

Comparing Chinese and English Lyrics: The Correlative Mode of Presentation

Cecile Chu-chin Sun

This paper is based on a comparative study I have done on the poetic methods of expressing feeling in Chinese and English poetry.¹ In my study of these two traditions of poetry, I have found out that despite all their differences in linguistic, cultural and literary backgrounds, two common features stand out: one is that both regard expression of feeling as the *sine qua non* of lyric poetry; the other is that both involve a search for palpable means of articulating what is felt within by turning to outer reality for expression of feeling. This is because outer reality, tangible, easily communicable, and inexhaustible, has always been relied upon as a source and means of poetic expression. With this area of genuine convergence as a common basis, we find that many of the seemingly indescribable differences between Chinese and English poetry can actually be located, at least in part, in the different modes in which outer reality is related to inner feeling for poetic expression. The questions are: 1) what are these different modes? 2) how are we then to look at these different modes in a comparative context?

Unlike so many comparisons between Chinese and Western poetry which rely heavily, if not exclusively, on Western theories and methodologies, the present study will introduce a long-standing critical concept from the Chinese tradition, namely, the relationship between *ch'ing* 情 and *ching* 景 as a critical perspective to compare the modes of expressing feeling in Chinese and English poetry. This is because the notion of *ch'ing* and *ching*, evolving from one of the world's oldest and richest lyrical traditions, does offer a fresh (because so far it has been relatively untapped by scholars in East-West comparative poetics) and useful perspective to elucidate some of the fundamental similarities and significant distinctions between the two traditions of poetry.

Briefly, *ch'ing* (hereafter "feeling") is about the thoughts and feelings

of the poet's inner world; *ching* (hereafter "scene" or outer reality) usually refers to a scene in nature or outer reality in general. Depiction of "scene" has since the very beginning of Chinese poetry been regarded as the most natural and effective means of expressing "feeling." Take, for example, the following couplet from the T'ang poet, Ssu-k'ung Shu 司空曙:

雨中黃葉樹	The yellow-leaved tree in the rain
燈下白頭人	The white-haired man under the lamp ²

Obviously, the two lines form a neat parallel. Here, quite typically, the scene in nature described in the first line, while ostensibly providing an evocative setting is, at the same time, expressive of the human situation in the second line. The unstated relatedness between "scene" and "feeling" is what makes it possible for "scene" to hover between the background as a setting, and the foreground as a metaphoric expression of the thoughts and feelings of the poet.

Compared to the notion of "scene" in Chinese poetry, outer reality when employed figuratively in English poetry, rarely remains external or parallel to the emotional tenor of the poem. It is usually lifted out of its sensuous context to be internalized as an analogical means for poetic expression. This is true of practically the entire spectrum of figurative language, ranging in complexity from the straightforward image in Burns's, "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose," to convoluted Elizabethan imagery and rigorously developed metaphysical conceits. One may take the first quatrain of Shakespeare's sonnet no. 73 for an example:

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.

Unlike the autumnal scene in the Chinese poem whose metaphoric dimension evolves spontaneously out of external reality, from the very beginning of Shakespeare's poem, we realize that his autumnal scene with its yellow leaves, and the songless, bare ruined choirs, is abstracted from its original physical context and explicitly internalized as an image: it is the autumnal scene in the speaker, not the one out there in nature that is described here. The basic difference stems from the different mode of relating to external

phenomena for poetic expression. In Shakespeare's sonnet, the relationship is established through a process of reasoning as the intellect *conceives* the various links between the external world and the human situation; in the Chinese poem, the relationship between the two worlds is more intuitively *perceived* as having a metaphoric correspondence between them.

Based on my comparative study mentioned earlier,³ three major modes of presentation can be distinguished according to the relationship between outer and inner reality. They are: 1) the correlative, in which outer reality and inner feeling are separately juxtaposed; 2) the collocational, in which outer reality and inner feeling are conflated in a single syntactical unit, which is usually a line in *shih*; and 3) the pictorial, which is posited on the premise that a depiction of outer reality is, at the same time, an expression of feeling. The correlative mode occurs normatively in Chinese, far less often in English poetry; the collocational is encountered in both Chinese and English; the pictorial mode characterizes some traditional Chinese poems and a few modern English poets.

Among the three major modes of relationship between outer and inner reality explored, in this essay I will concentrate on one mode, namely, what I refer to as the correlative mode. It is not only the earliest and the most influential mode in Chinese poetry but is, probably, the most significant in a comparative context. For as a proto-mode in Chinese poetry, it provides a perspective to examine where the two poetic traditions converge and diverge in their most fundamental characteristics.

