Translating Sung *Tz'u*: Contemporary English Renditions of the Chinese Lyrical

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I

The Chinese Lyrical I would call a mode of energy, not, in the first instance anyway, a genre-category with particular cultural markers. The term Chinese Lyricism has already been taken by Burton Watson, in a book which assumes the five-character and seven-character *shih* form is the paradigm of all Chinese poetry, reserving thus a minor corner for the *tz'u* whose origins in song are nonetheless more obvious (1970).[1] In calling the Chinese Lyrical a mode of energy, I want to place a highlight on *tz'u* but by no means to diminish the great T'ang Dynasty achievement in *shih*. Primarily, though, I want by means of examples to argue a thesis about the nearly impossible task of one who attempts to translate Chinese poetry of any sort into any foreign language. The inter-related cultural and linguistic barriers to translation are formidable.

The limitation of translation theory is usually a focus on detail at the expense of the work as a whole and its world of experience as a whole – a starved literature and cultural semiotics. The limitation of lyric theory is usually an over-hasty pouncing on one or a few aspects of short poems (affiliation with song-measures; simple emotions; an I-You mode of address; and so on) in order to certify genre-attributes and validate a felt intensity. In eluding these limitations, perhaps the postulate of the energy-transfer will create its own. What, after all, is this energy? How transferred?

Despite his characteristic refusal to define terms, Charles Olson provides a beginning from within the sphere of contemporary American poetics. Olson is a student of literary kinetics:

> A poem is energy transferred from where the poet got it (he will have several causations), by way of the poem itself to, all the

> way over to, the reader .... Then the poem itself must, at all points, be a high energy construct and, at all points, an energy-discharge. So: how is the poet to accomplish the same energy, how is he, what is the process by which a poet gets in, at all points energy at least the equivalent of the energy which propelled him in the first place, yet an energy which is peculiar to verse alone and which will be, obviously, different from the energy which the reader, because he is a third term, will take away?[2]

Since translation is by etymology and in practice a transferring, a carrying-over, translation studies should have something to say about such fundamental issues. As a disciple of Ezra Pound, Olson would doubtless specify the energy-transfers he expects of the poet as phanopoeia or image making, melopoeia or music making and logopoeia or style making; and Olson might add the character (ethos) of the speaker as another kinetic for re-enactment. Mindful of my task of defining and exemplifying the Chinese Lyrical as more than a reified quality, to all these I would add another strenuous demand: the translator from Chinese into modern Western languages ought also to re-enact the laws which rule cosmology as it is conceived of in Chinese thought. The translator and the historian of translations must go behind the text as the residuum or precipitate of energy, to interpret also the world "where the poet got" the energy, the kernel experience of the poem in the original language. What is true of all translation is true to the highest exponential power for translation from the Chinese. Saying this, I have already by implication declared myself on one of the classical (but least productive) issues in debates on translation: word-for-word is never sufficient; nothing less than the whole poem with the ethos of its speaker and the cosmos of its creator is sufficient, though as readers we make do with less since all translations are failures when so measured.

This study turns, below, to a reading of four different versions of each of two Sung Dynasty *tz'u*. It makes a partial inventory of devices that have proved to be available to the Anglo-American translator for re-presentation of Chinese originals by analog operations. Here I would insist on the context and raison d'etre of devices, in the link between poetry and cosmology in Chinese thought, the way, as Francois Cheng says, "through magical trickery of [Chinese] written signs, [the Chinese writer can] share in the secrets of

Creation."[3] From the Tao of Origin or Supreme Breath emanates the One, which is the Primordial Breath, fountainhead of all energy. The one engenders the Two, Yin and Yang as the two vital breaths. The Two then give life to the Ten Thousand Things – but there is an intermediary between the Two and the Ten Thousand, a Third party in the work of creation, Man. Francois Cheng:

> Void-Full, Yin-Yang, and Heaven-Earth-Man constitute the three relational and hierarchical axes around which Chinese cosmology is organized. Poetic language, which proposes to explore the mystery of the Universe by means of signs, has not neglected to structure itself, on its different levels, along these three axes. (xiii)

There are many commentators beside Cheng Pao-i who have discussed these matters, but none have so persuasively (with semiotic concepts) shown the link between poetry and cosmology, showing "the ardor with which Chinese poets worked to attain the realization of the infinite communion among things, and, through the realization of this communion, toward the attainment of the mystery of Origin" (xiv). Cheng using Chinese terminology shows what I in my own would describe as the movement of energy through different forms, from primordial breath through the things and events of the world through ordinary and poetic language, including necessarily the language of translation, into the sort of language Heaven embodies, the "beyond language" toward which Chinese poetry has always tended: "the privileged Man-Earth link is never allowed to become a closed circuit, it must end in something else, something *open*. . . . Apparent from its very origin is a contradictory, a dialectical, relationship between represented sounds and a physical requirement of linearity and the desire for a spatial evasion" (xiii, 3). Energy, when it begins simultaneously with the Tao of Origin, brings with it obligations of the Divine, in Sung *tz'u* to the same degree as in T'ang *shih*. Perhaps what this implies for the translation of Chinese lyrics into English is that re-enactment is not just the highest criterion of success; it is the only criterion.[4]

Let me summarize only those features of Francois Cheng's presentation which I can turn to use in reading the two *tz'u* poems and their English versions. Chinese poetic writing is "an integral part of an organic ensemble of semiotic systems," along with the several "languages" of calligraphy, painting, music, and myths. The common traits of all these are:

> systematic symbolization of the elements of nature and the human world; constitution of symbolic figures and signifying unities; structuring of these unities according to certain fundamental laws, which are themselves foreign to linear and irreversible logic; engendering of a semiotic universe ruled by a circular movement within which man and the world constantly intermix and prolong themselves. (pp. 20-21)

Poetic language has thus, with these features and reciprocal with the other "languages" of the culture, "taken to itself the basic dynamic of Chinese thought" and "represents the semiotic order *par excellence*" (xiii). Cheng emphasizes the importance of the void in Chinese aesthetic thought, showing how the isolating structure of the language is heightened by manipulation in poetry of full words (substantives and verbs of action and quality) against empty words (tool worlds like personal pronouns, adverbs, particles): ellipses of personal pronouns, prepositions, words of comparison and verbs, and use of empty words in place of verbs (as in "yellow leaves *always* wind-rain"). He writes: "the Chinese poet seeks, through the process of reduction, not just to simplify the language to the extreme, but rather to multiply the nominal-verbal play, and to introduce to the language an implied dimension, that of the void. On the paradigmatic axis and on the syntagmatic axis, the void (created by the omission of personal pronouns [etc]...) engenders complex relationships of substitution and of combination."[5] These Cheng calls the passive procedures because they grow from the language itself; the active procedures are those which derive from inherited poetic forms, where on the syntactic level "the dialectical interplay of Yin and Yang takes place, notably in the form of parallelism." Finally, "on the symbolic level ..., metaphorical images, through transfer of meaning and the implied circular movement between subject and object, fully exploit the ternary relationship Man-Earth-Heaven" (XIII). The primordial Breath animates and circulates through the whole of this signifying practice: an energy of the world which is also the energy of the poet's own act of notation and the reader's making of sense.

The vast and powerful array of Chinese cosmological assumptions are to be recovered, if at all, in and through the poem – and its translated versions – only by performing or studying the rhetoric of lyric. Working in his or her language, the writer redirects energy by transposing contexts. So too, at degrees of removal, is performed the task of the reader of the

original poem, and the task of the translator working on behalf of another language and its readers. In *shih* and *tz'u,* the passive and active procedures and the type and structure of images combine to give the reader the satisfaction of a transparent simplicity, the purity and directness of the Chinese lyrical – as Wei T'ai said, precise about the thing and reticent about the feeling. Many Western poets have come to admire this lyric tone and the world-view it transposes into language; and they have hoped to use the Chinese lyrical as a means to defamiliarize their own poetic tradition, to weed out the insistent Western self, to let energy into the spaces of the poem. Since verbal art is never transparent, pure, or simple the task of the interpreter, and of the translator as interpreter, would seem to be one of understanding how the lyric effect is created by verbal art. The problem, as W. R. Johnson has recently phrased it in his book on lyric modes in ancient and modern poetry, "is that simplicity cannot, usually, handle complexity of reflection whereas complexity of reflection, which is naturally allied with rhetorical sophistication, can handle, can attain to, certain kinds of simplicity."[6] A few of those kinds I try to specify here. *Tz'u* attain certain kinds of simplicity *shih* do not reach: residual song forms in *tz'u* create a different social relationship in the poem, a different influx and and stoppage of primordial Breath, thus a different construction upon the ideograms.

Thus the questions which will interest us are: How does a literary form derive from a popular ballad form? What are the gains and losses when melopoeia turns into or at least toward logopoeia? What forms of verbal energy, what procedures, create the lyric rhetoric of *tz'u*?

