

Wêng Fang-kang's *Chi-li* (Textural Structure)
and John Crowe Ransom's
Texture-Structure Dichotomy:
A Parallel Study

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I. Introduction

Wêng Fang-kang 翁方綱 (1733–1818) was one of the important Confucian scholars, poets, critics and calligraphers of the Ch'ing 清 dynasty in China. The central concept in his literary criticism is *chi-li* 飢理 (an organismic metaphor, literally referring to the texture-structure of musculature, viewing a poem as an organismic or organic whole), which he developed as an emendation to the rather elusive concept *shên-yün* 神韻 (*approximately*, a "state of mind" conveyed in a poem, put forth as the identity of good poetry by Wang Yü-yang 王漁洋 (1634–1711), one of his most respected predecessors) and which he later substantiated with Neo-Confucian metaphysics.¹ As my title indicates, I have already ventured a tentative translation of Wêng's *chi-li* as "textural structure," or "structural texture." This is to say, in Wêng's perception, texture and structure are inseparable and must be taken as a whole in a poem. Translating the term in this double way might be putting the cart before the horse, but I hope that my breaking the term into the *chi-* and the *-li* (the hyphen signifies the inseparability of the two) and the use of Ransom's terms in the translation will be explained and qualified in the course of this argument.

John Crowe Ransom (1888–1974) was no less versatile than Wêng. He was a college teacher, a poet, a critic, and the editor of *Kenyon Review* for almost thirty years—the *Kenyon Review*, of course, was one of the forces which shaped and publicized the school of reading now known as the American New Criticism. The whole body of Ransom's literary criticism is

complex and multi-dimensional, with an adequate sense of historicity and dialectic. His most memorable theme, which is most central to our present comparative study, namely, the irrelevance between texture and structure, however aroused tremendous criticism from his contemporaries. Ransom maintained that texture in poetry is irrelevant to structure and he conceived this very irrelevance as the ontology of poetry. Ransom's ontology of poetry was intended as a distinction between poetry and science rather than a general investigation of the mode of existence of poetry as such as it is. Wêng did not pose the concept of *chi-li* for the purpose of formulating an ontology of poetry; yet the full sense of Wêng's concept, as said before, implies a Neo-Confucian metaphysics. The comparable notions between Wêng's metaphysics and Ransom's ontology, between Wêng's and Ransom's vocabularies, and the apparent differences between Wêng's monism and Ransom's dualism provide a fruitful area for a comparative study, which may give rise to a wider view of organic unity in a poem, opened up by these two "rival" but perhaps complementary theories.

II. A Re-construction of Wêng's *Chi-li* Theory

It must be kept in mind that there exists a lapse of time about one hundred and fifty years between Wêng and Ransom. The unpopularity of long critiques in classical Chinese literary criticism on the one hand, and the modern tendency towards systematic formulations in Western literary criticism on the other, must dictate notable differences between Wêng's and Ransom's writings. In order to overcome this discrepancy, it is necessary to re-constitute the full implications of Wêng's thought through a careful perusal of his commentaries, which are rather laconic and intuitive.

Wêng's career in poetics seemed to have undergone three stages.² In his early stage, as represented in his *Shih-chou shih-hua* 石州詩話 (*Remarks on Poetry*, 1768), his use of the term *chi-li* did not significantly differ from his predecessors'.³ This is to say, the term had not been closely linked to Wang's *shên-yün*, nor to Neo-Confucian metaphysics. The term *chi-li* in Chinese poetics has been used as a metaphor, which originally denotes the structure and the texture as well of musculature. This borrowing of vocabularies from bodily categories has a long tradition in Chinese literary criticism, which can be traced back to the Six Dynasties (220–589) when the contemplation of

human character through man's appearances, such as features, gestures, voices and so on, came into vogue and the analogy between poetry and human organism gained momentum. When the term *chi-li* was employed in the field of poetics, it simply meant, metaphorically, the textural structure of a poem without any further specification. Wéng in this early stage did not go beyond this bare notion of the term. He was inclined to separate the textural structure of a poem from the poem's inner qualities which had been recognized in Chinese poetics; or, he did not emphasize an organic relation between the textural structure and the inner qualities of a poem.⁴ On the other hand, what the textural structure of a poem might imply was still vague in Wéng's mind; or, Wéng had not yet expanded the concept by substantiating the *li*, the second part of the term *chi-li*, with a Neo-Confucian metaphysics.

In his middle stage, as represented in his two important discourses respectively on *kê-tiao* 格調 (literally, style and tone, a concept developed by Li Méng-yang 李夢陽 (1472–1529) and *shên-yùn* (literally, spirit and cadence, meaning a "state of mind," a concept developed by Wang Yü-yang as mentioned before), Wéng intended *chi-li* as an emendation to these two concepts.⁵ Wéng remarked that "style" and "tone" are innate elements of a poem, but Li's proposal unfortunately turned out to be a servile imitation of the classics of the High T'ang (8th century). Therefore, Li's perception of style and tone is limited and thus detrimental to the expression of poets' genuine feelings. Wéng continued and commented on Wang's *shên-yùn*, saying that Wang's posing "state of mind" as the identity of good poetry aimed at redeeming poetry from servile imitation misleadingly advocated by Li. Unfortunately, Wang's perception of "state of mind" was rather narrow because he limited it to a few "states of mind" such as "elegance" and "subtlety" as exemplified by Wang Wei's 王維 (701–761) poetry. Wéng pointed out that "spirit" and "cadence" are innate elements of poetry and are not limited to a certain kind. In fact, "state of mind" can be revealed through varied aspects, such as the sound shape, the diction, the structure, the style and so on. Wéng complained about a lack of means to realize "state of mind" in Wang's poetics. As a result, "state of mind" in a poem remained inaccessible to the poet as well as to the reader in any substantial graspable manner. Consequently, some contemporaries even mistook "state of mind" as something most elusive, and the theory of "state of mind" as an empty talk. "Therefore," Wéng said, "I posed the concept *chi-li*

to concretize and substantiate the concept *shên-yün*. *Chi-li* is in effect nothing but *shên-yün*.” 以肌理之說實之，其實肌理亦神韻也 The second part of this quotation means, to use Wêng's other words, “to grasp the “state of mind” by means of the textural structure of a poem” 於肌理求之. To sum up, the “state of mind” is where the essence of poetry resides and the “state of mind” must be grasped in terms of its textural structure. It must be kept in mind that both *shên-yün* and *chi-li* are deep-seated in the organismic tradition of Chinese poetics. *Shên-yün* refers to the difficult-to-define “state of mind” contained in both a man and a poem while *chi-li*, to the textural structure in both a man and a poem. Theoretically speaking, since “state of mind” and “textural structure” are both integrated in a single organism, there must exist certain organic relationship between them to assure the very existence of the organism. We may say therefore that “state of mind” and “textural structure” are two “instances” or “aspects,” to a certain extent inter-definable, of a poem. Since the “states of mind” are varied and can be revealed on varied aspects of the textural structure, room for certain local independence on both sides is to be expected. This accounts for the fact that although Wêng in this middle stage emphasized an organic relation between “state of mind” and “textural structure,” certain incongruity between these two supposedly inter-defined aspects can be seen in his practical criticism.