The correlative mode is syntactically characterized by a line or lines of "scene" (or "feeling") juxtaposed to a line or lines of "feeling" (or "scene") in a simple and disjunctive manner. In fact, this mode has already been partially illustrated in the Chinese poem quoted earlier. I am now going to examine how this mode is expressed in the context of an entire poem by citing the first lyric from the *Book of Songs*, the earliest collection of Chinese poetry (1100 B.C. to 600 B.C.):

關關雎鳩	"Kuan, kuan," cry the ospreys,
在河之洲	On the river's bank,
窈窕淑女	Lovely, a fair maiden,
君子好逑	A gentleman's fit mate.
參差荇菜	Zig-zag grows the water mallow,
左右流之	To left and right on seeks it.
窈窕淑女	Lovely, a fair maiden,
寤寐求之	Day and night he seeks her.

求之不得	To seek her but possess her not —
寤寐思服	Day and night he thinks of her,
悠哉悠哉	So distant, so forlorn,
輾轉反側	Tossing and turning in bed he spends the night.

參差荇來	Zig-zag grows the water mallow,
左右采之	To left and right one gathers it.
窈窕淑女	Lovely, a fair maiden,
琴瑟友之	With lute and zither he befriends her.

參差荇采	Zig-zag grows the water mallow,
左右芣之	To left and right one plucks it.
窈窕淑女	Lovely, a fair maiden,
鐘鼓樂之	With bells and drums he gladdens her. ⁴

Perhaps what strikes a Western reader most about this poem is the spontaneous manner in which the poet leaps from the natural world of birds and plants to the human world of thoughts and feelings. In the first section (lines 1-4), the provocative mating cries of the ospreys both establish the physical context of the poem and reflect vividly the young man's yearning for the lovely maiden. The lyrical leap is based on an intuitive grasp of the correspondence between "scene" and "feeling." An analogous leap occurs again in the second section (lines 5-12). The correspondence between this section and the one following is even more carefully established as the poem moves towards the climax at the end. Just as the water mallow gatherer searches for the plant from left to right without slackening, the young man longs for the lovely maiden day and night, without a moment's reprieve.

In the final section (lines 13-20), we again observe a similar kind of provocative analogy being set up between "scene" and "feeling." First, we note that the water mallow is being gathered and is no longer tantalizingly out of reach. Likewise, the fair maiden is not inaccessible any more, but being courted by the young man with lute and zither. And this is immediately followed by the scene where the water mallow, now being plucked, is finally secure in the hands of its gatherer. Analogously, in the world of human feelings, the young man has at last succeeded in wooing and winning the lovely maiden as his bride whom he gladdens now with bells and drums to celebrate the happy occasion.

The fact that China's first anthology of lyrics, the *Book of Songs*, abounds in this particular mode of presentation, certainly has had a great

impact on subsequent poetry. It established the notion of "scene" as the most natural and spontaneous means of expressing "feeling;" it also established the disjunctive juxtaposition of "scene" and "feeling" as a proto-mode of poetic expression in Chinese lyrics. The characteristic absence of any logical or grammatical connectives in this mode captures, in poetic terms, the most natural and pristine moment of lyrical expression. It is that moment when man is suddenly inspired by the world around him, but not yet ready to surrender his intuition to the scrutiny of the intellect.

I call this mode of presentation "correlative," because it faithfully captures a kind of direct and intimate *correlation* between "scene" and "feeling." The syntactical separateness between "scene" and "feeling" is a crucial characteristic of this mode. For it reinforces the notion that "scene" and "feeling," each as a self-contained entity, correlate with one another as equal partners. At the same time, it is precisely because of this syntactical independence that it is possible for "scene" to relate to "feeling" as *both* an evocative *and* a metaphoric agent simultaneously.

Within this mode, there are three distinguishable patterns according to the placement of "scene" in a poem. A poem may open with a "scene" followed by an expression of "feeling." A poem may also begin with a statement of "feeling" and then shift to a "scene." Or a poem may end with a "scene." Each of these three strategically placed "scenes" — what I would call the initial "scene," the middle "scene," and the final "scene" — serves a distinct function in relation to the tenor of the poem. While the proto-type of these "scenes" have already been established in the *Book of Songs*, it is in later poetry that the positioning of "scene" becomes an increasingly sophisticated and effective means of evoking and suggesting the emotional drift of a poem. In the following, we will examine precisely how "scene" correlates with "feeling" in these three positions.

