

of those poets of Taoist verse such as Sun Ch'o, Hsu Hsun, and Yu Ch'an, who are persistently and thus wrongly considered in antagonism to the *shan-shui shih* originated by Yin Chung-wen and Hsieh Hun, and perfected by Hsieh Ling-yun.

## 中 文 摘 要

本文在探討：(1)感性的變遷與中英自然詩的興起，(2)中英田園詩傳統與自然詩之關係，(3)西方術語運用到中國古典詩之缺失。

英國人由於深受基督教思想的影響，一直到十七世紀中葉，跟自然界仍處於扞格不入的地位。十七世紀下半個世紀是一個轉捩點，此時由於文學、神學、哲學、地質和天文學等觀念之改變，以及那時頗為流行的旅行歐洲大陸的影響，在在都激起人們感性的轉變，而此種轉變對真正的自然詩之興起却是必要之條件。

中國人由於未受到基督教的影響，自古就跟自然界處得極和諧。對自然界之描繪片斷詩經和楚辭就有不少，但是它們只是傳情達意之襯托或背景，並非詩人之專注所在。真正的自然詩要到魏晉時代才出現，而這跟那時之社會、政治、哲學和宗教思想有關。

專就對自然界之熱愛而言，西方田園詩應是自然詩之始祖；在中國，田園詩和自然詩（山水詩）應是平行發展。創始於湯姆森的自然詩，其描寫大體而言是寫實的、客觀的，也極少提到羊及牧羊女等，而田園詩則是理想化的，往往依賴河流、草地、山林、羊和牧羊女這一類「道具」，以及諸如重複句型、歌唱比賽、口語和套語等技巧來創作。田園詩之一片天真爛漫、純樸和新鮮只是一道煙幕，用以襯托出複雜的人生。而在中文詩裡，田園詩和山水詩雖云不同，惟對自然之描寫却大都是客觀和寫實的。中文的田園詩也絕少依靠上提之「道具」來創作。中國田園詩比較重視刻劃農耕細節、遷居之樂，而這些在英國田園詩裡並不太重要。因此筆者認為在運用西方術語來探討中國古典詩時，對不同文化背景產生出來的術語應先加以釐清、調整，以免運用時混淆不清。

本文認為，「詩經」之「七月」、「考槃」和「十畝」等是中國田園詩之始祖，曹操之「觀滄海」是山水詩甚至自然詩之始祖，這種看法大體沿襲了游國恩和林庚二氏之論點，却有些跟傅樂生（J. D. Frodsham）氏之見解不同。

Taoist verse having been accused of writing poetry like writing philosophical treatises in the very beginning,<sup>68</sup> are also lovers of nature and travelling despite the fact that they do not concentrate on describing nature as their primal concern.<sup>69</sup> All in all, we perceive that the savory of nature, as we have pointed out elsewhere, had long been formed before the times of these Taoist verse masters. Their attitudes certainly exerted some influence on their revolutionary heirs. It goes without saying that Frodsham errs in making too peremptory a notion regarding the issue of the originator of Chinese nature poetry.

However, we have also to concede that Frodsham's article has some contribution. It is the first in the West to take notice of the problem of the harbingers in Chinese nature poetry in company with the change of sensibility in spite of its indebtedness to Wang Yao's earlier work to which no acknowledgement is made. Moreover, the English critical criterion of seeing nature poetry as a form to accommodate and blend natural description and moral reflection helps him to re-evaluate and to broaden the Chinese perspective of nature poetry.<sup>70</sup> That is to say, it enables him to include within his definition of Chinese nature poetry some

68) In his preface to the *Shih-p'in* 詩品, Chung Hung says,

永嘉時，貴老黃，稱尚虛談。于時篇什，理過其辭，淡乎寡味。爰及江表，微波尚傳，孫綽，許詢，桓庾諸公，詩皆平典似道德論，建安風力盡矣。

During the Yung-chia period (307-312) Taoism flourished. Discourses on the Void were highly valued (i.e. Taoist philosophy). In the verse of the time there was more philosophy than there was poetry. It was flat and insipid. A little of this influence was passed on to the other side of the river (i.e. to the Eastern Chin dynasty). Sun Ch'o, Hsu Hsun, Huan (Hsuan) 桓玄 and Yu (Ch'an) wrote verses which were all as dull and as full of allusions as the *Discourses on the Tao Te Ching* (By Ho Yen 何晏 A. D. 249). The inspiration of the Chien-an period had petered out (English translation by Frodsham, "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," 68-69).

See Chen yen-chieh 陳延傑, *Shih-p'in chu* 詩品注 (Taipei: K'ai Ming Bookstroe, 1958), p. 3.

69) Wang Yao, p. 59.

70) From another perspective as we have assumed in this paper, we discover that this view of seeing nature poetry is rather limited and rigid, for it has loughed over the purely experiential and phenomenological treatment of nature characteristic of various poems by T'ao Yuan-ming and Wang Wei, William Carlos Williams and Gary Snyder.

ing the history of the development of nature poetry will thoroughly fail him. Even granting that Wang's criticism is pertinent, we have also to concede that the passages involved in revealing their relationship and indebtedness are somewhat desultory and unsystematic.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, we are not quite justified in severely criticizing Frodsham simply for his failure in getting at the truth. What is most unpardonable, it seems to us, is Frodsham's tone of peremptoriness in proclaiming that "Chinese literary criticism has long been guilty of a gross over-simplification in seeing Nature poetry as springing . . . from Ling-yun's ingenious imagination." A modifying word "traditional" in front of "Chinese literary criticism" would have softened the issue a great deal, for modern Chinese criticism would certainly exempt itself from this harsh accusation. Wang Yao, an expert of the history and literature of the Wei Chin Period, has written a highly illuminating and scholarly article entitled "*Hsuan-yen, shan-shui, t'ien-yuan*" in which the transition from Taoist verse to shan-shui shih or nature poetry and *t'ien-yuan shih* is admirably accounted. He does not in the least maintain that Hsieh Ling-yun is the first nature poet in China.<sup>64</sup> Instead he infers from the statements documented in the "Biography of Hsieh Ling-yun 謝靈運傳"<sup>65</sup> and Tan Tao-lun's (檀道鸞, fl. fifth century) *Hsu Chin yang ch'iu* 續晉陽秋<sup>66</sup> to maintain that the forerunners of *shan-shui shih* are Yin Chung-wen and Hsieh Hun.<sup>67</sup> He even declares that Sun Ch'o and Hsu Hsun, two of the masters of

63) The passages in question are adduced by Wang Wen-chin, pp. 10-13.

