

The Genesis and Evolution of Literary Forms: An Inquiry Across Cultural Boundaries¹

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to derive a cross-culture understanding of the basic literary forms by exploring their genesis and evolution in terms of psycho-historical theory of human development. By treating the literary mind of a cultural tradition as a macroperson, and by analyzing comparative data drawn from both Occidental and Oriental traditions, it locates a correlation between psychological theories of infantile development and the historical evolution of the most basic literary forms: poetry, drama, and fiction. Poetry satisfies the (un)conscious wish for oral gratification; drama gratifies the (un)conscious fantasy for primal scenes and the curiosity for the unknown; fiction fulfills the (un)conscious desire for individuation, dominance, and libidinal gratification. Having found the correlation, the paper establishes a developmental model of major literary forms in relation to the five stages of psychological maturation. Then, the paper further examines the developmental history of Chinese literary forms and finds that the Chinese tradition corresponds pretty well with the model. The paper concludes that the genesis and evolution of literary forms are not a random development, but are (un)consciously motivated by the psychological force of the collective literary mind.

KEY WORDS

Poetry

Drama

libidinal stages

Prose

psycho-historical movement

psycho-sexual development

oral

urethral

oedipal

(un)pleasure principle

defense

primal scenes

anal

phallic

post-oedipal

unconscious fantasies

mechanisms

Literature is a universal phenomenon across cultural boundaries. The basic literary forms, poetry, drama and fiction, are universal to all major literary traditions. The order of their appearance, however, can vary from one literary tradition to another. While all literary traditions began with poetry, the advent of drama and fiction did not have a uniform order of appearance. Western drama came into existence early in ancient Greek literature and attained a glory that has since been admired by later generations. In the Orient, Indian drama existed as early as the third century B. C. and became a mature form about the third century A. D. Although elements of drama in China can be traced to times of antiquity, Chinese drama as a mature form did not appear until the 13th century². In the Arab world, drama was unknown until recent times. Fiction was not considered respectable for the educated in most literary traditions from the outset, but while in the West, it gained a legitimate status early in its development, it was demoted in China and the Arab world until fairly modern times. Even in the case of poetry, differences are more than similarities. Whereas Western traditions produced many long narrative poems, in Chinese literature, the dominant form is short lyric poems, and narrative poems over a hundred lines are a rarity in classical Chinese literature. Whereas most major literary traditions each can boast of epic poems at their inception: Greek literature has the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Roman literature the *Aeneid*, English literature *Beowulf*, French literature the *Song of Roland*, German literature the *Nibelungenlied*, and Indian literature *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, all of which run to thousands and tens of thousands lines, Chinese literature has no comparable epic or even long family sagas at its beginning, through the

middle ages, and until modern times. It was as though there was simply no epic impulse in the Chinese literary mind.

Scholars may turn to historical conditions for insights into these variations, but a historical approach can only explain the external movement of literature and cannot account for the internal mechanism that has made the variations possible. Since literature is a psychological phenomenon, we may resort to psychology in our exploration of the genesis and evolution of literary forms. The purpose of this paper is to derive a cross-culture understanding of literary forms by exploring their genesis and evolution in terms of psycho-sexual theory of human development. My approach is by no means novel. A precedent is found in Northrope Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. In his discussion of western literary tradition, Frye used the psychoanalytic theory of displacement to account for the historical movement from mode to mode of Western literary tradition, though, as one scholar points out, he claims that his system is derived purely from an inductive survey of western literature (Paris 14).

In my speculations, I intend to adopt a comparative approach, using data from both Occidental and Oriental literatures and laying emphasis on data drawn from Chinese literature. My selection is justified not only by a desire to contribute my share to readjust the Eurocentric imbalance in literary studies, but also by the subject of my study. Basic literary forms have existed since recorded history in the West. Because of the frequent and constant cultural and literary exchanges in Europe over history, it is almost impossible to examine their genesis and evolution. By contrast, Chinese literary tradition has a uniqueness which facilitates such an inquiry. Chinese literary tradition arose and reached maturity in isolation from Western literary tradition until modern times. Before the coming of Western influence, Chinese literature received little formative influence from other major literary traditions. It is also the only uninterrupted literary tradition in the world and has some fossilized features which have preserved a clear process of evolution in the way buried fossils reveal for the archaeologists the evolution of species.

I

John Stuart Mill, in his famous essay "What Is Poetry," made some tentative but evocative remarks about the differences between poetry, fiction and drama. He defined poetry as "the delineation of the deeper and more secret workings of the human heart" which appeals to the feelings, fiction as "narratives" which derive "their principal interest from the incidents," and drama as a form of "composition which requires the union of poetry and incident." He refused to distinguish between poetry and prose because he thought poetry may exist in other forms than verse, while fiction may contain poetry in prose form. Writings, whether in verse or prose, can act on feelings, thus attaining the status of poetry. He, however, did say that poetry and fiction differ in the faculties with which poetry and fiction are composed, in the sources from which interests are aroused, in the way they achieve their effect on the mind, and finally in the creative motivations that make poetry and fiction possible (537-39). Although I do not agree with him on some points, I find his speculations extremely helpful on the whole and intend to use his theory as reference indexes in my own speculations.

Literature is a human creation. As a human product it comes into existence as a result of human demand. One of the chief functions of literature is that of entertainment. Since Aristotle, scholars concur that the value of literature lies in its pleasure-giving qualities. Literature entertains the mind by providing it with psychological satisfactions. The belief in the sexual origin of art, badly stated by some scholars, more subtly by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, D. H. Lawrence, Freud, Lacan, Barthes, Foucault, makes it almost necessary to state that the satisfaction yielded by literature is sexual in nature. Freud called it "fore-pleasure": "The writer softens the character of his egoistic day-dreams by altering and disguising it, and he bribes us by the purely formal—that is, aesthetic—yield of pleasure which he offers us in the presentation of his phantasies. We give the name of an *incentive bonus*, or a *fore-pleasure*, to a yield of pleasure such as this, which is offered to us so as to make possible the release of still

greater pleasure arising from deeper psychological sources. In my opinion, all the aesthetic pleasure which a creative writer affords us has the character of a fore-pleasure of this kind, and our actual enjoyment of an imaginative work proceeds from a liberation of tensions in our minds." ("Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" 443)

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle briefly touched on the motivating force that gave rise to literary genres. In his opinion, literature diverged in different directions because of "the individual character of the writers:" "The graver spirits imitated noble actions, and the actions of good men. The more trivial sort imitated the actions of meaner persons, at first composing satires, as the former did hymns to the gods and the praises of famous men" (50). The individual character of writers, in Aristotle's opinion, are responsible for the rise of serious poetry, epic and tragedy, and of less serious poetry, comedy and satire. But how can we account for the fact that very often, a writer may be at once a poet of tragedy, comedy and even farce? Evidently, individual character of writers cannot adequately explain the rise of different literary forms. Let us try a different approach. In my opinion, poetry, fiction, and drama, the most essential forms of literature arose as a result of the collective demand of a community for different types of pleasure. Their order of appearance in history owed much to the fact that they satisfied the demands for pleasure at different stages of mental development of the community. The early or late rise of a basic literary form in a literary tradition indicates precociousness or retardation of the macro-literary mind in that culture.