Wêng's two discourses on *Li* 理 or Principle in 1785 can be regarded as the beginning of his later stage, in which he put forth a monistic view of Principle and supported it with Neo-Confucian metaphysics, i.e., identifying as the same Principle the varied principles in varied things, including ethics and poetry. In this stage, it seems that Wêng moved beyond his intention of using *chi-li* as an emendation to *shên-yün* and moved towards a metaphysics of poetry. Towards the end of his life he followed Wang Yü-yang's example, illustrating his concept of poetry by editing an anthology, which is, unfortunately, lost. The Preface to this anthology is available in his *Collected Essays* or *Fu-ch'u-chai wên-chi* 復初齋文集. One passage from the Preface serves well as a central point for our discussion of Wêng's metaphysics of poetry:

What resides in the mind is called *chih* 志, which gives rise to poetry when expressed in words; both *chih* and poetry are deep-seated in the *Li* or Principle. *Li* is that which mankind is endowed with, the world

of things must follow, human events and the natural world must be subject to, sounds and metres must model on. . . . The *li* in the ethical world, the *li* in the literary world, and the *li* in the textural or muscular world, are the same *Li*. . . . The focus of attention in poetry must be placed upon a poem's *chi-li*.⁶

在心爲志，發言爲詩，一衷諸理而已，理者，民之
秉也，物之則也，事境之歸也，聲音律度之矩也……
義理之理卽文理之理，卽肌理之理……爲詩必以肌理爲準。

Although it is an extremely concise passage, its implications and ramifications will not be too difficult to understand when read against Wêng's cultural heritage. *Chih* is the total phenomenon of the mind in which the realm of will gains momentum.⁷ Wêng here followed the most traditional belief, which can be traced back to the remotest time in China, that poetry is the expression of *chih* in words. After re-stating the old belief, Wêng immediately made a connection between the *chih* and the *Li*, saying that the *chih* finds its roots in the *Li*, the ultimate cause of the All. By introducing the *Li* or Principle into the old statement, Wêng turned it into a Neo-Confucian declaration. The human psyche is traced back to the ultimate Principle and takes on all the implications and ramifications the term *li* may contain.

The term *li* is consistently rendered as "Principle" in our translation, in order to maintain the metaphysical dimension. In fact, the term *li* has at least five slightly different denotations in Chinese, namely, reason, principle, order, structure and pattern. The fact that Principle contains a reason, an order, a structure and a pattern reveals the transformation and the exchangeability of these terms.

Li or Principle, in Neo-Confucian metaphysics, is the Reason of Being. Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130–1200) distinguished two aspects from the Universe, the *Li* or Principle and the *Ch'i* 氣 or Matter. As a metaphysical presumption, the *Li* can pre-exist; but it in effect never leaves the *Ch'i* and never exists alone. On the other hand, the *Ch'i* is given no chance to exist alone because at the moment it exists the *Li* is already embodied there. Wêng followed this dimension of Chu's metaphysics; therefore, in Wêng's passage, *Li* subsists and exists in human being; in things; in the situations and vicissitudes of the human world and of the natural world as well; and in the sounds and meters. In Chu's metaphysics, each thing has its own Principle: "It is exactly because

there are many *li*(s), there exist many things.”⁸ 惟其理有許多，故物有許多。 Yet in Wêng’s view, the *Li* or Principle exists through the All and that it is the one and the same Principle which is contained in the ethical principle, in the literary principle and in the textural principle. The term “the same” is ambiguous. It may suggest a kind of “identification” of all these individual principles. From one metaphysical point of view, each principle is a microcosm of the Principle in General and is in this sense “identical” with each other individual principle, which by itself is also a microcosm. All these individual principles—the principle in the ethical world, the principle in literature, the principle in musculature, and so on—are therefore the manifestations of the Principle in General.⁹

In view of its underlying Neo-Confucian metaphysics, we become aware of the possibility of separating *chi-li* into two components, the *chi-* and the *-li*, as a parallel to the metaphysical distinction between Matter and Principle. Here, allow us to follow through this analytical stratagem when we abandon the metaphor and investigate what *chi-li* of a poem refers to on a non-metaphorical level. Theoretically, the *-li* in the poem can imply all the principles in all things if the monistic metaphysics is unlimitedly applied; however, on the practical level, based on the passage from Wêng’s Preface and based on Wêng’s practical criticism, we may safely infer that the *-li* mainly refers to ethical principle, literary principle, and metrical principle in a poem. Meanwhile, the *chi-* refers to human events and the natural world on the content level and to sounds and meters on the acoustic/metrical level. Obviously, the ethical, the literary, and the metrical principle as principles are abstract and must find a body for their realization (the Principle never leaves the Matter). There seems no other candidate for this body as qualified as “human events and the natural world, “sounds and meters,” which constitute and realize the ethical, the literary, and the metrical principle (the Matter cannot exist without the Principle). But since the sound and meter component is relatively self-sufficient and independent, it has a name of its own, namely, *chin-mai* 筋脈 (an organismic metaphor, denoting “joints of muscles and veins”). This component is sometimes observed alone and sometimes left out in Wêng’s practical criticism and in his formulation of the concept *chi-li*. Perhaps, we may say the limited sense of Wêng’s *chi-li* puts aside the sound and meter component. Or, we may say, the acoustic/metrical principle has already been implied in the literary principle when it is not singled out and mentioned. From now on, my term “literary principle” implies the acoustic/

metrical principle.

Needless to say, the *chi-* and the *-li*, that is, the ethical, literary principle on the one hand and human events and the natural world on the other are inter-defined. Wêng remarked that structures and patterns (*li*'s other denotations aside from principle) will arise from human events and the natural world when acted upon by the poet's mind, and that no matter whether the theme is human emotion or filial love (ethical principle), it must be conveyed and expressed through the corresponding human events and the natural world in the poem.¹⁰ Wêng suggested that poetry or literature, which is supposed to be composed according to literary principle, implies in fact the ethical principle. He quoted from Tu Fu 杜甫 that "one must penetrate the *li* in [Hsiao T'ung's 蕭統] Anthology of Literature" (熟精文選理) and reasoned that since *li* is ethical while the Anthology is literary, the ethical and the literary must imply each other. Again, by quoting from Tu Fu that "In the three hundred poems of the Chou dynasty/ the Teachings and Ordinances are structured (*li*) according to the principle of elegance and splendor," 周詩三百首·雅麗理訓誥 Wêng suggested that ethical principle in poetry cannot do away with literary principle.¹¹ In short, the principles (the *-li*) and human events & the natural world (the *chi-*) are inter-defined. Moreover, when the ethical and the literary as structures realize themselves in the the world of human events and nature, they are realized in perceptible patterns (from structure to pattern), just like any other structure which gives rise to a wide variety of patterns that envelop all aspects of the Universe. The patterns are perceptible and the variety of them depends on the varying arrangements of the elements that support them, just as, Wêng explained, there is a healthy color to the skin when the textural structure of the musculature is well organized and well tied to the bones 於肌理貼緊處自生肉采.¹² In other words, elegance, splendor, and perhaps other aesthetic qualities, we may say, may emerge due to specific arrangements of the elements of a poem. All these difficult concepts will be illustrated later in this paper.