64) He only says that Hsieh writes much and contributes much to nature poetry, in "*Hsuan-yen, shan-shui, t'ien-yuan*," p. 67.

65) The passage in question is

仲文始革孫許之風，叔源大變太元之氣。

Chung-wen was the first to alter the influence of Sun and Hsu. Shu-yuan [that is Hsieh Hun] brought about a change in the spirit of the T'ai-yuan period. [367-397] (English translation by Frodsham, "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," 70).

in Shen-Yo, *Sung Shu* 宋書, SPPY edition (Taipei: Chung Hwa Book Co. Ltd., 1965), LXVII, 19b.

66) This historical book has not survived, but the statement in question runs as

玄言之風 . . . 至義熙中謝混始改。

During the I Hsi period [405-419], Hsieh Hung began to change the Taoist vogue.

and is documented in Liu I-ch'ing's (劉義慶, 403-444) *Shih-shuo hsün-yü* 世說新語. See Yang Yung, 楊勇 ed., *Shih-shuo hsün-yü chiao-chien* 世說新語校箋 (Hong Kong, 1970: rpt. Taipei: Le T'ien Publishing House, 1972), p. 205.

67) Wang Yao, pp. 59 and 67.

In the classic statement that "Chuang and Lao had receded into the background and the theme of mountains and streams then began to flourish" under discussion above is embodied a transition of two styles of writing. This change of the manner of writing, as has been so expertly pointed out by Wang Yao and endorsed by Wang Wen-chin, did not in the least involve the shift of fundamentals such as thoughts and visions of life and the universe.<sup>59</sup> The writers of Taoist verse and *shan-shui shih* all want to evince the noumenal world, Tao, with different means to achieve the same end. The former camp of poets such as Kuo P'u (郭璞, 276-324), Sun Ch'o, Hsu Hsun, and Yen Hung (袁宏, 328-376) attempt to express the all-embracing and most perfect Tao by means of a metaphysical language highly studded with understatements and rich in undertones.<sup>60</sup> However, in contrast to, and as a revolt against, this type of poetry, the *shan-shui* poets such as Yin Chung-wen, Hsieh Hun, Yen Yen-chih (顏延之, 384-456), and Hsieh Ling-yun, in an attempt to approximate the same elusive and all-including Tao, all employ a more concrete and metaphoric language to write about nature, the manifestation of Tao itself.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, if there were any revolution taking place at the beginning of the Liu Sung Period, it is this change of the fashions of presentation which counts, but not the change of fundamentals, and this change had long been taking place at the times when the Han Dynasty was about to go to pieces. Under this perspective and the help of the newly modified and broadened definition of nature poetry, we wholly support Lin Keng's contention that Ts'ao Ts'ao's "*Kuan ts'ang-hai*" is the first nature poem in Chinese literature.

The most devastating point of Wang Wen-chin's article is his pointing out the stark fact that the so-called "newly-discovered" harbingers of nature poetry had long been discussed, and their succession and indebtedness were also taken notice of in Liu Hsieh's and Chung Hung's critical works more than 1500 years ago. Thus Frodsham's treatise is not of much significance,<sup>62</sup> and his purpose of rewrit-

59) Wang Yao, p. 63; and Wang Wen-chin, p. 10.

60) Wang Yao, pp. 57 and 63.

61) Ibid., pp. 63 and 65.

62) Wang Wen-chin, pp. 6 and 15.

development, not just "a sudden revolution" or anything suggesting suddenness which is simply over-exaggerating the case.<sup>55</sup>

In order not to over-strain the sentence, Wang further quotes a passage preceding the one under examination to reinforce his argument. Short as it is yet too long for our citation here, this passage had covered a span of 180 years<sup>56</sup> in which the Taoist verse and its antagonistic force, nature poetry in its embryonic state, were in constant confrontation and struggle to come to the fore.<sup>57</sup> Ironically, however, the past critics and even Frodsham himself in modern times are blind to the traces of evolution embodied here. They are simply distracted by Liu Hsien's famous dictum "Chuang and Lao had receded into the background and the theme of mountains and streams then began to flourish" so as either to pronounce Hsieh Ling-yun the founder of a literary genre or to deprive him the claim as Frodsham has done, or even to proclaim that "Taoist verse *suddenly* gave way to Nature poetry" (underlining mine) in this period.<sup>58</sup> However, the shift of sensibility in China, like we have witnessed in the Western case, had been a long process of development which inevitably involved various factors. It happens that Wang's account of the evolutionary process fits in very admirably with our argument earlier that there was a change of attitude toward nature taking place in the Wei Chin Period. It seems that without this kind of understanding, it is almost impossible not to explore the theme of nature without a loss of perspective. And this is the reason why we have to treat the shift in question in great length.

55) The phrase "a sudden revolution" and the following "that Taoist verse suddenly gave way to Nature poetry were evidently critical commonplaces of the time" are Frodsham's, in "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," 72 and 69.

56) That is from Cheng Shih ( 正始 , 240) through the Chin Dynasty to Liu Sung ( 劉宋 , 420).

57) The passage is from " 乃正始明道 " up to " 挺拔而為後矣 , " in Liu Hsieh, p. 67. English translation in Vincent Yu-chung Shih, p. 47. Wang Yao has made a very illuminating and original study of the transition from Taoist verse to *Shan-shui shih* and *t'ien-yuan shih* in "Hsuan-yen, shan-shui, t'ien-yuan," pp. 47-83. The book where this article appears was first published in 1948. The title of it appears in the bibliographical section of Frodsham's *The Murmuring Stream* and seems to have illuminated the author in a variety of ways without any acknowledgement of indebtedness in the text.

