

lyric, *To* ---, by the exquisite craftsman Chu Hsiang 朱湘.³ The following is the first stanza of the original with Chu Hsiang's translation:⁴

ENGLISH AND CHINESE METRES IN HSÜ CHIH-MO

by CYRIL BIRCH

Of the technical problems facing the young Chinese poets of the nineteen-twenties who were attempting to create a "New Verse" (新詩), none was greater than the problem of selection of suitable metres. And this fact is nowhere better exemplified than in the poetry of Hsü Chih-mo 徐志摩 (1896-1931), who during the prolific last decade of his life experimented with an almost infinite variety of forms and metres. My intention in this present essay¹ is first to illustrate, by metrical analysis of certain of Hsü's poems, his debt to the metres of the English Romantics whom he held in such veneration. It was obvious, however, that even a cultural borrowing of such magnitude as this could not provide final satisfaction for the needs of the New Verse. By analysis of further pieces I hope to indicate Hsü's recognition of this truth, implicit in his creation of a type of metre dictated not by the English example but by the nature of modern Chinese prosody.² Such "Chinese" metres are in fact very varied in kind, and at present I shall attempt no more than to suggest their essential difference from the "English-type" patterns described.

The most obvious place to look for English metres would be in translations of English verse, and an example perhaps more convincing than anything from Hsü Chih-mo would be the translation of Shelley's short

¹ This paper is an initial by-product of a study of Hsü Chih-mo which I hope eventually to publish in monograph form. The study was begun, under the generous auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation, in the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, to the former and present Curators of whose Chinese Collection, Professor Mary C. Wright and Dr. Eugene Wu, I am deeply indebted.

² Hsü was a native of Chekiang province, and has several poems in his own local dialect, e.g., 一條金色的光痕 *A Ray of Gold*, in 志摩的詩 *Poems of Chih-mo*, Shanghai, 新月 ("New Moon") Book Co., 1930. The most productive part of his life as a poet was, however, spent in Peking, and I take the National Language as the standard of Hsü's style as did Chu Hsiang and other early reviewers of his poetry. I must take upon myself responsibility for the scansions proposed in this paper. Each was, however, checked against a reading recorded for me by Miss Mao Ts'an-ying, whose help as informant I greatly appreciated. Miss Mao was born in Taiwan in 1935 but resided in Hopei province 1939-45. She was not previously familiar with the poems, and so read them as it were "spontaneously", without preconceived ideas of their rhythms. At the opposite pole of familiarity with the texts was Professor Ch'en Shih-hsiang, whose kind suggestions and modifications proved most helpful.

One word	is too oft=	en profaned	
	Yeou	igeh tzyh=	yeau bey ren lan'nyonq,
For me	to profane	(it)	
	Dann woo	bugaan	lan'nyonq (ta,)
One feel=	ing too false=	ly disdained	
	Yeou	ijoong chyng=	shihuh bey ren chaurnonq,
For thee	to disdain	(it)	
	Dann nii	buhao	chaurnonq (ta,)
One hope	is too	like despair	
	Yeou	ijoong shi=	wanq jyi shianq shy yih,
For pru=	dence to smoth=	(er,)	
	Shy yih	yeou shwei	neng kehshyang?
And pit=	y from thee	more dear	
	Der=	dawle nii=	de idean lianshi
Than that	from anoth=	(er,)	
	Bii bye=	ren chian	bey du chyang.

³ In 小說月報 *Fiction Monthly*, XVII, 1, January 1926.

⁴ Transcription of the texts by the use of the *Guoyeu Romatzyh* system enables the scansion more effectively to show (a) the tones, without such diacritical marks as would interfere with the stress indications, and (b) the syntactical groupings of syllables. In transcribing poems in "English-type" metres I use marks for stressed syllables: ˊ, and unstressed syllables: ˋ. In transcribing poems in "Chinese-type" metres I continue to use these symbols for full stress and absence of stress respectively, but distinguish also syllables receiving intermediate stress or "half-stress", which are marked with a circle: ˆ. The sign ^ indicates a "defective foot". In the case of each individual poem studied, the object of investigation was the underlying metric pattern of the whole. Therefore, despite the apparent risks of over-simplification and dogmatism, the elementary techniques of "graphic metrics" were preferred above more sophisticated musical notations or the methods of "acoustic metrics". Such methods might well reveal more successfully the significance of the poet's departures from his pattern; but cf. Warren and Wellek, *Theory of Literature*, p. 158: "The pattern of verse is inaccessible and incomprehensible to merely acoustic or musical methods".

有一個字眼被人濫用，
 但我不敢濫用牠，
 有一種情緒被人嘲弄，
 但你不好嘲弄牠；
 有一種希望極像失意，
 失意有誰能克降？
 得到了你的一點憐惜，
 比別人千倍都強。

The metrical pattern used here by Chu Hsiang, precise as it is, differs of course from the pattern of the original. But Shelley's anapaests are reproduced, with an extra foot per line (Shelley: 3-2 repeat; Chu: 4-3 repeat). The rhyme-scheme is the same, but male and female rhymes alternate throughout Shelley's stanza, in Chu's for the first half only. It is worth noting that Chu matches also the tones of his rhyming words, if allowance be made for *yih* : *shi* (ll. 5,7).

Hsü Chih-mo was less happy in his few translations from English verse. The following are the first twelve lines of his verse translation, posthumously published, of the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.⁵ This translation of the scene is rather less satisfactory than others made into Chinese,⁶ and metrically it is something of a mess. It can be seen from this opening speech of Romeo's that Hsü intends an iambic metre, with six feet rather than five as the staple. But in the outcome, very few lines are passable iambic hexametres. Ll. 1,2 are fairly regular, l.1 rendered iambic rather than trochaic by the use of an initial expletive, l.2 having only five feet. L.12 is the only other line with less than two irregular feet. Irregularity mounts throughout the speech, ll. 21-24 (not quoted here) being loosest of all (only seven actual iambic feet out of the total twenty-four); and indeed throughout the rest of the translation:

⁵ Act II, Scene 2, in 新月月刊 *New Moon Monthly*. IV, 1, 1932.

⁶ The playwright T'ien Han 田漢, among others, translated *Romeo and Juliet*. More recently there has appeared a complete Shakespeare translation by Chu Sheng-hao 朱生豪 (Peking, Writers' Press, 1954).

Ā, chīng shie! Sher = me guang tzay nah = bian
 chuang chyan tow lianq?

Nahsh dong = fang, Ju- lih-yeh sh dong = fang-de
 tay(yang.)

Sheng = chiilai ia, meei = lih-de tay = yang, kuay
 lai gaydao

Nah yeou jih = shin-de yueh, ta in = wey nii,
 tadē shyh = (neū.)

Yeuan bii ta meei, yiiran iouchour-de maanmiann
 tsangbair:

Tzay bye tzuoh tadē shyh = neū, jihran tadē-shin =
 yeā budah;

Tādē chuuneū-de ishāng dūsh liuh- inin- de
 binqtay,

Chwu lē chanq chooujeau- de tzay meiyēou ren
 chuan; kuay tuo (lē chiuh.)

Nah = sh woo = de sheaujēe, a, nah sh woo = de
 liann-ay!

Ā, dann yuann tā tzyhjii yēe cherngrēnn tā yii
 sh woo = (de.)

Tā kai koou le, kee yow meiyēou huah: nahsh
 tzeemme-de;

Tādē yeā tzay tzuoh wenjang; ranq woo lai dar =
 fuh ta.

呵，輕些！什麼光在那窗前透亮？
 那是東方，朱麗葉是東方的太陽。
 升起來呀，美麗的太陽，快來蓋倒
 那有忌心的月，她因為你，她的侍女，
 遠比她美，已然憂愁得滿面蒼白：
 再別作她的侍女，既然她的心眼不大，
 她的處女的衣裳都是綠陰陰的病態，
 除了唱丑角的再沒有人穿；快脫了去。
 那是我的小姐，呵，那是我的戀愛！
 呵，但願她自己也承認她已是我的！
 她開口了，可又沒有話：那是怎麼的？
 她的眼在做文章；讓我來答復她。

By turning from a translation to an original composition which is in fact one of his most successful poems, we may find Hsü more faithful to an English metrical pattern he uses as base. The poem is 落葉小唱 (*A Song of Dead Leaves*),⁷ and the metrical pattern is that of Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. It must be emphasized that Hsü's poem is in no sense a translation or paraphrase, but is wholly original in matter and mood. Juxtaposition of lines will, however, show the extent of Hsü's technical reliance on the Keats original:

(Keats, v. 1):

Ō what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

(Hsü, v. 1):

Ijenn shengsheang joanshanq = le jieyan
 Alone and pale = ly loit = ering?