III. An Interpretative Account of Ransom's Texture-Structure Dichotomy

The distinction between science and poetry occupied Ransom's attention in his critical writings. He attempted to define the ontology of poetry

in terms of its distinction from science. In "Poetry: A Note in Ontology" (1934), he set up a formula which was rather crude: "Science gratifies a rational or practical impulse and exhibits the minimum of perception. Art gratifies a perceptual impulse and exhibits the minimum of reason."¹³ Later, in 1938, in the Preface of *The World's Body*, a collection of his critiques, he concluded that what we know through science is "the world only as a scheme of abstract conveniences," but not the world "which is made of whole and infeasible objects, . . . the world which poetry recovers for us." The body and the solid substance of the world are lost in science but seem "to have retired into the fullness of memory of poetry, but out of this we construct the fullness of poetry, which is counterpart to the world's fullness."¹⁴ Poetry was considered a cognitive knowledge reconstituting the fullness of the world. "The fullness of poetry", as we may guess, anticipated Ransom's direction towards a close observation of the texture-structure relationship in his later writings.

The ontology of poetry in terms of texture-structure relationship based on a distinction between poetry and science, became central for Ransom in 1941, with "Criticism as Pure Speculation" and with "Wanted: An Ontological Critic." These two essays were written in the same spirit and proposed the same doctrine. In the first, "a poem is a logical structure having a local texture"; in the second, "the poem is a loose logical structure with an irrelevant local texture."¹⁵ The main idea, deep-seated in the poetry-science dichotomy, is that the "texture"—the irrelevant, concrete, local details of a poem—reconstitutes by its very logical irrelevancies the "body," the qualitative richness of the world, while the "structure"—the indispensable, logical core of the poem—makes reference to the world of abstract conveniences formulated by science.

The two essays supplement each other. The first poses a speculative framework through analogies, while the second is more illustrative and descriptive. Let us follow Ransom's speculative framework and then move to his descriptive formulation. Ransom started his speculation with, in his term, a "crude" formula:

[In poetry] the ostensible substance is increased by an x, which is an increment.

Ransom continued: "the poem actually continues to contain its ostensible

substance, which is not fatally diminished from its prose state: that is its logical core, or paraphrase. The rest of the poem is x."¹⁶ An anti-organic stance is taken. The ostensible substance never receives transformation. Any organic relation between the ostensible substance and the x seems to have been ruled out since the x is merely an increment.

Ransom defined the x and offered "a figurative definition of a poem" by comparing it to a democratic state:

The intention of a democratic state is to perform the work of state as effectively as it can perform it, subject to one reservation of conscience: that it will not despoil its members, the citizens, of the free exercise of their own private and independent character.

The operation of the state as a whole represents, Ransom explained, "the logical paraphrase or argument of the poem," and the private character of the citizens represents "the particularity asserted by the parts" in the poem. The last one is the increment x.¹⁷ In this trope, the poem is made up of the parts, just as the state is made up of its citizens.

Ransom furthered his emphasis upon the irrelevance of the increment x by comparing a poem to a house:

Suppose the logical substance remained there all the time, and was in no way specially remarkable, while the particularity came in by accretion, so that the poem turned out partly universal, and partly particular, but with respect to different parts The poem was not a mere moment in time, nor a mere point in space. It was sizeable, like a house. Apparently it had a "plan," or a central frame of logic, but it had also a huge wealth of local detail, which sometimes fitted the plan functionally or served it, and sometimes only subsisted comfortably under it; in either case the house stood up.

In this trope, the "plan" represents the "logical paraphrase or argument," while the interior decoration, such as "the paint, the paper, the tapestry," represents the "texture." The definition of a poem is "a logical structure having a local texture."¹⁸ There are two discrepancies between Ransom's two tropes. In the trope of a state, the "logical paraphrase" is an abstraction based on the parts of the poem. In the trope of a house, the "plan" is supposed to pre-exist and then the particularity comes in. Secondly, in the first trope, the particularity asserted by the parts is not considered

mere "decoration," while in the second trope, some parts are discriminated as "decorations" and the term "texture" is used in such a "decorative" sense. Ransom's belief in the pre-existence of the logical paraphrase and the decorative sense of the texture aroused a lot of bitter criticism.

Ransom, in "Wanted: An Ontological Critic," based on Charles Morris' theory of icon came up with his own formulation, which is akin to his speculative, metaphorical frameworks. He proposed that in aesthetic discourse, the symbols—each symbol denotes one abstract concept and has only one value-property—are replaced with icons—which, being mental images by themselves, "embody" the fullness of objects, marked by "a qualitative density, or value-density, such is unknown to scientific understanding."¹⁹ By introducing the theory of icon into his speculative framework, Ransom was able to formulate a less metaphorical but more descriptive definition of a poem:

So the aesthetic discourse will be discovered, one expects, making digressions from its logic with its icons at local points; or perhaps maintaining itself on the whole in terms of valid symbols, but occasionally and suddenly building a routine symbol out into the icon denoting the full body of the object.²⁰

Surely this formulation is still speculative, and Ransom did not illustrate his formulation by examples. Ransom took a further step towards a descriptive definition of the ontology of poetry. He illustrated the process of combining in a poem an intended meaning and an intended meter in an analogy of the "bigness-redness relation" in selecting apples, although the former was more complicated than the latter. After the analogy, Ransom analysed the meter-meaning relationship directly. Since language possesses "two properties, the semantic and the phonetic," a poem can be observed "on the two-grounded basis of (1) an intended meaning and (2) an intended meter."²¹ Four elements are generated in a finished poem by the interaction of meaning and meter, namely, determinate meaning, indeterminate meaning, determinate meter, and indeterminate meter. With regard to the relation between meaning and meter, Ransom took a dualistic view: "phonetic effect serves as a sort of texture to the meaning. This is to assign to the meaning an ontological addition."²²

From the very beginning the poet, working out the exigencies of both

intended meaning and intended meter, has to make sacrifices in both areas. But later on, most interestingly and importantly, the poet finds that the "ir-relevances" that have resulted from the "sacrifice" are most valuable. Ransom observed that:

An "irrelevance" may feel forced at first, and its over-plus of meaning unwanted, because it means the importation of a little foreign or extraneous content into what should be determinate, and limited; but soon the poet comes upon a kind of irrelevance that seems desirable, and he begins to indulge it voluntarily, as a new and positive asset to the meaning. And this is the principle: the importations which the imagination introduces into discourse have the value of developing the "particularity" which lurks in the "body," and under the surface, of apparently determinate situations.²³ [*italic mine.*]

To dispel possible misunderstandings concerning Ransom's texture-structure theory, it is most important to note that the "irrelevance" becomes "a new and positive asset to the meaning" and "lurks in the 'body,' and under the surface, of apparently determinate situations." From a crude and general logical stand-point, it is an "irrelevance." But on a much more subtle level, an "irrelevance" may become "relevant" again. Ransom implied a logic of "irrelevance." We wish that Ransom had pursued this issue more fully, because it is very significant to his theory.

