

The Concepts of Sincerity and Impersonality: an Essay in Comparative Poetics

Chi Ch'iu-lang

ABSTRACT

Sincerity and impersonality are central concepts in classical Chinese and Japanese poetics. In modern Western criticism, however, only impersonality has been affirmed, notably by Keats, Eliot and Pound, as an essential quality of a poet of great achievement. Sincerity, on the other hand, is mistaken as "biographical truthfulness," and since sincerity as such is contrary to the concept of impersonality, it is rightly invalidated as a criterion of judgment. After René Wellek's emphatic negation of sincerity as having nothing to do with poetic excellence, the misunderstanding persists and critics generally shy away from using the term.

Confusion arises mainly from the use of 'sincerity' or 'sincere' in the practical sense of fidelity to 'intensity of emotion or intense, lived experience (*Erlebnis*). Indeed, "intense, lived experience" is irrelevant to literary excellence unless the raw experience is aesthetically processed in the alembic of his creative mind.

Instead of "biographical truthfulness," sincerity in Romantic poetics and its direct counterparts, *ch'eng* and *makoto* in classical Chinese and Japanese poetics, mean accurate or unwarped reproduction of the author's "interpreted reality" or "felt truth." What is called "felt truth" can be illustrated by Su Tung-po's notion of "having the made bamboo in the mind," and acquiring the necessary technique to represent it. The term is significant in that it encompasses two dimensions of unity: the primary or natural unity that knits the author, the work, and the universe together, and the secondary or formal unity of the work itself. Ruskin's "concept of "pathetic fallacy" and Wordsworth's notion about "poetic diction" may all be understood as instances of lack of sincerity. They become "glossy and unfeeling" because they do not command these two dimensions of unity.

Basho's *fuga no makoto* literally means the sincerity of the haiku mind, or in Makoto Ueda's words, the "true 'poetic spirit.'" In essence it is the poetic imagination that transforms with the evolution of the four seasons and acts according to the principle of the unchangeable (*fueki*) and the temporal (*ryuko*). It is the creative mind in control of what Liu Hsieh calls *t'ung-pien* (tradition and change)—a mind that, purged of egotistical considerations, has become a thoroughfare of immanent principles, and capable of adapting itself to changing circumstances.

KEY WORDS

sincerity
 impersonality
ch'eng
fuga no makoto
 Basho

Su Tung-Po
 Liu Hsieh
 Wellek
 Keats
 Eliot

After the advent of Formalism in the West in the 1920s and 30s, 'sincerity' as a criterion has become nearly defunct. It seems that, along with such words as 'meaning,' 'reality,' and 'truth,' sincerity can be used only apologetically with inverted commas. Like the Estheticism of "art for art's sake" in the late nineteenth century, Formal criticism asserted the independence of art. Yet, unlike the Impressionistic criticism advocated by Pater and Wilde, Formal criticism devoted itself to the study of 'literariness,' which in effect is a careful, intrinsic study of the text dissociated from its author, reader, and milieu— but not ironically, the critic who is licensed to present his supposedly 'objective' reading. It is understandable that, in literary studies with a meticulously 'scientific' approach— primarily linguistic, semiotic, and psychological—the word 'sincerity' has lost its use for interpretation. The term is almost completely excluded from contemporary critical rhetoric. To the science-minded, it is inexact, indeterminable, and sometimes downright misleading.

Yet, to refrain from using the term in interpretative activity or to supplant it with others in literary theory is one thing, and to reject the concept altogether is quite another. Poetry originates from the mind, and as we study poetry, we must respond to the consciousness perceptible in the text. After we have considered the implications of sincerity's counterparts *ch'eng* 誠 in classical Chinese and *makoto* まこと in Japanese haiku poetics, we may come to see its central significance in prescribing creative activity or describing esthetic experience.

I. Some Misconceptions

1. Biographical truth

As the modern cult of scientific objectivity permeated humanistic studies, a large group of formalist critics came to consider literature as an autonomous system. Critics now use pseudo-scientific terms such as motif, irony, sign, tension, automation, motif, and metonymy. Instead of work, Tao, nature, standard, elegant and vulgar, we prefer text, universal, universe, norm, top and bottom. All this is as it should be: men in new ages need to put away their old garments and put on new ones. Putting away the concept of sincerity in criticism, however, is a problem because "sincerity" as an esthetic concept is closely related with the central human concern in the text. As I will try to demonstrate later, this word in poetics is closely allied with felt

truth, poetic truth, impersonality, or inscape rather than with biographical truthfulness.