⁷ First line of Chinese text, insert 邊 after the eighth character.

⁷ In *Poems of Chih-mo*. Chu Hsiang, in a review-article 評徐君志摩的詩, praised the "high quality of feeling" of this poem (*Fiction Monthly*, XVII, 1, January 1926).

(Woo jenq aijinn = j menq shiang-bian)
 The sedge is withered from the lake,
 Jehhwei joen sh ta = de jeau buh le, woo sheang
 And no birds sing.
 Tzay jeh shen yeh.

(v. 8):

She took me to her elf in grot

(v. 2):

I sheng bo = jwo tzay woode chuang- (shanq)
 And there she wept, and sigh'd full sore,
 (Woo jenq kawjiin = j shuey = shiang-parng)
 And there I shut her wild wild eyes
 Jeh joen sh ta lai naw = j wan — nii kann
 With kiss = es four.
 Woo pian bu janghwang!

The full text of the *Song of Dead Leaves* follows:

Ijenn shengsheang joanshanq le jieyan
 (Woo jenq aijinn = j menq = shiang-bian)
 Jehhwei joen sh ta = de jeau buh le, woo sheang
 Tzay jeh shen yeh.

I sheng bo = jwo tzay woode chuang- (shanq)
 (Woo jenq kawjiin = j shuey = shiang-parng)
 Jeh joen sh ta lai naw = j wan — nii kann,
 Woo pian bu janghwang!

I geh sheng = shyi tiejinn woode chwang,
 Woo shuo (ibann sh shueymenq, ibann sh mimang) —
 "Nii tzoong buneng ming = bair woo, nii yow her kuu
 Duo jiaw woo shinshang."

ī sheng wey = shyi luoh tzay woode jēn— (bian)

(Woo yii tzay menq = shiang-lii liouliann)

"Woo fuh = le nii," nii shuo— niide reh ley

Tanqj woode lean!

Jeh in = sheang nao = j woo = de menqhwen

(Luohyeh tzay tyng- chyan wuu, ijenn, yow ijenn)

Menq wan = le, a, hwei = fuh chingshiing; nao ren(-de)

Chiueh jyy = sh chiousheng!

A rustling against the balustrade⁸

(As I drift ever nearer the realm of dreams)

I tell myself, these are her footsteps at last—

In this still night.

The sound of tapping here at my window

(I press ever closer the frontier of sleep)

She must be here to plague me again—and see,

I remain calm!

The sound of breathing draws near my bed

And (half-dreaming, half in a daze) I cry,

"You will never understand me—what good then

To hurt me more!"

The sound of a sigh falls by my pillow

(I cling now to the dream I am dreaming)

"I wronged you," you say—now your hot tears

Scalding my cheek!

These noises trouble my dream-locked spirit

(In the garden the dead leaves dance, flurries before the breeze)

My dream ends, sleep clears, I find my tormentor

Is only the voice of Autumn!

⁸ All the English translations in this paper are my own. For complete translations of 海韻 and 死水 see Harold Acton and Ch'en Shih-hsiang, *Modern Chinese Poetry*, London: Duckworth, 1936; for 死水 see also Kai-yu Hsu, "The Life and Poetry of Wen I-to", in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 21, December 1958.

一陣聲響轉上了階沿

(我正換近著夢鄉邊)

這回準是她的脚步了,我想—
在這深夜,

一聲刺啄在我的窗上

(我正靠緊著睡鄉旁)

這準是她來鬧著玩——你看,
我偏不張皇!

一個聲息貼近我的床,

我說(一半是睡夢,一半是迷惘)——

「你總不能明白我,你又何苦

多叫我心傷!

一聲喟息落在我的枕邊

(我已在夢鄉裏留戀)

「我負了你」你說——你的熱淚

燙著我的臉!

這音響惱著我的夢魂

(落葉在庭前舞,一陣又一陣)

夢完了,阿,回復清醒;惱人的——

却只是秋聲!

The identity of pattern is by no means absolute. We have to make allowance in particular for Hsü's extra foot in the third line of each of the first four stanzas—a foot consisting in two cases, significantly enough, of a phrase with the effect of an afterthought. But the exact prosodic equivalence of phrases like "loitering": *menqshiang-bian*,⁹ or "And no birds sing": *Tzay jeh shen yeh* puts it beyond doubt that Hsü borrowed his pattern directly from Keats. This is in no way unexpected, for Keats was in the eyes of Hsü Chih-mo the perfect poet. In his essay 話 ("Words")¹⁰ Hsü distinguishes between what is worth saying and what is not. Nothing ever said was "absolutely worth saying"; political speeches or formal academic addresses are examples of what is "absolutely not worth saying". Well worth saying, however, are the "wild ravings" of poets: "The only proper occupation of the poet is dreaming. The true poet is one who deep in dreams, his spirit soaring far above the bright clouds, gives voice at will to random lines and fragments." This Hsü justifies by quotations illustrative of poetic unconventionality, the first from Li Po:¹¹

Go now, I'm drunk and on the point of sleep;
Tomorrow, if you will, come with your lute.

—the second from Keats, two of the lines scanned above:

And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

I have pointed out that 落葉小唱 is in matter and mood quite remote from *La Belle Dame*. The atmosphere of the latter is, however,

⁹ In my transcription I have given stress to the last syllable of "loitering", but of course it is merely by courtesy that this is stressed, to meet the demand of the metrical pattern. In fact, Hsü's *menqshiang-bian* exactly parallels the lulling effect of Keats' "loitering" in having full stress on the first syllable only.

¹⁰ In 落葉, *Falling Leaves*, Peking: 北新 Book Co., 1926.

¹¹ The complete "stop-short" is the following:

兩人對酌山花開
一盃一盃復一盃
我醉欲眠卿且去
明朝有意抱琴來

We toast each other as the hillside blooms,
Cup follows cup, and then a cup to follow,

—completed by the two lines quoted in Hsü's essay. The title of the poem is 山中與幽人對酌 *Drinking with a Recluse in the Hills* (李白詩, Students Sinological Series, p. 145). Line three is an allusion to a statement in the biography of T'ao Ch'ien 陶潛 in the 宋書 (*chüan* 93: *Twenty-five Dynastic Histories*, K'ai-ming edition, vol. 2, p. 1645.2):

On the arrival of any visitor, exalted or humble, what wine there was would be brought out at once. If T'ao Ch'ien was the first to get drunk he would say to his guests, "I am drunk and wish to sleep, go away".

recreated by Hsü in another poem, 海韻 ("A Song of the Sea")¹²; it is an interesting sidelight on the process of poetic creation that *La Belle Dame* should thus have prompted Hsü Chih-mo to the construction of two very different poems, one drawing on Keats' metre and the other on his mood. A vision, as in Keats' poem, forms the substance of 海韻, a vision of a solitary girl in a romantic landscape, though now we leave the lake's edge and the "cold hill's side" for the shore of a wild sea at dusk. The true Gothic chill is induced by the later verses as the girl, who has danced and sung on the shore, disappears into the foam: the effect is exactly that of Keats' lines

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam

With horrid warning gaped wide . . .

Hsü's vision is no doubt more spontaneous, impressionistic, less complex with magic than that of Keats. But its literary ancestry is I think clearly indicated by the opening lines, which compare closely in sense with the opening lines of *La Belle Dame*; and the form of the poem does offer some supporting evidence. The first stanza runs as follows:

"Neulang, dāshēn- dē neulang:
Maiden, solitary maiden:

Nii wey sher= mē liouliann
What makes you linger here

Jeh hwanghuen- dē haebian? —
On the dusk-darkened shore? —

Neulang, hwei jia ba, neulang!"
Maiden, maiden, turn back!"

