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Traduttore, Traditore?

The Creative Translations of Ezra Pound's *Cathay*

This paper focuses on Ezra Pound's Chinese creative translations or adaptations in *Cathay* (1915). Evidence is given why the poems in this volume should not be considered to be regular translations, failing to obey the most evident requirements of "translation" proper. Although adaptations of *Cathay* retain foreign peculiarities of the original poems, some additional features of Western 20th-century literature are also infused into them. After some preliminary theoretical considerations about Pound's translation theory, a few exemplary poems of the volume will be analysed with respect to the techniques of adaptation Pound applied. The Fenollosa manuscripts Pound used as a source will be taken into account for comparative purposes.

1 Introduction

"Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee! Thou art translated."¹

Shakespeare's characters call attention to a crucial problem of translation theory by mixing up the words "translate" and "transform": is translation necessarily transformation? In Ezra Pound's case, the translational process frequently implied transformation, indeed. This paper will present the major peculiarities of Ezra Pound's method of "creative translations" or "re-creations"² in *Cathay*, using Willis Barnstone's system of

1. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Harold Brooks (The Arden Shakespeare, London and New York: Methuen, 1990), 3.1.113–4.

2. This paper will use the terms "re-creation," "creative translation" and "adaptation" as synonyms to denote the distinct phenomenon of the Poundian translation as opposed to "translation proper." Both "re-creation" and "creative translation" appoint creation as the crucial characteristic of Pound's method. The former indicates that the repeated act of creation is more emphatic than actual translation (*re*-creation), the latter rather balances the weight of the two processes (creative translation). Through the occasional use of the term "adaptation," we want to suggest that the Poundian translations are rather "adaptations" than "translations proper." On the other hand, by "translation proper" (this term is borrowed from the translation analyst Achilles Fang (cf. Achilles Fang, "Some Reflections On the Difficulty of

translation analysis as a point of reference. Each of the three levels of Barnstone's chart (register, structure and authorship) correlates with one or more of Pound's innovations in *Cathay*. Firstly, in the section dealing with register, the libertine handling of images will be investigated: how Pound utilised images in his sources to create imagist poems. The analysis of "Leave-Taking Near Shoku" will illustrate the intensification of images that determine the symbolism of the poem. Secondly, in relation to structure, ample examples will be provided to show Pound's varied arsenal of poetic restructuring. The initiation of dialogicity both throughout the volume and between single poems will be treated in detail, together with the elliptic structures Pound advocates and the actual reshaping of poems. Besides alluding to these features in other poems, "The Beautiful Toilet" and "The River Song" will occupy the centre of attention in this chapter. Thirdly, the invention of undertones incongruent with the original tone of poems will be studied concerning authorship. Relying on the conclusions from the previous section, the discussion of "The River Song" will be elaborated. Lastly, to give a more detailed picture of how these features (invented or intensified images, dialogicity, ellipsis, reshaping, undertones) really form an intricate system in a poem, "The River-Merchant's Wife: a Letter" will be analysed at length. Thus, this paper attempts to identify the main tools of the Poundian creative translation.

2 *Cathay*: "A maundarin tongue in a poulderin jowl"³

"I will get you a green coat out of China. . ."
(Ezra Pound, "Further Instructions")

In *Cathay*,⁴ using Ernest Fenollosa's⁵ notes, Pound published fourteen poems, mostly by Rihaku (the Japanese name of Li Po that Pound and Fenollosa used), an

Translation," in *On Translation*, ed. Reuben A. Brower [New York: Oxford University Press, 1966], 111–133) we mean a kind of translation that is scholarly, very precise and justifiable, having equivalence as its primary aim. The reason why creative translation is contrasted with translation proper throughout this paper is that Pound's translations were condemned more often than not on the grounds of translation proper.

3. James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), p. 89.

4. Robert Kern in his study about Pound's oriental interest gives the etymology for the title: "Cathay" is "Marco Polo's name for the country whose fabulous image he largely created in the narrative of his travels" (Robert Kern, *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996], p. 190). In fact, "Cathay" is Marco Polo's name of Northern China, while he refers to Southern China as "Manji." Thus, the title connects Pound's literary excursion implicitly with Marco Polo's adventures.

eighteenth-century Chinese poet. This collection, though, was as modern and European as it was ancient and Chinese. In Pound's renderings of the Chinese poems through Fenollosa's English transliteration, we shall try to enumerate the most typical in(ter)ventions of Pound.

Willis Barnstone in his *The Poetics of Translation – History, Theory, Practice* established a categorisation for translation analysis that is based on the traditional notion of "fidelity." Since the outrage against Pound's translations was mainly due to his "unfaithfulness" or loose adherence to the original texts, this may be an appropriate scheme to follow. Barnstone leaves ample space for creativity in translation, acknowledging that translation involves more than just transferring a linguistic message. To establish Pound's position in the realm of translation, Barnstone's chart is of great assistance:

- 1 Register, or translation level
 - literalism
 - middle ground
 - license
- 2 Structure, or degree of source text in translation
 - retaining structure of source text in target text
 - naturalizing structure of source text in target text
 - abandonment of original structure and creation of new one
- 3 Authorship, or dominant voice
 - retaining voice of source language author in target language
 - yielding voice of source language author to translator's voice in target language⁶

5. Ernest Fenollosa taught at the Imperial University in Japan. In addition to his professional duties, he studied Chinese and Japanese literature under Japanese instructors. Meanwhile, he wrote several volumes of notes. Since he did not speak or read Chinese, he used his instructors' Japanese guidance for understanding Chinese, too. After his death in 1908, his widow let the first two volumes of his notes be published (*Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, 1911), then sought a suitable person for further work. Finally she chose Pound and entrusted the poet with the literary estate of her late husband. Pound examined the Fenollosa manuscripts and edited some volumes from the notes and drafts (Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* [Reading: Penguin Books, 1985], p. 185). Now Fenollosa's papers can be found at the Beinecke Library at Yale University, New Haven.

6. Willis Barnstone, *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1993), p. 25.

Subsequently, Pound's stance in translation shall be allocated with respect to these criteria. Evidently, register, structure and authorship form an intricate system: a distinctive feature in one poem may result in the appearance of another. Consequently, the analyses of poems can be divided along the above categories only artificially and imperfectly, with the need of numerous cross-references. Yet, in this way we can investigate the individual characteristics of the Poundian inventions methodically. Finally, we shall also study the aggregation of these phenomena in one poem, without enforced dissociation.

2.1 Register

Barnstone's first criterion in translation analysis concerns the literality of the text: to what extent the words in the target text differ from the source text; whether the translation is approximately verbatim or significantly libertine. As a first step, we shall summarise Pound's observations on this problem, to give theoretical evidence why we consider Pound a middle-ground translator. Afterwards, in "Leave-Taking Near Shoku" we shall illustrate a major innovative tendency in *Cathay*: how Pound intensified the presence of images in the volume, along his Imagist doctrines.

