

# **Ezra Pound's Eleusinian–Dantean Love Mysteries in His Translation of Confucian Classics**

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## 要 約

### エズラ・パウンドの儒教古典の翻訳とダンテ・エレウシスの秘儀愛について

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エズラ・パウンドが1947年から1951年までに出版した儒教古典の翻訳、*Confucius, Unwobbling Pivot & The Great Digest* (中庸、大学) と *Confucian Analects* (論語) はむしろ創作と呼べるもので、詩人はダンテやプロティヌスに倣って原文に独自の瞑想を加えている。ダンテの「饗宴」では作者はすでに昇天したベアトリーチェの目を天使たちから贈られ、その目の中に人間の完全な形相を見る。パウンドは1938年に“Mang Tsze” (孟子) を書き、儒教の聖人たちもダンテとひとしく人間の完全な形相を「仁」(humanitas) の中に見たと考えた。「神曲」はダンテがベアトリーチェの愛に導かれて天上に昇る作品である。パウンドはダンテの神秘愛から、プロティヌスの瞑想に、さらにギリシャ秘儀にまでさかのぼって、地上に落ちた魂が自らを浄めて天に昇る過程を人類共通の資産と考え、この型を儒教にもあてはめて理解していた。

一例をあげれば、中国古代の皇帝舜は焰の手で楯をつかむエチプトの女神イシスで、ギリシャ秘儀の穀物神にあたり、プロティヌスの天上の魂、またダンテのベアトリーチェに相当する。「中庸」の最高の徳、「誠」はパウンドが考えると「太陽の矛が言葉により、完全に正しい場所に止まること」となる。太陽はプロティヌスの最高善まで昇った人間の魂を指し、この太陽とイシスとの神秘的結婚がパウンドの「キャンター92」にあらわれる。天上の魂との神秘的結合をとげて、人間は天地を貫ぬく中庸の軸を建て、朱子の「中庸序」に見るように天地の化育を助け、国土に豊饒をもたらすことができる。

ギリシャ穀物神の祭儀から内なる光を求めて天上に到るプラトン哲学が育ったように、中国でもまた先祖崇拝は穀物神の祭儀であり、その瞑想の中から人間の最高の姿を儒教が発見したとパウンドは考えるのである。

When Ezra Pound was arrested by the Anti-Fascist partisans in 1945 at Rapallo,<sup>1</sup> because he had broadcast from the station of Rome during the Second World War, he was taken to the Military Training Camp of the U. S. Army at Pisa, carrying James Legge's translation of *The Four Books* of Confucius.<sup>2</sup> Being confined at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D. C., at the end of the same year, he continued his translation there of Confucius's *Chung Yung* (Zhong-Yong 中庸) and *Ta Hsueh* (Daxue 大学) and published them in 1947 as *Confucius, The Unwobbling Pivot & The Great Digest*. Together with *The Pisan Cantos* published in 1948, the translation is a work of the most critical period of his life. Mary de Rachewiltz observes the work was done as "reaction to his environment at Pisa."<sup>3</sup> Naturally he wrote the most unique "translation" in the sense that he contemplated each passage for re-creating the original texts and interweaving them into his own Neo-Platonist, Dantean ascension to heaven. He added to his work of 1947 the corresponding Chinese texts in 1951, while he completed his translation of *Confucian Analects* (論語) in the same year. At present these translations of the three Confucian classics are put together in *Confucius: The Great Digest, The Unwobbling Pivot, The Analects*. This paper will not only try to interpret Pound's most curious "translations" but also to place them in the framework of his love mysteries.

First of all the translator surprises the reader by finding Dante in the Confucian classics. Though it is in only one passage of his essay, "Mang Tsze" (Meng Zi 孟子, 1938), that he associated Dante and Confucianism directly, he wrote clearly enough, and this association of Dante and Confucianism dominates throughout all his translations of the Confucian classics:

*Tsin Sin* [Jin Xing 盡心], pt. 1, xxxiii, 2, is our solidest join with Dante. 'What is the scholar's aim?' (Scholar here being also officer.) There follows one of the shortest verses, 'Mang tse said,' then the sign for 'raise' [尚] and the sign for 'will' [志]<sup>4</sup>.

The two Chinese characters, 尚志, are seen in the same essay (SP 98). The passage in *The Works of Mencius* referred to here reads in the original and Legge's translation:

1. 王子墊問曰、士何事。孟子曰、尚志。

The king's son, Teen, asked *Mencius*, saying, "What is the business of the *unemployed* scholar?"

2. Mencius replied, "To exalt his aim."<sup>5</sup>

Pound continues:

They translate it 'exalt the aim'. This is definitely Dante's *directio voluntatis*, with no ambiguity possible. The top of the *will* sign [志] is the scholar-officer sign, and its base the heart. The lifting up is structural.

Nevertheless Dante's 'god above' exists in an ideogram. No one with any visual sense can fail to be affected by way the strokes move in these characters (SP 107-108).

This passage from “Mang Tze” is not a riddle if we realize immediately that Dante’s ‘god above’ is not God the Creator of Judaic-Christian belief but a mystifying term for Beatrice. *Directio voluntatis* is seen in Dante’s *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, 2, 2, 7. In Dante’s argument there, “venus” or sexual love<sup>6</sup> is one of the greatest pleasures for man, and hence must be treated with the best care, that is, by setting man’s will to the right direction. Any attentive reader of Dante’s *Commedia* knows how love brings about ruin if it works against the will of God. In the most pathetic love of Paolo and Francesca, the shades of the couple forever wail and moan, fluttering in the dark sky (*Inferno* 5. 34–36). For having their ill-directed love purged in the purgatorial fire, Guido Guinizzelli and Arnaut Daniel endure the pain with obedience (*Purg.* 26. 92–147). It is only at the end of *Paradiso* that the divine will and Dante’s human will can work in perfect accord (*Par.* 33. 143–145). Now to which direction should the will and love of Confucians and the will of Pound the Neo-Platonist be turned?