The Initial Scene

Among the three "scenes," the initial "scene" probably has occupied the most prominent position in the Chinese poetic tradition. Out of 305 poems in the *Book of Songs*, 116 begin with what its most famous commentator, Mao Heng 毛亨, call *hsing* 興. Practically all of these 116 poems begin with a description of a certain scene or object in nature.⁵ Many of them, as C.H. Wang's study has shown, are in fact formulaic.⁶ In general, the initial "scene" is set up to prefigure in an implicit manner the main

drift of the entire poem. Its impact becomes increasingly explicit as the poem gradually unfolds itself. Earlier, we have already seen how the initial "scene" functions in the first lyric from the *Book of Songs* – the mating cries of the ospreys certainly cry out the theme of the poem from the very beginning. Let us now examine more closely how this initial "scenes" exerts its pervasive power in a poem by the T'ang poet Li Po 李白:

子夜吳歌	<i>Tzu-yeh Song of Wu</i>
長安一片月	Tonight, Ch'ang-an is moonlit,
萬戶擣衣聲	From ten thousand houses, the washers' mallets are heard pounding.
秋風吹不盡	What the autumn wind cannot blow away,
總是玉關情	Is the feeling for the Jade Pass.
何日平胡虜	Oh, when will the Tartars be conquered
良人罷遠征	And my husband quit the campaign afar? ⁷

The poem begins with the scene of Ch'ang-an, the capital city, on a quiet night where the autumnal moon, known for its special brightness, bathes the entire city in its cool, silvery, almost liquid light. Everything here seems quiet, peaceful; yet the pounding noise of the washers' mallets from so many (ten thousand) houses literally destroys this place in a singularly disturbing way. This is because the mallets' noise on the washing block has long been associated with frontier war and the severe winter the absent soldiers are soon to endure. We are, for example, reminded of the T'ang poet, Shen Ch'üan-ch'i's 沈佺期 famous lines, written earlier than Li Po's poem:

九月寒砧催木葉	In September the chilly washing blocks
	hurry the leaves from the tree,
十月征戍憶遼陽	Ten years of campaigning on the frontier –
	She thinks of Liao-yang ⁸

Moreover, the pounding noise has been traditionally associated with deep sorrow, as the following lines from the *Book of Songs* clearly show:

我心憂傷	My heart is grieved and saddened
惻焉如擣	Pained as if by the mallet pounding. ⁹

The word, "tao" 擣, in Li Po's poem, not only describes how the mallets

pound on the clothes — probably an onomatopoeic word — but the same noise also pounds on the lonely wife's psyche. Hence, what the peaceful sight suggests in the first line is now relentlessly smashed by what the ear hears in the second line. There is almost a sense of antithesis between sight and sound. Indeed, the world woven by these two lines is one of disturbing beauty, a paradox caused by what the moonlit Ch'ang-an seems to promise but fails to be in reality. All these subtle yet powerful associations implicit in this evocative scene become gradually explicit as the poem reveals the woman's poignant complaint at the end. The initial "scene" does not simply provide a setting here, but envelops the entire emotional experience of the poem within its evocative ambience. The power of the initial "scene" is far more pervasive than a clearly focused image or metaphor. Perhaps, the term, "atmospheric metaphor," would come close to defining the complex function of the initial "scene."

The Middle Scene

Compared to the initial "scene," the "scene" which appears right after the expression of "feeling" serves a rather different function. For convenience's sake, I shall call it the middle "scene" though it does not necessarily appear exactly at the mid-point of a poem. The function of the middle "scene," involving a shift from "telling" to "showing," can be described as one of "scenic relief" in two senses of the term. In one sense, the "scene" functions as a timely restraint, *relieving* the "feeling" of some of its own overly-charged emotive expression. In another sense, the concrete "scene" tends to set the preceding expression of "feeling" in *relief* and thus render it visible in scenic terms. Both of these functions are of course interrelated, aimed at expressing "feeling" in a suggestive and, at the same time, paradoxically more vivid way. Let us consider Tu Fu's 杜甫 "Meandering River" 曲江, which is most famous for its middle couplet about the spring scene:

朝回日日典春衣	Returning from court day after day,
	I pawn my spring clothes.
每日江頭盡醉歸	Every day I come home drunk
	from the riverbank.
酒債尋常行處有	Wine debts are common wherever I go;
人生七十古來稀	Seventy-year-olds are rare since
	time began.

