

Vilnius University

Faculty of Philology

Department of English Philology

Die Zhou

**An Imagism Approach Towards Pound's Translation in *Cathay*:
Comparative Reading Between Pound and Xu Yuanchong**

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of MA in English Studies
(literature, linguistics, culture)

Supervisor: Dr. Rimantas Edvard Užgiris

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Abbreviations of Works by Ezra Pound Cited

ABC: *ABC of Reading*.

EWPP: *Early Writings: Poems and Prose*.

LE: *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*.

SL: *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*.

SP: *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound*.

Terms explained:

“Image” is exclusive to Pound's concept,

“image” refers to the general literal meaning.

Abstract

This MA thesis examines four poems from Pound's collection *Cathay*: "The Jewel Stairs' Grievance," "Separation on the River Kiang," "Taking Leave of a Friend," and "Leave-Taking Near Shoku." Based on Pound's Imagist poetics, this paper establishes a comparative study by using Xu yuanchong's translations as a counterexample for reading, highlighting the inseparable relationship between Pound's translations and his Imagist poetics. While drawing inspiration from Chinese classical poetry, particularly the works of Li Bai, Pound simultaneously employs an Imagist approach in his translations of these ancient poems. Through close reading and comparative analysis, it becomes evident that Pound adheres to the three principles of Imagism and effectively utilizes phanopoeia and logopoeia in his translations. In his translations, Pound not only adheres to the three principles of Imagism in terms of language but also vividly portrays images. This is reflected not only in his concise and direct depiction of objects through language but also in his establishment and connection of the inherent logical relationships between these images. From the short "The Jewel Stairs' Grievance" and "Separation on the River Kiang" to the relatively longer "Taking Leave of a Friend" and "Leave-Taking Near Shoku," it becomes obvious that Pound uses juxtaposed images to create more complicated Image and more subtle feelings. Pound's translations exhibit a meticulous selection of verbs and adjectives for description, serving the purpose of creating precise and vivid imagery in the readers' minds. Furthermore, these carefully chosen words combine with his use of prepositions and conjunctions severed for the shared logical cues, aiding readers in comprehending the poem. Through this analysis, it becomes evident that Pound demonstrates a strong grasp of Imagist poetics in poetry translation. The poems in *Cathay* serve as excellent material for analyzing Pound's Imagist poetics.

1. Introduction

Sam Hamill once remarked that “*Cathay* opened the doors to American modernism” (Barnstone *et al.*, 2000, 81). While modernism is a familiar concept to many, the work *Cathay*, and its significance in relation to Imagism and Chinese poetics, remains unfamiliar to the majority.

Ezra Pound, the author of *Cathay*, is widely recognized as one of the most influential literary figures of the 20th century in the field of literature. As a poet, he developed novel approaches to poetry writing, which brought him widespread fame and inspired later generations. As a literary critic, he founded literary Imagism and is considered the forerunner of the modernist movement. “It is commonplace to say that imagism played a crucial role in poetic modernism,” and according to Hakutani (1992, 46), Pound, more than any other figure, effectively “put these poetics into practice.” As a translator, he translated from Provençal, Latin, Greek, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese into English, enriching English literature and expanding the boundaries of translation.

Among Pound’s translation oeuvre, his translation of classical Chinese poetry has sparked in-depth research and discussion in both China and the West. In Western society, Pound is considered an iconic figure in the development and innovation of Anglo-American poetry. In China, he is lauded for the gesture of bringing classical Chinese culture to Western readers. Palandri (1966, 291) once commented, “Without his infusion of vitality, the ancient Chinese classics would have remained inaccessible to the West.” Studies of Pound and his translations of classical Chinese poetry have gained increasing interest since the publication of *Cathay* in 1915.

There has been a considerable amount of discussion and study of Pound’s first collection of translations of classical Chinese poetry, *Cathay*, both in Western society as well as in China. It not only serves as an emblem of Pound’s literary achievement with the Imagist movement but inspired academia to focus more on the study and translation of Chinese poetry, promoting cross-cultural communications. Furthermore, The Imagist poetics that Pound had absorbed from classical Chinese poetry, particularly from Li Bai, subsequently became the theoretical weapon employed by Hu Shi against Chinese Classicism in the new literature movement (Li 2020, 7). The studies of Pound and his *Cathay* covered a wide range of areas, including but not limited to literature, culture, and translation.

What should be remembered is that even though *Cathay* is a collection of translations from classical Chinese poetry, Pound barely knew the Chinese language. In 1913, Pound obtained the manuscripts of

American Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa, whose interpretations of classical Chinese poems were influenced by the work of Japanese sinologists Ariga and Mori. Ariga and Mori, both were influent in classical Chinese as well, having received the original Chinese texts, processed the poems based on their own understanding (Billings 2018, 7, 29). Thus, in the process of these poems arriving to Pound, there is no authoritative interpretation from the Chinese side. Pound's bold attempts at translation, without question, have generated a lot of discussions.

Some laud his strategic maneuver in translation and praise the poems in *Cathay*. Ford Madox Ford, for example, thinks highly of him and comments that the poems of *Cathay* are things of supreme beauty. He regarded *Cathay* as the most beautiful book in the world (Corrigan 1973, 122); some criticize Pound for being unfaithful to the original poems. The Chinese poet Yu Guangzhong, in contrast, felt indignant about Pound's translation of Chinese poetry. He complained that his renderings were more an "adaptation" and even "plagiaristic creation" than a "translation" of classical Chinese poetry (He 2007, 7).

Regarding Pound's translations of classical Chinese poems, it is always a topic with ongoing heat, and scholars from the West and East show subtle differences in their interpretations of *Cathay*.

Language barriers prevent Western scholars from interpreting Chinese poetry; the focus on Pound's poetic innovations led to a misunderstanding of Chinese poetry as a cluster of images. The early studies on *Cathay*, for example, Donald Davie's *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor* (1964) and *The Pound Era* (1971) by Hugh Kenner, both put emphasis on Pound's recreation based on Chinese poetry and acknowledged Pound's contribution to Anglo-American poetics. The inspirations from Chinese poetry were not thoroughly discussed, and they were unable to provide a clear answer to the question of to what extent Pound had drawn from classical Chinese poetry.

In response, overseas Chinese scholars sought to fill the gaps in understanding classical Chinese poetry in western academia. They acknowledged Pound's innovative poetics on the one hand but also pointed out and corrected his misreading by introducing classical Chinese culture and poetics as a supplement. Wei-Lim Yip and Xie Ming are representative scholars of Pound's translation of Chinese poems. In his book *Ezra Pound's Cathay* (1968), Yip compared in detail the translated poems in *Cathay* and the original poems in Chinese in terms of the perversion and alteration of certain words in the process of translation and came to the following conclusion: "Considered as a translation, *Cathay* ought to be viewed as a kind of re-creation." Similarly, Xie Ming's *Ezra Pound and the Appropriation of Chinese*

Poetry (1999) related Pound's Imagism to classical Chinese poetry on both linguistic and cultural levels and examined Pound's Chinese translations from the angle of ideogram, image, parataxis, *Vers libre*, etc., to provide a rounded understanding of both Pound's version and original Chinese poetry in general.

Domestic Chinese scholars tend to stress the influence of classical Chinese poetics on Pound and restrict *Cathay* to the translation field. Zhao Yiheng's *The Muse from Cathay* (2003) is an extensive overview and descriptive analysis of the influence of Classical Chinese Poetry on Anglo-American Poetry, where Zhao comments on Pound's work and puts forward an idea of "imagery" in Chinese poetry in comparison with western Imagism. Young scholars from translation studies also contributed to Poundian research. Zhang Xi's (2013) *On Ezra Pound's Translations: A Skopostheoretic Perspective*, and "Translation and Re-creation—An Analysis of Ezra Pound's *Cathay* from the Perspective of Functionalist Approach to Translation" by He (2007) both examine Ezra Pound's translations through the lens of translation studies.

Furthermore, as mainland Chinese translator Xu Yuanchong was awarded the Aurora Borealis Prize for Outstanding Literary Translation in 2014, more researchers began to compare Pound's translation with Xu's. As a domestic Chinese translator, Xu shares different principles in poetry translation from Pound. His "Three Beauties" principle guided his translations and was widely accepted by Chinese academia.

Wang Yue's "A Comparative Study of Chinese-English Translation of Poetic Images by Xu Yuanchong and Ezra Pound" (2013) and Qi Huan's "On Classical Chinese Poetry Translation From the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics—Case Studies on Ezra Pound and Xu Yuanchong's Translation" (2019), both comparative studies, come up with unique understandings on Pound and Xu's versions, instead of discussing Pound's Imagism as proposed by Pound, and their studies more or less are concentrated on the accuracy in the translation process.

The discussion of Pound's translations, whether faithful or not, whether good or bad, seems always to be a topic that will never be resolved. In general, the majority of the research conducted by Western scholars focuses on the aesthetic and literary merits of Pound's translation of Chinese poetry. According to them, Pound's translations are the result of his distinctive insights and poetic imagination, which generates a unique synchronicity with classical Chinese poetry. While Chinese scholars highlight the cultural and historical value of Pound's translation of Chinese poetry, they see Pound's translation of classical Chinese poetry as an important connection between Chinese and Western cultures. Compared with domestic scholars who focus on accuracy in translation, overseas Chinese scholars were willing to

interpret Classical Chinese poems and culture for the Western audience.

The enthusiasm for Pound's translation and his *Cathay* has not waned in recent years, especially as cultural interactions between China and the West have intensified, and an increasing number of intellectuals have begun to analyze and debate Pound's translation from various perspectives. Christopher Bush, in his introduction to *Cathay: A Critical Edition* (2018), stresses that "*Cathay* has, in a word, become a part of world literature" (1). This slender collection has consistently proven to be "a constant source of fascination" for a wide readership encompassing critics, scholars, poets, and common readers who is interested in poetics. With its enduring popularity, it seems like everyone is trying to interpret *Cathay* from a new perspective but neglecting Pound's initial choice of classical Chinese poetry served the need to develop Imagism.

Among the current studies on Pound, I found that in China, academics prefer to highlight his role as a bridge between Chinese and Western poetry rather than his Imagist poetics in translation; his Imagist poetics in translation has often been disregarded or given insufficient consideration. English academia, by contrast, focuses too much on Imagism and does not give fair attention to the inspirations from classical Chinese poetry. The result is that the inspirations Pound draws from China have sometimes been misinterpreted or exaggerated. A fair look towards it based on Imagist poetics is needed.