A student of Dante here remembers that Dante and Confucians can participate in at least one vision together: the vision of the perfect form of humanity. In Dante’s *Convivio*, the Tuscan poet was sent by Beatrice in heaven the vision of her eye. Within the eye Dante observes Beatrice as the perfect form of humanity. It is the spirits of the third heaven that do the poet this kind service, so that in appreciation Dante addresses his first canzone in *Convivio* to the spirits of the third heaven of love, and explicates the canzone in The Third Tracts:

Then when I say

*Every supernal intellect gazes upon her,*

I commend her without reference to aught else, and I say that the Intelligences of heaven marvel at her, and the noble folk down here below think of her when they have most of that which is their delight ... all the Intelligences[in heaven]have knowledge of the human form in so far as it is regulated by intention in the divine mind. But the motor Intelligences have highest knowledge of it because they are the most especial cause of it and of every general form.<sup>7</sup>

Pound speculates that not only Dante but also Confucians could see in their visions the perfect form of humanity, for Confucians considered 仁 (jên) the most important virtue, and Pound interprets 仁 to be:

*Humanitas*, humanity, in the full sense of the word, “manhood.” The man and his full contents.<sup>8</sup>

The Tuscan poet in the fourteenth century and the ancient Confucian sage, Mang Tze, meet here in the circle that Pound closes in his attempt to comprehend man’s pursuit of the Platonic, bright Idea of the transcendent self.

The reader can protest that Confucians were never guided by love as Provençal or Italian poets of the Middle Ages. Yet it is true that Pound believed that love alone could lead a man, Oriental or Occidental, to the Idea in heaven. Pound finds in every one of the Confucian virtues man’s gazing into his heart. The ideogram for 慎 (shêng) or discre-

tion means for our poet “The eye (at the right) looking straight into the heart” (*Con* 21). The will 志 indicates “the officer standing over the heart” (*ibid.* 22). The virtue (徳 de = tē) represents “What results, i. e., the action resultant from the straight gaze into the heart” (*ibid.* 21). However unacceptable it is for Orientals to identify Dante and Confucian sages together, we never can doubt that Pound means the heart as the dwelling place of love. Pound in Canto 90/605 defines that love proceeds from the human soul, quoting Richard of St. Victor’s Latin passage:

Animus humanus amor non est,  
sed ab ipso amor procedit, et  
ideo seipso non diligit, sed amore  
qui seipso procedit (90/605).

(Human soul is not love, but love proceeds from it, and it [soul] does not rejoice in its wise idea but rejoices in love which proceeds from itself.)<sup>9</sup>

Love thus born out of the human soul is reinforced by the will from the heart according to Guido Cavalcanti’s “Donna Mi Prega” (A Lady Asks Me; Canto 36/177).<sup>10</sup>

In Plotinus’ *Enneads*, the Soul that emanates from the Divine Mind called *νοῦς* in Greek creates the material world, as it has accepted the Reason–Principle from the Intellectual Principle of the *νοῦς*, with the beauty, wisdom and the power of the Divine Mind. The Soul is involved in bodies at her extreme ends of lowering into the world of matter. The individual’s soul thus involved in bodies is called “the lower Soul” in contrast with the Soul the Creator, which is called “the higher Soul.” It is because of the higher Soul’s love that she searches herself in the lower world of matter, and equally in love the lower Soul forever pursues the higher Soul:

The lower Soul is moved by the higher which, besides encircling and supporting it, actually resides in whatsoever part of it has thrust upwards and attained the spheres. The lower then, ringed round by the higher and answering its call, turns and tends towards it; and this upward tension communicates motion to the material frame in which it is involved . . .<sup>11</sup>

Reading *Enneads* we realize precisely why Pound states in “Mang Tsze” that “the lifting up is structural” (See p. 3). Dante’s Christian God created the world with his first love (*primo amore*, *Inf.* 3. 6) and supports each man in love constantly. However, in Neo-Platonism the lower Soul’s ascension to the higher Soul is natural and causes constant circling motions of the material world which Pound calls “Vortex.”<sup>12</sup> Hence the lower Soul can attain the higher Soul only if the former exerts her will, while no purgation nor retribution is required unlike Dante’s Christian world. The ascension of the lower Soul to heaven is structurally made possible in Pound’s Neo-Platonism.

Even though Pound never met a noble lady like Dante’s Beatrice, he held love for the Platonic Idea in heaven all his life, calling this celestial object of his love by the name of Isis. In “The San Trovaso Notebook” which he wrote at Venice in 1908, we find a hymn to Isis entitled “Lotus–Bloom:”

Two candles offerèd unto that Queen

That for new dreaming "coelum regnit  
Et regnet in semper" O Matri Dei . . .<sup>13</sup>

(. . . she rules heaven and will rule for ever, O to the Mother of a God.)

Isis is the mother of Horus, the sun god in the Egyptian mythology.<sup>14</sup> Born of Isis and the dead god Osiris, Horus is half-flesh, indicating a human hero who could ascend to heaven because of his burning love.<sup>15</sup> Isis the goddess of love appears in Pound's "A Vision of Italy," and is again included in *Personae*, 1909. In "The Little Review Calender," which Pound published anonymously in 1922, the twelve months make a circle each with its own Hellenic deities while Isis appears in the middle of the circle.