As a matter of fact, sincerity as a term in poetics becomes serviceable only when it is not confused with sincerity in human relations in real life. One such misleading statement about sincerity came from René Wellek. Perhaps out of his reaction to Romantic emotional indulgence, he downplays it as follows:

The frequently adduced criterion of 'sincerity' is thoroughly false if it judges literature in terms of biographical truthfulness, correspondence to the author's experience or feelings as they are attested by outside evidence. There is no relation between 'sincerity' and value as art. (*TL* 80)

The goodness or badness of poetry has nothing to do with sincerity. The worst love poetry of adolescents is the most sincere. . . . If the standard of sincerity were taken seriously, the critical problem would shift to the examination of the psychology and biography of the author. (*HMC*, 2:137-38)

We know this to be a version of the "genetic fallacy," or what Wimsatt and Beardsley originally called the "intentional fallacy." Since there is no warrant that 'sincerity' in literary criticism means "biographical truthfulness" and nothing else, Wellek's conclusion is questionable. The psychology of the author cannot be determined except by examining the text, although as supporting evidence one may refer to the author's biography. One cannot deny the value of biography in literary studies (cooperation of disciplines), but to use biographical evidence as a sole criterion of literary judgment is to close out the *raison d'être* of literary art (confusion of domains). A passage from Shakespeare may well illustrate this point: "Audrey: I do not know what poetical is. Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a true thing? / Touchstone: No, truly; for the truest poetry is the most feigning" (*As You Like It*, III.3; Abrams 298). What is "honest in deed and word" in life is history, and if the standard is applied to most of Shakespeare's history plays, we will have to label them as false or insincere.

In Ryunosuke Akutagawa's 芥川龍之介 (1892-1927) "Yabu no naka" 藪の中 (its film version titled *Rashomon* 羅生門), the story of a rape incident in the woods (or thicket) is narrated quite differently by a *ronin* (a roving warrior, the rapist), the wife of a sumurai (the victim), the samurai,

and a woodcutter who chances to pass by. Whether each of them is 'sincere' or not is up to the reader to determine, but what is really important is the signification of the whole story, which the reader/audience is called upon to build up from the different points of view. What Akutagawa is getting at in the story is not so much what has actually happened, or who better qualifies as a villain or a saint, as how each of the characters truthfully reflects human nature. At the same time, the story dramatizes the often-neglected fact that the so-called objective fact or historical truth is not necessarily easier to come by than poetic truth. When the reader in his creative participation perceives consistency not only among elements within the work but also between the signification and the norm of human nature, he may then judge that it has 'sincerity.' The story being a piece of fiction, it is meaningless to ask whether Akutagawa had been one of the characters or even whether he had a similar experience.

Such views of sincerity as Renè Wellek's appear rather odd because they are restricting to the domain of non-literary (biographical, historical) truth, the concept of "sincerity"; *ch'eng* 誠 (sincerity) is central in classical Chinese and Japanese poetics. In real life biographical truthfulness is a matter of great pragmatic concern: whether a person means what he says is important to human, especially business or legal, transactions. In dealing with literary art, on the other hand, or Shelley's *Adonais* should not be condemned for the fact that Milton hardly knew Edward King and Shelley did not have a close acquaintance with Keats (Peyre 328; Wellek, *HMC* 1:80). In his *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* 文心雕龍 (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*) when Liu Hsieh 劉勰 (c. A.D. 464-522) praised the nineteen "Ancient Poems" as "realistic in describing objective scenes and deeply moving in depicting inner emotions" 婉轉附物，悵悵切情 (S 67; W 6/17/9), he was not at all sure of their authorship, let alone whether they were actual, lived experience. Liu's expression *ch'ieh-ch'ing* 切情 approximates "fidelity to felt truth" or sincerity, and we can be sure that his judgment is based, not at all on biographies, but on the poems themselves.

