

Waley or Pound? The Dynamics of Genre in Translation¹

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One of the most frequently posed questions by teachers of world literature who are innocent of Chinese is, "Who is the better translator? Arthur Waley or Ezra Pound?" Like so many interesting questions, it is unanswerable, not because there are no answers (partisans can be found on both sides), but because as a question, it is — as the philosophers would say — ill-phrased. There is the obvious but necessary need to ask first: on which poem is Waley's or Pound's version to be preferred? There are also the prior questions: what does one mean by "translation?" What criteria are assumed in a judgment of value in translation? What can be learned from these versions and by their comparison, either about the original or about the process of translating? These are the questions that must first be addressed, before one can ask meaningfully the question: Who is the better translator? Waley or Pound?

These prior questions — on the ontology of translation (what is it?), on its criteria of canonicity (how does one judge it?), and on what might be called its heuristics (how does one teach from it? what can be learned by studying them?) — are by no means settled, nor can they be definitively resolved. Yet, these questions are worth exploring, for by asking them, we will be able to see the larger issues implicit in the Waley or Pound choice, which illuminate not only the generics of translation, but the dynamics of language and culture, and the methodology of cross-cultural comparison.

The text that attracted both Waley and Pound is, of course, the *Shih Ching* 詩經, the ancient Chinese classic which is itself surrounded by complex and interesting questions of historicity, genre, and canonicity. Large hermeneutical questions about this work can be asked, and voluminously answered, but we will resist the temptation to rehearse that scholarly scenario.² For the purposes of this discussion, one posits the original

existence of these works, not as texts, but as songs, paeans, celebrations, laments, memorials "composed" — either orally or in writing — by ancient peoples or persons unknown, who lived sometime before the reputed lifetime of Confucius, whose dates are 551-479 B.C.³

The typologies of translation are numerous. Distinctions have been drawn between translations and imitations, between translations and "versions"; these distinctions have also been denied: some argue that all translations are, in some ways, imitations, and that a translation is inevitably a version.⁴ But these are author-determined classifications and do not take into account the factor so often neglected in translation studies: the audience. Just as with the assumption that the original is one and inviolate, so also it has been assumed — but with far less warrant — that the audience for translations of a work is and should be one and the same. A look at literal translations, imitations, adaptations, etc., will show that their ontological differences can be adduced only if one examines the intended, or implied, audience. A literal version, for example, is not intended for a bilingual reader: he has no need of word-for-word equivalents, and he would not grasp the meaning of the original work in such a mechanical way.⁵ Nor is a literal version intended for the general reader: he does not know the original and is not likely to appreciate the "accuracy" of the rendering; he does not appreciate the clumsiness of word-for-word versions since it disappoints his expectations of reading literature. Literal versions — or "trots" in academic parlance — are actually aids to the student of the language in which the original is transmitted. Imitations, on the other hand, are the more appreciated when the reader is thoroughly familiar with the original. Pope's imitation of Juvenal and of Homer, Dryden's of Ovid and Virgil, Pound's of Propertius are to be savored by a reader who is assumed to be conversant with the originals in Greek and Latin. The translations by Edward Fitzgerald of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, the renderings of the Confucian Classics by James Legge, and the English versions of the Bible dating from at least the Tyndale-Coverdale rendering, on the other hand, were directed at audiences who were *not* expected to know the original: readers who — with only negligible exceptions — could not, and were not expected to read, Persian, Chinese, Aramaic, or *koine* Greek.

The differences in intended audience seem crucial in creating a useful, and historically accurate, genealogy of translation. In another study, I characterized the first type of translation as "co-eval," i.e., designating works that subsume the original as a reference in the "imitation";⁶ the

second type I have called “surrogate” translations, where the reader is expected to be innocent of the language in which the original was written.⁷ The third type, which includes literal versions, and “trots”, is directed at a reader who is assumed to be neither wholly innocent of the original nor entirely familiar with it. I have characterized these translations as “contingent,” because they are neither self-sufficient like “surrogate translations,” where the original is effectively absent, nor self-sufficient like “co-eval” translations, where the spirit and meaning of the original is effectively present. The reader of “contingent” translations is the student of the language, who is not always — alas! — a student of literature. Texts and editions for this readership have proliferated in recent generations. These versions, with their accompanying linguistic apparatus and the density of their annotation and exegesis will often bewilder the general reader.⁸ They are sometimes presented in a “metalanguage” comprehensible neither to the speaker of the original language nor to the native speaker of the target language untrained in the specialized discourse. In the case of translations from the Chinese, these may be familiar as “sinological” translations. Transliterations are but one example of this “metalanguage,” particularly obvious in non-alphabetic languages, where the native speaker is often an unreliable source, since he is spared the burden of “romanizing” words he knows in non-transliterated orthography.⁹

To clarify the differences between the three categories of translation, we propose the following “ontological grid”:

<i>target text</i>	<i>source text</i>	
untranslated works	explicitly absent	implicitly absent
surrogate translations	explicitly present	implicitly absent
contingent translations	explicitly absent	implicitly present
co-eval translations	explicitly present	implicitly present

The characterization of untranslated works as both explicitly absent and implicitly absent might seem a banal insight, but it reflects an important lesson of epistemology, for it underlines the difference between realizing and not realizing that something is missing, and it reminds us of the crucial importance between self-conscious ignorance and blithe ignorance. In trans-

lation, it represents the difference between *knowing* about the existence of an important work in another language that is as yet untranslated, and *not knowing* about it.¹⁰

“Surrogate” translations presuppose the inaccessibility of the original for its readers, and the effective non-existence of the source text. In this perspective, there is the possibility of a certain linguistic chauvinism: a work does not exist until it is translated in the significant target language. The practice, alas, of a number of departments of English that teach “continental” works in their English versions without any consideration of their pre-existence in the source language, is a lamentable confusion of cultural as well as literary identities, and stems from a dangerously ignorant linguistic provinciality, akin to the ardent belief of many Southern Baptists in America that the Bible was written in English.¹¹

On the other hand, “contingent” translations show by their very impenetrability and cumbersomeness that *only* the original exists. If “surrogate” translations are often misused by the language provincial, “contingent” translations are as often abused by the language snob. Translations will be denigrated as impostures and impossibilities. Anything less than the *ipsissima verbum* in the original tongue is viewed as at best an irrelevancy, and at worst a desecration. But ironically, there is a language provinciality here as well, for the language snob fails to realize the importance of translations for the very source culture he admires: where would Buddhism in China be without translations from the Sanskrit and the Pali? Where would Christianity be without the translations from the semitic languages and from ancient Greek? Since Babel, presumably, few if any languages have developed *ex nihilo*, but rather as variants and translations from other languages. The hoariness of ancient tongues, whether Sanskrit, Chinese, Hebrew, Greek or Latin, should not blind us to their crucially derivative character.

“Co-eval” translations are the presage of what might be called the ultimate post-Babelian future, where everyone knows everyone else’s language. The paradigm of the future is not so much the “melting pot” model, where all languages and cultures become one bland pabulum, but a pluralistic “harmony of flavors” where each ethnic ingredient retains its character yet contributes to a delectable whole. “Co-eval” translations might start with the self-translations of Vladimir Nabokov of Russian into English (and a few works written in English into Russian) and of Samuel Beckett from French into English and English into French. Certainly, both

versions “co-exist” in these translations; in some cases it might be hard to discern which is artistically the more original, however easy it might be to determine originality in terms of chronological priority.

These generic characterizations are not meant to be rigidly categorical: one should not expect in every instance to determine unequivocally whether a given translation is “surrogate,” “contingent,” or “co-eval,” though in most instances these distinctions will prove useful.¹² These three categories are not to be thought of as equally exclusionary: a “surrogate” translation and a “co-eval” translation will address mutually exclusive classes of readers: one cannot be both ignorant of an original *and* familiar with it. But the “contingent” category is more fluid: the student of the original, and the original language, can read with profit both a “surrogate” version and a “co-eval” one, though they are less relevant to his interests. All three classes of translation are, of course, relevant to the student of translation.

With these categorical and generic classifications in place, we can now address the Waley-Pound question. In judging value for each of these “genres” of translation, different criteria will be applied. “Surrogate” translations will be judged solely according to their impact on the target language reader: whether it piques sufficient interest to ensure the survival of the work in a new language. Fitzgerald’s *Rubaiyyat* and the King James Version of the Bible are prime examples of successful “surrogate” translations. Accuracy or fidelity to the original text is not a crucial factor.¹³ “Contingent” translations are to be judged by the degree of usefulness to the student: their purpose is to ease access for the non-native reader to the original. Readability is not a desideratum for these versions: Nabokov’s version of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* falls in this category, along with the almost impenetrable translations, with their brackets, extended footnotes, linguistic mutations that characterize many an academic rendering. Co-eval translations answer to perhaps the most stringent requirements: they must succeed as literary works in their own right, and — in some measure — satisfy those who are familiar with the original. The remarkable translations of Gabriel Garcia-Marquez by Gregory Rabassa, and both Arthur Waley’s and Edward Seidensticker’s of *The Tale of Genji*, each in their own way, measure up to the target as well as the source language audience.¹⁴

From this perspective, let us examine songs from the *Shih Ching* in the Pound and Waley versions. Let us start with *Shih Ching*, #40. Here is Pound:

North gate, sorrow's edge,
purse kaput, nothing to pledge.

I'll say I'm broke
none knows how, heaven's stroke.

Government work piled up on me

When I go back where I lived before,
my dear relatives slam the door.
This is the job put up on me,
Sky's "which and how"?
or say: destiny.

Government work piled up on me.