58) For this original view and some points discussed in this paragraph, I am greatly indebted to Wang Wen-chin, pp. 6-10.

terpreted or just overlooked by the past critics and Frodsham as well. Wang Wen-chin 王文進 in a very recent monograph, a rejoinder to Frodsham's investigation of the origins of Chinese nature poetry, argues that the formation of the gross error in question all lies in the misinterpretation of the following key passage in *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* 文心雕龍 .

宋初文詠，體有因革，莊老告退，而山水方滋。儷采百字之偶，爭價一句之奇，情必極貌以寫物，辭必窮力而追新，此近世之所競也。 53

At the beginning of the Sung [420-479] some development in the literary trend was evident. Chuang and Lao had receded into the background and the theme of mountains and streams then began to flourish. Writers vied in weaving couplets which might extend to hundreds of words, or in attempting to achieve the wondrous by a single line. In expressing feelings, they always made them in complete harmony with the things they described; and in literary phraseology they tried their best to achieve freshness. These are the fields in which recent writers have been competing.<sup>54</sup>

Attention should be directed, Wang contends, not to the second sentence of this passage which is an admirably close description of the formal characteristics of nature poetry, but to the first one which involves a transition of two styles of writing, a transition from *hsuan-yen shih* 玄言詩 or Taoist verse to *shan-shui shih*. An accurate explication of the two very crucial words, *yin* 因 and *fang* 方, of this particular sentence will shed some light to the manner of change. For Wang, *yin* should be explicated as “following and imitating 沿襲,” and *fang* as “exactly begin or happen to 正是, 正值” instead of “renovation or revolution 沿革” emphasizing the aspect of change, and “just 剛剛.” In the light of this new exegesis, the sentence will naturally take on the significance that the literature at the beginning of the Liu Sung Period had undergone a long process of

53) “*Ming-shih p'ien* 明詩篇”, “*Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, ed. Fan Wen-lan 范文瀾 (Rpt. Taipei: Ming Lun Bookstore, 1970), p. 67.

54) Vincent Yu-chung Shih's rendition in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Taipei; Chung Hwa Book Co. Ltd., 1970), p. 48.

Snyder. Thus some kind of broadening of the sensibility and vision is in nowhere more urgently needed than here.

In his pioneering and controversial monograph, "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," Frodsham explicitly defines nature poetry "as verse inspired by a mystic philosophy which sees all natural phenomena as symbols charged with a mysterious and cathartic power."<sup>49</sup> With this definition as a guideline, he, after dismissing the *Ch'u Tz'u* 楚辭 as genuine nature poetry, charges that

Chinese literary criticism has long been guilty of a gross over-simplification in seeing Nature poetry as springing in 'celestial panoply all armed' from Ling-yun's ingenious imagination, for his verse represents but the culminating point of a movement which had begun centuries before.<sup>50</sup>

To amend this, he contends with some satisfaction that Tso Ssu, Sun Ch'o, Hsu Hsun, Yin Chung-wen, Hsieh Hun, Yu Ch'an, Chan Fang-sheng, Chiang Yu, and even Monk Chih Tun, are all virtually the *forefathers* of Chinese nature poetry, not Hsieh Ling-yun who is merely the culminating point of a movement. To be sure, Frodsham's purpose of writing this article is to rewrite the history of "the development of Nature poetry."<sup>51</sup>

Grand indeed is Mr. Frodsham's purpose. However, how does it fare? *Most* (mind this pivotal word, not "all") of the traditional Chinese critics ranging from Shen Yo (沈約, 441-513) the historian to most of the Ch'ing critics such as Wang Shih-chen (王士禎, 1634-1711) and Shen Te-ch'ien (沈德潛, 1673-1769) are really guilty of over-simplifying the case by ascribing the place of the first of the great nature poets to Hsieh Ling-yun,<sup>52</sup> but not the far-sighted Liu Hsieh (劉勰, 466?-520) and Chung Hung (鍾嶸, fl. 505) and some modern critics such as Lin Keng and Wang Yao, most of whose opinions are either misin-

49) Frodsham, "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," 72.

50) *Ibid.*, 73.

51) *Ibid.*, 97.

52) For an enumeration and examination of these critics, see Frodsham, "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," 69-72; and Wang Wen-chin, p. 5.

Ch'o ( 孫綽 , 320-377), Hsu Hsun ( 許詢 , 320?-365), Yin Ch'ung-wen ( 殷仲文, d. 407), Hsieh Hun ( 謝混 , d. 412), Yu Ch'an ( 庾闡 , c. 286-339), Chan Fang-sheng ( 湛方生 , fl. fourth century), Chiang Yu ( 江適 , 303-362), and Chih Tun ( 支遁 , 314-366),<sup>47</sup> all of whose poems fit in very well with his criterion or tenet of fusing natural descriptions with certain "informing philosophy." It should be pointed out here that Frodsham's notion is a rather prevalent one which inevitably reminds one of William K. Wimsatt's far-reaching statement with respect to the structure of romantic nature poetry:

The common feat of the romantic nature poets was to read meanings into the landscape. The meaning might be . . . characteristically . . . concerning the spirit or soul of things—'the one life within us and abroad.' And that meaning especially was summoned out of the very surface of nature itself. It was embodied imaginatively and without the explicit religious or philosophic statements which one will find in classical or Christian instances.<sup>48</sup>

"To read meanings into the landscape" is indeed the supreme achievement of English nature poetry, and it aptly reflects the Westerners' "ever-present" or ubiquitous efforts of conceptualizing the outward world. In saying this, we are in no sense attempting to put ourselves on the dissenting side. In actuality, what we endeavor to perform is to point out the fact that their definitions of nature poetry frequently fall short of accommodating innumerable poems written by T'ao Yuan-ming, Hsieh Ling-yun, and Wang Wei, William Carlos Williams and Gary

47) These figures are taken to be the harbingers of Hsieh Ling-yun by Frodsham, in "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," 78-97.

