetorical inclusion and carefully managed encounters with cultural difference. *Translation Un/Bound* seeks to make visible this doubleness, to trace the ways in which otherness becomes re-situated in new frames of intelligibility and value, where "translation" reveals itself as a mode of use, a practice of capture and containment. The transnational visions produced through such practices therefore have a vexed relation to Anderson's formulation of the nation as an "imagined political community."[43] Contrary to the widely adopted assumption that transnational practices exceed or dissolve national thinking, the cases examined here enact a dialectical process of revision and reinvention, an often uneasy dynamic between the national and the transnational. While Anderson emphasizes a synchronic "communion" grounded in a homogeneous national time, the transnational imaginaries constructed by Pound, Yeats, Waddell, and others are prospective,

[39] Yunte Huang, *Transpacific Displacement: Ethnography, Translation, and Intertextual Travel in Twentieth-Century American Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 3.
[40] Berman, *Modernist Commitments*, 10
[41] Mao and Walkowitz, "New Modernist Studies," 739.
[42] Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 5.
[43] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

oriented toward speculative futures in which alternative versions of nationhood—or alternatives to the nation itself—might be realized.

As I have indicated, when describing this dissertation's approach as dialectical, I do not invoke Fenollosa's Hegelian ideal of the sublation of East-West fusion into a transcendent unity. Doyle's etymological reminder that *dia* means "across, through, and thoroughly," and her account of dialectics as naming both an "oppositional twoness" and the pressure of "several-all-at-once," better captures the historical frictions I have identified in these modernist scenes of translation.[44] The crossings made by the poets in this dissertation—between selfhood and otherness, metropole and periphery, the modernist canon and feminized minor genres—rarely culminate in synthesis. Instead, they produce "un/bound translation," a practice in which the impulse to unfasten texts from originary location coexists with the coercive re-binding of those texts to new ends. Saint-Amour's call to dismantle "strong thought's metanarratives" and the "Hegelo-Marxian models of totality" that have underwritten triumphalist accounts of modernity, gives my refusal of redemptive teleology here an additional rationale.[45] Against the Fenollosan mirage of East-West unity, I seek to emphasize the non-synthetic, internally contradictory, ideologically pressurized dynamics that structure modernist translation writ large. Such a renewed conception of modernist translation and transnationalism allows us to rethink what "internationalism" can mean once it is detached from superficial eclecticism and from the logics of imperialist expansion. As Homi Bhabha observes, the apparent coherence of "homogenous national cultures," or the "organic" continuity of self-contained national traditions, is never a given but continually undone by the "transnational and translational" processes through which modern nationhood itself is produced.[46] A "new internationalism," on Bhabha's account, does not arise through the incremental enlargement of national traditions (an assumption that shadows Anderson's notions of "imagined community" and modernity as "homogeneous empty time") but through forms of cultural production marked by rupture and reorientation, where the grounds of comparison shift away from unified narratives of national progress toward more fragmented, contested sites of political and aesthetic identification. The modernist rewritings I analyze took place on this altered terrain. They both extend modernism's international engagement outward

[44] Doyle, "Toward a Philosophy of Transnationalism."
[45] Saint-Amour, "Weak Theory," 440.
[46] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 7-8.

and Eastward and reveal it as a mode of discontinuous translation, marked by misalignments and strategic reattachments. In this process, poetry became a mediating practice through which the ideological terms governing national and cultural distinctiveness were reassessed.

Form, Aesthetics, Politics

The question of whether these modernist "Orientalist forms" are aesthetic or political is beside the point, insofar as these forms demonstrate the inseparability of these two dimensions that are not dichotomous to begin with. Form, in Adorno's words, is "itself sedimented content," and even the "purest forms" bear the trace of extra-aesthetic practices from which they arise.[47] To read form in this dissertation, accordingly, is to engage what Jameson calls "the ideology of form," to grasp formal patterns and eccentricities of literature as "sedimented content in their own right, as carrying ideological messages of their own,"[48] Taking "form," therefore, as a loaded term with a long and complex literary heritage, the analysis offered in this dissertation is best described as an ideologically attuned formalism, a "politicizing" of formalist reading as taking place in the field of translation.

Because so much is being asked of it, the word "form" itself needs a brief defense. The argument is familiar to us that "form" is a word so overdetermined—as prosodic rules, as placeholders for aesthetic agendas—that it borders on uselessness even when discussing poetry, a genre so constrained by formal demands historically (and modernist poetry routinely marked by the breaking away from these demands). There is far more effort to theorize around proliferating synonyms for "form" (such as "genre" and "style") than to theorize "form" itself, as Marjorie Levinson observes, even in what is known as "new formalism"—which is less a coherent movement than a shared "rededication" with the purpose to "generate commitment to and community around the idea of form."[49] Yet the word's capaciousness does not diminish its resourceful, forceful quality, and indeed its critical force depends on its resourcefulness, its being at once empty and ubiquitous. As Angela Leighton demonstrates in *On Form*, the word's rich

[47] Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 5, 144.
[48] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 99. In the semantic horizon of Marxist interpretation, form is "apprehended as content."
[49] Marjorie Levinson, "What is New Formalism?", *PMLA* 122.2 (March 2007): 561.

genealogy, shaped by Romantic, Victorian, and modernist debates, attests to its ability to register both the material structure and the affective and philosophical pressures in the making and theorizing of poetry.[50] Because "form" is at once "an abstraction from matter, removed and immaterial; but it is also subtly inflected towards matter" and can name both "the finished object, the art form in its completion, or the parts that make up its technical apparatus," it is uniquely equipped to register not only the material and structural organization of poems but also the "arguments about use, purpose, and relevance" and the competing aesthetic and ideological pressures that gather around them, from Kant's demand that "form" bear the burden of "disinterested judgement" to Coleridge's uncanny "forma efformans," where form becomes a living, possessive agent.[51] For Leighton, this semantic volatility—"volatile, evasive yet resilient, surviving the fashions which bring it to prominence and constantly recovering forgotten meanings"—explains why "form has always been a word needed by the arts," namely, its capacity to hold incompatibles together.[52]

With that genealogy in view, I understand the archives in this dissertation as different species of "Orientalist forms" on a spectrum of "un/bound translation" practices. I consider the formal eccentricities of modernist appropriation as symptomatic of the inevitable convergence of aesthetic impulse and ideological intent. Such "Orientalist forms" assume various configurations, with different ideological temperament and consequences: Pound's ideogrammic, visually-driven form of polemical poetry, which conscripts the Chinese character as both a visual logic and a political instrument; Yeats's calibrated borrowings of Noh dramaturgy, which run the gamut from conspicuous borrowing to structurally submerged or even subversive reuse; Waddell's Orientalist transcreation of the Confucian Odes, where lyric sequence becomes a site of affective solidarity and gendered ventriloquism; and for American women poets like Amy Lowell and Mary Fenollosa, the formal repertoire of Poetess poetry—stock prosody, performative mimicry, and a choreographed disappearance of the lyric "I"—takes on an Orientalist facet to produce a relational lyric subjectivity, one that troubles the imperial-nationalist presumption of a monumental, self-sufficient Western interiority. Said's broad distinction—taken up by critics including Homi Bhabha and Vivek Chibber—between latent Orientalism (the durable moral-

[50] Angela Leighton, *On Form: Poetry, Aestheticism, and the Legacy of a Word* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[51] Leighton, *On Form*, 1, 3, 245, 4, 7.
[52] Leighton, *On Form*, 19.

conceptual architecture premised on "unanimity, stability, and durability") and manifest Orientalism (the historically variable repertory of expressed views and knowledges), makes it possible for us to see how formally and ideologically divergent practices may register as manifestly distinct yet participating in a shared latent structure of Orientalism whose authority they variously reproduce or erode.[53]

To recognize these case studies as saturated by both aesthetic and ideological pressures does more than reopen a familiar opposition between form and ideology. Their imbrication instead begs the question of how poetic form itself operates as a medium for and a site of disturbance for ideological work. The critical task concerns less the deterministic presence of external social forces in poetic form than the ways different modes of transcultural appropriation generate equally distinct "Orientalist forms," each defined by a particular constellation of formal peculiarity, aesthetic effect, and ideological intent. Caroline Levine argues in *Forms* that "if the political is a matter of imposing and enforcing boundaries, temporal patterns, and hierarchies on experience, then there is no politics without form."[54] Once the inquiry shifts from whether form participates in ideology to how it does so, it becomes clear that the imported materials in these modernist rewritings carry with them specific ranges of "affordances," to use the term Levine borrows from design theory about shaping raw materials into products, capacities that enable them to serve or unsettle the ideational projects into which they are recruited.[55] In gendered contexts, moreover, ostensibly aesthetic categories such as "form," "femininity," and "impersonality" often acquire ideological weight in various unexpected ways. Countering what she describes as a dominant strain of "later twentieth-century criticism, in which established poetic forms are associated with conservative ideologies, while free verse is aligned with progressive politics," Sara Parker demonstrates that women poets such as Alice Meynell and Michael Field "engage with modernity through form, rather than in spite of form."[56] This engagement operates even at the most literal level of poetic form, as these women writers linger with "established poetic forms—including ballads, blank verse, and rhymed lyrics—over free

[53] See Said, *Orientalism*, 206; Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 102-103; Vivek Chibber, "The Dual Legacy of Orientalism," in *After Said*, edited by Abu-Manneh, 39-40.
[54] Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), 3.
[55] Levine, *Forms*, 6.
[56] Sara Parker, *Form and Modernity in Women's Poetry, 1895–1922* (New York and London: Routledge), 5, 20.

verse," to address "controversial subject matter with contemporary relevance, such as transgressive sexual desire, reproductive rights, pacifism, child loss, adultery, and the fight for suffrage."[57] In my chapters on women poets, Waddell, Lowell, and others exhibit a comparable preference for a combination of traditional formal resources (including balladry, rhymed couplets, and the Poetess repertoire) and ideological investments that are exploratory or reformist rather than conventionally conservative. In modernist translation, moreover, questions of form are also questions of gendered authority. Pound's translational practice, for instance, was "at once a conceptual and a concrete textual strategy" for establishing "proper" gendered roles of poetic production.[58] *Cathay*'s early consolidation of his "deeply sexualized, overtly masculinist conception of literary production" later intensified in *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, where eroticism is affirmed as "a logical precursor to and a driving force behind epic achievement" and thereby a precondition for the political ambition of *The Cantos.*[59]

These cases yield a transnational archive that situates Adorno's account of the autonomous art of modernism in practices of cultural borrowing, where autonomy does not mean art's insulation or withdrawal from social reality but its "double character" to disclose and refract the "unsolved antagonisms of reality" immanent to empirical life, which "return in artworks as immanent problems of form."[60] Adorno already demystifies autonomy as an effect produced through social contradictions rather than outside it, a position that Jameson states less forgivingly as "an illusion of autonomy."[61] History, as Jameson claims more radically, is an "absent cause," which is "inaccessible to us except in textual form" and apprehensible only through "its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious," such that the history at stake in literary criticism can be said to reside in literature itself.[62] Terry Eagleton specifies such immanence by arguing that a literary text produces ideology (which is itself a production) in a way analogous to the operations of "dramatic production on dramatic text."[63] Each text, as

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[57] Parker, *Form and Modernity*, 4-5.
[58] See Steven Yao, *Translation and the Languages of Modernism: Gender, Politics, Language* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 78.
[59] Yao, *Translation and the Languages of Modernism*, 28, 56.
[60] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 5-6.
[61] Jameson, "Beyond the Cave," 2.
[62] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 35.
[63] Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: Verso, 1978), 68-69.

Eagleton puts it in *Criticism and Ideology*, "encodes within itself its own ideology of how, by whom and for whom it was produced."[64] To approach form as a locus of ideological production is to recognize, as Marxist criticism has long maintained, that aesthetic structures organize political imagination no less than they shape our empirical experience. In modernity, the aesthetic becomes a historically constructed mechanism for regulating subjectivity and political feeling: literary form materializes and condenses historically specific combinations of "productive modes, social relations, ethical, political and aesthetic ideologies," configurations that have been subsumed under the "empty anthropological abstraction of 'culture.'"[65] The literary text therefore cannot be assumed to be transparently self-identical:

> … the text's relation to itself is problematical because it is simultaneously a relation to certain ideological problems. The text is thus never at one with itself, for if it were it would have absolutely nothing to say. It is, rather, a process of becoming at one with itself—an attempt to overcome the problem of itself, a problem produced by the fact that the text itself is the production, rather than reflection, of an ideological "solution."[66]

To attend to poetry, a genre evaded by Marxist criticism from Georg Lukacs to Raymond Williams (who focused on novel and drama), is to confront what Eagleton calls "the most searching test of a Marxist or para-Marxist criticism accustomed to dealing in structural generalities and historical abstractions."[67] The Orientalist poems concerning this dissertation further complicate that test, for they took shape in a "translation zone," where cultural difference was actively repurposed to meet various ideological sensibilities and orientations. Instead of floating above ideology, such transnational poetry arising from "un/bound translations" makes ideology's contradictions unusually palpable and available to close reading.

The term ideology, and by extension, "transnational ideology" in this dissertation's title, also needs clarification. From the vast Marxist heritage (or baggage) it comes with, which runs through Louis Althusser, Williams, and Jameson, and others, I extract a broad working distinction between two interlocking categories of ideology. On the one hand are macro-ideologies of nationhood that both shape and are shaped by literature, such as Romantic nationalism, Victorian imperialism, and their twentieth-century afterlives. On the other hand are correlative formations of selfhood articulated as norms of individual identity, such as what may

[64] Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 48.
[65] Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 26.
[66] Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 89.
[67] Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 36.

be retrospectively and provisionally generalized as Renaissance individualism, Romantic expressivity, Victorian moral subjectivity, and other related configurations through which individual interiority is routed into and constrained by broader cultural or national consciousnesses. I benefit from Althusser's understanding of ideology as at once spectral and concrete, diffuse and material, a "ghost" in the self-perpetuating machinery of capitalism and a set of institutionalized practices (such as the ideological state apparatuses) through which social relations are reproduced.[68] Crucially, ideology is not reducible to "false consciousness," as in the intellectuals and the masses misrecognizing what is disseminated. What appears as silence or acquiescence may register anything from misapprehension to lucid pessimism about the limits of one's capacity to act or react. It includes, too, the affective conditions that make action feel thinkable or foreclosed, such as exhaustion, fervor, exhilaration, rancor, resignation—which I call attention to as "affective evidence" later in this section.

What matters for my purposes is that Pound, Yeats, Waddell, and others were all intellectuals reacting to and participating in the dissemination and creation of ideological formations. Gramsci's distinction between types of intellectuals and their different relations to institutions and social groups offers a useful, if somewhat rigid, way to frame these positions.[69] Yeats, who served in the Irish Senate and participated directly in state politics, can be read through Gramsci's category of the "traditional" intellectuals, who hold administrative roles in political institutions and tend to be apologists for these establishments even when seeking reform, and whose cultural authority is intertwined with and often legitimates existing structures of power. Pound, though never formally installed in such a role, repeatedly sought proximity to state authority, insisting on counseling Mussolini while in Italy and sending confounding letters to advise Roosevelt on American economic policy. Gramsci's "organic intellectual," by contrast, is less a fixed sociological description than a hopeful vision or a critical aspiration, a type of figure wary of institutional power, arising from and living to articulate the need of particular social groups through public activity, a class of specialists who aspire toward reform. Gramsci's taxonomy is helpful insofar as it sharpens our view of how the modernists poets considered here at once inhabit and confound these categories, and how, coming from different class

[68] See Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (London and New York: Verso, 2014).
[69] See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From The Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 5-23.

backgrounds, these figures bear correspondingly complex relations to institutional establishments. Their positions and affiliations (Waddell's academic career, Lowell's patrician New England inheritance) situate them in different strata of authority, yet the work they produce can exceed or contradict the interests those strata might be expected to sponsor. The disjunction between the social worlds they come from, the constituencies they imagine, and the publics they actually address proves consequential for the operation of their "Orientalist forms" in question. Pound, notoriously, can presume to speak for humanity even at the height of his antisemitism, to channel a universalist rhetoric into a theocratic and authoritarian scheme. Culture, as Raymond Williams's critique of base-superstructure reductionism insists, matters centrally to the gaining of consent, to the circulation and naturalization of ideology. The suffragist predilection of Waddell's Confucian transcreations can be read, in this sense, as a literary intervention into British debates over women's enfranchisement.

Immanuel Wallerstein's historical-materialist account of culture as the "ideological battleground of the modern world-system" offers an additionally useful way to read modernist "un/bound translation" as a practice of symbolic accumulation.[70] Metropolitan poet-intellectuals such as Pound and Yeats can be seen as converting materials coded as peripheral or foreign into cultural capital that can legitimize new claims of literary and ideological authority. Chinese classics and Japanese theatre, for them, become resources that can be redeployed and recontextualized in Euro-American literary economies. At the same time, these cases also resist a simple cartography of center and periphery. Japan's status as an emergent imperial power, China's semi-colonial predicament, and Ireland's ambiguous place in British imperial structures trouble any straightforward mapping of core, semi-periphery, and marginal nation spaces. The world-system is indeed not a static backdrop but a contested horizon in which formations of cultural authority and national identity are mutually reconfigured, sometimes in directions that reverse the expected vectors of influence. Recent work such as Xiaomei Chen's *Occidentalism* underscores this reversibility,[71] and, methodologically, as Doyle contends in "Toward a Philosophy of Transnationalism," the value of a transnational frame lies in recognizing the "implicitly other-oriented interactions between and among nations," which makes

[70] Immanuel Wallerstein, "Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 7.2-3 (June 1990), 31-55.
[71] See Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

transnationalism "mutually shaping and mutually contingent."[72] Put differently, these modernist translation practices can be understood as symptomatic of a capitalist literary world-system in which cultural capital is accumulated and redistributed by Western poet-intellectuals. If, as Wallerstein outlines, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked a transition from competitive to monopolistic or imperial modes of capitalism, accompanied by intensified cultural rationalization, then the shift from Victorian translations of Eastern materials (such as FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát*) to modernist experimental rewritings with more explicit political freight registers can be read as an ideological reorganization, driven by newly sharpened anxieties over cultural authority in a multipolar world-system.

It would be overstated, of course, to claim that modernist poets ever fully occupied the role of cultural managers, let alone ideologues, in the capitalist world-system, given that their ambitions toward such authority were intermittent, aspirational, and often thwarted. Yet Pound's crusade against usury, Yeats's preoccupation with Ireland's political reform, Waddell's involvement in early twentieth-century feminism indeed testify to the persistence with which these poets imagined a poetry capable of intervening in the material arrangements of the world. What they discovered, more often than not, was poetry's resistance to such ambitions, its reluctance to function as a direct or efficacious instrument of social change. With varying degrees of disillusionment and suspicion toward literature's potential heroism, Yeats, Pound, Waddell, and others arrived at their own versions of the recognition that W. H. Auden would give voice to in his elegy for Yeats, memorably and bleakly, in the line that "poetry makes nothing happen." Yet that frustration did not cancel the search for ways of ideological work both in and beyond poetry's reach and limits, as these poets carried forward, if only obliquely (such as Yeats, who increasingly turned to actual political work in the Irish senate), the residue of unfulfilled ambitions in alternative and adjacent forms. As shown in the Pound chapter, the much remarked "non-story" of *The Cantos*, its notorious incoherence and incompletion, may be read less as the record of Pound's personal or political shipwreck than as the poem's inadvertent witness to structural contradictions it cannot bring to heel, between totalitarian longings and cosmopolitan openness, between universalist pronouncements and the exclusionary elitism on which that universality covertly relies. To stay with this "non-story," rather than redeem it into coherence or dismiss it as failure, is to refuse the consoling binary in which poetry either

[72] Doyle, "Toward a Philosophy of Transnationalism."

decisively "makes something happen" or else evaporates into inconsequence. It is, indeed, to linger with the "fracturedness" that Adorno identifies as the generative "enigma of artworks," their "failure with regard to their own element of rationality," without forcing that failure into a narrative of resolution or coherence.[73] In Levinson's terms, it is to preserve artwork's irreducible "complexity" (which new formalism deems its leitmotif) and thus the "deep challenge" it can pose to ideology and to the "flattening, routinizing, absorptive effects associated with ideological regimes."[74]

One significant question to follow, then, would be how such "complexity," or difficulty (which has become a signature description of modernist literature), became subsequently interpreted and valued in relation to the literary canon. Canonization, as John Guillory's post-Marxist analysis in *Cultural Capital* helps us see, is a process of mediation between the institutional valorization of value and the complex work of literary form.[75] Guillory, drawing on Bourdieu, foregrounds a basic material fact often obscured by appeals to intrinsic literary value, namely that the circulation of literary works—whether by Pound and Yeats or by figures whose presence has thinned in literary history such as Amy Lowell and Helen Waddell—largely depends on the extent to which they are taken up for institutional and pedagogical purposes, their formal features rendered exemplary insofar as they can be made to support the shifting disciplinary standards of literary study. The canon, in this sense, does not simply reflect value but distributes cultural capital by selecting and stratifying, by naturalizing certain formal-ideological configurations while consigning others to the margins as minor, derivative, or productions of a literary "period" or "sphere" (such as the fate of Poetess poetry). This is where, I add, translation writ large becomes legible as an instrument of canon formation. As Lefevere emphasizes, "rewriting in all its forms" is central to "the process resulting in the acceptance or rejection, canonization or noncanonization of literary works," a process always embroiled in

[73] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 126-127.
[74] Levinson, "What is New Formalism?", 560.
[75] John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 134-175. T. S. Eliot's intention to reform the canon through criticism (in "Tradition and Individual Talent," most famously), for instance, supplies a rationale for enshrining difficulty and an impersonal ideal of form; but, as Guillory insists, the efficacy of that rationale lies less in its doctrinal propositions than in its institutional uptake, its conversion into anthologies, syllabi, and the pedagogical habitus of "close reading" (141).

"issues such as power, ideology, institution, and manipulation."[76] In particular, by reframing translation as a mechanism for the accumulation and circulation of literary capital, Pascale Casanova shows how translation functions as a historically enabling practice of cross-cultural use and re-use, often "'nationalizing' the great universal texts which are recognized as universal capital in the literary universe."[77] The German Romantics' annexationist "program of translation," for example, demonstrates how literary traditions consolidate authority by importing and reworking prestigious foreign materials.[78] It is in a similar sense that the modernist cases I examine used translation writ large as a strategic mode of cultural positioning, their adaptations and repurposings of East Asian sources operating as deliberate acts of rewriting through which ideological and aesthetic capital is produced and circulated in English literature.

The differing fates and receptions of Pound, Yeats, Waddell, and Lowell's Orientalist experiments in literary history can be seen as evidence of the differential incorporation of their "un/bound translations" into the circuits of cultural capital in relation to the formation of the modernist canon, where formal innovation, cultural borrowing, and institutional legitimation together participated, fruitfully or obstructively, in the making and unmaking of literary "value." The concrete infrastructures of such circulation, in particular, made a difference. Those Orientalist poems were ushered into view by a variety of venues—prestigious presses, modernist little magazines, Victorian popular periodicals, self-published volumes, posthumous collections, and even radio broadcasts. *Purgatory*, for instance, first appeared in Yeats's polemical pamphlet *On the Boiler* and bent toward his rhetoric of nationalism and eugenic "purification." Waddell's *Lyrics from the Chinese* was issued by the same publisher that later printed Arthur Waley's highly successful *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems*. Waley's volume may be seen as absorbing or muting Waddell's feminist aims in an already institutionalized market for Chinese translation, one that privileged the authority of professional sinologists (yet with the telling exception of the disruptive intervention of Pound's *Cathay*). Pound composed *The Cantos* over decades through serial revision and reassembling, with fragments and offshoots circulating even through his radio broadcasts from Italy, where the Confucian maxims he was studying were increasingly recruited into openly authoritarian address. Amy Lowell's Japan-themed "Guns as

[76] Lefevere, *Manipulation of Literary Fame*, 2.
[77] Pascale Casanova, "Consecration and Accumulation of Literary Capital," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited by Lawrence Venuti (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 411.
[78] Casanova, "Consecration and Accumulation," 411-412.

Keys," published in the short-lived *The Seven Arts*,[79] moved through the small readership of the modernist little magazine—an alternative counterpublic sphere unlike the popular and middlebrow press of headlines and "stunts" that Joyce parodies in *Ulysses*.

To return to modernist scholarship here, Jessica Berman and Rebecca Walkowitz offer complementary precedents for what it means to treat literary style and form as politically consequential in the context of global modernisms. For Berman, what she calls political "commitment" does not mark off a separable class of writing opposed to purely aesthetic experiment (if such purity ever exists); it instead names literary work that "knits together aesthetics and the ethicopolitical experience of modernity."[80] Politically engaged narrative is regarded a "constellation of rhetorical actions, attitudes, or aesthetic occasions," responsive to the demands of its historical moment and capable of performing "political intervention."[81] Walkowitz similarly argues for "treating literary style politically" in *Cosmopolitan Style*, where she shows how modernist techniques such as Woolf's strategy of rhetorical evasions, Joyce's use of triviality, or style understood more broadly as "attitude, stance, posture, and consciousness," can carry "specific projects of democratic individualism, on the one hand, and of antifascism or anti-imperialism, on the other."[82] Crucially, Walkowitz insists that such projects are "not always ethical," and that such "critical cosmopolitanism" cannot be pigeonholed as unconditionally progressive or morally unconflicted, as they often "privilege the ability to see and think mistakenly, irreverently, trivially, and momentarily over the necessity to see and think correctly or judgmentally."[83] This invites a mode of reading attentive to what "style" (or "form," to substitute it with my term) enables and forecloses, as well as what it smuggles in, in ideologically committed literature. In other words, the formal means by which texts intervene can just as readily yield ambivalence or complicity as they do critique or emancipation. Susan Stanford Friedman's conception of modernism as the "aesthetic dimension" of modernity understood as a "broad geohistorical condition" sheds further light on why formal innovation becomes such a critical register for tracing the contradictory forces at work in transnational

[79] Amy Lowell, "Guns as Keys, and the Great Gate Swings," *The Seven Arts* (Aug 1917): 428-451.
[80] Berman, *Modernist Commitments*, 26.
[81] Berman, *Modernist Commitments*, 7.
[82] Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 2-6.
[83] Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style*, 18.

cultural production.[84] At the core of modernity, Friedman argues, lies a constitutive tension—its capacity to "enslave or free, shatter or exhilarate, displace or replace, dismantle or reassemble," to be at once "utopian and dystopian"—a tension that finds one of its most concentrated yet inconspicuous expressions in literature's form.[85] These various approaches by Berman, Walkowitz, and Friedman can be seen as responses to a broader methodological imperative in the "New Modernist Studies," to the broader call to analyze "politics as itself," to attend to the political rhetoric and state structures that were part of modernism.[86] Besides treating politics as a coded substrate or in the "thick textures" of history, Mao and Walkowitz emphasize awareness of "confrontations with immediate apparitions of the state" and the "perplexities of sovereignty" in analysis of modernist literature and art.[87] This, I argue, entails revisiting what Eagleton terms "a politics of form," particularly for works positioned against a backdrop of "crisis" or involved in a rhetoric thereof, "almost always bound up with an historical upheaval."[88]

As stated earlier, I also rely on what I call "affective evidence" as a critical entry point into the ideological contradictions at work in the Orientalist poetry of Pound, Yeats, Waddell, and others. Rather than treating what we might distinguish as "ideological content" and "affective content" as separable layers, I take affect—modulated and intensified by literary forms from which it takes its own various shapes—as one of the primary strata in which ideological tension becomes readable, especially at moments where a text is strained, pressured, incoherent, or divided in voice. By "affective evidence" I mean the currents (or undercurrents) that surface in episodes of emotional excess, hesitation, or tonal fracture that bear self-reflexive and self-undoing tendencies in textual and paratextual spaces—such as Pound's abrupt slips into weariness or indifference amid his fervent Confucian didacticism, Yeats's anxious overinsistence on a eugenic poetics that never quite steadies itself, the flashes of vulnerability and pessimism that interrupt Waddell's satirical rhetoric toward patriarchal state power, and the paradoxical withdrawals (which appear as fatigue or recoil) that emerge from the abundance of sentimental outpouring in the Japonisme lyrics of Amy Lowell and other women poets. These aporetic

[84] Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 185.
[85] Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, 4.
[86] Mao and Walkowitz, "New Modernist Studies," 745.
[87] Mao and Walkowitz, "New Modernist Studies," 745.
[88] Terry Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 8.

affective turns complicate what we consider authorship's consistency and generalizability. They show these modernist poets instead as themselves what Adorno calls the "historical subject" through which art necessarily passes, and whose complexity comes from an embattled subjectivity to begin with, an unstable construct of authorial selfhood reflected in the artwork as "self-alienated and concealed."[89] My focus on affect, then, resists rehearsing a potential opposition between the formalist attentiveness to feeling and the alleged historicist indifference to it.[90] I understand such "affective evidence" in terms of an embodied "experience" that is not the antonym to ideology but, as Eagleton suggests, "ideology's homeland," the intimate, easily missed expressions of ideology's contradictions and slippages, manifesting as mood or tone or impulse.[91] This helps avoid two opposite temptations: treating ideology as total so that every textual feature becomes a predictable effect of a determining system, or treating modernist "difficulty" as intrinsically virtuous so that qualities such as fragmentation are granted ideological purity. Reading for the "formal and ethical lineaments of affect," as David James argues, can reveal the "devastating torque" that occurs when narrative or poetic structures are asked to bear more ideological weight than they can sustain. The risk, James reminds us, lies in converting such stress too quickly into virtue, in "sanctify[ing] modernism's enchantment with disenchantment" or mistaking refusals of consolation for inherently progressive gestures.[92]

Reading affective disturbance as evidence of ideological stress is what I consider yet another way of resisting the smoothing tendencies of global modernist narratives in which cross-cultural engagement appears frictionless or uniformly liberatory. The critical compass must widen to include affective experiences that are, as James's account puts it, "negative and reparative, disconsolate and ameliorative," including the incoherent, non-directional effects produced by modernist practices of rewriting.[93] Affect functions here symptomatically, as well as diagnostically. The strange feelings that drift away from and at times back toward alignment

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[89] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 169.
[90] The renewed emphasis on affect by new formalist critics constitutes what Levinson calls "a recoil from what is cast as the arid rationalism," informed by the (mis)conception of "alleged indifference to the cognitive and political dimensions of feeling" by historicist approaches to literature. See Levinson, "What is New Formalism?", 561
[91] Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, 15.
[92] David James, "Affect's Vocabularies: Literature and Feeling after 1890," in *The New Modernist Studies*, edited by Douglas Mao (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 132-135.
[93] James, "Affect's Vocabularies," 132.

with authorial intention, I argue, can cast unexpected light on the ideological stakes of modernist transnationalism and its failures and fissures. In this vein, too, "affective evidence" can open onto what might be called a productive non-synthesis, a refusal of simplistic resolution that nonetheless shows, in Adorno's phrase, how "social antagonisms" can, and always indeed, "shimmer through" literary works.[94] This is why I select for this dissertation the most ideologically saturated instances of rewriting in modernist Orientalist poetry, episodes in which the stakes of transcultural borrowing are most acute, and in which modernism's fraught relation to cultural difference is shown to be an oftentimes conflicted practice of repurposing.[95] To invoke Jameson's metaphor once more, the supposed "autonomy" of modernist art must be pathologically scrutinized if we are to move "beyond the cave," to bring into view literature's ideological and historical embroilments.[96]

Translation and Orientalism in Modernist Studies

Modernist translation more often names an ethos of remaking than a practice of fidelity. The impulse toward retranslation and mistranslation—implicit in T. S. Eliot's dictum that "each generation must translate for itself" and amplified by his oft-cited praise of Pound as "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time"—offers a revealing point of entry into what translation came to mean in early twentieth-century literary culture.[97] Eliot's formulation serves as a fitting epigraph for a broader modernist historicism of "carrying across," understood less as recovery than as refashioning, a backward glance undertaken in order to produce new aesthetic and ideological configurations in the present. The extent to which modernist praxis relied on the generative force of translation and adaptation is visible across many acts of transposition, from Pound's revival of Confucian philosophy and reinvention of the Homeric epic in Pound's *The Cantos* (paralleled, in another genre, by Joyce's reworking of epic form in *Ulysses*) to Yeats's deployment of Celtic traditions and Japanese court theatre in pursuit of a syncretistic idiom for

[94] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 255.
[95] For related but distinct cases, including Eliot's appropriation of minstrel performance as a prototype for his experiments in polyvocality and Pound's deployment of Black dialect in his translation of the Confucian Odes, see Michael North, *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
[96] Jameson, "Beyond the Cave," 1.
[97] T. S. Eliot, "Introduction," in *Selected Poems by Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928), xvi.

Irish nationalism—interventions that find a dissident proto-feminist parallel in H. D.'s palimpsestic reanimations of women figures drawn from Greek mythology. In studies of modernist Orientalism, critics have often observed that the Far East came to function as a surrogate or alternative classicism alongside Greco-Roman models in Euro-American modernism's self-fashioning.[98] Ideas about China and Japan informed a range of cross-cultural literary experiments that coalesced into quintessential "make it new" modernist gestures, as translations and transcreations of East Asian materials drew on the "Oriental" as a "legitimizing force"—a strategy evident in Pound's recourse to Chinese poetry, Yeats's engagement with Noh, and in a later context, Gary Snyder's appeal to Zen Buddhism as a counterweight to the spiritual exhaustion of post-war American capitalism.[99] These gestures extended earlier histories of influence, from the Elizabethan fascination with a putatively universal human experience fostered by expanded routes of cultural contact and Jesuit transmission, to the Romantic-era enthusiasm for translated and paraphrased Oriental literatures. Yet they differed from those precedents in ambition and consequence.[100] It was only in the twentieth century that English-language poetry began to construe its formal, aesthetic, and political possibilities as explicitly entwined with the Far East, as at once a means of thematic enrichment and a generative matrix for rethinking what poetry could do. John Livingston Lowes's remark in 1919 gives succinct

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[98] On translation as a strategy for modernist cultural ambitions through the search for "alternative sources for such enabling models" beyond the Greco-Roman classical tradition, see Yao, *Translation and The Languages of Modernism*, 10. For a discussion of how critical accounts of modernist engagements with Asia have often reproduced the anachronism embedded in these appropriations by treating the "Orient" as static and unchanging, "very like the comparatively fixed classical traditions of Greece and Rome in which the Euro-American modernists were also deeply invested," see Steven Yao, "A Rim with a View: Orientalism, Geography, and the Historiography of Modernism," in *Pacific Rim Modernisms*, edited by Mary Ann Gillies, Helen Sword and Steven Yao (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009), 10. For a description of this dynamic as a "process of classicization," in which the "assimilation of 'Oriental' writing practices proceeded by classicizing works from antiquity, that is, by arranging and establishing them as the core canon and original tradition of a civilization," see Aamir Mufti, *Forget English!: Orientalism and World Literatures* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 58. For the longer genealogy of this impulse, extending back to nineteenth-century efforts to assemble an Oriental canon as a supplement to the Greco-Roman classics, see Alexander Bubb, *Asian Classics on the Victorian Bookshelf: Flights of Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), xxix.

[99] Park, *Apparitions of Asia*, 158. Park's Chapters 1 and 2 offer case studies on Pound and Gary Snyder's use of "Eastern aesthetics as the mode of an American literary revolution."

[100] These antecedents are identified by Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa in *"Noh" or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917), 100-101.

expression to this sensibility: "a new and significant phase of the immemorial Oriental influence is coming into English poetry. And so far that is pure gain."[101]

Modernist scholarship has established the "Orient," which includes China and Japan but also India, Egypt, and other areas categorized as such,[102] as a source of aesthetic inspiration for modernists such as Pound, Williams, Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens, an emphasis that distinguishes itself from Edward Said's critique of the Orientalist gaze as a manifestation of colonial hegemony. Modernist Orientalism is accordingly often understood as emerging from a search for resources, solutions, or regenerative difference in response to a perceived Western "decadence" or "crisis."[103] Non-Western materials, as Ramazani observes, supplied abstractive and concrete forms that proved catalytic for modernist pictorial, sculptural, and poetic practices, notably the influence of Chinese and Japanese verse forms on the compressed structure of imagism.[104] Critics such as Steven Yao have thus read modernist appropriations of East Asia as "crystallizing examples of the Modernists' realizing Self."[105] Said's critique nonetheless remains indispensable, particularly for its demonstration of how the "Orient" is produced as an object of knowledge rendered usable in modernism. The premise inherited from Said's *Orientalism* is that Orientalism, in the post-Enlightenment period, functions as the systematic means by which European culture came to "manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively."[106] It takes the form of what Said terms a "radical realism," a stabilizing practice in which the act of designation itself confers

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[101] John Livingston Lowes, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919), 166.

[102] On Egyptian-related influences, see Jesse Schotter, *Hieroglyphic Modernisms: Writing and New Media in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). On parallel engagements with South Asian religious traditions, see scholarship on Yeats's interest in Indian philosophy and Eliot's incorporation of Indic concepts and texts, particularly the *Upanishads*, into his poetic and critical thought.

[103] On the claim that "the distance between Asia and its modernist refunctionalizations testified to a deliberate program of cross-cultural *non-interpretation* of which such later East Asian-inspired *écritures* as Tel Quel Maoism and Roland Barthes's *Empire of Signs* might be seen as the theoretically self-conscious descendants," see Christopher Bush, "Modernism, Orientalism, and East Asia," in *A Handbook of Modernism Studies*, edited by Jean-Michel Rabaté (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 193.

[104] Ramazani, *Poetry in a Global Age*, 120.

[105] Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism*, 2.

[106] Said, *Orientalism*, 3. For subsequent elaborations and reconsiderations of Said's formulation, see Kern, *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem*, 157; and Eric Hayot, *Chinese Dreams: Pound, Brecht, Tel quel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 6.

reality, so that "anyone employing Orientalism [. . .] will designate, name, point to, fix what he is talking or thinking about with a word or phrase, which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality."[107] Historically, such practices in history have reproduced the assumption that the "Orient" exists outside the Hegelian movement of history, preserved in the amber of a distant past. Modernist appropriations of the East similarly gravitated toward ancient or medieval cultures, treating them as emphatically "pre-modern" and as repositories of timeless aesthetic value rather than as products of historical contemporaneity.[108]

Although critics have questioned the fit of a strictly Saidian framework for modernist Orientalism, the longer history of Western engagements with the "Orient," traced by Said and others, remains crucial for grasping the continuities and ruptures that shape modernist appropriations of East Asia. This genealogy can reveal how modernist writers inherited, reworked, or strategically disavowed earlier Orientalist practices and regimes of knowledge, which renders "un/bound translation" a site where residual imperial logics meet newly emergent ideological formations. Early missionary Orientalism, motivated by the imperative to rescue a lost or corrupted Eastern antiquity, supplied one influential model of cultural stewardship, one that Ernest Fenollosa himself embraced during his years in Japan. Following Napoleon's campaigns, however, the epistemic terrain shifted as Orientalism moved from descriptive realism toward increasingly imaginative reconstructions of an exotic East. This change produced what might be called a "free-floating Orient," a mobile repertoire of images that animated late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fantasies of preindustrial Asia, when Orientalism overrode the orient, transhuman the human.[109] The rise of "academic Orientalism" in the later nineteenth century, represented by figures such as Herbert Giles, Arthur Waley, Lawrence Binyon, and Fenollosa, introduced new forms of philological rigor, yet continued to codify Asia through classificatory and archival impulses intensified by British imperialism and proliferated through travel literature's creation of ever more elaborate Orientalist simulacra. Pound's understandings of the Chinese language, Japanese poetry, and Confucian classics, for example, were shaped simultaneously by French and British Orientalist traditions. His translational and interpretive practices, at the intersection of these overlapping genealogies, instantiate how modernist

[107] Said, *Orientalism*, 73.
[108] See Yao, "A Rim with a View," 6-10; Bush, "Modernism, Orientalism, and East Asia," 201.
[109] Said, *Orientalism*, 119.

Orientalism depends not on a clean break from past paradigms but on the interplay of inheritance and re-inscription.[110]

Scholarship on modernist Orientalism has itself undergone a process of differentiation and refinement. Steven Yao characterizes this body of work as having developed a tripartite typology of "distinct phases or approaches," with the caution that any account of such development as linear progression is "something of an enabling or heuristic fiction."[111] Early studies were governed by what he terms a "hermeneutic of authenticity" and a broadly positivist method, focused on the "fundamental work of explicating references, tracking sources" and assuming "'Oriental' cultures and traditions to be determinate and stable entities." A second phase, shaped decisively by Said's *Orientalism*, adopted a "hermeneutic of suspicion" to reframe modernist borrowing through the lens of Western imperial power, and contended that modernists "inevitably 'misread' the 'Orient.'" More recent work has moved beyond this unidirectional model toward a "hermeneutic of process," using historicist methodologies that seek to map "more complex, non-linear routes of traffic among cultures."[112] The "Orient" is then understood as playing a "specifically generative role" in the constitution of modernism itself, one that confers a measure of cultural agency and historical dynamism.[113] These "phases" are indeed better seen as concurrent and overlapping rather than sequential. What they share is a recognition that modernist culture is inextricably bound up with imperialism, and that Orientalism provides an ideological mechanism for that entanglement. Nor has this recognition been confined to retrospective critique in modernist studies. As Steven S. Lee reminds us, even contemporaries of Pound did not uniformly regard such appropriative practices as positive. At the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress, delegates explicitly repudiated the kind of "urban exoticism" associated with

[110] Also see Adam Piette, "introduction," *Translation and Literature*, 12.1 (March 2003), 12. Piette's observation that "modernist translation was defined, most importantly, by relations between Anglophone culture and France" can be extended, I believe, by attending to such triangulation among French and British Orientalist traditions, in which French Orientalist scholarship often mediated East Asia's presence within Anglophone literary culture—an Orientalist dimension relatively underexamined.
[111] Yao, "A Rim with a View," 4-8.
[112] Yao, "A Rim with a View," 10-12.
[113] Yao, "A Rim with a View," 12.

Western imperialism, a category that encompassed "Pound's *Cathay* translations" as well as "Goncharova's neoprimitive East" and "Picasso's African masks."[114]

Ramazani's push back in *A Transnational Poetics*—that "criticism that reduces high modernist and later cross-regional 'appropriations' to orientalist theft or primitivist exoticism may risk circumscribing instead of opening up possibilities for global and transnational analysis"—now seems largely unneeded.[115] The subfield of modernist Orientalism has generated a wealth of discoveries and affirmative rhetoric reminiscent of Lowes's exaltation about the "immemorial Oriental influence." Quarrying paratextual, epistolatory, and anecdotal archives around Anglo-American modernism's East Asian connections, this vein of scholarship often treats even marginal traces of cross-cultural contact as potentially revelatory. Such recovery work has proven invaluable for its enabling of speculation about, for example, what Pound may have learned from his Japanese interlocutors and how such knowledge might have shaped his poetics. Alongside this archival expansion has come a broader reconceptualization of "translation" as a pervasive mode of boundary-crossing that exceeds interlingual ferrying. Yao notably defines translation as a "vital and generative writing practice" in modernist history, and Rebecca Beasley argues that, conceptually speaking, it is "built into the dominant epistemological structures" of the era.[116] Under this expanded definition of translation, what Rajeev S. Patke has called modernism's "not overtly colonial" forms of "appropriative ethnocentrism" have increasingly been interpreted in ways that extend beyond the parameters of Said's critique in *Orientalism*.[117] Acts of borrowing and repurposing East Asian materials are thus framed less in terms of fidelity or identicality than as anti-mimetic, iconoclastic experiments that produced new literary possibilities. Translation, understood in this enlarged sense, emerges as a "compositional procedure," "conceptual structure," and a subject of "considerable critical reflection" underwriting the conditions under which modernist writers encountered and reconfigured the cultural Other.[118]

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[114] Steven S. Lee, "Revolution's Demands: Modernism, Socialist Realism, and the Manifesto," in *The New Modernist Studies*, 232.
[115] Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics*, 11.
[116] Yao, *Translation and the Languages of Modernism*, 9; Beasley, "Modernism's Translations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, 554.
[117] Rajeev S. Patke, *Modernist Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 35.
[118] Yao, *Translation and the Languages of Modernism*, 8.

The field's buoyancy has also produced important correctives that re-center dissonance and misfit in translational and transnational encounters. As R. John Williams and Eric Hayot have observed, much scholarship has participated in what they call the "bull market" of "Pound era and the Orient," sharing a celebratory consensus about the radicality and cosmopolitan virtue of cross-cultural borrowing, often at the expense of attending to its problems and ethical risks.[119] Joshua L. Miller and Gayle Rogers make a cognate case when they argue that modernist translation is organized as much by disconnection as by connection (namely the logic of influence and affinity), by "compelling disruptions, internal contradictions, and illustrative gaps" that trouble triumphant narratives of global modernism.[120] Their emphasis on the dialogic, "forward-looking" yet simultaneously backward-turning work of "reversion" offers a name for the unstable, non-linear dynamics through which poets retrofit foreign materials to intended agendas. Pound, for instance, elevated the Chinese character into a prototypical imagist poem, an ideal fusion of organic pictoriality and universal legibility, a species of visual poetry ("phanopoeia") that purportedly, in his Imagist terms, "lose[s] nothing" in translation.[121] In his hands, Chinese characters became instruments for disciplining lyric expressivity, curbing what he perceived as the emotional surplus of nineteenth-century verse by substituting interior feeling with object-centered visuality. The subsequent modernist enthusiasm for an imagined "rhythmic vitality" in Chinese and Japanese poetry, as Ben Glaser has shown, belonged to a broader reaction against Victorian prosodic regularity.[122] Pound's projection of "absolute rhythm" onto the Far East, his insistence that Chinese prosody underwrites his own "pentameter breaking," obscures a deeper continuity between his practice and earlier efforts in English poetry to locate in rhythm an ideal of acoustic immediacy and embodied affect. In other words, what Pound advertised as radically new carried within it a revised inheritance, rehearsed through an Orientalist lexicon. This aspect of modernist Orientalism, where "innovation" depends on

[119] Hayot, *Chinese Dreams*, 2; R. John. Williams, review of *Modernism and the Orient*, by Zhaoming Qian, *Twentieth-Century Literature* 59.3 (2013): 513-519.
[120] Joshua L. Miller and Gayle Rogers, "Only Disconnect?: The Flickering Circuits of Modernist Translation," *Modernism/Modernity Print+* 3.3 (2018).
[121] Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* 1.6 (1913), 200-206. "That part of your poetry which strikes upon the imaginative *eye* of the reader will lose nothing by translation into a foreign tongue; that which appeals to the ear can reach only those who take it in the original" (205).
[122] Ben Glaser, *Modernism's Metronome: Meter and Twentieth-Century Poetics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020), 7

strategically disavowing its own genealogy, has received less attention than it warrants than been acknowledged in scholarship on Pound and Chinese poetry.