For Pound, a faithful translator's duty was to preserve the artistry of a text, so that contemporary readers would enjoy it as much as the original audience could. Hence, in his view, a translator's victory depends merely upon his poetic talents, not upon his reliance on a dictionary. As Pound wrote in "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris": "In the translation . . . I give that beauty – reproduced, that is, as nearly as I can reproduce it in English – for what it is worth."⁷ The superiority of transferring beauty instead of words is affirmed in "Notes on Elizabethan Classicists" as well: "We have long fallen under the blight of the Miltonic or noise tradition . . . a state of mind which . . . has long ceased to care for the beauty of the original; or which perhaps thinks 'appreciation' obligatory, and the meaning and content mere accessories."⁸ Similarly, in his essay "Early Translators of Homer" he praises those whose translation could amount to beauty comparable to that of the original: "in each of which books [Latin translations] a great poet has compensated, by his own skill, any loss in

7. Ezra Pound, "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris," in *Selected Prose 1909–1965*, ed. William Cookson (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 19–43, p. 26.

8. Ezra Pound, "Notes on Elizabethan Classicists," in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (London: Faber, 1966), 227–248, p. 232.

transition; a new beauty has in each case been created.”⁹ Elsewhere, in “Cavalcanti,” he defined faithfulness as a preservation of emotional intensity. “It is even doubtful whether my bungling version of twenty years back [of Cavalcanti’s poems] isn’t more ‘faithful,’ in the sense at least that it tried to preserve the fervour of the original.”¹⁰

Pound also advocates scholarly thoroughness so that he could “preserve the fervour of the original.”¹¹ However, this did not imply that he was bound to infuse all his knowledge into his poetry. Even if he knew a little about Chinese literature while he was translating the poems later to be published in *Cathay*, he dared to deviate from the principles governing Chinese poetry.¹² His impeachment by Achilles Fang for his ignorance seems unjust because it does not consider his artistic motifs. For Fang, a translator must be an extremist “translator proper,” who attains a possible maximum knowledge of (what Pound called) *logopoeia* as well – although, as Pound wrote about *logopoeia*, it “does not translate.”¹³ Note that *logopoeia* is a concept of Pound’s later essays, e.g. “How to Read.” In this, he defines the term: it is

“the dance of the intellect among words,” that is to say, it employs words not only for their direct meaning, but it takes count in a special way of habits of usage, of the context we *expect* to find with the word, its usual concomitants, of its known acceptances, and of ironical play. It holds the aesthetic content which is peculiarly the domain of verbal manifestation, and cannot possibly be contained in plastic or in music. It is the latest come, and perhaps most tricky and undependable mode.¹⁴

On the other hand, Fang writes, “a translator must comprehend not only his text but also its numerous glosses, actual and possible.”¹⁵ The difference of the two approaches, though a simplification it may be, can be grasped in this contrast: in Fang’s understanding translation is primarily an intellectual challenge, in Pound’s case rather an artistic one. Fang apparently wants to retain the semantic structure of original works, i.e. the signified; while Pound’s focus is on the sign.

9. Ezra Pound, “Translators of Greek: Early Translators of Homer,” in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, 249–275, p. 249.

10. Ezra Pound, “Cavalcanti,” in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, 149–200, p. 200.

11. Pound, “Cavalcanti,” p. 200.

12. Besides, at the time of his translation he did not speak or read any Chinese.

13. Ezra Pound, “How to Read,” in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, 15–40, p. 25.

14. Pound, “How to Read,” p. 25.

15. Fang, p. 115.

To preserve the artistic prominence of the texts even at the cost of libertine modifications, Pound approximated the original poems to his literary convictions: to imagism and its later derivations. Imagism was started in the latter part of 1912, by several poets including Pound, Hilda Doolittle (H. D.), Richard Aldington, and F. S. Flint. Their main goal was the presentation of images stripped of authorial commentary; further aims included a return to ancient or exotic, aboriginal arts, a simplification of poetic diction, the abandonment of any attached excrescence, and precision in handling the objects of poetry. Therefore images gain more emphasis in Pound's creative translations. In "Leave-Taking Near Shoku," the central requirement for imagism, the presentation of images will be analysed in detail.

The third of four departure poems, "Leave-Taking Near Shoku" abounds in images not present in Fenollosa's rough translation,¹⁶ hence it provides an opportunity for insight into Pound's workshop.

"Sanso, King of Shoku, built roads"
 They say the roads of Sanso are steep,
 Sheer as the mountains.
 The walls rise in a man's face,
 Clouds grow out of the hill
 at his horse's bridle.
 Sweet trees are on the paved way of the Shin,
 Their trunks burst through the paving,
 And freshets are bursting their ice
 in the midst of Shoku, a proud city.

Men's fates are already set,
 There is no need of asking diviners. (199)¹⁷

Anne S. Chapple claims that since Pound omitted most of the allusions to fate and nature found in the original poem, the composition lost its integrity, the coda (the last two lines) just following the rest as an inorganic part. Although Pound really eliminated allusions, and changed the original meaning of the poem, we shall argue that he simply replaced it with a different sense. The pedestrian paraphrase in the Fenollosa notes reads as follows:

16. It is reprinted in: Anne S. Chapple, "Ezra Pound's *Cathay*: Compilation from the Fenollosa Notebooks," *Paideuma* 17.2–3 (Fall–Winter 1988) 9–46, pp. 32–33.

17. All parenthesised references are to this edition: Ezra Pound, *Cathay*, in *Translations* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 189–204.

The whole tenor of the poem is "You are going to Shoku. They say it is hard and yet do not be alarmed. For it is spring (lovely). (As in nature there is dark and light) so in men's life there is rise as well as fall. . . need not ask fortune teller. . . i.e. you may rise again. . ."¹⁸

Subduing the encouraging atmosphere of the original poem, Pound – through the systematic modification of images – alters the tone.¹⁹

First of all, the second line "Sheer as the mountains" has no equivalent in the text provided by Fenollosa; it is an invention of Pound.²⁰ Neither has "walls," "bridle," "paved," "Their trunks burst through the paving," and "a proud city." Moreover, instead of Fenollosa's line "And spring brooks must be encircling the shoku [sic] city"²¹ stands the new line "And freshets are bursting their ice / in the midst of Shoku, a proud city." Following the thread of Pound's alterations we shall construct our interpretation.