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle speculated that all the arts have their origin in imitation or mimesis. He attributed the genesis of poetry to two human instincts: "Imitation . . . is one instinct of our nature. Next, there is the instinct for 'harmony' and rhythm, meters being manifestly sections of rhythm. Persons, therefore, starting with this natural gift developed by degrees their special aptitudes, till their rude improvisations gave birth to poetry" (50). His theory of mimesis would seem problematic if it is applied to literature of non-western traditions. In Chinese literary tradition, it is believed that poetry arose not so much as a result of the desire to imitate nature as an impulse to

express one's desire. "Poetry," according to the time-honored definition contained in the *Book of Documents (Shu Jing)* and attributed to the legendary sage Emperor Shun (ca. 2255-2205), "expresses the heart's wishes." This is the most authoritative statement on poetry throughout pre-modern Chinese literature. As Professor Stephen Owen points out, it "is almost as authoritative as if God had delivered a brief definition of poetry in Genesis" (27). In the "Preface to the Book of Poetry by Mao," this definition is further elaborated:

"Poetry is where the heart's wishes go. What lies in the heart is 'wish', when expressed in words, it is 'poetry'. When an emotion stirs within one, one expresses it in words; finding this inadequate, one sighs over it; not content with this, one sings it in poetry; still not satisfied, one unconsciously dances with one's hands and feet." (Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* 70)

The contrast is very distinct: while Aristotelian theory locates the origin of all arts in the desire for imitation, the Chinese theory locates the genesis of all arts in the human impulse for expression. It seems that the Chinese idea comes closer to the essence of poetry if we are to use the word in contra-distinction to "verse" and other forms of literature, and if we accept Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," which "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility" (441).

Aristotle did not elaborate on the instinct for harmony and rhythm. With what does the poet seek harmony and from what does he imitate rhythm? While he admitted that each of the two instincts lay "deep in our nature," he did not speculate on its depth. In my opinion, the poetic instinct for harmony and rhythm can be traced to the period of human life passed in the womb. Following Aristotle's theory of mimesis, some scholars hold that the poet seeks harmony with nature and the poetic rhythm is an imitation of the rhythm of nature: the rhythmic sound of wind, rain, sea and seasons, etc. This may be true, but I think that the prototype of harmony the poet seeks

is the harmony with the mother in one's infancy and that the poetic rhythm is the imitation of the rhythmic stimuli experienced by the fetus in the womb and the born child in early infancy (heartbeats, crooning sounds and swaying movements of the mother). Human beings' ultimate unconscious wish is to regain the "paradise" lost at the time of birth—the tranquil state of existence in the womb sheltered from external stimuli, and to return to the "good old days" of infancy when mental tranquillity suffers the least outside disturbances (Ferenczi 213-22). Rather than the outcome of the impulse to imitate nature, poetry arose from the impulse to mitigate the sense of nondescript loss. Through poetry, the poet and the reader satisfy their indescribable and unnameable longing which has its roots in the unconscious desire for a reentry into the "paradise" lost at birth, and the poetic rhythm effects a symbolic harmony with the maternal matrix, which reproduces the mental tranquillity of the "good old days" that was gone since childhood and never returns. The image of nature, whether in Western poetry or Eastern poetry, is invariably an unconscious reference to the mother. Hence the cliché, "Mother Nature." In the poetry of Wordsworth, perhaps the greatest nature poet in Anglo-American tradition, the image of nature is, in the final analysis, the metamorphosed replica of the mother. In his analysis of Wordsworth's autobiography, Richard Ontorato proves convincingly that because of the insistent need to deny the loss of his mother, Wordsworth persisted in "the fantasy of unimpaired possession of the mother within him, and in her projected form, around him as the Presence in Nature" (174).

Poetry is a human creation. Without human beings, the spectacular sounds of nature do not have any meaning. In a symbolic way, the rhythm of nature is also the rhythm of the mother's heart-beat. A fetus in the mother's womb cannot hear the rhythmic sounds of nature, but it can hear the heartbeat of its mother. When it has sensations, it grows accustomed to the rhythmic beating of the mother's heart. I think the rhythmic heartbeat is the first poem to the embryo. It also cultivates the embryo's initial ability to appreciate poetry. Monotonous as it is, the repetition of heart-beat has the same soothing

effect as nursery rhymes and lullabies. From its early life in the mother's womb, the embryo has already developed the faculty for appreciating the rhythms of poetry which are repetitious, rhythmic, and above all, comforting. Psychologists who observe the behavior of children have reported the incomparable soothing effect of mother's heart-beat and monotonous babble in singsong tones. A crying baby will become quiet once it snuggles close to the mother's bosom and the mother begins to hum a meaningless tune. After its birth, the infant is exposed to another kind of rhythm: the mother's voice. The voice of the mother produces a general soothing effect, but when the mother's voice is uttered in a rhythmic way, it is even more comforting. Hence the use of nursery rhymes, lullabies and even nonsensical humming. Nursery rhymes are the first poems in the true sense of this word "poetry." From mother's heartbeat through nursery rhymes to poetry, there is an inherent link. Heartbeat, nursery rhyme and poetry share some similar qualities: rhythm, repetition, and sameness in variations. In poetry, the chief formal elements, such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, assonance and prosody in general are essentially the variegated manifestations of these qualities. In modern times, *vers libre* has dispensed with most of the traditional devices, but however free a verse may be, it must have rhythm. Perhaps the necessity of rhythm has a deep root, which can be traced to the mother's heartbeat. Without rhythm, there is no poetic pleasure.

In terms of formal elements, poetry differs from prose in that it permits repetition: repetition of sounds, words, phrases, lines and stanzas etc. Repetition in poetry produces an incantative effect through familiar elements, giving an inexplicable sense of pleasure. This pleasure through repetition can be traced to the infantile mentality at the oral stage. The infant at the oral stage loves repetition because it produces pleasure: the mother's face, voice, smell, touch, holding, and most important of all, mother's breast—all the familiar objects or gestures capable of producing pleasure. The infant at this stage dislikes unfamiliar objects because these are intruders that disrupt the harmony between the infant and mother and upset the illusory union with the mother, hence producing anxiety. That children love nursery

rimes and lullabies may have to do with this love of familiarity and hate of intrusion. After all, lullabies and nursery rimes abound in repetition and similar sounds. The most frequently used device in children's poetry is rhyme. Rhymes, according to one dictionary of literary terms, "must be associated with the sense of music, of rhythm and beat; the pulse sense which is common to all human beings" (Cudden 573). Evidently, this prerequisite is unconsciously associated with the sense of familiarity produced by the mother's heartbeat, singsong tunes and rhythmic coming and going.

