

**Parallel Processes in the Language of Modern and Contemporary  
Russian and Chinese Poetry**

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## Modern Poetry Magazines in China (Interaction of Official and Informal Discourse)<sup>1</sup>

The paradox of Russian literary life is a space that is almost free from the magazines specializing exclusively in poetry. Traditional “thick” magazines have been legitimizing the subordinate position of poetry in relation to prose for more than two centuries now, which began with the famous speech of Dostoevsky on the anniversary of Pushkin.

There are very few purely poetic magazines in Russia: *Air*, *Arion*, *PROSŌDIA*, *POet Magazine*. *Air*, for example, focuses on the broadest coverage of the spectrum of Russian poets in its projection on the international context, while *Arion* tries to follow the traditional algorithm preprogrammed by the Union of Writers of Russia. In this regard, it seems interesting to compare the situation with poetry magazines in Russia and China, where since the end of the Cultural Revolution the flowering of poetic publishing projects scarcely has any analogues.

When describing Chinese poetic and literary magazines, they are usually subdivided into the *official*, the *unofficial* and the *underground*<sup>2</sup>. The official ones are created by government structures of various levels, the unofficial ones are open editions funded by private capital (often by the poets themselves), and underground samizdat are small-circulation, uncensored journals that are distributed among like-minded people. It is curious that already here the triple model appears instead of the adamant opposition of “authorized” – “unauthorized” that we are accustomed to (or samizdat / underground – official).

Not only magazines, but also poetry itself in China is described in terms of *official*, *semi-official* and *unofficial*. Among those who create modern texts, there are authors who adhere to state-sanctioned literary policy. This policy in general preserves the line that Mao Zedong laid down in 1942 in his famous *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art*, which placed literature and art in subjection to political ideology (although today's control is incomparable with that of the 1940-1970s).

The origins of unofficial Chinese poetry lie in the literary underground, whose first, isolated manifestations date back to the late 1950s-early 1960s. On a somewhat larger scale, the underground declares itself during the Cultural Revolution, when the political and ideological

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<sup>1</sup> The research was rendered possible by the RSHF (RFBR) grant 16-24-10001.

<sup>2</sup> See *Van Crevel M.* Unofficial Poetry Journals from the People's Republic of China: A Research Note and an Annotated Bibliography // MCLC Resource Center Publication. 2007. <http://u.osu.edu/mclc/online-series/vancrevel2/>. *Yeh M.* Contemporary Chinese Poetry Scenes // *Chicago Review*. 1993. Vol. 39. № 3/4. P. 279–283.

restrictions on literature and art were the most stringent. It was then that the first spaces of unofficial poetry were formed, including literary salons<sup>3</sup>.

Before the era of reforms in 1978, the metaphor of the underground can be interpreted literally: the underground is “secret”, “under-ground”, “illegal”. Poets show their poems only to the closest friends, sometimes the texts are destroyed immediately after reading. The underground community neglects any official authority; it builds its own hierarchy.

Underground poetry continued to exist in the era of reforms. The underground in the near-literary, institutional sense became part of unofficial poetry. Nevertheless, today in China underground often means not politically engaged texts but aesthetic-oriented poetry, different from the aesthetics of the mass reader. In this sense, the term “underground” partially overlaps with the term “unofficial poetry”. In the 1980s, some important authors began to appear in the official press, and the structure of poetic space grew more complicated, but the gradation of semi-official poetry – unofficial poetry generally persists.

The perception of the term “avant-garde” also proves to be important for understanding of the context of Chinese poetry magazines. In China, it is interpreted differently than in contemporary Western discourse. Avant-garde poetry in China includes a very large set of texts with different poetics that do not fit within the framework of official poetry. In the first years after the Cultural Revolution, the poetics of the avant-garde was determined *ex negativo*: with the active dissociation from subjects, images, poetic form and linguistic characteristics that appeared in products of state-sanctioned orthodoxy. However, since the mid-1980s, the avant-garde has finally eclipsed the official poetry and has become greatly differentiated.

Today the term “avant-garde” partially overlaps with the term “unofficial poetry”. With all the vagueness of the meanings of both terms, “avant-garde” is understood primarily as an aesthetic category, and “unofficial poetry” as an institutional one, while the expression “unofficial magazine” is much more common than “avant-garde magazine”.

Unlike the Russian “thick” magazines, “official” Chinese magazines do not imply a certain aesthetic position or a system of aesthetic prohibitions and restrictions. It is precisely the official magazines that are the least homogeneous, or rather, the most heterogeneous. As Boris Dubin points out, in Russia “old ‘thick’ magazines, created back in Soviet times, were reduced in circulation and functions to ‘small literary reviews’”<sup>4</sup>. In China, unofficial magazines are much

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<sup>3</sup> *Sunken Temple: A snapshot of the dead tradition of underground Chinese poetry of the 70s of the XX century* 沉沦的圣殿：中国二十世纪 70 年代地下诗歌遗照 / Ed. by Liao Yiwu 廖奕武. Ürümqi 乌鲁木齐: Xinjiang Qingshaonian 新疆青少年, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> *Dubin B.V. Farewell to the book // Dubin B.V. Essays on the Sociology of Culture. Moscow, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie Publ. 2017. P. 836.*

more homogeneous precisely because of the explicated aesthetic position and the more significant role of criticism. Editors of official magazines select texts primarily based on institutional affiliation or take into account a certain significant status (whether the authors are members of the Writers' Union, China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC), etc.). In addition, there are thematic limitations (including censorship) and, finally, the political beliefs and political activity of the authors, including those residing abroad, are taken into account. World and public fame is significant for publication only in official journals.

It is interesting that today almost every major poet is published in magazines and books that are official in the institutional sense, that is, are officially registered publications with impressum for library catalogues, they have a fixed price on them, as is customary in China, etc. In the 21st century, one can be published in official magazines (or have membership in official institutions such as national and local Writers' Unions) and still get recognition in China and beyond as an aesthetically unofficial poet.

Yu Jian 于坚 and Xi Chuan 西川, some of the best-known first-line poets, undoubtedly identified as belonging to the unofficial camp, nevertheless publish poetry books in official publishing houses. Moreover, Yu Jian even worked as an editor of the official magazine *Yunnan Literary Review* 云南文艺评论, in parallel making a career as an unofficial poet. Xi Chuan not only teaches at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, but also was one of five poets who received the official Lu Xin literary prize in 1997–2000.

One could note such a paradox as a vague border between official and unofficial aesthetics<sup>5</sup>. However, the opposite situation practically does not occur: those who are published in official publications are not accepted in unofficial ones. The paradox of the situation is that unofficial magazines prefer not to accept official authors, but official magazines are willing to publish informal authors too.

There are several dozen official poetry magazines (according to the editorial staff of the *Poetic Journal*, in 2013 there were more than 400 purely poetic unofficial magazines in China). The average magazine has about a hundred pages, for example, in such publications as *Poetic Journal* 诗刊, *Stream of Poems* 诗潮, *Stars* 星星, *Poem Selection* 诗选刊, *Yangtze* 扬子江, *Thatched Cottage* 草堂. These major official poetry magazines are published monthly: 12, sometimes 24, issues are published annually. Semi-official editions *Reading Poetry* 读诗, *Light Year* 光年, *Enclave* 飞地, etc. come out mostly four to two times a year. Approximate circulation

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<sup>5</sup> Yeh M. The «Cult of Poetry» in Contemporary China // *Journal of Asian Studies*. 1996. Vol. 55. № 1. P. 51–80.

of a successful official publication varies from two to eight thousand copies that of informal magazines – from several hundred copies to several thousand for the most successful ones.

All these magazines publish only poetry. In addition, there are publications that also publish stories, essays, paintings, for example, *People's Literature* 人民文学, *Youth* 青春, *October* 十月, *Work* 作品. However, poetry occupies a rather important place in these magazines.

Most official magazines exist for a long time – for them the problem of financing or attrition is irrelevant (they are financed by the state). For example, *The Poetic Journal* has been published since the 1950s. Unofficial magazines generally take two to three years to publish. In this sense, the example of the avant-garde magazine *Tiannan* 天南杂志 ("Chutzpah!"), which has been published 4-6 times a year since 2010, is extremely illustrative. It was one of the most innovative literary magazines in China, which acquainted the reader with the kaleidoscopic variety of Chinese prose and poetry of a new generation of writers, but even despite the use of advertising, it had to close in early 2014 due to funding issues.

The history of its emergence demonstrates a paradoxical example of the transition of an official magazine into the unofficial one, possible only through a complete re-birth of the publication. Since 1982, the Folk Artists Association of Guangdong has published a magazine under the same name; in 2005 the company Modern Media, which planned to turn the magazine into a book review, bought it. However, the new publication was never created, and five years later the writer, curator and public figure Ou Ning 欧宁, who worked for Modern Media, suggested his own project for a new literary magazine<sup>6</sup>.

There are also semi-official magazines that can publish avant-garde texts, but at the same time be associated with official institutions, for example with universities or provincial branches of CFLAC. They get support from these institutions, in particular the symbolic approval of well-known professors and poets, who are demonstratively referred to as “consultants”. Such magazines seem to test the boundaries of official discourse, publishing what is often called “campus poetry”<sup>7</sup>.

In China unofficial magazines are also called “people’s” (*minjian* 民间) or “created with the [money] of the people” (*minban* 民办). A term hard to translate, *minjian*, describes quite different things: from the institutional affiliation of a poetic group or publication to a certain poetics that in no case sets the guidelines for all unofficial poetry. The frequency of using the term “people's” (instead of or along with “unofficial”) has grown dramatically since the biggest polemic

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<sup>6</sup> *Ou Ning*. Preface: The Story of Chutzpah! / Trans. Austin Woerner // *Chutzpah!: New Voices from China* / Ed. Ou Ning, Austin Woerner. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. P. VII–XIV.

<sup>7</sup> 姜红伟 *Jiang Hongwei*. In search of the missing from poetic history: a memorandum of the movement “poetry of campuses” of the 80s of the 20th century 寻找诗歌史上的失踪者：二十世纪八十年代校园诗歌运动备忘录. Jinan 济南: 黄河 Huang He, 2008.

between the so-called “intellectuals” and “popular authors” in 1998–2002. “People’s journals” (*minkan* 民刊) today mainly refer to publications that are not published and are not officially distributed, since they do not have a special number assigned by the General Administration of Press and Publication. Nevertheless, this does not mean that such publications cannot, for example, be bought in a bookstore (although a shop can be fined for selling them, it happens infrequently).

Obtaining a unified number of a periodical is a complex issue for poetic magazines that seek to expand their audience<sup>8</sup>. It costs about 300 thousand yuan (almost 2.7 million rubles). Publications with content seen as dubious by the authorities have little chance of obtaining such number; only certain government structures have the right to request it. Getting a book number is incomparably easier, so many publications are published as books (*yi shu dai kan* 以书代刊), despite the fact that they come out several times a year.

In order to protect themselves, many magazines claim that they are not intended for sale (or are sold at a minimum cost to “compensate for the cost of production”). Here, as in many other aspects of social life in modern China, there are “grey zones” that are shrinking or expanding following the alternating tendencies of “tightening” and “easing” in national and local politics. The magazine may not be registered, but still obtain permission to publish and at the same time be provided with a standard statement that it contains only “materials for internal exchange” (for example, within a literary salon), which is clearly not true, because the magazines do not try to control their audience.

Despite the expansion of space for free expression, during the entire era of reforms in PRC, conflicts between political authorities and poets or publishers continue to arise periodically. Magazines are often banned (or they decide to stop publication after intimidation by the police). This can be read between the lines in the memoirs of the famous poet and editor Chen Dongdong about the publication of the magazine *Tendency* 倾向<sup>9</sup>. Many poets and critics, even if they were not close to explicit political dissent or pornography, nevertheless were persecuted, for example, Xu Jingya 徐敬亚, Yang Lian 杨炼 and Bei Dao 北岛. They were the main targets of the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign of 1983–1984 that culminated in the self-criticism of Xu in the newspaper *People’s Daily* and the bans on publication for Yang Lian and Bei Dao. There is a lot of such examples. Zhou Lunyou 周伦佑 spent three years in a labor camp on charges of counter-revolutionary propaganda shortly after the Tiananmen events of 1989. His detention was due

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<sup>8</sup> Merle A. Towards a Chinese Sociology for «Communist Civilisation» // China Perspectives. 2004. № 52. <http://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/801> (accessed on February 18, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> 陈东东 *Chen Dongdong*. Fish bones grow in fish flesh: the beginning and end of the Chinese underground poetic magazine *Tendency* 鱼刺在鱼肉中成长: 中国地下诗刊《倾向》始末 // 文艺报 *Wenyibao*. 1995. № 2. P. 48–50.

almost exclusively to his publishing activities. Other Sichuan poets and publishers (Wan Xia 万夏, Li Yawei 李亚威, Liao Yiwu 廖奕武, etc.) received prison and corrective labor terms at the same time for their poetic responses to the Tiananmen tragedy. 443 authors of the 1500-page critical anthology of Chinese poetry edited by Wang Bin 王斌, which was to be published in the summer of 1991, never saw the book, all copies of which were confiscated. The text contained six early poems by Bei Dao, which had already been published before, but were now censored, since the author who left the country became persona non grata. The Shanghai poets Meng Lang 孟浪 and Momo 默默 were imprisoned in April 1992 for possession, production or distribution of what the authorities considered illegal publications; their richest collections of unofficial publications were confiscated.

As for censorship in PRC, the combination of vague and meaningful formulas in the sphere of cultural policy with the threat of severe sanctions works very effectively to create a self-censorship mechanism more effective than in the former Soviet Union<sup>10</sup>. At present, for a Chinese poet and publisher the practice of self-censorship provoked by the state is supplemented by the global self-censorship created by the literary community. The famous poet Shen Haobo 沈浩波 writes about this in *To Publish a Poem* 发表诗歌这件事:

I am more and more afraid of different things  
I am afraid of the government  
well, of course it is armed  
I am afraid of patriotic masses  
(they think I write non-patriotic poems  
they believe that non-patriot is worthy of death)  
I am afraid of the nationalists  
I am afraid of the Han  
and the Uigurs too  
I am afraid of the Beijingers  
and Shanghai people  
(I once wrote a poem about Shanghai  
2000 Shanghaiers for several days  
blamed me on the net)  
I am afraid of Buddhists

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<sup>10</sup> Link P. *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000.

I am afraid of Christians  
Muslims of course too  
in general, I am afraid to hurt anyone  
because I whom had I not hurt yet  
yesterday  
Mr. Liang Yujing my English translator  
translated my most famous poem  
“A Handful of Tit”  
he said  
one may try to print it in Europe or America  
but there is a serious cause for concern – feminism  
well, well, well  
now i'm afraid of feminists

In other countries, the concept of publication depends on the formal participation of members of more or less formal, professional communities, such as publishers and reviewers. However, in China, “to publish” primarily means to make the text public (i.e. to expand its audience beyond the narrow circle of initiates). This point is illustrated by the difference between the Chinese terms “publish, make public” (*fabiao* 发表) and “publish, publish in print” (*chuban* 出版)<sup>11</sup>. Not everything that becomes public passes through the official publisher.

At the end of 1978, during the 3rd Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC, which marked the political return of Deng Xiaoping, unofficial poetry moved from the underground to the foreground and ceased to hide its activities from the authorities, and, as a consequence, from a wider audience. This change was caused by the appearance of two magazines: *Enlightenment* 启蒙, which originated in Guiyang, but was subsequently published in Beijing, and the Beijing-based *Today* 今天. Both these magazines appeared initially in the form of wall newspapers (*dazibao* 大字报), and then began to spread in the usual format. They contained mostly texts written underground in the late 1960s. *Today* and *Enlightenment* were rare examples of purely literary magazines among a large number of politicized unofficial publications that appeared in cities throughout China and were part of the democratic movement of 1978–1981.

While in the Russian literary space the few poetic magazines now aspire to the greatest possible inclusiveness, and therefore criticism exists rather in the pragmatics of presenting, in

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. in German *veröffentlichen* (“publish, make public”) and *herausgeben* (“publish, act as a publisher”).

Chinese magazines that unite groups of aesthetic adherents, criticism is still possible as critique, as well as manifest statements. The Chinese poetic magazine exists in the format of critique + politics + poetry, not poetry + prose. According to the poet Zhang Zhihao 张执浩, the publication itself is only one of the functions of a poetic platform, which is not necessarily manifested outwards.

A colossal number of literary manifestos published in unofficial Chinese poetry during the first half of the 1980's were collected under one cover in the book *The Landscape of the Modernist Poetic Groups of China in 1986–1988* – this was the first large-scale presentation of the new underground poetry in official publications. The most recent manifest text published in a literary magazine was Shen Haobo's program article *Lower Body Writing against the Upper Body*, which opened the first issue of the magazine *Lower Body* 下半身 in 2001. In 2004, the magazine *Lower Body* having already ceased to be published, was banned post factum as an illegal publication.

Unlike Russia, many important poetry magazines are published in the regions. In addition to Beijing and Shanghai, the main publishing centers are Shenzhen, Chengdu, Xi'an, cities with the liveliest cultural life. Some magazines consciously expand their audience and circle of authors in an attempt to overcome geographical and aesthetic barriers (for example, *Modern Han Poetry* 现代汉诗). Others retain regionality or adhere to a particular poetics, regardless of whether this is done explicitly through manifestos and theorization (for example, the feminist magazine *Wings* 翼, *Lower Body*, etc.) or implicitly through their choice of works (for example, *The Nineties* 九十年代)<sup>12</sup>.

Such magazines often appear as “publications by like-minded people” (*tongren chubanwu* 同仁出版物). They can also insist on regional identity. For example, the magazine *Razor* 剃须刀, created in 2004, brought together authors from Sichuan and Harbin, located far apart – almost as it had been done earlier by *The Nineties* and *Against* 反对. Since the mid-1980s in the regions local authors are often accompanied by a small number of poets from outside the region. Xi Chuan and Chen Dongdong are two examples of poets who regularly cross the North-South border in their publications.

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<sup>12</sup> Created in 1989, *The Nineties*, whose name refers to Robert Bly's *The Eighties* was the brainchild of the poet Sun Wenbo 孙文波. The project was planned to continue after 2000, with appropriate renaming, but the magazine was forced to close in 1993. It was the main platform for the propagation of the so-called “narrative verse”.

Some magazines, for example, *Han Poetry* 汉诗, published in the province of Hubei, are turned from local into national. Many literary magazines, for example *One Line* 一行, unite experimental authors, Chinese as well as foreign ones<sup>13</sup>.

A very illustrative example is the Nanking magazine *Them* 他们, which came out during a peak decade for unofficial publication – from 1985 to 1995 – and invariably appeared as the main voice of avant-garde poetry<sup>14</sup>. It is considered to be the basis for consolidating the “colloquial verse” (*kouyushi* 口语诗). Nevertheless, it is interesting to recall that it was the editorial board of *Them* who gave birth to the idea of creating a community of authors in various places throughout the country (in Nanjing, Kunming, Shanghai, Fuzhou, Chengdu and other cities) and the strategy for the regional poetic magazine to step beyond the local poetic space.