When I come in from being out
my home-folk don't want me about;
concrete fruit of heaven's tree
not to be changed by verbosity.

It would be easy to dismiss this version as a strained attempt to create a "literary" poem where none existed. Pound's eclectic diction, mixing the intellectual slang of "purse kaput" with the homey "my home-folk don't want me about" and the abstract nominalizations, "Sky's 'which and how'" and "concrete fruit of heaven's tree" presents a pastiche that is awkward and unnatural. The version is obviously an attempt at a "surrogate" version, for Pound ignores the student learning the source language and the reader familiar with the original. Pound makes no effort to accommodate the original meaning: the translation reads like a poetic exercise verging toward, but failing to achieve, originality. The vestiges of the refrain in the original, which consists of three lines, occurring at the end of each of the three stanzas, is conflated by Pound into one line – "Government work piled up on me."

What Pound has tried to do is to compose a successful poem to be read rather a lyric to be sung: the texture of his language is contrived and cerebral, whereas the original is closer to visceral utterance. Pound makes only a token attempt to preserve the balladic form of the Chinese (the conflated refrain is repeated only once), and there is no attempt to preserve the theme and variation pattern in the original.

Arthur Waley's version preserves more of the original structure: there

is, at least, a line-for-line correspondence to the original:

I go out at the northern gate:
 Deep is my grief.
 I am utterly poverty-stricken and destitute;
 Yet no one heeds my misfortunes.
 Well, all is over now,
 No doubt it was Heaven's doing.
 So what's the good of talking about it?

The king's business came my way;
 Government business of every sort was put on me.
 When I came in from outside,
 The people of the house all turned on me and scolded me.
 Well, it's over now.
 No doubt it was Heaven's doing,
 So what's the good of talking about it?

The king's business was all piled up on me;
 Government business of every sort was laid upon me;
 When I came in from outside,
 The people of the house all turned upon me and abused me.
 Well, it's all over now.
 No doubt it was Heaven's doing,
 So what's the good of talking about it?

In this version, the formulaic structure of the original is manifest: each variation on the line is preserved; each verbatim repetition carefully duplicated. Clearly, Waley had the original in mind, not merely as a catalyst for poetic inspiration, but as a form, a content, to be preserved as much as possible in English. The student of the language, and of the *Shih Ching*, finds these renderings useful as an aid to the original text. Yet, there is something awry here. The Waley version is verbose and tedious in a way that the original, with its basically four-word, four-syllable lines, is not in Chinese. (Each stanza has seven lines; most of the lines contain four word-syllables in Chinese, except for line four, which has only three characters, and line two in the second two stanzas, which has six characters: see Appendix).

Clearly there are no gross inaccuracies in the Waley, at least at the level of the individual line, though the result would be hard to recognize

as poetry. Waley's version tries neither to replace the original or to vie with it: it is a serviceable "contingent" translation that can be relied upon to render at least the sense of the original plaint. Yet, "contingent" translations, when they are successful, are manifestly *unsuccessful*: they create a void which can only be filled by reading the original.¹⁵ They are accurate without being satisfying: their value is contingent, and only in the access they provide to the original.

If these version by Pound and Waley were to be evaluated, one could say defensively that Pound attempted a "surrogate" translation but did not succeed; Waley provided a "contingent" translation, which succeeded within its generic limitations. Notice the failure adduced in the one case is not the same as the failure adduced in the other: Pound's translation fails because it is an inept piece of poetic writing, not because it is inaccurate; Waley's succeeds despite its slack verbosity because it effectively evokes the original: indeed, it almost compels the reader to consult the original. But the two are being judged on different criteria, because they proceed from entirely different premises.

Yet both versions are equally unsatisfactory in one respect: neither captures the vocative immediacy of the original expression which even two millenia of scholarly exegesis in Chinese have not quite managed to erase. These are intensely commonplace sentiments, with a universality which the song does not try to hide: the diction is simple, almost visceral in its directness; there is nothing here that smacks of the studio, of belles-lettres or of scholarship. At the risk of self-exposure, let me share a version which I've developed to render some of the disarming accessibility of the original. The title of this version might be, and has been, used as the title of a popular song:

That's Life

Can't work there any more —
 Now I'll be poor.
 No one knows
 All my woes.
 What's the use —
 That's life!
 What's the point?

Working in a bureaucracy —
 All kinds of work piled up on me.

They played fast and loose,
 And really cooked my goose.
 What's the use —
 That's life!
 What's the point?

Slaving in a bureaucracy —
 All kinds of work were dumped on me.
 They found every excuse
 To cook my goose.
 What's the use —
 That's life!
 What's the point?

I make no brief for this version as anything more than an illustration of the direct sentiments, disarmingly expressed, in the original. What this version lacks, of course, is the “hoariness” that the original text has acquired: twenty-five centuries of scholarly commentary cannot help but leave their mark. Yet, few would deny the original folkloric provenance of these words; few would refute the fact, even if they occasionally forget it, that this is a poem from the section of the *Shih Ching*, entitled “Airs of the States,” a section traditionally regarded as a collection of songs from the people reflecting their complaints, miseries, joys and sorrows, which was intended to serve as a “mirror for magistrates.”

