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Freiheit der Sprachbewegung ihre eigenste Bahn zu verfolgen.

Ouyang Jianghe beschreibt seine Erfahrung mit Hölderlin folgendermaßen:¹⁵

In meiner ersten Nacht in Tübingen machten Zhang Zao und ich einen Spaziergang zum Stift (an dem Hölderlin einst studierte). Wir setzten uns auf eine Steinbank und sprachen bis gegen Mitternacht über Hölderlins Gedichte. Das waren glückliche Stunden. Die Rede kam auf Hölderlins „Brot und Wein“. Zhang Zao bestand darauf, auf der Stelle heimzugehen und mir, daß ich es höre, das Original aus dem Stegreif ins Chinesische zu übersetzen. Und genau so machten wir es. Zhang Zao war damals höchst inspiriert und knipste mit einemmal im dunklen, schwerverständlichen Kosmos Hölderlinscher Sprache einen Schalter ins Chinesische an - zum ersten Mal empfand ich, wie heilig, wie schön, wie genialisch ungestüm Hölderlins Dichtung ist. Zu unserem Leidwesen war der „Schalter ins Chinesische“ jener Nacht unversehens wieder verschwunden. Am folgenden Tag wollte Zhang Zao „Brot und Wein“ erneut übersetzen, doch den geheimnisvollen Schalter konnte er nicht mehr auffinden. Er versuchte es danach noch viele Male, fand ihn aber niemals wieder. Ich denke jetzt, vielleicht war der Hölderlin jener Nacht im Universum der chinesischen Sprache ein unwiederholbares Ereignis?

Man mag in einem Fall wie diesem vom Tod des Originals, vom Untergang des Übersetzers sprechen, aber das Scheitern selbst wäre auch ein Akt der Nächstenliebe, weil es dem kommenden Leben einen Raum der Sehnsucht nach Vollkommenheit beließe, genauer gesagt einen Ausgangspunkt: Die Nachgeborenen wären gebeten, etwas einmal und kurz Erlöstes erneut aus seiner Vergangenheit zu erwecken, das für die Heutigen nur eine kleine Gegenwart hatte.

Abstract

The essay is only moving very slowly to its topic once proposed by Ana Agud. The argument is that translating might result in hatred towards the text to be translated or in depression when the translation is finished. The cause for this is the moment of dying that the translator has to face when doing translation work. Dying might mean the death of one's own person being given away to something else, i.e. to the text, it might also mean the death of the original text itself within the process of translation. When being translated a text may suffer from a multiple death: the worst one is not being relieved from its original language and not being allowed to resurrect in another language. Whenever they meet for a very short time the original and the translated version of a text given come up with life in the process of reading and explaining.

¹⁵ Ouyang Jianghe: Paul Hoffmann hören, deutsch von Susanne Göße, in: Hansgerd Delbrück (Hg.): *Dem Dichter des Lesens. Gedichte für Paul Hoffmann*. Tübingen: Attempto 1997, 95

Death in Macau: In Defence of Orientalism

John MINFORD, Hong Kong

1. Karmic Rendezvous

For an intellectual product of any value to exert an immediate influence which shall also be deep and lasting, it must rest on an inner harmony, yes, an affinity, between the personal destiny of its author and that of his contemporaries in general. Men do not know why they award fame to one work of art rather than another... The real ground of their applause is inexplicable - it is sympathy.¹

'ambition de tout confondre, de l'Orient d'amour à l'Occident héroïque, du Midi face au Prince au Nord trop amical - pour atteindre l'autre, le cinquième, centre et milieu - qui est moi.'²

Among the many thousands of translations from the Chinese since the seventeenth century, a very few stand out as having been able to bring the work across. This has little to do with academic sinology. The Chinese would probably call it *yuanfen* 緣分 or karmic affinity, between text and translator. It is a relationship of inevitability. The translator, as Homo Ludens, enters into an interactive, deconstructive game that leaves all the elements changed - the world of the so-called „original“, and the world of the „new“ version. Both are changed, and something new is born. It is an act of dissemination. Many of the translators from the Chinese whose work has stood the test of time have been precisely those whose participation invites the vituperation of the post-Said world as rapists and pillagers of the Orient, because they have dared to allow themselves to be driven by their love of the work, and their sheer joy in it.

This love also exposes its devotees to rejection or betrayal by their beloved. Like the old butler in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, they may find at the end of it all that they have served an unappreciative, or unworthy, master or mistress, that their love is unrequited, or fantasmagorical.³

¹ Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*, tr. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (Penguin Books, 1955), 11.

² Victor Segalen, *Stèles* (1912), „Perdre le Midi Quotidien“.

³ I am grateful to my friend Nicholas Koss for this comparison, which has haunted me ever since he first made it several years ago.