The explosion of popularity of unofficial poetry in the 1980s was followed by a period of its quiet prosperity as a small but persistent industry with a well-organized audience. An unexpected turn for European thinking is worth noting: in works formally sanctioned as textbooks for higher education, contemporary Chinese poetry is described almost exclusively with reliance on texts from unofficial poetic magazines<sup>15</sup>. The most famous Chinese literary critic, Hong Zicheng 洪自诚, in his book *The History of Contemporary Chinese New Poetry* relies almost exclusively on unofficial sources in describing poetry after the Cultural Revolution. Many well-known magazines are mentioned in the book, including *Today*, *Not-Not* 非非, *Macho Men* 莽汉, *Them*, *Tendency*, *At Sea* 海上, *Southern Poetry Magazine* 南方诗志, *Against*, and others<sup>16</sup>. A high-profile exhibition of poetry held in August 2006 in Guangzhou under the title *Faces of Chinese poetry*, where visitors were met by a five-foot stack of unofficial magazines (starting from 1978), was almost entirely devoted to unofficial poetry. It continued the attempts to build a genealogy of unofficial poetry, culminating in an impressive “exhibition” *Modern Poetic Groups on the Chinese Parnassus in 1986* by Xu Jingya.

If at first many informal magazines could not boast a high-quality polygraphics, from the middle and the end of the 1980s, when resources became more accessible to private users, the quality of printing of unofficial publications increased. Now, unofficial magazines are

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<sup>13</sup> There is also a bilingual Anglo-Chinese magazine *Poetry East West* 诗东西, simultaneously published in Beijing and Los Angeles.

<sup>14</sup> The title of the magazine was born as a tribute to the famous novel by Joyce Carol Oates *Them*, translated into Chinese under the title 他们.

<sup>15</sup> In *Poetics of Voice* Zhang Hong categorically states that all important Chinese poetry first appeared and continues to appear in unofficial journals (张宏 Zhang Hong. *Poetics of Voice 声音的诗学*. Beijing: 中国人民大学 National University of China, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> 刘登翰 Liu Denghan, 洪子诚 Hong Zicheng. *The History of Contemporary New Chinese poetry 中国当代新诗史*. Beijing: 北京大学出版社 Beijing University Press, 2010.

indistinguishable in print quality from official ones and even surpass them in terms of innovative formats and illustrations – for example, *Poetry Reference* 诗参考, *Poetry and People* 诗歌与人 or aforementioned magazine *Tiannan*.

Over the past thirty years, especially over the past decade, due to the development of the Internet, the circulation has declined. Many magazines began to pay more attention to their sites and electronic versions. This gives an advantage to unofficial poetry: the number of official publications has decreased, but the number of unofficial ones has increased, their circulation has grown, and their positions have become stronger. Discussions that once took place in printed versions or at personal meetings and poetic events now take place in forums, blogs, microblogs (Weibo 微博), and recently on the social networking platform Weixin 微信 (WeChat), although these are mostly the young or obscure authors who get published on the Internet and WeChat. Major poets defend the idea of the “ideal literary magazine” (a modification or development of the modern concept of the “unofficial magazine”), which, on the one hand, must have a qualified, independent and impartial view of poetry, and on the other hand, provide high fees (the average fee in an official publication is about 10 yuan per line).

The main paradox of contemporary Chinese poetry lies in the fact that a poetic magazine usually means an unofficial magazine. This is not only because political pressure continues to be a reality and unofficial poetry exists in confrontation with the official “art of the state”. In itself, the existence of unofficial poetry underlies a lively poetic climate, which is crucial for the emergence and establishment of both individual poets and contemporary Chinese poetry in general. The Chinese poetic community is the largest in the world. This creates a unique basis for interaction of various poetic circles, and it is not surprising that a literary magazine in China is primarily a poetic magazine.

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## Poem Titles in Contemporary Chinese Poetry in their Projection on Russian Poetry<sup>1</sup>

In traditional Chinese poetry, as it prevailed before the advent of the literary reforms of the 1920's, a poem's title was an indispensable part of the work. The titles could be very long – here is an example of an extremely long title by the poet Wu Fu 吴芾 (1104–1183): *Hu Jingzhong from Kuocang taught the canons to students in my county, and I, worthless, when I was in Qiantan, received letters from my elder brother Yongyan Doyi and from my friend Meng Shigong, and there hadn't been a time they did not mention their friendship with Jingzhong, but rather showed me poems that circulated between them and which convinced one that Jingzhong was not a man of this perishable world. In early spring, returning from Qiantan, I met Jingzhong in the courtyard for fasting people and realized that those gentlemen were truly good judges of his character. During the unforgettable year that followed the meeting we had met three times and each time chatted and laughed for ten days, and the bamboo cases with poems scurried back and forth between us, never once stopping. But I, worthless, began to feel sad at heart because I could not be with Jingzhong from morning till night. Once Jingzhong came to visit, and before he could sit on the mat, he said to me, worthless: "I'm returning home and next year I will not come here". I, worthless, remembered how, during our friendship, the talented Jingzhong did not pay attention to the bustle and noise of the world around us. For our next meeting there is not even a time limit; when I stood in the wind with the words of parting, I was seized by unbearable aching grief and, having remembered a line from the old Du [Fu] that "in the life of man there is a lot of separation," during the send-off I wrote five four-line poems. This is the first of them* 括苍胡经仲以经术授吾乡子弟仆顷过钱塘得吾兄永言多益及友人孟世功书未尝不以得交经仲为言且以其往还诗什相示已决知经仲非尘埃中人矣春初归自钱塘遂获识经仲于斋馆信数公之知人交道之不朽一年之间凡三相会从容谈笑者盖十许日而诗筒之循环来往曾未尝辍而仆之心犹以不得朝夕见经仲为恨也一日经仲来访席未定乃谓仆曰吾将归乡明年不复来此矣仆念经仲之贤交游中所未有顾世方扰攘会合无期临风语离殆不胜依黯因诵老杜人生足别离之句作五绝以送之其一。

Of course, this is an example of exceptional length, but it was quite common to have titles like *Gata in response from the teacher to whom the ruler of Yuezhou district sent people to ask whether he controls the community through contemplation or by rules* 越州观察使差人问师以禅住持依律住持师以偈答 (Ling Mo 灵默 (747–818)). The poems of *ci* 词 (lyric meters) form, as

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<sup>1</sup> The research was rendered possible by the RSHF (RFBR) grant 16-24-10001.

a rule, did not have their own titles – the title was the name of the tune plus the first line of the text, added to distinguish it from other poems to the same tune. The practice of providing *ci* with their own titles begins from the Song period (960–1279), largely owing to the poetry practice of the outstanding poet Su Shi 苏轼 (1037–1101). For example, his famous poem to the tune *Jiang cheng zi* 江城子 (River Town) has the title *On the 20th of the first month in the year yi-mao (the 52nd year of the 60-year cycle) I wrote down a dream at night* 乙卯正月二十日夜记梦, and its first line reads like this: “For ten years the living one and the dead one are separated from one another as though with a haze” 十年生死两茫茫. We can also notice the abundance of verbal titles, which is not typical for the Russian poetic tradition, but it is a characteristic feature of the Chinese one. In the modern times, it remains well preserved.

Often a poem was also accompanied by an additional prosaic “epigraph” – a preface describing the circumstances either of its creation or of the acquaintance with an anonymous text. For example, the poem by Su Shi to the tune of *Shuidiao getou* 水调歌头 (The Chant of Clepsydra) is accompanied by a small preface: “At Mid-Autumn Festival in year *bing-chen* (the 53rd year of the 60-year cycle) I feasted until dawn, drank heavily and wrote this work in thoughts about [brother] Ziyou” 丙辰中秋，欢饮达旦，大醉，作此篇，兼怀子由. Another example comes from the *Records of heard oddities* 闻奇录 by Yu Ti 于逖 (749?): “Wang Shao, the holder of the degree He Who Learned the Canons, was reading a book late in the dead of the night. A man outside the window asked him to lend a brush. Shao passed [the brush], and the man began to write a verse on the window. Having finished writing, [the man] fell silent and made no sound. Then [Shao] realized that he was not human” 明经王绍，夜深读书，有人隔窗借笔，绍借之，于窗上题诗，题讫，寂然无声，乃知非人也 (anonymous, probably composed by the author himself, the poem is called *Poems on the Window* 题窗上诗).

Very rarely could authors afford creating a piece with no title at all; the most famous example is a series of poems by the Tang classic Li Shangyin 李商隐 (813–858), each of which, nevertheless, is accompanied by an *Untitled* 无题 heading. It is difficult to tell whether they form a single cycle. This resembles the works of Gennady Aygi (1934–2006) who compared his poems to a farmhouse, in which a title / a roof is necessary – therefore, during the reconstruction of the late handwritten texts of Aygi, it was decided by Tatiana Grauz and Natalia Azarova that if the title could not be restored, the poem would be given the heading *Untitled*.

The title appears as part of the mandatory framework of a piece. This is why in modern Chinese poetry, which emerges in the 1920’s (and a little earlier) and develops throughout the the 20th century, the rejection of the title becomes a notable technique and one of the markers of an

avant-garde text. For example, in Yu Jian 于坚 (1954 –) all the poems of his long cycle *Flash Cards* 便条集 (1996–1999) are deprived of titles. This is a frequent phenomenon in the texts of Yu Jian. At the same time, most modern Chinese authors still retain the titles – here we can see a significant discrepancy with the Russian-speaking tradition, where there is no tight binding to the need for a title.

In the 1980's, apparently under the influence of the European tradition, a peculiar play with the title starts to emerge, and the title ceases to perform an exclusively external function in relation to the text, but is involved in the space of a single macrotext. A vivid illustration is the poem by Bei Dao 北岛 (1949–) *Life* 生活, which consists of a single line one character long (*wang* 网). This character records a word with the meaning “net / toils”. This is reminiscent of the situational brevity of the description in Andrei Sen-Senkov, which is often accompanied by a detailed explanation of what is happening, sometimes almost equal in volume to the main text. This explanation can play the role of the title, and can be designed as an alternative text of the poem itself or an explication of the reasons for its coming into being.

In contemporary Chinese poetry, Yang Xiaobin 杨小滨 (1963–) and Zang Di 臧棣 (1964–) also experiment with a dense integration of the title into the main text. Zang has a large cycle of poems where the title invariably contains the word *congshu* 丛书 (a book series). Each separate text reveals an entire book, or a multivolume collection; the poem turns into a compressed spring. The second major series by Zang Di are prolegomena that do not introduce to the system of rational knowledge, but rather to a profoundly personal experience and at the same time supertemporal understanding and perception of everything that happens to a person. When his young son died tragically in the summer of 2017, Zang Di dedicated a cycle of six poems to this sad event, including *Prolegomena to the Theory of Ashes* 骨灰学入门, *Prolegomena to Minute Immortality* 瞬间的永生入门 and *Binding Stronger than Death. Prolegomena* 比死亡还纽带入门 with a distinct roll call of the title and the main text.

In Chinese poetry, the practice of duplicating the first line of a work in the title (as it was, for example, in *ci* to distinguish them from one another) is preserved. The paradox is that the title of the first line is not simply given in the table of contents, as it is customary in the European tradition. It is also reproduced before the main text, thereby actually duplicating the first line, for example in Han Dong 韩东 (1961–), in *On the Big Wild Goose Pagoda* 有关大雁塔 and *You've Seen the Sea* 你见过大海. For Han Dong, this way of structuring the text appears as a substitute for the complete absence of the title in Yu Jian, online poets, etc.

We also note a different attitude towards the title graphics in the Chinese and Russian traditions. In Russian literature, the title graphics was the publishers' domain right up until the 20th century. In contemporary poetry, the poet begins to work with the graphics (the "epigraph" title in Natalia Azarova, which is placed in the right corner before the text, or long titles in capital letters in Andrei Sen-Senkov, etc.) In traditional China, the poem was recorded (and, later, printed) without punctuation marks, without division into lines, and the title in most cases was not separated from the main text. The whole text represented a single work of verbal art, welded together through calligraphy. This text-picture is preserved in modern Chinese poetry. Dialogue between the visual and the verbal in Chinese art is the topic of a separate extensive conversation, but it can definitely be observed that switching the focus of attention from the person of an individual artist to the artistic space so characteristic of Chinese art of the 21st century has created a special significance for art zones<sup>2</sup>. There the pre-modern models of aesthetic expression find their second birth, existing in the format of *wenrenhua* 文人画 (unity of painting-poetry-calligraphy)<sup>3</sup>.

Turning back to look forward is extremely important in the modern context, as it demonstrates the continuing strength of Chinese cultural models. It is also important because it moves the avant-garde texts of the last decades into a category of reproducible models. This can be illustrated by the work of the poet and calligrapher Ouyang Jianghe 欧阳江河 (1956–) from 2011, in which the poet rewrites the first three strophes of the poem *The Rose of Time* 时间的玫瑰 (2005) by Bei Dao. This is a contemporary poem written in free verse without rhyme, absolutely not correlated with the metrics of the classics. The experiment of Ouyang Jianghe is an attempt to present layers of meanings through the visual appearance of the text<sup>4</sup>. Visible images of words in the line "when birds' ways define the sky" 当鸟的路界定天空 seem to "fly" across the paper, losing order and approaching the cursive. Short flashes of a clear "you" 你 are swept away by the chaotic *xingshu* 行书. The title is placed at the very end – this is the last, closing line (this is also part of the normal practice of the traditional text, where the "preface" 序 is often turned into an afterword).

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<sup>2</sup> Dekker R. 798 Art Zone Beijing: Site of 'Cultural Revolution' or Showpiece of City Marketing? (M.A. thesis)/ R. Dekker. – Gent University. – 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Hong, Jiang. Poetry and Painting in Chinese Literati Culture / Jiang Hong // International Journal of the Arts in Society. – 2009. – Volume 4, Issue 4. – C. 1-12.

Li Ch.-ts., Watt J.C.Y. The Chinese Scholar's Studio, Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period. An Exhibition from the Shanghai Museum / Ch.-ts. Li, J.C.Y. Watt. – London: Thames and Hudson, 1987.

<sup>4</sup> Manfredi P. Modern Poetry in China: A Visual-Verbal Dynamic / P. Manfredi. – Amherst: Cambria Press, 2014, p. 94.

Just as the aforementioned work by Ouyang Jianghe, the work *Black Eyes* 黑眼睛 by Li Zhangang 李占刚 (1963–) recycles the modern poetic text, in this case the famous poem manifesto of Gu Cheng 顾城 (1956–1993) *A Generation* 一代人 (1968). It implies that the reader / viewer is so well acquainted with the text of the work that they can appreciate the pure beauty of its visual presentation, as they know what it says. Exactly the same model often works for classical calligraphic works. However, here we are dealing with a poem that was created just thirty years before.

Chinese poetry is also characterized by a gravitation towards a certain cyclicity of the title. In tradition, the title often represents a figure of *Title.Number* type, where the same title of the poem is methodically reproduced in each part of it, and not as it is customary in the European tradition (first the common title for the poem /cycle, and then only numbers). What was the norm for classics like Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) – let’s recall his poem *Autumn Meditations* 秋兴八首 – remains in modern times. The long cycle by Yang Lian 杨炼 (1955–) *Where the Sea Stands Still* 大海停止之处 is organized in a similar way: each part consists of three numbered parts, but before the next part the original title is reproduced; there are four such parts. The poet Yi Lei 伊蕾 (1951–2018) has a cycle *A Single Woman’s Bedroom* 单身女人的卧室, where each poem, on the contrary, ends with the same phrase “you don’t come to be with me” 你不来与我同居.

Finally, the Chinese tradition is characterized by geographical titles – their number is noticeably larger than in European poetry; this is due to orientation towards large spaces, towards regular and frequent relocation of authors in modern and traditional China.

Here is a brief outline of what distinguishes the structure of the Chinese title in its projection on the phenomenon of title in the newest Russian poetry.

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# Translating Contemporary Russian and Chinese Poetry: Practice of Poet-to-Poet Translation<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

In the last decade, the projects where poets translate poets are more and more popular. These projects can be quite diverse: web sites with permanent and periodically updated content<sup>2</sup>, anthologies<sup>3</sup>, workshops and festivals<sup>4</sup>. Crucial features that allow to identify these projects as a new matter of poetry translation is the number of languages involved and the usage of intermediary languages. At the same time, it does not really matter if there is a main language or not. *Lyrikline* and *Poetry translation* are multilingual projects; however, the vast majority of programs do have a main language: it is German for *VERSSchmuggel*, Mandarin for International Writing Center in Beijing Program, etc.

Poet-to-poet translation projects in contemporary context are different from the traditional practice when a poet would translate another poet. Unlike the individual translations, they are organized and managed by some other people than poets. Unlike poetical translation on demand they are smaller and do not incorporate into larger cultural programs.

This paper discusses the role of a linguist and major challenges in his/her work as an expert, coordinator, and intermediary in each project dedicated to poetry translation, the main issues of literal and poetic translation between cognate/non-cognate and typologically similar/different languages, the opportunities for new technologies of literary translation in multilingual space and culture.

Despite the growing popularity of this new literary translation practice, it still lacks a solid and theoretically grounded overview, and it clearly invites us to provide a professional reflection on multilingual and multidiscursive processes that this practice involves. The practice of poet-to-poet translation may benefit if linguists together with poets could develop new technologies and strategies for optimization of this kind of work. We hope to suggest a possible theoretical framework that will be useful for further work of linguists and organizers of similar projects.

So far very few projects of this kind addressed contemporary Russian poetry, i.e. *VERSSchmuggel*. This paper is based on two projects dedicated to interaction of Russian poetry

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<sup>1</sup> The research was carried out with the support of the RHN (project No. 16-24-10001 "Parallel processes in the language of modern and contemporary Russian and Chinese poetry").

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.poetrytranslation.org/about>, <http://www.lyrikline.org/en/home/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Another Kind of Nation: An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Poetry*, Ed. Zhang Er and Chen Dongdong. Jersey City, New Jersey. Talisman House, Publishers LLC, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> *VERSSchmuggel* is an international workshop by Goethe Institute organized in different countries; annual meetings of poets from a wide range of countries take place in China within the scope of the International Writing Center in Beijing Program.

with Chinese and Spanish ones. Each project involves more than 10 Russian poets and linguists. The ultimate objective for both projects is the publishing of two bilingual anthologies, four books in total: Russian poetry translated to Spanish, Spanish poetry translated to Russian, Chinese poetry translated to Russian<sup>5</sup> and Russian poetry translated to Chinese.

One of the key tasks for an organizer of a project of poetry translation is the selection of texts. The choice of authors and their poems need to take place on individual basis different for each project and should be based on expert opinions of poets belonging to the international community, linguists and philologists who take part in the project.

In our case, in total the experts selected 20 Russian, 20 Spanish and 20 Chinese poets who wrote in the second half of XX century or in XXI century. Among them are such emblematic figures as Gennadiy Aygi and Dmitry Aleksandrovich Prigov, Juan Eduardo Cirlot and Antonio Gamoneda, Duo Duo 多多, Yang Lian 杨炼 and Shen Haobo 沈浩波. At the same time both projects include the selection of poems written by young authors, who are about 30 years old.

These projects of poetry translation have a specific communication scheme where the key components are a direct contact between the poets, double-language translation and the participation of an intermediary. The poets who belong to different languages and cultures can still work in the direct contact with each other. It is the direct contact of two poets that becomes the crucial element of any project of this kind, in some cases it implies mutual translation. A Chinese poet not only translates a Russian poet but also works with them when a Russian poet translates from Mandarin. This complex communication gives invaluable insights to both poets about each other's poetry and the style of thinking. This is the key difference from the traditional approach where the translation is typically unilateral and monological.

Very rarely poets can communicate directly with each other, and be self-sufficient in this communication. Of course, in the ideal situation both poets are fluent in the languages of each other or at least one of them has some knowledge the language of the other. A more common option is that both poets have one language in common, which often happens to be English. Obviously, both options in real life have certain limitations that can generally be described as a lack of fluency. Understanding of a poem always requires a very advanced knowledge of a language. One of the innovations of poet-to-poet translation is the constant contact between poets and an intermediary: a linguist, a professional translator or a philologist.