To the first of these questions there can be no definitive answers.[7] The *Imperial Register of Tz'u Prosody* (completed 1715) lists 826 tune patterns, with nearly three times as many variant forms of the patterns in illustration, and yet the melody is extant for perhaps only twenty of these tunes. It is still unknown whether there was a syllable-to-note correspondence in the original melodic settings of *tz'u* texts. In modern music East and West, extra notes are added to redouble or multiply syllables, creating changes in the emotional register of the words; if melisma is possible and likely now, it seems more than likely that it was possible in the late T'ang and early Sung dynasties as well. One scholar, Laurence Picken, has argued that musical lines in the Sung dynasty were composed to a rhythmic measure of 8 beats, no matter what number of Chinese characters constituted the line, and on that hypothesis melisma was inevitable. In any event, for more than seven

hundred years, the *tz'u* has been separated from music; poets no longer compose lyrics to their own melodic compositions, but rather compose literary lyrics to the fixed beat and phrasing of a pre-existing song-structure. The resulting patterns have become known by the names of the tunes underlying them, and the residual tunes are thus like skeletons constantly being reincarnated in different bodies, from century to century.

Chiang K'uei was a Chinese *trouvère* who wrote lyrics to his own compositions, some of whose actual melodic notations have come down to us; major writers like Su Shih and Li Ch'ing-chao saw possibilities in the form and decided to use it for their own purposes. Through such practice a popular erotic ballad form was lifted into high literary art, its range extended beyond the staple themes of love and loss and nostalgia, and yet something of the origin of the form was carried forward in the transformation.[8]

Just what was carried forward and what not? A recent book by Mark W. Booth, *The Experience of Songs* (1981) attempts to map "the important area where song verse and lyric poetry that is not song meet" (p. 5). and a few of his sentences seem pertinent:

> Any poetical text can of course be yoked by violence to music, but much poetry cannot thereby be transformed into song. . . . Where the song properly exists, where it is words for the singing voice, it has possibilities not recognized among poems for reading. . . . Words only heard are not forgiving in this way. Song words bear the burden of oral communication, under the special condition of being set to music.[9]

Tz'u may be considered either as an extending of the communal song-voice a modest distance in the direction of personal voice, or as the appropriation by an elite, mandarin art of something relatively more oral, irregular, and vigorous from a folk tradition. Both hypotheses seem likely and both involve something of a breach in the famous impersonality of T'ang lyric. Booth argues that songs "embody common, rather than personal, images of world and self," and if that is correct *tz'u* poems seem somewhat closer to self, to that illusion we now call a personal voice, than the Han ballads or than T'ang *shih* with its much greater interest in natural scenes. It is a matter of fine degrees of difference, a somewhat different inner participation of the poet in that of which he or she sings.

An informal diagram of the differences under discussion, prepared with the aid of Booth's discussions, might draw the lines between song verse and

verse written for the page in this way:

Poems for Singing	*Poems for Reading*
songs: aural reception (ears)	lyric poetry: written reception (eyes)
common images of world, self	personal images of world, self
collective encounter with reality	personal encounter with reality
common construction upon language: prizes redundancy	unique construction upon language: prizes compression, information
fluidity, movability of elements in the text	fixity of elements in the text
structure and meaning immediately seized by the ear	structure and meaning cannot be seized immediately by the ear
units of thought made commensurate with 4-stress musical phrase (ballads)	units of thought made commensurate with more various measures
discourages subtlety, irony	encourages subtlety, irony

Tz'u as a form belongs on the right-hand side of the diagram, and yet not entirely. The strength of the Chinese cosmology makes these song-words more communal than they may seem in English translation. Again, the song-residuum in the way the Chinese reader responds is unquestionable, for the Chinese reader has many associations with the song-titles of these poems which few readers from another culture could appreciate. Fixity of elements must be a relative thing because of the nature of the Chinese language itself and its liberation of signs from their codified relationships. Fixity would also be partly baffled by the way these poems were printed in the Sung Dynasty – as square blocks of type with no line-markers, no punctuation, only a white space in the middle of the block to mark the gaps between stanzas – a mode of printing which must have made more indeterminate the

way early readers took in the text, even when they knew the poem's outer structure because they knew the underlying song.

Thus *tz'u* is a privileged form in world literature, one of the few where residual song-qualities are markedly present on the face of the written text. In Sung *tz'u* we see texts in transition from singing to reading nearly but not yet arrived texts transforming (as Hans H. Frankel has said) "musical patterns into metrical patterns."[10] In formal-structural makeup, these lyrical measures are sometimes longer than *shih,* from one to three stanzas; enjambment occurs more frequently than in *shih,* and these have (according to James L. Liu) "more subtle and varied sound-patterns than the *shih*."[11] However, the features which most markedly distinguish *tz'u* from *shih* are unpredictability of rhyming and unpredictability of line-length. Nearly every *tz'u* poem has a different pattern from every other; indeed, nearly every poem in stanzas has asymmetrical structures from one stanza to the next. Because the regularity of Chinese lyric poetry had been so regular before *tz'u* came on the scene, the name *tz'u* became synonymous with irregularity, an all too easy label which has been passed down in traditional Chinese criticism. *Tz'u* are highly conventional verbal artifacts; they are only irregular in the sense that each is one of a kind in outer structure, and in the sense that the reader must respond to patterning in an ad hoc way, finding the norms that each poem determines for itself. Irregularity of line-length; rhyme used as instance, not as received design from another poem: these were of course laid down as rules by the strict design of the preexisting song lyric, and yet because of these special features there exists a special affinity with a way of structuring texts that was invented only centuries later and in the West, namely free verse. This is a likely analogue, and therefore a tool for the translator who can handle the several prosodies that comprise free verse.[12]

The English translations of a poem by Liu Yung and a poem by Li Ch'ing-chao present a variety of differing analogues for the passive and active procedures, and the lines of imagery, in the original Chinese texts. Alan Ayling and Duncan Mackintosh in their *Collection* (1965) and *Further Collection* (1970) of Chinese lyrics have specialized in metered and rhymed translations from *tz'u,* having doubtless seen the lack of English versions of this type of text by contrast to the attention given to T'ang *shih.* Another who follows the rhyme and meter method is John Turner, whose *Golden Treasury of Chinese Poetry* (1976) has one section on Sung lyric. To the Ayling-Mackintosh and Turner methods, I would contrast the literary free-verse translators Wai-lim Yip (1975; Liu Yung), Kenneth Rexroth and

Ling Chung (1979; Li Ch'ing-chao), C. H. Kwock and Vincent McHugh (1980; Li Ch'ing-chao). As a subset of the free-verse type, we would group the scholarly translators who hope to give a clean version of the poem as an aid to persons following an argument in a critical book on Sung poetry: James J. Y. Liu (1974) and Kay L. Sun Chang (1980). These latter, have chosen an unheightened non-metrical poetry, whose very plainness nonetheless conveys certain literary values – scholar's translations which assist towards a clearer understanding.[13]

II

Liu Yung (fl. 1045) was one of the early literary practitioners of the *tz'u* form. Unquestionably he was aware of the residue of the popular and the musical in the form he had chosen. "Bells in the Rains" is the English for his song-title to the poem to be discussed here, "Yü Lin Ling." The poem is an excellent example of the Chinese Lyrical in the way it combines many types of received convention into a statement seemingly intensely personal. What seems especially Chinese is the way the poem judiciously exploits not the most but the least difference from its predecessors. Conventional are the parting-scene at the city's limits, the references to autumn and rain and the moon, the explicit reference to those who in the past likewise lamented parting, the mention of possible other scenes to be viewed by one of the love partners but not both. The selection and the sequence of these and related elements, as the elements serve to merge (and yet keep distinct) scene and agent, help give the poem its signature.[14] The poem also shows a range of diction from the colloquial (as in the word for "speak" which is the poem's last character, "shuo") to the more refined ("feng-ching," at end of the second-last line, "romantic-feeling": a contrast to "shuo"). In their eagerness to describe the poem and its devices, all the scholarly accounts of it known to us tend to give little space to an interpretation of the self or voice that is constructed in and through the isolating structures of the ideographic script. I can hardly give a full account of the poem itself in a paper devoted to its English versions, and so must be content with the following sketch.