2. *Erlebnis*

On the same ground, it should not be difficult to see that 'sincerity' does not mean 'intense' personal experience. With this premise we readily concede that Wellek is right when he asserts that *Erlebnis*, or "lived experi-

ence, intense, private experience" in itself does not guarantee good art (cf. *Disc.* 245-47). Moreover, no matter how intensely the experience has been lived, a direct carrying over of the experience to the poem is history, not poetry. As M. H. Abrams has noted, in the eighteenth century in general, "the representation of truth [fact?], and nothing but the truth [fact?], is non-poetry"; in the nineteenth century "the representation of fact unmodified by feeling [imagination?] is non-poetry" (Abrams 298). 'Intense' experience, however, is not totally irrelevant to poetic excellence.

If we see that writing involves discipline not only in the craft of writing, but also of the writing personality, we should also see that ordeals or various kinds may contribute to the chastening of the creative mind. Like many Chinese writers before and after him, Liu Hsieh recognized that sincerity, and hence excellence, in poetry frequently results from the chastening or "disciplining" of the spirit by suffering and grief. Our emotions are often purified and our egos subdued in a period of tribulation. This is why our emotions of pain and misery tend to be truer, sincerer, and feeling them we tend to be better able to identify sympathetically with others. Coleridge dramatizes this in the character of the Ancient Mariner, and Shelley in the release of Prometheus from his bondage. In both cases a radical change in the protagonist's inner psyche takes place because of ordeal. In *The Literary Mind* notable examples are those of King Wen (W 1/2/4-5), Chien-an writers (W 45/117/12-13), and the Ancient Poets (authors of the nineteen *Ancient Poems*) (W 31/88/14-15).

Those who have suffered intensely are better able to reflect on the fundamental nature of things and to reach a state of sincerity. Those who insist on cultivating nothing but technique, on the other hand, often aim at beautiful expressions merely for the sake of expression. As a result, according to Liu Hsieh again, the one tends toward simplicity and the other toward ornateness. Thus: "A sincere writer deploys words to express his creative intent; a superficial writer uses words at the expense of his genuine feeling" 懇惻者辭爲心使，浮侈者情爲文使 (W 22/68/12 f.). In "Emotion and Literary Expression." Liu discusses how sincerity has its central significance in the literary art:

The Ancient Poets wrote to express their feeling; the *tz'u* and *fu* writers fabricated emotion to make up their literary works. How do we know this? The *feng* and *ya* of the *Shih-ching* poetry rose because the poets had their sincere intent and pent-up emotion; singing out their emotion, those poems also served to remonstrate

their betters. This is writing to express emotion. The *tz'u* and *fu* writers, on the hand, did not have any feeling or emotion; they wrote with extravagant ornament merely to win worldly fame. This is feigning emotion for composition. A work of literary art, therefore, will be simple and truthful if the writer tries to present sincere emotion, but it will be gaudy and extravagant if he aims merely at literary fame. . . . Some people, who are intent on knocking at preferment's door, my still sing vainly of retired, idyllic life; some others, while being preoccupied with a busy, politician's life, can go on chanting about other worldliness. But, if sincerity does not exist, the work will go against the grain of inner feeling. Although peach and plum trees do not talk, trodden paths are formed underneath because they bear fruits. The story goes that orchids planted by men did not emit fragrance: those men were not sincere in their love of flowers. If even little plants depend on true feeling to bear their fruit, how much more is this true with literary art which has the expression of intent and feeling as its rationale? If what is presented is contrary to the true intent, how can truth be found in the text?

昔詩人什篇，爲情而造文；辭人賦頌，爲文而造情，何以明其然？蓋風雅之興，志思蓄憤，而吟詠情性，以諷其上，此爲情而造文也；諸子之徒，心非鬱陶，苟馳夸飾，鬻聲釣世，此爲文而造情也。故爲情者要約而寫真，爲文者淫麗而煩濫。 . . . 故有志深軒冕，而汎詠皋壤；心纏幾務，而虛述人外；真宰弗存，翻其反矣。夫桃李不言而成蹊，有實存也；男子樹蘭而不芳，無其情也。夫以草木之微，依情待實，況乎文章，述志爲本，言與志反，文豈足徵？（W 31/88/16-）。