穿花蝴蝶深深見 Deep among the flowers, butterflies
are seen fluttering about;
點水蜻蜓疑之飛 The water-dotting dragonflies are
flitting leisurely on the wing.
傳語風光共流轉 I'll whisper to the wind and light:
"Together let's tarry;
暫時相賞莫相違 We shall enjoy the moment
and never contrary be."¹⁰

The seemingly discontinuous middle "scene," (lines 5-6) which constitutes a substantial part of the rather fragmented central couplets of regulated verse, not only correlates with the preceding "feeling" but does, in fact, carry out the emotional drift of the poem. When we look at the conclusion of the poem, we realize that the middle "scene" certainly helps to convince the poet that life is to be enjoyed. For what can more strikingly illustrate the urgency and the wisdom of enjoying life while it lasts than showing how even an insect knows by instinct how to seize the moment with all its vitality? The subtlety and versatility of the middle "scene" lies precisely in its paradoxicality: it vivifies the elusive "feeling" by restraint; it carries on the emotional drift of the poem by a shift from "telling" to "showing."

The Final Scene

The presentation of "scene" is by nature open-ended. But when the "scene" appears at the end of a poem it is even more so. To end a poem with a "scene," known as *yi-ching chieh-chü* 以景結句 is a common practice in Chinese poetry. Usually, the final "scene" is employed when the complexity and elusiveness of the emotional tenor is such that the poet cannot possibly commit himself to any specific resolution. It may also be introduced to provide a different or larger perspective to view the human situation previously described in the poem. Of course, these two functions are not mutually exclusive.

As a poetic closure, the final "scene" is not meant to end the poem on a note of stasis which creates no further expectations in the reader once the conclusion or resolution has been reached in the poem.¹¹ On the contrary, in most Chinese lyrics, we can almost look at the final "scene" as a poetic gesture that the poet makes towards the reader, urging him to participate in the on-going process of the unresolved or, more likely,

unresolvable situation described in the poem. And it is in this sense that the final "scene" is dynamic and open-ended, a closure without cessation. The deliberate vagueness of the final "scene" in the following poem by Wang Wei 王維 is most thought-provoking.

送 別	Sending a Friend Off
下馬飲君酒	I dismount and drink a toast to you,
問君何所之	And ask where you are going.
君言不得意	You say you are out of sorts with the world,
歸臥南山陲	And will retire by the South Hill's edge.
但去莫復問	Go, go your way, no more questioning —
白雲無盡時	White clouds without end. ¹²

On a purely visual level, the endless clouds stretching into infinity could well be what the poet sees as he watches his friend gradually disappearing into and thus merging with the enveloping clouds. Considering the fact that the friend is at odds with the world and is ready to rest by the South Hill (often associated with retirement from office in Wang Wei's poems), we could almost imagine that as the all-encompassing white clouds loom large on the horizon, gradually enveloping and finally absorbing everything into their misty and intangible whiteness, the friend is at one with them. The visual then becomes, in a twinkling of the eye, visionary. The symbolic meaning of the white clouds is not something artificially imposed upon the experience by the poet, but something that grows out of the visual scene quite naturally without any obtrusive reasoning process. From this perspective, the meaning of the title, "Sending a Friend Off," seems to have taken on an additional dimension. The poet is sending his friend off not simply to a different *locale*, but to a different *realm*, separated from this world by those white clouds that rise endlessly into infinity. It is in this sense that the visual "scene" becomes the "visionary" world, a leap from the "visual" *ching* 景 to the visionary *ching* 境.

This spontaneous leap reveals an innate metaphoric relationship between "scene" and "feeling," which is one of the most important concepts in Chinese poetics. The Ch'ing critic, Li Ch'ung-hua 李重華 (fl. 1736), for example, has this to say about the metaphoric function of an evocative "scene:"

In a totally unmediated manner the poet talks about birds,

animals, grass and trees; yet somehow by doing so, the season, climate, the particular locale, and the human situation are all revealed in the poem without him being explicit about them at all.¹³

Wang Kuo-wei 王國維 (1877-1927) the famous poet and critic, cogently summarizes this intimate relationship between "scene" and "feeling" and says: "All language of scene is, in fact, language of feeling."¹⁴ With this understanding of the notion of "scene" in Chinese poetics, we realize that the apparent abundance of scenic descriptions in Chinese poetry does not necessarily mean that it is mainly about nature or nature-oriented.

Looking at English lyrics from the perspective of this correlative mode, particularly the notion of "scene" as a spontaneous correlative of "feeling," we find that they are radically different from Chinese poetry. Scenic description in English poetry is seldom used as *both* an evocative *and* a metaphoric means of expressing "feeling." It seems that the spontaneously arrived-at metaphoric relationship between outer reality and inner feeling, the very premise of the correlative mode, is not an established notion in English poetics. Consequently, the relationship between the outer and the inner is usually clearly specified in English poetry. In fact, we may in general distinguish three basic patterns in which outer reality relates to inner feeling.