The poem derives its energy and reason for being by virtue of the speaker's inner need to speak, to reveal feeling through speech. This difficulty of love and departure is the subject of the first stanza when the poet finds his faculties of language blocked up:

ching	*wu-yu*	*ning*	*yeh*
even	no-speech	freeze	sob

(line 8)

And it is the subject of the poem's end in the second stanza, as the poet imagines a future time when there will be much to say but no lover to listen:

pien	*tsung*	*yu*	*ch'ien-chung*	*feng-ching*
even	if	have	thousand-kind	romantic-feeling

keng	*yu*	*ho-jen*	*shuo*
any-more	with	what-person	speak

(lines 18-19)

Either he cannot speak in the presence of his intimate listener, or he can speak volumes when the listener is no longer there. The invisible cicada (1. 2) can make its sound but he cannot. The poem is about the urgent need to speak one's feelings, and is, at the same time, that very speech at the moment of utterance – when surrounding sounds and sights are vividly noticed (stanza one), and when past memories and future imaginings are brought in for a closure which drives deeper into the contradiction of voice and absence (stanza two). Writing itself is of course, ironically, a guarantee of the silencing of physical voice; and it is a further irony that the poem's listener is not the lover but the reader. Thus the poem uses the ancient but powerful resources of lyric to help the reader respond with something like the intensity of an actual auditor. The mode of address is the first among such resources, giving a sense of an I-You relationship between writer and implied auditor, writer and actual reader, even despite the total absence of personal pronouns which is the norm in Chinese writing. The result is a somewhat more personal tone than in T'ang regulated verse.

But not a great deal more personal, though some of our translators have tried to make it so. The poem is one with T'ang *shih* in its handling of signs with opposing and complementary values, in its extensive, indeed pervasive use of ellipsis, void-and-full substitutions, multiple perspective, and metonymic images which include man, earth and heaven in the same thought. For instance, the procedures of lines 5-6 are typical of the whole poem:

fang	*liu-lien*	*ch'u*
just	linger	place

lan	*chou*	*ts'ui*	*fa*
magnolia	boat	urge	set-out

(11. 5-6)

Who lingers, what place? We cannot say. Does the magnolia boat urge us to set out, or do we urge it to set out? Does the boat itself urge, or is it the implied boatmen? We cannot say. Yet the translators, pressed to make decisions, have specified what is left indeterminate in Liu Yung's original: "Just as we most need one another, / The boatmen urge me to be gone" (Ayling and Mackintosh); "I linger, but the magnolia boat is ready to go" (Chang); "Just where I am lingering, / The magnolia boat urges me to go" (Liu); "While hankering after all this, the magnolia boat is pressed to go" (Yip). The word *feng* is an empty word with no exact meaning, and it fills the first and therefore least-determinate place in line 5; but the translators, with the exception of Chang who deletes the term entirely, make of this the reason for a coordinate clause which will control line 5 and lay out the semantic pattern of line 6. Perhaps Liu makes the best response to this difficult assignment, but only because his version is the least obtrusive, the least interpretive even though he adds a personal pronoun, coordinates the two lines very precisely by syntax, and personifies the boat as being able to urge the speaker along.

The lyric rhetoric of "Yü Lin Ling" also comprises the presence of several examples of *ling-tzu* or one-to-three character locutions which work as directives for consecutive phrases or whole lines (as in *tui,* "face," at beginning of line 2, or *nien,* "think" at beginning of line 9); enjambement, especially at poem's end; combination of colloquial and refined language; asymmetry of stanzas, in length and structure, though stanzas are connected by homophony through same end-rhyme sound on lines which end stanza one and begin stanza two. There is some disagreement among modern scholars and translators as to how many lines there are in the poem: Ayling-Mackintosh, Yip, and Liu count nineteen lines but Liu counts ten in the first stanza while these others count eleven; Lin by joining elements within the first stanza and within the second stanza ends with seventeen lines in all. Such matters have implications for both grammar and metrics in the translated versions of the poem, especially when, as we know, Chinese

poetics uses the same word for both sentence and line. Coincidence or noncoincidence between sentence and line must be a variable of great importance in a culture which understands a rhythmic Breath or energy circulating through the poem as through all things, not so much directing as initiating the complementary energies of the reader's attention. So many lines are coincident with sentences, that when one is not a quite major effect is produced – as at the end of "Yu Lin Ling," where the poet springs his question.

Plainly Ayling and Mackintosh consider they are translating into genuine English verse, though they spend a good deal more time in their introductory comments discussing the nature of the originals than the nature of their assumptions as translators. This much can be said in defense of their method and its underlying assumptions: they have tried to show some of the effects of sound in the original, they have tried to display the overall structure of the original, they have tried to give the English reader the overall meaning of the original in an unhackneyed language, and they have reasonably well kept to the traditional definition of line and rhyme in the Anglo-American tradition. Often Chinese readers who know the original *tz'u* texts, but know little of modern writing in English, tend strongly to prefer the Ayling-Mackintosh versions because they display good craftsmanship and a serious labor of approximation. However, spaced through the whole poem at an average of two words per line, there are at least thirty-seven English words in this translation which have no warrant whatever in the brief original: in the first four lines alone, there are "measure" and "where's the pleasure" (to get a rhyme), "of farewell," the implied and imported contrast between "savage" and "snug," and the expansion of "hard by" the city. The final line, "With whom could I discuss, to whom explain?" overdramatizes the final question with the redundant and unwarranted final clause.

To speak more harshly, Ayling and Mackintosh have not stripped their English for action to try to make it more like Chinese, they have assimilated the original love-and-departure poem to something already familiar to them, making Liu Yung sound like a lesser Browning. The energy circulating through the Chinese cosmology is absent. Their overspecification makes for choices which all converge to make a rich personal language of inwardness of a familiar sort: "hand in hand, we watch the tears brim in each other's eyes"; "how then shall I bear alone the autumn cold again?"; "enchanting scenes will cast their spell in vain"; "my heart was stirred." It is not exactly translationese, just dead language. What Robert Bly recently called for in

Chinese translations, a grounding in the senses and in sound and in spoken American, could not perhaps because of nationality and training have been pursued by these two English translators, at least in the way Bly proposed; yet his judgment that "in general our translations have been too mental" seems pertinent to this case, and below also to John Turner.[15] Partly, it is a matter of the translator's knowing what to *take away* from English, what to elude; whereas Ayling and Mackintosh have built up outworks around the original poem, which remains there, well protected, inside the heavy walls of nineteenth century rhetoric.[16] It is my position that their way of deploying conventions of rhyme and meter has to a large degree prevented them from carrying across the kinetics of the Chinese Lyrical which are present within "Yü Lin Ling." Perhaps in the hands of more careful poets the conventional prosodies may have served the purpose, and made a translation closer to the original than the free verse versions we have next to consider.

Of the two recent versions of "Yü Lin Ling" which have appeared in scholarly books, James J. Y. Liu's makes stronger claims to be independent of the book's argument. Liu's treatment of the poem in his *Major Lyricists of the Northern Sung* (1974) is extremely useful for an understanding of the poem, partly because of the format of presentation: original text set out in left-to-right lines, a version with English word-for-word under transliterations into the English alphabet, and a free-verse translation in language as close as may be to the word-for-word already supplied; and then notes, metrical pattern diagram, and several pages of commentary. The free verse translation is the basis of my remarks here. Liu makes coordinated English clauses, linking lines and parts of lines together by a more explicit logic than in the original; also he specifies the speaker by no fewer than seven self-references to "I" and one each to "me" and "we," spaced evenly through the poem. He achieves a plain style, appropriate to his reading of the poem's tone as "straightforward and informal, without being stilted on the one hand or undignified on the other" (p. 58). The gain in clarity and directness is paid for by a loss of nominal-verbal play, a diminishing of the multiple possibilities of the original. There is no attempt to find analogues in English language or versification for the effects of the original, except perhaps for an occasional unobtrusive alliteration, and except for the mildly daring use of a single sentence to convey the rush and enjambement of the original's final lines:

15 Once gone, I'll be away for years,
16 And all fine days and lovely

17 Views will be there in vain:
18 Even if I should feel a thousand tender sentiments,
19 To whom could I express them any more?

Kang-i Sun Chang's chapter on Liu Yung, in *The Evolution of Chinese Tz'u Poetry: From Late T'ang to Northern Sung* (1980), concerns the poet's role in raising the long form of *tz'u,* or *man-tz'u,* from a popular song type with colloquial diction to a new sub-genre with literary flexibility, even with verbal density. Chang puts a highlight on the colloquial elements in the poem's language, and translates the poem in the context of an exposition of the device of *ling-tzu* (literally "lead-in words") which connects a series of lines. Chang finds four *ling-tzu* that begin lines, and italicizes these to show their role in structuring the smaller parts of the two stanzas. The translation, unlike Liu's, is set up with justified left margins, and makes no show of displaying by typography the overall irregular structure of lines and rhymes. To emphasize the colloquial nature of the poem, Chang uses dashes and rhetorical questions, and drastically overspecifies the self-reference of the speaker: fifteen pronoun usages for "I," "me," or "we." There is no interest in the dynamics of the verse line beyond the avoidance of ugly sounds, and the lines have a certain heavy length, neither a free-verse measure nor a counted traditional measure:

8 I think of the place where I will go – a
thousand miles of misty waves ahead of me –

That serves its purpose as part of a historical and structural argument, but has little to do with the mode of energy in the original, which reads:

nien	*ch'u-ch'u*	*ch'ien-li*	*yen*	*po*
think	depart-depart	thousand-mile	mist	wave

Who thinks this? Is "depart-depart" an imperative or a description, and why the emphasis of doubling? Does one depart to or from the mist-wave? Is the wave one of departure, or of a thousand miles, or of mist, or of thinking? How does this play with and against the previous line, with and against the following? We cannot say. Non-specification in the original is one of the sources of its energy. One way to suggest where the energy lies is to falsify translations.