The motives behind such modernist appropriative practices have come under closer and more searching scrutiny. Christopher Bush, for instance, reconstructs modernism's extensive engagement with China—which has long been "read over or read out of the history of modernism" and often dismissed as "offhand, allegorical, ornamental, or merely formal"—across the work of modernists from Kafka and Victor Segalen to Walter Benjamin and Paul Valéry.[123] In a similar vein, Eric Hayot demonstrates how the idea of "China" functioned as an "epistemological formation" in Western modernity and postmodernity—a projective Orientalism in which "China" operated as "a way of knowing the world," defined by reference to an actual place but having "ultimately no clear referential relation."[124] Modernist translation has been situated along a spectrum extending from the reaffirmation and subtle modulation of imperial ideologies to their estrangement and subversion—a spectrum that Christian Bancroft brings into focus by tracing how translational procedures can unsettle normative regimes of gender ideologies.[125] Recent studies of modernist literature, moreover, have shown the importance of transnational experiences (including transatlantic, diasporic, and expatriate crossings) in shaping socio-political identities beyond established cultural and geographical boundaries.[126] Yet the ideological implications of another mode of crossing—translation, understood expansively to include a wide range of transpositional practices—remain comparatively underexplored, particularly in light of modernist poetry's engagement with the unprecedented East-West encounter amid the geopolitical volatility of the early twentieth century. What remains missing is a focused account of modernist translation's ideological operations and implications as a historically situated mode of repurposing. In this sense, the questions postcolonial philosopher

[123] Bush, *Ideographic Modernism*, xv.
[124] Hayot, *Chinese Dreams*, 183.
[125] Christian Bancroft, *Queering Modernist Translation: The Poetics of Race, Gender, and Queerness* (New York and London: Routledge, 2020).
[126] See Rebecca Walkowitz's *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* (2006), Susan Friedman's *Planetary Modernisms* (2016), Douglas Mao's *The New Modernist Studies* (2021). Paul *Gilroy's The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) notably theorizes the Black Atlantic as a transnational formation whose "countercultures of modernity" emerge through seaborne circuits of cultural exchange that unsettle nation-based models of cultural history. His account of modernity produced through diasporic, transatlantic movements provides a parallel paradigm for understanding how modernist identities more broadly were shaped by analogous networks of cross-cultural movement.

Niranjana poses under the banner of a "critique of historicism"—which entails "a complex notion of historicity" that asks "Who uses/interprets the text? How is it used, and for what?"—must converge with translation theorist Lawrence Venuti's insistence that we read translations symptomatically, not to measure "freedom" or "fidelity," but to understand that the interpretive choices of a translator that "answer to a domestic cultural situation and so always exceed the foreign text."[127]

Such an account of modernist translation also requires re-situating East Asia as an active participant in the intertwined processes of global modernism and modernization rather than as a distant aesthetic reservoir. As Christopher Bush has argued, the formal and aesthetic dimensions of modernism's engagement with East Asia, which has been studied abundantly, must be read together with a historical and geopolitical aspect, since "East and West are part of the same world," bound by shared histories of imperialism and modernity.[128] Indeed, the formal and thematic commitments of modernist writers are often difficult to disentangle from their perceptions of modern China as a semi-colonial nation in crisis and modern Japan as an emergent imperial power. Pound's vehement rejection of what he called "fetid ignorance" of a BBC commentator who claimed that Japan had only recently "emerged from barbarism,"[129] or Arthur Waley's insistence in carrying "his own images of China and Japan within himself and had no wish to dilute them by tourism,"[130] for example, point to an underexplored relation between their chosen methods of translation and the ideological conditions shaping them. As Park notes, East-West "aesthetic crossing" was always "underwritten by material ties"; American Orientalism, in particular, bore the imprint of a "historically bound economic exigency specific to United States relations with East Asia," fueled by the "dream of commerce that inspired Whitman's ecstatic meditations on the Asiatic."[131] To adopt this view is also to align with the broader shift in global and comparative modernist studies away from diffusionist models of

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[127] Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 35; Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 37. As Venuti observes, Pound's ostensibly liberatory translation practice in "The Seafarer" nonetheless "reinscribes its own modernist brand of individualism" into the Anglo-Saxon text (36).
[128] Bush, "Modernism, Orientalism, and East Asia," 196.
[129] See "#6 (January 29, 1942): 'On Resuming,'" in *"Ezra Pound Speaking": Radio Speeches of World War II*, edited by Leonard W. Doob (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978).
[130] See Ivan Morris, "The Genius of Arthur Waley," in *Madly Singing in the Mountains: An Appreciation and Anthology of Arthur Waley* (New York: Walker and Company, 1970), 80.
[131] Park, *Apparitions of Asia*, 3-7.

modernism—which treat Chinese modernism (*xiandai zhuyi*) and Japanese modernism (*modanizumu*) as derivative or belated offshoots of Euro-American metropolitan modernism—toward pluralist accounts that recognize multiple, coeval modernities that unfold across distinct national and transnational formations.

Mediated Retranslation, its Archives and History

If the case studies in *Translation Un/Bound* converge on a shared translational logic, it is best described as "mediated retranslation," a mode of rewriting refracted through prior textual, institutional, and cultural-ideological intermediations rather than through direct access to an originary source. Unlike existing models for transpositional practices in translation studies that emphasize a translator's generative agency (among them "prismatic translation," "transcreation," or related concepts that privilege proliferative difference),[132] the term mediated retranslation draws attention to the already intermediated condition in which these modernist engagements with East Asia unfold. These poets, rarely working in unmediated ways, relied on the inaugural scholarship of informants or collaborators, notably Orientalists such as Ernest Fenollosa, Florence Ayscough, and James Legge. Yeats and Pound both implied, on various occasions, that their engagements with East Asian materials were superior both to the ornamental concerns of Victorian Japonisme and Chinoiserie and to what they viewed as the ethnographical labor of Orientalist scholarship. For their work of Orientalist poetry, they claimed a position more rigorous and inventive than superficial appropriation or academic philology. And uniquely, for American women poets such as Amy Lowell, Japonisme functioned as a cultural intermediary in the form of a fad, a material and affective lens through which they encountered Japanese materials and subsequently repurposed it for modernist poetry. Instead of a simple dyad of translator and source, the translational relation in these cases is triadic, heteroglossic, and historically recursive, as the poets approached the foreign through the mediating presence of earlier Orientalist frameworks. As Anderson argues, print-languages created "unified fields of exchange and communication" that stabilize national languages and fostered the "embryo of the

[132] See, for instance, *Prismatic Translation*, edited by Matthew Reynolds (Legenda, Transcript to Modern Humanities Research Association, 2019).

nationally imagined community."[133] These modernist practices of mediated retranslations, then, generated, though by a kindred logic, a rather different kind of transnational interactive field, one built from the circulations of earlier Orientalist scholarship, inherited philologies, missionary and scholarly canons, and antecedent translations—materials that this dissertation seek to foreground as the lingua franca of modernist Orientalism.

Conceptually, "mediated retranslation" also adapts and refines descriptive translation theory, above all Toury's empirical account of "mediated translation," or what he calls "second-hand translation," a culturally determined practice rather than "some kind of an aberration, as has long been the prevailing attitude," when a translation is made from an intervening version rather than from a determinate source text.[134] My emphasis, however, falls on what Toury leaves implicit, namely, that this ostensibly "aberrant" procedure can be purposive in ideologically consequential ways, an implication he approaches only obliquely when noting how translated literature can be influenced by models of prestige operative in a target culture.[135] In Damion Searls's blunt formulation, "the ideal of 'faithfulness' is an empty tautology: we are really judging what the translator sees in the author or text and chooses to be faithful to."[136] Not coincidentally, this is salient for modernists such as Pound, H.D., and Yeats, who shared a rejection of "classical erudition" as a gatekeeping condition of "authentic" translation and who, as Yao observes, "openly flaunted … departures from accepted translation practices."[137] In such gestures, formal deviation doubles as subversion in translational terms, and, in some cases, particularly for women writers like H.D., such stance was framed "in expressly gendered terms." Helen Waddell offers a similarly telling case. She lacked that philological "erudition" in Chinese but possessed it in Latin, yet she pursued creative renderings over fidelity in both *Lyrics from the Chinese* and, later, *Mediaeval Latin Lyrics* (the companion translation to her acclaimed monograph *The Wandering Scholars*). Waddell indeed also complicates the assumption that modernism's "Oriental" classicism and its Greco-Roman classicism demand different translational ethics. Her readiness to privilege imaginative rendering over philological authority

[133] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 44
[134] Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 161.
[135] Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 21.
[136] Damion Searls, *The Philosophy of Translation* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2024), 190.
[137] Yao, *Translation and the Languages of Modernism*, 83

spans both Latin and Chinese materials, though it is in the latter that this practice acquired a distinct feminist urgency.

An obvious objection may be raised at this point, that the practices I group under the rubric of "un/bound translations" do not all qualify as translation in a strict sense—and indeed, even when interlingual translation is plainly practiced, as in the work of Pound, Waddell, or Crapsey, fidelity is rarely the aim. I retain the word "translation" nonetheless, in part because of its long genealogy as a name for practices of crossing that are at once translingual and transcultural, and because of its ability to invoke the vast and valuable body of scholarship gathered in "translation studies," a field that has itself stretched well beyond narrow models of textual transmission to encompass cultural translation as well as its ethics and politics. In theorizing translation broadly as a transpositional practice rather than a relation of equivalence or identicality, I gain purchase from Spivak's insistence, quoting Derrida, in her translator's preface to *Of Grammatology*, that "a notion of transformation must be substituted for the notion of translation: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another."[138] To frame modernist translation as an expansive set of transpositional practices is, more broadly, to return to Tymoczko's characterization of translation as a "cluster concept," conditioned by "reception, ideology, and power."[139] The rewritings undertaken by Pound, Yeats, Waddell, and others, operating metonymically as diverse kinds of ideological configurations, accords with the consensus in translation studies that translation is a "one-to-many" process that produces irreducible and deliberate difference.[140] This attention to that diversity, in addition, is indebted to the postpositivist tradition of translation theory from Lawrence Venuti and André Lefevere to more recent postcolonial and feminist accounts that attend to the ideological and ethical aspects of literary-cultural productions. From Venuti's critique of the norm of fluency in domesticating practices that results in the translator's "invisibility," and Lefevere's account of translation as rewriting shaped by ideological and poetological agendas, this body of work has been extended by Spivak, Apter, Tymoczko, and others, who continue to foreground translation's entanglement with imperialism and other forms of inequality. These debates, importantly, have shifted the field

[138] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translator's Preface," in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), lxxxvii.
[139] Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation*, 128-9.
[140] For a comprehensive account of a "postpositivist history of translation studies," see Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation*, 15-53.

away from a narrowly textual focus toward an understanding of translation as a historically embedded practice that reiterates or contests hegemonic formations, and these discourses have themselves been doing transnational work that reflects back on the ethics and politics of transnationalism.

That expanded account of the political implications of translation-as-difference-production also enables my consideration of how the modernist "West" met the "East" through prior representations and institutionalized regimes of legibility and value. For Pound, Yeats, Lowell, and others, the "Orient" arrived as a pre-interpreted object, catalogued through inherited taxonomies and made available in selected textual packets, and often ideologically primed in advance. Reading these practices as mediated retranslation therefore foregrounds translation's constitutive heteroglossia, a historically layered coexistence of interpretive regimes and sedimented epistemologies that shape what can be taken to mean "China," "Japan," or "the Orient" at a given moment. In this context, the concept of "transculturation" becomes illuminating for modernist rewriting, in its reference to "performative types of translations that function primarily to insert elements from one culture into another," where close lexical fidelity is subordinated to the pragmatic demands of the target text, as in Pound's treatment of Chinese poetry.[141] What such insertions are capable of in a literary field is further named by Itamar Even-Zohar, who argues that translated literature, when it occupies a central position, becomes "by and large an integral part of innovatory forces," and as such tends to be aligned with formative interventions in literary history.[142] Walter Benjamin's concept of translation, as giving the source text an "afterlife" (Überleben), helps us consider further what such innovation entails. Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" shifts attention away from the dated concept of translation—as the instrumental reproduction of an invariant message—to the idea that the original is extended and "changed" by translation like the "transformation and renewal of a living thing."[143] Benjamin's claim that translation is called upon to "mark the post-maturation of the alien word and the birth pangs of its own" is suggestive for the "un/bound translation" practices I trace here, provided that one resists the temptation to treat this "afterlife" as inherently redemptive. In the archive of Orientalist poetry I trace, the "birth pangs" are found in the

[141] Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation*, 125.
[142] Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem," in *Translation Studies Reader*, 192.
[143] Walter Benjamin, "The Translator's Task," in *Translation Studies Reader*, 91-92.

emergence of new formal possibilities but also of various ideological tendencies. Once the "original" is understood as something that survives only by being altered, the premise of a pure linguistic or cultural "own"—a stable ground from which translation would depart and to which it might return—also becomes difficult to sustain. Derrida makes that implication explicit in *Monolingualism of the Other*, where he argues that the fantasy of a self-identical language or an unmediated identity can only depend on a systematic forgetting of the prior work of translation and contact through which such "ownness" is constituted.[144] His book's titular riddle, for my purpose, indeed turns on the impossibility of absolute monolingualism or monoculturalism, as well as on the constitutive impurity of the "self" in relation to otherness, and, by extension, of the notion of the "West" in relation to what it calls the "East."

Importantly, modernist homophonic or adaptive translations, such as Augusta Gregory's and Eleanor Hull's creative transpositions of Cuchulain tales, have been recognized in translation studies as representing the move away from fidelity toward "original literary creations," a practice understood to emerge alongside modernity.[145] Kenneth Rexroth's fabrication of the phantom Japanese poet "Marichiko," for instance, is characterized by Apter as an act of textual "cloning" or "linguistic forgery."[146] Rexroth's invented erotic verse, constructed "out of the codes of 'Japaneseness'-in-translation," is an example of a more direct appropriative ethnocentrism than the Orientalist poetry in question, with a more unsettling implication of translational creativity, that translators, as Apter puts it, can operate as "counterfeit artists, experts at forgeries of voice and style." It is thus also necessary to situate *Translation Un/Bound* in modernism's fraught relation to the archive, since these cases of mediated retranslation lead us to repositories of transcultural borrowing that are themselves enmeshed in complex structures of power. The range of materials I draw on—missionary translations, sinological manuscripts, publishing records, marginalia, notebooks, correspondence, little magazines—operate as more than a storehouse of "context." As Derrida recalls in "Archive Fever," the Greek *arkheion* names the house of the archons, those authorized to keep and interpret what is preserved. The interpreters of archives were also their protectors, their "hermeneutic right and competence"

[144] Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other: or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
[145] Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation*, 64.
[146] Apter, *Translation Zone*, 220-221.

coming from their share of the state power.[147] Archival interpretation is bound from the start to political jurisdiction, and that authority remains braided with the institutions that secure and police it. To work in and through the archives of modernist Orientalism is therefore to navigate the risk that interpretation may inadvertently, uncritically sanitize or re-legitimate the elements one seeks to historicize, particularly when it comes to the totalitarian and eugenic commitments, for example, in Pound's notebooks and radio scripts and Yeats's political pamphlet. The methodological problem cannot, then, be solved by simply extracting usable aesthetic "data points" from an ideologically complicated archive. These archives must be read as constitutive pressures on the works themselves—pressures that become especially visible and revealing at the points where a text's formal or ideological textile begins to fray.

Jerome McGann's observation—that "the indeterminacy of the textual situation fluctuates in relation to the size and complexity of the surviving body of textual materials: the larger the archive, the greater the room for indeterminacy"—has licensed, for critics such as Finn Fordham, a "positive evaluation of indeterminacy," indebted in turn to Foucault's notion of an "ideal archive," the totality of discursive practices in an episteme that exceeds any finite collection of documents.[148] Such formulations help in thinking through modernist textual multiplicity in the presence of revisions, competing versions, proliferating paratexts, and many other traces that make it hard to stabilize a single "text." The risk, however, lies in treating indeterminacy as a virtue in itself. The more pressing question concerns what kind of indeterminacy is in play, as well as what it discloses. Is it deliberately engineered as part of a poet's formal design, the "machinations of ambiguity" that William Empson identifies as "among the very roots of poetry"?[149] Is it uncertainty generated by the contingencies of transmission, from editorial intervention or variant authorial intentions, or produced by the collision of divergent formal elements or ideological intentions that pull against one another in the same work? To recover, as Fordham puts it, the "ephemeral fugitive processes of writing […] from within the folds of archived manuscripts," entails specifying the affective, political,

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[147] Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," *Diacritics*, 25.2 (1995), 9-10.
[148] Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: University Press, 1991), 62; Finn Fordham, "The Modernist Archive," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, edited by Peter Brooker, Andrzej Gąsiorek, Deborah Longworth, and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 47.
[149] William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949), 3.

epistemic tensions that such instabilities register, rather than taking instability as their sufficient meaning.[150] This bears directly on the modernist materials I examine, whose archives are both voluminous and ideologically overdetermined as well as indeterminate. A focus on indeterminacy can indeed readily lapse into what Fordham calls a "nonstory," a narrative "fragmentary but in an undramatic way," resistant to the satisfactions of revelation, and equally resistant to the consolations of a counter-narrative around suppression and recovery.[151] Yet it is worth remembering that "nonstory" can itself be considered a modernist form, insofar as it is both an effect of archival profusion and a formal strategy, an aesthetic of broken linkage. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, in Lawrence Rainey's phrase, performs a "histrionics of non-relationship," a deliberate collapse of connective tissue that registers the felt impossibility of coherent totality.[152] Pound's late confession in *The Cantos*—"The dreams clash / and are shattered— / and that I tried to make a paradiso / terrestre"—likewise names a "non-story" in the sense of an unrealized teleology, one that shows the incompatibility between a totalizing ambition and the linguistic multiplicity and cultural polysemy of the historical archives his poem gathers.[153] Instead of valorizing indeterminacy in the abstract, I therefore read these archival and formal "nonstories" as indices of both intention and strain in these modernist projects of appropriation.

Importantly, the archives surrounding women writers involve a different species of "non-story," or more precisely a belated story, defined by their relative obscurity and posthumous rediscovery in literary history, a condition that demands a specifically feminist approach to archival work. As Sara Crangle's discussion of Mina Loy and Anna Mendelssohn suggests, feminist criticism must adopt "meta-archival approaches," which do more than add women to existing canons but instead interrogate the classificatory regimes that rendered marginal their "generativities artistic and reproductive"; it entails attending to the "contortions requisite to escaping confines of established taxonomy" for women who lay claim to the title of "artist."[154] I intend my recovery of Helen Waddell's Confucian transcreations and of the Japonisme Poetess verses by American women poets to follow a comparable strategy. These archives are treated in

[150] Fordham, "The Modernist Archive," 52.
[151] Fordham, "The Modernist Archive," 51.
[152] Lawrence S. Rainey, "Eliot Among the Typists: Writing The Waste Land," *Modernism/modernity* 12.1 (January 2005), 62.
[153] Pound, *The Cantos*, 802.
[154] Sara Crangle, "Feminism's Archives: Mina Loy, Anna Mendelssohn, and Taxonomy," in *The New Modernist Studies*, 261.

this dissertation as gendered sites of experiment in which notions of authorship and originality were contemplated, and in which women's rewritings of East Asia recalibrated, often quietly, the ideological expectations attached both to "Oriental" material and to the fraught inheritance of women's poetry.

In resisting any homogenizing, unproblematically celebratory notion of modernist "world literature," the Orientalist poetry in this dissertation necessarily enters into dialogue with debates in world-literature theory, particularly around the mediating role of translation. From Goethe's early formulation of *weltliteratur*—post-national in aspiration yet still premised on the controlling role of a strong national tradition such as German literature—to Marx and Engels's vision of a world literature superseding "national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness," translation has long been imagined, in both literal and metaphorical senses, as the enabling mechanism of a putatively "planetary" literary sphere. More recent theorists have complicated this legacy, notably David Damrosch, whose influential account of world literature defines it as "a mode of circulation and reading," both diachronic and synchronic, in which translation functions as a form of transculturation by which works of literature "take on a new life."[155] Franco Moretti's "distant reading" similarly frames world literature as a revisable "unit of analysis" rather than a fixed hierarchy of value.[156] A stratified "literary world-system" is further posited by Pascale Casanova, in which translation is the principal but not-always-reliable means of circulation, implicated in the "tragedy of translated men" whose works are misrecognized or diminished in transit.[157] My approach aligns most closely with Emily Apter's caution in *Against World Literature*, which resists the "reflexive endorsement of cultural equivalence and substitutability," or the celebration of nationally and ethnically branded "differences" in the name of the "deprovincialization of the canon."[158] *Translation Un/Bound* shares with these accounts an insistence on motion and relation, and it attempts to relocate the problem from the altitude of the global system of "world literature" to the grain of transcultural appropriation practices, by following the formulation and contestation of "world-literary space" in the

[155] David Damrosch, *What is World Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5, 23.
[156] See Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013), 53-5.
[157] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), xii-xiii, 254.
[158] Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London and New York: Verso, 2013), 1-3.

micropolitics of modernist mediated retranslations, in the specific Orientalist forms and ideological pressures that shape Pound's, Yeats's, Waddell's, and Lowell's engagements with East Asia. The "laws" and "flows" of the literature-world, variously theorized by Damrosch, Moretti, and Casanova, materialize here in particular translational acts, and in the processes that make texts "worldly" through rewritings and institutional consecrations that bind questions of form and ideology together. David Porter's emphasis on the "direction and scope" of a text's migrations and its shifting modes of interaction, in particular, helps this dissertation draw attention to the complex ways through which Noh dramaturgy, the Confucian Odes, or Edo-period lyricism came to be animated in Euro-American modernist poetry.[159] These modernist appropriations indeed cannot be adequately treated by a "contrastive mode of intercultural analysis" that presumes cultural essentialism, nor by a "genealogical approach" that treats a nation or culture as "a discrete and historically coherent entity." To strategically rethink concepts of nation, period, and genre through alternative vocabularies such as "trajectory," "life cycle," and "function," as Porter proposes, helps see these Orientalist experiments as "vectors" in motion—objects whose meaning emerges from their "functional transmissions, connections, and recombinations." Their formal irregularities, then, reflect what the "life cycles" of literary works, the successive stages of "rereading and rewriting" that accompany travel across linguistic and national boundaries, as textual and cultural materials acquire new ideological uses in the course of their worldly voyages.

Revealingly, Aamir Mufti traces the genealogy of world literature back to what he calls the "classical phase of modern Orientalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries," a moment defined by an "enormous assemblage of projects and practices" that furnished the conditions of possibility for world literature's emergence as both a concept and an enterprise of scholarly practice.[160] As Mufti contends,

> "World literature" came into being (only) when the cultural system of the modern bourgeois West had appropriated and assimilated—that is, "discovered," absorbed, recalibrated, rearranged, revaluated, reclassified, reconstellated, compared, translated, historicized, standardized, disseminated, and, in short, *fundamentally transformed*—the widely diverse and diffuse writing practices and traditions of the societies and civilizations of the "East," which extended in the Euro-Occidental imagination from the

[159] David Porter, "The Crisis of Comparison and the World Literature Debates," *Profession* (2011), 245-255.
[160] Mufti, *Forget English!*, 19.

Atlantic shore of North Africa to the littoral of the Sea of Japan. (49)

For the reason that "world literature" did not precede Orientalism but grew out of it, inheriting its classificatory ambitions and logic of power, and because the genealogy of Orientalist literature itself matters centrally here, it would be remiss not to consider the presence of a long prehistory of unorthodox translational and rewriting practices, in poetry as well as other genres. FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* was the most familiar precedent, a work openly rearranged and stylistically naturalized to cater to Victorian taste. Poetry, as it happens, provides a particularly dense archive of such unconventional translation and transposition, as proven by the range of examples collected by Bubb in *Asian Classics on the Victorian Bookshelf*, from Richard Le Gallienne's *Rubáiyát* to Louisa Stuart Costello's *The Rose Garden of Persia* to Richard Burton's *The Kâsidah*.[161] Modernist mediated retranslations such as Pound's and Waddell's may indeed be seen as the intensification and redistribution of an existing practice of translational freedoms.[162]

A representative model of the Orientalist literary genre is Andrew Lang's *Ballads in Blue China*, which projects a distinctly Victorian imperial and religious imaginary onto a distant Eastern elsewhere—"Of china that's ancient and blue; / Unchipp'd all the centuries through."[163] Oftentimes, however, Victorian rewritings of the Orient differ from modernist ones in the ease with which they treat Asian materials as secondary or inferior foreign classics, available for embellishment or entertainment, rather than constituting a classicism in their own right. FitzGerald, for example, justified his liberties by claiming that the Persians were "not Poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little Art to shape

[161] See Bubb, *Asian Classics*, 1-62. Bubb shows how Victorian translators and pseudo-translators routinely blurred the boundary between translation and authorship: Le Gallienne pursued a "Kaleidoscopic combination" (59) of himself and the author, famously interpolating his own gender-switching quatrains ("How sad to be a woman") to supply a female perspective on the poem's treatment of love; Louise Costello, despite her knowledge of Persian forms, deliberately ignored them in favor of analogous English meters such as Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*, seeking a "national" and "vital" idiom legible to general readers (11); and Richard Burton's *The Kâsidah* took the form of an original poem presented as a translation from Arabic.

[162] This phenomenon was by no means confined to elite or avant-garde circles. Transposition and adaptation were routine features of middlebrow Victorian reading culture, as amply evidenced by Bubb's digital archive of Victorian "popular editions" of Asian classics translated into English, *AVaTAR*, "Archive of Victorian Translations from Asia and their Readerships," available at https://avatar-books.com).

[163] Andrew Lang, *Ballades in Blue China* (Portland: Thomas B. Mosher, 1907), 7.

them"—a posture that, as André Lefevere observes, reflects a "not unwidely disseminated attitude toward Islamic literature as a whole" in Victorian culture, one that licensed forms of transposition FitzGerald "would have never dreamed of rewriting Homer, or Virgil."[164] And, as Jorge Luis Borges famously suggests in his essay on the translations of *The Arabian Nights*, the proliferation of English versions of that tale points less to any recoverable narrative essence than to the heterogeneous moral, aesthetic, poetological agendas with which different translators approached their task.[165] Translation, in such instances, was where cultural intention and ideological projection took palpable form, well before modernism codifies such practices under the rubric of formal experiment. Such acts of creative transposition persist, with equal vigor and intensity, in later literature, from Margaret Atwood's rewriting of Greek myth, as in her "Circe/Mud Poems," to Aimé Césaire's anticolonial adaptations of Shakespeare—which show how canonical or "classical" works circulate through cycles and economies of retranslation that bind them to new political, aesthetic, and ethical demands. Joyce's *Ulysses* offers a paradigmatic case of a work that began as a reworking of *The Odyssey* and has itself become part of a modernist canon no less formidable than the classical tradition it transforms.

This genealogy extends further back into Romantic poetry, where the Near East, admittedly, more than the Far East, served as the principal reservoir of Orientalist inspiration. Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," the opium-haunted fragment that conjures a Mongol emperor and his Xanadu pleasure-dome, imagines a fantastical geography that bears only the faintest relation to historical Asia. Byron's Oriental tales, such as *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, likewise unfold in a fabricated Ottoman and Levantine world saturated with intrigue and mysterious fatalism. Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, composed in a pseudo-Oriental idiom indebted to European translations of Persian and Arabic literature, reproduces the sensuous excess that came to typify Romantic Orientalism. One might add Shelley's *Alastor*, with its spectral "veiled maid" of indeterminate Eastern provenance, or *The Spirit of Solitude*, which offers a feminized Orient embodied by a lost muse, or Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*, drawing loosely on *The Arabian Nights* and Islamic eschatology as mediated through early Orientalist scholarship. Even in the

[164] Qtd in Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, 8. Edward Fitzgerald, "Letter to E. B. Crowell," in *The Variorum and Definitive Edition of the Poetical and Prose Writings, Vol. 6* (New York: Doubleday, 1902).
[165] See Jorge Luis Borges, "The Translators of *The Thousand and One Nights*," in *Translation Studies Reader*, 122-135.

adjacent domain of Romantic Gothic-Oriental fiction, notably in William Beckford's *Vathek*, set in a mythical Arabian realm, one encounters the same habits of imaginative projection in an Oriental world fabricated from fragments of travel writing and fantasy, recomposed into a seductive, often ominous and menacing, elsewhere. I take these Romantic experiments to anticipate, though in a rather different key, the modernist Orientalist poetry this dissertation traces. At the very least, they show that translation and adaptation had long served as techniques for converting partial, mediated knowledge of the "Orient" into a vehicle for Romantic and Victorian understandings of universality and cosmopolitanism. These precedents fostered some of the templates through which later writers and philosophers imagined "world literature," such as in Goethe's Persian-inspired *West-östlicher Divan*, which first bred a vision of *Weltliteratur* as a dramatically idealized cosmopolitan horizon, mediated through German national literature and reliant on translation as its enabling medium.

The modernist moment this dissertation isolates did something distinctive with a familiar practice: transcultural appropriative rewriting was taken up as an avowed instrument of innovation, a self-conscious compositional method calibrated for both formal experimentation and ideological intervention, though no less as a vehicle for cosmopolitan sentiments. These modernist "un/bound translations" came to occupy an unusually structural role, straining inherited conventions and performing ideological work, within and through the transnational poetry of Pound, Yeats, Waddell, Lowell, and others. The reorientation I trace marks less a turn from translation-as-poetics to translation-as-politics than a redefinition of translational work itself, a migration away from the rhetoric of interlingual (in)fidelity toward the making of "Orientalist forms" suited to the period's competing cultural and political intentions. Tracing these transpositional maneuvers, *Translation Un/Bound* rethinks the place of East Asia in English literary history by attending to the ways these modernist poets rework mediated foreign materials into such forms, and to what those forms make possible, formally and ideologically, in and for English poetry.

Chapter One:
"No, that is *not* philological": Rock-Drilling with Confucius in Ezra Pound's Canto 85

In *Guide to Kulchur*, Ezra Pound extols Confucius as a cosmopolitan "mover," one whose belief that "travel broadens the mind" allows the philosopher to transcend provincialism by anchoring his pragmatic philosophy in the rich "knowledge of local conditions."[166] Confucius's cosmopolitan inclination aligns with the internationalist temperament for which Pound himself has been recognized in modernist scholarship, particularly in light of the poet's extensive engagement with East Asian literary traditions, notably with classical Chinese poetry and Japanese Noh theater, central to the "transnational turn" in modernist studies.[167] Discussions of transnational modernism often cast Pound's approach to Asian materials as an "anti-Orientalist" endeavor, a "saving grace" that mitigates the "demons of imperial fascism" haunting other aspects of his work.[168] Yet, such framing risks an idealization of Pound's cross-cultural borrowings and, by extension, a reductive celebration of modernist transnational practices more broadly—Picasso's adaptation of African art, for instance, or Victor Segalen's use of Chinese stone inscriptions in *Stèles*. It may likewise obscure the ways in which Pound's transnationalism masks and amplifies the instrumentalist logic at work in certain instances of his repurposing (or "reinvention," as T. S. Eliot approvingly terms it) of non-Western traditions. That earnest engagement and self-serving appropriation do not always exist as opposites in modernist transnationalism but may, in fact, be mutually sustaining is evinced, I argue, by an instance from the later *Cantos*. As this chapter's reading of Canto 85 proposes, Pound's use of Confucianism binds the totalizing impulse of his transnational poetic experiment with the totalitarian drift of his larger ideological project—his vision of an autocratic social order grounded in hierarchical

[166] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 272.
[167] See Mao and Walkowitz, "The New Modernist Studies," 745. One major strand of modernism's "transnational turn" emphasizes the "centrality of transnational circulation and translation in the production of modernist art," a body of scholarship in which Pound's use of Chinese materials has figured prominently.
[168] Park, "Transnational Turn," 187.

governance, aesthetic absolutism, and the belief that political power and ethical authority should be centralized under a singular, ruling elite.

The uneasy relation between Pound's internationalism and his politically contentious stance, something gaining attention only recently in studies of transnational modernism, reverberates through a larger discourse on poetry and politics dating back at least to Pound's controversial reception of the first Bollingen Prize for the *Pisan Cantos* in 1948. A multilingual, multicultural mix of Eastern and Western traditions, blending references to Confucianism and Greco-Roman mythology with Provençal lyricism and the American vernacular, the *Pisan Cantos* cement Pound's reputation as a cosmopolitan "mover" but also imply a disturbing affinity between his cultural eclecticism and political extremism. Composed during Pound's imprisonment by the U. S. army in Italy, the *Pisan Cantos* have stood at the center of debates about the moral complexities of "good" poetry, particularly in the context of modernist poetry.[169] For Luther H. Evans, then Librarian of Congress, the aesthetic merit of Pound's work demanded recognition independent of the poet's politics; to judge otherwise, Evans argued, would be itself a "dictatorial, illiberal, undemocratic" act.[170] Evans's defense is not without irony. In attempting to cordon off Pound's poetry from politics, his own ideologically charged adjectives prove just how inescapably political, especially in cases like Pound's, poetry and its criticism can be. The difficulty of disentangling Pound's literary achievement from his political commitment, then, translates into an important yet rarely confronted question in discussions of his transnationalism—the degree to which his cross-cultural "reinvention" answers to aesthetic exigency, and the degree to which it selects and disciplines the foreign in accordance with his ideological purposes.

Indeed, Pound's use of the Far East has yet to receive thorough analysis in relation to his totalizing poetics or to what it discloses about the broader complexities of his transnationalism.[171] This chapter poses this question to Canto 85, the opening poem of "Section:

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[169] See, for example, Alfred Kazin, "The Fascination and Terror of Ezra Pound," *The New York Review* (March 13, 1986); Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-garde* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); and Leon Surette, *Pound in Purgatory: From Economic Radicalism to Anti-Semitism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999).
[170] Robert A. Corrigan, "Ezra Pound And The Bollingen Prize Controversy," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 8.2 (1967), 45.
[171] For an incisive assessment of Jahan Ramazani's reading of Pound's transnationalism in *Poetry in a Global Age* as a form of "well-traveled humanism," and for the criticism that such celebration risks

Rock-Drill," where transnationalism and authoritarianism intersect in ways both striking and unsettling. Composed between 1953 and 1954 during Pound's confinement at the St. Elizabeths Hospital, where he was held after being charged with treason but declared mentally unfit for trial, Canto 85 marks a particularly fraught moment in Pound's transnational-Orientalist experiments. China, here, becomes both a "pervasive and integral" presence and an indispensable medium for Pound's dream of an autocratic society shaped by Confucian ideals.[172] It was in Canto 85 that Pound made his first systematic return to Chinese history since the *China Cantos* (LII–LXXI), which had appeared in 1940, a period when he had become an increasingly vocal supporter of fascism.[173] In Canto 85, Pound renewed his engagement with Confucian thought in the aftermath of his notorious wartime broadcasts. Labelled a traitor, interned in Pisa, and confined to St. Elizabeths, Pound wrote from a place of despair and persistence, though notably, not of regret for his fascist sympathies, as shown by the fascist salute he gave reporters upon his return to Italy in 1958. Not until 1967 did Pound express to Allen Ginsberg a more specific, if inadequate, remorse for what he called his "stupid, suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism."[174] In Canto 85, rather than renouncing his proto-fascist ideal of a modern empire-state, something that had stirred public alarm, the poet redoubled his commitment and distilled his historical inquiries into an oblique, allusive form of political poetry: an Orientalist form, imbued with epistemic ambition and fortified by a masculinist resolve.

In Canto 85, we encounter a distinctly Poundian combination of Orientalism and activist poetry. Borrowing over a hundred Chinese characters—some translated, others left in their original script—from French Jesuit Séraphin Couvreur's trilingual rendering of *Chou King* (or *Shūjīng,* the *Book of History* compiled by Confucius),[175] Canto 85 enacts Pound's belief—one he claims to be an inheritance from Confucius himself—that the foundational principles of just rule and social order are to be unearthed from this archive of speeches and edicts from China's past

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disentangling Pound's "polyglot literary cosmopolitanism" from his anti-Semitism and fascist politics, see Nersessian, "Global Poetry and Provincial Poetics," 823-825.

[172] Jeffrey Twitchell-Waas, "Ezra Pound and Chinese Poetry," in *The New Ezra Pound Studies*, 169.

[173] Ira B. Nadel, *The Cambridge Introduction to Ezra Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15.

[174] See Allen Ginsberg, "Encounters with Ezra Pound," *City Lights Anthology*, edited by Lawrence Ferlinghetti (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1974), 14-15.

[175] Séraphin Couvreur, *Chou King: Texte chinois, avec une double traduction en français et en latin, des annotations et un vocabulaire* (Paris: Librairie Orientale & Américaine, 1897).

emperors and rulers.[176] Pound's intention to fuse Confucianism with fascism finds a pointed expression in his transcription onto the last page of Canto 85 the Chinese character 秉 *bing*—a word of little consequence in Confucius's own lexicon, meaning "grasp" and resembling a hand clutching grain—because it evoked for him "the basic Fascist symbol, a hand holding together many spears of wheat."[177] Minor though the detail may appear, it shows how Pound's cosmopolitan, transnational "moving" draws the Chinese word into a centripetal force of containment and co-optation, one that consolidates the ideological scaffolding of his "paradiso / terrestre."[178] Such "moving" is not an opening outward but an act of seizure, a territorializing absorption that recasts the foreign in the strictures of his political vision and contracts, rather than extends, the plurality his transnationalism professes to invite.

Pound's use of China in Canto 85 marks both a departure from and an intensification, now in more overt political terms, of his earlier romanticization of the Chinese written character, which he once described, in his adaptation of Ernest Fenollosa's "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry: An Ars Poetica" (1918), as "a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature."[179] In Canto 85, the Chinese characters serve not only as an organic expression of the "operation of wrestling artistic power from nature," to borrow Fenollosa's transcendentalist formulation, but also as instruments of the centralizing cultural-political authority that Pound seeks to assert through his poetry. If, for Fenollosa, Chinese writing represents a pre-Babelian mode of apperception that transcends linguistic barriers, a "pictorial method" that "would be the ideal language of the world," for Pound, a political poem composed in these characters holds the promise of a perfected polity, a new kind of nation-state unified by the very universality of its language.[180] Such a vision evokes an imagined political community bound not by provincial nationalism but by an intrinsic harmony with, and reverence for, nature. Yet if Pound's vision lays claim to universality, my chapter contends that this universalist aspiration is also profoundly coercive, the form of unity it posits achieved through imposition instead of shared recognition,

[176] See Pound, *The Cantos*, 559: "Kung said he had added nothing. Canto 85 is a somewhat detailed confirmation of Kung's view that the basic principles of government are found in the Shu the History Classic."
[177] Terrell, *Companion*, 481.
[178] Pound, *The Cantos*, 802.
[179] Fenollosa and Pound, "Chinese Written Character," 45.
[180] Fenollosa and Pound, "Chinese Written Character," 59.

its coherence compelled by the poet's authorial will. What presents itself as the ideal of a universal language, and of poetry in seamless accord with nature, becomes under Pound's hand a disciplinary demand on the reader's cognition and, at the level of social imaginary, a totalitarian principle of governance.

Central to this chapter is an analysis of how Canto 85's formal-aesthetic agenda, the pursuit of a universally accessible concept of visual poetry, relies on Pound's politically motivated appropriation of Chinese writing and Confucian philosophy, and how both aspects of the poem fuel and sustain a utopian vision of imperial governance that veers toward totalitarianism. Within Canto 85's immediate epistemological task, Pound's presentation of Chinese sources on the material page serves as a useful means of ideological inquiry, a method of setting before himself the very process of his quarrying, a way for his composition to double as an act of exploration. When confronted with the unavoidable question of political poetry's influence and agency, its capacity to effect ethical social change and mold readerly consciousness, however, this chapter contends that Canto 85's very epistemic design inhibits the prospect of the egalitarian poetics it aspires to realize. Pound's integration of Chinese writing, whose archival materiality often resists interpretive containment and strains against his totalizing system of thought, becomes the point at which the fissures and contradictions in his political poetry are laid bare. Pound's Odyssean self-mythology as a seeker of ethical and political knowledge provokes the larger question of whether epic, a literary form "singularly well suited to nationalist, idealist, didactic, and imperialist aims,"[181] was already out of key with his time, or rather, too closely attuned to the totalitarian art and fascist aesthetic of the period.[182] Epic was Pound's chosen form as well as his medium of activism; so too was Orientalism. What emerges from Canto 85, I argue, is an Orientalist form of political poetry that fails but in a revelatory manner: a failure inscribed in the poet's self-aestheticization as a tragic Odysseus who would "lose all companions"; in the way Canto 85's imagined reader, a community of audience interpellated as allies, is rendered non-participatory, even "lost"; in the way the poem's

[181] Patricia A. Cockram, "Hypertextuality and Pound's Fascist Aesthetic," *Paideuma: Modern and Contemporary Poetry and Poetics*, 26.2/3 (Fall & Winter 1997), 158.
[182] Cockram, "Hypertextuality," 157-8. Cockram identifies a strong presence of fascist aesthetics in *The Cantos*, observing that Pound's project shares the major characteristics of totalitarian art: monumentalism, a "phallic thrust," a "penchant for didacticism," and a "poetics of heroism."

aspiration to epiphany imposes its own epistemic foreclosure; and, crucially, in the way modernist internationalism reverts to an aesthetics—and politics—of exclusivity.

And insofar as "Section: Rock-Drill," like the *Pisan Cantos*, is bound up with Pound's endorsement of repressive fascist regimes like Mussolini's Italy, his experiment with an Orientalist form of political poetry in Canto 85 shows how a complex variety of ideological agendas can be derived from literary pursuits broadly categorized as transnational or internationalist, even when such endeavors present themselves as merely translational or interpretive. Pound's case reminds us that any account of transnational borrowing must attend to both its continuity with established patterns of cross-cultural use and its reworking of inherited discursive habits. Canto 85, in particular, extends the European tradition of the Orientalist romanticization of Chinese writing, a lineage traceable to the seventeenth century, yet it also reconfigures that tradition through a newly purposeful, politically motivated performance of modernist appropriation.[183] Pound's version of modernist Orientalism, like Yeats's recourse to Noh in Irish national theatre, shows the fraught entanglement of aestheticizing and politicizing the Orient (and cultural otherness in general). It alerts us to how an internationalist practice can breed a totalizing aesthetics, one whose seductive coherence too often lends itself to authoritarian ends. Pound's case also makes clear that the "political utility" of transnational scholarship lies in the critical interrogation and active un-making, rather than reiteration, of the latent structures of hegemony that easily pass unexamined in internationalist literary productions.[184] My chapter, in this vein, goes beyond identifying the totalitarian and fascist impulses in Canto 85 to examine the mechanisms through which they take form—and to ask why and in what manner Pound's Orientalist model of political poetry breaks down. If failure pulses through the poem's structure and vision, it is a failure that proves instructive, a demonstration of how an absolutist, all-encompassing ideological paradigm for poetry inevitably erodes itself and crumbles beneath the weight of its totalizing design.

[183] See David Porter, *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).
[184] Park, "Transnational Turn," 186.

Inventing the Chinese Phanopoeia

Canto 85 opens with an exceptionally large Chinese character, *ling* 靈, followed by the line "our dynasty came in because of a great sensibility" (fig. 1). This compound word, which Pound renders as "sensibility," combines the shorthand images of "heaven" over "cloud" over "three raindrops" over "ritual."[185] Recurring in varying sizes in the seventeen-page Canto 85, it is accompanied each time by a version of the message that the Shang dynasty of China had ruled because of "a great sensibility."[186] This character is a relatively insignificant word in the original text, and the message is merely Pound's mistranslation of Couvreur's "les empereurs de notre maison de Tcheou, à cause de leur grande bonté, furent chargés d'exécuter l'œuvre du roi du ciel," where *ling* indicates a broad virtue—kindness or goodness—ascribed to a ruler.[187] An exegetically important word for Pound, *ling* is also a capacious marker of Confucian wisdom, such as when he elsewhere describes Confucius's conversations as "the record of a great sensibility."[188]

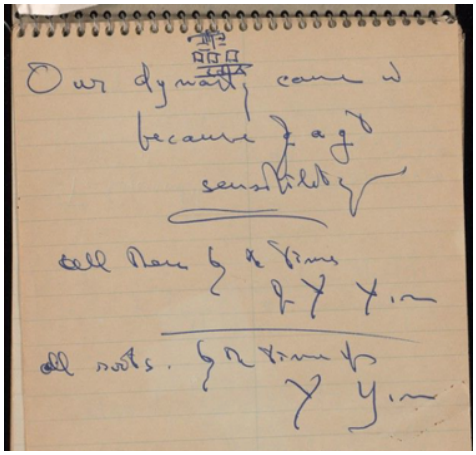


Figure 1 Image 50, Notebook 80: [Rock Drill, 13], 1953-1954 Jan, *Ezra Pound Papers*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library.