Gabriele Rossetti's *Il Mistero dell' Amor Platonico del Medio Evo* (1840) gives more evidence that Pound identified Isis and Plotinus' higher Soul and Dante's Beatrice.<sup>16</sup> The Italian scholar of Dante lore and father of the Pre-Raphaelite poet and painter wrote in his study of the love poems of troubadours and Italian poets of "Dolce Stil Novo" (Sweet New Style, meaning the works of Dante and his contemporaries), that in the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece the initiates ritualistically married the goddess in the dark, and that after the mystical marriage they acquired a duplicate being half in heaven and half on earth:

L'alunno del sacerdozio si considerava nell' Inferno coi profani e nel Cielo con gli iniziati, perchè, mentre si fingeva nell' errore con quelli, era nella verità con questi: quindi veniva in esso riguardato l'uomo esterno e l'uomo interno . . .<sup>17</sup>

(The student of the priesthood considered that those who were not initiated were in Hell and that those initiated were in Heaven, because, while he pretended the former to be in error, the latter were in truth: thence he came to regard man as external and internal. . . .)

The duplicity of their life is represented by the constellation of Gemini, for the mystical marriage is done in the third heaven, and Gemini is the third zodiacal sign. The Gemini are the twin brothers born of a god and a woman, one being in heaven and the other being in the underworld:

Il segno de' Gemini tenendosi all' orizzonte vi rimane parte su e parte giù . . . A quel mistico spozalizio del terzo cielo planetario succedeva la mistica nascita del terzo segno zodiacale, la quale adombrava la riproduzione della specie umana (ibid., 1 : 101).

(The sign of the Gemini keeping at the horizon remains there partly above and partly below . . . The mystical marriage of the third heaven of planet was succeeded by the mystical birth of the third zodiacal sign, which suggested the reproduction of the [new] kind of man.)

The initiates of the Greek mysteries in Eleusis near Athens married Demeter. When the Ptolemy Dynasty was founded in Egypt, the Macedonian rulers invited priests from Eleusis, and identified Demeter with the Egyptian goddess Isis, promoting the Egyptian version of the Eleusinian Mysteries in Alexandria.<sup>18</sup> Isis then was extensively adored in

the Hellenistic world both as the goddess to assure the soul's ascension to heaven and as the fertility goddess of abundant crops, so that we have today *The Golden Ass of Apuleius* and *De Iside et Osiride* of Plutarch to testify the veneration of Isis in the ancient Hellenistic world. It is the major theme of Gabriele Rossetti's *Il Mistero dell' Amor Platonico del Medio Evo* that this mystical marriage and the subsequent rebirth of man as the spouse of Isis in heaven was inherited in the mystical love of the medieval Provençal and Italian poets (*Il Mistero* I, Part I, chaps. 4, 7, 10; Part II, 2–3; Part III). Isis in the poetry of the troubadours appeared as their ladies in the courtly love. With Dante and other Italian poets Isis took varied names: Beatrice for Dante, Lucia for Guido Guinicelli, Giovanna for Guido Cavalcanti, and Laura for Petrarch. Yet as Gabriele Rossetti claims, they all indicate for the poet the soul that is in heaven, called the higher Soul by Plotinus.

Pound simply added his Confucian heroes to those mystics who practiced the mystical marriage, Greek, Italian or Provençal. In his “Chinese History Cantos” (Cantos 52–61), the poet sings of Ouang-ngan-ché (Wang an shih 王安石), who tried an extensive reform in the market distribution and tax system under the reign of Chin Tsong of the Sung Dynasty (神宗, 1067–85, 宋), calling the reformer rather cryptically “the master of Nenuphar:”

Said Ngan: YAO, CHUN were thus in government  
Died now the master of Nenuphar (55/298).

It was Père Joseph–Anne–Marie de Mayriac de Mailla, the author of *Histoire générale de la Chine*, who recorded that Tcheou Tun-y (周敦頤, 1017–1073) was called the “master of nenuphar,” because the flowers were seen by his house.<sup>19</sup> Pound was delighted to use the flower for Ouang-ngan-ché. Since “nenuphar” is the particular kind of lotus that blooms on the Nile and represents Isis in Pound's “Lotus-Bloom,” the “master of nenuphar” of course signifies the spouse of Isis. Yao (堯) and Chun (Shun, 舜) are the legendary emperors of the Chinese golden age. Ouang-ngan-ché tried to restore the golden age of the righteous emperors by introducing his political and economic reforms. Tcheou Tun-y (Canto 55/298) started Neo-Confucian metaphysics which were expanded later by Chu-Hsi (朱熹, 1230–1300) into the theory of Reason and Matter (理氣說), which can be paralleled with Plotinus' argument of Reason Principle of the Soul.<sup>20</sup> Hence Pound includes all these names: Yao, Chun(shun), Ouang-ngan-ché and Tcheou Tun-y in his list of people who practiced his Eleusinian–Dantean love mysteries because they all aimed to attain the perfect form of humanity, seen through their love of the Idea in heaven and of the higher Soul.

Having realized that Dante's “god above” means Isis the higher Soul and the object of Pound and his Confucian heroes' love, how could Pound find her image in the Chinese character of 尚 (raise) as he claims in the passage of “Mang Tsze” quoted in p. 3 of this paper? Pound's thought is not too abstruse to guess, for the exterior part of the character 尚 resembles the higher part of the character 舜, the second emperor of the Chinese golden age.<sup>21</sup> Pound analyses the character 舜 in his “Unwobbling Pivot” (中庸):

He [舜] observed their discordant motives and followed the

middle line between these inharmonic extremes in governing the people, thus he deserved his name. [That is the significance of the ideogram “Shun” the hand which grasps, the cover that shields the discordant extremes.]

