

- Fu* 賦 (A. Narrative-Descriptive Mode;
B. A Genre: Rhyme-Prose)
Bi 比 (Similaic Analogical Mode)
Xing 興 (Evocative Associative Mode)

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SUMMARY

Fu, *bi*, *xing* are an inseparable unity of modes which figure centrally in the Chinese poetical tradition. Viewed trichotomously, they are the constants in Chinese lyricism, underlying an imagistic insight into both presentation and representation, a sense, rational and practical, of categorical correspondence, and the spontaneous response to subtleties in natural phenomena. Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 (466-518) advocated the synthesis of the three modes by warning that the exclusive use of the latter two, *bi* and *xing*, would result in a kind of reconditeness beyond comprehension and damage the fluency of verbal expression; whereas the unaided employment of the first could only lead to too overt a delivery of one's poetic ideas in a loose and diffused style. Liu Xie 劉勰 (465-520) held that *xing* is comparatively obscure as against *bi* which is obvious. *Bi* involves parallels between different objects, that is, the use of simile or metaphor; *xing* consists in affective responses to stimuli. Reason is to be supported by juxtaposing things with comparable features; emotion is to be revealed by insinuating perceptions with finesse. *Xing*, as a mode of expression, springs out from the poet's emotional urge, while *bi* is intended for poetic reasoning. According to Liu Xizai 劉熙載 (1813-1881), to express one's feelings through giving account of a situation of things is call *fu*;

to single out something to parallel one's sentiments is called *bi*, to feel something so deeply as to further arouse intense [poetic] emotions in one is called *xing*. In Pang Kai's 龐攄 (?-1700?) opinion, *fu* plays the leading role, *xing* and *bi* are geared to the function of *fu*. In the process of evolution, *fu* as a mode also developed into a genre called rhyme-prose due to its self-containment and autonomy.

For this triad, the diversity in definition as well as the perplexity critics have experienced in their efforts to find its equivalent in Western texts, can be attributed to the interdependence and interpenetration of the three modes and especially the indivisibility of *bi* and *xing*. For comparative studies, we recommend Paul Ricoeur's proposition of "the metaphorical process as cognition, imagination, and feeling." To regard this triad as the dialectical unfolding of poetic process, and relate it to other triads in Chinese poetics in a schematic configuration, will enable us to see more clearly how these modes are predicated on a distinctive tradition which is characterized by what F.S.C. Northrop terms "the immediately experienced aesthetic continuum."

KEY WORDS

Aesthetic continuum
Shipin 詩品
 Northrop F.S.C.
fu 賦
xing 興
 Paul Ricoeur

Liu Xizai
bi 比
Wenxin diaolong 文心雕龍
 Pang Kai
 Liu Xie
 Zhong Rong



1A. *Fu* as Mode

In principle, according to Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 (466-518), a famous literary critic, poetry technically boils down to three modes: firstly, *fu* 賦 (the narrative-descriptive); secondly, *bi* 比 (the similitic or analogical); thirdly, *xing* 興 (the evocative-associative). *Fu* involves the direct narration of an event or a series of events, with moral undertones or implications interwoven in the description of outer objects. Zhong advocated the synthesis of the three modes for writing poetry, warning that the exclusive use of the latter two modes, *bi* and *xing*, would result in a kind of reconditeness beyond comprehension and damage the fluency of verbal expression. Similarly, the unaided employ of the first mode *fu*, could only lead to too overt a delivery of one's poetic ideas in a loose and diffused style.

In Chinese, *fu* originally meant "to expound, to elaborate on." As a stylistic technique, it emphasizes the true representation of an aesthetic object, a situation or the process of an event, with the aim of bringing about the antithesis of good and evil in order to convey moral instructions or social comments. This definition is colored as a reflection of a poetic orthodoxy: a didactic view of poetry based on the Confucian ethical codes and its political ideals. Judging from its function and purpose, *fu* can be said to be a combination of two of the four types of composition in Western rhetoric, *narration* and *description*. In fact, without a considerable incorporation of

description, it is quite doubtful whether narration can effectively perform its function: to engage and entertain, to infuse and inform.

A poem in the *Book of Songs* (The Odes of Bei 邶風, 17) has been often quoted to exemplify the use of *fu*:

The Gentle Lass

The gentle lass, a beauty,
By the city wall should be waiting for me.
Yet I can only scratch my head in anxiety,
My lover I am unable to see.

The gentle lass, so lovely,
Gave me this pipe red and bright.
O, pipe, with lustre shiny,
For me your gleam is a delight.

Back from the pasture she sent me
A blade of grass, delicate and rare.
Not of beauty the gift seems to be,
It reflects the grace of the fair.

This poem can serve to illustrate the proper use of *fu* as observed by the Song critic Li Zhongmeng 李仲蒙 (?-1156?): "*Fu* is characterized by the expression of emotions through giving an account of the object. Both the affective and physical aspects of a poetic situation are expressed to the full" (Peng 210). The poem narrates an amorous "event": the rendezvous for the date has been arranged in advance, but due to some unexpected cause, and to his great disappointment, the lad is unable to go to meet his partner. In the self-narration of the event, the qualities and features of objects (the pipe and a blade of grass, etc.), as well as their relevance to the event, or more exactly, a series of events, are described emotionally in relation to the yearning of the lyrical subject of the poem.

Thus, the whole gamut of both affectiveness and thingliness in terms of subject and object is presented and represented to the full.

