THE POETRY OF HSÜ CHIH-MO

by

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Abstract

Hsu Chih-mo was an influential poet in China in 1920's but his works have not been thoroughly studied either in or outside China. In this thesis the main features of Hsu's poetry are examined and attention is given to the influence he received from others and the impact of family life and social and political environment on his thoughts and works. His prose writings which supply valuable sources to the understanding of his poetry are often drawn upon.

Chapter I (Background) provides some basic information about the poet's life and the Chinese social and political conditions in his days. Chapters II (Woman), III (Love), IV (Revolution) and V (Religion) may be regarded as what the poet has to say and Chapter VI (Diction) and VII (Imagery), the ways he says them. On account of the scope of this paper, prosody, which requires extensive studies in the case of Hsu, is not treated as a separate topic, and in the last chapter (Conclusion), a brief summation and appreciation is given with emphasis on the role played by Hsu as an ever sincere and zealous promoter and experimenter of modern Chinese poetry ("new" poetry).
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CHAPTER I

Background

Hsü Chih-mo was born in Hsia-shih (破石), Chekiang province, China on 15th January, 1897, the only son of a wealthy banker whose ambition was to make his son his successor in his banking business.\(^1\) Evidently, Hsü was brought up in the love and care of his parents.

Hsü was a clever and vivacious boy and could already write readable wen-yen\(^2\) essays in the last year of his elementary school education.\(^3\) He was not at all a hard-working student but was often engrossed in reading novels and always achieved good marks in composition during his secondary school years (1910-1915).\(^4\) Like most young students of his time, he had most probably read a great deal of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao before he wrote "On the Relation between Fiction and Society" which was published in the school magazine of the First Secondary School of Hangchow in 1913.\(^5\) But as to writing poetry, he had no inclination for it before 1919.\(^6\)

Hsü studied a few months in Shanghai University during 1915-16, and then enrolled in the preliminary course at Peiyang University in Autumn, 1916. Next year he became a first-year student at Peking University, majoring in politics. His ambition was to become a Chinese Alexander Hamilton in future so as to serve his country and the people.\(^7\) His patriotism was due to the influence of his teacher Liang Ch'i-ch'ao whom he greatly admired.\(^8\) However, the socio-political conditions in China which moulded the Chinese youth into patriots also shaped his thought;
for while Hsü was still in secondary school, China had already experienced an unprecedented revolution (1912) which after overthrowing the Ch'ing dynasty subsequently made China a divided nation dominated by a handful of warlords and tossed by conflicts and even civil war. The three years of Hsü's university life in China, i.e. 1915-18, saw Yuan Shih-k'ai's treacherous activities to the nation; Japan's encroachment on China embodied in the clashes of the warlords and politicians; and the miseries and suffering of the common people. All this was sufficient to make anybody's blood boil, not to say a passionate young man like Hsü. And therefore his long letter of farewell to his relatives and friends when he was on his way to America in the summer of 1918 expressed a blazing patriotism as well as his ambition.\(^9\) Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's influence was quite obvious. But there was scarcely any indication of an intention to pursue a literary career in it.

In the United States Hsü first entered Clark University to study banking and sociology; he obtained his M.A. at Columbia University in 1920. His life in America was that of a fervent patriot and soldier.\(^10\) The news of the May Fourth Movement from home greatly excited him\(^11\) and the fact that many young people in China found their voice in "new" poetry would not have escaped his attention. And probably Nietzsche had influenced him by then.\(^12\) The philosophy of the Superman must have stimulated him with a strong desire to "perfect and recreate" himself. The prospect of winning a Ph.D. degree at Columbia did not attract him. He felt that he had to strive for something high, and he decided to work under Russell whom he called the Voltaire of the 20th century.\(^13\)
It was clear that neither Nietzsche nor Russell made Hsü a poet. But the fact that they made him cross the Atlantic did usher him into the circumstances that radically changed his attitude toward life, his career, his family relationship—in short, the whole picture of his life.

The first thing England awarded him for his zeal was a blow, for Russell had been expelled from Cambridge before Hsü stepped on the British soil. Disappointed, he registered at the London School of Economics and Political Science to study under Harold Laski. He got acquainted with H.G. Wells, John Middleton Murry and some of the Bloomsbury people after coming to England. He thought he was benefited by their friendship and regretted the years he spent in America. He began to abhor politics. He felt bored at the School, and after staying there a few months, he transferred to Cambridge as a special student through the help of G.L. Dickinson.

Hsü's Cambridge days were important in his life; he said:

In my own case, my eyes were opened by Cambridge. My desire to learn was stimulated by Cambridge. The consciousness of my own being was nourished by Cambridge.

In Cambridge, being a special student, Hsü did not have any examinations to worry about, and just went to whatever lectures he liked and read whatever books he preferred. He was deeply impressed by the atmosphere and scenery of Cambridge, especially the River Cam.

Before Hsü registered at Cambridge he already struck up an acquaintance with Lin Ch'ang-min and his daughter Lin Hui-yin in London, and in March, 1922 he divorced his first wife Chang Yu-i. The reason for the divorce, according to Hsü
himself, was that there was no love existing between him and her, and the absence of love must have been due to their temperamental difference; apart from this there could not be other reasons since Chang Yu-i was sufficiently good-looking, well-educated, intelligent, virtuous and of a prominent family. Hsü's sudden change of attitude toward marriage occurred in 1921 when he and Lin Hui-yin were in England. It is noteworthy that by that time, Hsü and Chang Yu-i had been husband and wife for six years and had already had two sons; temperamental difference could not have suddenly become so vexing and acute that divorce was the only solution unless the man had fallen in love with someone else who was superior to his wife; and the young, pretty and talented Lin Hui-yin was the only person that could have been the cause of all that. It may be argued that Hsü's divorcing his wife was prompted by his intellectual development in England which urged him to seek freedom and emancipation of his soul by breaking a marriage that had only been arranged between two families but had not been sealed in love. However, no English writer, philosopher, or Cambridge lectures would endorse this. Further, Hsü admired Lin Hui-yin's father, and the fact that he wrote a great deal to and for Lin Hui-yin who resolutely refused to let other people see or publish any of it either before or after the poet's death also points to their possible England romance which seems to be the main cause of his plunging into poetry. Hsü's reminiscent words written in 1931 are significant:

A ten full years ago I came across a strange wind, or was shone on by some strange moonlight, and since then my thought has turned to the expression of words in lines. A portion of profound melancholy finally
over-powered me. This melancholy, I believe, even gradually permeated and transformed my temperament.  

But the England romance somehow did not develop although Hsü and Lin even after returning to China were sometimes still together. Lin Hui-yin married the eldest son of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao in 1928.

It seems that Hsü was first attracted to poetry, or literature in general, in 1919, but did not come to the actual writing of it until 1921. He wrote about the first period of his career as a poet thus:

In the first half year of my writing poetry, my life was shaken by a great power, and all my ideas, half-mature or immature, were hurriedly transformed into verse. At that time I followed nothing, and cared for nothing. Whatever burdens I had in my heart were vented indiscriminately through my hand. It was like saving a life, and no consideration was given to quality. I wrote a great deal during a short period, but almost all of it was unpublishable.

None of his poems written in that period seems to have been preserved.

In July, 1922, three months before Hsü left England for home, he paid a visit to Katherine Mansfield and the twenty-minute talk with her engraved a permanent mark on his memory. His loathing of the life of a politician-economist and passion for literature were fixed and not to be changed.

Returning to China, Hsü found many educated people engaged in polemics over such topics as religion, revolution, social and political reforms, etc. He did not like controversies though he was not entirely indifferent towards them. He began to contribute poems and essays to newspapers and magazines and being financially secure, he was not at all anxious to take up a job,
and just spent much of his time in visiting scenic spots along the east coast of China.

In 1924 Hsu taught English at Peking University. When Tagore came to China, he acted as his interpreter. He admired Tagore for his character and his humanistic messages to the world. His personal friendship with Tagore was always cordial. In the same year Hsu met Lu Hsiao-man and both fell in love. Their love was growing rapidly and as Lu Hsiao-man was the wife of Wang Keng, a high government military officer, their romance became a scandal in Peking. Pressure from all sides became so heavy and formidable that Hsu had to leave China in March the next year.

Hsu first went to Soviet Russia and was horrified and disgusted. In England he paid a visit to Thomas Hardy and was delighted to have met and talked with the English poet and novelist. He also spent some time in France and Italy where he expected but was too late to meet Tagore. In this "emotional tour" as he called it, he also visited the graves of many famous men of letters wherever he went. He rushed back to China in July after hearing Lu Hsiao-man's illness.

A few months of mental agony elapsed before Lu Hsiao-man succeeded in divorcing her husband. However, owing to financial difficulty and objection from his own family, Hsu could not marry his lady-love until October, 1926.

Hsu had been continually writing poems and essays since 1923; in October, 1925 he assumed the editorship of the Literary Supplement of Peking Morning News. He and Wen I-to and other young poets started the Poetry Supplement in the same paper next year, advocating pai-hua regulated verse. Their "movement"
became quite influential though they met with opposition from critics and poets who favoured free verse.

China in the twenties was first writhing in civil war and even after the warlords were crushed and a sort of unity was achieved in 1928, conflicts among the politicians in and outside Kuomintang and clashes between Kuomintang and the Communists never ceased. This together with the military and economic invasion of Japan and other Western nations was sapping away the strength of China, and her people were suffering. All this in some ways affected Hsü's life and writings. In 1927, when the safety of Peking was threatened on account of civil war, Hsü and his wife, like many other people, went down to Shanghai. There he opened a bookstore and a dress company with the co-operation of some friends.

The leftist movement in Chinese literary circles was growing stronger and stronger in the twenties. The leftist writers, not necessarily Communists, advocated Marxism and revolution, and they were always ready to attack others who did not share their political views; therefore when Hsü Chih-mo and his friends like Hu Shih, Wen I-to, Liang Shih-ch'iu, etc. started their Crescent Monthly (新月刊) in March, 1928 in Shanghai, writers from the leftist camp at once opened fire. But Hsü himself, though one of the five editors and in fact more responsible than others, was not seriously involved in the subsequent polemics about literature, literary criticism, revolution, etc. The Crescent Monthly in a way checked the development of proletarian literature in China though its "success" was limited.

During 1929-1930 Hsü was often hurrying between Shanghai and Nanking because he, apparently trying to increase his income
for supplying the need of the extravagant Lu Hsiao-man, taught in two universities in these two different places and also served as editor at Chung-hua Book Co., Shanghai. The next year, however, saw him coming and going between Peking and Shanghai because he taught at Peking University but Lu Hsiao-man enjoyed her life in Shanghai though Peking was already quite safe after the defeat of the warlords in 1928.

On 19th November, 1931, Hst died in an air crash in Shangtung province when he was flying back to Peking from the south, at the age of 35. As he was a well-known poet, and always a sincere, selfless and friendly person, his death was mourned by many people in China. His published poetical works include Chih-mo's Poems (1925), A Night in Florence (1927), The Tiger (1931) and Roaming in the Clouds (1932, posthumously).
CHAPTER II

Woman

Of all the women recorded in Hsu Chih-mo's poetry, Lu Hsiao-man stands out most prominent. There are over forty poems directly or indirectly associated with her, that is, about one third of the corpus of the poet's works. This is quite understandable since the poet's love affair with her was the greatest event in the life of them both. All their sorrow and happiness, pain and pleasure, and even their relations with their families, friends, and society at large, stemmed from this very key event. The following are selections representing the beginning and development of their love affair which involves a myriad phases of hopes and fears, courage and despair, sorrow and longing, in short, mental agony:

What is love after all?
I was unborn when he made his first call.
The sun had shone on me o'er twenty years,
I, a child, did not know any sorrow's spheres.
But, one day - the day I loved and yearned,
My heart was restless and concerned.
That's the first time I found myself deceived.
Touch my chest; it's wounded and some people so believed.
What is love after all?
I was unborn when he made his first call.

So I changed - an unbridled wild horse,
Racing through a desert wilderness - Life's course.

(From: What Is Love after All)
That day the first time I caught sight of you,
You were shining like a star,
I was merely one among the multitude, a grain of sand.
But with you in my view,
I felt the grip of a thrilling tremor
Which assaulted ev'ry fibre of my body.
I was like a flower in a gale,
My heart swung in a swoon,
My face was in flames.
I felt happiness.
A flash divine swept before my eyes;
I felt sad, I wished to cry.
Confusion subjected my soul,
But I didn't understand then,
Didn't know that's fallen in love!

(From: *The Inspiration of Love*, pp. 542-543).

I'm waiting for you.
I'm gazing at the outdoor twilight
As if I'm looking at my future.
My throbbing heart is deaf'ning my ears.
Why don't you come?
Hope blooms at ev'ry second,
I'm expecting your foot-steps,
Your laughing words, your face,
Your silky hair,
Expecting ev'ry part of you.
Hope dies at ev'ry second.
Where are you?
I want you and my heart aches.

(From: *I'm Waiting for You*, \(^2\) pp. 359-360)

But I cannot change a fixed rudder,
And no wind can e'er make me hesitate.
I can't turn back, as goaded forward now by Fate.
I know I may be heading to
The path of ruin;
Yet for you, for you,
I'm willing to face all ups and downs;
It is not merely passion's words,
My remaining reason also thus confirms.

(From: *I'm Waiting for You*, pp. 362-363)

I've come to the bank of the Yangtze River to buy a
bunch of lotus seeds.

I peel their skin, layer by layer;
Watching the gulls that fly in front of me,
I've sad tears in my eyes.
I think of you; I think of you, O my dear!

I taste the lotus seeds, to revive the sweet experience:

The screens unrolled before the steps
Protect the happy love of our two hearts;
Again I hear your pledge:

"I am forever yours - body and soul." \(^3\)
I taste the heart of a seed; more acrid is my heart.
   All night long I cannot rest,
   The victim of dark nightmares.
   Who knows my agony?
You've brought me all this, my love. How can I live such a life?

But I cannot blame you as unfaithful or think you changeable.

I am all tenderness.
You are mine and I still
Clasp you closely, closely -
And unless the sky collapses - but who can imagine such a day?

(I've Come to the Bank of the Yangtze River to Buy a Bunch of Lotus Seeds)

Alas, you say let us live on and wait, wait for that day! Would there be such a day? If you stay, I'll have faith; But you'll leave at dawn.
Can you really bear to leave me and go?
But I cannot keep you. That's fate.
This flower, without sunshine or dew,
Will parch e'en though it does not die; how pitiable!
You can't forget me, my love.
I have no life if not in you.
Yes, I obey your words; I'll wait.
Even if I have to wait till iron trees flower,⁴
I will be patient.

(From: *A Night in Florence*, pp. 194-195)

The lovers were thus "tortured" for two years before Hsiao-man eventually and successfully divorced her husband, ended her "poverty" of being rich, won her "liberty", and married the poet. Her exquisite beauty, universally acknowledged and envied in her days, and the consummation of the hard won love, find voice in the following:

Like her eyebrows the moon looks tonight,
The arch, the arch, how charming!
Like her love is the sky tonight,
The blue, the blue, how profound!

(From: *Love Thoughts in Two Places*)

These rocks are a pile of ungainly crudity,
These lilies are a group of beauty;
But when the moon delineates the flowers' shadows on the rocks,
A trace of fairness grows upon the ugly.

I am a lump of awkward mediocrity,
She is the matchless fairy in the world;
But when Love lodges her in my bosom,
E'en I am changed into a heav'nly hero.

(*A Heavenly Hero*)
She is asleep -
A reclining snowy lotus bloom in starlight.

She is now dreaming -
A curl of blue smoke rising from an incense-burner.

Behold, how beautiful!
The hues of Spring have moved on her fragrant body.
They are roses and y'heh-chi.
And narcissus in the morning sun, - the fresh and sweet beauty!

Lovely dimples
Reveal the joy of a maiden's dream,

Like a dewdrop,
Quiv'ring, mirrors morning in a lotus leaf.

(From: She Is Asleep)

The most precious is her infinite magic
Which elevates my spirit's waves to a height.
I love their silvery surges best,
The surf does carry musical silver bells.
Even the white foams, horse-tail like,
Are comparable to the polished gems.
A round moon,
Never waning!
Whenever I close my eyes,
With grace she skyward will ascend!

(From: Two Moons)
Last night,
And the night before last, too,
In a violent snow-storm,
Spring,
In Winter's dead body was reborn.
Don't you feel the softness underfoot,
And the warm air by your ears?
Green waves on the branches,
Ripples on ponds form endless tenderness
While within our limbs and breasts
There's a thrilling throb.

Peach blossoms already flower on your face;
I enjoy most keenly
Your beauty, swallow
Your unceasing laughter.
Don't you feel my arms
Demand your waist in eagerness,
Or my breath assail your body,
Like thousands of fireflies swarming to a blaze?

All these and many others,
In chorus with the birds' passionate warbling,
Hand in hand are praising
The rebirth of Spring.

(The Rebirth of Spring)
The moon: behind the gauze window curtain in the dark
I watch her struggling up from a jagged mountain peak -
A disc of light, dishevelled and dazed,
Like a virgin cherishing chastity,
In a fright, fighting to escape from the claws of Violence.

This reminds me of you, my love;
You once were suffering between cruel fate's sharp teeth,
But now, like the bright moon in the purple sky,
You've risen to the peak of bliss,
Showering your brilliance to light the undulating earth.

"Don't pinch me. Pain...."
You said, slightly frowning.
That "pain", a pearly half utterance
At the tip of the tongue rotates - rolling.

Even a flash of the eye can speak.
The twinkling causes ripples
In the fountain of secrets down the heart.

Dreams
Spreading
A gauze net.

"Where are you?"
"Let's die," you said.
Hsiao-man as object of the poet's passion is analogous to Fanny Brawne in Keats's *Verses to Fanny Brawne* which furnish interesting comparative reading to some of the translated pieces above. The two respective young women incited the same kind of intense feelings in the two respective poets. But their cases were by no means identical. Fanny was comparatively more passive than Hsiao-man and her love for Keats was of a tantalizing kind which had a gnawing effect. Hsiao-man responded wholeheartedly to Hsü and was hindered from marrying the poet only by her married status at first.

The poems connected with Lu Hsiao-man show some degree of morbidity but it is not so great as Keats's Fanny Brawne pieces. After all, Hsü was not a consumptive like Keats and although discouraged by circumstances, he was encouraged by Hsiao-man's response.

Further, since the subject matter of Keats's major poems looks back to the past and his female characters are mainly from the good old "realms of gold", Fanny's place in Keats's works is far less significant than Hsiao-man's in Hsü's poetry.

Lu Hsiao-man in Hsü's eyes was capable of accomplishing great things which would be beneficial to mankind. In fact it was the poet's aspiration that he and Hsiao-man should do significant work that ordinary people could not hope to perform, and their union, spiritual as well as physical, would be the first step of success. Lu Hsiao-man would not have been the poet's object of passion if the latter had not perceived the potentiality in her that could be developed and elevated to a high intellectual level. The poet's expectation was clear
enough in the last two lines of *Gazing at the Moon*. However, in this vital place Lu Hsiao-man failed Hsu. Their married life being soon darkened was a good proof.

As to love, though I have you, dear,
   And worry not about in the way of life
   The fear of isolation,
Yet Heaven knows I wish to climb up high.

In love, I desire a brilliant realization:
   A firefly by a grassy marsh
   Aspiring after the heav'nly spheres.
I want our love to reach the sky.

I want the cleansing power of a sacred fount
   To clean out the soul's inner cell
   And liberate the captive there;
Let him change into some gentle smoke, or a bluish lotus bloom.?

..................................

Know that it is not suicide
   But strike off the dross of our existence
   To own the essence of our life;
Give me courage, Oh, my only darling.

   (From:  *Don't Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face*)

Lu Hsiao-man simply could not "strike off the dross" in order to "own the essence"; actually she had no lofty thoughts or
any of the poet's philosophical tendency such as a "brilliant realization" of love. She was clever, no doubt; she learned and could talk English and French, she painted and wrote, but all this was merely a socialite's dabbling. Her energy went to frivolous pursuits and she, on the whole, was too used to her old life of "mediocrity, lowness, meticulousness, vulgarity" and "luxuries" to free herself from a social circle that enhanced anything but intellectual or spiritual advancement. She presented herself to the world as a pretty and clever young woman, but no more than that. The life she led frustrated the poet who had to work hard, writing and teaching, as a good husband, in order to earn enough for an extravagant wife. What caused him to produce the following must be "attributed" to Lu Hsiao-man.

Dreary, murky, crawling like a poisonous snake,
Life narrows into a corridor;
Once skidding in, you cannot but plod on,
Fumbling along the clammy drip of the chilly walls.

Struggling in the bowels of a monster,
No gleam of light is seen above,
The soul is oppressed in terror;
There is no hope for it but death.

(Life)
I don't know
In which direction the wind blows;
I'm dreaming,
In the sorrow of dreams my heart is breaking.

I don't know
In which direction the wind blows;
I'm dreaming,
Gloom is my dream's very light.