I have chosen Macau as a shorthand for the space inhabited by these translators, a rendezvous, like Alexandria, Constantinople, and Venice, between East and West.⁴ Macau is the city where Portugal's national poet Luis Camoens (1524-1580) may (or may not) have lived for a while when writing the *Lusiads*, the great epic celebrating Vasco da Gama and Europe's adventure beyond the confines of the Mediterranean and into Asia („Asianisieren die Philosophie“?). The garden called „Grotto of Camoens“ perpetuates the myth of this imaginary sojourn.

2. Song of the Earth

The seasons revolve and the years change
With no assistance or supervision,
The moon, without taking thought,
Moves in its cycle, full, crescent, and full.⁵

As an example of this bringing across, I have chosen two movements from Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.⁶ Here we have Chinese poetry reaching into the very heart of European culture - in this case through a complex process involving not only translations (sometimes

⁴ Many places potentially contain this symbolism. Even the town of Covilhã claims as its most famous son one Pêro de Covilhã, a „young Arabic-speaking Portuguese who went East in search of spice markets, and perhaps to find the legendary Christian priest-king Prester John, on behalf of Dom João II.“ See Julia Wilkinson and John King, *Portugal* (Lonely Planet, 1997), p. 380. Yule has a wonderful summary of the jabberwocky pedigree of Prester John, the legendary Christian monarch of Asia (*Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 3, p. 26): „Much ingenuity has been expended by learned men to little purpose in devising an origin for the name of Prester John. The *John* has been derived from the Chinese title Wang, or has been connected with the old legends of the immortality of John the Evangelist. *Prester John* has been interpreted as a corruption of *Firishitajan*, *Paraster Khan*, *Presbyter Cohen*, and what not, down to Pedro Juan, and Preto Joam, or Black John, which the Portuguese applied to the King of Abyssinia, and the *Pretiosus Joannes*, with which one of the Popes actually addressed that potentate.“
Coimbra, the ancient coastal Portuguese city, has a wonderful university library, decorated in a style that can only be called High Chinoiserie Baroque. Close by, in the old Jesuit seminary, the chapel ceiling is painted by the great Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione, alias Lang Shining, the one Western painter to have breached the wall of traditional Chinese painting.

Kenneth Rexroth, „Another Spring“.

Readers of the text may wish to listen to the wonderful recording by Janet Baker, with Bernard Haitink conducting the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. It was this recording, the movements „Der Einsame im Herbst“ and „Der Abschied“, that we listened to at the 1997 Académie du Midi meeting in the old Sanatorium high up in the Serra da Estrela. We sat before a log fire, and outside, although it was May, it was bitterly cold, and there were still pockets of snow on the mountains. Without the music these few paragraphs can be no more than a lame shorthand record of that occasion.

improvisations and inventions) between several languages, but also in the case of „Der Abschied“ the joining together by Mahler himself of two previously unconnected poems. Throughout the work, the composer impregnates the text of the poems (which he more than occasionally rewrites) with some of his most poignant melodic, polyphonic and orchestral music. Language and music are both poured into the alchemical crucible.

3. Tidal Wave

Die liebe Erde allüberall
Blüht auf im Lenz und grünt aufs neu!
Allüberall und ewig blauen licht die Fernen,
Ewig... ewig!⁷

Spiritually and emotionally, it was, as Mahler himself wrote in a letter to Bruno Walter in September 1908, the most „personal [das Persönlichste] thing I have done so far.“ Walter recalls Mahler saying to him concerning „Der Abschied“, „What do you think? Is this to be endured at all? Will not people make away with themselves after hearing it?“⁸ And yet strangely, the „original“ poems of parting, written by two Chinese friends, have travelled full circle. The transcendent philosophy of Buddhism reached China from India (the great Tang-dynasty pilgrim Xuanzang 玄奘 [c. 600-664] immortalised in the novel *Journey to the West* was first and foremost a translator into Chinese of the sutras). The Buddhist-inspired words of Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (689-740) and Wang Wei 王维 (701-761), find a resonance after nearly twelve hundred years in the „supernatural serenity“ of Mahler (the words are Benjamin Britten's). „I cannot understand it - it passes over me like a tidal wave - and that matters not a jot either, because it goes on for ever, even if it is never performed again - and that final chord is printed on the atmosphere. Perhaps if I could understand some of the Indian philosophies I might approach it a little. At the moment I can do no more than bask in its Heavenly light - & it is worth having lived to do that.“⁹ Benjamin Britten finds his way with a musician's instinct back to the cosmic source of inspiration behind both text and music.

⁷ Gustav Mahler, „Der Abschied“, based on Hans Bethge's German version of Wang Wei.

⁸ Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death, Interpretations and Annotations* (London, 1985), 342.

⁹ Britten's letter to Henry Boys, 29 June 1937, quoted by Mitchell, pp. 339-340.