The love of familiarity, when translated into poetry, gives rise to the basic features of poetry: rhythm (the alternation between stressed and unstressed syllables), rhyme (repetition of vowel sounds), alliteration (repetition of consonants at the beginning of words), assonance (repetition of similar vowel sounds, usually close together, to achieve a particular effect of euphony), refrain (repetition of a phrase or line especially at the end of a stanza), onomatopoeia (imitation of familiar sounds), and above all, repetition as an essential unifying element in nearly all poetry and most prose, which consists of sounds, particular syllable and words, phrases, stanzas, metric patterns, ideas, allusions and images. Lyric poetry, due to its short form, is especially effective in evoking a sense of familiarity. Narrative poetry, because of its length, proves less effective in producing that sense of familiarity. Fiction and drama are even less effective in producing a sense of repetition.

All literary traditions began with oral poetry. This universal phenomenon seems to suggest that poetry, as the literary product of humanity at its earliest stage, may have to do with the human need to evoke the sense of familiarity. Primary oral culture (culture that has no writing system) shares some similarities with infants before the acquisition of a written language. A person from a primary oral culture faces the same problem as an illiterate child: how to remember and recall things in your mind since you have no recourse to a written language. Professor Walter Ong provides the answer using extensive anthropological and psychological data: "Your thought must come into being in heavily rhythmic balanced patterns, in repetitious or

antithesis, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulaary expressions, in standard thematic settings . . . in proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterned for retention and readily recalled or in other mnemonic form" (34). All the mnemonic devices in oral cultures are found in classic Chinese poetry, and are especially prominent in lyric poetry. That Chinese lyric poetry has more mnemonic devices, narrative poetry is less developed and epic poetry is non-existent suggests, from a different angle, but Chinese literary identity is predominantly oral. Walter Ong lists a series of characteristics of orally based thought and expression: additive rather than subordinative; aggregative rather than analytic, redundant or "copious," conservative or traditionalist, close to the human life world, agnostically toned, empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced, homeostatic, situational rather than abstract (31-56)—all are appropriate in describing Chinese lyric poetry and classical Chinese literature.

When the infant enters a maturer stage at which he can move about, things are quite different. Instead of feeling anxious in the face of unfamiliar objects, he welcomes strange persons and new things. At this stage, strange persons, new objects and new phenomena become pleasure-giving because they satisfy the infant's growing curiosity and desire to explore the unknown. Narratives, because of the capacity to include heterogeneous elements, serve this purpose well. The late rise of narrative prose suggests that it belongs to a later mode which is related to the demands of later stages of human development. Greek and Indian epics are narrative verse: the product of the creative impulse that breaks the repetitive cycles of the early stage and desires a linear development. The anomaly that Chinese literature has no epics may be the consequence of lingering too long at the early mode which love repetition and cyclical movement. That there are few long narrative poems in pre-modern literature may also be explained in this way. In any literary tradition fiction came into being after poetry, perhaps because it is the product of later modes.

The importance attached to poetic form is, in the final analysis, the pleasure of remembrance attributed to the "good old days" of infancy. Child observers have reported that infants have a high demand for the sameness of sounds, smells and movements; any change will cause anxiety. In the same way, a literary tradition attaches great importance to the continuity of literary forms. The invention of new literary forms is generally made possible by great genius through what Harold Bloom described as literary oedipal rebellion, as "triumphant wrestling with the greatest of the dead" (9). The history of major literary traditions shows that the evolution of literary forms has taken long time to complete. Free verse which dispenses with rigid devices did not appear until 19th century. It is interesting to note that free verse as invented by Whitman became a popular poetic form first in America, a land noted for its phallic (oedipal) identity. As an infant grows into childhood, and as it becomes maturer, its attachment to the mother becomes less and less intense and its desire to experiment with new forms of life more and more intense. To a certain extent, the evolution of literary forms may be viewed as a long process of gaining imaginative maturity. The longer old literary forms persist, the greater the attachment to the maternal matrix of tradition. From this point of view, I venture to argue that the maturation of the Chinese literary mind took a longer time than the West and, because of a stronger unconscious attachment to the maternal matrix of literary tradition, relapses to early stages are more frequent. The inherent literary conservatism in Chinese literature characterized by a strong attachment to the past is a sign of the macro-literary identity's unwillingness to extricate itself from the unconscious longing for the cultural maternal matrix.

II

My above analysis shows that the development of literature seems to have a correlation with the theory of psycho-sexual development. My further inquiry will reveal that there does exist some deeply hidden correspondence that can be detected more readily in

the development of Chinese literature than in European literary traditions. Most psychoanalysts, whether classical Freudians, ego-psychologists or object relation theorists, accept the significance of libidinal stages for personality structure and behavior.³ Following Freud, they have, with some variations in length of periods, divided the first few years of infantile development into five stages which acquired their names from the corresponding libidinal zones: oral, anal, urethral, phallic and oedipal. Freud, Jones, Abraham, Fenichel, Michaels, Wilhelm Reich, Margaret Mahler, Erikson, Holland and others have given detailed descriptions of the characteristics of each stage. I shall choose to present a summary which includes only those features most relevant for literary studies.

The first is the oral phase characterized by a sense of passivity, dependence and merging, a desire for union, fusion (with a maternal matrix) and return (to the womb), and other feature related to the mouth (Holland, *The Dynamics of Literary Response* 34-38). "The kind of images in a literary work that would make you expect you are dealing with an oral situation are," writes Holland, "naturally enough, almost anything to do with the mouth or with taking in: biting, sucking, smoking, inhaling, talking, and the like; or their correlatives, food, liquor, tobacco, and especially words, particularly curses, threats, and vows, words which "bite," constituting a kind of action in themselves" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 37). *The Book of Songs*, the first anthology in Chinese history is pervaded with signs of orality.

