

# Translation and/as simulation: first attempts at imitating James Joyce's *Ulysses* in Hong Kong, 1960-1963

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*Imitations of texts of foreign origin, as a form of cross-cultural rewriting, are of considerable interest to literary comparatists, though much of this interest has been targeted at the transference of thematic material. The concept of influence becomes incurably vague in many accounts of Chinese imitations of Western literature, for instance, precisely because the 'textual' links are neglected. The author believes that translation studies can help throw some light on what influence is all about, in ways that comparative literary studies has not. The present article focuses specifically on three Chinese imitations of Joyce's *Ulysses* from the early 1960s, all published in Hong Kong. The styles and strategies of these imitations are contrasted with those of one translation of the "Hades" episode from 1960. In the conclusion, an attempt is made to address the different conceptualizations of imitation in China and the West, and to justify the inclusion of imitations as a viable object of investigation in translation studies.*

## 1. 'Influence' and translation studies

If votes were to be cast on the most favored passage in twentieth-century Western literature among Chinese writers today, Molly Bloom's extended soliloquy in the last chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses* might very well score a first. That fact is, among other things, also borne out by the number of Chinese imitations it has spawned in recent decades. Two leading Chinese novelists appear to have been fascinated by the unusual narrative mode: Mo Yan (1956- ) in *Jiuguo* (Wine Republic, 1992) and Wang Wenxing (1939- ) in *Beihai de ren* (Backed against the Sea, 2 vols., 1981 & 1999). In the latter novel, the nameless hero, a scoundrel, carries on an almost endless monologue (of over 300 pages) after getting drunk one night. The innovative language used by Wang, which deviates radically from standard Chinese usage, parallels that used by James Joyce in the 'original' text, which, for some, has undermined the hegemony of the English language to a greater extent than any other work in English literary history. Besides the lexical inventions, especially the neologisms present on almost every page, there are syntactical deviations from accepted norms of Chinese writing which reveal, on one level, the psychological perturbations of an exiled character – he has been forced by his pursuers to leave the city and hide in a town by the sea – and, on another level, the chaos of modern life. Even in the English translation, the convoluted, farcical syntax of sentences reminds one of how Molly sur-

veys her past in her dream-like state.<sup>1</sup> Can we not say that Wang Wenxing has 'translated' *Ulysses* for a Chinese readership?

As a form of cultural rewriting, cross-cultural imitations are of course of considerable interest to literary comparatists, though much of this interest has been targeted at the transposition of thematic material from a literary work (or a body of such works) in one culture to that (or those) of another. The attention paid to the textual and textural links between the original and the imitation is often overshadowed by such interest. The concept of influence becomes incurably vague in many of the accounts of Chinese imitations of Western literature, precisely because links other than those on the thematic level are left undemonstrated. Signs of influence are often casually identified. In fact, in order to understand imitations better, one should begin by sharply differentiating concrete and conscious evidence of imitation from intertextual connections where the author has allowed elements from another cultural-literary stock to slip in inadvertently.<sup>2</sup> The contribution of translation studies might, under such circumstances, consist in refocusing the attention on the microlevel transformations, as texts are imitated and reconfigured in the target cultural environment. In this way, the insights of literary comparatists could be made textually verifiable, and a more solid identification (and understanding) of 'influence' undertaken.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship between a source text and its imitation, the central object of influence studies as conducted by comparatists, could indeed be revamped through recourse to the new perspective made possible by research in translation studies. Many of the terms familiar to scholars of translation theory are transferable, so much so that one can begin thinking of the re-invigoration of comparative literary studies by translation research. For one thing, verbal correspondences between texts can be understood as 'loanwords', 'calques' and 'borrowings'.<sup>4</sup> The convergences and divergences between the source text and the imitation are comparable to the concepts of 'correspondences' and 'differences' between original and target texts in translation studies research. The donor-recipient, precursor-follower and father-son relationships, hitherto crucial to the analysis of imitations and imitated texts, can be complemented with what translation scholars have called guest-host (Liu 1995: 25-27) and husband-wife (Chamberlain 1992: 57-74) relationships between original and target texts. Finally, features of transposition and assimilation into new literary contexts, crucial to the study of imitations and influence, must be seen as similar to those of 'acculturation' and 'domestication' in translation. It is imperative that we see not only the ways in which influence studies overlaps with translation studies, but also the possibility of allowing the twin disciplines of translation and comparative literature to mutually reinforce one another.

The problem with the traditional 'influence approach' is that it relies too heavily on generally observed correspondence on any one level, on the basis of which affinity between two texts or authors is then asserted. In his comprehensive study of James Joyce's impact on Spanish-American fiction, Robin W. Fiddian devotes almost exclusive attention to the thematic paral-

rels between Joyce's masterpieces and Spanish-American writings from Jorge Luis Borges to Leopoldo Marechal and Julio Cortázar, among others (Fiddian 1989: 23-39). According to Fiddian, the themes shared by the works of Joyce and his imitators from Mexico and Argentina include, broadly speaking, the search for identity in an alien environment, the difficult process of sexual initiation, anti-clericalism and the rejection of Catholicism. The author summarizes in detail the correspondences between characters (the exile, the mother) and individual plot elements (Stephen Dedalus as Hamlet) with reference to four novels which imitate either *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* – especially Marechal's *Adán Buenosayres* (1948), said to be the first 'Argentinian *Ulysses*'. While some linguistic features (play on names, puns, verbal resonances) are also noted, Fiddian's article on the whole evinces a comparative approach overdetermined by the emphasis on the borrowing of thematic material.