The outer as a catalytic or evocative agent relating to the inner primarily on the basis of contiguity

This kind of relationship is often manifested through the "when-then" or "since-then" or other such familiar formulas. Take Thomas Nashe's "Spring, the Sweet Spring," for example:

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king,
The blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
 Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
 In every street these tunes our ears do greet:
 Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
 Spring, the sweet spring!¹⁵

Clearly, the sweet spring is depicted as an evocative background to set off what is going on in the human world. Compared to the first lyric from the *Book of Songs*, where every single turn of the mind or the heart of the young man finds its correlative in the immediate surroundings, outer reality here does not form such a closely integrated relationship with the human world. Moreover, the presence of such connectives as “then,” also makes it clear that outer reality is purely a setting, not an equal partner with the human world. Looking at this kind of role that outer reality often plays *vis a vis* inner feeling in English poetry, it is not difficult to understand why most English readers tend to interpret “scene” in Chinese poems as something subordinate to the “feeling” of the poem, usually as the latter’s setting and that only. Bynner’s translation of Ssu-k’ung Shu’s couplet quoted earlier is a case in point:

雨中黃葉樹 And as raindrops brighten yellow leaves,
 燈下白頭人 The lamp illumines my white head.¹⁶

The subtle interplay between the two lines, reinforced by their paratactical relationship in the original, is completely lost in the translation by the addition of the misleading connective “as” which mistakenly subordinates the first line to the second line.

The outer reality as a means for comparison, relating to the inner feeling on the basis of similitude or contrast

This is the most common purpose for which outer reality is used in English poetry and, practically speaking, much of its figurative language can be grouped in this pattern. In general, the logical connectives most frequently encountered follow the “as . . . so” or a simple “A is like B” (or “A is not like B”) formula; the basis of similarity or contrast may be implicit, following, in general, the simple formula “A is B” (or “A is not B”). Take the following lyric by Robert Herrick for example:

To Daffodils
 Fair daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon:
 As yet the early-rising sun,
 Has not attained his noon.
 Stay, stay,
 Until the hasting day
 Has run
 But to the evensong;
 And, having prayed together, we
 Will go with you along.
 We have short time to stay with you;
 We have as short a spring;
 As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you or anything.
 We die,
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away
 Like to the summer's rain;
 Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
 Ne'er to be found again.¹⁷

In this short lyric, we see nothing of the splendor of the daffodils, nor do we know anything about the physical locale of the poet, something a Chinese poem would normally provide as a living context from which the emotional tenor gradually evolves. This is, of course, especially true of poems in the correlative mode. In Herrick's poem, quite obviously, it is the ephemerality of the flower that is singled out as a means of describing the swift passage of human life. The unstated, yet implicit interchange between "scene" and "feeling" which we find in the correlative mode, is here replaced by clearly spelled-out points of connection between outer reality and inner feeling, between vehicle and tenor.

**The outer reality as realistic object or setting moving
 towards its metaphoric or symbolic relationship
 with the inner feeling**

This is a pattern which typifies (though not exclusively) Romantic poems where the external world is first perceived in its own independent

status and then, gradually, through the mediation of the mind, emerges as a metaphor or symbol for the poet. In fact, the eighteenth century descriptive-meditative mode, exemplified in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* or Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, to a large extent, anticipates this pattern.

Although outer reality in this pattern does relate to inner feeling both as an evocative and a metaphoric agent, there is, however, a discernible process whereby outer reality gradually, yet explicitly, moves to the foreground as a symbolic expression of the poet's inner world. Take for example, Wordsworth's often quoted poem, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud":

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed – and gazed – but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.¹⁸

In this poem, the brilliant transition from the sight of the daffodils to a vision of delight is almost imperceptible compared to his other poems.

Yet the final self-reflective note beginning from the end of the third stanza (lines 17-24), certainly tells us very clearly how the poet internalizes the daffodils. The daffodils that "flash upon that inward eye" are certainly not the same daffodils that he first saw beside the lake.

