

Xinyi Zhao

University College London

Jinan, Shandong, China

Translation and Identity Formation in Transcultural Communicating Practice –Analysis of Representation of China in the First Half of Twentieth – Century

In this paper, I analyse the representation of China in the twentieth – century in the prose and poetry of two modernist authors through the textual tensions among utopia/dystopia/heterotopia, specifically Franz Kafka's 'The Great Wall of China' (1917) and Ezra Pound's *The Cantos* (1885 – 1972) and *Cathay* (1915). Drawing on Foucault's concept of heterotopia as a way of thinking about space in real and imaginary terms, as well as its political implications, I consider the two writers translate China into utopias/heterotopias for their own identity formation. This approach allows my paper to make observations about the poetics of each author, the modernist reception of China in terms of cultural translation, and the translatability of Chinese thought in terms of intermediality. This paper identifies the atemporality in both authors' approach to China, revealing the dispassionate identification of Chinese and Jewish culture in Kafka versus the subjective identification of real and imaginary China in Pound. I analyse the gaps between the superimposed factual plane and imagination, in order to examine how they translate, accept Chinese culture and philosophy in the horizon and crisis of modernity, how they speak of 'China' (textual China) for the aim of mirroring the self, how Chinese philosophy is transplanted as medicine (Pound) for the modern European spirit. Drawing on a broad range of research, this paper synthesises and brings into dialogue scholarship on hermeneutics, aesthetics, and cultural studies in several different languages. I propose to reinvigorate utopia's inherently critical nature as critical utopias, heterotopia and meta – utopia being involved as emanations. The synthesising remarks that compare Kafka with Pound will show that they are both conducting comparative studies, transcultural interpretations; they both reject unifying views of identity, and both accept Chinese poetics, philosophy in formal and spiritual sense.