In the academic interpretation of *Cathay* in English, domestic Chinese translators have received little consideration, despite their translations more or less reflecting how they, as native speakers expect classical Chinese poetry to be understood. It is unrealistic for non-Chinese speakers to read the original classical Chinese and apprehend it at a fair level. Reading from Chinese translators, however, provides a possible approach to inhaling the essence of the poems that Chinese scholars wish to be seen. For this reason, I will use Xu Yuanchong's translations as a counterexample from Pound in my study to compare some poems from *Cathay* with Pound's translations.

Among many translators, I choose Xu Yuanchong for three reasons:

1. Xu has a renowned reputation in the translation field. He is the only Asian to win Aurora Borealis Translation Prize since its establishment.
2. He is a trilingual translator experienced in mutual translations between Chinese and English/French.
3. As a prolific translator, he translated many Chinese literary classics. Almost every poem translated by Pound, has a corresponding version by Xu.

In this comparative process, we can better understand how Pound implants Imagist poetics into translations without reliance on the word-to-word explanations from classical Chinese and give a fair interpretation of Pound and his Imagist poetics in *Cathay*. What is more, the newly released version of *Cathay: A Critical Edition* (2018), edited by Timothy Billings, thoroughly analyzes Pound and traditional Chinese poetry. It is carefully annotated with contextualizing historical and cultural information, Fenollosa's texts, and the original Chinese version, making it possible for readers with no knowledge of Chinese to appreciate and understand. Thus, this book will be used in my studies to assist in the interpretation of Chinese poetry together with a comparative analysis between Pound and Xu.

A clear indication of Pound's preference for Li Bai can be seen in the Chinese poetry translation he provided. In *Cathay*, Twelve of the nineteen poems Pound translated are from Li Bai. There had been English translations of Chinese poetry for a long time now, but until *Cathay*, most translations of Chinese poetry were random samples from classical Chinese poems without any special attention paid to a particular name. Pound was the one who introduced Li Bai to Western culture. *Cathay*, in a way, can be regarded as Pound's effort in translating Li Bai (Li 1998, 81).

As a Chinese poet, Li Bai (701-762 C.E.) has many names. He has also been known in the West as Li Po, and Li Bo, both of which are phonetic transcriptions of his original Chinese name. Pound referred to him as Rihaku in *Cathay* because he translated Chinese poetry from Ernest Fenollosa, who had learned it from Japanese sources. For convenience, this study will keep using the Chinese name as presently transcribed: Li Bai.

During the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.), when poetry had reached a mature stage, Li Bai was one of the most remarkable poets of the time. He wrote a number of canonical poems. In the annals of Chinese poetry history, Li is referred to as both the "Poet Immortal" and the "Banished Fairy." In *Cathay*, Pound highlighted Li Bai's farewell poems by placing them in a category named "Four Poems of Departure."

This study thus will take three departure poems from Li Bai: "Separation on the River Kiang," "Taking Leave of a Friend," and "Leave-taking Near Shoku," with his famous "The Jewel Stairs' Grievance," as examples to make a comparative study with Xu's translation, aiming to see how Imagist principles were articulated by Pound in his translation process.

Based on the same poet, by comparing the translations from both the West and China, we can more directly discover the key points emphasized by both sides. From this, a more concrete understanding of

Pound's use and understanding of Imagism can be achieved.

In this study, the following questions are addressed through a comparative analysis with a close reading of Pound's Imagism:

1. What makes Pound's translation different from Xu's? Why did Pound translate that way instead of others?
2. To what extent did the encounter with classical Chinese poetry influence Pound's conceptualization of Imagism?
3. How was Imagism refined and developed through contact with classical Chinese poetry, and in return, how did Pound deploy translation techniques for his need to advocate Imagism poetics?

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive and systematic analysis of Ezra Pound's translation of Li Bai's classical Chinese poems in *Cathay*, which is very beneficial to the thorough understanding of his Imagist poetics. Through the lens of Imagist poetics, I hope this study will provide an impartial and unbiased understanding of classical Chinese poetry as well as Pound's translation without introducing intertwined concepts of cultural differences. In the meantime, focusing on Li Bai's four short poems may assist in preventing the disparity between long and short poems and differences in poets' styles. Furthermore, a comparative study with a native Chinese translator brings another promising possible method in the interpretation of *Cathay* and classical Chinese poetry in general.

This paper will be divided into five chapters to offer a guide for a well-organized structure.

The first chapter is the introduction. This part focuses mostly on introducing the research backdrop, the study difference between the West and China, the study's goals, and the significance of this study.

The second section is a review of the existing literature. This part is broken up into three sections: the first section will provide a review of studies that have been conducted about Pound and *Cathay* in general, both in China and overseas, and the second section will focus specifically on the studies on Pound and poetry in Tang Dynasty, especially Pound and Li Bai. The last section will be specific to recent comparative studies on Pound's translation of classical Chinese poems.

Next, the third chapter will concentrate on the theoretical evolution of Pound's Imagism and his ties with classical Chinese poetry. In this chapter's first part, I will discuss Pound's Imagism, beginning with its origins and progressing through its poetic ideas, representative figures, *etc.* After gaining a basic comprehension of Imagism, the focus will shift to an in-depth investigation of Pound's translation of Chinese poetry, the relationship between Imagism and translation will be discussed.

The most important part of this research will be presented in the fourth chapter, which will consist of a comparative analysis of four of Li Bai's shorter poems. A close reading of both Pound's and Xu's translations of Li Bai's poems will be conducted in this part, followed by systematic analysis. Through a comparative and contrastive study of Pound's translations with Xu's version, this chapter explains Pound's translations from an Imagist poetic perspective.

This thesis concludes with a summary and discussion of the conclusions drawn from the prior analysis as well as the limitations of this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Studies on Pound and *Cathay*

Cathay was one of Pound's masterworks, published from Fenollosa's manuscripts in 1915. It is an anthology of English translations comprising 19 classic Chinese poems. Since its publication, *Cathay* has garnered both admiration and criticism from critics, sinologists, and translators. Some highly praise Pound's innovative approach to translation and consider *Cathay* as "the instrumental work, initiating a vogue for Chinese translations" (Nadel 2004, 63). Others, however, reproach Pound for making innumerable linguistic mistakes and consider *Cathay* to be unfaithful to the original. Nevertheless, Pound's *Cathay* remains one of the most influential poetry collections, extending its impact beyond literature and translation into the cultural domain.

Pound's significant contributions to the translation of classical Chinese poetry and his reform of Western poetics are unquestionable. Therefore, it is worthwhile to delve into the study of the connections between his translations of classical Chinese poetry and his Imagist poetics. The upcoming chapter aims to initiate this endeavor by examining existing literature on Pound and his translation of *Cathay* from both Chinese and Western perspectives. Additionally, it will explore specific studies on Tang poems and recent comparative analyses based on Pound's translations.

2.1.1 Studies by Western Scholars

Pound's translations of Chinese poetry began gradually in 1913 when he received the manuscript from Fenollosa. After publishing several translations of Chinese poems in *Des Imagistes*, he compiled a separate book in the following year entitled *Cathay*. This book contains "The Seafarer" and nineteen classical Chinese poems. Pound remarked in an explanatory note under the title, "For the most part from the Chinese of Rihaku, from the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa, and the deciphering of the professors Mori and Ariga." This emphasizes the source of acquisition and the interpretive medium, as well as the fact that most of the poems come from Li Bai. This thin collection, as a translation of classical Chinese poetry, brought new inspirations to poetry in English.

Ever since the publication of *Cathay*, there have been many comments on it. Among the scholars who have studied Pound's translations, T. S. Eliot, winner of the 1948 Nobel Prize in Literature, is perhaps the most distinguished one. As Pound's friend and avant-garde modernist, he thought highly of *Cathay*

in his introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound* (1957), remarking that Pound's translation helped the Western audience to "get the original" and made his famous compliment to Pound as "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time" (14).

In fact, before Eliot applauded Pound's translation, as early as 1914, Thomas Edward in *New Weekly* had already praised it: "[Pound] had seldom done better than here under the restraint imposed by Chinese originals or models" (Corrigan 1973, 122). J.B. Rittenhouse also admitted the great beauty in *Cathay*, "that in the Chinese section, *Cathay*, there is much beauty and the poems amount to creations" (Mondolfo 1976, 304).

Apart from the impact on Anglo-American poetics, this thin volume also fulfilled people's curiosity about far-away China. Monro Harold remarked:

The series of translations from the Chinese entitled Cathay is composed in plain lucid English running in harmonious rhythms and conveys to the average western mind an extraordinary clear picture of such a China as travellers and native art have led to imagine (ibid., 315).

In this early stage of the publication, it was widely acclaimed and recognized in English literature. Scholars, poets, and critics have been impressed by the writing that Pound presented. Pound himself also feels good about his translations. He wrote to Wyndham Lewis (24 June 1916), "If you like I will send you a copy of *Cathay* so that the colonel [i.e., Lewis] may be able to understand what is imagisme" (SL, 47).

It is true, in the time of the development of modernism, writers were trying to find new ways for expression, and Pound's *Cathay* during that time surely thrilled those who were in the same pursuit. The new style of poetics focusing on imagery inspired literary critics and writers at that time.

Because China was still in a semi-colonial state and its development was disconnected from the Western world, the publication of *Cathay* did not gain attention and discussion locally. Nevertheless, *Cathay* opened a door for the West to take a glimpse into China through poetry and inspired scholars to pay attention to the study of classical Chinese poetry.

Scholars at that time tended to comment on *Cathay* from the perspective of Pound's poetics, setting it in the framework of Anglo-American poetry, focused on the aspects like language style and poetic creation, about how his brand-new way of translation injects energy into Imagism and encourages writers to be

innovative in style, but rarely was there systematic study of Pound's deployments of Imagism based on his translation of Chinese poems.

The initial investigations on *Cathay* from Western society were conducted by sinologists. In his work "Fenollosa and Pound" (1957), Achilles Fang briefly summarized the poems translated by Pound and asserted that Pound was mainly responsible for promoting Chinese studies among non-sinologists (214).

In the 1970s, Western society carried out a more systematic analysis of *Cathay*. Kenner's masterpiece, *The Pound Era* (1971), is a landmark in the study of Pound in the 20th century. Kenner provided a detailed social and intellectual context of Pound's writing, delving into a comprehensive analysis of his work within the literary and historical context of the time to trace his impact on the literary and cultural movements of the early twentieth century. He considered Pound to be a pivotal figure in the 20th-century literature movement and dubbed it the "Pound Era" to underscore Pound's tremendous influence on Anglo-American literature.

In this book, Kenner discussed Pound's translation of classical Chinese poems and acknowledged that *Cathay* had a profound impact on modern English poetry. He noted "Its real achievement lay not only on the frontier of comparative poetics but securely within the effort, then going forward in London, to rethink the nature of an English poem" (199).