Two inter-related characteristics are common to the above three major patterns concerning the relationship between outer reality and inner feeling in English poetry. First, the relationship between the two worlds is almost always specified through logical or grammatical connectives. Second, as a result, outer reality relates to inner feeling in an *either / or* situation. That is, outer reality relates to inner feeling *either* evocatively, *or* metaphorically, *or* first evocatively, *and then* metaphorically. Roman Jakobson's observation about the bi-polar tendency in human discourse is relevant here: "The development of a human discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity."¹⁹ In a comparable way, the external world, where concrete expression of feeling is found, is often drawn into the poem along these two lines, that is, either contiguously as an evocative agent or metaphorically as an expression of the inner feeling. Both of these characteristics are different from the unspecified and bi-functional relation "scene" has with "feeling" in the typically Chinese correlative mode. The term, "bi-functional," as elaborated on above, indicates that "scene" *both* evokes *and* metaphorically expresses "feeling."

Having explored the crucial factors which account for the general absence of the correlative mode in English poetry, our next question is: how do we explain the fact that some English poems are strikingly similar to the correlative poems in Chinese poetry? Are they simply to be explained away as a meaningless coincidence? Or do they tell us something about the English tradition and, perhaps, about the lyric as a genre? Let us take a look at some Western poems beginning with the following lyric from the fifteenth century:

Westron wind, when will thou blow?
The small rain down can rain.
Christ, that my love were in my arms,
And I in my bed again.

Among the critics who have commented on this short lyric, Achibald MacLeish seems to be the most perceptive about what enables the lyric to

express so much, so powerfully in such a brief space. He describes the relationship between the wind and rain, on the one hand, and the girl and the bed, on the other, as a collision of images which do not collide.²⁰ This notion of collision of images which do not collide is curiously similar to that of the relationship between "scene" and "feeling" in the correlative mode, where the relationship between them is achieved by a quiet juxtaposition which does not explicitly state their connection. First, there is the scene of the Western wind and the rain which establishes the atmosphere of the poem; then there is the sudden leap into the human world expressed through an interjection of feeling. The plea by the young man to the wind and rain on the cosmic level, both evokes and reflects the yearning for a comparable release of pent-up feeling and energy on the human level. Is it not true to say that the special poignancy of the poem is closely related to the unstated and, hence, highly suggestive correlation between the plea to the wind and rain on the one hand and, the aching longing of the lover on the other? It may seem superfluous to name the wind and rain as "scene," and the mode of presentation of the lyric as "correlative." Yet, this seemingly unnecessary fuss about nomenclature is, in fact, a critical act which calls our attention not only to the subtle and important distinction between "scene" and image, but to the existence of "scene" and, for that matter, to the existence of the correlative mode in other English poems as well.

In the following poem by Wordsworth, one of his loveliest lyrics, conspicuously free from what Hazlitt calls the poet's "intense intellectual egotism," we find that the descriptive passage (lines 5-8), tucked between the two narrative passages, achieves something very similar to the effect of the middle "scene" in so many Chinese lyrics:

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
 Beside the springs of Dove,
 A Maid whom there were none to praise
 And very few to love:
 A violet by a mossy stone
 Half hidden from the eye!
 — Fair as a star, when only one
 Is shining in the sky.
 She lived unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy ceased to be;
 But she is in her grave, and, oh,

The difference to me!²¹

Cleanth Brooks, in his reading of the poem, points out the uniqueness of the middle stanza in terms of its implicit metaphorical relationship with Lucy, the focus of the poem. The middle stanza, according to Brooks, describes Lucy. Wordsworth, he says, has simply set down the comparison side by side, with not an "and" or "but" or a "therefore" or a "nevertheless" to relate one to the other.²² Lucy's delicacy, her quiet brilliance, and her secluded life become almost visible through the scene described here which, on the surface, seems purely descriptive of the violet and the star.

Bearing in mind the general practice in English poetry to reach after some kind of resolution at the end of a poem, particularly in a well-constructed poetic form such as the sonnet or ode, Shelley's sonnet, "Ozymandias," stands out as a rare exception. The entire poem gravitates toward the colossal irony at the end brought about by the contrast between the King's boast and what the traveller actually sees.

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
 And on the pedestal, these words appear;
 "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.²³

As in so many Chinese poems, the final "scene" is enacted as an indirect comment on a situation which is basically too overwhelming to be adequately communicated in words. The visual scene with the level sands stretching into the distance provides a totally different perspective from which we may view or re-view the situation described in the poem. The elongated vowels in the final line also help reinforce the infinity and constancy of nature as contrasted with the vicissitudes of human achievement. It is worth noting how a Western critic, Charles Wheeler, reads the final "scene" of

"Ozymandias" as a design of irony and a powerful means of emphasis by way of understatement:

We should note that the poem leaves the reader to draw his own inferences exactly as the original scene would have done: Shelley never says in so many words that time betrayed the King's expectation by destroying his works. He never even says that the works do not exist: he merely points out what else *does* exist, which is nothing but sand. The ironic understatement acts as a kind of emphasis.²⁴

Despite the fact that in English poetry outer reality in the sense of "scene" is seldom employed as a means of expressing "feeling," yet when it is successfully executed, it can achieve a variety of effects comparable to those achieved in Chinese poetry.