The most impressive of these versions of "Yü Lin Ling," to my way of

thinking, is Wai-lim Yip's in his anthology *Chinese Poetry: Major Modes and Genres* (1975). Yip's introduction to his section of *tz'u* translations speaks sensibly of musical pressures upon the poem, admits that "music is untranslatable," and goes on to explain that the sophisticated content in *tz'u* forced him to abandon rhyme in order to avoid cutting meaning: "alliteration has been used as an alternative to drive the music along" (p. 415). It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the music is within the lines, not from line to line, because his presentation is the most fragmented in its grammar and measures we have so far encountered. The syntactical breaks – enforced by coincidence of line and sentence, heavy use of colons, juxtaposition of images without copula, omission of pronouns and verbs, quick-turn questions, and other less prominent methods – help give an English analogue to the relationships of substitution and combination in the original, partly obscuring the relationship of voice to stable self in the translation's mode of address. Where Ayling and Mackintosh make thirteen sentences out of the poem's nineteen lines, Chang and Liu eight, Yip makes as many as sixteen sentences with only one line of the nineteen a run-on. It is a hesitating music, then, using free verse to mime the wavering between the "requirement of linearity and the desire for a spatial evasion" we have already seen expressed in Francois Cheng's account of the cosmology which infuses Chinese poetic writing.

Some lines from Yip's version with commentary on free verse prosody as it pertains to the Chinese Lyrical, will show this broken music:

1 Cold-day cicada's cutting creak.
(heavy alliteration; direct presentation of sound without verb; imitative use of language in verb-become-noun, "creak": compare the less energetic "droning" in Liu, "are chirping sadly" in Chang)

2 Sudden rains freshly still.
("freshly" is an adjective-become adverb, emphasis on stillness by contrast to previous state; subtle alliteration)

8 Speechless, words blocked and locked.
(omission of nominative subject, omission of verb: presentation of emotional state without commentary; most marked internal rhyme in the translation)

11 Mist in dusk sinks, sinks: Southland sky widens.
(coordinated half-line sentences: "*As* the mist sinks, the sky *widens,*" so cause and effect relation is implied but not stated; repetition of action "sinks, sinks" gives the conceptual and verbal relationship in the original's "*ch'en-ch'en,*" "deep-deep;" original's "wide" is an adjective, but turned into an active verb in present tense)

15 Willowed banks, morning winds, leftover moon.
(juxtaposition of three adjective + noun phrases, without connectives: broken yet connected in the line's music and sense, each phrase with falling rhythm: most like a T'ang line in the whole poem)

The compression of these phrasings gives knotty energy, sometimes somewhat infelicitous and non-English but everywhere resolving substantives into verbs, verbs into substantives, dividing lines by grammatical partitions, balancing and moving off balance. English is being turned toward Chinese without being turned into Chinese.

However Wai-lim Yip's version has perhaps a higher quantity of brokenness than the Anglo-American may wish to take. Fragmentation can not go on for very long. His methods in *Chinese Poetry* seem better suited to the sections he devotes to T'ang verse, where the poems are shorter, more rigorous in form, and more absolutely impersonal in tone than "Yü Lin Ling." Yip does permit himself to employ the first person pronoun in the final two lines, when he cannot avoid it any longer, and where it is effective when it arrives because of the previous reticence. In *tz'u* the "I" is more explicitly present than in *shih,* and perhaps there is a certain uneasiness in this translator with this relatively more continuous, more directly personal form of the Chinese Lyrical.

III

In turning to Li Ch'ing-chao and her poem written to the air of "Sheng-Sheng Man," it is well to remind ourselves that the personal within the Chinese Lyrical, particularly in these ancient texts, is not the same as the personal in post-Romantic Western writing. Finding or achieving a personal voice is not what the writer of Sung *tz'u* wants or even imagines as a poetic

task to be achieved through language. Instead the writer is concerned to display, in and through the passive linguistic and active literary procedures which are received, a particular redirection of the Primordial Breath, a particular realization of the infinite communion of things. "Sheng-Sheng Man" shows a sense of being and belonging in the universe, even despite the cruelty of mortality. Being out of tune with the world, a leftover person or voice is one way of being part of it.[17]

So the personal circumstances of the poem, insisted upon in certain interpretations, are necessary to know but finally incidental. The poem was written by Li Ch'ing-chao when her husband Chao Ming-cheng passed away while travelling through Nanking on the 18th day of the 8th month (Lunar calendar) in 1129. Hence the early autumn setting: migrating geese, faded crysanthemums strewn over the ground, drizzling rain dripping gloomily at nightfall. At the time of Chao Ming-cheng's death he was 49; his wife was 47. Their scholarly work together as cataloguers of ancient monuments, along with his respect for her literary work, made for a marriage of extraordinary equality. The poem concerns, among many other things, the absolute loss of that mutuality and the forms of meaning it might give to a woman's life. Yet this is not a love lament, not an expression of "Sorrow" as one translator has titled it or the verbal sketching of an "Autumnal Mood" as others have suggested. The love-theme is the vehicle for a lyric meditation on the place of consciousness in the world, and on the inadequacy of language definitively to enclose the sadness of things. This *tz'u* employs the popular love ballad, as it came down to the poet from the songs to courtesans, for purposes and results very different from the earlier Chinese folk songs – or from nineteenth and twentieth century literary ballads of love in the West. Brief as it is, this is a lyric of and about cosmology, whose specially profound example of the Chinese Lyrical comes from the way the speaker accounts for herself as an agent within (and separate from) the scene.

The poem contains a careful sequence of images: repeated actions of searching, circular and unproductive patterns, opposed warmth and coldness, inability to rest, tasteless wine, night winds, wild geese, hurt heart, yellow flowers on the ground, person at a window, dusk, trees in rain, sounds of rain. Amongst these are inter-fused, at intervals, certain commentary lines, namely "How wearisome to take care of myself" (1. 5), "They hurt me, old friends" (1. 11), "How utterly desolate" (1. 13), "For whom now can I pick them?" (1. 14), and the final question about the word "sadness" (11. 20-22). Images and ideas all converge – changing but consistent presentations of

absolute loss, the limits of mortality in the face of the World Breath, whose very presence we may plausibly see in line 8, "the strong wind that comes at nightfall." Much of the poem's meaning and tone are comprised in the earliest commentary line, here given in the Kwock-McHugh version, "How wearisome to take care of myself." Absence of the loved one has made thoughts of mutuality meaningless, and the speaker moves through the world as a surplus consciousness, a voice with no ear to hear it (though as readers we overhear). The poem is a meditation-by-means-of-images on what the world is like, and on our vulnerability before the world as we register it in the language of thought-charged perceptions.

The title-characters, "Sheng-Sheng Man," literally mean sound-sound-slow. Thus, since reduplication of nouns means "every," every sound, every utterance. "Slow" refers to one of the three categories of *tz'u* melodies, in this case the longest – the poem has 97 characters and thus reaches the upper limits for the extent of the Chinese Lyrical. Here is the poem in English word-for-word, with a transliteration for the first three lines only, and with brackets for bounded, mostly disllabic, forms:

Written to the air of Sheng-Sheng Man

1. *hsun* *hsun* *mi* *mi*
   search(ing) search(ing) seek(ing) seek(ing)

2 *leng* *leng* *ch'ing* *ch'ing*
   chill(y) chill(y) lonely lonely
   clearly clearly

3. *ch'i* *ch'i* *ts'an* *t'san* *ch'i* *ch'i*
   woe woe sob sob sad sad

4. suddenly, warm still cold time [indicator]
   at first glance

5. very difficult (to) rest

6. three cup(s) two bowl(s) light wine
   tasteless

7. how (to) resist he / that

8. night come wind rapid

9. wild geese pass ( )
[auxiliary word – no meaning]

10. just when broken-heart
hurt

11. Yet (it) is old time acquaintance

12. whole ground yellow flower piled up
full chrysanthemum

13. wan withered damage(d)
[implied: and]

14. And now who care to pluck
(has anyone)

15. keeping close (to) window

16. alone how auxiliary word till black (dark)

17. wu- tung (trees) even more together with fine rain
what is more little

18. through dusk
till

19. dropping dropping dripping dripping
drop by drop drop by drop

20. this one after another
sequence

21. how (can) a
one

22. sadness word aptly manage
sorrow

Especially in the first lines, the poem has many similar-sounding words, and not only at line-endings but within the lines themselves. There is also tautological redundancy, quite spectacular in the opening three lines but also in the "dropping dropping dripping dripping" of line 19 towards the end. In lines 1-3 the redundancy is itself divided and diversified by the way internal characters are magnetized together: "hsun," "mi," and "hsun-mi" all mean seek or search, and the two middle characters in the line make a plausible disyllable, a separate idea; similarly in line 2, "leng" means cold, "ch'ing" means clean, and "leng-ch'ing" in the two internal characters means chilly and lonely; in line 3, "ch'i," "ts'an" and "ch'i" mean quite the same thing, so the semantic shift from character 2 to 3, and from 4 to 5 is the least possible shade of meaning: the middle 4 characters of the line have three different words for but a single meaning. Line 3 strengthens line 2, then, by specifying further to show deeper feeling. Iteration and minor partition of meanings and sounds, here perhaps most markedly in the poem, serves to bring down into the sphere of technique the poem's larger intent to show the patterns of unproductive, leftover life.