What seems prevalent in many influence studies is the tendency to over-emphasize the 'spiritual' affinities at the expense of 'technical' affinities, and it is this imbalance in the study of imitations that a translation studies approach can help redress. It is not as if Fiddian has neglected the microscopic level of analysis altogether and avoided having to cope on a linguistic level with dense experimental texts like those of Joyce and his Spanish imitators; indeed, his discussion of quoted examples from Gustavo Sainz's imitation is noteworthy. Yet implicit in his approach is an orientation to the conceptual rather than the verbal – a binary opposition he introduces himself – and this is evidenced by his objection, near the end of his article, to Robert Martin Adam's view that "about all we can discuss as Joycean constants are technical innovations in the art of story-telling, and in the use of language" (Fiddian 1989: 36). An emphasis on theme, however, is precisely what can make influence studies so elusive and subjective, for unless the textual foundations of imitations are also demonstrated, the possibility of influence remains something very much in the reader's or critic's mind.

The present article reviews several Chinese imitations of Joyce's *Ulysses* in the early 1960s in Hong Kong, in essence the first such imitations in the Chinese language. In contrast to such attempts at rewriting Joyce for a Chinese audience, there was only one conscientious and conscious translation of a Joyce episode at the time – Zhu Nandu's translation of part of "Hades" from 1960. Still, that is hardly surprising in an era which witnessed a general disinclination to translate the novel. The stylistic links with Joyce's (rather than, say, Virginia Woolf's) stream-of-consciousness method are clearly discernible in the imitations. The fact that these imitations were undertaken by some of the leading writers of the time based in Hong Kong, underscores the seriousness and the high regard in which the most prominent figure of high Modernism (and his best-known novel) were held. Further, since the imitations were all produced within a period of three years, and complemented by scholarly essays on the modernist technique in a prominent literary journal of the time,<sup>5</sup> one can fairly say that a kind of concerted effort to introduce the novel – or its experimental method – was

underway. Indeed, 1960 to 1963 saw the golden era of *Ulysses* imitations in China.

## 2. The elusive style of *Ulysses*: translatability versus imitability

The difficulty in rendering Joyce's style in *Ulysses* in another language has strongly determined the contorted path taken by the novel upon its entrance into China, via imitations first, and direct translations much later. The general feeling of incoherence, randomness and indirection that is conveyed by the Joycean interior monologue distinguishes his variant from, say, that of Virginia Woolf. Joyce's stream of consciousness is seldom as controlled as Woolf's: in Woolf's novels words like 's/he thought' are just beneath the surface of the text, while in Joyce's work one often has difficulty deciding whether it is the narrator or the character who is making a particular remark. This has given rise to the puzzlement and lack of comprehension that readers feel in reading a novel like *Ulysses*, although it is only by presenting thoughts as they come floating, uninterrupted and unstructured, into a character's mind that the Joycean stream of consciousness is made so convincing. Though the narrator does provide some guidance from time to time, hardly any allowances are specifically made to ensure that the reader will grasp the thought contents of Bloom, Stephen and Molly. Consequently, it may sometimes be at a second, or third, reading only that the reader discovers the associations between the thoughts presented. Not only the words and the rhythm, but even the content itself, are meant to convey the characters' thinking styles, and this requires Joyce to manipulate the English language most deftly. Most Chinese imitations fall short of achieving the artistry that Joyce displays, but since a complete translation of Joyce's novel was for a long time not available, the imitations must be seen as having filled a niche in 'translation history'.

A crucial difference between the stream-of-consciousness methods of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, both acknowledged masters of the genre, is that Joyce makes greater use of interior monologue, the direct rendering of thought streams marked by the use of the first person, whereas in Woolf it is narrated monologue (or indirect free speech) that largely predominates. Both methods contrast with the more traditional mode of psycho-narration in the presentation of inner thought, in which an omniscient narrator 'tells' the reader – in his own words – what is going on inside a character's head.<sup>6</sup> In interior monologue there is, essentially, a direct quotation of thought, whereas in narrated monologue, characterized by the use of the third person, there is an obvious form of mediation by a narrator. While in both methods the actual words used in a character's mental discourse are ostensibly recorded, the stronger presence of the narrator in the latter allows a more structured and orderly presentation.<sup>7</sup> Hence Woolf's stream-of-consciousness novels are more readable than Joyce's. In fact, Joyce's practice in *Ulysses* of allowing direct interior monologue to immediately follow passages or sen-

tences of external narration makes the novel not only more difficult to read but also to translate, though probably not to imitate. In fact, as we shall see, imitation of a foreign text might have a greater chance of success than translation when it comes to the transference of that most slippery thing of all, style.

On the level of word usage and sentence construction, the task of translating *Ulysses* is made daunting by Joyce's idiosyncratic wordplay (his persistent preoccupation with the denotative and connotative meanings of words, as well as their phonic qualities) on the one hand, and his deliberate flaunting of syntactic rules on the other. Both of these are more than purely linguistic tricks, of course; they are an integral part of Joyce's perception and presentation of mental processes. They are meant to reflect the manner in which thoughts arise and flow along, tallying with the associative principle advanced by psychologists contemporaneous with Joyce, such as William James and Sigmund Freud. As a result of this, and as occurs in *Ulysses*, words can collide with one another, leading to the formation of portmanteau words, compounds and other neologisms; and while some sentences are broken off unfinished, others are thrown in without subjects or verbs.

This textual fragmentation is meant to show the pre-verbal level of consciousness (or rather, the subconscious) where scattered impressions and random images appear that defy rational explanations.<sup>8</sup> This constitutes yet another dimension of difficulty in the translation of *Ulysses*. In fact, failure to recognize the special character of Joyce's work has led to simplistic assertions that the stream-of-consciousness technique did have counterparts in classical Chinese literature, from medieval poetry to eighteenth-century novels – assertions that are hard to substantiate. While it is certainly true that the presentation of thought has not been altogether absent in the Chinese literary tradition, and even techniques roughly analogous to free indirect speech can be found in certain Chinese literary works, one would be hard put to cite undeniable instances of Joycean, as much as Woolfian, stream-of-consciousness presentation in Chinese fiction prior to the twentieth century.

