

Noh Collaboration: Ito, Pound, Yeats, *Nishikigi*, and *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*

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Abstract

Ezra Pound was initially more interested in Noh than in Ernest Fenollosa's notes on Chinese poetry. The attention paid to "Ezra Pound and China" often obscures Pound's interest in Noh, his first love in Fenollosa's notes, and the actual work of the collaboration/s that resulted in the published texts. Pound gained specific ideas and cultivated particular relationships due to his prior attention to Noh. In fact, given the presence of Japanese interlocutors and translators to aid Fenollosa in the creation of his notes which Ezra Pound then went on to utilize, it might be argued that the Noh plays, such as *Nishikigi*, that Pound published would be "closer" to the originals (given one less level of "translation"), as it were, than his efforts in *Cathay*, thus, more suited to his purpose of bringing disparate cultures to an understanding rooted in their common humanity.

Keywords: Ezra Pound, modernism, Noh drama, Japonisme, Ernest Fenollosa

Noh Collaboration

As Ezra Pound sought to redefine poetic modernism in light of the Vorticist theories he was working on with Wyndham Lewis in the last months of 1913, he received assistance from an entirely new direction in the form of Ernest Fenollosa's notebooks on Chinese poetry and Japanese Noh drama. While these notebooks ultimately resulted in the publication of *Cathay* in April 1915 and *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (henceforth, CNJ) in September 1916, Pound was initially more interested in Noh than in Fenollosa's notes on Chinese poetry. Miranda Hickman explains the critical relationships of Vorticism, not only between "the men of 1914," but also as they pertain to Hugh Kenner's glorification of them and the subsequent scholarly acceptance of the fact that Vorticism was "both a crucial site of origin and a negligible flash in the pan" (5-13) – something which she says needs to be revisited as she attempts in her study of *The Geometry of Modernism*. The idea that Vorticism may be of overblown interest in Poundian works is just as important to consider as the one that Noh may be an underdone one.

Pound's first publication from Fenollosa's notebooks was the Noh play *Nishikigi*, which appeared in May 1914. This reflects an actual working time of less than five months after Pound received the notebooks from Mary Fenollosa in December 1913 (Qian 56). In a title style to be repeated, with certain key modifications, in *Cathay*, it was published as: "*Nishikigi* Translated from the Japanese of Motokiyo by Ernest Fenollosa. Edited by Ezra Pound." Two other complete plays, *Hagoromo* and *Kinuta*, followed soon after in October 1914.

The clearest indication we have that Pound *chose* to work on Noh first (rather than have Mrs. Fenollosa simply send him the notes before she did the ones on Chinese poetry) is his letter to Louis Untermeyer on January 8, 1914 where he enthuses "I've come in for Fenollosa's very valuable mss. on the Japanese 'Noh' plays and the Chinese lyric. I suppose I'll have the first paper on same in the 'Quarterly Review' for about May" (Pound *Selected Letters* [Henceforth PSL] 29). Instead of *Quarterly Review*, it was *Poetry* that published *Nishikigi*. More attention is usually paid to the fact that,

by 1917, Pound had already dismissed Japan as “a special interest [i.e. not fundamental] [...] I don’t mean to say there aren’t interesting things in Fenollosa’s Japanese stuff [...] But China is solid” (PSL 101). However his publication history shows that earlier, Noh was paramount. Thus it was arguably Noh that led Pound onward from imagism and vorticism to *The Cantos* as Peter Nicholls has suggested: “Japanese theatre led to a fundamental redirection of Pound’s early poetics” (2).