[185] Terrell, *Companion*, 467.
[186] See Pound, *The Cantos*, for recurrent formulations of this statement, including "Our dynasty came in because of a great sensibility" (543, 551), "Ling / was basis of rule" (552), and "Our Dynasty came in because of great Ling / Sensibility" (555).
[187] Couvreur, *Chou King*, 285
[188] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 232.

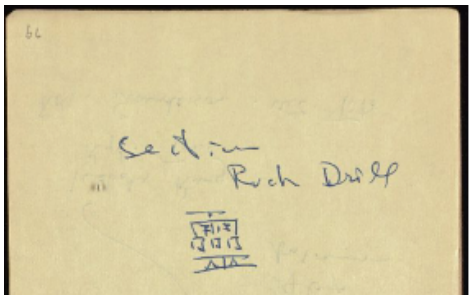


Figure 2 Image 887, Notebook 77: [Rock Drill, 10], *Ezra Pound Papers*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

In his "Section: Rock-Drill" notebooks, Pound positions *ling* directly beneath the section title (fig. 2), an unmistakable indication of the word's guiding status for him. His approach to Chinese writing—to single out and ritualistically repeat the words he deems revelatory—echoes what he outlined early on as the broader compositional method for the *Cantos*: to achieve a "magic moment" of revelation through the "repeat in history."[189] The section title "Rock-Drill," as Pound remarked in 1962, itself hints at this motif of repetition: "the necessary resistance in getting a main thesis across—hammering."[190] His choice of the term draws on Jacob Epstein's abstract, non-representational sculpture *Rock Drill*, which Pound saw as the embodiment of *forma*, an immutable conceptual pattern, and aligned with both a new classicist ideal of aesthetic permanence and the heroic model of political leaders in history who translate right thinking into decisive action, such as the Chinese rulers in Confucius's *Chou King*.[191] The purpose of rock-drill is to reveal, or to 顯 *hsien*—another Chinese character of distinct significance for him,

[189] See *Ezra Pound: A Critical Anthology*, edited by J.P. Sullivan (Middlesex and Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), 93.
[190] From Pound's *Paris Review* interview with Donald Hall in 1962. See *Ezra Pound: A Critical Anthology*, 279.
[191] See Jacob Korg, "Jacob Epstein's Rock Drill and the 'Cantos.'" *Paideuma* 4.2/3 (1975), 301–13. Jacob Epstein originally exhibited "Rock Drill" in 1915 as a large plaster figure straddling a pneumatic drill, but he later removed the drill and lower body to create a bronze torso, now housed in the Tate Gallery. This modification shifted the sculpture's meaning from an assertion of human dignity in the industrial age to a more ominous vision of machine's oppression, which Epstein described as "the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow," resembling a "terrible Frankenstein's monster" (302). Pound was clearly untouched by Epstein's later pessimism, as he continued to invoke "rock drill" as a vorticist symbol of relentless creative force and epistemic precision rather than threat or dread.

which Pound sets beside the self-assured assertion "Heaven's process is quite coherent / and its main points perfectly clear" in Canto 85.[192] Frequently invoked by Pound in this and other cantos, *hsien* traces its older form to an image of a figure discerning silk threads beneath the sun—an act of clarification, of bringing order to complexity through illumination. Like *ling*, it is exemplary of the characters Ernest Fenollosa speaks of as "shorthand pictures of actions or processes" and, moreover, a compound word where "two things added together do not produce a third thing but suggest some fundamental relation between them."[193]

Carroll Terrell observes that *ling* holds a singular place among the many Chinese characters that captivated Pound, for it visually fuses "the process of heaven with the processes of nature and the Confucian ideals of order in man,"

> Just as the transcendent order of Neoplatonic thought is imaged by the heavens and clouds being reflected in water, so here the sky-cloud components on the top of this character, with the rain in the center and the earth-ceremonies of the bottom components, imply in parallel fashion the harmony that results when the processes of heaven's will are reflected in the actions of the emperor who has the good of the people at heart.[194]

Hugh Kenner likewise notes that what sets *ling* apart for Pound is not its phonetic property, but rather its visual composition, which Pound regards as a vivid image of cosmic harmony and ritualistic power:

> Then set *wu* [巫] under *ling*, 靈 and out of all the *lings* that chime through Chinese speech, and mean in different tones and contexts a multitude of unrelated things, you have designated the *ling* which means the spirit or energy of a being, in harmony with the invisible and by ritual drawing down benefice: we may say, *sensibility*.[195]

Pound's parenthetical declaration in Canto 85— "No, that is *not* philological" (544)—can be taken as the methodological cue for his visual reading of Chinese characters, such as *ling*, as a sort of compressed pictographic poetry. Such treatment of Chinese characters as visual-poetic revelations can be directly observed in his annotated copy of Morrison's *Dictionary of the Chinese Language*, where Pound commented "Magnificent ideogram—phanopoeia" beside the character 旦, the shorthand image of the sun rising above the horizon, meaning "dawn."[196]

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[192] Pound, *The Cantos*, 552.
[193] Fenollosa and Pound, "Chinese Written Character," 46.
[194] Terrell, *Companion*, 475.
[195] Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 14-15.
[196] See Kenner, *Pound Era*, 103.

Pound's signature anti-philological statement concludes a polyphonic passage in Canto 85, where he interweaves his own voice with Couvreur's French translation and an interpretive rendering of Chinese terms culled from the *Chou King*. This yields a bewildering assemblage of English, French, Greek, and transliterated Chinese (fig. 3).

no mere epitome without organization
The sun under it all
Justice, d'urbanité, de prudence

wei heou, Σοφία

the sheltered grass hopes, chueh, cohere
(No, that is *not* philological)

Figure 3 Pound, The Cantos, 544.

Here, "the sun under it all" is Pound's interpretation of the character 智 *chih*, meaning intelligence or mind, whose lower component, Pound's ever-favored "sun" radical, suggests for him a "process" of enlightenment unfolding "through time."[197] Placed in curious juxtaposition to this etymological reading is Couvreur's translation of the core moral principles of rulership bestowed by heaven, "Justice, d'urbanité, de prudence," which stands beside "wei hou," the French transliteration of a Chinese phrase denoting "sovereign."[198] Σοφία, the Greek for "wisdom," is Pound's marginal gloss on *Chou King* as a whole. This is then followed by his defiantly non-philological, digressive pictorial reading of the character 厥 *chueh*, a pronoun meaning "his" or "their," which Pound sees as the image of a shelter, a structure of stability and order, beneath which lie the radical for "grass," a symbol of transience, and "lacking," a marker of absence. This visual reading feeds into the creative imperative at the line's end: the necessity of making things "cohere," of creating an architecture that shelters and governs the mortal and the ephemeral alike. Through such idiosyncratic selection and reassembly, Pound creates a conceptual emblem of governance and sovereign duty, where the ruler's charge is to build an enduring system of order against the flux of historical time. Pound's dictum of making "cohere," which is also the principle that underlies his own reading practice, is embodied by such

[197] Terrell, *Companion*, 469.
[198] Terrell, *Companion*, 469.

deliberate curatorial orchestration, which he deems essential for a meaningful grasp of history—"no mere epitome without organization." At once a homage to *Chou King* as a repository of historical wisdom and a declaration of the poet's authority, Pound's method of "organization," in effect, establishes an interpretive empire of his own, an edifice built from recovered fragments, their meanings unified through etymological speculation and visual intuition. Art, for Pound, has indeed always been a labor of selection and emphasis, of isolating "some component of that [supreme] intelligence for the sake of making it more perceptible"; such labor, as he puts it, creates "a door or a lift," a means of hoisting us "mentally into, a zone of activity, and out of fugg and inertia."[199] Pound's historiographical method, then, is an act of extraction that "lift[s] single words out of history," nowhere more literally so than what he does with the Chinese script, placing, in this practice, an almost mystical faith in the heuristic and epistemic potence of ideogram as poetry, and poetry as seeing.[200]

Ling, one of the characters Pound identifies as a pictorial representation of the triadic relationship between earth, heaven, and men, conveys for Pound an important subject rhyme between the East and the West, or as he puts it, "between KUNG and ELEUSIS."[201] The Confucian vision of this trinity intimates an ideal of "a perfect polis," in which the individual's social being is inextricable from her attunement to nature, and where political life subsumes both the ethical and the mystical.[202] As Pound opines, Confucius "offers a way of life, an Anschauung or disposition toward nature and man and a system for dealing with both."[203] Confucius's dissolution of the boundaries between political governance and moral philosophy, civic duty and spiritual intuition, offers Pound an Eastern solution to the dilemma around man's nature of existence in the West. It is in the Confucian synthesis of nature and human society, as Michael Bernstein argues, that Pound discerns a means of harmonizing two seemingly antagonistic strains—"the classical (and neo-classical) conviction that man's most complete existence was as a citizen of the polis, and the Romantic notion that Nature is at once man's comforter and source of his finest instincts."[204] It bears repeating that by the time Pound composed "Section: Rock-

[199] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 189-190.
[200] Kenner, *Pound Era*, 143.
[201] Pound, *The Cantos*, 258
[202] Michael Andre Bernstein, *The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and The Modern Verse Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 81.
[203] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 24.
[204] Bernstein, *Tale of the Tribe*, 83.

Drill," the universalist aspiration of his earlier years—the dream to "gather the latent energy of Nature," or, to "gather the limbs of Osiris"—had grown more radicalized, its initial aesthetic impulse now charged with a political urgency. In the 1910s, "Nature" had stood for what Pound venerated as a ubiquitous source of artistic vitality, a cosmic energy that manifests across cultures and historical epochs.[205] But in Canto 85, this pursuit sharpens into a method of reading, a system of thinking that seeks both to interpret and to impose. Seeing Chinese writing as a direct visual embodiment of Nature's process, Pound creates a close circuit of interpretation that privileges his own (mis)reading while foreclosing all other possible readings, including those grounded in philological accuracy. As the later Cantos took shape under dire life circumstances, these Chinese characters became, for Pound, fragments shored against his own ruin, pieces from which he still sought to build a "shelter," one that might yet salvage coherence from the dissolution of his fractured, unraveling ambition of Confucian governance and the renewal of a bygone ethical-political form.

Pound's method of deliberate misreading, informed by the thematic resonance he establishes between neo-platonic light and Confucian "process," guides his selection and interpretation of Chinese characters. His practice of reading horizontal strokes—lower strokes as "earth," upper strokes as "heaven"—has little philological basis, yet aligns with his conviction that Chinese writing are visual repositories of historical knowledge. In 仁 *jen*, the Confucian concept of "virtue" or "humaneness," Pound sees the image of a person (suggested by the left hand component) poised between heaven and earth; hence his assertion, "Heaven and Earth begat the perceiver."[206] Likewise, in 止 *chih*, he singles out the bottom stroke as the word's defining element, reading it as an image of the "hitching post, position, place one is in, and works from," the ground from which virtuous action springs.[207] This character recurs in Canto CX from "Drafts and Fragments" (fig. 4), appearing near the line "new with the day," an echo of Pound's modernist mantra, "make it new," itself a phrase he believed a Chinese emperor had inscribed on a washbasin.[208] Pound indeed did not hesitate to make these Chinese words new. In 德 *tê*, another word for "virtue," he sees 目 ("eye") resting atop 心 ("heart"), therefore glossing it

[205] Park, "The Transnational Turn," 184.
[206] Pound, *The Cantos*, 552.
[207] Terrell, *Companion*, 716.
[208] This emperor is Tching Tang, or Ch'eng T'ang. See Terrell, *Companion*, 205.

as “the action resultant from this straight gaze into the heart. The ‘know thyself’ carried into action.”[209] Pound would no doubt have taken enormous pleasure in the fact that his own name, widely rendered in Chinese as 龐德 (pang tê), means “tremendous virtue.” As Kenner astutely writes, “any sinologist is entitled to protest that this is like finding *iron* in *irony*; but Picasso by analogous process found a baboon’s head in the shape of a toy car.”[210] Pound had no interest in “wring[ing] song from philology”; his forte is “magnificent misreading.”[211]

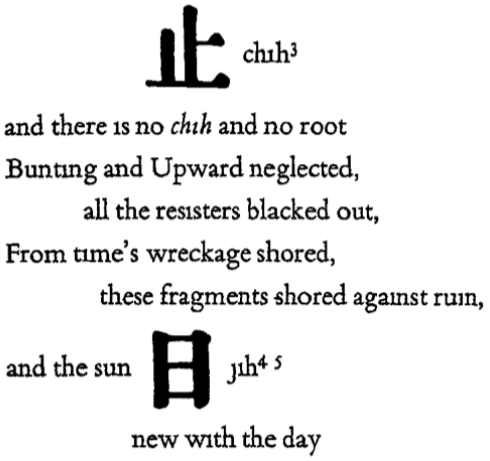


Figure 4 Pound, The Cantos, 781.

Pound did not hesitate to repurpose particular words from Confucius’s writing directly as vessels for his metapoetic and ideological expressions. 教 *chiao*, a recurring character in Canto 85 and other cantos, meaning “teach,” is made to form a subject rhyme with the poet’s own German neologism, “Sagetrieb,” meaning “pass on the tradition.”[212] Pound’s visual reading is practiced here again: he discerns within *chiao* the character 孝 *hsiao*, meaning “filial piety,” depicted as an old man standing beside a child. This element, *hsiao*, has been deliberately juxtaposed with “Sagetrieb” on the frontispiece of an earlier edition of *The Cantos* that concludes with Canto 84.[213] For Pound, *chiao* represents both an injunction of familial duty and a broader cultural metaphor where the old is revitalized, or made new, through the young. The Sagetrieb-

[209] Qtd. in Terrell, *Companion*, 470.
[210] Kenner, *Pound Era*, 144.
[211] Kenner, *Pound Era*, 195.
[212] This is according to David Gordon, who heard Pound discuss the word. Qtd. in Terrell, *Companion*, 479.
[213] See David Gordon, “Thought Built On Sagetrieb,” *Paideuma* 3.2 (1974), 171.

filiality connection serves a function akin to the *Nekuia* theme of *The Cantos*: just as Odysseus receives prophecy and guidance from Tiresias, "Sagetrieb" represents the "carrying on of a tradition from the world of the dead as a way of rejuvenating the living world."[214] Pound thus aligns the historiographical mission of the *Cantos* with Confucius's curatorial efforts—the selection and compilation of odes and historical texts from past dynasties—and frames both as the creation of an invaluable heritage for posterity.[215]

In this regard, Pound's terse defense of Confucius in *Guide to Kulchur* becomes a self-justification: "Nothing cd. be more false than the idea that Kung was preoccupied with the dead. He was concerned with the living."[216] This proclamation serves as another mission statement for later in *The Cantos*, where Pound positions himself as a modernist Confucius who understands that "people need poetry" and takes it upon himself to fulfill this need.[217] For Pound, this inheritance of tradition necessitates poetry as its medium—poetry being "totalitarian in any confrontation with prose."[218] In fact, the very term "Sagetrieb" encapsulates Pound's ambition to serve as the poet-historiographer of his age: he sought to embody the "the *Sage* (literally "saying" or "speech") of his own historical era, the έπος (speech, or tale) of a tribe that had itself inherited all of man's previous legends and accomplishments as constitutive elements of its own consciousness," as Bernstein explicates.[219] The orthographic oddity of this coinage, as Michael Kindellan observes, is not an error but a strategic deviation that shows how Pound's ideal form of dialect is meant to disrupt, not adhere to, philological norms:

> We know it to be a neologism combining the German words *sagen*, to say, and *der Trieb*, urge or instinct. … Even Pound was unsure of its provenance, telling Eva Hesse in response to her question about it, "I cert/ got the woid Sagetrieb out of somewhere I spose I got it spelled wrong for TREIB astigmatic eye, allus gittin things spelled usteronprot." A term of uncertain provenance, used by an author who "HAS forgotten-what-book," and spelled in a form that does not accord with orthographic rules […] are the hallmarks of Pound's especially sacred dialect.[220]

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[214] Gordon, "Thought," 172.
[215] Terrell, *Companion*, 479.
[216] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 274.
[217] Pound, *The Cantos*, 144.
[218] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 121.
[219] Bernstein, *Tale of the Tribe*, 9. Pound borrowed the idea from German anthropologist Leo Frobenius.
[220] Michael Kindellan, *The Late Cantos of Ezra Pound: Composition, Revision, Publication* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019), 130.

Pound's use of the character 誠 *ch'eng*, meaning "sincerity," is a revealing instance of his interpretive disposition. Though Pound correctly grasps the righthand component's meaning—"to perfect, bring to focus"—his reading of the lefthand element as a pictorial rendering of "sun's lace coming to rest on the precise spot verbally" is mistaken. Yet it is precisely in this misreading that we see his method at work, one that prompts him to define *ch'eng* as "the precise definition of the word," rather meta-poetically. The Chinese script, for Pound, is not a fixed system of signs but a space for imaginative projection, where "precise" meaning is determined as much by his own interpretive convictions as by the actual features of the characters themselves. His translation of these Chinese words is less a matter of fidelity than of reinvention, a deliberate remaking of Chinese writing as a prototypical form of *phanopoeia*, where the presumed semantic transparency of ideograms becomes interchangeable with the sublime universality of a world-language. The Chinese characters are bent to align with his theory, reimagined as a language of action rather than abstraction, in which his selected words stand as paradigmatic expressions of a superior species of "ideas" that are action-oriented, dynamic forces that act directly upon human thought and conduct:

> At this point we must make a clean cut between two kinds of "ideas". Ideas which exist and/or are discussed in a species of vacuum, which are as it were toys of the intellect, and ideas which are intended to "go into action", or to guide action and serve us as rules (and/or) measures of conduct.[221]

For Pound, "the history of culture is the history of ideas going into action."[222] His strategic reinvention of Chinese characters from Confucius's writing indeed recasts them as action-ideas, as instruments of an agenda of cultural renewal. Such process of making new, which he broadly terms *paideuma*, is not the resuscitation of a pre-existing Zeitgeist but the revival of the historical past as the blueprint for an envisioned "new civilization."[223] In other words, what Pound pursues is less a disinterested exercise in philological retrieval than a conscious remaking of history and language—a process in which meaning is reconstructed in service of the poet's own cultural-political visions.

Pound's use of Chinese written characters in "Section: Rock-Drill" furthers the creative liberty of his long-standing engagement with Confucius, an involvement that begins much earlier

[221] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 34.
[222] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 44.
[223] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 58.

in *The Cantos*. Pound's role as a cultural "mover" can be glimpsed from his unexpected means of "carrying across" Confucius: such liberty is already at work in Canto 13, where Pound constructs a "pastiche of passages knit elegantly together" from *The Analects*, fabricating a version of Confucius who "smiled upon all of them equally" to replace the original Confucius who favored a single disciple's response.[224] Confucius becomes less an immutable historical figure than a protean presence in Pound's re-creation. It is Pound, then, who keeps Confucius "moving" through his rewritings. Confucius's words, which Pound quotes at the end of Canto 13—"The blossoms of the apricot / blow from the east to the west, / And I have tried to keep them from falling"—become indistinguishable from Pound's own credo, a declaration of his role as someone who both transmits and transforms. No longer the "urbane sage of *The Analects*," Pound's Confucius emerges in *The Cantos* as a light-philosopher instead, a figure of empyrean intelligence whose wisdom is continually revitalized and rewritten in the poet's adept hand.[225]

Like Pound's idiosyncratic (mis)reading of Chinese writing, shaped by Fenollosa's mistaken belief that all Chinese characters are pictorially meaningful, Pound's Confucius, too, is filtered through the interpretive slants of the translators he relies on. Just as Canto 1 lays bare the Latin Homeric traces of its source, so too does Canto 13, in its retention of French transliterations, flaunt Pound's reliance on M. G. Pauthier's *Les Quatre Livres de Philosophie Morale et Politique de la Chine*.[226] Pound himself acknowledged such constraint, lamenting his position of being "at the mercy of single translators," given the dearth of bilingual and up-to-date editions of Confucian texts available to Western readers.[227] This frustration, in part, spurred his own translations of *Ta Hio* and other canonical Confucian texts, whose fidelity is, however, subject to no less debate, unsurprisingly.[228] The *China Cantos* (LII-LXXI), notably, draw from the didactic, eighteenth-century account of French missionary Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla's *Histoire Générale de la Chine*, itself a composite of other sources spanning centuries of

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[224] Mary Paterson Cheadle, *Ezra Pound's Confucian Translations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 19-22. Also see Zhaoming Qian, "Ezra Pound and His First Chinese Contact: For and Against Confucianism," *Paideuma* 35.1&2 (Spring & Fall 2006), 168-9.
[225] Kenner, *Pound Era*, 459.
[226] On Pound's habit of not covering his "tracks" of knowledge mediated by translations, which shows his understanding of tradition as a process of "handing on" across different languages, see Kenner, *Pound Era*, 445.
[227] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 147.
[228] See Pound, *Confucius: The Great Digest, the Unwobbling Pivot, and the Analects* (New Directions, 1969).

Chinese historiography.[229] Misled by de Mailla's biased portrayal of Taoism as an anarchic counterforce to Confucian order, Pound scorns the "taozers," failing, until later, to recognize Taoist thought's nonnegligible influence on Confucianism. Tellingly, the very "process" of nature, which Pound exalts and associates with neo-Platonic light, corresponds to the word 道 *Tao*, the "way" of Taoism.[230] Pound's interpretive reframing around Confucius operates in much the same way as his handling of Chinese characters; both Confucius and his writing become mutable vessels open to reconfiguration to suit the poet's poetic and political epistemes.

Seeing as Knowing: A Myth of Universal Poetry

Canto 85's use of Chinese characters may at first seem to contribute to the kind of opacity not untypical of modernist texts. Yet to define the poem in the terms of such "difficulty" alone would be to misconstrue its intent, for it shares Friedrich Schleiermacher's preference for the former approach in his well-known distinction between two modes of translation: bringing the reader closer to the foreign text (preserving its otherness) and bringing the text to the reader (domesticating it into familiar modes of expression).[231] Pound, like Schleiermacher, contradicts the assumption common in the nineteenth century that the unmediated presence of a foreign language necessarily obstructs a reader's understanding, as well as the related belief that translation and explanation, if skillfully made, can adequately substitute for the original. In undoing the assumed opposition between "difficult" untranslated elements and "accessible" translations, Canto 85 advances Pound's conviction that Chinese characters, by virtue of their visual and ideographic clarity, offer a universal legibility that circumvents the need for conventional literacy, asking from readers simply the capacity to "see" in lieu of to read. This belief manifests in Pound's own practice of physically cutting Chinese characters from printed sources and affixing them to the proof sheets of "Section: Rock-Drill," a method that shows his

[229] Cheadle, *Ezra Pound's Confucian Translations*, 221.
[230] Kenner, *Pound Era*, 454-6.
[231] Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On the Different Methods of Translating," *in The Translation Studies Reader*, 51-71. "Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him" (56).

investment in the material presence of Chinese script as poetry in its own right.[232] The Chinese characters do not embellish, as in the ornamental manuscript aesthetic of Pre-Raphaelite poetry, where decorative visual elements enrich but remain extrinsic to the text. Instead, as Patricia Cockram incisively comments, "they are the poem," not adornment but form itself, an embodied articulation of Pound's universalist poetics.[233]

In idealizing Chinese characters as the "picture of a thing," Pound constructs a myth of cognitive immediacy and bypasses the traditional obstacles concerning philology and literacy, in pursuit of an epistemic universality that, in its claim to directness, is as problematic as it is alluring. Joshua Kotin, in *Utopias of One*, argues that Pound, through Fenollosa's essay, arrives at a method aimed at a utopian ideal of poetry, one that dispenses with the need for specialized knowledge and education. Such a method rejects conventional standards altogether, embracing "a poetry and a poetics that did not require expertise of any kind" by appealing to "innate and universal properties of mind."[234] Fenollosa's claim in "Chinese Written Character" anticipates Pound's own belief in a poetry capable of transcending linguistic and cultural confines: "such a pictorial method, whether the Chinese exemplified it or not, would be the ideal language of the world."[235] Pound's vision of universal poetry, indebted to Fenollosa's influence, finds an emphatic articulation in *ABC of Reading*, where he declares, "the Chinese 'word' or ideogram for red is based on something everyone KNOWS."[236] The presumed visual-epistemic immediacy of these characters, as Kindellan points out, reveals a "textual exigency" central to Pound's late poetics, a direct opposition to the "slow, decentralized, and fragmentary" nature of philological readings.[237]

One observation to add here is that Pound's aspiration toward a universalist poetics is complicated and unsettled by his own conception of his readership, and by his vacillation between addressing everyone and appealing to a select few, between advocating an egalitarian accessibility and indulging an impulse toward intellectual exclusivity. Pound's delineation of an ideal audience often serves as an implicit critique and an act of exclusion. He asserts a decidedly

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[232] See A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet, III: The Tragic Years, 1939-1972* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 349.
[233] Cockram, "Hypertextuality," 152.
[234] Joshua Kotin, *Utopias of One* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020), 112-3.
[235] Fenollosa and Pound, "Chinese Written Character," 59.
[236] Ezra Pound, *ABC of reading* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1991), 22.
[237] Kindellan, *The Late Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 10.

elitist stance, for example, commenting on Canto 96: "One demands the right, now and again, to write for a few people with special interests and whose curiosity reaches into greater detail."[238] In *Guide to Kulchur*, for another instance, he insists that the book is not for the "over-fed" but those untouched by university education, offering these potential readers an alternative pedagogy—an Ezuversity, a "totalitarian treatise" designed to transmit "the New Learning or the New Paideuma."[239] His disdain for institutional learning can again be found at the outset of *The ABC of Reading*, where he derides "those who have arrived at full knowledge of the subject without knowing the facts"—a pointed dismissal of those who privilege academic orthodoxy over empirical engagement with specificities. It is clarified that his work is intended instead for "those no longer in school; by those who have not been to school; or by those who in their college days suffered those things which most of my own generation suffered."[240] Pound's apathy to institutional definitions of literacy, however, does not resolve a self-contradiction in his universalist ambition: even though he postures against intellectual gatekeeping, his insistence on educating the "right" kind of audience establishes a new form of didactic authority as he positions himself as a paternal figure ("papa") guiding his readers ("goofs") toward proper understanding.[241]

In what follows, I further argue that such tension between elitism and absolute accessibility in Pound's poetics finds a revealing test case in his treatment of the Chinese character *ling* in Canto 85. Through an analysis of Pound's various strategies of annotation and interpretation—translation, transliteration, transcription, and repetition—I trace in detail how he attempts to make *ling* embody his ideal of a universally comprehensible poetics. I discover that at certain moments, his efforts may momentarily succeed in fostering a communicability that seems to transcend linguistic boundaries; yet such a project ultimately falters, hindered by a contradiction at the core of Pound's method: he seeks to construct an egalitarian poetics through interpretive methods that are, by their nature, exclusionary and hegemonic, reliant on an elusive "sensibility," or *ling*, that only certain readers can access.

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[238] Pound, *The Cantos*, 659.
[239] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 27.
[240] Pound, *ABC of Reading*, 11.
[241] Qtd. in Michael Thurston, *Making Something Happen: American Political Poetry between the World Wars* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 142. In a 1938 letter to the Italian economist Odon Por, Pound voices explicitly antisemitic and anti-American views while lamenting his lack of audience: "WD/the goofs listen to papa?? They would NOT."

Pound's engagement with *ling* unfolds through the expository system he constructs around the word—a constellation of transliteration ("ling"), translation ("a (great) sensibility"), and the many transcriptions of the word in his notebooks, although these do not always reliably reproduce the original character.[242] Through this layered means of illumination, Pound turns *ling* into a locus of communication that draws readers into an exegetical process guided by the "rock-drilling" metaphor and the poet's unearthing of potential revelations. The transliteration functions both as a mnemonic device and a point of connection between distinct systems of linguistic signification, while the translation, "sensibility," encodes Pound's own interpretation of the word. Though Canto 85 is dense with foreign words and obscure allusions that risk estranging the reader, Pound's elucidatory strategies surrounding *ling* suggest a keen awareness of audience, an attention from an organizing intelligence that invites the reader's encounter with *ling* to unfold in triadic dimensions—visual (transcription), aural (transliteration), and conceptual (translation)—as if testing the very limits of translation and representation.

The recurrence of *ling* in Canto 85 obliges the reader to confront, time and again, a visual inscription that Pound elevates to the centre of his poetic enterprise, which he frames as a sacred undertaking—the transmission of Confucian principles of governance through a universally accessible poetic form. The etymology of *ling*, depicting a rain ceremony in which the emperor communes with and incarnates heaven's will, encapsulates the very concept of intersemiotic translation. This ritual image performs a synthesis of cosmic, natural, and human orders, where "the processes of heaven" converge with "the processes of nature and the Confucian ideals of order in man."[243] As a pictorial rendering of the ceremony through which heaven reveals itself via imperial mediation, *ling* parallels the traditional conception of translation as the faithful transmission of a "sacred" original. The translator is thus implied to be less a humble intermediary than a sovereign figure, invested with the authority to both convey and remake meaning. Pound's deliberate placement of *ling* at Canto 85's opening, then, is not just a typographical experiment in the visual materiality of the page. Instead, it asserts the poet's own

[242] Transliteration takes on greater importance for Pound during this period than when he was editing Fenollosa's "Chinese Written Character," where his focus remained on visual composition and the isolated meanings of individual words. As Kenner notes in *The Pound Era*, during the composition of "Section: Rock-Drill," Pound was also considering how to unite *melopoeia* with his engagement with Chinese characters, asserting that he doubted whether the Chinese sound "was inferior to the Greek" (226).
[243] Terrell, *Companion*, 133.

role as a heroic mediator, one through whom Chinese history and Confucian wisdom are borne across to the modern reader. It is a gesture of cultural stewardship, where the poet, like the message in *ling*, assumes the role of an authoritative transmitter and carries forward what he perceives as a higher order of historical intelligence.

Pound's transcriptions of *ling* in the "Section: Rock-Drill" notebooks (fig. 5 and fig. 6), though often incomplete or imperfect, reflect his effort to grasp the written character's ideal, official form. At the same time, these transcriptions suggest that *ling*, in its unmediated presence within the poem, resists full equivalence with the English translation "sensibility." This leads us to an important tension in Pound's approach: the pull between his pursuit of visual-epistemic immediacy and the unavoidable demands of repetition and mediation. This tension is one that haunts all acts of translation: the desire for unmediated transmission across linguistic divides must reconcile with the perpetual search for perfect correspondence. Even in Pound's seemingly straightforward act of transcription, his handwriting dramatizes rather than resolves this struggle. His attempt to reproduce *ling* stroke by stroke, in an effort to preserve its visual integrity, inevitably fragments and reconfigures it. Extracted from its original context, broken into constituent elements, and reconstructed as part of his own poetic text, *ling* undergoes the very operations of mediation that has defined translation itself.

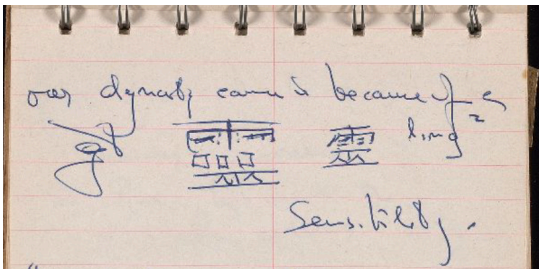


Figure 5 Image 39, Notebook 77: [Rock Drill, 10], *Ezra Pound Papers*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The "three raindrops" component is absent from the second "ling" character transcribed by Pound.

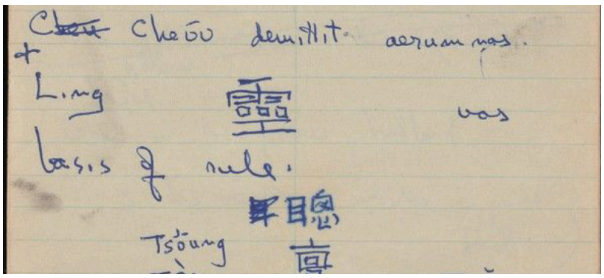


Figure 6 Image 22, Notebook 80: [Rock Drill, 13], *Ezra Pound Papers*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The "men" components are missing (or intentionally omitted) from Pound's transcription of ling.

Pound's belief that words like *ling* are universally pictorial and immediately comprehensible hinges on an incongruity: he envisions a mode of communication that grants instant cognitive clarity, yet he also attributes to such a language a hypothetical inscrutability, such as the elusive essence of Confucian political "sensibility" that *ling* is said to embody. This is a problem structurally perceptible in Pound's broader metaphor of "rock-drill": just as this thematic term suggests both a penetration into meaning and a resistance to that very penetration, *ling* oscillates between the promise of immediate visual comprehension and the persistence of semantic opacity. This dialectic between immediacy and obscurity results in Canto 85's simultaneously familiarizing and alienating effect on the reader. Kindellan captures this duality in his analysis of Pound's strategy of "iterum dico"—the deliberate repetition of certain difficult words, statements, and textual motifs. He argues that such repetition, overwhelming rather than clarifying, is meant to deter close reading: "once something *is* reiterated its critical status changes from something that is unknown and bears further scrutiny to something that begins to stop attracting attention as such, and instead starts assisting in the interpretation of surrounding text."[244] Although Kindellan is not specifically addressing Pound's reprise of Chinese characters here, his insight into the mechanics of repetition in "Section: Rock-Drill" sheds important light on *ling*'s double role: as a navigational marker that gradually acquaints the reader with what initially seems forbiddingly obscure, and as a recurring site for Pound's ongoing performance of his aspiration toward a universally accessible visual language. With each recurrence, *ling* becomes increasingly normalized, its initial strangeness fading. Yet this process can yield divergent outcomes: for some readers, ideally, repetition may bring about

[244] Kindellan, *The Late Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 75.

comprehension; for others, the persistent lack of resolution may leave them stranded within the limits of decipherability.

Pound's translation of *ling* as "a great sensibility" marks an interesting departure from his characteristic insistence on precision and concreteness. His embrace of ambiguity, an openness at odds with his usual principles, can itself be seen as a deliberate strategy that allows space for gradual clarification. It bears out Kindellan's observation that the repetition of a strange, undecipherable element helps to domesticate the unfamiliar and eventually "starts assisting in the interpretation of surrounding text."[245] Pound's addition of "great," a modifier absent from the original Chinese, echoes the character's commanding visual presence at the beginning of Canto 85, where *ling*'s spatial prominence gestures toward the magnificence of the discovery to be made. The first page of Canto 85 becomes a charged space of epiphanic potentiality, where Pound's epistemic rock-drilling works to extract some form of hidden knowledge. *Ling* can be seen as a ritualistic portal, where the poet performs his invocation of an Oriental political tradition—an ideogrammic locale for a Chinese *nekyia* that echoes the descent into the underworld and the summoning of spirits (which is, coincidentally, another meaning of *ling*) in Canto 1.

Ling epitomizes the thematic image of rock-drill by serving as both a means and an end. As Maria Luisa Ardizzone speculates, *ling* "appears to be not so much present content as goal, a potential indicating something to be aimed at."[246] Pound's repetition of the word mimics a process of excavation, of uncovering its latent meanings, much like his imagined task of drilling through rock to attain its hidden essence. Yet this method invites scrutiny of its underlying assumptions: what does it mean, after all, to portray the pursuit of knowledge as a heroic excavation of history, as a masculinist act of penetration? It is such a formulation that elevates *ling*—a relatively minor term in Confucius's *Shūjīng*—into a monumental site of ritualistic communication, one pressured to disclose a presumed revelation under the poet's relentless archaeological assault. Within this pattern of thought, Pound's *nekyia* becomes the objective that subordinates every aspect of *ling*'s presence and communicative function—its translation, repetition, and visual presentation—to the demands of the poet's own necromantic ritual. Pound

[245] Kindellan, *The Late Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 75.
[246] Maria Luisa Ardizzone, "Pound's Language in 'Rock-Drill', Two Theses for a Genealogy," *Paideuma*, 21.1/2 (1992), 127.

casts himself as a modernist Odysseus, channeling the voices of the past, while his readers assume the auxiliary roles of Perimedes and Eurylochus, silent witnesses to his solitary communion with ancestral spirits:

> Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
> And drawing sword from my hip
> I dug the ell-square pitkin,
> Poured we libation unto each the dead,
> First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour
> Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads,
> As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best[247]

Pound's *nekyia* sustains a hierarchical structure: Pound-Odysseus commands the central role—drawing the sword, digging the pit, and offering prayers—while the reader, absorbed into the collective "we," is relegated to peripheral acts of libation-pouring and passive observation. The spirits summoned respond not to the reader but to the self-styled "man of ill star." The soothsayer's warning—"lose all companions"—proves prophetic for Pound's own standing in "Section: Rock-Drill," where each iteration of *ling*, despite the poet's accumulating efforts at communication and translation, distances Pound further from his reader, until he becomes, inevitably, his own sole interlocutor. When experiencing a non-linear, borderless "hypertext" like *The Cantos*, which appears to invite unrestricted movement at first, the untrained reader might initially, as Cockram argues, delight in a "false sense of absolute freedom."[248] Yet such openness is illusory, for the reader is "never truly in complete control," since the poem, for all its apparent fluidity, already dictates a "correct" path of reading through deliberate patterns of repetition, intertextual references, and embedded ideological cues. It is in an alarmingly similar way that fascist aesthetics in general create an illusion of interaction and participation, yet impose a rigid underlying order on the viewer's understanding.

In the end, Pound emerges as the most devoted and the ideal reader of Canto 85. His writing and re-writing of *ling* in the "Section: Rock-Drill" notebooks shows an intimate practice of emulation, where each stroke of *ling* is meticulously reproduced—a act resembling the poet's "praying many a prayer" in search of revelation, a performance akin to what Kenner calls the poet's ritualistic "dance,"

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[247] Pound, *The Cantos*, 3.
[248] Cockram, "Hypertextuality," 160.

> *Ling* with its dancers below, its rain falling above, its ritual engaging by harmony cosmic process, the "great sensibility" by which dynasties are generated, may serve as emblem for the poet's role, making the dance, questing for the right and absolute rhythm to mime with his blood and breath some greater process: whether the speech of mothers with sick babies, or the energies locked in some alien ancient poem, or the fingers of recurrent dawn.[249]

Ling's recurrence, like rock-drill, enacts a historiographical quarrying, a repeated demand for the enigmatic pictograph to yield revelations. Yet this sustained effort, for all its gestures toward universality and transparency, constitutes a largely hermetic monologue. As both writer and reader of Canto 85, Pound continuously reassembles and reinterprets the historical fragments he gathers, drilling toward an ever-receding endpoint of knowledge in a solitary ritual of invocation, exegesis, and self-communication. The sense of heroic isolation is both ideological and deeply personal, something that A. David Moody aptly captures in his characterization of "Section: Rock-Drill"—with its idealization of China as a counterpoint to the decay of Western governance—as "more than ever the work of a solitary, sometimes maverick, sometimes credulous, individual crusading against the prevailing culture."[250] For Pound at St. Elizabeths, the drive to tame "heteroclite contents into a formal order" arises both from his longstanding poetic ambition and from the state of his own mind as it grapples with physical confinement and a self-imposed solitude in his poetic practice. In this, *ling* becomes a fitting cipher for the tragic paradox of Pound's poetics: a language meant for all, yet continually perfected for an audience of one.

Canto 85's Hegemonic Intimacy

To claim that Canto 85 is a ritualistic enactment belonging more to Pound himself than to the reader is not, however, to imply that it retreats into the poet's private realm. Although the distance between Pound and his reader is no closer than in John Stuart Mill's conception of poetry as something "overheard," in Mill's theory the poet's "utter unconsciousness of a listener" is a studied fiction, a rhetorical stance that turns confession inward, where the lyric "I"

[249] Kenner, *Pound Era*, 544.
[250] Moody, *Ezra Pound*, 354-5.

withdraws into a sanctified, privileged space of solitude and reflection.[251] What Canto 85 stages, by contrast, is a self-conscious performance in which the very notion, or need, of addressing an audience is rendered extraneous. "It doesn't point to us," as D. S. Carne-Ross succinctly observes, because Pound, as the poet-translator, becomes both the gravitational force that orders the poem and its principle recipient.[252] If Mill's model of poetic utterance depends on a feint, concealing the reader's presence beneath a guise of indifference, Pound's epistemic endeavor in "Section Rock-Drill" eliminates such gestures entirely.

The question of poetic address gains further complexity in the peculiar circumstances of Pound's confinement at St. Elizabeths, where the boundary between public and private voice grows tenuous, which leaves the poem suspended between personal contemplation and public declaration. Different from Mill's model of disinterested lyricism, which prizes a self-contained utterance, Pound's poetic act is motivated by a drive for communication and intervention, for creating an imagined agora where his reader community participates in a collective excavation of historical truth led by the poet. Canto 85, then, is a poem both for and not for the reader. Such ambiguity is best understood through Michael Thurston's distinction between acts occurring *in* poems and those unfolding *around* them. As an epistemic project, Canto 85 appears to hinge primarily on Pound's heroic pursuit of meaning, seemingly independent of readerly engagement. Yet it also aspires, undeniably, to cultivate what Thurston identifies as an imagined community of "like-minded, or at least similarly subordinated, readers," a group whose purpose is to create a "collective subjectivity required for political action."[253] This brings into focus the nature of the political community Pound envisions: does it masquerade as collective engagement and reinstate totalitarian structures instead? Or does it position itself outside hegemonic orders of power, only to reveal that such order is constitutive, woven into the fabric of the community the poet seeks to construct? If the poem extends an invitation to the reader, it does so under terms that are neither reciprocal nor open-ended. To read Canto 85 is not to engage in an act of interpretation but to assent to a predetermined arrangement of meaning, one that privileges revelation and closure over multiplicity and dissent. Unity of vision is the poem's unspoken demand, which sits

[251] John Stuart Mill, "What is Poetry?", in *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory*, edited by Thomas J. Collins and Vivienne J. Rundle (Broadview Press, 2005), 1216.
[252] D. S. Carne-Ross, "The Music of a Lost Dynasty: Pound in the Classroom," *Boston University Journal* 21 (Winter 1973), 37.
[253] Thurston, *Making Something Happen*, 20.

uneasily with the canto's own fractured texture, its restless juxtapositions and heterogeneous historical planes. Pound's own words betray the nature of his address: his mission, he insists, is to "get the goofs to listen." The reader is neither an overhearer nor interlocutor but a disciple to be instructed, compelled to see as the poet sees. As Pound asserts, "the RIGHT WAY to study poetry, or literature, or painting" is simply to "LOOK," a command that turns the reader's perception into decree and suppresses alternative readings in favor of a single authoritative gaze.[254]

Pound's rendering of *ling* as "sensibility" itself implies a particular kind of readerly intelligence, one reserved for a select few.[255] He envisions an audience defined by their capacity for rarefied discernment, an intelligence found in figures like Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, who could, as Pound admiringly records, "read the Chinese radicals and many compound signs almost at pleasure" and recognize the "pictorial values which were to him perfectly obvious and apparent."[256] The Chinese characters in *The Cantos*, as Bob Perelman argues, function as gatekeeping devices, estranging marks that constitute the "basic mode of Poundian address, one that makes reading his work so confirming to those who are initiated and so frustrating to those who are not."[257] However, to situate such literary elitism in direct opposition to Pound's aspiration for a universal, visual poetry would be to miss the deeper entanglement of these two tendencies. *Ling*, in fact, suggests that Pound's intellectual exclusivity and his populist rhetoric are not contradictory but mutually reinforcing. The word's reappearance on the page following Canto 85, alongside the phrase "the feel of the people," marks Pound's interpellation of a notional masses, a "people" summoned into being by the poet's own authoritative voice. Here, linguistic inaccessibility—the opacity of *ling* and other sinographs to an English-speaking readership—becomes the very condition of realization for the absolute accessibility promised by these words. Pound assumes what Gilles Deleuze terms the role of the "representant," one who claims to speak for the universal on the presumption that "everyone recognizes."[258] The notion of "everyone," as Deleuze warns, is always a construction, one that effaces the irreducibly other:

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[254] Pound, *The ABC of Reading*, 23.
[255] Kindellan, *The Late Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 9.
[256] Fenollosa and Pound, "Chinese Written Character," 58.
[257] Bob Perelman, "Pound's Legibility Today: Pedagogy and/or Imitation," *Sillages Critiques* 5 (2003), 24.
[258] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, translated by Paul Patton (Columbia University Press, 1994), 52.

"there is always the unrepresented singularity who does not recognize precisely because it is not the everyone or the universal. 'Everyone' recognizes the universal because it is itself the universal." Pound's universalist aspiration, through such interpellation, becomes a pseudo-universalism, a rhetorical sleight of hand that elides difference to prioritize an imagined totality.

Pound's repurposing of *ling* is characteristic of his practice of selective, interpretively inflected translation that reduces linguistic complexity to singular meanings. In his usage, *ling* is constrained into representing an unambiguous picture of absolute harmony, a miraculous alignment of human sensibility with heavenly order, even as Pound's own notebook documents his awareness of the character's inconveniently rich polysemy (fig. 7), including its more ominous connotations: *ling* can signify not only spirit but also a corpse or a coffin, an unsettling meaning that casts an ironic shadow over the poet's heroic project of cultural-historical resurrection. The very sources he consulted, from R. H. Mathews's *A Chinese-English Dictionary* to its nineteenth century precedent, Morrison's *Dictionary of the Chinese Language*, suggest to him that *ling* is not a stable signifier but an umbrella term spanning a spectrum of spiritual phenomena, from the sacred to the spectral.[259] Within such semantic expansiveness, *ling* represents not a verdict, a teleology, but a constant interplay between the living and the dead, a purposelessness. The word operates as what Jacques Derrida would call a *pharmakon*, a word whose unstable meaning is resistant to translation into Western languages without an essential loss. Pound's translation of *ling* as "sensibility" enacts the exact kind of reductive violence Derrida critiques in "Plato's Pharmacy," where translation does not merely transcribe but "violently destroys" the original, stripping away its multiplicity in favor of a single, domesticable interpretive element.[260] In Pound's hands, the word that could signify a threshold—between meaning and unmeaning, existing and passing—becomes reduced to serve a totalizing vision that is at odds with the very instability *ling* implies.