The first five lines depict man as a creature who has to face obstacles, both natural ("Clouds grow out of the hill" or the image of mountains) and artificial ("the roads of Sanso are steep," "The walls rise in a man's face").²² Meanwhile, when this man looks around, what does he see in nature? In lines 6–9, the "sweet trees" that fringe the way may "burst through the paving," defending their freedom against man-made constructions. "And freshets are bursting their ice / in the midst of Shoku, a proud city," fighting back again. Comparing these to Fenollosa's notes, no trace of the above is there: "(But at the same time) (this being springtime) Fragrant woods / must be covering up the supported paths of Shin / And spring brooks must be encircling the shoku [sic] city."²³ Note that the whole passage by Fenollosa is a description of nature at peace; there is no hint of "bursting," which appears twice in Pound's text, making it maybe the most emphatic single word in the poem.

18. Quoted in Chapple, p. 32.

19. Instead of the original encouraging farewell, Pound's re-creation gains a definitely resigned tone. This phenomenon (undertones and altered tones) will be exemplified in other poems as well in Section 2.3, Authorship, as a further tendency in *Cathay*.

20. Though, it has to be noted that the next line, which Pound also transformed, replacing "mountains" by *walls*, included the image of mountains. In Fenollosa's transliteration it read as: "(because) mts. rise up in the very face of a man" (Chapple, p. 32).

21. Quoted in Chapple, p. 33.

22. A person hindered by outer forces will be an image recurring in the cage-metaphor of both "The Beautiful Toilet" and "The River-Merchant's Wife: a Letter."

23. Quoted in Chapple, p. 33.

The personification in the expression “proud city” alludes firmly but unmistakably to human beings, in the middle of a natural scene. This might be the moment of an inner comparison in the speaker’s mind between one’s own possibilities and those of unanimated creatures. The speaker (or writer, but not in the sense of “author,” just as one capable of using typography for purposes of poetry) of the poem utilises space between two units as an indication of ellipsis:²⁴ a train of thought is withheld. However, it can be deduced fairly easily: the apparent contrast of the first two units, between the situation of human beings and creatures of the flora poses a question whether it is possible also for humans to rebel against their fate. Thus, in our interpretation the last two lines do not stand as an inorganic attachment as Chapple perceived it but, having their antecedents in previous lines, rather as the climax of understanding. Visiting diviners, the mediators between humans and the divine, is vain: our fate is already set; we have to defer to it. Henceforth, the invention and modification of images defines the mood of the Poundian poem, reversing encouragement to resignation.

To sum up, Pound is a middle-ground translator concerning register because he did not adhere to the literal text of the original poems; however, he wished to retain as much of the artistic virtues of the source texts as possible. To achieve this, the poet assists the translator as mentioned before: “a great poet has compensated, by his own skill, any loss in transition; a new beauty has in each case been created.”²⁵ The “new beauty” is, in this case, the invention of images, which has been illustrated in “Leave-Taking Near Shoku.”

2.2 Structure

Pound claims even more licence where Barnstone’s second perspective, structure, is concerned. He does not hesitate to discard the original structure of a poem or invent a new one as he also did in “Sestina: Altaforte,”²⁶ to ensure that the form and logic of a poem matches the subject material in the target language as well. As Xie remarks he was able

24. This is to be echoed in the structure of “The Beautiful Toilet.” Ellipsis will also be a kind of re-structuring that is one of the three analysed tendencies.

25. Ezra Pound, “Translators of Greek: Early Translators of Homer,” in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, 249–275, p. 249.

26. Ronnie Apter describes the restructuring of “Sestina: Altaforte” in detail. It is a translation of the “Sirventes in Praise of War,” though it does not even remind one of the original poem’s structure (cf. Ronnie Apter, *Digging for the Treasure: Translation after Pound* [New York: Peter Lang, 1984], pp. 69–72).

to penetrate through the literal surface . . . to grasp the integrity of a poem as a whole and then to transmit his insight and understanding into the artifice of a new medium, thus enabling the structure of feeling to generate itself, organically, according to its own inner compulsion and momentum.²⁷

Re-structuring is realised by several methods in *Cathay*. Firstly, there is a tendency to establish a dialogue between poems in the volume, to create a unity in this selection of Chinese literature: the interaction of texts thus suggests a conscious instead of a haphazard gathering of poems. Secondly, ellipsis is a frequently occurring poetic device in Pound's renderings that is also emphasised by formal peculiarities (e.g. the detached lines in "Leave-Taking Near Shoku"). "The Beautiful Toilet" will be the case-study of ellipsis in the discussion. Thirdly, the actual re-structuring of poems (for instance, merging texts, omitting parts, inserting stanzas etc.) will be studied in "The River Song." The analysis of this last poem will be elaborated on in the section on authorship.

2.2.1 The relations of content and structure in *Cathay*

Analysing the structure of the volume, we can see the creation of unity through the interplay of poems that were not meant to constitute a tightly linked system originally. One may remember that *Cathay* appeared during the First World War in 1915. Hence the tenor of the volume is defined by the presentation of the miseries of soldiers and civilians alike. At the beginning of the book concealed accusations of leaders (kings, emperors and generals) alternate with songs of lament and sorrow. The first, third, fifth and seventh poem ("Song of the Bowmen of Shu," "The River Song," "Poem by the Bridge at Ten-shin" and "Lament of the Frontier Guard") present supposedly male narrators who articulate their feelings against the splendour of the rich, against the opaque and unintelligible purpose of war, against the soldiers' inhuman suffering and the hopelessness of their situation. On the other hand, these poems are juxtaposed to accounts of the situation of female characters ("The Beautiful Toilet," "The River-Merchant's Wife: a Letter" and "The Jewel Stairs' Grievance"). These personae are deserted not necessarily because of a war but still they are left "too much alone" ("The Beautiful Toilet," 190).

The alternation of the poems sketches a grotesque dialogue between poems of men and women, representing the genre of epistle at a meta-level. Note that the letter form is emphatic in the volume: two of the fourteen poems are – male- or female-

27. Ming Xie, "Pound as Translator," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 204–223, p. 210.

written – letters²⁸ (from which the second one, “Exile’s Letter,” ends the above sketched dialogue of the initial poems). Even the volume can be regarded as an epistle to the soldiers who, according to a letter of the young sculptor, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, a friend of Pound’s, could perceive its reference: “I keep the book in my pocket. Indeed I use [the poems] to put courage in my fellows. I speak now of the ‘Bowmen’ and the ‘North Gate’ [i.e. “Lament of the Frontier Guard”] which are so appropriate to our case.”²⁹

Another train of thought is discussed between the poems: the possibilities of communication in time of war. The very first poem of *Cathay*, “Song of the Bowmen of Shu” poses a question:

When we set out, the willows were drooping with spring,
We come back in the snow,
We go slowly, we are hungry and thirsty,
Our mind is full of sorrow, who will know of our grief? (189)

which is repeated in “Lament of the Frontier Guard” as well:

Ah, how shall you know the dreary sorrow at the North Gate,
With Rihaku’s name forgotten
And we guardsmen fed to the tigers. (195)

and is answered in the last part of the last poem, creating a framework for *Cathay*:

“It is not that there are no other men
But we like this fellow the best,
But however we long to speak
He can not know of our sorrow.” (204)

The questions are raised by the soldiers; but who is the addressee? In the first quotation (“who will know of our grief”), the soldiers seem to seek for a mediator, a poet who, like ancient bards reported the events and battles of wars, should inform the ensuing generations about their terrible, inhuman conditions. However, the second question seems to be aimed at the reader (“how shall you know”) with the poet (Rihaku) forgotten, the soldiers dead; or is this *you* the translator, the rejuvenator of the text, who should make account of the events, and not let the audience

²⁸. As described later on in this paper, “The River-Merchant’s Wife: A Letter” was not a letter in the Chinese poem by Li Po: it was Pound’s invention.