4. Nouvelle Chinoiserie

The late humour of reading Oriental Romances... has extended our Notions, and made the Customs of the East much more familiar to us than they were before, or probably ever would have been, had they not been communicated to us by this indirect, and pleasant Way.¹⁰

Ce n'est pas vous, non, madame, que j'aime,
Ni vous non plus, Juliette, ni vous,
Ophélie, ni Béatrix, ni même
Laure la blonde, avec ses grands yeux doux,

Celle que j'aime, à présent, est en Chine;
Elle demeure avec ses vieux parents,
Dans une tour de porcelaine fine,
Au fleuve Jaune, où sont les cormorans...¹¹

That Li Po should reach Kensington by way of Tokyo, through the intercession of a Harvard-educated enthusiast of Spanish descent, was but a global recapitulation of the steps by which the Arabs transmitted Aristotle to 12th-century Paris...¹²

Musically, *Das Lied* was Chinoiserie in a most creative sense, in the tradition of all the best translations of Chinese literature. It developed musical procedures which, to paraphrase the Mahler-scholar Donald Mitchell, were „orientalist” not in a superficial sense, but in an internal, structural, and spiritual sense. The music was heterophonic, asymmetrical, rhythmically free, pulseless, unanchored, weightless.

In the same way, when confronted with Wang Wei's immortal line *Kong shan bu jian ren* 空山不見人, Kenneth Rexroth did not beat about the bush (no „empty mountains”, or „lonely mountains”, for him). He went straight to the spiritual heart of the matter:

„Deep in the mountain wilderness...”

5. Dragoman, or Druggerman at Babel (or Macau?)

The Dragoman - a comprehensive designation applied to all who act as intermediaries between Europeans and Orientals; from the grandest - the dragoman of the imperial divan - to the meanest hotel tout or travellers' guide.

¹⁰ Thomas Simon Gueulette's *Moguel Tales* (1736).

¹¹ Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), „Chinoiserie”.

¹² Hugh Kenner, „The Invention of China”, in *The Pound Era* (Berkeley, 1971), 222.

In 1669 the French government decided on the foundation of a school for French dragomans at Constantinople, for which in later years was substituted the Ecole des Langues Orientales in Paris. Druggerman, from the Levantine Dragoman, Arab *tarjuman*, from Aramaic *targeman*, an interpreter; the Jewish Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases of the Scriptures, being named from the same root. The original force of the Aramaic root is seen in the Assyrian *ragamu*, „to speak”, *rigmu* „the word”. Other forms of the word are (from the Spanish *trujaman*) the Old French *truchement*, Low Latin *drocmandus*, *turchimannus*, Low Greek *dragoumanos* etc.¹³

Till I cried out, you prove yourself so able,
Pity! you was not Druggerman at Babel!
For had they found a linguist half so good,
I make no question that the Tower had stood.¹⁴

It is arrivals such as Mahler's that the tribe of translators yearn for. Undervalued midwives, they announce such births with defiant pride. When Bishop Thomas Percy (1729-1811, of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* fame) worked up his Northamptonshire neighbour James Wilkinson's uncle's unfinished manuscript of the minor Chinese novel *Haoqiu-zhuan*, entitled *Hau Kiou Chooan, or The Pleasing History: A Translation from the Chinese Language*, in the mid-eighteenth century, he too brought something convincingly home.

„In the city of Tah-ming, formerly lived a student named Tieh-chung-u, of great endowments of body and mind: for the beauty of his person, which equalled that of the finest woman, he was called the handsome Tieh: yet was his temper no less rough and impetuous than his form was elegant and pleasing: bold and resolute in resenting affronts, without any regard or awe of his superiors; yet strictly just, humane, generous, and noble, never so happy as when employed in assisting and relieving the distressed.”

The Pleasing History was swiftly translated into several European languages, and the German translation (done by Christopher Gottlieb von Murr in 1766) was much appreciated by Goethe. Wilkinson had completed the first draft in Macau, with a teacher who either was Portuguese, or knew the Portuguese language (the last quarter of the manuscript was still in Portuguese).

In the first years of the nineteenth century, two missionaries engaged simultaneously on the mammoth task of translating the Bible into Chinese. One of them, the Baptist Joshua Marshman, was working in Serampore, the Danish colony not far from Calcutta, with the aid of an Armenian, by the name of Lassar: „Mr Lassar was an Armenian, born,

¹³ Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson* (London, 1886), p. 327.

¹⁴ Alexander Pope, *After Donne, Sat. iv. 81* (1738).

we believe, at Macau. His parents had two Chinese servants, a man and a maid-servant - both Christians. With them it seems probable that the boy learned to speak the Chinese language in his childhood. We have been informed that subsequently his father procured for his son a Chinese teacher from Canton, who taught him to read and write the language. He left Macau, our informant thinks, in 1802, for Calcutta, where report said he was engaged by the English government as Chinese interpreter. We have somewhere, we think, seen a notice of the death of Mr Lassar: but we cannot recollect where it was, nor when it occurred."¹⁵

The other missionary, Robert Morrison, was himself based in Canton and Macau. Many of his books, including his monumental Dictionary, were printed in Macau, by P. P. Thoms, printer to the East India Company (and himself a translator of Cantonese „wooden-fish” ballads). Morrison, who died in 1834, is buried in Macau’s old Protestant Cemetery, a stone’s throw from the „Grotto of Camoens”.