We mentioned earlier that the correlative mode in Chinese poetry is a particularly significant mode in a comparative context. This is because, first of all, through its perspective, particularly the notion of the implied correlation between "scene" and "feeling," we become much more aware of the strong tendency in English poetry to *specify* and to *internalize* outer reality for poetic expression. This kind of tendency reflects a discursive penchant, which is perhaps the single most crucial characteristic of the English poetic tradition. Furthermore, the existence of the notion of "scene" and the correlative mode in English poetry, however infrequent, is significant for two reasons. First, it indicates where these two essentially different traditions of poetry coincide. Second, the fact that what is normative in Chinese poetry occurs only occasionally in English, certainly points out some important distinctions in the prevailing practices of both traditions. Now two questions may be asked here. The first question: is this coincidence between the two traditions as totally incidental as it would seem? Or does it suggest something about the early beginnings of lyrical poetry, especially when we consider that the correlative mode is a poetic mode which occurs with the highest frequency in one of the world's oldest collections of poems, the *Book of Songs*? The spontaneous interchange between man and nature which characterizes this mode seems to indicate that man's primitive and instinctual mode of expressing feeling was direct, pre-rational, and intimately related to the immediate surroundings. Arthur Waley, in translating the *Book of Songs*, for example, is stuck by the constant recurrence of this

mode and is promptly reminded of an analogous situation in the early days of the Western tradition:

Early Chinese songs do not as a rule introduce a comparison with an "as if" or "like," but state it on the same footing as the facts that they narrate. European traditional poetry sometimes uses the same method. Our English folksong does not say: "My feelings after being forsaken are like those of a person who has leaned against an apparently trusty tree and then found that it was insecure." It says:

I lean'd my back against an oak;
I thought it was a trusty tree.
But first it bent and then it broke;
My true love has forsaken me.

Compare a Polish song:

They have cut the little oak, they have hewn it;
It is no longer green.
They have taken my lover.
Have taken him to the wars.

That is exactly the way that images are used in early Chinese songs. For example:

The cloth-plant grew till it covered the thorn-bush;
The bindwind spread far over the wilds.
My lovely one is here no more.
With whom? — No, I sit alone.²⁵

If we can assume that the simple, disjunctive correlation between outer reality and inner feeling characterizes a more primitive mode in lyric poetry, how then do we account for its continuous presence in the long tradition of Chinese poetry? Moreover, how do we explain its rare occurrence in English poetry? Both of them lead to the second question: are there some factors, deeply rooted in the two traditions, not just the tradition of literary convention or practice, which are associated with this sharp distinction between Chinese and English poetry?

In the Chinese tradition, the normative occurrence of the correlative mode may very well be related to an innate correspondence between man and nature, deeply grounded in the notion of *t'ien-jen he-i* 天人合一 (harmony between man and nature) in Chinese epistemology. The famous Ch'ing poet, critic, and philosopher, Wang Fu-chih 王夫之 (1619-1692), makes a cogent remark in this regard:

Emotion [*ch'ing*] is the activity between *yin* [陰] and *yang* [陽]; and things [物] are what have grown up between sky and earth. When this activity between *yin* and *yang* takes place in man's inner being [*hsin* 心], there exists what has grown up between earth and sky to respond to it from the outside. Whatever thing there is outside, there can be a counterpart in man's inner being; whatever emotion there is in man's inner being, there must be the thing outside [to match it] If we go through the things of the world, we will see that, whatever our emotion is, it cannot be without a suitable objective.²⁶

That "scene" can be so inexhaustibly expressive of human thoughts and feelings in Chinese poetry is intimately related to the notion of *Tao* 道 as manifested in both the physical world of nature and the human world of culture. For the Chinese, the intangible *Tao*, encompassing all natural laws, is everywhere coexistent with everything; its concrete expression can be found in man and nature. Hence, both man and nature are *Tao* concretized; and their harmonious correspondence is due to their common ties with *Tao*.

Given the general epistemological orientation in the Chinese tradition as such, it is not difficult to understand why the relationship between inner feeling and outer reality, unlike what we normally find in English poetry, is seldom explicitly spelled. The key notion in Chinese poetics that all language of "scene" is language of "feeling,"²⁶ certainly testifies in poetic terms to the intimate relationship between man and nature. The presence of the correlative mode in Chinese poetry which occurred continually after the early, primitive stage of pre-rational spontaneity can, very possibly, be viewed as a poetic expression of the innate harmony and correspondence between man and external reality.