The case is similar with the meter. The accomplished poets do not "resort to their variations, which are metrical imperfections, because a determinate meaning has force them to do so. The poet likes the variations regardless of the meanings, finding them essential to the capacity of a sound-texture to go with a sound-structure." Ransom here on the metrical level made the logic of "irrelevance" almost a necessity, dealing with it more explicitly than he did when he discussed texture within the context of meaning: "But the texture that is realized within a meter is under conventional restrictions. . . . Variations from the meter are permissive but they must be of certain kinds."²⁴ It may be possible to take Ransom's words to mean that the restrictions and variations are based on prosody and music: the unique character of poetry as a discourse is that the indeterminate sound and the indeterminate meaning become independent and assume aesthetic value by their very indeterminacy. As one may expect, Ransom concluded that ontologically, poetry is a case of "bringing into experience both a denser and

a more contingent world, and commanding a discourse in more dimensions."²⁵

As we have seen, Ransom's investigation of the ontology of poetry has undergone three stages and touched upon three related but not identical themes. In the speculative framework, he exposed the irrelevance between logical paraphrase and local texture of the poem. In the theory of icons, he speculated on how symbols turned out to be icons and on the aesthetic dimension of icons. In his formulation of intended meaning and intended meter, he described how the two interacted and generated four elements—namely, determinate meaning, determinate meter, indeterminate meaning, and indeterminate meter—and speculated on the aesthetic dimension of two indeterminate elements. A parallel may be drawn between these three formulations: logical paraphrase, symbols, and determinate meaning and meter on one side; local texture, icons, indeterminate meaning and meter on the other. In each side, the elements are not identical, but may be relevant to each other. It seems to me that the theory of icons may help to account for the aesthetic dimension of the texture. For instance, in making a connection between texture and icon, Ransom might say, the local texture digresses from the logical core and appears as a cluster of icons, and "under the iconic sign the abstract item is restored to the body from which it was taken."²⁶ On the other hand, the two indeterminate elements may be identified as one kind of "texture" of a poem, and by their very indeterminacy, they take on multiple value-properties and thus turn out to be icons. This will be illustrated later in the paper.

The decisive factor in Ransom's theory is perhaps logical paraphrase or structure, which exercises itself as a yardstick to discriminate the irrelevance or the indeterminacy, by means of which the symbols build themselves out into icons. We are aware of the heterogeneity in Ransom's three critical themes; to fashion links between his varied arguments is only to promote a possible coherent understanding of his texture-structure theory.

IV. A General Comparison

As one can see, the differences between Wêng's and Ransom's theory are inherent to the differences between monism and dualism, between organic perception and its opposite, differences fundamental to antithetical meta-

physical positions. On the one hand, Wêng used an organismic metaphor in formulating his concept of poetry. The metaphor *chi-li* signifies the organic manifestation of the spiritual through appearances, the abstract through the concrete, the "state of mind" through the textural structure, the ethical, literary, metrical principles through human events and the natural world on the content level and through the sound and meter on the acoustic/metrical level. *Chi-li*, the textural structure of musculature, visualizes the inseparability of form and content, concretizing a poem into a perceptible whole, supported by its underlying structures. It also accounts for the aesthetic patterns revealed on the poem, the result from the varying arrangement of the textures and structures of the poem. Wêng's ethical principle and literary structure are flexible enough to cope with all the heterogeneous possibilities rising from the complexity of human events and the natural world. The heterogeneity and complexity of human events and the natural world are acknowledged, but only acknowledged to the extent that they can still be relevant to each other. Wêng's main endeavor is to offer an organismic theory illustrated in an organismic metaphor and supported with a monistic metaphysics.

On the other hand, Ransom endeavored to work out his theory on the descriptive level although he began with analogies in speculating on the way the parts occasionally expanded out as texture, irrelevant to the structure of the poem. He then proposed, in the spirit of his speculative framework, a theory of icons which may help to account for the aesthetic dimension of the texture. He formulated the interaction between meaning and meter in a poem, from which four elements are generated, namely, determinate meaning, determinate meter, indeterminate meaning, and indeterminate meter. Both the indeterminate meaning and the indeterminate meter are textures. But, as we have intimated, the so-called "irrelevance," no matter if it is on the meaning level or on the sound level, is, in effect, not arbitrary but subject to certain conditions and restrictions. In other words, there is a possible "relevance" behind the "irrelevance." As we have suggested, on the sound level, the "irrelevance" must be subject to prosodic or musical rules. On the meaning level, a similar logic of things is still lacking in Ransom's formulation. The need for such a logic of texture was clearly noted by Kenneth Burke in his review of Ransom's *The New Criticism*:

I think that Mr. Ransom could profitably round out his terminology by

some such third term as the "structure of texture." . . . There is a general tenor discernible among the heterogeneities, something that limits the range of variations, or that points them thematically in the same direction. And if the term "structure" is used as its point of departure, then "structure of texture" could designate the element of consistency limiting the range or quality of this departure.²⁷

To take the "split" between texture and structure constructively is to take it as the heterogeneity within an organic whole. In this roundabout way we can preserve non-organic dynamic and organic unity at the same time. This is exactly what Murray Krieger suggests in his interpretative reading of Ransom's theory:

Here [Ransom] seems to be saying that, led into the wayward paths of irrelevance, the poet somehow, in his enjoyment of these bypaths, can hack his way back to the main prosaic road by clearing the area between the structure and the texture so that the paths and the road are joined into a broad highway, newly conceived, in which the irrelevancies are made relevant.²⁸

If the structure of texture can be worked out, if the "irrelevance" can be made relevant again, then Ransom's theory of texture-structure will be a powerful organic theory indeed.²⁹

As a matter of fact, the reason for the occurrence of the "irrelevance" between logical structure and local texture is the deep-seated limitation of logical structure, which allows for the emergence of textures which cannot be absorbed by the logical structure. Ransom contended that it was wrong to believe that "the *Universal or logical plan* of the poem is borne out perfectly in the sensuous detail which puts it into action; and that this Concrete is used up so completely in the service of the Universal that there is no remainder"³⁰ [*italic mine*]. Ransom stealthily took the Universal to mean "logical plan" and thus made room for the possible "irrelevance" or "texture." His insistence on the discrepancy between the Concrete and the Universal is valid only as far as the Universal is limited to "logical plan." But, the Universal can, in fact, be a-logical, ineffable and not answerable to what logic dictates. In other words, the Universal can be an abstract structure which can follow all the cuts and turns of the Concrete down to the very end. Such an inclusive Universal is theoretically possible. Ransom argued against W. Wimsatt who took the poem as a Concrete Universal, saying that

“if we keep qualifying the concept as [Wimsatt] does by every bit of the poem’s concreteness, for then it becomes tautological to say that all the detail qualifies the concept, or that no reduction of the qualified concept can be equivalent to it.”³¹ The difference between Ransom’s and Wimsatt’s position is in a sense the difference between Ransom’s and Wêng’s. As I see it, the argument arises from different perceptions and definitions.

It may be possible to see the *-li* in Wêng’s metaphysics as the Universal in Wimsatt’s “Concrete Universal.” The *-li* never leaves the *-chi*, just as the Principle never leaves the Matter, and surely follows all the ins and outs of the *chi-*. Its five denotations—namely, reason, principle, order, structure and pattern—make it a wonderful concept denoting the totality of the abstract. At the same time, the *chi-* refers to the Concrete, the totality of concrete details in a poem. As a composite term, *chi-li* signifies the inseparability of the Concrete and the Abstract and thus shows that a poem is nothing other than a Concrete Universal. The differences between Wêng’s *-li* and Ransom’s logical structure, between Wêng’s *chi-* and Ransom’s texture, must be clear to us now. While the *-li* is the total structure following all the curves of the Concrete, Ransom’s logical structure is only a limited structure accessible to logic. While Wêng’s *chi-* refers to all the concrete details in the poem, Ransom’s texture refers to only those parts unabsorbed by the logical structure. The mutual absorption of the *chi-* and the *-li* and the “irrelevance” between logical structure and texture are in fact inherent in the definitions of those terms respectively assigned by Wêng and Ransom.