Pound's version of *Shih Ching* #75 is nothing short of an embarrassment: one would never have guessed from it that a simple iovelorn lyric was the inspiration. Even allowing for the traditional allegory, commonplace in Confucian commentaries, of interpreting the neglected and unrequited girl as the minister neglected by the emperor, Pound's version is far-fetched:

Live up to your clothes,
 we'll see that you get new ones.
 You do your job,
 we'll bring our best food to you 'uns.

If you're good as your robes are good
 We'll bring you your pay and our best food.

Nothing too good, bigosh and bigob
 For a bureaucrat who will really attend to his job.

The jazzy colloquialisms, the brash diction, the inflated rhetoric represent Pound's inventiveness out of control: it is creativity without a critical conscience: fecundity without discrimination. How far this departs from the poetry in the original can be seen in a comparison with Waley's version:

How well your black coat fits!
Where it is torn I will turn it for you.
Let us go to where you lodge,
And there I will hand your food to you.

How nice your black coat looks!
Where it is worn I will mend it for you.
Let us go to where you lodge,
And there I will hand your food to you.

How broad your black coat is!
Where it is worn I will alter it for you.
Let us go to where you lodge
And there I will hand your food to you.

Waley leaves out the line-ending vocalizer — 兮 *hsi* — which marks the ballad, a “heigh ho,” “tra-la-la” insertion to fill out the line or to end with emphasis, but, on the whole, his version reflects the simplicity and poignancy of the original. There are many such lyrics in the *Shih Ching*, the pure and unadorned expression of folk sentiment, originally sung communally, perhaps antiphonally.¹⁶ Pound's version smacks of false rhetoric, the sophisticated condescension of a wordsmith mimicking the sounds of the populace. Waley's rendering is more modest, and given the modest posture of the persona in the song, more appropriate in tone. Pound's “surrogate” version misfires; Waley's “contingent” version is prosaic, but it preserves some of the spare abjectness of the original. Note also the strident, imperative tone of Pound's rendering, so at odds with the deferential elegance of most traditional Chinese poetry.

Shih Ching #90 is a perfect instance of the theme-and-variation ballad form (see Appendix). There are three stanzas of four lines each, and four words (thus four syllables) in each line. In the first line, the first two words are the same in every stanza; in the second, again, the first two words are the same; the third line in each stanza is identical; and in the last line, only the last word is changed from stanza to stanza. The song is an almost

abstract design, with no internal progression, and what appears to be random variation. It conforms to a common ballad formula, where limited demands are put on the invention of the singers. The repetitions are the heart of the poem, an obvious vestige of its oral origins. One of the problems, so often glossed over in discussions of translation, is not merely the difficulty of translating from one language to another, but of translating from oral to written discourse. The difference between script as phonetic transcription – the case with Indo-European languages, and script as ideogram – the case with Chinese – further exacerbates the difficulties. Repetition in an oral mode has a different value from repetition in a written or printed mode (which is why refrains of songs in printed texts are not repeated verbatim, but are abbreviated in one way or another). The same words in the same positions read in a text, without the accompaniment of music, is boring; as lyrics in a song, in a refrain, the same words elicit an incremental pleasure. The differences become obvious when we see Waley's "contingent" version, for – faithful as it tries to be, the result is boring and lifeless:

Wind and rain, chill, chill!
 But the cock crowed kikeriki.
 Now that I have seen my lord,
 How can I fail to be at peace?

Wind and rain, oh, the storm!
 But the cock crowed kukeriku
 Now that I have seen my lord,
 How can I fail to rejoice?

Wind and rain, dark as night,
 The cock crowed and would not stop.
 Now that I have seen my lord,
 How can I any more be sad?

The first line includes a error common among translators of Chinese: the term *ch'i-ch'i* 淅淅 is a onomatopoeic compound, connoting cold and chill, like the shivering sound, created by the doubled frontal spirant; in connotation it is comparable to English "Brrr!" Waley wrongly translates each member of the compound as a separate word, yielding "... chill, chill." He preserves the phonetics of the doubled frontal spirant, but he violates the phonemic unity of the onomatopoeic compound. And he resorts to

an interesting device to render the onomatopoeia of the *chieh-chieh* 啾啾 (archaic *ts'ier*) and the *chiao-chiao* 膠膠 (archaic *klög*) in the second line of the first two stanzas respectively: he borrows from Japanese, and provides Japanese onomatopoeia — *kikeriki/kukeriku* — in an English translation of a Chinese poem!