"A bu; hwei jia woo bu hwei,
"Ah no, I do not please,

Woo ay jeh woan= feng chuei" —
For love of the evening breeze" —

Tzay sha= tann-shanq, tzay muh- ay-lii,
On the sand of the shore, against sunset clouds,

¹² First published in the (Peking) 晨報 Supplement No. 1252, August 17th, 1925 (see 陳從周, 徐志摩年譜, Shanghai: St. John's University, preface dated August 1939; p. 50). The poem is collected in 飄冷翠的一夜 *A Night in Florence*, Shanghai: New Moon Book Co., 1928. It was given a most impressive musical setting by Y. R. Chao in 1927. I am indebted to Dr. P. C. Li of the Army Language School, Monterey, for permitting me to hear his recording of a very beautiful performance of this work conducted by himself in Taipei in 1958; and to Professor Chao himself for the gift of his recent re-issue of his settings for this and other poems (新詩歌集, Commercial Press, Taipei: 1960). In my transcription of the first verse of 海韻 I have of course been guided by Professor Chao's assessment of its rhythms.

Yeou í= gēh saanfah— dē neulang —
 A maiden with wind-tossed hair
 Pairhwei, pairhwei.
 Wanders at ease.

「女郎，單身的女郎
 你為什麼留戀
 這黃昏的海邊？——
 女郎，回家吧女郎！
 「可不，回家我不回，
 我愛這晚風吹：——
 在沙灘上，在暮靄裏
 有一個散髮的女郎——
 徘徊，徘徊

There is no identity of metrical pattern here, but Hsü's metre is none the less recognizably "English". Most of 海韻 consists of dialogue, as does all of *La Belle Dame*: of the nine lines of each stanza of 海韻, the first four are spoken by the poet to the girl, ll. 5-6 (in all but the fifth and final stanza) are the girl's reply, and the last three lines are narrative. Keats' short, slow-stressed last line is paralleled in 海韻 as in 落葉小唱.

What is remarkable about these two poems by Hsü Chih-mo is their quality, despite their debt to Keats, as Chinese verse. Hsü's importation of English metre did not, as one might fear, result in Anglicized Chinese: there is no single phrase in either poem which would not be found in standard modern Chinese usage. Nothing could be nearer to "plain language" than l. 3 of the first stanza of 落葉小唱. And yet the simplicity of this poem is most artfully contrived. A languorous, plaintive effect proper to the frustrated lover is achieved by the use of closed syllables for all rhymes (the rule is broken only by the imperfect last rhyme of v. 1), and by the use of near-synonyms, which whilst avoiding reiteration produce a kind of lulling effect: *aijinn, kawjinn, tiejinn; ijenn shengsheang, igēh shengshyi,*

isheng weyshyi, jeh insheang; and menqshiang-bian, shueyshiang-parng, shuey-meng, menqshiang-ii. A grammarian making a study of the particle ("durative") 著 would find rich material in this poem. It is used five times in as many stanzas, and seems to me both to assist the prosody—in the direction of a "surging" effect—and, semantically, to enhance the sense of immediacy in the scene. The construction of the poem is most skilful, the dream developing to its climactic point in the second half of v. 4, until in the final stanza the rhythm suddenly changes, when the choppy middle lines express the poet's starting into wakefulness.

In the stanza quoted from 海韻, it is not too difficult to catch as the short lines vary in length an echo of the ebb and surge of the tide: first line, the tide drags back; ll. 2-3, a small wave quickening; l. 4 drags back again; ll. 5-6, fresh surge of a larger wave, l. 7 the long steady ebb; and the last two lines, the diminishing counterflow.¹³

It has been possible in the preceding instances to present evidence of the English provenance of the metres used. The next poem I wish to consider owes no particular debt, so far as I know, to any English poet, but may be taken to represent Hsü's own original thinking in *English metre*. 秋蟲 ("The Cricket")¹⁴ is a piece of rhetoric. It is for the sake of rhetorical effect that Hsü uses the tight form of organization by rhyming couplets. Through these he speaks with persuasive certainty: "This you must believe," he seems to be saying, "listen—it clicks as I say it". Having selected an organization by couplets, he then utilizes them to the full by developing the entire content of the poem through them. Through the first half of the poem we have a progressive extension through nature, beginning with the lowly cricket (first couplet), then outwards to the grass and dew

¹³ I do not think it is excessively fanciful to see in this poem such an excellent matching of metre to subject. There are numerous instances in Hsü of comparable rhythmic effects. Two must suffice for the present. For the first, the zigzag motion of a dead leaf as it sways to the ground, conveyed by the alternation of rising and falling tones, see my remarks on 愛的靈感 *Love's Inspiration*. Second is the rhythm of a train, in the opening lines of 火車禽住軌 *Night Train* (in 雲遊 *Cloudwandering*, Shanghai: New Moon Book Co., 1932):

Huooche chinj goei, tzay hei= yeh-ii ben
 Guoh shān, guoh shōei, guoh chern= sy ren -de fern.

火車禽住軌，在黑夜裏奔，
 過山，過水，過陳死人的墳

Pressing to its rails, through the night it speeds,
 Past hills, past streams, past tombs of the ancient dead
 (in my translation I have tried to reproduce the rhythmic effect of the original:
 CLACKer CLACKer CLACK, CLACKer CLACKer CLACK,
 kerLACK, kerLACK, kerLACKerty kerLACK).

¹⁴ Dated 1927 (see Chen Ts'ung-chou, *op. cit.*, p. 73), published in the first issue of *New Moon Monthly*, March 1928, and later in Hsü's volume 猛虎集 *Tiger, Tiger*, Shanghai, New Moon Book Co., 1931.

(second couplet), up to the sky, the daylight clouds and night stars of the fourth and fifth couplets, and at last off to the far desert where decency is hiding (half-way through the poem). Two epigrams follow now, each wrapped in its couplet. The first has the form of a detached simile; the second is something of a "proverb for the age". With l. 17, the ninth couplet, we return to a landscape, but the landscape now of nightmare, the metaphysical garden where the soul has chosen to vegetate, the threat of Circean transformation and at last cosmic disaster and the threatened extinction of the human spirit. And still each step is begun and ended with its own couplet:

Chiouchong, nī wēy shērme lai? Rēnjian
 Tzao bu = sh̄ jiōw shyrhow- -de chingshyan.
 Jeh chingtsao jeh bairluh yeesh dai,
 Tzay yee meiyēou yonq, jehshie shytsair. 4
 Hwangjin tsairsh renmen-de shinchoong,
 Ta jann = le bair = tian, yow bah = j menq.
 Aychyng shianq bair = tian-lii- de shing(shing),
 Ta tzaō jiōw hweibih, tzaō moh = le yiing. 8
 Tian hei tamen yee buder hweilai,
 Bannkong-lii yeongyeuan yeou u = yun gay.
 Hair yeou lianchyy yee gaw = le charngjiah,
 Ta duoo tzay sha = mo-dih- lii juh jia. 12
 Hua jīn jaur kai kee jye = bucherng guoo,
 Sysheang bey juuyih jianu-der kuu.
 Nii bye shuo jeh ryh = tz guoh- der menn:
 Hueychih- lean-de hair tzay how = miann gen. 16
 Jeh ibann yeesh ling-hwen- de lay,
 Ta ay duoo tzay yuan = tz-lii jonq tsay.
 "Buguan," ta shuo, "ting ta woang shiah choou
 Biann ju, biann chiu, biann har = ma biann goou. 20
 Guoh tian tayyang shiou-der jelle lean,
 Yuehlianq tsarnchiueh = le tzay bukeen yuan,

Daw nah = tian ren = daw jen miehle joong,
 Woo tzay lai daa- daa germinq- de jong!" 24

You, cricket, what are you here for? Mankind
 No longer knows the old leisure.
 Green grass, white dew, a little silly now,
 No use any more, these poet's toys.
 Gold, only gold is man's new darling,
 Ruling his day, lording his dreams.
 Love like daylight—lingering stars
 Long ago retired, vanished long ago.
 Nor do the stars return at dusk,
 For ever the black clouds hang beneath the sky.
 Decency, too, has taken leave of absence,
 Gone to the desert, there to make her home.
 The blossom may open, but no fruit forms,
 Dogma cruelly ravishes thought.
 Don't complain that time is crawling:
 There's ill-luck behind you, right on your heels.
 For a good half of this, blame the malice of the soul,
 Who likes to get away, to attend to his garden.
 "Leave them", says he, "let them wallow deeper,
 Let them change to dogs, change to swine or frogs or maggots.
 When the time comes, when the sun hides in shame,
 When the moon has lost the wish to return from the wane,
 When that day comes, when the spirit of man is dead,
 Then I shall strike—strike the signal for revolt!"