There are several functions that may be combined in one person or distributed across a

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<sup>5</sup> *Chinese Poetry Today* (Kitayskaya poeziya segodnya), Ed. Natalia Azarova and Yulia Dreyzis, Moscow: Cultural Revolution, 2017.

team of several people depending on the size of the project.

As we mentioned above, a linguist acts as an **expert who selects the texts or authors for the project**. The key step for the next phase of work is composing the pairs of poets to translate each other. The expertise and knowledge of two poetical traditions allow a linguist not only to select those authors and texts that will be the most interesting and representative but also to arrange the pairs of poets-translators. The choice of translation partners should be based on similarities of form, style and poetics, and shared interests by both poets.

In the Russian-Spanish project there are several examples of perfect “matches”, i.e. Sandra Santana and Andrei Sen-Senkov both were inspired so much by each other’s poems that after their work in the project was over they translated books by each other.

<p>* ЗАКРЫТОЕ ОКНО: ПОЛУОТКРЫТОЕ ОКНО В КОМНАТУ, ГДЕ НА СТЕНЕ ВИСИТ КАРТИНА, ИЗОБРАЖАЮЩАЯ ЗЕБРУ, КАК РАЗ НАПРОТИВ ЧЁРНОЙ ПОЛОСКИ *</p> <p>Глядя с улицы сквозь открытое окно, никогда не увидишь столько интересного, сколько таится в закрытом.</p> <p>Ш.Бодлер</p> 	<p>SE HABÍA MARCHADO Y, SIN EMBARGO, EL AIRE SE AGITABA EN EL HUECO QUE HABÍA DEJADO SU FIGURA</p> <p>El dedo rozaba la superficie metálica del telefonillo. Este gesto le concedería por un momento cierta superioridad sobre el objeto de su deseo. Al presionar el botón, automáticamente, dejaría todo lo que estaba haciendo para acudir a la puerta y hablarle a través del auricular.</p>
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Another example of close poetics is Natalia Azarova and Shen Haobo. Shen Haobo is famous for his perfectly provoking poems that clash with Chinese poetry tradition. One of their most characteristic features is the combination of formal complexity of minimalist poetics and social content. Natalia Azarova uses a wide repertoire of poetical tools and her experience of reconstruction of minimalist texts by Gennadiy Aygi in order to find the balance of formal sophistication and minimalism for her translations of Shen Haobo.

Снежные го

возвращаясь опять  
в ледяной Пекин  
под самолетом внизу  
Пекин  
тонко тонко слой снега

СЛОВНО  
белая доска для го  
кто будет играть со мной?  
НИКОГО  
я и шар  
кровоаво-красный заката  
за доской напротив друг друга  
(Translation by Natalia Azarova)

### 白雪棋盘

再一次  
回到冰凉的北京  
从飞机上往下看  
北京  
铺着一层薄薄的雪  
像一块  
白色的棋盘  
谁来和我对弈?  
——没有人  
我和一轮  
血红的夕阳  
在棋盘上对望<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, Shen Haobo used an unusual way to translate Azarova's poem. As an equivalent to a peculiar rhythm of her poem, he found a graphic tool, round empty dots, a punctuation mark in Mandarin nonexistent in European languages.

still alive are the swans under the snow  
the river swans are snowdropped

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<sup>6</sup> Once again I'm back // to the cold Beijing // watching out— // Beijing— // a thin layer of snow, // a white // chess board. // But who is playing the chess with me? // Nobody. // Only me and the bloody setting sun— // watching each other // across the snow, the chess board.

raised to the rhone

mountain horses and legs are short  
shortlegged mountain horses  
boots boot the being

for the night-shift work it snows  
for the foothills' immigrants  
fidelity guaranteed

puny points of geneva's snow  
for white cows  
hunting  
(translation by Petr Kolpakov)

【俄罗斯】娜塔莉亚·阿扎洛娃

### 雪下天鹅

天鹅。活在。白雪。下。  
河。天鹅。春天。白。花。  
雪。河水。天鹅。平平。铺。

矮的。马。短的。腿。  
矮的。马的。短的。腿的。山。  
矮马。穿。靴子。走。

夜晚。雪。夜晚。人。  
山下。移民。工人。山上。雪。  
雪。像。狱警。

日内瓦。点点点点。雪。碎。  
移民。工人。给。白的。牛。  
找。  
日内瓦。点。点。点。点。雪。碎的。末。

沈浩波 译

It is interesting to observe that similarities of poetics of two poets are important for their interaction on a personal level, or for the research that a linguist performs, however this similarity is not an essential thing for a good translation. Poets with different but non-contradictory poetics can translate each other. Therefore, the absence of contradiction between their poetics is the key for the successful translation.

During the second phase, when the poets are directly translating each other, a linguist acts as a translator and an intermediary in direct communication. For both (Russian-Spanish and Russian-Chinese) projects a linguist should always provide a literal translation, a transcription and a general commentary for each poem.

Let us look more carefully at the components involved in the translation process at this preliminary stage as they can vary in every particular case.

### The lineal translation or the literary translation

Russian original	Transliteration
Свет в решетку течет. Снег решетку сечет. Чет. И нечет. И чет. Сад нечетных камней, Сад нечетких детей, Анемии теней Из огромного времени вызванный. Летний свет Сад – и нет. (...) <i>Vladimir Aristov</i>	Svet v rishotku tichot. Snek rishotku sichot. Chot. I nechot. I chot. Sat nechotnyh kamnej, Sat nechotkih ditej, Animii tinej Iz agromnova vremeni vyzvannyj. Letnij svet Sat – i net. (...)
Lineal translation	Translation
La nieve en la reja corre. La nieve la reja azota Par. E impar. Y par. Un jardín de piedras impares Un jardín de niños difusos anemias de sombras del enorme tiempo llamado.	La nieve en la reja corre. La nieve azota la reja. Par. E impar. Y par. Un jardín de piedras impares, un jardín de niños difusos, anemias de sombras, llamado del interminable tiempo.

La luz del verano	La luz del verano
Jardín – y no. (...)	jardín –y no. (...)
Translated by Svetlana Bochaver	Translated by Alfredo Saldaña

We can compare the preparation for the translation for Chinese and Spanish texts. Above we have shown the transcription and lineal translation for Chinese and Spanish texts.

For the translations from Chinese we have developed a system for lineal translation that is close to glossing technique used in linguistic typology.

要想 / 知道 / 梨子 / 的 / 味道

если хочешь / знать / груша / (атрибуция) / вкус

我 / 要 / 先 / 种植 / 一株 / 梨树

я / должен / сперва / посадить / один / грушевое дерево

就 / 要 / 先 / 找到 / 适宜 / 种 / 梨 / 的 / 春天

тут же / надо / сперва / отыскать / удобный, пригодный для / посадить / груша / (атрибуция) / весна

Slashes here allow to understand how the words are related to Chinese characters and clarify the borders between words and concepts in the original text. This technique helps a poet who is not familiar with Chinese writing system to see clearly the differences in syntax and grammar in Russian and Chinese. At the same time, it gives us a way to avoid a translation that is more coherent and would impose on a poet a particular interpretation of the text. However, we still try to offer a coherent version of lineal translation, especially when the poet needs a clarification of syntactic and grammar structures that are not explicitly present in the Chinese original.

We also have developed a brief explanation for poets who are not familiar with linguistic terms in order to convey the semantics of the Chinese attributive particle *de* 的:

Qualitative characteristic

铁/ 的/ 纪律 metal/ de (attribution) / discipline -> metallic discipline

很/ 好/ 的/ 东西 very/ good/ de (attribution) / thing-> excellent thing

Possession

我/ 的/ 书 I/ de (attribution) / book -> my book

Attributive

买/ 的/ 东西 buy/ de (attribution) / thing-> a bought thing

The explanation of the grammar structure of a poem is one of the important tasks for a linguist in this kind of projects. A clarification of grammatical peculiarities of text leads to the formation of meaning. We try to make our lineal translations coherent but neutral towards the meaning of the original text, therefore we need to add a grammar commentary in order to express the whole volume of meaning that a poem contains. Often times the explanation of grammar and commentary takes place during verbal discussions about the translation during the work with poets.

We assume that the translation alone is not sufficient, especially when poets are dealing with languages that they do not really know. Spanish poets who have to translate Russian texts cannot easily read them and even if they do, they are not always aware of complex rules of placing the stress or reduction of vowels. For Russian poets who translate Chinese the transcription in standard *pinyin* may not be enough due to difficulties of Chinese phonetics. In these cases, it is especially important that a linguist guarantee that the sound component would not be lost during the translation.

One of the tasks for the linguist is the general commentary of the original poem. During our work with poets, we offered discussions of the functions of rhyme in Russian and Chinese poetry, commented on allusions and quotes belonging to a literary tradition that is less familiar for poets, or offered descriptions and characteristics of a poetry group. For instance, for a Russian poet it was unclear why Shen Haobo's poems belong to Lower Body poetry. So we provided an explanation that this kind of poetry is opposed to classical verse and intellectual poetry and doesn't literally describe lower body.

Finally, when the translation of a poem is completed a linguist participates in editing the text, may provide commentaries and advice necessary to reach the final version of translated text. We publish bilingual anthologies where each poem is presented in the original and translation.

An important characteristic of contemporary practice of poetry translation is complex interaction between languages and discourses<sup>7</sup>. While the poets translate, they always switch between languages, naturally between the languages of original and translation but also between third and fourth languages (English, German, French). Poets look at translations made by other poets in other languages, and read available resources in order to learn more about the poet they are translating or poetry of a given country in general. This indicates that the process of translation

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<sup>7</sup> Azarova N., Korchagin K. et al. *Poetry. Handbook* (Poeziya. Uchebnik), Moscow: OGI, 2016.

is getting more similar to the cultural transfer<sup>8</sup>.

The poets who take part in these projects have to switch between languages and between discourses. Not all the translation work takes place in the field of poetic discourse, they also communicate with a linguist, read research on this particular poet or poetic tradition and so on. So at least three discourses interact during the work of poets and linguists: poetic written discourse, oral informal communication discourse and scientific discourse. Poets partially acquire the functions of researchers when they look for synonyms, means of expression and always produce commentary to their own and others' poems.

Poetry translation that appears as the result of this process is highly exact, grounded in a deep understanding of the original, highly formal and analytical. A poet and a linguist who work together act as counterbalance in order to moderate each other and make sure that nobody is trying to deviate too much from the original. This strategy in general can be described as a focus on language *per se*. It is quite the opposite of a traditional monologue poetry translation when a translator often tends to extract the meaning from the text and present to the reader in a different language.

Therefore, we have described the main functions of a linguist in a process of poetry translation. A linguist acts as an expert, composes couple of poets to translate together, prepares lineal translation, participates in the translation itself as an intermediary, helps to finalize or edit translations and coordinates the publication process. These projects are mutually beneficial for both poetry and linguistics.

1. Benefits for poetry from linguistics:
  - Management and publication;
  - Systematic approach and consistency (Linguists are interested in language so they can guarantee that the translation is truthful and correct both for the source language and the target language).
2. Benefits for linguistics from poetry.
  - The project creates a space for cultural transfer (min. three cultures and languages). A linguist becomes an agent of cultural transfer, and, thus, can get new knowledge on how cultural transfer works by means of introspection;
  - Evidence and data for crosslinguistic, and crossdiscursive interaction;

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<sup>8</sup> *Espagne M.* « La notion de transfert culturel » // *Revue Sciences/Lettres* [Online], 2013, 1. URL : <http://rsl.revues.org/219>.

*Linguistics and semiotics of cultural transfers: methods, principles, technologies: Collective monograph* (Lingvistika i semiotika kul'turnykh transferov: metody, printsipy, tekhnologii: Kollektivnaya monografiya), Ed. V. Feschenko. Moscow: Cultural Revolution, 2016.

- Parallel processes in languages of poetry – a new way to look for the tendencies in the language of poetry (poetical universals).

For a linguist this practical work in translation may provide a good input for reflection about the main issues of literal and poetic translation between cognate/non-cognate and typologically similar/different languages, the opportunities for new technologies of literary translation in multilingual space and culture and analyze the opportunities for cultural transfer and creation of space of cross-linguistic interaction in poetry translation.

Our project is an opportunity to operate between four languages, and compare data across four languages. We hope to provide a new model of translation practice.

Poet-to-poet translation is never an easy process, it is conditioned by the complexity of the material being translated but also by the procedure itself, that involves several participants and stages. Yet this work is fruitful. It allows to see new models of translation and to create a new communicative multilingual field where universals of poetic language ('superlinguistic poetic norm') provide a basis for an effective work.

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## Challenging the Boundary between Essayism and Verse in Contemporary Russian Poetry<sup>1</sup>

This article problematizes the points of convergences and divergencies in the techniques of essay writing by such close-minded authors belonging to the group of Russian poets called metarealists as Vladimir Aristov and Arkady Dragomoshchenko. The focus will be on the problem of boundaries and transfers between essayism and verse, which are especially relevant for both of these poets.

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Vladimir Aristov (hereinafter – VA), whose essayist work is no less extensive than the poetic one, has devoted a specific essay, published in the NLO journal, to formal and ontological boundary between the essay and other genres of literary writing<sup>2</sup>. The boundary between essayism and verse is at first sight clearly visible to the naked eye. However, as in the situation of any boundaries, we often have transition zones, where border zones exchange attributes or elements among themselves, without eliminating the boundaries themselves. Such cases of transfer, both inter-genre and inter-discourse, will also interest me.

Speaking about connections between the poetic and the essayistic genre, we should pay close attention to the problem of subjectivity. Metamorphoses of the subject and the object within themselves and in relation to other subjectivities and objectivities is a challenge steadily made by VA in poetry, prose, and essays. The essay as a genre allows him to formulate the fundamentals of his metaphysics and poetics most fully. The genre of the essay acquires new characteristics here, being fertilized by adjacent forms of author's self-expression – poems, prose, scholarly articles etc.

VA himself noted the non-accidental proximity of the Latin verb «esse» and the Russian borrowed word «эссе», whereby essayism appeals to human essence and essentiality. Such, in fact, was the genre of *essai* / *essay* for its pioneers Michel de Montaigne and Francis Bacon. This form of writing initially addresses the “inner self”, oneself as another self, but also the other as oneself. It is no coincidence that it seems to VA, that the Russian word *эссе* resonates with the infinitive verb *esse* in Latin. Infiniteness and even abstractness are the properties of the genre of the essay. The text of the essay often looks like an unfinished fragment of an endless text of inner life. Meanwhile, it always has, as a rule, its own theme, subject, problematics, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> *Aristov V. Esse: ontologicheskie ustanovki i formal'nye granicy // Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, № 104, 2010. Cited from: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2010/104/ar19.html>.*

The connection between ontology (being) and subjectivity (person) is fundamental for VA, especially in discussing literary forms. In one of his essays on the “internal man”, he casually talks about the “ontological setting” of “*I am*”, which is characteristic of a poetic utterance. However, this installation of the lyrical “*I*” is not single-person, it “inevitably doubles, ripples, elements of a dialogue with oneself-as-other”<sup>3</sup>. VA attributes this splitting of the subject to the poetry of metarealism, to which the author relates himself. However, this statement outgrows the boundaries of only poetic genre. VA spreads the ontology of subjectivities associated with certain genres and formats of writing is beyond lyrical discourse. Characteristically, he formulates such a model of the subject in the article on the essayistic form and its potentialities. This form itself provides an opportunity to state the provisions relating to several key formats of contemporary literature, in which VA exists and works.

VA proposes a model of subjectivity based on what he calls “ontological setting”. The deictic formula “*I am*” corresponds to a poetic position where the speaker-author-lyrical hero himself is in the focus of attention. The formula of the second person (“*you are*”) or the third person (“*he/she is*”) is inherent to prose, with its focus on the being of another person, another thing that is alienated from the author him/ herself. Finally, drama, as the third major literary genre, deals with the setting “*we are*”, i.e. the polyphony of author's and non-authorial positions. In such distinctions, according to VA, “the primary ontological move” of the literary act is fixed. What is this move in such a relatively new genre in the evolution of literature as the essay? Being a synthetic, integrative and experimental form, the essay can combine elements of all other “primary ontological moves”. Subjectivity here can migrate from one setting to another. Intercrossing the different settings allows the “*I*”, the “*you*” and the “*he/ she*” to appear simultaneously, to change their positions, to test the subject for new transformations. Such interaction of subjectivities, indeed, takes place in VA’s essayism.

In addition to asserting the ontological positions of the subject in the essay, VA outlines certain boundaries of this genre and its distinctive features. The combination of different settings can unite the “plurality of centers of being” in a “separate unity”, he writes. A structure important for VA’s poetics in general: singularity in multiplicity and multiplicity in a single. The key property of essayism interpreted in this new way, is “the simultaneity of perception and the reproduction of sensation – “*I*” and “*you*” are not separated by the sign of the dialogue, but they speak through each other”<sup>4</sup>. The disintegrations of one’s different “*I*’s, or selves”, nonetheless, contribute to the integrity of the text of the essay as a form of writing. Besides, the essay can

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<sup>3</sup> *Aristov V.* «Tot chelovek v cheloveke...» (Idem-forma i pojetika Drugogo) // *Semiotika i Avangard: Antologija*. M., 2006. P. 1119.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem.*

synthesize in itself different languages of description, for example, scientific and artistic, providing an “internal translation” from one cultural language to another. For instance, in some essays VA argues for a connection between physics and poetry as different languages describing the same phenomena (in this case, he identifies the metaphor with the equation and vice versa)<sup>5</sup>. In another text devoted to Velimir Khlebnikov, he considers mathematical calculations as a new form of pictoriality<sup>6</sup>. VA introduces the synthetic concept of “chi-slo-vo”, a unity incorporating the properties of a word and a number. As a scholar in mathematical physics and Doctor of hard sciences, VA uses the essay as a semantic space that could test his mathematical ideas in a more flexible way than that common for a scholarly article. His essays provide for inter-discourse and interdisciplinary transfers between the exact knowledge of mathematical physics and fuzzy sets of humanities.

VA’s first essays appeared as a practice of collective improvisation in the mid-1980s, conducted under the leadership of Mikhail Epstein in the so-called Club of Essayists<sup>7</sup>. Apparently, already at that time, in this new experience of collective writing, arose the idea of the multiplicity of the “I” and the “you”, marked by VA as a property of essayism. The authors of essays in that club could change as they wished and chose the subject of the writing-performance; for example, they could exchange texts, read each other's texts aloud, or create a sort of collective “text aggregates” based on author's texts.

According to Konstantin Zatsepin, the “cognitive-linguistic unit” of the essay is not a concept, not an image, but “certain multilevel semantic complexes-figures”<sup>8</sup>. The fact that the essay, for VA, is a special cognitive practice began to clear up in the 2000s in the series of his texts featuring the core concept of what he calls Idem-form. The genealogy of this concept goes back to his idea of “internal plastic theater” as a new form of artistic representation, a concept expressed in the 1980s. He has applied this idea in his own prose fiction: the novels *Predskazaniya ochevidca* and *Mater studiorum*, as well as in his play *Teatr odnogo filosofa*. A space is created for what he calls a “figural stage” of the interaction of multiple metaphors. The concept of internal plastic theater assumes, therefore, a multidimensional equality, the multiple identity of the individual. Idem-form is a unit, a node of that space that unfolds in this multiplicity of the unit, the universality of the particular.

