Dialogues
Between
Chinese
and
Western
Poetics

Diffusion of Distances

Wai-lim Yip

Diffusion of Distances

Dialogues between Chinese and Western Poetics

WAI-LIM YIP

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章

University of California Press
BERKELEY LOS ANGELES OXFORD

University of California Press
Berkeley and Los Angeles, California

University of California Press, Ltd.
Oxford, England

© 1993 by
The Regents of the University of California

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Yip, Wai-lim.
Diffusion of distances : dialogues between Chinese and Western poetics / Wai-lim Yip.
p. cm.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-520-07736-9 (alk. paper)
1. Chinese language – Versification. 2. Chinese poetry – History and criticism. 3. Poetics. I. Title.
PL1279.Y56 1993
895.1′1009 – dc20 92-15325
CIP

Printed in the United States of America
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984. ♾

Diffusion of Distances

For Tzu-mei
June
David
&
Jonas

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

Acknowledgments

A slightly different form of chapter 1 first appeared as a conference paper, "The Use of 'Models' in East–West Comparative Literature," in *Tamkang Review* 6, no. 2, and 7, no. 1 (October 1975–April 1976). An earlier, much shorter version of chapter 2 was published as the Introduction to my *Chinese Poetry: Major Modes and Genres* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). Portions of chapter 3 appeared in *New Asia Academic Bulletin* 1 (1978) and as "A New Line, A New Mind: Language and the Original World" in *Literary Theory Today*, ed. M. A. Abbas and T. W. Wong (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 1981). Parts of chapters 2 and 4 appeared as "Classical Chinese and Modern Anglo-American Poetry: Convergence of Languages and Poetry" in *Comparative Literature Studies* 40, no. 1 (March 1974), and "Aesthetic Consciousness of Landscape in Chinese and Anglo-American Poetry" originally appeared in *Comparative Literature Studies* 15, no. 2 (June 1978). (Copyright 1974 and 1978 by The Pennsylvania State University; reproduced by permission of the Pennsylvania State University Press.) Chapter 6 was included as "Reflections on Historical Totality and the Study of Modern Chinese Literature" in the Comparative Literature Conference Proceedings in *Tamkang Review* 10, no. 1 and no. 2 (Fall–Winter 1979). A fragment of the Epilogue appeared in an article entitled "The Framing of Critical Theories: A Reconsideration" in *Asian Culture Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1968). I am grateful to the editors and publishers for permission to reprint.

The book was conceived as early as the academic year 1969–70 under an ACLS grant, although some of the essays written then were channeled into other contexts. In the next stage of the book's metamorphosis, the Committee on Research of the University of California came to my aid. To both the ACLS and the Committee on Research I would like to acknowledge my debt. While I was writing these essays, many colleagues and friends afforded inspiration and stimulation. I would like to single out for special thanks Professor Claudio Guillên (University of California, San Diego, and Harvard University), Professor Roy Harvey Pearce (University of California, San Diego), and

Professor Fredric Jameson (University of California, San Diego, and Duke University) for their continual trust in my ability to bridge the gap between Chinese and Western poetics, giving me courage to break into new terrains. A special friend, Professor William Rogers of San Diego State University, read my entire manuscript with fine discernments that made me reconsider some parts of my argument. He also made many stylistic suggestions. So did Professor Dan McLeod, who likes most of the poets I studied in this book. I am also grateful to Professor Stanley Chodorow, Dean of Humanities and Arts in the University of California, San Diego, for spending many hours in converting my manuscript from its more complicated computer format to a PC format that I could work with. It would have been a total nightmare if I had to retype everything from beginning to end. Finally, all my heartfelt thanks and love must go to my wife, Tzu-mei, who has been doing everything she can to keep me fit and sane so that I could embark on this rugged journey with comfort and satisfaction.

A Note on Transliteration

This book employs the Wade-Giles system of transliteration because to use the pinyin system would alter too many names, phrases, and titles long established in the English world. However, I have prepared a conversion chart at the end of the book for those who are familiar only with the pinyin system.