### 3. *Ulysses* imitated: three versions

#### 3.1. Ye Weilan's "Youlisaisi zai Taibei" - "Ulysses in Taibei"

Published in the Taiwanese journal *Xiandai wenxue* (Modern Literature) in 1960, Ye Weilian's (1937-) "Youlisaisi zai Taibei" (1960) boldly announces its indebtedness to Joyce's *Ulysses*. Born in Guangdong province but growing up in Hong Kong, Ye was very active on the Hong Kong literary scene of the 1960s. Besides co-editing several leading literary journals, he also founded one of the best known of them, *Xin sichao* (New Thought Currents), in 1959. Ye did much to promote an interest in literary modernism, introducing well-known figures like T.S. Eliot, Marcel Proust and Tennessee Williams through numerous essays: some of these he wrote himself, others

he translated. “Youlisaisi zai Taibei” is the story of one day in the life of a professor at a university in Taiwan, strewn with an abundance of inconsequential details – a story that is clearly reminiscent of Leopold Bloom’s aimless wandering through the streets of Dublin in *Ulysses*.

Ye appears rather deft at simulating Joyce’s stream-of-consciousness method, but upon detailed study the departures from the original become obvious. The very first sentence of his story contains an instance of *catachresis*, with a disjunction between the noun and the verb: “armpit carrying a book toward the toilet” would be grammatically correct only if rephrased as “in his armpit he carries a book toward the toilet”. The same device reappears eleven lines later, and what is obvious is that these are by no means grammatical slips on the author’s part. The use of colons to string together phrases is also typically Joycean, and meant to give readers an impression of unconnected thoughts arising in a sporadic manner; examples are: “Paid the bill: two dollars fifty”, “Waited for bus: twenty minutes already” and “Lunch: six dollars”. Just like in *Ulysses* too, some thoughts (“Why doesn’t the bell ring?”) recur, and the protagonist’s conversations, first with the students and then with the librarian, themselves embedded within the flow of his thought. However, the references to the ‘source text’ transcend the transplantation of the technique of interior monologue alone; indeed, the central portion of the Chinese story, in which the professor teaches a poetry class, is a recreation of the “Nestor” episode in *Ulysses*.

It is interesting to note how the potentialities of the Chinese language are made manifest in Ye’s imitation of Joyce’s stream-of-consciousness technique. Since the past and present tenses are unmarked in the Chinese language, the reader of “Youlisaisi zai Taibei” can choose to read great chunks of the story as either the narrator’s (or character’s) after-event narration, or the immediate representation of mental processes and spontaneous impressions. The text remains ambiguous throughout, suspending rather than pinning down the time element. The past tense in the first few sentences in my English translation below is arbitrary, since a present tense would work equally well:

(I, he) got off (my, his) bed, armpit carrying a book toward the toilet. (I, he) washed (my, his) face, brushed teeth. Put on clothes and trousers, socks and shoes; combed hair; picked up a bag of dirty laundry. Drank salted soya bean milk and ate a thin piece of pancake. Picked up a greasy paper: “Prime Minister Lumumba of Congo on the run” – *there’s no desperate need to take such a course of action!* The supplement: “Nudity is an art?” Master Ha: “Lifelong Regret” – *Watch it tonight? Will they all be cut?* (Ye 1960: 39) (emphasis added, translation LTC.)

It is only with the dash on the seventh line that the direct interior monologue actually begins. What goes before could be interpreted as either stream of consciousness or omniscient narration; the difference is not signaled in the text.

The conflation of narrative time schemes is facilitated by the omission of the subject, especially as it is a perfectly legitimate practice to leave out the subject in a Chinese sentence where it can be ‘guessed at’. The unitalized portion quoted above can be seen as third-person omniscient narration, when ‘his’ and ‘he’ are inserted, or as a first-person account with ‘I’ left out. It is not unusual for ‘I’ to be omitted in either spoken or written Chinese. Both readings (of first and third person narration) are therefore viable in Chinese, even if one argues that the entire passage quoted contains stylistic indications suggesting that it might be coming from one and the same person. Needless to say, a number of Joycean critics have also noted that the narrator in *Ulysses* has the tendency to adopt the idiom of the characters whose thoughts he is rendering.<sup>9</sup> Liu He has argued that the Chinese language is a better medium for conveying free indirect speech (Liu 1994: 174-92). Perhaps it is also an especially apt medium for conveying interior monologue of the Joycean variety.

### 3.2. Lu Yin’s “Peiqiang de Jidu” – “Armed Christ”

Lu Yin’s (1935- ) “Peiqiang de Jidu” (1960) is more closely imitative of Joyce than Ye’s “Youlisaizi zai Taibei” – perhaps due to its greater length – and exploits several features of the style and subject matter of *Ulysses*. A co-founder of the Society of Modern Literature and Art in 1958, Lu wrote prodigiously in the 1950s and 1960s for the literary supplements of several local newspapers. He eagerly introduced Western literary ideas to the Hong Kong community in the journal *Qianshui wan* (Repulse Bay), and served as an editor for a handful of popular literary and film journals – before finally migrating to Canada in the 1970s. In Li and Qin’s history of Chinese-Western literary interactions, he is said to be chiefly “responsible for the translation of stream-of-consciousness fiction into Chinese” (Li and Qin 2001: 842) (emphasis added),<sup>10</sup> though there is no evidence of his ever translating the technique. “Peiqiang de Jidu”, published in *Xin Sichao*, is a conscious Chinese imitation of Molly’s soliloquy. Other than a dozen full-stops, mostly placed at the end of paragraphs, and the frequent use of dashes, punctuation marks are dispensed with altogether, in simulation of the ebb and flow of thought. Parenthetical statements are scattered here and there, some inserted to show external actions (like “he continued walking” (Lu 1960: 32) and “she laid down flat, stretching out her two legs” (Lu 1960: 32), others to render the omniscient narrator’s interpolations.