(From: I Don't Know in Which Direction the Wind Blows)

Among Hsü's contemporary poets none had a wife like Hsiao-man and none versified his love affair like Hsü. Kuo Mo-jo might be taken as an exception and for comparison, but his girl friend, though important as object of young passion in Kuo's collection P'ing (The Vase), does not occupy a really significant position in the corpus of the poet's works, which in the main do not flaunt love affairs as a message. Nonetheless, both poets were frustrated by women. Hsü's case was more serious in that it was an ideal ruthlessly shattered, an aspired paradise which eventually turned out to be a mirage that might have withered the soul and destroyed the body of the lofty-minded and single-handed pilgrim who had wrestled all his way in a desert with evil fate. Hsiao-man was not to be divorced like Chang Yu-i. She was the poet's personal choice and trophy of a glorious war of soul emancipation and discarding it would only mean the victor's shame and disgrace. It would be a task far beyond human capacity. What was done could not be undone. Acceptance proved to be the only way; hence:
Fragments of a dream float before my eyes,
Waving, like the tree-top in the morning breeze.
There is nothing special
Which demands a yes or no,
Yet I must keep myself awake
And repel the enticing dreamland;
For this is my only chance:
To come to myself to accept,
To accept penalty. If not, what is it?
Life in these days has sealed my mouth!

(Acceptance of Penalty)

A general feature of the women depicted by Hsu is their misery. All of them are sufferers, and not a few die young. Katherine Mansfield is a good example. She came to his notice when the poet was in England. Her death in the next year filled him with great sorrow and afterward he wrote the following elegy:

Last night I dreamed of ent'ring a deep dark gorge,
Hearing cuckoos weeping blood amidst lily flowers.
Last night I dreamed of going up a peak,
Seeing a bright tear drop from heaven.

Although I saw you only once,
Yet the twenty minutes are immortal;
But who can believe your celestial beauty and manner,
Have like morning dew departed from the world forever?
How can my sorrow like lightning flash
To move your soul remote in heaven?
I shed tears to the wind my messenger,
Asking when the gate of life and death can e'er
be broken.

(From: In Memory of Katherine Mansfield)

The other poems dealing with women in general also present a dismal picture and reveal a strong influence of Hardy. From his observation, the poet certainly thought that women, irrespective of age, being "weaker vessels", were naturally victims in the hands of fate. The following few are examples:

What nameless pain, or new sorrow,
What oppression, what grievance; what's scorching
Your body, woman, that you should cover your face
In this dark night by an unknown road-side,
Letting the passers-by stop and wonder at you,
Yet keeping quiet, you huddle up in the dark?
And the stirring heap that squats beside you,
Two little black eyes gleaming with a strange light
Like a cloudy dark sky's rare little stars; who's she?
Suspicion and fear are on her face, poor lamb.
How can she know life's woe, or the night's darkness,
How can she ever apprehend the apathy
Of fate and its austerity?
Coming and going, the passers-by and their amazement,
A transient sympathy may be,
But they can hardly stay for you and yours.
What keep you company are the black night's gloom
And the fireflies in the dark that fly to you
For illumining the little black eyes' starry twinkle.

(By An Unknown Road-side)

From Sung-Chiang's Shih-hu-t'ang,
A couple of old women came on board;
Thanks to, I guess, P'u-tu mountain's creeping rattan,
That to the old bent two some shaky support afforded.

Blue wadded coats, black quilted jackets,
Half bald, a few remaining teeth:
Shoulder to shoulder they sat before a sunny window,
Like a pair of old timid swallows in cold days they murmured to themselves.

Trembling and trembling were their dried-up hands
Shaking and shaking were their lined chins;
They, sitting close, their aged eyes had woeful tears.
These two: are they relatives, sisters-in-law or sisters?
O pity! Poverty is not lowliness;
Weak old age has boundless dignity.
What grief? Old ladies, why so sad?
Why do you on happy New Year's Day desert your family?

(From: A Queer World)

Shortly afterwards I fell ill.
The poison of storms spread in ev'ry fibre
Causing such a fever with delirium that my brother
Brought me home. I was unconscious.
It was a wonder that I did not die that time.
Perhaps there was still more suffering
That I must endure on the earth.
They urged me to marry. I couldn't refuse.

I became a bride, then a mother,
Though heaven didn't allow my child to survive.
These years I have been a puppet,
A lump of clay for others to mould.
Although sometimes I thought of you,
Yet such thought was like the yearning for
The gorgeous clouds of sunset in the western sky, or
a flower,
Not less, not more. And
Illness, again and again, gnawed at
My body. I'd already well prepared to die,
Nourishing a beautiful secret
Ready to deliver the light eternal
To boundless darkness.

(From: The Inspiration of Love, pp. 567-570)

Decadence, a pit, has a way in but no way out -
One falling in will find it bottomless.
Confound it! One after the other the fresh sins
Decorate and strip me of all resolutions.

Of course women get the immediate worst - yes, pitiable.
Retribution follows on sin's heels.
And she cannot blame her "eunuch" husband; ah damn it -
A packet of medicated powder brings great trouble all
over the body.

This is only a prelude; real curses follow.
Her family had a pair of white lotus blooms,
Trans僻ently fresh, that God forbade the wandering
bees to intrude,
But Fate did not approve the white jade's chastity.

......................

It isn't her fault. You cannot blame her.
I've told you all, and laid down all my burdens.
My only prayer is: to preserve your family;
She's innocent, let me say it again, my friend.

(From: Sin and Retribution)
The next piece looks almost joyous and gay; even the title bears the light of happiness. However, the key word is "poverty", and the deceptively joyful mood is only a Hardyan irony that is also part of Hsü's poetic equipment:

A huge heap of garbage lies at the entrance of the lane, Probably the refuse from the crimson lacquered doors. Not just ashes, there are some coal bits unburned; Not just bones, there may still be marrow stored in them, And perhaps some threads of meat between the joints. The others: shreds of rotten cloth, newspapers quite intact, A couple of matches, and some stumps of cigarettes.

This garbage heap is like a hill of gold, On the hill are crowds of gold-seekers, A team of dirty ragged cotton blue coats, One and two and countless towering hips and bended waists. There are little girls, women both middle-aged and old, A basket in one hand, a rough stick on the other. Waists deeply bent, no coughing, no murmuring, No wrangling, but seeking in the ashy pile, Shoulder to shoulder, head by head, picking, poking, and poking, picking.

Grandma's got a shred of cloth, fine stuff! Some are for small coals only, lots of them. Mummy, a girl cries, I've picked up a fresh piece of meat, Shall we boil it with bean-curd at home?
A team of rags, like a turning picture-lantern\(^{15}\)
Revolving here, there, and here again.
There are old and less old women, little girls,
And some dogs to join in the fun.

(A Little Sketch of Happy Poverty)

It is true that Hsü drew his female characters from reality. China in the twenties staged all kinds of human tragedies almost every day; even a blind man could hear and sense them if not see them. Indeed, if men were suffering at large, what better role could women expect? The world was, and still is, men's world, and "of course women get the immediate worst."

Hsü Chih-mo was brought up in love by his parents. His sympathy was part of his nature, well-known and well remembered by all his friends and acquaintances.\(^{16}\) His sense to the world's suffering folks might be rather dull before 1925, but after that he underwent a kind of spiritual revival and was not going "to dream with open eyes any longer."\(^{17}\) The suffering of the female sex struck him as most pitiful since, apart from the attraction of the opposite sex, he saw many qualities in them. Virtues like courage, sense of righteousness, faithfulness, endurance, gentleness, filial piety, patriotism, etc., to be discussed later, are all found in women, not in men, as Hsü's poetry shows. The men in his works can only serve as a contrast to the women since almost all of them are detestable. While "Frailty, thy name is woman" rings true in a few cases, to Hsü's men in his works we must utter something like "Ugliness, thy name is man!"
Like Hardy, Hsü did not censure those women thought to be "loose" by the conventional who are always only too eager to condemn. He said they were innocent and introduced them to us in such a way that we would refuse to disagree with the poet. All his women, from the beautiful Hsiao-man down to the plain common folks, often urge us to ponder on the social background that have made them as they are. A sensitive reader will not just enjoy the sweet, crystal passages attributed to Hsiao-man, let alone laughing at the rapture of the little girl who picks up a piece of meat in A Little Sketch of Happy Poverty; he will probably, when delving deeper, sympathize like the poet, not to sigh for what is already past, but to think of the present world, where many "ugly" people are still playing their dirty tricks in different fields and many innocent women are still made unchaste, unfaithful, destitute, to fall ill, to suffer and to die young.

Shelley did not think it justifiable for a man to love only one woman, since beauty and wisdom are not bestowed on a single female. This "revolutionary" idea was shared to some degree by Hsü and therefore there were other women, besides Hsiao-man, in his poetry who seemed to have titillated the poet's heart. Some of them were very obscure but some were clearly objects of the poet's Shelleyan platonism.

I don't remember Vienna,
If not because of you, Alice;
I can't think of Frankfort,
If not because of you, Dorothy.
Nice, Florence and Paris,
Are all insipid
Unless they have your beauty -
    Siouey, Matilda, Lemi,
So elegant, so graceful,
So lively, so slim;
You illuminate the gloomy darkness of my memory,
    Like stars in winter night,
    Like fireflies in summer eve.
I cannot but drink and fall,
I cannot but become intoxicated.

(To -)

Charming is her head's low gentle bow
    Like a lily shyly quivering in a cool breeze.
An utterance of a farewell, a farewell,
That comprises a sweet sadness -
    Sayonara!

(Sayonara)\textsuperscript{19}

From the women depicted in Hsu Chih-mo's poetry, it is not difficult to work out a picture of the poet's ideal beauty. Far from being an Amazon queen, she is a Lin Tai-yü type of girl with delicate features and limbs.\textsuperscript{20} She is very gentle, tends to be quiet and soft-speaking but not dull.\textsuperscript{21} In fact she can be a lively companion especially when she is out in open nature.\textsuperscript{22} Being full of the most intense and divine love, she is patient as Patience, brave like a lion and self-sacrificing
as Florence Nightingale, if she is required to be so.23 And last but very essential; she is intelligent and wise, an Athena.24 Hsiao-man answers many of these criteria, and that is why the poet made her his goal. Her "deficiencies", not unknown to Hsü, were considered to be remediable. She was not only to be "saved" and "liberated" but to be educated and elevated to a high spiritual and intellectual level, i.e., the level of ideal beauty. The outcome was a failure as noted before.

Hsü's idea of ideal beauty has its origin from Shelley and the traditional Chinese ping-t'üi mei (sickly beauty).25 Shelley's ideal beauty is often too spiritual to be real, for when he praises a woman, the latter becomes a goddess or semi-goddess. In Hsü's case, she is much less transcendental. The strongest expression used to describe beauty in Hsü's poetry, i.e. "celestial beauty and manner",26 is attributed to Katherine Mansfield. Indeed, of all the women appearing in Hsü's writings, both poetry and prose, Katherine Mansfield is undoubtedly the prototype of ideal beauty. Her illness and untimely death enhance all her characteristics in the eye of a romantic though it is also common that human beings find it more natural and easy to eulogize the dead than the living and tend especially to overlook the shortcomings of deceased friends and acquaintances. If Katherine Mansfield had been the Chinese poet's wife, I wonder whether he could have put up with her temper. Ideal beauty, if taken to be an external thing, presents no problem. Good-looking women are found in every race and every city and there must be one who can be termed as ideal. But if ideal beauty is regarded as something dealing with both external and internal qualities, then it will often frustrate rather than gratify.
CHAPTER III

Love

Love in literature is a wonderful word, and the fact that it is a mighty motive in human nature is undeniable. That being so, love in its various forms as a poetic theme is found in all languages of which Chinese is no exception. In addition to a great deal of love poetry in the many dynasties of the past, love verses abound in China right after the literary revolution (1917). Although many of them are sentimental and unsubstantial outbursts of feelings of the "groaning without being ill" type, there are at least some which have stood the test of time and are still read today. Hstü Chih-mo's works are among them.

Most critics agree that Hstü Chih-mo achieved most in his love poems. Indeed, love in Hstü's poetry is a prominent theme, for to the poet love is a vital and an extremely serious matter - it "concerns life and death and goes beyond life and death". If love is to be treated as a diamond, it certainly has many facets and sparkles charmingly in his works.

The poet proclaims love to be creator of all truth, goodness and beauty in the following:

As if on a lofty peak, I see in surprise
The surging splendour of truth, goodness and beauty
Shelter the world of progressing humanity
And bring to light the colourful fibres of life —
All are the labour of the god of love.

(From: Farewell, Cambridge, CW., Vol. VI, p. 33)
The poet also affirms that love, as light, illumines a man's way in life, and is immortal:

my heart is filled with thanks
For there is Love, the lamp of spirit,
That illumines my path.
And labour adds to me more energy
Which pushes myself forward and enables me
To bear with joy e'en heavier burden and more risks.
Are you surprised at my perseverance?
Inconceivable is Love's inspiration!

(From: The Inspiration of Love, pp. 556-557)

O pain; but it is short,
And it is passing.
Joy is everlasting,
Love, immortal.

(From: The Inspiration of Love, pp. 573)

Love is the unfailing inspiration and the greatest unaccountable motivating force, and the poet speaks eloquently that all the noble deeds in the world are the work of love:

Lightning to become my thought —
The flashing dance of snakes and dragons in the sky;
Thunder to become my voice that all of a sudden
Wakes up Spring, arousing Life.
Inconceivable, oh, incomparable,
This inspiration of Love; this power of Love.

(From: *The Inspiration of Love*, pp. 548-9)

I must be thankful to you
Because from you I have obtained
The sense of life,
And from the depth of the inner light
I'm led to a spiritual enlightenment
Which breeds some beams of wisdom
That brings about exhaustless moral valour.

(From: *The Inspiration of Love*, p. 563)

I heard that in ancient time
A filial daughter for saving her father
Dared to defy the king's authority. 3
It was the drive of pure love, I believe.
I also heard that in medieval France
A village girl called Joan, 4 one day,
Threw off her rustic dress,
Forsook her sheep,
Took up armour and arms,
Led a hundred thousand men
Yelling, "Kill the enemy!"
And she broke the cordon,
And she saved the whole country.
That, too, must have been due to Love.
For only Love can impart the valour;
Only Love can open a person's eyes
To descry all truth and values.
Only Love can kindle a person's spirit,
Make him crash forth for a goal
And forget that fire can burn and water can drown.
As light and heat sustain all life on earth,
The source of moral light and heat,
All brilliant and striking deeds,
Would not have happened but for Love.

(From: The Inspiration of Love, pp. 557-559)

In short, because of all its attributes, love is God, or re-versely, God is love, as the last stanza of Hsi's Eyes Have Thee has it:

By the roadside I saw a child,
Lively, handsome, and in rags.
He uttered, "Mum," eyes glistening with love;
God, his eyes have Thee!

No reader will fail to notice in Hsi's poetry the particular love between man and woman. In many cases, it is just the personal affair between the poet and Lu Hsi's man. This kind of love in the beginning is something like a mystery which inscrutably plagues and gnaws the heart as What Is Love after All and part of The Inspiration of Love manifest. However, when love has passed the initial stage, it often assumes a passionate
character. *A Night in Florence* was written in the first person of Lu Hsiao-man, but undoubtedly it expresses the poet's feelings. Some of its lines are really "blazing":

You feel my heart - how it's throbbing;
You feel my face - how it's burning.
Thanks to the dark night that veils all vision.
O darling, I can't breathe.
Don't kiss me now; I can't bear this fierce fire.
This time my soul is like a piece of iron
In a white-hot furnace; and with Love's big hammer
You're striking and striking. The sparks scatter ...
I faint. Hold me.
Darling, let me die here in this quiet garden,
Die in your bosom, with eyes closed.
How beautiful!

*I'm Waiting for You* and *The Rebirth of Spring* are similar in nature.

Hsu Kai-yu in his general survey of twentieth century Chinese poetry touches on the influence of D.G. Rossetti on Hsü though he does not enter into detail on account of the nature of his book. True enough, the intensely personal and passionate aspect of love in the Victorian poet's works finds echoes in Hsü's poems of which *The Rebirth of Spring*, *Don't Pinch Me; Pain*, *I'm Waiting for You* and *Love Thoughts in Two Places* are representative.
Robert Buchanan's reviling of Rossetti as a sensualist who made London "a great Sodom and Gomorrah waiting for doom" is analogous to the allegation of Communist critics such as Ch'ü Ch'iu-p'ai that the love expressed in Hsü's poetry is repulsively erotic. In all truth, passion does flare up in some of Hsü's poems, the few mentioned in the foregoing paragraph being examples, but they are not more "erotic" than some love poems by the ancient Greeks or by the English poets Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew and even the great Shakespeare, to name just a few. In view of the fact that even Robert Buchanan recanted concerning Rossetti and few people would brand the leader of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as an erotic poet nowadays, it would be unfair to libel Hsü as one. Further, whether a literary work is erotic or not ultimately has to do with social moral standards. Many Chinese writers can still remember how the "new" poet Wang Ching-chih was attacked in 1922 as being immoral after the poor young man published his Passage Her House (過伊家門前) which happened to have the following lines:

One step forward, one glance backward -
To catch a glimpse of my ladylove.

People nowadays will wonder why such innocent lines should have deserved the hue and cry raised in those days.

So much for this. It is noteworthy that Hsü once said,

Love is indispensable, but it must not be too hot.
Emotion is to be necessarily and considerably limited and moderated by reason.
Indeed, in Hsü's poetry love is not always dealt with in terms of passion. In many instances it shows restraint and subtlety, and serenity; thus a high degree of beauty and lyrical excellence is achieved. The following is considered one of Hsü's best in this category:

If I were a snowflake
Swinging in the sky,
I must mark my goal,
And fly, fly, fly --
There is a haven on the earth.

I don't go to some chilly lonely vale,
Nor to a cheerless slope.
A desolate street is not my aim --
I fly, fly, fly --
Behold, my haven is o'er there!

Dancing lightly in the air
I spy that secluded dwelling;
Waiting for her coming to the garden
I'm still flying, flying, flying --
Oh, her body carries plum trees' fragrance!

By my moving soft and light,
I land on her lapel;
Sliding near her bosom sweet,
I'm melting, melting, melting --
I melt into her tender, falling and swelling bosom.

(The Joy of a Snowflake)
But **In the Mountains** is even more beautiful:

Quiet is the courtyard
   Though the city's humming never stops.
The pine-trees' checkered shadows lie on the ground;
   I look at the bright moon overhead.

I wonder what can be seen
   In the mountain area.
There must be moonlight and pine trees
   And a deeper quietude.

I long to cling to some moonbeams,
   Transform myself into a waft of breeze,
Wake up the pines intoxicated in the spring,
   And slip here and there around the mountains.

I will drop a new pine-needle
   On your very window-sill;
It will fall down silently and tenderly —
   No disturbance to your soothing sleep.

The love conveyed in **The Autumn Moon** at once reminds the reader of the late T'ang poet Li Ho; the chilly, eerie and ghostly atmosphere has its unique fascination and beauty:
She [the moon] glances at an ancient city's parapets.

Millions of bricks breathe in her silver light.

She fondles

The scattered graves outside the city wall.

In the night birds' fitful cries

I visualize the ghosts of different times

Who, like us, are standing closely together there

With eyes sparkling,

And with mouths chewing the frosty chill.

This silvery and tender poetic sentiment

Like the will-o'-the-wisp on a marshy ground,

Dances in the dewy sky.

(From: The Autumn Moon)

According to the poet, "genuine love is no sin", and the idea may be so enlarged upon that even fornication and adultery are justifiable as long as there is "genuine love" between the man and woman concerned. The following poem proclaims that true love can even stand the most rigorous judgment of God:

In the year when spring breezes do not return,

On the day when winter branches do not give more green,

The sky will have no light

But exhale a dark and ghostly atmosphere.

The sun, moon, stars — all are dead.
On the day when all the standards are upset,
At the time when all the values are re-estimated,
Exposed in the terror of the final judgment
Are all the nothingness, hypocrisy and vanity;
The naked souls fall prostrate in the presence of the Lord.

My love, at that time we fear no more -
No need to appeal, protest or hide.
Our hearts, like two snow-white lotus blooms,
Upright, gay, fair and fresh, on one green stalk of love.

Love is the only glory before the Lord.

(The Judgment Day)

The thought inherent in this poem implies a moral attitude which is quite contrary to the traditional Chinese morality. The love advocated is exactly that upheld by Shelley, said to be able to breed virtue. But the irony is that the love practised by both poets is condemned as sin by their respective countrymen. However, Shelley did not feel it wrong in deserting Harriet Westbrook nor did Hsü have the slightest compunction in divorcing Chang Yu-i and in urging Lu Hsiao-man to break away from her first husband. In fact both the English and Chinese poets embraced noble and exhilarating feelings when carrying out their actions which, as conceived by them, were the emancipation of soul and the proclamation of the true value of love. No wonder Hsü when proposing divorce in 1922 wrote to Chang Yu-i thus:
We would then see the light of life and the unprecedented glory ... And a change from night to day and from hell to paradise can be accomplished at once.\textsuperscript{14}

Hu Shih,\textsuperscript{15} one of Hsî's most intimate friends, alleges that Hsî's philosophy of life is his "simple belief" which consists of three words, i.e., love, freedom and beauty, supposed to be the poet's three ideals.\textsuperscript{16} Liang Shih-ch'iu,\textsuperscript{17} another friend of Hsî's, argues that it is more appropriate to group the three as one ideal with three elements, the same love, freedom and beauty.\textsuperscript{18} However, from the poet's works, love towers as the only ideal, for as soon as love is won, freedom and beauty follow. In \textit{Let's Build a Wall}, freedom exists within the "wall of love":

\begin{quote}
I want your love to be as strong as good-pure steel; 
In this changing life let's build a wall. 
Let autumn wind the garden's yellow leaves all blow away; 
Let termites all the thousand-year-old murals spoil. 
Even the universe should one day be upset by thunders, 
Nothing will destroy the freedom within our "Love Wall".
\end{quote}

And in \textit{Farewell, Cambridge}, truth, goodness and beauty are the production of love as discussed before.