Contents

Acknowledgments ix

A Note on Transliteration xi

PROLOGUE 1

1 THE USE OF "MODELS" IN EAST–WEST COMPARATIVE LITERATURE 8

2 SYNTAX AND HORIZON OF REPRESENTATION IN CLASSICAL CHINESE AND MODERN AMERICAN POETRY 29

3 LANGUAGE AND THE REAL-LIFE WORLD 63

4 AESTHETIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF LANDSCAPE IN CHINESE AND ANGLO-AMERICAN POETRY 100

5 "SECRET ECHOES AND COMPLEMENTARY CORRESPONDENCES"—A CHINESE THEORY OF READING 138

6 REFLECTIONS ON HISTORICAL TOTALITY AND THE STUDY OF MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE 163

EPILOGUE: THE FRAMING OF CRITICAL THEORIES IN CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT 185

Notes 209

Romanization Conversion Table: Wade-Giles/Pinyin 231

Index 237

Prologue

> Our ideal of vital being rises not in our identification in a hierarchy of higher forms but in our identification with the universe. To compose such a symposium of the whole, such a totality, all the old excluded orders must be included. The female, the proletariat, the foreign, the animal and vegetative; the unconscious and the unknown.
>
> —Robert Duncan, "Rites of Participation"

> In a sense, East–West studies are or could become the climax for which all these years of comparative study would have been a preparation. The great theoretical issues regarding literature in general will only be fully faced, I think, when two great bodies of poetry, the Chinese and the European and Anglo-American, are jointly known and reflected upon!
>
> —Claudio Guillên, letter to author

These are transparent words; both Duncan and Guillên propose to widen the circumference of consciousness, a point that needs no explanation and speaks quite eloquently for itself. And yet, both in the classroom and in the published world, neither "the symposium of the whole" nor "mutual reflection" between the East and the West (nor, for that matter, between the "written" and the "oral" traditions) has been given much serious attention. Despite a good deal of earnest protest about cultural exchange, ethnocentrism (open or subterranean) remains stubbornly entrenched in Western academia. One may argue here that Oriental departments and other programs of ethnic studies have been established (some are nearly a century old) and that many translations have been made, some in as many as eighty to ninety versions. But what is at stake here is not a question of "inclusion" *only* (though, clearly, most current humanities sequences are Eurocentric and many remain Euro-exclusive) but *also* a question of representation. Simply put, it is a question of whether the indigenous aesthetic horizon is allowed to represent itself *as it is* and *not as it is framed* within the hermeneutical habits and the poetic economy of the West. The essays collected in this volume, written for the most part between 1973 and 1988, compose a series of responses and challenges to, and dialogues with, the dominant mode of interpretation, which has not been particularly hospitable to literatures founded on non-Western aesthetic values or expectations.

I became aware of the problems of representation in cross-cultural contexts very early, although I did not really get a handle on this until I began to write on Pound's translations of Chinese poetry. Because I was a bilingual poet and translator, long before I began my graduate work, I read poetry across national boundaries as a matter of course. Of the translations I was reading at that time, English translations of Chinese poetry disturbed me the most. I found, to my dismay, formidable distortions of the Chinese indigenous aesthetic horizon in treacherous modes of representation. I was so enraged that when I published my first outcry against this distress,[1] I could not resist using Ezra Pound's judgmental phrase: "Wrong from the start." Translation is a "pass·port" between two cultures in which they face each other and through which they pass from one state to the other. It involves the confrontation, negotiation, and modification of cultural codes and systems. It requires a "double consciousness" that includes the state of mind of the original author (source horizon), as it was constituted by what Pound once called "the power of tradition, of centuries of race consciousness, of agreement, of association," and that of the expressive potentials of the target language (target horizon), which has its own "power of tradition, of centuries of race consciousness, of agreement, of association." Most English translations of Chinese poetry simply let the target horizon mask and master the source horizon. The translators seemed unaware that classical Chinese poetry possesses a whole different set of cultural-aesthetic assumptions, that its syntax is in many ways inseparable from perception, and that by imposing Indo-European linguistic habits upon the classical Chinese without any adjustment they were significantly changing the source horizon, a situation I tried to rectify in my *Ezra Pound's "Cathay"* (1969) and in the Introduction to my *Chinese Poetry: Major Modes and Genres* (1976). Unforgivable distortions and misfits are many, some of which are given a philosophical and aesthetic probing in chapter 2. Just to illustrate the kind and extent of these kinds of distortion, let me offer an example here that is not discussed in my book, although it is still a widely circulated misconception: that the Tao (Way) of the Taoists can be rendered as (the Christian) God or as (the Platonic) Logos!