秋蟲，你為什麼來？人間
 早不是舊時候的清閒；
 這青草，這白露，也是歎：
 再也沒有用，這些詩材！
 黃金才是人們的新寵，
 她佔了白天，又霸着夢！

愛情像白天裏的星星，
 她早就迴避，早沒了影。
 天黑它們也不得回來，
 半空裏永遠有烏雲蓋。
 還有廉恥也告了長假，
 他躲在沙漠地裏住家。
 花儘着開可結不成果，
 思想被主義姦污得苦！
 你別說這日子過得悶，
 晦氣臉的還在後面跟！
 這一半也是靈魂的懶，
 他愛躲在園子裏種菜；
 不管他說「聽他往下醜，
 變豬，變蛆，變蛤蟆，變狗；
 過天太陽羞得遮了臉，
 月亮殘闕了再不肯圓，
 到那天人道真滅了種，
 我再來打一打革命的鐘！」

To accept the above transcription would be to recognize the metrical basis of the poem as the iambic tetrametre. If we allow the presence in each line of one extra unstressed syllable (which may *begin* any one of the four feet), we can follow the iambic pattern through all but four of the twenty-four lines. Of these four, ll. 9 and 21 are untidy. An alternative and

perhaps more natural reading for l. 21 would in fact show five trochaic feet:

Guoh tian tayyang shiou-der jeh lean.

The other two non-iambic lines, 5 and 14, are interesting in that they are precisely the two lines of the poem most passionate in their accusation. For these two lines Hsü moves into a heavier metre resembling rather the trochaic: l. 5, in particular, is a replica of the "Dead Water" pattern which will be described below.

The poem illustrates rather vividly some of the problems confronting the would-be Chinese iambist. Most commonly the disyllabic compounds of modern Chinese have stress on the first syllable.¹⁵ This situation is reflected in the trochees which open nine of the twenty-four lines of the poem: thus, *aychying*, *sysheang*, *yuehlianq* all are natural trochees, and the position is complicated by the infrequent use of the demonstratives *jeh*, *nah* (as compared with the article in English). But the greater threat to Chinese iambs is to the final foot. It is occasionally open to Hsü to use the kind of compound, e.g., *chingsshyan*, which is formed by complementary constituents carrying almost equal stress. More often, however, he anchors his line with a monosyllabic word. No less than eighteen lines end with monosyllabic words, each of course stressed and carrying rhyme. The effect of these words as they are placed throughout the poem is to enhance the impact of the individual couplet: this effect builds up to a climax in the powerful simplicity of the last line, with its final aural image of the bell.

What is again noteworthy is the naturalness of Hsü's diction in 秋蟲, despite its tight organization into an imported metrical pattern. As set out in the above transcription the poem no doubt appears artificial in the extreme. But when one reads it aloud, or silently from the character text (which has its own kind of "artificial" symmetry), one is struck by the prevalence of natural, everyday phrasing, from the totally matter-of-fact opening question, through the colloquialisms of ll. 4, 15 and others, to the last line itself. Hsü's critics were not slow to react when he published

¹⁵ Cf. Y. R. Chao, *Mandarin Primer*, Introduction, p. 26:

A minority of syntactic words—but a majority in frequency of occurrence—have a tonic accent on the first syllable, followed by one or more completely unstressed syllables, as *mian.hua* "cotton", *yii.ba* "tail", where the dot indicates that the following syllable is completely unstressed. (My italics.)

Cf. also the same author's Introduction, p. xvi, to R. H. Mathews, *Chinese-English Dictionary*, Revised American Edition, 1945:

What is most important in this dictionary is the recording of thousands of compounds containing the neutral tone as individual lexical facts, just as facts of the stress-accent in English have to be recorded individually in dictionaries and cannot be covered by rules."

My statement should therefore be regarded as a more-or-less acceptable general comment rather than as a hard-won "rule".

verses which seemed to them to read unnaturally.¹⁶ Thus, Yü P'ing-po, who admired Hsü, nevertheless pointed out several faults in his verses written in memory of Katherine Mansfield¹⁷; the last stanza, he maintained, read particularly poorly. Yü P'ing-po proceeded to make the following statement:

If Hsü, with his gifts, his spirit, his training, is yet unable to use forms of this kind with freedom, how much more likely are his imitators to stiffen and shrivel up. This kind of form, evolved from Western lyrical poetry, I believe to be as it were atrophied. It may be put to use on occasion, but it is not at all, I believe, germane to our development. It is my basic faith that our road is for ourselves to open up.¹⁸

Examination of the complete oeuvre of Hsü Chih-mo leads to the conviction that he would have shared this "basic faith". The remainder of this present essay seeks to suggest the way in which Hsü contributed to opening up the road of which Yü P'ing-po speaks.

So far we have been concerned with metres of an essentially English type, in which stressed syllables are so placed as to form rhythmic (most commonly iambic) feet which are then disposed so many to the line. The rhythmic foot has been implicitly understood as a group of one or more syllables of which the one which is stressed occurs in either initial or final position. I wish now to turn to a different method of metrical scansion, one which has been applied by certain critics to English *vers libre*.¹⁹ Here the foot is again taken to comprise a group of syllables of which one is stressed, but with the important provision that this stressed syllable may occupy any position in the group. The criterion by which the foot is marked off is now no longer its commencement or conclusion with a stressed syllable. The concept is introduced of the "sense group", the minimum syntactical phrase containing a stressed syllable. From the linguist's viewpoint, this type of scansion is more arbitrary and less satisfactory in that it uses

¹⁶ In his earliest work Hsü was guilty of considerable clumsiness. In places he seems almost to have conceived a line first in English (NB that his diary contains original verse in English) before setting it down in uneasy, semi-archaic Chinese. Thus, although later he wrote a very successful poem *On Leaving Cambridge for the Second Time* (再別康橋, in *Tiger, Tiger*), his early *Farewell to Cambridge* 康橋再見吧 dated August 10th, 1922, contains the line

康橋! 汝永為我精神依戀之鄉!

—surely the original form this line took in Hsü's own mind was something like:
Cambridge! Ever shalt thou be my spiritual home!

¹⁷ In *Poems of Chih-mo*.

¹⁸ Yü P'ing-po 俞平伯, *On Reading "Destruction" 讀毀滅* (a poem by Chu Tzu-ch'ing 朱自清), in *Fiction Monthly*, XIV, 8, August 1923.

¹⁹ Cf. for example Yvor Winters, *In Defence of Reason*, pp. 103-150, "The Influence of Meter on Poetic Convention", esp. pp. 112-29, "The Scansion of Free Verse".

notional rather than purely formal criteria. Its importance to the present study lies in the fact that this is precisely the method of scansion used by Wen I-to and other "New Moon" poets; it would thus be familiar to Hsü Chih-mo, although Hsü himself, at least in print, never descended to discussion of such technicalities.

Of the greatest interest in this connection is a recent paper by Miss Ling Shu-hua,²⁰ the close friend of Hsü and member of the New Moon group, whose short stories so well recall the delicate sensitivity of Katherine Mansfield.²¹ On p. 10 of this paper Miss Ling writes as follows:

The units we ordinarily use for the construction of our thoughts are "sense groups".²² Each sense group must contain at least one "point of stress". When we speak it is in one sense group after another, and these are all fitted together to form the sentences of speech. Those who have investigated the units of prosody have found that each race has its own favourite rhythms. In Chinese prosody the great majority of segments have either three or four beats. One individual segment may contain more or less syllables; if there are many syllables, they will be all squashed up together, if there are fewer, then there will be some which are more drawn out. It appears that our "nervous energy" functions by rise and fall, influenced by our own pulse and breathing. This is why when we speak we have no need to pay special attention to prosody: the more natural our speech, the more rhythmical. This rhythm is often regular. That is to say that rhythm only comes about when "time intervals" of even length repeat themselves, gaining strength by reiteration: in other words, without the accumulation of a certain number of equal time intervals there can be no rhythm. Thus in the great majority of verse lines, the number of time intervals is found to be regular . . . In the verse line, the time interval is called the "foot" or "metre"; within one poem, the general rule is to use a single kind of foot throughout and it is rare to find a poem using a variety of feet.