The rare occurrence of the correlative made in English poetry may suggest man's drastic departure from the naive and spontaneous relationship

with his environment. More research into the primitive songs and ballads in the Western tradition, particularly their mode of relating to outer reality will be, I believe, very helpful.

In English poetry, the strong tendency to internalize external reality for poetic expression, seems to imply an innate distance between man and nature resulting, very possibly, from a divisive primordial tension between them. The Judaeo-Christian version of a paradise lost seems to indicate this division. The Romantic obsession with imagination as an all-powerful mediator between man and the natural world, certainly reflects that man's proclaimed unity with nature is not a given but a phenomenon much sought after.

Our examination of the correlative mode has helped to point out some major distinctions between the two poetic traditions. It has also set us thinking about some larger issues. After all, if we regard poetry as a medium of expressing man's thoughts and feelings, the mode in which he relates to outer reality must in one way or another be closely bound up with his perception of reality. Our final query has been precisely to look at some such important implications of this mode, both its normative presence in Chinese poetry and its relatively rare occurrence in English poetry.

Notes

1. See my doctoral dissertation, "A Sense of Scene: Depictions of Scene as Expressions of Feeling in Chinese and English Poetry," Indiana University, 1982.
2. *Ch'üan T'ang shih kao pen* 全唐詩稿本 (Taipei, 1979), *chüan* 28, p. 289. Hereafter *CTSKP*. All translations in this paper are mine, unless otherwise noted.
3. See n. 1.
4. *Mao shih Cheng chien* 毛詩鄭箋, in *Ssu pu pei yao* 四部備要.
5. See *Chu Chih-ch'ing ku-tien wen-hsüeh wen-chi* 朱自清古典文學備要, ed. *Shanghai ku-chi ch'u-p'an-she* 上海古籍出版社 (Shanghai, 1981), Vol. 1, p. 236.
6. See *The Bell and the Drum* (Berkeley, 1974).
7. *CTSKP*, Vol. 12, p. 188.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 206. Liao-yang is a frontier country in northern China.
9. Poem no. 197.
10. *CTSKP*, Vol. 16, p. 210.
11. Also see Barbara H. Smith's *Poetic Closure* (Chicago, 1968), p. 34.
12. *CTSKP*, Vol. 10, p. 39.
13. "*Chen-i-chai shih-shuo*" 貞一齋詩說 in *Ch'ing shih-hua* 清詩話, preface by Kuo Shao-yü 郭紹虞 (Shanghai, 1963), Vol. 2, p. 932.

無端說一件鳥獸草木，不明指天時；而天時恍在其中；不顯言地境，而地境

宛在其中；且不實說人事，而人事已隱約流露其中。

14. *Jen-chien tz'u-hua* 人間詞話, ed. Hsü Tiao-fu 徐調孚 (Hong Kong, 1961), p. 47. 一切景語皆情語也
15. M. H. Abrams, et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 4th ed. (New York, 1979), I, 340. The original Elizabethan text may be found in Ronald B. McKerrow, ed., *The Works of Thoman Nashe* (Oxford, 1958), III, 238.
16. *The Jade Mountain* (New York, 1929), p. 132.
17. *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, ed. L. C. Marin (Oxford, 1956), p. 125.
18. *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford, 1954), II, pp. 216-17.
19. Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague, 1956), p. 76.
20. *See Poetry and Experience* (Baltimore, 1964), p. 70.
21. *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford, 1954), Vol. 2, p. 30.
22. See A Retrospective Introduction, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (Chapel Hill, 1967), p. xv.
23. *The Complete Poetical Works by Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed., Thomas Hutchinson (London, 1905; rpt. London 1960), p. 550.
24. *The Design of Poetry* (New York, 1966), pp. 103-04.
25. *The Book of Songs, translated from the Chinese* (New York, 1937), p. 14.
26. *Shih kuang-chüan* 詩廣傳, ed. Wang Hsiao-yü 王孝魚 (Shanghai, 1964), I/20. The English translation (with minor changes on my part) is based on Siu-kit Wang's article, "Ch'ing and Ching in the Critical Writings of Wang Fu-chih," in *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i ch'ao*, ed. Adele A. Rickett (Princeton, 1978), p. 140.
情者陰陽之幾也，物者天地之產也，陰陽之幾動於心，天地之產膺於外，故外有其物，內可有其情矣；內有其情，外必有其物矣。
27. See n. 14.