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<sup>5</sup> *Aristov V.V. Svjaz' opisaniya v jazykah fiziki i poezii // Jazyki nauki – jazyki iskusstva. M., 2000; Aristov V.V. Diskretnoe i kontinual'noe: pereklichka poezii i nauki v kul'turnom kontekste // Voprosy filosofii, № 10, 2016.*

<sup>6</sup> *Aristov V.V. «Doski sud'by» kak porozhdajushhaja model' v poiske «chi-slo-va» // «Doski sud'by» Velimira Hlebnikova. Tekst i konteksty. Stat'i i materialy. M., 2008.*

<sup>7</sup> See on this topic: *Epstein M. Klub esseistov i kollektivnaja improvizacija: tvorcestvo cherez obshhenie (Iz intellektual'noj istorii 1980-h) // Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, № 104, 2010.*

<sup>8</sup> *Zatsepin K. Esse: ot filosofii k literature. Cited from: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2010/104/za17.html>*

First, for VA, Idem-form is a technique of versification. It is an extension of the term *metabola* introduced by Epstein and widely used by metarealist poets. Idem-form allows to transgress the patterns of resemblance or mimesis towards the patterns of sameness, or oneness, as it were (*idem* in Latin means “the same”). A poem containing Idem-form is a machine for locating or creating same entities out of extremely different images or experiences. Again, here, an issue of subjectivity is at play. Idem-form allows the different ontological settings, like “I am”, “you are” and “we are” to enter into new combinations and transform into more complex formulas, such as “I am because you are because I am”. Such is the new poetic practice, “Idem-form is a figure of a poetic image (and an element of a new worldview), where not only the duality already overcome by the metabole disappears, but also an effect of identification with the other person or the other thing is at play, where the unique single manifests itself through the plural”<sup>9</sup>. VA seeks to create an actual poetic form as the embodiment of a metaphysical *Idem-form*. The new concept thus entails the development of a new poetic language, “not completely fixed in stiffened signed, where one can think-feel-embodiment through blurred structures of sensations that can penetrate each other, not displacing each other but mutually filling the self and the other in a sought structure of identification”<sup>10</sup>.

Apart from being a tool used in poetry, Idem-form for VA is also a method of analysis. The method of “internal theater” that directly precedes the Idem-formal method can already be an instrument for a critical interpretation of an artistic text, he notes. The interpreter here becomes an “internal critic” creating an integral picture in the “inner” word of the work. The concept of *Idem-form* allows us to reveal the “big correspondences” in a variety of small structures, the “generic form” that “looks for its membrane in an external ‘open closure’”<sup>11</sup>. Justifying his conception, VA once again resorts to analogies from his own physico-mathematical activities. A new model of time, proposed by him, outlines ways of revealing the singularity hidden in the statistical sum of the moments of time<sup>12</sup>. This concept of time takes into account the dependence of the generic values on the small ones hidden in the multiplicity. VA foregrounds the same principle in the application of the concept of *Idem-form* to the analysis of classical works of world literature.

Since 2003, VA regularly publishes essays on the functioning of Idem-form in classical and modernist literature. He has been publishing these texts increasingly in academic publications on philology and philosophy, thus gaining legitimacy as scientific works. This method of analysis

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<sup>9</sup> *Aristov V.V. Vozmozhnosti «vnutrennego izobrazhenija» v sovremennoj poezii i pojetike // Pojetika iskanij, ili Poisk pojetiki. M., 2004. P. 129.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>11</sup> *Aristov V. «Tot chelovek v cheloveke...» (Idem-forma i pojetika Drugogo). P. 1120.*

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g. *Aristov V.V. Relative Statistical Model of Clocks and Physical Properties of Time // On the Way to Understanding the Time Phenomenon: the Constructions of Time in Natural Science. Part 1. Interdisciplinary Time Studies. Singapore, New Jersey, London, Hong Kong. 1995.*

consists in revealing some common patterns (patterns of sameness) in texts written by authors not having any biographical links between them, like, for example, between William Faulkner and Andrei Platonov. The discovered patterns not only evidence the sameness, but also allow distinguishing between the individual features of particular literary texts. Here again the basic principle of VA's vision comes to the fore – multiplicity of the singular and singularity of the multiple.

Speaking of VA's literary articles, I must say that albeit being academically drawn-up and presented, the Idem-formal studies are essentially essayistic. It is exactly in the genre of essay that they acquire a three-fold value: first, analytical and critical; second, artistic and metaphorical; and third, the value of freedom of thought and experiment peculiar to essayism almost exclusively as a mode of writing. We observe here the “unmethodical nature of the essay elevated into a method” that Theodor Adorno attributed to the form of essay. The method of Idem-form in essayism is a specific method of cognition, where “‘exact’ and ‘inexact’ languages transmit signals to each other, being a station and an instance of translation, interpretation and performance of the other”<sup>13</sup>. The descriptive languages of physics, mathematics, and poetry intersect here in the original essay-thinking, in that “unchanging form” which, according to Ulrich, a character from Robert Musil's *Man without Qualities*, assumes the author's inner life at moments of “decisive thoughts”<sup>14</sup>.

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In contrast to Aristov who publishes poetry and essays separately, Arkady Dragomoshchenko's (hereinafter – AD) essay writings are nearly always embedded in his poetry books, or constitute an entire book with elements of verse. His essayism always balances on the verge of essayism and verse. This is noticeable already on the formal, even physical, level: lines in his verses are often extremely long and often gravitate toward the length of the full page, sometimes making the text look prosaic or essayistic in terms of quantitative distribution of the text. Inclination towards essayism in such verse may be evidenced by the use of particular metapoetic speech acts in titles of poems (such as “observation”, “description”, “consideration”, “image” (and “caption”), “augury”, “weather report”, “experience” etc.). These speech acts serve as particular modes of writing activated by the poet, like in the poem *Опыт* from the book *Под подозрением*, in which the first stanza opens with the line “Любовь замедляет свое движение”, and the rest of the text reads as a metareflexion: “забуду совсем, зачем я писал о том, / что ‘любовь замедляет движение’”. It unfolds as an experiment with the first lines of the same text

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<sup>13</sup> *Aristov V.V. Vzaimotransljacija jazykov nauki i iskusstva i poiski edinogo jazyka // Jazyk kak mediator mezhdzhu znaniem i iskusstvom. Sbornik dokladov Mezhdunarodnogo nauchnogo seminara. M., 2009. P. 329.*

<sup>14</sup> See more about VA's essayism in the context of his entire work in my more detailed article: *Feshchenko V.V. Esse-homo // Vladimir Aristov. Stat'i i materialy. M., 2017.*

(the text ends with lines: “В данном случае опыт переводится / как часть прочитанного стихотворения”<sup>15</sup>). It is not evident how we should translate the title *Opyt* here; probably by “Test”, or “Experience”, or “Experiment”; but the important thing is that “опыт” is the name for a special mode of poetic writing, reflectively and recursively traversing the outlines its own materiality (“опыты описания способов описания как такового”, in AD’s own words).

Let us recall that the original meaning of the word “essai” in French is “experiment, or test”. This experimental, tentative nature of his writing pulls together the two genres, poetry and essayism, into a single genre entity. Olga Severskaya fairly notes that essay for him is “the matrix of all genre possibilities”; she also proposes to speak of a special genre of “poetic essay” in the work of metarealist poets<sup>16</sup>. It is in this poetry, from her point of view, that the poetic and aesthetic statements are especially close to each other. According to another scholar Dmitry Golyngo-Wolfson, an indispensable attribute of the essay is its unidentifiability (неопознаваемость) as a genre and format that resides “at the junction of philosophical discourse, art criticism, scientific thinking and poetic creativity, that is, where its style and genre references will be as unidentifiable as possible”<sup>17</sup>. Indeed, the author of the essay purposely eliminates the boundary between poetic and prosaic speech, and this is especially evident in AD’s writing. Golyngo-Wolfson also believes that AD’s poems and essays “differ greatly”, but in this article, he actually does not discuss these differences. In my opinion, this is not a matter of differences. In contrast to AD, VA is a poet and a scholar in hard sciences and tends to differentiate the genres. For AD, these genres do not act differently; on the contrary, they constantly coexist in the space of his books, alternately regulating the shifting “gears”, so to speak, of writing and reading. The modes of writing here are like a “gearbox”: with the help of lines, sentences, paragraphs, pages, the author switches the registers of writing and reading: from syncopated and discrete mode, with frequent stops-enjambments of free verse to long paragraphs of prose fragments, as if continuing lines without breaks, stretched into paragraphs and pages. In this respect, AD’s predominantly essayistic (prose) book *Bezrazlichija* points with its very name at the fundamental absence of differences between modes of writing in their essence. It is the materiality of writing as it unfolds that determines one or another mode of the utterance: poetic or prosaic. In this respect, Golyngo-Wolfson is right when he writes, “Dragomoshchenko’s essays seem to encroach on the formal limitations of poetic speech and tend to become a field of unlimited (and wasteful) speech production”<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> *Dragomoshchenko A.* *Opisanie*. SPb., 2000. P. 68-69.

<sup>16</sup> *Severskaya O.I.* *Esseisticheskaja pojetika (na materiale russkoj literatury rubezha XX-XXI vekov) // Obshhestvennye nauki i sovremennost'*, № 3, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> *Golyngo-Wolfson D.* *Esse o nevozmozhnosti esse // Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, № 104, 2010. Cited from: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2010/104/go27-pr.html>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

In the free verse mode, the break between the lines syncopates the rhythm, marking the microscopic stops in perception, which syncopate the sense of the utterance. The full stop marks between sentences in the essay do not syncopate the text as much as the line breaks, building upon a more continuous, long-term perception. However, the length of the lines in AD's texts rather conceal the clear boundaries between poetic discontinuity and essayistic continuity.

In Fosfor, AD's book with the most unusual form, the diffusion of genres culminates: although it seems that the book and especially the three texts called "Phosphorus" are labeled by the author as "narratives", they read more as essayistic reflections (sometimes as autobiographical prose), often written in the first person singular. The texts bear the names of "reports", then "articles", then "verses", then "plays", but in fact, they vary as versions of an essay-specific utterance. The novel *Kitajskoe solnce* (Chinese Sun in the published English translation) is different, with the blurring of the narrative somehow held within the framework of the novel form. However, it is a novel form close to the Musil's, with essay-like thinking of his characters.

The shifting of modes of utterance within one text is illustrative in the text titled *Melejushhie veshhi*. It consists of two parts: a poem and a commentary to Ludwig Wittgenstein, which in its turn contains fragments from AD's other poems. The poetic and prose fragments alternate. The two modes of writing serve as parts of a whole "machine" of transposition and sense production. Entries of non-verse fragments into verse fragments and vice versa are like actions of perception shifts: shifts between the linear and the non-linear, the horizontal and the vertical, the beginnings and ends of utterances. We might even think of long prose paragraphs as verse lines prolonged without breaks. The corporeality of such writing is evident. At a Dragomoshchenko memorial conference in Saint-Petersburg Aristov performed a curious exercise in air-writing AD's poetry, where the body was directly involved in the process of public reading. This experience shows how corporeal the actual writing or rewriting (or even reading and re-reading) can be. Indeed, AD's writing involves the scriptor's, or typer's, bodily movements.

AD's essay writings vary from one sentence to a dozen of pages. The essay *Mestnost' kak usilie*, which is clearly subtitled by the author as "Essay", begins by some thoughts about reading books as a child. Then quite abruptly, it shifts to discuss the politics of the poetic discourse, with references to Immanuel Kant and the nature of the poetic utterance. Finally, it unfolds as a treatise on the role of language in modern poetry and on pragmatics as "extension of subjectivity". The philosophical genre of treatise serves here as another mode of essayist writing.

Some of AD's texts exist in the format of a "note"; these are like shatters or embryos of essays. The book *Xenia* contains a lot of them. The text's title, dedication, epigraph, quotation alone may be among these tiles of discourse. The cycle *Utro kak pora goda* composes entirely of non-versified fragments that read as true essays, such as the text entitled *O lishnem* whose topic is the idle and

at the same time celebratory nature of poetry (“о праздности поэзии”). Quite markedly, AD’s as well as VA’s essayism challenges the boundaries of subjectivity, like in this excerpt from Xenia,

Я, возникающее из прикосновения, отпущено поровну всем, и ты понимаешь, что не в означивании дело, но в исключении. Незримые опоры, растягивающие кожуру совмещений в неукротимом переходе в иное, - вторжение. Разве в том городе, где провел он юность (холмы, глинистая река, сладчайшее тело Иисуса, запах которого смешан с запахом старческих тел), разве там не говорили на всех языках? И что за благо, начав движенье в одном, завершать в другом, не сдвигаясь ни на йоту: дерево в окне поезда, кружащее вокруг собственной оси, - вавилонские башни степей, - кружащее, пеленающее собою твое, дарованное многими «я», которое, как известно, забывается в первую очередь. Жаворонок. Провода<sup>19</sup>.

AD establishes his own authorial rules of deixis. Quite often the “I” in his texts is but a linguistic pronoun without the person behind it; it may be just a logical operator: “Грамматическая функция Я – союз в сравнении”<sup>20</sup>. Markers of personal deixis are still rather common in Dragomoshchenko’s early lyrics. In his later verse, they dispersed in the world of objects created by poems. More specifically, in his last book *Tavtologija*, personal pronouns characteristically appear in quotes almost throughout:

Неуловима и бессонна, как «другой»,  
В словесном теле чьем «я» западной застыло<sup>21</sup>.

Видим, как «мы» расслаивается на «я» уравнений времени  
(никогда ни одного на дороге). Даже, если до пота на амальгаме<sup>22</sup>

(что легче в итоге:

«сигарета», «имя», «ты», «фильм», «сердце»?  
словари огромны, вращаясь на осях забвения<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Dragomoshchenko A. Ksenii. SPb., 1993. Cited from: [www.vavilon.ru/texts/dragomot3](http://www.vavilon.ru/texts/dragomot3).*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>21</sup> *Dragomoshchenko A. Tavtologija: Stihotvoreniija, esse. M., 2011. P. 21.*

<sup>22</sup> *Idem. P. 23.*

<sup>23</sup> *Idem. P. 26.*

The following poem makes this idea of objectification of deictic words most clear:

«Я»  
«Здесь»  
  
«Сейчас»  
  
«Ты»  
  
«Там»  
  
«Тогда»

вероятный процесс  
извлечения себя  
из языка  
извлекаемого из себя  
странствующая ось  
плавающие углы<sup>24</sup>

The subject, or persona, completely merges with language, the author of the text being operator of subjectivities with linguistic means. As a poet, he seeks to what he calls “produce and extend subjectivity”<sup>25</sup>. The pronoun “I” ceases to act as an egocentric particular, pouring into the common stream of nominalised world:

Что забавно – население, которое удвоилось с моего рождения и удвоится к моей предсказуемой смерти; четыре «я» там, где было лишь одно; больше «я», чем этих

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<sup>24</sup> Idem. P. 158.

<sup>25</sup> Idem. P. 205.

«я» когда-либо было, включая, возможно, все «я» с переселившимися в них душами муравьев<sup>26</sup>

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As we have seen, Dragomoshchenko's subjectivity differs from Aristov's subjectivity. The latter consciously differentiates the personal positions "I", "you", "he", "we" (and they correspond to different genres of writing: lyrics, drama, prose, essayism), although they enter into complex interactions with each other. The subject in Dragomoshchenko's writings tends to a constant reassembly and self-deletion. Working with modes of writing is different in two authors, Aristov conceptualises essayism as a special form of writing, complementary to poetry and prose, while the essay provides for transfers between artistic and scientific discourse. Dragomoshchenko's writing assumes the constant migration from one format of writing (verse) to another (prose). Essayism as an intellectual endeavour permeates all his verbal creativity.

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<sup>26</sup> *Idem.* P. 94.

## WORD. LETTER. IMAGE.

### On the Visual in Poetry<sup>1</sup>

What is “visual” poetry? What is “the visual” in poetry? Asking these almost childish questions, one can easily see that any word inscription translates language (speech) from “verbal” into “visual”<sup>2</sup> – and this is due to the invention of writing. Allow me to recall a few simple truths about language and give a little reference to the origin of alphabet, which appeared supposedly in the 3rd millennium BCE. However, written language had existed long before that. Some of the most ancient recording systems are considered to be pictographic, hieroglyphic or ideographic (Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Aztec, Chinese), they differ from the alphabetic one in that each sign is provided with its own meaning (not solely phonetic).

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Alphabet (Greek: Ἀλφάβητος) is a form of writing based on a standard set of signs. In alphabet, individual signs (letters) denote phonemes of a language, although the univocal correspondence of sound ↔ letter is observed rarely and tends to get lost in the process of the development of oral language. Alphabet is different from pictographic writing, where the signs denote concepts (Sumerian cuneiform), and morphemic and logographic writing, where the signs indicate individual morphemes (Chinese writing).

Semitic peoples invented the principle of alphabet. In the middle of the 3rd millennium BCE scribes in the city of Ebla (Northern Syria) created such a classification of syllabic cuneiform symbols borrowed from Mesopotamia (used by them to record the local Eblite language), in which the signs were ordered according to the nature of the vowels with the same consonants: ma, mi, mu. (In Semitic languages there were only 3 vowels a, i, u). It seems that due to the experience of cuneiform and Egyptian writing, the Semites, no later than the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE, were able to create such an initial type of consonantal syllabic writing with signs for conveying consonants in combination with any vowel (syllables of the type wa, wi, wu, recorded not with different signs, like in cuneiform, but a single one). When the signs for vowels had also been included in the complete set of written signs, alphabet as an ordered set of written symbols of phonemes was finally established.

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<sup>1</sup> The first edition of the article was published on the *Discourse* website in 2016. The second edition (under the title “The Visual in Poetry”) was published in the magazine *Interpoezia* (“Interpoetry”), 2017, No. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Y. B. Orlitsky. The visual component in contemporary Russian poetry // *Theory of Literature: A Textbook for Universities* / E. Y. Fesenko. – 3rd edition, supplemented and amended. – Moscow, Academic Project; “Mir” Fund, 2008.

In all known alphabet systems, each letter has its name. The names of the letters are derived from words denoting the objects that begin with the corresponding phonemes (*alef* “bull”, *bet* “house”, etc.), and are mostly preserved in related systems and when borrowing from one system to another (from West Semitic, for example, to Greek).

Around 863 the brothers Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius of Solun were ordered by the Byzantine emperor Michael III to organize the writing for Old Slavonic language, and used the new alphabet to translate Greek religious texts into Slavonic language. For a long time it remained debatable whether it was Cyrillic script (and in this case the Glagolitic script is considered a ciphering that appeared after the prohibition of the Cyrillic alphabet) or Glagolitic – the alphabets which differ almost exclusively in the way of writing. At present the view of the Glagolitic script being primary, and the Cyrillic alphabet secondary prevails.

\*

It is believed that visual poetry<sup>3</sup> began back in ancient Greece, around the 3rd century BCE – with Simmias of Rhodes, Dosiad, Theocritus, Aratus. Figured verses that looked like axes, eggs, wings, altars or flutes, palms, cups, towers or pyramids; verses as peculiar hieroglyphs; cryptography via figured verses. As Jacque notes: “Simmias did not content himself with giving his poems the appearance of a drawing. He simultaneously harmonized the rhythm of his poems and the figure he wanted to depict”<sup>4</sup>. Aratus of Soli (Ancient Greek: Ἄρατος ὁ Σολεῦ), a Greek didactic poet, born around 276 BCE in Cilicia, composed the poem *Phenomena* (φαινόμενα) in 732 verses and the poem *Forecasts* (διοσημεία) in 422 verses (often united under the common title of *Phenomena*)<sup>5</sup>. It had a great influence on subsequent literary tradition. Paul the Apostle, speaking in the Athenian Areopagus, quoted *Phenomena* (see Acts 17:28).