In such passages it is taken for granted that the feeling to be expressed in poetry has to be sincere. Almost all of his uses of the word *ch'ing* (emotion) or *chih* 志 (intent), moreover, have to be understood in the context of the mind in its *hsü-ching* 虛靜 (emptiness and tranquillity)—a concept very closely allied to sincerity (Chi, "Liu Hsieh's *Shen-ssu*" 128-36; Hayashida). Before and during the creative act, the writer is supposed to be purged of egotistic considerations and merged with things in nature. In this way he achieves sincerity of emotion, which alone is aesthetically significant. Whereas the modern West is intent on making objectivity a cult in literary criticism, the Oriental artist seems to take it more or less for granted. In Jacques Maritain's words, "The Oriental artist would be ashamed of thinking of his ego and intending to manifest his own subjectivity in his work. His

first duty is to forget himself" (Maritain 10-11).

When Keats says that "The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate," he is speaking about the 'intensity' of an art work, or "the sense of beauty" perceivable in the work (Adams 472, 474). Intensity of experience is irrelevant if it does not contribute to the dispelling of 'disagreeables' from the creative mind. While looking at a long belt of daffodils fluttering in the wind, Wordsworth's mind danced with them (and at least, his sister Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journals* [Apr. 15, 1882] attests to his having this experience), but without the imagination to divest the crude experience of its film of familiarity, or to discover its esthetic significance, or to formalize it into a poem, his "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud" could not have become a good poem.

In esthetics sincerity is formed in the mind and achieved in the work, and since we have no way and no business of getting into the poet's mind, it must be found in the work. Liu Hsieh says with conviction about the possibility of discovering the emotion (*ch'ing* 情) or mind (*hsin* 心) in his "Understanding Critic" 知音：

A writer starts committing his feeling to words after it has stirred in his mind. The reader, on the other hand, enters the feeling through the words. Tracing the waves back to their source, he will surely discover it though it be hidden and obscure. Although we may not come face to face with the author in the distant ages, we may still see his mind by examining his work. . . . When an artist is minded for the mountains and waters, the emotion is revealed in the music on the lute. How can it be hidden from us especially when it is put in black and white?

夫綴文者情動而辭發，觀文者披文以入情，沿波討源，雖幽必顯。
 • 世遠莫見其面，覘文輒見其心。 . . . 夫志在山水，琴表其情。
 • 況形之筆端，理將焉匿。（W 48/125/5-7）

The emotion or intent discoverable in the text is no longer the crude emotion in the lived experience. In the above quotation, except perhaps the first part of the first *ch'ing* 情, all of the words *ch'ing* 情 (emotion), *hsin* 心 (mind/heart), and *chih* 志 (intent) are formalized feeling or emotion, to be strictly distinguished from the raw material from which it is formed. Too often confusion of a historical fact with an esthetic phenomenon leads to distrust of the Romantic poetics and of sincerity as an esthetic concept.

Because of its close affinity to the Chinese lyrical tradition, we may re-examine Wordsworth's famous formula of Romantic poetics to see how the expressive theory is or may be grossly misinterpreted. Grasped partially Wordsworth's concept of good poetry is only "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." We should note, however, that in 'tranquility' the 'emotion' is 'recollected' and 'contemplated,' and that in the creative mind the 'emotion' is no longer the same emotion in real life. Since it is a 'kindred' one that has been formed "by a species of reaction," we may conclude that Wordsworth does make a distinction between biography (emotion) and esthetic phenomenon ('kindred' emotion in the creative mind and the created poem) (Adams 441). Wordsworth does not think that "powerful feelings" or intense experience alone will make good poetry. The question is not so much whether the experience presented in the poem has been actually lived as whether it has been esthetically transformed so as to cohere as a whole in the poem.

Incidentally, what Ruskin has labeled as the "pathetic fallacy" may or may not be a fallacy: like 'sincerity' the test of this fallacy lies in the text as a piece of art. A literary handbook describes it as if there were two kinds of pathetic fallacy—one merely "the tendency . . . to credit nature with the emotions of human beings," the other that which is "overdone to the point of absurdity" (Holman 323). This is perhaps a carrying over from Dallas's opinion that pathetic fallacy is no fallacy at all (Wellek, *HMC* 4:148). Since Ruskin has labeled it as a fallacy, pathetic fallacy must be one that has failed to measure up to the 'natural' or 'primary' unity to be discussed later. Any instance that coheres in the unity of the work is only personification, a figure of speech, and not a fallacy at all. Like the kind of poetic diction condemned by Wordsworth, pathetic fallacy must be "glossy and unfeeling," and should therefore be condemned as such (Abrams 291-92).

