

Translating the Oriental Otherness at the Turn of the 19th Century

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Introduction

In 1985 Hendrik van Gorp and José Lambert proposed a methodological framework for describing translations based on polysystem theory as developed by Itamar Even-Zohar. According to their seminal essay “On Describing Translations,” any translation can be described on the micro or macrostructural level, on the preliminary or systemic level, as long as it takes into account the textual, paratextual, and contextual factors bearing on the translation process. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to micro-textually compare the formal literary structures of two 19th-century European translations of classical Chinese poetry, and briefly relate them to Antoine Berman’s conception of ethnocentric and hypertextual translation as defined in *La Traduction et la lettre ou l’auberge du lointain*. These turn-of-the-century translations will also be referred to as examples of another cultural phenomenon, that of cultural translation: “as a superior level of interaction [cultural translation] takes place whenever an alien experience is internalized and rewritten in the culture where that experience is received” (Carbonell, 1996: 81). It is our contention that translators’ behaviour, when interlinguistically rewriting an alien experience, can be to some extent unveiled through a micro-level analysis strictly focused on literary formal choices.

Theoretical considerations

The 19th-century European vogue for things of the Far East mirrored Europe's cultural and artistic openness to the South Eastern Seas (here understood as China and Japan) and to Orientalism in general. Much encouraged by the 18th-century importation of Chinese motifs and objects of art, as well as the 19th-century Paris and London Universal Exhibitions and the end of Japan's self-imposed seclusion, this surge of interest gains to be understood in the light of Goethe's claim for *Weltliteratur*, which raised curiosity about the exotic literatures produced outside European boundaries. Turn-of-the-century readers were therefore introduced to the subsystem of oriental¹ literatures via translation (Hervey Saint-Denys, Judith Gautier, James Legge, Herbert A. Giles, Camilo Pessanha) and original pieces of writing inspired by oriental motifs (Bernardin de Saint Pierre, Pierre Loti, Lafcadio Hearn, Wenceslau de Moraes, Victor Segalen, Paul Claudel, and others). To effectively introduce extra-European literatures, linguistic and cultural barriers had to be broken down, but not all national cultures had the same human and linguistic resources at their disposal. Many cultures had to give in to indirect translation, in particular French-mediated in that France occupied the centre of the literary polysystem.² French travellers and writers were also actively engaged in producing travel literatures and (semi)ethnographic writings on Middle and Far Eastern cultures, which reinforced France as a cultural and literary model to look up to.

The *topos* of Chinese otherness is enthusiastically expanded in *Le Livre de jade* by Judith Gautier,³ which was received as one of the first collections of classical

¹ By oriental we are referring to everything that has been commonly conventionalised, accepted, and read as oriental throughout European history and discourse on the foreign Other. One must not obviously forget Edward Said's influential *Orientalism* (1978) and all the ideological implications contained in the term "oriental," which is the European understanding of a space (geographically and historically) demarcated according to European standards.

² On the French literary hegemony, see Pascale Casanova's *La République des lettres* (1999).

³ When first published, *Le Livre de jade* was signed under the name of Judith Walter – a pseudonym chosen by her father (Richardson, (s.d.): 24) or, as Maria Rubins points out in her article "Dialogues

Chinese poetry to be directly translated from Chinese into a European language. It also marked out the beginning of Judith Gautier's career and literary involvement in the oriental *topos*.⁴ Recent research has, however, shown that the majority of the 33 poems making up her "jade" volume are in fact pseudotranslations,⁵ and poems that do have a Chinese source text tend to be adaptations⁶ rather than translations. Originally published in the year of the Paris Universal Exhibition (1867), a new edition followed in 1902 with several additions and minor corrections. (The 1908, 1928, and 1933 follow-ups were based on the 1902 edition.) *Le Livre de jade* was itself imported, translated, retranslated, and adapted into other European languages (Détrie, 1989: 302). Many of these new translations were based on previous translations into other languages:

It was through these "translations of translations" that the first wave of enthusiasm for Classical Chinese poetry (or at least "in that style") spread through Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. At that stage, the nuance of meaning suggested by "in that style" was of little relevance. (Stocès, 2003: 3)

Portugal was no exception to this aesthetic tendency or style, and in 1890 António Feijó's lyrical volume *Cancioneiro chinês*⁷ was born. To its second edition (1903) –

across Cultures" (2002: 150), Walter is the German translation of Gautier –, which could be a self-preservation technique against translation failure or rejection.