Later in the nineteenth century, the French poet Théophile Gautier’s precocious daughter Judith worked with a young Chinese, „le jeune mandarin réfugié”, Ting Tun Ling, who had accompanied the Bishop of Macau on a visit to Paris. The result, *Le Livre de Jade* (1867), was the first truly poetic anthology of translations from Chinese poetry to penetrate into the heart of European culture. Its influence was enormous.

6. Songs of the Orient

Asie!
Je voudrais m’en aller...¹⁶

We who with songs beguile your pilgrimage
And swear that Beauty lives though lilies die,
We Poets of the proud old lineage
Who sing to find your hearts, we know not why, -

What shall we tell you? Tales, marvellous tales
Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest,
Where nevermore the rose of sunset pales,
And winds and shadows fall toward the West:

And there the world’s first huge white-bearded kings
In dim glades sleeping, murmur in their sleep,
And closer round their breasts the ivy clings,
Cutting its pathway slow and red and deep.

(ii)
And how beguile you? Death has no repose
Warmer and deeper than that Orient sand
Which hides the beauty and bright faith of those
Who made the Golden Journey to Samarkand

And now they wait and whiten peaceably,
Those conquerors, those poets, those so fair:
They know time comes, not only you and I,
But the whole world shall whiten, here and there;

When those long caravans that cross the plain
With dauntless feet and sound of silver bells
Put forth no more for glory or for gain,
Take no more solace from the palm-girt wells.

When the great markets by the sea shut fast
All that calm Sunday that goes on and on:
When lovers find their peace at last,
And Earth is but a star, that once had shone.¹⁷

Until you raised dead monarchs from the mould
And built again the domes of Xanadu,
I lay in evil case, and never knew
The glamour of that ancient story told
By good Ser Marco in his prison-hold.
But now I sit upon a throne and view
The Orient at my feet, and take of you
And Marco tribute from the realms of old.

If I am joyous, deem me not o’er bold;
If I am grateful, deem me not untrue;
For you have given me beauties to behold,
Delight to win, and fancies to pursue,
Fairer than all the jewelry and gold
Of Kublai on his throne in Cambalu.¹⁸

Sir Henry Yule (d. 1889) was in the lineage of Judith Gautier, not as a poet, but as an eloquent scholar-gentleman, whose edition of *Marco Polo, Cathay and the Way Thither*, and *Hobson-Jobson* (with Burnell)

¹⁵ *Chinese Repository* IX, October 1835.

¹⁶ Tristan Klingsor (1874-1966), „Schéhérazade” (1903), set to music by Maurice Ravel.

¹⁷ James Elroy Flecker (1884-1915), „The Golden Journey to Samarkand - Prologue”, set to music by Frederick Delius.

¹⁸ Dedicatory Poem for Yule’s *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, by E. C. Baber, dated July 20, 1884.

are lasting monuments of imaginative humanistic scholarship.¹⁹ He was one of that generation of Orientalists („that Orient in which I also had spent years not a few”) for whom the romance of travel, and the „quest” for Cathay, were part of a grander global vision of humanity.

Nowadays such men are hunted like cultural child-abusers. How fashionable it is to mock this old-fashioned romance with the Orient, to deride the passion of a man like Yule, who ended his own Preface to the second edition of *Marco Polo*, not with a bow to the politically correct academic establishment (à la Said), but with a visionary passage of prose (dated Palermo, 31st December, 1874):

„A loud Amen seemed to peal from without, and the awakened reader started to his feet. [Yule has been reading from an Old French version of Polo.] And lo! it was the thunder of the winter-storm, crashing among the many-tinted crags of Monte Pellegrino, - with the wind raging as it knows how to rage here in sight of the Isles of Aeolus, and the rain dashing on the glass as ruthlessly as it well could have done, if instead of the Aeolic Isles and many-tinted crags, the window had fronted a dearer shore beneath a northern sky, and looked across the grey Firth to the rain-blurred outline of the Lomond Hills.”

This sort of romance is today widely considered culpable. „Arthur Waley never travelled further East than Rome!” How many times I have heard this protest from the lips of indignant modern Chinese readers of Waley’s translations. And yet he „travelled” further into the world of the classical Chinese poet than most Chinese reading their works today. Like Victor Segalen, he was moving on a deeper level. Like Kenneth Rexroth („I have thought of my translations [of Du Fu 杜甫] as, finally, expressions of myself”), he was discovering himself in the Chinese poets - like Bo Juyi - that he translated. Like Edward FitzGerald, and Ezra Pound, he made the Orient sing.