The dazzling redundancy of the opening, so different from all other poems in the *tz'u* tradition, is one effect whose handling should be traced in the English versions. The way the magnetized characters in mid-line of lines 1-3 pull together and separate is flatly impossible to show in English, of course, and equally the other bounded disyllables in the poem. The original names the trees: wu-tung; but not all translators like this bit of special diction. However the poet does not name the flowers, calling them yellow and only implying that these are drooping autumn chrysanthemums. Should the translator specify less or more than the original in such cases, or keep to the original's very choices? The image of the trees (conveyed by the special name but not the general term "tree"), in lines 17-18, would seem to be a difficult point in the original, because the time-marker "through (till) dusk" would for Chinese readers refer back equally to both auditory images of the sound of the leaves and the sound of the rain. In another crux at the end, "how (can) a (one) sadness (sorrow) word aptly manage this one-after-another," the emphasis seems by this sequence of characters to fall upon "word" rather than the quality, and seems thus to put language and poetry into doubt, turning against the poem's own medium. The translators provide rather different readings of this interrogative closure, with its weight of implication and unresolvedness. A final feature of the original, which most successfully brings in the wider cosmology as a contrast to the isolation of

the speaker, is the untranslatable reference to wild geese in line 9, for the Chinese reader knows that these birds, always in teams, migrate in autumn by lining up in the sky as the character "person" (人). It is such a cosmological dimension of the text which is perhaps most Chinese and least translatable, because here music, calligraphy, painting, myth and poetic writing are fused in a single sign. The cosmological dimension is brought in through and by means of the conventionality of the image of the geese, which is by no means ingenious but rather conventional.

The relation of the agent to the scene, throughout, may be read by the lens of the one image of the geese. Of course the speaker represents herself as yang without yin, voice without ear, life without meaning. But this does not separate her from her world, for even in grief she is metonym of the whole, emanation of the World Breath. The geese represent her even as they stand as counter-symbol of her state of isolation: even as they are the image of mutuality they are the image of mutability, of autumnal constriction, the death of winter. Wind, rain, dusk, and yellow flowers perform the same functions as outer images of inner states. There is no gratuitous landscape, no description for the sake of verisimilitude in classical Chinese poetry; images are all used up by opposing and complementary values in the Chinese cosmos.

The fussy Western eagerness to locate the voice in a poem, to identify a single tone which may, once specified, be shown to go through permutations, seems to a degree frustrated by the cosmological reach of a poem like this, and by the deep but seemingly unphilosophical dismissal of language at poem's end. That is as it should be, if the Chinese text is to have its integrity. But the translators, forced into choices, must all to a degree specify the voice more than the original does – by cues such as title or notes, by internal devices such as first-person pronouns, and by hundreds of more subtle indications in the diction and syntax and versification, and even in the punctuation or lack of it. A notion to be tested in our readings of the versions is this: the least the voice is specified, the more the speaker's emotions are left unlocatable through elisions, the more satisfying the version.[18] All the versions are separate corridors to something in the original, but the rhymed-and-metered versions more than the others would appear to put in a good deal of furniture that clutters the path to the original.

The Ayling and Mackintosh "Sheng-Sheng Man" brings to Li Ch'ing-chao, stylistic features already noticed in their translations: inner and outer rhyme as analogue of original sound, metered lines of irregular length set up

as lyrical stanzas with typographical indentation, and an expansion of rhetoric that leads even the shorter lines to lack a lyric agility. The attempt to reproduce by English analogue the Chinese sound-play is sensible, and not badly managed, though the redundancy of the original's opening is turned into variant rather than exact repetitions, and the original's direct, if not naked, ending statement is given with the fussy insistence of: "Tell me, with all this, then, with all this, / How can the one word 'sorrow' paint what sorrow is?" (where, incidentally, the idea of painting as a conventional transposition for writing finds no warrant in the original). Reasonable choices are made for handling the detail of the yellow flowers and the wu-tung trees, and with the trees they get the best analogue-effect in this version when they use the same verb, "falls / falling," for the darkness and the rain: a nuance immediately undone by the bloated seven-stress line (not to be scanned by any system known to me), "Plodding drop by drop down into the dusk's uncertainties." The overall effect is scrupulous but heavy-handed.

Ayling and Mackintosh do make a contribution to our understanding of the original, and produce an English that is *lisible* if hardly *scriptible*. John Turner's version, which he titles "Sorrow," has not so much to recommend it. In fact, it is difficult to understand why this version was published by a modern university press. Turner's is an extreme example of the principle of melopoeia to the limit. Noticing the density of sound-patterns in the original, he hopes to reproduce this by extraordinarily heavy internal repetition and rhyme as well as end-rhyme and phrasal repetition. The result is a version with throughout a lack of poetic tact because of the overspecification of the voice; but there is worse, because his method leads him to nonfunctional nonsense. This is the case of a translator fixing on one attribute of his original and resolving everything into it; if that attribute is sound, the results are likely to be deplorable, especially if the reader has some hope to penetrate through the version in the direction of the Chinese cosmology that constitutes the original.

Nearly enough is said when we have noticed that the twenty-two lines of the original have become thirty-four in Turner. Expansion in his hands has become invention on a scale the Chinese Lyrical cannot support. The combination of violence of feeling and delicacy of statement in the original is absent, because Turner has wished to make of the poem the rant of an unhinged widow –" Ah, such a plight / Of grief – grief unbearable, unthinkable." His last lines show that he has made a special interpretation

of the voice in the poem, a reading that is biographical rather than cosmological. This has skewed all his particular choices in single lines.

Only a few details of Turner's transgressions will be brought forward here, again in the form of a commentary on selected passages.

1 I pine and peak
(overspecification of the first-person pronoun as opening word of the whole poem; "pine and peak" are inventions from nowhere)

4 Anon to wander and wonder, glare, stare and start

5 Flesh chill'd

6 Ghost thrilled

7 With grim dart

8 And keen canker of rankling anguish.
(archaism in diction of "Anon" and in obsolete contraction of "chill'd"; "Ghost thrilled" is not there in the Chinese and is apparently contrary to the cosmology and meaning of the Chinese; to get sound-play Turner must invent situations and terms, here including "glare" and "anguish" which overspecify the voice and work up a drama by means of statement alone; not clear that the sound-chiming in the original is any warrant for this rich encrustation in the English)

18 The wild geese-see –

19 Fly overhead

20 Ah, there's the grief

21 That's chief – grief beyond bearing,

22 Wild fowl far faring

23 In days of old you sped

24 Bearing my true love's tender thoughts to me.
(ostensive gesture of "see" is not in original, and the obtrusive verb, within dashes by itself, is a striking example of obvious end-rhyming in English: the translator needed a mate to "me" six lines down; "the grief/That's chief" makes no sense; "in days of old" is an archaism, and the turn to refer to the geese as "you," by explicit personification, is not in original; after the geese are named in line 18, they are un-named in line 22, when they have become merely fowl; "Bearing my true love's tender thoughts to me" is an outworn, nineteenth-century English which gives a heavily biographical interpretation of the details of the original; the geese have three lines in the original, but these seven in Turner)

25 Lo, how my lawn is rife with golden blooms
("Lo" is the third exclamation in the space of seven lines, along with "see" and "Ah": a rhetoric of excitement and emotional abandon not found in original; "lawn" is a concept of the West since the mid-19th-century; "rife with" is an archaism)

There are, in addition, syntactical inversions in order to make rhymes in lines 27 and 29; an omission of the splendid detail of the wu-tung trees, compounded by the evil of a note which describes the trees at the back of the book; a fourth exclamation, "Ah" (line 33), and an ending not on a question but on the "unbearable, unthinkable" adjectives, two flabby quality-words. The energy that permeates original has entirely drained away as a result.