Pound's intolerance of polysemy is consistent with his invocation of 正名, "Ch'ing Ming" (the rectification of names), which demands, in his words, "a clear terminology whereof no part can be mistaken for any other."[261] His commitment to terminological precision is an insistence on singularity, a refusal of semantic slippage. As Carne-Ross points out, "Pound's

[259] Ardizzone, "Pound's Language," 126.
[260] Jacque Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by Vincent B. Leitch (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), 1716.
[261] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 58-59.

whole effort is not to be polysemous but to give back to the literal first level its full significance, its old significance."[262] Yet even this so-called "literal first level" is, in the case of *ling*, subject to deliberate mistranslation. Pound's willful neglect of *ling*'s multiple meanings is symptomatic of his broader translation philosophy that privileges the unidirectional transmission of presumed truth over interpretive indeterminacy. For Pound, to acknowledge *ling*'s fundamental aporia would be to undermine its potency as an "action" idea, to let it slip from the realm of assertive declaration into what he disparagingly calls "a species of vacuum," mere "toys of the intellect," and into a Derridean *pharmakon*.[263]

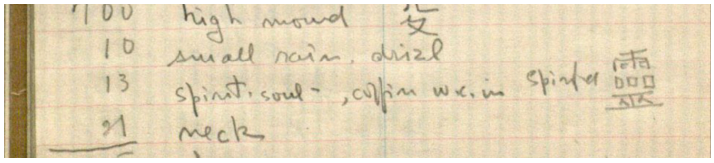


Figure 7 Image 37, Notebook 104: [Thrones, 15: Chinese Ideograms]. *Ezra Pound Papers*. Beinecke. Pound copied ling and its various meanings (including "spirit, soul" and "coffin") from a dictionary.

Revelation, in Pound's scheme, becomes both the imagined substance and the ultimate purpose of his communicative enterprise, a modus operandi for engaging with the vast, fragmented archive of ancient traditions and a lost historical "sensibility." The belief that these fragments, amassed through his expanding accumulation of details, will somehow resolve into a unified whole remains largely a construct of Pound's own imagination. The utopianism that defines his vision of *ling*—as a word capable of bridging past and present, of illuminating a path forward—meets an irresolvable incommensurability between the word's supposed pictorial immediacy and its persistent inscrutability. The ideogram is shown to be a fulcrum for his quest, a stabilizing presence whose self-contradiction sustains the poet's formidable political ambition at a moment when, for Pound, "all hopes seem lost" and "the only action possible is entrusted to poetry."[264] Significantly, Pound never directly explicates his interpretation of *ling* for the reader, though a simple clarification would render his intentions far more accessible. Nor does he apostrophize the reader. The poet assumes that *ling*'s dense visual and historical resonances

[262] Carne-Ross, "Music of a Lost Dynasty," 38-9.
[263] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 34.
[264] Ardizzone, "Pound's Language," 124.

would communicate themselves without the labor of elaboration—an assumption that, in the end, obstructs the transmission of his poetic and ideological purposes. What Pound imagines as epistemic immediacy reveals itself as something else: a myth of intimacy that brooks neither cognitive diversity nor readerly resistance, operating through a hegemonic mode of engagement that invites the reader in only to steer them inexorably toward closure. His ideal readership, then, resembles less a democratic collective than the subjects of an empire of his own design—a predilection reflected in his own ambivalent stance toward imperialism: though he condemns the Empire's "great lies and rascalities," he defends the necessity of this form of ruling, maintaining that "the mere collapse and deliquescence of an Empire can't in itself do any good, or 'help civilization.'"[265]

That Pound's dream of universality culminates in a totalitarian vision, that the imagined intimacy with the reader gives way to a hegemonic poetics, complicates any Manichean distinction between good poetry and bad politics, between idealism and fascism, between egalitarian ethos and authoritarian aesthetic. In Canto 85, these presumed binaries operate alongside and actively sustain one another. It is in such entanglement of aesthetic and political ambitions that Pound seeks to forge a Confucian-Fascist alliance in Canto 85, though the precise nature of that alliance—whether it constitutes a deliberate alignment or a mistaken identification with fascist ideology—remains a subject of debate. Cockram, for instance, insists that Pound fundamentally misunderstood the aims of the fascists, mistaking them as congruent with his own: while the fascists "politicized aesthetics" as Walter Benjamin indicates, Pound "aestheticized everything, including politics," believing in "a discernible connection between a country's art and the kind of government it had."[266] More forgivingly, Moody argues that Pound's attempt to integrate Confucian doctrines into Fascism was intended as both a "constructive offering" and a "warning," for Confucian thought is, at its core, "un-Fascistic, even anti-Fascist" in its emphasis on the power of the virtuous individual who does not yield to the state's interpellation of the collective.[267] I would add that what is unmistakably clear in Canto 85, however, is Pound's confrontation with the hegemonic logic internal to his Confucian-Orientalist poetics. The poem, as both a testament to Pound's epistemic ambition and a troubling evidence of his politics,

[265] Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 228-9.
[266] Cockram, "Hypertextuality," 154.
[267] Moody, *Ezra Pound*, 37-8.

demands, from us, a dialectical reading that recognizes how his dream of cultural renewal struggles against the authoritarian doctrines and hierarchies he could neither fully embrace nor entirely disavow.

Here, we also need to attend to a broader question concerning transnational modernist poetry and its politics—namely, that Canto 85's experiment with Chinese writing calls into question the very notion of communicability in politically engaged poetry. This notion comprises not only a poet's overt intent to convey a political message but also the nature of the exchange between poet and reader—the degree to which meaning is dictated or discovered—allowed by such intent and by the poem's formal strategies of control and openness. In Pound's poetics, such reader-writer dynamic is inseparable from his politics, which, nonetheless, have often been unproductively considered a "big stumbling block" to the "dispassionate study of his poetics."[268] Such rhetoric of "dispassionate study" has appeared in analyses of Pound's transnational engagements, particularly in discussions of his use of Chinese and Japanese materials, which are often framed as eclectic, internationalist experiments rather than as implicated in his ideological commitments. But to approach Pound "dispassionately," especially when it comes to the later *Cantos*, is to bracket the ways his poetry actively shaped and was shaped by his political intentions. The supposed "stumbling block" posed by Pound's politics may, in fact, be the very terrain that must be navigated to account for the ways in which his poetic choices—his linguistic appropriations, his historiographical method, his use of an Orientalist form—operate as various means of ideological inscription and exploration.

In her poem "Visits to St. Elizabeths," Elizabeth Bishop makes twelve attempts at translating Pound, extending her stanzas incrementally, each time returning to the figure of the poet who "lies in the house of Bedlam." The overdetermined presence of Pound—by turns tragic, talkative, honored, old and brave, cranky, cruel, busy, tedious, and wretched—evokes, through repetition and variation, his own overdetermination of *ling*. Pound, much like the Chinese character he singles out, becomes a site of interpretive contestation for another poet, at once a performance of polysemy and a closure of meaning, an expansion and a return. Through *ling*, Pound renders Canto 85 a place of reckoning and a ritualistic happening, where seemingly dichotomous concepts and forces—openness and closure, elitism and populism, accessibility and inaccessibility, hegemony and community, immediacy and inscrutability—cease to stand in clear

[268] Mark Byron, "Afterword: 'read him,'" in *The New Ezra Pound Studies*, 271.

opposition, such that the established meanings and implications of these supposedly divergent terms become profoundly troubled. Organized in deliberate proximity to Confucius's *Book of History* and Couvreur's translation of it, Canto 85 revolves on a singular epistemic axis, driven less by the temporal linearity of the original historical narrative than by its own aspiration toward revelation. The conjectural mistranslations and intentional non-communications surrounding *ling*, bearing the weight of Pound's ideal of immediate intelligibility and an unattainable universal "sensibility," leave us with an Orientalist form of political poetry perilously characterized by a hegemonic intimacy.

Chapter Two:
"False Stitches" of Her Own: Feminist Transcreations of the Confucian Odes in Helen Waddell's *Lyrics from the Chinese*

Translation as Feminist Rewriting

The first two decades of twentieth century saw a Chinese poetry "translation war" unfold alongside an actual war in Europe—a coincidence that seems uncannily predestined when we hear the lament of the frontier soldiers in a Tang dynasty war poem when translated by Ezra Pound in *Cathay* (1915)—"a gracious spring, turned to blood-ravenous autumn / a turmoil of wars-men, spread over the middle kingdom … and sorrow, sorrow like rain"—and when we realize how strangely familiar this voice must have seemed to Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, the young Vorticist sculptor who carried a copy of *Cathay* with him to the French trenches before being killed there.[269] If the Great War came to a close in 1918, this "translation war" did not. Instead, it took root as an Orientalist current in the various translation and rewriting performances in Anglo-American poetry in the years to come. Arthur Waley, a Bloomsbury Orientalist, followed with *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* (1918) as soon as the paper shortage was over. And by the time Amy Lowell's *Fir-flower Tablets* (1921) came out, Witter Bynner was already planning *The Jade Mountain* (1929), his own collaborative translation with a Chinese scholar named Jiang Kanghu. Needless to say, looming over them was Pound's *Cathay*, celebrated as much for its adaptation of prosodically disciplined Chinese poems into English free verse as for the intentional mistranslations that gave it a singular, virtuosic voice.

Pound was not, in fact, the first "mistranslator" of Chinese poetry. That dubious yet characteristically modernist honor belongs to Irish writer Helen Waddell, who, at the close of the long nineteenth century, had a rather different kind of war in mind—a suffragist war—when translating the Confucian Odes in 1913, the same year marked by Emily Davison's tragic death under the king's horse at the Epsom Derby. Waddell's *Lyrics from the Chinese* stakes out a third

[269] Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (New York: New Directions, 1960), 45.

position—that of radical rewriting—in the Victorian dispute on translation method between Francis Newman, who "championed the literal mode, the retention of all verbal singularities," and Matthew Arnold, who argued for the radical erasure of excess, the "severe elimination of details that distract or detain."[270] Waddell's pamphlet-like booklet of thirty-six verses, deceptively unassuming, reveals itself, upon closer reading, as what might be called a "transcreation," where her audacious rewritings, feminist editorial designs, and insistent subversion of androcentric narratives led a reviewer at the time to confess uncertainty as to "how far the poems in this extremely attractive little volume are Chinese, and how far they are Miss Waddell."[271] Alexander Bubb, in *Asian Classics on the Victorian Bookshelf*, notably places Waddell among those Victorian women translators of Oriental literature who took "strident liberties with their text [...] in pursuit of their own civil liberties."[272] Indeed Waddell's re-voicing of Chinese poetry amounts to a double intervention, a challenge to the conventions of philological fidelity in Orientalist scholarship as well as a feminist rejoinder to the patriarchal and state violence of her own day.

Like Pound and Lowell, Waddell knew no Chinese. She based *Lyrics* entirely on James Legge's translation of *Shih-ching* (the Book of Songs compiled by Confucius) from his formidable, heavily annotated seven-volume anthology of the *Chinese Classics*.[273] While Legge saw in *Shih-ching* a canonical archive of Confucian morality and statecraft, Waddell, amid what she called the "dull dogs" of imperial maxims and didactic verse, unearthed what she called pieces of a "buried treasure"—among them a confessional lyric, the cry of a woman resisting her lot—"five hundred years before Sappho died in Greece."[274] Placing Sappho and women of the

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[270] See Borges, "Translators," 36.
[271] Helen Waddell, *Lyrics from the Chinese* (London: Constable and Company, 1913). "Various Verse: Some of it very good and all of it very pleasant," Review of *Lyrics from the Chinese*, *New York Times* (Aug 2, 1914). ProQuest Historical Newspapers, BR333.
[272] Bubb, *Asian Classics*, 147.
[273] James Legge, *The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes, vol. iv. part I, containing the first part of the She-King, or the Lessons from the States; and the Prolegomena* (London: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1893).
[274] See "7, III," typescript (MS 18/2 (c) 1), *Helen Waddell Papers*, Special Collections, McClay Library, Queen's University Belfast. This archive contains an early version of the preface to *Lyrics from the Chinese*, including passages omitted in the published version. Among them is Waddell's claim: "from the Songs of Sacrifice to the first lyric 'of love-longing', there is a gap of centuries; yet even so, a woman had cried 'Let me have seen him, / Let me have met him, / And my heart will then be stilled.' five hundred years before Sappho died in Greece."

Confucian Odes in the same lineage, Waddell gestures toward a proto-feminist universalism made possible by lyric as a transhistorical medium. Strict fidelity to the original text (as represented by Legge's scholarly literal rendition) would have cost Waddell her own voice and obscured the fact that she had turned to the Confucian Odes for a "dry disinfectant" after being repulsed by the misogyny she encountered when reading medieval French poet Jean de Meun's work. As Waddell recalled in the letter to her sister,

> Do you remember the old shelf of 'Chinese Classics' by James Legge D.D., Trubner & Co., London and Hong Kong—the very name of it is an incantation—I've worked beside it for years and dipped into most of them, dull dogs though, chiefly sayings of emperors and sages. [. . .] Well, it happened on Tuesday. I had sickened my very soul over Jean de Meung and yearned for anything, by way of dry disinfectant. And I reached out to the familiar shelf, and something guided my hand to one of the volumes I had never opened before. […] My breath came thick, my head swam round—for I know buried treasure when I see it, and not even the Reverend James Legge's awful and literal prose could hide the freshness of it. […] it's the cry of a woman who has turned her back on marriage for the sake of love.[275]

And "in ten minutes" upon being enthralled by the rebellious timbre of the woman's voice, Waddell produced her first adaptation of Legge's translation, which duly became the opening poem, "The gourd has still its bitter leaves," in *Lyrics from the Chinese*, which was swiftly accepted and published by Constable & Co. in 1913. This portable volume of thirty-six verses secured Waddell's standing as a popularizer of Oriental classics, but one with a distinctly feminist agenda. Formally, by establishing patterns of visual and rhythmic regularity through near-isometric lines, Waddell's translation contrives impressionistic echoes of the Chinese odes, whose original prosody depends upon rows of evenly measured monosyllabic characters. Yet as Waddell approximates this quasi-Oriental structure, she also disrupts it through caesura, indentation, enjambment, and other typographical surprises, and chisels away at Legge's learned but stolid translation—which she sarcastically calls the "kindly precision of a scholar without guile" (xi)—into taut, imagist utterances. Her translation, infused with a feminist vitality, speaks with sharpened urgency, such that the female figures in those lyrics, once muted by Confucian moralism, awaken to the conditions of their confinement.

While Orientalist scholarship in Waddell's time remained largely a male imperialist reserve, two distinctively gendered discursive traditions also emerged, ones that differently

[275] Qtd. in D. Felicitas Corrigan, *Helen Waddell: A Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1986), 103.

entangled questions of gender with Oriental otherness. The first, "feminist Orientalism," was a rhetorical strategy that invoked stereotypes of oppressed Eastern women to advance Western feminist agendas. The literary and political manifestations of this discourse ranged from Charlotte Brontë's Orientalizing of Rochester as "sultan" and Jane as "slave" in *Jane Eyre* to the images of confined harem women in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*.[276] Such use of the Orient as a vehicle for Western self-criticism abetted the ideology of "imperialist feminism," which used the need to liberate colonized women as a pretext for expansionism.[277] A second, complementary formation, which may be called "feminine Orientalism," operated in the same imperialist framework as its feminist counterpart, and disseminated notions of Eastern inferiority to validate imperial occupation. Employing feminized imageries and tropes to depict the Orient as exotic and alluring, it reinforced the gendered discourse of Western dominance and Eastern subordination.[278] Waddell's practice aligns most closely with the first tradition, yet she resists the imperialist logic that sustains it: instead of citing and caricaturing stock images of passive Oriental women, she reimagines them as figures released into new expressive possibilities. If, to borrow Adorno's reminder that even the most introspective lyric is political, these female voices of the Confucian Odes indeed embody an expression of "social antagonisms" in their historical and cultural specificities, then Waddell's rewritings appropriate these grievances so they resonate doubly, as echoes of women's dissent from the past and as heuristic interventions in the suffragist struggles of her own present.[279]

"I wonder if the Sages knew / A woman's heart," complains an abandoned marquise in an eighth-century verse from *Lyrics* (12, Poem XI), a line that epitomizes the practice of intentional mistranslation characterizing Waddell's rewriting of the Confucian Odes. Where the original voice is meekly compliant—"I think of the ancients / And find what is in my heart"—Legge's translation preserves that docility, assuring his readers in a footnote to *The Chinese Classics* that the examples of antiquity were meant to leave the rejected woman "strengthened to endure [. . .]

[276] See Joyce Zonana, "The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structure of Jane Eyre," *Signs* 18.3 (Spring 1993), 595-604.
[277] Zonana, "The Sultan and the Slave," 594.
[278] On how Western women's cultural productions contribute to the exoticizing and feminizing of the East, see Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996).
[279] See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 255.

her own painful experience."[280] Waddell overturns this didacticism and sharpens the speaker's voice with doubt. Prefacing her version of the poem with Confucius's "seven reasons for which a man may divorce his wife," Waddell calls into question the conventions "adopted by the Sages" that consigned the childless marquise to abandonment in the harem. In Waddell's adaptation, the lyric "I" acquires a newfound agency in an added gesture of refusal ("And turn away my face"). In place of Legge's translation, which reproduces the despondent submissiveness of the original ("The sorrow of my heart,— / How can it cease?"), Waddell rewrites the speaker's repeated exclamations of sorrow into a detached, unagitated contemplation that borders on indifference: "I wear the green of scorning, / Who wore the gold so long. I think upon the Sages, / Lest I should do them wrong." Her draft (fig. 8) shows that she initially followed Legge in writing "the ancients," but later revised it to "Sages," a substitution that allows a quiet provocation: the sonic proximity of "Sages," figures of moral authority, to words voicing the speaker's lived distress, such as "disgrace," "face," and "shames," turns the poem away from a posture of self-pitying lament to a veiled critique of patriarchal convention.

[280] Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 42. This poem, like many others in *Shih-ching*, has been subject to varied interpretations over time. Legge adopts the traditional reading that it is spoken by a neglected marquise. Later interpretations understand the poem instead as a man's elegy of a deceased wife. Waddell follows Legge's reading and adapts the poem to her own end.

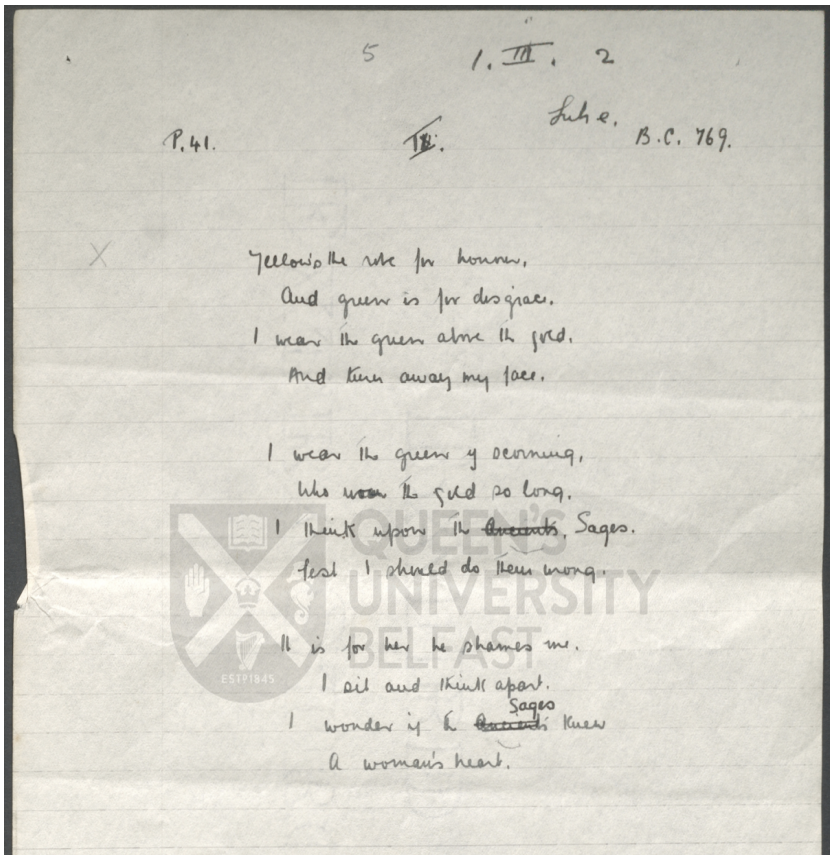

5 I. III. 2
Luke.
P. 41. B.C. 769.
Yellow is the rose for honour,
And green is for disgrace.
I wear the green above the gold,
And turn away my face.
I wear the green y scorning,
Who wear the gold so long.
I think upon the Sages,
Lest I should do them wrong.
It is for her he shames me.
I sit and think apart.
I wonder if the Sages knew
A woman's heart.

Figure 8 Waddell's first draft of Poem XI (initially marked as Poem III). MS 18/2/1. n.d. Draft, in HW's hand, of 13 of the lyrics later printed by Constable & Co. in 1913. *Helen Waddell Papers*, Special Collections and Archives, Queen's University Belfast.

Waddell's appetite for feminist satire is on vivid display in the pendant pieces of the volume's second half, many of them radical reinventions of their sources. The sarcastically self-disparaging speech of the female speaker in Poem XXI ("I had a plan would have saved the State. / —But mine are the thoughts of a girl") is framed by a biblical epigraph that implies the poem's relevance to suffragist struggles: "Is there anything whereof it may be said, 'See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us" (24). The cutting irony of the sententious Poem XXII reads unmistakably as a masked allegation against the British government's neglect of women's suffrage: "What does she in affairs of State? / Her place is in the inner room. / Her wisdom doth least hurt in this, / To mind the silkworm and the loom" (26). Waddell's closing image of "silkworm and the loom," absent from both Legge's version and the Chinese original, is an interpolation that calls up the industrial present of early twentieth-century Belfast, then known as the "Linenopolis," where women mill workers, often referred to as "linen

slaves," endured exploitative conditions and in 1911 staged the Linen Strike that shook the city just two years before Waddell's *Lyrics* appeared. The loom, long a symbol of women's domestic seclusion, returns in Waddell's rendering newly associated with the political awakening of women textile workers who formed the backbone of Northern Ireland's labor movement.

Waddell may not have marched with the Pankhursts, but in the field of translation she waged a parallel insurgency no less militant.[281] T. S. Eliot's famous tribute to Pound as "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time" might well be extended to Waddell. And when Eliot supplemented that often-cited claim with the rather modernist maxim that "each generation must translate for itself," Waddell shows that, in practice, each English translator of Chinese poetry in her cohort worked with an acutely time-bound sense of purpose, which, for Legge, was studious scholarship fueled by Christian fervor; for Waley, it was the taxidermic preservation of a foreign heritage; for Pound and Lowell, a transnational poetic form catalyzed by Eastern verse; and for Waddell in 1913, the making new of the Confucian odes precisely by presenting them as not new at all—a palimpsestic rendering that was the opposite of surrendering.

Waddell's Poem XXI, adapted from the much longer "Tsae ch'e" (載馳, "Riding the Chariot"), warrants a closer look as one of the few Confucian odes traditionally attributed to a female poet. The poem is credited to Baroness Muh of Heu, who, having married into a foreign state, lamented her forced exile just as her home country faced war, when her counsel was most needed.[282] Legge's rendering, in prose-like stanzas, is marked by explanatory brackets, deferential phrasing, and Victorian-style hedging:

> I would have galloped my horses and whipt them,
> Returning to condole with the marquis of Wei.
> I would have urged them all the long way,
> Till I arrived at Ts'aou.
> A great officer has gone, over the hills and through the rivers;
> But my heart is full of sorrow.

---

[281] Also see Diane Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics, 1890-1940: A History Not Yet Told* (Dublin and Portland: Irish Academic Press, 2000). Militancy, as Urquhart points out, was not a first choice but "very much a last resort, embarked upon by Ulster, Irish and British women alike from a sense of frustration and disillusionment," a course of action taken only when conventional means of advocacy had been exhausted (8). Waddell's feminist rewriting, a response to the same political frustration, can be seen as a parallel effort of literary insurrection that made the Confucian odes a vehicle for feminist dissent, a quieter but no less deliberate act of defiance that carved out a new possibility for women's intellectual agency.

[282] Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 88-89.

You disapproved of my [proposal],
And I cannot return [to Wei];
But I regard you as in the wrong,
And cannot forget my purpose.
You disapproved of my purpose,
And I cannot return across the streams;
But I regard you as in the wrong,
And cannot shut out my thoughts.

I will ascend that mound with the steep side,
And gather the mother-of-pearl lilies.
I might, as a woman, have many thoughts,
But every one of them was practicable.
The people of Heu blame me,
But they are all childish and hasty [in their conclusions].

I would have gone through the country,
Amidst the wheat so luxuriant.
I would have carried the case before the great State.
On whom should I have relied? Who would come [to the help of Wei]?
Ye great officers and gentlemen,
Do not condemn me.
The hundred plans you think of
Are not equal to the course I was going to take.

Waddell reshapes the ode into a compact ballad, its tempo and mnemonic pulse recalling the cadence of suffrage protest chants. The sprawling original is distilled into four focused quatrains that heighten a starkly affecting narrative of the unfair dismissal of the Baroness's political acumen by the "Elder Statemen":

I would have gone to my lord in his need,
  Have galloped there all the way,
But this is a matter concerns the State,
  And I, being a woman, must stay.

I watched them leaving the palace yard,
  In carriage and robe of state.
I would have gone by the hills and the fords;
  I know they will come too late.

I may walk in the garden and gather
  Lilies of mother-of-pearl.
I had a plan would have saved the State.
  —But mine are the thoughts of a girl.

The Elder Statesmen sit on the mats,
   And wrangle through half the day;
A hundred plans they have drafted and dropped,
   And mine was the only way.

Rhyme becomes a structuring device for entwining public and private, political and personal, as in Waddell's opening pair of words, "State" and "stay." While Legge's version clings to fidelity and retains formal markers of translation (e.g. "You disapproved of my [proposal]," "Who would come [to the help of Wei]?"), Waddell compresses the lyric into concentrated affect, laced with irony and exigency, her dramatic pauses carrying the sting of resignation ("And I, being a woman, must stay"). The resolute declarations, "And mine was the only way" and "I know they will come too late," assertions of the Baroness's authority, are sharply at odds with Legge's deferential phrasing ("I might, as a woman, have many thoughts"). Instead of reverently apostrophizing "Ye great officers and gentlemen," Waddell caricatures them as dithering "Elder Statesmen." She strips away the language of negation that saturates Legge's version ("cannot return," "cannot shut out my thoughts," "not equal to"), in the final stanza especially, where the original's apologetic plea "do not condemn me" disappears altogether, leaving in its place the clear-sighted confidence of a woman whose voice refuses erasure.

The recuperation of "a woman's heart" from the virtuous models of subservient womanhood in Confucius's *Shih-Ching* is indeed central to Waddell's feminist reworking of these confessional lyrics. Under Waddell's pen, a widow's vow of chastity is unsettled by her own skepticism (2, Poem II).[283] Legge's firm declaration—"and I swear that till death I will have no other"—becomes, in Waddell's rendering, the pensive "and until death I will go desolate," which shifts the emphasis from loyalty as assertion to solitude as consequence. The speaker no longer proclaims devotion but betrays a reluctant recognition of the life-long isolation that obedience to the oath entails. What Legge glosses as the admirable "protest of a widow against being urged to marry again" takes on a nearly opposite meaning in Waddell's rewriting.[284] The woman's subsequent appeal to Heaven, marked by a tense oscillation between imploring ("How is it that ye will not understand?") and assertion ("I swear I will not do this evil thing [of breaking widowhood]"), reads less a defense of chastity than the barely contained intensity of a

[283] Also see Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 73.
[284] Legge, 73. Note that in this poem, Waddell renders Heaven 天 as the Christian "God."

desire for release. A similar unsettling occurs in Poem VIII (2), an ode of a young wife's wistful longing for a home to which she could not, with propriety, return, where Waddell turns the latter half into a bitter reflection on the speaker's paralysis imposed by convention and internalized as self-denial.[285]

> How say they that the Ho is wide,
> When I could ford it if I tried?
> How say they Sung is far away,
> When I can see it every day?
>
> Yet must indeed the Ho be deep,
> When I have never dared the leap;
> And since I am content to stay,
> Sung must indeed be far away.

While the speaker in the original poem (as rendered in Legge's literal translation) contemplates her physical proximity to home through symbolic questions—"Who says that the Ho is wide" and "Who says that Sung is distant"—and imagines herself traversing the distance by various means, Waddell rewrites the scene as the speaker's sober reflection on her own inaction. The "Yet must indeed" at the start of the second stanza breeds an affective shift, where the speaker grows to question, however faintly, the validity of her obligation to remain. The deliberate tentativeness of this self-assurance amplifies the sense of absurdity in Waddell's playful reversal of causality: "Yet must indeed the Ho be deep, / When I have never dared the leap; / And since I am content to stay, / Sung must indeed be far away." The poem's logic is inverted: it is not the impossibility of the journey that restrains her, but her own refusal to act that renders the journey impossible. The sharpened opposition Waddell creates between the external "they," who inflate the difficulty of the young wife's homeward travel, and the lyric "I," who begins to recognize the roots of her hesitation, produces an emotional momentum absent in Legge's version and leaving the reader optimistic that the woman hovers on the brink of departure. By such rewritings, Waddell turns the poems against their moralizing, didactic grain by fostering an imaginative space for flight and resistance. The feminist force of these retranslations lies in the cultivation of a distinctly liminal lyric "I," suspended between submission and awakening, pressing against what Waddell perceived as *Shih-Ching*'s scripting of womanhood and reproduction of patriarchal orthodoxy.

[285] Also see Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 104.

Amy Lowell's version of the poem in *Fir-Flower Tablets* (Figure 8), unlike Waddell's, cleaves close to the original in rhetorical structure and tone and dwells on the speaker's measuring of distance.[286] In Lowell's rendering we remain on the riverbank, gazing toward Sung, caught between a tantalizing nearness and insurmountable apartness:

> Who says the Ho is wide?
> Why one little reed can bridge it.
>
> Who says that Sung is far?
> I stand on tiptoe and see it.
>
> Who says the Ho is wide?
> Why the smallest boat cannot enter.
>
> Who says that Sung is far?
> It takes not a morning to reach it.

Waddell's narrative shift toward introspection and self-rebuke, by contrast, draws us into the young wife's hesitating heart, where the real crossing must occur, her speaker's "if I tried" murmuring of a half-formed resolve and a path still to be taken. Legge's and Lowell's translations both preserve the original's uniform structure, each stanza posing and answering questions about the feasibility of crossing the Ho and reaching Sung. Waddell's rewriting, moving from rhetorical questioning to declarative statement, disturbs such structural symmetry. Compared with the loose, incidental rhymes employed in Lowell's and Legge's versions, Waddell introduces a deliberate, disciplined rhyme scheme, particularly in the second stanza, where "Yet must indeed" leads into tightly paired rhymed couplets ("deep" with "leap," and "stay" with "away"), a formal maneuvering that intensifies the poem's sense of mounting urgency and inevitability. Waddell's metrical variation, weaving iambic and anapestic rhythms, also renders the voice fluctuating and expressive. Where the original's various spatial speculations, its preoccupation with spans and distances, operate as a means of physical orientation, Waddell's version shows them to be the entrapment of the woman's own mind. Compared to Lowell's idealizing "Why one little reed can bridge it" and Legge's pragmatic "with [a bundle of] reeds I can cross it," Waddell's damning confession "since I am content to stay" reveals that the true width of the "Ho" lies not in its undangerous waters but in the distance

[286] Amy Lowell and Florence Ayscough, *Fir-Flower Tablets: Poems Translated from the Chinese* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1921). 147.

between acquiescence and action, in the invisible rules of propriety that kept women in their appointed places.

Fittingly, when conceding that the fidelity of her translation might be "matter of dispute," Waddell defends her liberty with a textile metaphor borrowed from the translator of Madeleine de Scudéry: "The translator hath but turned the wrong side of the Arras towards us, for all translations, you know, are no other."[287] Yet, in a characteristic reversal, she inverts this tapestry metaphor much as she does the *Shih-Ching* poems. While de Scudéry's translator insists that he "hath inserted no false stitches of his own," Waddell instead embraces such interventions, arguing: "it was only to compensate for the original colouring that a later hand 'hath inserted [. . .] false stitches of his own'" (xi). If by "original colouring" she alludes to the resonant pathos she discerned beneath Legge's rigid literalism, then her "false stitches" do not obscure but rather make those lyric speakers' distinct interiorities and individualities exceptionally palpable. The Arras analogy itself gains its resonance from a gendered form of work: the "wrong side" reveals traces of weaving, sewing, and mending—a labor traditionally coded as feminine but reclaimed here as a metaphor for feminist reinvention. It is a comparison distinctly favored by women writers: Amy Lowell describes her translation as weaving "a brocade as nearly alike in pattern" in *Fir-Flower Tablets* (xcii), just as Virginia Woolf likens novel-writing to a hostess orchestrating different voices, whereas Joseph Conrad imagines writing as seafaring and Ezra Pound as a masculinist, Vorticist craft of sculpture.

Waddell's arrangement of the poems in *Lyrics* constitutes a feminist editorial practice in its own right. Many pieces are accompanied by excerpts from "The Little Preface," the set of moralizing glosses by later Confucius scholars that attach specific ethical lessons to each ode in the *Shih-Ching.* Instead of citing from "The Great Preface," which offers elevated metaphysical reflections on poetry's role in cultivating sensibility and moral order, Waddell chooses to foreground the prescriptive dicta of the governing "Sages," particularly those that regulate women's conduct and decorum. Deliberately set against the lyric testimonies of individual

[287] Waddell specifies in parentheses that "in seven lines only has the original rendering been strictly kept, the opening line of Odes I., XI. and XXXIII., the second and third of Ode II., and the last of Odes XXVIII. And XXXVI.." For the original line quoted by Waddell, see Madeleine de Scudery, *Artamenes, or, The Grand Cyrus: An Excellent New Romance, Written by that Famous Wit of France, Monsieur de Scudery, and now Englished by F.G. Gent* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1653): "The Translator hath inserted no false stitches of his own, having only turn'd the wrong side of the Arras towards us, for all Translations (you know) are no other."

suffering on the page, these injunctions become jarring counterpoints in Waddell's dramatizing of the cost of obedience. Her refusal to treat the canon as sacrosanct is clear in her choice of the volume's concluding piece. The final ode in *Lyrics* is drawn from a minor ditty outside Confucius's canon, a piece recorded only in Legge's appendix under "Specimen of Ancient Poetical Compositions" (18). Closing with the line "I pray you not to die," the poem is likely intended as a tribute to Emily Davison, more broadly, a prayer for the future of suffragism. Waddell appends it to a stark passage from *Ecclesiastes* —"Their memory is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished" (41)—but omits the last line of the original poem preserved in Legge's version, "perhaps you will come here again," whose consolatory note would have sentimentalized or denied the finality of death. Though Legge gives no further detail in the *Chinese Classics*, the piece in fact records a parting between a traveling Chinese king and a queen of distant land. Unaware of this context, Waddell repurposes the obscure fragment as a modern dirge for a fallen suffragist and a quiet benediction for an egalitarian future—in a characteristic practice of turning inherited texts into vehicles of present urgency.[288]

Waddell's selection ranges across lyrics spoken by both ordinary and historical women, but one piece about a generic, unnamed figure, in Poem XXXII, stands apart, perhaps functioning as a veiled allegory of Waddell's own role as translator (or mistranslator): "Blue iris sweetest smells, / Upon its stem unbroken. / A woman highest sells, / With her fair name unspoken." Waddell attributes the piece to John Davis, but the closest match in his version of the poem is the line "The blue lily, unblemished, emits the finest fragrance" from a didactic poem advising the impoverished not to harbor resentment.[289] And for the poem's epigraph, Waddell turns not to China but to Rome, quoting Plautus's "Mulier recte olet ubi nihil olet" ("a woman smells right when she doesn't smell at all"), an aphorism about the Roman ideal of

[288] Legge's translation is faithful: "The white clouds are in the sky; / The mountain-masses push themselves forth. / The way between us is very long, / With hills and rivers intervening. / I pray you not to die;— / Perhaps you will come here again." The original lines come from 穆天子傳 ("Tale of King Mu, Son of Heaven"): 西王毋為天子謠，曰：「白雲在天，山陭自出。道里悠遠，山川間之。將子無死，尚能復來？」See https://ctext.org/mutianzi-zhuan/juan-san/zh

[289] John Francis Davis, *Poeseos Sinensis Commentarii: The Poetry of the Chinese* (London: Asher and Co., 1870), 21-22.

"odorlessness" as a virtue in both writing and women.[290] As Waddell keeps her own "fair name unspoken" through the relative invisibility of her authorial and editorial "false stitches," she paradoxically "highest sells," and *Lyrics* did sell well, with more than nine hundred copies issued in the first three months, before being quickly overshadowed by Waley's *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems*, which came from the same publisher. The seemingly generic "I" of Waddell's rewritten poem becomes, in this light, a figure of not anonymity but multiplicity, a composite voice of openness that channels the plural, often-effaced "I"s of the *Shih-Ching*'s women, whom Waddell speaks through and speaks for, imperceptibly yet insistently.

The Radicalism of a Woman Translator

Waddell may find her closest Victorian counterpart in Louisa Costello, a female translator of Persian poet Hafiz who belonged to what Bubb has called "a new species of Oriental translator" basing their work on existing English versions "with an eye not to specialist and professional readers but the general public."[291] Yet unlike Costello, whose unmitigated admiration for Sir William Jones's authoritative translation made his work her touchstone, Waddell's acknowledgment of Legge's *The Chinese Classics* is ambivalent at best, and often edged with critique. In her preface to *Lyrics from the Chinese*, she situates Legge among an older generation of translators who, she suggests, took the "easier road" of treating Oriental texts like *Shih-ching* as inert objects to be dissected rather than as living voices to be heard:

> This is the easier road; every lyric has its Chinese text, black and unfamiliar and satisfying; beneath it a prose translation of unflinching accuracy, and footnotes that unravel all things, from the habits of a sinister plant called tribulus—Shakespeare would have had it in his witches' cauldron—to the wickedness of the Duke Seuen in his palace of Wei. It is the footnotes that create so gracious a sense of security, an atmosphere in which even the Duke Seuen loses half his terrors: the kindly precision of a scholar without guile. (*Lyrics* x-xi)

[290] See Benjamin Eldon Stevens, "Smell and Sociocultural Value Judgment in Catullus," *The Classical World* 109.4 (2016), 471.
[291] Alexander Bubb, "The Race for Hafiz: Scholarly and Popular Translations at the *Fin de Siecle*," *Comparative Critical Studies* 17.2 (2020), 232.

Given the association of tribulus with the unspeakable shame of "chronique scandaleuse" in the Palace of Wei in a poem Waddell includes in her translation, the sarcasm is unmistakable.[292] One can argue that Waddell's reworkings strip the original odes of the heavy allusiveness valued by Legge, a feature for which Waley faulted classical Chinese poetry,[293] in order to make space for a feminist pathos derived from sarcastic defiance and emotional clarity.

Framing her practice as the antithesis of the "easier road" of scholastic dissection, Waddell indeed did not hesitate to popularize, and make familiar for English readers, the Confucian Odes by adopting, yet also reworking, the motifs commonly found in popular Orientalist translations of her time. Poem III, which Waddell dubs "the oldest drinking-song in the world," reads as a Chinese *Rubáiyát*, its spirit of indulgence reverberating in two later poems in *Lyrics* (Poem XXX and XXXI) adapted from Davies's translations. In her preface Waddell invokes the cosmopolitan ideal of world literature through the image of a "universal Babylon," placing herself among those Western interpreters of Eastern texts who sought not fidelity but resonance across cultural divides: "it is long since the East made good its claim to Babylon in one thousand and one nights, and now among all the taverns there is none more crowded than the Inn of the Rubaiyat; yet on the farther side the city stretches dim and all but unexplored."[294] But even as she participates in this Orientalist fad, Waddell unsettles its tropes with a disruptive bent. The Dionysian exuberance of Poem III is quickly undercut by the satirical portrayal of a royal drinker in the following verse: "Our prince is sure a man of men, / And splendid are his wines" (4). A later, related poem (XXIII), rewritten in a tone of wry admonition, dictates that the pleasure of drinking must be governed by decorum: "To drinking, though a custom good, / One must deportment bring" (27). These poems collectively contribute to a larger caricature of privileged male figures, including kings, the nobility, and ritual participants, whose public roles are rendered hollow or ridiculous in contrast to the passivity of women confined in their appropriate dwellings. The handful of poems featuring male speakers in Waddell's collection often lapse into comedy, their voices caught in mindless routine or empty fantasy. The ritualists in Poem VI carry out their duties with unthinking certitude: "We know no harm to come of it; It

[292] Waddell, *Lyrics*, 13.
[293] On classical allusion as "always the vice of Chinese poetry," see Arthur Waley, *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* (London: Constable and Company, 1920), 3.
[294] Waddell, *Lyrics*, ix. "Every literature has its Babylon. … Babylon is one, and all nations have drunk of her wine" (viii).

may be God is pleased" (6). And in the paired verses (XVI and XVII) about a man rhapsodizing over the dream of a lotus-like woman "soft as the grey twilight," Waddell dispatches the latter half with a terse shrug, commenting impatiently "a variant of the same" on the second piece.

Waddell's approach to Chinese poetry differs markedly from Amy Lowell's, who likewise lacked knowledge of the language of Confucius. In *Fir-Flower Tablets*, the collaborative translation project she undertook with the Sinologist Florence Ayscough, Lowell sought to bridge Orientalist scholarship and poetic imagination. She framed the work in the language of fidelity and aesthetic responsibility, describing it as a "long and arduous task," a characterization in stark contrast to Waddell's swift, improvisatory rewriting of the Confucian odes. Lowell deemed her role an ethical obligation, a "duty […] to turn her [Ayscough's] literal translations into poems as near to the spirit of the originals as it was in my power to do."[295] Her remark that "a sinologue has no time to learn how to write poetry; a poet has no time to learn how to read Chinese" insists on the need to unite linguistic expertise with poetic artistry, and clarifies her investment in such careful, rigorous labor, a challenging pursuit of both faithfulness and aesthetic refinement. Waddell was practicing, differently, a freer radicalism of a feminist translator-poet unencumbered by the demands of scholarly legitimacy.

Waddell drew much of her recalcitrant energy from her study of the medieval goliards, an interest that culminated in *The Wandering Scholars* (1927), a book based on her doctoral thesis on the satirical minor tradition of medieval Latin poetry. This study itself began as a translation endeavor, which "outgrew the original intention" of serving as an introduction to Waddell's renditions of mediaeval Latin lyric.[296] Her fascination with subversive poetic traditions surfaces even earlier in *Lyrics from the Chinese*, notably in her rendering of Poem XVIII, which satirizes a licentious man boasting of his affairs with various court ladies. Here Waddell delights in what she perceives as a rare Chinese parallel to the goliardic spirit, remarking that "there is evidently an unsuspected strain of the 'gaillard' [sic] in an imperturbable nation."[297] The same impulse to recover unruly, marginal voices animates *The Wandering Scholars*, where Waddell recuperates the goliardic poets—the wandering clerics and scholars known for their irreverent, satirical

[295] Lowell and Ayscough, *Tablets*, v.
[296] Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars* (London: Constable & Co, 1927), v.
[297] Waddell, *Lyrics*, 19.

verse—describing them as "one of the earliest disintegrating forces in the mediaeval church," and countering their dismissal by Augustan classicists as crude or unsophisticated.[298]

Waddell's fondness for satirizing authority and the anti-establishment bent of her translation practice may also be read as an empowering response to the abusive restrictions imposed by her Presbyterian stepmother on her social and intellectual autonomy—if we can speculate so without reducing Waddell to the biographical reading to which Victorian women writers have often been subjected. The motif of "wandering," or vagabondage, both literal and metaphorical, recurs throughout Waddell's own life and career and indexes her sustained interest in marginality as a space of creative and epistemic freedom. She likens herself to a *vagans*, the itinerant figure par excellence, in the preface to *The Wandering Scholars*, and elsewhere she characterizes her intellectual vocation as one of ascetic dignity, "the eternal beggary of scholarship."[299] Eschewing the conventional life expected of a woman of her time, Waddell evaded marriage, acknowledging that she "could have loved terribly, and was born to have a house and children and a man," yet instead chose to live "solitary up four flights of stairs, writing a book."[300] Her refusal of social norms extended beyond domesticity to her intellectual commitments, reflected in her embrace of hybridity and errancy—her enthusiasm toward blurring the boundary between scholarly work and creative writing, and her resistance to the "blighting binary" of Protestant and Catholic in matters of faith.[301]

It is hardly surprising, then, that Waddell's work was repeatedly faulted for its transgressive liberties with source materials, nowhere more notoriously than in the acclaimed *The Wandering Scholars*, where her lyrical treatment of Latin verse earned her the reputation of "jazz[ing] the Middle Ages."[302] Such critique did little to deter her. The ensuing, highly successful *Peter Abelard* (1933), written and marketed as fiction, seems less an attempt to evade such accusations than to defy them outright.[303] Boldly experimental in its historiography, *Peter*

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[298] Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, ix.
[299] Waddell, *Wandering Scholars*, v. See also Helen Waddell, "Scholares Vagantes," *The Heritage: published on behalf of the four Women's Colleges in Oxford* 14 (Jan 1925), 2. Qtd. in Jennifer Fitzgerald, ed. *Helen Waddell Reassessed: New Readings* (Peter Lang, 2014), 11.
[300] Qtd. in Fionola Meredith, "An Alcoholic Stepmum and a Doomed Love Affair… Real-life Drama of Our Forgotten Writer," *Belfast Telegraph*, July 17, 2012; clipping in Helen Waddell Papers, MS 18/25/2.
[301] Fitzgerald, *Waddell Reassessed*, 1.
[302] P. S. Allen, review of *The Wandering Scholars*, *Speculum* 3.1 (Jan 1928), 109-10.
[303] Fitzgerald, *Waddell Reassessed*, 6.