⁴ Let us bring forth some details concerning her biographical background: *Le dragon impérial* (1869), *Les Peuples étranges* (1879), *La Fille du ciel* (co-authored by Pierre Loti, 1911), *En Chine (merveilleuses histoires)* (1911).

⁵ See Ferdinand Stocès (2003), "The Book of Jade by Judith Gautier – General Characteristics of the Editions from 1867 and 1902", *Oriente* 7, pp. 3-20; Ferdinand Stocès (2007), "Sur les sources du *Livre de jade* de Judith Gautier (1845-1917) (Remarques sur l'authenticité des poèmes)", *Revue de littérature comparée* 319, pp. 335-350.

⁶ See Georges Bastin's definition of "Adaptation" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Routledge, London & New York, 2001, pp. 5-8). Likewise, Muriel Détrie warns us that "la plupart des traductions de Judith Gautier sont autives et tellement éloignées des originaux parfois qu'il est difficile voire impossible de reconnaître ceux-ci" (1989: 304).

⁷ It would be interesting to delve into the choice of this title, *Cancioneiro chinês*, which bears no resemblance to the source title. It should not go unnoticed that "Cancioneiro chinês" echoes the Portuguese translation of the *Shih-ching* (or *Shijing*), the oldest known collection of Chinese poetry

despite being based on the 1867 version of *Le Livre de jade*, it will not be considered given the scope of this article – António Feijó also added four new translations of other poems extracted from his source text.

Following the tradition of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), the contrastive analysis proposed relies on the target-oriented culturalist model as theorised by Gideon Toury: “concrete texts in languages other than the target’s are not part of necessary equipment for launching research (...) even if none is used, the study will still pertain to Translation Studies as long as the assumptions of their temporal preexistence and logical priority are taken into account” (1995: 34). Given our unfamiliarity with the Chinese language and since indirect translation is, in any case, our object of study, the Chinese poems Judith Gautier selected, compiled, and translated will not be taken into account so as to prove that second-hand translations are a “culturally relevant phenomenon,” as well as “more than a mere legitimate object for research” (Toury, 1995: 130). Such a target-oriented decision pertinently raises the question of which is after all the source culture of the Portuguese indirect translation.

If, on the one hand, the culture at stake in the French source text is the Chinese system of poetic representation, on the other António Feijó’s translation emerges as a product of the 18th-century French *chinoiseries*.⁸ Judith Gautier’s translations must have been greatly shaped by her target readers’ expectations and by the literary constraints of her time. Even her pseudotranslated poems were written according to the images she had created on Chinese literature and culture. *Le Livre de jade* was but a double indirect

(dating from c. 1000 to 200 B.C.) that could be paired with Aristotle’s *Poetics* as suggested by Earl Miner (1986: 14).

⁸ *Chinoiserie* is usually defined as a tendency towards things Chinese, which translated into the import, reproduction and imitation of Chinese objects of art. There is a short chapter by William Appleton which, though focused on the English world, elaborates on the implications of the “chinoiserie” concept and points not only the reasons for its success but also for its decline. Ho-Fung Hung’s essay “Orientalist Knowledge and Social Theories: China and the European Conceptions of East-West Differences from 1600 to 1900” (*Sociological Theory*, vol. 21, n° 3 (2003), pp. 254-280) is also extremely enlightening since it relates the European knowledge and contact with China to “the changing political economy of the capitalist world-system” (2003: 254).

referent to António Feijó's *Cancioneiro*: both as a mediating unit of translation and as a container storing original poetic testimonies that unveil a profusion of representations of the Chinese alterity.