Though Kenneth Rexroth with Ling Chung, and C. H. Kwock with Vincent McHugh, both head their versions with an interpretive title ("Autumn Love" and "Autumnal Mood," respectively), their free verse translations are cooler in language, more neutral in tone, far less driven by the need to make a dazzling substitute for the formal-structural effects of the original. Inevitably these are also interpretations of the original, and limited by the poetic rhetoric of the present moment, and yet they do use a workable rhetoric which is current now. Since this is not a rhetoric or a prosody

in the grand manner, the effects are quiet and avoid many of the forms of overstatement and biographical overspecification we have seen in the rhyme-and-meter translations. The rhetoric is out of Pound and Williams and the period of classical free verse, where short lines and clipped phrasings make at least a rough analogue to the Chinese poem's structures.

Free verse often uses rhyme within the line, particularly in alliterative forms, but end-line rhyme is extremely rare. Free verse substitutes for meter a different system of measuring lines, where the coincidence or noncoincidence of grammatical with prosodic units becomes extremely important, with the line and the sentence as volatile units. There are different forms of stopping, turning, and continuing than one sees in counted-out meters, and thus a somewhat different musical possibility. There is more acceptance of repetition. The Rexroth-Chung version stays extraordinarily close to the original, and gets for English some of the effect of the indeterminacy and daring oddity of the Chinese:

1 Search. Search. Seek. Seek.
2 Cold. Cold. Clear. Clear.
3 Sorrow. Sorrow. Pain. Pain.
4 Hot flashes. Sudden chills.
5 Stabbing pains. Slow agonies.

Four lines each in four parts; and two lines, each in two parts. Word equals sentence equals syllable in lines 1-2; line equals four sentences. At the end of five lines there are sixteen sentences. The poem then becomes more discursive, with many lines equal to whole sentences, and a few sentences moving beyond the line-ends to find their endings.

10 Wild geese fly overhead.
11 They wrench my heart.
12 They were our friends in the old days.

The intent of the translation is to keep a certain womanly reticence, a holding back or fending off of feeling; that is not out of keeping with the original. The effect is not achieved initially by sound but by deliberate concision of grammar and prosody as these two forces in the poem interfere with each other, scissoring each other's units.

19 Fine rain sifts through the wu-t'ung trees.
20 And drips, drop by drop, through the dusk.

Rain, wu-t'ung, and dusk seem in the right relationship there. Breaking of sentence at end of line disrupts yet continues the image. Rexroth-Chung use two questions at the end instead of one. Also they change the meaning of the final question when they reproach only the word ("Hopelessness" is their choice) and not the inability of language to convey the world (as seems to be the case in the original) and yet their one-word final line, with its insistent question mark, seems accurate to Li Ch'ing-chao's intent. "What can I ever do now?" is splendid, as are their lines about the chrysanthemums.

In the Translator's Dialogue at the end of their book of translations, Kwock and McHugh affirm their Poundian principles of a "hard, unsquidgey language" (p. 183), of staying "as closely as may be to the intense mathematical concision of the Chinese" and creating "structures to project this in English" (p. 189) and of rooting out the declarative verb, "the curse of English poetry and translation" because it describes action without making action. Their translations, rather like Yip's, rarely employ verbs, and when verbs appear these are usually participles. The attempt is to give in English an accounting of the world-view and mode of perception on display in the Chinese original, and so the effect of the whole is more important than any given structuring component of the original, whether that component be meter, rhythm, rhyme-scheme or syntax. If a choice is to be made, rhythm and syntax are preferred over meter and rhyme-scheme, because in these components are kept more of the original poem's mode of perception. Thus Kwock and McHugh do not convey what a line looks like in Chinese; nor do they convey what the poem sounds like in Chinese. They have made different construction upon the free-verse line than either Yip or Rexroth-Chung.

The basis for their two and three tier lines is in the later poetry of William Carlos Williams, influential in the 1950s in the United States when Kwock and McHugh began their collaboration. Counting only the lines which begin at the left margin, and assuming that the inset segments are the later thirds and halves of lines, Kwock-McHugh make the same number of lines as the Chinese original. Of course the parts of these lines take on differing attentional energies, as the reader is led out and down across the page. With the identation and mid-line stepping-down, these translators also omit many marks of punctuation, so that sentences turn into other sentences

by colon or dash structures that are implied but not notated. This achieves something of the non-specification of relationships of the Chinese original, but of course where nearly every word is the focus of several possible relationships in the Chinese, here it is a matter of slightly modifying the determinate grammar of English in the direction of Chinese. Short blocks of phrase are counterposed against each other:

7 How wearisome
to take care of myself
8 Two or three cups
weak wine
9 – how can they fend off
the strong wind
that comes at nightfall?
10 Wild geese going over
11 They hurt me
12 Old friends

The only definite resolution in these lines is the question mark. Lack of punctuation prevents easy recognition of sentence structure, and unpredictable breaking of lines and line-ends has the effect of unsettling, frustrating, and thus keeping alert the reader's attention.

Of course, the step-down line is itself an inherited procedure and subject to the draining away of energy; it is perhaps more in use as a medium of translation than as a medium of contemporary American or English poetry. It can be used in a routine way: for example here Kwock and McHugh have employed italics for emphasis in four separate places and thus to a degree discounted the surprise of all occurrences. However, this response to the Chinese Lyrical does not invent situations or turn simple repetition into rhyme, so it leaves itself less vulnerable to challenge than the traditional versified solutions. In sound and in the mutual scissoring of grammar and free-verse lines, the final lines of the translation are run-of-the-mill, at least not utterly without a certain minor kinetic; the closing question is kept as a question, and "sadness" is more accurate than either "hopelessness" (Rexroth-Chung) or "grief" (Turner). The most original passage comes just before the end:

14 I
watching alone

at the window
15 When will it be dark?
16 *Wu-t'ung* trees
at twilight
17 the fine rain

Kwock and McHugh have used the lyric "I" pronoun, a debatable choice perhaps, but they have given it energy of position in the one-word line, separating it from its verb, giving it spatial as well as grammatical-prosodic isolation. There is some warrant for that effect in the overall meaning of the original poem. Finally, there is the placement of "at twilight" between two lines by typographical means, so that the time-marker can refer to both auditory images of the sound of the leaves and the sound of rain. That re-enacts the original's subtle relationships within the image. Apparently the capacity for phanopoeia or image-making in American free verse affords some analogues to the Chinese mode of perception.

IV

Free verse lines have to follow the grain of the English language, or at least do nothing to violate the structure of English. Lines also justify themselves as units of sense by conforming to and extending habits of attention in the reader. Line integrity is determined by syntax, sense, rhythm or sound-recurrence, sound-values, intensity of sound, visual considerations, punctuation, and probably other, more subtle variables. For any line taken singly, whether run-on or not has no bearing on the matter; whether the line can stand, and how it is resolved into the mass, are the main issues.

Focussing primarily on the relation of sentence and line, this essay has isolated only a few factors in a counterpoint analysis. A complete study would have to offer factors above and below the prosodic unit of the line and the grammatical unit of the sentence. However the narrowing of focus has given certain advantages. Much of previous work on poetic syntax has been restricted to accounts of repeated grammatical forms within sentences or from sentence to sentence in the poem; but here it has been shown that the figure of grammar is one of progressive transition, linear and directional (as well as recursive). The relationship of the line to the sentence is one of mutual scissoring, where the type and quantity of the pauses thus created

make for a rhythm of phrase and of stress quite different from the more regular recurrences of metered poems.

Free verse could not have become a valid measure if it had tried to will essential changes in the mind's tendency to find stable shapes, once the mind has been inhibited from responding. All reading, including the reading of Chinese texts, is a process of transposing perspectives of attention. Since free verse is marginally more vigorous than traditional verse in its demand for such transpositions, the open-field poem has often been described through an informal cognitive psychology of attention, and through physiological analogues like breathing, artistic analogues like music and dance. Within the free verse measure itself, these explanations of it are expressions of an immanentist poetics, where rules are not imposed upon the poetic material but are allowed to emerge.

But what, Mr. Williams and Mr. Olson, is being measured? I return to my opening questions about motion in the kinetic of verse. To what are poet and reader paying attention by way of the poem itself? How does poetry turn thought and language into energy? The short answer to the last question, which yet implicates the others, is that energy is passed over from the world and the poet's experience of it through the mutual interference of cognitive and aesthetic impulses in the poem's language. The interference of grammatical and prosodic systems which occupy the same site, the poem, acts to inhibit and to release the normal human tendency to respond – to, as we say, make sense. So energy is the end-product of the frustration and the resolving of expectation. "The Compleat Prosodist, ideally equipped," as Harvey Gross has said, "should deal with the psychology of the creative process, the structure of the poem, and the reader's experience."[19] Like the poet, the Compleat Prosodist as interpreter of what is Lyrical in any tradition must re-enact the motions of the writing and reading mind; and must also and in addition, something which can only be mentioned here, study the wider historical and cultural conditioning of attention. For literary kinetic, as consciousness-in-action and therefore as prosody, is always informed, always overdetermined. The writer's family romance, class background, and education are factors which have indirect bearing on choice of genre, mode of address, style, even rhythm. Obviously they also affect choice of what to translate from another culture's lyric tradition, and of how to find equivalent formal structures and tones of voice.