Abelard embraces fictional reimagination as a performative means of engaging the past, privileging affective resonance and epistemological permeability over positivist reconstruction. As one reviewer admiringly puts it, Waddell "clothed the old tale in a garment as fresh and fair as the young Heloise."[304] The critical unease surrounding Waddell's unorthodox method is perhaps best captured in R. Ellis Roberts's review for *The Guardian*, which registers both the allure and disruption posed by her mingling of factual and fictional,

> It was only to be expected that Miss Waddell would get into trouble. When her *Wandering Scholars* was published, the alarm was heard; who was this woman at whose touch the faded tapestries of the middle age took on again the lively colours of their early glory? Who was this who stood beside the glowing arras, stroked it with the love born of knowledge so that the figures of the dim past, seen flatly and invidiously by tired scholars, sprang into round and exciting life? There was some indignation then; but the dry-as-dusts of medieval scholarship could not avail against the applause of those who knew that the picture of a forgotten past was too lovely to be false.[305]

Waddell's uncompromising commitment to creative freedom came at a considerable cost. The greatest "trouble" incurred was her exclusion from the academic career to which she had originally aspired. Tethered by filial obligation in Belfast throughout her twenties, caring for a stepmother whose decline into alcoholism consumed her energies, Waddell faced institutional obstacles no less formidable. Queen's University Belfast, which barred women from teaching posts at the time, effectively foreclosed Waddell's prospects when she sought university positions elsewhere. Shut out of formal academic employment, Waddell was left to chart her path as an independent scholar while supporting herself with part-time work at Constable & Co.[306] Her literary radicalism, in this light, seems less an eccentric indulgence than a necessity, a contingent mode of female authorship fostered from the margins she herself was consigned to occupy.

Looking back, Waddell's feminist rewriting in *Lyrics* in 1913 was not a fleeting experiment but the inception of a prolonged creative practice, one that Waddell continued to develop despite the persistent criticism of her supposed want of academic rigor. Her

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[304] Waddell Papers, MS 18/25/2, review of *Peter Abelard*, *New York Herald Tribune Books*, October 1, 1933, titled "From the first to the last a story of passion," with the subtitle "Miss Waddell Has clothed the old tale in a garment as fresh and fair as the young Heloise."
[305] Waddell Papers. MS 18/25/2, review by R. Ellis Roberts, "Reviews and impressions. Old England," The Guardian, January 22, 193[2?].
[306] Fitzgerald, *Waddell Reassessed*, 2-3.

idiosyncratic approach to translation in *Lyrics*, far from a capricious, unpremeditated digression, prefigured the creative liberty and nonconformist sensibility that came to define her later work. It also marked a decisive break from the studious, heavily taxonomic Oriental scholarship of her father, who left behind "a massive, incoherent manuscript study on the 'Chinese Mind.'"[307] Female orientalists, as Bubb observes, "were often drawn into inextricable relationships of debt" to the learned and authoritative male figures surrounding them.[308] While Waddell's *Lyrics* might seem doubly indebted to two such paternal Orientalist figures, her father and Legge, it is telling that Waddell, even while dedicating the book to the former, all but evades him and his scholarly method, and treats the latter with frank disapproval.

As Gillian Hanscombe observes in a generalization that, though sweeping, is not without truth, the radicalism of early twentieth-century women writers lay in their "simultaneous breaking with both literary and social conventions"—they "lived as they wrote, lived what they wrote, wrote what they lived."[309] Waddell's *Lyrics* shows how translation-as-rewriting could become a site for such inseparability of life and writing. In this respect Waddell would indeed find kinship with Victorian women poets such as Amy Levy, whose lyrics register the psychic toll of domestic confinement while seeking, through poetic expression, a form of personal and collective recuperation. Waddell's adaptation practice is also comparable to that of women modernists such as Hilda Doolittle, who brought women's consciousness to the fore by reimagining Greek mythological women such as Helen, Eurydice, and Leda in a feminist spirit. Like Levy and H.D., Waddell turns to confessional lyric as a medium through which new possibilities for women's voices and subjectivities might emerge.

Here I extend the argument that, as in much nineteenth-century women's poetry where form and feeling are inextricable, Waddell's formal and stylistic choices in *Lyrics* are motivated by a feminist desire to reinvent and emancipate women's subjectivity in and through lyric. Read in isolation, the *Lyrics* poems appear a somewhat disorienting mix of traditional prosodic structures and vers libre. Yet if read next to Legge's flat, rigidly metered translations, her acknowledged source of reference, Waddell's versions show a conscious divergence, driven by a feminist interest in discovering various affective potentialities in the lyric form. Contrary to the

[307] Qtd. in Bubb, *Asian Classics*, 148.
[308] Bubb, *Asian Classics*, 151.
[309] Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia L. Smyers, *Writing for Their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), 10-11.

prevailing modernist tendency to equate formal experimentation with ideological progressiveness, Waddell's recourse to conventional forms, rhymed ballads among them, unsettles the assumption that inherited forms necessarily align with conservative ideologies.[310] Her reworking of Legge's translations, which David Burleigh refers to as "attractive rhymed versions,"[311] is a case where an established poetic feature, rather than the breaking thereof, can be repurposed toward progressive ends. In this, Waddell belongs to the "mature women poets" whose "enduring critical neglect," as Sarah Parker argues, owes much to their "continued use of traditional poetic forms in the twentieth century; forms which are assumed to be at odds with modernity" and with the Poundian imperative to make it new.[312]

Waddell's rewritings prove distinctly her own, if we compare her translation of the poem "Ts'aou-ch'ung" (The Grasshopper) with Legge's literal rendering and Pound's looser adaptation.[313] Her version, arranged in three concentrated tercets, distinguishes itself by foregrounding the female speaker's affective experience, neither bound by Legge's philological fidelity nor drifting into Pound's impersonal abstraction. Consider these three versions. First, Legge's translation in *The Chinese Classics* (23-24),

> Yaou-yaou went the grass-insects,
> And the hoppers sprang about.
> While I do not see my lord,
> My sorrowful heart is agitated.
> Let me have seen him,
> Let me have met him,
> And my heart will then be stilled.
>
> I ascended that hill in the south,
> And gathered the turtle-foot ferns.
> While I do not see my lord,
> My sorrowful heart is very sad.
> Let me have seen him,
> Let me have met him,

[310] See Parker, *Form and Modernity*, 4. Waddell's case challenges the assumption that, as Sara Parker identifies, "poetic innovation, especially free verse, aligns with progressive politics, while established poetic forms are aligned with conservative ideologies."
[311] David Burleigh, "Chinese Originals: Helen Waddell and Arthur Waley," in Fitzgerald, *Waddell Reassessed*, 258.
258.
[312] Parker, *Form and Modernity*, 4.
[313] Ezra Pound, *The Confucian Odes: The Classic Analogy Defined by Confucius* (New Directions, 1954).

And my heart will then be pleased.

I ascended that hill in the south,
And gathered the thorn-ferns.
While I do not see my lord,
My sorrowful heart is wounded with grief.
Let me have seen him,
Let me have met him,
And my heart will then be at peace.

Then, Pound's version in *The Confucian Odes* (7-8),[314]

"Chkk! chkk!" hopper-grass,
nothing but grasshoppers hopping past;
tell me how a lady can
be gay if she sees no gentleman?

But when I've seen a man at rest,
standing still, met at his post,
my heart is no more tempest-toss'd.

I climb South Hill to pick the turtle-fern,
seeing no man
such climb's heart-burn

but to see a good man at rest, standing still, met at his post,
I no more think this trouble lost.

To climb South Hill picking the jagged fern
and see no man, who shall not pine and yearn?

But to see good man at rest
standing still there at his post
is the heart's design's utmost.

Finally, Waddell's adaptation in *Lyrics* (5),

The morning glory climbs above my head,
Pale flowers of white and purple, blue and red.
I am disquieted.

Down in the withered grasses something stirred;
I thought it was his footfall that I heard.
Then a grasshopper chirred.

[314] Legge's version was an important source for Pound's translation. References to Legge can be found throughout Pound's *The Confucian Odes* (xvii, 33, 49, 57, 69, 132, 204).

I climbed the hill just as the new moon showed,
I saw him coming on the southern road.
My heart lays down its load.

Waddell's translation departs decisively from Legge's preoccupation with precision. Like Pound, she turns away from Legge's stilted imitation of the original poem's tripartite seven-line stanzas and its formulaic parallelisms, such as the repeated plea, "Let me have seen him, / Let me have met him." Yet Waddell's "reinvention" of Chinese lyric here, a modernist achievement too often attributed to Pound, goes even further than his, not least because her version reads almost as a different poem altogether. And her creative liberty was certainly not derivative of Pound's, since *Lyrics* appeared two years before *Cathay*. Employing iambic tetrameters and a tightly controlled rhyme scheme, Waddell constructs an intensifying narrative arc of mounting anticipation built toward affective release. Her strategic use of enjambment in the final line of each stanza, paired with emphatic rhymes, heightens key moments of emotional transition. "Disquieted" caps the initial unrest, "chirred" punctuates disappointment, before "load" resolves the tension with the lover's arrival.

The visual imagery Waddell introduces—morning glory, pale flowers, and new moon, all absent from the original—unfolds with a cinematic clarity that guides the reader from an overhead vista to ground-level details and, finally, to an elevated, widened vision. This layering of visual planes moves in tandem with the speaker's shifting interior state. The acoustic confusion between the anticipated footfall and the grasshopper's chirring dramatizes the projection of emotion onto the sensory world, as desire distorts perception and ambient noises acquire personal significance. While Legge and Pound maintain emotional and rhetorical distance—Legge through deferential formal address ("my lord") and Pound through impersonal reference ("a lady," "a man")—Waddell's speaker invokes an intimate, unqualified "him." Legge's emotional register, characteristic of Victorian poetry, oscillates between understatement ("will then be pleased") and melodramatic flourish ("wounded with grief"), while Pound abstracts female experience into stylized anonymity, a tendency toward displacement that echoes his preference for studied indirection over expressive directness in *Cathay*.[315] Waddell, by

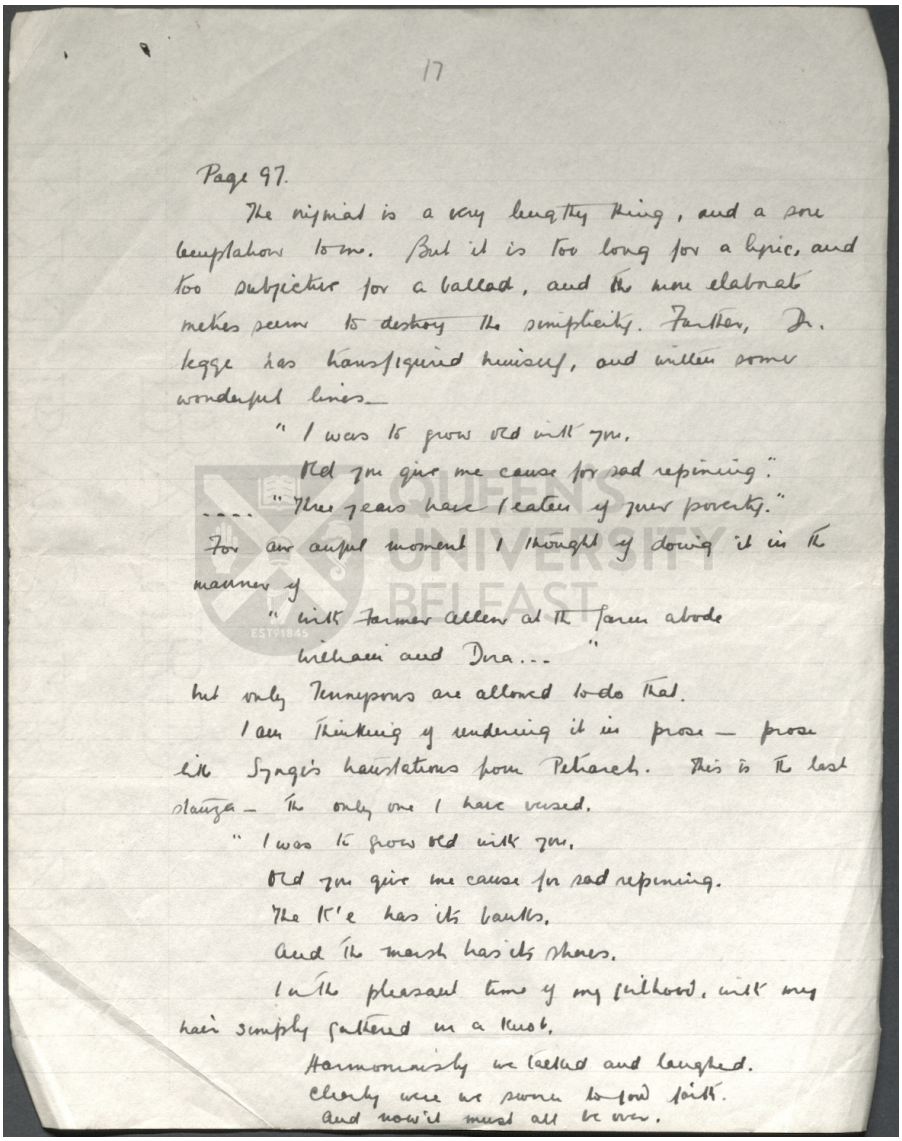
[315] See Ezra Pound, *Cathay* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1915), 13. Commenting on the poem "The Jewel Stairs Grievance," Pound notes that the poem is "especially prized because she [the court lady]]utters no direct reproach."

contrast, anchors the poem in an unembellished first-person voice and its psychological interior. Her adaptation, which foregrounds female subjectivity as a heightened and sensorially saturated consciousness, is a reclamation of lived experience through a woman poet's rewriting of a distant foreign text.

Waddell's reflections on form, as glimpsed from her unpublished manuscripts, show a deliberative process underlying the assured formal choices of *Lyrics*. When adapting Legge's long, literal six-stanza (of ten lines each) rendition of "Măng" (氓, "The Commoner"), a folk song recounting a woman's sorrowful memory of a failed marriage,[316] into Poem XIX in *Lyrics*, Waddell wavered between lyric, Rossettian, Tennysonian, and prose renderings (fig. 9). Her indecision is a dilemma familiar to late Victorian women poets, torn between emulating the Poetess, the Poet laureate, or else turning toward free verse to claim modern, or modernist, ground. What she wrestles with is the search for a form equal to the original's narrative amplitude and emotional weight:

> The original is a very lengthy thing, and a sore temptation to me. But it is too long for a lyric, and too subjective for a ballad, and the more elaborate metre seems to destroy the simplicity. [. . .] For an awful moment I thought of doing it in the manner of "With farmer Allan at the farm abode / William and Dora…" but only Tennyson is allowed to do that. I am thinking of rendering it in prose—prose like [Surrey's?] translations from Petrarch. This is the best stanza—the only one I have reused: "I was to grow old with you, / Old, you give me cause for sad repining. / The K'e has its banks, / And the marsh has its shores / In the pleasant time of my childhood, with my hair simply gathered in a knob. / Harmoniously we talked and laughed, / Clearly were we sworn to good faith. / and now it must all be over."[317]

[316] Legge, *Chinese Classics*, 97-101.
[317] See Waddell Papers, MS 18/2/1.



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The nipmal is a very lengthy thing, and a sore temptation to me. But it is too long for a lyric, and too subjective for a ballad, and the more elaborate metres seem to destroy the simplicity. Further, Dr. Legge has transfigured himself, and written some wonderful lines—

" I was to grow old with you.
Did you give me cause for sad repining."
" Three years have I eaten of your poverty."

For an awful moment I thought of doing it in the manner of

" With farmer Allen at the farm abode
William and Dora..."

but only Tennysons are allowed to do that.

I am thinking of rendering it in prose — prose like Symge's translations from Petrarch. This is the last stanza — the only one I have revised.

" I was to grow old with you.
Did you give me cause for sad repining.
The K'e has its banks,
And the marsh has its shores.

In the pleasant time of my girlhood, with my hair simply gathered in a knot,

Harmoniously we talked and laughed.
Closely were we sworn to fond faith.
And now it must all be over.

Figure 9 Waddell Papers, MS 18/2/1. n.d. Draft, in HW's hand, of 13 of the lyrics later printed by Constable & Co. in 1913, with notes (presumably addressed to George Saintsbury), 17. *Helen Waddell Papers*, Special Collections and Archives, Queen's University Belfast.

Waddell's version of "Măng" is eventually a sparse and unadorned one, yet sonically resonant, humming auditory textures that mingle present perceptions with remembered sound:

The K'e still ripples to its banks,
    The moorfowl cry.
My hair was gathered in a knot,
    And you came by.

Selling of silk you were, a lad.

Not of our kin;
You passed at sunset on the road
From far-off Ts'in.

The frogs were croaking in the dusk;
The grass was wet.
We talked together, and I laughed;
I hear it yet.

I thought that I would be your wife;
I had your word.
And so I took the road with you,
And crossed the ford.

I do not know when first it was
Your eyes looked cold.
But all this was three years ago,
And I am old.

The alternation of long and short iambic lines mimics, structurally, the undulating rhythm of the rippling "K'e" (river), enacting in form the speaker's experience of emotional and temporal flux. This sonic vitality, however, dwindles into silence in the closing stanzas, where the disappearance of sound coincides with the lover's absence, his word vanishing, his gaze grown cold. Waddell condenses the original's expansive, repetitive narrative into five quatrains that move with linear clarity from the initial encounter to courtship, marriage, and the eventual disillusionment, each stanza capturing a discrete moment or realization. For this purpose the line "With my hair simply gathered in a knob," which appears in the final stanza of the original as retrospective detail, is moved by Waddell to the outset. In Waddell's version, the sonic brightness of nature and laughter gives way to the melancholic resignation in the lingering iambics, soft consonants, and long vowels—a subdued sadness carried by formal steadiness. Opening with a wide, optimistic vision of lively natural imagery (river, moorfowl, sunset, frogs, grass) largely Waddell's own invention, the poem contracts from joyful anticipation into an interior space of depletion. The closing line, "And I am old," pared down and rhymed with "Your eyes looked cold," renders aging as a consequence of estrangement, a causal suggestion that anticipates Pound's "The River-Merchant's Wife: a Letter" in *Cathay*—"They hurt me. / I grow older"—which is a similar, far more well-known compression of voice that makes silence the measure of loss and alienation.

Waddell's Feminist Orientalism

In an earlier, unpublished draft of her preface to *Lyrics*, Waddell stresses that the Confucian Odes, comprising "a diversity of texts and a corresponding multiplication of commentators, a thing not unknown in other literatures," have always lent themselves to versioning and remaking.[318] The poems are so ancient that their origins are indistinct, blurring into no more than what she calls a "historical mention" (5, II). The "sacred original," then, has receded past the horizon of empirical certainty, yet for Waddell such obscurity is enabling. The absence of an inviolable ur-text makes space for a plurality of interpretations and adaptations that have proliferated across centuries. Translation thus appears less as a custodial duty to a single definitive text than as participation in a living textual tradition whose authority is diffused across its afterlives. By that light, Waddell's *Lyrics* claims kinship with *Cathay*, insofar as both models a salutary (mis-)translation that resists the reductive binary of fidelity versus betrayal, preferring instead an intricate ethics of making, again, what has arrived as made and remade.

Yet unlike Pound, Waddell enters the scene as a woman translator whose feminist inflection situates her in a historically obscured lineage of women Orientalists and translators. Tracing the chronology of Western versions of the Confucian Odes—from "an enthusiastic Jesuit Father, Pere Lacharmel; thence into German verses by one Julius Mohl; finally, after a survey of texts and commentators from the second century B.C., to the nineteenth A.D. into English prose of a monumental accuracy by Dr. Legge, late Professor of Chinese at Oxford" (17, VIII)—Waddell frames her own work against a genealogy of Orientalist scholarship tied to academic structures from which women were barred. Yet translation, particularly outside of institutional contexts, also offered women a site for intellectual freedom and creativity.[319] Waddell's treatment of translation as an open, evolving process that invites imaginative reanimation, then, takes on further feminist significance in this alternative, matrilineal genealogy of women translators. Because translation, considered a socially appropriate form of labor for women, was often deemed secondary, derivative, or amateurish—feminized, in a sense, by its weakness in philological and academic authority (as in Stendhal's admonition to women, "Don't write,

[318] See "Lyrics from the Chinese," typescript, 17, VIII, MS 18/2 (c) 1, *Waddell Papers*.
[319] Bubb, *Asian Classics*, 139.

translate, and you will earn an honorable living")—it registered as unthreatening. This may explain why Waddell's *Lyrics* attracted little attention from Pound, who, despite his own creative translation, ignored Waddell's work and reserved his competitive ire for male rivals, as in his irritation with Arthur Waley, particularly over Waley's insistence on retaining "the length of the line of the original," which notoriously drove Pound to scream, "Break it up—break it up."[320]

Lyrics is a vital yet long-neglected experiment in feminist retranslation, one through which we might better discern the divergent and previously unacknowledged ideological and aesthetic potentials in both Victorian and modernist engagements with East Asian materials. Whereas nineteenth-century figures such as Andrew Lang, Arthur Sullivan, and Lawrence Binyon approached the Orient as a repository of exotic alterity or scholarly inquiry, modernists like Pound, Lowell, and Yeats sought in Asia a source of formal and thematic inspiration. Waddell's *Lyrics* offers a feminist variant of Orientalist classicism that straddles Victorian inheritance and modernist innovation, one that resists easy subsumption into paradigms of male authority, whether in philology or poetry. Though *Lyrics* situates Waddell in the contested terrain of modernist translation, where the Poundian model of reinvention is instated as the dominant paradigm, Waddell's project inhabits a distinctly suffragist, feminist space of its own, as a practice at once historical and insurgent.

Before Woolf imagined a female literary lineage in *A Room of One's Own*, before Gilbert and Gubar contested the male-centered construction of canon, and before Spivak theorized an ethics of feminist translation attentive to the representation of difference, Waddell was already heralding a matrilineal tradition by way of her radical reinterpretations of classical texts. An unavoidable question to address in Waddell's case, then, is one that arises in the context of feminist translation: does Waddell's creative reimagining achieve something arguably more valuable than a translator's fidelity to the source text? Or, conversely, does it risk reproducing the long-standing tendency in European literature to domesticate the foreign—what Lawrence Venuti has critiqued as the translator's "invisibility," a fluent transparency that smoothes away a text's foreignness for Western taste? To put otherwise, is Waddell's reclamation-via-

[320] See Helen Rapp, "Arthur Waley in Conversation: BBC Interview with Roy Fuller," in *Madly Singing in the Mountains* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970), 138. Also see Kenner, *The Pound Era*, where Kenner follows Pound's suit by calling Waley "one of the many who rushed in as word of the two-shilling pamphlet, *Cathay*, got around" (195).

appropriation a regressive feminist universalism that projects a familiar self onto an (re)imagined East?

Yet if such a critique were to be leveled at Waddell, it could equally touch Woolf, who, in her praise of Arthur Waley's translation of Lady Murasaki's *The Tale of Genji*, exalts its "rush and bubble and the chuckle of life," a vitality rendered as universally legible, refracted through a Western interpreter.[321] It may be more meaningful to understand such interpretive practice as symptomatic of a historically particular mode of affective identification prevalent in post-war Europe, a longing for spiritual refuge, a hunger for the richly aestheticized affective plenitude that *Genji* seemed to offer. Woolf's portrayal of Lady Murasaki as a Japanese Orlando—"sitting down in her silk dress and trousers with pictures before her and the sound of poetry in her ears, with flowers in her garden and nightingales in the trees, with all day to talk in and all night to dance in" (53)—is a historically situated reimaginative impulse driven as much by affinity and resonance as by the lure of elsewhere, though not innocent of projection. Waddell, too, speaks this language of transhistorical kinship when she aligns Roman poet Ausonius with the lyric sensibilities of Chinese poets Han Yü, "whose friends washed their hands in rose water before opening the manuscript of his poems," and of Po Chü-i, "sitting on the terrace under the peach trees in blossom."[322]

Waddell's *Lyrics* is motivated by a sense of transhistorical identification not unlike Woolf's, but one avowedly feminist. Her translations prioritize the emergence of fully realized female subjectivities often muted or erased in classical texts, and such an act of recovery intervenes in the way these texts are presented as they circulate globally, through translations and reinterpretations. Like other women medievalists of her time, Hope Emily Allen among them, Waddell tended to identify intimately with the subjects she studied—a tendency evident in her selection and creative treatment of Confucian odes centered on Chinese women.[323] The gendered stance of the female translator matters here: Waddell's own experience of being excluded from academia and social life as a woman, as FitzGerald suggests, inclined her toward a humanism deeply inclusive and compassionate.[324] Translation, for women historically barred from more authoritative forms of literary authorship, can function as a form of autobiographical writing. It is

[321] Virginia Woolf, "The Tale of Genji," *Vogue* 66.2 (July 1925), 53.
[322] Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, 5.
[323] For varying viewpoints on this inclination, see Fitzgerald, *Waddell Reassessed*, 7-8.
[324] Fitzgerald, *Waddell Reassessed*, 5.

important, then, for feminist scholarship to read women's works of translation as more than exercises in transparent representation or amateurish derivatives, to read them instead for the differences they display and the interpretive agency they disclose, however subtly. Indeed, as David Burleigh succinctly puts it, "it is in her choices, her comments, and her rewriting of the poems, that Helen Waddell most reveals herself."[325]

There is no easy answer to the ethical quandary between rendering the source text as it is and presenting it anew: Borges's mediation on the competing versions of *A Thousand and One Nights*, each informed by distinct poetological and ideological priorities, reminds us that such choices are conditioned by historical needs and interpretive contexts. But the least we can assert, when it comes to feminist translation, is that much depends on whether the original text invites or even calls for the un-silencing of voices buried in it. Waddell's radical rewriting of the Confucian Odes responds to a particular kind of need, one motivated both by her position as a female writer and by the broader currents of the suffragist movement. Her feminist retranslation might be understood as a form of strategic mistranslation, a willful and productive unfaithfulness that, in her hands, becomes an important, if unexpected, site for feminist literary authority and innovation. Translation, a minor mode of authorship long prescribed for women as a suitable intellectual activity, became, for Waddell, a vehicle for autonomy. Her project unfolds both as an act of feminist reclamation and as a transnational, cosmopolitan humanist rejoinder to nationalist and cultural essentialist ideologies in early twentieth-century Ireland, for "if it was important to identify with Ireland, it was even more important to identify with a wider world which included Ireland."[326]

Waddell's intervention also performs an active reframing of the lyric genre in the context of Orientalism and translation. Her choice to title the volume *Lyrics from the Chinese* is an act of genre making that participates in the historical construction of the lyric form through processes of transmission and reinterpretation. By labelling the poems she selected from the Confucian Odes as "lyrics," Waddell aligns them with a poetic mode that, as Virginia Jackson has argued, is less a transcendent, timeless category than a historically contingent editorial and critical construct.[327] Translation is shown to operate as a process of curation, framing, and recasting—

[325] Burleigh, "Chinese Originals," 258.
[326] Fitzgerald, *Waddell Reassessed*, 9.
[327] See Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005). "From the mid-nineteenth through the beginning of the twenty-

akin to the work of lyricization itself. When Waddell discerned in the Confucian Odes what she described as the impression "not of age; rather, of an unworn youth," she was not so much uncovering an intrinsic quality but advancing her own interpretive intervention, one that foregrounded—indeed, produced—the "freshness" of the poems she presented.[328]

Though *Lyrics* may have begun in Waddell's fortuitous encounter with Legge's translation on her bookshelf, it was not her only feminist engagement with the Far East. "Métier de Femme," in Waddell's *Stories from Japan*, rewrites a myth retold by British Japanologist Basil Hall Chamberlain: the tale of Oto-Tachibanabe, whose sacrificial drowning for her husband the legendary Japanese prince Yamato-Take, under Waddell's pen, is adapted into a sardonic catechism on a "woman's role" (métier de femme) to serve and endure. The motif recurs in Waddell's *The Spoiled Buddha*, a two-act play set in ancient Japan, where Buddha's disciple Binzuru is banished for discovering enlightenment through his love of a woman. These engagements with East Asia were not incidental: born and raised in Tokyo where her father worked as missionary, Waddell repeatedly returned to the Far East as a cipher of otherness and a site of aesthetic projection and possibility. The trope of the silent yet resistant Oriental woman, the unspecified but unmistakable protagonist of *Lyrics*, becomes a recurring presence in Waddell's oeuvre. In "Dead and Buried," an article for the *Manchester Guardian* reflecting on her old family house, she recalls it "shrank behind its overgrown garden like an Eastern woman clinging to her veil in face of outrage."[329] And her remark—"the house trusted me; trusted me to improve nothing. Only, I might restore"—offers a perfect allegory for her feminist translational ethic: not to possess or impose upon, but to reanimate through restoration and imaginative inhabiting. If Pound's dictum to "make it new," supposedly derived from an inscription on a Chinese emperor's bathtub, became modernism's rallying cry for reinvention, Waddell renewed Chinese poetry through a feminist revoicing. Her *Lyrics* performed intertwined awakenings, of the women in the Confucian Odes, of herself as a creative interpreter of Oriental classics, and of a nascent lineage of écriture féminine via translation.

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first century, to be lyric is to be read as lyric—and to be read as a lyric is to be printed and framed as a lyric" (6).

[328] See "7, III," typescript (MS 18/2 (c) 1), Waddell Papers.

[329] Helen Waddell, "Dead and Buried," *Manchester Guardian*, December 3 [19--]; newspaper cutting with the printed title crossed out and 'Mort et enterré' added in ink. MS 18/25, Newspaper Articles, Cuttings, Reviews, *Waddell Papers*.

Chapter Three:
Noh, Tragedy, and Eugenic Poetics in Yeats's *Purgatory*

Noh's most memorable transnational event was also a modernist event, a syncretic experiment that brought together Celtic mythology and Japanese theater through a series of translations and reinterpretations. It transpired in Lady Cunard's drawing room in April 1916, when W. B. Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* was performed for an invited coterie, among them T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.[330] This enactment, entwined with Orientalist practices old and new, marked a vexed *weltliteratur* moment in the history of Euro-American modernism's eclectic transnational engagements. The masks and costumes, fusing Asiatic and Greek elements, were designed by Edmund Dulac, an illustrator known for embellishing Victorian texts such as *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and *The Arabian Nights* with opulent scenes of Oriental fantasy.[331] Dulac's exotic garment was donned by the mythical hawk-woman luring Cuchulain away from the well of immortality, a figure performed by a Japanese dancer whom Yeats believed embodied the "tragic image" that had initially inspired the play.[332] Yeats's foray into Celtic Noh, moreover, was directly informed by Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa's ethnographic documenting of Japanese traditions in the late nineteenth century. Fenollosa's manuscript had been posthumously entrusted to Pound, and the poet, despite his unfamiliarity with Japanese, reworked the Noh translations in a manner akin to his rendition of Fenollosa's Chinese poetry manuscript into *Cathay* without knowing Chinese. The result was *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*, prefaced by an exultant Yeats who claimed to have been inspired to create, out of Noh, "a form of drama, distinguished, indirect and symbolic, and having no need of mob or press to pay its way—an

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[330] See Helen Caldwell, *Michio Ito: the Dancer and His Dances* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 49.
[331] See W. B. Yeats, introduction to *Certain Noble Plays of Japan: From the Manuscripts of Ernest Fenollosa, Chosen and Finished by Ezra Pound, with an Introduction by William Butler Yeats*, by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound (Churchtown: Cuala Press, 1916), ii. Yeats praises the "noble half-Greek half-Asiatic face" designed by Dulac, "the distinguished illustrator of *The Arabian Nights*."
[332] Yeats, introduction to *Certain Noble Plays*, iv.

aristocratic form."[333] As *At the Hawk's Well* came into being, the Orient was animated in various ways: through textual mediation and visual reimagination, at once ornamental and aesthetically indispensable, making available not only the corporeal presence of a Japanese dancer's body but also a set of Far Eastern dramatic conventions—on the basis of which Yeats would go on to produce a substantial corpus of Noh-inspired plays featuring supernatural motifs, masked protagonists, and ritualistic dances in the last two decades of his career as a verse dramatist.

Yeats's Noh experiments have been regarded as the acme of "modernist Orientalism," a twentieth-century phenomenon of reinvention that looked to the Far East for models and sources to catalyze Euro-American literary projects. Reviving East Asian art forms and philosophical traditions—ranging from calligraphy and classical painting to waka poetry and the doctrines of Zen Buddhism and Confucianism—to establish a new kind of classicism, this was a species of Orientalism that moved beyond the ornamental concerns of Victorian Japonisme and Chinoiserie.[334] Adopting a romanticized view of a pre-modern Oriental past, this genre of historicism often took interest in a heritage that was already deemed an outworn tradition in East Asia at the time—and such was the situation of Noh and Yeats. A highly stylized form of religious theater intended for the cognoscenti and the nobility and whose practices remained unchanged for centuries, Noh had already fallen into sharp decline in its native land as Japan grappled with western influence and sought to modernize itself after commodore Matthew Perry's threatened incursion. But Noh came to Yeats's attention as something radically new rather than obsolescent, as a modernist gem sophisticatedly crafted and the very opposite of the prevailing naturalism of the European stage. For him, Noh was a conduit for a vision both national and universal, a "possibility of the Irish dramatic movement" he believed would make him "as lucky as a Japanese dramatic poet at the Court of the Shogun" if materialized.[335]

The triad of critical approaches to modernist Orientalism, as Steven Yao, Christopher Bush, and others have observed, is closely tied to current concerns in cultural studies with the

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[333] Yeats, introduction to *Certain Noble Plays*, ii.

[334] Modernist orientalism does not entirely supersede these earlier ornamental interests, however. Allen Upward's mythical Chinoiserie poems in the first imagist anthology *Des Imagistes* (1914) and Amy Lowell's Oriental persona poems in *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919) are two cases in point.

[335] See Yeats, introduction to *Certain Noble Plays*, ii. The second quote appeared in Yeats's letter to John Quinn on April 2, 1916. See *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, edited by Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 610.

ethics, politics, and genealogy of representing otherness: an evaluation of the fidelity of translation based on the notion of cultural authenticity, a poststructuralist scrutiny of the power dynamics between cultures influenced by Edward Said's classic postcolonial critique in *Orientalism*, and a historicist analysis of transnational, transcultural interactions in the shifting milieu of ethnographical and ideological interests.[336] The often-praised beginning of the Yeats-Noh encounter in 1916 has been fruitfully studied through a combination of these methods.[337] However, what is exceptional about Yeats's engagement with Noh is its continuity and scope, a process that spanned twenty prolific years of his playwriting during and after World War I. It has not been pointed out that Yeats is a prime and rare example of a modernist figure whose work yields a diachronic micro-history of his own brand of Orientalism, a history bound up with the poet's formulation of an ideal of tragedy developed and refined over the years.[338] Yeats merits attention in this regard also because his longtime involvement with Noh included a distinct "late" phase, temporally and methodologically, particularly evident in *Purgatory*, where Noh's influence grew elusive, appearing only at a point when Yeats had deeply integrated his idiosyncratic Orientalist vocabulary into his hermetic system of lyrical and theosophical languages.

Turning to this lesser-known concluding phase of Yeats's transnational relation with Noh, this chapter focuses on *Purgatory*, Yeats's penultimate play composed two decades after his first exposure to Japanese theater and performed shortly before his death. I foreground *Purgatory*'s use of Noh as an overlooked instance of modernist Orientalism where an imported element, no longer visibly foreign, becomes remarkably constitutive of the ideological anxiety of

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[336] See Yao, "A Rim with a View," 4-16; Bush, "Modernism, Orientalism, and East Asia," 193-208; R. John. Williams, review of *Modernism and the Orient* by Zhaoming Qian, *Twentieth-Century Literature* 59.3 (2013): 513-519.

[337] A mixture of these methods, usually with one dominant, can be seen in scholarship on Yeats and Noh. See, to name but a few, Richard Taylor, *The Drama of W. B. Yeats: Irish Myth and the Japanese Nô* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Earl Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958); Masaru Sekine and Christopher Murray, *Yeats and the Noh: A Comparative Study* (Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1990); Carrie J. Preston, *Learning to Kneel: Noh, Modernism, and Journeys in Teaching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); and most recently, Seán Golden, ed. *Yeats and Asia: Overviews and Case Studies* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2020).

[338] For a comprehensive analysis of Japanese influences on Yeats, including Japonisme, Zen Buddhism, Noh drama, and Kyogen theatre, see Yoko Chiba, *W.B. Yeats and Noh: From Japonisme to Zen* (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1988).

the host text. Noh's formal characteristics, commonly seen in Yeats's earlier plays, are largely absent from *Purgatory*, such that this later text appears to bear little relation to Japanese theater, except for its appropriation of a supernatural figure from Noh—the suffering ghost of a madwoman ("kyōjo mono") awaiting salvation. By rendering this ghost monologic and unrescuable in *Purgatory*, Yeats enables a scenario of failed salvation, a failure through which he installs his ideal of "tragic joy"—a concept with a provocative Orientalist facet, as this chapter will show—as a superior worldview accessible only to the Old Man, his perennial quasi-heroic tragic protagonist. Tracing the continuous presence of this Noh specter in Yeats's later writings, this chapter discovers her shackled performance in *Purgatory* to be a manifestation of Yeats's unease with his own ideas about tragedy in the last years of his dramatic experiment—ideas that are underpinned by the nationalist and eugenic agendas as articulated in his posthumously published pamphlet, *On the Boiler*.[339] This Noh ghost's dual status of passivity and perpetual motion also evinces Yeats's ambivalent assimilation of Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence: in her endless return to a troubled site of familial and national memory, this liminal specter is on the verge of becoming a Nietzschean woman able to rise above her immediate tragedy yet was kept by Yeats from such a possibility as he developed and revised *Purgatory* in the process of several drafts. The predicament of this specter, who serves as both a catalyst and destabilizer in Yeats's linear ideal of tragedy and its singular ideological ambition, reflects the poet's vacillation between his eugenic vision for modern Ireland and his own skepticism regarding the ethics of such an agenda.

By recovering the significance of this transnational ghost in *Purgatory*, my chapter's evaluation of the play's relation with Noh lies in between Leonard Nathan's negation that "Noh form is loosened or all but abandoned, until Yeats seemed to be adopting the methods of realism" and Sidney Warschausky's praise that *Purgatory* "transmutes the Noh, instead of recreating it."[340] In lieu of the direct replication of elements of Japanese theater in Yeats's earlier Celtic Noh plays, *Purgatory*'s appropriation of Noh's crazed female specter instances a minor

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[339] *Purgatory* appears as the final piece in W. B. Yeats, *On the Boiler* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1938). Yeats had planned the volume to come out before *Purgatory*'s performance in Dublin, but his draft met significant delays at a new publisher. See William O'Donnell, "The Textual History of Yeats's *On the Boiler*," *Yeats Annual* 21 (2018): 391-446.

[340] Leonard Nathan, *The Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965), 223; Sidney Warschausky, "Yeats's Purgatorial Plays," *Modern Drama* 7.3 (Fall 1964): 278-286.

type of Orientalism—and a less theorized genre of transnationalism at large—when an encounter with a foreign form moves away from overt mimesis and toward modes of catalysis less conspicuous yet no less consequential. This spectral figure's subversive role in *Purgatory* also complicates the aestheticized narratives of early twentieth-century Orientalism constructed by the modernists themselves—such as when Eliot declared, remarking on Pound's rendition of Noh texts, that the ideal effect of translation is "not exoticism but rejuvenation," and when Yeats extolled Rabindranath Tagore's poetry as where the west "have met our own image."[341] In *Purgatory*'s inconspicuous Orientalism, it is the image of the playwright that we meet: not the generalized western "we" in Yeats's narrative of cultural affinity contingent on a geographical dichotomy now obsolete, but the aporetic portrait of a Noh-influenced Anglo-Irish verse dramatist who sought to valorize, yet was continuously troubled by, his final discourse on tragedy.

Tracing the Noh Specter: A History

To T. S. Eliot, the discovery of a modernist Yeats was accompanied by the discovery of Noh's relevance to the West. He saw Yeats's Noh-influenced cluster of dance plays, which include *At the Hawk's Well*, as a turning point where Yeats began to move beyond the "vague enchanted beauty" of pre-Raphaelite influence toward something at once national and supranational: "in becoming more Irish … he became at the same time universal."[342] Recalling the importance of *At the Hawk's Well* to his perception of Yeats, Eliot believed that the Noh experiment had breathed new life into the poet,

> Yeats was well known, of course; but to me, at least, Yeats did not appear, until after 1917, to be anything but a minor survivor of the '90s. (After that date, I saw him very differently. I remember clearly my impression of the first performance of "The Hawk's Well," in a London drawing room, with a celebrated Japanese dancer in the role of the

[341] T. S. Eliot, "The Noh and the Image," review of *'Noh' or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan*, by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, *The Egoist* 4 (Aug 1917): 102-103. Also see W. B. Yeats, introduction to *Gitanjali or Song Offerings*, by Rabindranath Tagore (London: Macmillan, 1913), xvii.
[342] T. S. Eliot, "Yeats," in *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition, Volume 6: The War Years, 1940-1946,* eds. David E. Chinitz and Ronald Schuchard, 78-90 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press and Faber & Faber, 2017), 82.

> hawk, to which Pound took me. And thereafter one saw Yeats rather as a more eminent contemporary than an elder from whom one could learn.)[343]

It is thus no surprise that Eliot took immediate notice when Pound followed with *"Noh" or Accomplishment*, another book of translation adapted from Fenollosa's Japanese manuscripts.[344] Reviewing the volume in *The Egoist*, Eliot echoed Yeats and Pound's belief that Noh's non-naturalistic approach carries vital implications for modernist drama and poetry.[345] Contrasting Noh with European theater's tendency to imitate reality in his review article titled "The Noh and the Image," Eliot singled out the Noh piece "Awoi no Uye," where the eponymous heroine is represented by "a red, flowered kimono, folded once lengthwise, and laid at the front edge of the stage," a garment that indicates her ill fate,

> The English stage is merely a substitute for the reality we imagine; but the red kimono is not a substitute in this sense; it is itself important. The more symbolical drama is, the more we need the actual stage. The European stage does not stimulate the imagination; the Japanese does.[346]

In fact, Yeats, Eliot, and Pound were among the first generation of western poets and playwrights, along with other modernist and late Victorian scholars and translators such as Fenollosa, Arthur Waley, and Marie Stopes, to acknowledge Noh's austere symbolism as more than the mere evidence of its eccentricity or inferiority. Since the sixteenth century, Noh has been mystified and dismissed by missionaries and travelers alike for its stark contradiction with

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[343] T. S. Eliot, "Ezra Pound," in *Complete Prose, Volume 6*, 759. Eliot means 1916.

[344] For these two adaptations and their overlaps, see Earl Miner, "Pound and Fenollosa Papers Relating to Nō," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 53.1 (1991): 12-16. For an archival study of Yeats's unpublished comments on Pound's rendering of Fenollosa's Noh-related materials during this time, see Yoko Chiba, "Ezra Pound's Versions of Fenollosa's Noh Manuscripts and Yeats's Unpublished 'Suggestions & Corrections,'" *Yeats Annual* 4 (1986): 121-144.

[345] Eliot, "The Noh and the Image," 102-103. Also see Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, *"Noh" or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917), 45. By emphasizing Noh's "unity of image," Eliot took up Pound's belief that Noh's emotional and visual oneness could be the model for a "long Imagiste poem." Eliot also iterated Yeats's praise of the utter absence of "naturalistic effort" in Noh's use of chorus as an interpretive organ and in its ritualistic dance at the climax of dramatic action.

[346] Eliot, "The Noh and the Image," 103. See also Fenollosa and Pound, *"Noh" or Accomplishment*, 193, where Pound quotes from "Mrs. Fenollosa's diary": "Awoi, her struggles, sickness, and death are represented by a red, flowered kimono, folded once length-wise, and laid at the front edge of the stage"—a passage that Eliot in turn cited in "The Noh and the Image." The Noh play in question is now commonly written as "Aoi no Ue," but in this dissertation I follow Pound and Eliot's transliteration for consistency.

western theatrical conventions.[347] But as Noh was rediscovered and classicized in the modernist context by Yeats and Pound, it emerged as an Oriental alternative to the immediate heritage of Victorian realist drama. Early attempts to break with nineteenth-century dramatic traditions and explore new possibilities of verse drama, as Irene Morra notes, coincided with an enthusiasm for classical Japanese theater—notably by Laurence Binyon, Gordon Bottomley, John Masefield, and others—within and beyond Yeats's circle.[348] As Victorian theater became associated more with melodramatic sentiments and less with spiritual profundity in the modernist imagination, early twentieth-century verse drama experiments turned to theatrical traditions less adjacent to them temporally and geographically: not only the Greeks and the Elizabethan but also the classical Japanese and the mythical "Celtic twilight" particularly revived in Yeats's Irish heroic plays.[349]

Although Noh lingered for decades with Yeats but not with Eliot, it was Eliot who first captured in the most concrete language the Japanese approach of "making the ghost real," of naturalizing the supernatural. As Eliot wrote in "The Noh and the Image," contrasting Noh's method of ghost enactment with that in western theater,

> The Japanese method is inverse to that with which we are familiar. The phantom-psychology of Orestes and Macbeth is as good as that of Awoi; but the method of making the ghost real is different. [...] The ghost is enacted, the dreaming or feverish Awoi is represented by the "red kimono." In fact, it is only ghosts that are actual; the world of active passions is observed through the veil of another world.[350]

The unequivocal appearance of the ghost, which allows for the sustained visibility of "phantom-psychology" through the soliloquy of the spectral protagonist, is the defining feature of Noh that Eliot deemed alien to the West. In "Awoi no Uye," the presence of the haunted victim is substituted by her silent kimono, whereas the maleficent spirit of Lady Rokujo (the jealous mistress of Awoi's husband) becomes the actual protagonist of the play whose speech and movement constitute the immediate dramatic reality on stage. Noh abounds with such scenes of spectral return where spirits—whether of the dead or of the living who become detached from

[347] For a history of Western perceptions of Noh, see Ury Eppstein, "The Stage Observed: Western Attitudes Toward Japanese Theatre," *Monumenta Nipponica* 48.2 (1993), 147-166.
[348] Irene Morra, *Verse Drama In England, 1900–2015: Art, Modernity And The National Stage* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 9.
[349] Morra, *Verse Drama*, 20.
[350] Eliot, "The Noh and the Image," 103.

their corporeal selves—take over the entire dramatic now. With interactions taking place between the spectral (the ghost who returns, or "shi-te," a primary actor) and the living (a wandering priest, or "wa-ki," a secondary character), Noh's affirmation of the supernatural presents an invigorating challenge to static notions of reality and temporality. As the priest helps spirits attain transcendence in Noh, the ghosts also continuously conjure their old selves by reliving memorable episodes of their life on stage, lamenting their apparitional state of existence through Buddhist metaphors of dreaming and waking. Noh's projection of past memory onto an ongoing moment, achieved from within the psychological time of a phantomic consciousness, opens up a powerful possibility of resuscitating "time past" as "time present." The ghost's self-enactment during the ephemeral present of a performance, conflating the linear temporal movements of "from" and "towards," may be seen as Noh's way of accessing the "still point of the turning world" thematized by Eliot in "Burnt Norton."