²⁹. Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska* (New York: New Directions, 1974), p. 68.

forget Rihaku's name, hence the soldiers' grief? Either way, the demand for reaching out for an audience and sympathy is urging; however, the paradoxical conclusion of the booklet (which, in fact, does commemorate the soldiers): "But however we long to speak / He can not know of our sorrow" seems to deprive the soldiers of this ultimate relief (also note that in this last quotation instead of the previous *you*, we can read about a *he* – this increases the distance between the speaker and the audience, and foreshadows the inability for establishing contact). Adding that in the last poem of *Cathay* the words are uttered by birds (a traditional metaphor for poets – cf. "The River Song"), a new problem is posed: is poetry or is a poet an able channel for historical ages to communicate through? Is a poet still able to reach his audience in order to create myth or legend, or just interpret events, or at least report them?

So far, the dialogic relationship between poems has been sketched. Furthermore, one can also find less overt dialogues in *Cathay*: the twin imagery of certain poems ties texts closer together as in the case of "The Beautiful Toilet" and "The River Merchant's Wife: a Letter." In these two, the imagery of an enclosure is developed markedly similarly. The atmosphere of outer forces hindering a person also associates "Leave-Taking Near Shoku" with these poems.

2.2.2 "The Beautiful Toilet"

An illustration of Pound's method of re-structuring, elliptic translation can be found in "The Beautiful Toilet," a tableau of a lady, trapped in her marriage to a drunkard.

Blue, blue is the grass about the river
 And the willows have overfilled the close garden.
 And within, the mistress, in the midmost of her youth.
 White, white of face, hesitates, passing the door.
 Slender, she puts forth a slender hand;

And she was a courtesan in the old days,
 And she has married a sot,
 Who now goes drunkenly out
 And leaves her too much alone. (190)

Wai-lim Yip claims that the topos of "the estranged wife" of Chinese literature that is presented in this poem is subject to Pound's method of "ironical play."³⁰ What

30. Cf. Wai-lim Yip, *Ezra Pound's Cathay* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969), pp. 128–138.

he means by this is the juxtaposition of emotions of the persona of the poem: gaiety and desolation. He argues that the title represents the undercurrent tone of gaiety which is covered by the melancholy of the body of the poem:

First, the title “The Beautiful Toilet” taken from the fifth line³¹ enforces the paradoxical gaiety which is to be undercut by the reversal of the situation. . . . Second, Pound spaces out the last four lines, allowing the second impression to play against the one captured in the previous five lines and the title.

In reaching the effect of the “ironical play,” Yip states, the governing structural element of the poem is “unexpectedness”: “as we understand it, *unexpectedness* rather than *expectation* is the clue of the poem.”³² In my view, however, the last four lines are not as unexpected as Yip claims but are the explication of an undertone of grief or complaint, the traces of which are detectable also earlier in the imagery. Consequently, instead of the ironical play, we shall propose that the structure of the poem is defined by another central poetic tool: ellipsis.

The beginning of “The Beautiful Toilet” is hard to account for: “Blue, blue is the grass about the river.” In Fenollosa’s transliteration both “green” and “blue”³³ appear as possible translations; however, as in the case of “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a Letter,” a twin poem of “The Beautiful Toilet” in terms of emotional content, subject matter and in the means of expression, where the same problem arises in the fourth line, Pound chose “blue.” Reasons and explanations are plentiful, yet, none of them is indubitable: first, “blue” has connotations that express moodiness (“I feel blue”); second, concerning the spectrum blue is a colder colour than green, and one may associate cold colours with less positive feelings; and third, green grass is supposed to be the sign of life-force. For the feeling of delusion and desolation, Pound may have had his reasons to pick “blue” – maybe with something akin to the above sketched ideas in his mind. Three lines later, a similar structure becomes a counterpoint to the colour blue: “White, white of face.” Yip notes on the whiteness very sensitively: “is ‘white’ to mean ‘pale’ or ‘powdered’ white?”³⁴ Both interpretations seem to be valid: it either intensifies the effect of despair or that of unusual beauty that is already indicated in the title.

31. In Fenollosa’s crib the fifth line went “beauty of face, beauty of face, red, powder (or berry), toilet”; quoted in Yip, p. 131. Pound cut it out of the poem and rendered it as a title.

32. Yip, p. 134.

33. Fenollosa’s translations and notes on “The Beautiful Toilet” are reprinted in Yip, pp. 172–173. The original Chinese text is reprinted in Yip, pp. 131–132.

34. Yip, p. 137.

Willows, again, are traditional symbols of lonesomeness and grief; hence they enhance the effect of the first line. The word “overfilled”³⁵ may exhibit an undercurrent of disillusionment on the part of the woman: there are too many willows and too much grief. The expressions “the close garden,” “within,” and “in the midmost of her youth” create imaginary barriers around the precious woman. Yip quotes another translation (by Giles) that Pound read and that ends: “Ah, if he does not mind his own, / He’ll find some day the bird has flown.”³⁶ Pound must have adopted the bird-imagery from Giles by creating a cage around the woman in his poem.

Subsequently, however, the lady of “The Beautiful Toilet” sees and seizes the opportunity to flee. She “hesitates, passing the door,” and (several lines later) “Slender, she puts forth a slender hand.” We expect to find explanation about what is happening, but a semi-colon finishes the first unit abruptly. Still, we can presume that she most possibly left her house – she finally escaped. Thus, instead of the ironical play (which is based on unexpectedness), *ellipsis*³⁷ is the clue to the poem (the preceding imagery partially resolves the enigma, hence the turn is slightly expected or at least suspected): from the culminating point of drama we are forbidden to see the events any longer. The next part with its ostensible unrelatedness to the previous lines explains the reasons for her deed rather vehemently, creating the effect of spontaneous speech. She used to be a courtesan, who had enjoyed the company of men, but after her marriage to a drunkard, her life of pleasure was cut off, she was left just “too much alone.”

“The Beautiful Toilet” can also stand as an example of how Pound’s innovations are folding out of each other eventually. The intensification of images (barriers around the woman) creates an undertone of desolation already in the first stanza that was not detectable in the Chinese text or Fenollosa’s transliteration. Thus unex-

35. Cf. the later discussion of “By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses, / Too deep to clear them away!” in “The River-Merchant’s Wife: A Letter,” where the same device of emphasis creates an undertone of grief.