The period of classical free verse, I should say, stretches from Whitman through Pound and Williams to persons writing today in the Pound-Williams

tradition. Most writers of free verse, most translators into free verse, still inhabit this period and its aesthetic. A significant and no longer small group of writers may be identified by their devotion to the poetic line as a musical and gestural unit, and by their exploration of the meanings of measure as opposed to meter, of the transfer of energy from world to poet and poem to reader. This paper has shown some advantages of this modern prosody, or set of prosodies, for the translation of essential features of the Chinese Lyrical in the *tz'u* of Liu Yung and Li Ch'ing-chao.

Notes

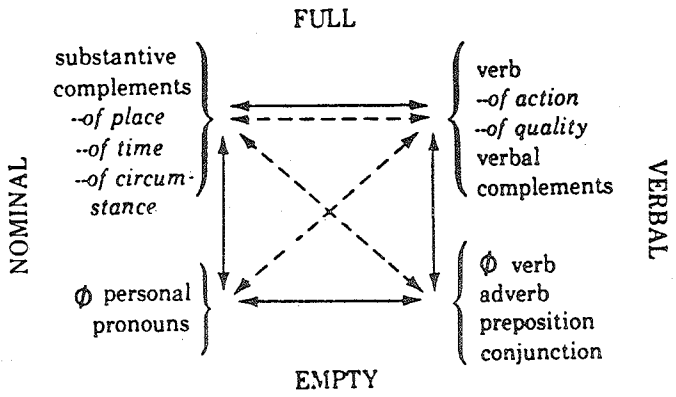
1. Burton Watson, *Chinese Lyricism: Shih Poetry from the Second to the Twelfth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

   This paper owes a great deal to Professor William Tay, who encouraged pursuit of the topic, provided materials, and helped me to understand special features of the original poems and their several versions. I have also had advice on "Sheng-Sheng Man" from Chi-lin Shih and Stephen Chan, graduate students at the University of California, San Diego – and from C. C. Wang of Jinan, Li Ch'ing-chao's birthplace. I have had a valuable letter on the formal precisions of *Tz'u* from Ling Chung of The University of Hong Kong. However all errors of fact and interpretation in the essay are strictly attributable to me.
2. Charles Olson, "Projective Verse," in *The Poetics of the New American Poetry*, ed. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman (New York: Grove Press, 1973).
3. Francois Cheng, *Chinese Poetic Writing*, Trans. Donald A. Riggs and Jerome P. Seaton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. x. Page references to passages in Cheng's book will hereafter be given in parenthesis at the end of quotations within my text – a method used below with a few other books, after the first citation in these footnotes, where titles quoted from will be obvious from will be obvious from context.

   A number of other sources could have been used to make most of the points here made with the help of Francois Cheng. I have relied on Cheng as a mediator for these reasons: 1) his book integrates recent developments in linguistics and semiology; 2) it understands Chinese poetry as an expression of Chinese cosmology; 3) it understands poetry as one of several languages within the culture, and shows the presence of the other languages of music, calligraphy, painting, and mythology within Chinese poetry and poetics; 4) Cheng has translation in mind as he writes his study, because the second half of his book is an anthology of T'ang poetry in translation.
4. Jacques Gernet, in *A History of Chinese Civilization*, trans. J. R. Foster (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1982), has these pertinent sentences on the general characteristics of Chinese logic: "for Chinese thought, the order of begins and of the world is best translated by systems of variable, dynamic symbols. Her logic does not proceed from an analysis of language. It is based on the handling of signs with opposing and complementary values. Perhaps Chinese writing is not unconnected with these deep-rooted tendencies, which have

ended by giving a privileged position to the written sign at the expense of the spoken word" (p. 29).

5. Cheng's diagram of these relationships between full-empty, nominal-verbal, is useful (p. 40):



Cheng explains (p. 40): "the ordered, and apparently static, aspect of this representation ought not to be allowed to obscure the fact that it deals with a dynamic language whose components imply each other. It is a language broken free, which puts back into play the relationship between the said and the not-said, action and nonaction, and, when all is considered, the subject and the object. For the poet it is only this sort of language, animated as it is by the void, which is capable of engendering words through which the breath circulates, and thus of truly *transcribing* the inexpressible. Here it is essential once more to recall the importance of the void in Chinese aesthetic thought."

6. W. R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 49.
7. Study of the tune-text relationship requires specialist knowledge. Unpublished writings on the subject by Mathew Chen and Chi-Lin Shih have helped me understand the dimensions of the difficulty of this topic. The most pertinent recent scholarship in English would seem to be: L. E. R. Picken, "Secular Chinese Songs of the Twelfth Century," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae,* 8 (1966), pp. 125-72; Rulan Chao Pian, *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); Glen W. Baxter, "Metrical Origin of the *Tz'u,*" in *Studies on Chinese Literature,* ed. John L. Bishop (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 186-225; Liang Ming-Yueh, "The *tz'u* Music of Chiang K'uei: Its Style and Compositional Strategy," in *Renditions: A Chinese-English Translation Magazine* (Hong Kong), Special Issue on *tz'u* (Spring and Autumn, 1979), pp. 211-46. There are also two dissertations: R. Boyce, *Rhythm and Meter of tsyr in Performance,* Harvard, 1975; R. W. Bodman, *Pattern and Prosody in Early Medieval China,* Cornell, 1978.
8. On the significant role of Su Shih in this transformation, see Cheng Ch'ien, "Liu

Yung and Su Shih in the Evolution of *Tz'u* poetry," trans. Ying-Hsiung Chou, in the *Renditions* issue cited above in note 9, pp. 143-56.

9. Mark W. Booth, *The Experience of Songs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 5, 6, 71.
10. The phrase is Hans H. Frankel's, from *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 216.

    What follows in my paragraph on the formal properties of *tz'u* should not be taken as underestimating the strictness of the form in the original language. Ling Chung, in a letter to me on a draft of this essay, speaks of the several constraints. She writes: "*Tz'u* is also *ch'ang tuan chu* (long and short lines).... Some critics translated this term as 'irregular verse.' For every tune, there are usually the following patterns: 1) pattern of length: the number of characters in each line cannot be altered; the number varies from one to nine; 2) pattern of tones: more than half the characters in a tune have to follow a strict tonal pattern; 3) rhyming pattern; 4) caesura pattern; 5) pattern of repetition of characters: for example in the tune *ju mong ling*, characters 24 to 27 must be a two-word compound repeating itself (however, the pattern of repetition in Li Ch'ing-chao's *sheng sheng man*, in the first 14 characters, is created by her). Because 2) and 5), the form of *tz'u* is more complicated and strict than that of *shih*." The following paragraph in my essay, whose subject is not strictness but rather unpredictability of line-length and rhyming, does not contradict these facts as pointed out by Ling Chung.
11. James J. Y. Liu, "Some Literary Qualities of the Lyric (*Tz'u*)," in Cyril Birch, ed., *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 151.
12. T. V. F. Brogan's reference guide, *English Versification: 1570-1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), lists and evaluates a number of studies (pp. 402-16), giving a place which to start. To his list I would add a few items, mainly recent, which I recommend. Eniko Bollobas, "New Prosodies in 20th century American Free Verse," *Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 20, 1-2: pp. 99-121 (1978); Clive Scott, *French Verse-Art: A Study* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Alan Golding, "Charles Olson's Metrical Thicket: Toward a Theory of Free-Verse Prosody," *Language and Style* 14, 1 (Winter 1981): pp. 64-78.

    The above are all scholarly studies, but there are also many collections by poets on poetry in open forms, such as *Naked Poetry: Recent American Poetry in Open Forms* (1969) and *The New Naked Poetry* (1976), both ed. Stephen Berg and Robert Mezey; *The Poetics of the New American Poetry* (1973), ed. Donald M. Allen and Warren Tallman; *American Poets in 1976* (1976), ed. William Heyen; *Towards a New American Poetics: Essays and Interviews* (1978), by Ekbert Fass; *A Field Guide to Contemporary Poetry and Poetics* (1980), ed. Stuart Friebert and David Young.