The anal stage is marked by order, control and discipline, and features of "holding on" and "letting go" as related to toilet training (Holland, *The I* 203-06). For the child, moral sense appears for the first time. Some psychoanalysts have called the first appearance of moral sense "sphincter morality." The anal features, when translated into literature, give rise to these fantasies: "Anal fantasies tend to stress laws and rules, particularly meticulous, precise, petty behavior, which deals especially with collecting or excessive cleanliness or rituals. Control by oneself or by another, is an important theme" (Holland, *The Dynamics of Literary Response* 40). The development

of Chinese poetry from freedom of length and meter to the rigidity of meter and prosody marked the entry of the Chinese literary mind into the stage of anal control. The appearance of Han *fu*, or rhyme-prose marked the entry of Chinese literature into the anal stage. The so-called *Pian-ti-wen* which stipulates strict formal elements like rhymes, antitheses and tonal pattern pushed Chinese literature to the peak of the anal stage.

The urethral stage is closely linked to the anal stage and is also marked by an interest in "holding on" and "letting go." As Holland points out, "the urethral aspect seems to determine his ability to wait, or, put in adult terms, to think conceptually in terms of consequences rather than act on whim or impulse . . . Abstraction seem to be associated with urethral processes, as does constant movement or a sense of restlessness, urgency, or discomfort, as for example, 'burning ambition'" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 41-42). I think that Chinese literature entered the urethral stage in Southern Dynasties and reached the peak of the stage in Tang dynasty. Before Tang, the five-character and seven-character *gu-shi* (ancient-style poetry) had already matured. During the Tang period, making full use of the formal elements developed by their predecessors in the Southern dynasties, especially the poetic theory of four tones, the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, and the use of antitheses, Tang poets perfected the *ge-lu-shi* or regulated verse. The appearance of *gong-ti shi* or palace-style poetry reflected the influence of anal traits, but Tang poets were never conservative. They learned from their predecessors but did not kneel at the feet of past masters. Their innovating spirit, their ambition for literary fame and achievement, their eagerness to make new forms out of the old ones, and their refusal to adhere doggedly to poetic rules and regulations were characteristic traits of the urethral stage. The outward-looking aggressiveness in Tang poetry, however, may be mistaken as phallic features. A representative poet is Li Po who was defiant to the point of lawlessness, restless like a naughty schoolboy, and addictive to alcohol—all these seem to suggest that he was a urethral poet regressing to the oral.

The phallic stage—or to avoid a phallogocentric view, we may adopt Erikson's term the "intrusive" stage—is characterized by intrusiveness, inquisitiveness, aggressive courage, and the contradictory tendencies of ambition and fear (Holland, *The I* 209-12). Holland gives a succinct summing-up: "The child's discovery of the pleasure associated with his genitals and the fact that they are somewhat taboo and secret give rise to terrible pressures in his relations with the big people around him on whom he is absolutely dependent" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 42). As for its representation in literary works, "the single most common fantasy-structure in literature is phallic assertiveness balanced against oral engulfment" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 43). Another distinct feature is an intense curiosity in sex organs and sexual acts: "A particularly rich and complex set of fantasies stem from the child's thoughts about what adults do when they are alone, particularly what they do with the organ which has become so important to him, and by his own curiosity about where he came from. He has what the psychoanalysts call 'primal scene fantasies,' which form the basis for a later interest in watching drama and other performances" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 45).

The explosive interest in sex and sexuality in seventeenth-century Ming fiction marked the entry of the Chinese literary mind into phallic stage. Interestingly, the plot, motif and precipitating situation of Ming fiction shows the dominant characteristics of an intrusive mode:

A formulaic situation in Ming fiction depicts a person on a journey who, as night approaches, is so intent on movement that he fails to stop at the last convenient inn. Forgetting himself, enraptured with the scenery, he overshoots the proper allotment of travelling time for one day and is forced to seek shelter in a broken-down temple in the woods or at some stranger's farm, where he meets with out-of-ordinary event. This sequence is a miniature of the plot of late Ming stories and novels. Exceeding one's lot,

getting sidetracked, being adulterous: these are various ways of describing this plot . . . and the fiction writers of this period are studiously devoted to illustrating exceptions to the norm and to noting details—minute, obscene, or erotic—that belie the consistency and decorum of the surface. (McMahon 1)

The oedipal phase is a time of crisis. The resolution of the oedipal crisis has paramount importance for the personality of a child, for in this phase, he/she leaves behind the dyadic relationship between himself/herself and the mother and enters into the triadic relationship among father, mother and child. This triadic relationship has life-long impact on the personality of any person. As Holland puts it, "Almost any interpersonal relationship has oedipal elements, and, by the same token, any work of art dealing in depth with relations of love and hate between people is likely to contain some oedipal fantasies" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 46). The most distinct characteristic features of the oedipal stage is rebelliousness and the rebellion is especially aimed at the father, or a father-figure, or a person of authority. In the history of any literary tradition, the rebelliousness is transformed into what Bloom calls the wrestling between great poets and their precursor: "Battles between strong equals, father and son as mighty opposites, Laius and Oedipus at the cross-roads" (*The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* 11). I suggest that in both Chinese culture and literature, instances of oedipal rebellion are very rare because of the deeply entrenched Confucian moral codes about filial piety. Throughout pre-modern Chinese literature, father-son conflicts are seldom portrayed. If there are rare cases of such conflicts, it is always the father dominating over the son who has to submit to his father's tyranny. The one exception is Cao Xue-qin's *The Dream of The Red Chamber*. Even in this exceptional work, the oedipal rebellion achieves only a partial victory. In Chinese literary history, instead of overriding accepted literary norms, literary conservatism always demanded return to the previous modes, movements and ways of presentation. Thus the inherent conservatism in Chinese literature

may be a symptom caused by the lack of frequent and powerful oedipal rebellions. Just as the resolution of the Oedipus complex is indispensable for the psychological maturity of infantile development, the maturity of the literary mind has to pass through an oedipal stage. For Chinese literature, the oedipal stage did not appear until modern times and post-oedipal maturity was not totally achieved until the 1980s.

III

Lu Hsun, father of modern Chinese literature, once remarked that "Poetry arises from suffering: fiction from pleasure." He is right in so far as he referred to the essential meanings of "poetry" and "fiction" as defined by Mill. I wish to add by saying that drama arises from pleasure too. Poetry, drama and fiction all serve to satisfy the psychological demands of human beings, but each performs its function in somewhat different manners. Poetry follows the unpleasure principle by symbolically getting rid of the source of suffering and creating the hallucinatory sense of fusing and union.

All literary tradition began with poetry. In all literary traditions, poetry was originally meant to be sung by the mouth. In Chinese, the word "poetry" is a combination of two radicals one of which (yen) means "speech" or "speaking" (Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature* 67-68). It is perhaps not far wrong to say that poetry, especially short lyric poetry, is oral in nature. Poetry can be associated with an infant's cry. We have never known whether an embryo cries inside the mother's womb, but interestingly enough, once the infant is born, it begins to cry. The first cry is a poem in two ways. First, it proclaims the birth of a new life. Secondly, it performs the same function as poetry does. It lessens the suffering caused by the separation from the mother. As the infant grows into an adult, he/she can no longer cry when he/she emotionally suffers from the irrevocable loss of union with the mother or the loss of any loved object. Poetry serves to reduce the emotional suffering. Writing poetry and reading poetry can both create a hallucinatory sense of reunion. Thus, riddance of emo-

tional suffering is the essence of poetry, whether it is regular verse or free verse. Narrative poetry differs from lyric poetry. It is basically phallic because it performs the same function as fiction. In other words, we may say that narrative poetry is a kind of fiction written in verse.