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<sup>3</sup> Gasparov M. Literary encyclopedic dictionary. Sov. Encyclopedia Publ., Moscow, 1987.

<sup>4</sup> Jean J. History of writing and book printing. – Ast: Astrel Publ., Moscow, 2005, P. 164.

<sup>5</sup> Semyan T.F. Visual appearance of prosaic text. Chelyabinsk, 2006.



Theological and mystical codes and ciphers of the visual poetic did not stop even in the Middle Ages. Poet monks often wrote down their poems in the shape of a cross, eight-pointed stars, etc<sup>6</sup>.

THE CROSS.

Blest they who seek,  
While in their youth,  
With spirit meek,  
The way of truth.

To them the Sacred Scriptures now display,  
Christ as the only true and living way:  
His precious blood on Calvary was given  
To make them heirs of endless bliss in heaven.  
And even on earth the child of God can trace  
The glorious blessings of his Saviour's face.

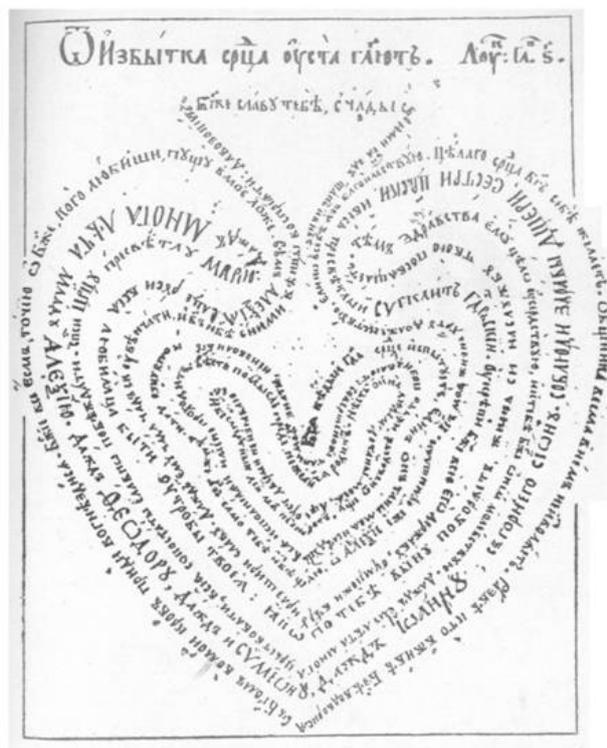
For them He bore  
His Father's frown,  
For them He wore  
The thorny crown;  
Nailed to the cross,  
Endured His pain,  
That his life's loss  
Might be their gain.  
Then haste to choose  
That better part—  
Nor dare refuse  
The Lord your heart,  
Lest He declare,—  
"I know you not;"  
And deep despair  
Shall be your lot.

Now look to Jesus who on Calvary died,  
And trust on Him alone who there was crucified.

However, by the 16th century, and even more so by the 17th and 18th centuries, during the Baroque era, the content and form of this kind of poetry acquired comical (playful) and / or satirical nature. Therefore, for example, Francois Rabelais in his poem *The Divine Bottle*, published after the author's death in 1564, wrote an ironic text in a hand-drawn bottle.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bonch-Osomlovskaya. Introduction to the literature of formal limitations. Literature forms and games from antiquity to the present day. Bakhrakh-M Publ., Samara, 2009.





Derzhavin's (1743–1816) figured poem *Pyramid* is, in turn, most likely of playful nature, as are, however, many visual experiments in the poetry of writers of that time (Sumarokov, Rzhevsky, Apukhtin, Rukavishnikov).

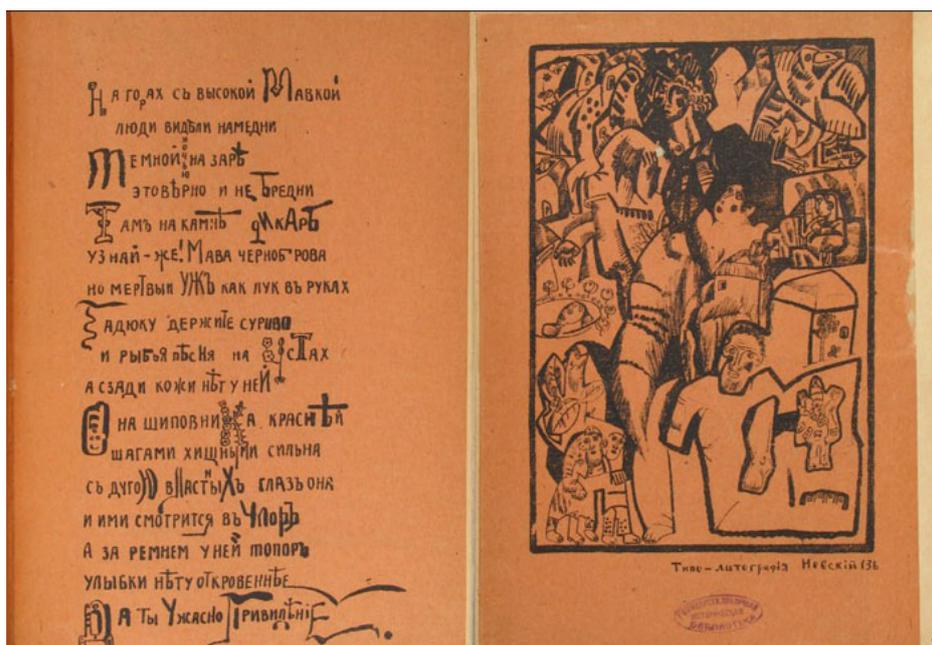
Зрю  
Зарю,  
Лучами,  
Как свечами,  
Во мраке блестящу,  
В восторг все души приводящу.  
Но что? – от солнца ль в ней толь милое блистанье?  
Нет! – Пирамида – дел благих воспоминанье.

The antagonism of the word and the image arises at the stage of the formation of the phenomenon of “pure” aesthetics. “Only art that has realized itself as a predominantly aesthetic phenomenon begins to isolate pictorial art from literature, and literature from pictorial art. <...> Until then, the unity of the fine arts and verbal arts was the most important prerequisite of theoretical thinking”<sup>7</sup>.

There was a new development in visual poetry at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, in the experiments of Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898) (*A Throw of the Dice*) and Guillaume

<sup>7</sup> Yakimovich A.K. Formation of Baroque and Classicism in the Italian sculpture of the XVIII century // Soviet art studies, 74. Moscow, 1975. P. 160 – 175.







As F.T. Marinetti wrote in 1914 in his manifesto: “Capital letters will indicate to the reader the words that synthesize the prevailing analogy. <...> I use italics for all liberated words expressing the infinitely small of molecular life. <...> We will also use on the same page ink of three, four different colors, and in case of need twenty different fonts. For example: italics for series of similar and rapid sensations, bold for violent onomatopoeia and so on. Through this typographic revolution and the multicolor variety of fonts, I do not want to get a picturesque effect, but just double the expressive power of words”<sup>9</sup>.

Influenced by the works of the philologist Nicholas Marr, the futurist poets shifted to another direction of visual poetry – direct work with a letter, a character. A good example are the books of avant-garde poets of the early 20th century. Thus, *Ferro-Concrete Poems* by Vasily Kamensky was a grandiose breakthrough into the field of the visible word<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Marinetti T. 1914.

<sup>10</sup> Biryukov S. Poetic master class. Lesson five: Visual. Topos Magazine.



The so-called Soviet poetry was also no stranger to experiments, represented by Semyon Kirsanov (1906–1972) (the poem *My Room*) and Andrei Voznesensky (1933–2010), who differed in style and social engagement. Concrete poems *MOTHERMOTHERMOTHER*, *SNOWMELTING*, *FLIES*, poems in the form of spirals, arches were included in the unique collection of Voznesensky *The Shadow of Sound*, published in 1970.





On the other hand, the figured poem by Iosif Brodsky (1940–1996) *Fountain* harkening back to Derzhavin's tradition, is a piece where the poet attempted to reproduce the pulse of water in the fountain by a special strophe of the poem.

И. БРОДСКИЙ

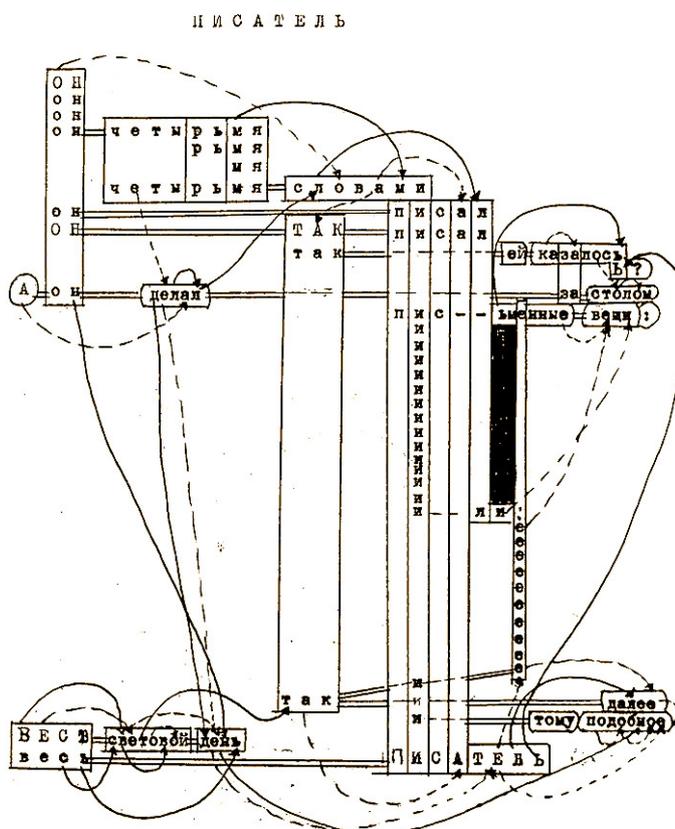
## ФОНТАН

Из пасти льва  
струя не журчит и не слышно рыка.  
Гмацкими цветут. Ни свистка, ни крика.  
Никаких голосов. Неподвижна листва.  
И мучна обстановка сия для столь грозного льва,  
и нова.  
Пересохла уста,  
и гортань проржавела: металл не вечен.  
Просто кем-нибудь наглухо кран заверчен,  
кормившийся в кушак, в конце хвоста,  
и красива опутала вентиль. Спускается вечер,  
из куста  
сомы темней  
выбегает к фонтану, как левы из чаши.  
Окружают сородича, сплотив в центре чаши,  
перепрыгнув барьер, начинают коситься в ней,  
лизжут лапы и морду вождя своего. И чем чаще,  
тем темней  
грозный облик. И вот  
наконец он сливается с нами и резко  
оживает и прыгает вниз. И все общество резко  
убегает во тьму. Небосвод  
прлчет звезды за тучу, и мыслишкой тразно  
навоет  
похищение вождя  
- так как первые капли блестят на скамейке -  
навоет похищение вождя приближенным дождя.  
Дождь спускает на землю косые линейки,  
строй в воздухе есть или клетку для львиной семейки  
без узла и гвоздя.  
Теплый  
дождь  
моросит.  
Как и льву, им гортань не остудишь.  
Ты не будешь любим и забыт не будешь.  
И тебе в поздний час из земли воскресит,  
если чудилцем был ты, компания чудил.  
Разгласит  
твой побег  
дождь и снег.  
И, не склонный к простуде,  
все равно ты вернешься в сей мир на мочлет.  
Ибо нет одиночества больше, чем память о чуде.  
Так в шкорму возвращаются в ней побывавшие люди,  
и голубки - в ковчег.

1967

In the direction set by Marr and the futurist poets, some modern avant-garde authors<sup>11</sup> conducted and conduct their graphic experiments: Valeri Scherstjanoi, Sergey Sigei, Ry Nikonova, Elizaveta Mnatsakanova, Boris Konstriktor, Arsen Mirzaev, Vladimir Mishin.

In Ry Nikonova (1942–2014) poems sometimes become similar to certain architectural designs. For example, in the text “*Writer*” – *an Architectural Treatment of 1992* the meaning of the written (pictured) is hidden behind a complex technical scheme, where words (letters) are implanted. However, the poem is “read” through the graphic appearance of the text-picture even without decoding, showing that simple words (letters) hide a complex scheme of interaction and mutual influence, a special “architecture” of connections.

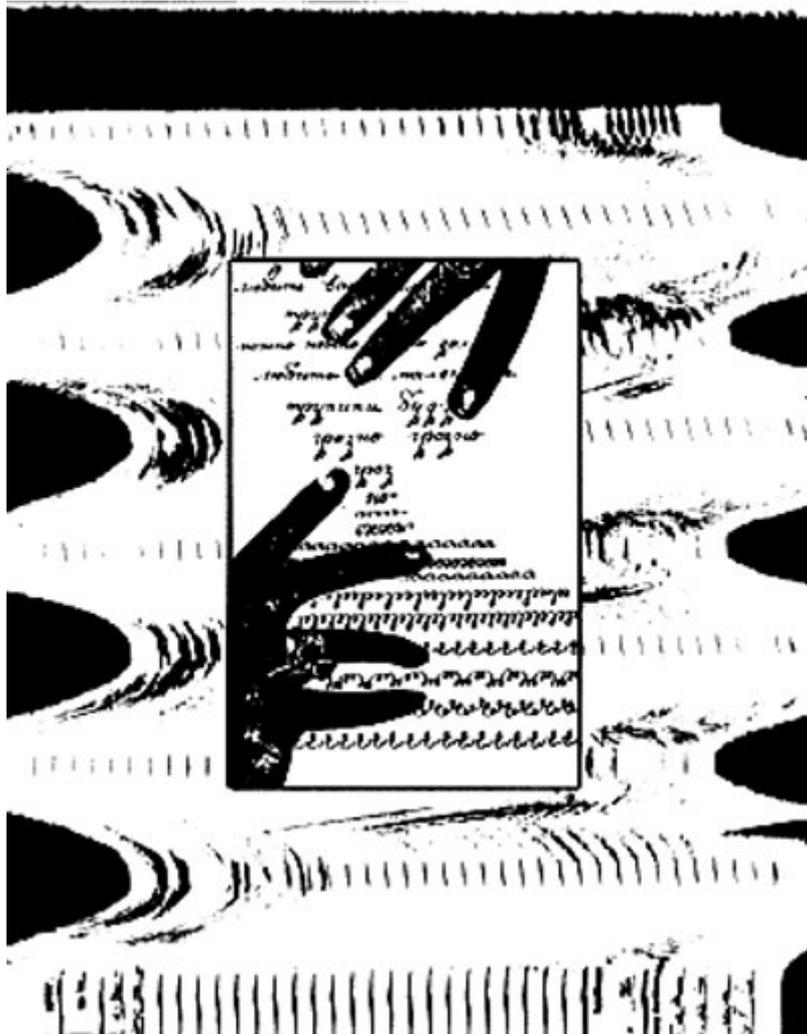


1973г.

архитектурная обработка 1992г.

In Elizaveta Mnatsakanova (born 1922), in her metaphysical visual-poetic texts-drawings, the words gradually turn into a ligature, into a kind of intertwined lines, next to which there is often a shadow-image of the “creating hand”, as if transforming the sensible writing into something different that exists beyond the limits of a direct speech utterance.

<sup>11</sup> Biryukov S. Draft: Literary Visual Almanac. Issue 12.



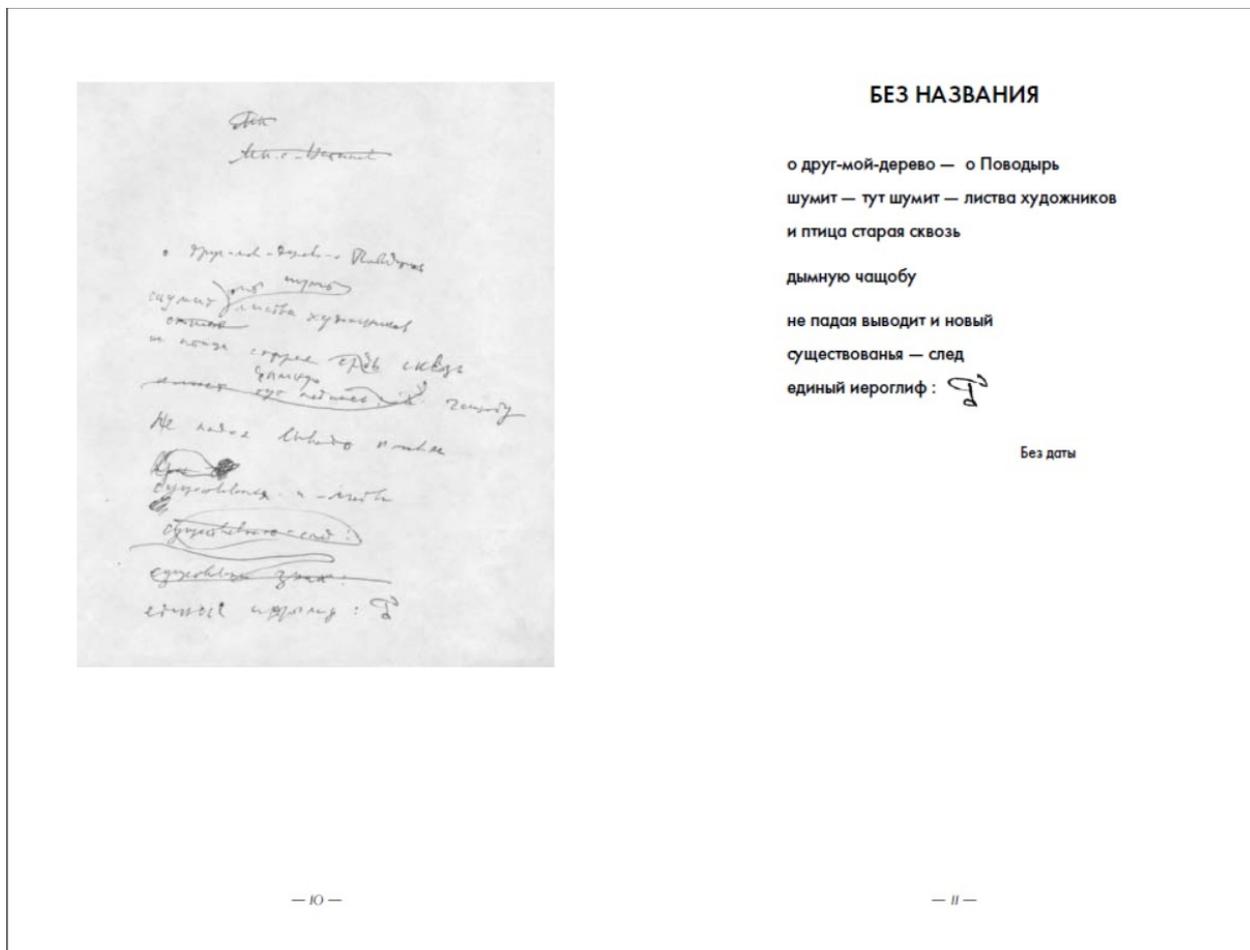
All these experiments are related, I believe, to the theme of the inability of alphabetic (sign) language to contain the existing world – visible and invisible. When it is obvious that any sign is paltry in comparison with what this sign stands for and that any verbal touch on reality weakly replenishes the inexplicable multidimensionality of the world revealed to man. Thus, for example, the mysterious signs invented by Sherstyanyoy (born 1950), similar to ancient letters and reminiscent of a scale of words, are attempts to somehow compensate for the lost sensate *imagery* of the letter sign.