Sometimes, 'sincerity' has been taken to mean straightforward or even wayward expression of such *Erlebnis*, or emotionalism, with the poet indulging in his emotions and neglecting his craft. 'Sincerity' in this misconceived sense becomes a sign of mediocrity instead of excellence in literature. Danziger and Johnson would have us believe that "The very opposite of sincerity may be the sign of good poetry" (p. 175). In the same vein Northrop Frye castigates the notion of sincerity as all feeling and no regard for convention:

The notion that convention shows a lack of feeling, and that a

poet attains "sincerity" (which usually means articulate emotion) by disregarding it, is opposed to all the facts of literary experience and history. The origin of this notion is, again, the view that poetry is a description of emotion, and that its "literal" meaning is an assertion about the emotions held by the individual poet.

(Frye 97)

This misconception about sincerity I take to be a second kind, which is even more wilfully destructive than the first. Such a notion can only be attributed to a misguided novice at writing, or adamant believers in the virtue of sheer "creative frenzy." Or else it might be an invention of the followers of the New Critics, or a Derrida, or a Roland Barthes who argue that the text does not refer to reality. Very few people would take sincerity to mean just strong emotion without any regard to convention or tradition. It is hard to see, moreover, why a writer or critic should think the attainment of sincerity necessitates disregard of convention.

On the contrary, we can argue that sincerity in the literary mind achieves its counterpart in the text by controlling its creative energy with some rules or conventions. In this connection a good example may again be found in Liu Hsieh whose views on the relation between emotion and genre requirements (i.e. conventions) seem quite pertinent. If we consider sincerity of the creative mind as something that exists internally, and technique as what is acquired externally, we can see that this double perspective is operative in Liu's conception of style. In "On Choice of Style" 定勢, he discusses how individual styles are to be formed in relation to creative intent (*ch'ing* 情) and genre requirements (*t'i* 體). He says:

One's emotion has a number of different moods, and each must be expressed in a particular literary style. All writers choose the genres which accord with their emotional moods, and adopt the styles proper to these genres.

夫情致異區，文變殊術，莫不因情立體，即體成勢也。

(S 327; W 30/86/3)

In other words, the author's emotional situation (inner elements) operates with reference to the requirements of particular genres (outside influences or restraints) to result in a poem with style.

Rather than biographical truthfulness or emotional intensity, therefore,

a more acceptable definition of sincerity is one which takes into consideration this other pole of restraint. A notable example is C. Hugh Holman, who wrote the following as "the other [distinct] sense" of sincerity:

It refers to the *integrity* with which *the work* adheres to its own demands, assumptions, and attitudes; if a *work* has sincerity, it restricts the emotions it calls for to those demanded by its actions and actors . . . ; it avoids the use of unmotivated actions . . . ; it avoids the use of poetic justice when the universe it depicts does not contain an order which justifies such a concept. An author may construct the microcosmic universe of a story or poem according to any principle he or she chooses, but, if *the work* is to meet the test of sincerity, having chosen, the author must act *consistently* with that choice (pp. 418-19).* [Italics mine.]

Note especially that in defining sincerity in this sense the focus of attention has shifted from the author's biography or creative consciousness to the "integrity" or consistency of the work. The implication is that the concept of sincerity is essentially esthetic, not biographical. After all, the major and final test of sincerity must rest with the work itself.

III. Felt Truth, Makoto, and Impersonality

A more satisfying definition of sincerity would be an accurate or unwarped reproduction of the author's "interpreted reality" or "felt truth." This definition considers overall achievement of the work in conjunction with its technical details and with reference to the author's "felt truth." Technical matters are visible in the form and the author's "felt truth" can be discerned by considering the formal unity of the work itself in relation to another unity which knits the author, the work, and the universe together.