48) *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington; University of Kentucky Press, 1954), p. 110. In a note to his "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," 103, Frodsham maintains that the following definition of the structure of Wordsworth's poetry by Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks can also serve well to define "the formal characteristics of Chinese landscape poetry":

Both tenor and vehicle are wrought in a parallel process out of the same material. The landscape is both the occasion of subjective reflection or transcendental insight and the source of figures by which the reflection or insight is defined . . . . The interest derives from our discerning the design and unity latent in a multiform sensuous picture [*Literary Criticism: A Short History* (N w York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 401].

Apparently, his notion of the structure of Chinese nature poetry is bound up with that of Wimsatt.



*shih* and *t'ien-yuan shih* and poems written in the same vein but earlier than when these two phrases were current in the Wei Chin Period.<sup>44</sup> For us, we mean nature poetry a particular type of poetry which accommodates and blends natural descriptions and didactic truths, but sometimes dispenses with the didacticism in question for the purpose of covering those purely experiential and phenomenological poems written by T'ao Yuan-ming, Hsieh Ling-yun ( 謝靈運 , 385-433), Wang Wei ( 王維 , 699-759) and others in China; William Carlos Williams, Gary Snyder, and some others in America, whose poems are primarily of images experssing the most unadulterated experience possible without the intrusion of alien thoughts and other elements of impurity. Sometimes, the broadest sense of the term is also employed. Unfortunately, most of the definitions and concepts of nature poetry are evolved and formulated either from Thomson's *The Seasons* or from the structure and underlying assumptions of romantic nature poetry. These definitions and concepts, when applied to the Chinese nature poems in question, frequently appear to be inadequate and awkward. For instance, while commenting on Ts'ao Ts'ao ( 曹操 , 155-220) "*Kuan ts'ang-hai* 觀滄海," a *yüeh-fu* ballad taken by some critic to be the first nature poem in Chinese literature,<sup>45</sup> Frodsham craftily dismisses its claim as the first nature poem under a fairly ambiguous disguise of approval and consent:

This *yüeh-fu*, though simple and stylized, is certainly the first example of a complete poem of this type that we possess. Yet the absence of any informing philosophy which would transform natural phenomena into symbols of a greater truth and mere emotion into a cathartic release from emotion, marks it off from later nature poetry.<sup>46</sup>

What he has in mind of is nothing but those poems which began to flourish in the third century of Christ and were heralded by Tso Ssu ( 左思 , 272-305), Sun

44) This is the broadest sense of the term. In a more rigid sense, it means that particular type of poetry starting with Thomson's *Seasons* and is synonymous with *Shan-shui shih* in China. See Frodsham, "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," *Asia Major*, 7 (1960), p. 68.

45) Lin Keng 林庚, *Chung-kuo wen-hsueh ch'ien-shih* 中國文學簡史 (Shanghai: Ku Tien Wen Hsueh Publishing House, 1957), I, 154.

46) *The Murmuring Stream*, 2 vols (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967), I, 92. A very similar version of these words also appears in "Landscape Poetry in China and Europe," 201; and "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," 76.

Western world. Further, it is intended to serve as a frame of reference for our further discussion of classical English nature poetry and, with some modification, for our discussion of classical Chinese nature poetry. In the following few paragraphs, we have to resume our examination of who the harbingers of Chinese nature poetry are.

In English literature, Thomson's *The Seasons* is unanimously avowed to be the first nature poem in the georgic tradition but distinctively different from pastoral poetry, and this can be taken as settled. In Chinese literature, it seems that the resolution of the issue of who the forefather of nature poetry is will hinge on the application of some such terms as "pastoral," "nature poetry," and "shan-shui-shih 山水詩." For us, the pastoral comes to mean those poems written by Theocritus, Virgil, Spenser, Pope, and some others to express the complexities of human life against a background of simplicity. And when it is employed as a synonym for the *t'ien-yuan shih* 田園詩 made known by T'ao Yuan-ming (陶淵明, 365-427), it is understood that some of the so-called pastoral "trappings" as sheep and nymph, and some of the technical parts as the singing contest, dialect, and even the refrain, can be regarded as non-essential. Moreover, details of husbandry, the voices of complaint, and even the delight of seclusion, which are so prominent in Chinese *t'ien-yuan shih*, should be allowed to play some more active role. With these qualifications in mind, we can then readily consent to Yu Kuo-en's (游國恩) argument that "July 七月," "K'ao-p'an 考槃," "Shih-mu 十畝," and "Heng-men 衡," in *Shih Ching*, are the first pastoral poems in Chinese literature,<sup>42</sup> but not nature poetry in the rigid sense of the term.

The nomenclature "nature poetry" remains an obvious neologism in Chinese literary criticism.<sup>43</sup> It has been recently introduced to comprise both *shan-shui*

42) *Hsien Ch'in wen-hs.ieh* 先秦文學 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1968), p. 104. In his edition *Chung-kuo shan-shui t'ien-yuan shih ts'u hsuan*, 2 vols 中國山水田園詩詞選, 上下冊 (Hong Kong: Shanghai Bookstore, 1966), Chun Shih 君實 includes "July," "Shih-mu," and another six poems of *Shih, Ching* in the section of *t'ien-yuan* presumably under the assumption that they are the forerunners of Chinese pastoral.

43) See, for instance, Lin Lu 林綠, "San-chung tzu-jan shih 三種自然詩," *Lin Lu tzu-hsuan-chi* 林綠自選集 (Taipei: Li Ming Cultural Enterprise Co. Ltd., 1975), pp. 175 and *passim*; and Fu Shu-hsien 傅述先, "Chang Hsin-ch'ang te 'Chung-kuo wen-hsueh yen-chiu' 張心滄的「中國文學研究」," *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly*, September 1, 1978, p. 11.