Displaying structural parallels with the Biblical narrative of Jesus’s death, this story tells of a triad member from Malaysia, Zhang Kang, who is pursued by the police and, after meeting with twelve of his ‘sworn brothers’ (one of whom eventually betrays him, or so it is suggested), arrested by them in Hong Kong. In the main, three different points of view are adopted, each one sliding imperceptibly into the other: the narrator’s, Zhang Kang’s himself, and Zhang Kang’s young wife Ah Xiang’s. The entire narrative can

roughly be divided into three portions, comprising first Ah Xiang's interior monologue, in which she looks back to the previous night when Zhang Kang made love to her (the first three paragraphs); then Zhang's meditations as he wanders aimlessly in the streets of Hong Kong and meets his fellow triad members (in the fourth and fifth paragraphs); and finally Ah Xiang and Zhang Kang confronting the policemen who have besieged their home (in the rest of the story). Often a shift in perspective is indicated in the traditional manner with an *inquit*-tag (like 'he thought'), in order to prevent the reader from getting confused, as in the fourth paragraph:

Zhang Kang came out early in the morning thinking too of the night before even of the prostitute's room a year eight years ago he remembered clearly. [...] as he walked he hoped he would not meet any Buddhist nuns. *He thought*: I will put an end to this he will end it as he did in Malaysia... (Lu 1960: 32) (emphasis added, translation LTC.)

However, in most places the shifts are unmarked, as at the end of the first paragraph, where a shift from external narration to Ah Xiang's interior monologue occurs almost inadvertently (though it is clearly indicated with a change in the subject), submerging the reader in the character's consciousness:

[...] in the pictures *she* saw a bare-chested, mustached man placing his two outstretched hands on the log my Dad taught me this he is the god of heaven the god of heaven can give protection *I* am eighteen this year can do the laundry cook mend clothes when *I* have a kid [...] (Lu 1960: 30) (emphasis added, translation LTC.)

As the story progresses, the blend of the various modes of narration becomes increasingly bold. Near the climax of the story, right before the policemen break into Zhang Kang's apartment, we find instances where Lu Yin mixes (a) external narration, (b) embedded conversations, (c) narrated monologue, and (d) interior monologue in such a way that the readers have to constantly shift perspectives. This results in effects similar to those that Joyce achieved with his overlapping of narrative voices. In the following passage there is a sequence of shifts from (a) to (d), then to (b) (taken from a conversation which Zhang Kang has with Ah Xiang earlier on in the text) to (c), and finally back to (d):

The sound of waves trembling Aladdin's oil lamp small boat afloat strolling onward Zhang Kang watched (a) – it's my business nothing to do with you (d) they will come they must come they want to fetch me I have washed my hands isn't that good (b) (he suddenly thought of death [c]) I opened all the windows I need more fresh air from the countryside I will have children Ah Xiang is healthy (d) [...] (Lu 1960: 34) (translation LTC.)

Lu Yin's experimentations in "Peiqiang de Jidu" are the closest approximation of Joyce's stream of consciousness in Chinese fictional writing up to the

1960s, an imitation meant to ‘translate’ *Ulysses* for Chinese readers. Although there were earlier efforts at transplanting European stream-of-consciousness models via imitations in the 1920s and 1930s, most notably Xu Zhimo’s (1896-1931) “Lunpan” (Roulette, 1929) and Lin Huiyin’s (1904-1955) “Jiushidu zhong” (In Ninety Degrees’ Heat, 1934), these two writers’ sources were Woolfian rather than Joycean. Time and again, indeed, Joyce was bypassed in favor of other modernists.

In comparison with Ye’s “Youlisaizi zai Taibei”, Lu’s imitation shows a greater resemblance to Joyce’s multi-layered narrative, and the crossovers from one narrative mode to another are more nuanced. Lu is also able to exploit more fully the resources the novel technique made available to the storyteller. Above all, however, Lu’s version of *Ulysses* is also marked by his use of a consistent pattern of Christian symbolism – the plot closely duplicates the events leading to Christ’s crucifixion – and his immersion of the symbolic references in the target cultural context. Christ, Eden, Adam and Eve, Noah’s ark, the Cross, the twelve disciples and God appear in a context which also features dragons, the First Emperor of China, Peng Lai (the island regarded as Paradise by the Chinese), the Himalayas and the Tibetan plains.

### 3.3. Liu Yuchang’s *Jiutu* – *The Drunkard*

Published less than three years after “Youlisaizi zai Taibei” and “Peiqiang de Jidu”, at first serially in an evening newspaper, is Liu Yuchang’s (1918- ) novel *Jiutu* (The Drunkard, 1962-63), yet another early Chinese imitation of *Ulysses*. Even on the surface, *Jiutu* exhibits the most thorough use of Joycean narrative strategies, especially the use of disjointed, elliptical sentences; syntactical contortions; cinematic devices like zooming and cutting; leitmotifs and repetitions; and finally, suggestive imagery and symbolism. In light of this, it is enigmatic perhaps that Liu Yichang once denied quite explicitly during an interview that he “imitated either *Ulysses* or *The Sound and the Fury*, or *The Waves*” (Pan and Wang, qtd. in Huoyi 1995: 118), characterizing the style of stream of consciousness that he used as ‘his own’. On the other hand, Li’s status as ‘an institution’ in the world of literature in Hong Kong (Pollard 1995: vii) may partly explain his refusal to admit having imitated the three Western novels in question. The debasement of imitations in the Chinese literary tradition (cf. below) may have contributed indirectly to the reluctance to acknowledge a ‘source text’. It is perhaps for the same reason that Mainland imitators of Joyce in the 1980s emphasized their efforts to Sinicize Western modernist literature, and insisted that they were developing an “Oriental or Chinese stream of consciousness” (see Song 1998). On another occasion, Liu Yichang spoke of his “feeling uncomfortable about” the stream-of-consciousness technique in *Jiutu* (interview by Li Jin, qtd. in Houyi 1995: 192), again indirectly testifying to the stigma attached to imitations.