Here, one point is worth further discussion. The mode *fu* is not necessarily marked, as some critics have asserted, with directness and explicitness. In almost all accounts of events or depictions of objects in poetry, there is some emotive process of the lyrical self's psychology which invariably becomes involved. The emotions, to be dramatized or refined, tend to find their expression in ways somewhat subtle and insinuous. Take the above poem as an example: from giving an account of anxiety in the first stanza, the poet (subject) suddenly switches to expressing his delight in the gift from his sweetheart. Verbally, this is not merely a break in the narrative continuity, but also a turning off in the process of affective association. Of course, in terms of poetic structure, the poem is still a compact narrative-descriptive whole. Yet in another sense, we should take notice that, the second stanza, as well as the third one, ceases to be confined to the exclusive use of *fu*. At least, the last sentence of this second stanza, "For me your gleam is a delight," can be regarded as having the *xing* mode infused in it. On the other hand, "insinuation" or "convolution" has also been resorted to in the narration and description of "a blade of grass." At first, it is said to be really delicate (mainly in the sense of being beautiful) and rare; and then the readers are told that it is in fact not so beautiful; at last, it has to be reaffirmed to be fascinating as "it reflects the grace of the fair." Chinese admirers of this sort of convolution have described it as producing an aesthetic effect like something having twists and turns in one's heart and swirling on in rhythm with one's breath (*hui chang dang qi* 迴腸蕩氣). Treasuring the tradition of these ballad-like lyrics, poets of later generations are encouraged to develop this poetic technique. Hence the rule: In poetry, obliqueness is to be appreciated above other things (*shi gui qu* 詩貴曲). From the

above instance, we can have some rough idea that the function of *fu* is to be reinforced by co-ordination with the other two modes, *bi* and *xing*.

Taking exception to the proposition that *fu* was an explicit representation of outer objects, and considering it superficial to explain *fu* as merely giving direct account of an event, Li Zhonghua of the Qing Dynasty has shown much cogency in attaching importance to the notion of *sui wu fu xing* 隨物賦形 (literally, to follow up the changing object in order to create form [of value]). He argued that creation displays excellences only through producing artistic forms which hinge upon the essence of objects in the physical world. Thus, *fu* was viewed from a higher level, lifted from merely a type of composition to a more complex function or mechanism in literary creation. Furthermore, Li imparts to *fu* a greater aesthetic significance for its indispensable involvement in the evoking of imagery. In his opinion, *fu* is not restricted to report on a situation or process, but must be assigned the task of grasping the essence of an object with a view to the enhancement of vividness and immediacy of an artistic image.

The prevalence of the term *sui wu fu xing*, a registration of critical progress in the definition of *fu*, perhaps should be mainly ascribed to the eminent Song poet, Su Shi (1037-1101). He had, on many occasions, emphasized its bearing on artistic creation. He compared his own literary writings to an irrepressible and inexhaustible spring of great momentum: unblocked in its course in a level terrain, it would sweep on at the speed of thousands of miles a day; in following a tortuous course with rugged rocks on either side, it would assume a multiplicity of lively and unrestrainable forms according to the objects it encounters. It was in this context that he introduced the phrase of *sui wu fu xing* as an aesthetic proposition. Talking metaphorically, Su Shi often emphasized the dynamic manifestations of a variable visual world as well as the profound harmony between subjectivity and objectivity

and the keen response to the changing magnificence of Nature on the part of a poet or an artist.

Sui wu fu xing, requires the merging of *xing si* 形似 (formal likeness) and *shen si* 神似 (spiritual likeness). For this, a poet should cultivate himself in order to gain more insight into the laws governing the changing conditions in both physical world and social life. He must free himself from restraints of negative stereotypes which are capable of suffocating one's imagination. Only then is it possible for him to conjure up fresh imagery amid the observance of artistic rules and convey subtleties with an untrammelled mode.

Let us conclude the discussion of *fu* as a mode by quoting Pang Kai 龐埏, a successful candidate in the provincial imperial examination of the 1675, who, somehow anticipating the theory of narratology, differed with conventional notions by arguing:

Fu is the prop of *xing*, playing the leading role. *Xing* is the arousing of a creative mood at the subject's chance encounter with some evaluative aesthetic object; *bi* is intended to facilitate signification through categorical correspondence. The latter two are of secondary moment . . . That is why I hold that *fu* should be put first in poetry. By *xing* is meant to evoke what is to be narrated; by *bi* is meant to draw analogy between those to be narrated (Pang 270-71).

1B. *Fu* as Genre

The connection between *fu* as a mode and *fu* as a genre is quite clear etymologically. Originally *fu* means "to extend, to effuse." It is natural, therefore, in the case of writing, for it to mean: to tell in detail, to elaborate on, to rhapsodize. It has undergone basically the same semantic evolution as narrate, narrative and narration in English. Means at last become an

end. Therefore, we can say, as a mode, *fu* was originally intended to describe and narrate; that is, to serve as a literary device or element within a work. Literary devices, however, as we have learned from Russian Formalism, are not fixed pieces in the literary game, but change their meaning with time and with context as well. In the process of the evolution of a literary form, devices and elements can develop into genre because of their "automatized" and independent aesthetic functions. In Western tradition, narrative or narration, with its inherent structural capacity of representing in art an event or story, evolved from a rhetorical device to a type of writing. Similarly, *fu* underwent a transition from being one of the six principles of classical Chinese poetry to the genre of rhyme-prose due to its self-containment and autonomy. For, though different from *bi* and *xing*, *fu*, apart from its special capacity to tell in detail, is also invested with basically the same emotive function as are *bi* and *xing*. Liu Xizai 劉熙載 (1813-1881) summarized: "to express one's feelings through giving account of the situation of things (events) is called *fu*; to single out something to parallel one's sentiments is called *bi*; to feel something so deeply as to arouse emotions in one is called *xing*" (Liu Xizai 121).

According to Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), *fu* is a variant of ancient poetry. And in Liu Xizai's opinion, emotive *fu* is a derivative from *feng* 風 (Airs); expository *fu* from *ya* 雅 (Odes); commendatory *fu* from *song* 頌 (Hymns). Whereas poetry is the *xin* 心 (center, core, heart) of *fu*, *fu* is the *ti* 體 (body, frame, structure) of poetry. Poetry is aimed at holding firm or in position one's emotion and nature; *fu* is used for effusive description of magnificent things. To hold one's emotion in position results in terseness; to make effusive descriptions can lead to great sweeps of stylistic grandeur. *Fu* rises to the occasion when there is a labyrinthine situation involving interwoven complexities of human feelings and social events which poetry finds it hard to control.