“With the perspective attained above, we can now investigate how the pastoral tradition both merges with and diverges from the development of nature poetry generally acclaimed to have been originated by James Thomson. Evidently, both pastoral poetry and nature poetry share the same enthusiasm and love for nature and to this extent only, nature poetry is really the heir and continuation of the older tradition. But what is more than apparent is that nature poetry shares very few of the underlying assumptions of the pastoral. It hardly ever or even never draws on the assistance of sheep and nymph, the properties of the pastoral, to inhabit its relatively more realistic and objectively visualized world,<sup>39</sup> a world in obvious contrast to that of pastoral poetry idealized along the Arcadian line. Secondly, pastoral poetry was grounded on a cultural background where man had a more intimate and harmonious relation with the outside world whereas nature poetry was a natural outcome of the liberation of the imagination and taste from the relentless trammel of the Christianity of the Middle Ages. Thirdly, according to Curtius’ recent researches, the *locus amoenus* sections of the earlier pastoral<sup>40</sup> demonstrate the crafty and profound influence of the *topos* of ancient rhetoric assimilated into the realm of poetry,<sup>41</sup> and this storehouse of knowledge does not readily makes its appearance in nature poetry as a part of its technique. Last but not the least is the very fact that the nature poetry introduced by Thomson will never resort to the art of disguise to work out the poet’s tenor; nature just predominates, and is sometimes transacted in a rather naturalistic manner.

The above discrimination is brief but essential for it can keep us informed of the convergence and divergence of the two seemingly similar traditions in the

- 39) The earlier “Winter” of Thomson’s *Seasons* is a poem of natural description. See Patricia M. Spacks, *The Varied God* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), p. 4. Alan D. McKillop points out the fact that *The Seasons* is about the Scottish border and that Thomson’s contemporaries regarded the poem to be primarily descriptive in *The Background of Thomson’s Seasons* (Minneapolis: 1942; rpt. Hamden: Archon Books, 1961), p. 4.
- 40) The places where the “trappings” or paraphernalia of the pastorals of Theocritus and Virgil appear are the *locus amoenus* sections of the poems in question. See note 26 of this paper for details of these sections.
- 41) For an understanding of the origins and function, the forms and its ultimate penetration into all literary genres of *topos*, see Curtius’ pioneering and illuminating work *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, especially pp. 68-105, and 183-202.

lies in its ability to accommodate all the interests in the life of the poet's time,<sup>31</sup> especially after the broadening of its sphere in the hands of the Renaissance poets.<sup>32</sup> The elegy, the panegyric, social and political comments, and religious satire all owe their origins to the earliest pastorals.<sup>33</sup> Thus in actuality, the pastoral partakes all the vehemence and concern for almost all realms of reality under the coating of innocence and simplicity.

Nature, therefore, together with time, seems to occupy a rather prominent part in literature. However, from the beginning, nature was not so much some particularized location as the projection of the poet's idea of it.<sup>34</sup> Very much like that concretized and perpetuated in *Han fu*, it was simply not intended to represent reality.<sup>35</sup> Though Theocritus built most of the setting of his *Idylls* against the background of Sicily where he spent his boyhood, yet he did not attempt at local color but just idealize it from the perspective of the overblown civilization of Alexandria of Ptolemy Philadelphus.<sup>36</sup> Arcadia, a proper name so much remembered in later ages, is another idealized *locus amoenus*. In actuality, it was that portion of Greece that bordered on Sparta and was reputed for its inhabitants' predilection for poetic contests. It first made its appearance in Theocritus' masterpiece<sup>37</sup> and later was taken over by Virgil to function as an imaginary world, a spiritual landscape, which represents the projection of an ideal. A modern critic states, "the Arcadia of his eclogues represents a conflation of Sicilian with Northern and Southern Italian landscapes, a union of reality and idealism which works to the idealization of all three. It becomes a universal."<sup>38</sup>

31) See, for instance, Paul E. McLane, "Spenser's Double Audience in *The Shepheardes Calender*," *Notes & Queries*, 6 (1959), 249; and Isabel G. Maccaffrey, "Allegory and Pastoral in *The Shepheardes Calender*," *Journal of English Literary History*, 36 (March, 1969), 91.

32) See, for instance, A. C. Hamilton, "The Argument of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*," *ELH*, 23, No. 3 (1956), 176; and Maccaffrey, 90 and 108.

33) Harry Berger, Jr., "Mode and Diction in *The Shepheardes Calender*," *Modern Philology*, 67 (November, 1969), 141; and Marinelli, p. 12.

34) Marinelli, p. 37.

35) Curtius, p. 183.

36) Marinelli, pp. 10 and 39.

37) In *idylls* 2, 7, and 22 of *The Idylls*. See *Greek Pastoral Poetry*, pp. 53, 77, and 126.

38) Marinelli, p. 41.

almost every poem written in this tradition. By means of these elements and devices, the pastoral poets are able to create a microcosm of innocence, freshness, and simplicity in drastic contrast to the sophisticated and corrupted macrocosm. In this vein, William Empson's often quoted definition of this literary form as essentially the "process of putting the complex into the simple"<sup>28</sup> appears terse and appropriate. However, this nutshell definition also has its shortcoming for it is too concise to take into consideration of the formal aspects of the genre. In view of this, Peter V. Marinelli also evolves his definition as "the idylls of Theocritus, the eclogues of Virgil and Spenser, the Pastorals of Pope, are all poems of the same formal type, 'mixed' poems of description and dialogue, part-narrative, part-dramatic, and usually but not always in either hexameter or pentameter verse."<sup>29</sup> Doubtlessly, this is a far better definition for it has taken into account not only of the tradition but also the formal aspects of the genre. However, it has also its demerit for it has left out the governing principles and process of creation which are the emphasis of Empson's definition. In our opinion, a far better definition than the above two should be a synthesis of them, accommodating and assimilating all the aspects mentioned above. This definition, as we have to admit here, is good only when it is employed to discuss works written in the Western tradition, and it should not, unless with some modification, be imposed upon similar works written in China which are, for one thing, not in hexameter or pentameter and, for the other, not necessarily equipped with all the "trappings" and devices of their counterparts.

Besides epic, the pastoral seems to have exerted the greatest influence on the later generations of writers.<sup>30</sup> This can be easily explained by its origins and its underlying assumptions. Man seems to have a universal longing and nostalgia for the age of innocence, the state of simplicity, and something felt to be lost in the immediate past and even in the past. In this sense, the pastoral seems to have shared something common with the Utopian literature which also has the tendency toward primitivism and the past. However, its chief divergence from the latter

28) *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), p. 23.