He noted that Pound began to consider translating poetry as a model for poetic art in the sense that poetry itself can be translated (*ibid.*, 150) and appreciated that the opportunity to invent Chinese poetry for our time fell not to some random modernist but to a master (*ibid.*, 65). Regarding the accusation of the lacking of fidelity and the misreading of the original version, Kenner explained some of these mistakes in detail, giving readers enough historical and cultural context for the misinterpretations.

What is more, in this book, in terms of the thematic concern, Kenner pointed out that *Cathay* is essentially a book about war. The central topics are often "exiled bowmen," "levelled dynasties," "deserted women," "departures for far places," and "lonely frontier guardsmen and glories remembered from afar" (*ibid.*, xx), which all bring similar sensitivities towards the first World War in Europe.

Kenner sets Pound apart as an individual subject of his study, providing a detailed analysis and evaluation of the time period he lived in, as well as the historical background and the cultural differences between China and the West. His study is crucial to understanding Pound and the development of his

literary movement, but the explanations of Chinese traditions and classical Chinese poetry were fragmentary and without coherence.

The Poetic Achievements of Ezra Pound (1981) by Michael Alexander is a comprehensive monograph evaluating Pound's poetic achievements. This book affirms Pound's poetic contributions and re-evaluates them chronologically with his major works. Alexander's language is accessible, without jargon or difficult terms, making Pound more approachable to a wider audience and establishing his important role in the modernist movement.

He thinks highly of Pound's *Cathay* and gives a separate chapter to discuss, attributing the success of *Cathay* not only to Pound but Feltonosa and Li Bai, for he considered Pound to be the one who holds sensitive enchantment with China (Alexander 1981, 100). It is with the help of Feltonosa's manuscripts that Li Bai's beautiful poems were able to be discovered by Pound. With joint efforts, *Cathay* led us to exotic Chinese poetry, which was "a world that is different-yet-the-same" (*ibid.*, 100). In terms of the expression of poetic emotions, Alexander argued that Pound's selection of poems in *Cathay* conveys a sense of regret and sadness. He believed that *Cathay* was Pound's response to the delicate, subtle, and flashing emotional expression in Li Bai's lyrical temperament (*ibid.*, 105). Like Kenner, he highlighted war as an important theme in *Cathay*. The themes of war and the related departure, exile, separation, love, *etc.*, among others, are all connected to these emotions.

Cathay, a work finished in the early 20th century, continues to stir enthusiasm among scholars after a century of discussion. Even in the 21st century, scholars have not ceased their study of it. "His Own Skiffman: Pound, China, and *Cathay* Revis[it]ed (2000)" by James Wilson evaluated Pound's selection and omissions in dealing with Feltonosa's scripts, which may lead readers away from the real original Chinese poems, but it is also part of his poetic "theoretical considerations" (3). Tom Dolack's "Imitation, Emulation, Influence, and Pound's Poetic Renewal" (2013) commented that poems in *Cathay* are "both original and clearly a translation" in that the translation and emulation from Pound enabled him to incorporate these elements into his own poetic practice (16). For Pound, "making new" is not the process of creating something wholly new from scratch; rather, it is the process of making something old new again through translation and imitation. Consequently, the success and influence of *Cathay* extends beyond inherent skill (*ibid.*, 18).

The newly published *Cathay: A Critical Edition* (2018) by Timothy Billings was awarded a finalist prize for the Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism from the Poetry Foundation, making it another significant

contribution to Pound scholarship in the new 21st century. In contrast to previous scholars, Billings is a sinologist who can provide a comprehensive introduction to the Chinese original text and background information from the perspective of Western readers. This critical edition contains Pound's *Cathay* and his other Chinese translation works. Billings provided word-for-word annotations for each poem in *Cathay* in line with notes from Fellonosa, providing a valuable entry for readers interested in ancient Chinese poetry and Poundian studies. He pointed out that Chinese poetry originals are already splendid and should not be regarded as a supplement to the analysis of Pound's work. Thus, it would not be appropriate to scrutinize the differences and nuances between the Chinese original and Pound's translation. In fact, Pound's translation of classical poems has made Li Bai's name familiar to the West, Pound's *Cathay*, from this perspective, constituted part of the "Sinosphere" (27).

2.1.2 Studies from Overseas Chinese Scholars

Among the contributors to the interpretation and analysis of *Cathay*, Chinese scholars have made much effort. During the early stage of the *Cathay* studies, overseas Chinese scholars tried their best to make sure the Chinese originals were noticed. Their studies tended to make pronouncements of Pound's contributions to discovering Chinese culture and literature. John C. Wang's "Ezra Pound as a Translator of Classical Chinese Poetry" (1965), for example, claimed Pound's poetic genius and regarded his translations as "superb handling of the language" which "comes closest to the original" (350). Similarly, "The Stone is Alive in My Hand—Ezra Pound's Chinese Translation" (1966) by Angela Jung Palandri also acknowledged Pound's attempt at translating Chinese poems, for his translations made the ancient Chinese classics accessible to the Western world, without his efforts the Classical Chinese poems will just be like "stone tablets upon which they were inscribed" (291). Their studies not only added to some interpretations from the perspectives of native Chinese speakers but also brought Pound and *Cathay* to Chinese scholars mainland.

Wai-Lim Yip, among all these overseas scholars, was one of the earliest ones to examine *Cathay* systematically. Prior to him, studies conducted by other Chinese scholars often ended up focusing on detecting linguistic errors and eventually failed to grasp Pound and his poetics. In his book *Ezra Pound's Cathay* (1968), Yip sought to provide a comprehensive analysis of Pound's achievement in *Cathay* rather than simply defending or condemning it.

As a native Chinese speaker, Yip first introduced readers to some of the syntactic features unique to the Chinese language and compared them to English to highlight the difficulties of translation. He placed

Pound alongside other translators and his own interpretations of the original, acknowledging Pound's achievement in being able to capture the central consciousness of the original author, even when given only the barest details (Yip 1968, 88). Yip's book provides a valuable reference for both Chinese and Western academics interested in Pound and Chinese translation.

In 1999, Professor Xie Ming published *Ezra Pound and the Appropriation of Chinese Poetry: Cathay, Translation, and Imagism*, where he studied Pound's poems in *Cathay* in light of the Imagist movement and the spread of classical Chinese poetry to the Western world.

In this book, he delves into the intricate relationships between the translation and appropriation of classical Chinese poetry by Ezra Pound and some of his contemporaries. He admitted that in Pound studies, there are difficulties in distinguishing between what is translation or adaptation and what is the original composition (*ibid.*, 229). Unlike other scholars who make explanations on Chinese poetics, Xie mostly relied on English texts. Through a chronological analysis of Pound's translation from classical Chinese poetry, Xie provided related historical contexts of Imagism in line with his identity as an "appropriative translator" and proposed that "the poems of *Cathay* should indeed be read as English poems in their own right, perhaps among the most successful of all Pound's works" (*ibid.*, 235).

Xie's study fills the gap in the relationships between the translation of classical Chinese Poetry and the development of Imagism and modernism. He compared Pound with other English translators, focusing on the translation technique employed in different versions to put up with Pound's translation and his poetic principles are not only inseparable but more to say, the process of his translation helped him to develop his Imagism, which makes his version so distinctive in comparison with others.

Acknowledging the importance of Pound's translation in modern English literature, Xie is trying to rediscover the neglected yet important role of classical Chinese poetry in forming Pound's Imagism and Western poetics. Just as he states in the beginning:

Creative misreading or "misprision," for that matter, can be very successful and influential so that historically a corpus of translations or adaptations from the Chinese can itself become an invisible tradition and establish for the Western reader a particular mode of poetic perception and canon of composition (ibid., 4).

Another scholar who promoted the study of *Cathay* is Qian Zhaoming. In his *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (1995), he borrowed the term "Orientalism" coined by Said. His "Orientalism" is "primarily a literary one," which refers to the inspirations of

American writers obtained from China (1-2). His main objective is to demonstrate that China played a significant role in the Western modernist movement, especially in the early twentieth century's Anglo-American poetry movement. Orientalism and Modernism were juxtaposed in the book to explain the influence of the East on the West, and *Cathay*, as a representative work, is a successful specimen of cultural exchange. In his analysis, Qian tries to convey to readers that the East is not merely an object of Western representation and manipulation but a positive force that has inspired, promoted, and influenced the West in modern times.

Scholars after Yip tend to be more confident in asserting Chinese influence on Imagism and literary modernism. However, their use of borrowed terms from other disciplines, such as “appropriation” and “orientalism” from cultural studies, may confuse readers since such studies downplay the negative impact of colonialism on China. While cross-disciplinary studies are innovative and crucial in contemporary literary analysis, there have been no breakthroughs or truly mind-turning achievements in this area. In their studies, both Xie and Qian use “appropriation” and “orientalism” in a positive context to highlight Pound's achievements and the important role that classical Chinese poetry played in the American and British literary movements of the 20th century. However, these terms are more like ornaments than essential components of their arguments.

In general, these overseas Chinese scholars have shouldered the responsibility to make the original Chinese poems understandable for the Western audience. They helped to make interpretations for the original versions, meanwhile serving as a bridge connecting mainland Chinese scholarships and Western academia.

2.1.3 Mainland Chinese Scholars

Despite both being Chinese scholars, studies from mainland Chinese scholars and those from overseas scholars differed. Mainland scholars are unlike overseas scholars provide elaborations on classical Chinese, they mainly focused on translation techniques adopted by Pound and the differences between the two cultures in poetic writing.

Gao Qingxuan's “The Difficulty in Translating Chinese Poetry as Exemplified by Ezra Pound (2001)” taking “The River-Merchant's Wife” as a specimen, ruthlessly remarks there has an insurmountable language problem for Pound and doubts whether Western people would appreciate the poems or not (92). Gao pointed out the difficulty in translation caused by the two language systems. The Poet's “freedom”

causes difficulties in translation, translators must sacrifice some of the Chinese double meanings to make the poem fit the demands of English grammar (*ibid.*, 97). Gao's study, based on language differences between two languages, touched on the problems that existed in cross-cultural translation. Of course, some scholars avoid these cultural differences to carry out research.

He Yanan's "Translation and Re-creation—An Analysis of Ezra Pound's *Cathay* from the Perspective of Functionalist Approach to Translation" (2007) and Yang Lizhen's "Creative Interpretation—A Case Study on Ezra Pound's *Cathay*" (2009) are based on the functionalist approaches and hermeneutics, respectively. Both agreed that *Cathay* could be treated as Pound's re-creation. Li Panke's "On the Translation and Canonization of Pound's *Cathay*" (2012), combined with Lefevere's Rewriting Theory, explores the cultural reasons for *Cathay*'s canonization. "Freedom of Translators: A Case Study of Ezra Pound's *Cathay* from the Perspective of Deconstruction" (2019) by Li Fangling, from the perspective of deconstructionism, affirmed Pound's translation is successful because it not only achieved Pound's own poetic innovation, but also appeals to its target audience, and has a long-lasting influence on American poetry. Their studies agreed that Pound's translation had its own profound influence on translation practice and has contributed to cultural communications; thus, it should be acknowledged as a success despite the flaws.