7. Venice, Macau, Anywhere

The conception of my story [*Death in Venice*], which occurred in the early summer of 1911, was influenced by news of the death of Gustav Mahler, whose acquaintance I had made in Munich and whose intense personality left the strongest impression on me.²⁰

¹⁹ Another unfashionable word: „Liberal humanism, of which Orientalism has historically been one department, *retards* the process of enlarged and enlarging understanding.” Said, *Orientalism* (Penguin, 1991), 254.

²⁰ Thomas Mann, March 18, 1921, letter to Wolfgang Born, illustrator of *Death in Venice*, in *Letters of Thomas Mann, 1889-1955*, translated by Richard & Clara Winston (New York, 1975).

It is especially necessary that the breach between the Chinese and English-speaking peoples should not be widened. That is something more important ultimately than, say, the dollar-gap. The value of Ezra Pound’s lonely pioneer work in the higher orders of gap-bridging will one day receive the honours due to him now.²¹

The city-states of Macau and Venice are states of mind, free ports of call, hazardous transit zones in which the unwary translator is liable to be stranded.

One of the most moving testimonies to the perils of being a translator is Carl Jung’s. Writing of his friend, the great German sinologist and translator Richard Wilhelm, who had recently died, Jung spoke of the intense spiritual conflict that threatened Wilhelm’s health after his return from China to Germany in the 1930s. Wilhelm’s mission of transmitting East to West had taken its toll, and in his last months he lay in a German hospital dreaming of revisiting the endless stretches of desolate Asiatic steppes. His soul had strayed into that „untrodden, untreadable region whose precincts cannot and should not be entered by force, a destiny which will brook no intervention.”²²

This region lies around us, and operates in different ways and at different times for different individuals. In 1912, looking up towards the wild range of hills in southern France known as the Corbières, Ezra Pound wrote, in his (recently deciphered) journal: „Foix... We are come again to a place where the waters run swiftly & where we have always this Chinese background. The faint grey of the mountains... Above Quillan the rd. leads into Chinese unreality... Dwarfed cedars clutch at the crevices. At bottom the stream is almost as green as they are. There is a Chinese bridge of poles across this current.”²³

And further south, in the Iberian peninsula, „oriental poetry was then translated to Andalusia. There it flourished from the tenth to the thirteenth century. Oriental and Spanish sensibility unite in it... This delicate poetry, which is reminiscent of the Moorish gardens of the Generalife, is one of the channels through which the spirit of Islamic art could find its way into the Spanish poetry of the *siglo oro*.”²⁴

²¹ Hugh Gordon Porteus, „Ezra Pound and his Chinese character: A Radical Examination”, in Peter Russell, ed., *Ezra Pound: A Collection of Essays to be presented to Ezra Pound on his sixty-fifth birthday* (London, 1950).

²² Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Appendix IV. See also his Memorial Address in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Jung is quoting Goethe’s *Faust*.

²³ Richard Sieburth, ed., *A Walking Tour in Southern France: Ezra Pound among the Troubadours* (New York, 1992), 48 and 51-2.

²⁴ E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, translated by W. R. Trask (London, 1953), 341. The Generalife, or Yannat al Arif, „garden of lofty paradise”, was the country estate of the Nasrid kings, on the northern side of the Alhambra in Granada.

8. Death in Macau I: Thomas Beale and his Macanese Garden

A rose in a moonlit garden, the shadow of trees on the turf, almond bloom, the scent of pine, the wine-cup and the guitar; these and the pathos of life and death, the long embrace, the hand stretched out in vain, the moment that glides for ever away, with its freight of music and light, into the shadow and hush of the haunted past, all that we have, all that eludes us, a bird on the wing, a perfume escaped on the gale - to all these things we are trained to respond, and the response is what we call literature...²⁵

One of the most famous gardens in Old Macau belonged to one Thomas Beale, a British trader who had arrived there around 1785 to join his brother Daniel in a commercial enterprise. The house and garden, old Portuguese structures, ownership of which passed from one brother to the next, stood in what had become known as Beale's Lane.

He occupied one of the finest of the old Portuguese houses, enclosed within high walls, on a narrow street known as Beale's Lane... To it was joined a large garden, filled with the choicest and rarest of plants and flowers, a Bombay mango tree in full bearing, lychee and orange trees, and the custard apple &c. It possessed an aviary also, in which amongst the brilliant peacock and the mandarin duck, with many strange and scarce birds, was a *live* bird of paradise, at that time the rarest of all. The garden, arranged as Chinese gardens are, with the flowers and plants growing in pots, was one of the sights of the city... He was himself one of the old school in its fullest signification: stately in manner, somewhat formal, with distinguished manners... By 1841 the old gentleman had fallen into great difficulties, while a natural pride withheld him from seeking that assistance which all who knew him (and could do so) would willingly have rendered... I did not see him again until the morning of December 10, 1841, when coming from my private residence to the office on the Praya Granda, I met him about ten o'clock on the corner of Beale's Lane and Mr Nye's house. It was one of those glorious Macau mornings. We chatted about the beauty of the weather, the delicious balmy air, and so on; then shook hands and parted... From that day the old gentleman disappeared. We were lost in conjecture as to his whereabouts... At length, on January 13, 1842, his body was found at Cacilha's Bay, embedded in the sand, by some Portuguese boys, while hunting for shells.²⁶

²⁵ Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, *Letters from John Chinaman* (London, 1901), Fifth Letter.