Jordan Herbert Stabler, Feijó's former colleague during the time he lived in Stockholm, tells us in the introduction to his *Songs of Li-Tai-Pé* (1922), which are “an attempt at rendering into English of [*sic*] some of the poems from his [Feijó's] favorite work ‘O Cancioneiro Chines’” (1922: 3), that “during the six years in which he [Feijó] engaged on his book, he read greatly in French and Portuguese in connection with Chinese literature and made a careful study of the works of the Jesuit missionary fathers” (1922: 4).

Stabler, as well as António Feijó's letters published in 2004 show that the Portuguese poet-translator sought to improve his knowledge of the Chinese cultural system. Thus, in addition to reproducing some features specific to the Portuguese literary conventions and his personal aesthetic choices, António Feijó's hybrid translation, as expected, ends up blending French and Chinese poetics and cultures. We therefore consider *Cancioneiro chinês* to have two source cultures: one potentially real (that of the French text) and one virtual (the Chinese culture, a culture-in-the-horizon). Furthermore, and despite our awareness of the intricacies of the concept, *Cancioneiro chinês* could be referred to as a poetic example of cultural translation, in that literature emerges as an intercultural contact zone. Language creates reality(ies), so literature – indeed language in use – engenders a particular conception of reality, a particular conception of otherness, a particular conception of intercultural contact.

Indirect translation and pseudotranslation helped decentre and develop European literature; hence the introduction of innovation or, at least, novelty into that system. Since indirect translation involves different levels of cultural interference, it also helps

understand the power relationships between languages, cultures, and literatures. As Martin Ringmar puts it,

If ITr [indirect translation] is viewed in the light of language/translation hierarchies it can be assumed that the SL and the TL are small/dominated languages, whereas the ML [mediating language] is a dominant language (...). (2006: 5)

Accordingly, the Chinese and Portuguese literary systems are smaller literatures in relation to France's literary hegemony, hence its mediating role. Indirect translation also means that the greater the degree of indirectness, the more shifts will be found between the original source text and the most recent target text. *Cancioneiro chinês* is, therefore, expected to reproduce and even increase the shifts found in its source text.

Based on these assumptions and bearing on the theoretical framework put forward, this article tries to shed some light on one specific micro-level issue raised by the translation of Chinese poetry into Western languages, in short, prosody. The scope of this article does not allow for the content analysis of each translated volume nor the discussion of translation problems and difficulties.

Prosody – from transgression to ethnocentric hypertextuality

Choosing the most suitable verse form in poetry translation is a preliminary decision that determines and constrains all the subsequent translation process. It must, of course, be consciously and carefully made. The translations under study differ concerning the

kind of verse form adopted: Judith Gautier prefers the prose poem, whereas António Feijó fancies the rhymed verse.⁹

Both Judith Gautier and António Feijó are heirs of the Romantic movement that liberated literary creation from strict literary forms and styles (Aguiar e Silva, 2002: 550-560). Consequently, new literary forms developed, such as historical novel, poetic narrative, and prose poem (Aguiar e Silva 2002: 590),¹⁰ the latter having become widely spread after Baudelaire's *Petits poèmes en prose – Spleen de Paris* (1869) inspired, in turn, in Aloysius Bertrand's *Gaspard de la nuit* (1842). In view of the industrial and material progress that so greatly changed 19th-century sceneries, Charles Baudelaire felt an urge to redefine the status of poetry through his *Spleen de Paris*,¹¹ prose poem being one possible solution. In this regard, one should here consider Judith Gautier's connection to *le Parnasse* – “Judith Gautier, a remarkable literary figure, who was so immersed in the Parnassian milieu that she was even referred to by some contemporaries as the only female Parnassian” (Rubins, 2002: 146) –, since writing poetry in prose became a distinctive formal aspect of this French school of poets that would later inspire Symbolism. Born out of the Art for Art's Sake movement in the second half of the 19th century, Parnassianism was an aesthetic tradition that emphasised poets' craftsmanship, in opposition to Romantic poets' divine inspiration, in achieving

⁹ According to James Holmes, both source and target strategies could reciprocally point to “metapoems”, which take into account, and place on the same level, the poetic tradition of the original text and that of its translation: “By virtue of its double purpose, the metapoem is a nexus of a complex bundle of relationships converging from two directions: from the original poem, in its language, and linked in a very specific way to the poetic tradition of that language; and from the poetic tradition of the target language, with its more or less stringent expectations regarding poetry which the metapoem, if it is to be successful as poetry, must in some measure meet” (1988: 24 and 25).