A famous episode in the Chinese history of art yields Su Tung-po's 蘇東坡 dictum of "having the made bamboo in the mind" 胸有成竹. Su says that when a branch of bamboo springs forth even just an inch, it comes naturally with its joints and leaves. Averse to the mediocre painters' way of doing it joint by joint, piling one leaf over another, Su maintains that to do a bam-

*A *Handbook to Literature*, 4th ed. (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1980). The entry "Sincerity" is dismissed from its 5th ed., by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon (New York: Macmillan, 1986). Is this an index of the further decline of the its significance?

boo, one should have the made bamboo in the mind, and that one should cultivate technique so as to achieve faithfulness to his vision of the bamboo (*Chung-kuo hua-lun* 2:1026, Lin 92-94). In other words, faithfulness to one's felt truth is achieved not only by having the ability to become one with the bamboo, but also by acquiring the necessary craft of wielding his brush. "Felt truth" then is just an expression for the pure consciousness in the artist and his achieved sincerity in his work.

The attainment of this pure consciousness amounts to an abnegation of one's ego, or a surrender of it to that unconscious "matrix of life in which all men are embedded" (Jung 168, 172). In Basho's 芭蕉 haiku poetics, *fuga no makoto* 風雅の誠 (sincerity) literally means the sincerity of the haiku mind. Rendered as the "true 'poetic spirit'" by Makoto Ueda, it consists in its ability to transform with the evolution of the four seasons and to act according to the principle of the unchangeable (*fueki* 不易) and the temporal (*ryuko* 流行) (cf. Kuriyama 25-27, 50-51, 62-65; Hisamatsu 242-44; Ueda 36-37; Sanekata 378-91). It is a mind, therefore, that is at one with nature and in control of *t'ung-pien* 通變 (tradition and change)—one that may "Create the extraordinary by looking at the present [and] / Establish rules with reference to the past" 望今制奇，參古定法 (W 29/86/2; Chi, "The Concept of *feng-ku*).

Granted that the attainment of sincerity or pure consciousness involves self abnegation, it becomes apparent that the *ch'ing* (emotion), *chih* (intent), or the "powerful feelings" are no longer expression of a mere personality. What Keats means by a poet losing his 'identity,' or Eliot by escaping from 'personality,' is no other than the process of attaining sincerity.

In defining the process of depersonalization, Eliot uses the analogy of the catalyst in a chemical reaction. But can the creating mind really remain "iner-, neutral, and unchanged" like platinum, or like an alembic, a receptacle? The answer, in spite of Eliot, should be negative. Eliot seems to contradict himself when he says in the latter part of the famous "Tradition" essay that the poet works ordinary emotions up into poetry, and that a great deal of the creative process is "conscious and deliberate" (Adams 786-87). His distinction of "the man who suffers and the mind which creates" is practically the same as Pound's distinction between the emotion felt by the poet as a man and the emotion embodied in the poem," or Alexander's "material passions" and "formal passions" (Ueda *ZBYP* 96; Adams 786, 861). Eliot should not be taken to mean that the poet's usual self has nothing to do with his creative mind. He banished personality, but only the

idiosyncratic personality. In "Yeats," published twenty-one years after "The Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot recanted his position about impersonality in art by dwelling on the "unique personality" expressed in Yeats' early poetry, and by conceding the influence of "intense and personal experience" on literary products (*SP* 201).

Nor does Eliot say that a work of art consists of only devices and contains no emotion. He does make a distinction of 'emotion' (which is material) and 'feelings' (which are formal), but does not carry it through even within the same "Tradition" essay (Adams 786-87). Indeed, what he objects to is the presence of material passions, of not quite formalized emotion in poetry, but not the kind of esthetic consciousness we recognize as sincerity. Too often, however, modern emphasis on objectivity has directed our attention to the first part of Eliot's "objective correlative," and led to our neglect of the second part. The passage in question reads:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an objective correlative; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (Adams 789)

Obviously, Eliot's objective correlative is not an emphasis on mere objects, so that poems are to consist of nothing but concrete images, but on objects, situations, or events which are correlative to emotion. The objective correlative, therefore, is in fact no other than formalized emotion. Like sincerity, the objective correlative is Janus-like: it looks both ways—inward to the esthetic consciousness and outward to the creative mind.