As a type of poetic composition, *fu* (generally rendered as rhapsody or rhyme-prose) reached its zenith in China between the second century B. C. and the sixth century A. D. Nearly all written by Han dynasty scholar-officials, Han *fu*, mainly treated themes associated with the glorification of the ruling royalty and the brilliant pageant of metropolitan life in a busy and successful empire. Perhaps, the ornate and over-rich style of Han *fu* can be more convincingly accounted for by the preoccupations and pleasures of Han officialdom and gentry. As Alexander Soper has pointed out, "For the articulate man of Han . . . the most insistent stimulus to the imagination came from the palace, the prime symbol of human greatness, erected now on an unimaginable scale of splendor, vastness, and multiplicity" (Hajime 333). *Fu* indeed had caught the spirit of the times. But after the Late Han, with the decline of this glorious empire, poets tended increasingly to devote the *fu* form to the expression of personal feelings or experiences.

Zhi Yu 摯虞 (?-311) of Western Jin, in his "On the Evolution of Literary Genres," drew a clear distinction between the ancient *fu* of the pre-Han period and modern *fu* of his contemporaries:

The ancient *fu* strikes root deeply in true sentiments and socialized ethical consciousness, with allegories and allusions playing the supportive role. The modern *fu* gives the commanding position to the descriptive mode, with the ethical sense as supplementary. In the first case, the stylistic orderliness is guaranteed by succinctness in expression. In the second, the text is marked with verbal exuberance and rhetorical erraticism (Yan, *juan* 77).

Preceding the above quotation, a definition of *fu* is given by him as follows:

The *fu* is noted for its features of being narrative and descriptive in an elaborately polished way. It was a variant of ancient poetry. Ancient poets, in an inspired state of mind, would commit themselves to writing; while at the same time, they were able to submit their emotions and passions to ethical codes and behaviour patterns. For their internal stirrings, they found the proper verbal embodiment; for moral purport, they conceived of the subject-matter drawn from actual situations. This gave rise to literary creation in the form of *fu*-a genre which served the purpose of having one's spiritual attitude conveyed through imagery borne out by richly-ornate language (Yan, *juan* 77).

One can get a glimpse of the grandiosity and magnificence of Han *fu* in some measure by reading Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 (179 B.C.-117 B.C.) "*Shanglin Fu*" (The Shanglin Park) (Birch 142-43) and compare it with Yu Xin's 庾信 (513-581) "*Xiaoyuan Fu*" (A Small Garden) (Watson 102-3). The latter strikes a note entirely different, tone and tint, from that of Sima Xiangru. Though depicting straitened circumstances in sharp contrast to Sima Xiangru's representation of a magnificent park, thus conveying a sense of decline in social milieu, Yu Xin displays one of his salient features in the luxurious way of using allusion in addition to the verbal richness which points clearly to the generic origin of Han *fu*. On the other hand, the shift in diction from difficult words and elevated phrases towards comparatively simpler expressions is also obvious.

This genre is unique for the combination of prose and rhymed verse. Equally impressive is its pomposity. Variable in length, and especially superb in descriptive-narrative function, *fu* enjoys greater advantages in producing resplendent representations of imposing or attractive objects or events in connection with "capital cities, palaces, imperial ceremonies

and great hunts as well as charming ladies, exotic plants, wondrous beasts, and fascinating tours of scenery remarkable for beauty and historical associations." On the other hand, as Burton Watson has pointed out, *fu* was often excessively obscure and pedantic in language and overloaded with historical allusions or too punctiliously imitative. Inevitably, it became the target of frequent criticisms in the Tang dynasty, and its influence drastically diminished with the rise of new genres.

2. *Bi* and *Xing* as Inseparable Poetic Metaphorization

Now to proceed to the two other modes of poetry, *bi* and *xing*, which are often linked to *fu* in its first modal sense. It seems that no clear-cut demarcation between *bi* and *xing* has so far been agreed upon by critics, both traditional and modern. Zhong Rong's definitions are rather simple: the mode *bi*, is to make something symbolic for one's intention or aspiration; and *xing* means that the words have been all read, yet the meaning still lingers on. But readers may well challenge this notion by asking: Is something symbolic as used in *bi* not also or even more effective for making one's meaning linger on? Then how to distinguish between *bi* and *xing*? Li Zhongmeng defined *bi* as obliquely making reference to something in order to convey one's emotion in an indirect way, that is, to attach one's emotions to outer objects; and *xing* as having one's feelings aroused through the contact with objective stimuli, that is, objects eliciting responses from the subject. Jiao Ran 皎然 (720-?), a famous monk-poet of the Tang tried to distinguish *bi* from *xing* in this formula: "to put emphasis on image is *bi*; to put emphasis on implication is *xing*. Implication is significance concealed under the image" (Wang 45).

A very suggestive point was raised by Shih-hsiang Chen when he called our attention to the inconsistencies and

deficiencies in the Mao Annotations to the *Book of Songs*. In Chen's opinion, the basic technical importance of *xing* had been played down due to a strong preoccupation with "allegorical interpretations in accordance with current political and moral ideology." For *xing* has been taken verbatim over from the *Rite of Chou* and pigeonholed in the "rigid formulation of the Six Principles" (Chen 21). Chen stresses that *xing* was an ancient song technique and that, the primary sense of *xing*, by which the poems in the *Book of Songs* are marked off as a genre from an antique origin, has been lost long ago, and shared by no later writings. And such loss should be attributed to the change of a generic practice as well as to the change of poetic concepts. Chen said:

We believe that a genre, while it may signify in its full development a complex set of recognizable literary fashions and conventions in a society at a given age, can and should be traced back to its pristine origin as a simpler common mode of expression of the emotional and imaginative life of a human community. On close examination, the "Mao Annotations" that uniformly mark off many phrases and lines as *hsing* reveal a set of conventions spreading through all parts of the texts of the *Songs*. The *hsing* elements bear up the structure of each poem where they appear, as they start or reinforce the rhythm, establish the sound pattern, and set the mood. They do this in the form of refrains or burdens, but more often than not as subtly significant strophes, as "incremental repetitions." They are quintessential to the whole charm and success of the generic character of the *Songs* as their main technical aspect (Chen 20).