Love as conceived to be the very ideal of life requires the lover to be resolute and courageous and to strive hard for the realization and fulfillment of love. If need be, he must die for it. The following pieces manifest these ideas:
You and I must not blaspheme about that word.
Don't forget the oath made in the presence of the Lord.
I not only desire your tenderest love
(That wraps up tight my heart now and evermore)
But want it to be as strong as good steel.

(From: *Let's Build a Wall*)

This is a cowardly world,
Intolerant of love, intolerant of love!
Loosen all your hair,
Bare your feet,
Follow me, my love!
Forsake this world;
Let's die for love.

I'll hold your hand;
Love, you follow me.
Let thorns pierce through our feet;
Let hailstones cleave our heads.
Follow me,
I'll hold your hand.
Let's escape from prison to regain our freedom.

(From: *This Is A Cowardly World*)
My love:
Don't hesitate;
Must grab
This only chance.

Our —
No need to mention.
The seed is sown;
Complete the rest.

Life, love, death —
Riddles inter-related;
The one being touched,
The other two will jerk.

We want love,
Want freedom and solution —
This little knife
Might be our heaven.

If we don't want suicide,
We must run far, far away.
Who can long complain,
In this little pig-sty?

Danger —
Sure, there it is.
But how can we succeed
If we don't take a risk?
Look at that star,
How fiercely bright;
Look at the night,
How solemn, how serene!

Let's go, sweetheart;
The future is not dark.
Thank heaven,
This is to get rid of hell!

(From: Determination)

This is your painful lot, you pilgrim --
Your feet being pierced by thorns.
Look back at the path you've taken,
At the stains of blood on the grass and rocks.
And recall, in twilight, the place you've come from.
Don't massage your limbs here, for your goal
Is still far in the cloud-enveloped mountains!

The silent gloaming, from slopes and the edges of woods,
Enfolds the wilderness and the sky.
Your lonely self, now facing an uncertain journey,
Is like a skiff without a compass
Being tossed in an angry sea.
There are the terror of night,
The dreadful howls of wolves and foxes, and the
eagles' screeches;
Pythons are hiding in the undergrowth.
Turn back? -- The dark night has covered the bloody path.
Drop down? -- But who will take care of a coward?
Press on? Oh, press on! Crush the blinding darkness,
Smash all terror, hesitation, fear and pain,
Tread on the sharpest thorns though feet should bleed,
And trample down the beasts and reptiles in the undergrowth.

Press on; the valour in your soul is the key of success.
Behold, when you're about to yield your life,
The mist has made way for the heavenly unchanging light,
The bright crescent moon, like a piece of green jade,
Is peeping behind the clouds
And resembles a fair lady, behind a gauze curtain,
Showing her white pearly teeth.
That's spiritual praise, the gracious gift!
But there is the lofty peak, the peak you expect to reach,
Which has appeared, fair like a lotus flower.
It stands against the blue sky in full moonlight --
A beautiful picture, a sublime scene --
Pilgrim, this vision is a reward for your labour.

(Without A Title)

The inter-relations of life, love, strife, suffering and death are obvious in Hsü's writings. The greatness of dying for love is stressed again and again in his letters to Lu Hsiao-man. The need of unceasing struggle in life is harped on in Determination, Go Forward, Life in Grey, Thank Heaven, My Heart Leaps Up Once Again, Away with You, etc. in addition to the
above-mentioned *Without A Title*. The *Inspiration of Love* also has the following lines:

On that day when in my heart
The Love-knot was tied,
I at once perceived
The fair and everlasting world — Death.

Because of numerous obstacles and frustrations in the first stage of his affair with Lu Hsiao-man and the anxiety and desperation incurred, it was natural that Hsü would attach his hope to the folly of suicide. However, Rossetti's influence was there. The Victorian poet was so fond of associating love with death in his poetry that one is tempted to conclude that the love-death relation was part of Rossetti's thought, and it must have plagued Hsü's subconsciousness. Shelley and Keats, whom Hsü enthusiastically admired, may also have contributed something to this love-death "theory". Hsü was well read in both their lives and works. Shelley's trouble with William Godwin and Keats' hopeless and morbid love for Fanny Brawne were in a way overshadowed by death; these frustrating experiences of the English romantics were sufficient to stir the Chinese poet's thought and were like iron fingers which must have touched a sonorous twang in Hsü's tight-strung heart-strings.

Liang Shih-ch'iu commenting on Hsü says that to the poet, "the realization of his ideal is the winning of the love of a beautiful woman." It is true that Hsü Chih-mo, under the influence of Shelley and the Bloomsbury group, assigns a very
high place to love between man and woman, and his life also seems
to convince his readers that "winning the love of a beautiful
woman" is his ideal of life. Actually this is only partly true.
A beautiful woman is desirable only because she by her beauty
contributes significantly to the perfection of married life
which is the starting point of the realization of the ideal or
the foundation on which the ideal can be built; but she cannot
claim to be the ideal total. Don't Blame Me for Pulling A Long
Face, a poem written after the poet has won Lu Hsiao-man, in-
dicates that the winning of a beautiful woman is not the complete
attainment of the ideal. Love as ideal must acquire a spiritual
value so that it can "reach the sky" and become "the essence
of life". Of all the aspects of love in Hsü's poetry, this is
the most interesting. It is not elaborated on in great detail
in any of his poems but is dealt with extensively in his prose
works. This sublime kind of love in conjugal life requires the
complete harmony of two souls; to use Hsü's own words, it is
"both to be mingled into each other's spirit". Entirely free
from jangling and wrangling, the husband and wife are to cherish
the identical noble thought, perform the work of tremendous
spiritual and social value for the common people. The Inspiration of Love indirectly preaches about that and that is also
the real meaning of Hsü's idea of "to climb up high" in Don't
Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face. Such love extends from a
couple to all human beings, with special reference to the weak,
the poor and the downtrodden, and is intrinsically associated
with the sentiment of mercy and sympathy.
Admittedly, love with such qualities can appropriately be termed universal love, and it is by no means the invention of Hsü himself. It is a river of mixed water from several sources — Shelley, Tolstoy, Rolland, Russell, Tagore and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, heroes of Hsü, are all contributors. The humanitarian message is remarkable in this kind of love, and Hsü's idea of spiritual revolution, to be discussed in next chapter, is connected with it.

Hsü said, "Love is the greatest matter in life: it must be perfect." But unless the universal character is acquired, love can never be perfect, and that is why he wrote about Robert and Elizabeth Browning with bubbling enthusiasm and admiration; for in Hsü's opinion, the Brownings' life is not only the embodiment of a completely harmonious conjugal love but also that of sympathy and understanding, and from this arose their great contribution to mankind, namely, their literary works which, Hsü asserted, are the "fortune of English literature."

On the passive side, the "dross of our existence" in Don't Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face is the hindrance to the realization of love as ideal. There is no clue to the meaning of "dross" in the particular poem but it evidently refers to "mediocrity, lowness, meticulousness, vulgarity" and "luxurious life". Hsü though born and brought up in a wealthy family was aware of the many evils caused by an uncreative and leisurely life of luxury which "destroys people" but is destroyed by Love:
Like the rising mighty sun that sweeps away
The puzzling mist in the wilderness,
Love approaches, and removes
What's trite, trivial, and vulgar that encroaches
on the heart.

It is the poet's conviction that the "dross" must be eliminated
or the ideal can never be realized.

Love has a prominent place in the poetical works of Hstü's
contemporaries like Kuo Mo-jo, Wen I-to and Chu Hsiang. Theirs
is also imbued with passion and sincerity but not idealized as
it is in Hstü's poetry. Love as conceived by Hstü in his works
is unique among the many different ideas cherished by the Chinese
writers in the nineteen twenties; however, it in its all-inclusiveness as ideal is given no assurance of its possible ultimate
realization. Ostensibly the last stanza of Without A Title32
sounds the joy of catching sight of the goal, but the goal itself, represented as a "lofty peak" standing "against the blue
sky in full moonlight", is only a "vision" and may forever tan-
talize the "pilgrim". In Search of A Star draws a grimmer pic-
ture and betrays more of the poet's doubt; in the poem the
seeker for the ideal is doomed to failure and despair. In the
reality of the poet's relatively short life, he was far from
being able to materialize his ideal, the lofty love, as we have
seen how he failed even in his first step to his goal since his
marriage with Lu Hsiao-man eventually proved to be a frustrating
experience. Matthew Arnold's comment on Shelley may be used to
describe Hstü in his attempt to reach a glorious goal:
A beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain,\textsuperscript{33}

But there must also be some people like Hu Shih who observed:

His [Hsü's] pursuit shames us, for our faith is too small ... His failure, however, should elicit our profound respect and sympathy.\textsuperscript{34}

All in all, the love in Hsü's poetry calls to mind the celebrated words of the Apostle Paul:

So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.\textsuperscript{35}
CHAPTER IV
Revolution

In his discussion of the first two decades of the Chinese new literature, Průšek asserts that "the situation in China required that the writer devote all his attention to social questions and not to the problems of individual being."¹ A little far-fetched as it is, the statement bears the truth that social problems were important issues during those years and nobody, writer or no writer, could entirely wave them aside. Hsü Chih-mo is no exception. But Hsü's image has been so much distorted that the average people just look at him askance and treat him as no more than an ivory tower dreamer or an unprincipled romantic poet writing "feverishly" and living "violently".² There are a number of reasons for such distortion. First, Hsü was blessed with a fairly abundant material life for the most part of his thirty-five years in the world; secondly, he acted headlong against the Chinese traditional morality over the divorce of his first wife and the second marriage with Lu Hsiao-man; thirdly, he wrote some passionate love poetry, very "feverishly" indeed for some time; fourthly, he was opposed to Communism and therefore made himself one of the targets of attacks continually launched by the leftist writers; and fifthly, his proposed remedy to social and political problems had never been well understood and was simply sneered at by the all-influential leftist writers. As a matter of fact, Hsü purposely chose and "dreamed" in his own ivory tower before the year of 1925, but after that, he experienced a kind of spiritual revival and
became conscious of the outside world, and got involved. He declared that he was "to observe, to examine, to remove, to wrestle, to challenge, to destroy." Indeed, how could a man with his emotional nature, kindness of heart and genuine affection for friends and mankind at large remain blind to the social and political ills of his days? A careful study of Hsü's life and works will reveal that the poet led a romantically serious life. He produced a relatively large quantity of social poems portraying the privation, suffering and misfortune of the poor, the oppressed and the weak and old; he exposed the injustice of society and condemned the warlords, the self-seeking politicians and the profiteer merchants. With such literary products in 1920's in China, he might well be expected to yell revolutionary slogans like many others. The fact is, he extolled revolution but denounced the revolutionaries in his days. This paradox is characteristic of him.

Hsü chih-mo's poetry does not abound in revolutionary cants. The word revolution (命) appears only twice in two of his poems, i.e., Farewell, Cambridge and The Autumn Insect; however, the poet's peculiar spirit of revolution does blaze in several of his poems, the intensity of which even exceeds that in his many love poems. The following is most typical:

Come, you follow me. Hold the white flag in your hand - not a flag with words of agitation, malice, or encouragement of slaughter, not that with the mark of dirty blood, nor that painted with
repentance and with magic words. (But repentance should be written in your heart.)

You line up, keep silent, be solemn, like a funeral procession. Pull a pallid and cheerless face. Be solemn, silent, like a suicide squad of soldiers.

Now it is time. All lift up your white flags, as if you were lifting up your hearts. Look up steadily at the overhead blue sky with fear, as if you were observing your own souls.

Now it is time. Let your tears that have been banked up, suppressed, bursting and surging flow out with all freedom, madness, impetus, ferocity and satisfaction, like a torrent rushing out from a gorge, and like a violent cloud-burst.

Now it is time. Let your voices that have been obstructed, repressed, struggling, billowing, yell with freedom, madness, rudeness, fierceness, like a typhoon roaring among the billows, and as if you were bereft of your dear ones ...

Now it is time. Let your nature that has been restored repent. Let it repent, that has been purified by hot tears and awakened by the roaring thunders. Let it repent, silently and thoroughly for a long,
long time, like chilly starlight that drops in a lonely vale; like a monk, or a nun, in black, falls prostrate in front of a golden shrine.

In the surging of tears, in the thoroughness of howling, and in the silence of repentance, you will see God's everlasting majesty.

(The White Flag)

The revolutionary message of the above poem cannot be readily appreciated unless it is viewed in the light of the poet's prose work. Hsü wrote in "A Talk on Revolution - on the Anniversary of Lenin's Death":

We should make substantial preparation for revolution, the earlier the better. But there are many different kinds of revolutions, and their aims and means are entirely different, and they even clash with one another ... There are many things against which we should start a revolution. From our clothes, talking, writing, wedding up to the government, we need a revolution for all. We have to revolt against our wickedness and servility that can be pointed out in our life and thought. We have to revolt against all the social and moral phenomena that are unjust and unnatural. It is clear that the revolution conceived by Hsü was not the same as that cherished by most people at that time; for in the latter case it was an armed, or a proletarian, revolution. However, Hsü professed his distaste for Marxism and Communism, and affirmed that the theory of class struggle, at least in China, was absolutely unacceptable, being the fancy of a few cranks. Unlike his contemporary leftist writers, he did not
consider the social ills and political chaos of China from the economic or utilitarian point of view. Although he detested the wealthy, acquisitive merchants and brutal warlords, he maintained that a handful of such people were not powerful enough to cause all the social and political problems, and therefore a revolution directed at eliminating those vermin as advocated by the Communists was irrelevant. Under the influence of the Bloomsbury group, who held that "[the spiritual] is superior to the material", and that of Tagore, who was always "at pains to persuade people to have a spiritual outlook on life", Hsü called himself "a man infatuated with the belief in spiritual life". And he did not consider any problems but mainly from a spiritual point of view. He held every single human being responsible for all the social and political problems, which according to him were represented by sin, uncleanness, slovenliness, cowardice, meanness and falsehood of the individual rather than a certain class of people, all this being comparable to Hu Shih's remarks about the "five evils" of China, i.e., poverty, illness, ignorance, corruption and disorder.

The social and political phenomena which justified a revolution were versified by Hsü as follows:

Believe me. The formidable shadow of suspicion,
like a dark cloud, has eclipsed all the relationships of men: sons mourn no longer o'er their lately deceased parents. Brothers hold no longer the hands of sisters. Friends turn
foes. Watch-dogs leap back to bite their masters' legs. Yes, suspicion floods all. Those weeping on the road, standing in the street, peeping by your window, are maidens who have all been violated. In the ponds are seen some broken lotus blooms, still fair.

In Humanity's murky stream five maimed bodies float—they are charity, justice, propriety, wisdom and sincerity, drifting toward the timeless sea.

This is an agitated sea, with wild waves breaking; On their white caps are distinctly written: human lusts and animal passions.

Violation is everywhere. Covetousness is hugging Righteousness. Suspicion is oppressing Sympathy. Cowardice is trifling with Bravery. Lust is insulting Love. Violence is invading Humanity. Darkness is trampling Light.

Hear, all these noises of obscenity. Hear, all this clamour of brutality.

Tigers and wolves are in the busy market place, Robbers on the beds of your dear wives' and sin in your souls' inmost cells.

(From: The Poison)
Although facing all the social and political ugliness and wickedness, the poet condemned "words of agitation, malice" and "encouragement of slaughter" in the first stanza of *The White Flag*. Besides, instead of inciting people to take up arms as a revolutionary would do, he called for a solemn surrender which would lead to repentance and the presence of God. In other words, the general need, or the comprehensive answer to the many vexing problems of society and nation was a determined individual struggle which did not push man to the street picketing, organizing demonstrations, shouting slogans, etc. but pulled man into his own inner being, i.e., to use the poet's word, man's soul. In this connection a person was expected to be true to himself, lift up a white flag courageously, submit himself to his conscience and allow this surrender and repentance to usher him to a spiritual rebirth that had eternal value in the universe (to see God's everlasting majesty), and that would be the essential factor for betterment of the individual, the nation and the world. Here Tagore's influence is obvious. Talking about India's troubles, the Indian poet once said,

> What India most needed was constructive work coming from within herself.\(^\text{13}\)

One of the most common slogans proclaimed by the revolutionaries in China during the twenties was "Down with the Imperialists". Like all Chinese people, Hsü did not find comfort in the encroachment on China by the foreign powers,\(^\text{14}\) but he believed that China could not and should not take any anti-imperialist actions unless she improved herself first,\(^\text{15}\) and that is also the message in *The White Flag* and that again shows the impact of Tagore's words:
All revolutions consist of the fight of the within against invasion by the without.\textsuperscript{16}

which were heard by Hsü about two months before he wrote *The Poison, The White Flag* and *The Baby*.\textsuperscript{17}

Hsü abhorred bloodshed more than anything else.\textsuperscript{18} In this respect he was, in addition to his own peace-loving nature,\textsuperscript{19} influenced by Shelley, Tostoy, Rolland, Tagore, Russell, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Hu Shih. The fact that he praised Byron\textsuperscript{20} was not because of the war in which the English romantic got involved but because of Byron's spirit of revolt against the established social institutions and that of fighting for individual freedom. The kind of revolution Hsü would have was an absolutely bloodless one, called spiritual revolution or spiritual emancipation by himself.\textsuperscript{21} It would start with the individual; but conceivably, when everybody was involved, it would naturally develop into a social and political reform movement which undoubtedly would delight the poet. Though an individualist who identified democracy with individualism,\textsuperscript{22} Hsü Chih-mo was concerned with not only himself but society, nation and mankind generally.

Tagore's message given in China in 1924 referring to revolution had these words:

\begin{quote}
Revolution must come, and men risk revilement and misunderstanding especially from those who put their faith in materialism and convention.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

This together with Rolland's interpretation of life as understood by Hsü that all "heroes of humanitarianism ... experience life in pain"\textsuperscript{24} must have had a tremendous impact on the Chinese poet who held that suffering and pain would be inevitable in the spiritual revolution.\textsuperscript{25} Indeed, since such a movement requires
one to examine fearlessly the innermost and ugliest part of one's soul and dissect the cancerous fibres therein, it incurs a fierce mental struggle. The "repentance", if thoroughly carried out, comparable to a political ideological reform in a Communist nation, will shatter all composure, complacency and conceit, and will cause pain. On the other hand, the fact that few people can appreciate and sympathize with such revolutionary ideas will result in direct or indirect persecution to the promoter of it, and suffering on the part of the latter is unavoidable. The whole concept is not remote from the Christian doctrine of glory attained through the cross. In The Baby the poet allegorically portrays the process of the spiritual revolution. The mother is the promoter of it and the baby to be born is the anticipated victory. It is a poem full of pain, untold pain, but also full of hope, assured hope, and glory. The poet's reminiscent remark of the poem is:

In the prophetic imagination of mine at that time,
I visualized a great revolution.26

The following is an extract from The Baby:

We are waiting for the coming of a great event.
We are expecting the birth of a blessed baby.
Look at the mother who is suffering on the bed.
The young woman's calmness, gentleness and fairness,
at this time of throes, have turned to incredible ugliness. Look at the veins of her body swelling under her tender skin and showing a horrible blue and purple hue as if they were water snakes in
fright, dashing here and there in rice-field drains.

Sweat drops like soya beans stand on her brow. Her limbs and body suffer a spasm. She huddles, jerks and turns. To her the mattress seems to have been made with needles and the curtain, woven with the fiercest flames.

The mother is suffering on the bed.

But she does not despair. Her life is combating. All the fibres of her body, on the brink of a precipice, are resisting and fighting against the threat of Death.

She does not yield, for she knows (her soul knows!) that this pain has its cause. She knows her womb has nourished the seed of life that's greater than herself - that's a baby whose eternity surpasses all.

Hstü in his rather short life experienced some very dejected moments. Once or twice he was driven almost to the verge of suicide;²⁷ but he was fundamentally an optimist.²⁸ His hope was associated with his belief that the spiritual revolution would one day prevail and mankind would be ideologically liberated and ennobled by lofty thoughts such as
sympathy, mercy, mutual respect, mutual help, or in short, universal love.

As to the proletarian revolution advocated by the leftist writers, Hsü's attitude was downright denunciation. Hsü in writing social poems generally followed Thomas Hardy's approach, that is, objectively exposing without explicitly condemning though the condemnation is often implied; however, when touching on proletarian revolution, he broke into vehemence as in the latter half of The West Window:

And some men of letters have now grabbed from God's creation
Their unique creation and have applied
To the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce
For the patent of creation:
This is the miracle of all miracles.
Just as the old fox looking at the moon
Displays its bead of charm,
They learn the secret of their trade
When the moon attracts the tides.