36. Quoted in Yip, p. 138.

37. Ellipsis is only partially Pound’s invention. The text of the original Chinese poem also included a certain amount of allusiveness and implicitness; yet, ellipsis in Pound’s version is also accompanied and made emphatic by formal features: inserted blank lines signify ellipsis visually as well, making it the central poetic tool of the poem. On the other hand, the Chinese original was written in the five-character regulated form. This means that each line contained five characters, and the flow of the lines was not broken by spacing out stanzas, creating a pleasing matrix-like look. Similarly, in “Leave-Taking Near Shoku,” Pound reshaped the poem so that ellipsis would become the most striking structuring element.

pectedness that operated in the source texts is eliminated, and ellipsis becomes the dominant structuring poetic device. The innovative tendencies in the next poem, “The River Song” are also tightly intertwined; hence, the aspect of restructuring will be examined in this section, while another perspective will remain to the section on authorship.

2.2.3 “The River Song”

After having dealt with dialogic relations and ellipsis, our focus will be now on the actual restructuring of poems. Pound stitched together two different poems to create “The River Song.” The implication of the merging will be accounted for in the next section.

This boat is of shato-wood, and its gunwales are cut magnolia,
Musicians with jewelled flutes and with pipes of gold
Fill full the sides in rows, and our wine
Is rich for a thousand cups.
We carry singing girls, drift with the drifting water,
Yet Sennin needs
A yellow stork for a charger, and all our seamen
Would follow the white gulls or ride them.
Kutsu’s prose song
Hangs with the sun and moon.

King So’s terraced palace
is now but barren hill,
But I draw pen on this barge
Causing the five peaks to tremble,
And I have joy in these words
like the joy of blue islands.
(If glory could last forever
Then the waters of Han would flow northward.)
And I have moped in the Emperor’s garden, awaiting an or-
der-to-write!
I looked at the dragon-pond, with its willow-coloured water
Just reflecting the sky’s tinge,
And heard the five-score nightingales aimlessly singing.

The eastern wind brings the green colour into the island
grasses at Yei-shu,
The purple house and the crimson are full of Spring softness.

South of the pond the willow-tips are half-blue and bluer,
 Their cords tangle in the mist, against the brocade-like palace.
 Vine-strings a hundred feet long hang down from carved rail-
 ings,
 And high over the willows, the fine birds sing to each other,
 and listen,
 Crying – “Kwan, Kuan,” for the early wind, and the feel of it.
 The wind bundles itself into a bluish cloud and wanders off.
 Over a thousand gates, over a thousand doors are the sounds
 of spring singing,
 And the Emperor is at Ko.
 Five clouds hang aloft, bright on the purple sky,
 The imperial guards come forth from the golden house with
 their armour a-gleaming.
 The Emperor in his jeweled car goes out to inspect his flowers,
 He goes out to Hori, to look at the wing-flapping storks,
 He returns by way of Sei rock, to hear the new nightingales,
 For the gardens at Jo-run are full of new nightingales,
 Their sound is mixed in this flute,
 Their voice is in the twelve pipes here. (190–191)

Many scholars claim that in “The River Song” Pound fused two separate poems not noticing the beginning of the second one, using the (unusually long) title only as a stanza of the poem.³⁸ Yet, the “notorious conflation,”³⁹ as Hugh Kenner addresses the phenomenon, may lay claim to defence. Sanehide Kodama describes the manuscript minutely:

The last page of “Kojogin” is filled to the bottom, and the next page, with the title of the second poem, “Jiju Gishunyen. . .” looks, at first glance, like the continuation from the previous page. Pound penciled “#129” to “Kojogin,” but he did not assign any number to “Jiju Gishunyen. . .”⁴⁰

38. The stanza that originates from the title of the second poem can be found now in lines 19–22.

39. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 204.

40. Sanehide Kodama, “Cathay and Fenollosa’s Notebooks,” *Paideuma* 11.2 (1982) 207–244, p. 229. Fenollosa’s complete transliterations and notes on this poem are reprinted here (pp. 230–236).

Thus – at a superficial, surveying reading – it might be easy to overlook the beginning of the new poem. Yet, it challenges all plausibility that Pound would not have noticed later on that Fenollosa wrote a comment at the end of the first poem: “having come to conclusion,”⁴¹ apparently indicating the ending. Moreover, if Pound was unaware of the beginning of the new poem, it also entails that he, while doing his translations, did not attribute importance to the fact that the two poems are written in different form: the first in the so-called five-character form (five Chinese characters make up a line), the second in the seven-character form (seven characters in a line). Hardly can we also imagine that he should not have been taken aback by the radically different tone of the two poems. Moreover, as Kodama pointed out, Fenollosa jotted down a note under the title: “All this is name, or rather description of circumstances of production, instead of name.”⁴² Faithfully to Nagao Ariga’s (Fenollosa’s Japanese professor’s) awkward English, Fenollosa wrote “name” meaning “title.” Still, Pound was well acquainted with the literary tradition that the explication of the details of production appears either at the beginning, or at the end of a poem – like in Chinese poems. Should we presume that Pound could have been so utterly mistaken in a dozen of things simultaneously, without the least suspicion? I prefer to assume that the “notorious conflation” is rather due to some poetical consideration.⁴³ Since the whole volume contrasts the loud pageantry of the aristocracy (even in wartime) and the sullen pauperism of common people: I propose that the “River Song” is focused on these extremes (this issue will be settled in the next section).

To sum up, Pound’s tailoring of the texts could have aimed to juxtapose the worlds of the two Chinese poems: that of nature and art and that of vanity. To reach this end, he definitely needed the title of the second poem as a stanza, and the ending of the first poem as a criticism of the second unit, to express the vanity and fragility of the former by the latter.

2.3 Authorship

Concerning Barnstone’s third perspective, authorship, Pound developed a novel technique that we shall refer to as co-authorship. Hugh Kenner in his “Introduction” to Pound’s *Translations* grasped the essence of this method:

41. Quoted in Kodama, p. 229.

42. Quoted in Kodama, p. 229.

43. The consciousness of the technique can also be evidenced by recalling that Pound applied the same device in “Homage to Sextus Propertius,” where he melted two poems into one; for a more detailed explanation see Apter, p. 98.

A persona crystallizes a modus of sensibility in its context. It derives from an attempt to enter an unfamiliar world, develop in oneself the thoughts and feelings indigenous to that world, and articulate them in English. A translator, by extension, is a rendering of a modus of thought or feeling in its context after it has already been crystallized, by a Cavalcanti or a Rihaku.⁴⁴

As we have seen, for Pound translation did not mean a mechanical process in which the translator is an impersonal medium between two languages. On the contrary, he approached it as an alternative way for self-expression.