A fact supportive of Chen's argumentation is the mournful exclamation of Liu Xie 劉勰 (465-520): "The true meaning of *xing* has been lost (*xing yi xiao wang*)!" Liu lamented that this

loss had resulted in the degeneration of literary qualities in comparison with those of the Zhou (Chou) period. Though not sufficiently throwing light on the obscured original vital link of *xing* with the genre of songs such as those found in the *Book of Songs*, he nevertheless gave his own explanation of the three modes as follows:

Versatile and profound indeed is the *Book of Songs* with the six principles (*feng*, *ya*, *song*, *fu*, *bi*, *xing*) superbly concretized in it. But why, in Master Mao's Preface, only *xing* is singled out for special attention? Is this not because the category of *feng* has become commonsensical and *fu* implicates nothing problematic, whereas *xing* alone is rather obscure as against *bi* which is obvious? *Bi* involves parallels between different objects, that is, the use of simile or metaphor; *xing* consists in affective responses to stimuli. Reason is to be supported by juxtaposing things with comparable features; emotion is to be revealed by insinuating perception with finesse. *Xing*, as a mode of expression, springs out from the poet's emotional urge, while *bi* is intended for poetic reasoning (Liu Xie 601).

If Western readers do not emerge much the wiser from reading these comments, they might possibly find it helpful to consult some reflections by comparatists. For example, in his "Marginalia to the Contemporary Situation in Chinese Comparative Literary Studies," Marián Gálik, urging people to comprehend the distinctive specificity of literary phenomena in general, has presented a thought-provoking observation:

By returning to the old Chinese traditions, but having in mind the European notions of poetics as well, we may more deeply and accurately understand their real significances and contributions to the world literary

mind. For example, *bi* and *xing* are two modes of expression in ancient-Chinese literature. When analysing them, European scholars sometimes commit an error in trying to bring them closer to Western readers with the aid of concepts from European poetics. This common approach tears the original terms out of the system of traditional Chinese poetics which is considerably different from its European counterparts, but of equal value.

Igor S. Lisevich, for instance, who for many years studied Chinese literary criticism at the end of the Han and the Six Dynasties, came up with the idea that *xing* comes closest to the European notion of metaphor, allegory or symbol (although it does not fully agree with any one of them). In fact, in Chinese poetry, *xing* is considered to be a "spontaneous growth of *qi* or as the words of response of the mind" to some external or internal stimuli. The same is valid also for the concept of *bi* which could be defined as a certain metaphor with the traits of allegory and mainly of comparison. Traditional Chinese poetics is not primarily concerned with an investigation of the verbal texture of a work, with an exact differentiation or definition of poetic tropes or figures of speech, but is more interested in understanding essential phenomena standing behind the work, or such as make its origin possible, in determining the philosophico-ethical fountainhead from which it originates (Deeney 2-3).

However, we are inclined to treat *bi* and *xing* as inseparable as a special kind of poetical metaphorization with peculiarities closely related to the philosophico-ethical fountainhead of the Chinese tradition. Actually, the poeticalness of Chinese poetry is in the main determined by this

metaphorization in both technical and allegorical senses. With *fu* as its essential means of execution, the *bi-xing* metaphorization originated from a distinctive symbolism in the collective experience with regard to ritualism. And it was the latter that had given rise to aesthetic pattern (*wen*) or "literariness." Afterward, this metaphorization became not merely a tripartite synthesized poetic mode for the poet, but a highly imaginative reading strategy for the reader. And its peculiarities should be first traced to a tradition of *bi de* 比德 (analogization of virtues) and then to the necromancy-myth-religion of primitive Chinese society. Li Zehou has listed the following from the *Analects* (tr. Legge) as instances of *bi de*:

The Master said, "The wise find pleasure in water; the virtuous find pleasure in hills. The wise are active; the virtuous are tranquil. The wise are joyful; the virtuous are long-lived." (6.23)

The Master said, "He who exercises government by means of his virtue, may be compared to the north polar, which keeps its place and all the stars turn toward it. (2. 1)

Zixia asked, saying, "what is the meaning of the passage -- 'The pretty dimples of her artful smile! The well defined black and white of her eye! The plain ground for the colors?'" The Master said, "The business of laying on the colours follows the preparation of the plain ground." Zigong said, "Are ceremonies then a subsequent thing?" The Master said, "It is Shang (Zigong) who can bring out my meaning! Now I can begin to talk about the Odes with him." (3.8)

Following Confucius's example, Xunzi 荀子 (289-238 B.C.) afterward elaborated on analogies between virtue and waters,

as well as between *junzi* (gentleman) and jade in his "You Zuo" and "Ga Xing." Yet on the other hand, *bi de* was gradually distorted and overstrained into farfetched ethical preachings and thus became a pernicious tendency in the Han Dynasty.

There has been a growing number of scholars who believe that though the descriptions of some objects with which the *songs* begin seem to have no apparent coherence with the particular emotions to be expressed in the poems, they might actually have certain relatedness to historical events or to the tradition of a clan community, especially to its ritual activities. Furthermore, perhaps they are the something connected to what the members of the community cherished like their totem. But such relatedness had gradually sunk into oblivion with the long passage of time. Still, we may possibly detect from the example below how *bi-xing* elements bear up the structure of the poem "as they start or reinforce the rhythm, establish the sound pattern, and set the mood":

The Swallows (Yan Yan)

With wings, not level, spread,
 About the swallows stir.
 Homeward the lady sped,
 And I escorted her.
 And when away from sight she passed,
 Like rain, my tears came falling fast.