The youth's blood, especially that which is bubbling,
Is delicious -
They've borrowed the proletarian spoon
For ladling out the blood as drink to one another.
Their future metal statues will most certainly
Be equal to those of
Chu Wen and Chang Hsien-tsung.
In the poet's eyes, the proletarian revolution lauded in China was only a means for some self-seeking revolutionaries and so-called revolutionary writers who would seize personal profit and prestige by deception and violence. He felt sure that such a revolution was a blind destructive force and was therefore a curse to the common people and a shame to humanity. He vented his indignation with sarcasm thus:

Autumn insect, why did you come?
The world is not so simple as it was.
The green grass, the white dew - all rubbish:
No longer useful are these poet's stuff.
Gold only is mankind's new favourite;
It has usurped the day, and also ruled the dream.
Love, like stars in daytime,
Has hidden herself and cannot be found
E'en when it's already night.
Dark clouds stay always in the sky,
And shame has tak'n a long, long leave,
Dwelling in seclusion in a desert place.
Flowers are in bloom but ne'er will fruit become.
Thoughts are rashly ravished by various -isms.
Don't complain that these are bad, unpleasant days.
The worse is yet to come!
This is partly due to the soul's lethargy,
For it just spends its days in gardening.
"Don't care," it says, "let it turn as ugly
As a pig, a worm, a frog, a dog ...
Later when the sun refuses to appear,
The moon, having waned, is unwilling to wax,
On that day when humanity dies out,
Then I'll come to strike - to strike the bell of revolution!"  

(The Autumn Insect)

The last few lines of the poem reveal the poet's awareness of the unpopularity of his own cause; but he is confident that the spiritual revolution will be appreciated and welcomed when man has sunk into the lowest and deepest abyss of vice and sin and other means to save the world have all failed.

In the poet's conception of the spiritual revolution, Thomas Carlyle's "Everlasting yea!" and a tenacious faith in the bright future of mankind never vacillate. However, Hsu died with an ideal unfulfilled, which was coloured with religious piety and fervour. Up to now the grim reality has proved the futility of the poet's spiritual revolution, and the kind of revolution he despised and denounced has been successful not only in China but in some other countries, and many people involved in it are most sincere revolutionaries with a profound reverence and zeal for their cause. Undeniably some of them must be self-seeking as self-seeking people are found everywhere and in every age, but their number might not exceed that in the Capitalist world. However, all this does not constitute the final proof of the utter ineffectualness of the poet's spiritual revolution. Perhaps the world has not yet turned "ugly" enough
as "a pig, a worm, a frog, a dog ...", and the sun most certainly still appears from day to day and the moon does not seem to have reached the stage of being "unwilling to wax"; therefore the time "to strike the bell of [spiritual] revolution" is yet to come. History is still too short to confirm the right of one revolution or the wrong of another, and indeed,

But there are many different kinds of revolutions, and their aims and means are entirely different, and they even clash with one another. . . .

Let the world wait and see.
CHAPTER V

Religion

The intellectuals in modern China on the whole are not enthusiastic about religion. Many of them just condemn it. In 1918 an anti-religious movement was started with Christianity as the main target of attack since it was associated with western imperialism which had greatly humiliated and angered the Chinese. The May Fourth Movement sweeping China in the next year intensified the anti-religious movement which subsequently reached its climax in 1922 when the Great Federation of Anti-Religionists was formed. However, after this somewhat "emotional outburst" against religion, especially Christianity, there ensued a period of debates and after 1927, while Marxism had gained ground, religion "was given its proper place."¹ Hsü Chih-mo returned to China from Europe in 1922, but he was not involved in the debates on religion, nor was he a member of any established faith. But this does not mean that he was indifferent. He maintained his own attitude toward religion and set it forth in his literary works.

It must be pointed out that what concerns religion in Hsü is generally connected with Christianity which, though not the religion of his family, must have caught the attention of the poet when he was still living in Chekiang as a young boy on account of the extensive missionary work of both the Catholics and the Protestants, Chinese or Western. It is not clear how and where the poet obtained his knowledge of the Bible. Speculation would favour, first of all, the few months Hsü spent at
Shanghai University, a Baptist institution, during 1915-16, but it is quite possible that he took a course of Biblical or religious knowledge or simply read the Bible himself in later years when he became interested in English literature or religion.

In a number of Hsu's poems the following Biblical words are found: God; the Lord; the Heavenly Kingdom; pray (or prayer); Heavenly Father; repent (or repentance). Of these words "God" is more often used than the others. The poem *His Eyes Have Thee* is most typical:

I climbed up a mountain of many thousand feet;
Thorns tore my clothes to rags.
I cast my eyes at the misty sky --
   God, I didn't see Thee!

I dug into the thick hard crust of earth
And laid waste the ancient dens of snakes and dragons.
I shouted in a bottomless abyss --
   God, I heard no sound from Thee!

By the roadside I saw a child,
Lively, handsome, and in rags.
He uttered, "Mom," eyes glistening with love;
   God, his eyes have Thee!

The above poem is virtually a renunciation of God, for it lays bare the fact that God exists neither in heaven nor hell but in the harmonious and loving relations of people. Nor is the
word God employed in other poems with the true Biblical meaning. It simply adds some flavour of Western influence to the verse—a decoration, as it were, fashionable at that time. But Hsu was not the person who would let God pass unquestioned; he had more to do with Him since he was bent on exploring into the core of religion, namely, the existence of a creator. **The Five Old Men's Peak** has the following lines:

A wonder that's unshakeable;
A majesty that dazzles human eyes.
This loftiness, this hugeness,
This raggedness that defies all climbing!
Look, between the jagged rocks
Emerges the sky, the infinite blue sky.
In the bosom of a broad expanse
This grand, imposing spectacle appears!
Whose idea, whose imagination?
Whose construction and whose remnants of a strenuous creation?

**The Five Old Men's Peak** savours of William Blake in that the questions posed there resemble those raised in Blake's *The Tiger*. Hsu's are not rhetorical questions; they are the passionate cry of a seeking soul, earnestly wishing to know who is the creator of the majestic-looking mountain. But there is no answer. The questions remain, as the last line of the poem goes, "A stubborn question in the blue and boundless sky". Such thought often turns up in Hsu's literary works, betraying the unrest of his
Whether there is a god existing and ruling in the universe is very puzzling to him. A stanza in *In Memory of Katherine Mansfield* reads as follows:

If the universe is an emotionless machine,
Why does our ideal shine like a lamp before us?
If creation is the embodiment of beauty, truth and goodness,
Why does not the rainbow abide in the sky all the time?

The pros and cons are provoked by the poet himself over the death of Katherine Mansfield. Indeed, if God, as creator, is good, why should the innocent suffer? Why can beauty not last long? Why should misery catch up with old age and why is freedom to guiltless people denied? But if God is wicked, why the existence of ideal, why the beauty of nature and why the sweetness of love? Although a devoted admirer of Tagore, Hsü being true to himself could not accept the Indian poet's personal God who in many ways is comparable to the Christian Heavenly Father, all gracious and merciful. On the question of God, Hsü was prone to associate himself with Hardy. The latter part of *Nature and Life* bears some Hardyan colour:

The mutable Nature, the mutable Life.
A rapid change, violence and peace,
A heart-breaking tragedy and soothing serenity —
Who is in charge and who isn't?
Which is true and which is not?
It might be the creator's humour and fun,
His wayward repetition of sad tears and joyous smiles,
And peril and good luck
Which are set for entertaining his heart cold and cruel,
All indicates indifference:
He's like me who just now was watching the thunder storm outside the clouds!

Hsü, like Thomas Hardy, found it hard to believe in a benign God, but was inclined to treat Him as a blind force, mostly destructive. Hsü did not offer any concluding remarks about God in his poetry, but in his prose he did. He declared that God was only created by man, not vice versa.  

Of the other Biblical words than the word God, "repentance" in The White Flag by its function amounts to almost Christian evangelical preaching, which sternly demands the confession of sins though the confession urged in the poem is not followed by claiming the power of the blood of the Lamb and accepting Jesus Christ as personal saviour. The White Flag can pass off as a religious poem but actually it is not. The word repentance in it has a profound social meaning which is not confined in individual salvation. It is interesting to note that Hsü's spiritual revolution is invested with a religious form and his religious feelings are not aimed at heaven but at the earth. He was well read in the Bible and could quote from it with ease. He admired Jesus and the poem Calvary is devoted to the
historical event about the crucifixion of Christ. But it is again a social poem intended to expose the injustice of society. It is not in the least a religious poem. Unlike God the Creator and the All Mighty, Jesus in Hsü's thought did not trouble him. He was simply honoured as a great historical figure of integrity who, clinging to his "simple belief" was ready to, and finally did, die for it. Jesus in Hsü's poetry is never the son of God, the bread of life, the living water, the saviour, the redeemer, the enthroned Lamb, the King of kings and Lord of lords as presented in the New Testament and acknowledged by Christians (at least the fundamentalists). Indeed, anxious as the poet was to acquire the "unchangeable value of life", he did not accept the Christian faith. His rejection of it had a little to do with the patriotism and anti-imperialism prevalent in his time: more than once he expressed his aversion to the organized Christianity, condemned the western missionaries and disparaged the Sunday sermons delivered by the Christian priests and ministers. But his rational thinking played a greater part in his rejection of Christianity. Even in his Cambridge days he was already influenced by the non-Christian thoughts of the Bloomsbury group; and in his study of Shelley and Hardy he would absorb pantheism and agnosticism respectively. Thus ideologically saturated, Hsü would naturally jibe at the fundamental Christian doctrines such as the original sin, baptism, eternal life through faith in Christ, etc. But Christianity nevertheless had an inscrutable grip on him: at his grandmother's death in 1923, his conception about the deceased old lady was "dressed in a snow-white long gown, slowly ascending to heaven."
The line "I quietly contemplate the mystery of life" in The Reeds Before the Ch'iu-hsüeh Convent signifies Hstü's habit of serious thinking. He felt keenly that the fundamental problems of life could never be avoided even if one should want to do so because:

Whether your thought starts with starlight, moonlight or butterflies or other things, you confront the fundamental problems of life when you proceed a little further. They coldly stand before you like a few gravestones that obstruct your way.19

Hstü's poetry touches on many dreary aspects of life, and Life in Grey, as the title implies, is representative, the following translation being the last part of it:

Come, I invite you to mysterious cells to hear the groans of all the maimed and lonely souls.
Come, I invite you to a place beyond the clouds, to hear the mournful cries of weird big birds.
Come, I invite you to the common folk, to hear the old, the sick, the poor, the injured, the oppressed, the bored, the servile, the cowardly, the ugly, the sinful and the suicidal -- they accompanied by autumnal tones of wind and rain, in chorus sing the "Life in Grey".

As Hstü Chih-mo could not accept God (Jehovah), or Allah, or Buddha, or whatever it is as a final answer to the question of life, the thought "Who is responsible for this mysterious life?" (a line from In Front of the Church of Exeter) often occurred to him.
Hsü called himself "a believer in Life". He confessed that he had been "baptized in the western philosophy of life", and surely he possessed his teacher Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's striving spirit to "create incessantly in this imperfect universe." But he repelled the idea of working blindly for the sake of work; he was anxious to probe into the spiritual world hoping to lay hold on something for an answer to life. Such a person when by observation comes to be aware of the shortness of life, is bound to feel the formidable threatening shadow of death. Hsü was not really afraid of death, because he reasoned that any other world, if there existed another one, or others, for the departed souls, would not be worse than this which was a dark and horrible place full of "snakes", "scorpions", "evil spirits", "thunders" and "bad dreams". But the idea of entering the realm of death irked him, for he was not certain of the situation "on the other side" which looked like an "extraordinary risk". "The undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveller returns" puzzled not only Hamlet but Hsü. Chih-mo. Whenever death bared its pallid visage in his family or amidst his friends, it stunned him and drove him into contemplation, and sometimes bewilderment. The cry of despair is unmistakable in the last two lines of In Memory of Katherine Mansfield:

I shed tears to the wind my messenger,
Asking when the gate of life and death can e'er be broken.

Actually Hsü hated the question of death. In an article he wrote:
I dislike to think of death because the opposite of death is the vexation of life. Death stops life but is not its solution or its annihilation. Death increases the complexity of life, but does not eliminate the intricacies of life.\(^\text{28}\)

Just like an elementary school child who intends to throw away his arithmetic book and declare his hatred for the subject after failing to do a sum, Hsü wanted to dismiss the puzzling question of death. But he could not. He was haunted by death's black shadow, if not death itself. The most hideous fact baffling him was that as soon as death intruded, life and love and everything came to an end. In *In Memory of Katherine Mansfield* he wrote:

That year I first heard the tidings of life;

As if in a dream, I suddenly felt the gravity of love,

The consciousness of life is the maturity of love;

But now because of your death I touch the brink of life and love.

No wonder he said in another place that the heat of passion was confronted by the "real solid ice"\(^\text{29}\) when death's power was felt.

The fifth stanza of *In Memory of Katherine Mansfield* offers a religious explanation of death:

O no! Life is a mere dream of a reality.

You, beautiful soul, are forever in God's love and care.
A sojourn of three decades is just like the bloom
of a canna flower;\textsuperscript{30}

I in tears can imagine how you, all smiles,
return to your celestial palace.

But this is merely a pathetic conventional consolation since Hsü
did not believe in the Christian God or other deities; the whole
stanza carries no religious faith as for instance Milton's
\textit{Lycidas} does. Further, it contradicts headlong with the fourth
and the last stanzas.\textsuperscript{31}

All in all, what the poet can say about death in \textit{In
Memory of Katherine Mansfield} is:

Death is a great, mysterious furnace
That smelts and refines the spirit of all creations.

Clothed in a metaphor, the above is very vague rhetoric, for
the "great, mysterious furnace" is obviously a riddle, and the
smelting and refining do not elucidate the mystery of death.
Tagore in a speech delivered in China in 1924 avowed that he
could not answer questions about "what happens after death",
but he boldly declared his being "saved from doubts and fears"
because his soul had had the experience of touching "the infinite
and has become intensely conscious of it through the illumination
of joy."\textsuperscript{32} Hsü admired Tagore immensely but he did not, and did
not pretend to, have the Indian sage's experience. His doubts lingered.
With death as a most knotty and apparently unanswerable question, Hsü's attitude toward life was that of desperation. Before he knew more about death, he hated to die; he unveiled his thought as follows:

And so I cling to the net of my life
Like a fisherman on his night watch,
With fears, gazing at the ever passing tide of time,
Athirst for some luck to emerge.

(From: Ask Whom)

Death being a constant problem is further confirmed by Hsü's translation of western poetry, for significantly enough, fourteen out of his thirty translations from English concern no other than death and its associate grave; by the way, visiting graveyards is the poet's eerie habit.

Death, graves and the deceased people are very peculiar features in Hardy's poetical works, and they seem to have been completely inherited by Hsü whose many poems therefore assume a solemnity and gloom and a "philosophical" content.

Prof. Cyril Birch pointed out that Hsü "differed almost completely from Thomas Hardy (1840-1926) in temperament." It is quite true that Hsü was a very vivacious personality who sometimes could be as merry and mischievous as Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream. But that was only part of Hsü. There was a seriousness in him which only revealed itself in his writings or in his private life when he was absolutely alone. His personality certainly had two aspects — he could be
carousing in one hour and then plunge into deep thought in another. This accounts for the religious thought as well as the passionate love in his verse. Undoubtedly Hsü's reflective poems owe a great deal to Hardy. But even without Hardy, he under Tagore's influence would still indulge in his contemplation though there might not have been a great many shadows of deaths and graves hovering in his works, and irony and sarcasm in his social poems might have been substituted by something else.

Hsü was not happy with his investigation of death. Since he could not, as following the dictates of his conscience and reason, embrace any existing religion, he, as it were, invented his own. He exalted nature. He wrote a great deal about it, for example:

Cambridge, aren't you my life's fountain-head?
Your precious gifts for me are countless:
Unforgettable are the fireflies' moving stars
and the distant dam's water music,
Such unceasing dancing and singing by the Bridge
of Chesterton I enjoyed
And used to recline on some railings at midnight
listening to cattle chewing their cud
In the meadows enveloped in darkness,
And to the little noises made by fish and insects
by the river-side;
They gently break the silent solitude.
Unforgettable is the spring sunset
Whose light stirs up a sea of genuine gold
Flooding all the steeples and bell towers, battlements and parapets,
And thousands of chimneys, clear water and green mountains.
Unforgettable are the old trees that straggle in the shady woods;
Their great trunks' sombre black and brown are touched up by the slanting morning sun
With rosy red that adds to the trees a pretty shyness and embarrassment.
Unforgettable are the July evenings: the distant trees crowd in silence,
Like some inky misty mountains they set contrast to the gentle and tender dusk.
So dense - it is a mixture of more golden yellow than darkish green;
Such exquisite beauty can only be caught on the brink of autumn dreams.
Unforgettable is the poetic bird that warbles all night in the shady elms
With burning passion: moving to tears the rose who nods,
Inspiring all the stars to dance around and chant,
Constraining all the romantic souls in dreams, far and near,
To be enamoured in their balmy charming world.
Unforgettable are the village maidens' rosy cheeks and milk-white necks.
Unforgettable are the graceful weeping willows screening the River Cam,

The elegant Clare College, and the handsome and elevated Fellows' Building.

(From: *Farewell, Cambridge*, CW., Vol. VI, pp. 33-35)

Quietly I leave just as
Quietly I come;
Quietly I wave my hand

To bid farewell to the western clouds.

The golden willows by the river
Are the brides at sunset time;
Their pretty images on the waves

Are flowing in my heart.

The verdant grass on the soft mud
Sways at the river bottom;
In the gentle ripples of the River Cam,

I wish to become a blade of grass!

Under the elms lies the shady pool,
Which is not crystal water but a rainbow
Crushed among the floating weeds -

There rainbow dreams are well concealed.
To seek dreams? Take a long, long pole
And punt toward the greener heart of the bright green grass;
With the whole boat filled with starlight,
    Troll in the starry radiance.

But I can't sing,
For the farewell music is silence;
Even the summer insects leave their songs for me.
    Silent is this ev'ning's Cambridge.

Quietly I leave just as
Quietly I come;
I wave my sleeves,
    Not carrying a piece of cloud.
(Farewell Again to Cambridge) 39

A lovely autumn scene! The silent falling leaves
Gently and gently drop onto this little lane;
Behind the bamboo fence, indistinctly, there is children's laughter.

It is musical ringing, intertwined with the peace and quiet of the village huts,
And like some dark gorges' birds that sing their morning songs,
Dispelling the murky night's obscurity and usher'ring in the light.
A sudden joy, like canna flowers\textsuperscript{40} opening,
Elevates my feelings, and I forget my spring romance,
Life's bewilderment and sorrow, vexation and
transiency —
In the children's laughter I descry the Heav'nly Kingdom:

The sunset floods the golden maple woods.
The cool breeze blows about my solitary figure.
My spirit shouts, its great waves surging,
And responding to a greater pulse and greater
spiritual high tides.

\textit{(Tidings from the Heavenly Kingdom)}

I have a love;
I love the stars in the sky;
I love their brilliance:

Mankind has not had such superior spirits.

In the chilly ev'n'ing of late winter,
In the quiet and grey early morning,
At sea, on mountain tops after a storm,

There's always a star, or tens of thousands.

The bosom friend of little flowers and grass
by the mountain torrent,
The joy to children who live in high buildings,
The shining lamp and compass to the traveller: —

Are these twinkling spirits thousand of miles afar.
I have a broken soul,
Like a heap of smashed crystal
Scattered in the wilderness's withered grass
    And imbibing your incessant radiant favour.

I unbosom my whole self,
Offering love to all the stars;
I don't care if life is real or otherwise,
Or the earth will exist or pass away --
    The sky forever has the ever shining stars.

(From: I Have a Love)

Thank Heaven, my heart leaps up once again.
This sky blue and sea green and the bright sunlight
Have dispelled all traces of the rainy season's gloom
And also untied the net and knots of my heart
That like a stramonium flower, fresh in dew, swaying
    and smiling in the breeze,
Forgets bewilderments in transcendence and freedom.
How sudden is the spirit that appears and drives away
My sorrow (like a bamboo shoot that breaks open its
    outer sheath
And unveils its inner heart), and for me
It has removed a film over my eyes
So that I can see again the joy of the universe.
This may be the sign of my rebirth:
Spirit of Nature, accept my prayer:
Allow me to fix my eager look at Thee,
Allow me to proffer my passionate homage,
Allow me to keep the marvel of this revelation, this very moment and this place.

(From: Thank Heaven, My Heart Leaps Up Once Again)

Nature is not only beauty to be enjoyed but inspiration to life. It has the healing power to man's soul. The poet even hinted in his prose that nature can solve all problems. As he believed that "in the essence of every thing there runs a universal spirit" which is no other than Nature, Nature is a kind of god to him. In the above poem this point is plain enough:

Spirit of Nature, accept my prayer:
Allow me to fix my eager look at Thee, etc.

