Report on Papers in English Presented at Panel VI: Chinese Literature

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In this panel, we have eight papers in English. Two deal with poetry, one with criticism and five with fiction. Of the two papers on poetry, one is on *Chiu-ko* 九歌 which dates from the third century B. C., while the other is on the mid-T'ang poet Liu Tsung-yüan 柳宗元 . The topic of the criticism paper is the sixteenth-century scholar T'ang Shun-chih 唐順之 Of the five fiction papers, three discuss Ch'ing while two, contemporary writers. My report is arranged according to the order of the dates of the works under discussion.

In "The sacred and the Profane: a Study of *Chiu-ko* 九歌," Mr. Ping-leung Chan 陳炳良 first explores the ritual implications of the *Chiu-ko* and then goes on to examine the "intrinsic literary merit of these poems," which has been overlooked by most scholars. His interpretation attempts to lend coherence and fresh meaning to this group of songs. According to Mr. Chan, the *Chiu-ko* is the "finished work of a talented poet" who "utilized these songs to reveal the perennial dilemma of human existence." Thus the love, hope, sense of helplessness and courage depicted in the poems fit into a unified thematic structure. Mr. Hong In-pyo's 洪寅杓 "A Study of Liu Tsung-yüan's poetry" begins with a biographical sketch of the poet. Though he has not discussed properly the poems themselves, the statistical information and classification he offers should be useful to students of the poet. Mr. Hong also rightly points out that Liu Tsung-yüan is different from other poets in that his poems are those of an exile, characterized by "sadness, loneliness, nostalgia and melancholy."

Mr. T'u Ching-i's 涂經詒 paper entilted "Neo-Confucianism and Literary Criticism in Ming China: The Case of T'ang Shun-chih (1507-1560)" supports the view that there is a close relationship between philosophy and literary criticism. Mr. T'u traces the development of Ming critical thoughts in general and that of T'ang Shun-chih's critical ideas in particular. He finds that literary criticism and theory changed with the prevailing

philosophical thought. T'ang Shun-chih is particularly noted for successfully explaining the concept of *fa* 法 and thus providing the theoretical basis for the T'ang-Sung 唐宋 schools which advocated imitating the T'ang-Sung rather than the Ch'in-Han 秦漢 masters. According to Mr. T'u, the emphasis of the Ch'eng-Chu 程朱 school on the method of moral cultivation must have inspired T'ang and other critics to regard *fa* central to their critical thinking. However, after he reaches forty, T'ang Shun-chih's own writing style, as well as his literary theory, shows a marked change as a result of the influence of the left wing of the Wang Yang-ming 王陽明 school led by Wang Chi 王畿. From the philosophical idea of liang-chih 良知, T'ang Shun-chih developed his literary idea of *pen-se* 本色 which implies sincerity and truthfulness in feeling, genuineness or originality of idea, and non-artificiality or naturalness in individual style. After a detailed discussion of the concept of *pen-se*, Mr. T'u concluded that it "inaugurated a new trend in prose writing which dominated for the remainder of the Ming and early Ch'ing periods. Of equal importance to the field of literary criticism, the concept of *pen-se* not only provided the most effective refutation to the doctrine of imitating the ancients, but also, together with its subsidiary ideas and fertile implications, anticipated many of the critical ideas later developed by the prominent Kung-an 公安 and Ching-ling 竟陵 schools."

Mr. Liao Hsien-hao's 廖咸浩 "The Paradox of Existence as Manifested in Pao-yü's 寶玉 Existential Struggle" attempts to shed new light on an old question by re-integrating "the Tai-yü / Pao-yü / Pao-ch'ai (黛玉 / 寶玉 / 寶釵) relationship" into the formulation of the thematic scheme of the novel." Inspired by Roland Barthes's observation on the symbolic code, Mr. Liao divides the world Pao-yü has to face into that of youth as represented by Tai-yü and that of non-youth as represented by Pao-ch'ai. While they should complement each other to form a totalized view of life, these two worlds are in reality mutually exclusive. Pao-yü's tragedy and by extension, Man's, lies in the fact that he is compelled to make a choice between the two worlds.

Mr. Lin Lien-hsiang's 林連祥 "Examination Syndrome in Ch'ing Fiction" discusses six works by six Ch'ing writers. Each of these writers suffered from the examination syndrome in one form or another. Their writings reflect their own failure or their sons' to obtain fame and wealth through the examination system. Though some satirize the aspiring candidates and attack the system itself, and some put their dreams into their novels and glorify the successful candidates, all these writers write from more or less the same

motive: by finding satisfaction in their works they try to make up for their failure in the examination system. This fact, Mr. Lin contends, provides the key to a better understanding of the works discussed in his paper.

Mr. Helmut Martin's "Opportunist Reformers in Late Ch'ing Hsiao-shuo 小說" reviews several novels dealing with the Reform Movement before discussing in more detail the *Hsin-tang sheng-kuan fa-tsai chi* 新黨升官發財記 or *Kuan-ch'ang wei-hsin chi* 官場維新記 written by an anonymous author in 1906. Mr. Martin examines the impact of the west, the reforms as pretext for personal advancement, China's development and the social-political aspiration of the author as reflected in the novel. Though the novel is not without some literary merit, Mr. Martin appropriately treats it more as a historical document than as an artistic piece of work.

Mr. Michael Duke's "A New Romantic Generation: Young PRC Writers of the Post-Mao Era and the Romantic Tradition" presented here represents excerpts from a longer paper dealing with five post-Mao stories. The major theme of all five stories is the quest for romantic love, a subject forbidden during the Cultural Revolution but has become a regular part of most mainland fiction since 1979. Though there are differences in outcome, all the stories present romantic love as a key to personal fulfillment and as a basic human need and right. After his discussion, Mr. Duke concludes that "the young romantics of the post-Mao era have shed their utopian illusions of instant grandeur, but they remain steadfast in their faith that the intangible values that have always made human life worth living do exist and can be manifested in an individual person's everyday life and work."

In his paper "Wang Wen-hsing and Stream of Consciousness: A Preliminary Investigation," Mr. Shan Te-hsing 單德興 deals with three short stories ("The Wedding of a Civil Servant," "Mother," and "Typhoon") and one novel (*The Man with His Back to the Sea*) by Wang Weng-hsing. By applying some principles of the stream-of-consciousness fiction and the principle of close reading, Mr. Shan studies "the adoption of a foreign literary technique by a person who is at once a student of foreign literature, a creative writer and a professor of fiction." Mr. Shan's paper does not profess to be an influence study, yet he appends to his paper an interview with Mr. Wang who mentions frankly some writers and literary works that might have influenced him. This interview provides us with some first-hand information on Mr. Wang Wen-hsing as a writer.

Almost all the papers presented in this panel attempt to offer something new, be it a new approach, a new methodology, or new insights. These papers, I am sure, have contributed to the success of this conference.