In the debates over the past three decades on the nature of the stream-of-consciousness technique in *Jiutu*, critics have sought to vindicate the novel's 'special' character. It has been argued, for instance, that it employs traditional narrative strategies as well as stream-of-consciousness narration (Li Jin, qtd. in Huoyi 1995: 183), that it is experimental not in its use of the interior monologue but in the way it creates a new form of poetic fiction (Lin Changhuang, qtd. in Huoyi 1995: 217), and that it is generically a variant of Western meta-fiction (Yang Yi, qtd. in Huoyi 1995: 238). Ironically, all these characterizations have equally been applied to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. In pinpointing what makes *Jiutu* unique, therefore, Chinese critics have unwittingly pointed to the ties that the novel bears to its modernist predecessor, turning it by implication into an imitation.

Textual evidence speaks louder than the words of the author himself or those of his critics. As far as narrative technique is concerned, *Jiutu* takes the experiment one step beyond the stories of Ye Weilian and Lu Yin; besides a means for reporting what goes on in the conscious mind, the interior monologue narration becomes a means for presenting memories, daydreams, fantasies and sensory impressions, many of them occurring when the protagonist (someone who is serious about his vocation as a writer but forced for financial reasons to churn out lowbrow martial arts and pornographic fiction) is inebriated. Still, very often Liu Yichang differentiates his protagonist's thoughts from the enveloping narration of external events through the use of parentheses wherein they are 'contained', so to speak, and consequently the ambiguous positioning between narrative modes, the overlapping of voices, particularly noticeable in "Youlisaizi zai Taibei" is not seen in this novel. The alternation between descriptions of external action and internal consciousness is seen most vividly in Chapter 8, when the protagonist is confined to the hospital after being beaten up by some ruffians. A short extract will illustrate the clear juxtaposition of the two modes:

He left.  
 (He walks like a pigeon, I thought.)  
 The nurse also left.  
 (She walks, like doing a rumba, I thought.)  
 I continued to recline in bed. . .  
 (Who has the power to reverse the passage of time, so that the past can replace the future? The smile under the bodhi tree makes the murderer draw back his knife; the frown on the cross gathers peals of thunder ...)  
 (Liu 1993: 41-42) (translation LTC.)

It is not just passages like these that show *Jiutu*'s indebtedness to Joyce's *Ulysses*. Overall, the novel puts on show – as it were – a variety of stream-of-consciousness devices not found in either of the two short stories analyzed above, thereby demonstrating the potential of a novel like *Ulysses* for its imitators and answering the question why contemporary imitations of one and the same source can turn out to be so different. Examples abound. In the

fantasy mode, there are the unpunctuated paragraphs in Chapter 10 (B) where witty wordplay figures prominently as the protagonist hallucinates:

With the steps of a traveler I enter 1992  
 The Great War is over the entire earth is burnt only the oceans have not been  
 dried  
 Even the wind has been polluted by nuclear dust  
 Lazily blowing the green smoke from the burnt earth about  
 Cannot find cockroaches cannot find tadpoles cannot find mosquitoes cannot  
 find ants cannot find earthworms cannot find lizards cannot find dragonflies  
 cannot find bats cannot find eagles cannot find pigeons cannot find crows  
 cannot find carp [...] (Liu 1993: 57) (translation LTC.)

Especially Joycean is the pronounced use of repetition in various places in the novel; examples are “The wheels keep turning” (in Chapter 4), “One glass, two glasses” (in Chapter 5), “I would like to take a space shuttle [...]” (in Chapter 6), “Sima Li wearing [...]” (in Chapter 11), and so on. This is compounded with imagistic references to “thought running wild like an unreined horse/ like the wind/like the rain/like a tram” (Liu 1993: 41, 42, 43, 67) and “swimming in a glass of wine” (Liu 1993: 2, 26), which impart a strongly impressionist ‘feel’ to the novel.

What has irked some critics of *Jiutu* is that the protagonist repeatedly digresses on literary topics, giving the reader his high evaluation of Western modernist literature, his condemnation of a consumer society where the arts have no place, and his exposition of the miserable predicament of the intellectual in 1960s Hong Kong. The portrait of Hong Kong as a “capitalized, commercial hub of Chinese culture, ‘lacking in culture’” (Larson 1993: 89) is the backdrop against which Liu Yichang finds ample opportunities to pay homage to Joyce and his *Ulysses*. James Joyce is thus said to be “one of the greatest literary talents of the twentieth century” (Liu 1993: 140); he “has a key to opening the door of modern literature” (41); and “thousands of books have been written on *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*” (41). The itinerant wanderings of the *flâneur*-protagonist in the city of Hong Kong also remind us of those of Leopold Bloom in Dublin on 14 June, 1901. Given such a web of correspondences, it is indeed surprising that Liu Yichang is so reluctant to admit influence or a linkage of sorts.