The swallows fly about,
 Now up now down, they dart.
 She to her home set out,
 And I was loth to part.
 Her form when distance from me kept,
 Long time I stood, and silent wept.

Above, beneath, then cry

The flying swallows vent.
 Homeward she passed, and I
 Far with her southwards went.
 Her form when distance from me bore
 With bitter grief my heart was sore.

This lady Chung loved me
 With feeling true and deep.
 Docile and good was she,
 Nor failed the light to keep.
 Unworthy me her deed and word
 Taught to respect our former lord.

(Legge 27-28)

We can compare this poem with Sheakespeare's Sonnet 73 for some fresh light on the relationship between *bi-xing* elements and poetic structure as well as on the difference between *bi-xing* and metaphor as Westerners understand it. Attention is invited to the general design or ground plan of Sheakespeare's sonnet:

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
 As after sunset fadeth in the West,
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals all in rest.
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
 That on the ashes of his youth does lie,
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire
 Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

In this poem, we can see how metaphorical involutions contribute to the clarity of its structure, and from which the poem derives its richness. A natural development of metaphorization holds the three quatrains in an organic relationship. As Hallet Smith put it, "they proceed from the declining of year to the declining of day to a declining of the fire, bringing the metaphorical point closer to the subject as the poem progresses" (Nowotny 77). We, of course, find in "The Swallows" no such a "heavy load of figuration, intellection and metaphysics in the language" as in the last quatrain of Sheakespeare's. Nor is the descriptive narration of the swallows so highly figured as to attain the status of the metaphysical as the declining of a fire. Yet the three descriptions of the "manner of being" (*qing zhuang*) of the swallows function equally well to enable the reader to "glide easily" from the first to the last stanza without "any jolting sense of sudden thinness" in their relation to the particular situation. They serve the construct of musicality as well as the "boundaries of the tone" (*diao zhi jie* 調之界) for a special poetic emotion. Swallows are migratory birds. At a certain seasonal point, they have to leave one place for another out of necessity. It has become the "eternal recurrence" and must have stood as a kind of symbol in the collective experience as in emotive association with human departure and separation. So, the precarious obliquing of their wings, their ups and downs on a wind, as well as their doleful notes, might possibly have long become the objective correlatives for members of some primordial community. We would not expect so much modern metaphorical sophistication if such a poem had been edited by Confucius more than two thousand years ago.

We would find it still more rewarding to further investigate the early stage of the application of *bi xing* by reading two other poems, "Suoshu" (Large Rats) and "Guanju" (Ode) from the *Book of Songs* (Chen 285, 327):

Large Rats

Large rats, large rats,
 Don't our millet attack.
 For three years you have on us thrived,
 Yet like for like you never requited.
 Now to you we bid farewell
 For a happy land to dwell.
 O for a happy land, for a happy land,
 Where we can secure a proper stand.

. . .

Metaphorically, this poem expresses indignation directed against the extortion perpetrated by the officials of the Wei government. It is rather obvious that this analogical use of rats in place of corrupted officials belongs to the mode of *bi*. But problematic issues are involved in the case of another poem, the first of the *Book of Songs*:

Ode

On the island, are cooing
 Ospreys in a pair;
 Our Lord is wooing
 A lady virtuous and fair.

Here and there grows the watercress
 To be gathered from left and right.
 A virtuous lady's care and caress
 Our Lord has sought day and night.

Sought and sought but in vain,
 Awake, asleep, to anguish he fell a prey.
 Lasting and unabated is love's pain;
 In bed, he tossed and turned in dismay.

Here and there grows the cress tender

To be culled from left and right.
 The virtuous lady sweet and slender
 Should be welcomed with music bright.

Here and there grows the cress tender
 To be plucked from left and right.
 Oh, that the lady sweet and slender
 In the pleasant music will delight.

This poem has long been quoted as the most archetypical example of *xing* (the associative mode). Perhaps it may be safe to put it this way: whereas the basis of Western metaphor is comparison or analogy, *xing* seems to be mainly focused on the spontaneous response to stimuli which is not necessarily related to similar qualities between two objects.

Concerning this poem, there are some points that deserve attention. Heading the 300 pieces selected by Confucius to constitute an anthology as "sources of information, models for speech, and guides in the performance of administrative and diplomatic duties" (Yu 49), this poem was first commented on by Confucius himself as expressing "joy without wantonness and sorrow without self-injury" (Yu 48). And this interpretation has been generally considered the prime principle upon which evolved the four functions of poetry: *xing* 興 (to stimulate), *guan* 觀 (to judge), *qun* 群 (to foster the communal spirit), *yuan* 怨 (to serve as a vehicle for one's complaints). Early commentators regarded this poem as a great King's epithalamium with the implication that a sagacious monarch should be aided by virtuous ministers. Ospreys, far from licentious by nature, mate only once and the male resides in a different place from the female's. This was taken by some commentators as signifying an image of moderated emotions which had been used to "evoke" (*xing*) the queen. But even the ancient critics were divided over this point. There have been challenges against Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) definition of *xing*

as "to inspire/ elicit the lyric/emotive expression by first making mention of something else" (Peng 211). However, the critics have all shared common ground in that they all tried to gear the exegetical interpretation to the Confucian ethical code.

In modern times, as people's attitudes toward sexual relationships have taken a more liberal turn, readers almost instinctively respond to *guan guan* (the ospreys' cooing) as a sign or symbol of wooing. Nowadays, critics pay little attention to whether or not this piece had much to do with King Wen and tend to generalize the theme as praise of healthy love among common people. Some of these modern commentators have come to the conclusion that a certain circumstance of productive activity made the subject in the text (the lyrical self) feel the erotic impulse; others emphasize no more than that the elegant bodily movement in the process of gathering watercress might be quite suggestive of the gracefulness of a gentle maiden.