¹⁰ “Embora o modo lírico se possa manifestar em *textos em prosa* – como acontece com textos integráveis em subgéneros híbridos como o *poema em prosa*, o *romance lírico*, a chamada *narrativa poética* e o *drama lírico* (...) Esta oposição entre poesia e prosa (...) identifica-se com a oposição *versificado/não versificado*, caracterizando-se por conseguinte o texto poético como aquele texto literário (...) que se particulariza pelo facto de nele se actualizarem normas e convenções reguladas pelo *código métrico* e pela interdependência semiótica relevante que nele se verifica entre este código e todos os outros códigos do policódigo literário, em particular o código fónico-rítmico” (Aguiar e Silva, 2002: 590-591).

¹¹ “J'avais primitivement l'intention de répondre à de nombreuses critiques et, en même temps, d'expliquer quelques questions très simples, totalement obscurcies par la lumière moderne: qu'est-ce que la Poésie? quel est son but?” (Baudelaire, 1996: 234).

formal perfection. It also rejected Romantic egocentrism, yet it inherited its refuge in the cult of exotic and picturesque motifs. Judith Gautier could only have cultivated the “poème en prose,” especially if we take into account that she was the daughter of one of the leaders of the Parnassian movement (Théophile Gautier) and married to Catulle Mendès, director of the *Parnasse contemporain* magazine whose first number was published by Lemerre, the same house that would later publish *Le Livre de jade*.

Since prose, in simple terms, is a continuous and uninterrupted textual segment, its use to translate poetry might reveal a disregard for the artistic quality (form and style) of source texts. In comparison to verse, its rhythm and musicality, prose is apparently a more neutral structure that makes it difficult for readers to parallel it with verse. Prose poem eventually developed as an independent genre on its own, and its formal choice can here illustrate three hypotheses:

1. It may be Holmes’s “kind of nil-form solution” (as Détrie 1989 argues), when the translator renders verse form by means of prose (Holmes, 1988: 25).
2. It might reveal a higher concern with its alien content in view of its recursive nature, hence a more literal and explicit rendering of the Chinese poems.
3. It might be (and this is our claim) a conscious strategy to contribute to canon formation and genre institutionalisation, legitimacy and authority. *Le Livre de jade* stands for the possibility of constructing national literary trends from foreign (extra-European) classical contents, as suggested by González-Millán:

we can identify some of the functions assigned to translation in a minor literary system: first, an expansive function, strengthening the infirm repertoire of discursive forms already present in the system; second, a diversifying function that results in the increase of much needed new discourses; third, an effort to contribute to the consolidation of a new poetics in open conflict with the prevailing one. We might distinguish two more functions: one identified with the disposition to validate certain forms that are already present in the system but are in a vulnerable position; and the other responsible for securing the canonical status of some discursive forms. (1996: 285)

Judith Gautier opts for this permissive genre to translate marginal poetry, her translation being endowed with the double task of genre recognition and incorporation of an Eastern poetic tradition that, in her view, would be much closer to prose poetry than to the traditional and outdated rhymed verse. Gil de Carvalho goes as far as to suggest that prose poem could have had Chinese origins:

“Poema em prosa” com uma alta tradição chinesa, desde sempre algo simbolista, e que antes de se tornar maneirismo vai conhecer na Europa um renovo singular: com Baudelaire e a tradição moderna da lírica em francês onde uma influência passível de sinofilia se imiscui: Michaux, Claudel, Segalen, Char, Ponge... Em português, deu-nos do pior simbolismo (alguma prosa de Pessanha pode ser-lhe eco) mas também Raul Brandão, e o poeta traduziu um dos clássicos da tradição chinesa: “Vozes de Outono”. (Carvalho, 1993: 37-38)