*Further examination of the 136th radical [𠄎] might find a root for “the discordant opposites,” in the signs of the waning and new-horned moon (Con 107).*

This is the most unexpected “translation” of *Chu Hsi’s Commentary* of Chung Jung (朱子, 中庸章句), 2. 2: “執其兩端、用其中於民、其斯以為舜乎”.<sup>22</sup> Isis the higher Soul exists just where the beauty, intelligence and power of the Divine Mind ( $\nu\omicron\delta\varsigma$ ) emanates into her, while she dissipates the unity of the ( $\nu\omicron\delta\varsigma$ ) into the vortices of the motion of matter. The unity of the whole material world, however, is kept firm within her Reason–Principle. Hence Pound observes the unity of Isis’s Reason–Principle in the ideogram of the shield with the hand of fire which is the element of heaven (<sup>天</sup>). Underneath her, the world of matter which is nothing but the creation of Isis, the higher Soul, undergoes such rapid changes being dispersed into extremes and oppositions. Hence the lower component of the character (𠄎) suggests to Pound oppositions “*in the signs of the waning and new-horned moon.*” These images of the early moon taken from the 136th radical of *Mathews’ English–Chinese Dictionary* are actually very authentic in Egyptian mythology to represent the genesis of the material world, for Budge wrote that Set broke the body of Osiris into fourteen pieces like the early phases of the moon, out of which the Bull Apis, the living soul of Osiris was begotten and rested upon Isis the great generator and mother (*Osiris*, 1:20). The living soul of Osiris means nothing but the essence shining behind the ever–ramifying and ever–changing phenomena, so that the flashing of their pieces of the moon under the aegis of Isis beautifully presents Isis’s intelligences procreating matter. Isis herself, on the other hand, stands for the moon, because the goddess appears to Lycius in *The Golden Ass of Apuleius* as such<sup>23</sup> and because it represents the whole world, celestial and earthly (*Il Mistero*, 1: 28–30) together, subordinating herself to the lunar change in her lower self. Pound’s Isis is also the moon as we see in the famous lines:

Isis Kuanon  
from the cusp of the moon<sup>24</sup>  
m’elevasti (90/606 uplifted me).

As Pound discovers the aegis of Isis in the exterior component of 尚 (raise) that raises the poet up to heaven, the interior component, 口, means the message from heaven for Pound.<sup>25</sup> Dante himself indicates in his second canzone of *Convivio* how every bright eye brings the message of Beatrice:

... li occhi di color dov’ella luce  
ne mandan messi al cor pien di desiri ...

(lines. 34–35. “—the eyes of those in whom she shineth send messages thereof to the heart filled with longings ...” Wicksteed 136.)

This testimony of Pound paralleling Confucianism and Dante–Eleusinian love



mysteries actually straightens out many riddles in Pound's translation of Confucian classics, complicated as they are. For instance, Pound puzzles the reader by translating the title of *Chung Yung* (中庸, the golden mean) into "The Unwobbling Pivot." Witness again Pound's image of Isis in the exterior component of 舜 and 尚. Under her aegis, Isis creates the material world into centripetal, vortex motions according to Plotinus' *Enneads* (2, 1, 3).<sup>26</sup> This aegis of Isis makes Aristotle's Formal Cause, which gives all the motions to the world in order to lead it into perfection, and which Dante calls "the motor Intelligences" in *Convivio* 3. 6. 5 (see the quotation in p. 4).<sup>27</sup> We can imagine then the lower cosmos of Plotinus forms necessarily a vertical axis in the center-bound motion which is perpetually winding the Reason-Principle of the Soul dispersed into the whirls. It is this vertical axis and these motor Intelligences that Pound calls respectively *Chung* [中] and *Yung* [庸], explaining in "The Unwobbling Pivot,"

*The two ideograms chung [中] and yung [庸] represent most definitely a process in motion, an axis round which something turns (Con 103).*

For Plotinus this lower universe "stands in need of harmonizing" (*Enneads* 3. 2. 2 ),

because it is the meeting ground of Necessity and divine Reason—Necessity pulling towards the lower, towards the unreason which is its own characteristic, while yet the Intellectual Principle [ $\nu\omicron\delta\varsigma$ ] remains sovereign over it (ibid.).

Since Reason and Necessity are mixed unequally, all is ruled in process, even the divine will or Providence. Any good in the lower cosmos is alien from the original unity of the Intellectual Principle of the Divine Mind, so that goodness falls short (ibid., 3. 2. 6). A good man is hurt by a wicked man merely because of the necessity of process, and the wicked man stands in one's way merely as a process. Hence each individual, good or wicked, is only playing his role like an actor (3. 2. 17).<sup>28</sup> This mixture of Necessity and Reason, however, is "not everywhere equal, as in a numerical distribution, but proportioned, differing according to the grades of place" (ibid., 3. 3. 5). There must be a better place than others for the purpose of receiving the Reason-Principle of Isis the higher Soul.

Pound's mythologization of *Chung Yung* following Plotinus indicates that this central axis that vertically extends downward from Isis should be where Confucian sages abide. Chu Hsi simply interprets *Chung Yung* as "Being without inclination" (中) and "admitting of no change" (庸, *FB* 347). In the lower cosmos of Plotinus, certainly one can stand suffering no change if one stays in the central pivot of the whirling world, whether one approaches Isis or not. Hence Pound's translation for Chu Hsi's Commentary on *Chung Yung*, I, 喜怒哀樂之未發、謂之中。發而皆中節、謂之和<sup>29</sup>

Happiness, rage, grief, delight. To be unmoved by these emotions is to stand in the axis, in the center; being moved by these passions each in due degree constitutes being in harmony (*Con* 101).

The Confucian virtue of self-control, of staying in Stoic "*nil admirari*" is thus integrating Pound's Dantean-Eleusinian Love Mysteries. Confucians can stay in the central axis of

the lower cosmos because their lower souls love the higher Soul's Reason-Principle, most genuinely collected there. Pound's mythologization further advances to determine that one can help harmonizing the universe by staying there, since Plotinus states that the lower universe needs harmonizing (*Enneads*, 3. 2. 2. See p. 11), since Reason and Necessity are unequally mixed there. Being harmonized, the universe will be more procreative and fertile. Pound translates Chu Hsi's *Commentary* I, 中也者、天下之大本也。和也者、天下之達道也。致中和、天地位焉、萬物育焉：<sup>30</sup>

That axis in the center is the great root of the universe; that harmony is the universe's outspread process [of existence]. From this root and in this harmony, heaven and earth are established in their precise modalities, and the multitudes of all creatures persist, nourished on their meridians (*Con* 103).