Yet, to what extent is it appropriate or inappropriate to summarize the *xing* mode in the same way as metaphor has been defined in Western literary discourse, namely, as "language that implies a relationship, of which similarity is a significant feature, between two things and so changes our apprehension of either of both?" (Babette Deutsch; quoted in Peet 73). In comparison with other interpretations of *xing* such as Legge's "stimulate the mind," Waley's "incite people's emotion," Donald Holzman's "metaphorical allusion" and "analogy," Chia-ying Yeh's "evocative image" and so on, to render it as metaphor is not entirely unjustifiable. In Western critical language, metaphor can be used in a narrow or a broad sense. Robert Frost posited that education by poetry is education by metaphor, declaring he would be willing to throw away everything else but that: enthusiasm tamed by metaphor. Frost firmly asserted that unless one is at home in metaphor, unless one has had his proper poetical education in metaphor,

he is not safe anywhere, because he is not at ease with figurative values. Frost was talking about metaphor in a broad sense.

Judging from the context, what Frost meant by metaphor seems to be what Chinese poets and critics would consider the virtual fusion of *bi* and *xing*. He actually defended poetry in a similar way as did Confucius who warned his disciples that without a poetical education, one's power of expression would always fail him whenever effective communication is required (see Liu Chongde 129, 223, 231). Following the rules of the Confucian poetic orthodoxy, ancient Chinese poets believed that: one can not "go far," unless his language is vitalized with enough literariness. And literariness is to be fostered mainly through the practice of the art of poetry; that is, mainly through the mastery of the fusion of *bi* and *xing*. This is exactly the gist of what Frost seems to have wished to get across when he elaborated: "The metaphor whose manage we are best taught in poetry—that is all there is of thinking. It may not seem far for the mind to go, but it is the mind's furthest. The richest accumulation of the ages is the noble metaphors we have rolled up" (Blake 190-199). Generally speaking, most critics tend to accept with little reserve Liu Xie's definition of "*bi*, explicit; *xing*, implicit." However, it must be pointed out that when attempting to define *bi*, it would be very misleading if we limit *bi* to simile because of its being explicit. In Chinese, the word metaphor is generally translated as *an yu* 暗喻 (implicit analogy) and simile as *ming yu* 明喻 (explicit analogy). In fact, there are at least ten kinds of *yu* 喻 (analogy or allegory) which have been traditionally assigned the function of *bi* in classical Chinese literary criticism. They are: *zhi yu* 直喻 (direct analogy), *yinyu* 隱喻 (ambiguous analogy), *lei yu* 類喻 (classificatory analogy), *jie yu* 詰喻 (interrogatory analogy); *dui yu* 對喻 (antithetical analogy), *bo yu* 博喻 (diversified analogy), *xiang yu* 詳喻 (detailed analogy), *jian yu* 簡喻 (simplified analogy), *yin yu* 引喻 (exten-

ded analogy), and *xu yu* 虛喻 (abstract analogy). Liu Xie himself also explored the immense domain in which *bi* can be effected: similarities in sound, in outer appearance, in the state of mind, and in the course of events, can all serve as bases for analogy and allegory of different kinds but under the same category of *bi*.

This issue becomes more complicated if we approach it from the same angle as Li Chonghua 李重華 (1682-1754). Li argued that "*bi* is not limited to qualities of objects in the physical world. Whenever you make reference to ancients by way of comparison, or allude to old tales for a literary purpose, you are virtually practising the art of *bi*." Whether or not we take his view with a grain of salt, we must admit that down the long course of historical evolution, *bi* and *xing* have incessantly acquired complexity in their actual application as borne out by some lyrics of the Southern Song Dynasty, especially those of *yongwu ci* (lyrics occasioned by or dedicated to a certain object which is described with deep emotions). Liu Xizai observed, "*ci* [lyric poetry] in general is noted for its depth through the application of *xing*". The production of the *ci*-poet, Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140-1207), undoubtedly has a special claim to such commendation. The following tune "*Mo Yu Er*" [Groping for Fish] indeed has quite a few points to recommend it in the original:

Why, still more wind and rain?
 To urge Spring to leave again?
 Wishing her sojourn would be longer
 I've dreaded to see flower bloom too soon;
 Now much more dismayed by countless petals strewn.
 Spring, with me please stay!
 The grasses spreading to the horizon
 would obscure your homeward way.
 Yet, from spring not a word is heard;
 Only by the painted eave, the weaving spiders

all day long amused at the willow-down stirred.

The Queen, the favor lost to regain,
 For a reunion subtly planned but in vain.
 To be envied Beauty is by nature ordained.
 Even though for a vehicle for feelings
 a thousand taels of gold were paid,
 By whom could the intense longing be allayed?
 Cease dancing! Have you not learned
 Ancient Beauties like Yu Huan and Fei Yan all to dust
 returned?
 The lonely soul knows all griefs' twists and turns.
 Oh, you must not lean on the perilous railings;
 The setting sun is conspiring with the hazy
 willows to evoke a vision heart-breaking.

Upon being "relieved of duty," Xin wrote this *ci*-poem at a farewell party given by one of his colleagues. He was an eminent figure of an elite group during eventful times, well versed in both civil and military affairs, and determined to dedicate himself whole-heartedly to his country. What sentiments could Xin have cherished other than resentment or even indignation when he was dismissed at a time when the fate of the nation was trembling in the balance? Yet working in a tradition where moderated emotions were socialized and treasured, the author could do nothing better than to let the movement of his poem twist and turn in evocative ways; that is, to embody his feelings obliquely in natural objects in the immediate field of vision on the one hand, and to have recourse to historical romance on the other. Beauty, "ordained to be envied," has been, among other things, symbolic in Chinese literature for the perfect fusion of talent and virtues regardless of sex. As a result, with allusion, analogy, allegory interwoven and interacting at multi-levels, the author succeeded in evoking the imagery as an "intellectual and

emotional complex" (Dyson 139). In the concretization of abstract ideas, *bi* and *xing* are so organically co-ordinated that we can hardly distinguish them from each other.