29) Marinelli, p. 8.

30) Curtius, p. 187.

itself. Their contemplation of nature is the contemplation of Reality itself.<sup>24</sup> They might have striven to see some meaning in things, but what they endeavored to convey were their most genuine, unsophisticated experiences exemplified by some of the works of T'ao Yuan-ming, Hsieh Ling-yun, and others. Thus the Chinese change of taste in the Wei Chin Period can be summarized as: one, the two major religions helped to work out the necessary rationale for the enthrallment with nature, and two, the social and political milieus helped to bring out the unexpected and fresh discovery of the beauty of nature. And these ingredients are not wholly similar with those helping to usher in a new sensibility at around the turn of the Seventeenth Century in England.

At this juncture before we can determine who is the forerunner of nature poetry in China, it seems that some words of clarification of the subtle relationship between nature poetry and its antecedent, the pastoral poetry, are needed. In the West, the pastoral was inaugurated by Theocritus (308-240)<sup>25</sup> and developed by Virgil (70-19 B.C.) whose works are entitled *The Idylls*, *The Eclogues* or *Bucolics* respectively and constitute the possible dimensions of this particular mode.<sup>26</sup> What is characteristic of this mode of writing are the so-called pastoral "trappings" or paraphernalia such as woods, hill, meadow, spring, bird, sheep, and nymph,<sup>27</sup> and the application of such overt devices as the refrain, the singing match, dialect, and the formulaic verse, to make up a conspicuous hallmark in

24) Wang Yao, p. 61.

25) These dates are taken from Anthony Holden's "Introduction" to his translation *Greek Pastoral Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), pp. 11 and 17. Curtius thinks that "Theocritus of Syracuse is the true originator of pastoral poetry," in *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, tr. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 187.

26) The idyll is derived from the Greek "eidyllion" meaning "image" or "picture"; the eclogue, from "eclogē" meaning "selection" or "fragment"; and the bucolic, from "boukolos" meaning a keeper of cattle as opposed to a shepherd or goatherd. See Peter V. Marinelli, *Pastoral*, Series 15 of *The Critical Idiom*, ed. John D. Jump (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1971), p. 8.

27) These "trappings" occur most unmistakably in the first stanza of "Idyll I," the seventeenth stanza of "Idyll V," the third stanza of "Idyll XI," and the second stanza of "Idyll XXII," of Theocritus' *The Idylls*, in Holden's translation *Greek Pastoral Poetry*, pp. 45, 66, 89, and 121; and in Eclogues II, 1-13; III, 55-59; V, 55-61; VIII, 21-24; X, 8-20, 31-43, of Virgil's *Eclogues*, in *The Poems of Virgil*, trans. James Rhoades, No. 13 of *The Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), pp. 6, 11, 17-18, 25, 32, and 33. The places where these "trappings" appear are the *locus amoenus* sections of the poems in question.

advocates for the obliteration of the barrier between Self and Non-Self or subject and object and the identification of ourselves with the outer world;<sup>22</sup> and Tsou, maintains that there is a close correspondence between human affairs and the supernatural tidings and upheavals. In their eyes, nature is not necessarily something external, vicious, and something to be conquered for the benefit of human beings. On the contrary, it is always immanent. And they resolutely encourage us to actively participate in the rhythm of cosmo and to be one with the outside world. Besides, Confucius' pronouncement that "The wise find pleasure in water; the virtuous find pleasure in hills 知者樂水，仁者樂山"<sup>23</sup> also works as a stimulant and even a rationale for anyone to entertain such indulgences. Yet in spite of all these, nature poetry in the rigid sense of the term did not emerge in the Pre-Ch'in Period (before 212 B.C.) nor in the Han Dynasty. This is doubtlessly a matter of definition which will be elucidated elsewhere. Above all, the cultural and philosophical climate crystalized in the form of Confucianism was not propitious to the emergence of such a genre in the Dynasties of Ch'in (221-207 B. C.) and Han.

In *Han fu*, a very elaborate and symmetrical prose-poetry chiefly devoted to the delineation of natural scenery, houses, and the imperial huntings, the Chinese predilection for nature seems to assume a disguised form. Most of the descriptions, in hyperbolic terms, are fictitious and decorative, anything but genuine. That is why the *fu* of this particular period are seldom treated for their own artistic merits except for the demonstration of the craft of language. It was at the collapse of the Han Dynasty that nature poetry virtually began to flourish. Political unrest and the eclipse of Confucianism encouraged the flourishing of a non-engagemental philosophy, the so-called Neo-Taoism, which is favorable to the flight of Pegasus. The literati and social elite of this time, in order to escape being killed by the despotic rulers, either took their refuge in the deep woods or pretended madness. Incidentally, Buddhism which had been introduced into China in the later part of the Early Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 7) also began to prosper at this time. The people, encouraged by Taoism and Buddhism, tried to live as close to nature as possible. Their abodes in the mountains were parts of nature

22) Wang Yao, p. 60.

23) *Lun-yu*, VI. 8a.

Confucians, it was sometimes held with a sense of detachment, sometimes not, and sometimes even taken as some object to be succumbed.<sup>17</sup> In a certain sense, the Confucian masters are very much like the ancient Greeks who attempted to "humanize" the outside world while the Taoists, who are more like the Rousseauist-Romanticists, endeavored to "naturalize" man.<sup>18</sup> In the eyes of this later camp of thinkers, nature is the least personal and human-willed. It may be equivalent to the ever-abiding, the all-including, the most ubiquitous force Tao. It may be interchangeably dubbed "t'ien 天," "ming 命," and correspondent with "naturalness," and the myriad natural objects of the world.<sup>19</sup> Later in the hand of Tsou Yen and his sorcerer school, it was conceived as a vast pattern of order in terms of *yin-yang* and the Five Elements.<sup>20</sup> Like what is its counterpart idea in the Western thought,<sup>21</sup> nature has also been in China a controlling idea ever since, if not the antiquity, at least, the establishment of Taoism which has since then exerted very powerful influences on the creation of literary works.