Tagore eulogized nature profusely, and exerted considerable influence on Hsu. But the Indian poet's idea of worshipping God was foreign to his Chinese junior even though he advocated a worship in nature, without material temples, "outward rites or ceremonies". After all, nature to Tagore is like an angel who reminds man of and leads man to the presence of God, but to Hsu, nature, by its "harmony of forms, colours, sounds and movements" helps him to forget; its function resembles that of the "slow and silent stream Lethe the River of Oblivion." Thank Heaven, My Heart Leaps Up Once Again has a few lines to convey this idea, and in Five Old Men's Peak the same thought dominates:
Then there will not be any mundane vanity;
Then there will not be earthly hurry and bad dreams.
My soul, remember this leisure and greatness,
Drink to the full in front of Five Old Men's Peak
this free mountain wind.
This isn't a peak but the prayer of ancient saints,
That congealed into this "frozen music", a work
by supernatural power.

But all this sounds rather futile, for the beauty and majesty
of Five Old Men's Peak do not really eliminate the "mundane
vanity" and "bad dreams". Oblivion may bring relief, and is a
sure cure to some mental distress, but it can hardly be used as
a remedy for political and social troubles.

If religion's function is to drug the frustrated and the
weak and the oppressed, and is therefore the people's opium as
all Marxists would affirm, nature to Hsü is to some degree his
opium. It pacifies and intoxicates him with a beauty and serenity
that soothe and heal his troubled soul. With an ideal unfulfilled, Hsü was not a happy man and needed consolation
which nature freely awarded.

Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning
Temple is a beautiful poem permeated with religious feelings.
But what prompted the poet to express his rapture was by no
means a sudden enlightenment and conversion to Buddhism but a
thankful heart for the solace brought about by the Buddhist
ritual music that, as understood by the poet, dissolved all the
problems of the world into nothingness; and all this was linked
with nature:

As if in the blazing and lovely sunlight, lying in
the long and tangled grass and hearing the
partridge's first summer melody which rings
from one side of the sky straight into the
clouds and sends echoes back;
As if in the moonlit desert, the moon's gentle
fingers quietly fondle every grain of sunburnt
sand, and in the velvet-like tropic air,
hearing a camel's bell, gently, gently jingling
from a distance, then nearer and nearer, and
then drifting afar ...
As if in a valley desolate, the daring evening
star alone shines above the earth where the
sun has died, and wild weeds and trees are
praying in silence, hearing a blind man, led
by a boy, sounding a fortune-teller's little
gong which causes repercussion in this dark,
dark world;
As if on a rock in the sea, the billows leap
and charge like ferocious tigers and the sky
is wrapped up in a heavy curtain of dark clouds,
hearing the sea confess his sins to the
threatening storm, quietly and softly;
As if on the summits of the Himalayas, hearing the Winds' footsteps resound among innumerable snow-white ravines as they are chasing the clouds;

As if in somewhere behind the curtain of Life's stage, hearing the empty chuckles, the appeals of frustrations and pain, the hurrahs of slaughter and brutality and the songs of pessimism and suicide — these make a chorus on the stage of Life;

I hear T'ien-ning Temple's ritual music.

From where does the spirit come? Such harmony does not exist amidst mankind.

This melody of drums, of bells, of ch'ing, wooden fish, of psalm chanting ... lingers and lengthens with its rise and fall in the temple hall; unnumerable streams of clashes are mixed into a quiet one; innumerable opposing colours are purified, and all the high and low of the present age are annihilated.

From where comes this great harmony ... the radiance of the sea of stars, the music of the spheres, the torrent of true life: it halts all movement, all turmoil ... 

...this fleeting revelation: blue sky, clear water, mother's warm and soft bosom. Is it homeland? Is it homeland?

(From: Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple)
Hsü's enthroning nature implies a tragic note; it reveals the escapism of a frustrated soul that in a state of "blood and water all over my head" can only turn to something unsophisticated and beautiful. But Hsü's literary works and life would refuse to confirm his being an escapist. The fact is: escapism he has some, but he possesses stronger stoicism acquired from all the people he adores.

Hsü's writings show him to be an idealist who rushes headlong at the adamant gate of grim reality, believing his burning sincerity can blast it open. He falls, he fails, but his blood is running, and his heart is beating. Half dazed, he trudges through a bloody path back to Mother Nature. He is healed and is blessed with oblivion. Courage returns and fresh attempts for life's glorious goal are again launched. He runs and strives for the second time and only repeats the previous experience, and this cycle of events goes on and on. Anyway it does not last long; the hero of this tragedy soon perishes. In the "glorious" life picture of the poet, nature plays the part as the Holy Ghost the Comforter does in a Christian's life; no wonder the poet pours out his heart to nature whenever he gets in touch with it. How many times one would hear testimonies from sincere Christians who would say something like "If it had not been for God, I should have killed myself." And what an analogy we see in Hsü who said, "I don't know how many thoughts of mine related to suicide are dissolved in the sky, in the clouds; or they are like a coolie's sweat, which the breeze blows away."
Shelley's writings positively establish the fact that the poet is religious in his own way, however persistently some people would still call him an atheist. Similarly, Hsü's literary works are a manifestation of a religious soul as well as a romantic character. Hu Shih, one of Hsü's best friends, comments that love is Hsü's religion and god. This is true if religion is understood as an ideal for one to live, strive and even die for; but if religion is treated as a spiritual fountain to soothe and refresh the soul, then in Hsü's case nature indisputably plays the part of it.
CHAPTER VI
Diction

The discussion of diction in modern Chinese poetry is faced with the puzzling question of "What is good pai-hua?" or we can put it another way: "What is bad pai-hua?" And this involves two points which must be clarified or any attempt to examine a poet's diction will be in vain: (1) To what extent can wen-yen elements be incorporated into pai-hua for the virtue of concision and elegance of the language? (2) To what extent should pai-hua be Europeanized?

Controversies about the above points have been going on since the onset of the New Literature Movement in 1917 and a brief review of the whole issue is necessary. Generally speaking, the New Literature Movement can be regarded as the Pai-hua Movement since its aim is to overthrow wen-yen and enthrone pai-hua as both the spoken and the written language. In this struggle pai-hua proves to be the victor although wen-yen has managed to survive among some die-hard writers and scholars. Amidst the pai-hua writers, however, pai-hua itself has witnessed their "civil war". Hu Shih in the beginning of the New Literature Movement already advocated a simple and lucid style for pai-hua, himself being against flowery language; but later writers like Chou Tso-jen, Ping Hsin and Lin Yutang held that some wen-yen words and even wen-yen style could be moderately used. The Communist writer and literary critic Ch'iu Ch'iu-pai lashed at wen-yen elements in pai-hua and at the same time condemned the indiscriminate Europeanization of the Chinese
language but upheld popularization of a "revolutionary Europeanized literature". The great master in modern Chinese literature Lu Hsün was opposed to *wen-yen* elements in *pai-hua* and was particularly keen on attacking Lin Yutang's *Yü-lu-t'ı* which is a kind of easy *wen-yen* in conversational style adopted by some late Ming writers; but in the thirties after the defeat of the so-called *Wen-yen* Revival, Lu Hsün seemed to be less positive, for when some *pai-hua* writers, chiefly the leftist ones, started to uphold *ta-chung-yü* the popular tongue or people's language free from both academic jargon and rhetorical embellishment, he agreed that "under inevitable conditions", some *wen-yen* in *pai-hua* could be accepted. Mao Tse-tung's view is not far from his superior and then inferior Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai's, and he in 1942 laid down "the language of the masses of the people" as the basis for all sorts of creative writings; but as far as the peculiar kind of *pai-hua* used in mainland China is concerned, it is normally embroidered with strings of political adjectives or adverbs or both, and is not exactly "the language of the masses of the people". Nowadays Taiwan's *pai-hua* in fact has fallen into different categories. The journalist's often smacks of *wen-yen* and the government publications are normally done in a kind of pseudo-*wen-yen* or pseudo-*pai-hua*. The "modern" poets, supposed to compose in *pai-hua*, frequently flirt with *wen-yen* expressions and sometimes even *wen-yen* particles; in this respect they follow the fashion of the first modern Chinese symbolist poet Li Chin-fa (1900? - ?). The *pai-hua* used by most novelists, story writers and essayists there seems to be more readable than that by others, and among
the essayists, the veteran writers Lin Yutang and Liang Shih-ch'iu are still influential. Their skilful blending of individual wen-yen words in their pai-hua has achieved something bordering on perfection.

Obviously, neither the Chinese writers nor the reading public have yet come to a conclusion about the acceptability of individual wen-yen words and expressions in pai-hua although wen-yen particles and syntax are universally frowned upon. To treat poetry exclusively, it seems that certain wen-yen elements in pai-hua cannot be avoided otherwise poetry can only be written in either Hu Shih-chih t'1 (Hu Shih style)\textsuperscript{10} or Chinese Communist style\textsuperscript{11} and many poetic qualities, notably the subtler ones, will be sadly sacrificed. But a strong dose of wen-yen will surely drug and kill pai-hua. The failure of some of the early pai-hua poetry serves as a good lesson.

Europeanization is a less heated issue because unlike wen-yen it is not part of Chinese tradition and writers can choose to ignore it. But it is now generally agreed that a moderate quantity of it vitalizes and flavours but too much of it will twist and strangle the language. Some of Lu Hsün's translations belong to this kind of grotesque Chinese, and time at an early date already passed its verdict against it despite the translator's great prestige, wit, erudition and influence.

Among the influential opinions on this question of wen-yen elements and Europeanization in pai-hua, Chu Kuang-ch'ien\textsuperscript{12} seems to have offered the most sensible answer. Referring to his own experience in writing, he said,
[I] do not avoid borrowing individual *wen-yen* words and expressions ... but I guard most vigilantly against *wen-yen* syntax and the customary *wen-yen* particles like *chih z*, *hu ë*, *che 昶*, *yen ū*, etc. since *wen-yen* has *wen-yen*'s atmosphere and *pai-hua* has *pai-hua*'s own; a mixture of both can hardly be harmonious.13

And further,

*Pai-hua* should to some degree be Europeanized, and should be logical and grammatical.14

In general, good *pai-hua* should therefore be free from *wen-yen* particles and syntax although individual *wen-yen* words and expressions can be selectively adopted for concision and elegance of the language. Admittedly, good *pai-hua* may and may not be precisely the everyday conversational speech. It all depends on the subject matter of a literary work and the way the writer presents it. On account of the impact of the Western culture, Europeanization in *pai-hua* seems inevitable, particularly in the absorption of new vocabulary, but adoption of Western syntax does not seem to be a necessity.

Of the various aspects of Hsü's diction to be discussed in the following paragraphs, some of them will be examined on the basis of Chu Kuang-ch'ien's statements.

Just as Thomas Hardy was fond of using some archaic and even obsolete words Hsü was evidently attracted to *wen-yen* four-character phrases in his early poems:

> 我四載奔波, 慕名求學 ...
> 廖靜! 汝永為我精神依戀之鄉! ...
> 設如我星明有福, 素願竟酬 ...
> 我故里聞此, 能弗怨汝僧愛, etc., etc.

(From: *Farewell, Cambridge*)
Most of the very early poems which were published in newspapers or magazines but not included in the poet's four collected works are studded with even more undesirable wen-yen expressions which destroy the pai-hua atmosphere of the poems concerned and disgust the reader with their hackneyedness. Indeed, who could stand a compound of Shakespeare and Robert Frost should there be such a mixture!

After all, wen-yen had been the dominating written language for a long, long time in China and its influence simply could not be shaken off in one day or through a movement, however radical it might be. In this historical perspective, no Zeus of critics may raise his thunderbolt to strike out at the poor poetic creatures though a universal pardon would err on the side of leniency. But in our present consideration of Hsü, it must be pointed out that the destructive wen-yen expressions, serious as they are, are relatively few; in fact the poet after the publication of his first collected works Chih-mo's Poems was quick to realize the undesirable existence of those remnants and did succeed in jettisoning them before he sailed farther on the adventurous sea of "new" poetry.

But wen-yen, as far as Hsü's poetic diction is concerned, has done the poet more good than harm. Lin Yutang is the most vigorous spokesman for this. The "great master of
humour" has been a steady admirer of Hsü's "elegant Chinese" for decades, and has maintained that Hsü owes a big debt to the tz'u and ch'ü of Sung and Yuan dynasties respectively. Lin's allegation is a more fitting garment to clothe the pioneer "new" poets like Hu Shih and Yu P'ing-po but not a later genius like Hsü Chih-mo. It is true that the former two at the first stage often relied on the irregular lines of tz'u and tempered and pressed them into their "new" poems, but Hsü was not contaminated by their early unhealthy tendency.

These might be the only tz'u words existing in Hsü's poetry. However, the fact that the last four lines are used in parenthesis and are supposed to be some sort of special dialogue may soften the critic's heart and induce him to pass them - only with a deep frown perhaps. Hsü never indicated that he was very fond of tz'u and ch'ü. Evidence has it that the poet loved T'ang poetry rather than tz'u and ch'ü though it is quite possible that he learned the musical quality from them both as any poet of sensibility who had a classical training in Chinese would. Now in terms of diction, the line in She Is Asleep:

These might be the only tz'u words existing in Hsü's poetry.
and such words as 星光, 夢境, 碧螺烟, 琴弦, 粉蝶, 翠蝶, and 春 in the same poem at once bring Li Shang-yin's celebrated and controversial Chin-se 錦瑟 to mind.

Yeh Shao-ch'un and Chu Tzu-ch'ing when discussing Hsü's essay "Wo so chih-tao ti K'ang-ch'iao" (The Cambridge I Know) said a good deal about the "pure" pai-hua as conceived by themselves, and their hostility toward all wen-yen expressions was noticeable; they would not even tolerate the use of individual wen-yen words. If they were right, most of Hsü's poetic works would be rubbish! As a matter of fact, Hsü's craftsmanship is his employing individual wen-yen words (but not hackneyed wen-yen phrases as mentioned above) in pai-hua sentences in such a way that the language in his hand becomes an elegant and expressive tool. Abstract discussion does not get us anywhere but let us look at a few concrete examples:

在氡氤氲的空中飞舞
(From: The Autumn Moon)

洒光辉照亮地面的坎坷
(From: Gazing at the Moon)

罩等春风到问一宿满艳
(From: Don't Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face)

向青草更青处漫溯
(From: Farewell Again to Cambridge)

吹下一针新碧
(From: In the Mountains)
The words underlined by the present writer in the above lines are definitely wen-yen but nobody, except people like Yeh and Chu, would protest that because of their presence, the few lines become non-pai-hua poetry. However, if their principle were followed for the "purity" of pai-hua, those words should be "purified" and would re-appear in a longer form as

在到處都有許多露水的天空飛舞.
洒光輝照亮地面的高高低低的地方.
單等春風到開一個完全美麗的風景.
向比青草更青的地方往上游很自由的划去.
一條新長起來的嫩綠色的松針.

respectively and there would be hardly any good poetry left.
It would be worse than changing Shelley's

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves

(From: To A Skylark)

into

Like a rose enclosed in a room
Of its own green leaves.

Clumsiness is no virtue in literature and Yeh and Chu's are clearly extreme views in spite of Chu's reputation as a
fair-minded critic. But incidentally, Chu did not live up to what he preached, for wen-yen words can be gathered without effort from his literary works.

The admission of individual wen-yen words into pai-hua poetry, especially lyrics, is something sensible and should not be objected to unless poets are content to write doggerel. Hsü's skill in mixing and moulding wen-yen words with other cruder pai-hua elements so as to produce a fine medium for modern Chinese poetry merits recognition though in some cases flaws do exist.

Lu Hsü once said that the adoption of Europeanization in Chinese was not a matter of curiosity but necessity. Unfortunately Europeanization in modern Chinese literature caused some chaos. The early twenties was certainly a shallow and crazy period of Europeanization and in the field of poetry Kuo Mo-jo stood out as the representative offender. Besides employing a great many transliterated words from western languages, he even used original English words and made some of his poems almost half English and half Chinese. Hsü was not less enamoured of western culture than Kuo; in one of his early poems Marseilles he wrote down his "declaration": "I love Europeanization", but he never committed such grave "sins" as Kuo. He did not at all insert English words into his poetry and even transliterated words like 心絵南 (symphony), 普羅利塔利亞 (proletariat), 安琪兒 (angel) and 煙士拔里純 (inspiration) are few. However, the use of the last three is justified for in his time wu-ch'an chieh-chi 無產階級 (for proletariat) and ling-kan 灵感 (for inspiration) were not yet firmly
established as correct terms and an-ch'i-erh 安琪兒 was already treated as a Chinese word. Yet the Europeanization in Hsu's diction is unmistakable. Words like shang-ti 上帝, t'ien-t'ang 天堂, ti-yü 地獄, hsüeh-chia 雪茄, yeh-ying 夜鶯, chui-hou shen-p' an 最後審判, ling-hun ti tzu-yu 靈魂的自由, ke-ming nu-ch' ao 革命怒潮, ai-chu lien-shen 偉主戀神, sang-chung 喪鐘, mo-kui 魔鬼, shih-tzu-chia 子架, chiao-t' ang 教堂, ku sheng-jen ti ch'i-tao 古聖人的祈禱, sheng-ming ti wu-t'ai 生命的舞台, etc., etc. show Western influence. Further, even if the setting is supposed to be Chinese in The Mid-night Wind in the Pines, A Night in Florence and The Inspiration of Love, the words convey a Western rather than Chinese impression.

The pronoun t' o 它 used for ying-erh 嬰兒 in On Board A Train is an interesting case, for t' o in classical Chinese is simply another way of writing t'a 他, but in modern Chinese, the correct form for ying-erh should be either t'a 他 if the sex is known, or t'a 她 if unknown. T' o in modern Chinese indicates an inanimate being instead of a living person. Whether the use of t' o by Hsu in the present case is Europeanization or archaism looks like a problem. Judging from the atmosphere, diction and stanza form of the poem concerned, Europeanization is more likely. Apparently the poet imitated the English "it" when he put down the Chinese t' o for ying-erh (baby) which, as the context shows, was used in a general sense, without special reference to the sex of the baby. Most Chinese readers would probably agree that such a choice of word in modern Chinese is unsatisfactory.
Europeanized syntax in modern Chinese is not very successful, and even a literary giant like Lu Hsun could not make its impact felt. According to the Chinese language tradition, a dependent clause precedes rather than follows its corresponding independent clause in a sentence and therefore

我不會出去要是天下雨.

would not be regarded as very correct in the past and should be changed to

要是天下雨, 我不會出去.

However, owing to the general tendency of Europeanization since the May Fourth Movement (1919), sometimes a dependent clause following its corresponding independent clause has been considered acceptable and 我不會出去要是天下雨 may well pass uncensured. The following are some of Hst's Europeanized sentences which no sensible critic would condemn:

在青草間飄拂, 她那潔白的裙衣.

(From: By A Mountain Path)

我記不得維也納

除了你, 阿麗思, etc.

(From: To —)

我亦願意讚美這神奇的宇宙...

假如她清風似的常在我的左右.

(From: Groans)

But some others cannot escape criticism because the language in them is twisted to such a degree that a person without some knowledge of a European language would find it rather hard to grasp the meaning and in fact some lines sometimes even cause
misunderstanding. For example:

刹那的同情也许，但他们不能
为你停留，妇人，你与你的儿女，

(From: By An Unknown Roadside)

那是纯爱的驱使我信。

(From: The Inspiration of Love, p. 557)

因為從你
我獲得生命的意識和
在我內心光亮的點上,

(From: The Inspiration of Love)

這回準是她的腳步了我想——

(From: A Ditty of Fallen Leaves)

The worst type would be the last stanza of Lei-feng in Moonlight:

深深的黑夜，依依的塔影——

團團的月彩，纖纖的波鱗——

假如你我蕩一支無遮的小艇，
假如你我創一個完全的夢境。

The trouble lies in the last two lines which when translated into English will be readily understood:

Would that we were rowing in a shelterless boat;
Would that we could create a perfect dream.
But in Chinese there is no equivalent to the above English structure. In this case it might well be said that Hsü conceived the idea in English first and then translated it into Chinese! As it is, the two lines in the original stand dangling in the stanza, for they have no independent clause(s) to hinge themselves on.

When Europeanized structures are considered as a whole, Hsü is not as black as he is commonly painted, for the condemnable words and sentences are not as many as they seem to be.

Hsü did not appear to possess a strong sense of grammar. The in the line 天黑它們也不得回來 in "Autumn Insect" is correct neither in English nor in Chinese; for there is a serious grammatical confusion between the and in the matter of number as related to the pronoun 它們.

Broken Thoughts should not be a poor product if it were not marred by a grammatically impossible adverb which, most inappropriately, starts each one of the four stanzas. It makes no good sense to say either in English or Chinese

深深的在深夜裏坐着

(Deeply I sit in the deep of the night.)

The poet deliberately selected the adverb for the noun 深夜 in order to heighten the musical effect of both alliteration and assonance in the poem. He might have been enchanted by Ou-yang Hsiu's famous line 庭院深深深幾許 or his favourite T'ang poet Li Po's 一叫一回腸一斷,三春三月懷三巴 or the like, but his own attempt was a fiasco. It is strange that Hsü, with
his genius and knowledge, did not come to something like
静靜的在靜夜里坐著 which should be grammatically correct
and the alliteration and assonance effect is even more striking
than the original.