²⁶ For this and the rest of the moving account of Thomas Beale's death, see William C. Hunter, *Bits of Old China* (London, 1855), 72-78.

9. „On Hearing a Foreign Lady Play the Forte-Piano in a Macau Garden”: Preface to a Poem by Wei Yuan (1794-1856)

Wei Yuan was a prominent scholar-official of the mid-nineteenth century, and compiled one of the first Chinese compendia of knowledge about the outside world, the *Illustrated Records of Countries Beyond the Seas (Haiguo tuzhi)*. He must have written this poem (I have only translated the Preface) after one of his frequent visits to the south.

Macau has existed as a Western city port since the middle years of the Ming dynasty. Visiting its gardens and pavilions, its mansions and villas, is like travelling abroad. In one garden I found strange rocks and ancient trees, rare and exotic birds flying among them - many of them imported from abroad. The birds are kept in large aviaries, enclosed in a wire mesh, and within these lofty cages (one hundred yards square and fifty yards high) there are ponds and trees, where the birds can fly and swim, can catch insects in their beaks and rest in their nests. It is a free, airy space, and in it they may easily forget that they are indeed confined.

The owner of this garden was a man called Weiliduo (?Hueldo, ?Vilhuelo), a Portuguese, and a hospitable man, who welcomed me into his house and led me upstairs. There I saw a piano (a foreign lute or zither), in appearance like the half of a table, strung with wire strings. I asked my host if he would play on it for me, but he declined, modestly protesting his musical incompetence. Then he went off all of a sudden into his private chambers, and returned presently with his wife. She proceeded to play on the piano from a score, keeping time with her hands and feet. She produced an exquisite sound, harmonizing subtly with the birdsong in the garden and the lapping of the waves outside. When she had finished playing, my host brought out his two sons; the eldest was a boy of nine, with a complexion luminous and smooth as snow, and a most captivating twinkle in his eyes. His like has never been seen in China.

My host asked me if I were able to write verse, and prevailed upon me to improvise some lines on the spot. These I recited, which seemed to give them considerable pleasure. On my departure he presented me with a foreign painting...

10. Death in Macau II: Sketch for a Film

What is the use of talking, and there is no end of talking,
There is no end of things of the heart.
I call in the boy,
Have him sit on his knees here

To seal this,
And send it a thousand miles, thinking.²⁷

By means of those frail tentacles, our sense, we explore the outward semblance of our fellow-creatures; but flesh is flesh and bone is bone, and only by insight and by divination can we pierce inward to the citadel of the mind and soul. We can only *translate* their touch, their gestures, the words they use, the changing looks on their faces into terms of our own consciousness and spirit.²⁸

„Death in Macau II” is a story of a friendship between two poets, of illusion and disenchantment, which leaves behind it no trace but a book of translations (like *Le Livre de Jade*).

A wealthy Englishman architect and artist working for the East India Company during the last days of that organisation’s existence, some time in the 1820s, lives in one of Macau’s most beautiful Portuguese-style gardens. He is a student of the Chinese language, and himself something of a poet.

He enters into a friendship with a young Chinese poet, the only son of a prominent mandarin stationed somewhere near Macau. They spend many hours together playing and listening to music. There is a friendship founded on the idea of Hearing the Sound (*zhi-yin* 知音), that unspoken sympathy that enables friends to know - or translate - each other’s thoughts, to „pierce the citadel of the mind and soul”.

In collaboration with his friend, he translates over the years a selection of poems by the Tang-dynasty poets Meng Haoran and Wang Wei, and eventually they publish the result in a deluxe, bilingual edition, printed by their friend Peter Perring Thoms (himself a translator), at the East India Company’s press in Macau. The book bears the motto „Men share the same heart; the heart shares the same reasons” (*ren tong ci xin, xin tong ci li* 人同此心，心同此理).²⁹

One winter’s day he learns that his Chinese poet friend has disappeared, taking with him his entire menage. He also discovers that several of his own confidential papers relating to East India Company and government business are missing. (He has been working on the fortification of several key buildings in Macau, including one of the old forts overlooking the barrier-gate).

It becomes clear to him that the poet, for all his exquisitely expressed sentiment, has been exploiting their friendship all along, in order to se-

cure sensitive information, for use in the simmering conflict, that will eventually erupt into the First Opium War between the Chinese and the English.