Pound is sensitive to the preponderance of repetition in the text, and sensitive to its potential dullness on the page, so his version is a free-wheeling recreation that preserves the repetition in more palatable ways — at the level of imagery rather than at the lexical level, but even here he varies the lexical form: “wind and rain,” *feng-yü* 風雨 he renders alternatively: “. . . wind, and the rain,” “. . . wind and the rain,” “Wind, rain. . .;” “cock crows,” *chi-ming* 鷄鳴 he renders: “cock crow,” “the cock crows and crows,” “the cock’s never-ending cry.” Pound adapts an oral lyric into a readable text, converting its verbatim repetitions to phonemic variants.

Cold wind, and the rain,
Cock crow, he is come again,
my ease.

Shrill wind and the rain
and the cock crows and crows,
I have seen him, shall it suffice
as the wind blows?

Wind, rain and the dark
as it were dark of the moon,
What of the wind, and the cock’s never-ending cry;

Together
again
he and I.

Pound has composed a version that “sits” better on the page than either the original or its more literal translations, as a text to be read rather than as a song to be sung. It replaces the ancient oral Chinese song with a modern American poetic text; one is surrogate for the other.

A more successful surrogate version, which relates to the original *Shih Ching* poem not as a copy, nor as counterpart and correlative, but as variant to theme, is #143 (see Appendix). The original folk song is a love-plaint, full of longing and almost inarticulate desire: it is pure lyric, with the

less bright than she the moon's colleague
that is so fair,

of yet such transient grace,
at ease, undurable, so all my work is vain
torn with this pain.

Pound notes, more in satisfaction than in apology, "A few transpositions, but I think the words are all in the text." Yet, a reader familiar with the original poem is not likely to recognize the original in this rendering. Several important aspects of the original are missing in Pound's version. First, he chooses an implicitly male "I" persona whose object of desire is female; the Chinese, by leaving the subject unstated, is ambiguous on this point. Second, his tone is leisurely, contemplative, studied, and discriminating ("less fair than she," "of yet such transient grace," "at ease, undurable"); his syntax is contorted and complex ("less bright than she the moon's colleague"); the tone in the original is urgent, breathless, scarcely articulate, an utterance whose aspirations (in both senses) are reinforced by the repetition of the balladic line-ending *hsi* 兮. The original is pure evocation, simple apostrophe, with little or no predication. On another occasion, I have considered several of Pound's versions of the *Shih Ching* which, though different from the original in significant ways, yet bear comparison with them. Indeed, they succeed not only with the reader innocent of the original: those familiar with the original have reason to marvel as well.¹⁷ His version of *Shih Ching* #23 ("Lies a dead deer on yonder plain") ranks with his "River Merchant's Wife: A Letter," his translation of a ballad by Li Po published almost forty years earlier, as an instance of a successful "co-eval" translation, one that can be appreciated not only for its own literary value, but also as an adjunct to the original. Waley's version conveys some of the chaste simplicity in the original lyric: an expression of feral innocence, of virginity both proud and vulnerable:

In the wild there is a dead doe;
With white rushes we cover her.
There was a lady longing for the spring;
A fair knight seduced her.

In the wood there is a clump of oaks,
And in the wilds a dead deer
With white rushes well bound;

There was a lady fair as jade.

'Heigh, not so hasty, not so rough;
Heigh, do not touch my handkerchief.
Take care, or the dog will bark.'

Waley's rendering of "longing for the spring" is perfect for the Chinese expression, *huai ch'un* 懷春, which suggests the stirrings of sexual desire. In this connection, Waley's choice of "lady" is perhaps not so felicitous, since that word suggests someone more experienced than the virgin in the poem (the original is *nü* 女 "girl") – "maiden" would have been better. Nor is Waley's rendering of *yu* 誘 (to entice, seduce, tempt) in the past tense very well judged. For it is clear from the poem that the seduction is in process: it is potential, not yet achieved; the action involved is indicative, not perfective. The brilliance of the imagery is the conjunction of the image of the dead doe, and the imminent loss of the girl's virginity. Waley's penultimate line is disastrously irrelevant and non-sensical: "Heigh, do not touch my handkerchief;" the word in question is *shui* 幌, which is the sash women use to wrap their robes around them, and therefore an extremely crucial and functional article of clothing.

Pound's rendering captures both the imagery and the dramatic situation with flawless resourcefulness:

Lies a dead deer on yonder plain
whom white grass covers,
A melancholy maid in spring
is luck
for
lovers.

Where the scrub elm skirts the wood,
be it not in white mat bound,
as a jewel flawless found,
dead as doe is maidenhood,

Hark!
Unhand my girdle-knot,
stay, stay, stay
or the dog

may
bark.

The insistent “stay, stay, stay” at the close is a *trouvaille*, for it succinctly preserves the ambivalent tone of entreaty and protest in the poem. Good as the poem may be in Chinese, a reader of the original can only delight at Pound’s rendering, for he now has access to two poems that – “coevally” – interpret the same experience: each of them creates its own voice, and preserves a memorable moment.