In addition to these methods, there are of course other scholars who have investigated and analyzed *Cathay* from the imagery in ancient Chinese poetry and the "Image" defined by Pound. Li Beibei's "A Study of the Imagery in *Cathay*: Origins and Functions (2010)" and "On Ezra Pound's Translation of Images in Chinese Classical Poetry —An Analysis on the Translation of Images in *Cathay* from the perspective of Translator's Status (2013) by Lv Xing both explained the term "Image" in classical Chinese poetics in comparison and contrast with Pound's. Their focus has been on examining the cultural differences between China and the West, identifying the similarities and differences in poetic techniques and requirements on both sides.

Overall, unlike Western scholars who prioritize and appreciate the Imagist innovations in *Cathay*, or overseas Chinese scholars who provide interpretations for Western audiences, while mainland Chinese scholars have centered their studies on Pound's application of translation techniques and methods of these poems. Their studies are intriguing and important in translation academia in China and offer more possibilities in the interpretation of *Cathay* in another cultural context.

2.2 Pound, Li Bai and Tang Poetry

The Dynasty of Tang (618-907 C.E.) is widely regarded by Chinese history scholars as the Golden Age of Chinese culture (Jiang 2018, ix). Li Bai is one of the most representative figures among the many poets of the Tang, and historical records indicate that he was not only the first Tang poet to garner attention from the English-speaking world but also the most influential poet, as evidenced by his works being selected more frequently than those of other poets in various early English translations of Tang poetry (*ibid.*, 16). The attention given to Li Bai by Pound and Fenollosa is further evidence of his significant role in the dissemination of Chinese and Western poetry. Currently, research on *Cathay* and Li Bai remains limited, with the majority of studies being conducted by Chinese scholars.

A History of Western Appreciation of English-translated Tang Poetry (2018) by Jiang Lan evaluates Pound's contribution to the transmission of Tang poetry to the West. Jiang provided an overview of the transmission of Tang poetry in Western society in this book, and she emphasized that Pound's translation of classical Chinese poems, particularly his publication of *Cathay*, served as a separate, significant node in the transmission of Tang poetry in the West as a whole.

Starting with the introduction of the very early stage of Tang poems by transmission to the West from missionaries and sinologists, Jiang stated that following the sequence of studies of the poets that were published, the first Tang poet to be noticed by the Western world was Li Bai (*ibid.*, 15). Jiang commented that in the eyes of those who knew little about China, Li Bai was Tang poetry, and the terms "Tang poetry" and "Li Bai" were interchangeable (*ibid.*, 16).

Tang poetry before Pound's *Cathay* was more to be translated and appreciated by small groups. It was after Pound that Tang poetry in foreign lands was not merely to be translated and appreciated but also became a significant resource for the development of the diversity of American culture (*ibid.*, 171). The ancient Tang poems revived and began to bloom in the modern Western literary movement due to the publication of *Cathay*.

Despite the mistakes in the translation, Jiang stressed that the importance of *Cathay* is more on the cultural domain as it advertises the win-win situation of intercultural communication: to propagate the literary conventions of Tang poetry as well as to enrich the creation of poetry in English (*ibid.*, 170).

Li Wenxin's "The Li Bo That Ezra Pound Knew" (1998) sought to demonstrate that Pound was attracted

to Li Bai's poetry not only because of its rich and evocative imagery but also its thematic content (90). Li shared Kenner's concern about the war theme in *Cathay*, specifically pointing out that Pound selected material from Fenollosa's notebooks because he himself wanted to explore themes that were currently occupying his thoughts, such as isolation, loss, and the consequences of war (*ibid.*, 90). The depiction of Li Bai in *Cathay*, as portrayed through the included poems, is that of a man who rejects wars, is sensitive and sympathetic toward women, and often separates from companions. All of these elements assist Pound in expressing a deep concern for the nature of war and its effects.

Other scholars have conducted research and analysis on specific poems of Li Bai included in *Cathay*. Zhang Yu's "'The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter': On Mistranslation of the Two Allusions" (1998) and Tang Jun's "Pound's The River Merchant's Wife: Representations of a Decontextualized 'Chineseness'" (2011) examine the same poem from different perspectives. Both of them identify errors in Pound's translation and the cultural misunderstandings that arise as a result of these mistakes. Contrary to Qian's praise of "the youthful Chinese woman's own voice—simple, naive, and straightforward" (68), Zhang held the view that Pound's translation is "his own cultural awareness of a typical Oriental woman" (185). Tang proposed that those mistakes, on the one hand, lead to misunderstandings of the original cultural messages, on the other, reinforced the Western stereotypical preconceptions of ancient China (534). The discussions remain ongoing, different approaches may come with different conclusions. While it may be a good work from the perspective of poetic creation, there may be different answers if seen through the lenses of feminism or Orientalism.

In recent years, unlike other scholars who examined the role of Li Bai's influence on Pound alone, Li Qingben's "China Question of American Imagism (2020)" conducted further research and discussion on the mutual relationships between Pound and Chinese literature. He stated that Li Bai's poems had inspired Pound in his Imagist adventure, but the influence "should neither be denied nor be exaggerated" (5). A just outlook towards Pound and his translation of classical Chinese poetry requires a just outlook of its influence in China as well. He pointed out that "the China question of American Imagism is not only related to ancient China but also to modern China" (7). Pound's Imagism which obtained inspiration from China, in return, had influenced the poetry movement in modern China.

Hu Shi (1891-1962) was a philosopher, poet, essayist, historian, and Chinese ambassador to the United States during World War II. He was the president of Peking University and is considered to be the Father of the Chinese Renaissance (Nolde 1980, 235). He drew inspiration from Imagism and came up with "Eight-Don'ts-isms" in 1916 after reading Pound's "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" and launched

language reform in the early twentieth century. The “connection” between Imagism and the Chinese literary revolution has been recognized by Achilles Fang in 1955 stated that “it would not be easy to deny” the influence of Imagism on Hu Shi’s “Eight-Don’ts-isms,” which served as the inspiration for the Chinese literary revolution of 1917 and referred Pound as the “godfather” (*ibid.*, 246).

The fact is with Hu’s advocacy, Chinese literature entered another era. Pound’s Imagist poetics, initially influenced by classical Chinese poetry and aesthetics, piqued the interest of Chinese young poets. The chase of simple vernacular language in poetry writing was preferred, and the rejection of melancholy and allusions was favored by the intellectuals.

In this cyclic process, both Pound and Hu Shi made alterations and modifications to the sources from which they drew inspiration. Li writes, “Pound reformed Chinese theories and Hu Shi also reformed Pound’s theories,” which implies that the two scholars were involved in a reciprocal process of transformation. In a manner parallel to Pound’s adaption of Li Bai’s poetry as a tool against Romanticism and Victorian literature, Hu Shi similarly adapted Pound’s Imagism as a means of opposing Chinese classicism (*ibid.*, 8). The events have completed in a circle: starting from Li Bai in eighth-century China, to Ezra Pound in twentieth-century England, and then eventually returning to China.

It is evident that the study of Pound and his development of Imagist poetics is inseparable from classical Chinese poetry, and in Pound’s case, the poet Li Bai is the central figure. What’s more, in the study of the influence of Imagism, Chinese modern poetry reform gained a lot of nutrition from it in return. Therefore, for whatever reasons, the study of *Cathay*, with a predominantly focus on Li Bai’s poems, is still of great significance and necessary.

2.3 Comparative Studies Based on Xu Yuanchong and Pound’s Translation

Xu Yuanchong, one of China’s most prominent translators, possesses excellent proficiency in Chinese, English, and French. His translation expertise spans across various genres, including poetry, novels, and plays. Xu is widely regarded as a pioneer in poetry translation in China, particularly in the field of classical Chinese poetry. He has translated over 3,000 classical Chinese poems and other literary works, such as *Selected Poems of Li Bai*, *Selected Poems of Du Fu*, *300 Tang Poems*, and *300 Song Lyrics, etc.*

Similar to Pound, who maintained his own distinct style in translation, Xu also had his unique evaluation

of the translation process. According to him, a good translation should encompass the qualities of “meaning, feeling, and heart-moving” (Zhang 2022, 219). Regarding the research and practice of Chinese-English mutual translation, he advocated against blind reliance on Western theories. Xu pointed out that most of the translation theory does not apply to translation between Chinese and English because the difference between the two languages is greater than, for example, that between English and French, and yet there is a lack of publications from Western translators or theorists that include literary translations between English and Chinese (*ibid.*, 230).

In the realm of Chinese translation, particularly when dealing with classical Chinese poems, a crucial element that must not be overlooked is the accurate understanding of the content. Western scholars and sinologists often found it challenging to achieve such understanding due to the complexities of classical Chinese language and the historical and cultural allusions embedded within. Consequently, while sinologists and orientalist like Fenollosa may comprehend the meaning of Chinese poems, they might struggle to fully appreciate their beauty (*ibid.*, 216). Xu, on the other hand, aimed to bring forth this beauty of classical Chinese poems to the West through his distinctive translation methods.

In recent years, particularly following Xu’s receipt of the Aurora Borealis Outstanding Literary Translation Award in 2014, Chinese scholars have conducted numerous comparative studies exploring translation techniques for classical Chinese poetry in the Western context, with a specific emphasis on Pound’s versions.

For instance, studies like “A Comparative Study of Chinese-English Translation of Poetic Images by Xu Yuanchong and Ezra Pound” (2013) by Wang Yue, “A Comparative Study of Xu Yuanchong’s and Ezra Pound’s Translation of Chinese Classic Poetry—from the Perspective of Faithfulness, Expressiveness and Elegance Theory” (2014) by Zhang Han, and “On Classical Chinese Poetry Translation from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics—Case Studies on Ezra Pound and Xu Yuanchong’s Translation Versions” (2019) by Qi Huan represent this category of research. These studies adopt a standpoint rooted in translation studies rather than literature, with a focus on poetic innovations from both Pound and Xu.

Additionally, “Tian’s Attitude in Appraisal Theory: A Comparative Analysis of English Versions of Changgan Xing” (Dong & Lin, 2018) offers a linguistic perspective, analyzing the poem and comparing the vocabulary used in translations. In “Xu Yuanchong as a Touchstone for Ezra Pound’s Translation of Tang Poetry” (2021), Wu sets Xu Yuanchong’s translation as a benchmark and provides a supplementary analysis of Pound’s translation, examining “Taking Leave of a Friend” and several lines from “The

River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter." Wu evaluates the gains and losses in Ezra Pound's translation of Li Bai's poem, explores the cross-cultural aesthetic transmigration of Tang poetry in American Imagism, and acknowledges *Cathay* as a "unique and aesthetically pleasing collection of poetry" (13).