Unlike the Western peoples (the ancient Greeks not included), the Chinese have long cultivated a harmonious communion with nature. In Chinese literature, the classical poets' intimacy and harmony with nature, especially after the Wei-Chin Period, was mostly built upon the aesthetic and philosophical grounds provided by Chuang-tzu, by Tsou Yen and his disciples. To be specific, Chuang

17) Ibid., 51, and the second part of the article in the same magazine, 15, No. 3 (1957), 91-92.

18) In *Rousseau and Romanticism*, p. 269, Babbitt remarks, "The Greek, one may say, humanized nature; the Rousseauist naturalizes man."

19) For an understanding of Tao and its possible derivatives, see Chapters 1, 4, 6, 21, 25, 34, and 42 of Lao-tzu's *Tao-te ching* 道德經, ed. Ho Shang Kung 河上公, SPTK edition (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1936); "*Ta chung shih* 大宗師," "*Ch'iu-shui* 秋水," "*Yang sheng chu* 養生主," and "*T'ien-yun* 天運," of *Chuang-tzu chi-shih*, pp. 246-47, 588-91, 124, and 494. For modern elucidation and examination of these, see Hsu Cho-yun, p. 91, and Chen Hui-hua 陳慧樺, "*Chuang-tzu te tz'u-chang yu hsiung-wei feng-ke* 莊子的詞章與雄偉風格," *Wen-hsueh ch'uang-tso yu shen-ssu* 文學創作與神思 (Taipei: Kuo Chia Bookstore, 1976), p. 150.

20) Hsu Cho-yun, 93.

21) Willey, p. 2.



Grand Tour fashionable with the aristocracy after the isolation of the country from the rest of Europe, during the greater part of the seventeenth century."<sup>12</sup> The Grand Tour, as we can now realize, is by no means the sole factor contributing to the working out of the consciousness in question. However, as was evidenced by the journal-letters and other records of John Dennis (1657-1734), Shaftesbury (1671-1713), and Joseph Addison (1672-1719), it did help to ignite the very sparks of love of nature latent in the deepest recesses of the mind.<sup>13</sup> In short, the above-mentioned are the forces and ingredients which helped to usher in a change of sensibility around the turn of the Seventeenth Century.<sup>14</sup> The immediate outcome of this shift of sentiment is the inauguration of the first English nature poet in the person of Thomson who can be considered as one of the harbingers of the Romantic Movement as far as the treatment of nature is concerned.

On the Chinese side, there is also a change of taste taking place during the Wei Chin Period ( 魏晉時代, 220-420). Before this watershed, nature, as was in the case of England before Thomson's age, was seldom treated for its own sake but as a setting for human action.<sup>15</sup> In order to arrive at this turning point with more concrete terms, we have to begin with the Chinese notions of nature and their relationship with the outside world in immemorial times like we have done with respect to the Westerners' vision of the universe in the very beginning of this paper.

Like the English, the Chinese attitudes towards nature are rather ambivalent. When equated with the powerful and wistful Heaven ( 天 ), nature is almost like a god, to be revered and feared.<sup>16</sup> More often, as is in the case of the ancient

12) Cited by Nicolson, p. 25.

13) Nicolson, pp. 276-323.

14) In "Landscape Poetry in China and Europe" *Comparative Literature*, 19 (Summer, 1967), p. 193, Frodsham remarks that "Western society did not really begin to appreciate landscape until the middle of the seventeenth century or so."

15) Wang Yao, 王瑤, "Hsuan-yen, shan-shui, t'ien-yuan 玄言, 山水, 田園," *Chung-ku wen-hsueh feng-mao* 中古文學風貌 (Hong Kong: Chung Liu Publishing House, 1973), p. 61; and Wang Wen-chin 王文進, "Chuang-Lao kao-t'ui, erh shan-shui fang tzu' - - chien p'ing J. D. Frodsham 'Chung-Kuo shan-shui-shih te ch'i-yuan' i-wen" 莊老告退, 而山水方滋」解——兼評 J. D. Frodsham 「中國山水詩的起源」一文, " *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly*, August 1, 1978, p. 4.

16) Hsu Cho-yun 許倬雲, "Hsien-Ch'in chu-tzu tui t'ien te k'an-fa 先秦諸子對天的看法," *Ta Lu Magazine*, 15, No. 2 (1957), 48-49.

*Mountains*, that seem but so many Wens and unnatural Protuberancies upon the face of the Earth,” and of the rivers and mountains as the “more rude and careless strokes and delineaments of *Divine Providence* in the World.”<sup>7</sup> Historically, as is mentioned earlier, he is the very person to make a remarkably significant synthesis of the infinite Spirit and His finite manifestations in space resulting from an abrupt and dramatic change of attitude in the span of four years—from 1642 to 1646.<sup>8</sup> But unlike his immediate successor, Burnet, who was drawn to admire the “rude” surroundings in spite of himself, he was consistent in his mood: he cherished no pleasure in the “rude and careless strokes” of the earth. In this vein, then, we discover that Burnet’s appreciation of the great natural objects played a more decisive role in shaping a new sensibility.

We should not blind ourselves, however, to say that this is the whole scene of the shift of sensibility. Other ingredients also contribute to the development. Longinianism figured as one of these forces. According to Samuel Monk, who has most exhaustively traced the Longinian tradition in England, the year 1674 virtually functioned as a turning point in the influence and reputation of Longinus in England and France.<sup>9</sup> Before this date, John Hall was the first to make an English translation of Longinus’ treatise and entitle it *Peri Hupsous or Dionysius Longinus of the Height of Eloquence* in 1652. But it had not roused the expected ripples of the pool. The fact remains that before 1674, “[ Longinus ] was known, but was not often quoted, and he had not yet become an authority.<sup>10</sup> In this pivotal year, Longinus’ work was again rendered and introduced into England, this time not by an Englishman, but by a French poet-critic Boileau and in the medium of French. Immediately, it caught on the wing and became a vogue, doubtlessly contributing much to help shape the aesthetic concept of the Eighteenth Century sublime.<sup>11</sup> Besides, “the awakening of England to an appreciation of landscape,” Christopher Hussey declares, “was a direct result of the

7) Cited by Tuveson, p. 35.