Confucian moral élites who could achieve the perfectly balanced mind and calmness are identified with the Hellenic heroes represented by Heracles who were initiated in the Eleusinian Mysteries (Kérényi, 78), apotheotized because they contributed to the fertility of the land,<sup>31</sup> through the mediation of Plotinus' *Enneads*.

Confucian moral élites do not merely stay in the vertical, central axis in Pound's translation, but having attained the higher Soul herself in heaven because of their duplicate life, are united with Isis in the poet's Dantean-Eleusinian mystical marriage. Together with her up in heaven, their celestial beings rest right with Isis's aegis having the fiery hand, unifying the whole vortex motions of the universe. It is this situation of their celestial beings that Pound represents with the character 止 (Canto 52/261). His "Great Digest" (大学) teaches one to rest in the Supreme Good or 止於至善.<sup>32</sup> "It [=the great learning] is rooted in coming to rest, being at ease in perfect equity" (*Con* 29). If one's celestial being is unified with Isis, remaining at the source of the vortex whirls and at the top of the vertical axis, one's earthly being can certainly stand within the axis. In heaven Isis the higher Soul can gaze into νοῦς, can emanate the Supreme Good which is the ultimate object of her sight (*Enneads*, 3. 9. 5, 5. 5. 8). *Ta Hseüh* quotes from Confucian Odes (詩經) and compares one who knows where to stay to a bright yellow bird:

*The Book of Poems* says:  
*The twittering yellow bird,*  
*The bright silky warbler*  
*Talkative as a cricket*  
*Comes to rest in the hollow corner of the hill*

(*Con* 39)<sup>33</sup>

Pound was delighted to use this image for indicating one's celestial being resting with Isis the higher Soul. "Bird for the mind' said Richardus/'beasts as to body ... (90/607)," simplifies Pound of Richard of St. Victor's delicate Latin passage, "In avibus itaque intellige studia spiritualia, in anima libus exercitia corporalia."<sup>34</sup> The image of a bright bird stands for the mind of a spouse of Isis strengthened and shining in heaven because it abides with the higher Soul.



against the ultimate Good is given by Pound in Canto 85 the name of Tcheou-knog (周公) called Tan (旦) or the dawn (85/554). Tcheou-kong, the virtuous regent for the infant king Ch'eng (成王 1115 B. C.), is the representative Confucian moralist being ever commemorated and eulogized in Chinese history (53/268).

Such a Neo-Platonic Confucian contemplator of Pound can see the good and the beautiful of Plotinus' ultimate Good are emanating out of the Good like the tensile of light for the purpose of raising mankind to heaven. Pound contemplates the Chinese character 顯 in the dingy Military Detention Camp at Pisa, creating this mythology:

in tensile 顯  
in the light of light is the *virtu*  
"sunt lumina" said Erigena Scotus  
as of Shun on Mt. Taishan (74/429).<sup>36</sup>

The threads of the bright ray (絲) are placed underneath the sun now identified with the Intellectual Principle. The Good being the object of the sun's sight is found in the right component of the character 頁, for Pound translates the character 碩 as "the stone-hard grain" (*Con* 55),<sup>37</sup> and the grain means the good for Pound. Witness his translation of *Analects* [論語], VIII, xii, 1, 子曰、三年学、不至於穀、不易得也:

He [Confucius] said: It is not easy to study for three years without some good grain for it. [*Ideogram* ku [穀]; *interesting as meaning both corn and good, or good luck.*]<sup>38</sup>

The rest of the passage quoted here from Canto 74/429 takes some explication. The threads of the ray are made possible because of the love of Isis the higher Soul, for Italian word, *virtù*, was used for the power of the beloved lady who leads the lover to heaven. Virgil addresses himself to Beatrice, "O donna di virtù, sola per cui/ l'umana spezie eccede ogne contento/ di quel ciel c'ha minor li cerchi sui ..." (*Inf.* 2. 76-78. "O Lady of virtue, through whom alone mankind rises beyond all that is contained by the heaven that circles least ...")<sup>39</sup> Guido Cavalcanti also sings in his Ballata V the *Virtu* of his lady in the sky, "*Guarda, se tu costei miri, / Vedrai la sua virtù nel ciel salita*" ("Look well! For if thou look on her, / Then shalt thou see her virtue risen in heaven").<sup>40</sup>

This raising power of Isis or *virtù* descends from heaven into the visible world of earth, being particularly seen in grain according to Pound's mythologization. Isis's *virtù* includes the power of the Good, because it is sent to earth through Herculean-Confucian heroes' sight of the Good. Not only was Isis a grain goddess in herself, but also the synthesis of all the grain goddesses; Athena, Persephone, Demeter and Aphrodite (*Apuleius* 11. 3). And the Herculean-Confucian heroes were all worshipped as grain or fertility spirits. This is testified by not only the celebrated anthropological study of Sir James George Frazer's *Golden Bough* but also by *Shi Ching* (詩經) or Confucian Odes, for in the latter, of all the ancestors of the rulers of the Tcheou Dynasty (周), especially 后稷 (Hou Je; Canto 105/ 747) and Weng Wang (文王) are venerated. 后稷 of course means grain king, and the latter is sung in the Ode quoted in *Ta Hsüeh*, 穆穆文王, which Pound translates:

*As a field of grain*

*White-topped in even order,  
The little flowing ears of grain  
Bending in white, even order,  
So glorious was King Wan . . . (Con 41).<sup>41</sup>*

In the lines of Canto 74/ 429 quoted already Pound adds the reference to Johannes Scotus Erigena to testify on the Christian, non-Confucian and non-Plotinian ground, “ ‘sunt lumina,’ said Erigena Scotus.” Erigena (c. 810-877) who translated Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite into Latin and served in the court of Charles the Bald, speculated in his *Periphyseon* that God the Creator’s substance or light has been divided into all the intelligibles and sensibles of the world.<sup>42</sup> Hence “Omnia quae sunt lumina sunt,”<sup>43</sup> wrote Pound to T. S. Eliot on 18 January, 1940. Just as God the Creator’s power is light, so is the procreating power of the Neo-Platonic Good, seen particularly in grain.