IV. Two Dimensions of Unity

The fact that a work of art has two dimensions of unity has been overlooked or wilfully ignored by most formalists. In describing his organic theory of art, Coleridge says:

The organic form . . . is *innate*; it shapes, as it develops itself from within and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. *Such as the life is, such*

is the form. Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms, each exterior is the physiognomy of the *being* within [with] its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror. . . . (Adams 462; italics mine)

What should be noted is the 'innate' power of the creative mind. The unity of form (i.e., formal unity which we call the secondary unity) is 'developed' by this innate power, which, being part of 'Nature,' is in turn part of the unity of Nature (i.e., natural unity, which we may call the primary unity).^{*} So long as the formal critic can 'subsume' content entirely in form, so long as his attention is directed entirely to 'literariness,' he can ignore the primary unity. He must ignore even the 'innate' in the formal unity because it generally resists scientific probing. On the other hand, an integral critic, who attends not only to the formal matters but to the consciousness as well, will have to take account of both unities. The two unities, moreover, are two sides of the same coin: they are like Yeats' ingenious interlocking cones, meeting in the esthetic consciousness of sincerity in the work. Thus, we may speak of one, instead of two, unities—provided that formal unity and natural unity are considered together.

What Liu Hsieh says about literary unity illustrates this point well. He advises the writers to achieve "a close-knit organization from beginning to end, which manifests a unity of external and inner elements" 首尾周密，表裏一體 (S 437; W 43/112/15). The "unity of the external and inner elements" is precisely the formal and natural unities in one: it is achieved by the purified creative consciousness for which we may appropriate the term "sincerity." Thus the literary mind is both 'enchanted' and 'enchanting' (Magliola 101). It is 'enchanted' because it reveals its felt truth in the unified pattern of the work; it is 'enchanted' because it has esthetic appeals in the text.

V. Conclusion

The Romantic Revival in the West opened up an infinite possibility for man's creativity to deal with the inner mind of individuals. In his

^{*}In the primary-secondary order here I have followed Coleridge's scheme in labeling two kinds of imagination. See *BL*, ch. 13, in Adams, 470.

awesome imagination man not only reaches heaven and hell, but brings them together for a marriage. Formalism in the present century, however, has cast a huge net which divorces art from its human concerns and deprives man of his aspirations for a new heaven and new earth. Since creation begins with the mind, criticism should also direct itself to the creating mind or the consciousness created in his work. Instead, criticism is made to dwell mostly on technical subtleties bungled up by sophisticated terminology. Is it a prison-house built by our "failure of nerve . . . in the face of the prestige of science and technology" (Graff 129), or is it simply a shade created by a passing cloud in the ups and downs of theoretical battles? Such bombast might not be necessary were we not content to see the dying out of the criterion of sincerity.

In our reconsideration, we find that the concept of sincerity should be central in the criticism of consciousness so long as it is not confused with biographical or historical truth. Instead of denoting biographical truthfulness or emotional internity, sincerity should be understood as either fidelity to the felt truth in the creative mind or identity of the creative mind with the common matrix of life and nature. Cleansed of trivial, egotistic, pragmatic considerations, the 'sincere' creative mind achieves a large unity which may be discussed as having two dimensions: one knitting the universe, the author himself, the work, and the reader together, and the other weaving all the substance and form in the work into a beautiful pattern. We concede that sincerity in the creative mind may or may not have gone into the making of a good poem, depending on whether a poet is capable of fidelity to his felt truth. Sincerity of the author cannot be known unless he succeeds in getting it across to the reader in the work.

Sincerity in the sense of biographical truthfulness or verisimilitude is rightly invalidated as a criterion in modern criticism. Common sense tells us that intense, lived experience does not guarantee good poems, but a poet stands a better chance of success if, in addition to the emotion aroused in an intense experience, the poet is equipped with the craft to turn the acquired material to good account. In any case, sincerity cannot be harmful to the creative mind or to that of a practicing critic: harm ensues only from its abuse or misconception.