#### 4. The first translation: a fragment

Just like the imitations, the translation of stream-of-consciousness fiction – or rather, its conspicuous absence in China – must be viewed against the backdrop of an interest in the dissemination of modernist fiction, and especially the innovative, Western-derived method of rendering inner psychology. The first translation of a story displaying this technique in Chinese, it is commonly acknowledged, is Ye Gongchao’s “Qiangsheng yidian henji”, a rendition of Virginia Woolf’s “The Mark on the Wall” (1932).<sup>11</sup> Other than

this there were no unabridged translations of stream-of-consciousness works until 1960, when Zhu Nandu's rendition of part of the "Hades" episode appeared in a journal. Perhaps not coincidentally, this translation appeared in the same year that saw the publication of "Youlisaizi zai Taibei" and "Peiqiang de Jidu". It must be conceded that linguistic difficulties present a major obstacle for translators, though the ubiquitous presence of sexually explicit passages might also have led to the delay in presenting a more or less faithful rendition of *Ulysses* in Chinese translation. Imitations might, by contrast, have been a way of resolving both problems, giving the work a safe, smooth passage to China.

Zhu Nandu's selection of the passage for translation, as well as the specific strategies he wields, are most telling in this regard. Only slightly over four pages from the middle portion of the "Hades" episode are translated; these describe the religious ceremony carried out by a Catholic priest at Digham's funeral. The passage has obviously been chosen for translation by Zhu (among other reasons) because it exemplifies the less fanciful stream-of-consciousness style typical of the initial episodes of *Ulysses* – that is, the part before the "Aeolus" episode, after which the narrative manner turns increasingly 'wild' and the story becomes harder and harder to follow. As regards Zhu's strategy, he has made a serious attempt at naturalizing the style, or providing careful elucidation, so that the translated extract is much more accessible to the reader than Joyce's original text. This, basically, appears to be little more than a skillful move in translating a novel as abstruse and mystifying as *Ulysses*. Three examples (here back-translated) will show how Zhu Nandu does some padding, or moves words and phrases around, to aid the reader's comprehension (italicized numbers refer to Zhu's translation, while un-italicized ones refer to Joyce's text):

- Phrases are added:

I hope you will soon follow him *into the grave*. For Hindu widows only *can you talk about it like this*. She would marry another. *Marry him?* No." (29/102; the words in italics do not appear in the English original)<sup>12</sup>

- Words are moved around:

Coffin now. *The man has already died*. Got here before us, *arriving before we do*." (28/101; the words in italics are the ones that have been moved)

- Sentences are rewritten:

First the stiff: then the friends of the stiff (101)

becomes

The dead goes before; behind, the friends of the dead. (29)

Generally speaking, despite his tampering with the vocabulary and syntax in order to smoothen the flow of the target Chinese language, Zhu Nandu shows considerable respect for Joyce's preferred style of choppy, disjointed sentences, meant to capture Leopold Bloom's thought processes. He closely follows the segments of the source text, and reproduces even the punctuation faithfully. The Chinese sentences are structured exactly like those in the English original, e.g.: "Paltry funeral: coach and three carriages. It's all the same. Pallbearers, gold reins, requiem mass, firing a volley. Pomp of death [. . .] Dogbiscuits. Who ate them? Mourners coming out" (Joyce 1990: 100). It is through literal renderings that Bloom's characteristic manner of thought is carried over in translation, and that Joyce's stylistic peculiarities are conveyed in Chinese. Then, too, in Joyce's presentation of inner thought, there is an abundance of sentences deprived of subjects or verbs, as well as elliptical expressions where words are simply glossed over. In the case of translation into Chinese, however, a language that can and often does make sense with these omissions (cf. above), a literal translation turns out to be more readable than the source version. The special character of the Chinese language has apparently been turned to advantage; syntactically fragmented sentences like the following ones do not come across as particularly wayward when transplanted into Chinese: "Leanjawed happy, hard woman at a bargain, her bonnet awry. Girl's face stained with dirt and tears, holding the woman's arm looking up at her for a sign to cry. Fish's face, bloodless and livid" (Joyce 1990: 101).

The above makes one wonder how the style of modernist writings affected the choice whether to translate or imitate. To begin with, imitation can facilitate the reception of an experimental text, making it more palatable to the readers than a translation. What is at issue here, is not just the subject matter but also the narrative method as such. Although the prurient content of *Ulysses* might have shocked target readers, what is most transgressive is actually Joyce's method of presenting the world, and the means by which he does so: his language. His radical experimentation with the English language entailed nothing less than a complete reconstruction, a re-representation, of 'the world' as his contemporaries knew it. This radical overhaul, of course, goes a long way toward explaining the long hesitancy in translating Joyce's *Ulysses* into Chinese.

Imitations, by contrast, appear to allow greater flexibility. Ben Johnson brilliantly summed up the nature of imitation as a category of writing when he called it a "middle composition" between translation and original design, suggesting that it shares the features of both, yet is not reducible to either. In this view, imitations derive their energy from a dialectic of invention and preservation, and the Chinese stream-of-consciousness fictions reminiscent of Joyce's *Ulysses* evidently helped cushion the shock effect when the novel itself was eventually transplanted to Chinese soil. Once the readers had been familiarized with the novel through an array of imitations (there were others that came in the wake of the three discussed here), the path was cleared for the unabridged translation, for a Chinese

*Ulysses* as it were. Eventually, in the early 1990s, *Ulysses* was translated into Chinese in its entirety in two versions by Jin Di (1993-96) and Xiao Qian/Wen Jieruo (1995) (and, as the century turns, work has begun even on a complete translation of *Finnegans Wake*). Therefore, one can say that the stream-of-consciousness *imitations* of *Ulysses* in China preceded, yet nicely complement, the stream-of-consciousness *translations*. The latter only appeared seventy years after the original work was published in 1922.