Nicholls explains that Pound’s “shift in 1914 from *image* to *vortex* [...] as he began to draft the early *Cantos*” led him to seek “ways of using the image not as a static ‘equation’ for a particular mood but as a device of reference and allusion which would hold in tension the various materials of the poem” (3). Through the application of Noh – where “the better plays are all built into the intensification of a single image” (CNJ 27) – Pound could facilitate the change from a short Imagist poem to a long one. Pound did not abandon Imagist ideas. Through his transnational collaboration with Noh ideas, texts, and the interlocutors through which he sought to read them, he translated them over to Vorticism producing yet another avant-garde aesthetic movement. Yet Pound’s transnational collaboration is, I will show, not just a means to a Vorticist end. Instead the Noh interaction offered Pound potential allegories for modernism itself as a practice of transnational collaboration. In *Nishikigi*, we find tradition encountered as if from an estranging distance, and an allegory of cross-cultural collaboration.

In a letter to Pound dated November 25, 1913, Mary Fenollosa noted

[y]ou will see also frequent reference to ‘Mr. H.’ This always means little Mr. Hirata, a pupil of my husband’s, who always went to the No [sic] performances with us, and did the translations ... (qtd. in Kodama 6)

Nicholls calls the “tripartite structure” of Noh key to understanding why it is important for Pound. Nicholls goes on to explain that the “Buddhist theory of salvation” as an “unending cycle of birth, death and rebirth” is the source of this triangulation – even though, according to him, “Pound seems deliberately to play down doctrinal elements in his version of the plays” (4). The tripartite view is key and becomes even more important to Pound in the aftermath of *Nishikigi*’s May 1914 appearance in *Poetry*. This triangulation comes to allegorize the transnational collaboration in *Nishikigi* and, following on from that, precisely which “doctrinal elements” are being emphasized and played down, and to what ends, are what we shall address below. However, we should also be aware of the effect on Pound’s thinking (about Noh, his other poetry, and his continuing work with Fenollosa’s notes) of Yeats’ well-documented excitement about Noh and the effects of some (live) “native informants,” who entered the scene after the initial publications of the plays but before their collected edition appeared, in early 1915 – among them, the dancer, Michio Ito.

Triangulating the Action – Ito, Pound and Yeats

Nishikigi’s three distinct characters allow the audience to pay heed to the web of relationships that are possible between them, thus allowing another element of the play to surface strongly: the element of ritual, involving the “tripartite structure” that Nicholls finds so important. In the story of *Nishikigi*, the relationship of the main characters is key to the production of a ritual that is then meant to have an effect on the audience. The allegory of the play allows us to see how new and untutored perceptions can question the traditional version.

The triangulation was to be achieved with another set of collaborations. While Pound’s publication of *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* in 1916 stemmed directly from Fenollosa’s notebooks, Fenollosa’s

own notes, translations, and impressions were dependent upon those of his student, Kiichi Hirata, who attended the plays with him, as Mary Fenollosa averred. From early 1915, however, Pound's, and indeed Yeats', encounters with Noh were strongly influenced by Michio Ito. Ito was born in 1892 in Tokyo and died in November 1961. His career began as a singer on a Tokyo stage in a German opera, *Buddha*, in 1911. Later that year, Ito left Japan for Paris to continue his voice training, but switched shortly thereafter from opera to dance (Caldwell 37-42).

Arriving in London in 1914, Ito barely got by until he was invited to dance at a party early in 1915 given by Lady Ottoline Morrell, and attended by, among others, Yeats, Shaw, and Lady Cunard, who immediately asked Ito to dance at her home the following night. Ito's biographer, Helen Caldwell, makes no mention of Pound being present on either night but Ezra was certainly the flavor of the month with Yeats at this time and might well have been there. The appearance of the refugee Japanese dancer must have seemed miraculous to him, engaged as he was with Noh. Pound certainly took to Ito as much as Yeats did, "arranging for Ito to perform five dance-poems in Noh mode by October 1915" (Foster 39). Caldwell notes that once they had met, Pound immediately asked Ito for help with Noh: "When [Pound] asked Ito for his help, Ito's response was, 'Noh is the damndest thing in this world'" (44).