That same evening, the Englishman, now already elderly and stooped, and further bowed down by this revelation, walks out to the island of Coloanne, and past the old chapel of St Francis Xavier, to a lonely beach looking out onto the muddy waters of the Pearl River Estuary. As darkness falls, he knocks on the door of a small fisherman’s hut on the dunes overlooking the sea, and, speaking in the impeccable Cantonese he has mastered during his long years in Macau, he tells the two elderly fishermen inside the hut that if they go down to the beach the following morning they will find the body of a foreigner washed up on the sand. He begs them to bury the body, and in return for this favour presents them with a small casket. Then he disappears into the night.

The fishermen are greatly disturbed by this apparition, and after a sleepless night they set off at first light down to the beach, where sure enough they find the body of an elderly foreigner, whom they think they recognise as the previous night’s visitor. They bury the body, but do not dare report their discovery to the authorities. Nor do they dare open the casket.

Several weeks later, haunted by a strange sense of guilt, they decide to take the casket to the Portuguese authorities and tell the whole story. The casket contains a small amount of money, and otherwise nothing except for two Chinese-style scrolls. The first has written on it, in Beale’s own hand, the following lines from John Donne’s „Meditation on Death”:

I hear that which makes all sounds music, and all music perfect. All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated... God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God’s hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie open to another.

On the second sheet of paper was a carefully copied Chinese version of the English, done in the euphuistic style of classical Chinese known as parallel prose.³⁰

²⁷ Ezra Pound, „Exile’s Letter” by Rihaku (Li Bo), *Cathay* (1915).

²⁸ Walter de la Mare, *Desert Islands and Robinson Crusoe* (London, 1930, my italics).

²⁹ Witter Bynner’s collaborator Kiang Kang-hu quoted this proverbial saying in a letter written from prison. See Bynner’s „Remembering a Gentle Scholar”, in *The Chinese Translations*.

³⁰ For drawing my attention to Donne’s „Meditation”, I thank Eugene Royang.

歷百島蛟鼉氣，遠吸扶桑萬重翠，①自成海外一天地。松颺琅琅，松濤湯湯，松蓋戰雲雲茫茫。②大哉百谷王中有此百樹王，③回我浩氣于穹蒼。夜深霆震百靈死，四山怒裂龍孫子。④

①怪怪奇奇，詩稿作「郁島怪松」。 ②扶桑萬重，詩稿作「隔海扶桑」。 ③松蓋句下，詩稿多「松根裂石萬丈強」一句。 ④百樹王，詩稿作「萬樹王」。 ⑤裂，詩稿作「茁」。

黑龍江將軍打圍圖歌

八月河冰九月雪，十月天山厚地裂。紇干山頭凍雀死，海東青翅冷如鐵。渥集連天獐鹿肥，渥集一作窩集，國語老林也。將軍下令大打圍。八旗列陣魚貫進，酣獵兼旬猶未歸。白羽連貫三狡貌，老林突出千年羆，用康熙進哨縱二獅敵二羅事。恍如鉅鹿昆陽師。山獵未壓水獵補，打冰重集撈珠戶。鱒鯉十丈可盈船，鯊魚帶甲可化虎。殺氣遙連長白山，大家痛飲黃龍府。細騎小隊貂襜褕，紅妝馬上懸玄狐。風馳電轉鬪飛捷，笑指新月如彎弧。烏蠟藉履不知凍，鵬翎蓋屋似穹廡。人參水灌磨菽粗，使鹿使麋如使驢。獵罷回軍載蒼兕，駝車相屬四百里。講武重勒索倫隊，堂子割牲觀角牴。人人自負曳落河，氣吞萬帳壓千壘。昨宵羽檄走烏孫，大婦小婦齊餞樽，抽箭仰視天山雲。二百餘年乘王氣，四海無敵遼兵銳。知

君畫手思鼓聲，漢家世出關西帥。

題東丹王射鹿圖

東丹有國號人皇，醫巫閭山萬卷堂。瀑布聲中寫射鹿，國人共服書中王。小山壓大山，大山弱無力，渡海風帆投外國。衣冠熏沐賓王家，更賜姓名李贊華。西樓烽火驚邊歲，欲擁東樓作東帝，可惜潞王已斷魂，臨事倉皇失奇計。寧作東丹李贊華，肯似鹽車載帝羆。

澳門花園聽夷女洋琴歌

澳門自明中葉為西洋市場，園亭樓閣，如游海外。怪石古木，珍禽上下，多海外種。其樊禽之所，網其上以銅絲，縱橫十丈，高五丈。其中池沼樹木，飛浴啄息，空曠自如，忘其在樊也。園主人曰委理多，葡葡亞國人。好客，延登其樓，有洋琴如半几，架以銅絲，請其鼓，則辭不能。俄入內，出其室，按禮鼓之，手足應節，音調妍妙，與禽聲、海濤聲隱隱應和。鼓罷復出其二子，長者九歲，冰肌雪膚，隨翫秋水，中原未之見也。主人聞予能文，乞留數句，喃喃誦之，大喜。贈洋畫而別。