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

Clearly, the case of treacherous representation of the OTHER in these translations calls for simultaneous investigations into both the source horizon and the target horizon, with equal attention and respect to the specific ways each of these horizons is constituted. When I became a graduate student in the early 1960s, I had hoped to be enlightened with methodologies and guidelines for such an investigation. As it turned out, the problems and questions I raise in chapter 1—"The Use of 'Models' in East–West Comparative Literature"—and have implied in the rest of this book were hardly taken up back then. There was (and I believe still is) a vague trust in some fundamental "universalism," as if one could judge all literatures on a single scale, as if there were one master narrative to which we can resort for all our evaluative activities, as if what had been valid literary standards for all Europe must also be valid for the rest of the world! Awareness of differences in models, the kind that I call for and outline in chapters 1 and 6 and the Epilogue, was totally absent, let alone the much-needed "self-reflection" on the various problems resulting from the unconscious internalization of certain models as primary norms and absolutes. For East–West students, there were no books to follow. Students were (and, unfortunately, still are in many universities in the West) often sent to take courses in separate departments—English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese, and so forth—as if, after sufficient exposure to different literatures, they would naturally come up with some truly universal "common poetics." But the fact is that most Western students and critics of Chinese literature are still being guided, unconsciously, by the critical assumptions of Western literature. I must hasten to add that there is nothing wrong with Western critical methods. As a matter of fact, with proper telescoping, they can be very stimulating and enriching to the study of Chinese literature, but the lack of awareness of differences in models will, at certain crucial moments, lead the scholar to judge the wrong things for the wrong cultural-aesthetic reasons.

What happened in the classroom also happened in published studies. Until quite recently, when a small number of scholars began to produce studies with concerns similar to mine, most articles and books on East-West literary relations have focused mainly on surface resemblances between two genetically unrelated works, the so-called parallel studies, without questioning the aesthetic grounding of each work separately, through comparison and contrast, so that the deeper, differing working dynamics of each system can be revealed.[2]

The distress I encountered as a graduate student and as a teacher, both in the classroom and in the published world, has larger implications for university education. For example, if we are to have a "symposium of the whole," how are we to reorganize the humanities sequence, the so-called great books or major writers sequence, the history of critical theories, the history of world literature, and the history of ideas? How are we to rewrite history in its totality? Central in the answers to these questions is that the word "international" should mean, literally, *inter*national, *inter*perception, and *inter*reflection; it should mean that we must not see other cultures from one master code or one hegemonic center of concern but from several differing codes or several centers of concerns. The goal of cultural exchange, like economic exchange, should not be to conquer one mode with another but to provide a truly open forum for dialogue through interreflection and "double perception"—that is, a gap or rift created by the copresence of two sets of provisional responses to two cultural "worlds." This gap or double perception allows us to mark the coding activities of either system by those of the other so as to understand more fully the making and the unmaking of discourses and hierarchies of aesthetics and power. As I say in the Epilogue, different critical and aesthetic positions will have a chance to look at each other frankly, to recognize among themselves potential areas of convergence and divergence as well as their possibilities and limitations both as isolated theories and as cooperative projects to extend each other. Here, I find that Fredric Jameson's recent reading of Gadamer complements my views quite cogently:

> Each hermeneutical confrontation, between an interpreter and a "text," between an interpreter of one culture and the text of another culture, always mobilizes, at each pole of the interpretive encounter, a whole deployment of prejudice and ideology: one in terms of which the text, as an act, is to be understood, the other which motivates the interpreter in his attempt to appropriate this alien act. Such false problems as that of the "suspension of disbelief" imply that historical distance of this kind . . . is the fundamental barrier to understanding and needs in one way or another to be lifted, abolished or "suspended" in order for any adequate "historical" understanding or reading to take place. . Not only is this ideal of some abolition of the content of prejudices of either or both sides of the hermeneutic encounter impossible, but such a suppression would in any case be undesirable, since what is wanted is very precisely just this encounter between ideological fields of text and interpreter. "Fusion" is not to be understood as the abolition of difference,

> as the "formation of one horizon" . . . but a preservation of tension, a coexistence within radical difference, a relationship by way of radical difference.[3]

Thus, this orientation would not condone mapping a course for modern world culture or history solely through the coding interests of the West, namely the appropriation of the non-Western world in terms of the interests of globalization (or multinational trade) as charted out by the consumer-oriented, goal-directed, instrumental reason of the post-Enlightenment West. In place of the principle of domination, I would like to see a cartography that allows students to follow two or several courses at the same time. Likewise, in the mapping of a department of literature, a humanities sequence, or a book of the major texts of critical theory, I would like to see a truly open dialogue that preserves the tension between cultural differences and that remains open to rethinking the ways in which various trajectories of theories have been constituted. The margin must be brought back onto the stage as an equal partner to play out the differences.

My essays, both by raising metacritical questions concerning the application of theories and by probing into actual cases of convergences and divergences—in syntax, perception, consciousness of the world, aesthetic consciousness of landscape, the framing of hermeneutical-aesthetical paradigms, and so on—intend to seek out, through comparison and contrast, possible guidelines that can perhaps lead to a more reasonable mapping of cultural phenomena in their multiplicities. For, as I argue in the Epilogue, no theory can claim to be final. All theories of culture must be considered exploratory, looking toward a true convergence in the future.

I would like to take up this opportunity to raise another problem. To many readers, these are separate essays; they are not integrated and do not form a matrixed presentation. The fact is that, even though they were written over a number of years, they were conceived as interrelated, interreferential, and interdefining. One essay grows or branches from another. One essay complements the other. I am not unfamiliar with the conventions of constructing a so-called integrated, unified presentation. Indeed, I have studied and followed the rhetorical topoi of *exordium, narratio argumentatio* or *probatio, refutatio,* and *peroratio* or *epilogue,* but I have never been very comfortable with this rhetorical tradition, for several reasons. This way of constructing a "narrative," in spite of its dominance in the Western tradition, suffers from an inescapable reductionism; namely, one is forced to isolate and privilege one element among many and, through a process of selection, discrimination, and closure, to differentiate the so-called relevant from the irrelevant before connecting them according to some predetermined set of relationships. But is the so-called irrelevant really irrelevant? Let us take a real dialogic situation. Full communication in a real-life conversation seldom involves a clean, straight line argument but a lot of backtracking, reiterating, drifting, moving back and forth, and "digression." When recorded in writing, it will be "straightened out," euphemistically called "formalized," but we also know that in this process many nuances may have been suppressed and sacrificed, some of which, now cut off from the umbilical cord of the original moment, are waiting to be retrieved to be put into another context. Here we are reminded of William James's discussion of the role of the subjective will in breaking the total order in order to control it:[4]

> The conceiving or theorizing faculty . . . functions *exclusively for the sake of ends* that do not exist at all in the world of impressions we receive by way of our senses. . . . The world's contents are *given* to each of us in an order so foreign to our subjective interests that we can hardly . . . picture to ourselves what it is like. We have to break that order altogether—and by picking out from it the items which concern us, and connecting them with others far away, which we say "belong" with them, we are able to make out definite threads of sequence and tendency.[5]