According to François Cheng, the overflow of symbolic images in Chinese poetry results in an economical structure and a strong visual aesthetics intone with the pictorial

nature of language and poetry as a whole. And “it is precisely these (...) images charged with subjective content, that permit the suppression of linking or narrative elements within a line” (Cheng, 1982: 69)¹²; hence the elliptical nature of verse that offers multiple interpretative possibilities. Prose, on the contrary, tends to render as much of sense as possible (Lefevre 1975), thus giving way to explicitness/explicitation. This tendency to simplify, explain, and introduce information presented implicitly in the source text involves the use of specific connectors (from conjunctions to adverbials, from gerunds to iterations, in the case of *Le Livre de jade*) that underline texts’ cohesion and render readers’ interpretative task much easier. These formal procedures enable prose to rival verse, yet they contradict the tenets of Chinese poetry.

Verse, on the other hand, as is well-known, is a rhythmic unit whose rhythm is close to music. It reveals a particular concern with the formal aspect of poems which, however, does not suggest disregard for content. Its condensed form requires a careful interpretation exercise of the source lines and specific skills to express images and meanings in a well-devised rhythmical unit, something António Feijó was an expert at. *Cancioneiro chinês* structurally deviates from its French pretext, given its rhymed verse organised in groups of four-line stanzas (the conventional *quadra popular*). There is usually a correspondence between the number of stanzas and the number of periods in Gautier’s poems, but it does not mean that each period equals each stanza. The option for this non-innovatory but indeed domestic and thus ethnocentric structure in place of prose poem is also subjective, however influenced it might have been by the

¹² Détrie corroborates this formal feature of Chinese poetry: “les poètes qui évitent le plus possible l’emploi de ce qu’en chinois on appelle les ‘mots vides’ (c’est-à-dire les mots-outils comme pronoms personnels, mots de conjonction et de coordination, adverbes, prépositions, etc.) pour ne garder que des ‘mots pleins’ (...)” (1989: 315). Camilo Pessanha had also in the 19th century commented on this visual impact: “considerar esta [beleza da língua chinesa] ainda sob três aspectos principais: a natureza ideográfica dos mesmos caracteres e o seu consequente poder de evocação visual; o intrínseco valor estético desses caracteres – cada um dos quais é fundamentalmente um desenho estilizado do mais puro gosto e do melhor efeito decorativo; e, finalmente, a euritmia musical da frase escrita na sua transliteração prosódica, que, pela sábia valorização dos tons, é mais rica, mais expressiva e mais perfeita na literatura chinesa” (1993: 59-60).

sociocultural and literary constraints of Portuguese literature, which would only recognize poetry when written in rhymed verse. Indeed, free verse would only start being cultivated more regularly after Fernando Pessoa. *Cancioneiro chinês* illustrates what Pascale Casanova terms “traduction-accumulation” (2002),¹³ since it is inscribed in a dominated literary space which imported literary capital, though from a culture with little visibility in Europe. On the contrary, *Le Livre de jade* would stand for “traduction-consécration,” in that it tries to import literary and thematic capital from a marginal space (because located outside Europe) into the western literary centre.

António Feijó’s decision in favour of *quadra popular* could, moreover, be related to the pictographic or ideographic nature of Chinese poetry, which corresponds to the two Parnassian tendencies Suzanne Bernard defined as: “la tendance *picturale* et la tendance *formaliste*” (1959: 339). Endowed with highly iconic features, Chinese poetry became more than just a valuable object of translation for Parnassians and importation into European cultures:

Não quis estabelecer uma regra absoluta para *todos os artistas*; (...). Para mim um verso *não é bom se eu o posso fazer melhor*. (...) enquanto eu tiver elementos para o tornar mais perfeito, quero dizer, mais musical, mais colorido, mais expressivo ou imprevisto, não me devo dar por satisfeito. Não quer isto dizer que aspire à perfeição absoluta, porque o melhor verso meu, nas mãos de um artista mais poderoso, pode ser transformado num outro *muito melhor*. O meu princípio consiste pois em que cada artista deve esgotar todos os seus esforços para fazer o *melhor que puder*. (Letter 4/08/1890; Magalhães, 2004: 233-234)

¹³ “(...) elle peut être notamment ‘traduction-accumulation’ – lorsque, par une stratégie collective, les espaces littéraires nationaux dominés cherchent à importer du capital littéraire; ou bien ‘traduction-consécration’ – lorsque les consacrants dominants importent un texte venu d’un espace littéraire dominé” (Casanova, 2002: 9).