8) Tuveson, pp. 23-24.

9) *The Sublime* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 21.

10) Monk, p. 20.

11) *Ibid.*, pp. 17ff.

for our comprehension, they fill and overbear the mind with their Excess, and cast it into a pleasing kind of stupor and admiration (Book I, Chap. XI).<sup>3</sup>

His infatuation with the great objects of Nature clearly anticipated Addison's theory of the great or sublime by almost thirty years. For him, very much like for the Nineteenth Century poets, nature is no longer some controlling idea abstract and intangible but some natural objects sensitively perceived. A "new susceptibility of soul," in Bellamy's phrase,<sup>4</sup> had indeed developed. This kind of response, however, was practicably impossible in a few decades earlier. For instance, in 1611, John Donne (1573-1631), lamenting the corruption of microcosm, geocosm, and macrocosm, wrote:

But keeps the earth her round proportion still?  
Doth not a Tenarif, or higher Hill  
Rise so high like a Roche, that one might thinke  
The floating Moone would shipwrack there, and sinke? ...  
Are these but warts, and pock-holes in the face  
Of earth? Thinke so: but yet confesse, in this  
The worlds proportion disfigured is.<sup>5</sup>

The underlying presuppositions might appear strange to us but not to Donne's contemporaries who imagined the universe as one of order, harmonious form and bounds, and that beauty chiefly consisted in regularity, symmetry, and harmony of forms and colors.

The notion that mountains are a blemish to the earth goes back to the theological positions long held by Christian and Jewish Fathers arguing strongly for the conception of the "round proportion" of the earth.<sup>6</sup> In approximately three decades later, Donne's aversion of the disproportion of the earth still found its repercussion in the person of More who spoke of those "rudely-scattered

3) Cited by Tuveson, p. 34, and by Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background* (Boston: Beacon Paperback, 1961), P. 30. For an account of this important book and its place in the age, see Willey. pp. 27-31.

4) Quoted by Tuveson, p. 34.

5) "An Anatomie of the World: The First Anniversary," *John Donne's Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Grierson (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 216-17.

6) Marjorie H. Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* (New York: The Norton Library, 1963), p. 28.

wicked deeds, falls on land and people alike: nature is subject to the moral order. In short, for the ancient civilizations, nature might be a world-view which a poet assumes or wrestles with, or it is a gentle, special world selected, as in the pastorals of Theocritus and Virgil, to function as a counterpoise of spirit for man's hectic life in courts and cities and to serve the perpetually recurring theme of innocence and freshness.

Inherited from these two main cultures, the English attitudes toward nature are ambivalent and indeterminate. It seems that they are influenced more by the Hebraistic thoughts than by the Greeks' ideologies. That is why even as late as the early Eighteenth Century, perhaps with the exceptions of the pioneers James Thomson, Richard Savage, David Mallet, Aaron Hill and John Dyer, they still cherished no harmonious communion with the outer world.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, they attempted to conquer this extraneous, and even vicious world, by subordinating it to the Almighty God or to their own visions. But according to one eminent historian of ideas, the 1640's seemed to function as a watershed in the shift of aesthetic taste in which the materials for the new world vision were worked out by Henry More (1614-1687) and Robert Boyle (1627-1691).<sup>2</sup> It is these same materials which made possible the emergence of another generation of thinkers through whom a new sensibility of nature was virtually ushered in.

Perhaps the most important of the aforementioned generation, Thomas Burnet (1635?-1715) was the first to describe what amounted to a new sensibility in his masterpiece *The Theory of the Earth* (1684-1690):

The greatest objects of Nature are, methinks, the most pleasing to behold; and next to the great Concave of the Heavens, and those boundless Regions where the Stars inhabit, there is nothing that I look upon with more pleasure than the wide Sea and Mountains of the Earth. There is something august and stately in the Air of these things that inspires the mind with great thoughts and passions; we do naturally upon such occasions think of God and his greatness, and whatsoever hath but the shadow and appearance of Infinite, as all things have that are too big

1) A. H. Thompson, "Thomson and Natural Description in Poetry," *Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1907-1917), X, 97.

2) Ernest Tuveson, "Space, Deity and 'Natural Sublime'," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 12 (1951), 23, 33-34.

# 自然詩與田園詩傳統

## NATURE POETRY AND THE PASTORAL TRADITION

Chen Peng Hsiang

Nature, now frequently taken as synonymous with external phenomena and opposite to our inner needs, is seen differently by the Western and the Eastern peoples. In prehistoric times, it was taken as grim and vicious, a preternatural force with some horrid and unconquerable being lurking behind it. This fear of nature is diluted by the passage of many millenniums and man's gradual mastery of and familiarity with his environment. Thus in Homer's epics, nature is no longer taken as antihuman. It is a large, solid, brilliantly lighted world of myriad objects. Life and nature are accepted, and presented in their own right. In the Old Testament, nature is rigorously subordinated to God, and details are given, never for their own sake, but for the manifestation of religious truth. In this is evolved the kind of Christian viewpoint that the myriad objects of nature are the manifestation of God's grace, the latest apostle being Gerard Manley Hopkins in the Nineteenth Century. Along with this is the way of taking nature as a fallen world. The crevices, crests, and crags of earth are seen as God's punishments of sins and sinners. Thus nature is looked upon, on the one hand, with praise, and on the other, with awe and fear by the Western peoples.

In contrast to the Hebrews' passive attitude toward nature is the Hellenic people's more flexible stance. To them, nature becomes many things: god-haunted, a goddess herself, a demiurge, a Heraclitean flux, an unreal world of appearance, an unceasing and godless play of atoms. As a whole, they attempt to establish a friendly relationship with the outer world whether by personifying or by analyzing it. And the divergences are ascribable to the temperaments of the poets and the philosophers. To the philosophers such as Parmenides and Plato, the outer world is delusive, and the final reality is a flux of ideas. But the poets' attitudes are more flexible. In Sophocles' *Oedipus*, as in other plays and poems, man and nature are joint heirs of weal and woe; the plague, caused by Oedipus'