It seems to be reasonable to assume that, as *bi* is to attach one's feeling to visual objects, and *xing*, according to Zhu Xi, is to make mention of something else first in order to inspire the lyric expression for one's emotions, they both should generally have some comparison or analogy as their basis. *Xing*, however, implies many subtle associations which might be at the same time quite spontaneous. Meanwhile, as *bi* and *xing* tend to fuse with each other, we may treat them as two interdependent facets or phases in the process of building up poetic intensity. This accounts for the fact that most critics have tended to link up *bi* and *xing* into a composite term to denote a kind of literary excellence in terms of technical competence, a fundamental aesthetic quality of classical Chinese poetry. Ancient Chinese critics seldom singled out a poet for praise for being good at *bi*, or, *xing* exclusively. However, though there is little starkness of dichotomy, analytical differentiation is still possible and necessary. As *bi* generally focuses on categorical correspondence, it is subject more to the rigor of rationality than is *xing* which mainly reflects the reciprocity of feeling between subjectification and objectification. The latter is marked by spontaneity and immediacy in the combination of universality and specificity at a more affective, intuitive level. It invites academic investigations to ascertain whether *bi* has contributed much to the build-up of solidity and weight in form and structure which has been termed *gu* 骨 (bone, that is, structural firmness, or signification through rhetorical formation) in Chinese critical texts, while *xing* has much bearing upon the evoking of affective literariness of *feng* 風 (wind). In this respect, studies can be conducted in the same way as inquiries have been performed on the relationship between metaphor and structure in Shakespeare's sonnets.

To paraphrase Liu Xizai, a distinction could be made between *xing* and *bi* in terms of "vector". *Xing* is of greater magnitude than *bi*. This is because *bi* denotes the enhancement of poetic import only in the positively (*zheng* 正) analogical direction, whereas *xing* signifies the increasing of poetic intensity through counterpointing movements in opposite directions (*zheng* 正 and *fan* 反), both rationally analogical and emotionally associative. *Bi* seems to be a facet within a complex process of *xing* (Liu Xizai 115). The exact meaning of Liu's statement has yet to be further investigated. It is also legitimate to assume that Liu might possibly have implied that while *bi* is restricted to one-way metaphorical transference in poetic abstraction, *xing* is capable of affective reciprocation between the subject and object. Western theorists have been endeavoring to throw new light on the difference between metaphor and metonymy in terms of "continuity" and "similarity," or "the horizontal and vertical dimensions of language." David Lodge in his *The Modes of Modern Writing*, has proved "what is metaphoric in one context may be metonymic in another. In a geographical context the fog in Dickens' *Bleak House* is metonymic (fog = London); in a social context, it is metaphoric (fog = the legal system)" (Selden 347). Western theory has reaped encouraging rewards in the study of literary conceptions from the linguistic perspective. Taking up the question raised by Li Xizai's assertion of *xing* being different from *bi* in referential magnitude, perhaps Chinese scholars can draw some inspiration from their Western counterparts in this respect. It is worth remarking that, *fu*, *bi*, *xing* occupy a place in classical Chinese literary theory similar to that of narrative, metaphor, metonymy in modern Western theory.

If we are to compare *bi* and *xing* with Western notions about metaphor, perhaps attention should be called to Paul Ricoeur's work in this field, especially his "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling." Commenting

on Ricoeur's work, Mark Johnson suggests:

An understanding of how metaphor works awaits a theory of the imagination in its productive or creative function. Such a study treads the boundary between a *psychological* theory and a *semantic* theory, i.e., "an inquiry into the capacity of metaphor to provide untranslatable information . . ." (p. 143). Ricoeur takes up this awesome task by offering the beginnings of an account of the mode of functioning of similarity in the predicative process of metaphor. There are three facets of this cognitive activity: (1) the metaphor schematizes (i.e., provides a procedure for) the synthetic operation in which disparate things are seen as similar. (2) Then there is a pictorial dimension in which images are provided to give content to the meaning. (3) There is also an *epoche* or suspension of ordinary reference, so that the emergent meaning can open up new ways of describing the world (or some aspect of it). Paralleling these three moments of imagination, there are three analogously structured moments of feeling, taken as part of, rather than intrinsic to, the cognitive operation of metaphor (Johnson 348).

Thus, new vistas of possibilities for comparative inquiries present themselves if we put the issue in a proper philosophical perspective. In fact, a profound understanding of the diversified use of *bi*, and *xing* is only possible for those who are well-informed about the "philosophico-ethical fountain-head" of the Chinese tradition, about its monistic view of the universe, and about the specificity in the mode of thinking as well as the distinctive way ancient Chinese poets feel and respond to changes in the cosmic pattern and rhythm, to the symbols of Nature.

In order to systematize the otherwise labyrinthine ways of

Chinese literary terminology, we have proposed a nine-cycle schema based on a series of traditional propositions among which is one of the most vital and dynamic trinities: 1) *liyi* 理 — (oneness of Principle/ Reason); 2) *fenshu* 分殊 (multiplicity of its manifestations); and 3) *Liangxing* 兩行 (reciprocity of abstraction and concretization, subjectivity and objectivity) (Liu Shu-hsien 522). A detailed explanation of this nine-cycle schema is presently under preparation for publication. Suffice it to say for now, applied to poetry and poetics, the aesthetic version of this trinity would be as follow:

1) Structurally, lived experiences are held together by rationality in a formal totality. The particular, specific are linked and point to the universal. With every concrete object turning its face to the highest ideal of Humanity, the possibility for allegory, analogy and allusion potentially knows no bound. Artistic abstraction is thus rendered more significant in terms of cognition and morality.