John W. Maerhofer, Jr. claims that an interpretative and an assimilative function are at work as the base processes of re-creation.⁴⁵ The first urges the poet-translator to internalise the state of mind of the original author. The second function, however, is the key factor to the appearance of the poet-translator's mind in the recreated poem. In Pound's case, however, the translator's personality does not obtrude in the poem; he rather puts on one of his numerous personae.⁴⁶ Maerhofer calls it the paradox of self-expression: Pound wants to realise his self-expression through masks.

The opening poem of the volume ("Song of the Bowmen of Shu," 189) can illustrate the appearance of a dominant foreign voice that can even surmount the original tone. In the original, "Song of the Bowmen of Shu" is an encouraging song written for soldiers at war. In Pound's adaptation, however, it became a Jeremiad-like lament, a definitely discouraging song. For example, Pound changed "tied" systematically into "tired" (189) as far as horses are concerned in the poem, giving the basis of mood. The line "That [*sic*] four horses are tied: they are very strong."⁴⁷ is adapted into "By heaven, his horses are tired" (189). Hence, interpretation is reversed in the line that went in Fenollosa's transliteration as "The generals are on their back, and the soldiers are by their side," (in Pound's version: "The generals are on them, the soldiers are by them," 189): it is not praise for braveness (that high ranked officers and com-

44. Hugh Kenner, "Introduction," in [Ezra Pound's] *Translations*, ed. Hugh Kenner (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 9–14, p. 11.

45. John W. Maerhofer, Jr., "Towards an Esthetic of Translation: An Examination of Ezra Pound's Translation Theory," *Paideuma* 29.3 (Winter 2000) 85–109.

46. As Pound acknowledged this in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*: "I continued [after a book of poems called *Personae*] in long series of translations, which were but more elaborate masks" (Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, p. 85).

47. Kodama, p. 211.

mon soldiers are fighting shoulder to shoulder) but accusation for lack of human feelings and tender sympathy (the generals can ride horses, while soldiers have to walk along). Pound apparently does not want to encourage soldiers to fight till death (among them a few of his close friends) but wants to express his sympathy.

Yet, it is rather rare that the undertone eventually supersedes the original tone. Mostly, the co-existence of voices characterises the poems in *Cathay*. Consequently, co-authored texts are often less homogeneous than their sources because undertones invented by the poet-translator that are discrepant with the primary atmosphere blur the solidity of the world view of the source text. In the next subsection, we shall study the emergence of such an undertone in “The River Song.”

The blending of the poems in “The River Song” has been outlined in the previous section. Re-structuring imposed consequences on authorship, too, because the compound provided new and immediate context for both previous texts. Both the differences between the Fenollosa⁴⁸ and Pound versions and the contextual relation of the two parts of “The River Song” will be taken into account.

At the beginning, sumptuousness, glittering and music are more intense in Pound’s poem than in Fenollosa’s line; compare for example: “jewel flute gold pipe instrument of wood sit both heads = both sides; Jeweled [*sic*] flute, and gold pipe, and (musicians) sitting in row on both sides”⁴⁹ with Pound’s line: “Musicians with jewelled flutes and with pipes of gold / Fill full the sides in rows” (190). The phrase “Fill full the sides in rows” implies much more musicians than Fenollosa’s transliteration. Sensual music, splendour, and rejoicing in gold and jewellery are accompanying the poet persona of the first part. Meanwhile, an undertone emerges in the middle part of Pound’s poem (right where Pound merged the two poems, lines 17–22) and makes the speaker reconsider his initial values. First, in brackets the reader encounters a self-reflective side-remark “(If glory could last forever / Then the waters of Han would flow northward.)” (190) which means, backward. This reminds the persona in the poem of the temporality of fame and how fast an author’s laurels wither. Afterwards, the narrator recalls a memory that reveals he is a paid poet (“awaiting an order-to-write,” 191) to entertain the Emperor. Contrasting the images of luxurious civilisation, nature utters the key word: “aimlessly” (191).⁵⁰ In the garden of the Emperor, the nightingales were singing aimlessly, without any hope of benefit, just for pleasure: “for the early wind, and the feel of it” (191), as a later line

48. Fenollosa’s version of “The River Song” is reproduced in Kodama, pp. 230–236.

49. Quoted in Kodama, pp. 230–231.

50. This is Pound’s invention (cf. Yip, p. 152).

puts it. This counterpoint incites the persona of the poem to admit the vanity of his ambitions and start an artistic purgation.

The middle part of the poem is a highly artistic description of nature, a very sensitive and emotional representation: in nature, the poet finds his true voice in solitary contemplation. Nature incorporates *ab ovo* all the beauty art can create – references to art forms can be found in lines 24–28:

The *purple* house and the *crimson* are full of Spring softness.
 South of the pond the willow-tips are *half-blue and bluer*,
 Their cords tangle in the mist, against the *brocade-like* palace.
Vine-strings a hundred feet long hang down from carved railings,
 And high over the willows, the fine birds sing to each other,
 and listen. . . (191)

Here the words “purple,” “crimson,” “half-blue and bluer” evoke visual art, painting, “brocade” may stand for crafts, while “strings,” in its secondary meaning related to musical instruments, would represent music, together with the subtle virtuosity of the line “Vine-strings a hundred feet long hang down from carved railings,” where the repetition of the nasal sounds [n] and [ŋ] anticipates the image of singing in the next line (191). Thus, nature is the source of all art, while it is also its product: the present depiction, the image of nature was conceived in and by poetry. Nature is hence overwhelmed by art: “Over a thousand gates, over a thousand doors are the sounds of spring singing” – but at this point the word “singing” recalls again the poet’s present miserable state and the repartee is coming in the form of a strikingly quick, declarative, almost cynical statement: “And the Emperor is at Ko” (191). The image of the ignorant Emperor juxtaposes the firmness of Nature: he, lacking the least artistic inclination, is *inspecting* flowers instead of admiring them, *looks at* the wing-flapping storks, and finally, *hears* the new nightingales. Art is merely flattering glitter, sheer entertainment, “to keep a drowsy Emperor awake” – as Yeats wrote in “Sailing to Byzantium.”⁵¹ In Pound’s poem, the garden is “full of new nightingales”: (191) swarms of ambitious poets are crowding to entertain the Emperor, to sing aimlessly, and the poet persona of the poem is present among them. The vanity of their art is acknowledged in the last two lines: “Their sound is mixed in this flute, / Their voice is in the twelve pipes here” (191).