All these too, too unique translations of the Chinese Confucian classics may sound simply absurd for Orientals with some amount of Confucian traditions lingering in their minds. Yet with Pound’s search of Dantean lovers within Confucians taken apart, Pound’s parallelism of ancient China and ancient Greece is not so bizarre as it first looks. *Chung Yung* deified the virtue of sincerity (誠) as daringly as Pound did, for instance. From Chu Hsi’s *Commentary of Chung Yung*, 24. 31, Pound translates 至誠之道、可以前知 . . . 禍福將至、善必先知之、不善必先知之、故至誠如神：

In the process of this absolute sincerity one can arrive at a knowledge of what will occur . . . If ill fortune or good be on the way, one or the other, the good will be recognizable beforehand, the ill will be evident beforehand, and in this sense absolute sincerity has the power of a spiritual being, it [sincerity, 誠] is like a *numen* (Con 175-177).<sup>44</sup>

Just as the Greek youth were initiated into Dionysus the tribal spirit, the youth of the ancient China and the youth of all the periods of Chinese history up to 1949 were all initiated into the Confucian spirit. In Pound’s own way, all the Confucians were “catechuman” or initiates of mysteries.

“Taught and not taught, Kung [Confucius] and Eleusis to catechuman alone” (53/ 272), suggests Pound in “The Chinese History Cantos”, noting how well the Greek way of worshipping the Grain spirit and the Chinese way of the ancestors’ spirit can be paralleled if the Confucians are presumed to be initiated into a kind of Greek mysteries which mean man’s research of the transcendental self through the deified tribal spirit. Here one has to realize that at least in the rural Japan, one venerates one’s ancestral spirit still as the grain spirit, though the grain rites of the Mediterranean kinds are only remembered through the words of Jesus, “I am the bread of life” in John 6:35.

Of course, to see *Ta Hsüeh* and *Chung Jung* thus uprooted and grafted on the stock of the ancient, occidental tradition of grain rites, Neo-Platonism and even Dante’s *Commedia* must be extraordinary, bewildering and even painful for Oriental readers. For the more lenient, flexible mind, Pound’s translations of Confucian classics are as fascinating as the modern art of collage can be. To more profound thinkers these

translations show the Confucian classics in a rarer light. Greek people contemplated the inherent, procreating power within man, discovered the inherent, transcendental light of Idea first in the symbolic image of fertility goddesses' light, then developed it into the transcendental essence of Plato's and Plotinus' philosophy. The medieval Christian mystics' contemplations of God, such as Richard of St. Victor's and Dante's were all founded on these Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophers' contemplations except that they sought God the Creator through the Saviour, nor Plotinus's higher Soul. The American poet's paralleling *Chung Yung* and Plotinus's *Enneads* unexpectedly suggests what the Chinese Confucian philosophy might have been, had it participated in the Greek philosophy in the ancient days. In this sense one might say that Pound's translation of Confucian classics have resurrected the lost Oriental tradition with the rare colours of the universal humanity shining in the rays of ancient Greece.

#### Notes

- 1 Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 407.
- 2 Mary de Rachewiltz, *Discretions* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), p. 241. Stock, p. 408. The Confucius that Mary de Rachewiltz says Pound put in his pocket must be Legge's *Four Books* printed in Shang Hai, which he refers to in his letter to W. H. D. Rouse, "Thank heaven I have what is probably a Shanghai'd (pirated) edtn. of Kung and Mantse . . ." Rapallo, 30 October, 1937. *The Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), #333.
- 3 "Ezra Pound's 'Kung,' *Ezra Pound Kenkyu*, ed. Rikutarō Fukuda and Akira Yasukawa (A Homage to Ezra Pound from Japan; Kyoto: Yamaguchi Shoten, 1986), 21.
- 4 *Selected Prose, 1909-1965: Ezra Pound*, ed. William Cookson (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 107. Cited hereafter as *SP* with the pagination in parentheses.
- 5 *The Four Books: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, and The Works of Mencius*, trans. James Legge (China: The Commercial Press, [n. d.]), 962. According to the catalogue card of Kyoto University, the copy was published in Shang Hai. Since Kyoto University purchased this in the 1930's, this must be the "Shanghai'd (pirated) edtn. of Kung and Mantse" that Pound possessed. Although the volume is big enough, it can be held in a pocket if the last part, *The Works of Mencius*, is separated. Possibly this is why Pound did not talk about *Mencius* in detail after 1945. *The Four Books* will be cited hereafter as *FB*.
- 6 See *Dante Alighieri, De Vulgari Eloquentia*, trans. Tomotada Iwakura (Tokyo: Tokai University Press, 1984), 80-81.
- 7 *The Convivio of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Philip H. Wicksteed (London: J. M. Dent, 1903), 167-168. "Poi quando dico: Ogni Intelletto di là su la mira, commendo lei, non avendo rispetto ad altra cosa. E dico che le Intelligenze del cielo la mirano, e che la gente di qua giù gentile pensano di costei, quando più hanno di quello che loro diletta . . . tutte le Intelligenze conoscono la forma umana in quanto ella è per intenzione regolata ne la divina mente; e massimamente conoscono quella le Intelligenze motrici, però che sono spezialissime cagioni di quella e d'ogni forma generata . . ." *Convivio* 3. 6. 4-5, ed. Piero Cudini (Milano: Garzanti, 1980), 163.
- 8 *Confucius: The Unwobbling Pivot, The Great Digest, The Analects* (New York: New Directions, 1969), 22. Cited hereafter as *Con* with the pagination in parentheses.