Inspired by Ransom’s dichotomy between texture and structure, we may come to see some advantages in separating *chi-li* into *chi-* and *-li* as we have already done, allowing more interactions between them, providing more analytical possibilities for the critics. Then, the *chi-* refers to human events and the natural world, while the *-li* to the ethical principle and the literary structure. Human events and the natural world constitute the “body” of a poem, without which no ethical or literary structure is possible. This is also true to Ransom’s system. If there are no human events and nature as the “body” or “content” of the poem, where do the logical structure and the texture, not to mention the irrelevance between them, come from? We now may be able to clarify Ransom’s system at one point or another. The concrete aspect of human events and nature is the representation of the world’s body, while the abstract aspect is the total structure in which the logical structure is implied. If an absolute dualism in metaphysics is followed, the concrete (the world’s body)

and the abstract (no matter whether it is total structure or logical structure) are "irrelevant to each other." In this broad sense, all the sensuous aspects of a poem, "irrelevant" to the logical paraphrase, are by their very "irrelevances" the texture of a poem. On the secondary level, since the logical structure can only absorb those parts which are subject to logic and contributive to the logical paraphrase, some parts will be left out because they are "irrelevant" to the logical structure or the logical paraphrase. Once again, inspired by Wêng's ethical principle and literary structure, we come to see that Ransom's logical structure implies in effect two related elements: an argument or paraphrase and its underlying logical structure. Indeed, Ransom's inconsistency in using terms encourages this double meaning of his logical structure: aside from other terms, he also used "paraphrase," "prose argument," and "logical paraphrase" as equivalents to logical structure. If organic unity means "Multēity in Unity" (from Coleridge), Wêng is strongly on the side of Unity in his organismic metaphor and in his microcosmic-macrocosmic perception of reality, while Ransom is strongly on the side of "Multēity" in his description of the "irrelevance" that occurs between texture and structure and in his multiple value-properties of the icons.

V. Illustrations and Further Formulations of Wêng's and Ransom's Theories

We shall in this last part of the paper give a few examples to illustrate their theories as well as to see their limitations and the new elements or devices they need. We do see that their practical criticism at times does not exhaust the potential of their critical concepts and at other times is not in full accord with their theories. We therefore choose our examples from their practical criticism and try, first, to see how they analysed poems, and second, to try a re-analysis of the poems based on their theories. In our re-analyses we might come up with a more sophisticated version of their theories.

Let us deal with Wêng's theory first. Wêng once analysed Tu Fu's poem entitled "Plum Trees" ("t'i T'ao-shu" 題桃樹)—a seven-character eight-line regulated poem—in five hundred words, which is rather long in Chinese critical practice of that time. We now romanize the poem and give a word-to-word denotation as follows:³²

小 hsiao small	徑 ching path	升 shêng ascend	堂 t'ang parlor	舊 chiu old (days)	不 pu not	斜 hsieh winding/sinuous
五 wu five	株 chu numeral	桃 t'ao plum	樹 shu trees	亦 i also	從 ts'ung unrestrainedly/shade/cover freely	遮 chê
高 kao high	秋 ch'iu autumn	總 tsung usually	餽 k'uei bequeath	貧 p'in poor	人 jên people	實 shih fruits
來 lai coming	歲 sui year	還 hai still/again	舒 shu stretch	滿 man full	眼 yen eyes	花 hua flowers
簾 lien curtain	戶 hu window/door	每 mei always	宜 i good for	通 t'ung passing	乳 ju young	燕 yen swallows
兒 erh children	童 t'ung	莫 mo don't	信 hsin allow	打 ta shoot	慈 tz'u (kind)	鴉 ya crows
寡 kua (lonely)	妻 ch'i widows	群 ch'ün grouped	盜 tao bandits	非 fei not	今 chin today's	日 jih day
天 t'ien the world	下 hsia	車 chü carriages	書 shu books	正 chêng just	一 i one	家 chia family

∴ A literal translation will read as follows:

The small path leading to the parlor was not sinuous,
The five plum trees were freely shading [the house];
In autumn we usually gave away the fruits to the poor,
The next year the flowers would blossom again before our eyes.
The window always welcomed the passing of the young swallows,
The children were never allowed to shoot the kind crows.
Not full of widows and bandits like today,
Carriages and books were shared in the world just like in a family.

Wêng analyzed the poem as follows. The poem begins with one family and with a few plum trees; but the ramifications cover all of nature and the whole human world. The poet's sympathetic mind—feeling himself as part of nature and as a member of mankind—is fully expressed, and this sympathy is the moral center of the poem. The function words and the events as well correspond to each other. The house covered with leaves chimes with the unsinuous path. The past—carriages and books were shared in the world—is contrasted with the present: “full of widows and bandits.” In the good old days before the Turmoil of T'ien-pao 天寶之亂, the small path leading to the parlor was not sinuous; people could walk straight into the parlor and the plum trees were freely shading the house. By contrast to the past, we could see that the small path is sinuous now, following the ins and outs of the fence which has been built to protect the plums from being stolen. The world has changed: in the old days, the fruits were given away to the poor and the trees would just blossom again each year. The house and the trees used to provide good nesting for the birds. Man and nature were in harmony, and people shared a sense of brotherhood. The plum trees just covered the house, blossoming in spring, giving fruits in the autumn; the family and the neighbors enjoyed the fruit and shared the beauty of the blossoming of the flowers in the same place. Birds also flew in and stopped here as their home.³⁴

Although critical terms such as “ethical principle,” “literary structure,” “human events” and “natural world” are not used in this piece of practical criticism, those concepts are in fact at work. The poet's sympathy, his nostalgia for the goodness of man and the unviolated Nature, his lamentation about the deterioration of human virtue and the loss of harmony between man and nature due to war and chaos, make up the poem's ethical

principle. The correspondence between the function words, the interaction between images, the contrast between the present and the past, are relevant to the literary structure of the poem. So the ethical principle and the literary structure are interdefined. For instance, in the first couplet, the function word *i* 亦 (also) connotes that it was a natural consequence that the plum trees were shading the house when the small path was not sinuous because of the man-made fence: nature was not violated, human morality had not deteriorated, and the leaves of the plum trees were naturally abundant and gave shade. The word *chiu* 舊 (in the old days) turns the natural scene toward nostalgia. In the Chinese poetic tradition, a poet does not use words to indicate the past tense—the Chinese verbs do not have tense and the events in poetry are presented as such as if they were free from time confinement—until he wants to make a contrast between the present and the past. This couplet, then, suggests the reversal of this beautiful world: the small path is now sinuous and the plum trees are barren, no more shading the parlor. The old world is gone.