Drama works on a more active principle. Instead of getting rid of unpleasure, it seeks to create pleasure by make-believe acting. In most cultures, the word "drama" is associated with "play." In English, drama is called "play." In German, "spiel" (play) is added to make "lustspiel" (comedy) and "trauerspiel" (tragedy). In Chinese, drama is also called "play" (xi) which literally means "to play, to mock, to make fun of, to ridicule, to joke, to parody." This series of meanings underlies all Chinese conceptions of drama—which is always understood to be the gratification of desires. The etymological origin of drama in Chinese and the mimetic origin in Aristotle's theory suggest that drama arises from the desire to reproduce a scene, pleasant or unpleasant. While drama is pleasure-giving, it is viewed as improper in most of Chinese literary history and at times in Western literary tradition. I think the improperness may be derived from the unconscious wish to view a primal scene. In Western culture, a crude form of drama which is closer to a primal scene is the so-called peep show. Like a peep show, drama satisfies the desire to view an improper scene which is in essence a primal scene. It is in this sense that drama is the product of phallic phase when the child is inspired by curiosity to explore the unknown. Just as a peep show is suggestive of primal scene, so drama carries the sexual hints. Perhaps for this sexual association, actors and actresses in old China were classified in the same social category as prostitutes and their profession was held in the utmost contempt by the very people who derived their amusement from the theater. Some literary theorists confirm the psychoanalytic insight that the basis for watching drama is the curiosity aroused by primal scenes—fantasies of children who imagine having watched adults engaged in sexual acts. Bloom, for example, notices the relationship between primal scene and drama, "What makes a scene Primal? A scene is a setting as seen by a viewer, a place where action whether

real or fictitious, occurs or is staged. Every Primal Scene is necessarily a stage performance of fantastic fiction" (*A Map of Misreading* 47).

To extend the analogy of peep show further, we may see the parallel between the theater-goer and the child who is eager to peep at a primal scene but at the same time reproaches himself for doing it. Driven by the desire for satisfaction, the ego followed the id (part of the audience's psyche) and went to the theater; but when they came out of the theater with their libido satisfied, the ego went with the superego in condemning the means that satisfied the id. If we relate this contempt for drama to the Confucian eulogy of lyric poetry, we may come to a better understanding of the eulogy and condemnation. Confucian morality encourages people to revel in lyrics because it offers oral gratification which helps strengthen their sense of dependence and merger, and proves conducive to social harmony. By contrast, drama which satisfies people's unconscious desire for primal scenes, contains phallic explosiveness, and is harmful for social cohesion, hence immoral.

From this point of view, we can approach the question of why drama arose early in Greek literature but very late in Chinese literature. In his monumental three-volume study of sexuality in Western civilization, and especially in the third volume of *The History of Sexuality, The Care of The Self*, Michel Foucault examined the conditions of sexuality in the Greek and Roman civilization and concluded that sexuality was not problematized until the first two centuries of Christian eras. By exploring the whole corpus of moral reflections among philosophers, like Plutarch, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca and physicians of the era, he uncovers an increasing mistrust of pleasure and growing anxiety over sexual activity and its consequences (235-40). Greek drama was established before the reign of Christianity, when there was no moral rigor to suppress drama. By contrast, Chinese drama fared far worse in a cultural environment where anxiety over sexuality set in early. Confucius and his followers viewed the predecessors of Chinese drama as improper in the same way 17th century English Puritans viewed Elizabethan Drama as im-

moral. The Confucian suppression of drama in China and Puritans' closing-down of theaters in England serve to corroborate, from entirely different cultural backgrounds, the psychological speculations that drama arose from the unconscious desires to repeat primal scenes.

Fiction arose late in both China and the West. It represents a further attempt by the libidos to seek fulfillment. While drama in its make-believe way can approximate a primal scene, it is restricted by time, space and moral codes. It is almost the same in the dramatic productions of all literary traditions that some scenes like bloody murder and sexual intercourse are forbidden on the stage. Moreover, drama is not well equipped for sustained psychological exploration of the domain of the unconscious. Fiction is not hampered by the restrictions drama encounters. Of course, it had a long fight to gain victory over the law of censorship which regarded the descriptions of sexuality and the unconscious as immoral. This may account for the universal phenomenon of all literary traditions-the belated rise of fiction.

All literary traditions assign to poetry the most reverent and prestigious position. The status of drama varied from nation to nation over history. Fiction was always a lesser form of literature at the lowest rung of the hierarchy of letters and ostracized from the center of the literary scene in all literary traditions until modern times. Poetry has enjoyed the favored position not just because of its being more philosophical, more universal than history (Aristotle 53) or other forms of discourse, but because of some unconscious reasons on which I have speculated in the above. Poetry satisfies the unconscious wish for oral gratification, a sense of merger and a symbolic union with the maternal matrix that was lost at birth; drama gratifies the unconscious desire for primal scenes and the curiosity for the unknown; fiction fulfills the unconscious wish for individuation, dominance, and genital gratification. Among all the unconscious wishes, the sense of merger dates back from the womb and lasts to the grave, and the sense of loss is the most difficult to get rid of. In fact, it is simply indestructible. Poetry provides a second-best alternative to fill

up the hole of loss. What poetry satisfies lies in the deepest of human soul and is, therefore, the most sacred, most revered and most treasured of all human sentiments. Poetry as the medium for such sentiments naturally acquires the status of honor among all literary forms.