In one of the halls of the museum of local lore in the city of Cheboksary you can find a large dark stone on which a mysterious text is inscribed in Arabic script. Oddly enough, it is claimed that Chuvash speech is recorded with Arabic script on this stone. The ancient inscriptions on the stone reminded me of the *listoverten's* (“rotate-sheets”) of Dmitry Avaliani (1938-2003). The unexpected transformations of the letters written by Avaliani's hand are subtly similar to the outlines of Arabic ligature, in which the Cyrillic symbols are guessed and “read”. In Avaliani's *listoverten's*, letters (characters) are so plastic that the words composed of them seem to be in a melted semantic field and contain several meanings at once, contrasting with each other or complementing one another.



Elaborating the theme of the incompleteness of direct utterance, the incompleteness of language is also explored in some of the poems by Gennady Aygi (1934-2006). Working on Aygi's manuscripts<sup>12</sup> one can clearly see that the poems' visual appearance came immediately to the poet, even in the rough notes. Let us study the way the visual and the verbal interact in the two texts of Aygi taken from the book *Location of Happiness*.



The word “hieroglyph” is found in Aygi's poetry quite often. In the manuscript of this poem, next to the word “hieroglyph” Aygi writes a special graphic sign, thus creating a new sign, *novyy sushchestvovan'ya sled* (“new trace of existence”), giving an instantaneous stroke, a sign (ideograph) written by hand (pencil), similar to the imprinted flight of a *bird* (its spin through a smoky thicket), a not immediately readable name – *Bog* (God). Thus, this sign  becomes a kind of plastic (graphic) equivalent of an ineffable word for the poet.

The visual means that Aygi uses in his poetry, in a strict sense, are not that “literal”, as in visual poetry that we know from the avant-garde experiences of the 20th century. Most often, this is an attempt to expand the expressive and emotional component of the graphic form by means of

<sup>12</sup> G. Aygi. *Location of Happiness*. Book of poems // Reconstruction by N. Azarova and T. Grauz. Moscow, Argo-RISK Publ., 2014.

the already known (traditional) punctuation. Here Aygi resorts to such things as variety of punctuation signs (dots, dashes, hyphens, exclamation marks or equal signs) and the use of empty space. Sometimes he draws crosses or small squares next to letters and words; makes (collage) music inserts or writes signs similar to hieroglyphs by hand. But in the poem *The Vision of a Rose*, the reader, moving through the text of the poem, witnesses how through ecstatic punctuation and graphics of the poem appears the image of a cross, how the poet uses the most ordinary graphic means to increase the dramatic nature of the transition from “*the seen*” to what is “*beyond – the Visible*”.

## ВІДЕНІЕ РОЗЫ

роза-и-крест

о:

крест-цветок:

«жизнь»? = «миг» — чтоб увидеть:

о (= нет):

и:

! —

(за — Зримым)

30 сентября 1982

In two poems by Gennady Aygi *First Grass* (1976) (from the book *Marked Winter*) there is a cross (red or black) drawn in the white space of the sheet and the inscription “first grass”, made by hand in green and black ink. How the semantics of these poems change, however. While the first one with a red cross and green inscription refers to the revival of nature and resurrection of life (and to the Christian connotations: Easter, as the symbol of this resurrection), the second poem where the same words and signs are manifested in black tells, I believe, about death – the cross – for each of us. Here the first grass is those mortals who leave us for another world. Or – another reading of this text: the cross is Calvary, and the “first grass” are the first martyrs of the new Cross.

### ПЕРВАЯ ТРАВКА



п е р в а я   т р а в к а

1976

470

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The visual poem is always open for many more readings than the usual “literal” graphic poem.

I would like to tell about the personal and creative friendship of Gennady Aygi with such artists as Vladimir Yakovlev, Nikolai Dronnikov, Igor Vulokh, Igor Ulangin. The treasure of this

generous and perennial friendship were joint evenings, and books that were born and published during the life of the poet and after his death. I would like to mention the *Aygi Book*<sup>13</sup> recently published by Mirzaev, where poets, artists, composers, musicians, friends and relatives tell about Aygi and recall the poet's favorite poems. These memories are interwoven like tree branches, and create a special space of joint creativity in the space of Aygi's poetry magnetized with love. It is noteworthy that in his paintings the artist Dronnikov sometimes paints/ inscribes (with broad strokes) Aygi's poems into his paintings (mostly in landscapes). The poems seem to soar in the air of a canvas, becoming a part of the artistic space, and the landscape shines through the written poetic text with a strange flicker.

It is also worth drawing attention to the Chinese fan of amazing beauty<sup>14</sup>, painted with the poet's works by Nikolai Dronnikov (I happened to see this fan at the exhibition dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Aygi in the museum of the city of Cheboksary). The technique of painting fans with verses is an ancient traditional technique that is still used today in China. Modern Chinese poets and artists sometimes imitate a fan on a sheet of paper and write on it using calligraphy. But here we see that the lines of the poet written on the fabric of a typical Chinese fan form not only a special kind of book that can be opened and read, but are embedded in a household utilitarian thing, creating a new semantic zone for the reader that uses a "fan-book". Thus, a transformation occurs, a change not only in the visual appearance of the poem and the emergence of a new form of the "book", but also a transformation of this peculiar book into something special. The completely new meanings of the poetic work manifest new forms and relations of "poem" ↔ "reader", "work of art" ↔ "consumer of art". The intention of this movement is changing. The "consumer of art" disappears. In place of the consumer, there appears someone completely different. As in Aygi's dream that the poet has repeatedly told his friends, the dream of one being able, walking around the city, to read luminous – advertisement-like – lines from poems of favorite poets, so that the lines do not go out all night.

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<sup>13</sup> "Aygi Book". Compiled by A. Mirzaev. Svoe izdatel'stvo Publ., Saint Petersburg, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> "Fan" by N. Dronnikov and G. Aygi



Usually art as a form of consumption is ironized. Ry Nikonova (1942–2014), for example, in some of her performances “wrote” poetry using jam, and then licked these “sweet” lines off or suggested the participants of her events did the same. Here it is appropriate to recall the honey-cake poems of Chicherin, his poem *Aveki Vikof*, which existed not only in the form of a drawing, but also in the form of a honey-cake board. Chicherin’s honey-cake, baked in 15 copies, was sold at Mosselprom and eaten by “consumers” of poetry at the dawn of the 20th century.

One day the artist Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), with the help of a luminous wand, drew in the air figures that disappeared as quickly as they appeared. This made it possible, if only for a moment, to radically change the view of art. It was a bright open – one might say glowing – gesture against the “consumerist” in poetry and art.



A gesture in which art was manifested through the light evading any rigid definition, not created by us and existing in the air of life itself. Similar experiments continue even now. Thus, in 2015, the poet and artist Andrei Cherkasov (born 1982) created a whole series of “ideograms” – a kind of “lighting” (light-writing) of the language of deaf-mutes. There were LED’s attached to the phalanxes of the fingers of the deaf-mute, who read or performed<sup>15</sup> verses, and all gestures (and dynamic transitions between gestures) were formed on the photograph into a single hieroglyph – a complete light ideogram of the poem.

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<sup>15</sup> Poetry by Marina Hagen



I would like to draw attention to another experience of “the visual” in poetry, the verses of Ilya Oganjanov (born 1971) from the book *Sotto Voce*.

вчера сегодня завтра минуту назад ребёнок родился мёртвым и дожил до  
 старости            грудь матери истомилась по сыну            не заплывай  
 далеко            нырнуть бы поглубже в парное молоко детства и вынырнуть у  
 кисельного берега старческой улыбки            достаёшь руками до дна            эту  
 дробь не сократить            отличник за партой облаков выносит тебя за  
 скобки            хочешь позвать мама мамочка и только лист пожухлый шуршит  
 под языком            язык шершавый пёс шелудивый трётся о небо только б  
 скулить да и то всё не скулеж а словно пила виз - жиг сжи - ваает со свету твою  
 тень            мама зовет пора домой            выпускаешь из легких углекислое  
 время            стайка нолей вырывается изо рта            на поверхности реки  
 лопаются созревшие пузыри            первоклассник подрисовывает своим  
 мечтам усы старик провожает облысевшие мысли в школу ты стираешь с  
 доски            урок окончен            агу-агу попей молочка

Oganjanov’s poetry is not as “obvious”, in the visual sense, as that of the avant-garde poets. This is most likely a kind of visual minus-manifestation, when through the absence of punctuation

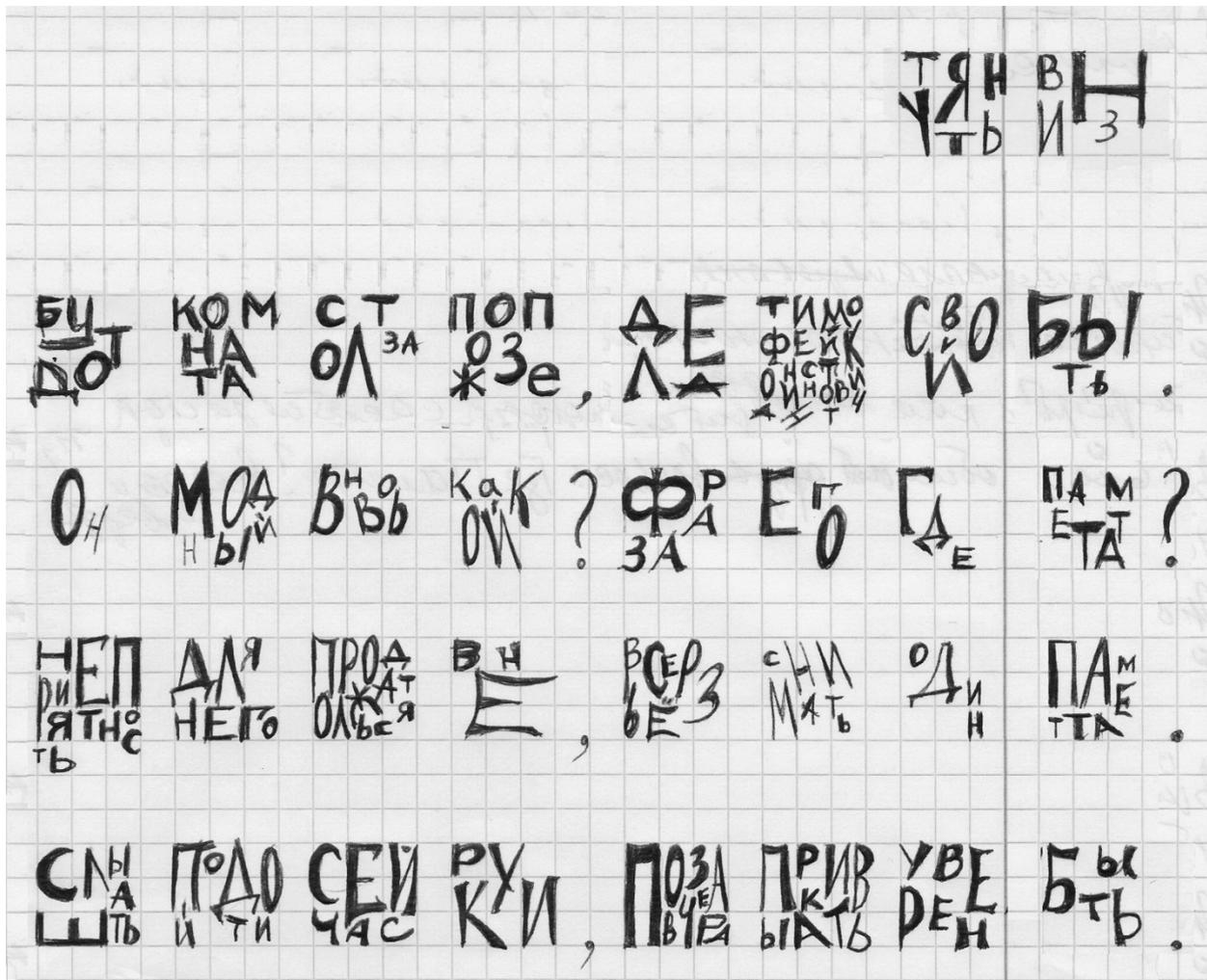
marks, capital letters and division into lines, a new semantics of the visual appearance of the poetic text arises. The words of the poems, enclosed in a rigid form, form a square (more precisely, a rectangle). The only graphic technique of Oganjanov in this book is the increased gap between the semantic (notional) segments of the text. This seemingly simple technique leads to unexpectedly serious consequences: on the one hand, the enlarged gap symbolizes the transparency (translucency) of culture and directly refers to the name of the *Palimpsest* cycle. On the other hand, it is in the pauses that arise in the blank spaces that there is the understatement and reticence – the “breath” of poetry – thanks to which the slow and deep rhythm of poems grows from lyric into epic.

Sveta Litvak, a poet and performer (born 1959) who works in different poetic techniques, has several visual works that imitate the Chinese characters outwardly: the text is positioned not horizontally, but vertically, in columns. Most of the letters are blotted out, so reading them is extremely difficult, almost impossible. A special field of verbal play arises from the contact of one culture with another. At the same time – with the help of the visual image of this text – interlingual characteristics of two cultures are manifested, as is their impossible (or almost impossible) translation. Only flashes of light blue, red and dark blue color with which the letters are blotted out, seemingly speak of a certain sensual understanding of another language, another text.



And in this visual poem by Litvak we see an imitation of characters made using Cyrillic script. Presumably, this poem can be read (and the poet read it at one of the literary evenings).

However, reading this poem causes some difficulty, and the difficulty is, I believe, the hidden (encrypted) task that the poet posed to readers: a penetration into another language is always a certain effort for someone who would like to learn this language.



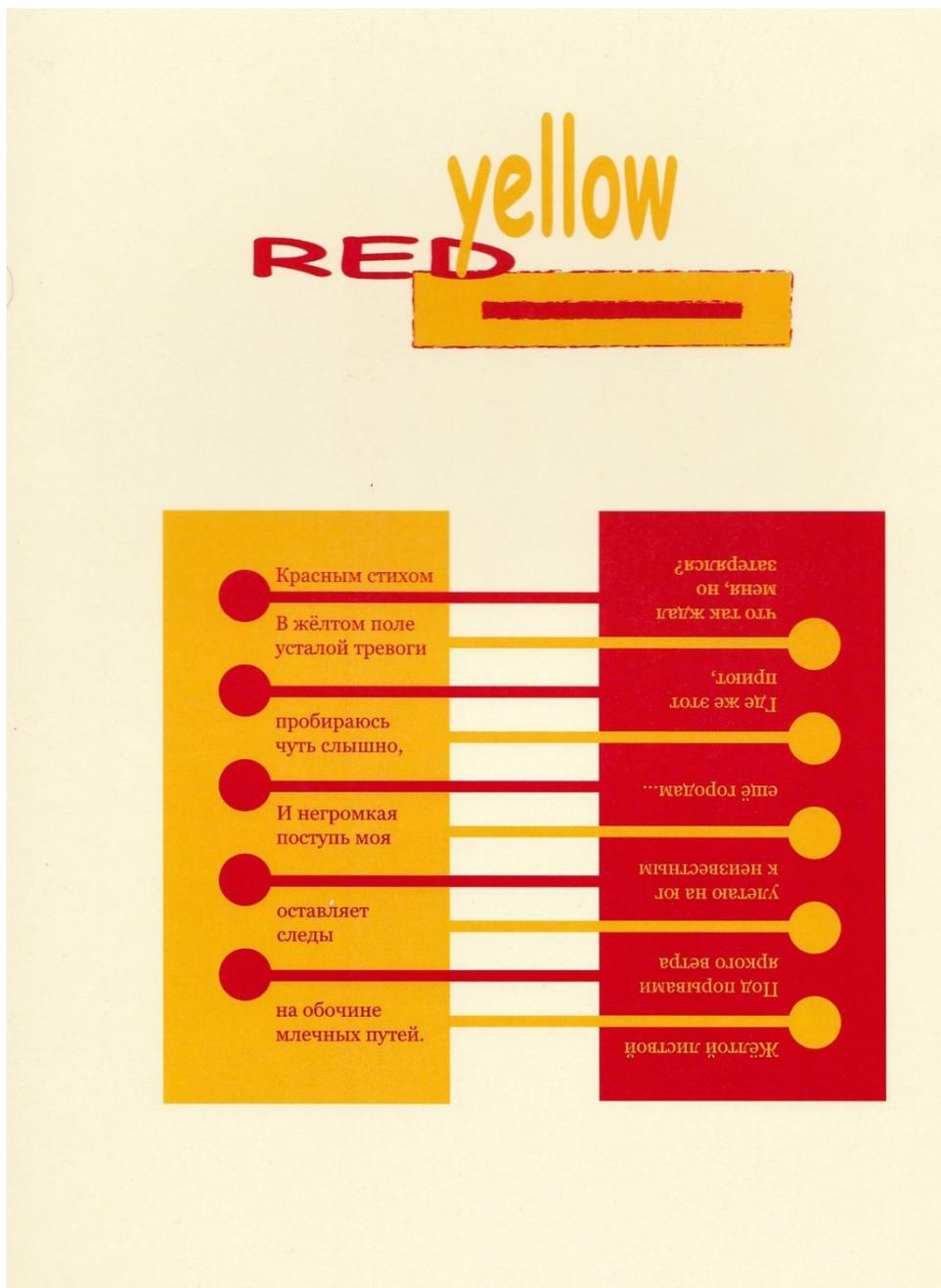
And here is another work by Sveta Litvak.



It is quite difficult to decipher this text, consisting of seven disintegrated, “surviving” letters БУ ИЗ СТЪ, the letters trodden by the “boot” of time (as I read this visual metaphor of the

traces of boots and / or cars that have been superimposed on each other). Perhaps, in these БУ ИЗ СТЪ, the *future* and *proximity* are hidden (lost), or maybe these letters accumulated around themselves some other semantic (semantic) fields, which we, the readers, can only guess. However, it is in the alarming instability of our conjectures that the beauty of this visual poem by Litvak is hidden.