Keats coined many rare adjectives in his poetry but not
with much success.  Hsu may have been influenced by Keats in
this respect and won nothing but discredit.  The following are
a few examples that startle the reader, and seem to jerk his
ear at the same time: 俊的村的命全盤交給了它 (From:  The
Train on the Rail), 悲悼的新鮮 (From:  By An Unknown Road-
side), 活動著自剖着我的-把鋼刀(From:  Don't Blame Me for Pulling
A Long Face), 燒死沙漠裏歸去的雛燕 (From:  Homage), 一個活命
的急 (From:  Sin and Retribution), 老頭活該他的愛 and 他是天
生那老骨頭硬(From:  Hardy), 前天她在水晶宮似照亮的
大廳裏跳舞 (From:  The Logic of Destiny), etc.

Dryden's words still ring true that a poet should not be too
bold in his use of words.26

Such expressions as 這光陰應分的摧殘 (From:  No
More, Lei-feng), 一樁樁更鮮豔的沉淪 (From:  Sin and Retri-
bution) and 淚怦怦的人生 (From:  Little Grass and Flowers in
the Morning Mist) are debatable issues.  Those who are fascinated
by them would be as many as those who frown on them.  Perhaps
it is a more objective attitude to treat them with some respect –
the case being somewhat analogous to Li Chin-fa's poem Ch'î-fu
棄婦 (The Forsaken Woman).  The language is stretched, no
doubt, but not to the point of breaking and the beauty and charm
desperately lie in its tension and the excitement incurred.
However, such lines as:

(From: Thank Heaven, My Heart Leaps Up Once Again)

這心頭火差一點變海水裏泡
(From: The White-Bearded Old Sea)

are the picture of clumsiness.

Vulgarity was one of Hsu's aversions; but oddly enough, the word 狗尿 (From: Calvary) should crop up in his works though the context might justify it. 飛娘, 槿翁, 崔姑 and 月兒 (From: No. 7 Shih-hu Lane) should be counted as literarily vulgar because they and others like 風姨, 花妹 etc. in modern Chinese literature are the brands of sentimentality that make one's flesh creep.

Ellipsis occurs frequently in Hsu. The device is accomplished by the use of one word which though seemingly detached in the sentence never fails to convey the meaning or a series of actions the context requires. The following are typical: 靜, 舞, 靜默 (From: She Is Asleep), 葡萄 (From: Sin and Retribution), 愁悶 (From: A Queer World), 轉 (From: Don't Pinch Me, Pain), 黑暗, 瘋 (From: I Am Waiting for You), 美 (From: Scenery Seen from the Train) and 淚 (From: Villages' Melodies). The staccato effect of these single words is obvious and a heavy reliance on such words will bring about monotony and also betray a weak descriptive ability, but in Hsu, the appearance of them is good enough to gain credit.
Harold Acton criticizes Hsü for clichés. In all truth, condemnation is justifiable though a thoroughly original poet must be rather rare. Apart from the hackneyed wen-yen expressions largely found in his early poems as mentioned above, Hsü in his later works tumbled into another fault, i.e. pai-hua clichés. Although less obnoxious than their wen-yen counterparts, they are as unwelcome as hangers-on in the realm of pai-hua poetry. In Hsü's case they are mostly adjectives and their presence is owing to the poet's innocent desire to polish his works and his mistake in picking up the wrong varnish. The following are a few of them, taken at random from his later poems only:

烈火般的煎熬 and 巨靈的掌
(From: The Unforgettable)

霧海中的天 and 四面八方的風
(From: The Wide Sea)

白雲 and 晴空
(From: Scenery Seen from the Train)

任憑海有時枯, 石有時燦
(From: Don't Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face)

秋月的明輝
(From: The Life in Grey)

雲在藍天飛行
(From: The Villages' Melodies)
Fortunately, the merit of Hsü's poetry does not solely depend on diction and even in diction he has other achievements to counterbalance the effect of clichés.

More than once Hsü gave his reader the impression that he had no literary genius and found creative writing an arduous task. He was modest; but that he was a serious artist is also true. The few manuscripts facsimile-d in the recently published Complete Works of his show that the changes he made to the poems are all improvements on them. The original title of (A Queer World) was (A Silent Sympathy). Evidently (A Queer World) was finally chosen in order to convey more Hardyan flavour which was in turn enhanced by the last two lines

I have no love; this is a queer world—
Is who strumming those discordant human chords?

that replaced the original

I have no love; this is a queer world—
Again harsh, cold, like a face, like a world without emotion!

The improvement made in the poem I Have a Love is remarkable. stands definitely superior to because it paints a perfect picture to match the broken heart and broken crystal in the poem. The improvement made in She Is Asleep follows the same principle and has the same success.
Reduplication of words as a Chinese poetic device can be seen even in the Book of Songs, the oldest anthology of Chinese poetry with a history of over two thousand years. This device helps to achieve music, harmony and emphasis. But like sugar and fat, too much of it will cloy and will, as Wen I-to says, expose the poet's weakness in imagination. Keats knew how to use it in English poetry; his famous odes show his craftsmanship in this besides many other qualities. Hsu obtained the desired effect when he wrote The Joy of a Snowflake, Sayonara and Hearing the Ritual Music from Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple. But the strongest manifestation of Hsu's mastery of this device is seen in his On Board the Shanghai-Hangchow Train. The reduplicative words in it can adequately compete with Li Ch'ing-chao's in her immortal Sheng sheng man. Some people may think that Hsu was too fond of resorting to reduplication of words; but since he was always the master instead of slave to it, he knew exactly where to draw a line, and therefore the device never jeopardized but harmonized and beautified many of his poems. However, a sister device, namely repetition of synonyms, almost ruined him in the poems like Nature and Life, The Poison, The White Flag and The Baby. He probably thought that a group of adjectives of nouns or adverbs would automatically strengthen his verse especially when violence and passion were the themes or when emphasis was needed. He forgot that to pile up things like children playing building blocks would allow no great height; the more blocks added would mean the greater the danger of falling. Nature and Life furnishes some material for our present discussion. This poem is
reminiscent of Byron's description of a storm scene in his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Canto 3, XCII-XCVII). A comparison will immediately expose the Chinese poet's inferiority. Byron used repetition, but sparingly, and the thunder effect was achieved by imagery and suggestion, not by scraping synonyms from a thesaurus. But look at the heap of words used by Hstü:

"猛进,猛进!" "猖獗，暴烈，威武","失色，动摇，颠覆","颤抖，叠着","风，雨，雷，霆，山岳的震怒","猛进，猛进! 矛锐的，猛烈的，吼着，打擊着，咆哮着","恋爱，嫉妒，咒詛，嘲諷，报复，犧牲，烦闷，疯犬似的跳着，追着，咆哮着，咬着","毒蜥似的铰着，翻着，掃着，舐着——","猛进，猛进! 狂风，暴雨，電閃雷鳴."

Indeed, one who bangs on the table and shouts to the microphone is not necessarily the most effective speaker, and Liszt's rhapsodies do not make him the greatest composer.

*Nung te hua pu k'ai* (too thick to be diluted), the title of an essay by Hstü, is sometimes used to describe his style of writing. It is a comment of half praise and half disparagement. Undoubtedly in poetic diction Hstü learned a great deal from Keats and other romantics like Rossetti and Swinburne. The key words in the fifth stanza of *She Is Asleep*:

醉心，彩衣，芳醴，藤花，舞，葡萄囊，颠倒，和昏迷

are almost a direct but clever borrowing from the second stanza of *Ode to A Nightingale*. And words associated with mysticism like 神闕 (From: *She Is Asleep*), 昏冥交抱著火電 and 在一切纖微的深處 (From: *The Autumn Moon*), 蘆田是仙家的別殿 (From: *The Reeds before the Ch'iu-hsüeh Convent*), 赤裸裸的靈魂們匍匐在主眼前 (From: *The Judgment Day*),
and with music, chiefly alliteration and assonance, reveal the influence of Rossetti and Swinburne. A general sensuous quality is very prominent in Hsü's poetic diction and She Is Asleep is most illustrative. A glance at such words as 星光, 白蓮, 碧螺烟, 濯泉, 琴弦, 粉蝶, 翠蝶, 清芬, 闪亮的黄金, 光豔的小艇, 醉心, 彩衣, 芳醴, 藤花, 葡萄囊, 颠倒, 昏迷, 三春的颜色, 香肌, 玫瑰, 月季, 朝陽, 水仙, 鮮妍芳菲, 花心, 金梭, 銀絡, 晚霞, 紫雲, 玉腕, 金棱, 彩霞, 歌, 舞, 萩瀧, 露珠, 荷盤 and 晨曦 will be enough for one to understand how Hsü has painted a picture of Byzantine colours and produced both sweet music and fragrance of flowers through the words; and yet he has not left the reader with "a heart high sorrowful and cloyed, A burning forehead, and a parching tongue." These words of Hsü's intoxicate to a certain extent but do not drug the reader. Among modern Chinese poets, perhaps no one except Wen I-to can compete with Hsü in such excellence.

One word about colour words. In Hsü's poetry they are fairly evenly distributed between hot and cold colours. But the fact remains that those carrying gorgeous hues like purple, red, golden, yellow and rainbow are fewer than those signifying cold colours like white, blue and green. This goes in harmony with other aspects of Hsü's diction since in his poetry words associated with concepts of peace, quietness, coldness, lightness and smallness play a more vital part than those connected with ideas of violence, noisiness, passion, heaviness, heat and largeness. His flowers are mainly white lotus blooms, flanked by plum and peach blossoms, and followed by lilies, huai flowers, magnolia, roses, yüeh-chi, narcissus and ivy. Most of
them do not give strong fragrance. His winds are usually breezes, seldom hurricanes. He prefers night, moon, stars, churches, temples and graveyards to sun, blue sky, modern high buildings and market-places. The sea and the ocean are Kuo Mo-jo and Ping Hsin's, and Hsü is content with his slow-moving River Cam and the serene pool lying in a mysterious gloom in the shade of some old elms in Cambridge. Hsü once discussed the skylark of Shelley and the nightingale of Keats with passion and ecstasy before his students. It is interesting to note that these two immortal birds in English literature may figuratively stand for the two important aspects of Hsü's personality and poetry — one is full of action, "like a cloud of fire", "like an unbodied joy" of "sweet thoughts", the other, contemplation. Here the contemplation is not the bird's but that which is aroused by its song and the "tender" and "balmy" night atmosphere. On the whole, the nightingale rather than the skylark prevails in Hsü who is more a religious man than a revolutionary, especially in the last few years before his untimely death.

Hsü's poetic diction shows its real strength when the poet is not trying to shine forth and dazzle but unburden his heart, to express his "emotion recollected in tranquility." Words sparkling originality are numerous in his lyrics; the following are only a few: 轉膽滿的懶暱 藿骨的冷涼 悲哀和著歡暢 (From: The Autumn Moon), 照亮我記憶的幽黑 (From: To _), 背着輕快的晚涼 牛放了工 隱著做夢 (From: Scenery Seen from the Train), 在妖魔的臍腑內掙扎 (From: Life), 一輪惶惶不整的光華 (From: Gazing at the Moon), 青湛湛的河水 曲玲玲的流轉 繞一個梅花島,畫幾個美人湯 (From: Undine's Wedding Song).
With the corpus of Hstū's poetical works in consideration, the comment "too thick to be diluted" is a little "too thick" for the appraisal of his diction. A slight alteration would perhaps suit better and nung erh hua te k'ai (thick but dilutable) might be an acceptable suggestion. Actually, poems of rich Byzantine flavour are not more than those which are pregnant with the conventional water-colour painting quality of transparency — but it is never that kind of transparency which borders on insipidity; Hstū's diction always contributes to his poems "an irresistible charm" that is peculiarly his own. Chou Tso-jen compares Hstū's prose to the Tientsin pear, "smooth, beautiful and lucid"; Chou's words can also be used to describe the poet's poetic diction in spite of the shortcomings already pointed out. All in all, ch'ing-li (transparency and beauty), rather than nung-yen (richness and gorgeousness), is the general quality of Hstū's diction, and light green and light yellow being the poet's favourite colours also confirm this. This quality is the conscious product as well as the natural flow of the poet whose transliteration of English words also speaks for him. 青翠 (cold and green, for Florence), 白朗礦 (white, bright rock, for Mount Blanc) and 沁芳南 (oozing fragrance and south, for symphony) are typical.

Finally, Hstū is one of those who bring colloquial words into verse with remarkable success. The high degree of naturalness and accuracy of such words are the very life and soul of The Autumn Insect, The West Wind, Sin and Retribution, A Little Picture of Happy Poverty, Calvary, Don't Pinch Me, Pain, The Great Marshal, Another Experiment, Hymn to the Captive and
A Golden Ray. Acclaim has been heaped on such superb colloquialisms by critics even though they may not praise the individual poems as a whole. Indeed, even Tsang K'o-chia, one of the most influential Chinese Communist poets and critics, has to commend Hsü for the quality of ch'ing-hsin (being clear and fresh) in his poetic language.45

The merits and demerits of Hsü's poetic diction stand side by side in his works, but on the whole the former overshadow the latter. His diction should have attained something like perfection had he been blessed with a longer life. This assumption is made on the ground that he was a modest, sincere and diligent artist; his courage and determination to criticize himself and accept criticism were assets that would have advanced him to excellence.46 But as it is, he may not stand ahead of Wen I-to and Chu Hsiang if diction is isolated for evaluation; indeed, Wen being a master of diction is beyond dispute and Chu Hsiang's shortcomings in diction are not so glaring as Hsü's.
CHAPTER VII

Imagery

The definition of poetic imagery often causes difficulty since critics think differently about it.\(^1\) It is no less confusing than the definition of good pai-hua or bad pai-hua as mentioned in the foregoing chapter. In this discussion the common approach is followed and imagery is understood as "the expression of sense-experience, channelled through sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste",\(^2\) and simile, metaphor and personification will also receive due attention since as far as Hsü Chih-mo's poetry is concerned, this would seem the appropriate way to deal with his imagery.

There is no indication that Hsü ever painted any pictures or played any musical instruments, but he went to art exhibitions and concerts,\(^3\) and laid great emphasis on the link between literature and art and music. According to him, art and music are a writer's mental training, without which no man of letters can hope to arrive at excellence.\(^4\) Consistent to his "theory", the imagery in his poetry is largely visual and auditory, and as nature is worshipped like God by him,\(^5\) his imagery is closely related to natural phenomena.

The night (evening included), moon, star, and flowers appear as the major "colours" in the "pictures" of Hsü's poetry and are to be discussed in the following paragraphs either separately or collectively.

The night is a source of sentimentality as well as profound feelings in Chinese poetry and its impact on Hsü is
understandable. But the more significant influence is from Shelley, Keats and Tagore. Both Shelley and Keats sing about the beauty of the night and in Keats, it is also coloured with mysticism which is the main feature of the night in Tagore.

Hsü's night is often accompanied by either the star or the moon or both, to convey beauty, sweetness, mystery, quietness and above all sorrow which is induced by pain, loneliness and sometimes death. The Cuckoo is very typical. In it the night is the setting for all the images, or rather, the very image that holds all the others together; for the "cuckoo", "shadows of the trees", "moths", "clouds", "moon", "stars", "love", "songs", "morning light", and "dreams" in the poem would fall to pieces if not sustained by the all-pervading night. Such emotional associations with the night are very common in Hsü.6

The night is allegorically compared to life in On Board a Train, Who Knows and It Is Rare; then the general image is not beauty and sweetness or the like but, to borrow Keats's words, "the weariness, the fever and the fret." It is easy to recognize the powerful influence of Keats's Ode to a Nightingale on Hsü. The night scene in the Ode has cast its sombre hue on most of the important works of the Chinese poet and whenever there is night, the Ode's sweetness and pain are felt. It may be incidentally pointed out that the Ode has permeated the life and works of Hsü7 and is an interesting subject for more intensive study.

The predominant night image is made more conspicuous as juxtaposed with the scanty reference to the day which in Hsü
is chiefly confined to the misty and obscure period of the early morning carrying the lingering flavour of the night. The day occupies no significant place in Hsü's imagery.

The night reigning, it is no surprise that the moon and the star are exalted in Hsü's works. Evidently the moon as an attribute for the beauty of woman has a very long history in China; in the Book of Songs there is already such imagery and Hsü's reference of it to Lu Hsiao-man is just natural. The association between the moon and the general impression of beauty and light is too common in literature to deserve elaboration and in fact worn-out moon images are numerous. In Hsü's case, it does not appear that the moon adds any significant lustre to his works with the exception of a few metaphors in Two Moons and Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple. Their exquisite originality may be commended.

The star outshines the moon in Hsü's imagery. It is compared to gold and symbolizes the poet's ideal. In Search of a Star, I Have a Love and A Feeble Gleam are the manifestation of it. Hu Shih uses the star also in this fashion and Chu Hsiang's star imagery is particularly comparable to Hsü's. Another possible and interesting comparison is Kuo Mo-jo's star imagery; whereas Kuo's demonstrates a revolutionary's distress and fighting spirit, Hsü's speaks for an idealist's passion and vision. At this stage of the present discussion, the bark must be introduced since it is often linked with the star in Hsü and is either the means to the ideal or a component of perfection. The star-bark-ideal image echoes strongly Shelley's poetry; for instance the "island", "grass", "flowers", "flowers",
"animals", "birds", "a swift bark", "the paradise", "love", "joy and freedom" in the last stanza of This Is a Cowardly World can all be seen against an almost identical background in Shelley's Epipsychidion; but Hsü's intelligent borrowing will not incur any justifiable censure. The star's associative meanings like light, mystery, height, beauty, etc. are everywhere in Hsü. The following with such imagery are some of the finest: She Is Asleep (first stanza), In Memory of Katherine Mansfield (first stanza), Farewell Again to Cambridge (fifth stanza), The Train on Its Rail (fifth and fifteenth stanzas) and Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple.

The artistic value of the star in the sky and that of the firefly on the earth is generally the same. One who is charmed by the former is naturally fascinated by the latter. In Hsü the firefly is noticeable but holds a far less superior place than its heavenly counterpart to which it mostly serves as a contrast or a foil. Two of Hsü's firefly images sustain impairment on account of the poet's inadequate knowledge of the objects concerned: the line "Like thousands of fireflies, swarming to a blaze" (in The Rebirth of Spring) is absurd because not fireflies but moths will fly toward light. The image should be acceptable if it were not spoiled by the fireflies. The other line is in On Board a Train.

那細弱的草根也在搖曳輕快的青螢！
(The weak and tiny roots of grass are also swinging with agile fireflies!)

The above is impossible because the roots of grass, being in the earth, will never swing.
The dream is also a common image in Hsü. It on the whole stands for the subtle beauty of obscurity, tinged with a faint sorrow and sweetness and \textit{I Don't Know in Which Direction the Wind Blows} is most typical of Hsü's dream imagery.\textsuperscript{20} In Chinese the dream and the \textit{yen} (mist, smoke or incense) have a very close relation; their momentary existence, hence an illusory character, is sufficient to capture the poet's imagination and in fact they often appear together, one helping and supporting the other. This is also seen in Hsü. \textit{Yen} as smoke is just part of the ordinary scenery in the countryside. As mist it is a natural phenomenon that in Hsü's "word pictures" enhances the value of obscurity and lightness just as it often does in Chinese painting. The most beautiful image created by \textit{yen} as incense is in \textit{She Is Asleep}:

She is now dreaming -
A curl of blue smoke rising from an incense-burner.

Here the \textit{yen}'s gradual ascension and final dissolving into the air represent the process of a person's falling asleep, or, poetically, entering the dreamland. The image stems from the Chinese classical poetry which is fairly heavy with the dream and \textit{yen}.\textsuperscript{21} However, the \textit{yen} in \textit{The Inspiration of Love} is a sign of Europeanization for the image there is a Biblical one, designated by the presence of Jesus, and the reference to prayer is positively Christian.

The flower imagery in Hsü is another means to convey beauty. As has been touched upon in the chapter of "Diction", of all the flowers the white lotus bloom is the most prominent.\textsuperscript{22}
It is the symbol of beauty, purity, transcendence, solemnity, agility, nobility and uprightness, and is almost exclusively the image of Lu Hsiao-man. This is oriental rather than western thought and springs mainly from the Buddhist sutras. It is interesting to note that Hsü did not follow his general tendency of Europeanization to adopt the lily for the lotus bloom. The explanation is not that Hsü was necessarily more strongly influenced by the Chinese tradition but that the associative meanings of the white lotus bloom are richer than the lily's. The other flowers bearing significance in imagery are peach and plum blossoms. The former are endowed with Chinese traditional symbols, i.e. young beauty and woman's sad destiny. As to the plum blossoms, two images in Hsü should be given credit. The first is in *Plum Blossoms and Snow*. Its first stanza is a description of a beautiful snow scene, posing as a contrast to the last stanza which refers to a Chinese anti-imperialist patriotic event, the March Eighteenth Incident (1926); on that day twenty-six demonstrators were killed and more than two hundred were injured by the guards of the warlord government in Peking. The plum blossom in the poem is appropriate for its colour resembles blood and furthermore it is the national emblem of China. The radical revolutionary may not like this image for its protest is only submerged and it lacks agitation and vehemence. The other image of the plum blossom looks like a Chinese painting:

Clusters of bright clouds are there sometimes,
   Gently offering some colour to the old men's grizzled hair,
Like the blossoms of a rough plum tree in moonlight,
Revealing their fresh beauty and their fragrance.