- 9 “Quomodo Spiritus Sanctus Est Amor Patris et Filii,” *Richardi a Sancto Victore Opera Omnia*, Patrologia Latina, ed. J. -P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1880), c. 1012. I owe the translation of “ideo seipso” to Dr. G. F. W. Kresel. See also *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1984), 2: 540.
- 10 See Strophe II, “Donna Mi Prega”:

In quella parte—dove sta memora  
Prende suo stato—si, formato, —come  
Diaffan da lume, —d’una scuritate  
La qual da Marte—vène, e fa demora;  
Elli è creato—ed ha sensato—nome,  
D’alma costume—e di cor volontate.

*Guido Cavalcanti: Rime*, ed. William Caslon (Torino: Alpignano, 1968), 37.

Where memory liveth,  
it takes its state  
Formed like a diafan from light on shade  
Which shadow cometh of Mars and remaineth  
Created, having a name sensate,  
Custom of the soul,  
will from the heart ... (Canto 36/177).

- 11 *Enneads 2. 2. 3. Plotinus: The Enneads* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), 91.
- 12 *Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound*, ed. Michael John King (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), 36. Cited hereafter as *CEP*.
- 13 See *ibid.*, 239.
- 14 See E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris: The Egyptian Religion of Resurrection*, 1911; reprint. (New York: University Books, 1961), 1: 20–23. Set, Osiris’s brother, killed Osiris and tore his body into pieces. Isis, the wife, collected the pieces, embraced the dead body, and conceived Horus. The sun god, Horus, was challenged by Set, conquered him, and resurrected Osiris. Cited hereafter as *Osiois*.
- 15 Horus, the sun being a human hero who has ascended to heaven, is suggested by Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride*, 41, “and they tell a tale that Heracles, making his seat in the sun.” *Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride*, trans. J. Gwyn Griffiths (Swansea, Wales: University of Wales Press, 1970), 183. Note that Heracles is a representative hero in the Greek mythologies, and Pound translated the story of his ascension to heaven through his *eros* from Sophocles’ *Women of Trachis* (1957).
- 16 Pound mentioned Gabriele Rossetti’s work only once in *Carta da Visita* (1942), which was published as *A Visiting Card* in 1952. An interesting evidence that Pound read Rossetti’s before 1906 is seen in his publication in *The Book News Monthly*, 1906. There the young poet reviewed Joséph Péladan’s *Le Secret des Troubadours* and *Originee et Esthétique de la Tragedie*, not only using the main themes of Rossetti, but also criticized Péladan for not detecting the secret language of troubadours that Rossetti claimed the troubadours used. See *The Book News Monthly* 25–1 (September 1906): 54–55.
- 17 *Il Mistero dell’ Amor Platonico del Medio Evo* (London: Riccardo & Giovanni Taylor, 1840), 1: 100.
- 18 See Harold R. Willoughby, *Pagan Regeneration: A Study of Mystery Initiations in the Graeco-Roman World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1929), 177. See also C. Kerényi, *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 115–120.

- 19 "Le maître du nénuphar," *Histoire générale de la Chine, ou Annales de cet empire, Traduites du Tong-kien-kang-mou* [通鑑綱目], 1777-1785; reprint. (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen, 1969), 8: 278. See also John J. Nolde, *Blossoms from the East: The China Cantos* (Orono, Maine: The National Poetry Foundation, 1983), 233-234.
- 20 Concerning Tcheou Tun-y and Chu Hsi, see Yoshio Takeuchi, *中国思想史* (Intellectual History of China), *武内義雄全集* (Collected Works of Yoshio Takeuchi; Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1978), 8: 168-193.
- 21 *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary* which Pound owned counts neither 𠃉 nor 𠃊 as radicals so that Pound could use his imagination freely.
- 22 "He [Shun] took hold of their two extremes, *determined* the Mean, and employed it in *his government* of the people. It was by this that he was Shun!" Legge, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, FB 356.
- 23 See *The Metamorphoses or Golden Ass of Apuleius of Madaura*, 11. 3, trans. H. E. Butler (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1910), 2: 130.
- 24 Pound identified Isis and the Oriental goddess of mercy, Kuanon, very adequately, for Kuanon certainly corresponds to the Babylonian Ishtar, the Greek Astarte, the Arabian Athtar, and the Phoenician Ashtart. See Angela Elliott, "Pound's 'Isis Kuanon': An Ascension Motif in *The Cantos*," *Paideuma* 13-3 (Winter 1984): 343. Pound was delighted at the image of the palace in the moon which appears in Ernest Fenollosa's translation of the Noh, "Hagoromo," in manuscript.
- 25 See "mouth, is the sun that is god's mouth/ 口" (77 / 466).
- 26 And our answer is, "Because the flux is not outgoing," where there is motion within but not outwards and the total remains unchanged, there is neither growth nor decline, and thus the Cosmos never ages.
- 27 See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 12. 3. 5-6. Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was transmitted into the medieval world as an apocryphal *Book of Causes*, which Dante calls "libro de la Cagioni," *Convivio*, 3. 6. 4. See Etienne Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen âge: Des origines patristiques à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, 2d ed. rev.* (Paris: Payot, 1962), 345.
- 28 *Enneads*. 3. 2. 17. Whitman uses this idea of each man playing his role on earth in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,"
- Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,  
The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as great as we like,  
Or as small as we like, or both great and small (6, lines, 83-85).
- 29 朱子、中庸章句、I. "While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of EQUILIBRIUM. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of HARMONY." FB 351. Reason(理) in Chu Hsi's Neo-Confucian metaphysics is still in Tcheou Tun-y's the Supreme Ultimun(周敦頤、太極). It appears in the motion of *Yin* and *Yang* (陰陽) as pleasure, anger, sorrow or joy is stirred, and all the phenomena are procreated as *Yin* and *Yang* work upon each other. Here man and the world(天地) are completely unified in the ideal situation of sincerity(誠). Otherwise man brings about disorder in the world. See Ryutaro Tomoeda, 「朱子の思想形成」(The Growth of Chu Hsi's Thought; Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1969), 146-148. Pound absorbed Chu Hsi's *Commentaries* for *Ta Hsüeh*, as he translated in 1928 M. G. Pauthier's French translation of *Ta Hsüeh* pronounced "*Ta hio*" into *Ta Hio: The Great Learning Newly Rendered into the American Language*. Since Pauthier literally translated all the supplements in Chu Hsi's *Commentary*, Pauthier's *Ta hio* delighted Pound with the metaphysics included in its resembling of Fenollosa's Neo-Confucian scholarship which the