IV

In so far as form is concerned, literature is composed in two basic forms: poetry and prose. All other genres result from the blending of the two. There seems to be a developmental reason for this. At the beginning, poetry is the literary form all ancient literary traditions. Prose appears later than poetry. As a literary tradition matures, more and more forms and genres are developed out of the interaction between poetry and prose. Various forms and genres are combined products of further division of these two categories. Poetry can be further divided into lyric poetry, narrative poetry and dramatic poetry. Drama and fiction are synthesized forms of poetry and prose. Poetry is the product of the most ancient humanity. It is predominantly oral. But due to the maturational process, poetry splits into the lyric, narrative and dramatic forms. Lyric is purely oral, or to be more exact, it is the product of the first half of the oral stage, the so-called passive phase. At this passive phase, the infant is totally dependent and passive and enjoys the illusion of being one with the mother. In other words, it loves swallowing or being swallowed (symbolically through holding or cuddling) by the mother. As the infant enters the active phase, it is able to put things in its own mouth if he likes them or spit them out if it does not. In the early oral phase, one of the infant's principal fears is betrayal or loss, that a source of comfort or power (the mother) will be taken away by a rival (a parent or sibling). Lyric poetry is largely a product of this sentiment. Whether the lyric poet is Chinese or English or German, he or she is most likely to express the emotions of loss, sorrow, longing, or missing dear ones. In the active phase, the infant thinks of mouths as a threat. He may imagine himself devouring or being devoured. He may imagine himself warding off the threat of devouring by devouring threatening objects. Dr. Edmund Bergler

suggested that all writers emit words as a way of defending against the fearful desire to obliterate oneself in a total union with the primal mother.⁴ Holland also suggest that "A common defense against oral fusion and merger is putting something out of the mouth instead of taking something in; the something is usually speech, as in a great deal of Shakespeare's or Lawrence's writing, though it may be almost anything" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 37). Thus the active oral phase gives rise to narrative, as in narrative poetry, and to prose. In the complete oral stage, the two basic forms of literature are established. In the final analysis, the core of literature is oral, which is confirmed by psychoanalytic theory and psychoanalytic criticism. Holland suggests, "Of all the different levels of fantasy in literature, the oral is the most common (at least in my range of reading). Apparently, just as in life the sense of trust and of self that we obtain in this first phase underlies all our subsequent development, so literature seems to build on orality. No matter what other issues from later stages appear in a literary work, one almost always finds at the core some fantasy of oral fusion and merger" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 38).

The stages after the oral, I suggest, only add something to the two established forms of poetry and prose, making combined forms and genres. Two of the characteristics of the anal and urethral phases are discipline and planning. This gives rise to formal control, such as prosody and dramatic form. I tend to think that the classical theory of drama which insists on the unities of time, place and action has major anal and urethral elements. Just as the child has to defecate and urinate at certain times and certain places and must excrete all he has, the classical dramatist unconsciously conforms to the three unities of time, place and action. It is interesting to note that literary theorists ranging from Aristotle, Horace, through Castelvetro, Sidney, Corneille, Dryden, Boileau, Pope, Johnson, to Bullough, Wimsatt and Beardsley—all discussed this dramatic principle, though some of them touched one unity, some stressed another unity, and others doggedly adhered to all three.⁵ The classical Chinese drama which does not follow the three unities but keeps to the dramatic pattern of pro-

logue, epilogue and acts in between, seems to suggest that the literary unconscious producing it has disciplinary impulsive elements in it.

The phallic or intrusive stage gives rise to the impetus to create drama and fiction. This is the stage at which the child begins to be preoccupied with what adults do when they are alone, particularly what they do with the sex organ which has by this time becomes so important to the child. The child is also in the grip of an intense curiosity about where other children came from. Driven by curiosity and inquisitiveness, he begins to explore and to spy on adult activities. He begins to develop what psychoanalysts call "primal scene fantasies" which form the basis for a later interest in watching drama and other performances (Fenichel 92-93, 214-15). Thus, drama is a literary form that combines the oral, anal, and phallic modes of fantasies. The early rise of Greek drama indicates the early entry of Greek imagination into the phallic stage, while the belated rise of Chinese drama signals the delayed entry of Chinese imagination into phallic phase. If, as Marx says, the ancient Greeks were normal children in their cultivation of arts,⁶ then the Chinese literary mind seemed to be somewhat belated in development.

Fiction is the synthesized form of oral, anal, urethral, phallic and oedipal modes. The delayed rise of fiction in all ancient literary traditions seems to corroborate this view. What distinguishes fiction in the modern sense from other literary modes is that while other literary forms are limited to one or more erogenous modes, fiction incorporate all modes and transcends the limitations of all literary modes. As D. H. Lawrence argues, "The novel is the one bright book of life. Books are not life. They are only tremulations on the ether. But the novel as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble. Which is more than poetry, philosophy, science, or any other book-tremulations can do" (535). Fiction as a late literary form in all literary traditions is largely due not only to the complexity of the mastery of all literary forms, but also due to its rebellious nature that always transcends the human effort to define and confine it. Fiction had to struggle for its legitimate status partly because of its sexual and

oedipal fantasies. Fiction is an embodiment of the oedipal fantasies Freud called the "family romance."

Using Freudian insights, Marthe Robert embarked on an interesting study of the origin of fiction in her *Origins of the Novel*. Robert argues that to trace the origin of fiction, one needs to think about the creative impulse in the fiction writer. Pressurized by the creative urge, the writer must turn to fiction for relief. Frustrated in the fulfillment of wishes, the writer wants to rebel against reality, to destroy the real world and to recreate another world in accordance with wishes. She also suggests that "family romance" can be regarded as the fountainhead of fictional inspiration, and fiction itself is only the extension of the writer's unconscious wishes. Whether it is popular or highbrow, old or new, classical or modern, fiction comes from the personal folklore which is the set of infantile complexes created by family life (21-40). "Family romance" and "family complexes" are phrases coined by Freud in his study of infantile sexuality, especially the Oedipal wishes. As Freud showed in his essay "Family Romance" (*The Sexual Enlightenment of Children* 41-45) and his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, the infantile mentality during the oedipal stage is pervaded with sexual curiosity, incestuous desires, rebelliousness and parricidal attempts (332-35). The infantile complex emanating from family romance is the universal psychic phenomenon of human kind. All kinds of artistic forms can reproduce this complex, but fiction is the most convenient form for representing it because while poetry and drama are restricted in the use of language of space, fiction is not subject to any formal restrictions, if the writer frees himself from psychological inhibition. D. H. Lawrence claims that "The novel is a great discovery: far greater than Galileo's telescope or somebody else's wireless. The novel is the highest form of human expression so far" (416). The late rise of fiction in all literary traditions and its capacity to incorporate all literary forms seem to support my suggestion that fiction as a literary genre is a synthesis of the full gamut of psychological modes.

To sum up, the combination or overlapping of modes gives rise to various literary forms and genres. Tentatively, I venture to make

these suggestions. Lyric poetry is the product of passive oral mode; narrative poetry that of active oral mode, dramatic poetry the product of oral, anal, and phallic modes; drama the product of oral, anal, phallic, and oedipal modes; classic fiction the product of oral, anal urethral, phallic, and oedipal with emphasis on phallic; epic the product of oral and phallic modes with the latter occupying a central position; romance the product of oral and phallic modes evenly spread; modern fiction the synthesized product of the oral, anal, urethral, phallic, oedipal and post-oedipal with phallic and post-oedipal occupying the central place but with variations depending on individual writers temperament. Reductive as this suggestion may seem, it may be taken as a basic schema for the evolution of literary forms. Due to the great differences between cultures, a given literary tradition may show some variations, but the basic pattern seems applicable.