In conclusion, the second part of the poem juxtaposes the world of the first part: their opposing values reveal the gap between the courtly parade of arts and the unaf-

51. W. B. Yeats, “Sailing to Byzantium” at <http://www.online-literature.com/yeats/781>.

fected inhabitancy of poetry in nature. Through the combination of two texts in “The River Song” and the invention and insertion of certain expressions, Pound introduced an undertone contrary to the original tone, indicating co-authoring. Thus a perceptible modification in register (e.g. intensive images, inserted words) and a crucially significant re-structuring (melting two poems) results in or is the means of creating an undertone, a token of co-authorship. The three aspects of Barnstone’s translation analysis are profoundly interwoven in any of Pound’s Chinese creative translations. The next section will study the interrelations and interaction of the three perspectives in “The River Merchant’s Wife: a Letter.”

2.4 “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a Letter”

In “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a Letter,” the interrelatedness of register, structure and authorship can be evidenced through a comparison of the original poem by Li Po in Fenollosa’s notes⁵² and Pound’s “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a Letter.”

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
 I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
 You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
 You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
 And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
 Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.
 At fourteen I married My Lord you.
 I never laughed, being bashful.
 Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
 Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
 I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
 Forever and forever and forever.
 Why should I climb the look out?

At sixteen you departed,
 You went into far Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
 And you have been gone five months.

52. All citations of Fenollosa’s notes and references to the original Chinese text of “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a Letter” are based on “Other Translations of ‘A River-Merchant’s Wife,’” in *Modern American Poetry*, ed. Cary Nelson, University of Illinois (20 October 2006) <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/m_r/pound/othertranslations.htm>.

The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.
 You dragged your feet when you went out.
 By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
 Too deep to clear them away!
 The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
 The paired butterflies are already yellow with August
 Over the grass in the West garden;
 They hurt me. I grow older.
 If you are coming down through the narrows of the river
 Kiang,
 Please let me know beforehand,
 And I will come out to meet you
 As far as Cho-fu-sa. (192–193)

Li Po's title was "The Song of Ch'ang-Kan," which in Fenollosa's Japanese reading of the Chinese text was transformed into "Chokanko" about which he explains that Chokan (Li Po's Ch'ang-Kan) is a "name of town/place" and "ko=uta=narrative song." Pound, however, discarded this title altogether, and called the poem "The River-Merchant's Wife: a Letter." The genre was thus also altered: an oral genre, the song of a community ("The Song of Ch'ang-Kan"), which does not have an addressee, was transformed into written communication using the word "letter" in the title: the poem thus gains a more personal perspective. Furthermore, since the original does not speak about a river in the title, Pound calls attention to an image invented as a complex psychological metaphor for the relationship between husband and wife. The river with its "swirling eddies" (in Li Po's poem: half-visible rocks under the surface of the river – a wonderful image for the cold and unmoveable threat; Pound's image has rather an emphasis on the depth of the problem) creates a feeling of uncertainty and hidden danger, while the "narrows of the river Kiang" suggests a sort of limitedness of possibilities. These assumptions are reinforced by other images and the undertone of the poem.

Concerning the persona of "The River-Merchant's Wife: a Letter," Robert Kern suggested an interpretation that would distinguish between two wives in the poem. According to him, the first wife, the one present also in Li Po's original is characterised by "her charming evocation of her own innocence as a child, her complete devotion to her husband, and her restrained assertion of feeling."⁵³ Pound allows the

53. Kern, p. 198.

second wife “to keep her self-effacing, ‘oriental’ manner but creates an undercurrent of critical feeling in his version that is apparently foreign to the original.”⁵⁴ In consequence of this critical undertone, she is removed from her former passion (“I desired my dust to be mingled with yours / Forever and forever and forever”) and expectations (e.g. expecting persistency: “Why should I climb the look out?”), and locked up in her bluntness. Yip’s previously discussed term, the “ironical play”⁵⁵ would be more appropriate here as the original tone and the emerging undertone in the translation start an ironic, though schizophrenic dialogue: the new persona mocks the naivety of the “oriental” wife.

There were two allusions to Chinese legends about faithful lovers (“I always had in me the faith of holding to pillars / why should I think of climbing the husband looking out terrace?” – Fenollosa) that got lost in the translation. Yu Zhang describes the first: “holding to the pillars” was based on the story of a man who promised a girl to wait for her under a bridge at a pillar. However, the maid was late in coming, and the tide was rising; the man clung to the pillar, and finally drowned, keeping his word.⁵⁶ The origin of the second legend (the “husband looking out terrace”) can be found in Sanehide Kodama’s essay: “According to one legend, a woman watching from the terrace for her husband’s return for many years was finally petrified.”⁵⁷ The advantage Pound took from the omission is that the question of being left alone does not even arise at the beginning of the poem, before the actual departure. Since the lovers of the legends had to pay with their life for their faithfulness, it is arguable that in Pound’s adaptation no suspicion about a tragic outcome appears before the departure of the husband.

A newly born imagery expressing cruelty can also be found in Pound’s poem, in the very first two lines. In Fenollosa’s notes the first line went as follows: “mistress, hair, first, cover, brow – My hair was at first covering my brows (Chinese method of wearing hair),” which became in Pound’s version “While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead.” Similarly in the second line, instead of Fenollosa’s plucking or “breaking flower,” which reflects an instinctive, ordinary, egotistic carelessness of children, Pound applied a phrase owing less innocence, rather an amount of intentional destruction: “pulling flowers” (the phrase most probably refers not to picking flowers but to pulling them up by the roots). These

54. Kern, pp. 200–201.

55. Yip, pp. 128–138.

56. Yu Zhang, “Ezra Pound’s ‘The River Merchant’s Wife: A Letter’: On Mistranslation of the Two Allusions,” *Paideuma* 27 (1998), 185–194, p. 188.

57. Kodama, p. 221.

images of cruelty and force correspond closely with the break in the love of the woman: her passion is also cut straight across.

The first line foreshadows another tendency of the poem. The abundance of vertical and horizontal lines in the images support the sense of being locked in, of being hindered by barriers in the territory of marriage. All the three dimensions gain an additional meaning by representing the lack of possibilities. First, there are images that are concerned with the vertical limitedness: "bamboo stilts," "Two small people," "Why should I climb the look out?," "leaves fall," and "lowering my head, I looked at the wall." This last one is already a mixture of horizontal and vertical limitations: lowering her head diminishes her vertical angle of seeing, while the wall limits her sight in a horizontal way. The first line ("While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead") was another example for the horizontal segmentation of space, and so is the gate. The very ending of the poem is also a note on spatial limits: "As far as Cho-fu-sa." Limits of space are metaphorical representations of the impossibility of their reunion, of their being locked in the self. She is a bird not to escape from her cage, unlike the more venturesome lady of "The Beautiful Toilet." In both poems, imagery creates the barriers surrounding the women, summoning an undertone; furthermore, the parallelism of the two situations initiates a dialogue between them.

The hierarchy between the later husband and the wife is established also visually by the first appearance of the boy: on bamboo stilts. Afterwards, he walked about the girl's seat (who must have been sitting), being higher again. Finally, when his wife wants to get to know whether he is coming, she has to climb up the look-out tower: her desire for height would make her being elevated onto the level of her husband, so that she could get information about her Lord.