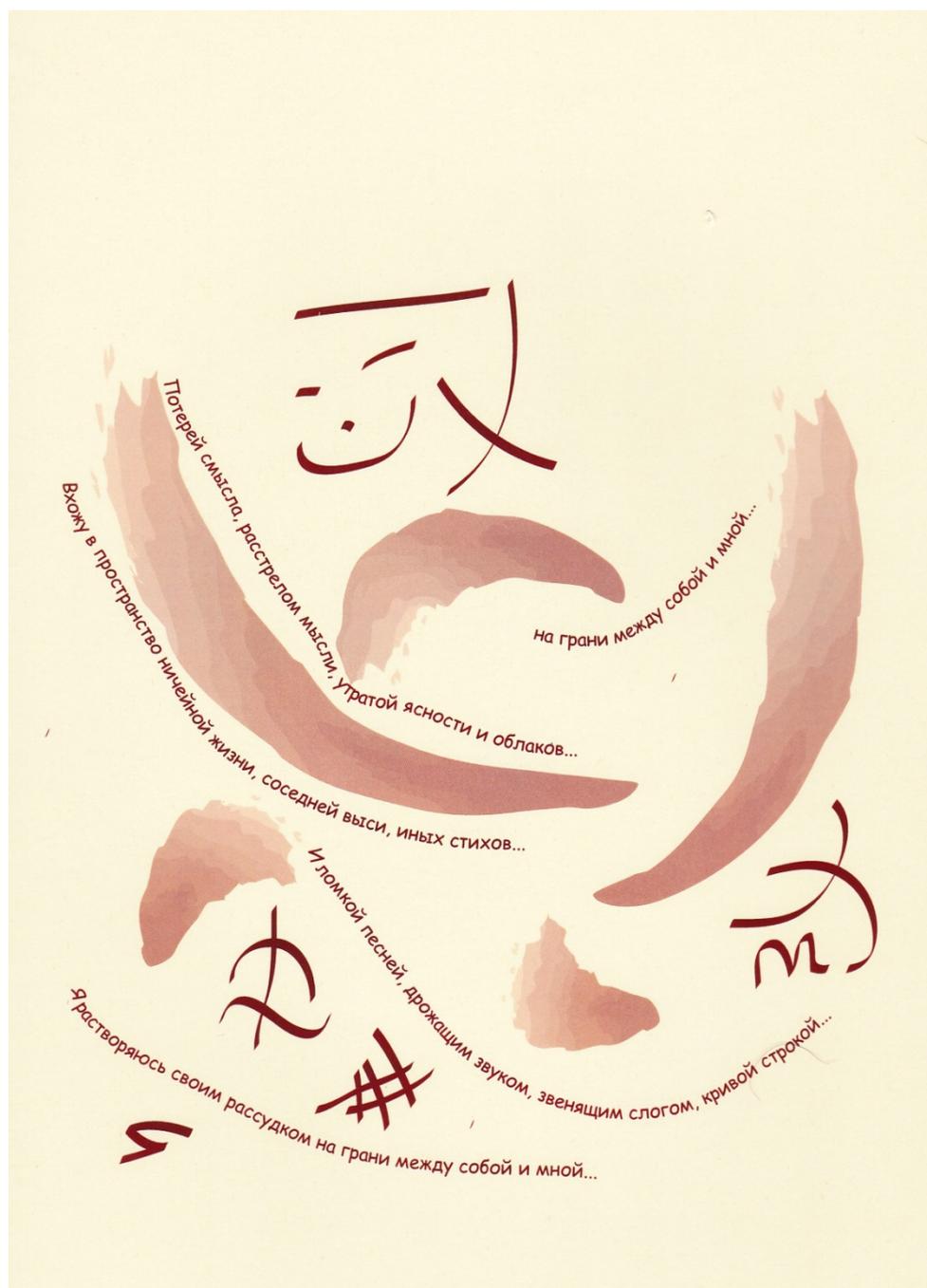
The text of the poet and artist Mikhail Pogarsky (born 1963) *Red – Yellow* is built on the principle of “implanting”, stitching the lines with red and yellow strips (the main colors of China and the Chinese flag).



The poem refers us to Chinese poetry about the futility of the path. The text is divided into two parts, two columns, sewn together the way Chinese men’s clothing was fastened. The color

red conveys an internal expectation, as well as a reference to the subject of suffering, blood, and the color yellow is simultaneously the main color of the Heavenly Empire and the color of autumn, and the color of that new, yet unexplored future.

Another poem by Pogarsky combines the lines “floating” between watercolor strokes and “floating” hieroglyphs (or their imitation) also refers to China and creativity – as self-contemplation and union in the poetic meditation of two cultures.



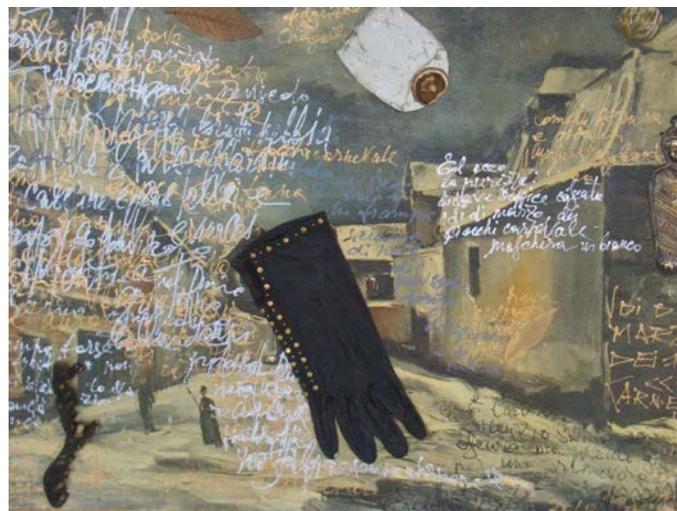
In the poem of Evelina Shatz (born in Odessa and now living in Milan) *At the Time When Verdi* (2011) the contrast of colors is also used. The work is a complex collage. The background is the imitation of the colors of the Italian flag (crumpled colored paper glued to a wooden board).

On the right side of the work is a text devoted to Verdi's music, consisting of lines that were torn from long ribbons (a technique declared since the time of Dada).

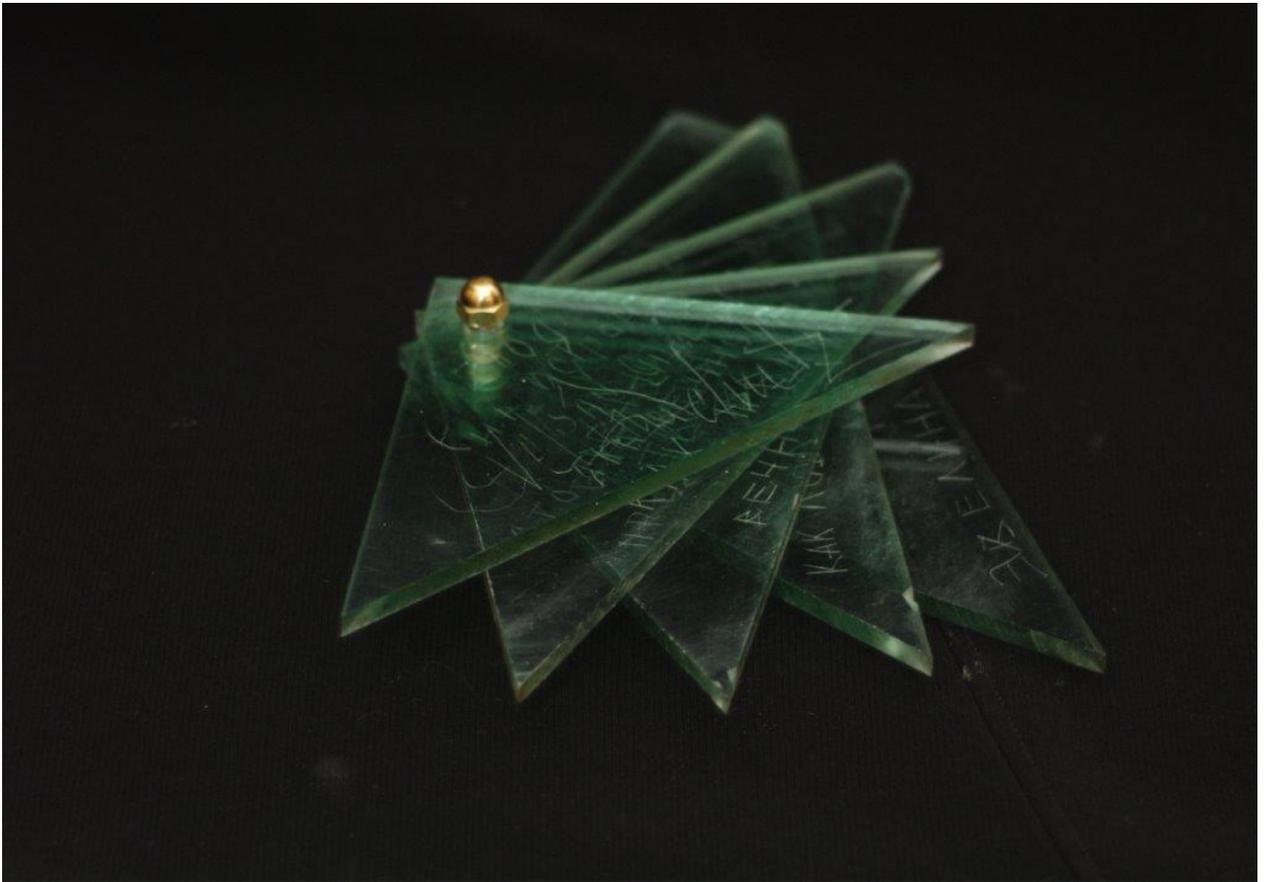


There are pasted musical quotes from Verdi's works plus wooden figures and letters on the left side of the picture. This leads from Italy and from all things social and switches consciousness into the field of artistic contemplation, where the unity of color, text and music is manifested, which is greater than anything social, although it (music) arises at a certain time and in a certain place.

In the work of Evelina Shats *It's Snowing* an old canvas is used, with a picture already existing on the canvas.



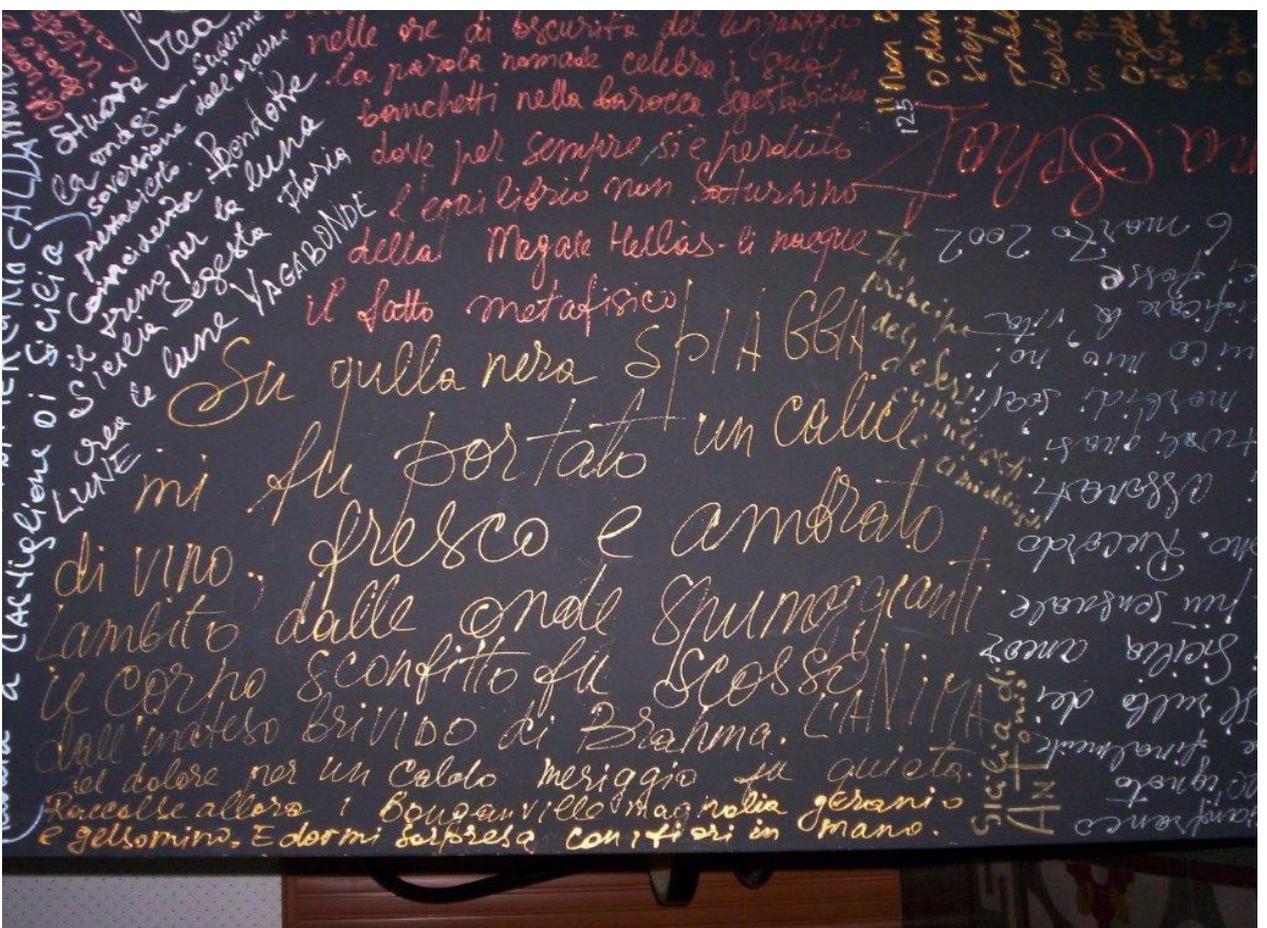
The text that mimics the snow resembles a “blizzard” of words that has not yet been clarified, and, perhaps, a text that has already appeared. The glove in the center of the work is a kind of homage to the entire cultural context of “gloves” in painting and literature, but it is also a dark (decorated) spot of culture that covers and obscures a part of the winter (natural) in the landscape.



*Ball of Triangles* by Shatz exists on the verge of visual poems and visual objects. Here, among other things, it is interesting that the medium of the verse text can be any material: in this case, glass. In the transparent *Ball of Triangles* scratched verse lines can certainly be read as a poem, but these scratches of the text on the glass are like a manifested metaphor by Mandelstam “On the glass of eternity my breath, my warmth was already laid...” These scratches of words on the glass are like a tiny transparent staircase leading to a complete poem, free for both reading and contemplation.

In other two works by Shatz one can see how easily and freely the poet and the artist uses various materials: the table top painted with verse lines is a household item used in the house, but also a kind of a “book of poems”. There is also a transparent theatrical curtain, painted with verse. The materials on which verse can be written – as can be seen even from this small number of examples – are different. Depending on where the verbal recording appears, the context of its

perception changes and sometimes the text itself changes, saturated with the structure of the material on which it is recorded.

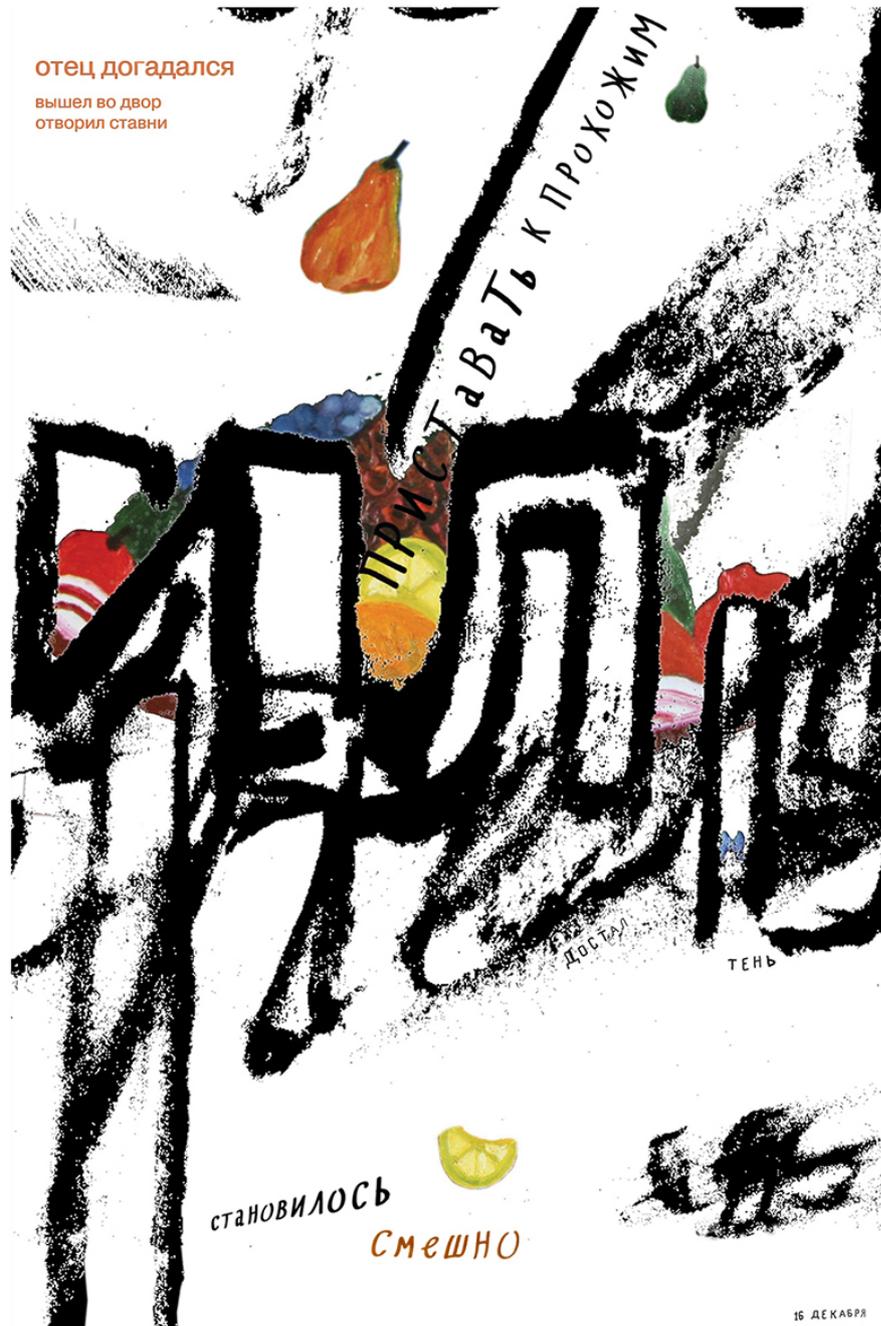


Videomes is a term coined by the poet Andrei Voznesensky for his works (we will talk about them later), but I believe that it is quite appropriate to use this term to characterize the visual texts that Nikolai Vyatkin (born 1987) makes.

*You Think Silence* is similar to an internal dialogue or a question, seemingly arising from nowhere. Question-address, created from disturbing reddish and bluish letters on a black background. The unsteady profile resembles a letter or a hieroglyph on dull black, bleeding into blue-gray, background, reminiscent of the paintings of Mark Rothko (Although, the work of Vyatkin is small in size, but it is quite possible to imagine that its size can be huge). The eternal disturbance of letters, born in the dark, denying darkness and silence, and saturating the silence and darkness with their presence. This is how I would “read” this videome.