I felt uncomfortable precisely because of this "breaking" and because, as I argue in great detail in chapter 3 and in the Epilogue, there is another mode by which we can minimize this breaking, namely, the Taoist project. The Taoist project began with full awareness of the restrictive and distortive activities of names and words and their power-wielding violence, opening up reconsiderations of language on both the aesthetic and political levels. On the level of aesthetics, by questioning the limits of language the Taoists suggest a decreative–creative dialectic to repossess the prepredicative concrete world, which is immanent and needs no human supervision. This is achieved by employing a series of language strategies—asyntactical structures that leave the reader-viewer in an "engaging–disengaging" relationship with the world, the diffusion of distances to make revolving perspective possible, negative space to become a departure point for retrieval of the undifferentiated, the use of paradox and other off-norm words, phrases, or events to reinscribe the off-norms as norms and the so-called norms as off-norms. On the political level, the Taoist project becomes a counterdiscourse to the territorialization of power, an act to disarm the tyranny of language so as to reawaken the memories of the suppressed or repressed part of the natural self.[6]

It is no accident that a lot of critical and theoretical formulations in classical Chinese did not always follow the progression from *exordium* to *epilogue,* although such a progression is not exactly alien to the Chinese.[7] Instead, they chose a poetic form, as in the case of Lu Chi's "Wen-fu," or used the form called *shih-hua,* or "poetry talks," which are "fragments" on the art of poetry or anecdotes on poets and poetry rather than long-winded arguments and explanations. These "poetry talks" are like Arnoldian "touchstone" passages that remain stuck in our minds after all the Platonic-Aristotelian argumentations are forgotten. Or take *Ars Poetica* (*The Twenty-four Orders of Poetry*) by Ssu-k'ung T'u (837–908), a poem from which appears in the first section of chapter 5. The poems from this work are poems of *ars poetica*: They operate with a kind of hexagrammatic structure, rather than with linear argumentation, and use intercorrespondences and interwebbing to form a dynamic, multivocalic, thick-textured musical composition.[8]

Writing in English and in an academic context, I try to strike a balance between the two modes. Within each essay, I basically follow the strategies of a matrixed presentation, but I want to bring back to the larger structure an interwebbing, interdialogic activity among the essays. As such, I have indulged myself in a bit of musical play (thesis, antithesis, repetition, and variation of leitmotifs), a bit of wandering, and a bit of poetic structure to tease the reader into playing with the text instead of reading for a predetermined conclusion.

Here is a story about two walkers. They were told to get to the central library from the far end of the campus. One person was so intent upon the idea of getting there that he went straight to the library without paying any attention to the activities on the square, the art objects that were placed somewhat off the path leading to the library, the blooming flowers, the people along the way. The other person took a leisurely walk, stopping at times to watch someone playing a simple wooden flute, branching off from the main, straighter road to take a longer, roundabout route so that he could enjoy the flowers, dream about them, meditate on them for a few moments, and look at buildings and other human constructions, appreciating their coextensive relationships with the trees around them, before finally arriving at the library perhaps an hour later.

Do we really have to hurry to the end?

1 The Use of "Models" in East–West Comparative Literature

To begin, listen to this fable:

> Once upon a time, there lived under the water a frog and a fish. They often played together and became fast friends. One day, the frog jumped out of the water and roamed for a whole day on earth. He saw many new and fresh things such as people, birds, cars, etc. He was totally fascinated by them and hurried back into the water to recount his new discoveries to the fish. Seeing the fish, he said, "The world on land was simply marvelous. There are people, wearing hats and clothes, with sticks in their hands and shoes on their feet." As he was so describing, there appeared in the fish's mind a fish, wearing a hat and clothes, with a stick under its fins and shoes dangling from its tail. The frog continued, "There are birds spreading out wings flying across the sky." In the fish's mind now appeared a fish spreading out its fins flying in the air. "Then there are cars rolling upon four wheels." In the fish's mind emerged a fish rolling on with four round wheels.

What does this fable tell us? It informs us about several related questions concerning models and the function of models in all mental constructions. All conceptions, whether they be literary creations or pedagogical investigations, proceed, consciously or unconsciously, from some kind of model upon which most formal and judgmental decisions depend. The fish, without having seen people, has to rely on his own model, the model that is most familiar to him, to structure his conception of human beings. A model is, therefore, a structuring activity through which materials at hand can be fitted into a form.

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com