Wu's study sheds light on the suitability of conducting comparative research between two translators for literary analysis. By using one translator as the primary source and the other as a supplement, it proves beneficial in analyzing the translation of classical Chinese poems. Inspired by Wu's findings, this thesis adopts a similar approach, employing Xu Yuanchong's translation as a comparative version to aid in the interpretation of Pound's translations. This methodology promises to contribute to a more accurate understanding of poetry translation.

3. Theoretical Framework

Pound's interest in classical Chinese poetry is fueled by his determination for developing Imagist poetics. From previous literature review we know that poems in *Cathay* serves partly as a means of generating inspiration and advancing his Imagist philosophy. Thus, a thorough comprehension of the translations presented in *Cathay* requires a detailed exploration of both Pound's Imagist principles and his approach to translation.

3.1. Development and Features of Imagism

Imagism is considered a literary movement in the early 20th century. Despite its short duration, it had an important role in the development of Anglo-American literature. As part of modernism, Imagism was undoubtedly Pound's preliminary attempt and exploration of the motto "make it new." Even after its ending, it still profoundly influenced other modernists like Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot, Carl Sandburg, *etc.*

Imagism occurred as an outcry against the Victorian literature. By the end of the nineteenth century, literature was seen to be preoccupied with an excessive affected sentimentality, elevated diction, and contrived emotional expressions. Pound held a critical attitude towards the such a literary atmosphere, considering it as a "blurry" and "messy" period (LE, 11). In particular, he commented:

The common verse of Britain from 1890 to 1910 was a horrible agglomerate compost, not minted, most of it not even baked, all legato, a dull mess of third-hand Keats, Wordsworth, heaven knows what, fourth-hand Elizabethan sonority blunted, half-melted, lumpy (ibid., 205).

Under such circumstance, he called for standing out to make a difference from these old poetics. He claimed that "No good poetry is ever written in a manner twenty years old" (*ibid.*, 11), thus he came up with literary Imagism, put emphasis on the brevity of language and the direct treatment of the objects, previous Victorian style and romanticized language were to be abandoned.

Imagism, though credited to Pound, had its roots in ideas developed by English philosopher and poet T. E. Hulme.

In 1908 after coming back from Canada, Hulme served as the first secretary of the Poets' Club founded by Henry Simpson in London, where he delivered "A Lecture on Modern Poetry" stating poetry should

be the accurate presentation of the subject without verbiage. In this lecture, he also pointed out the importance of free verse in poetry writing as well as the use of images. “I object to the sloppiness which does not consider a poem as a poem unless it is moaning or whining about something or other” (1924, 126). His early poems “Autumn” and “A City Sunset” could be regarded as early examples of imagist poems.

In 1909, Pound was given the opportunity to become acquainted with Hulme in Poets’ Club and got familiar with Hulme.

Contact with Hulme brought Pound into the ambit of the newly formed Imagist school of poetry, an Anglo-American movement that promoted the use of direct and tactile language in place of vague sentiment and subjective effusion (Travers 2006, 154-155).

It was through Hulme’s introduction that Pound received recognition from A. R. Orage, who was the editor of New Age magazine, where Pound was able to publish many of his essays, poems, and criticisms. In the years that followed, Pound’s reputation began to grow.

In the spring of 1912, Pound, H.D., and Richard Aldington agreed upon three principles in poetry writing:

1. *Direct treatment of the “thing” whether subjective or objective.*
2. *To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.*
3. *As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome.*

(LE, 3)

In August, Pound was hired as a foreign correspondent for Poetry magazine. In October, after reading “Hermes of the Ways” by Hilda Doolittle, Pound made some revisions and signed “H.D., Imagiste” since then, a new literary movement began.

Pound went on to explain Imagism and published “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste.” According to Pound (*ibid.*, 4), an “Image” involves presenting an “intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time,” which shall be elaborated in three main points. Firstly, an “Image” is inherently complex and involves multiple elements, rather than solely the object being described. Secondly, an “Image” combines both rationality and sensibility, with only objects containing emotional meaning qualifying as true Image within a poem. Finally, an “Image” must be conveyed within a brief moment of time to successfully evoke an emotional response, if such a complex was not achieved or captured in an instant time, it would not be a perfect Image. Meanwhile, he provided further elaboration and explanation on the three

principles mentioned earlier.

“Direct treatment” was proposed as a rejection of the rhetorical trend in Victorian poetry, aiming to eliminate extra ornaments. Pound stressed the best way to present the “thing” and the “Image” itself, was through an accurate and precise language. In terms of how to present the “thing,” Pound put forth the second proposition. He suggested using an economy of language and “no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something” (*ibid.*, 4). Pound believed that the use of empty or flowery language “dulls the Image” (*ibid.*, 5) and obscures the meaning of the text. In the third proposition, Pound emphasized that a skilled poet should not solely focus on the rhythm of their work, but instead approach their craft with a musician’s mindset.

Let the neophyte know assonance and alliteration, rhyme immediate and delayed, simple and polyphonic, as a musician would expect to know harmony and counterpoint and all the minutiae of his craft (ibid., 6).

The rhythmic structure of a poem should enhance the quality of the writing rather than detract from it. It is important to ensure that the rhythmic structure in writing does not negatively impact the natural sound, meaning, or shape of the words (*ibid.*, 6).

With such pursuits, “In a Station of the Metro” was published in *Poetry*, marking the birth of a revolutionary approach to poetic expression and Imagism entered the public consciousness.

Pound’s dedication to refining the principles of Imagism persisted, and 1913 must be a pivotal year for him as it is also this year, he started to find inspiration for Imagism from classical Chinese poetry. After obtaining a manuscript of the orientalist Ernest Fenollosa from his widow, Marie Fenollosa, Pound embarked on a journey of studying and translating Chinese poetry, seeking to explore poetics that were distinct from the traditional Western canon.

He published *Des Imagistes: An Anthology* in 1914, the first anthology of Imagist works, in which he picked poems that embodied the ideals of Imagism at the time, including six poems from his own and others by Richard Aldington, H.D., F.S. Flint, Amy Lowell, William Carlos Williams, James Joyce, *etc.* Among the six poems, it is not difficult to discover his translations of classical Chinese poems. His further exploration of classical Chinese poetry continued, in 1915 he published *Cathay*, a slender volume with 19 Chinese poems. This book, based on his chase of new poetic expressions, brought classical poems from China centuries ago to the West, and made Li Bai familiar in the West.

While Imagism was in full swing, there were disputes among the Imagist poets about the leadership and control of the group. Not satisfied with where Imagism stands, in the same year, Pound published the essay “Vortex” elaborating his new ideas regarding images. “Image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which and through which, and into which ideas are constantly rushing” (EWPP, 292). In order to differentiate it from the Imagist movement, he renamed it vorticism. In the years that followed, from 1915 to 1917, Amy Lowell continued the Imagist movement and published three anthologies titled *Some Imagist Poets*. Thereafter, literary Imagism declined and was slowly replaced by Modernism.

3.2. Pound’s Chinese Translation and Imagism

Pound is a master of languages. He devoted his studies to mastering English, Latin, French, Italian, Provençal, and Greek, with a particularly strong command of the Romance languages. Though he had little knowledge in Eastern languages such as Japanese and Chinese, he still made his efforts to appreciate the Eastern literature. He even went so far as to bring about translations of classical Chinese poems and Confucius classics without the knowledge of Chinese written characters. This bold move made him a focus of dispute for his approaches to translation.

Edwin Gentzler (2001, 62) described Pound as “the most influential” and possibly also “the least understood” translator. In fact, Pound’s role as translator is always fraught with controversy:

Pound’s translations have from the beginning come in for sharp attacks. ... But these eminently readable translations have also received praise from many of Pound’s literary peers (Brooks et al. 1973, 2063).

Pound’s translation is and unconcerned with grammar and fixed rules, instead valuing meaning and equivalence and seeking to inject fresh energy into the predominant literature. This attitude has made his translations consistently controversial. In translating poetry, Pound aimed to discover “what was counted as poetry anywhere” by exploring “what part of poetry could not be lost in translation” as well as “whatever was unique to each language” (Xie 1999, 229). While some scholars have criticized Pound for his departure from the original text, many others have praised his creativity and innovation, as well as the aesthetic beauty of his translations.

Although Pound’s status as a translator is debatable, the irreplaceable role translation has played in Pound’s literary career should never be neglected. Xie Ming referred to in his work,

Translation served as an “adjunct to the Muses’ diadem”... Pound’s translations stimulated and strengthened his poetic innovations, which, in turn, guided and promoted his translations. Pound’s poetics is essentially a poetics of translation, and he has largely redefined the nature and ideal of poetic translation for the twentieth century (ibid., 229).

His purpose of translation, especially for the translation of classical Chinese poems, lied in advocating Imagist poetry. It is during his exploration of Imagist poetics that he encountered Chinese poetry and realized “China is fundamental, Japan is not” (SL, 102). The stimulus in Chinese poetry he found paved the way for his Imagism. Pound’s translations were not always faithful to the literal meaning of the original text, as he prioritized conveying the imagery and poetic essence of classical Chinese poetry through the representation of images. Despite errors and mistakes, Pound remained steadfast in his own distinctive pursuits and approaches to translation.

In practice, for better implementing his translation strategies and realizing the depiction of images, Pound adopts three dogmas: “melopoeia,” “phanopoeia,” and “logopoeia” in his translation process (Peng 2015, 46). Among these three dogmas, “melopoeia” refers to the use of musical elements to create a sense of rhythm and cadence. “Phanopoeia” involves the creation of vivid sensory Image in the mind of the reader, and “logopoeia” stimulates both intellectual and emotional associations that are linked to the actual words or word groups used. Pound believed that Chinese poets, including Li Bai, were particularly skilled in using “phanopoeia” to realize the recall of visual property in reader’s mind (SL, 25-27). As previously mentioned, an “Image” is an “intellectual and emotional complex,” so it becomes evident that this complex is a compound of “logopoeia” and “phanopoeia” (Quentel 2006, 498). Because it involves the issue of how to actually present the Image to readers’ mind. The emotional connections between these individual images and objects rely on the combination of “logopoeia” and “phanopoeia.”

Edwin Gentzler (2001) concluded in *Contemporary Translation Theories* that Pound’s approach adopted a theory of “luminous details” with a focus on precise rendering of individual words and fragmented images (15). In his theory of translation, Ezra Pound emphasized the presentation of isolated or even disjointed images. Through such presentation of clear and specific images of concrete objects, it provides a sudden understanding of the surrounding conditions, their causes, effects, sequence, and underlying principles, which corresponds with his language of “phanopoeia” and “logopoeia.”