These lines show Feijó's belief that any poet is free to improve another poet's creative production, and it is up to the artist to decide how to improve it, all solutions being allowed. Furthermore, Feijó evokes his translation as a creative improvement of *Le Livre de jade*, which brings us back to the idea of the translator as "the deliberate rewriter, the translator-author or translator-adaptor who sees his or her task as that of improving (censoring) an original which is deemed to be not fit for publication in the receiving culture in its present, source-culture form" (Hewson, 1997: 48). António Feijó's "translations-adaptations" or "recreations"¹⁴ point to an estheticising tendency that reminds us of the 17th-century *belles infidèles*, this is "l'acte de traduire comme une restitution embellissant (esthétisante) du sens" (Berman, 1999: 13). Such intervention allows for those improvements to become mingled with the literary production of the poet responsible for polishing up other poets' production. Sometimes these improved texts gain autonomy not only inside the translator-poet's repertoire, but also within the national literary tradition. Source text and target text may therefore become independent works in their own right. On the other hand, António Feijó's translation shows that Portuguese Parnassianism developed differently in relation to the French movement, highlighting verse as the supreme unit of poetry, as stated by João Gaspar Simões: "[...] aproveitar os temas objectivos – anedotas, figurações mitológicas, descritivo paisagístico, motivos exóticos –, valorizando quanto possível a estrutura formal do verso. Nesse sentido trabalhou João Penha e nesse sentido trabalhariam os seus discípulos" ((s.d.): 477).

Whether prose poem or popular verse, either structural element is connected, to a certain extent, to an ongoing process of contestation or defence of national literary

¹⁴ "No período relativamente longo que dedica à laboriosa composição destas traduções-adaptações, Feijó refere-se a estes poemas em termos francamente elogiosos – 'traduções chinesas encantadoras' –, mostrando consciência da beleza alcançada com as suas recriações" (2005: 17).

histories; either translation strategy is in accordance with the literary aesthetics at work at the time and space of each translation process. This distinction is, however, apparently irrelevant to the Chinese literary system:

L'exemple du *fu*, genre littéraire typiquement chinois dont on ne saurait décider s'il appartient à la prose ou à la poésie, pourrait être aussi invoqué pour montrer *la non-coïncidence des systèmes littéraires occidentaux et chinois*. Il est d'autant plus important de prendre conscience de *l'inexistence du clivage prose-poésie dans la théorie littéraire chinoise classique* que cette distinction tend à disparaître dans la littérature occidentale moderne elle-même. (Détrie, 1991: 134; my italics)¹⁵

Though prose poetry did attempt to rival verse (Bernard, 1959: 340), both genres are compatible, at least as shown in the French translation of Chinese poetry. Prose does not have to be always negatively compared to, or considered in the light of,¹⁶ verse poetry.

António Feijó reveals resistance to innovation – as conceived of in Judith Gautier's prose poems –, therefore repressing a genre that distinguished French literature. Such decision shows that the Portuguese literary system had after all some degree of autonomy in relation to the centre of the European polysystem. On the other hand, *Cancioneiro chinês* brought thematic innovation into both António Feijó's and national repertoires, in addition to suggesting a formal alternative to French

¹⁵ Donald Keene reinforces this conviction as regards Japanese literature: "Even in the later novels there is no really sharp distinction between the world of poetry and the world of prose, probably because poetry played a more common role in Japanese society than it has ever played in ours" (Keene, 1955: 10). We could probably extend this feature to Asian literature as a whole.