In Hsü's auditory imagery, the bird and the church or temple bell are most significant. The birds with names appearing in Hsü's poetry include the swallow, cuckoo, partridge, oriole and nightingale. The first two are negligible and the cuckoo and oriole are depicted as if they were the nightingale which actually is the dominating image among birds in Hsü. Indeed, Keats's nightingale can easily be identified in Hsü's bird imagery since its song, passion and ecstasy are unmistakable.26 Besides, Shelley's skylark also plays a salient role. From the words "fire", "bright cloud" and "vernal radiance" in The Oriole and the partridge's shrill sound in Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple Shelley's "blithe Spirit" is discerned.

As a contrast to the silvery, melodious warbling of the bird, Hsü's imagery of the church or temple bell rings a slow, soothing and sacred music imbued with mysticism. He wrote in his essay "The Cambridge I Know":

Listening to the sound of water,
the evening church bell in the neighbourhood
and the cattle chewing their cud by the riverside
under a starlight sky is one of the most mysterious experiences I gained in Cambridge.
As to the other auditory images, they are mirror to the personality of the poet, for some of them like strong winds, waves, thunders, heavy rain, etc.\textsuperscript{27} denote noise and action whereas the others, greater in number, like breezes, ripples, insects, fallen leaves, mountain cascades, etc.\textsuperscript{28} suggest tranquility and contemplation; in terms of art, the latter in Hsü are superior to the former. Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple is very typical of Hsü's auditory imagery which gives a synthesis of both types of music that culminate in a great sound - silence, or the harmony of all sounds. Silence as a peculiar auditory effect can also be found in other poems, for example: "For the farewell music is silence" (in \textit{Farewell Again to Cambridge}), "Silence is the universe in universal mourning" (in \textit{I Am Waiting for You}) and "The mountain stream has brought its singing strings to silence" (in \textit{She Is Asleep}).

There is no need to elaborate on other types of imagery in Hsü because of their relative unimportance. \textit{She Is Asleep} can be regarded as the representative of all and still it is clear that the visual and auditory images eclipse others. Hsü in his poetry is chiefly a painter and a musician and his art and music can be likened to John Robert Cozens' water colour paintings and Fritz Kreisler's violin pieces respectively.

Similes are numerous in Hsü. Some of them are in an undecorated simple form like:

Shoulder to shoulder they sat before a sunny window,
Like a pair of old timid swallows in cold days.

(From: \textit{A Queer World})
But more often they appear in a group:

Like a rush of sad wind, like a shower of miserable rain, like a fall of fallen flowers.

(From: Hearing the P'i-p'a at Midnight)

Or the simile is extended with an addition of description:

Like a mad dog that leaps, runs, barks, bites;
Like a poisonous snake that twists, turns, sweeps, licks.

(From: Nature and Life)

Obviously, whether it is a string of similes or an extended one, the whole device rests on the foundation of repetition and is therefore often in danger of being monotonous and of loss of emphasis owing to over-emphasis. Poems with such similes in Hsu sound a tone highly analogous to that as expressed in some of Shelley's works, which may be called the intensity of the romantic poets perhaps. It is also present in Kuo Mo-jo and Wen I-to, both being Hsu's contemporaries, though these three poets write differently.

A string of similes may be used more justifiably and effectively if each of them is extended in greater length as in the first few stanzas of Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple because the monotony will be less felt when such "harbingers" of similes as "like", "as", "as though", etc. are not crammed into one single stanza of a poem. The way the simile is presented in On My Sick-bed and Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple has its roots in Shelley's To A Skylark which is extolled by Hsu. If Shelley's
similes are praiseworthy, Hsü's in the two poems mentioned above should not be slighted because although the form is a borrowed robe, the content breathes its own freshness.

It is not unusual that a simile is used side by side with a metaphor in Hsü, and in several cases such a mixture in a line or a few lines demonstrates Hsü's poetic genius as well as his skill. Life and the following are examples:

Look at her, a full round disc of beauty
Rising from the sea of clouds
Which are as dark as the rioters.

(From: Autumn Moon)

and

You are shining like a star,
I am merely a midget in the human world,
A pinch of sand or earth.

(From: The Inspiration of Love)

The metaphor is less common than the simile in Hsü. It is often used in an extended form and remarkable instances can be seen in Life, Farewell Again to Cambridge, She Is Asleep, etc. Sometimes a metaphor is extended to such a degree that the poem concerned is just one all-embracing metaphor and most of the objects become symbols. For example In Search of A Star implies the poet's quest of his ideal and his fear and estimate of a success not to be enjoyed by himself, and therefore the "dark night" symbolizes the human life; the "blind and lame horse", the poet's limited ability and power; the "bright star", the
ideal; the "crystal-like brightness", the realization of the ideal; the "dead horse and the dead horseman", the failure of the idealist himself.

Hsü's metaphors on the whole heighten the language and enhance the quality of his poetry. In other words, originality is present and the cumbersome elements of his similes are relatively few in his metaphors. Harold Acton's words: "His importance lay in opening long-locked doors for new 'figures of speech'. He did not reach the heights" are appropriate comments on Hsü. As to the "heights", it is rather doubtful whether any Chinese "new" poet has the time and ambition and perseverance to work his way up to them. The political and social climate in the last few decades and up to the present day does not seem conducive to the growth of a Chinese Shakespeare or Milton.

Personification abounds in Hsü's poetry. It usually appears in those poems written either in a conversational, or familiar, style such as *The Autumn Insect, The West Window, Change and No Change, Ding, Dong - Break It, The White-Bearded Old Sea, Undine's Wedding Song, The Train on Its Rail, Seasons, and In Front of the Church of Exeter*, or in a pure lyrical vein such as *The Cuckoo, The Autumn Moon, Lines Written At An Inn, Gazing at the Moon, Two Moons, No. Seven of Shih-hu Lane and The Five Old Men's Peak*. Generally speaking, the poems in the first category achieve more excellence than those in the second as the poet is always at home in a familiar style. *The Autumn Insect*, for example, depends entirely on the strength of the wholesale personification, and yet the poem pleases rather than cloys because of the poet's superb dramatization of the objects.
Even a superficial study will reveal that the personified objects are mostly related to nature. The poet's interest in the creations of God rather than those of man is evident. In the last category of poems mentioned in the above paragraph, personification often goes to the moon, not without some exquisite result. But No. Seven of Shih-hu Lane, as if led astray to the borderland of sentimentality and hackneyedness by the device of personification, is more or less spoiled by it.

With the night, moon, star, firefly, yen (smoke, mist and incense), dream, white lotus bloom, nightingale, church or temple bell, etc. forming the backbone, Hsü's imagery carries the prevailing atmosphere of tenderness and tranquility and in many ways exhales a Keatsian flavour. However, unlike Keats who indulged in mythology, Hsü very seldom drew on mythological or historical sources, and allusions are scarce in his works. His passion for the antiquities rather than modern inventions, which Farewell, Cambridge fully displays, is not a scholar's interest in history or past civilizations but a poet's love of the environment those objects provide for his contemplation of personal and sometimes even universal problems. Wen I-to is both poet and scholar, but Hsü is only a poet, a pure one; his imagery speaks for the man.
CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

In the foregoing chapters we have seen what Hsü Chih-mo wrote about woman, love, revolution and religion in his poetry and how he by using his poetic techniques dealt with them.

Hsü's love poems are highly personal and many of them concern his own love affair with Lu Hsiao-man. The three stages of his love life - pursuit, consummation and failure are all faithfully recorded and prove to be valuable materials for anybody who is interested to write the poet's biography. Hsü sometimes wrote about women of the poor and miserable masses and such works can well be called social poems through which he came to grips with social problems of his days.

Love, being idealized by the poet, is not included in the chapter "Woman" but treated as a separate topic. This Love consists of two phases, the first being the winning of a beautiful woman and the second, the realizing of a creative life beneficial to mankind through the harmonious co-ordination and spiritual union of the beautiful woman.

Chapters IV and V are about Hsü's attitude toward revolution and religion as expressed in his poetry. The poet felt concerned about the social and political conditions in China and advocated his spiritual revolution as remedy. This "revolution", in opposition to any armed revolt, has a religious core for the poet was interested in the probing of questions such as life, death, nature, the spiritual world, etc., all associated with religion in general.
As far as diction is concerned, Hsü Chih-mo in the beginning of his poet's career wrote in *pai-hua* which was however marred by many *wen-yen* expressions. He was quick enough to make improvements and the language in his later works shows a fairly high degree of skill in blending individual *wen-yen* words in *pai-hua* which is also considerably Europeanized. Both beauty and stiltedness exist in his Europeanized poetic diction. It is generally agreed that Hsü has both merits and demerits in his diction; the former overshadow the latter though both are sufficiently conspicuous in his works.

Hsü was a word-picture painter and word-music maker in his poetry and therefore his imagery is mainly visual and auditory. In both poetic diction and imagery, Hsü is a pioneer in modern Chinese poetry. Although prosody is excluded in this paper on account of the scope of the present discussion, it should be noted that Hsü is the most zealous experimenter in poetic forms for Chinese "new" poetry and has opened up an almost unknown land for his contemporaries and others coming after him.

Hsü's poetry shows his debt to English literature more than to Chinese literature. His overall romanticism is closely related to that of Byron, Shelley and Keats. His method of objective portrayal and even the subject matter chosen for his social poems manifest a direct influence of Hardy. A Keatsian flavour is strong in some of his lyrics which sometimes also convey some Shelleyan thought. The humanitarianism of Rolland, Tagore and Russell colours his works; and his attitude toward religion has been formed chiefly under the influence of Tagore.
and Hardy. Hsu in his prose works praised the above-mentioned people and he modelled his life, his philosophy of life and his poetry in general on them unconsciously as well as consciously. He once said, "I don't deny that I am a hero-worshipper."¹

In addition to his poetical works which are the expression of his life experience and also fruits of his many experiments in poetic diction, imagery and prosody, Hsu's contribution to modern Chinese poetry extends to his social activities as a promoter of "new" poetry. In this capacity he is the most outstanding figure among all men of letters in modern Chinese literary history. Despite his unhappy life in later years which seems to have obstructed the stream of his poetic inspiration, he never lost hope in poetry and was never weary of helping others, notably the younger poets, to launch into the poetic world. Many Chinese scholars and writers tried their hand at "new" poetry after the New Literature Movement, but the only person who continually wrote and advanced the cause of "new" poetry was Hsu Chih-mo. His belief that "new poetry has its future... It is the most unmistakable voice of the age"² never wavered, however unproductive he was for a period of time after his second marriage with Lu Hsiao-man. Because of his activities and contagious enthusiasm, his name eclipsed all other poets though he was not necessarily the best of them. His tremendous popularity was not enjoyed by his contemporaries. His influence in his time is understandable. In a way at least, the works of later poets like Feng Chih and Pien Chih-lin³ may be regarded not only as continued experiments of Hsu but as the fruits of his experiments. Hsu Chih-mo's influence was suddenly checked
when the Anti-Japanese Aggression War broke out in China in 1937 for most poets turned to write military songs and propaganda poetry in free verse. Nowadays Hsü's poetry suffers as much as his friend Hu Shih's scholarly works in mainland China and his place in literature has been deliberately removed by the Communists. However, he is not entirely ignored in places outside China. He is by no means considered very important by those who call themselves "modern poets" in Taiwan but the less "modern" ones still learn from him.5

Everything taken into account, Hsü's rank among modern Chinese poets should not be a low one. His revolutionary and social messages are not so clear and persuasive as Kuo Mo-jo's and his language may not be so "pure" as Chu Hsiang's and is less lucid and transparent than Ping Hsin's, but he is a better poet than any of them and a much more important figure than even Wen I-to in the development of modern Chinese poetry.

It is indeed a sad event that modern Chinese poetry when growing was deprived of its most enthusiastic promoter, experimenter and versifier. The fifth stanza of The Reeds before the Ch'iu-hsüeh Convent sounds like prediction of his own life and fate:

The reed-waves were then dancing in the moonlight,
I quietly contemplate the mystery of life;
A new song of it I was about to write -
Oh, the reed-pipe, broken, can sing no more!
Abbreviation

CW. = Chiang, Fu-ts'ung and Liang, Shih-ch'iu, (ed.),

Hsü Chih-mo ch'üan-chi 徐志摩全集
(Complete Works of Hsü Chih-mo), Taipei,
Chuan-chi wen-hstieh ch'u-pan she, 1969, 6 volumes.
Notes

(Chapter I, Background)


2. Wen-ye (文言) is translated into English as literary Chinese or classical Chinese.

3. Ch'en Ts'ung-chou, Hsü Chih-mo gien-p'u (A Chronological Biography of Hsü Chih-mo, [Shanghai], [No publisher], [1949]), p. 5.


5. Ch'en Ts'ung-chou, op. cit., p. 8. Hsü's article shows the influence of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's "Lun hsiao-shuo yu ch'un-chih ti kuan-hsi" (On the Relationship between Fiction and the Governing of People), in Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Yin-ping shih wen-ch'i (Collected Works of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao), Shanghai, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1926, Ch'uan 17, pp. 16-19.


10. According to Ch'en Ts'ung-chou, op. cit., pp. 14-15, Hsü and his four Chinese roommates "got up at six. At seven, held a morning meeting (in remembrance of the humiliation China had suffered). Sang the national anthem in the evening. Went to bed at ten-thirty. During the daytime, studied hard; and besides that, did exercise, running and also read newspapers."


17. Lin Ch'ang-min (1876-1925), also known as Lin Tsung-meng, scholar and government official eager to establish constitutionalism and parliamentary government in China.

18. Lin Hui-yin was staying with her father in England at that time.


20. Hsü's letter to his parents (dated 26th Nov. 1920) shows that Chang Yu-i is not a passionate type of person like himself; see Ch'en Ts'ung-chou, op. cit., p. 18.


22. See the following for reference: CW., Vol. IV, p. 512; Liang Shih-ch'iu, T'an Hsü Chih-mo (About Hsü Chih-mo), Taipei, Yüan-tung t'ü-shu kung-ssu, 1958, p. 52; Ch'en Ts'ung-chou, op. cit., p. 23.


24. According to Ch'en Ts'ung-chou it was due to a mistake between them; see Ch'en Ts'ung-chou, op. cit., p. 23.


29. Pai-hua ( 白話 ), the Chinese spoken language, or vernacular tongue, or plain speech as variantly translated in English.

30. Concerning this point, most books give 36 years of age which in fact should be understood as sui ( 年 ) since Hsü lived on the earth only 34 years, 11 months and 4 days, to be very exact.
Notes
(Chapter II, Woman)

1. Page number is given here and also for the other extracts
   of longer poems in the rest of this paper. Unless other­
   wise indicated, all page numbers are based on CW., Vol. II.

2. This poem has more than 60 lines. The poet's passion, anx­
   iety and despair burst, as it were, through the pages.
   This poem, however, presents a problem. The fact that
   it appears in the third collection would indicate its
   date not before but after the marriage of the poet and
   Lu Hsiao-man, yet this seems impossible, for there is no
   ground for the experience mentioned in the poem after
   their marriage (August, 1926). Perhaps we can only choose
   a conclusion from (1) The third collection includes one
   or two poems composed before August, 1926 and (2) the
   poem in question was written after August, 1926 from re­
   collection. Anyway, the experience in the poem in unmis­
   takable and must have taken place before August, 1926.

3. Many people believe that Hsü and Lu-Hsiao-man were guilty
   of adultery before their marriage. This stanza, together
   with She Is Asleep and the poet's diary might be viewed
   as support to the speculation.

4. T'ieh-shu k'ai-hua is a Chinese saying
   meaning an impossible thing.

5. Yueh-chi, known as Chinese rose in English.

6. See CW., Vol. IV, pp. 266, 352 and poems such as Don't
   Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face and The Inspiration of
   Love.

7. Some Chinese records, for instance Ming i-t'ung chih
   and Liu-ch'ao shih-chi, say that a lotus
   flower might grow from the mouth of virtuous or extra­
   ordinary people after their death.

8. All these were condemned by Hsü in his letters to Lu
   Hsiao-man; see CW., Vol. IV, pp. 260, 311.

9. Lu Hsiao-man's extravagance is alarming; see Liang Shih­
   ch'iu, T'an Hsü Chih-mo (About Hsü Chih-mo), Taipei,

10. Hu Shih maintains that this poem is an illustration of the
    failure of Hsü's life after his marriage with Lu Hsiao­
11. The other poems of the same category are: Su Su, Ask Whom, Hearing the P'i-p'a at Midnight and The Logic of Destiny.

12. In Kiangsu province, China.

13. Hsü seems to have made a mistake here. P'u-tu Mountain (普渡) should be P'u-t'o Mountain (普陀), situated in the east to Ting-hai (定海) District, Chekiang province, China.

14. This poem tells a story about some women wronged by a man.

15. A Chinese lantern with a circle of paper horses, or people on horseback. The hot air from the candle or candles inside the lantern causes the turning around of the paper figures which give the impression that they are walking, moving or racing.

16. A great number of people wept for Hsü after hearing his air crash near Chi-nan, Shantung province; see all the articles written in memory of him in CW., Vol. I.


19. A Japanese word meaning "good-bye".

20. Lin Tai-yü is the heroine in the famous Chinese novel Hung-lou Meng (The Dream of the Red Chamber). She is a beautiful but sickly young lady.


22. See the poem Fish Jumping.

23. See Hsü's reference to the girl who saved her father and Joan of Arc in the long poem The Inspiration of Love and For Whom.

24. See the description of the young woman's intellectual development in The Inspiration of Love.

25. From such representative poetical works as Shih Ching (The Book of Songs), Ku-shih shih-chiu shou (Nineteen Old Style Poems), Ch'iü Yüan's poetical works, Yü-t'ai hsin-yung (Poems of the Jade Platform) and Hua-chien chi (A Collection of Tz'u), the reader will easily notice that before
the Six Dynasties, sickness is not the quality of female beauty in China; however, beginning from the Six Dynasties, such “quality” has become dominant. Most of the women depicted in tz'ù (粵) are especially pitiably unhealthy.

26. Quotation from the 4th stanza of In Memory of Katherine Mansfield.
Notes

(Chapter III, Love)

1. "Groaning without being ill" (無病呻吟) is often used in Chinese to ridicule sentimental writers and their works.

2. CW., Vol. IV, p. 266.

3. This refers to T' i Ying (缇萦), daughter of Ch' un-yü I (淳于意), living during the reign of Emperor Wen of Han Dynasty. She saved her father from being punished by offering herself to become a servant-girl. Her filial act moved the Emperor who pardoned her father; see Liu Hsiang, Lieh-nù chuan (Biographical Sketches of Some Prominent Women).

4. This refers to Joan of Arc.

5. See pp. 9-10.


8. Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai branded Hsü as an erotic poet in 1931 and quoted some lines as evidence (see Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai wen-chi (Collected Works of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai), Peking, Jen-min wen-hsteh ch' u-pan she, 1954, pp. 270-272). The quotations in question, obviously not poetry but prose, are not found in any of Hsü's published collected works.


13. Shelley made this clear in his long poem Prometheus Unbound. He undoubtedly had his own peculiar criteria of morality and was followed fairly closely by Hsü Chih-mo.

15. Hu Shih (1891-1962), one of the most influential scholars in modern China, was temperamentally different from Hstl in many ways, but they respected each other's talents, shared more or less the same political views and fought the same battle for individual freedom and dignity. As to their personal charms like kindness, sincerity, forebearance, etc. they were almost identical though their expressions, as may be imagined, were not always the same.


17. Liang Shih-ch'iu (1902- ), writer and professor of English in China, now retired and living in Taiwan. He was a member of the Crescent group and had been engaged in literary and political polemics with Lu Hstn and other leftist writers by the late twenties.


20. Shelley was ready to die for love when he had fallen in love with Mary and was driven away by her father William Godwin. Shelley expressed the same love-death idea in his poem Epipsychidion though he might not have meant it seriously there.

21. See Keats's Fanny Brawne poems and letters.

22. See Liang Shih-ch'iu, op. cit., p. 34.


28. See p. 18.


30. CW., Vol. IV, pp. 311, 374.

31. CW., Vol. IV, p. 374; see also pp. 311, 375.
32. See pp. 44-45.


34. Hu Shih, "Chui-tao Chih-mo" (Im Memory of Chih-mo), in CW., Vol. I, p. 363.

35. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians 13:13 (Revised standard version).
Notes

(Chapter IV, Revolution)


2. These two words are from Robert Payne (ed.), Contemporary Chinese Poetry, London, Routledge, 1947, p. 36.


17. Tagore was in China from April to June, 1924. The Poison, The White Flag and The Baby were published in early autumn that year by Hsü.


23. Rabindranath Tagore, op. cit., p. 5.


28. The evidence of this is his life and works. Notable are his thought's "ups and downs", or rather "downs and ups". When he wrote The Baby (in 1924) and "Ying shang ch'ien ch'ü" (Marching Forward) (1925), he was full of hope (see CW., Vol. III, p. 662), but "Tsai p'ou" (The Second Self-dissection) (1926) shows his gloomy thought. "Hsin-yüeh ti t'ai-tu" (The Attitude of the Crescent Monthly) (1928) clearly indicates a "rebirth" but "Ch'iu" (Autumn) (1929) sounds the note of dejection. However, when he wrote the preface to his third collection of poems The Tiger (1931), he emerged refreshed from his troubles and depression and was ready to embark on an animated career of teaching and creative writing. On the whole, Carlyle's "Everlasting yea!" was always at work in his life.