This entirely honest statement from the targeted native informant may well be the source for Pound's critically exasperated pronouncement to Harriet Monroe the following year: "Drama is a dam'd form" (PSL 81). The key issue here is that the perception of value is not to be made by the native informant, supposedly the one who is being approached for her superior knowledge. It is, rather, the outsider, the poet-expert, who recognizes and prizes literary and cultural value. By doing so, Pound starts to perform a sleight of hand, perfected in *Cathay*, which allows him to take the credit for being expert enough to present "unquestionable" art to a (hitherto) undiscerning public while insisting that the art is, itself, the key thing.

Unfortunately for this budding transnational collaboration, Ito clearly knew, or cared, very little about Noh. Although he had studied the piano and European style singing in Japan, and had also had early training in Kabuki, Ito told Pound that he had not been to see a performance of Noh since the age of seven (and then only under compulsion). Nevertheless, he agreed to help, even though this meant that he had to study the archaic Japanese in which the plays and much of the commentary were written (Caldwell 45). The allegorical shadow of *Nishikigi* now starts to thicken: we have the desire for a complete understanding but no real interlocutor who can give us such an ideal view. The tradition is left interpreted by untutored responses. Fortunately for Pound, Ito also recruited two Japanese friends, Tamijuro Koumé and Jisoichi Kayano, who did have training in Noh. Sanehide Kodama notes in *Ezra Pound & Japan*:

When the dancer Michio Itoh [sic] arrived in London in 1914, he knew next to nothing about classical Japanese drama – but, most fortunately, a fellow expatriate, the painter Tami Koumé, did. So it was in London, not Tokyo, that Itoh learned about his own cultural tradition. (xi)

This is precisely the point about the collaboration at work here – it is not that we should try to determine the content of each culture in some kind of percentage value comparison but that we should be open to the idea that multiple protagonists *are* involved and that they bring discernibly different sets of "practices, problematics, and cultural engagements" (Berman 7), by way of their varied mixture of languages, cultures, and traditions, as in Ito's training in and knowledge of

Western dance and music, to the table. Ito went on to play the “Guardian of the Well” in Yeats’ *At the Hawk’s Well* on its debut at Lady Cunard’s in April 1916. He left in the autumn of that year for America and never returned although he did perform *At the Hawk’s Well* twice in the US (Caldwell 54). In 1939, Ito translated that play into Japanese and it has ultimately come to be regarded as a Noh play and made a permanent part of the Noh repertory. Years later, in a letter to Katue Kitasono, Pound referred to Ito and Koumé:

Miscio’s [sic] strong point was never moral fervour, and he may have a sane desire to popularize [...] HOWEVER Tami Kumé [sic] who HAD studied Noh, though he hadn’t in 1915 Itoh’s inventiveness etc/ had by training something that Miscio hadn’t (quite naturally had NOT at age of 23) got by improvisation. (qtd. in Kodama 105)

This 1940 passage is notable precisely because Pound was never under any illusions as to the “native-ness” of his key living informant, Ito; thus he must have valorized his collaboration for its “inventiveness” despite the “sane desire” which, on a closer reading, clearly runs counter to Pound’s own inclinations as he might have projected them back to WWI. Ito has that in-between, liminal position that was important to Pound. Pound clearly represented himself as translator, and, therefore, mediator of an “other” tradition but neither he nor Yeats seemed (or claimed) to be in any way desperate to gain popular appreciation for that tradition as we have seen above. At any rate, this revealing discussion about Ito is in direct contrast to the usual idea that “Pound and Yeats [...] thought they had discovered the living tradition of Noh dancing” (Longenbach 198) in Ito. Pound is often praised for having grasped the “essential nature” of Noh with an “intuitive grasp” (Taylor 345) – which is simply to transfer the artistic merit of his publications into the realm of cultural expertise and has him providing the right ethos even when in obvious error. In fact, Pound thought his own ideals to be still superior when confronted with the lived experience of Noh. In an article in *The Japan Times and Mail* in 1939, Pound wrote of Koumé and how he and Yeats had approached Noh together:

Tami Koumé had danced the Hagaromo before the Emperor, taking the tennin part when he was, as I remember, six years old. At twenty he still remembered the part and movements of the tennin’s wings, which as [s]he returns to the upper heaven, are the most beautiful movements I have seen on or off any stage. Tami knew something of Noh that no mere philologist can find from a text book, BUT when it came to the metaphysics he could not answer questions which seemed to me essential to the meaning. Very probably the original author had left those meanings in the vague. There may not have been ten men in Europe who would have asked those particular questions, but it so happened that Yeats, in my company, had spent several winters trying to correlate Lady Gregory’s Irish folk-lore with the known traditions of various myths, psychologies and religions. (qtd. in Kodama 152-3)

We may see Spivak’s warning about the relegation of the “native informant” borne out here through the pitfalls of a “somewhat dubious” situation that “demand[s] that ethnics speak for themselves” (40) and, if they cannot to the satisfaction of the dominant strand of thought, they are simply denigrated or written out. James Longenbach confirms that “[r]ather than bringing an authentic understanding of the Noh to Pound and Yeats, Itow [sic] confirmed their own Western expectations, making Yeats’s *At the Hawk’s Well possible*” (200). In fact, as we have seen, Pound, at least, was under no illusions as to Ito’s authentic knowledge, rather his ideal, or, more to the point, idealized (by Pound at least), experience. The informant knows but cannot comprehend whereas

the privileged observer, with experience in the field, excels in question and knowledge, and only needs some factual (“movements”) data to achieve comprehension. Here, not only is the informant unknowing, but the idealized author may have been remiss too – it is the questioner who holds all the power, the interviewee is merely meant to perform. This is a transnational collaboration to be certain – but not one to be celebrated as a meeting of equals connected by literature. This “complex interaction” is far too fraught for that.

It is also complex in that Pound and Yeats were clearly not philologist Western experts in the Japanese tradition but self-acknowledged amateurs. Hence this is a somewhat different situation from the one Spivak explicates. In this case, rather than privileged Western knowledge of an ancient tradition being favored over contemporary native informants, Pound favors improvisation and instinctive poetic knowledge, associated also with one native informant (Ito) over Koumé’s expert knowledge. This then provides a neat précis of the very real complexities of the power dynamics of triangulation and transnational collaboration.

Nishikigi

The addition of these characters to the Pound-Yeats collaboration did what it does for *Nishikigi* – producing the effect of “triangulating” the action of the play. We are no longer watching two characters agree with or confront one another for, with the addition of the third, or more, the possibility of a majority – whereby the point of view of two may be highlighted above the third – is introduced, as well as the chance for one of the characters to represent the audience. This representative is the priest who functions rather like a conduit to explain the themes of the play – being outside the tradition he does not understand much of it and he is given much explication – making queries and filtering responses. The priest approaches the village of Kefu and encounters an old couple who offer to sell him the painted sticks and woven cloth that each is carrying. From them he elicits the story of the objects themselves: in times past, by placing an ornately carved wand (*nishikigi*) into the ground near a house, a suitor announced his attentions to a young girl. For her part, the young girl waited within, weaving a cloth, presumably as part of her trousseau. The old couple relates the story of a suitor who placed a thousand wands near the house of a maiden without receiving her favor. The suitor eventually died and was buried in a nearby cave along with his wands. At the priest’s request, the old couple takes him to the cave. Falling asleep while waiting there, the priest has a dream of the suitor and maiden (the transformed old couple) now enabled to unite by the priest’s act of interest in their story. The play ends with the couple’s disappearance and the priest’s very real perplexity over the true nature of what he has seen; the play’s division falls roughly into two acts separated at the point where the old couple becomes enervated into (now) young lovers.