¹⁶ Burton Raffel, the American translator of Indonesian poetry, also claims poetry to be a higher form of expression incomparably superior to prose: "Poetry (...) expresses in its condensed, incisive way only what, *in the last analysis*, can also be expressed – *but how differently!* – in prose. The different mode of expression ensures, by definition, a difference in understanding, a difference in audience response; that which prose states directly, baldly, poetry lights with indirection, illuminates with grace, opens out with beauty" (1964-1965: 457; my italics).

Parnassianism. Why then disrupt the stability of the system with a literary resource that had no tradition in Portugal? On this matter, Gideon Toury reminds us that

cultural systems are also prone to manifest a certain resistance to changes, especially if they are deemed too drastic. When renewal seems to involve such changes, they may well be rejected in an attempt to maintain what has already been achieved; in other words, retain whatever equilibrium the culture has reached. Innovation and conservation thus appear as two major contending forces in cultural dynamics. (2005: 3)

Despite the need to import genres to guarantee the dynamics and thus the survival of the literary system, Portuguese literature resisted to the importation of the prose poem genre. Resistance to changes or, in a word, conservation echo Antoine Berman's three binary types of translation, namely: ethnocentric against ethical translation, hypertextual *versus* poetic translation, and platonic as against reflexive translation (1999). Considered to be the two dominant types of literary translation, ethnocentrism (domestication) and hypertextuality (dialogic interaction between one translated text and other previous texts)¹⁷ point to creative rewritings of pre-existing texts or sets of texts. From the structural viewpoint both translations-adaptations (*Le Livre de jade* and *Cancioneiro chinês*) could be classified as ethnocentric and hypertextual. Should there be a scale for measuring hypertextuality, *Cancioneiro chinês* would certainly occupy a more extreme position. A connection seems to surface between hypertextuality and indirect translation: the bigger the number of mediating texts – which put into play several layers of interference –, the higher the level of hypertextuality and the more

¹⁷ “Ethnocentrique signifiera ici: qui ramène tout à sa propre culture, à ses normes et valeurs, et considère ce qui est situé en dehors de celle-ci – l'Étranger – comme négatif ou tout juste bon à être annexé, adapté, pour accroître la richesse de cette culture”; “Hypertextuel renvoie à tout texte s'engendrant par imitation, parodie, pastiche, adaptation, plagiat, ou toute autre espèce de transformation formelle, à partir d'un autre texte déjà existant” (Berman, 1999: 29).

distant translations will be from the original text. Although Berman advocates a compulsory link between ethnocentrism and hypertextuality, the means by which the effects they produce are achieved can either result in an adequate product (when based on a textual corpus drawn from the source repertoire) or an acceptable product (when the canon lies, according to the translator, with the target system, and he or she transforms the text based on his or her literary memory and textual experience within the target culture).

Conclusion

An analysis of *Le Livre de jade* and *Cancioneiro chinês* from the strictly formal point of view shows that both translations illustrate ethnocentric and hypertextual approaches. Yet, these domestications – induced by national literary conventions – are not in accordance with the 19th-century cultural and literary task of rescuing China from its isolation in the Far East. The next step should be a comparative content analysis in order to confirm whether the strategies used to deal with poetic translation differ from, or coincide with, the structural approaches this article discloses.

These literary ethnocentrisms and hypertextualities can still be combined with cultural translation, in that it implies the presence of a foreign element that is submitted to an intercultural transfer through which that alien element may be maintained, assimilated into the target culture or simply suppressed. The Other, the foreign literary system, becomes a place of formal experimentation maybe because the label “foreign” opens up that possibility. It would then be interesting to see whether there can be a direct connection between foreignness, distance or location and translation

permissiveness or shift, whether there is a pattern between translation strategies and both the geocultural and literary position of the source text.

In this case study, poetry translation proved to act as mediation, reconciliation and intercultural dialogue between different literary traditions. Thus, translation may on the whole contribute to the interpenetration of marginal otherness and mainstream tendencies in small literatures such as the Portuguese one.

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