天風吹我大西洋，誰知西洋即在澳門之島南海旁。怪石磊磊木千章，園與海濤隔一牆。牆中禽作百蠻語，樓上人通百鳥語，鳥聲即作琴聲譜，自言傳自龍宮女。蟬翼纖羅髮髻，甘絃能作千聲彈。初如細雨吹雲間，故將兒女幽窗態，寫出天風海浪寒，似訴去國

萬里關山難。倏然風利帆歸島，鳥啼花放檣聲浩，觸碎珊瑚拉瑟聲，龍王亂撒珍珠寶。有時變節非絲竹，忽又無聲任剝啄，雨雨風風海上來，蕭蕭落落燈前簇。突并千聲歸一聲，關山一雁寥天獨。萬籟無聲海不波，銀河轉上西南屋。嗚呼！誰言隔海九萬里，同此海天雲月耳。膝前況立雙童子，一雙瞳子翦秋水。我昔夢蓬萊，有人長似爾。鞭騎么鳳如竹馬，桃花一別三千紀。嗚呼，人生幾度三千紀。海風吹人人老矣。

香港島觀海市歌

香港島在廣東香山縣南綠水洋中。諸嶼環峙，藏風宜泊，故英夷雄踞之。營盤舍樓觀如澳門，惟樹木鬱葱不及焉。予渡海往觀，次晨甫出港而海中忽湧出數山，回顧香港各島，則銳者圓，卑者廬，盡失故形，若與新出諸山錯峙。未幾山漸離水，橫於空際，交馳互驚，漸失巖罅，良久化為雄城如大都會，而海市成矣。自寅至巳始滅。幻矣哉！擴我奇懷，醒我塵夢，生平未有也。其可以無歌。

山邪雲，城邪人，胡爲兮可望不可親？豈蓬萊宮闕秦漢所不得見，而忽離立於海濱。豁然橫互兮城門，市廛樓閣兮兼郊閩。中有化人中天之臺千由旬，層層級級人蟻循。龍女綃客闌干捫，珊瑚萬貝填如雲，貿易技巧紛詐諉。南市罷，農市陳，農市散，軍市屯，漁樵耕饒春樹帘，畫本掩映千百皺。旗纛車騎收狩闕，蠻君鬼伯甲冑紳。合圍列隊肅不喧，但有指揮無號令，招之不語揮不噴。盡盡鱗鱗，隱隱幡幡，若非天風漸蕩吞，不知逞奇角怪何時

泯。俄頃樓臺盡失陂陀存，但見殘山賸樹斷橋隻獸一一漸入寥天痕。吁嗟乎！世間之事無不有，世間之物無不朽，影中之影夢中夢，造化丹青寫生手。王母雙成今老醜，蟻王蝸國爭蒼狗。若問此市有無與幻真，三世諸佛壁挂口。龍宮怒鼓風濤噴，回頭已入虎門右。

京口琴孃曲

順治二年，北固山楊公祠壁有女子題詩，自言台州人，衛氏字琴娘，嫁三月而遭兵難，掠入淮河，乘間逃還，至此死焉。事載邑志。道光二十年庚子，予奉檄濬徒陽河，親事愴愴，詩以悼之。

山下江濤撼樓櫓，闌干花亞紅禽語。紅禽樓下逐花飛，樓上紅飛墮樓雨。琴娘昔日天台嫁，才名豔絕東甌下，卷畫溪頭並蒂晨，浣紗江畔聯襟夜。鯨鯢唐突雲翻月，蜂蟻登城一旅雪。何意樓頭鳳吹聲，一旦馬上鶯啼血。紅旗閃陣濁河頭，弓鞬破襪清淮流。駝囊瀉酒駝鞍喫，鬼妾呻吟鬼馬愁。蠻氈帳裏蠻絃語，春雁秋鴻亂無序。虬髯莫覓崑崙奴，筓拍欲同青冢女。黑雲壓帳三更夕，星月無光辨巾櫛，偷壕出塹萬死生，縋逃虎口真奇策。野田積水淮南道，日乞窮途夜青草。娉婷秋月缺難圓，爛漫春雲竟誰掃！雲煙冥歷天如弓，關山不見去來鴻。猿驚雁怯江聲近，鶴寡鸞嬌月色濃。北固山頭半城雪，西陵渡口行人絕。冤禽叫下上山雲，鬼鳥啼紅寺門血。阿爺生我阿娘慈，袖中團扇妾郎詩。君生妾死君休問，妾死君生君不知。風風雨雨摩山壁，字字行行帶淚題。豚魚吹浪江生風，雲霓爲佩月