In fact, in his essay “Chinese Poetry,” Pound used Li Bai’s “The Jewel Stairs’ Grievance” as an example to give guidance on how to read these Chinese poems in his translation. He claimed that in order to comprehend these poems, one at least needs some mathematical thinking to decode the meaning (EWPP, 300). Actually, this way of thinking aligns with the notion of “logopoeia” needed for poetry. Li Bai’s representation of Chinese poetry embodies the characteristic of “Phanopoeia,” while the presence of

Image in the poetry is indispensable from the application of “logopoeia,” Pound’s translation process reflects his adherence to both of these aspects in his language choices.

Through his translations of ancient Chinese poetry, he made these centuries-old poems an inspiration for Imagism, laying the foundation for the Modernist Movement. For Pound, translation is a creative process. His way of translating is difficult to analyze by merely traditional translation theory because it always involves Imagism. Therefore, it is necessary and meaningful to study Pound’s translation from the perspective of Imagism. On the one hand, it allows us to better understand Pound’s own translation methods, and on the other hand, it can also deepen our understanding of his Imagism. *Cathay*, as his masterpiece of poetry experiment, not only integrates Chinese and Western cultures but also has an impact on both Chinese and Western poetics. Based on Imagism, an in-depth study and research of *Cathay* will help us to have a deeper understanding of Pound’s poetics and how Chinese materials helped him to develop poetics.

4. Close Reading—Four Poems from Li Bai

In this section, I will take Li Bai's four poems as the research object and interpret them from the perspective of Imagism. Pound's three Imagist principles will be restated, and the quality of "phanopoeia" and "logopoeia" will be examined in context.

To begin with, I will provide an overview of the poem itself where Billings' notes will serve as complementary help, then delve into the language and words selected and used by Pound and Xu. Xu's translation will be provided as a counterpart for the discussion of Pound's translation.

In terms of the sequence of analysis, I will analyze the poems based on their length. I will first go to "The Jewel Stairs' Grievance" and then to three departure poems: "Separation on the River Kiang," "Taking Leave of a Friend," and "Leave-taking Near Shoku."

4.1 The Jewel Stairs' Grievance

Translated by Pound:

The Jewel Stairs' Grievance

The jewelled steps are already quite white with dew,
It is so late that the dew soaks my gauze stockings,
And I let down the crystal curtain
And watch the moon through the clear autumn.

NOTE [Pound's note included with the translation]. —Jewel stairs, therefore a palace. Grievance, therefore there is something to complain of. Gauze stockings, therefore a court lady, not a servant who complains. Clear autumn, therefore he has no excuse on account of weather. Also she has come early, for the dew has not merely whitened the stairs, but has soaked her stockings. The poem is especially prized because she utters no direct reproach.

Translated by Xu:

Waiting in Vain on Marble Steps

The marble steps with dew turn cold,

Silk soles are wet when night grows old.
She comes in, lowers crystal screen,
Still gazing at the moon serene.

To begin with, I have chosen Li Bai's "The Jewel Stairs' Grievance." This poem is probably one of the poems that attracted Pound the most, and it is the only poem for which Pound wrote notes for elaboration. He proposed that this kind of poem is short and obscure, requiring a mathematical process of reduction (EWPP, 301). This poem is especially representative because the female character utters no direct reproach, but through analytical thinking, we can find clues for the conveyance of her "grievance."

In fact, this poem belongs to a special poetry category called "palace complaint" (Billings 2018, 134), where it is written based on the first-person narrative of a woman waiting and missing her man.

The first two lines describe the environment and provide the setting for the whole story. They do not portray or describe the inner thoughts of the character but depict that the dew on the steps is cold and wets the socks of the heroine. The next two lines describe the protagonist's actions of "letting down" the curtain and "watching" the moon.

If we deduct from those lines, we can know that for the environment: It is late at night, and the heroine had been waiting for a long time because her socks were wet with dew. In such a situation, what she did was let down the curtain and watch the moon through it, which implied that

1. She is still waiting; otherwise, she could lock the door or go to sleep. However, she has just let down her curtain and is watching the moon.
2. She did not wait with the same mood as before. She let down the curtain, indicating a separation of space and blocking part of her view. Instead of looking straight ahead and waiting, she looked through the curtain and watched the moon above.

As Pound proposed, the elegance of this poem derives not from a single word used to express the idea of waiting and resenting (*ibid.*, 134) but from all the interlocked settings and actions, the protagonist's emotions were conveyed without direct depiction. The grievance was embedded in the analytical understanding of the readers.

According to Pound's translation, he chose "jewelled" to describe the steps for the environmental description, whereas Xu used "marble." Pound also used the color "white" to describe the dew, whereas Xu used "cold" to emphasize its quality. Pound's Imagism emphasizes the economy of words and direct treatment, and he points out the use of adjectives that reveal something (LE, 5). The "jewelled steps" highlight the nobleness and identity of the hostess, and "white" echoes the color of the jewelled steps and the dew caused by coldness. Pound also boldly uses adverbs "already" and "quite" to modify adjectives, which strengthens the effects of the adjectives and emphasizes that the dew has accumulated on the steps for some time.

In the next line, Pound uses the introductory phrase "it is" to offer a direct depiction of the protagonist's status, whereas Xu creates a connection by introducing a subordinate clause with "when." Xu did not employ such direct writing nor the use of adverbs. His lines are short, and the language is carefully arranged.

In this poem, Pound opts for a first-person perspective instead of third-person. The last two lines employ a juxtaposition of the actions "let down" and "watch." By using the first-person narrative, readers can better immerse themselves in the role and environment of the heroine. On the other hand, Xu employs a third-person omniscient perspective and juxtaposes the actions of "comes" and "lowers," utilizing "gazing" to accompany the two actions. Within short lines, Xu expresses more detailed and condensed information, which is descriptive rather than imaginative for readers.

Xu places great emphasis on poetic rhyme and utilizes a stricter rhyme scheme than Pound. For instance, "old" and "cold" as well as "screen" and "serene" are designed to rhyme. Being a native Chinese speaker, he places great importance on the musical effects of classical Chinese poems. He maintains that the rhyming effect is critical in translating Tang poetry to convey its "musical, semantic, and imagistic beauties" to readers in another language (Wu 2021, 6). Thus, he prioritizes the use of a rhymed language in practice. In the following poems, we can also observe his emphasis on a rhymed scheme.

Conversely, Pound's version does not adhere to a fixed length and rhythm, thereby highlighting the flexibility of his poetics. Pound believed that Imagist poetics should choose a rhythm that preserves the essence and integrity of the words, avoiding any distortion of meaning (EWPP, 262). Therefore, in his translation, Pound prioritizes Image representation over musical patterns. He believed that each image does not exist in isolation but rather shares its functions with other images. Pound once commented on the characters in Classical Chinese poetry as follows:

There is another sort of completeness in Chinese. Especially in their poems of nature and of scenery, they seem to excel western writers, both when they speak of their sympathy with the emotions of nature and when they describe natural things (ibid., 304).

Therefore, his translation, by accurately depicting the images, one can entail the underlying emotions and feelings. Readers can infer the nuanced feelings that are being expressed when they are shown clear imagery. Subjects such as “steps,” “dew,” “curtain,” and “moon” are not treated as separate entities in this poem. Rather, they are interlocked with one another by a picture of a scenario that takes place late at night. The steps are moist with dew in the late night, and the protagonist, who does not want to keep waiting in the cold, lets down the curtain and watches the moon. Here, Pound employs two “and” to describe the actions of the protagonist, serving as conjunctions that emphasize the continuity between the sentences, indicating the connection within these lines. Furthermore, the adjectives “jeweled,” “white,” and “crystal” used to describe these words all help to indicate the luxurious and affluent lifestyle of the protagonist. In contrast, Xu's translation, with terms such as “marble steps,” “cold,” “silk,” and “old,” lacks a strong logical connection among them. The usage of “old” to describe the night does not entail a logical connection with the steps or the silk soles.

According to Pound's three-fold system of language, the act of projecting Image onto the mind's eye is labeled “phanopoeia,” which encompasses the emotional atmosphere evoked by visual imagery (LE, 25). In this poem, Pound describes many items/images and follows the three principles of Imagism to create visual imagery. Each Image and scene created by each line is logically connected, and through reasoning, readers can further understand the “grievance” of the female protagonist. In Pound's framework, the cognitive process of reasoning and deduction, which he describes as “the dance of the intellect among words,” is referred to as “logopoeia,” and this facet of language, triggers a fusion of intellectual and emotional associations that have been linked to the words used (Quentel 2006, 492).

For Pound, the interlocked images and the depiction of the environment were what he valued most from classical Chinese poetry. In his translation process, he attempted to use his own language to present the Image. From this short poem, we can see his application of Imagist poetics. Logopoeia and phanopoeia intertwine to achieve emotional communication that does not require explicit language description.

Building upon the foundation of Pound's application of Imagist poetics in the short poem, we will now delve into three departure poems by Li Bai. To start our exploration, we will examine “Separation on

the River Kiang” first, as Fenollosa commented, “This poem is very simple, yet very famous” (Billings 2018, 221).

4.2 Separation on the River Kiang

Translated by Pound:

Separation on the River Kiang

Ko-jin goes west from Ko-kaku-ro,
The smoke-flowers are blurred over the river.
His lone sail blots the far sky.
And now I see only the river,
The long Kiang, reaching heaven.

Translated by Xu:

Seeing Meng Haoran Off at Yellow Crane Tower

My friend has left the west where the Yellow Crane towers
For River Town green with willows and red with flowers.
His lessening sail is lost in the boundless azure sky,
Where I see but the endless River rolling by.

This is a farewell poem that mainly depicts Li Bai bidding farewell to his friend Meng Haoran at Yellow Crane Tower. The poem conveys a profound sense of melancholy that goes much beyond the literal meaning of its words (Billings 2018, 224).

The first two lines of this departure poem are similar to the opening lines of the previous poem, in which the poet draws a picture of the surroundings for the readers. Given that it is a poem about departing, it should inform us not only about the destination but also about the place where they leave and the surrounding scenery they pass through as they go. There is a word-for-word translation of the title of the poem included in the notes that Billings has supplied, and it goes: “At the Yellow Crane Tower, Sending off Meng Haoran for Guangling.” The name of the friend, the location of the farewell, as well as the location of the arrival, are all included in the title of the original Chinese version. When the two versions are compared, it is evident that Xu has carefully processed the material and distinguished two separate

locations, whereas Pound only specifies the place of farewell, “Ko-Kaku-ro,” and omits the place of destination. Xu provides an explanation of the location names through translations, rendering “Yellow Crane Tower” and “River Town” while Pound retains Japanese sounds in his translation.