The third stanza confronts the wife's former passionate, mature love for her husband and the first sorrow upon the inevitable departure, and reveals the frightening gap between the two. The wife in Pound's adaptation is a flesh-and-blood, erotic woman, burning with love, rather a traditional character of a lover than a wife ("I desired my dust to be mingled with yours / Forever and forever and forever"), while her Chinese counterpart has a rather restrained love of an ideal, abstract, well-behaving wife ("And so I desired to live and die with you even after death, I wish to be with you even as dust, and even as ashes – partially together / I always had in me the faith of holding to pillars," Fenollosa's notes read). The modifications Pound applied in this stanza reveal that the wife in the Poundian version is rather self-concerned, while her Chinese counterpart is more worried about her husband. Sanehide Kodama accounts for the differences in detail: "The young wife in Pound's version says the monkeys cry

over the head, not his. [While Fenollosa's transliteration was "Monkeys cry sorrowful above heaven," referring to the "swirling eddies" where the husband is.] She does not give directions to her husband or warn him not to touch the rock 'in the fifth month.' But, instead, she laments that he has been gone 'for five months.'⁵⁸ Thus, a passionate, slightly egotistic woman is left alone in Pound's poem, not a persevering, humble wife: the latter is more likely to feel only loneliness and pain, as she does in the Chinese version, while the former shall cry out in grief and disillusionment.

The last stanza has the most references to hidden disappointment. Its second line has a postpositioned phrase, "the moss is grown, the different mosses," which does not have equivalent in Fenollosa's text ("[the footsteps] one by one have been grown up into green moss"). Emphasising that the mosses are not simply green but she observed their being varied in colour (note the stress put on it by its syntactic position) suggests that she must have spent lots of time staring at the last reminder of his. These are "too deep to clear them away." Concerning symbolic reading, Pound gave the clue himself to the understanding of his poetry. As he wrote in his "A Retrospect":

I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man use 'symbols' he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude; so that a sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom, for instance, a hawk is a hawk.⁵⁹

We may conclude that the mosses are "perfect symbols" in the sense they do not "obtrude" but *may* add something to the interpretation. While in the Chinese context it is rather a domestic talk about the state of their home and about the lack of his presence, in the Poundian net of allusions it is pure disillusionment.

The next lines include very subtle hints for ageing, early mortality, all present in the version by Fenollosa, too ("Fallen leaves autumn wind early," "8th month butterflies yellow"⁶⁰ – before time came, they are changing their colours, "West garden" – where the sun disappears from the earth at the end of the day). Afterwards, as if

58. Kodama, p. 223.

59. Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect," in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (London: Faber, 1966), p. 9.

60. It was Fenollosa's misunderstanding of the last character of the 23rd line that caused the appearance of the word "yellow" – originally, it was "come." Fortunately, the appearance of "yellow" could form a sharp contrast to the blue plums in the first stanza, emphasizing the progress of time and the loss of the innocent old days together, as Wenxin Li pointed out ("The Li Po that Ezra Pound Knew," *Paideuma* 27.1 [Spring 1998] 81–91, p. 84).

juxtaposing Pound's dramatic line "They hurt me. I grow older," both the original and Fenollosa's notes are quite talkative (talkative enough even for two lines), which immediately dissolves the sorrow at least partially. However, the modern version's wife is alone not only physically but also spiritually, left in the trap of her one-person marriage.

The farewell of the letter is formed according to these feelings: the Chinese wife's impatience and insistent love cannot be hidden ("For I will go out to meet, not saying that the way be far," Fenollosa writes), while the other one cannot pretend generous eagerness about his returning, either ("And I will come out to meet you / As far as Cho-fu-sa").⁶¹

To sum up, the invention and intensification of images (e.g. images of cruelty, creation of barriers, indication of hierarchy and symbolic natural images) contributes to the appearance of an undertone of disillusionment notably. Similarly, restructuring devices (e.g. replacing the title, omitting allusions and initiating a covert dialogue with other texts by means of the invented imagery) also support the effect of the imagery: they stress personal involvement and sharpen the contrast between the two sides of the speaker's personality. Consequently, the undertone of the co-authored text pervades all aspects of the poem, and is inseparable from the subtleties and alterations of register and structure.

3 Conclusion

Following Willis Barnstone's threefold system for translation analysis, this paper has outlined the major innovations of Ezra Pound's creative translations in *Cathay*. Examining the register of the texts firstly, we demonstrated that the intensification and invention of images characterises the discussed poems, which tendency is a consequence of Pound's preoccupation with the transmission of artistic qualities instead of a verbatim rendering of the source text. "Leave-Taking Near Shoku" has served as an

61. Since the Chinese text ("each other, welcome, not, say, far" in Fenollosa's translation) might be interpreted the other way round too, as David Hinton did ("I am not saying I'd go far to meet you, / no further than Ch'ang-feng Sands" (Li Po, *Selected Poems*, trans. David Hinton [New York: New Directions, 1996], p. 13), it would be arguable that Pound simply accepted that the wife does not want to put much effort in greeting her husband. However, Pound used only Fenollosa's notes, which accepted without ambiguity the first version of the text, thus we can conclude that it was Pound's alteration of the source to make it fit for his conception.

illustration for this feature of the adaptations. Nevertheless, as later discussion also has noted, “The River Song,” “The Beautiful Toilet” and “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a Letter” also utilise the potentials in the modification of images substantially.

Secondly, alterations in the structure of both the volume and the poems have been investigated. Pound established dialogic relations between texts, enhancing the coherence of the volume and providing immediate context for the poems. Another device of restructuring in *Cathay* is ellipsis. The structure of both “Leave-Taking Near Shoku” and “The Beautiful Toilet” is defined by this poetic tool. Afterwards, a radical re-structuring method has been analysed in “The River Song” where two separate poems were fused.

Thirdly, the notion of co-authorship has been invented to denote the special case of Poundian translations. Undertones that cannot be traced back to the source texts and that blur the homogeneous world of the original poems have been identified as markers of co-authorship. “The River Song” has been taken as a case-study for the problem. In extreme cases, the undertone can even supersede the original tone of the poem, as shown in “Leave-Taking Near Shoku” and “Song of the Bowmen of Shu.”

Lastly, to prove that the above tendencies of Pound’s re-creations are thoroughly intertwined, their simultaneous presence and interrelations have been exemplified in “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a Letter.” Imagery of cruelty, hierarchy and separation invaded into the former realm of naivety, creating a strong critical undertone for the speaker’s personality. Re-structuring methods (omission and establishment of dialogic relations with other poems on the basis of parallel imagery) also enhanced the effect of the inventions of images. Therefore, imagery and re-structuring, mutually supporting each other, introduced the undertone of disillusionment in the poem.