Miss Ling goes on to point out that the division into rhythmic feet may often cut across the sense group: this is especially noticeable, she says, in English verse. But it is clear, particularly from the examples of scansion which follow in her paper, that the principle of the sense group is of

²⁰ 凌叔華, 新詩的未來 *The Future of "New Verse"*, n.d., n.p. (privately printed in Malaya, 1959). I am most grateful to Miss Ling (Mrs. Ch'en Yuan) for her kindness in presenting me with a copy.

²¹ Several of Katherine Mansfield's own short stories were translated into Chinese by Hsü himself, the collection published by the Pei-hsin Book Co. Hsü idolized her, rejoiced in the opportunity he had to visit her in London in July 1922, and on her death six months later wrote a poem (mentioned above) and an essay *in memoriam*.

²² The words in quotes in my translation of this passage appear in English after their Chinese equivalents in the original.

paramount importance to her in her reading of Chinese verse. One would hesitate indeed to accept certain of her applications of this "sense-group scansion". Four lines from Pien Chih-lin 卞之琳²³ are scanned by her²⁴ as follows:

Guujenn-shanq yeou leangjoong shengin,
Two sounds are heard in the ancient city,
Iyanq- de jyiliau:
Equally desolate:
Bairtian sh suannminq-*luo*,
By day the fortune-teller's gong,
Yeh-lii sh bangtz.
At night the watchman's rattle.

古鎮上有兩種聲音，
一樣的寂寥：
白天是算命鑼，
夜裏是梆子。

It is hard to see how the particle could be stressed in l. 2 (or indeed how it would qualify as a "sense-group"); if it is not stressed then there is no justification for a third foot. Each of ll. 2-4 might more easily be read as containing two feet:

Iyanq-dē jyiliau:
Bairtian sh suannminq-*luo*,
Yeh-lii sh bangtz.

In general, however, one must concede that the method used by Miss Ling was the method of grouping syllables which came most naturally to certain poets working in modern Chinese. It was the method in accordance

²³ From his poem 古鎮的夢 *Dream of the Old City*.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 18. The author's scansion is conveyed by the grouping of characters in the manner indicated by my spacing of transcribed forms. She does not mark stress.

with which Wen I-to worked out his famous 死水²⁵ ("Dead Water") metre, which he advocated as a possible staple for the New Verse. The nine syllables of the "Dead Water" line are arranged, as Wen himself points out,²⁶ in four groups or feet, three of two syllables and one of three syllables. The danger of a jingling monotony is countered by shifting the position of the three-syllable foot through successive lines. Stanzas are of four lines, rhymed a-b-c-b. Thus, v.1-2 of 死水:

Jēhsh̄ igow̄ jyuewanq-dē̄ syshōei,
Here is a ditch of hopeless dead water,
Chīngfēnḡ chueibūchiī bāndēan̄ iluēn̄,
The breeze can raise no ripple on this surface,
Būrū duō rhēnḡ shiē̄ pōhtōrnḡ lanntiē,
Here's where you dump old brass and rusty iron,
Shoangshīnq̄ pō̄ niidē̄ shēnqtsaȳ tsārngēnḡ.
Or cheerfully waste your left-over food.
Yēeshēū tōrng-dē̄ yaw̄ liuhchērnḡ fēeitsueȳ,
But scraps of brass may hue to turquoise,
Tiēeguān-shānq̄ shiōwchū̄ jūibān̄ taurhūā,
Peach-blossoms flower from rusting cans,
Tzaȳ ranq̄ younih̄ jȳ itsērnḡ luoyiī,
The greasy scum weave a texture of gauze
Mēijeun̄ gēeī tā̄ jēngchū̄ shiē̄ yunshyā.
And a tinted haze steam up from the germs.

²⁵ 死水, first published April 15th, 1926, was the title poem of a collection published in 1928. Wen I-to was not in fact the first to use this line: one precedent at least is to be found in a poem by Jao Meng-k'an 饒孟侃 (another member of the later New Moon Group) dated November 12th, 1925 (in 中國新文學大系, poetry volume, p. 345). This poem, 家鄉 *Home*, consists of ten rhyming couplets of which the first and last use an 8-syllable line. The remaining couplets use the *Dead Water* line, e.g.

Suannminq-dē̄ luol̄ chiauguoh̄ dawchaanḡ
Dyishēnḡ iouyanḡ tzaȳ shoēinioū bey-shānq̄

算命的鑼兒敲過稻場
笛聲悠揚在水牛背上

The gong of the fortune-teller sounds across the paddy-field,
The flute's song floats across the backs of water-buffalo.

²⁶ In an article 詩的格律 *Form in Verse*, originally published in the 農報 Supplement, May 13th, 1926; reprinted in 聞一多全集, Shanghai: K'ai-ming Book Co., 1948, T vol. 3, pp. 245-53.

這是一溝絕望的死水，
清風吹不起半點漪淪，
不如多扔些破銅爛鐵，
爽性潑你的膿菜殘羹。

也許銅的要綠成翡翠，
鐵罐上銹出幾瓣桃花；
再讓油膩織一層羅綺，
黴菌給他蒸出些雲霞。

My scansion of the above two stanzas is a "sense-group" scansion of the kind advocated by Miss Ling Shu-hua and actually practised by Wen I-to himself on 死水. It is to be noted that in this instance the grouping of syllables would not be so very different if one were to apply a formal trochaic scansion: that is to say, only a few of the feet distinguished above would be unacceptable as trochees; and these few would be found among the trisyllabic feet, where stress is often on the medial syllable, e.g., *duo rheng shie, tieeguann-shanq*. In direct contrast, Hsü Chih-mo's metre in 秋蟲 is so strongly "English" in type that a sense-group scansion would show a very different and much less satisfactory pattern. To take only a few individual lines, sense-group scansion would postulate the following:

(1. 1): Chiouchong, nii wey sherme lai? Renjian

(1. 2): Tzao bush jiow shyrho-de chingshyan.

(1. 6): Ta jannle bairtian, yow bahj menq.

—whilst 1. 3 would show as quite exceptional in having only three feet:

Jeh chingsao, jeh bairluh yeesh dai.

Thus Hsü's metre in 秋蟲, if analysed by the kind of scansion employed by Miss Ling Shu-hua, would seem irregular and clumsy; if recognized as essentially iambic in nature, that is to say "English" in provenance, it will be seen as not only regular but singularly skilful.

Without doubt, Wen I-to had ample grounds for the "Dead Water" pattern. The use of rhyme tightens the organization of his rich material: without it, the stanza would lose its individual impact. The use of lines of uniform length accords with his insistence on the visual beauty of poetry written in the Chinese script. The mathematical distribution of syllables within the line gives his poem that "beauty of architecture" which again as a theorist he demanded in verse as a complement to the "beauty of music" and the "beauty of painting"²⁷; and all these features combine to point up the measured quality of his thinking in this bitter, sombre poem.

The nature of modern Chinese prosody gave Wen linguistic justification for the "Dead Water" line. The lexical staple of modern Chinese is the disyllabic compound, and to include three disyllabic feet in the line was only to recognize this fact. The remaining foot could then accommodate three syllables in any combination: disyllabic compound plus monosyllabic pronoun or adverb; disyllabic verb plus verb particle; disyllable plus the particle 的; and so on.

Unfortunately modern Chinese, whether we extol its rich resources or deplore its untidy and inconsiderate lack of grammatical system, has too many loose monosyllables to lie happily on this particular Procrustean bed. Wen I-to filled his pattern with semantic words, nouns above all, and ended with a texture so rich that it rapidly cloys. Despite the closeness of his literary convictions to those of Wen I-to, Hsü Chih-mo never used the "Dead Water" line as a staple. In all his verse there is a lightness, a spring which could not survive beneath the heavy tread of the trochee (which was what, in practice, Wen had tended to use). Our examination of 秋蟲 has shown that even when Hsü employed the nine syllables recommended by Wen I-to as a practicable staple length for the New Verse line, he reorganized them into an iambic pattern influenced by his English experience.