To Yeats, the difference of this "Japanese method" Eliot observed in 1917 initiated a two-decade-long experiment of animating the supernatural for the Irish dramatic stage. *The Dreaming of the Bones* conjures up the ghosts of Diarmuid MacMurrough and Dervorgilla, historical figures responsible for the English colonization of Ireland, who continue to be tortured in the "self-created winding of the labyrinth of conscience" centuries after death.[351] *The Words Upon the Window Pane* brings back to modern Dublin the apparition of an old distressed Jonathan Swift who foresees Ireland's "dreaded future" of democracy, who functions as the mouthpiece for the right-leaning playwright's fraught political stance.[352] Unlike Victorian theater's deployment of the supernatural as "a device to create mystery and sensation" with little ontological importance, Noh afforded Yeats a useful alternative for investing these ghostly appearances with political and symbolic weight.[353] With Noh, Yeats was able to effectively dramatize spectral return as part of a continuous yet diversely enacted national—and nationalist—literary project.

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[351] W. B. Yeats, *Four Plays for Dancers* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 129.
[352] W. B. Yeats, *The Words upon the Window Pane* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1934), 57.
[353] Nathan, *Tragic Drama*, 8. Ibsen's realism, which belonged to the "new drama," did not appeal to Yeats because of its lack of spiritual content. "If the Victorian verse drama emphasized the natural order at the expense of the spiritual, the new drama gave total and oppressive attention to the natural" (9).

The performance of *At the Hawk's Well* was not the last Noh-related event that brought Eliot's attention to Yeats. The year 1938 saw another such happening, when *Purgatory* was staged at Dublin's Abbey Theater and when Eliot was finishing a ghost play of his own, *The Family Reunion*. If *At the Hawk's Well* brought Eliot and Yeats briefly on the same page in 1916, *Purgatory* sparked irreconcilable difference between them. At a time when *Murder in the Cathedral* brought religious drama into the mainstream before the genre's mid-century decline, Eliot, having converted to Anglicanism, grew impatient with Yeats's heterodox bent: "I cannot accept a purgatory in which there is no hint, or at least no emphasis upon Purgation."[354] He had earlier called Yeats's entire spiritual scheme into question in *After Strange Gods*: "Mr. Yeats's 'supernatural world' was the wrong supernatural world. It was not a world of spiritual significance, not a world of real Good and Evil, of holiness or sin, but a highly sophisticated lower mythology."[355] What Eliot considered a superior kind of supernatural was demonstrated by the very text he was writing at the time. Harry, the protagonist of *The Family Reunion*, suspects that he murdered his wife and is pursued by the vengeful Furies as a consequence; he seeks imagined peace at Wishwood, his old family house, but it turns out to be the true location of haunting where he must confront the dreaded specters at last. These supernatural beings, unexpectedly, are revealed to be divine and benevolent "bright angels" Harry eventually resolves to follow. Although both Eliot's and Yeats's pieces are religious plays featuring supernatural occurrences in a modern setting, they diverge in their soteriological trajectories: Eliot's protagonist awakens to religious enlightenment (albeit at the expense of secular connections) whereas *Purgatory*'s Old Man drowns in hopeless despair.[356] Harry's optimism may ring hollow, but his resolute break from familial responsibility points toward Eliot's own desire for affirmation as a newly converted Anglican pursuing dramatic art. Much as Eliot's theological criticism of Yeats served his own purpose, it missed the thematic point of *Purgatory*'s intentional pessimism: Eliot took issue with *Purgatory*'s plot of failed redemption without realizing that the dramatizing of failure, already central to *At the Hawk's Well* in 1916, acquired an even greater significance in Yeats's vision of tragedy in 1938.

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[354] Eliot, "Yeats," 83.
[355] T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934), 46.
[356] See Giles Evans, *Wishwood Revisited: A New Interpretation of T. S. Eliot's The Family Reunion* (Sussex: Book Guild Ltd., 1991). Evans argues that Harry's "doing down love of created beings in favour of the divine calling" helps to dramatize the "human cost" of religious fanaticism (45-6).

What Eliot meaningfully discerned was the issue of enacting the supernatural in a realist setting, a challenge he shared with Yeats in 1938. Taking place in the unlikely arrangement of an English drawing room, *A Family Reunion* was Eliot's first venture into supernatural drama. The difficulty, as Raymond Williams succinctly puts it, is that Eliot grafted "a play of spiritual revelation on to the most enclosed of all theatrical forms: that of the fixed, entering and exiting, country house group."[357] Though the play points toward the divine meaning inherent in human reality rather than simply blending supernatural elements into naturalist conventions, the failure to bring the Furies to life on stage was indeed something that Eliot later considered the piece's "deepest flaw."[358] Similarly for Yeats, *Purgatory*'s modern setting was vastly different from the historical settings of his earlier Cuchulain plays and only remotely evocative of the Dublin house where the characters of *The Words Upon the Window Pane* gathered for séance. But Yeats's intention was the opposite of Eliot's: Eliot could not enact the supernatural as successfully as he desired, whereas Yeats greatly weakened the supernatural presences he had brought forth rather adeptly elsewhere.

It was indeed unusual for Yeats that the specter in *Purgatory* was reduced to an unresponsive phenomenon in the background, oblivious to the intrusion of the living and stranded in the repetition of a past happening. The play's structure resembles a classic Noh apparition scenario wrapped in a larger crisis of stasis, but the Old Man's mother's ghost, who is at the genesis and center of the tragedy, is Yeats's first spectral figure to be non-communicative and in utter isolation. Confined in the perpetual replay of her fateful night of marriage, she sets in motion a malicious cycle of familial murder and turns a single event of misfortune into a continuing curse. The Old Man, returning to the ancestral house burned down by his drunk father, kills his son with the same weapon he murdered his father with in an unsuccessful attempt to jolt the ghost out of her endless "nightmare"—"my father and my son on the same jack-knife!".[359] The specter, "alone in her remorse" in the floorless, roofless house, had been distanced from the two main characters and further away from the audience since Yeats's earliest

[357] Raymond Williams, *Drama in Performance* (London: C. A. Watts, 1968), 143-144.
[358] See Eliot, "Poetry and Drama," in *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition, Volume 7: A European Society, 1947-1953,* eds. Iman Javadi and Ronald Schuchard, 589-610 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press and Faber & Faber, 2021). "They never succeed in being either Greek goddesses or modern spooks. But their failure is merely a symptom of the failure to adjust the ancient with the modern" (601).
[359] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 45.

conception of the play; in *Purgatory*'s "Scenario" manuscripts, Yeats already established a spatial dichotomy that segregated the mother ghost from the Old Man and his son: she inhabits "a ruined house … in shadow," while "a stream of moonlight falls on the front of stage so that the characters are well lighted."[360] Relegating the specter to a far less prominent location than in Noh, Yeats brought to the fore the speech and action of the Old Man who occupies the role of the priest in Noh, a secondary character who typically aids in the liberation of ghosts.

Despite such inversion of Noh's configuration, *Purgatory* remains the most closely aligned among Yeats's works with Noh's soteriological preoccupation. The mother ghost's plight—"Re-live / Their transgressions, and that not once / But many times"—is a near replication of the narrative in "Motomezuka," a fourteenth-century Noh text Yeats came across in Marie Stopes's *Plays of Old Japan*.[361] The ghost in "Motomezuka," like the Old Man's mother in *Purgatory*, is stuck in her own mind. This Noh play, which Stopes renders as "The Maiden's Tomb," tells the story of the encounter between the ghost of a young woman named Unai—who is tormented by hellfire as she holds herself responsible for the death of her suitors (fig. 10)—and a priest, who reminds her that the purgatorial nightmare is merely the work of her own conscience and imagination, "the clouds of thy delusions,"

> I'll raise the voice of prayer. "Thou spirit soul,
> Awake thyself to understanding true,
> Enter Nirvana casting off from thee
> Delusions of thy life and of thy death."[362]

The ghost's experience of self-imposed torture left a deep imprint on Yeats, for he revisited "Motomezuka" several times as he experimented further with Noh in his later dramatic works and built his theosophical system over two versions of *A Vision*.[363] In his 1921 notes on *The Dreaming of the Bones*, Yeats already spoke of "a Japanese 'Noh' play, where a spirit, advised by a Buddhist priest she has met upon the road, seeks to escape from the flames by ceasing to

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[360] W. B. Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials including the Author's Final Text*, ed. Sandra F. Siegel (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 37.
[361] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 40; Marie C. Stopes, *Plays of Old Japan: The Nō* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1913).
[362] Stopes, *Plays of Old Japan*, 47-48.
[363] For a summary of all mentions of this Noh play in Yeats's writings and correspondences, See Hae-Kyung Sung, "The Poetics of Purgatory: A Consideration of Yeats's Use of Noh Form," *Comparative Literature Studies* 35.2 (1998): 107-115. The Buddhist idea of hell differs from the Catholic purgatory, but in both the dead yields to suffering in order to cleanse their sin.

believe in the dream."[364] Commenting on *Purgatory* in 1938, Yeats again recalled the influence of "medieval Japanese plays" which confirmed his belief that "the dead suffer remorse and re-create their old lives just as I have described," another reference to "Motomezuka."[365] And in the first version of *A Vision*, Yeats cited the same play about a spirit returning to past deeds and punished by flames that are "her own conscience made visible."[366] Later, in the significantly rewritten 1937 edition of *A Vision*, Yeats brought up "Motomezuka" once more, this time stressing the ghost's "exaggerated conscience" and the ambiguity of the story's ending,

> I think of a girl in a Japanese play whose ghost tells a priest of a slight sin, if indeed it was sin, which seems great because of her exaggerated conscience. She is surrounded by flames, and though the priest explains that if she but ceased to believe in those flames they would cease to exist, believe she must, and the play ends in an elaborate dance, the dance of her agony.[367]



Figure 10 "The Maiden's Tomb," Plate 6, in Stopes, *Plays of Old Japan*.

Yeats's framing of the supernatural as the externalization of one's inner turbulence in *Purgatory* is also traceable to another Noh text, "Awoi no Uye." Specifically, it came from Pound and Fenollosa's misinterpretation of "Awoi no Uye" in *"Noh" or Accomplishment*, a misreading Eliot then carried into his review of the book. Pound, misinformed by Fenollosa,

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[364] Yeats, *Four Plays*, 129.
[365] See Yeats's 1938 interview with *Irish Independent*, quoted in Donald T. Torchiana, *W.B. Yeats & Georgian Ireland* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 357.
[366] George Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood, eds., *A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision (1925)* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1978), 225.
[367] W. B. Yeats, *A Vision: A Reissue with the Author's Final Revisions* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 231.

argued in *"Noh" or Accomplishment* that the ghost haunting Lady Awoi is none other than the embodiment of the victim's own resentment, one that takes the form of her husband's mistress but later transforms into a demon ("hannya") of jealousy.[368] Such a reading distorts the plot of the original Noh text where the apparition is simply the ghost of Lady Rokujo, the mistress herself. Arthur Waley called attention to this error in *The Nō Plays of Japan*, noting that "Fenollosa seems to have misunderstood the play and read into it complications and confusions which do not exist."[369] But it had been this very misunderstanding—the idea that "Awoi is tormented by her own passion"—that led Pound to marvel at the psychological complexity in Noh, something he believed was captured only at a much later time in the West,

> This play was written before Ibsen declared that life is a "contest with the phantoms of the mind." The difficulties of the translator have lain in separating what belongs to Awoi herself from the things belonging to the ghost of Rokujo, very much as modern psychologists might have difficulty in detaching the personality or memories of an obsessed person from the personal memories of the obsession.[370]

Among the many texts introduced in *"Noh" or Accomplishment*, it is telling that Eliot was most drawn to "Awoi no Uye," where the misery of the haunted was understood to be acutely self-inflicted and the ghost merely a result of one's own emotional and spiritual struggles—something that is iterated in *The Family Reunion*. It is equally revealing that Yeats also returned time and again to the Noh play "Motomezuka," where the ghost's dilemma is strikingly similar to the "Awoi no Uye" misread. Mistranslation, unwittingly made, holds equal sway over the imagination when what is recognized as a laudable difference in the cultural other is a projection or affirmation of what is already considered innovative in one's own context—Ibsen and modern psychology.

A Catalyst For Tragedy

The two madwomen informing Yeats's *Purgatory*—Unai in "Motomezuka" and Lady Rokujo in "Awoi no Uye"—are both classic examples of the crazed female specter archetype

[368] Fenollosa and Pound, *"Noh" or Accomplishment*, 193.
[369] Arthur Waley, *The Nō Plays of Japan* (New York: Alfred. A. Knopf, 1922), 143.
[370] Fenollosa and Pound, *"Noh" or Accomplishment*, 194.

("kyōjo mono") traditionally rescued in rituals performed by male priests in Noh. This recurring figure reflects the belief in Mahayana Buddhism that it is more difficult for women to attain enlightenment.[371] The mother figure in *Purgatory*, trapped in self-imposed repetition and triggering the Old Man's attempted act of salvation, is undeniably such a Noh ghost. Yet in being a Noh ghost she is also doubly paralyzed by Yeats: unable to interrupt her own past or participate in the Old Man's present moment, either through action or speech. She exemplifies the *Return* phase after death in Yeats's esoteric system, a phase where, as *A Vision* dictates, one must "exhaust pleasure and pain by the display of all the good and evil of his past life, but it is always the old, never new pleasure or pain."[372] This ghost's ability to move forward and elsewhere—or to renew herself in a higher order of existence as specters often do in Noh—is stymied, as Yeats designed her as a static phantomic being who continues to exist but does not exist anew. As a spectral phenomenon witnessed by the Old Man and his son, this Noh ghost precipitates all dramatic actions in *Purgatory*; yet she herself is the greatest stillness in the play, who can be overheard but cannot hear, who neither communicates nor can be communicated with. She is the condition of tragedy in *Purgatory*, the "immovable" against which the Old Man's violent, futile performance of redemption unfolds. As Yeats theorizes in *On the Boiler*,

> Some Frenchman has said that farce is the struggle against a ridiculous object, comedy against a movable object, tragedy against an immovable; and because the will, or energy, is greatest in tragedy, tragedy is the more noble; but I add that "will or energy is eternal delight," and when its limit is reached it may become a pure, aimless joy, though the man, the shade, still mourns his lost object.[373]

Yeats's conception of tragedy is rooted in the image of an individual's vain battle against the supernatural (oftentimes an inexorable destiny of failure): the thwarted hero meets his inevitable defeat, whereas the challenged remains a mystical force indifferent and inscrutable. Yeats's dramatic texts put on display the struggles of Irish heroes who are his double, who fight, fail, and transcend their personal tragedies by submitting to a greater cosmic order consisting of recurrent cycles of collapse and renewal.[374] Hence Cuchulain drowns in his hallucinatory fight

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[371] See Matthew Chudnow, *Soteriology in the Female-Spirit Noh Plays of Konparu Zenchiku* (PhD diss., University of California, Irvine, 2017): 1, 26.
[372] Harper and Hood, eds., *Critical Edition*, 225-6.
[373] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 35.
[374] Nathan, *Tragic Drama*, 3, 14.

against the king of Ulster in *On Baile's Strand*, and the same hero finds himself condemned to be kept by the hawk-woman of the mountain from the sacred water of immortality in *At the Hawk's Well*. The Old Man's failure in *Purgatory* to influence his mother's ghost or alter ancient events to his will is a predictable development when viewed through this Yeatsian framework of tragedy. Championing a theory of returning historical phases in *A Vision*, one that he believes will "proclaim a new divinity," Yeats scoffs at progressive views of history widely applauded by modern media.[375] But the poet's own idea of tragedy, built on a cyclical notion of history, is itself construed as a progressive process, where the heroic individual must overcome the immediate terror of demise before fathoming the sublime truth of "gaiety transfiguring all that dread," a superior state of mind idealized in "Lapis Lazuli."[376] Seeking to radicalize Plato's idea of tragedy that stops at the inevitability of human defeat, the poet summons a disquieted ghost of the philosopher through whom he declares: "*'What then?' sang Plato's ghost, 'what then?'*".[377] The linear sequence of Yeatsian tragedy, as B. L. Reid points out, is motivated by a singular aspiration toward ontological maturity: one accepts the limit of human agency, reconciles with failure in a post-apocalyptic vacuum of profound peace, and finally comes to understand "the great paradox of joy out of suffering."[378] Such active transformation leading to a plateau of affective transcendence and epistemic fulfillment is what Yeats calls for in his later poem "An Acre of Grass," both for himself ("Grant me an old man's frenzy. / Myself must I remake") and for others ("shake the dead in their shrouds").[379]

A recurrent question about *Purgatory* has been to what extent the play is an adequate representation of Yeats's ideal of "tragic joy" and in what ways the Old Man's failure of redemption should be interpreted in accordance with it. Given Yeats's scant commentary on *Purgatory* and his rather vague claim that the play embodies "a scene of tragic intensity," one might suspect, as Harold Bloom does, that the story's grim ending is not meaningful at all in relation to such an ideal.[380] Bloom negates *Purgatory*'s significance in this respect completely,

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[375] Yeats, *A Vision*, 27, 262. Yeats poses his own theory against "the happy counter-myth of progress" celebrated by modern newspapers.
[376] W. B. Yeats, *New Poems* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1938), 2.
[377] Yeats, *New Poems*, 12-13.
[378] B. L. Reid, "Yeats and Tragedy," *The Hudson Review* 11.3 (1958), 394.
[379] Yeats, *New Poems*, 12.
[380] See Harold Bloom, *Yeats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 426. See also *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, edited by Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 907.

considering its plot most comprehensible when read as an "exercise in practical eugenics" rather than a narrative consistent with Yeats's last reflection on tragedy in *On the Boiler*.[381] But insofar as Yeats accorded *Purgatory* the important place of coda piece in *On the Boiler*, the play should at least display some legibility as a counterexample to his tragic vision or even as a daemonic anti-self to his earlier mythological heroic pieces. In this vein, *Purgatory* can be seen as a deliberate exhibition of human unsuccess, one that emphasizes "the failure of heroic transcendence, failure that results in horror without affirmation, unqualified pathos," as Leonard Nathan argues.[382] Since failure is on display, *Purgatory* can be further understood as a preparatory episode that potentially brings about the Old Man's attunement to Yeats's samsara-reminiscent worldview, a possibility that follows this protagonist's personal devastation. The inevitable wretchedness of the Old Man could be a metaphysical lesson for this unenlightened quasi-hero, and in time he would see that his failure points to more than his own doom; or, as Otto Bohlmann speculates less forgivingly, "until he has learned Nietzschean exultation in the moment and a longing for its return, the Old Man is condemned to experience life as a purgatorial nightmare, meaningless repetition."[383] It is indeed fair to see the chance of transcendence, if any, to arise from the Old Man's struggle in *Purgatory* rather than from that of the female ghost in the play's background, for such was Yeats's design. Tragic joy, as Yeats made clear, "has not joy, as we understand that word, but ecstasy, which is from the contemplation of things vaster than the individual."[384] The contemplation of such vastness in the luxury of a Damascene moment is indeed an opportunity left only for the Old Man, who exhausts his will in a redemptive endeavor fated to fail, who alone survives in the present tense and is likely to arrive at Yeats's cherished revelation that "opposites are everywhere face-to-face, dying each other's life, living each other's death."[385]

In a letter to Edith Shackleton Heald dated 15 March 1938, Yeats described his emerging conception of *Purgatory*, writing "I have a one-act play in my head, a scene of tragic intensity" and noting that "my recent work has greater strangeness and I think greater intensity than anything I have done" (*L* 907).

[381] Bloom, *Yeats*, 426.

[382] Nathan, *Tragic Drama*, 190, 249.

[383] Otto Bohlmann, *Yeats and Nietzsche: An Exploration of Major Nietzschean Echoes in the Writings of William Butler Yeats* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), 188.

[384] W. B. Yeats, *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), xxiv.

[385] Yeats, *On the Boiler,* 22.

But we must also ask what defines *Purgatory*'s female specter beyond her subsidiary function in the Old Man's potential enlightenment. This is an important line of inquiry because this mother figure—as well as her prototypical ghost in the Noh play "Motomezuka"—was continuously present for Yeats, as I have shown, over two versions of *A Vision* and elsewhere in the two decades leading to the composition of *Purgatory*. In a sense, she predated Yeats's dramatic text. This ghost represents one variation of the generic figure of madwoman who is adept at various roles—from initiatory to exemplary—in Yeats's visions of tragedy as mediated through different collocations of insanity and female identity. The lyrical speaker in "A Crazed Girl," whose soul is "in division from itself," derives her Dionysian song of "O sea-starved, hungry sea" from the willing embrace of affliction.[386] The abject yet defiant protagonist of the "Crazy Jane" poems performs her utterance of wisdom obtained from lived suffering and costly transgressions.[387] Exhibiting a frenzied state devoid of tragic dignity, the "hysterical women" in "Lapis Lazuli," who are "sick of the palette and fiddle-bow, / Of poets that are always gay," foreshadow the cataclysmic events needed to transmute collective woe into divine ecstasy.[388] If the portrait of Maud Gonne in "No Second Troy" who "taught to ignorant men most violent ways" is that of an initiator of a Euripidean tragedy who filled the poet's days "with misery," then the woman of the Sidhe in *At the Hawk's Well*, who was "always flitting upon this mountain-side / to allure or to destroy," is a direct bringer of tragedy to Cuchulain, Yeats's heroic alter ego.[389] These variations of the madwoman figure continued to dramatize the gendered aspect of Yeats's conceptualization of the supernatural. As early as in *The Celtic Twilight*, the poet had asserted that women possess a psychic sensitivity to the tragic truth of the world: their "sudden emotions" open up to "a certainty, glimpses of much that sanctity finds at the end of its painful journey," and they are innately attuned to the ultimate truth of tragic joy, a truth encapsulated in lines such as "Heardst thou not that those who die / Awake in a world of ecstasy?".[390] Yeats's investment in the notion of mystical female insight is also reflected in the

[386] Yeats, *New Poems*, 14.
[387] See Margaret Mills Harper, "The Problem of Crazy Jane," *Nordic Irish Studies* 17, no. 1 (2018): 13-30, for an analysis of how the figure "Crazy Jane" allowed Yeats to imaginative inhabit a transgressive and tragic body that is "gendered beyond binaries, whole as well as aged, authoritative while abject, not yet born and long dead" (26).
[388] Yeats, *New Poems*, 2.
[389] Yeats, *Four Plays*, 17.
[390] W. B. Yeats, *Mythologies* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1959), 115-116.

fact that he both knew and constructed women aligned with such a belief: his wife Georgie Hyde-Lees, whose mediumship and automatism helped create *A Vision*, was assumed capable of communicating with supernatural sources in an altered and self-less state of consciousness, just as Mrs. Henderson in *The Words upon the Window Pane*, or Madame Blavatsky, Yeats's fellow practitioner at the Theosophical Society, could allegedly access realms of knowledge beyond the limit of human experience.

The foremost reason to read *Purgatory*'s madwoman anew, however, is that she is at the root of the difficulty of interpreting the play, a difficulty that lies in the play's double foci of tragedy, the ghost's serving the Old Man's: the tragedy of the mother specter, a quasi-maenad figure imprisoned in the recurrence of memory, takes place in the fire-ravaged dwelling that serves as her immediate purgatorial site, but her stasis is also at the heart of the Old Man's moral purgatory. It is against the local tragedy of the ghost that the Old Man performs the redemptive ritual—and fails, at last reaching a moment of anagnorisis—as Yeats's intended tragic hero of the play. To Yeats, the mother ghost must remain unsalvageable and unaware, so that the Old Man could recognize his failure as inevitable, so that, enervated and disillusioned, he could end *Purgatory* with his vain appeal to divine intervention, performing a final exclamation of despair that falls on two heavy anapests,

> O God!
> Release my mother's soul from its dream!
> Mankind can do no more. Appease
> The misery of the living and the remorse of the dead.[391]

An earlier version of *Purgatory*'s ending goes "O my God what is man—Are they never ending / the misery of the living & the remorse of the dead."[392] Yeats's last line, unchanged from the first draft to the last, binds the tragedy of the Old Man with that of his mother's and shows *Purgatory* to be a dramatizing of dual suffering. Distilling the initial ontological question of "what is man" into the plain acceptance of "mankind can do no more" in his later drafts, Yeats heightens the breaking point of human agency as *Purgatory*'s principle concern and establishes the Old Man as a not-yet-fulfilled, if not wrong, incarnation of a tragic hero whose fulfillment depends on the mother ghost's unresolved predicament.

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[391] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 46.
[392] Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials*, 52-53.

If we shift our gaze away from the much-discussed tragic significance of the Old Man to this spectral heroine from Noh, it becomes clear that her repetition carries an unnoticed dramatic potency of its own. I have demonstrated earlier that Yeats, in an apparent reversal of Noh's stage configuration, places the ghost in the shadowy background and the Old Man at the front (fig. 11). But markedly, the mother specter occupies the space where a painted green pine tree stands on a traditional Noh stage, a celebratory symbol of perennial nature underscored by Pound in *"Noh" or Accomplishment* (fig. 12).[393] While a trio of smaller pine trees—representing the harmony of heaven, earth, and man—are traditionally placed as a part of Noh's stage set, Yeats installs in *Purgatory* only a "bare tree" whose white branches are "not in the shadow" and "well lit by moon." This lone tree, likened by the Old Man's son to "a silly old man," once had "green leaves, ripe leaves, leaves thick as butter" before being blasted by a thunderbolt.[394] Valorized at the play's beginning as an indication of the family's decay and the mother's misfortune, this withered tree turns out to be an unreliable symbol. As the abrupt filicide takes place, the Old Man mistakenly takes the tree that stands "in white light" as a sign that the ritualistic murder has successfully awakened his mother's ghost,

> Study that tree.
> It stands there like a purified soul,
> All cold, sweet, glistening light.
> Dear mother, the window is dark again
> But you are in the light because
> I finished all that consequence.[395]

After a deceptively hopeful pause, the familiar "hoof beats" of the drunk father return, echoing as spectral "impressions" in the mother's dreaming mind, and mark the start of another cycle of her recurrent nightmare. The Old Man then comes to the dreaded realization that he has been "twice a murderer and all for nothing," that his mother must "animate that dead night / not once but many times." The reader, too, is disabused of the easy equation of the ghost's fate with the symbolic significance of the bare tree as the Old Man construes it—"That tree is like the soul of a woman / Half purified in purgatory," as Yeats puts explicitly in *Purgatory*'s first verse draft.[396]

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[393] Fenollosa and Pound, *"Noh" or Accomplishment*, 19, 59.
[394] Yeats, *On the Boiler,* 39.
[395] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 45.
[396] Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials*, 69.

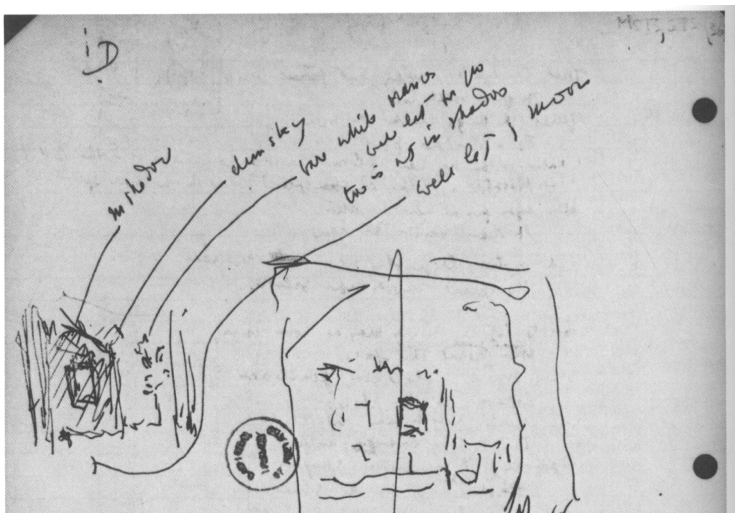


Figure 11 The stage set Yeats drew for *Purgatory*. His comments, from left to right, read "in shadow, dim sky, bare white branches well lit for the tree is not in shadow, well lit by moon." See Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials*, 60.

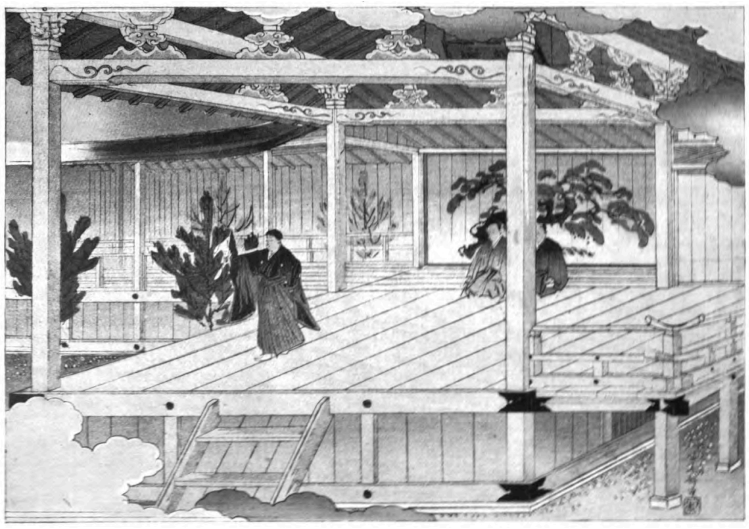


Figure 12 "View of the Nō Stage," with a painted pine tree in the background, Plate 2, in Stopes, *Plays of Old Japan*.

The relentless return experienced by the ghost, unaffected by the Old Man's intervention, establishes her as something perennial, something akin to the painted pine tree in Noh, an unchanging "view" that serves as the backdrop for dramatic action and speech. Therefore the bare tree in *Purgatory*, reminiscent of the leafless tree that stands opposed to the water of immortality Cuchulain seeks in *At the Hawk's Well*—that tree which "who but an idiot would

praise"[397]—shares no symbolic kinship with the mother specter. *Purgatory*, in this sense, bears resemblance to Noh's architectural structure where movement unfolds against the unmoving. Though the Old Man fails to rescue the specter from her repetition, this very failure releases the ghost from a monolithic mode of interpretation: despite being consistently defined by passivity, she exhibits remarkable dramatic vigor through her tireless reconstruction of a past scene with herself at the center, an energy that is unexpected from a silent, monologic figure who speaks not a single line in the play. Helen Vendler finds a similarly generative energy in the protagonist of "Motomezuka," the source character for *Purgatory*'s specter in Noh.[398] Interpreting this Noh figure in light of Yeats's spiritual scheme in *A Vision*, Vendler sees her as a triple symbol of artistic creativity that facilitates an autobiographical reading:

> Simply by virtue of being a ghost, the girl belongs to the world of artistic creation, and can be called an artist; by being a character in a play, she represents as well the created image. … she is a double symbol, and even a triple one … this girl is at once Muse, Artist, and Art. Her "exaggerated conscience" resembles the acute sensibility of the poet, which, like her sense of sin, demands visible manifestations, in spite of the dismissal of those manifestations by unsympathetic witnesses.[399]

Purgation, as Vendler further contends, is for Yeats "a symbol of the imagination at work" in *A Vision*: contrary to Harold Bloom's assertion that "the somewhat more aesthetic purgation outlined in *A Vision* has little to do with the notion of purgation in the play," Vendler believes that the exhaustion at the end of *Purgatory* mirrors Yeats's profound skepticism toward the achievement of his career when revisiting—reliving, as the Old Man's mother does—his life's work in his mind.[400] From such a perspective, *Purgatory*'s ghost can be seen as where Yeats's affirmation of his own poetic imagination, centered on the female specter, enters into conflict with his attempted validation of an unfinished vision of tragedy centered on the Old Man.

While Vendler has helpfully illuminated the symbolic significance of *Purgatory*'s mother specter to Yeats's authorial anxiety, we risk casting this figure too readily as the antithesis of victimhood and, consequently, obscuring the complex reasons that led Yeats to create a character

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[397] Yeats, *Four Plays*, 24.
[398] Helen Vendler, *Yeats's Vision and the Later Plays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 79.
[399] Vendler, *Yeats's Vision*, 79.
[400] Vendler, *Yeats's Vision*, 198-202. See also Bloom, *Yeats*, 427.

fettered by her own "exaggerated conscience." It is unsurprising that Yeats had second thoughts when describing the nature of the ghost's quandary, given her provocative psychic capability and nonnegligible potential to access Yeats's ideal of "tragic joy" if she was to translate the accumulation of her suffering into epistemic awakening. In Yeats's earliest version of *Purgatory*, "Manuscript of the Scenario," it was emphasized that the ghost "does not understand—her agony, her agonized joy, / or her remorse begin all over again."[401] The ghost's "agonized joy," which bears a promising similarity to the affective texture of Yeats's ideal of tragedy, was subsequently eliminated from later drafts as Yeats continued to specify the Old Man's mother's "joy" as the carnal pleasure she experienced on her wedding night in the bridal chamber. All associations with the more sublime species of "joy" were carefully avoided, even though such sublimation should logically follow the ghost's recurrent return to the same site of misery had she been acknowledged as a true protagonist of Yeatsian tragedy. Yeats's revision shows his repression of the ghost's ability to rise above even her most immediate adversity: kept from the knowledge of her own liminality, the ghost is made the agent of feeling but not self-reflexive action. She is reduced to a supernatural catalyst for the Old Man's—but not her own—possible attunement to the generative non-finality of destruction and death that undergirds Yeats's notion of tragedy.

The omission of "agonized joy" from subsequent drafts of *Purgatory* can be further explained by Yeats's realization that "joy" had become a pervasive and integral element in his poetic idiom. It is the transcendent state of existence that he instructs humanity to find in the unsettling imagination of "irrational streams of blood are staining earth" as he invokes an epistemologically superior communal "we" who "but laugh in tragic joy."[402] It is also what Yeats celebrates in "Lapis Lazuli," an awareness and embrace of great cycles of "all things fall and are built again" when tragedy is "wrought to its utmost."[403] "Joy" also marks the point of affective culmination in "Imitated from the Japanese," a Noh-inspired text published the same year *Purgatory* was performed in Dublin,

> A most astonishing thing
> Seventy years have I lived;

[401] Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials*, 52-53.
[402] Yeats, *New Poems*, 1.
[403] Yeats, *New Poems*, 2.

(Hurrah for the flowers of Spring
For Spring is here again.)

Seventy years have I lived
No ragged beggar man,
Seventy years have I lived,
Seventy years man and boy,
And never have I danced for joy.[404]

As its title already shows, the piece was adapted from a waka poem composed in Heian Japan and later woven into a Noh play.[405] Yeats encountered the Noh text in Pound's translation, though Yeats's version of the poem strays considerably from the source.[406] This rewriting again contains an iteration of Yeats's notion of tragedy: what precedes the ecstatic lightness of the magical last word, "joy," is the maximizing of its opposite, the distressing weight of its antithesis. A joyous dance may be a simple thing to accomplish if one so desires, but in Yeats's poem, its possibility is submerged in a lifetime of unfulfillment, in the lyrical speaker's astonished discovery of "never have I." While the anticipated "dance for joy" promises a moment of beautiful elation, the poem uses this apparent climax to gesture at a more profound form of fulfillment—one stemming paradoxically from accepting the absence of joy across seventy irrevocable years: the ultimate Yeatsian "joy" surpasses the fleeting delight of any single event and emerges instead through the existential triumph of transcending a life marked by unfulfillment.[407] The poem resonates with Yeats's romanticized Chinese musicians from the preceding piece "Lapis Lazuli" in *New Poems*—figures who, despite their "mournful melodies," do not succumb to grief but instead view "all the tragic scene" with "ancient, glittering eyes" that are resolutely "gay."[408]

Yeats's reluctance to elevate *Purgatory*'s ghost to a tragic protagonist in her own right can also be attributed to this figure's coincidence with what the poet regarded as the obsolete

[404] Yeats, *New Poems*, 4.
[405] See Earl Miner, *The Japanese tradition in British and American literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 251. The Noh play referred to here is "Kakitsubata."
[406] Miner, *Japanese tradition*, 251.
[407] For an analysis of "joy" in the context of East Asian influences on Yeats's thinking and poetry, particularly how this concept relates to Buddhist enlightenment and other East Asian philosophical ideas, see Seán Golden, "Trance, Dance, Blessedness and Joy", in *Yeats and Asia,* ed. Seán Golden, 261-274.
[408] Yeats, *New Poems*, 4.

heroine of nineteenth-century melodrama. The Old Man's mother's apparition, made to function in *Purgatory* as a monologic spectacle, is an otherwise unruly Victorian "suffering woman" put out of action.[409] This "active, feeling, suffering" heroine commanding the dramatic spotlight was a new type of character invented by Victorian melodrama, a figure who originated from the "suffering victim" trope in eighteenth-century Gothic plays.[410] Yeats, speaking consistently of Noh theater as an antidote to what he considers Victorian theater's mimetic tendency and superficial sentiment, was known for his aversion to melodrama and had turned down imitations of this genre when serving as a reader for the Abbey Theater.[411] The ruined house in *Purgatory*, where "the floor is gone, the windows gone / And where there should be roof there's sky," is also a realist dwelling rendered violently into a supernatural locale—the inverse of the domestic space of femininity where Victorian melodramas commonly take place. When *Purgatory*'s Old Man speculates about the ghost's inner state, the sensations of female desire traditionally heightened in melodramas are also censored through what he imagines to be the mother's retrospective scrutiny of her own "transgressions":

> But there's a problem: she must live
> Through everything in exact detail,
> Driven to it by remorse, and yet
> Can she renew the sexual act
> And find no pleasure in it, and if not,
> If pleasure and remorse must both be there
> Which is greater?[412]

The last two lines recall Yeats's poem "The Lady's Second Song," where a playful query arising from sensual indulgence—"If soul may look and body touch / Which is the more blest?"—is met by the recurring refrain "the Lord have mercy upon us," a juxtaposition of female sensuality and patriarchal moral order that creates an undercurrent of penitence.[413] Yeats's invocation of divine judgment to subdue the expression of female desire carries an irony: within his spiritual hierarchy of "a new divinity," the supreme object of worship resides not in religious devotion—a

[409] Katherine Newey, "Melodrama and Gender," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Melodrama*, ed. Carolyn Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 149-62.
[410] Newey, "Melodrama and Gender," 149.
[411] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 33.
[412] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 43.
[413] Yeats, *New Poems*, 10.

realm that, unlike Eliot, he rarely relates to—but in the tragic noble.[414] The poem's appeal to divine mercy speaks to Yeats's broader ambivalence toward female agency, an attitude that comes to the fore in *Purgatory*, where the mother specter is indicated to be both spiritually enabling and earthly tempting, both a muse of creation and an agent of ruin.

A Nietzschean Ghost

Forlorn in her fruitless repetition and kept from a superior species of "joy," *Purgatory*'s Noh specter serves as both a supernatural catalyst for Yeats's ideal of tragedy and a convenient site of suppression as a generic embodiment of the Victorian melodramatic heroine. However, in being at once Victorian, Japanese, and, as will be argued in this section, Nietzschean, she displays an untamable multiplicity within Yeats's attempt to harness her various historical, transnational, and philosophical reverberations. The ghost's true predicament is not so much her "sin" but the poet's anxiety over the ethics and efficacy of his own ideological agenda behind the composition of *Purgatory*.

Few things provide a better glimpse into Yeats's ambivalent assimilation of Nietzsche than *Purgatory*'s ghost of agony in a horror-filled tale of triple returns—filicide as a repetition of patricide, the night of the Old Man's conception coinciding with the night of his son's murder, and the mother's endless reliving of the genesis event of family disaster. "Joy," a word the Noh-derived ghost is deprived of in *Purgatory*, was present in Yeats's first encounter with Nietzsche's work, when the poet experienced a "curious astringent joy."[415] It was a feeling Yeats soon elevated into his own notion of "tragic ecstasy which is the best that art—perhaps that life—can give" in a distinctly Nietzschean idiom.[416] Equating the philosopher's birth with a heroic phase of growth that awaits fulfillment in *A Vision*, Yeats further incorporated Nietzsche into his esoteric system as a tragic protagonist who is ready to launch a momentous cycle of

[414] Yeats, *A Vision*, 27.
[415] *The Letters of W. B. Yeats, ed. Allan Wade, 379.*
[416] *Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, Vol. 2*, edited by John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson (London: Macmillan, 1975), 385. For Nietzsche and Yeats alike, the universe lords over humanity; the acceptance of such destiny, preceded by a Herculean resistance to the inevitable, is what makes tragedy complexly beautiful. The Nietzschean echoes in Yeats's work, interwoven with the sibylline voices of William Blake, are heard with increasing clarity as Yeats's lyrical tone harshens in his later years. Also see Bohlmann, *Yeats and Nietzsche*, 4, 15.

transformation in the "twenty-and-eight phases of the moon."[417] Yeats's last two plays are particularly intelligible in a Nietzschean framework as a continuous project of tragedy writing: the supra-individual transcendence idealized by the poet, left unattained at the end of *Purgatory*, is re-animated in a return to the Irish heroic times in his last play, *The Death of Cuchulain*, where Yeats's favorite Celtic warrior meets his fate in a final exhaustion of human will, where the Apollonian energy of individuality falls back into the Dionysian force of destruction and resurrection, returning to the latter's inevitable motion in which all things are eternally immanent. Such Nietzschean immanence manifests itself as an unresolved conflict in the two opposing messages—one urging survival and the other bravery—borne to Cuchulain by Eithne Inguba, another female spectral figure and mediator of male destiny, possessed by the Celtic goddess Morrigu. The ambiguous dual messages, which drive Cuchulain to his fatal battle, contain a perfect clarity when seen as a symbiotic expression of Yeats's superhuman ideal of "death-in-life and life-in-death."

When it comes to *Purgatory*, it may be easy to take Nietzsche's gender analogy in *The Birth of Tragedy* hastily—namely that the Apollonian and the Dionysian operate in a similar way as reproduction depends on two sexes in continuous struggle—and project it directly onto Yeats's play, so as to understand the mother's ghost as the unruly Dionysian and the Old Man as the Apollonian individual engaged in an unfinished drama of male heroism.[418] It may also be tempting to map a masculinist reading of Nietzsche—his philosophy as a radical response to the feminine psyche of Christian morality—directly onto the Old Man's violent reaction to a penitent female ghost.[419] But to understand *Purgatory*'s mother specter as both Nietzschean and Yeatsian, it must be recognized that the play contains evidence of both Yeats's indebtedness to Nietzsche and his relative independence therefrom. As the concluding piece of Yeats's last political manifesto *On the Boiler*, *Purgatory* is inseparable from the poet's polemic on Ireland's project of national rejuvenation in the pamphlet. Citing Nietzsche's "transvaluation of all values," Yeats affirms the value of destruction in the breeding of newness in a nationalist

[417] Yeats, *A Vision,* 60.
[418] See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Nietzsche argues for the aesthetic significance of the view that "the continuing development of art is tied to the duality of the Apollonian and the Dionysian: just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, which are engaged in a continual struggle interrupted only by temporary periods of reconciliation" (19).
[419] For this masculinist strand of reading Nietzsche, see Bohlmann, *Yeats and Nietzsche*, 5.

context.[420] To embrace ending and death as gateways to new beginnings, a line of attitude that evinces Nietzsche's influence, underlies Yeats's iteration of tragic joy in *On the Boiler*—"we who have hated the age are joyous and happy."[421] Without situating *Purgatory* in Yeats's Nietzschean-influenced last political discourse, the play's grim narrative would be reduced to a mere bout of irrational passion, as the rhetorical challenge "why should not old man be mad?" in *On the Boiler*'s opening verse would register only as the ravings of a bitter old poet.[422] Yet, even as he drew from Nietzsche, Yeats's resistance to immediate Nietzschean interpretations can be observed in his revision and reworking of *Purgatory*. In the play's earliest draft, the Old Man's son willingly yielded himself as a sacrifice and was strangled in a Sophoclean manner.[423] In later versions, Yeats replaced the strangling with stabbing, which weakened the association between the Old Man and the Nietzschean Oedipus in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the latter being a canonical tragic hero whose passivity is associated with both the destruction and renewal of social order. In the same vein, the word "evil," a consistent target of Nietzsche's skepticism, was repeatedly invoked in earlier drafts of *Purgatory* by the Old Man to denote what the mother's mesalliance had set in motion.[424] But Yeats, apparently reluctant to wrestle with the Nietzschean genealogical baggage the word comes with, substituted "evil" in later drafts with his own term, "consequence."[425] This pivoted *Purgatory* toward Yeats's own theosophical system in *A Vision*, where souls continuously expiate their moral transgressions and explore "every consequence" after their death.[426] Yeats's simplifying act, which sidestepped the historical contingencies around moral judgment, is something Nietzsche would no doubt frown upon.