We can now attempt an answer to the question “Who is the better translator? Waley or Pound” by rephrasing it into another question: “For whom is Pound or Waley the better translator?” The student of Chinese will find Waley generally the more reliable; the student of poetry will often find Pound the more interesting. Waley may be limp and laborious, but he never falls into the meretricious or the bombastic. Pound, on the other hand, may be uneven, but some of his versions achieve poetry in a way that Waley never does. Where Waley is safe, Pound is inspired. In contemplating the comparison, one is reminded of a more famous comparison, the one Johnson made of Dryden and Pope. The parallels between the two comparisons are not exact, but there are some similarities. Of Pound, it could be said, as Johnson did of Dryden: “Pound’s performances were always hasty . . . he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave.” It might be said of Pound and Waley that “of Pound’s fire the blaze is brighter, of Waley’s the heat is more regular and constant. Pound often surpasses expectation, and Waley never falls below it.” However, one must be careful not to force a false equivalence of comparisons: if we can characterize Pound, as Johnson did of Dryden, that he “is read with frequent astonishment,” we cannot with equal justice characterize Waley, as Johnson did of Pope, that he may be read “with perpetual delight.”

Waley produces “contingent” translations of unerring if often bland good taste. Pound produces “surrogate” translations of variable quality, ranging from misjudged exercises in failed rhetoric to superlative recreations with a life of their own. Pound invariably attempted “surrogate” translations, versions that addressed an audience that would be content with *his* view of the original.¹⁸ Waley’s posture was somewhat ambivalent: he often spared the reader the scholarly apparatus that he was familiar with, yet he

was modest about the literary character of these translations, going to such lengths as renumbering the *Shih Ching* poems according to subject matter to facilitate reference by the student interested in anthropology and content analysis. In the preface to the Second Edition (1960), Waley indicated as his intended audience "Anyone using my book for documentary purposes, that is to say, for the study of comparative literature, folklore, or the like . . ." ¹⁹ Waley translated to show the intrinsic or extrinsic value of the originals: hence, his versions were "contingent" on their value. Where Pound translated for an audience of general readers, Waley addressed an audience of students and scholars.

The audience for translation can be categorized into three distinct and decisive groups: the monolingual, the incipiently bilingual, and the bilingual. "Surrogate" translations accommodate the first; "contingent" translations the second; and "co-eval" translations attract the third. Most teachers of world literature (Waley would have called them teachers of comparative literature) depend on "surrogate" translations. An intelligent response to the question "Who is the better translator? Waley or Pound?" — like so many questions in so many fields in the modern period, from relativity theory to narratology — reverses the focus of inquiry, turns both telescope and microscope back at the viewer. Instead of determining what the *object* of study is, these disciplines ask, "who is subject conducting the inquiry?" ²⁰ "From what the vantage point is the object perceived?" "Whose point of view is being subsumed by the question?" Translating these concerns to the current theory and practice of world literature, one must convert the question "What is world literature?" to "Which worlds are in us, who study world literature?" "Is there really any such thing as 'non-Western' literature, or is that denomination merely a reflection of Western ethnocentricity?" When we ask the question, "Waley or Pound?" we are — whether we realize it or not — asking a profoundly relevant question about ourselves. ²¹

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at a Summer Humanities Institute on The Theory and Teaching of World Literature at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, on July 7, 1987; portions were offered to the Translation Panel in the Fifth Quadrennial International Comparative Literature Conference in the Republic of China, Tamkang University, Taiwan, on August 10, 1987.
2. For a recent survey of these issues, see Pauline Yu, "Collections, Canons, and Classical Chinese Poetry." paper presented to the Second Sino-American Symposium on

Comparative Literature, Princeton University, October 29-31, 1987.