In the English-type metre, as applied in Chinese, syllables are to be counted either as stressed or unstressed. The foot may then have more than one unstressed syllable, but not more than one stressed syllable, which is placed *either initially or finally* in the foot. In contrast, in the "Chinese-type" metre as evidenced by 死水 or by the poem of Hsü Chih-mo's which we are to examine next, syllables may be stressed, or unstressed, or *half-stressed*. This last category takes care, in effect, of all those syllables which in the English-type metre count as "unstressed", *except for the particles* (plus 是 and the "localizers"). These particles then are the only truly unstressed syllables. One or more particles, being unstressed, may be added to a foot already containing a stressed syllable plus a half-stressed syllable; thus, *tieeguann-shanq* counts as one foot, where *guann* is stressed, *tie* half-stressed and the "localizer" *shanq* is unstressed. A more extreme

²⁷ *Loc. cit.*

example would be the last foot of the first line of the passage from 愛的靈感 quoted below: *wanqjiannle-de*. Moreover, as already observed in 死水, the syllable receiving full stress may be found *medially* in the foot as well as initially or finally.

It is to be noted that such a pattern permits of a much freer use of particles than does the English-type iambic metre, where the general rule allows the inclusion of only one syllable in the foot in addition to the stressed syllable. If this one syllable is a particle, then the stressed syllable must perforce be a monosyllabic word. The latter being less frequent than the disyllable in modern Chinese, it follows that disyllables will tend to predominate and particles to drop out of the English-type metre.

The chief characteristics, then, of the Chinese-type metre constructed by Hsü Chih-mo and used by him in 愛的靈感 and other poems, are the introduction of half-stress in addition to full stress and absence of stress; the placing of the fully-stressed syllable in any position in the foot; and the freer use of particles.

In 愛的靈感 ("Love's Inspiration"),²⁸ Hsü again uses the nine-syllable length of line, but in a manner which demands scansion in accordance with the principles outlined above. I believe this poem shows Hsü Chih-mo at his nearest to the achievement of a purely Chinese metre which would so exploit modern Chinese prosody as to make possible any effect the poet desired.²⁹

"Love's Inspiration" is Hsü's longest poem and one of his last. It is a monologue reminiscent (in conception only) of Browning,³⁰ and some four hundred lines in length. In this poem Hsü makes his most complete statement of his faith in the power of love to ennoble human life. The statement is made through the lips of a dying girl. Fallen in love at first meeting, for long she feels her lover to be unattainably remote, and keeps her hopeless love a close secret. Driven by its power she leaves her family to spend herself in the work of relief in a stricken countryside. There she grows to maturity of soul through imaginative understanding of Nature, and grows also to accept the call of service to her fellow men. After three years of privations she contracts a fever, and is sought out and taken home by her

²⁸ Dated December 25th (1930). First published in the *New Moon Monthly*, IV, 1 (issue commemorating Hsü's recent death); collected in *Cloudwandering*, 1932.

²⁹ Of course Hsü throughout his poetic career was experimenting with a wide variety of short lyric forms which owe little metrical debt to English or any other foreign poetry. 決斷 *Decision (Florence)* would be an example typical of scores. Present space does not permit the examination of such patterns; they may be understood, however, to have contributed to the rhythmic sense which finally controlled *Love's Inspiration*.

³⁰ Book VII, "Pompilia", of *The Ring and the Book* consists similarly of a death-bed confession. Browning was another of Hsü's heroes: cf. his introduction (*New Moon Monthly*, I, 1) to Wen I-to's translations of the love sonnets of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

brother. Recovered somewhat, but still too weak to resist the pressure of her family, she submits to a conventional marriage, and gives birth to a child, who dies. Still she keeps secret her great love, but at last, in a return of delirium, she inadvertently discloses it. The man she has loved through these years is summoned and holds her now as she makes her confession.

Several distinct elements interweave to form the texture of this poem:

(i) although all but one line of the poem is from the girl's own lips, a set of "stage-directions", so to speak, is provided by her asides to the man in whose arms she is dying. In the most matter-of-fact manner, (often used for contrast with passages of intense emotion) she asks for water, and enjoins him to keep silent, to listen, for time is short;

(ii) the narrative element is handled with great skill. The poet is of course under perpetual danger of bathos in the transition from high flight of fancy to statement of mundane fact. His solution is not to contrast these two elements (contrast is already provided by the "stage directions" just mentioned); but to retain unity of tone by the use of euphemism, e.g.

I became

A bride, I became a mother, though Heaven
Did not permit this flesh of my flesh to endure.

我做了
新娘, 我還做了娘, 雖則
天不許我的骨血存留。

The risk of monotony from this sustained elevation of tone is countered by a skilful handling of structure, so as to introduce a definite element of suspense. From the opening line:

No one will mind now, just sit down . . .

不碍事了, 你先坐着罷

—from here on, the reader contracts a simple narrative curiosity, which Hsü exploits like a practised story-teller;

(iii) meditations on the love of Nature, and the nature of love;

(iv) ecstatic flights of fancy, marked by the use of a cosmic imagery.

Hsü remains faithful to the nine-syllable line, which gives visual order to his poem and tightens its organization. But he now rejects both rhyme and iambs, and uses his line with the greatest flexibility:

(i) the distribution of the nine syllables between the four feet of the line gives the individual foot anything from one to four syllables;

(ii) caesura may be used not at all, or after the fourth syllable, or after the fifth;

(iii) sometimes whole long passages are constructed of dependent lines, giving a more loose, prosaic texture;

(iv) in contrast, at climactic points there may be the use of "hard" or "soft" lines (see below), or the use of deliberate tone-patterning for imitative effects of imagery.

It is possible to define a standard line, a line whose rhythmic movement dominates the whole poem.³¹ This movement is as follows:

Tā PŌM ǐi tā PŌM (caesura) PŌM ǐi tā PŌM

or, the caesura advanced,

Tā PŌM ǐi PŌM (caesura) tā PŌM ǐi tā PŌM.

Examples would be ll. 23 and 21 respectively of the long passage quoted below.

With this type of line we might compare the least organized, most prosaic type of line, in a "framework" passage, an "aside":

Duoshieh nii búshyr-dé baa tyanshoei

Thank you for giving me, from time to time,

Jinnruenn woodé ianhour, yaw buran

Water to moisten my throat; without this

Woo idinq tzaō jiaw choanshyi jyhsyy.

I should by this time have choked to death.

多謝你不時的把甜水
漫潤我的咽喉，要不然
我一定早叫喘息塞死。

³¹ This definition of the "standard" line is based on more than mere general impression. It can be supported with statistical evidence from a stress count, however repulsive such a purely mechanical process might appear to the lover of poetry. Syllables are given numerical values to represent degree of stress: 1 for absence of stress, 2 for half-stress, 3 for full-stress. When all the lines of a passage of some length have been thus evaluated, simple addition reveals which syllable-positions have accumulated most stress units and which have accumulated the smallest total. Thus, in one particular passage of 21 lines, the fifth and ninth syllable positions had scores of 48 each (maximum possible 63), whilst the third and seventh positions had 33 and 34 respectively (minimum possible 21). These then were the points of greatest and slightest stress respectively in the overall pattern, as indicated in the construct

Tā PŌM ǐi tā PŌM PŌM ǐi tā PŌM
(3) (5) (7) (9)

(the first of the two patterns I propose).

The type of the "hard" line is used in images conveying strength, as in the following line expressing the gusty force of the wind:

Tā herng lianq guoh hae, tzuoh isheng hoong.
It scourges the sea with a mighty roar.