    Also, Paul Mariani has edited an important set of notes for various talks and readings given by William Carlos Williams from May 1940 to April 1941: "Studiously Unprepared," *Sulfur* 4 (Pasadena: California Institute of Technology, 1982).
13. The English translations of poems by Liu Yung and Li Ch'ing-chao in order of presentation in my essay, are taken from these sources: Alan Ayling and Duncan Mackintosh, *A Collection of Chinese Lyrics* (London: Routledge, 1965), and *A Further Collection of Chinese Lyrics* (London: Routledge, 1970);

James J. Y. Liu, *Major Lyricists of the Northern Sung, A. D. pp. 960-1126* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Kang-i Sun Chang, *The Evolution of Chinese Tz'u Poetry: From Late T'ang to Northern Sung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Wai-lim Yip, *Chinese Poetry: Major Modes and Genres* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); John Turner, *Golden Treasury of Chinese Poetry* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1976); Kenneth Rexroth and Ling Chung, *Li Ch'ing-chao: Complete Poems* (New York: New Directions, 1979; C. H. Kwock and Vincent McHugh, *Old Friend from Far Away* (San Francisco: North Point, 1980).

14. In his extensive section on Liu Yung in *Major Lyricists of the Northern Sung,* James J. Y. Liu speaks of this poem as the writers "best-known lyric and one of the most famous farewell poems in Chinese."
15. Robert Bly made this statement in a panel discussion transcribed in the Chinese Poetry and the American Imagination issue of *Ironwood* 17 (Tuscon, Arizona), Spring 1981, p. 40.
16. Ayling and Mackintosh are archaic enough to permit themselves in line 16 a "tho'" for "though." The archaic diction is part of an attitude toward style in translation; another and perhaps more constitutive component is the prosody itself which is part of the rhetoric and to a degree initiates the rhetoric. The irregular line-length and rhyme of the original, which these translators recognize and hope to reproduce, seems to give them warrant for various types of expansion, especially in their use of the seven stress English line for four of the nineteen lines. The seven stress line has unfortunate antecedents in English; it is rarely successful in lyric poems in English.
17. An interpretation of this poem is given in Pauline Yu's article "Li Ch'ing-chao and Lasker-Schuler: Two Shattered Worlds," *Comparative Literature Studies* 20, 1 (Spring 1983), esp. pp. 104-05.
18. One type of specification of voice would seem to be very useful and worth preserving, however, and that is the presence of some notation that the speaker is a woman. Often in *tz'u* known to Li Ch'ing-chao, a male poet pretends to be a woman left alone in her grief and sexual isolation. In her poem, perhaps the very violence of the opening lines, the extremity of redundancy, the need for the speaker to comment on her perceptual images, the very length of the utterance, may all be understood as tactful cancellations of the convention of pretend-courtesan poems by earlier male writers in a male-dominated social (and literary) order.
19. Harvey Gross, ed., *The Structure of Verse: Modern Essays on Prosody,* revised edition (New York: The Ecco Press, 1979), p. 12. A similar gestaltist view of prosody in the reading process is unfolded in Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

Appendix:

The English Translations of "Yü Lin Ling" and "Sheng-Sheng Man"

雨霖鈴　Yü Lin Ling

柳永　*Liu Yung*

寒蟬凄切
對長亭晚
驟雨初歇
都門帳飲無緒
方留戀處
蘭舟催發
執手相看淚眼
竟無語凝咽
念去去千里烟波
暮靄沈沈楚天闊

多情自古傷離別
更那堪冷落清秋節
今宵酒醒何處
楊柳岸曉風殘月
此去經年
應是良辰
美景虛設
便縱有千種風情
更與何人說

I. James J. Y. Liu's Translation:

A cold cicada sadly droning—
I face the post-pavilion at twilight,
When the shower has just stopped.
Listless, the farewell party outside the city gate.
Just where I am lingering,
The magnolia boat urges me to go.
Holding hands, we look at each other's tearful eyes,
Without a word, choked by frozen sobs.
Think of the thousand miles of misty waves stretching ahead,
And the deep layers of evening clouds in the vast Southern sky!

Since time began, loving natures have lamented partings;
How, then, can I bear this desolate, cool season of autumn?
Awaking from tonight's drunken sleep, where shall I be?
A willowy bank, dawn breeze, fading moon.
Once gone, I'll be away for years,
And all fine days and lovely
Views will be there in vain:
Even if I should feel a thousand tender sentiments,
To whom could I express them any more?

II. Kang-i Sun Chang's Translation:

The autumn cicadas are chirping sadly,
As *I face* [*tui*] the pavilion in the evening—
A sudden rain has just ended.
At the banquet near the city gate I am preoccupied;
I linger, but the magnolia boat is ready to go.
Hand in hand, we look into each other's tearful eyes;
Not a single word is said, for we are choked with tears.
I think of [*nien*] the place where I will go—a thousand miles of misty waves ahead of me—
A scene of evening haze enveloping the boundless southern sky.

From of old, tender natures grieve at separation;
But how, then, can I bear [*keng na k'an*] this in this

desolate autumn season?
Tonight when I awaken from drunken sleep, where
shall I be?
A willow-bank, the breeze at dawn, the fading moon.
This time I'll be gone for a few years,
All the pleasant days and beautiful scenes set before
me will surely be in vain.
Even if [*pien tsung yu*] I should experience a thousand
kinds of romantic feelings,
To whom shall I express them?

III. Wai-lim Yip's Translation:

Cold-day cicada's cutting creak.
Late evening before the tall pavilion.
Sudden rains freshly still.
Farewell drinking outside the city: no good mood.
While hankering after all this,
The magnolia boat is pressed to go.
Hold hands, face to face, eyes in tears.
Speechless, words blocked and locked.
This departure:
A thousand miles of smoke-waves.
Mist in dusk sinks, sinks: Southland sky widens.

All ancient men of emotion grieved over separation.
Now this cold, deserted, clear autumn!
Today: sober from wine? how and where?
Willowed banks, morning winds, leftover moon.
This departure: many years.
Good times, great scenes, all there in vain.
A thousand styles of sentiment I may have
To whom can I spell them?

聲聲慢 Sheng-Sheng Man

李清照 *Li Ch'ing-chao*

尋尋覓覓，
冷冷清清，
悽悽慘慘戚戚。
乍暖還寒時候，
最難將息。
三杯兩盞淡酒，
怎敵他，
晚來風急。

雁過也，
正傷心，
却是舊時相識。
滿地黃花堆積，
憔悴損，
如今有誰堪摘。
守著窗兒，
獨自怎生得黑。
梧桐更兼細雨，
到黃昏，
點點滴滴。
這次第，
怎一個，
愁字了得。

I. Ayling & Mackintosh's Translation:

Unending search in endless quest
So cold and still, how cold and still;
By grief and anguish, grief and anguish hard oppressed.
This season of the sudden change from warm to chill
Weighs down the heart in search of peace.
Cupfuls of light wine, two or three;
How else confront the wind that blows at dusk so urgently?
Even the flighting geese
Have stabbed me to the heart,
Friends that fly past me out of older memories.

Chrysanthemums in yellow masses everywhere:
Melancholy has marked them for its own.
For whom are they worth gathering growing there?
Watching from my window all alone
How am I to live until the darkness falls?
Fine rain is falling, too, into the wu t'ung trees;
Plodding drop by drop down into the dusk's uncertainties.
Tell me, with this, then, with all this,
How can the one word 'sorrow' paint what sorrow is?

II. Turner's Translation:

I pine and peak
And questless seek
Groping and moping to linger and languish
Anon to wander and wonder, glare, stare, and start
Flesh chill'd
Ghost thrilled
With grim dart
And keen canker of rankling anguish.
Sudden a gleam
Of fair weather felt
But fled as fast – and the ice-cold season stays.
How hard to have these days
In rest or respite, peace or truce.
Sip upon sip of tasteless wine
Is of slight use

To counter or quell
The fierce lash of the evening blast.

The wild geese—see—
Fly overhead
Ah, there's the grief
That's chief – grief beyond bearing,
Wild fowl far faring
In days of old you sped
Bearing my true love's tender thoughts to me.
Lo, how my lawn is rife with golden blooms
Of bunched chrysanthemums—
Weary their heads they bow.
Who cares to pluck them now?
While I the casement keep
Lone, waiting, waiting for night
And, as the shades fall
Upon broad leaves, sparse rain-drops drip.
Ah, such a plight
Of grief – grief unbearable, unthinkable.

III. Rexroth-Chung's Translation:

Search, Search. Seek. Seek.
Cold. Cold. Clear. Clear.
Sorrow. Sorrow. Pain. Pain.
Hot flashes. Sudden chills.
Stabbing pains. Slow agonies.
I can find no peace.
I drink two cups, then three bowls
Of clear wine until I can't
Stand up against a gust of wind.
Wild geese fly overhead.
They wrench my heart.
They were my freinds in the old days.
Gold chrysanthemums litter
The ground, pile up, faded, dead.
This season I could not bear
To pick them. All alone,
Motionless at my window,

I watch the gathering shadows.
Fine rain sifts through the wu-t'ung trees.
And drips, drop by drop, through the dusk.
What can I ever do now?
How can I drive off this word—
Hopelessness?