3. The Confucian character of the traditional interpretation of these texts is reflected in Pound's title for his versions: *The Confucian Odes: The Classic Anthology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954; New York: New Directions, 1959). Waley's version is more anthropological and emphasizes the folkloric character of the original: *The Book of Songs* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1937; New York: Grove Press, 1960).
4. See John Hollander, "Versions, Interpretations, and Performances" in *On Translation*, edited by Reuben Brower (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959; New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) for an analysis of the distinctions, and for the argument against the distinctions, consult Susan Basnett-McGuire, in her article, "Ways Through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts," *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, edited by Theo Hermans (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), pp. 87-102, especially p. 101.
5. Vladimir Nabokov might be cited as a perverse and eccentric exception, but his insistence of literal renderings no matter how awkward was a strategy calculated to remind the reader of the ultimate futility of translation, not to render the essence of the work through translation.
6. This genre has been a staple in traditional Western literature, when the reader could be expected to know the classical languages at least as well as his own; and it is no accident that imitations should have flourished during the Neo-Classical period, when classical virtues were emphasized.
7. These terms were developed in my essay, "Translation as Excommunication: Notes Toward an Intraworldly Poetics," presented before the first Sino-American Symposium on Comparative Literature, held in Beijing, August 31 to September 2, in Beijing, China.
8. Bilingual editions fall into this category, as does Stanley Burnshaw's widely used *The Poem Itself* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1960; Thomas Crowell, 1976). David Hawkes' *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), by its very title, addresses a student audience, and provides the original text, a transliteration, a paraphrase, and a line-for-line translation.
9. Chinese is particularly burdened in this respect: the speaker of English learning Chinese must be familiar with at least half a dozen transliteration systems (Wade-Giles, pin-yin, Guoyuu Romatzy, postal system, Yale, p'o-p'o-mo-ph'or).
10. Part of Japan's success in recent years may be attributed to the fact that she leads the world in translating into her native tongue works of all sorts from other languages.
11. These instances proliferate as more translations become available: a recent Ph. D. thesis, vaunted by its department as one of its best, addressed the topic, "Confucianism and Ezra Pound," yet no one conversant with Chinese, or knowledgeable in the voluminous Confucian tradition, or capable of examining Pound's understanding or misunderstandings of Chinese, was on the dissertation committee.
12. These categorizations seem to me more helpful with literary translations than other typologies that have been proposed. Katharina Reiss's ternary divisions — informative, expressive, or operative — are based on the source text, and cover a wider scope, distinguishing between say, text-books, belles-lettres, and advertisements. Juliane House's distinction between "overt" translations, where the reader is aware that what is being read is a translation, and "covert" translations, where

- the translation is "almost accidentally in a language other than the original," distinguishes between culturally sensitive productions (literature) and culturally less sensitive communications (mathematics, scientific documents), but doesn't sufficiently recognize reader-based conceptions of genre implicit in every literary translation. See Marilyn Gaddis Rose, "Translation Types and Conventions," in *Translation Spectrum: Essays in Theory and Practice*, edited by Marilyn Gaddis Rose (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), p. 32.
13. The voluminous scholarship since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (conveniently accessible in the multi-volume *Anchor Bible*) make the King James Version of the Bible no longer a reliable textual resource, but its literary value as a "surrogate" translation remains undiminished. Robert Graves, similarly, has exposed the linguistic errors in Fitzgerald's version of Rubaiyyat, and has supplied a more "accurate" version, yet he has not managed to replace Fitzgerald in providing a better "surrogate" rendering (see *The Original Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam*, A New Translation with Critical Commentaries by Robert Graves and Omar Ali-Shah (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1968). The authenticity of his original, indeed, of Fitzgerald's original, has been questioned; cf. L. P. Elwell-Sutton, in his translation of Ali Dashti's *In Search of Omar Khayyam* (New York: Columbia UP, 1977), as well as in *Delos*, No. 3-4 (1969-70), pp. 170-190.
 14. The two versions of the Genji pose a somewhat special case, however, since the original is not in contemporary Japanese, but in a language that few in Japan can read. Hence, there are no living source language speakers, and hence on truly bilingual readers of the Genji. It has often been observed that the Japanese resort to Waley's translation (and now doubtless, Seidensticker's) more often even than to the "translations" of the Genji into modern Japanese in the versions by, among others, Yosano Akiko or Tanizaki Junichiro.
 15. Renato Poggioli's dictum is: "Artistic translation presupposes... both the ideal presence of the original, and its physical absence."
 16. Marcel Granet, in his *Fêtes et chansons de la Chine* (1919) two generations ago, cited parallels in contemporary folk singing in southeast Asia, which he considered – from an anthropological perspective – offshoots of the original folk tradition that produced many of the songs in the *Shih Ching*.
 17. Eugene Eoyang, "The Confucian Odes: Ezra Pound's Translations of the *Shih Ching*," *Paideuma* 3:1 (Spring 1974), 33-42.
 18. In addition to the consultation, somewhat permissive, of Achilles Fang at Harvard, Pound had resort to at least three previously published translations: James Legge's (1893), Waley's (1937), and Bernhard Karlgren (1950).
 19. The implicit view of comparative literature as a field of study that precludes any interest in the original, or the original language, is now not as much in fashion as in Waley's day.
 20. The ambivalence of the word "subject" is apposite here, for present in any field of inquiry is not only the agent, the central intelligence (subject) conducting the inquiry, but also the field of study (subject) as reflecting subjective biases.
 21. At the Tamkang Conference, an interlocutor pointed out that I really hadn't answered the question posed at the outset of the paper. I agreed, pointing out that I turned the question back on itself. His response was that I had begged the question. My retort was that, on the contrary, far from begging the question, I had clarified it so that a meaningfully specific question could first be asked, and then,

just as meaningfully, answered. Contemporary logic and rhetoric provides pseudo-logical formulations as "begging the question" to contradict an assertion. But few are aware of the complexities of "begging the question." There are times when, logically, we should be nothing short of importunate when we beg a question.