I must point out that my division of the literary mind into oral, anal, urethral, phallic, oedipal and post-oedipal does not imply any value-judgement that privileges later modes. All stages of the literary mind can produce great literary works; all modes of writings have the potential of becoming great masterpieces. Sophocles' and Shakespeare's identity is predominantly oedipal and they produced *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*. T.S. Eliot and James Joyce's identity seems to have a large proportion of anal characteristics, as their works are replete with anal images such as dust, dirt, sewage, waste, feces, mist, fog, air, smells pleasant and unpleasant, defecation, and collection of details, etc. But the anal identity did not prevent them from producing such great masterpieces as *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, *The Wasteland*, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Lu Hsun's identity seems to have had a large proportion of oral traits, as his works are much concerned with food, medicine, eating, cannibalism, and the fear of engulfment, but that does not prevent him from tuning out the masterpieces of "A Madman's Diary," "Medicine," and *The True Story of Ah Q*. The Chinese literary mind is predominantly oral. The oral identity enables Chinese literature to produce the largest number of lyric poems of any literary tradition and the finest lyric poems in the world.⁷ Thus, the point is that any type of identity may produce good

and bad works. As Professor Holland puts it, "It is a curious but, I think, accurate estimate that far more good literature builds on pre-oedipal materials than on oedipal, despite the built-in range of oedipal fantasies. Paradoxically, the great bulk of cheap fiction and drama is oedipal—nominally, therefore, more mature" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 47).

Literary mind as a macroperson is much more complicated than that of an individual writer as a macroperson because it is the sum total of the psychic forces of all the individual writers of a nation. While most of the writers living in a period share a literary mind with the identity theme of a dominant mode, one or two writers may be able to break away from the dominant mode and enter a different one. It is these highly individualized writers who are responsible for initiating changes to the total literary mind. Another complexity is that an earlier mode may persist when it has long been superseded by another. Just as in an individual, all the five modes may exist simultaneously and one of them occupies a central position at a particular social circumstances, the literary mind as a macroperson may show the characteristics of all the previous modes with one predominant mode. The dominance of the central mode does not exclude the existence of other modes. That is why we can see nowadays writers of different modes who may be classified as oral, anal, urethral, phallic and oedipal. More often than not, a writer shows the characteristics of more than one mode. For instance, Shakespeare is considered an oedipal writer with oral features; so is D. H. Lawrence; James Joyce a phallic writer with anal traces; so is T. S. Eliot; writers of single dominant mode are rare. I can think of Fitzgerald and Hemingway who are distinctly phallic writers. Even they still show traces of other modes. They seem to share some oral tendencies.

V

Now with the above schema in mind, I want to see whether it fits the conditions of various literary forms in Chinese literature and whether it can account for some idiosyncrasies of Chinese literary

tradition. Chinese literature has no epic tradition, because of its predominant oral mode and fear of sexuality. Chinese mythology consists of short, disorganized fragments because the literary mind was undeveloped during the active oral phase. Chinese lyric poetry is the best in the world because the literary mind went through a over-developed passive oral phase. The absence of drama at the beginning and the late rise of drama and fiction were largely the consequence of unconscious repression.

In his "Preface" to *A History of Drama in Sung and Yuan Dynasties*, Wang Guo-wei, a renowned Chinese scholar said, "Every dynasty in Chinese history has its dynastic literature. Chu boasts of *Li-Sao*; Han of *fu*, Six dynasties of *pian-wen*. Tang of *shi*, Sung of *ci*, Yuan of *qu*—all can be counted as the dynastic literary forms and none of the later dynasties was able to continue this tradition with comparable dynastic genres."⁸ Wang Guo-wei was either confining his analysis to poetry and prose or he was influenced by the traditional belittlement of *xiao-shuo* (prose-fiction). If either is not the cause, he should have listed *xiao-shuo* as the dynastic form of Ming and Qing dynasties.

The evolution of Chinese literature from one dynastic form to another is not a random development caused by chance happenings. There is an inherent motivating force. It is a psycho-historical movement powered by the collective psycho-sexual development. To view Chinese literature from the view-point of psycho-history in terms of psycho-sexual development, I see an interesting correlation between Chinese dynastic forms and psycho-sexual development. Among the traditional Chinese literary forms, *shi* poetry as a lyric form is predominantly oral; *fu* of Han and *pian-wen* of Six dynasties as a genre halfway between poetry and prose marked by accumulation of ornate details and strict pattern is oral and anal, so is *lu-shi*, a regulated form of poetry with strict tonal and rhyming patterns; *ci* of Song and Chu of Yuan characterized by uneven verse lines are oral and urethral; the *chuan-qi* of Tang and later times is oral and urethral with phallic signs; drama of Yuan, Ming and Qing is urethral and phallic; the fiction of Ming and Qing is phallic and oral with signs of the oedipal.

Modern fiction is a synthesis of all modes. Corresponding to psycho-sexual development, Chinese history of literature can be viewed through a psycho-sexual model with five major literary modes which incorporate more modalities. The following is a sketchy developmental model for Chinese literary genres:

<u>Libidinal Stages</u>	<u>Dominant Literary Modes</u>	<u>Dynastic Genres</u>
Oral	Lyric Mode	Shi-Jing Chu-Ci (Gu-ti Shi)
Anal	Rhyme-Prose Mode	Han fu Pian-fu of Six Dynasties (Lu-Shi), (Gong-Ti Shi)
Urethral	Uneven-Line Mode	Tang-Shi, Song-Ci Yuan-Qu
Phallic	Dramatic Mode	Yuan Drama Ming Drama
Oedipal	Narrative Mode	(Tang Chuan-qi) Ming Xiao-shuo Qing Xiao-shuo
Post-Oedipal	Modern Mode	Modern Fiction

Note: The literary identity, like an individual's personality, evinces fixations, precocity, and regressions. Those items in brackets are anomalies which signify either regression or precocity.