latter called a “Japanese school of the study in Chinese culture.” See “The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry by Ernest Fenollosa,” *Instigations* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920), 360.

- 30 This EQUILIBRIUM is the great root *from which grow all the human actions* in the world, and this HARMONY is the universal path *which they all should pursue*.

Let the states of equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection, and a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth, and all things will be nourished and flourish. *FB* 351–352.

In Chu Hsi’s Neo-Confucian metaphysics, certainly one can bring in harmony to the world if one’s mind works in the ideal situation of peace and harmony, and bring in disorder if otherwise. It is deep-rooted in Chinese thought that a good and virtuous ruler can achieve peace and the fertility of the land. It is possible to consider that the ancient prevailing custom of grain rites in China, which still remains extensively in the Confucian areas as the worship of the ancestors’ spirits, was rationalized into the Confucian demand for the rulers’ to harmonize and pacify the people and the land, and became further interwoven with Chinese Buddhist philosophy and the Book of Changes (易經) into Neo-Confucian metaphysics.

- 31 Such was the role of heroes in the ancient folklore of Greece. The victors of Olympic games were considered to be the Year Daimons to confer fertility on the land and were praised in Pindar’s odes. See Jane Ellen Harrison, *Themis*, 1927; reprint. (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1974), Chap. 7. Pound’s line in Canto 71/417, “THEMIS CONDITOR,” proves that Pound had read this book at least by 1940.
- 32 See 大学之道、在明明德、在親民、在止於至善。What the Great Learning teaches, is—to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to reach in the highest excellence. *FB* 308–309.
- 33 詩經、小雅；鶯鸞黃鳥、止于丘阿。 *Ezra Pound: The Confucian Odes*, no. 230. Quoted in 大学。 II, iii. “There is that little oriole, / Resting on a bend of the mound.” Legge, *The She King or the Book of Poetry, The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*, 1861–1872; reprint. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 4: 418. It is *Ta Hsüeh* that used this elegant song for moralization.
- 34 In birds is therefore intelligent spiritual study; in animals corporeal exercise. *Riccardo da S. Vittore: Pensieri sull’Amore*, ed. Ezra Pound (Milano: Vanni Scheiwiller, 1956), 26.
- 35 Carroll Terrell conjectures that the Italian quotation can be “an Italian popular song heard on the DTC [Detention Training Camp] loudspeaker.” *C* 2: 414.
- 36 Mt. Taishan, the famous mountain in central China was known to Pound through the poem of *Li Po* (季白), “太白何蒼蒼,” which was translated in Fenollosa’s notebooks. Pound used the poem in Canto (56 / 301). In Canto 92, the summit of the mountain appears in the third heaven, representing the human energy in love being focused at Isis in heaven. See 92/618–619. Pound associated 舜 (Shun) with Mt. Taishan because of the focused energy of love and because of 舜 including the image of Isis. See p. 8.
- 37 See Pound’s translation of 大学章句, 8. 2. 故諺有之、曰、人莫知其子之惡、莫知其苗之碩：

Hence the shaggy proverb: No man knows his son’s faults, no one knows the stone-hard grain in the stalk’s head from the first sprouts (*Con* 55).

Here in the character 碩, Pound saw stone (石) and the grain (頁). Legge translates the same passage:

Hence it is said, in the common adage, “A man does not know the wickedness of his son; he does not know the richness of his growing corn (*FB* 328).

See 碩 is “richness” here.

- 38 *Con* 226 Legge's translation of the corresponding passage reads, "The master said, 'It is not easy to find a man who has learned for three years without coming to be good.'" *FB* 101.
- 39 *Inferno, Dante Alighieri: The Divine Comedy*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1977) 16-17.
- 40 *Ezra Pound: Translations*, ed. Hugh Kenner (New York: New Directions, 1963), 106-107.
- 41 Surprisingly all these lines are the translation of 穆穆文王. The image of the ears of grain is derived simply from the character 穆. Legge only wrote, "Profound was King Wän" for the corresponding passage in *FB* 318. The Confucian Ode quoted is 大雅,文王在上, I, 4: Ode no. 235 in Pound's *The Confucian Odes* (New York: New Directions, 1959), 148.
- 42 See *Johannis Scotti Eriugena Periphyseon*, eds. J. P. Sheldon-Williams and Ludwig Bieler (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1972), 2: 17.
- 43 All that are light. Quoted in a letter, no. 368, *The Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 432.
- 44 "It is characteristic of the most entire sincerity to be able to foreknow . . . When calamity or happiness is about to come, the good shall certainly be foreknown by him, and the evil also. Therefore the individual possessed of the most complete sincerity is like a spirit." *FB* 401-402.

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