In the second couplet, the function word *tsung* 總 (always) corresponds to the function word *hai* 還 (still/again): we “always” gave fruits away but there were fruits “still”. This suggests the abundance of nature so long as natural processing is allowed to go on. This also suggests a human theme: the more one gives, the more one gains. Surely, the human theme and the natural theme reinforce each other. In the third couplet, the phrase *mei-i* 每宜 (always good) corresponds to the phrase *mo-hsin* 莫信 (don't allow): the harmony between man and nature—the swallows find their home in the house—is “always good,” while the violation of nature—to shoot the crows—must be “forbidden.” In the last couplet, the contrast between the present and the past is heightened: the present: widows and bandits; the past: carriages and books shared by people. The word *fei* 非 (not) and the word *chêng* 正 (just) correspond each other in a very special way. In the context, these two words are function words; but when they are not used as function words, they denote “wrong” and “right.” In other words, in this concluding couplet, the poet suggests that the present world is wrong and the old world is right. This suggestive use of words corresponds to the similar use of *hsieh* 斜 (sinuous) in the first line of the poem. “Sinuous” is the opposite of the “straight.” A sinuous path represents a wrong way. This symbolism is not difficult to apprehend: in the Confucian *Analects* we are told many times that one must follow the wide path, the right Way, not to follow the narrow, sinuous path. The symbolism of the word “sinuous” sets the tone

for the deprived present world and reinforces the nostalgia for lost harmony.

In our analysis, it is clear that the ethical principle and the literary structure correspond to and depend on each other. If there is not such ethical principle underlying the poem, the literary structure—the correspondence of the function words, the interaction of images, the contrast between the present and the past—will be left unsupported. Similarly, if there is not such literary structure, the ethical principle—the sympathetic mind, the harmony between man and man, and between man and nature—will not be revealed. They rely on each other so much that they are in fact different “instances” or “aspects” of their body, i.e., human events and the natural world. This is the reason why in our analysis we had to talk about ethical principle and literary structure in terms of the human events—to give away the fruits, full of widows and bandits, etc.—and in term of the natural world—the blossoming of the flowers, the birds dwelling the human home and the trees, etc. From ethical principle to literary structure and to human events and the natural world, what we have become more and more concrete and perceptible. One can hardly perceive the ethical principle and the literary structure when they remain purely abstract, unsupported by any human event or the natural world. Wêng in his theory suggests that when ethical principle and literary structure are realized or embodied in human events and the natural world, they become relatively “perceptible.” Let us try to explain this “perceptibility” as follows. The ethical principle—the sense of brotherhood and the harmony between man and nature—is realized and visualized by the human events—to share fruits, share the beauty of flowers, share carriages and books in the world like in a family — and by the natural world—the harmonious co-existence between humans, birds, and trees. In this sense the ethical principle is visualized and is perceptible. The same holds true with the literary structure: the correspondence, the interaction, and the contrast are realized and become perceptible in the correspondences, interactions, contrasts of the human events and the natural world. On the other hand, if unsupported by the ethical principle and the literary structure, human events and the natural world will fail to yield any sense to human mind: they are merely a mass of broken chaotic images. In fact, as Wêng suggests, ethical principle, literary structure and their “body”—human events and the natural world—are inseparable. Wêng uses an organismic metaphor to visualize the organic, inseparable relation between these “instances” or

“aspects;” and reinforces this metaphor by a metaphysics, viewing these different “instances” or “aspects” as “microcosms” of the totality of the poem.

Wēng also proposes a most puzzling concept: certain aesthetic patterns may be revealed on the body which is supported by ethical principle and literary structure. This may be explained in terms of the five denotations of the concept *li*, in terms of the transformation from order to pattern. To solve this puzzle we have to examine what constitutes the pattern itself. Let us take a simple line pattern, for example. The lines can be categorized in terms of some opposed qualities: light and dark, short and long, sinuous and straight, and thin and thick. It is clear that different patterns will emerge due to varied proportions and arrangements of opposed categories of lines. If the words and their accompanying images are grouped in terms of different opposed qualities as we did with the lines, certain patterns will be shaped and become perceptible to our eyes. In other words, in order to perceive these aesthetic patterns, we had better visualize the poem in terms of varied opposed categories. Let us for this purpose and in an experimental spirit list 12 perceptual opposed categories—these categories do not cover the whole scope of visibility of course—as below:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. size | small vs. large |
| 2. color | light vs. dark |
| 3. strength | weak vs. strong |
| 4. tempo | slow vs. quick |
| 5. position | low vs. high |
| 6. line | sinuous vs. straight |
| 7. magnitude | thin vs. thick |
| 8. dimension | temporal vs. spatial |
| 9. time | past vs. present |
| 10. space | enclosure vs. openness |
| 11. concreteness | abstract vs. concrete |
| 12. actuality | unreal vs. real |

Here we analyze only the first couplet to see how a pattern may be generated. In the very beginning, the small path generates in our minds a perception of smallness. When we come to the word “parlor,” we can perceive a change from “small” to “large.” At the same time, the word *shēng* 升 (ascend) gives us a perception of an ascent from “low” to “high.” When we come to

the word *chiu* 舊 (in the old days), we may visualize a contrast of the past and the present: a change from the present description to its opposite. When we come to the word "sinuous," we get the perception that the path—which in our first perception may be straight—turns out to be sinuous. At the same time, this sinuousness is negated by the preceding word "not." The perceptible pattern given by this single line is a continuous change and negation. In the second line, we first perceive five plum trees. We then may sense the spatial difference between singleness and multitude when we put the single small path side by side with the five plum trees on our mental stage. At the same time, the plum trees generate in our minds a perception of "height" and thus correspond to the parlor to which an ascending path leads. When we come to the phrase "freely shading the house," in our minds may appear an image of thickness with relatively dark color. The word "freely" may give us a sense of fast tempo and natural movement. In the second line, we can not "perceive" much change or negation on our mental stage. Rather, we perceive an expansion of space from five tall trees to a mass of leaves. In comparison, in the first line, there is a movement from one place to another—from the yard to the parlor—and the movement then stops: we cannot perceive any movement in the last three words. In the second line, there is no change of space: the trees remain in their own place. When we visualize these words in the way we just described, it is most likely that certain aesthetic patterns—similar to the patterns of lines in terms of light and dark, short and long, etc.—will emerge in our minds. Surely these image patterns are more diverse and complex than the line patterns. We hope our experiment with the first couplet of the poem has illustrated the possibility of Wêng's perception, the transformation from order to perceptible patterns.

Let us now discuss two of the examples Ransom gave to illustrate the arguments of "Criticism as Pure Speculation" and "Wanted: An Ontological Critic." We can thereby see more exactly how he explained the contrast of texture and structure. Ransom in "Criticism as Pure Speculation" put forward his concept of "irrelevance" by means of an example from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*:

When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his hard days journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains

Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbec only; when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? What not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

Ransom commented that the argument with connection to the chamberlains is that "Lady Macbeth says she will make the chamberlains drunk so that they will not remember their charge, nor keep their wits about them." Ransom then pointed out:

But it is indifferent to this argument whether memory according to the old psychology is located at the gateway to the brain, whether it is to be dis-integrated into fume as of alcohol, and whether the whole receptacle of the mind is to be turned into a still.³³

Ransom called this "particularity asserted by the parts" by the name of the texture, irrelevant to the argument of the passage. Indeed, the particularity of the parts is "irrelevant" to the argument, but it will be mistaken to take this particularity as a mere decoration, an addition, which can be taken away. Ransom's texture-structure formulation is, I believe, much more than an "ornamentalist" theory. We should take note of the function of presenting the memory as "the warder of the brain" and as a "fume" under the effect of alcohol. To be sure, "the warder of the brain" and the "fume" remain "irrelevant" to the argument of the passage but they are no mere decorations: they, we would say, give us "a sense of real density and contingency of the world" (this aesthetic dimension of "irrelevance" is claimed by Ransom) of Shakespeare's time, by presenting to us the varied aspects of the memory.