Nishikigi presents a tangible image to the audience and an allegory for the relationship of the present to the past/to tradition. There is the real sense that by attending to the tradition/to the past, we can make it live anew. The title refers to the wands the suitor places before a maiden’s house to signify his love. The initial action/image of the play is such a wand that the old man offers to sell to the priest. As such the wand not only signifies the man’s love for the woman but also draws the priest, and the audience, into the story. It still functions as it was meant to though – as a lure, a declaration of interest. The wand has additional value; the old man displays the intricate carving and painting that adorn it to justify its value as an item of interest to the priest. Yet these markings are not simply ornamental, as we soon discover. They are written indications of the sentiments that the suitor wishes to convey to the woman of his dreams. The wand is, right at the

outset, a multi-layered image into which people may read different times and meanings as in the cross-cultural transference of the text itself. We have the woven cloth that the old woman offers, adorned to convey the feelings of the maiden and attract the attentions of the connoisseur. So far, apart from the fact that there are twin foci, we have seen nothing untoward in the valencies of these images.

In the context of Pound's publication of the play in English, the wand could also be read as an allegory for the cross-cultural transference of the text itself. Indeed our reading of the allegory and the images in the play deepens for, as the old couple spins out their story, we realize that the wand and the cloth are not any old objects for sale but may be the very products of the loving labors of the couple in the legend. This was, after all, the place where their lives played out and the suitor is entombed nearby. Now we see that the objects stand not just for the ritual, the almost forgotten tradition – "I wonder what they call them," the priest muses (CNJ 77) – which they represent and which an audience, used to the touristic possibilities of a well-established capitalist and bourgeois tradition of acquisition of objet d' art and souvenirs, immediately understands the virtue of. They may also be the specific products of a great love, works of art produced before the age of mechanical reproduction, as it were. But is the latter a real possibility? What specifically is the identity of the old couple holding the items? Immediately after the priest's entrance (but outside his hearing), the couple addresses each other:

Shite (to Tsure)

Tangled, we are entangled. Whose fault was it dear? Tangled up as the grass patterns are tangled in this coarse cloth [...] we neither wake nor sleep, and passing our nights in a sorrow which is in the end a vision, what are these scenes of spring to us? This thinking in sleep of some one who has no thought of you, is it more than a dream? And yet surely it is the natural way of love. In our hearts there is much and in our bodies nothing, and we do nothing at all, and only the waters of the river of our tears flow quickly. (CNJ 76)

This is a fascinating manifesto for a tourist-stall couple. Are they real or is their reality a Manichean trap where only the transcendental is real and the physical world nothing but an illusion? Just as we note the declaration that this is a "vision [...] thinking in sleep" we are brought back by the very trenchant observation that this kind of despair "is the natural way of love" and so, presumably, simply to be taken as par for the course by those among us not so afflicted/blessed? The priest very clearly does not see the old couple as ghosts:

Waki

(not recognizing the nature of the speakers)

Strange indeed, seeing these town-people here,
They seem like man and wife,
And the lady seems to be holding something,
Like a woven cloth of feathers,
While he has a staff or a wooden scepter
Beautifully ornate.
Both of these things are strange;
In any case, I wonder what they call them. (CNJ 77)

The objects are clearly as foreign to him as the couple is mundane. Though he feels that something is unusual in the meeting, the priest does not recognize anything supernatural in the old couple

– though the audience certainly may. The imagism inherent in the objects immediately starts functioning differently for priest and audience: while he feels the wands and cloth indicate the survival of an old tradition, and, perhaps, the personae of the old lovers mentioned in the tale, for the audience the more significant aspect of the proceedings must surely be the suspicion, or outright conviction, that it is the old couple who are the young lovers. Here, the old couple is, simultaneously, what they appear to be *and* what they actually are. It is the question of which is the appearance and which the actuality that is irresolvable. To the more romantically inclined, it may be that the aged pair are disguised to the priest and undisguised to the audience, still wearing the costumes of the old couple in Act I but seen in their true form in Act II.