他橫掠過海，作一聲吼。

Against the regular (near-standard) beat, absence of unstressed syllables, final stressed monosyllable and use of consonantal finals of this line, we can set the following series of "soft" iambic lines, carrying a protracted image of the faintness of memory in the after-life (pre-figuring death, the girl describes herself as floating, cloud-like, through space—will she have any memory of the man she loves?):

Jiow yeou yee buguoh sh sheau = guang-lii
If there is anything of you, it's a thread

Ifah- dé chingshan, ileu yousy,
Of hills in the dawn, a wisp of gossamer,

Iyih ueimiaw- dé yunn; shuo jyh duo
The thinnest shade of haze: at most

Yee buguoh ru tsyy; nii tzay yaw duo
That is all there is: if you must have more

Woo nah duoo yun yee buneng cherngtzay.
That is something my cloud cannot carry.

就有也不過是晚光裏
一髮的青山一縷遊絲，
一翳微妙的暈；說至多
也不過如此；你再要多，
我那朵雲也不能承載。

Such "hard" or "soft" lines are not so noticeable in the longer passage quoted below, nor is there an example here of the patterning of tones for imitative effect. We must go elsewhere in the poem for this description of the sway of falling leaves:³²

Banntsarn- de horngyeh piauyau daw dih
Half-faded red leaves sway down to the ground.

半殘的紅葉飄搖到地。

But bearing in mind such possibilities of modulation of the nine-syllable line, we may now follow Hsü's metrical progress through the following passage (it should be explained that the passage itself occupies a climactic stage of the poem, and is correspondingly carefully worked both metrically and in the arresting nature of its imagery. Physically exhausted by her toil—inspired by love—in the service of human suffering, the girl must now face death. But such is the power of love, which taught her to understand life, that now it enables her to contemplate death):

Syy, woosh tzaoyii wanqjiannle-dě.
Nahtian ay-dě jye daashanq woode
Shintou woo jiow wanqjiann syy, nahgeh
Meeilih-dě yeongherng-dě shyhjiéh; syy, 4
Woo ganyuann-dě tourshianq, inwey ta
Sh guangming yeu tzyhyou-dě dannsheng.
Tsrngtsyy woo chingshyh woode chiutii,
Genq bu jihjiaw jinshyh- de fwurong, 8
Woo jyy chihwanq= j genq mianyan-dě
Shyrjian lai shourong woode hushi,
Tsannlann-dě shing tzuoh woode yeanjing,
Woode fahsy, nahban-dě jingyng, 12

³² In this instance alone I use no stress marks: the lines above the transcribed forms emphasize the direction of movement of the tones in the stressed syllables.

Sh fen= pi tzay tian-way- dě yunshya,
Bordah-dě feng tzay woode yeh-shiah
Shiong-chyan meiyeu-jian parnshyuan, botaur
Chornghii woode jinqhwei, meei igēh 16
Jidanq yeongchu guangyann- dě shernming!
Tzay yeou diannhuoo tzuoh woode sysheang,
Tian-bian chehchii sher-long-dě jiauwuu,
Leijenn woode shengin, moh-dih-lii 20
Jiawshiinglě chuen, jiawshiinglě shengminq.
Wu kee sylianq, a, wu kee biikuanq,
Jeh ay- dě linggaan, ay-dě lihlianq!

Death itself I long ago gazed on.
On that day when the bond of love
Was formed in my heart, that day I saw
The realm, splendid, eternal, of death.
Gladly would I surrender, for death
Is the birth of freedom and glory.
From that time forth I scorned my body,
Disdained the vanity of this world.
I looked only for a more enduring
Measure of time to receive my breath,
When the glittering stars should be my eyes,
My hair, a sheen at the sky's edge,
The disarray of the tinted clouds,
And my arms, my breast, borne on the wind's
Whirling, free against my brow,
And the waves dashing my legs, from each
Surging rising a mystic aura.
With these, the lightning for my thought,
Flashing its dragon-dance on the horizon,
My voice the thunder, suddenly breaking
To wake the spring, to wake new life.
Ah, beyond thought, beyond compare
Is the inspiration, the power of love!

死，我是早已望見了的。
 那天愛的結打上我的
 心頭，我就望見死，那個
 美麗的，永恆的世界；死，
 我甘願的投向，因為他
 是光明與自由的誕生。
 從此我輕視我的軀體，
 更不計較今世的浮榮，
 我只企望着更綿延的
 時間來收容我的呼吸，
 燦爛的星做我的眼睛，
 我的髮絲，那般的晶瑩，
 是紛披在天外的雲霞，
 博大的風在我的腋下
 胸前眉宇間盤旋，波濤
 沖洗我的脛踝，每一個
 激盪湧出光艷的神明！
 再有電火做我的思想，
 天邊掣起蛟龍的交舞，
 雷震我的聲音，蒼地裏
 叫醒了春，叫醒了生命。

無可思量，阿，無可比况，
 這愛的靈感，愛的力量！

In this passage the movement of thought is paralleled by the modulation of metre:

(i) ll. 1-6: introductory, death as transcendence, "the birth of freedom and glory", recognition of this simultaneous with the understanding of love and its power. *Pattern*: no line standard; of the first five lines, three are dependent. Only line 6, concluding the section, has a recognizable rhythmic pattern. This might be termed a "locking line", such as Hsü often uses to end a short poem or a section of a longer one: it is marked by a quality of rhythm almost to the degree of the jingle, and is something of a "hard" line.

(ii) ll. 7-8: realize the inadequacy of the world. *Pattern*: standard "pair", with shift of caesura.

(iii) ll. 9-10: desire transcendence (in death). *Pattern*: from here forward the effect is of gradual crescendo. This is the start, with l. 9 non-standard, dependent.

(iv) ll. 11-21: picture physical union with the cosmos-after death, in a series of images impressive for their combination of tactile with visual strength. *Pattern*: rather complicated, but overall effect of crescendo, starting with 11-14, standard 4/5; 15-16 speed movement by dependence, 17 is a hard line ending this run. 18-19 a pair, standard 4/5; 20 again dependent, leads on to locking line 21.

(v) ll. 22-23: extol power of love. *Pattern*: pair, standard 5/4, rhymed, both locking lines.

There seems little more that Hsü could have done to match the movement of his rhythm, its varying speed and tension and definiteness, to the movement of his thought, thus extending the meaning of the whole into that extra dimension which belongs to poetry alone.

Although the chief concern of the present study is with metrical problems rather than with such matters as sources of inspiration or of imagery, the fuller understanding of the passage quoted requires us to pursue for a moment some of its echoes of other experience. The point of departure we may take as the sixth stanza of the *Nightingale Ode*:

Darkling I listen, and for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain . . .

23a Correct first character in line 14 of the above text: 博

—ll. 9-10 of our passage are practically a translation of Keats' line,

To take into the air my quiet breath.

Of course Keats is not merely translated but transmuted: the basic concept of death as transcendence is still there, but the means of deliverance into death from "the weariness, the fever, and the fret" is for Hsü's dying girl not the ecstasy of bliss in the song of the nightingale, but that understanding and desire of the eternal to which love has opened her eyes.

It is interesting that this concept of death was vivid in Hsü's mind at least six years before it found expression here. It was in December 1924 that he completed his essay "On Keats' *Nightingale*".³³ This essay consists principally of a very sensitive and beautiful rendering of the *Ode* into Chinese prose. In a comment on the sixth stanza, Hsü writes:

With stanza six both the music of the poetry and the mode of feeling undergo a total change: what previously was the tremor of delight gives place now to the true cry of ecstasy. The poet is at the height of ecstasy, his soul has reached out to infinite release and freedom, and to prolong for ever this instant of supreme joy he longs to blend, now, his last breath quietly with the air. Such a perishing into abstraction would itself be the birth of eternal bliss; elsewhere in his poetry³⁴ Keats wrote:

I know this Being's lease,
My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads,
Yet could I on this very midnight cease,
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds;
Verse, Fame and Beauty are intense indeed,
But Death intenser—Death is Life's high Meed.

In Keats' view, "Life" has its limits, and so has the happiness we can know in life. "Verse, Fame, and Beauty" are the highest ideals known to us while we live, but none of these can compare with Death, for Death is limitless, a transcendence, an intimate union with the endless flow of the spirit, Death alone is "Life's high Meed".³⁵ Ideals in life are realized only in part, only relatively, but in death they are brought to full and absolute harmony. For in the utter freedom of the realm of death, all that was in discord is given accord, all that was incomplete is given completion.