### 5. *Mofang* versus *imitatio*

The cases that we have looked at beg a reconsideration of the classical Western model of imitation in a (new) cross-cultural context. According to this classical concept of *imitatio*, works chosen for imitation are almost invariably landmarks of tradition, notable literary works to be preserved for the future. In line with this, imitations have been carried out since the Renaissance, against a background of veneration for the original cultural artifacts, which were considered to be superior and hence worth incorporating into the target cultural repertoire. While the Chinese imitations of *Ulysses* were undertaken with an awareness of the esthetic eminence of Joyce's novel, there was probably little expectation, on the part of the imitators, that their works would serve any 'preservation' purpose. Instead, throughout the history of the imitation of the stream-of-consciousness novel in China, there appears to be a strong tendency to toy with the new technique, in contexts where new subject matter is also introduced. After all, of primary and persistent interest for the imitators of *Ulysses*, as well as other works in the same vein, were its stylistic, rather than cultural, aspects.

Now it has been typical practice among literary historians, more perhaps in the West than in China (which has a similar but not equivalent theory of imitation, or *mofang*), to draw attention to the ways in which imitations supersede their originals, and latecomers surpass their predecessors. Successful imitators have thus been applauded at the expense of those who did not make a name with their imitations – the example that comes most readily to mind being Ezra Pound, and his poems in the classical Chinese style. The early imitations of *Ulysses* in Hong Kong, however, belong to the company of 'nameless heroes', long consigned to obscurity by now. They furnish evidence of how writers have learnt their craft from acknowledged masters abroad, without seeking to emulate their prestigious literary models. A theory of apprenticeship may therefore have to be considered, next to the theory of emulation, since the motive of learning from a master can at times take precedence over that of surpassing a predecessor. Awareness of this fact can alert us to the subtle ways in which literary forms and genres are rewritten across cultures.

While early imitations may help transplant a foreign work or literary mode, thus creating an impact on the target literature, they seldom receive critical acclaim, and are soon replaced by their better 'successors'. Ye

Weilian's "Youlisaisi zai Taibei" and Lu Yin's "Peiqiang de Jidu" may have played a role in encouraging more mature stream-of-consciousness fiction in Taiwan in the 1970s and 1980s, like that of Wang Wenxing. Liu Yichang's *Jiutu*, often extolled for introducing Western modernist narrative techniques to China, may have exerted a strong influence, too. None of the three, however, has been considered comparable to mature stream-of-consciousness fiction like Wang's; they are also viewed as too slavishly imitative of Joyce. If the truth be told, all of them evince the author-imitators' limits in using the new technique. The low regard for imitations in China has definitely had a role to play in this, and the derogatory attitude toward imitations (especially self-proclaimed ones) persists to this day. Whether it is possible for a Chinese Ezra Pound to emerge remains, for the time being, an unanswerable question, although one can be hopeful because there are signs that views on originality are changing in China as much as in the West, with the influence of postmodernist thinking.

Our examples have shown that imitations will never be more than *partial* translations. Imitators may choose to carry over the experimental technique used, as in the case of "Youlisaisi zai Taibei", or transfer a special combination of theme and technique, as in "Peiqiang de Jidu", or explore the usefulness of the technique in dealing with new subject matter, as in *Jiutu*. The principle of faithfulness to the original, whose cardinal status has repeatedly been questioned by translation scholars in recent years, is even less closely adhered to in such imitations than in prototypical translations. For theoretical precision, we could coin the term *imitative translations*, in contrast to *prototypical* or *verbal* (focusing on the words on the page) translations. However, even if one resorts to the argument of faithfulness to the Spirit as opposed to the Letter, it must be conceded that, with the amount of alterations incorporated, an imitation simply cannot be a truthful replica of its original. Likewise, with reference to imitations, the concepts of 'correspondence' and 'equivalence' may still retain some utility, but only to a lesser degree.

In understanding imitations, it is imperative, too, that attention be paid to the issue of the 'original text'. In both China and the West, it has long been recognized that, instead of basing his/her work on one source text, the imitator can use several. Because of the central position occupied by *Ulysses*, it is easy to simply focus on this work as the source for the three imitations discussed above, though the possibility of the imitators' having been influenced by more than one stream-of-consciousness text – by, say, Proust, Faulkner and Woolf, whose original works were widely available in Hong Kong at the time – should not be ruled out altogether. The existence of an imitation having a mishmash of elements from several imitated texts is something that merits further investigation.

In both Chinese and Western literary traditions, there has been a clear recognition of the important role played by imitations as a key element in cultural exchange. In China, however, since imitations have generally been regarded as inferior to their sources, they rarely surpass what is imitated. In

other words, imitation can never achieve the perfection already achieved by the master. Such privileging of the predecessor is akin to the reverence shown in traditional translation thinking for the source text. This attitude is shown perhaps most clearly in the Chinese view toward indigenous reproductions of earlier masterworks: those of the two fictional/quasi-fictional works, *Honglou meng* (Dream of the Red Chamber) and *Shishuo xinyu* (New Account of Tales of the World), have largely been denigrated (see Qian 2001). At the same time, the general scholarly practice in China has been to consider imitations separately from ‘translations’, a term still understood in its narrower sense of cross-language transfer.<sup>13</sup> The difference in approach between China and the West, between *mofang* in one case and *imitatio* in the other, has created a gap to be bridged if we wish to theorize about imitations-as-translations in the Chinese context.