Ransom did not give a particular example to illustrate his theory of icons. Ransom did give many examples to illustrate his descriptive theory of determinate and indeterminate meaning, determinate and indeterminate meter. Ransom suggested that in the very beginning the indeterminate meaning and indeterminate meter appear as a result of mutual sacrifice between the intended meaning and intended meter. Later on, the poets find the value of the indeterminate meaning and indeterminate meter and nurture

them in their works. We would like to discuss one of his examples of the relation between determinate and indeterminate meaning:

Had we but world enough, and time
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Should'st rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews;
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow.

(from Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress")

In our discussion of Ransom's example, we would like to link the issue of determinate and indeterminate meaning to the question of "irrelevance," his theory of icons, and the redemption of the world's body. It is unnecessary to reproduce Ransom's whole analysis here; we only focus our attention on some of his comments which are most relevant to our subject. He commented that the word "world, as distinguished from time, is not space, for the lovers already have all the space in the world, and long tenure would not increase it. It is a violent condensation meaning, I think, 'the whole history of the world before us,' and combining with the supposal of their having time to live through it; it supports the historical references which follow."³⁴ We now try to further his comment, based on his theory. First of all, the meaning of the word "world" is "indeterminate." According to the common binaries as already internalized in our consciousness, the word "time" in the line compels us to take the word "world" to mean "space," but the word "world" does not merely mean "space" since whether the lovers have "enough" space or not exerts no influence on the time element (i.e., enough time), the logical core of the poem. The meaning of the word "world" becomes indeterminate and suspended. Because of this indeterminacy, the "world" appears to our minds as a world in its fullness, uncertain in its definition. It implies "the whole history of the world" (including the future, since according to popular chronology, the Jews were to be converted just before

the Last Judgment) as well as the earth as a space (Indian Ganges and tide of Humber). The word "world" finally takes on multiple value-properties and becomes an icon in Ransom's definition. The syntactical structure also helps turning the word into an icon. The word "world" suspends in between two function words, namely, "but" and "enough." Consider another word order like "Had we but enough world and time"! Ransom once formulated as already quoted above that an aesthetic discourse makes "digressions from its logic with its icons at local points; or maintaining itself on the whole in terms of valid symbols, but occasionally and suddenly building a routine symbol out into the icon denoting the full body of the object." We now may be able to present this idea in a more specific manner, saying that this shift from symbol to icon has something to do with the logical structure of the argument and depends on the lexical (this will be illustrated later), syntactical structure of a poem.

Ransom's comment on the word "vegetable" brings forth other dimensions; it reads: "*Vegetable* is a grotesque qualification of love, and on the whole decidedly more unsuitable than suitable, though there are features in which it is suitable." I would suggest that the word "vegetable" turns out to be an icon. Its shift from symbol to icon mainly relies on the lexical structure: the compound "vegetable love" makes the word "vegetable" stand out because of the unusual lexical structure. The iconic quality of the word "vegetable" in the text is more prominent than the word "world;" this provides us with an opportunity of understanding more about "icon." "Vegetable" as a symbol merely denotes "plants;" but in "vegetable love" it signifies far more than that, even far more than its usual connotation "dullness" in the context of the poem. It brings forth a new dimension of value-property which is uncommon in the general use of the word but has been in fact inherent to the full body of the icon "vegetable." That is to say, the compound "vegetable love" gives rise to a contrast between vegetable love and human love, and in this contrast, "vegetable" signifies, according to its contexts, a non-passionate vastness and gradual growth, which, we would say, the image of "vegetable" in its fullness may radiate. Ransom's ontological claim that poetry redeems from science the real density and contingency of the world for us appears somewhat less doubtful after our look at this example.

From the examples given by Wêng and Ransom and our re-analysis, it appears that both Wêng's and Ransom's theories, as in the way we explained, illuminated and expanded them, may be workable, each according

to its own concepts and stratagems. Wêng's concept of "perceptible pattern" bears some similarity to Ransom's redemption of the world's body: both emphasize the sensuality of the poem. Ransom's theory of icon may need expansion and more sophisticated formulation; yet its potential to account for the sensuality of the poem is, to me, unquestionable. Wêng's idea of the poem's "perceptible pattern" is a somewhat difficult concept; yet it yields a possibility of a significant dimension of reading, that is, an aesthetic visualization of the poem, based on a transformation from order to perceptible pattern. After all, Wêng's and Ransom's theories are not as incongruous as they first appear to be, Ransom's logical structure might be implied in Wêng's all-inclusive *li* and the so-called "irrelevances" might be made relevant again. A wider perception of organic unity of a poem might be opened up by these two "rival" but perhaps complementary theories.

Notes

1. The first extensive study of Wêng's critical writing is an M.A. thesis by Li Fêng-mou 李豐楙 in 1974, published in 1978, entitled *Wêng Fang-kang chi ch'î shih-lun* 翁方綱及其詩論 or *Wêng Fang-kang and his Theory of Poetry* (Taipei: chia hsin). Li located and examined Wêng's manuscripts by searching the special collections in all libraries in Taiwan and arrived at a much more comprehensive understanding of Wêng's literary criticism. With respect to Wêng's central concept *chi-li*, which Wêng never defined but only laconically presented in twenty eight occasions in the whole body of his critical writings, the main contribution of Li's study was that it brought to our attention its cultural heritage, namely, Neo-Confucian metaphysics and the traditional organismic view of poetry (to view poetry as an organism), which had been minimized or even ignored by modern scholars. Wêng's concept of *chi-li* as presented in varied histories of Chinese literary criticism lacks theoretical interest because its metaphysical and organismic foundation is overlooked. I, therefore, in this paper intend to theorize Wêng's concept by referring it back to its metaphysical and organismic foundation and formulating its implications. (The present paper is an expanded version of my essay "Wêng-fang-kang *chi-li*-shuo yü lan-sên tzu-chih-chieh-kou-shuo chih pi-chiao" 翁方綱肌理說與藍森字質結構說之比較 (*Chung-Wai*, vol. 5, no. 2, July 1976).
2. Li seems to divide the development of Wêng's concept of *chi-li* into two periods. I think it is better to single out Wêng's discourses on *kê-tiao* and *shên-yün* as an individual period since in that period the concept of *chi-li* is unmistakably intended as an emendation to the concept of *shên-yün*.