He kept the Japanese sounds of “friend” and “Yellow Crane Tower” in the first line, perhaps due to the influence of the notes he read, which stated, “Often sung by Jap. Students... It is impossible to suggest any change for the better” (*ibid.*, 221). This peculiar approach to translation does not detract from readers’ understanding of the poem since both are nouns. Instead of translating as “my friend” like Xu, “Ko-jin” consists of only two consonants and two vowels, the pronunciation is shorter, and it ensures the language remains concise and efficient and, at the same time, introduces an exotic feeling.

The second line, “smoke-flowers” possesses a very strong and striking visual quality. Pound made a purposeful decision while describing the location’s surroundings. In contrast to Xu, he did not explicitly translate the place but rather excluded it from the translation. Because of this absence, the reader’s attention is redirected to envision the flowers growing along the riverfront, which gives his description stronger emphasis. Xu’s translation, for example, is a comprehensive descriptive representation. By deftly using verbs such as “green” and “red” to describe the flourishing flowers and thriving willows, he restricted the things he saw into specific categories. In contrast, Pound employs the verbs “blurred” and “smoke-flowers” to express the scene of an abundance of blossoming flowers. The expressions “blurred” and “smoke” provide an impression that is more complex and dazzling, and the colors involved are more vague rather than specific.

In the final two sentences, the protagonist watches his friend depart, and Pound divides the description into three concise lines to avoid redundancy, which differs from Xu, who followed a rigid line-to-line translation. When depicting the scene of the friend’s figure gradually disappearing, Xu uses the verb “lost” to directly indicate the action and prefers to use descriptive adjectives to explain nouns. “Lessening sail” and “boundless azure sky” are both similar structures. When dealing with an “Image,” Xu’s method is to identify it first and then select appropriate descriptive words to reach the balance in rhyme and accuracy. Pound does not emphasize the action but rather says that his friend’s figure “blots” the sky. “Blot” as a polysemous word can be used both as a verb and a noun. In this context, the verb form evokes an immediate visual image for readers to associate with. Pound defined an Image as “an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time” (LE, 4). Here, the use of “blot” represents his Imagism poetics and his unique approach to poetic translation. In Pound’s mind, what he wanted to absorb from Chinese poetry is its goal is to create a perception that is not meant to be definitive but

instead serves as an introduction to a sequence of many experiences and emotions (Xie 1999, 6). The word “blot” here is used as a verb, the verb form of a noun helps readers decode its imagery derived from its noun form. By a simple verb, it gives readers an instant realization of how his friend’s back is lost in the horizon; such usage makes his language concise and accurate, yet with the pictorial Image in mind.

In the last line, Xu wrote that he saw the river “rolling by,” describing the continuous movement of the river crashing and raging, while Pound did not provide any further description but simply indicated “long Kiang” and used the phrase “reaching heaven” to reinforce the length of the river. Here, a similar method is used as in “The Jewel Stairs’ Grievance.” Because it is “long,” it can be depicted as “reaching heaven”, both stress the distance. While in Xu’s version, “endless” and “rolling” do not entails such strong logical connections. When Pound uses adjectives, he doesn’t just use a single word in isolation but rather connects it to the context to assist in creating his Image.

We can also do similar mathematical analysis: since “his sail blots the far sky,” Li Bai is gazing at his friend’s back until nothing can be seen after bidding goodbye. “The long Kiang, reaching heaven” entails the endless length and vastness of the river. He stood there watching his friend leave, and the small blot made a contrast with the long river. The river, which reaches to heaven, also shows uncertainty, as the journey of his friend gradually disappears from his sight, with nothing more to be seen, everything remaining unknown to him now. After seeing his friend’s back off, nothing could be known and seen by him, thus the poet feels empty and lost. That’s why Fenollosa commented, “Power of sight has already reached its limit, and yet the sorrow of separation is still without limit” (Billings 2018, 221).

From this poem, we can also see how Pound’s poetry embodies logopoeia and phanopoeia. The description of a single image and scene is phanopoeia, while the deeper emotions of concern and worry for a friend’s journey are not directly mentioned. Instead, they are conveyed through the meticulous description of these images, which is logopoeia. Pound presents us with the images of “smoke flower” and “Kiang,” while the emotions of concern and sorrow are the manifestation of logopoeia poetics. Pound carefully considered his choice of words to convey complex emotions to readers. To maintain a logical thread, the selection of adjectives and the use of verbs were crucial. The interconnection between “smoke flowers” and “blurred,” “long” and “reaching heaven,” and even “lone” and “blot” can project an visual Image into readers’ minds. Therefore, readers can use inference to gradually understand the relationships behind these images and perceive the emotions that the poet wants to convey.

By analyzing these two poems, we have gained a preliminary understanding of Pound's translation of Chinese poetry and his Imagist poetics. Now, we will analyze two more departure poems that were originally written in the traditional "regulated verse"¹ style, which gained popularity during the Tang dynasty (*ibid.*, 227).

4.3 Taking Leave of a Friend

Translated by Pound:

Taking Leave of a Friend

Blue mountains to the north of the walls,
White river winding about them;
Here we must make separation
And go out through a thousand miles of dead grass.

Mind like a floating wide cloud.
Sunset like the parting of old acquaintances
Who bow over their clasped hands at a distance.
Our horses neigh to each other
as we are departing.

Translated by Xu:

Farewell to a Friend

Green mountains bar the northern sky;
White water girds the eastern town.
Here is the place to say good-bye,
You'll drift our, lonely thistledown.
Like floating cloud you'll float away;
With parting day I'll part from you.
We wave and you start on your way,

¹ The form consists of four couplets with interlocking rhymes (typically AB CB DB EB) and a strict tonal meter, characterized by "antithetical parallelism" within the middle two couplets, which calls for an exact correspondence of conceptual categories and grammatical forms between characters in matching positions in the lines (Billings 2018, 227).

Your horse still neighs: “Adieu! adieu!”

This poem has eight lines. Xu’s English rendition is divided into eight lines as well, and they strictly rhyme with abab cdcd. In contrast, Pound’s translation is less concerned with rhyme. And structurally he divides the poem into two stanzas.

From previous analysis, we know that for classical Chinese poems, it usually starts with the depiction of the environment. Likewise, the first two lines in the poem explain the environmental information of departure. It depicts the background landscape of where the poet and his friend bid farewell. In both Pound and Xu’s renditions, the most significant difference is their treatment of color. Pound translated the word as “Blue” and Xu as “Green.” It would be weird to refer to mountains as blue, but the original Chinese word incorporates two colors at the same time. However, it typically means “blue” in Japanese (Billings 2018, 96). Pound read the source material from Japanese scholars, thus adopting “blue.”

In describing the positional relationship between mountains and water, Xu uses the verbs “bar” and “gird” in parallel, while Pound is more flexible. For the description of the position, he uses prepositions “to” and “about.” In particular, Pound’s use of the pronoun “them” for reference without translating the exact location, in contrast to Xu’s translation of “eastern town,” is an omission in the translation from the original text. However, this omission also makes the relationship between the mountains and water more concrete and vividly portrayed. There is a locational connection between mountains, water, and the wall. Xu’s version separates the mountain and water, each adhered to another place.

After the depiction of the environment and location, the next line directly states that this is the place where the two friends bid farewell. For the next line depicting the landscape, Pound’s use of “and” connects the previous and the following lines, continuing the theme of separation. The difference between his approach and Xu’s can also be seen in the specific description. Xu translated the type of grass as “thistledown” and carefully paid attention to the sound and rhyme in the language.

In contrast, Pound used “dead grass” for his translation and put efforts into describing the image of “dead grass.” “Go out through a thousand miles” emphasizes that the journey is long and the grass seems endless. Thus, in order to describe the grass, he uses the adjective “dead” which not only depicts the status of the grass by nature but also contributes to the poet’s state of mind in departing from his friend. This also reflects his persistence in Imagist poetics. Once he employs an adjective, it is wisely used. This

kind of usage mirrors the previous line “long Kiang, reaching heaven,” where the adjective describing an image is always bound with further emotions of the poet.

The next five lines describe the parting scene more specifically. Pound’s proposals for Imagism are vividly reflected in the handling of these lines. Many images are juxtaposed at the same time as they depart.

“Mind like a floating wide cloud” implies that the poet’s mind is indeterminate and uncertain. The poet’s mind is wandering and cannot fix on one thing at the moment of departure; thus, it floats around like a cloud. The adjective “wide” not only describes the cloud but also reflects the abundance of his thoughts in that moment. The next line describes the setting sun, which indicates the end of the day and the imminent disappearance of the cloud and the poet’s wandering mind.

In the following line, Pound describes the gesture of parting at sunset, “bow over their clasped hands” which is his understanding of the way of bidding farewell in Chinese culture. He explains it, whereas Xu’s version, for example, does not explain the difference in waving hands for goodbye.

Here, Pound employs “Sunset like” to correspond with the earlier “Mind like” metaphor. The metaphor of clouds was used to describe the mind, and now the etiquette of farewell is used to describe the sunset, blending human emotions with the environment. This parallelism creates a dynamic relationship between people and the environment, where thoughts can float like clouds and the sunset can fall down like a farewell.

In the next line, Xu’s translation personifies the friend’s horse, while Pound emphasizes the mutual reaction between the two persons and their horses. As they bid goodbye, bowing to each other at a distance, their horses keep neighing to one another. In contrast, Xu’s version, “you start on your way” and “your horse neighed” focuses on how the poet perceives the parting scene.

Pound’s translation technique fosters a mutual reaction that helps to juxtapose images. Just as Pound proclaimed:

The defect of earlier imagist propaganda was not in misstatement but in incomplete statement. The diluters took the handiest and easiest meaning and thought only of the STATIONARY image. If you can’t think of Imagism or phanopoeia as including the moving image, you will have to make a really needless division of fixed image and praxis or action (ABC, 52).

Pound creates a dynamic and parallel relationship between humans and the environment, then moves to the mutual reactions between the poet and his friend, and the neigh of the horses during the farewell. This creates a vivid and dynamic interaction between the protagonist and his friend, highlighting their mutual value and respect. Even their horses behave in a similar manner when they part, demonstrating the depth of their relationship.

When analyzing Pound's use of juxtaposition, Yip draws an analogy to montage: two independent shots are juxtaposed against one another and then spliced together. The outcome resembles a creation more than the sum of its parts, since the finished product is qualitatively distinct from each component piece when seen separately (Yip 1969, 22-23). The bow at a distance, the neigh of the horses, and the change of space all work together to immerse readers in the Image of the parting scene, as if in a movie.