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[420] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 25. See also Bohlmann, *Yeats and Nietzsche*, for an analysis of Yeats's "joy in the apocalyptic emergence of new values with changing epochs" as inspired by Nietzsche (174).
[421] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 25.
[422] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 9.
[423] Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials*, 52-53.
[424] See Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials*, 36, 40, 46, 52, 58, 64, 76, 86, 88, 90, 92, 99, 144. The word "evil" appears with decreasing frequency across the evolution of the play's manuscripts, from the "Scenario" to the "First Verse Draft: *Purgatory*" and finally to the "Second Verse Draft: *Souls in Purgatory*."
[425] See Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials*, 114, 142, 160, 174, 177, 192, 198, 208, 214, 216.
[426] See Harper and Hood, eds., *A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision*, 225. See also George Mills Harper, *The Making of Yeats's A Vision, A Study of the Automatic Script*, vol. 1 (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1987), for a different but related use of the term "consequence" in Yeats's description of the Saint figure who "voluntarily takes on the sins of others" (204), including "the remorse and the consequence & the sense of sin" (206).

Crucially, in a comment made for the *Irish Independent* a few months before his death, Yeats elucidated *Purgatory* with a clarity unseen elsewhere,

> In my play, a spirit suffers because of its share, when alive, in the destruction of an honoured house; that destruction is taking place all over Ireland to-day. […] In some few cases a house has been destroyed by a mesalliance. I have founded my play on this exceptional case, partly because it enables me to depict more vividly than would otherwise be possible the tragedy of the house.[427]

By linking mesalliance (the mother's "transgression") directly to the Old Man's tragedy, Yeats made clear that *Purgatory*'s protagonist acted as his mouthpiece in declaring that "to kill a house / where great men grew up, married, died," is a "capital offence" committed by the Old Man's debauched, low-born father.[428] Yeats's emphasis on the socio-political consequences of mesalliance, a concern that is tied to the poet's eugenic agenda for Ireland in *On the Boiler*, shows an important correlation between the female specter in *Purgatory* and Nietzsche's "eternal return"—the philosopher's thought experiment that "this life, as thou livest it at present, and hast lived it, thou must live it once more, and also innumerable times."[429] Nietzsche's "eternal return," proposed as a test of human worth, shares with eugenic thinking a preoccupation with the "betterment" of the species: those who embrace the prospect of life's endless recurrence mark themselves as "healthier," while those who recoil from such destiny of sameness are "weaker." Yeats's notion of tragic transcendence undeniably shows an aspiration to the Nietzschean Übermensch who triumphs before the test of "eternal return," but Yeats clearly also struggled with the absence of a terminal point of reconciliation or stillness in the temporal circularity of Nietzsche's concept.

Yeats's solution was to flatten the concept, as he did in *A Vision*, into a finite transitional phase experienced between death and life—a phase that is but one small step in one's gradual attunement to the ideal of "tragic joy"—instead of fully accepting the design of unending cycles

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[427] See Yeats's 1938 interview with *Irish Independent*, quoted in Torchiana, *Yeats & Georgian Ireland*, 357.
[428] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 41.
[429] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom ('La Gaya Scienza')*, trans. Thomas Common, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol. 10, ed. Oscar Levy (Edinburgh and London: T. N. Foulis, 1910), 270.

of recurring existence as an overarching worldview as originally posited by Nietzsche.[430] The same can be said of Yeats's treatment of the Noh ghost's "eternal return" in *Purgatory*, as Yeats framed her situation as a predicament—at best a contemplative space for "remorse" in extenuation of a grave "offense"—rather than a once-and-for-all opportunity for the Old Man's mother to transmute herself into a tragic Übermensch through her perpetual repetition. Yeats, like Nietzsche, reckoned with the idea of "eternal return," but *Purgatory* shows that Yeats assimilated this concept more in the personal sense of "I am content to live it all again" rather than adopted it as an extensive historical outlook—a reservation that Jahan Ramazani also observes.[431] Yeats may stand the challenge of "eternal return" as a markedly "healthy" Nietzschean individual himself, but he never fully integrated the concept—certainly not its imagination of unredemptive circularity—into his celebration of the tragic sublime. *Purgatory*'s most salient non-Nietzschean aspect is its earnest investment in the Yeatsian notion of "consequence" in need of rectification. The Noh trope of spectral return, with its focus on the possibility of redemption through the revisiting of past memories, came in handy in *Purgatory* as a counterweight to Nietzschean influence, ultimately turning the play into a Dionysia of Yeats's own design, not Nietzsche's.

Purgatory's Noh-inspired mother ghost, whose plight of "not once but many times" displays an inevitable Nietzschean resonance yet excludes her from Yeats's ideal of tragic sublime, shows a specific point of incompatibility between Nietzsche's and Yeats's philosophical frameworks—one affirming ceaseless recurrence, the other seeking transcendent resolution.[432] Her erratic pattern of compulsive return, immune to redemptive intervention, brings to the surface a subversive, anti-eugenic current of political meaning in the play. Although

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[430] Nietzsche's term "eternal return" is also repurposed by Yeats in his own theosophical context to stand for the return of historical phases, when constellations "return to the positions they once set forth (*AVR* 245).

[431] See R. Jahan Ramazani, "Yeats: Tragic Joy and the Sublime," *PMLA* 104, no. 2 (Mar 1989), 168. Yeats's line comes from the poem "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," in W. B. Yeats, *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1933), 8.

[432] See also Frances Oppel, "Yeats's *Purgatory* and Nietzsche's Eternal Return," *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 82, no. 1 (1994). In a Yeatsian fashion and in alignment with my argument here, Oppel posits in the broader context of *On the Boiler* that Nietzsche's notion of "eternal return" and Yeats's conceptualization of tragedy are opposites "everywhere face to face," arguing that "Tragedy belongs to the shorter war—to the particular and individual, the realm of the Other, of difference. Eternal return on the other hand belongs to the realm of the Same" (11).

this specter can be easily identified with the *Return* phase as described in Yeats's *A Vision*, closer scrutiny shows her to be an anomaly within his mystical scheme. The dead, as Yeats establishes, relive the events that are most imbued with emotional intensity until a certain knowledge is acquired as to the "causes" and "consequences" of these events,

> In the *Dreaming Back*, the *Spirit* is compelled to live over and over again the events that had most moved it; there can be nothing new, but the old events stand forth in a light which is dim or bright according to the intensity of the passion that accompanied them. [...] After its imprisonment by some event in the *Dreaming Back*, the *Spirit* relives that event in the *Return* and turns it into knowledge, and then falls into the *Dreaming Back* once more. … One thinks of those apparitions haunting the places where they have lived that fill the literature of all countries and are the theme of the Japanese Nō drama. … After each event of the *Dreaming Back* the *Spirit* explores not merely the causes but the consequences of that event.[433]

Dreaming Back is the cyclical re-enacting of past events occurring "in the order of their intensity or luminosity, the more intense first," whereas the next phase, *Return*, is an occasion for the chronological revisiting of events that eventually yields knowledge. *Purgatory*'s ghost, who attains no actionable knowledge of her own condition in the play yet relives her wedding night both chronologically and cyclically, defies the teloi of both processes. Nor does she fit into Yeats's further next phase, *Phantasmagoria*, where one exhausts all emotions in the hope of reaching an ideal state of equilibrium after obtaining a thorough understanding of one's past.[434] The purposeless, solipsistic circularity of this ill-fitting ghost's continual return clashes directly with the Old Man's eugenic agenda—a goal that aligns with Yeats's own advocacy of eugenic reform in *On the Boiler*. By recreating the night the Old Man was conceived, the ghost stages the origin event leading to her "consequence" time and again, affirming the "transgressive" happenings of her wedding night more than she might—or should, according to the Old Man—negate it. Given no opportunity of speech, the ghost far from excludes the possibility that it is in pursuit of pleasure alone that she returns—in pursuit of joy without agony rather than "agonized joy"—in repudiation of the linear progression and predetermined end in Yeats's idealized path toward tragic transcendence.

[433] Yeats, *A Vision*, 226-228.
[434] Yeats, *A Vision*, 230-231.

My contention, therefore, is that *Purgatory*'s Noh specter is most legible as a Nietzschean woman, a Yes-Sayer "content to live it all again," to borrow the line Yeats reserved for himself.[435] She is most decipherable as the ideological fault line in *Purgatory*'s eugenic narrative, who could not be maneuvered to conform to the vocabularies of "consequence" and "pollution" that preoccupied the Old Man and drove him to brutality. In her perpetual return unshaken by intervention she is, dare we say, an anti-eugenic ghost. By thwarting the Old Man's violent ritual, she contradicts Yeats's defense of eugenic reform in *On the Boiler*, where the poet warns his reader about the danger of a "corrupt generation" with "many weak persons, both in body and mind […] our fathers bad, and we are like to be worse."[436] Insofar as Yeats advocated for fostering an elite group of Irish men who "can do more for the welfare of a people […] than a million of any lesser sort" in *On the Boiler*, the Old Man in *Purgatory* can be read as motivated by a self-destructive eugenic mission to eliminate those deemed "lesser"—his father, himself, and his son included.[437] *Purgatory* is the reflection of Yeats's own embattled mind where two forces were at war—the disillusioned Old Man resorting to violence and the insubordinate female specter protesting in silence.[438] If what the Old Man attempts in *Purgatory* is what Bloom calls an "exercise in practical eugenics," it is an exercise that declares its own failure in front of the mother specter, who is victorious in her stillness.[439] Even though the Old Man's understanding of himself gradually shifts, as Yeats revised *Purgatory*, from that of a pollutant to that of a savior, until he becomes both the corrupted target and the violent executer of eugenic logic, he is proven wrong, by the ghost's indifference, in his commitment to the very ideology that motivates his identification with both roles.[440] Had Yeats intended *Purgatory* to be a salutary subversion of his own endorsement of eugenics, the mother specter would be the key subverter. Yeats did not illuminate this aspect of *Purgatory* for us, but the specter's resistance to containment—even in her imposed stasis—reveals both his unresolved struggle with Nietzsche's influence and his ambivalence toward his own eugenic politics in his final years. In her refusal to progress toward redemption, *Purgatory*'s Noh ghost undermines the play's eugenic thinking

[435] Yeats, *Winding Stair*, 8.
[436] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 16.
[437] Yeats, *On the Boiler*, 30. The piece is titled "Ireland after the Revolution."
[438] Bloom, *Yeats*, 429.
[439] Bloom, *Yeats*, 426.
[440] See Yeats, *Purgatory: Manuscript Materials*, 5.

through her own version of tragic performance—not the heroic failure Yeats envisioned, but the failure to submit to ideological subjugation.

"A form of aesthetic detachment," as Charles I. Armstrong astutely observes, governs Yeats's use of Noh and his appreciation of the traditionalist foundation of Japanese court theater.[441] But *Purgatory*'s mother specter, a Noh figure who becomes inconspicuously Noh in the host text, is at the center of attachment as much as detachment, with Yeats's putative tragic protagonist fixated on her salvation and the poet himself revisiting his encounter with her in "Motomezuka" on various occasions over the course of two decades. *Purgatory*'s specter, repurposed in the modernist circulation of classical Japanese texts, may appear to be a simple product of transnational borrowing. But within the broader context of modernist Orientalism, she is a vibrant example of Yeats's multifaceted appropriation of the Orient, a figure enmeshed in the poet's fusion of mysticism and symbolism, where the somatic and incorporeal converge. Through the metaphysical repetition of spectral return, this Noh ghost turns the memory of physical pleasure into a site of theosophical contemplation, where Yeats coalesces physicality into spirituality. She is evocative of a similar presence in *A Vision*, whose conflation of purity and inviolability is interwoven with Oriental motifs:

> But Muses resemble women who crept out at night and give themselves to unknown sailors and return to talk of Chinese porcelain—porcelain is best made, a Japanese critic has said, where the conditions of life are hard—or of the Ninth Symphony—virginity renews itself like the moon—except that the Muses sometimes form in those low haunts their most lasting attachments.[442]

Defending his work, Yeats compares the flirtations with sailors in "low haunts" to his own engagement with popular spiritualism—practices that Eliot dismissively termed "lower mythology."[443] The Muses' self-renewing cycles of romance, through which they restore and transform themselves, yield a metaphorical power of creativity that Yeats appropriates as his own. The mystified "Chinese porcelain" is one of the many protean signifiers in Yeats's constellation of Eastern things whose referents are constantly renewed in the poet's esoteric

[441] Charles I. Armstrong, "'Born Anew': W. B. Yeats's 'Eastern' Turn in the 1930s," in *Yeats, Philosophy, and the Occult*, eds. Matthew Gibson and Neil Mann (Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2016), 88.
[442] Yeats, *A Vision*, 24.
[443] Eliot, *After Strange Gods*, 46.

discourses. His Orient is spectral and chameleon, mediating and exemplifying as needed. It is malleable enough to stand in for the concealed authorship of *A Vision*, where Yeats fabricated an Arabian traveler as the source of spiritual knowledge in lieu of the poet's wife Hyde-Lees, the real medium who preferred anonymity. It is also such malleability that allowed Yeats to attribute the sophisticatedly constructed cosmology of *A Vision* to the lost doctrines of an Oriental tribe, the "Diagrammatists" as he calls them whose dances supposedly "leave upon the sand traces full of symbolical meaning."[444]

In a 1935 letter to Lady Gerald, Yeats proclaimed a geographical dichotomy through an elliptical meditation on tragedy, "the east has its solutions always and therefore knows nothing of tragedy. It is we, not the east, that must raise the heroic cry."[445] Yeats's invocation of this divide is far from an argument for cultural opposition, for he was suggesting neither ignorance on one side nor epistemological preparedness on the other. Rather, his East that "knows nothing of tragedy" is Yeats's romanticized Oriental world that epitomizes an innocence that arises from a profound maturity—an imaginary return to the pristine achieved through an exceptional accumulation of experience and wisdom. Yeats's Eastern world functions as a location of alterity through which he was able to valorize a tragic sublimity that releases an individual from the solitary heaviness of personal agony into the joyous lightness of self-less immersion in the rise and fall of the larger cosmos. It is such a location that he discovered in Harry Clifton's gift of carved Lapis Lazuli as well as in what he called the "tragic image" of the Japanese dancer in *At the Hawk's Well* whose physical form receded "into some more powerful life" during performance.[446] Yeats's Orientalism, in its most visible incarnations, represents what the poet desires from tragedy: the radical reconciliation of opposites, of life and death, destruction and regeneration. The mother specter in *Purgatory*, though an inconspicuous case of Yeats's Orientalism, is no less important despite her relative invisibility as an imported figure from Noh. In a sense, she is the one who "knows nothing of tragedy," for Yeats lent her no possibility of participation in his higher realm of tragic transcendence. Yet far from dissolving "into the labyrinth of itself,"[447] this Oriental specter, who returned "not once but many times" to haunt the poet's final meditations on tragedy, reveals the inherent ambivalence of the text she inhabits through her quiet resistance to *Purgatory*'s ideological and interpretive closures.

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[444] Yeats, *A Vision*, 41.
[445] See Yeats's Letter to Lady Gerald, July 6, 1935, in *Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 9.
[446] Fenollosa and Pound, *Certain Noble Plays*, iv.
[447] Yeats, *A Vision*, 60.

Chapter Four:
Orientalist Lyricism: Imitation and Japonisme in American Poetess Poetry

In 1894, *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* printed "To a Portrait of a Japanese Princess," a poem by Mary McNeil Scott, an obscure American poet who later became known as Mary Fenollosa, wife of the Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa, whose posthumous manuscripts on East Asian materials Mary would famously entrust to Ezra Pound.[448] Immediately identifiable in the poem's impassioned address is the voice of the "Poetess" figure widely circulating in nineteenth-century periodical and print culture, whom Virginia Jackson aptly calls a "feminized figure of extravagant feeling that emerges when you are not sure what kind of poet or poem you are reading."[449] Mary Fenollosa's piece bespeaks the lingering presence of this Poetess persona, as both a constraint and as a shared heritage, in American women's poetry at the century's close. The stylistic habits legible as "Poetess-like"—the imitable metrical patterns, the reliance on stock diction and imagery, the diffusion rather than consolidation of the lyric "I," and a reportorial posture more descriptive than critical—are conspicuously present in the poem.[450] In its observance of trochaic tetrameter, Fenollosa's verse reflects the prevailing commitment of women poets to prosodic forms soon to be dismissed by modernists like Pound as outworn. The

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[448] Mary McNeil Scott, "To a Portrait of a Japanese Princess," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* 53 (February), 280. The poem was later collected in Mary McNeil Scott, *Out of the Nest: A Flight of Verses* (Little, Brown, and Co., 1899), 134. She also published under the pseudonym Sidney McCall. This dissertation refers to her by the more widely recognized name, Mary Fenollosa, for consistency.
[449] Virginia Jackson, "The Poet as Poetess," in *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Poetry*, edited by Kerry Larson (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 55.
[450] See Laura Mandell, "Introduction: The Poetess Tradition," *Romanticism on the Net* 29-30 (2003), 27-46. See also Anne K. Mellor, "The Female Poet and the Poetess: Two Traditions of British Women's Poetry, 1780-1830," *Studies in Romanticism* 36.2 (Summer 1997), 261; Alexandra Socarides, "The Poetess at Work," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American Renaissance*, edited by Christopher N. Phillips (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 132; and Tricia Lootens, *The Political Poetess: Victorian Femininity, Race, and the Legacy of Separate Spheres* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 4, 8. The features mentioned by Mandell concretize those that Mellor identifies among Poetess poetry's feminine "literary conventions," what Socarides notes as a general "passivity" marked by formal smoothness, as well as the "citational performances" that, as Lootens observes, contributed to the impression of the Poetess persona's "pure conventionality."

opening stanza alone encapsulates the characteristics that, as Ben Glaser outlines in his account of the perceived maladies of nineteenth-century poetry in the modernist imagination, register as "sterile femininity, a failure to inhabit the spirit of American newness, deafness to spoken (usually American rather than poetic) language, and the lack of individualized form or rhythm."[451]

> Fragile, waxen dream of woman,
> Cold, inscrutable, unhuman!
> Ivory skin too dense for veining.
> Hair as deepest shade remaining,
> Tiny lips gold-tipped with silence,
> Sealed to girlhood's gay beguilance.

Yet Fenollosa's adherence to older verse forms is also unsettled here in the second line's metrical irregularity, where the apostrophic voice, struck by the realization that nothing beyond the immediately corporeal can be reached, falters into frustrated pauses. The heavy caesurae that interrupt the trochaic pulse render hesitation audible, a strategy of embodying emotional excess also discernible in the work of other American women poets such as Sara Teasdale and Louise Bogan.[452] Like them, Fenollosa explores the affective capacities of prosodic form as a means to "persevere in and transform the sentimental and poetess traditions," participating at once in the old and the new of women's poetry.[453]

Fenollosa's poem is unusual, however, in the way it uses the Far East as a locale for Poetess poetry in staging a performance of selfhood as provisional, and "lyric outside the terms,

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[451] Glaser, *Modernism's Metronome*, 4. Though modernists proclaimed a wholesale break from meter through their advocacy of vers libre, the persistence of "metrical vestige" (the residue of nineteenth-century lyricism) in Pound and Eliot's poetry suggests a more troubled and partial detachment from the Victorian ear (25). For an account of the anxious modernist repudiation of a supposedly "effeminate" Victorian prosody, which hardened the prejudice that aligned "bad" verse with femininity and "good" poetry with masculinity, see Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century. Vol. 3* (Yale University Press, 1994), 74.

[452] See Glaser, *Modernism's Metronome*, 132-134. Glaser terms this tactic "formal feeling," defined as "a feeling or passion felt in the process of formalization," which often manifests as an "affective relationship to prosody"; the phrase originates in Bogan's disapproving remark on Allen Tate's poetry and echoes Emily Dickinson's well-known poem.

[453] Glaser, *Modernism's Metronome*, 107.

or boundaries, of subjectivity."[454] Facing a woman unconcerned with love's maddening uncertainties, which often torment the Poetess, the speaker (if we may momentarily essentialize) belatedly emerges, troubled yet enthralled by a figure who is the antithesis of the stereotypically sentimental Victorian woman: "I can dream that men may love thee; / But will all their loving move thee?" The voice subsequently merges with the observed figure, calling into question its own boundedness as an autonomous speaking subject. Retiring to a string of mystic associations in the closing stanza, it withdraws into the borrowed voice of Elizabeth Barrett Browning—a citation practice common in Poetess poetry.[455] The reader is left with a self-vanishing voice, sustained by perfect rhymes yet caught in emotional suspense and unfinished intent:

> Thou art made of dew and shimmer
> Of the moon where snow-crests glimmer,
> Wrought of pure and scentless flowers,
> Stilled with hush of starlit hours.
> Deep the natal mystery gleaming
> 'Neath thine eyelids' heavy dreaming.

Fenollosa was not the first to write in a voice that disappears itself in the act of beholding another woman. The protagonist in Sappho's "Fragment 31" is deprived of speech by euphoric sensation but documents her near-collapse with passionate perspicuity.[456] The petrified victim in Bogan's "Medusa" makes the remnant of her voice overheard despite the incurable silence imposed.[457] Yet while in Sappho's and Bogan's poems the voices preserve and even intensify their visibility through the dramatic un-silencing of themselves, the "I" in Fenollosa's poem does the opposite, growing invisible and submerging herself in the addressee's silence. Conforming to neither the performative dialogism of Romantic conversation lyric (with its fiction of a voice

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[454] Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins, "Lyrical Studies," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 27.2 (1999): 523.

[455] Fenollosa's last line comes from the sixth line in Barrett Browning's "To Bettine, the Child-Friend of Goethe." See Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (James Miller, 1870), 238. For the "self-avowedly middle-brow" quality of such borrowing practices, see Mandell, "Introduction: The Poetess Tradition," 18.

[456] On the English reception of this Sapphic fragment and Victorian women poets writing in the wake of Sappho, see Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton University Press, 1999).

[457] Bogan's poem amounts to the "actual slaying of the Gorgon's head" because the speaker, by narrating the poem to the reader, proves her silence duplicitous. See Christine Colasurdo, "The Dramatic Ambivalence of Self in the Poetry of Louise Bogan," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 13.2 (1994), 347-8.

overheard in intimate appeal to a silent auditor) nor the self-assertive monologism of the Victorian dramatic monologue, Fenollosa casts lyric as selfhood's paradoxical yielding to what it encounters.[458] The speaking "I" immerses itself in the portrait it contemplates, as though donning the woman's draperies and becoming her—a gesture Fenollosa herself later reprised before the lens of American photographer Eva Watson-Schütze (fig. 13). The portrait recalls Claude Monet's "La Japonaise," with its theatrical display of the painter's wife posed in an ornate kimono before a wall of Japanese fans, only in Fenollosa's costumed performance, the sitter seems almost to blur into otherness, a visual analogy of her poem's evocation of dispersed subjectivity.

[458] For the influential formulation of the Romantic "greater lyric" as a paradigm of overheard colloquy, as M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and The Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 1971), 86. Later critics have shown how Victorian poets reoriented this model. On the performative self-display of Victorian monologues, which constituted a "reductio ad absurdum" of Romantic lyric, see Herbert Tucker, "Dramatic Monologue and the Overhearing of Lyric," In *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*, edited by Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker (Cornell University Press, 1985), 228. For a discussion of how women poets in effect invented dramatic monologue through their insistence on a Poetess persona, which helped achieve "a travestying of femininity, in order that it can be made an object of investigation," see Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, Politics* (Routledge, 1993), 318-319.

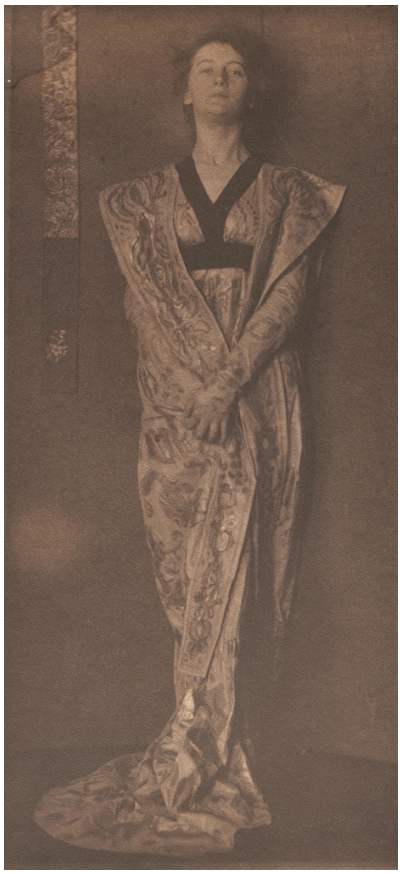


Figure 13 Eva Watson-Schütze, Portrait of a Woman in Japanese Dress (Wife of Ernest Fenollosa), c. 1905. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of Harvey S. Shipley Miller and J. Randall Plummer, 2004-205-30.

On one hand, Fenollosa's "To a Portrait of a Japanese Princess" represents the familiar conundrum of Poetess verse: even as the lyric "I" speaks, its voice is heard as silence, derivative of prevailing ideology, conventional in its stylistic gestures, and inscribed with a regressive femininity. The act of speaking, as a result, folds into self-effacement, diminished by a reliance on citation and repetition. On the other hand, Fenollosa's poem shows that such performance of lack is a generative failure. In relinquishing its legibility, the speaking "I" cultivates a selfhood contingent on the perception and imitation of otherness, a relational mode of subjectivity that forgoes self-sufficiency. This erodes the received nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critical assumption that lyric is a transcendental genre offering direct expressions of the poet's autonomous interiority.[459] If the supposed limitations of Poetess poetry—its dependence on

[459] For a genealogy of lyric as a post-Enlightenment construct valorized as a transcendental genre in the nineteenth century and assumed to be already circulating in the twentieth, see Virginia Jackson

imitation, its dilution of original voice—have also been, as Fenollosa's poem instantiates, opportunities for reimagining the terms of lyric subjectivity, then its longstanding reputation for triteness reveals less about the genre itself than about the paradigms of originality that have governed its reception.

To name Poetess poetry as a genre, as this chapter does, is to designate the vast and various body of verse produced by women who both inhabited and reimagined the shared print-culture fiction of the Poetess. That figure, at once static and mutable, ubiquitous yet overdetermined, has long invited critical attention because of her availability for variation and versioning.[460] She is, in the words of critics, a "stock character" affording "an accessible image for a literary self,"[461] a consumable trope displaying "privacy's utter publicity,"[462] an anonymous "cultural abstraction,"[463] a vehicle for an "aesthetic of the feminine" through which women poets might "revolutionise it from within,"[464] and, indeed, "an occasion for shifting historical definitions of women and of poetry."[465] These different critical accounts share a vigilance against conflating person with persona, against collapsing what Alexandra Socarides calls "real women with particular identities" into the generic Poetess persona that these writers assumed.[466] To study Poetess poetry is to follow this perpetual negotiation between role and self, convention and

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and Yopie Prins, eds. *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

[460] See Yopie Prins, "Poetess," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, edited by Roland Greene, Stephen Cushman, Clare Cavanagh, Jahan Ramazani, and Paul Rouzer (Princeton University Press, 2012), 1051-54. It is telling that, despite the figure's pervasive presence, no entry for "Poetess" appeared in the first three editions of *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Only with Yopie Prins's addition to the fourth edition did the term gain inclusion, defined as "a repeatable trope, a personification, performed by female poets," a persona whose ready availability, one might say, led to her neglect (1052).

[461] Cheryl Walker, *The Nightingale's Burden: Women Poets and American Culture before 1900* (Indiana University Press, 1982), 87-88.

[462] Elissa Zellinger, *Lyrical Strains: Liberalism and Women's Poetry in Nineteenth-Century America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 140.

[463] Alexandra Socarides, *In Plain Sight: Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry and the Problem of Literary History* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 24.

[464] Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, 316

[465] Jackson, "The Poet as Poetess," 54.

[466] Socarides, *In Plain Sight*, 24.

invention, attending to the "many versions of the Poetess" fashioned through the conscious embrace and revision of individual poets.[467]

Recent reappraisals have cast Poetess poetry as an expansive, enabling category open to reclamation and remaking, following Jackson and Yopie Prins's seminal argument for the Poetess as a self-conscious medium for the circulation of feelings and ideologies.[468] Tricia Lootens treats the Poetess as "less a heroine than a heritage," a transnational inheritance embodied by figures as diverse as Phillis Wheatley, Germaine de Staël's Mirza, and Sarojini Naidu, each an iteration that revivifies the genre.[469] Paula Bennett observes that Emily Dickinson, who "played the role of 'poetess' with a difference," did not so much depart from the tradition as rework it,[470] an impulse that Elissa Zellinger likewise traces in Edna St. Vincent Millay's "mobilizing the poetess to confront the problem of modern selves," a pursuit shared, in differing poetic forms, by H. D. and Marianne Moore.[471] The Poetess persona thus emerges in criticism as both symptom and agent of Poetess poetry's historical transformation, a genre whose varied practices, in hindsight, render her an ever-adaptable trope, a "personified vacancy."[472] Annie Finch even extends this lineage by affirming Poetess poetry as an ongoing mode of humanist practice, naming herself a "postmodern poetess" who joins a tradition of women poets seeking to "diffuse their individual subjectivities … to make room for the world in their world."[473] These reassessments draw attention to the ways Poetess poetry's performative attenuation of expressive authority, as seen in Fenollosa's poem, has been continually adapted and made new. Poetess poetry may yet prove an unexpected site of lyric innovation, as Mandell suggests, carrying a "full range of intersubjective and political possibilities," not only in the Victorian era but in its wake.[474]

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[467] Virginia Jackson and Eliza Richards, "'The Poetess' and Nineteenth-Century American Women Poets," *Poetess Archive Journal* 1.1 (12 April, 2007): 4-6.
[468] Jackson and Prins, "Lyrical Studies," 522, 529.
[469] Lootens, *The Political Poetess*, 5-9.
[470] Paula Bennett, *Emily Dickinson: Woman Poet* (University of Iowa Press, 1990), 19.
[471] Zellinger, *Lyrical Strains*, 31.
[472] Virginia Jackson, *Before Modernism: Inventing American Lyric* (Princeton University Press, 2023), 193.
[473] Annie Finch, *The Body of Poetry: Essays on Women, Form, and the Poetic Self* (University of Michigan Press, 2005), 129.
[474] Mandell, "Introduction: The Poetess Tradition," 63.

Fenollosa's piece indeed belongs to an Orientalist strand of Poetess verse that carries into the early twentieth century and that included Japonisme-inspired poetry by writers such as Amy Lowell and Adelaide Crapsey. The revival and reinvention of Poetess performance by these American women unfolded amid modernism's Eastward turn (long charted through their male contemporaries such as Pound, Yeats, William Carlos Williams, and Witter Bynner) and partook of a wider phenomenon of literary Orientalism through which Anglo-American poets sought new aesthetic vocabularies in Asian forms and motifs.[475] These women's engagement, however, was distinctively with Japonisme, the capacious art-historical category denoting the Western vogue for Japan as an aesthetic resource for borrowing and reimagining, consolidated and institutionalized in American public culture by Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition of 1876 (featuring a much-publicized Women's Pavilion) and the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.[476] Significantly, Japonisme moved front and center in American women's literary and artistic work, as commodities in the Japanese taste became, in effect, "byproducts of the changing status of women in Victorian life" and assumed an "extraordinary range of forms," from decorative art and book illustration to woodcarving and the Japanese-style scrapbook, a "sentimental and highly personal" token of domestic artistry.[477] As these portable forms gained currency, women's poetry, a neglected participant in this history, likewise adopted Japonisme's

[475] For the ways in which translation and the fetishization of the East informed the formal innovations of literary modernism, see Mari Yoshihara, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 101-103. For a parallel and related configuration of Orientalism, where affective tropes of "unfeeling," such as insensitivity and inscrutability, came to mediate American racial discourse and to circumscribe the terms of Asian American subjectivity, see also Xine Yao's *Disaffected: The Cultural Politics of Unfeeling in Nineteenth-Century America* (Duke University Press, 2021), 11-12.

[476] See William Hosley, *The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America* (Wadsworth Atheneum, 1990). The term Japonisme first gained currency among art historians for the influence of Japanese aesthetics on French impressionism (29), before widening into a catchall for Japan as an aesthetic resource—"a mode of style, an exquisite fancy of art," so capacious that, as Oscar Wilde quipped in 1891, "the whole of Japan is a pure invention." From Commodore Perry's forced opening onward, Japanese artworks and objects captured the attention of Euro-American aesthetes. The American "Japan craze" proved both aesthetically fertile and fraught, however (162-181). Alongside the veneration of Japan ran its travesty, as seen in the racialized spectacles of *The Mikado* (1885), John Luther Long's *Madame Butterfly* (1898), and their subsequent adaptations. For a discussion of how Japanese materials circulated beyond connoisseurship and became "a truly mass-cultural phenomenon" in the West with Japan's rising imperial profile after the Meiji Restoration, see Joseph Lavery, "Japonisme," in *The Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature*, edited by D.F. Felluga (John Wiley & Sons), https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118405376.wbevl346

[477] Hosley, *The Japan Idea*, 161-174.

consumable, circulatable idiom—akin to that of Poetess verse—as a means of imitative self-fashioning.

In what follows, I look closely at two additional instances of such transcultural imitation in early twentieth-century American Poetess poetry before returning to the example of Mary Fenollosa. I begin with Amy Lowell, an unmistakably canonical modernist, whose *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919) adopts Japonisme-inspired personae to suspend disclosure and to confound the expectation of autobiographical authenticity. I then turn to Adelaide Crapsey, whose formal-prosodic imitation of Japanese tanka distinguishes her proto-modernist cinquains from the pathologized sentimentality long imputed to Poetess verse. Finally I return briefly to "A Japanese Garden," which I argue ventriloquizes Japonisme's commercial logic through the self-canceling, de-monumentalized Poetess speaker. Each of these three poems derives originality from self-conscious performances of unoriginality. Each reveals imitation to be an overlooked means of reinventing Poetess verse outside the paradigm of confessional expressivity. I do not seek to cast American Poetess poetry as naturally amenable to cross-cultural imitation, as if its echoic tendencies predisposed it to borrowing. Rather, what stands out in such Japonisme-inspired Poetess poetry is how imitation enabled a variant of American women's poetry to challenge the grounds of the stigma of unoriginality—the nationalist imperative that lyric expression secure an autonomous, internally coherent identity. At a moment when literary nationalism required women poets to root their songs "simultaneously in the nation and in the self," to celebrate "a distinctively American but still individual subjectivity,"[478] these poems represent an inverse response. They offer, instead, a mimetic species of selfhood predicated on performative borrowing, a relational subjectivity fashioned through immersion in otherness.

I intend this chapter, then, to serve as a limit case for the dissertation's account of ideologically consequential poetry written in "Orientalist forms." Unlike Pound's overt designs on totalitarian governance or Yeats's explicit investments in eugenic purification, these Japonisme Poetess poems rarely declare such interests and commitments at the level of content. Their stakes lie instead in the handling of lyric personhood: thinned, borrowed, and strategically unsovereigned, in response to and against the nationalist habit of treating women's lyric as a signature of private interior truth, as well as the Orientalist impulse to stabilize Japan as a

[478] Jennifer Putzi, *Fair Copy: Relational Poetics and Antebellum American Women's Poetry* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), 24.

knowledge object. Speaking through appropriation, stylization, and ventriloquized form, these Poetess verses turn what appears feminine and unoriginal into a quiet critique of ideological-cultural currents and regimes, national and Orientalist alike, that entail stability and self-sufficiency in voice and selfhood.

For American women poets of Fenollosa's time, imitation often meant transatlantic borrowing, a conscious shaping of their work in the image of English predecessors, adapting sanctioned metrical forms, thematic conventions, and a shared lexicon of sentiment to their own ends. To distinguish Fenollosa's borrowing of Barrett Browning from Lydia Sigourney's imitation of Felicia Hemans is, at its clearest, to draw a line between direct citation and diffuse, extensive traces of influence. Eliza Richards has proposed seeing "lyric mimicry" as a constitutive feature of nineteenth-century women's verse, in which emulation and ventriloquism functioned as affiliative gestures through which women poets forged communal relations and disseminated "cultural and formal understandings of value."[479] Whereas such imitation occurs in the intertextual field and internal genealogy of English poetry, the transcultural mode of imitation of Fenollosa, Lowell, and Crapsey looks Eastward in both content and form. These Japonisme Poetess poems resist the view widely attributed to Plato—that imitation or mimesis is an inherently inferior act of copying. Instead, they animate the formative potential of Aristotle's rejoinder that the human propensity for imitation engenders new ways of imagining the self through the other.[480] For the study of lyric to account for a reconstrued relation between subjectivity and imitation in the Aristotelian sense, where possibilities of identity are drawn forth through the non-self, one salient category of poems to consider are those that bear the imprint of the foreign.

The imitative tendency long seen as Poetess poetry's limitation may thus be understood as a reaction to, rather than evidence of incapacity within, paradigms of lyric originality from

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[479] Eliza Richards, *Gender and the Poetics of Reception in Poe's Circle* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25. See also Christa Holm Vogelius, "Mimicry, Originality, and Sarah Piatt's Ekphrastic Failures," *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* 64.2 (2018), 300. Vogelius likewise reads mimicry affirmatively in the case of Sarah Piatt, whose strategies of ekphrastic "copy-work" and "split consciousness" unsettled nineteenth-century claims associating Poetess verse with "a failure to truly originate."

[480] See Stephen Halliwell, *The Poetics of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary* (University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 18. The onto-epistemological implications of this Aristotelian conception of imitation, particularly as they concern self-other relation, are further developed in an anthropological context in Michael Taussig's *Mimesis and Alterity* (1993).

Romanticism to modernism. Straddling sentimentality and impersonality, these Japonisme poems contradict the dismissive caricature of Poetess poetry as self-absorbed expression, a charge leveled by the "men of 1914," the high modernists who professed to transcend the confessional lyric mode yet never entirely freed themselves from it.[481] These verses also obliquely yet insistently counter what Lootens terms the "Poetess parallax," the critical tendency to flatten nineteenth-century women poets into the "mere Poetess," whose feminized voice is presumed to arise solely from narrowly delimited ranges of sensibility.[482] While scholarship has yielded "ambitious individual readings of specific—and often problematic—texts of feminine (and/or feminist) political poetry,"[483] the force of these interpretations often rests on the distinction, as articulated by Mellor, between the self-avowedly feminine "tradition of the poetess" and the "tradition of the female poet," the latter marked by overt political intent and engagement with the public sphere.[484] This distinction remains indispensable to recovery work, yet it can eclipse the broader cultural impact of women's poetry in genres deemed less consequential—love lyrics, confessional verses, and other disarmingly "feminine" modes of utterance.[485] The Japonisme poems considered here, in troubling the lyric "I" and its fiction of unmediated interiority, recast the Poetess from a cipher of sentimentality, constrained by emotional and ideological simplicity, into an unlikely source of originality where imitation operates, imperceptibly, as intervention.

The Japonisme Poetess

D. H. Lawrence's protest against Amy Lowell's *Pictures of the Floating World*, that it "isn't you at all, it has nothing to do with you, and it is not real," is a repudiation of two genres at

[481] Though modernists like Pound, T. S. Eliot, and T. E. Hulme sought to reaffirm the authority of tradition through a rejection of Romantic individualism, the doctrines of impersonality they championed found their origin in Romanticism itself. See Maud Ellmann, *The Poetics of Impersonality* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 3-4.
[482] Lootens, *The Political Poetess*, 8.
[483] Lootens, *The Political Poetess*, 9.
[484] Mellor, "Female Poet and the Poetess," 262.
[485] For an account of women's lyric, particularly Dickinson's, as disputational and embedded in public discourse even in its most ostensibly apolitical, devotional postures, see Shira Wolosky, *Poetry and Public Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 18, 108.

once: Poetess performance and Orientalist masque.[486] It is a rejection of a twentieth-century female poet speaking in the sentimental register of the Poetess ("I am tired, Beloved, of chafing my heart against / The want of you") and at the same time in a presumably artificial foreign voice not recognizably Anglo-American ("And, behold! Fuji-yama lay upon the water / Like a dropped leaf!").[487] Lawrence is unsettled by the disjunction between the woman poet he knows and what he perceives as the mannered feminine voice of *Pictures*. Addressing Lowell, he insists that she is not the Poetess, her voice not those poems' voice. For the common reader, the riddle lies on the other side. The Poetess's publicly performed privacy is unmistakable in a poem like "A Year Passes" ("But the sword-shaped moon / Has cut my heart in two"), yet Lowell marks the voice as an Oriental one, not hers (*Pictures* 7). In the end, the question of how much, or little, of Lowell resides in *Pictures* is but a modernist, Orientalist variation on a perennial debate about such performances: to what extent women poets ought to be identified by the personae they inhabit. Beneath it lies an unspoken demand for the evidence of an authenticated "I," in both women poets and their lyric performances, and a classic, if unwitting, reluctance to see the dislodging of selfhood not as loss but as virtuosity in their poetry. For women poets working in the Poetess tradition, the impasse inheres not only in what Zellinger calls "the disjunction between the biographical poet and the full-blown imaginary Poetess,"[488] but in their subjection to the arbitrary opposition of authenticity and fictionality that sustains the disjunction's authority.

Lowell's paradox, a voice of private yet deliberately estranged confession, invites a closer look at what sets her apart from the long lineage of Poetess-playing women poets. Her difference lies in her turn to Japan as a site of extensive imitation, a departure from the storied figures of classical antiquity such as Pythia, Sappho, and Philomela, on whom women poets traditionally modeled their dramatic personae.[489] Lowell's impressionistic verses in *Pictures*, composed in what she calls a "quasi-Oriental idiom" (vii), are undisguised simulacra, displaying casual resemblances to Far Eastern scenes and happenings.[490] Some, Lowell acknowledges, "owe

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[486] See D. H. Lawrence's letter to Amy Lowell dated March 23, 1917, qtd. in S. Foster Damon, *Amy Lowell: A Chronicle* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1935), 405).
[487] Amy Lowell, *Pictures of the Floating World* (The Macmillan Company, 1919). The two lines come from the poems "The Letter" (40) and "One of the 'Hundred Views of Fuji' by Hokusai" (11).
[488] Zellinger, *Lyrical Strains*, 36.
[489] Mellor, "Female Poet and the Poetess," 261-2.
[490] The "Lacquer Prints" poems had earlier appeared in *Some Imagist Poets, 1917: An Annual Anthology* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917).

their inception to the vivid, realistic colour-prints of the Japanese masters," while others emerge from layers of mediation and translation (viii). The opening poem "Streets," for instance, depicting a flâneur's passage through Japan's imperial city, reworks Arthur Davidson Ficke's prose translation, itself derived from a German rendering of an earlier source.[491] Lowell's transposition of settings, images, and other signifiers from eighteenth-century Japan, in the sequence titled "Lacquer Prints" in particular, licenses a felt passage into sensations, identities, and relations not her own. It is within this mimetic site of imaginary perception that Lowell conjures a titular "floating world" of romance and its lyrical embodiments.

What distinguishes Lowell from the ornamental exoticism of Victorian Japonisme is her use of East Asia as a locale to revive the much-disparaged voice of the Poetess and imbue it with Sapphic flair in a seemingly unserious manner, thereby skirting the modernist censure against sentimentality. *Pictures* allows the notion of authentic self, for both Lowell and the Poetess figure she animates, to dissipate into a deliberate excess of personae and symbols, into a lavish theatre of imitation wrapped in a homoerotic poetics of unresolved desire. Dissociating the lyric "I" from singularity and monumentality, Lowell moves it deftly through a gallery of characters, oftentimes melancholic women recalling absent lovers, each vignette fleetingly evoked through the dramatic evanescence of a few brief lines. Imagining the sound of wind passing among pine trees as the "shuffling of waves / upon the wooden sides of a boat," Lowell offers a forlorn soliloquy on behalf of a fisherman's wife (*Pictures* 8). "Yoshiwara Lament" adopts the voice of a courtesan awaiting the boat that might bring a lover to her rescue (6). Dressing her hair with "little chrysanthemums," the speaker poses as a geisha anticipating her patron's return (21). These shifting performances, each surfacing only to give way to another, unspool in a field of unscripted identities. Confession is continually deferred through these imitations, such as in "Vicarious" (5), which assumes the voice of a woman who, withholding direct utterance of affection, transposes her longing onto the lover's portrait, mediating desire through another's image rather than spoken in its own name:

> When I stand under the willow-tree
> Above the river,
> In my straw-coloured silken garment
> Embroidered with purple chrysanthemums,
> It is not at the bright water

[491] This provenance is recorded in the front matter of *Some Imagist Poets.*

That I am gazing,
But at your portrait,
Which I have caused to be painted
On my fan.

This transference of affect onto object becomes, meta-poetically, one way in which Lowell circumvents expressive transparency. Though "Lacquer Prints" is the opening section of *Pictures*, Lowell's recourse to Japonisme motifs, as extensive as the volume's title implies, affords her the pretext to publish her most conspicuously feminized performances of feeling, gathered under the telling title "Two Speak Together" in the ensuing section, "Planes of Personality." The passionate supplications in the verses that follow her Japonisme personae pieces—lines such as "Why are you not here to overpower me with your tense and urgent love?" (39) and "Ah, Dear, I love you!" (99)—would predictably provoke, for Lawrence, the demand to clarify whether the speaking voice is a nineteenth-century Poetess persona playfully donned or a proxy for Lowell's own disclosure. Such queries would be met with firmer deferrals—of the lyric "I," and of its imagined addressee in turn. The apparitional lover, never directly presented yet persistently apostrophized, is always displaced by vivid associations and lucid visions, as in "Mise en Scène" (42):

When I think of you, Beloved,
I see a smooth and stately garden
With parterres of gold and crimson tulips
And bursting lilac leaves.