Works Cited |

- Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Introduction*. New York: Norton, 1958.
- Adams, Hazard, ed. *Critical Theory Since Plato*. New York: Harcourt, 1971.
- Akutagawa, Ryunosuke 芥川龍之介. *Yabu no naka 藪の中* (In the Thicket). *Hsincho* 新潮 (Jan. 1912).
- Chi Ch'iu-lang 紀秋郎. "The Concept of *Feng-ku*: A Bridge Across History and the Reader." *Tamkang Review* 14:1-4 (1984), 249-60.
- Chi Ch'iu-lang. "Liu Hsieh's *Shen-ssu*: Its Positive and Negative Capability." *Tamkang Review* 16:2 (1985), 123-137.
- Chung-kuo Hua-lun lei-pien* 中國畫論類編. 2 vols. Taipei: He-luo, 1975.
- Coleridge, S. T. *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Shawcross, 2 vols. London: Oxford UP, 1907.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Shakespeare's Judgment Equal to His Genius," in Adams, 459-462.
- Danziger, Marlies K., and Wendell Stacy Johnson. *The Critical Reader: Analyzing and Judging Literature*. Boston: Heath, 1978. (See esp. 172-75)
- Eliot, T. S. *Selected Prose*, ed. John Hayward. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1953.
- Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in Adams, 784-90.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton UP, 1957.
- Graff, Gerald. "What Was New Criticism?" *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society*. U of Chicago P, 1979. 129-49.
- Hayashida, Shinnosuke. "Kan-Gi Rikucho bungakuron ni arawareta jo to shi no mondai" 漢魏六朝文學論に現われた情と志の問題 (A Study of *ch'ing* [Emotion] and *chih* [Intent] in Han, Wei, and Six Dynasties Literary Criticism), in *Mekada Makoto Hakase kanreki kinen ronshu* 目加田誠博士還曆紀念論集 (Kyu-shu Daigaku Bungakubu Chugoku Bungaku Kenkyushitsu, 1964), 329-52.
- Hisamatsu, Sen'ichi 久松潛一. *Nihon bungaku hyoronshi: Kinsei, kindai-hen* 日本文學批評史——近世近代篇 History of Japanese Literary Criticism: Pre-Modern and Modern. Tokyo: Shibundo, 1968.
- Holman, C. Hugh. *A Handbook to Literature*, 4th ed. New York: Odyssey, 1980.
- Jung, C. G. *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, trans. W. S. Dell and C. F. Raynes (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1933), 168, 172.
- Keats, John. "Letters," in Adams, 472-74.
- Kuriyama, Riichi 栗山理一. *Basho no haikai biron* 芭蕉的俳諧美論 (The Esthetics of Basho's Haikai Poetry). Tokyo: Hanaha Shobo, 1971.
- Lin Yutang 林語堂, trans. *The Chinese Theory of Art*. Taipei: Tung-nan-ya, 1967.
- Liu Hsieh 劉勰. *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* 文心雕龍. (The Literary Mind and Carving Dragons). Ed. Chou Chen-fu 周振甫. Taipei: Li-jen, 1984.
- Magliola, Robert. "Like the Glaze on a Katydid-Wing: Phenomenological Criticism," in *Contemporary Literary Theory*. Ed. G. Douglas Atkins and Laura Morrow. Amherst, Mass.: U of Massachusetts P, 1989.
- Maritain, Jacques. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. New edn. New York: New Amer. Lib., 1955.
- Peyre, Henri. *Literature and Sincerity*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1963.
- Ruskin, John. "Of the Pathetic Fallacy," in Adams, 615-23.

- Sanekata, Kiyoshi 實方清. *Nihon bungei riron* 日本文藝理論 (Japanese Literary Theory). Tokyo: Kobundo, 1964.
- Shih, Vincent Yu-chung 施友忠. *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature* [by Liu Hsieh]. Hong Kong: Chinese UP, 1983. (Shih's translation is cited as "S" and followed by "W chapter/page/line" from Wang Li-ki edition. Those WHTL passages without 'S' are my own translation)
- Wang Li-ki 王利器, ed. *Index du Wen Sin Tiao Long, avec texte critique* 文心雕龍通檢, 1952; rpt. Taipei: Ch'eng-wen, 1963.
- Wellek, Renè. *Concepts of Criticism*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1963.
- Wellek, Renè. *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1970.
- Wellek, Renè. *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*. 4 vols. Princeton UP, 1950-65.
- Wellek, Renè, and Austin Warren. *Theory of Literature*, 3rd ed. New York: Harcour, 1963.
- Wimsatt, W. K., Jr. *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*. New York: Moonday, 1960.
- Wordsworth, William. "Preface to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads*," in Adams, 432-43.
- Ueda, Makoto. *Zeami, Basho, Yeats, Pound: A Study in Japanese and English Poetics*. The Hague: Mouton, 1965.