## 6. Conclusion: imitation as translation

The practice of imitating the ancients has been a long-lasting one in the history of Chinese poetry-writing and storytelling, but since the ancients were invariably those in the autochthonous tradition, it has never been categorized as a ‘translation’ practice. On the other hand, the imitation of foreign models, especially classical ones, was quite widespread in the West in Renaissance times (see Hermans 1992: 95-116). In the seventeenth century, the English poet Sir John Denham’s free literary renditions of his sources represent a similar mode of rewriting. Consequently, it becomes almost impossible for the Western translation theorist to leave out of count ‘imitation’ in their discourse on translation, though difficulties persist. The uneasiness with which it sits in the tripartite formulation of types of translations, produced by different translation *methods*, in John Dryden’s scheme (Dryden 1680: 17-31) – alongside paraphrase and metaphrase – betokens its ambiguous status.

The practice of the production of versions loosely based on the original becomes a theoretical problem when in our times it reappears with such astounding spectacularity. The difficulty is compounded when one considers that many would view imitations as original creations, not copies of whatever original there might have been, and authors simply would prefer not to announce themselves as imitators. There are many instances, not considered in the present article, of stream-of-consciousness imitations in Mainland China in the 1980s where a source was not acknowledged, which means that the situation is even less amenable to analysis, whether by literary comparatists or translation scholars.

In the last decade or so, a few of the leading scholars in translation studies have sought to define more precisely the territory within which the murky, marginal field of imitations can be placed. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere appear to have gone the furthest, offering an inclusive definition. For them, critical commentaries, movie versions, etc., are all ‘translations’,

and their famous statement, “translation is a rewriting of an original text” implies that imitations are ‘translations’ too (see Bassnett & Lefevere 1990). Armin Paul Frank, on the other hand, imposes some limits. He states categorically that “it is not helpful to redefine ‘translation’ in a way which includes responses within the same language, discursive (journalistic, critical, scholarly) responses, and inter-medial transpositions” (Frank 1992: 370). Still, with that proviso, Frank proceeds to define translation as “receptive re-creation” – and this virtually implies that ‘imitations’ cannot be excluded. Anthony Pym offers a third view of the problem. His preferred method of dealing with the dazzling array of transformed texts, the classification of which translation scholars have by no means agreed upon, seems to be well-reasoned as well as flexible enough, at least from a research perspective. For him, one needs to apply inclusive definitions first and exclusive definitions only afterwards, permitting the materials that one has acquired to reveal their usefulness when placed next to each other (Pym 1998: 58). As we have seen, incorporating imitations into a broader framework of translation, and applying the methodology or Translation Studies research to the textual analysis of these works, offers insights that may reorient thinking about the cross-cultural transplantation of a genre, a narrative technique, and a masterpiece. The case of the imitations of *Ulysses* in Hong Kong in the early 1960s shows that imitations even of the ‘remotest’ type do have value, both filling a niche where translations have not yet appeared on the scene and paving the way for the eventual acceptance of translations in the target culture.

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<sup>1</sup> For a full translation of the novel, see Gunn (1993).

<sup>2</sup> Instances of the difficulty in pinpointing precise influence are aplenty; see Gálik (1968, 1990). Gálik's instances can similarly be reviewed through the looking-glass of current translation studies research.

<sup>3</sup> The recent literature on influence is voluminous. Particularly useful is Clayton and Rothstein (1991). On the idea of influence operating in both forward and backward directions, or 'influence roundabout', see Manfredi (200: 1-34).

<sup>4</sup> For a consideration of these terms from a translation perspective, see Fawcett (1997: 27-52).

<sup>5</sup> Note must be made here of a special issue on James Joyce featured in the Taiwanese journal *Xiandai wenxue* (Modern Literature) in September 1960 (no. 4). This was followed later by a special on Virginia Woolf in January 1961 (no. 6), though none of her stream-of-consciousness works got translated there. Yet another major stream-of-consciousness novelist, William Faulkner, was the subject of a special issue in November 1961 (no. 11).

<sup>6</sup> The tripartite division used here is borrowed from Beeretz (1998: 21-27). The authoritative discussion of the categories of thought presentation is, of course, Dorrit Cohn, though Cohn prefers 'quoted monologue' to 'interior monologue' (Cohn 1978: 11-17). Other critics have identified more than three modes of internal narration in stream-of-consciousness fiction, but Beeretz's classification allows us to make a clear distinction between the methods used by Joyce and Woolf.

<sup>7</sup> It needs to be noted that, because of Joyce's blending of the characters' (first-person) thought presentation with the narrator's third-person descriptions of external

events, it is often difficult to sort out the individual streams of thought. In light of this, Weldon Thornton has suggested that Joyce aims to present collective, rather than individual, mentalities in his *Ulysses* (Thornton 2001: 58-60).

<sup>8</sup> For accounts of the intractable problems that *Ulysses* presents to the Chinese translator, see the articles by Cheu, Fong and Tseng in the special issue of *James Joyce Quarterly* 35(1), 1997.

<sup>9</sup> This is the well-known Uncle Charles Principle in Joyce scholarship (see Beeretz 1998: 33-38).

<sup>10</sup> Also see Li and Qin (1994: 835-41) for a discussion of the translation scene of the 1960s in Hong Kong, especially the part played by journals in the introduction of modernist fiction.

<sup>11</sup> Ostensibly a short essay, Virginia Woolf has chosen to call this text a short story and it was first published in a collection of short stories, *A Haunted House* (Woolf 1953).

<sup>12</sup> Numbers in italics refer to Zhu (1960); numbers in normal type refer to the original text (Joyce 1990).

<sup>13</sup> That, incidentally, is in striking contrast to the cases of Japan and Korea, where prestigious traditions have arisen in connection with conscious imitations of literary works from abroad, predominantly from China. In fact, the study of concepts of imitation (as opposed to 'translation') from a cross-cultural perspective is fascinating if one also takes into consideration the views of countries in China's periphery. Scattered research has been done on the imitations of classical Chinese fiction and poetry in Korea, Vietnam and Japan, but the relevance of a translation studies approach to all of this has yet to be demonstrated.