In that sense *Nishikigi* better captures the sense of difficulty that Pound must have felt when he faced Fenollosa's notes, vide his desire for "metaphysics [...] essential to the meaning" above. Whilst the technique of focusing on a clearly defined image, then multiplying its meanings and layers of importance while depicting the relations of the characters is present here, these elements are much harder to isolate from the stream of events that constitutes *Nishikigi* since it is unclear whether the true image is the objects or the couple themselves with their multiple possibilities, oscillating between past and present, youth and decrepitude. By this I mean that since the priest, the audience's prime "translator," has no real understanding of the objects and their breadth of possible meaning, he, and, perforce, we, must focus on the couple and their enactment. Jonathan Stalling reminds us that

Modernism may have signaled a break with the signature themes and poetic forms of Romanticism's organicist, idealistic, and unified epistemological vision; nevertheless, vestiges of earlier heroic visions (even if Nietzsche's and Yeats's visions were self-consciously so) continued to permeate modernist poetics. So while Modernism may have inaugurated a dissolution of epistemic coherence through what Marjorie Perloff later came to call its 'poetics of indeterminacy,' the aesthetic fragmentation of Ezra Pound's Cantos still *required readers to create or reconstruct ontological wholes through complex yet eventually coherent images* (the 'concrete image' may well be the primary device [...]). (12, emphasis added)

Long before *The Cantos* starts to take shape, we can see this requirement in *Nishikigi*.

At any one point we have Pound's genius and his own poetic sensibilities, certes, but we must never forget the very real presence of the notes and the means of their production by Fenollosa and Hirata. The problem of interpreting the play, the wands, and the couple is also the problem of interpreting the situation of multiple points of view via the players and their use of the play. Pound's rendering of *Nishikigi* ultimately points to the spectators and asks them to decide what has taken place before them – a neat encapsulation of his own doubts, rather than his certainties in either "invention" or "appropriation" of the other with whom he was collaborating. According to Kodama, Ito, or Pound, is meant to show the way but may be, almost tragicomically, unable to because of his own unfamiliarity with "his" culture. Certainly this is the claim of orientalist studies in its heyday during imperialism and shortly after – that it taught the "native" what had been forgotten and recovered history that was otherwise lost in what is termed

the Whig interpretation of history. The past is retroactively reconstructed to establish and demonstrate the inevitability of the present. A quasi-natural linkage between Western Europe and modern science and technology is assumed in order to trace the one-way diffusion of the latter to the 'people without history'. (Baber 40-41)

Ironically, of course, Pound is working after Japan has become the first recognized non-European imperial power of the modern era after defeating the Russians (1905) and establishing itself in treaty ports in China, alongside the French and British. Japan becomes a key example of how the history of modernity is not simply the history of the West and its expansion. Like Ito, the country by this time occupies a difficult to place position – combining a non-European culture and tradition with elements of Western culture, tradition, knowledge, science, and technology. Koumé might have done better but he suffered, as Zaheer Baber points out above, from a lack of the relevant knowledge of his own history, a lack which might only be identified if one knew how to ask the right questions – which clearly these Japanese did not. Ultimately the collaboration here is “complex” because it is one where Pound is almost desperate to find wisdom but settles, almost perforce, for his own interpretations due to the lack of “worthy” collaborators. In doing so, he enhances, willy-nilly, the idea that it is his individual genius that has allowed these texts to come forth rather than the listed and unlisted collaborators whose work it is all based on. At a certain point in this presentation the idea would no doubt have started to take root that he really was “creating” another tradition in English for “his” times but, nevertheless, *Nishiki*’s allegory is acutely discernible in our postmodern era – the author, rightfully in a work of this nature, disappears, to be replaced by the web of possible perceptions created by our textual, socio-historical, and personal awareness of, and reactions to, the play.