3. The use of the term *chi-li* in literary criticism began before Wêng; for example, T'u Lung 屠隆 of the Ming dynasty (1368—1644) once remarked that "A poet who does not nurture his spirit but relies on descriptions with grand dictions will never arrive at the high level of poetry. The result: the *chi-li* of his poetry may be roughly maintained, but the vital energy will be languid, and the bone, thin." 士不務養神而務工詩，刻劃釜藻，肌理粗具，氣骨索然，終不詣化境 "Wang-mou-tai hsiu-chu-t'ing-kao-hsu 王茂大修竹亭稿序," in *Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh p'ï-p'ing tsü-liao hui-pien*, 中國文學批評資料彙編, vol. 7 (Taipei: Kuo-li Pien-i Kuan, 1978—9), p. 500. The appearance of the term *chi-li* in literary criticism may have something to do with the *p'ing-tien* method 評點學 (i.e., making marks and comments on the margins or between the lines in a serious manner), which began in the Sung dynasty and became flourishing during the Ch'ing dynasty. Wêng was one of the important *p'ing-tien* critics, who once worked on Tu Fu's poetry; this may be one of the forces to urge him to develop the concept *chi-li*.
4. For example, he commented on certain poems, saying these poems are beautiful, natural, full of energy and so on, but their textural structure is rather crude or loose: 格力雖新而肌理粗疎 (c. 4), 肌理稍疎而秀色清揚 (c. 5), and 不免肌理稍穢, 然其秀骨天成 (c. 5) in *Shih-chou shih-hua* (Taipei: Kuang-wen, 1971).
5. Wêng Fang-kang, "Kê-tiao lun 格調論" and "Shên-yün-lun 神韻論," in *Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh p'ï-p'ing tsü-liao hui-pien*, vol. 8, pp. 530—37.
6. Wêng, "Chih-yen chi hsiü 志言集序," in *Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh p'ï-p'ing tsü-liao hui-pien*, vol. 8, pp. 528—29. In my translation, I took the term *shih-ching* 事境 (literally, events and surroundings) to mean "human events and the natural world."
7. The definition of the term *chih* is quite a controversy in Chinese criticism; for the varied definitions of the term, see James Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 67—70. After having done some research on the term, I incline to interpret *chih* as the total phenomenon of the mind in which the realm of will gains momentum. My reason is as follows. The archaic form of the character for *chih* is written as 𠄎, composed of a heart and a 止; the latter means both "to go" and "to stop." Therefore, the *chih* might originally mean the total phenomenon of the heart or mind. It is presumed that the scope of mind or heart can be divided into three categories, feeling, will, and thought, according to a traditional philosophy or psychology. With this in mind, I studied the vocabularies, especially the literary terms, in these three categories and became aware of the fact that *chih* is close to the will rather than to other two categories. My definition is in fact harmonious with the ancient poetics, which can be exemplified in Confucius' remarks on poetry.
8. For the Neo-Confucian metaphysics, see Fêng Yu-lan 馮友蘭, *Chung-kuo ssü-hsiang shih* 中國思想史 (Shanghai: Shang Wu, 1930), pp. 896—906. For English translation of Fêng's book, see *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 2 vols., trans. by Derk Bodde (Peking: Henri Vetch), 1937.

9. The microcosmic-macrocosmic perception of reality is explicitly enunciated in China after the mutual interpretation between Taoism and Buddhism during the Six Dynasties. This perception came to a climax in the Buddhist Discourse "Chin Shih-tzu lun" 金獅子論 or "On the Golden Lion" in the T'ang Dynasty. According to that Buddhist discourse, the whole reality of the golden lion is embodied in its each single hair; or, each single hair contains all the elements and structures of the whole golden lion. Wêng, besides identifying the principle in ethics, the principle in poetry and the principle in musculature as one as shown in the quotation from the Preface, also mentions that the principle in cutting and polishing jades and bones 治玉治骨之理 (*Su-chai pi-chi*, vol. 9 蘇齋筆記) and the principle of ordering 條理 (*Mêng-tzu fu-chi*, vol. 2 孟子附記) all are the manifestations of the Principle in General. It seems that Wêng's identification of the principles or structures as one is akin to the absolute monism as represented in the previous Buddhist discourse. In the vocabulary of one Neo-Confucian school of the Sung dynasty, each thing is a small universe reflecting the ultimate Universe 太極. The logic may go this way: all elements and structures are ultimately implied in each thing but certain elements and structures may be essential to and thus explicitly manifested in a certain thing.
10. See Wêng, *Su-chai pi-chi*, vol. 7 and vol. 11 (Manuscript, Central Library of Taipei, Taiwan). Cf. Li, *Wêng Fang-kang chi ch'i shih-lun*, pp. 69-70.
11. See Wêng's two articles on li, "Tu-shih shou-ching-wên-hsüan-li li-tzu shuo" 杜詩熟精文選理字說 and "Han-shih ya-li-li-hsün-kao li-tzu-shuo" 韓詩雅麗理訓語理字說, *Fu-ch'u-chai wên-chi*, vol. 34. Cf. Li, pp. 57-9.
12. Wêng, "Wang Pang-shan" entry 王半山像, *Wang-wên-chien ch'i-yen-shih-ch'ao* 王文簡七言詩鈔, vol. 8.
13. See Ransom, *The World's body* (New York: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1938), p. 130.
14. *Ibid.*, p. x.
15. For the first quotation, see Donald Stauffer, ed., *The Intent of the Critic* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1941), p. 111. For the second quotation, see Ransom, *The New Criticism* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1941), p. 280.
16. Donald Stauffer, ed., *The Intent of the Critic*, p. 106.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.
19. Charles Morris in *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* (1938) adopted and popularized Charles S. Peirce's semiotic trichotomic category of signs, namely, symbols (unmotivatedly linked with their objects), icons (similar to their objects) and indices (physically or causally connected with their objects). Among these three kinds of signs, icon has been the focus of attention and the concept of iconicity becomes one of important themes in the field of semiotics. Ransom's approach to icons is quite different from those of semioticians. To Ransom, a word turns out to be an icon simply because at the moment it represents the full image of its object within a literary text due to particular arrangement, not because it, as a linguistic sign, bears a motivated relation to its object in terms of its sound and graphic shape.

20. For Ransom's theory of icon, see *The New Criticism*, pp. 292-93.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 314, 318-19.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 330.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
27. Quoted from Thomas Young, *Gentleman in a Dustcoat: A Biography of John Crowe Ransom* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1976), p. 350.
28. Murray Krieger, *The New Apologists for Poetry* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 86.
29. Ransom was aware of the inadequacy of his terms and definitions used in his writings on the ontology of poetry, after having written "Wanted: An Ontological Critic." This may indicate that the anti-organic stance the texture-structure dichotomy takes on may not be what Ransom intended. See his letter to Tate on Jan. 16, 1941; in Thomas Young, *Gentleman in a Dustcoat: A Biography of John Crowe Ransom*, pp. 345-6. In fact, fifteen years after he wrote these two essays he turned to an organismic figure. He likened a poem to an organism, composed of three organs, namely, the head, the heart, and the feet respectively speaking in intellectual, affectual, and rhythmical language. This indicates Ransom's hacking his way back to organic theory in spite of his insisting on the texture-structure dichotomy. See "The Concrete Universal: Observations on the Understanding of Poetry I," *Kenyon Review*, XVI, Autumn 1954.
30. Ransom, "The Concrete Universal: Observations on the Understanding of Poetry, [II]," in *Poems and Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 164-65.
31. Ransom, "The Concrete Universal: Observations on the Understanding of Poetry, I," *Kenyon Review*, XVI, Autumn, 1954, p. 557.
32. Wêng, "Ta Liu-Kuang-wên wên tu-t'i t'ao-shu-shih" 答劉廣文問杜題桃樹詩 *Fu-ch'u-chai wên-chi*, vol. 10.
33. Donald Stauffer, ed., *The Intent of the Critic*, pp. 106-7.
34. Ransom, *The New Criticism*, pp. 311-3.