Shih Ching #40

Pound's version

North gate, sorrow's edge,
 purse kaput, nothing to pledge.
 I'll say I'm broke
 none knows how, heaven's stroke.
 Government work piled up on me
 When I go back where I lived before,
 my dear relatives slam the door.
 This is the job put up on me,
 Sky's "which and how"?
 or say: destiny.

Government work piled up on me.
 When I come in from being out
 my home-folk don't want me about;
 concrete fruit of heaven's tree
 not to be changed by verbosity.

Waley's version

I go out at the northern gate;
 Deep is my grief.
 I am utterly poverty-stricken and destitute;
 Yet no one heeds my misfortunes.
 Well, all is over now,
 No doubt it was Heaven's doing.
 So what's the good of talking about it?
 The king's business came my way:
 Government business of every sort was put on me.
 When I came in from outside,
 The people of the house all turned on me and scolded me.
 Well, it's over now.
 Now doubt it was Heaven's doing,
 So what's the good of talking about it?
 The king's business was all piled up on me;
 Government business of every sort was laid upon me;
 When I came in from outside,
 The people of the house all turned upon me and abused me.
 Well, it's all over now.
 No doubt it was Heaven's doing,
 So what's the good of talking about it?

實為之，謂之何哉。王事適我，政事一埤益我，已焉哉，天實為之，謂之何哉。王事敦我，政事一埤遺我，我入自外，室人交徧摧我，已焉哉，天實為之，謂之何哉。

出自北門，憂心殷殷，終窶且貧，莫知我艱，已焉哉，天實為之，謂之何哉。王事敦我，政事一埤益我，已焉哉，天實為之，謂之何哉。王事敦我，政事一埤遺我，我入自外，室人交徧摧我，已焉哉，天實為之，謂之何哉。

Shih Ching #75

Pound's version

Live up to your clothes,
 we'll see that you get new ones.
 You do your job,
 we'll bring our best food to you 'uns.
 If you're good as your robes are good
 we'll bring you your pay and our best food.
 Nothing too good, bigosh and bigob
 For a bureaucrat who will really attend to his job.

之樂兮。繡衣之好兮，敝予又改造兮，適子之館兮，還予授子
 之館兮，還予授子之樂兮。繡衣之宜兮，敝予又改爲兮，適子之館兮，還予授子
 之館兮，還予授子之樂兮。繡衣之宜兮，敝予又改爲兮，適子之館兮，還予授子
 之館兮，還予授子之樂兮。

Waley's version

How well your black coat fits!
 Where it is torn I will turn it for you.
 Let us go to where you lodge,
 And there I will hand your food to you.
 How nice your black coat looks!
 Where it is worn I will mend it for you.
 Let us go to where you lodge,
 And there I will hand your food to you.
 How broad your black coat is!
 Where it is worn I will alter it for you.
 Let us go to where you lodge,
 And there I will hand your food to you.

Shih Ching #143

Pound's version

The erudite moon is up, less fair than she
 who hath tied silk cords about
 a heart in agony,
 She at such ease
 so all my work is vain.

My heart is tinder, and steel plucks at my pain
 so all my work is vain,
 she at such ease
 as is the enquiring moon.

A glittering moon comes out
 less bright than she the moon's colleague
 that is so fair,
 of yet such transient grace,
 at ease, undurable, so all my work is vain
 torn with this pain.

(Pound's note: "A few transpositions, but I
 think the words are all in the text.")

Waley's version

A moon rising white
 Is the beauty of my lovely one,
 Ah, the tenderness, the grace!
 Heart's pain consumes me.

A moon rising bright
 Is the aimess of my lovely one.
 Ah, the gentle softness!
 Heart's pain wounds me.

A moon rising in splendour
 Is the beauty of my lovely one.
 Ah, the delicate yielding!
 Heart's pain torments me.

燎兮，月出皎兮，佼人僚兮，舒窈窕兮，舒窈窕兮，勞心忡兮。月出皓
 兮，佼人憫兮，舒憂受兮，勞心慙兮。勞心慙兮。月世照兮，佼人
 紹兮，勞心慘兮。

Shih Ching #23

Pound's version

Lies a dead deer on yonder plain
whom white grass covers,
A melancholy maid in spring

is luck
for
lovers.

Where the scrub elm skirts the wood,
be it not in white mat bound,
as a jewel flawless found,
dead as doe is maidenhood.

Hark!

Unhand my girdle-knot,
stay, stay, stay
or the dog
may
bark.

Waley's version

In the wilds there is a dead doe;
With white rushes we cover her.
There was a lady longing for the spring;
A fair knight seduced her.

In the wood there is a clump of oaks,
And in the wilds a dead deer
With white rushes well bound;
There was a lady fair as jade.

'Heigh, not so hasty, not so rough;
Heigh, do not touch my handkerchief.
Take care, or the dog will bark.'

而脫野有死麕，野有白茅包之，有女懷春，吉士誘之。
脫脫兮，無感我晬兮，無使老也。吠。舒