30. Obviously the poet makes use of the word creation to ridicule the leftist writers of the Creation Society.

31. The Chinese legend has it that when a fox grows to or over a hundred years old, it will have a bead of charm in its mouth and will begin to worship the Dipper in moonlit nights displaying the bead. By this magic practice it will be able in due course to transform itself into a handsome young man or a beautiful young woman, and will try to have sexual intercourse with human beings so as to obtain from them the "essence of life" which will enable it to attain immortality. The word "命珠" in the original of Hsti should be "縷珠" (bead of charm).

32. The poet hereby accuses the leftist writers of perverting the Chinese youth by giving them dose after dose of Marxism-Leninism only for the contemptible aim of self-interest.
33. Chu Wen, or Chu Ch'üan-chung, the first emperor of Later Liang Dynasty, reigning from 907-912, was originally a bandit; after surrendering to the government, he was made a general. Then he killed the last T'ang emperor and usurped the throne. Chang Hsien-tsung was a very brutal bandit ravishing North China at the end of Ming Dynasty in the 17th century.

34. See CW., Vol. III, pp. 593-598.

35. This refers to all sorts of political and social sciences theories talked and written about by the Chinese intellectuals.

36. This refers to Marxism, Leninism, Communism, etc. cherished by the leftist writers who while propagating their beliefs attacked and denounced others.

37. The "soul's lethargy" is the negligence of spiritual life. The poet, under the influence of Tagore, regards this as the most grievous degradation of mankind. See CW., Vol. III, pp. 593-598.

38. See CW., Vol. III, p. 47. The poet used the two original English words.

Notes

(Chapter V, Religion)

1. The quotations are from Wing-tsit Chan, Religious Trends in Modern China, New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1953, pp. 228, 238.


3. For instance see his poems By An Unknown Roadside and Su Su.

4. For instance see his poem In Memory of Katherine Mansfield.

5. For instance see his poem A Queer World.

6. For instance see his poem On Board Ship Outside Ta-ku Fort at Midnight.

7. There are many poems describing the beauty of nature in Hstl's works; a few are translated in this paper; see pp. 76–85.

8. For instance see his poems The Rebirth of Spring, To – Love Thoughts in Two Places, etc.

9. Tagore was by no means a Christian. He did not belong to any particular faith and his God was a mixture, or his own God, a cosmic spirit of his own invention.

10. In his English "Florentine Journals" Hstl wrote:

   There is no such thing as divinity apart from what is also discoverable in human nature. "God created man in his own image". Rather man creates god in his own image. (CW., Vol. III, p. 693).

11. See p. 57.


17. Hsu gave a short account of how he came to read Shelley in CW., Vol. III, p. 315; his admiration for Hardy can be seen from CW., Vol. VI, pp. 145, 147, 175-213, 303-319.


23. Hsu wrote a number of poems sighing over the transiency of life, for example The Oriole, The Late Spring, The Little Grass and Flowers in the Morning Mist and On Board the Shanghai-Hangchow Train.


27. See the collection of mourning essays in CW., Vol. III.


30. The "Canna flowers" here are supposed to be Canna indica. In Chinese literature t'an-hua 菖花 is usually used in the phrase t'an-hua i-hsien 菖花 - 現, which is from Fa-hua ching, fang-pien p'in 法華經,方便品: "Ju yu-t'an-po-hua, shih i-hsien erh 如優曼鉛花, 時一現耳." (Just like yu-t'an-po flowers, appearing for a little while only). The yu-t'an-po flowers are in fact Ficus carica, not Canna indica (see Pen-ts'ai kang-mu 林草綱目, ch'ian 31, Fruit Section, Item Wu-hua-kuo 無花果). T'an-hua i-hsien 菖花 - 現 as a rule signifies something which suddenly appears and then vanishes.

31. For the translation of the 4th stanza see p. 68, and that of the last stanza see p. 22.


33. The translated poems are dispersed among original works in CW., Vols. I, II and VI.

35. Hstū had no systematic philosophical thought; the "philosophical" content of some of his poems was due to the influence of Hardy and Tagore, especially the former; Hstū himself did not even hint at this "philosophical" content in his writings. Cyril Birch points out briefly how Hstū borrowed some "philosophy" from Hardy; see Cyril Birch, "Hstū Chih-mo's Debt to Thomas Hardy" (Abstract), in Transactions of the International Conferences of Orientalists in Japan (No place), The Institute of Eastern Culture, No. IX, 1964, pp. 73-77.

36. See above note about Cyril Birch's article.

37. Liang Shih-ch'iu's book T'an Hstū Chih-mo (About Hstū Chih-mo), Taipei, Yüan-tung t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1958, records some interesting anecdotes of the poet, highly illustrative of Hstū's vivacity and childlike qualities. Relevant accounts can also be found in the articles by Yü Ta-fu, Chang Hsi-jo and Lin Hui-yin in CW., Vol. I.

38. The "verdant grass" is ch'ing-hsing 青荇 in the original, also known as hsing-ts'ai 荷蕖 or hsing-ts'ai 荍蕖 (Nymphoides peltalum). Its leaves float on the water, usually with roots reaching the bottom of the river. It seems that the poet made a mistake here since the grass that "sways at the river bottom" can be anything but ch'ing-hsing. In fact it is simply some shui-ts'ao 水草 as he mentions in CW., Vol. III, p. 252.

39. This is followed by In the Mountains, the translation of which is on p. 38.

40. See note No. 30. However, Hstū used t'an-hua 花 (Canna indica rather than Ficus carica) in this line for its sudden full bloom, not its peculiar character of transiency.


42. CW., Vol. III, p. 75.


44. These are Tagore's words. See Rabindranath Tagore, The Religion of Man, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 4th impression, 1958, p. 18.

45. Paradise Lost, Book II, line 582. Hstū thought that in the "great maze" of life, "the rarest thing is oblivion;
we can have an opportunity to regain the freedom of breathing and the joy of soul only during a brief period of forgetfulness." (CW., Vol. III, pp. 502-503).


47. The two words "quietly" and "softly" seem to be out of place in this storm scene. The poet probably refers to the spirit of the sea, which is supposed to be confessing, and confession is normally done in a quiet manner.

48. The ch'ing are musical stones played in ancient China. But those used in Buddhist temples are bronze or iron vessels like bowls, or rather, pâtra (Buddhist alms-bowls). They are struck repeatedly when rituals are being conducted.

49. A remark uttered by the poet a few months before his death; see CW., Vol. II, p. 347.

50. Such as Tagore, Hardy, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Rolland, Tolstoy, Shelley, etc.

Notes

(Chapter VI, Diction)

1. See Chapter I, note No. 29.

2. See Chapter I, note No. 2.

3. Chou Tso-jen (1885- ), or Chou Ch'i-ming, brother of the famous Lu Hsün, is essayist, scholar and translator of western works into pai-hua.

4. Ping Hsin (1900-1969?), or Hsieh Wan-ying, one of the most famous and influential writers after the New Literature Movement. She wrote poems, stories, and also letters to children in a smooth and beautiful style.

5. Lin Yutang (1895- ), educated in China, U.S.A. and Germany, is a famous writer and promoter of humorous and casual essays.


10. It is a plain, conversational style usually adopted by Hu Shih in his verse. It was popular for a short period right after the New Literature Movement but was not well received by later poets because of its insipidity.

11. This would mean strong political orientation, plain speech and folk-song quality.


18. Yu P'ing-po (1899—), poet, scholar and critic. He has been harshly criticized in Communist China mainly for his "bourgeois" viewpoint in his literary works.

19. The affirmation of Chiang Fu-ts'ung that Hsi liked Li Po and Li Shang-yin is reliable; see CW., Vol. I, p. 31.


22. Yeh Shao-ch'üan and Chu Tzu-ch'eng were not generally regarded as extremists; they wrote in a rather straightforward and sincere style but their attitude toward wên-yen as expressed in the essay concerned is deplorable.


26. Dryden thought it right for a poet to be reasonably bold or he can never hope to reach excellence; but Dryden would certainly not encourage people to be too bold; that would mean rashness. See H. James Hense, A Glossary of John Dryden's Critical Terms, Minneapolis, Univ. of Minnesota, 1969, pp. 27-28.


30. See Wen I-to, Wen I-to ch'üan-chi (Complete Works of Wen I-to), (No place), K'ai-ming shu-tien, (No date), ting-chi 丁集  p. 197.

31. This only refers to the art of poetry. As to the atmosphere or the "world" of the two poems, the difference is very great; Hsu's conveys the speed of the train and the glimpse of the scenery outside the train window whereas Li's, the loneliness and sorrow induced by a dreary autumn evening.


34. Keats: Ode on a Grecian Urn.

35. Huai 輝, flowers are flowers of huai (sophora japonica), a kind of locust trees growing in north China.

36. See Chapter II, note No. 5.


38. See also pp. 75-76.

39. Quotations from Shelley's To A Skylark.

40. See Keats's Ode to A Nightingale.

41. See p. 88. See also Chao Ching-shen's comment on the style of Hsu's The Tiger in CW., Vol. I, p. 433.

42. Liang Shih-ch'iu's words; see his book T'an Hsu Chih-mo (About Hsu Chih-mo) Taipei, Yüan-tung t'ü-shu kung-ssu, 1958, p. 41.


44. See CW., Vol. IV, p. 497.

46. There are many incidents pointing to this. For example he pruned away a number of poems from the first edition of Chih-Mo's Poems and made the subsequent editions shorter and better; he learned from Wen I-to and told the world about it; and he fully displayed his own self-criticizing spirit in his poem Don't Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face and in his essays in Tzu-p'ou wen-chi (Essays of Self-Dissection) (in CW., Vol. III, pp. 385-444). See also CW., Vol. II, pp. 344-345; Vol. I, pp. 385-386.
Notes

(Chapter VII, Imagery)


2. Ibid., p. 3.


5. See pp. 82, 87.

6. There are some pure descriptions of the night in Farewell, Cambridge, but they are not many in the corpus of Hsü's works.

7. See also p. 108.


9. See pp. 84-85.


11. For instance see Chu Hsiang's Reply to A Dream (答 ) in Ibid. p. 327.


13. See the last stanza of This Is A Cowardly World, the fifth stanza of Farewell Again to Cambridge, the fourth stanza of She Is Asleep and the second stanza of Lei-feng in Moonlight.


16. See translation on p. 79.

17. The following is the translation:

At that time the groans of the train had awakened a couple of stars in the sky;
They looked down through the rifts of the clouds.
Our light, wisdom and eternal beauty? Forget them;
You and we are suffering alike.

18. See translation on pp. 84-85.

19. See the twelfth stanza of Don't Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face; the translation of it appears as the third stanza on p. 18.

20. The translations of the last two stanzas of this poem are on p. 20. The last lines of the first four stanzas are given below, the first three lines of each stanza being the same:

1) Lingering in the light waves of the dream.

2) Her warm embrace is my intoxication.

3) Sweetness is the dream's gleaming.

4) Her unfaithfulness - my sorrow.

21. The dream and yen are common not only in poetry (shih 诗 ), but in tz'yu 族 and ch'ü 夔 in Chinese literature. Many descriptive essays and scroll paintings depend on yen for effect, too.


23. Innumerable lotus bloom images can be seen in all genres of Chinese literature and the virtues represented by this particular flower can be applied to both sexes.

24. Ta pao chi ching 大寶積經, Hua yen ching 華嚴經, and Pu k'ung ch'uan so shen pien chen yen ching 僧薩神 言經 have reference to the lotus bloom; but long before Buddhism was introduced into China, the lotus bloom was already used to describe woman's beauty.

25. The "old men" is the Five Old Men's Peak.

26. See also p. 108.


28. See Lei-feng in Moonlight, Melodies from the Villages, I Don't Know in Which Direction the Wind Blows, The Five Old Men's Peak, Farewell, Cambridge, In the Mountains, She Is Asleep, Groans, The Inspiration of Love, On My Sick Bed, Roaming in the Clouds, In Front of the Church of Exeter and The Ditty of Fallen Leaves.

30. See p. 19 for translation.

31. See p. 102.
Notes

(Chapter VIII, Conclusion)

1. CW., Vol. VI, p. 305.

2. Hstü Chih-mo, "Shih-k'an fang-chia" (Poetry Supplement's Holiday), in [Chao Chia-pi], Chung-kuo hsìn wen-hstleh ta-hsi (Compendium of Chinese New Literature), Hong Kong, Hsiang-kang wen-hstleh yen-chiu she, Vol. II, (No date), p. 347. These words are in fact an addition to the article. The editors of CW have missed them.

3. These two poets used the sonnet form to write Chinese "new" poetry and achieved some success only a few years after Hstü's death.


5. See Liang Shih-ch'iu, "Kuan-yü Hstü Chih-mo" (Concerning Hstü Chih-mo), in Wen-hua t'u-shu kung-ssu (ed.), Hstü Chih-mo ch'tlan-chi (Complete Works of Hstü Chih-mo), Taipei, Wen-hua t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1968, p. 2.
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* There are other "complete works" of Hstü Chih-mo published in Taiwan before 1969. They are all very incomplete and unreliable.
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Appendix I

English and Chinese Titles of Hstü Chih-mo's Poems Mentioned in This Paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Title</th>
<th>Chinese Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of Penalty</td>
<td>領罪</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few Sheets of Oil-Paper</td>
<td>蓋上幾張油紙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in Vain</td>
<td>枉然</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another Experiment</td>
<td>又一次試驗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Insect, The</td>
<td>秋蟲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Moon, The</td>
<td>秋月</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away with You</td>
<td>去吧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby, The</td>
<td>嬰兒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Thoughts</td>
<td>破破</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By A Mountain Path</td>
<td>在那山道旁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By An Unknown Road-side</td>
<td>在不知名的路旁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary</td>
<td>加爾弗里</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change and No Change</td>
<td>變與不變</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint</td>
<td>怨得</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral, The</td>
<td>珊瑚</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuckoo, The</td>
<td>杜鵑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep in the Night</td>
<td>深夜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>决斷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilapidated Temple, The</td>
<td>破廟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ding, Dong - Break It</td>
<td>丁當清新</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditty of Fallen Leaves, A</td>
<td>落葉小唱</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Blame Me for Pulling A Long Face</td>
<td>再休怪我的臉沉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Pinch Me; Pain</td>
<td>別搊我，疼</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Farewell Again to Cambridge
Farewell, Cambridge
Feeble Gleam, A
Fish Jumping
Five Old Men's Peak, The
For Whom
Gazing at the Moon
Go Forward
Golden Ray, A
Groans
Hardy
Hearing the P' i-p'a at Midnight
Hearing the Ritual Music of Ch'ang-chou's T'ien-ning Temple
Heavenly Hero, A
His Eyes Have Thee
Homage
Hymn to the Captive
I Don't Know in Which Direction the Wind Blows
I Have A Love
I'm Waiting for You
In Front of the Church of Exeter
In Memory of Katherine Mansfield
In Search of A Star
Inspiration of Love, The
In the Mountains
It Is Rare

再别康桥
康桥再会吧
一星弱火
鲤跳
五老峰
為誰
望月
你去
一條金色的光痕
呻吟語
哈代
夜半深巷琵琶
常州天寧寺聞禮讃聲
天神似的英雄
他的眼裏有你
禮讃
俘虜頌
我不知道風是在那一個方向吹
我有一個戀愛
我等候你
在哀克剎脫教堂前
哀曼殊斐兒
為要尋一個明星
愛的靈感
山中
難得
I've Come to the Bank of the Yangtze River to Buy A Bunch of Lotus Seeds

Joy of A Snowflake, The
Judgment Day, The
Last Spring, The
Lei-feng in Moonlight
Let's Build A Wall
Life
Life in Grey
Lines Written at An Inn
Little Grass and Flowers in the Morning Mist
Littleness
Little Sketch of Happy Poverty, A
Logic of Destiny, The
Love Thoughts in Two Places
Lowliness
Man Turned Beast
Marseilles
Marshal, The
Melodies of the Sea
Midnight Wind in the Pines, The
Nature and Life
News
Night in Florence, A
No. More, Lei-feng
No. 7 Shih-hu Lane
On Board the Shanghai-Hangchow Train
On Board A Train

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雪花的快樂
最後那一天
殘春
月下雷峰影片
起造一座牆
生活
灰色的人生
客中
朝霧裏的小草花

渺小
一小幅窮樂圖
命運的邏輯
兩地相思
卑微
人變獸
馬賽
大帥
海韻
夜半松風
自然與人生
消息
翡翠裡的一夜
再不見雷峰
石虎胡同七號
滬杭車上
車上
On Board Ship Outside Ta-ku Fort at Night

On My Sick Bed

Oriole, The

Plum Blossoms and Snow

Poison, The

Queer World, A

Rebirth of Spring, The

Reeds Before the Ch’iu-hstieh Convent, The

Roaming in the Clouds

Sayonara

Scenery Seen from the Train

Seasons

She Is Asleep

Sin and Retribution

Thank Heaven, My Heart Leaps Up Once Again

This Is A Cowardly World

Tidings from the Heavenly Kingdom To-

Train on the Rail, The

Two Moons

Undine’s Wedding Song

Unforgettable, The

Villages’ Melodies, The

War Song, The

West Window, The

What Is Love after All

一月十二深夜大沽口外

在病中

黄鹂

梅雪争春

毒药

古怪的世界

春的投生

西伯利亚道中憶西湖秋雪庵

藍色作歌

雲遊

莎楊椰拉

車眺

李候

她是睡著了

罪與罰

多謝天，我的心又一度的

跳盪

這是一個懦怯的世界

天國的消息

給

火車車住軌

兩個月亮

渡堤孩新婚歌

難忘

鄉村裏的音韻

戦歌

西窗

戀愛到底是甚麼一回事
White-Bearded Old Sea, The
White Flag, The
Wide Sea, The
Without A Title
You Deserve It
Appendix II

Chinese Books and Articles with Titles Translated into English in This Paper

About Hstl Chih-mo

Anecdotes in the Literary Circle by the Time of the May Fourth Movement

Anthology of Chinese New Poetry, 1919-1949

"Attitude of the Crescent Monthly, The"

Biographical Sketches of Some Prominent Women

Book of Rites, The

Book of Songs, The

Brief History of the Chinese New Literature Movement, A

Chih-mo's Poems

Chinese Literary Circle in the Last Fifty Years

Chinese Poetry in the Last Fifty Years

Collected Essays

Collected Works of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai

Collected Works of Hu Shih

Collected Works of Kuo Mo-jo

Collected Works of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao

Collection of Tz'u, A

Compendium of Chinese New Literature

Complete Works of Hstl Chih-mo

Complete Works of Lu Hstln

Complete Works of Wen I-to
"Comrade Kuo Mo-jo's Answers to the Questions Raised by This Magazine Concerning the Main Problems of Today's Poetry"

"Concerning Hsü Chih-mo"

"Concerning Poems Written in 'Hu Shih Style', "

Concerning Writing and Reading Poetry

"Criticize Wang Yao's Bourgeois Viewpoint Relating to New Poetry"

Draft History of Chinese New Literature, A

Dream of the Red Chamber, The

Essays of Self-Dissection

Experiments

Fallen Leaves

"Fourth Anniversary of Chih-mo's Death, The"

From Literary Revolution to the Execution of Literature

"Grief over the Death of Mr. Lin Tsung-meng"

History of Modern Chinese Literature, A

History of the Chinese New Literature Movement, A

Hsü Chih-mo and Lu Hsiao-man

I and Literature

I and Literature and Others

"In Memory of Chih-mo"

"In Remembrance of Chih-mo"

"Introductory Remarks to Poetry Supplement"

"Last Meeting with Chih-mo, The"

Lectures by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao
Leisure Talks by Hsi-ying
Letters to Dear Mei
Literary Thoughts in the Last Two Decades in China
"Love Poems of Mrs. Browning, The"
"Marching Forward"
Materials Related to the History of the New Literature Movement
"Mourning Words on My Teacher Chih-mo"
My Words
New Letters
Night in Florence, A
Nineteen Old Style Poems
Notes in Literature
On Chinese Literary Revolution
On Modern Chinese Poetry
On New Poetry
"On Reading 'Destruction'"
"On Wen I-to's Poetry"
Orchid Wind, The
Outline of the History of Chinese Revolution in the Last One Hundred Years, An
Outline of the History of New Literature, An
Ping Hsin's Poems
Poems of the Jade Platform
"Poetry Supplement's Holiday"
Preliminary Draft History of Chinese New Literature, A
Random Talks on Anything
Random Talks on New Poetry
Revolution and Literature
Sample Essays for Intensive Reading
"Second Self-Dissection, The"
Selected Works of Poetry and Prose by Wen I-to
Selected Works of Sixteen Modern Essayists
Sketches in Paris
"Social Foundation and Characteristics of Modern Chinese Literature, The"
Studies of the History of Chinese New Literature
Supplement to "The Chinese Literary Circle in the Last Fifty Years"
Supplementary Compendium of Chinese New Literature
Talks on the Development of Chinese Poetry
Talks on the History of Chinese New Literature
"The Cambridge I Know"
Tiger, The
Vase, The
Writers Are in My Recollection, The