"You are the crimson of amaryllis, / The silver of moon-touched magnolias" (69), writes Lowell in "Opal," where the floral hues do not embellish a known image of the lover but constitute the entirety of seeing. Devoid of external referent, the beloved verges on being unaddressable. This pattern recurs throughout Lowell's "Lacquer Prints" performances, where the lover's existence is apprehensible only when the speaker's cognitive horizon is painted with something else. It underpins Lowell's Japan-themed "Spring Dawn," where the beloved is "the blue shadow of the plum-tree / Upon the shōji" (17), as well as "Reflection," where the "I" imagines gazing into the lover's eyes and seeing a garden "with peonies, and tinkling pagodas / And round-arched bridges / Over still lakes" (27). Even the most ostensibly tangible address evades directness. In "Madonna of the Evening Flowers," the lover's description is bizarrely

unadorned: “You are cool, like silver / And you smile” (45). In “July Midnight,” the mere thought of the lover is experienced as ineffable ambience, articulable only through the charged imagination of the “air all about you” being “slit, and pricked, and pointed with sparkles of lemon-green flame” (49). In “Wheat-in-the-ear,” the speaking “I” confronts at last the torment of such indeterminacy—“What are you, / A gem under sunlight? / A poised spear? / A jade cup?” (50)—before revealing how costly an unequivocal answer, even if metaphorical, can be:

> You flash in front of the cedars and the tall spruces,
> And I see that you are fire—
> Sacrificial fire on a jade altar,
> Spear-tongue of white, ceremonial fire.
> My eyes burn,
> My hands are flames seeking you,
> But you are as remote from me as a bright pointed planet
> Set in the distance of an evening sky.

The speaker’s devastation, brought on by a moment of overwhelming clarity, intimates Lowell’s own anxiety about being merely seen, or fixed, as the source of feeling in a way that would collapse *Pictures* into the banal expressivity taken to characterize Poetess poetry. To construe her choreography of imitation and self-distancing so reductively would imperil what Lowell labors to sustain throughout these poems by calling it endless other things: not only an obliquely rendered devotion to Ada Russell, but a selfhood conceived through alterity rather than derived from a prescribed interiority. Lowell’s reprise of inherited tropes and symbols, many of which are common to traditional love poetry, contributes to a “dazzle camouflage” that “thwarts interpretation not by concealment, but by excessive revelation.”[492] Such camouflage is, significantly, also an Orientalist one in *Pictures*. The enamored bewilderment of diverted vision, captured in lines such as “You shine, Beloved, / You and the moon. / But which is the reflection?” (57), is how Lowell renews Poetess performance through confessions that never consummate. The recurring “beloved,” within reach yet perpetually elusive, represents a metaphorical otherness through whom intimacy is repeatedly rehearsed, not secured.

What emerges from these verses is a circuit of desire and attachment that coils around the Poetess figure herself, who is Lowell’s unnamed yet supreme object of fondness, whom she keeps alive and continually reinvents through kaleidoscopic Orientalist performances. Lowell

[492] Melissa Bradshaw, *Amy Lowell, Diva Poet* (Routledge, 2011), 113.

refuses autobiographical exposition in her deflective prefatory remark about the "Planes of Personality" poems, describing them as coming from "everywhere and nowhere as is the case with all poetry, and needing no introduction" (*Pictures* viii). By downplaying the recurrence and significance of Japonisme themes throughout *Pictures*, she performs a studied circumlocution that forestalls both the expectation of authentic self-expression and the conflation of a woman poet's personhood with the Poetess persona employed. Obfuscation thus becomes the necessary substance of Lowell's love lyrics when the Poetess risks becoming a legible stand-in for the woman poet, or vice versa. The inscription of the lover's name transpires in a moment of deflection and distraction, as in "By Messenger," where "the dazzle of moonlight / in the ink" (*Pictures* 4) obscures the gaze of both the speaking "I" and the reader, withholding what might otherwise be seen or spoken.

D. H. Lawrence was not alone in accusing Lowell of lacking originality and authenticity, nor was *Pictures* the only work to incur that reproach. Lowell is often cast as a foil to Pound in narratives of modernism, her stewardship of Imagism dismissed as mere "Amy-gism" under his scornful coinage.[493] Though praised by Padraic Colum as the "propagandist of innovation," Lowell remains burdened by the reputation of an imitator.[494] Yet Lowell did not hesitate to mark her difference in "Astigmatism," where she satirizes Pound as a tyrannical aesthete obsessed with perfection, who, in his quest for a flawless rose, destroys other blooms with his ornate "walking stick," a symbol of his critical authority.[495] Casting her lot with the trampled daisies, irises, and dahlias, Lowell answers, "Peace be with you, Brother. Go your ways." As Pound traced a poet's classic trajectory from lyric to epic, trading imagism for the masculinist force of Vorticism and the Homeric ambition of *The Cantos*, Lowell built a counter-aesthetic of dispersion and excess for Poetess poetry in *Pictures*. Before imitation was pejoratively assigned to her, she had already embraced it as a covert lyricism of Sapphic survival through Japonisme, such that her lingering with the Poetess, at the height of her career, was less an escapist

[493] Paul Bradley Bellew, "'At the Mercy of Editorial Selection': Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, and the Imagist Anthologies," *Journal of Modern Literature* 40.2 (2017), 25.
[494] Padraic Colum, "Recent American Poetry," in *On American Books: A Symposium by Five American Critics as Printed in the London Nation*, edited by Francis Hackett (B. W. Huebsch, 1920), 23. In *The Pound Era*, Hugh Kenner echoes Pound's dismissal by characterizing Lowell's *Fir-Flower Tablets* as an inferior imitation of Pound's *Cathay*, for instance (292-7).
[495] Amy Lowell, *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (The Macmillan Company, 1914), 45-9.

regression into Victorian femininity than a forgotten experiment in reimagining female selfhood for women's poetry through a performative opacity.

Poetess in the Cinquain

When Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, borrowing the Poetess's voice of "ideal sympathetic identification," was enshrined as masterful performance in the American poetic canon,[496] early twentieth-century women poets working in the same feminized idiom were arrested by a critical reflex that equates them with their lyric personae. If *Pictures* was censured for its supposed flight from Lowell's self, Adelaide Crapsey's deft, lapidary cinquains fell victim to the charge of being too transparently autobiographical, which found tacit sanction in the narrative of her as a frail Victorian consumptive whose abbreviated thirty-six-year life lends an all-too-easy symbolism to the short cinquains collected in her posthumous *Verse* (1915). Crapsey's invention of the cinquain, a Japanese-inspired stanzaic form that rises in incremental stresses before a clipped two-syllable close, has attracted mostly biographical readings. William Drake critiques the stanzas for leaving "an inappropriate impression of a pathetic, ladylike poet," noting the same "hovering between self-assertion and shrinking back, even to the point of canceling herself" that he pathologizes in Sara Teasdale's poetry.[497] Crapsey's cinquains have been read reductively as "expressions of self-pity," and have been trivialized as emotional bleedings that lack the restraint and maturity credited to male poets such as William Soutar, whose reworking of her cinquain form is celebrated for its Poundian "imagist tinge."[498]

Such dismissals are compounded by a dichotomized account of Crapsey's career: as a dispassionate scholar of quantitative prosody, evidenced in her *Study in English Metrics* (1918) on one hand, and as a sentiment-drenched female poet in *Verse* on the other. This contrast is rehearsed in Jean Webster's foreword to the 1922 edition of *Verse*, where she calls Crapsey's metrical study "astoundingly objective" and her poems "at the other extreme, astoundingly subjective."[499] A divide tidy to the point of caricature, it occludes the synthesis of these two

[496] Jackson and Richards, "'The Poetess' and Nineteenth-Century American Women Poets," 6.
[497] William Drake, *The First Wave: Women Poets in America, 1915-1945* (Macmillan, 1987), 64.
[498] K. L. Goodwin, "William Soutar, Adelaide Crapsey, and Imagism," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 2.3 (1965), 98.
[499] See Adelaide Crapsey, *Verse* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1922), 10.

seemingly irreconcilable sides in Crapsey's cinquains, which she composed as illness approached. With the revival of interest in Victorian prosody in recent decades, her cinquains have come to be recognized for their interwoven formal originality and affective intricacy. Beneath both her syllabic study and her poetic practice lies what Karen Alkalay-Gut identifies as "the charting of a series of data points, in the expectation of an eventually revealed significance," a refined logic of gradual revelation that weds form to feeling.[500] Observing Crapsey's effort to "avoid the potential pathos (and variety) of accentual verse," Meredith Martin notes her attempt to recalibrate affect through the prosodic structure of the cinquain itself.[501] Jenny Molberg and Christian Bancroft conclude that Crapsey's poetry "anticipates Modernism, but does not embody it; it deals with illness and inevitable death, but does not rely on it as an aesthetic tool."[502] Her fraught, divided identity—poet and prosodist (a pursuit rarely associated with women), belated Victorian and incipient modernist—compels critics to read her cinquains not as personal confessions but as formal experiments in the reconstruction of lyric subjectivity in women's poetry.

Such a reevaluation of the cinquain can begin with Crapsey's imitation of Japanese poetry: her transposition of a tenth-century tanka, mediated through Victorian Orientalist Michel Revon's French rendering (fig. 14),[503] into a cinquain.

> Why have
> I thought the dew
> Ephemeral when I
> Shall rest so short a time, myself,
> On earth?[504]

[500] Karen Alkalay-Gut, "Death, Order, and Poetry: 'The Presentation Copy' of Adelaide Crapsey," American Literature 57.2 (May 1985), 270.
[501] Meredith Martin, "Picturing Rhythm," in *Critical Rhythm: The Poetics of a Literary Life Form*, edited by Ben Glaser and Jonathan Culler (Fordham University Press, 2019), 209.
[502] Jenny Molberg and Christian Bancroft, eds. *Adelaide Crapsey: On the Life and Work of an American Master* (Pleiades Press & Gulf Coast, 2018), 15.
[503] See Michel Revon, *Anthologie de la Littérature Japonaise des Origines au XXe Siècle* (Librairie Delagrave, 1918), 145.
[504] Adelaide Crapsey, *Verse* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1934), 129.

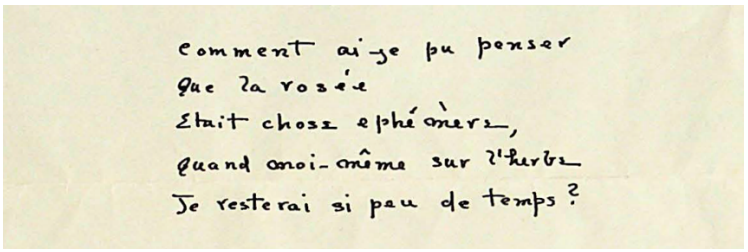


Figure 14 Crapsey's transcription of Revon's translation. Box 2, Folder 6, "Translations, Holograph copies," *Adelaide Crapsey Papers*, A.C89. Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester.

Conspicuously absent from early editions of *Verse*, this cinquain owes its omission to the fact of its being a translation, not an original composition.[505] Yet its provocation lies in that marginality, in its refusal to belong wholly to a single voice. Crapsey's editorial note, "from the French, presumably itself a translation from the Japanese," deflects biographical readings by foregrounding the poem's history of mediation. Presented as borrowed text yet markedly a cinquain of Crapsey's own, the poem complicates the most quintessentially Poetess-like aspect of her work: the confessional lyric "I," assumed to bear autobiographical sincerity, is here ventriloquized and doubled. The lyric self, rather than being monolithically self-expressive, performs a composite utterance in which Crapsey's voice overlays an Eastern antecedent refracted through Revon's French. What might easily be essentialized as Crapsey's expression of feeling, or reduced to the stereotypical confession of the Poetess, eludes such recognition and drifts into a palimpsest of sources.

Crapsey's adaptation disentangles the cinquain form, as well as the lyric "I" it carries, from a biographical overcoding of tragic finality. It departs from Revon's measured, meditative hovering near the seven-syllable mark, which reproduces the original tanka's steady alternation of five and seven morae.[506] With a slow ascent followed by sudden contraction, Crapsey's cinquain collapses inward into a voice withheld. The paired invocations of "I," set at the opening and close of lines, press against the intervening blank space on the page that implies both forced

[505] See Barbara Swain, "Adelaide Crapsey," *Vassar Quarterly* 19.1 (February 1934), 58.
[506] For the original tanka, see Helen Craig McCullough, ed. *Kokin Wakashū: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry: with Tosa Nikki and Shinsen Waka* (Stanford University Press, 1985), 188. It is composed by Japanese poet Fujiwara Koremoto on his deathbed: 露をなと / あたなる物と / 思ひけむ / わか身も草に / おかぬばかりを (tsuyu o nato / ada naru mono to / omoikemu / wa ga mi mo kusa ni / okanu bakari o). McCullough's translation reads: "Why did I regard / dewdrops as evanescent? / My life was not spent / clinging to a blade of grass: / that is the only difference."

departure and unrealized possibility. Likewise in the penultimate line, "myself" is suspended between a caesura and an enjambment, verging on self-effacement and delaying its descent into closure. The final word, "earth," which we all briefly dwell upon before returning to, offers a fitting resting place for the poem's contemplation on life's transience to meet its answer. Whereas the source poem meditates on the self's insignificance before the cosmos, Crapsey's version reorients this epiphany around a dialectic of confinement and release, arriving at a revelation whereby the awareness of limitation becomes the cinquain's ground of fulfillment.

Such rewriting serves as a counter-elegy to readings that reduce Crapsey's poems to self-pitying laments. Borrowing from Japanese tanka its disciplined brevity and nature-referencing habits (nocturnal and seasonal imagery in particular), Crapsey's cinquains displace confession with relationality and obliquity, thereby resisting the critical inclination to fix lyric subjectivity in a self-sufficient, expressive "I"—the stereotype of the dying, sentimental Poetess which Crapsey herself has, posthumously, been made to embody. In "Moon-Shadows" ("Still as / On windless nights / The moon-cast shadows are, / So still will be my heart when I / am dead."), selfhood yields to analogy: "I / am dead" arrives belatedly and haltingly, broken by enjambment, as a faint, dissipative gesture that transfers the speaker's fate onto an evanescent simile.[507] In "Amaze," selfhood falters into further alienation, held between memory and disavowal: "I know / Not these my hands / And yet I think there was / A woman like me once had hands / Like these" (46). The recursive qualifications ("I think," "there was," "like me") fracturing the speaker's self-recognition render the "hands" not evidence of a corporeal presence but the revenant traces of a disarticulated Poetess figure. In "Madness" ("Burdock / Blue aconite / And thistle and thorn . . . of these, / Singing, I wreathe my pretty wreath / O'death."), the Poetess's signature act, "singing," becomes a stylized, ironic flourish that substitutes emotional overflow with a disconcertingly "pretty" garland of poisonous flora (48). In "The Warning" ("Just now / Out of the strange / Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . . / A white moth flew. Why am I grown / So cold?"), the voice's chilling final query, eschewing catharsis for unresolved disquiet, trails behind a moth's silent flight into a trembling suspense (49). And in "Fate Defied," ("As it / Were tissues of silver / I'll wear, O fate, thy grey, / And go mistily radiant, clad / Like the moon."), the speaker does not mourn fate but wears its "grey" as a transfiguring fabric, through which the self, aspirationally imitative, remakes itself in borrowed light (51).

[507] Crapsey, *Verse* (1934), 37. Subsequent page references in this paragraph are to this edition.

The structural tensility of these cinquains, with crescendo followed by abrupt collapse, makes possible a playfully fragile poise of subjectivity, diffracted through symbolic and atmospheric figurations. Their formal economy and syllabic distinctiveness, less tethered to the accentual regularity of traditional verse, distance Crapsey from the ideological investments carried by nineteenth-century meter.[508] This prosodic experiment, affiliating her with the modernist impulse toward a "freedom to define its formal terms," places her in kinship with Pound's adaptation of Japanese poetry's structural restraint and Williams's innovations in temporal prosody.[509] Crapsey's version of that freedom, embedded in the feminized convention of Poetess poetry, is doubly coded: it materializes through imitation, yet reclaims imitation as a mode of lyric originality. Her cinquains arise less from the European Orientalist scholarly lineage, to which Revon belongs, than from a felt responsiveness to what John Livingston Lowes perceived as the "crystalline" appeal of "Japanese jewels five-syllables-long,"[510] a description that resonates, tellingly, with Dutch poet Emmy Veronica Sanders's praise of Crapsey's poems as "crystalline drops of beauty."[511] Crapsey's cinquains answer mortality not by seeking "an immortalization of the self," but by a deliberate self-dispersion continuous with the Poetess lineage, as when she names them "my ashes" and "my funeral urn" in her epitaphic poem, a counter-image to Keats's well-wrought, enduring Romantic urn.[512] Through imitation, her cinquains construct a synergy of voice and silence, privileging a selfhood that threads itself through the contours and reverberations of otherness.

The Originality of Unoriginality

Edward Said observes that early twentieth-century Euro-American Orientalism, in the twilight of imperialism, operated through a process of selective digestion, whereby elements

[508] For an extensive discussion of how meter in nineteenth-century England operated within a range of nationalist discourses, from conservative projects of patriotic discipline to liberal-reformist ideologies, see Meredith Martin, *The Rise and Fall of Meter: Poetry and English National Culture, 1860–1930* (Princeton University Press, 2012).
[509] Martin, "Picturing Rhythm," 203.
[510] John Livingston Lowes, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), 165.
[511] Emmy Veronica Sanders, "Adelaide Crapsey," Poetry, 17.5 (Feb 1921), 249.
[512] Alkalay-Gut, "Death, Order, and Poetry," 289.

from the Orient were extrapolated into "ideal bearers of its values, ideas, and positions."[513] Among those Said identifies as participants in this tendency were modernist men like "Pound, Eliot, Yeats, Arthur Waley, [Ernest] Fenollosa," whose engagement with the Orient, he argues, reinscribed the dominance of the West by bolstering its epistemological authority. In this account, these figures exemplify a Western subjectivity whose authenticity and originality were unaltered by cross-cultural encounters, whereas the East remained its passive object of detached, aestheticized perusal. Yet, as recent scholarship on Japonisme reminds us, the moment Said describes was also when the East actively circulated itself to the West.[514] The European fascination with Japan in the nineteenth century, culminating in the 1910 London Exhibition that showcased the nation as an island Empire rivalling Britain, was a two-way phenomenon of Western fascination and Eastern intention.[515] Collapsing distinctions between origin and imitation, Japonisme traveled through decorative objects, reproduced art works, and bric-a-brac, many produced expressly for Western tastes.[516] The woodblock prints, initially used as inexpensive packing materials for fragile porcelain exports, were promoted as valuable commodities as they came to influence Monet's water garden and Degas's Japanized portrayal of Paris.[517]

Mary Fenollosa's "A Japanese Garden," written after her husband's death and amid her editorial collaboration with Pound on his Fenollosan translations, stages the commercial logic of Japonisme through a quintessential Poetess performance of self-cancellation.[518] The poem mimics the objectifying Western gaze, before turning that gaze inward upon the lyric "I" itself:

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[513] Said, *Orientalism*, 251-253.

[514] For a critique of unidirectional models of Orientalism that obscure the material realities of Japonisme, borne alike by elite artworks and by commodities circulating "on the most mundane level" in Western markets, see Gabriel Weisberg, "Reflecting on Japonisme: The State of the Discipline in the Visual Arts," *Journal of Japonisme* 1 (2016), 10-11. As Weisberg notes, the traffic of Japonisme was not exclusively westward but also folded back in the mirror phenomenon of "reverse Japonisme," in which Meiji artists trained in Paris, for instance, adopted Western techniques to appeal to Euro-American audiences.

[515] See Ayako Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Gateway to the Island Empire of the East* (Japan Library, 1999), 74-99

[516] See Jacques Dufwa, *Wind from the East: A Study in the Art of Manet, Degas, Monet, and Whistler 1856-86* (Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1981), 33; Hosley, *The Japan Idea*, 41.

[517] Dufwa, *Wind from the East*, 40.

[518] Mary McNeil Fenollosa, *Blossoms from a Japanese Garden: A Book of Child-verses* (Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1913), 4-5.

Not long ago
In Tokio
I found a garden old
Where hoary trees
Bent gnarléd knees
To tufts of velvet mould.

A lamp of stone
All lichen-grown
With rayless eye peered on;
While ancient rocks
With mossy locks
Sat silent in the sun.

[…]

And gazing thus,
So covetous
I soon became, I trow,
I bought the whole, —
It's in a bowl
And on my table now.



Figure 15 Illustration accompanying "A Japanese Garden," depicting two miniature landscapes in the style of bonsai displays. From Mary Fenollosa, *Blossoms from a Japanese Garden*, 4.

The bonsai, a cultivated imitation of Japanese garden in condensed, portable form, serves as an apt symbol for Japonisme, a phenomenon predicated on the conflation of authenticity and simulacrum. The dramatic turn in Fenollosa's final stanza demystifies both the garden's supposed identity and the authority of the gazing "I" as aesthetic arbiter. Contrary to Rilke's command to change one's life in "Archaic Torso of Apollo" or Keats's rapturous exclamations of happiness in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," the closing gesture of self-exposure in Fenollosa's ekphrastic verse descends into comic anticlimax, a limerick-like fall into the domestic, which displays the relation between the bonsai and the beholder as one of consumption. The poem's form shows a corresponding imitation of the ornamental logic motivating Japonisme: its enclosed rhyme and tightly structured stanzas mimic a garden miniature, and its cascading indentations evoke the meandering paths and layered tiers of bonsai trays. Unable to identify an independent thinking mind in Fenollosa's poem at first glance, one might suspect that the voice

is an unresisting echo of culture, a habitual self-effacement bearing out Mandell's observation that Poetess poetry is more inclined to "mouth ideology than to critique it."[519]

Yet it is in its ostensible unoriginality that the originality of Fenollosa's poem is found. The "hoary trees" of the tabletop bonsai (fig. 15), antithetical to the upward-pointing Wordsworthian tree emblematic of the Romantic self, register an unassuming refusal to monumentalize selfhood. The poem's timing points to its engagement with a formative moment in modernist poetry: published in *Blossoms from a Japanese Garden* (1913), it appeared as Mary Fenollosa was poring over the proofs of her late husband's manuscripts, then being reworked by Pound, among them the seminal essay "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry."[520] The essay's pre-Babelian premise—that Chinese writing, conceived as "a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature," might offer an "ideal language of the world" through its pictorial immediacy—motivated Pound's imagist tenet of poetry's "direct treatment of the 'thing.'"[521] Though well-acquainted with the direction of Pound's visual poetics, Mary Fenollosa diverged from imagism's effacement of the observing eye, from its "magic of metamorphosis" that conceals the epistemic labor of grasping an image before rendering it into verse.[522] In the surprising disclosure of the garden as bonsai—an object that, once bought and displayed, becomes decorative and finite and elicits no further exposition—Fenollosa's poem relegates nature to an unpoetic acquisition owned by the lyric "I," who acknowledges her gravitation toward purchase and possession with a lightly satiric shrug. Through a self-conscious play-acting, the speaker declares, rather than disavows, the acquisitive propensity of a deliberately labile subjectivity.

In Fenollosa's verse, as in the Japonisme Poetess poems of Lowell and Crapsey, the lyric voice, purposefully occluded or withdrawn, is easily mistaken for unoriginal repetition or relative silence. Ironically, the originality of their mode of lyricism lies in the elusiveness of a Western "I" that renders itself harder to capture through the Far East. Such elusiveness is less an index of loss than a performance of contingency that refutes the construct of a sovereign, self-contained

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[519] Mandell, "Introduction: The Poetess Tradition," 42.
[520] See Caldwell Delaney, "Mary McNeil Fenollosa, An Alabama Woman of Letters," *Alabama Review* 16 (July 1963), 171.
[521] Fenollosa and Pound, "Chinese Written Character," 45-59. Also see Ezra Pound, *Pavannes and Divisions* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1918), 95.
[522] Marjorie Levinson, "Object-Loss and Object-Bondage: Economies of Representation in Hardy's Poetry," *ELH* 73.2 (2006), 575.

subjectivity. The intricate relation between these women poets and their lyric voices necessitates not the question of where they are hidden in these voices, but of what becomes possible when the Poetess's confessional "I" is unsettled and unanchored in their poetry. This unmooring constitutes a method of speaking otherwise: to speak through borrowed voices and forms is, paradoxically, to claim a mode of lyrical liberty for both the Poetess tradition and for themselves.

Given the long-standing association of women writers with mimetic habits, it is important to recognize Poetess performance as a complex, deliberate practice that involves not only homage but also negotiation and intentionality. Intrinsic to both Poetess poetry and Japonisme (as well as its twin phenomenon, Chinoiserie), imitation is an overlooked strategy of self-suspension that disarticulates female selfhood from models of authentic interiority across literary and cultural registers. An expanded understanding of Japonisme, from its original designation as the influence of Japanese art on European visual culture to a compositional mode discernible in women's poetry, echoes existing efforts to reframe Poetess poetry in broadened temporal, geographical, and historical coordinates. Conjoining a lyric genre with a cultural one means a cross-generic, twofold resistance to genre's finality, a method that enacts Jonathan Culler's conception of genre as an "open process of generic negotiation" responsive to historical variations.[523] The interanimation of Japonisme and Poetess poetry reveals an unexpected kinship between two seemingly disparate genres as they converge: both delight in imitation and borrowing, and both reconfigure self-other relation through acts of becoming-other, a conscious costuming, a donning of another's garments and voice.

[523] Jonathan Culler, "Lyric, History, and Genre," *New Literary History* 40.4 (2009), 885, 897. As Culler observes, the critical value of the term "lyric" lies in its provisionality, which renders visible the historical shifts in poetry's uses and effects that invite renewed critical scrutiny. To this ongoing work of interrogating genre's contingency, Jackson and Prins's *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology* (2014) contributes what they describe as a history of the "lyricization of poetry," the "modern consolidation of lyric as a genre" in twentieth-century criticism (5-7).

Afterword: Appropriation as Method

For Ezra Pound, blossoms must not be permitted to complete their fall. Either they are caught mid-passage, "blow[ing] from the east to the west," as in *Canto* XIII, where he has "tried to keep them from falling," or, more audaciously still, in his essay "Vorticism," they appear to defy gravity altogether in the hokku Pound cites, attributed to the medieval Japanese poet Arakida Moritake:

> The fallen blossom flies back to its branch:
> A butterfly.[524]

Pound is drawn to this little miracle of perception not least because it flatters an imagist appetite for the instantaneous. The metamorphic return of the blossom also embodies a desideratum for the conversion of loss into gain, of a bygone past into renewed motion. Moritake's hokku, in Pound's retrospective account, was an enabling inspiration for his "In a Station of the Metro." Though the Parisian moment, rendered telegrammically, is famous for its brevity, the labor behind it is not. Pound recalls an extended search for an "expression," an "equation … in little splotches of colour," a "pattern," and later, "a word, the beginning … of a language in colour." Only by turning to hokku, the Japanese "one image poem," does Pound claim to have found the principle of composition that resolves the impasse—"super-position," the "one idea set on top of another" that produces a heightened "intensity" he then names as vorticist.[525]

Revealingly, Pound's rendering of the hokku effaces the lyric "I" that is plainly present in Yone Noguchi's translation, "I thought I saw the fallen leaves / Returning to their branches: / Alas, butterflies were they," the version through which Pound first encountered Moritake's verse.[526] By suppressing the presence of the perceiving consciousness so that the metamorphic

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[524] Pound, "Vorticism," *Fortnightly Review* 96 (1 Sep 1914): 461-471.
[525] In "Vorticism," Pound's reflection on "Metro" alongside hokku provides the basis for his definition of vorticism (as "an intensive art" and "a language of form and colour") that follows.
[526] Yoshinobu Hakutani, "Ezra Pound, Yone Noguchi, and Imagism," *Modern Philology* 90.1 (1992): 56. Also see Yone Noguchi, *The Spirit of Japanese Poetry* (London, 1914), 50.

image appears to present itself, self-grounding and self-evident, Pound reshapes the hokku in the likeness of his modernist doctrine of impersonality, which renders it a closer exemplar of the aesthetic he intends it to embody. To "record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective," Pound contends in "Vorticism," demands a "particular sort of consciousness," an epistemic posture purportedly enabled by imagism and vorticism. Yet what "darts into" Pound's own mind from the Japanese lyric tradition is itself altered in its passage, and that alteration symptomizes the logic of citation-as-reinvention, or appropriation-as-method, at issue in this dissertation, at once an aesthetic strategy and a practice of reconstruction that refashions both "Oriental" otherness and Western selfhood in the process. Pound's recurrent vocabulary of "falling," then, names the contingency he cannot permit, a lapse in mastery or a fragment resistant to conversion into usable form. Whether arrested in suspension or retroactively resuscitated, what arrives from elsewhere is subject to a recalibration of its temporality and legibility. Appropriation, in this sense, designates not only what modernist poets do to East Asia but what they do *with* it, the use of cultural alterity as resource and vocabulary for formal invention and, inseparably, as a vehicle and technique for political poetry, whether toward totalizing designs or toward dissident revision.

This dissertation has traced modernist engagements with East Asian materials that are best understood neither as peripheral episodes in modernism's formal experimentation nor as uniformly progressive tokens of cultural diplomacy, but as ideologically consequential acts of rewriting across the genres of epic, lyric sequence, verse drama, and Poetess poetry. These practices, structurally entangled with colonial regimes of knowledge regulation, move within and often reiterate what Anderson has called colonialism's "totalizing classificatory grid," the epistemic reflex of extracting cultural difference, such that a "particular" may be installed as "a provisional representative of a series," made intelligible in metropolitan literary economies.[527] Pound's ideogrammic poetics, Yeats's borrowing of Noh, and Lowell's Japonisme lyrics all relied, albeit in dissimilar ways, upon a logic of museumification that detaches "Oriental" forms from their historical lifeworlds, a process frequently mediated, in quite literal terms, by museum encounters like Lowell's experience of Japanese art in Boston or Pound's with Chinese written characters at the British Museum. Cross-cultural appropriation, in other words, licenses a selective memory work that brackets imperial habits of interpretation and elevates usable

[527] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 184.

histories. It is also, decisively, a temporal maneuver, a curation of East Asian materials into alternative temporalities that intervene in what Anderson, following Benjamin, describes as the formation of nationhood within a "homogeneous, empty time," the secular seriality of "clock and calendar" (24). In the pages of this dissertation, that temporal singularity and linearity give way to the assertion of transhistorical authority in Pound's Confucian maxims, to the transtemporal feminist resonance imagined by Waddell, to Yeats's cyclical mythic returns that counter the secular progression of time, and to the suspended lyric instants of the Japonisme poems poised outside literary nationalism and ethnocentrism. For all their divergent ideological ends, this shared repudiation of temporal discipline, by which poetry resists synchronization with inherited regimes of national time, thickens our understanding of how formal experimentalism may become integral to what Berman designates as the "ethicopolitical power" of modernist transnational writings with "political commitments."[528]

At the same time, I have insisted on reckoning with the failures that accompany the attempted fulfillment of various ideological ambitions in these projects of transnational reinvention, the moments when appropriation's promises falter and when the blossom does not fly back to the branch. Such a "minor history"—composed of dissonant mistranslations, weak synergies, incomplete assimilations, and unfruitful encounters that do not quite take hold—revises these modernist poets' own narratives of their cosmopolitan reach and aspiration, from Pound's cultural utopianism and Yeats's supranational theatre to Waddell's idiom of a "universal Babylon," as it also reframes the contingencies that inhere in transcultural practices as such. Indeed in each instance a distinctive species of failure proves diagnostic, disclosing through the visible seams of these imperfect literary experiments the limits and contradictions of various ideological commitments. It is in this sense that the dissonances produced when Pound's totalitarian repurposing of Confucianism abrades against his democratic rhetoric may be viewed in terms of what Levine terms "formal collisions," the pressure points generated when heterogeneous orders are compelled into uneasy cohabitation, which in turn expose the fissures in the totalizing synthesis such works strain to secure.[529] To dwell with these failures and breakdowns is to recalibrate our own critical investments in the romanticized rubric of "world literature," which too readily smooths over the diminished, refractory textures of cross-cultural

[528] Berman, *Modernist Commitments*, 9, 23.
[529] Levine, *Forms*, 7-8.

encounter. The promise of radical transformation voiced at the outset of such encounters—whether in Ernest Fenollosa's vision of East-West fusion or in John Livingston Lowes's evocation of an "immemorial Oriental influence [. . .] coming into English poetry"—should be assessed less as a record of accomplished condition than as romantic projections optimistic in tone and aspirational in intent.[530]

The Far Eastern materials that become important to these modernist ideological commitments—materials whose foreignness is routinely made to signify "newness," whether in the idioms of universality or transhistoricity—do not always conform to the spheres of abstractions they are pigeonholed into. As this dissertation has shown, forms and genres such as Noh and Chinese poetry, as they circulated and became classicized in Western literary culture, arrived as composites and hybrids of Orientalist scholarship, partial transmission, and imaginative reconstruction. Reduced to easy surprises—the pictoriality of the Chinese character, the "phantom-psychology" attributed to Noh—these materials inevitably bear the mark of selective attention and incomplete reading. What has more rarely been asked is how such occluded particularities return to trouble the texts and practices that depend upon their abstraction—how East Asia, after such mediated "versioning," resists functioning as a stable aesthetic resource or ideological instrument in Western literary projects. What initially announces itself as remedy or revelation, as Fenollosa's East promised to be for the West, more often yields not resolution but the displacement and reiteration of preexisting impasses. The "minor history" of transnational appropriation outlined here thus suggests that the attempt to advance one's literary and ideological agenda through the use of otherness may end up exposing that agenda's constitutive predicaments, even and perhaps especially when no direct or compensatory "gain" is achieved.

This dissertation also foregrounds the vexed relation between transnational literature and the category of the national from which it is often presumed to depart. If nationalism, as Gregory Jusdanis contends, politicized the distinction of the self from the other,[531] then what is termed

[530] Fenollosa, "Coming Fusion." Lowes, *Convention and Revolt*, 166.

[531] See Gregory Jusdanis, *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 26-30. Jusdanis argues that nationalism politicized identity by converting diffuse religious and local affiliations into a consolidated national consciousness, obliging individuals to construct their "self" through abstract allegiance to the state. This politicization was achieved through "cultural engineering" (26), which

"transnational" in this dissertation does not dissolve or supersede that national frame so much as place that self-other distinction under intensified strain through and inside acts of importing and reinterpreting "China" or "Japan" as both civilizational totalities and portable fragments of otherness. With the partial exceptions of Helen Waddell (born in Tokyo to a Presbyterian missionary family) and Mary Fenollosa (whose life in Japan followed the itineraries of her two marriages), the poets considered here did not travel to East Asia at all, but encountered it through mediating infrastructures of circulation—bookshops, anthologies, museums, institutional collections—that enabled the discovery of fragments of "Oriental" national literatures and their subsequent redeployment to varied ends in English verse. Waddell's turn to the *Book of Songs*, discovered on her shelf while seeking a "dry disinfectant" after her recoil from Jean de Meun's misogyny, or Adelaide Crapsey's chance encounter with Japanese waka in a Paris bookshop amid her experiments with quantitative prosody, are cases in point. The absence of actual travel, contrasting the profusion of various metaphorical and textual voyages, reframes transnationalism as a complex geocultural traversal enacted through participation in global literary circulation, through selective affiliation with cultural alterity, and through a cosmopolitan disposition that can as readily recode and rework a national tradition as evade certain aspects thereof, whether that tradition be one's own or another's.

Transnational "influence," then, names too static a relation for the intricate circuitry set in motion by translation in its enlarged sense, through which a national tradition travels and acquires altered force, altered idioms, and with new stakes elsewhere. Poetry, as Weinberger and Paz remark in *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei*, "lives in a state of perpetual transformation, perpetual translation."[532] Their reconstruction of successive rewritings of a Wang Wei quatrain in English has indeed shown how translation enables many incarnations of a single text and mediates mutable definitions of Chineseness in the West. Pound's *Cathay*, notably, marked a watershed moment in this history. Prior to it, Orientalist translations tended to frame the quatrain as an artifact to be glossed and domesticated; after Pound, renderings increasingly take on an exoticized mysticism evocative of a spectralized, "Fu Manchu" East. The prismatic translational "afterlife" of what was once singularly monocultural, to borrow Walter Benjamin's

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used standardized language and the creation of a literary canon to enforce internal uniformity while excluding or demonizing elements of otherness, such as those deemed "Oriental" or heretical.

[532] Eliot Weinberger and Octavio Paz, *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei: How a Chinese Poem is Translated* (New York: Moyer Bell, 1987), 1.

formulation once more, is by no means a phenomenon confined to Anglophone modernism. In Chinese literary history itself, the Taoist classic *Zhuangzi* was a gateway through which Buddhist doctrines, Jesuit teachings, and even Baudelairean aesthetic vocabularies entered circulation and became citable at various historical junctures in China.[533] That the construction of national literatures and cultures can be surprisingly reliant on the selective importation and absorption of the foreign is further borne out by *Translingual Practice*, in which Lydia Liu traces the emergence of Chinese modernism through the circulation and legitimization of new terminologies and discourses mediated by materials in foreign languages including English and modern Japanese.[534]

It bears noting that, even when East Asian conceptions of nationhood or selfhood can be shown to matter to these transnational experiments, they seldom do so as historically dense formations carried over intact. What enters modernist poetry is more often an impressionistic abstraction—the Confucian ideal of centralized order in *The Cantos*, or the quasi-Buddhist investment in selflessness in the self-vanishing lyricism of those Japonisme-inspired verses by American women poets—readily adapted to distinct problem-spaces, such as Pound's search for a vocabulary of governance commensurate with his political intentions, or Amy Lowell's cultivation of a lyric voice capable of dissolving or ventriloquizing the "I." Ironically, the instrumental portability and clarity of these concepts, which made them responsive to diverse formal and ideological needs in English poetry, depends upon the attenuation of their historical variability and complexity. It is thus unsurprising that the political turbulences of early twentieth-century China and Japan remain largely offstage in this archive of rewriting, and that the rare moments that tackle the geopolitical pressures facing China and Japan—as in Amy Lowell's "Guns as Keys," with its image of Commodore Perry blowing off the "locks of the East" (450)—they register as punctures in an otherwise carefully controlled temporal field of modernist classicism and historicism. More direct contextualization tends to appear instead in the writings of contemporaneous Orientalist scholars, from Ernest Fenollosa's civilizational teleology in "The Coming Fusion of East and West" to Arthur Waley's interrogation of the British empire's expansion in Asia in *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes*. For Pound, Yeats, and others, such

[533] Haun Saussy, *Translation as Citation: Zhuangzi Inside Out* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6.
[534] Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), xvi.

materials were largely paratextual knowledge adjacent to rather than immediately disruptive of their methods of cross-cultural appropriation.

Coexisting with this extractive impulse in this archive is a compensatory recourse to universality. The legitimacy of modernist rewriting, in other words, is affirmed through appeal to allegedly transhistorical orders of meaning, which (mis)translation is imagined to liberate insofar as it relaxes constraint on fidelity. One implication of my dissertation has been to approach such universalist aesthetic as an ideologically consequential technique, illuminated through a critical vocabulary drawn from Western translation theory attentive to the poetological and ethical stakes of domestication and rewriting. At the same time, the archive also presses toward a necessary expansion of that analytic frame that this dissertation has only begun to contemplate. The prismatic phenomenon of transcultural borrowing in global modernisms calls for the possibility of a de-Westernization of translation analysis in future studies similar to mine, one that would benefit from non-Western conceptualizations of translation oriented less toward fidelity than toward relationality, reciprocity, or historical continuity. Such a methodological reorientation is particularly apposite for assessing Western adaptation practices that make use of non-Western materials apprehended only in part, and that depend, for their efficacy, upon that partiality.

Pound, for instance, may not have recognized that, in invoking the Confucian hermeneutic principle of "Ch'ing Ming" (the rectification of names), he was linking a Chinese ethical theory of language to the imagined moral order of his monocratic utopia.[535] In the *Analects*, "Ch'ing Ming" names a political imperative whereby social order depends upon the accurate alignment between language and reality—"If names are not correct, speech does not accord with reality, and affairs cannot be carried out successfully." Translation, in this view, constitutes a form of moral labor that preserves the intelligibility of ethical and social relations through the restoration of semantic precision. And yet Pound's idiosyncratic misreadings of Confucian texts and Chinese characters displace this logic by relocating authority onto the visible signs of language themselves, in order that a political vision be projected through them.

[535] See Pound, *The Cantos*, 682; and *Guide to Kulchur*, 16-17. In the section "Digests of the Analects" in *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound renders the principle of "Ch'ing Ming" as follows: "If the terminology be not exact, if it fit not the thing, the governmental instructions will not be explicit […] the rites and music will not be honoured […] the people won't know where to put their feet or what to lay hold of or to whom they shd. stretch out their hands." See also William Tay, "Cheng Ming: The New Paideuma of Ezra Pound," *Tamkang Review* 6.1 (April 1975), 114-121.

His etymological fantasy, impatient with philological exactitude, effectively supplants "Ch'ing Ming"—an ethical correspondence between word and world—with a consolidation of interpretive sovereignty in the figure of the poet-translator, and with a poetics of mistranslation that "Ch'ing Ming," if used as a critical lens, itself helps to diagnose.

For the purpose of a de-Westernized framework commensurate with the translational liberties similar to those traced in this dissertation, it also matters that East Asia (together with translation theory emerging from its intellectual contexts) supplies its own vocabularies and precedents for translational agency—vocabularies capable of naming, with greater suppleness than the language of interlingual equivalence, the kinds of mediated performances and strategic rewritings that modernist appropriation routinely enacts and intermittently disavows. In Meiji and Taishō Japan, for instance, discourses around *hon'yaku* ("translation") were increasingly constrained by what Naoki Sakai has described as a totalizing "regime of translation" that imagined linguistic exchange as a symmetrical relay between self-identical national languages; Sakai's counterproposal of "heterolingual address," then, reconceives translation as a performative act oriented by the translator's situated intention, as the purposeful intervention of a "subject in transit."[536] This may be a serendipitously suitable lens for reading the self-effacing lyric subjects of Amy Lowell's Japonisme personae poems or Crapsey's haiku-adjacent cinquains less as evasions of originality than as cultivated enactments of translational role-assumption, as poetic acts that model agency obliquely, through something other than expressive self-assertion. Relatedly, the case of Lin Shu furnishes an early twentieth-century Chinese precedent for translation conceived as purposive recomposition. His much-debated practice of (mis)translating Western novels into classical Chinese through oral intermediaries was censured by contemporaries as *waiyi*, "distorted translation," yet later reassessed by Qian Zhongshu as a form of *huajing*, or transformative rewriting.[537] The priority Lin and Qian accord to mutability over semantic fixity offers a suggestive way to approach Helen Waddell's rewriting of the Confucian Odes as an Occidental practice of *huajing*, so to speak, animated by a feminist sensibility.

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[536] Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997): 1-17.
[537] See Qian Zhongshu, "The translations of Lin Shu" (1963), translated by George Kao, in Leo Tak-hung Chan, ed. *Twentieth-Century Chinese Translation Theory: Modes, Issues and Debates* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004): 104-114.

Orientalism, finally, cannot be adequately grasped as a unidirectional representation or projection of the "East" by the "West" alone. It emerged from colonial capitalism's dawning apprehension of national-cultural multiplicity, from "an articulated and effective imperial system of cultural mapping, which produced for the first time a conception of the world as an assemblage of civilizational entities, each in possession of its own textual and/or expressive traditions."[538] The history of Orientalism, as this dissertation contends, is necessarily a political business of transnationalism no less than it is an aesthetic event of transculturalism. To think in terms of the "bang/clash of contradiction" that Susan Friedman identifies as the constitutive pulse of modernity, these Orientalist forms of modernist poetry manifest less as linear planetary flows than as erratic, ideologically saturated relays through which texts, forms, and motifs from East Asia entered Western poetry.[539]

The Orientalist poetry of Pound, Yeats, Waddell, Lowell, and others both concretize and complicate the perceived fluidity of transcultural mobility, the commonplace conceptual vocabulary for describing modernism's transnational circulation. These verses disclose a recursive pattern, a cycle of departure and return in which the poet-translator traverses an elsewhere, selects and refashions what is encountered, and often re-enters the originating contexts under revised or altered imperatives, sometimes across decades of evolving aesthetic and ideological commitments. For figures like Yeats or Pound, repeated returns to East Asian materials accrued into a micro-history of their own distinct Orientalisms—recursions that make visible a logic of selection and occlusion by which the authority of the poet-translators coheres and consolidates as they draw upon and reimagine the foreign. It is here that these instances of "un/bound translation," where norms of fidelity are openly or quietly breached, yield a uniquely sensitive register for tracing the layered itineraries of travel and return underpinning the shifting relations between self and other in transnational poetry. The Orientalist forms that result, as the final archive and sediment of these modernist crossings, render legible the arrest and reinvention of the "other," which, like Pound's suspended blossom, becomes, not by accident but by design, a participant in a poetry that sought, in the foreign, the provocation and substance through which it imagines its ideological horizons and becomings.

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[538] Mufti, *Forget English!*, 20.

[539] Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, ix. Also see Friedman's critique of methodological nationalism, where she proposes a "transformational planetary epistemology" (50) that challenges periodizing and Eurocentric accounts of modernity by defining it as "multiple, contradictory, interconnected, polycentric, and recurrent for millennia and across the globe" (4).

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