Since the literary mind as a macroperson stretches over several thousand years, the overlapping of various modes is inevitable. One thing, however, is clear: throughout the history of a literary tradition, one mode stands out prominently. This is the predominant mode for that literary tradition. From this point of view, I think that Western literary tradition is predominantly phallic while Chinese literary tradition is oral. The psychological immaturity of Chinese fiction, the

belated rise of drama and fiction, the dominance of short lyric poetry—all may be traced to the late entry of the literary mind into the phallic phase and the absence of oedipal rebellions in Chinese literature and culture before modern times. Siegfried Berthelsdorf, a medical doctor, published in *American Imago* an interesting psychoanalytic paper on the formation of Chinese characters—the medium of Chinese literature. His findings support my speculations. His study concerns one simple question: why, in Chinese character-formation, is the “woman” radical used to form character either with consoling, comforting, and adorable qualities or with negative, derogative, and depreciative connotations. His conclusion is: the constructions of the characters with “woman” radical “documents the projection of hostile reactions of infantile frustration: of disappointment in the mother’s seemingly restricting attitude and of her unavailability” and reflects “not only the lack of resolution of the oedipal complex but also a preoedipal lapse in development, individuation and maturation” (229).

Professor Holland’s discerning remarks concerning the oedipal fantasies in literature may offer us some more relevant insight into the matters we are examining:

It is safe to say, as a general rule, that a work of literature builds on an oedipal fantasy whenever it deals with relationships involving more than two persons or whenever it makes us feel fairly realistic versions of adult love or hate, note, for example, the simple primitivity of

Come live with me and be my love,

And we will all the pleasures prove . . .

Lyrics almost always tend to be highly stylized and the poet is usually a solitary singer. Lyrics, thus, are almost inevitable pre-oedipal, while oedipal fantasies are confined to drama, cinema, and narrative (though these may be pre-oedipal, too.) (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 47)

In terms of this assumption, it is not far wrong to say that pre-modern Chinese literature is predominantly pre-oedipal, and most pre-modern Chinese literary works are pre-phallic. *Shi, fu, ci, qu* are all pre-phallic both in content and in form. Even those love poems are, with a few exceptions, pre-phallic, for they resemble the two lines Professor Holland quotes as an illustration. In classic Chinese poetry, the poet is always a lonely singer suffering from an indescribable loss or longing; even if he suffers from lovesickness, the poems he produces lack adult sexual interest and may be considered Platonic. The absence of adult sexual interest deprives these poems of the inquisitiveness needed for further exploration, especially exploration of the unknown. As a result, classic Chinese poets are content with the expression of a fleeting emotion in short lyrics of a few stanzas. They did not have any internal stimulation to write long and elaborate poems. That is why there is no interest in creating epics of thousands of lines.

Let us analyze a love poem by Li Shang-ying, a Tang poet (815?-58), famous for his love poems. The following poem is sufficient to prove that the poetic rendering of love sentiments is pro-oedipal, lacking adult sexual connotations:

Spring Rain

Lying disconsolate in new spring white wadded robes,
 by white gates lost and lonely, my wish too much denied;
 a red pavilion beyond the rain—we watch each other coldly;
 pearl blinds, a torch that flickers—she comes home alone.
 A long road is grief enough in spring dusk and evening;
 what's left of the night still offers me phantoms of a
 dream.
 Jade earrings, a sealed letter—how to get them through?
 Ten thousand miles of cloud gauze, a wild goose winging.
 (Quoted from Burton Watson, *Chinese Lyricism*, p.192)

The poem shows the poet dreaming of a lady. For some unknown reasons, they are separated from each other. The poet wants to send a

love letter, but does not know how to get it through. The cool emotions of the poet give the poem an air other than sexual. It seems more innocuous than the two lines quoted by Professor Holland.

In his *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrope Frye posits an interesting theory of fictional modes in his discussion of the historical development of Western literature. Basing himself on a modified theory of Aristotle's elevation of the characters in the *Poetics* and his own observation of western fiction, he classifies European literature into five epochs in terms of "the hero's power of action:" 1.myth; 2.romance; 3.high mimetic mode; 4.low mimetic mode; and 5. Ironic mode (33-67). Interesting enough, his division of epochs coincides with the major stages of human development in psychoanalytic psychology and illustrates a process of movement undertaken by Western literature from pleasure principle to reality principle. The coincidence is by no means accidental. Professor Paris points out in his study of Jane Austen's novels, "The devices which a realistic writer uses to make his plots seem plausible and morally acceptable Frye calls 'displacement.' It is displacement also which accounts for the movement from mode to mode. This concept is taken from Freud, and Frye's reliance on it indicates that his system is not derived purely from an inductive survey of literature, as he claims. The conflict between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, and the evolution of Western literature represents a series of stages in the development of the sense of reality" (14). Although Frye's emphasis on the movement from pleasure principle to reality principle differs from my focus on psycho-sexual development and repression, essentially, we have investigated the same area of interest from two different perspectives. Both of us treat a literary tradition as a macroperson. Both of us try to locate a deep structure that underlies the development of a literary tradition. My approach fits the evolution of literary forms and Chinese tradition as well as his approach fits Western tradition. The development model we have discovered from different perspectives may be considered a hidden structural pattern of long-term human endeavors such as the history of literature, art, civilization and culture.

NOTES

¹ I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professors Norman Holland and Bernard Paris at the Institute of the Psychological Study of the Arts of the University of Florida for reading my paper and making suggestions for revision.

² According to Wang Guowei's widely accepted definition of Chinese drama as "the combination of language, acting, and singing for the staging of a story," the earliest Chinese drama can be dated to the late Song dynasty. See Qian Nanyang 1-3. Also see Wang Guowei.

³ Among those who accept the developmental stages in relation to erogenous zones are classic psychoanalysts like Freud, Otto Fenichel, Wilhelm Reich, Ernest Jones, ego-psychologists Karen Horney, Erik Erikson, and object relation theorists like W. R. D. Fairbairn, D. W. Winnicott, Edith Jacobson, Margret S. Mahler, Otto Kernberg, et al.

⁴ See Bergler.

⁵ See Aristotle 50, 53, 60, 66; Horace's *Art of Poetry*, 68; Castelvetro's *The Poetics of Aristotle Translated and Explained*, 149, 152-53; Siney's *An Apology For Poetry*, 173-74; Corneille's *Of the Three Unities of Action, Time, and Place*, 319-26; Dryden's *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 232-36; Pope's *An Essay on Criticism*, 281; Johnson's *Preface to Shakespeare*, 333-36; Bullough's "Psychical Distance" as a factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle, 763-64; Wimsatt and Beardsley's *The Affective Fallacy*, 1027; all to be found in *Critical Theory Since Plato*.

⁶ See Marx,

⁷ The late Professor James Liu held the opinion that Chinese lyric poetry is the best in the world. Scholars generally agree with him. Western poets and critics like Pound, Eliot, Lowell, Stevens, W. B. Yeats, Sandburg, Ford Madox Ford who read some Chinese lyric poetry (mostly through English translation) became fascinated with it and showed their great admiration. Pound and Lowell expressed the

idea that the lyric poetry by Chinese masters are incomparable anywhere in the world.

⁸ See Wang Guo-wei.

⁹ See Siegfried 229.

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