Starting, then, from a line of the *Nightingale Ode*, Hsü goes on to pre-figure immortality in a brilliant flight of imagery. Where do these

³³ Published in the collection of Hsü's essays entitled 巴黎的鱗爪 *Paris Pot-pourri*, Shanghai: New Moon Book Co., 1927.

³⁴ These lines are from Keats' sonnet beginning "Why did I laugh tonight?", published in *Literary Remains*, 1848.

³⁵ Hsü mistranslates at this point, reading "mead" (honey wine) for "meed". No translator from Chinese, however, bearing in mind his own near misses and head-on crashes, will feel inclined to take him too harshly to task for this.

images come from? What promptings can we suggest? In my own mind the lines on first reading called up a vivid picture which was not difficult to identify: it was one of Blake's illustrations to the *Divina Commedia*. These hang in the Tate Gallery in London, and I have no doubt that Hsü would have seen and admired them—Blake was one of his many heroes.

Another mystic, the contemporary poet who elicited Hsü's most fervent admiration, was Rabindranath Tagore. There is no doubt that the particular kind of personification of Nature employed in the passage quoted, especially in such lines as 20-21, would be wholly consonant with Tagore's imagery.

But perhaps the true source of Hsü's vision lay nearer home than Bengal or the Tate Gallery:

When P'an Ku was on the point of death, his whole body underwent a great transformation: the breath expelled from his mouth turned into the winds and clouds, his voice became the crashing thunder, his left eye became the sun and his right eye the moon, his limbs and body changed into the four cardinal points and the five sacred mountains . . . the hairs of his head and beard became the stars in the sky . . .³⁶

The manner of Hsü's development as a poet and the nature of his thinking in the passage analysed above make it inevitable that certain phrases should carry a novel, even an unnatural ring to ears accustomed to modern Chinese in the form of everyday speech.

我只企望着更綿延的時
間來收容我的呼吸，

for instance, is hardly the sort of statement one would teach to beginners for use in a basic type of situation. Nor is it likely to fall pleasingly on the ear attuned to Tu Fu or Su Shih. But it does not help to dismiss it in consequence as "un-Chinese". Let us rather say that this is modern Chinese stretching its resources to assimilate new experience. Stretching but not straining: there is nothing here that conflicts with normal syntax, nor any word far-fetched in its application; the newness results from the idea expressed rather than the means of expression. And my concern throughout has been with metre. I have tried to show how Hsü, though very much at home in metres of the English type, nevertheless was not content to limit himself to these but experimented with a mode of metrical organization which took cognizance of half-stress and was more suited to the individual genius of modern Chinese prosody.

³⁶ 袁珂, 中國古代神話, revised edition, Peking, 1960, p. 38.

The manner of presentation of my material has no doubt suggested a steady chronological progression by Hsü from English to "Chinese-type" metres; such a progression could be established only by further research, but it is indicated in the most general terms by some of Hsü's contemporaries, as for instance by Yang Chen-sheng in the following passage:³⁷

I often think of the New Verse as passing through three stages. The first stage of course saw Hu Shih and his colleagues breaking down the cage of the old poetry and striving to create a miniature of the New Verse, though at this stage those composing verse in the vernacular were still unable to divest themselves of the feeling of the old poetry. It was merely a matter of external form, of colloquializing the vocabulary and striking off the fetters of tone-pattern; in content, there could not be said to be anything particularly new. With the advent of Hsü Chih-mo the writing of the New Verse became fully suffused with the influence of Western poetry. Not only did verse forms leave for ever the nest of the old poetry, but in subject-matter, vocabulary, structure and feeling alike this was no longer the old poetry but New Verse. For the sake of convenience we can describe this as stage two. What power they had, those poems of Hsü's early period, "The Baby", "White Flags", "Poison!"³⁸

And yet in these prose-poems one missed that major constituent of poetry—the beauty of music. It is possible to observe in the evolution of Hsü's verse the gradual Westernization of his metres. Yet the discrepancy between the monosyllabic and the polysyllabic, the prosodic divergences between Chinese and the Western languages, prohibit the total Westernization of the metres of the Chinese New Verse. Such metres can succeed only by seeking out the intrinsic music of the Chinese language itself. Thus stage three is the search for New Verse metres. This has been the course of effort from the appearance five years ago of the *Ch'en Pao* "Poetry Supplement" edited by Hsü Chih-mo and Wen I-to; right up to the Poetry Supplement now being published by the *New Moon*. Hsü's metres by the time of *Tiger, Tiger* were smoother than the metres of *Poems of Chih-mo*. There was a new ordering of form, though at the same time we hoped he was not going to lose the power of his early period.

Three decades later it is still possible for us to recognize in Hsü Chih-mo not merely a skilful versifier and a minor poet of huge contemporary popularity, but an important contributor to the development of modern Chinese poetry. I should like to conclude this study with the quotation of a

poem by Ai Ch'ing,³⁹ who prior to the Anti-Rightist campaign of 1958 enjoyed the highest repute of any poet living in China. Following the quotation, the simple juxtaposition of certain individual lines from Ai Ch'ing's poem with lines from the 愛的靈感 passage analysed above will show something of the metrical debt owed by Ai Ch'ing to Hsü Chih-mo's work of ten years previously:

Tzay nahtyau chweijyr = shiann-dē yowmiann
 Bannjiann lanleu-dē hei jyhfwu,
 Sanke torngneou kowyan = j jyrshiann
 Hoangj sanjaan dannhwang-dē youdeng
 — You yii kuay ganle.
 Tzytorng-dē miannseh yeou guujiow-dē guang,
 Uanj-dē shoou-dē jowlieh-dē shooujaang-dē
 Pyifu-lii chyuanfwuj shuailao-dē genshiu.
 Tā tzay jünwohj jinqliuann-dē shenghwo-dē woeiba
 — Hwajinnle ni-u-lii-dē chiou,
 Tā yaubaej guutorng-dē chyan-er,
 Bairmoh-lii jiannchu jowtzuu-dē hua,
 Ji-eh-dē yansh
 Raanshanqlē ta ichieh-dē yanyeu.

To the right of that perpendicular
 A black uniform, part of, in tatters,
 Three brass buttons in line with the vertical
 Glow with the pale yellow flame of lamps.
 — But the oil is almost dry.
 Copper-coloured cheeks with antique gleam,
 A few withered hairs coil against
 The wrinkled palms of unstraightening hands.
 He grips life's tail as it jerks away
 — An eel wriggling into the mud.
 He shakes his ancient coppery head,
 Curses flower from the foam of his spittle:
 And all his words
 Are dyed with the tint of hunger.

³⁷ 楊振聲，與志摩最後的一別 *My Last Parting from Chih-mo*, dated December 1931, in *New Moon Monthly*, IV, 1.

³⁸ Three Whitmanesque poems in *Poems of Chih-mo*.

³⁹ 艾青，老人 *Old Man*, date unknown but probably about 1940. Collected by Wen I-to in *現代詩鈔，聞一多全集*, vol. 4, 辛, pp. 537-8.

在那條垂直線的右面
 半件襪樓的黑制服，
 三顆銅鈕扣沿着直線
 晃着三盞淡黃的油燈
 ——油已快乾了。

紫銅的面色有古舊的光，
 彎着的手的皺裂的手掌的
 皮膚裏蜷伏着衰老的根鬚，
 他在緊握着痙攣的生活的尾巴
 ——滑進了泥污裏的鯁，
 他搖擺着古銅的前額，
 白沫裏濺出咒詛的花，
 飢餓的顏色
 染上了他一切的言語。

The following are exact metrical correspondences:

- (HCM): Shyrjian lai shourong woode hushi
 (AC): Tzay nahtyau chweijyr = shiann-de yowmiann
 (HCM): Jidanq yeongchu guangyann- de shernming
 (AC): Sanke torngneou kowyan = j jyrshiann
 (HCM): Woode fahsy nahban-de jingyng
 (AC): Hoangj sanjaan dannhwang-de yodeng;

others, though not exact, are very close:

- (HCM): Meeilih-de yeongherng-de shyhjieh; syy

- (AC): Bairmoh-lee jiannchu jowtzuu-de hua
 (HCM): Tsannlann-de shing tzuoh woode yeanjing
 (AC): Raanshanqle ta ichieh-de yanyeu.