2) Rational rigidity can and should be softened by sensuousity. A universal emotion is to be vivified by a diversified richness in imagery or symbolism. Narration and description, supported by metaphorization (as Pang Kai has put it), are activated and actualized to give representation of the particularity of the life world with immediacy. Meanwhile, presentation of affective niceties is connotatively implicated.

3) There is a mutual transformation of subjectivity and objectivity into each other. Here, crudities inherent in sense data are dropped, while the irreducible immediacy and vividness of natural phenomena are retained and sublimated. The universal and particular, the rational and emotional, are subtly balanced at a highly imaginative level for the realization of values, aesthetic and moral alike.

To put Liu Xie's ideas about *bi*, *fu*, *xing* in a succinct way, we have *bi* as *fuli* 附理 (to be attached to Reason in order to establish the categorical correspondence for patternization), *fu* as *tiwu xiezhi* 體物寫志 (to present one's psychological im-

pulses through the representation of things), and *xing* as *qiqing* 起情 (to arouse emotions/poetic mood through responding to subtleties in natural phenomena). So, we can assume that *bi*, *fu*, *xing* should be understood as a dialectical process determined by the interrelation of cognition, imagination and feeling. If Kant's duality of cognition and aesthetic judgement is so rigorous as to contain the seed of its own destruction (see Eagleton 73-74), then Liu Xie can be said to have followed the Confucianist Doctrine of the Mean in his attempt to achieve reconciliation between cognition and feeling through the intermediation of imagination (*shensi* 神思). This is borne out by his emphasis on *shen yong xiang tong* 神用象通 (imagination, as the functioning of spirituality, leads to the articulation of imagery/spirituality is communicable through image) and *shen yu wu you* 神與物遊 (the imagination wandering with things, that is, to feel at one with it). Therefore, the deeper we probe into the relationships between *bi* and the structurality of poeticized truth (*ge*); between *fu* and the multiplicity of the symbolic phenomenal world (*jing* 境); and between *xing* and the reciprocation of aesthetic feelings in an individuate manner (*zhi* 志); that is, the more conscientiously we relate this triad to the philosophical trinity, *liyi*, *fenshu*, and *liangxing*, the more productive and creative a theory of *bi*, *fu*, *xing* will emerge. Only with this as a point of departure, can we proceed to more fruitful investigations in the field. Thus, in discussion of *xing*, a poetic mode characteristic of the Chinese identity, against some prevalent Western notions such as objective correlative, archetype, principles of Gestalt Psychology, etc., we can sharpen our insight into the issue: for Chinese poets in their tradition, *xing* is mainly focused on emotive association and evocation, foregrounding the sparking off of inner feelings when there is a dramatic encountering of the lyric subject with a provocative object. And as the Great Preface to the *Book of Songs* (Odes) has suggested, "what is internal (emotion) will naturally find some externally correla-

tive form or action, and that poetry can spontaneously reflect, affect, and effect political and cosmic order" (Yu 23).

Similarly, we can in a more constructive way assess the fact that in classical Chinese poetry, once an image was evoked as a metaphor, to borrow René Wellek's phrase, it would persistently recur, both as presentation and representation, and gradually grow into a symbol, or even a part of a symbolic (or mythic) system (Wellek 189). For instance, almost all the images which appeared in the *Book of Songs* and Qu Yuan's 屈原 (340-278 B.C.) equally famous *Li Sao* 離騷 (*Encountering Sorrow*), have persistently recurred in the works of later poets to become symbols or archetypes in the sense the word was used by Northrop Frye. For example, beautiful birds and fragrant herbs stand for loyalty and integrity; undesirous beasts for the slanderous; things offensive in nature for the wicked; fair ladies for virtuous princes, holy men and able ministers; fabulous dragons and phoenixes for persons of excellent character; fleeting clouds and ominous rainbows for the ignoble and worthless, and so on.

To sum up, *fu*, *bi*, *xing* as an inseparable unity of modes which figure centrally in Chinese poetics, viewed trichotomously, are the constants in Chinese lyricism, underlying 1) a peculiar imagistic insight into both presentation and representation, 2) a keen sense, rational and practical, of categorical correspondence steeped in "this-worldliness," and 3) a feeling for subtleties in natural phenomena as well as for sound and rhythm of poetic significance. Even Western scholars have admitted that there are few nations in the world that have been so highly endowed as to be more keenly responsive to the cosmic pattern and rhythm than the Chinese. For poets in the Middle Kingdom of old, the principle of principles has been conceived of as responding to *wu* (things) and singing of *zhi* 志 (one's intention or psychological drive). That is, the drive towards the life world for Sensuosity (*qingjing* 情境); the drive towards forms and structures for

Sensibility (*qingli* 情理); and the drive towards aesthetic values for Sensitivity (*qingzhi* 情致). This is the reason why ancient critics identified *qing* 情 (emotions, manner of being) with *zhi* 志, for they held that the latter is the externalization of the former; *qing* is the internal source of *zhi*. Answering the call of such impulses, *fu*, *bi*, *xing* arise hand-in-hand and find their proper place in the dialectical unfolding of the poetic process. They function in a way so unique that they are considered the main factors which have made classical Chinese poetry Chinese, rendering its symbolic embodiment both representational and presentational. For this triad, the diversity in views regarding its definition as well as the perplexity critics have experienced in their efforts to find its equivalent in Western terms, can be attributed to the interdependence, interpenetration and interaction among these three modes. By relating them to other essential triads in Chinese poetics in order to form a schematic configuration as has been hinted at in the nine-cycle schema, we can see more clearly how *fu*, *bi*, *xing*, like many other difficult Chinese literary terms, are predicated on a distinctive cultural tradition which is characterized by what F.S.C. Northrop terms "the immediately experienced aesthetic continuum" (Northrop 318).

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