Nicholls has “Pound’s famous injunction to ‘Make It New’ [...] point[ing] not simply to an idea of cultural renovation but to the far more complex process [...] grafted together, each somehow ‘supplementing’ the other” (12). One of the key precepts of Saidian inspired critique is that the production of colonial/oriental knowledge is not simply a matter of what was advanced by knowledge practitioners in the West. Indigenous intellectuals and antique traditions of knowledge actively, even equally, shaped the imperial agenda. Thus, we no longer speak of a hegemonic western reality. While the center may have had powerful illusions of a fully autonomous archive, the reality on the ground was that a massive repertoire of native informants, bearers of indigenous knowledge systems, enabled and greatly expanded colonial knowledge. Yet it is problematic that such “native informant” cultural consultation assumes that there is a singularly identifiable way that a work of art with multiple valencies in its original setting would bear. In our arguments about whether Pound captured the “essence” of the works depicted in Fenollosa’s notes or not, whether he translated successfully or appropriated infamously, whether Japan or China are represented thereby in distorted or sympathetic ways, we do violence to the text/s by assuming that Pound alone is responsible for what occurs on the page rather than the collaboration of ideas that gives us the publications. In contrast to these simplistic assumptions, a more compelling analysis of the power of literary texts to function cross-culturally comes from the notion of the image as it moves into and out of the various levels of cultural and critical meaning that we have access to.

The hitherto explicit discussion of collaboration in Imagism and Vorticism, and works such as *The Waste Land* should provide a blueprint for continued critical efforts. However, due, at least in part, to Pound’s own dismissal of Japan as a “special interest” (PSL 101), the attention paid to “Ezra Pound and China” (itself understood to be an unceasing interest of comparative literature – “[I]t questions and ideas,” notes Eric Hayot, “apparently remain both relevant and provocative,” but it is telling that he prefaces this statement with the somewhat weary point that, “[t]he flood of books on the subject shows no signs of abating” (2)) often shades Pound’s interest in Noh, his first love in Fenollosa’s notes, and the actual work of the collaboration/s that resulted in the published



texts. In a sort of anachronistic progression the critical themes of the former may stand in for the treatment of the latter. One can see such conflation in Michael Alexander's contention that *Certain Noble Plays* "is a little-known cousin of *Cathay*" (108); in Daniel Tiffany's aesthetic judgment that "[t]he apparitional and nostalgic features of poems directly associated with Imagism become more elegiac in Pound's adaptations of Japanese Noh dramas [...] and in his "translations" of Chinese poetry" (59); and in Ming Xie's location of "the "Noh image" in his study of the Poundian misreading that led to the *Cathay* version of "The River Song" (119-20).

In fact, Pound gained specific ideas and cultivated particular relationships due to his prior attention to Noh. Given the presence of Japanese interlocutors and translators to aid Fenollosa in the creation of his notes which Ezra Pound then went on to utilize, it might be argued that the Noh plays that Pound went on to publish would be "closer" to the originals (given one less level of "translation"), as it were, than his efforts in *Cathay* had been, thus, more suited to his purpose of bringing disparate cultures to an understanding rooted in their common humanity to take the high, Kennerian reading. As we have seen, this is far from the actual case. Longenbach gives us the details of Eliot's refutation of that idea as, by collaboration with Yeats at Stone Cottage, too much of an idiom that was "not [...] of Mr. Pound" (qtd. in 203) had crept in. Not to put too fine a point on it, the shite sounded Irish to an Eliot who "prefer[red] the Noh in English" as that "brings us much nearer to the Japanese" (qtd. in Longenbach 203). Given Hayot's nuanced defense of Eliot's breadth of understanding as to the proven excellence and the necessary limitations of Pound's accomplishment in *Cathay* (4) we now see a very different shade of meaning expressed in relation to the work on the Noh, too Irish by far to be "Japanese drama for our times." This collaboration was clearly not to the fastidious Mr. Eliot's taste. *Nishikigi* shows us that, on the one hand, there is the perception that Pound again attempted to create the sense of an "ideal," even "aristocratic," ethos in his "translations from the Japanese" that bore the burden of having to reflect universal ideals. On the other hand, the exciting, messy locutions of the texts, their production, and their critical appreciation by Pound and all those he involved clearly show us that the doubling and tripling in the plays is not just an allegory for collaboration – it is an exemplar thereof, thus placing transnational collaboration right at the heart of these textual acts of composition/translation. Rather than pass judgment on whether a sense of unity or of difference results, it may be more fruitful to study the "complex sense of interaction" that best illuminates Pound and his various collaborators.

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