In the translation and creation of this poem, Pound continues the methods used in the previous two poems. To accurately present the images, he uses prepositions and pronouns to avoid repetition in translation. Additionally, because Pound's poetics require attention to the internal logic of the images, he uses conjunctions such as "and" and "as" to connect them in translation to help readers understand. The difference between this poem and the previous two is that this poem creates dynamic interactions between humans and the environment, as well as between humans and their horses. The Image is in movement, like a dynamic panorama, unlike the previous one where the poet passively watches his friend's figure disappear and sees the endless river.

4.4 Leave-Taking Near Shoku

Translated by Pound:

Leave-Taking Near Shoku

"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.

Translated by Xu:

To a Friend Departing for Shu

Rugg'd is the road, I hear
Built by the pioneer.
In front steep mountains rise;
Beside the steed cloud flies.
O'er plank-way trees hang down;
Spring water girds the town.
Decid'd our rise and fall,
Do not bother at all!

When it comes to translating this poem, Xu Yuanzhong's version is both more succinct and offers an effective starting point for understanding the poem's meaning. In short, the poem describes Li Bai bidding farewell to a friend who is leaving for Shu (Shoku). As a way of consoling his friend, who has been told that the path to Shu is treacherous and dangerous, Li Bai reassures him by pointing out that the journey would also be accompanied by incredible scenery, just as life is full of ups and downs. The poem has been praised for its apt connection of roadside landscape to the difficulties of life (Billings 2018, 234).

To begin with, in terms of the translation of the title, Pound's translation, "Leave-Taking Near Shoku," emphasizes the location of the separation, while Xu's "To a Friend Departing for Shu" emphasizes the friend who is departing. From the subsequent translation, it can also be seen that Pound inserts an epigraph at the beginning to explain the relationship between Shoku and Sanso, while Xu directly omits this part.

The epigraph “Sanso, King of Shoku built roads” is an insertion by Pound himself, which serves to help readers understand that “Sanso” in the following line is actually a person rather than a place (*ibid.*, 234). The first line of this poem is “They say the roads of Sanso are steep.” Without the epigraph, Pound would have needed to provide annotations and explanations for Sanso, which would have disrupted the coherence of the reading. This approach should actually be in line with his Imagist philosophy. If it were not, he could have omitted this particular part as Xu did. Since he chose this unique form and inserted the sentence, which seems to go against his principle of simplicity of language, it must serve a purpose.

By inserting this sentence, on the one hand, it echoes with “They say” and provides a reason and background for the first line. At the same time, it connects King, Shoku, and the roads. The King built the road, and it is said to be steep. There is a corresponding connection between the two, where the king holds the authority in ancient times, representing the highest position, and the roads by him are said to be steep somehow connecting with the King’s, Sanso’s characteristics with the roads. This is logically reasonable and in line with Pound’s concept of the juxtaposition of images. Pound went on to describe the roads as “sheer as the mountains,” which also echoes the King’s authority and grandeur.

In the next three lines, Pound depicts the scene in which a person is riding a horse and struggling to make his way through. In translation, Pound used verb-preposition structures to describe the state of the walls and clouds. “Rise in” and “grow out” were used to depict the status of the walls and clouds. Pound first presented the images of walls and clouds in order, and then described them. “Rise in a man’s face” and “grow out of the hill” give a sudden abruptness, which corresponds to the dangerous characteristics of mountain roads and towering peaks. In his description of the clouds, Pound continued to impose limitations, using “at his horse’s bridle” to indicate that this person is riding his horse in such a dangerous position, where the walls rise in his face and the clouds are just at the position of the horse’s bridle.

Here, “Walls,” “man’s face,” “clouds,” “hill,” and “horse’s bridle” are put together to highlight the dangerous mountain roads. Pound believes that “the image is itself the image. The image is the word beyond formulated language” (EWPP, 288). By employing verbs “rise” and “grow,” these scattered objects were connected. In such combination, the Image of the man riding on a dangerous mountain road is presented vividly.

The following four lines correspond to Xu’s “O’er plank-way trees hang down; Spring water girds the town.” Pound provides a detailed and meticulous description of it. In the first two lines, Pound employs the term “sweet” to describe the trees. These trees, growing along the road, are depicted as thriving, with

their branches bursting through the pavement. Both “sweet” and “burst” convey a sense of powerful vitality and liveliness, contributing to a vivid portrayal of the scene.

The description of the water flow is similar, as Pound also uses “burst” to depict the water breaking through the ice in Shoku. As previously mentioned, Shoku is a territory under the rule of Senso King, and the roads under his authority are perilous and arduous. However, the freshets described here break through the ice that belongs to this proud city.

Previously, there was a discussion of the hardship of horseback riding on mountainous roads. However, the following four lines depict a transformation from mountain roads to a scene of abundant foliage, the rebirth of living things, and the breaking of the ice by the water. The preceding four lines describe mountains and clouds, both “rise” and “grow” indicate the perspective from bottom to top. The towering mountains and the clouds nearby instill fear about the so-called dangerous roads. However, the following four lines change the perspective. Li Bai does not stare at the unattainable walls, but rather looks at the surroundings. The trees are “sweet” and the water flow nearby is “bursting,” full of vitality, indicating that even on such treacherous roads, if one just changes their perspective, there is beauty and vitality even in such a dangerous place.

This farewell poem by Li Bai differs from his previous works as it describes the scenery from the beginning to the end. The poem starts with Li Bai hearing that his friend is going to the dangerous Shoku road, where walls show directly in front of one’s face, and even the clouds in those mountain areas can be reached by a bridle. In the face of such danger, Li Bai suggests looking around from a different perspective, then you will find nearby trees and water that are full of vitality. He uses this analogy to comfort his friend who is about to embark on the journey.

The last two lines of the poem, whether in Pound’s “Men’s fates are already set, There is no need of asking diviners” or Xu’s “Decid’d our rise and fall, Do not bother at all!”, both convey the same message: fate is predetermined, and there is no need to seek the advice of diviners. In translation of the poem, Pound provides detailed descriptions of the changing scenery in the first and second halves. He depicts the treacherous journey in the first half and incorporates an epigraph to offer context and improve logical coherence for readers. To accurately convey the Image, Pound meticulously employs adjectives, with each one contributing not only to the description of the object but also aiding readers in their logical reasoning process. Additionally, he uses combinations of verbs and prepositions to describe the scenes, highlighting the relationship between the various images.

5. Conclusions

As a leading figure of the 20th century literary movement, Pound has had a tremendous impact worldwide. His Imagism redefined the way of poetics in 20th century and its influence extends beyond the Britain and the United States.

Cathay, as a representative work of Pound's Imagist poetry, is not only a compilation of translations of classical Chinese poetry, particularly the works of Li Bai, but also a reflection of Pound's application of Imagist poetics. It is precisely because of this uniqueness that its publication has had significant influence both in English-speaking countries and in China.

This thesis has approached the analysis from an Imagist perspective, taking a comparative study with the native translator Xu Yuanchong. It becomes evident that Pound's translation strategies are intricately intertwined with his adherence to Imagist principles. In contrast to Xu's focus on rhyme and conveying meaning, Pound places a paramount importance on the presentation of Image in poetry. His translations aim to convey the essence of the Image rather than merely the meaning.

From the analysis of four poems by Li Bai, we can observe Pound's poetry translation is not merely a translation, but a purposeful creative endeavor that combines his own poetic principles. He employs his own poetic principles in translating and handling these texts for the purpose of the delivering of Image. Pound's translations of classical Chinese poetry effectively demonstrate the combination of "logopoeia" and "phanopoeia." "Phanopoeia" is specifically manifested in the presentation of each image in a poem, while the analysis focusing on the connotations and emotions requires an examination of "logopoeia." Reading his poetry from the perspective of "logopoeia" and "phanopoeia" helps us understand his language in poetic writing and enables us to appreciate these poems more effectively.

One of the most prominent features in his translation is the careful selection of adjectives. Each adjective he uses is not in isolation, it provides logical clues for readers in deciphering the Image.

Moreover, he boldly employs adverbs to further modify the depicted images, as seen in phrases like "already quite white" and "Men's fates are already set," where the adverb "already" is used to help intensify the meaning. In the descriptions of spatial relationships, he utilizes prepositional structures to depict the relationship between two images. For example, in "Taking Leave of a Friend" he uses prepositions to indicate the position of the mountains and the water. In "Leave-Taking Near Shoku" he

employs verb-preposition structures to describe the clouds and mountains protruding in front of the sight, stressing the danger of the roads. Furthermore, he utilizes conjunctions such as “and” and “as” to provide logical explanations and progression between sentences, which is evident in all four poems.

In terms of sentence structure, Pound does not emphasize strict correspondence in structure or rhyme scheme, unlike Xu, who used precise rhyming in his translation. However, for the sake of syllabic conciseness, Pound retains certain Japanese words such as “Ko-jin,” “Ko-kaku-ro” and “Sanso” in his translation. Additionally, in “The Jewel Stairs’ Grievance” he boldly employs a first-person perspective in his translations, allowing readers to feel more involved.

Pound’s utilization of these methods reflects his adherence to the Imagist principle of concise and direct portrayal of a particular image or object and the rejection towards Victorian style. Moreover, these techniques, on a deeper level, help establish logical connections, allowing each image to be linked with each other in certain way. These images are complex and intertwined with one another, despite the simplicity and directness of the language used.

At the same time, through a close reading of these four poems, we can observe Pound’s gradual sophistication in the expression of Imagism. The use of juxtaposed images becomes more apparent in the latter two poems. In “Taking Leave of a Friend,” in the last stanza, he emphasizes the dynamic changes of the scenery together with the two friends’ emotions, while in “Leave-taking near Shoku,” he juxtaposes various images to stress the danger of the roads in the first six lines.

Without a doubt, Pound’s translations of Chinese poetry have served as a bridge between the West and China. By incorporating the poetics of classical Chinese poetry, which highly values the portrayal of images, into the English language, Pound created a unique fusion. Scholars from both Eastern and Western cultures could discover something refreshing in Pound’s translations and be captivated by his language. Therefore, to fully grasp the essence of the poems in his collection *Cathay*, it is imperative to always keep Pound’s Imagist poetics in mind, as it holds the key to understanding, rather than relying solely on interpretations rooted in classical Chinese language. This study, serving as a mere attempt, has demonstrated the possibility of adopting an Imagist approach to conduct a detailed analysis of the Chinese poems in *Cathay*, without interpretation of Chinese language and characters. It highlights the significance of comprehending Pound’s translations within the context of Imagism.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The scope of analysis was limited

to four out of the nineteen Chinese poems, resulting in a narrower coverage. Additionally, the study did not delve into the interpretation and analysis from “melopoeia” aspects. Future research can explore these aspects in more comprehensive analysis.

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