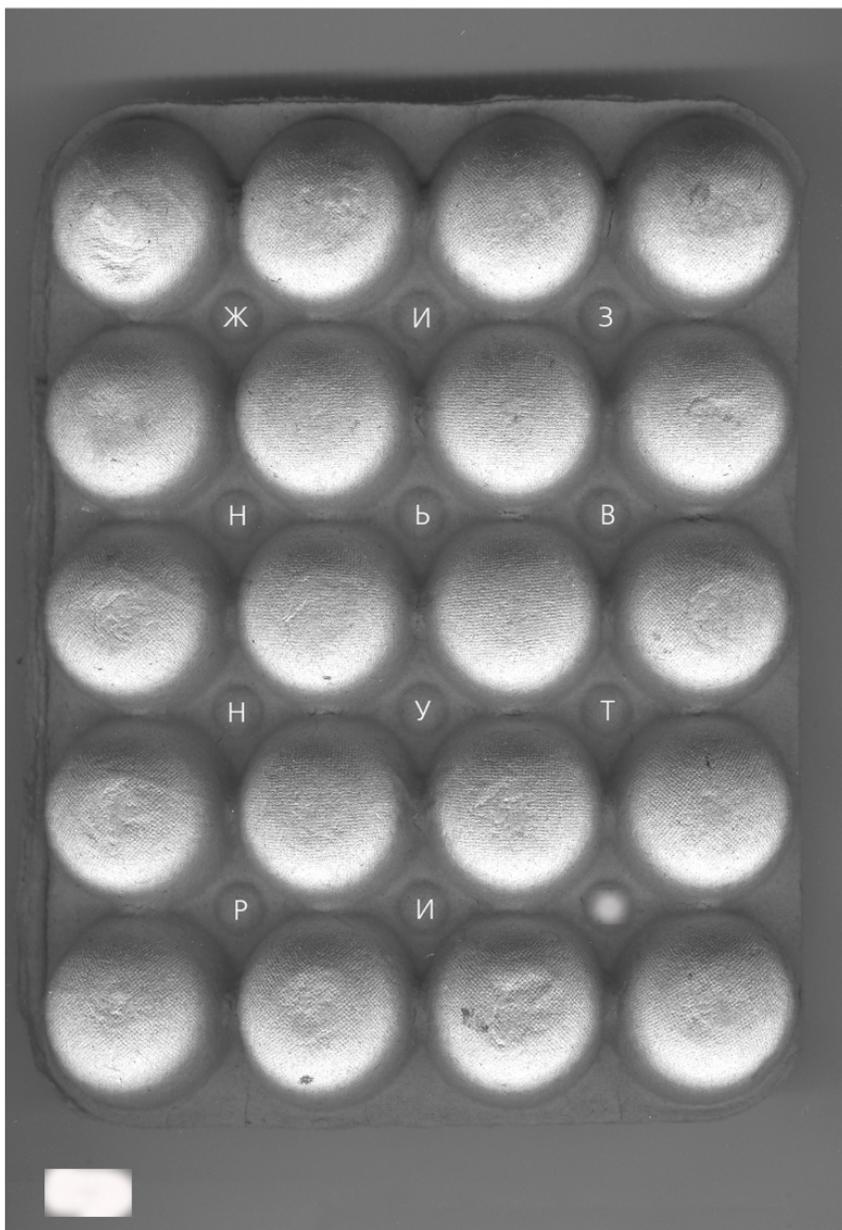


In another work by N. Vyatkin, *Father Has Guessed*, the verbal part of the verse is closely fused with a visual change in the letters in the word СОЛЬ (SALT). This word, towering like a lump of last year's snow, like a snowdrift, dominates all other semantic layers of the picture: both the image in the background, and the text written in a smaller font. There can be a lot of readings, like in any poetic text, saturated with meanings like with salt.



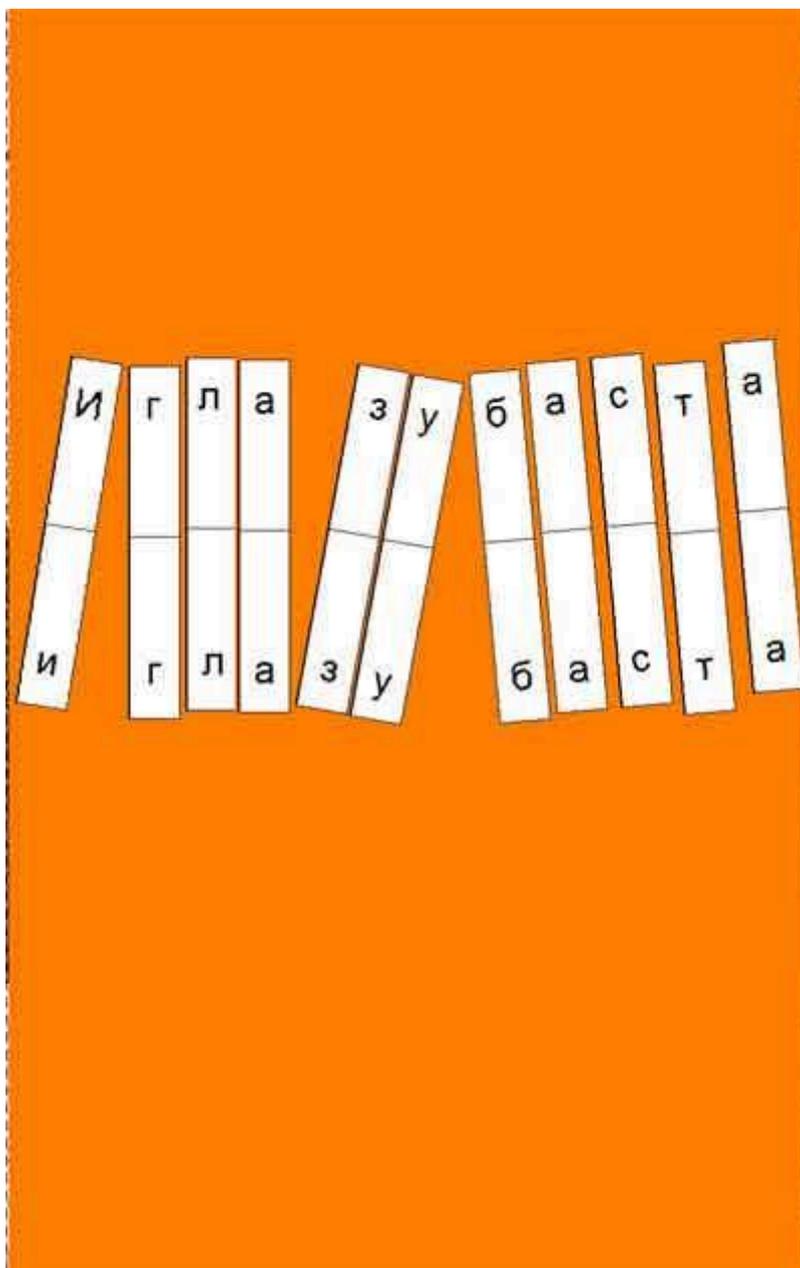
*Proletters* by Nikolai Vyatkin and Mikhail Vyatkin (born 1949), made in collage technique, are original visual meditations on the subject of what a letter, a character is and where an alphabetical character is conceived. Meditations on the natural, organic origin of letters.

Another work of these authors – *Life Inside* – is quite difficult to decipher. I believe that these protuberances – the cells – are egg cartons that conceal something uncertain. Nevertheless, it is these strange, disturbing, coarse bulges that are that peculiar secret code (peculiar bubbles of the earth) at which this visual text image hints.



The works of Valery Silivanov (born 1972) are made in completely different techniques. His favorite technical method is the video animation of palindromes and anagrams. Unfortunately, we have no opportunity to show these video works in print.

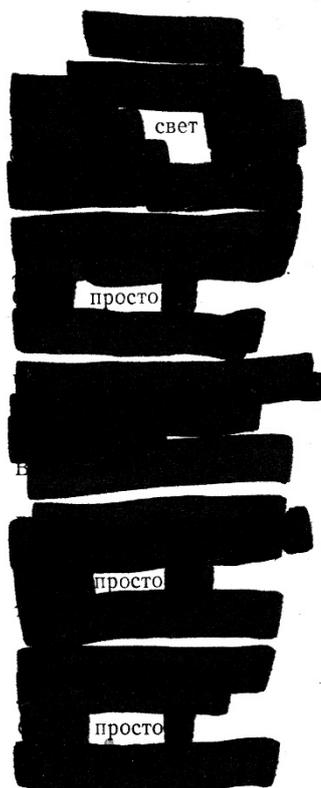
The visual texts of the poet, made in collaboration with artists (for example, with Sergei Orlov), have, as is often the case with Silivanov, a both ironic and creepy playful subtext: “Iгла zubasta” (The needle has teeth) — “I glazu basta” (Enough for the eye).



In the visual works of the poet and performer Andrei Cherkasov (born 1987), a variety of methods is used quite often. In these works Cherkasov transforms well-known poems of classical poets, for example, Alexander Blok. We can see the conceptual solution of this visual association on the right side of the picture. In the case of Marina Tsvetaeva, on the right side of the picture,



with other authors' texts – the poets of the 1970s. In the obscured (with writing ink or India ink) poem, there still remains a new poem revealed by Cherkasov. Here is the active impact of not only the word but also its immersion in the darkness, and the way in which the new text manifests itself graphically, encapsulating sometimes a completely provocative visual semantics of the poem. It can be both witty and very modern.



As in this case, a new visual appearance of the poem is reminiscent of a semi-dilapidated high-rise building, a Chinese or Japanese poem, or censorship of text (a characteristic sign of the 1970s). The text that wasn't painted over is somewhat reminiscent of minimalist poems in the spirit of Nekrasov. In such a perfectly simple way, new meanings of this new “visualized” poem are manifested.

A poet, a performer, the unique Willy Melnikov (1962–2016) created visual works that he called “lingvotapestries”. He invented various exotic fonts of obscure languages, which he sometimes voiced in the “original” language, and sometimes translated them into Russian. I have

in possession one of such translations that Willie made and, having fixed/ fixated it, gave me a copy of his text, and I included it in one of my collages.



Regardless of the translations and voice-overs, Willy Melnikov's lingvotapestries themselves are remarkable in visual, chromatic, and compositional solutions. In them, there is an incandescence of the ancient fusion of poetry and imagery, the ancient fire of the word and the hidden secrets of the language that Willie Melnikov displayed in his visual works.

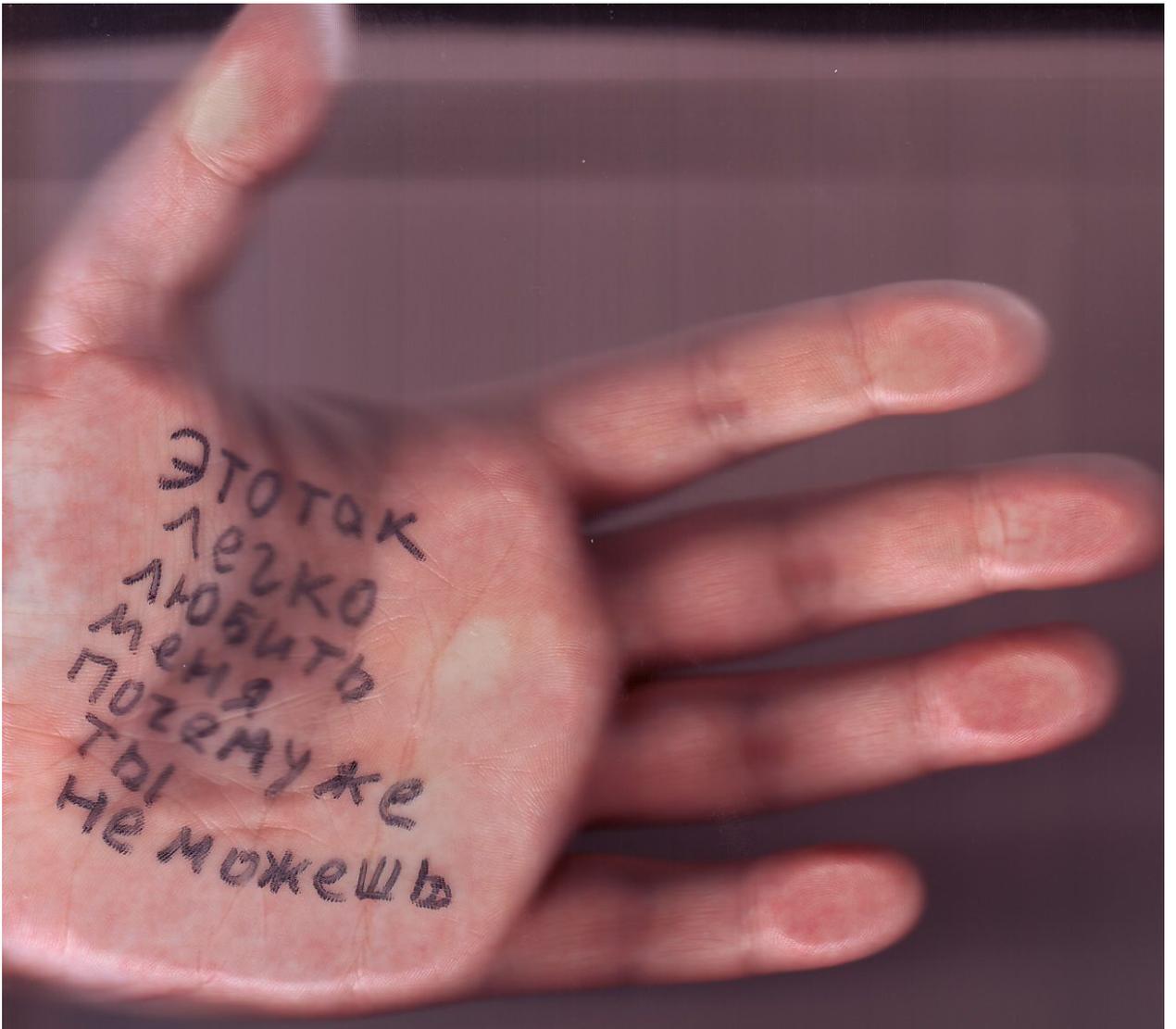


The visual works of the poet and performer Yevgeny Kharitonov (born in 1969) are somehow subtly similar to lingvotapestries. Nevertheless, here the text is not an ancient – “reconstructed” – language, but vague signs of nature.

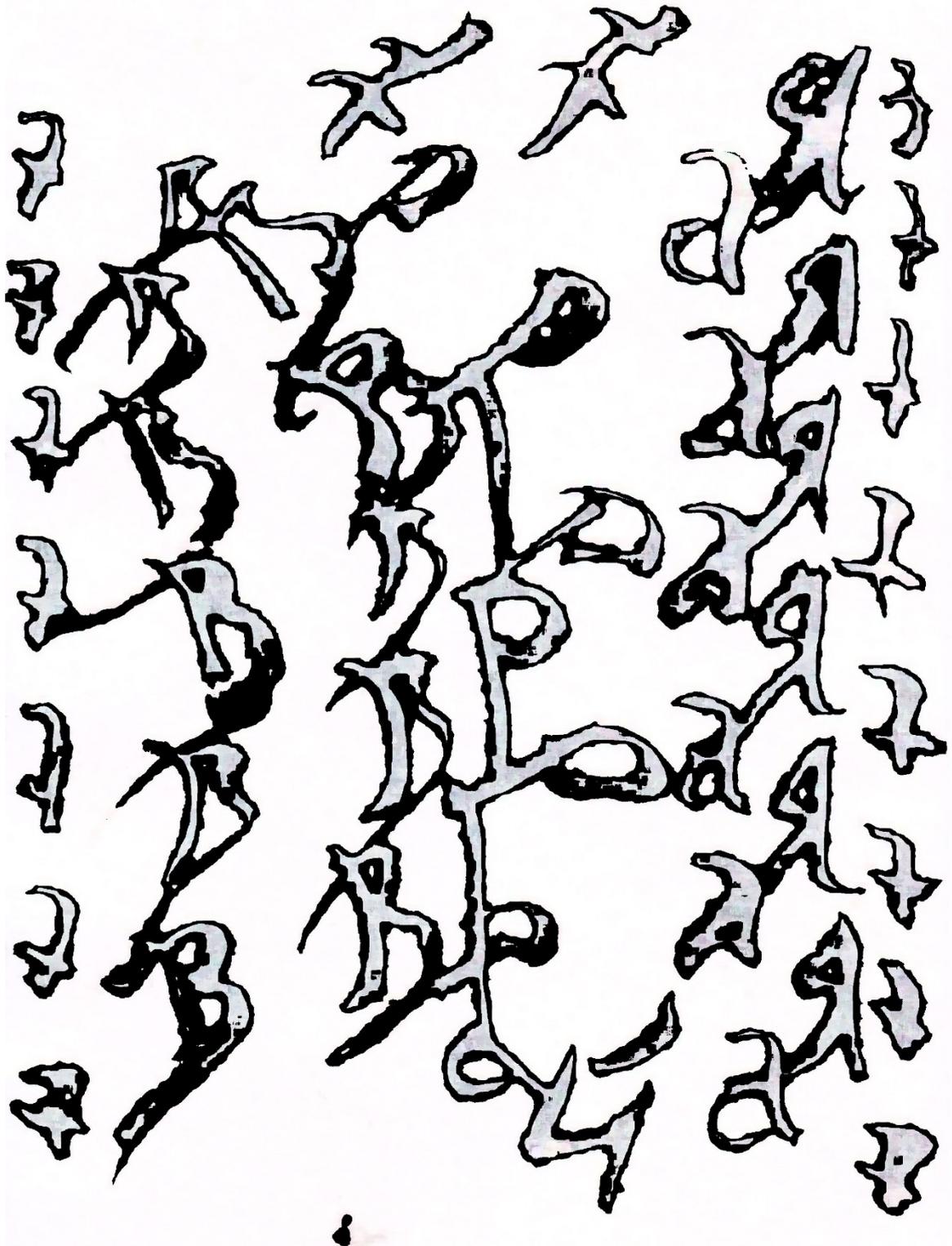


This is most likely a black and white snapshot of water with its ripples and circles, which the author supplements with two font symbols A and N, gradually emerging from somewhere. It is they that give a new semantic (sensible) “sound” to these vague signs and shadows of water: the manifestation of an alphabetic (sensible) sign in vague natural erosion. Alphabetic characters seem to manifest themselves in the chaos of nature (alternatively, a reverse movement can be made: the letter decays into natural elements).

The next work by Kharitonov is a poetic text (vers libre) written on the palm with a black felt pen. It also refers to the *Palm-of-the-Hand Stories* by the Japanese writer Yasunari Kawabata (1899–1972), and to the popular still from the film *Titanic* (1997) – a palm is leaning against the glass. You can call this visual poem not only a text, but also a poetic gesture – warm and human.

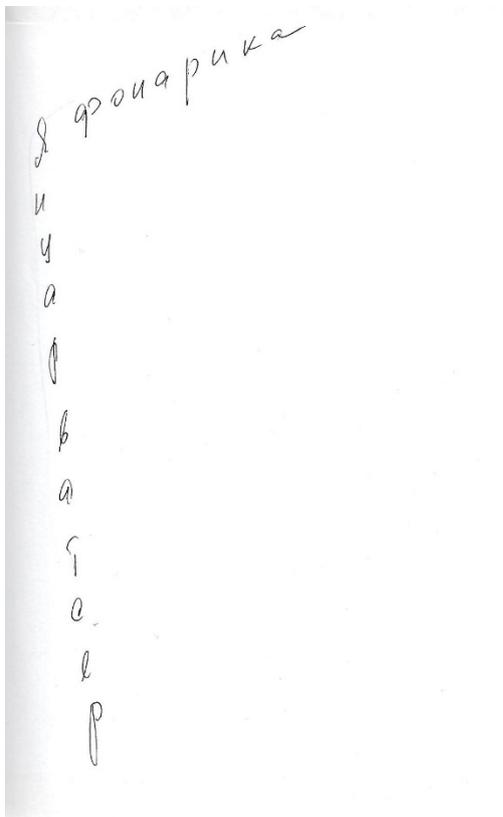


Here is another “text” by Kharitonov – unsteady, losing clarity, like frost on the glass, with letters flying in the airless white space. The semantics of this poetic text is on the verge of evanescence, but the visual and pictorial meanings on the contrary acquire a distinct ringing – icy clarity of some Zen-verse, sweeping in the air before the reader.



Visual works by Natalia Azarova (born 1956) vary in technique. These are poems with complex graphics that expand the semantic area of the utterance with extensive use of spaces, inverted exclamation and question marks, plus the inclusion of squares, triangles, square brackets and other graphic elements in the “body” of the poem. Azarova has cycles of lines (one-line verses) written by hand which – like in this case – go back to Apollinaire – and continue the tradition of

visual poetry, where in a special minimalist way the author's "calligraphy" is involved, giving a new semantic and sensate expressiveness to the text. Visual works of Natalia Azarova made in collaboration with the artist Alexei Lazarev require a separate conversation, as well as their joint project *House of Verse*.



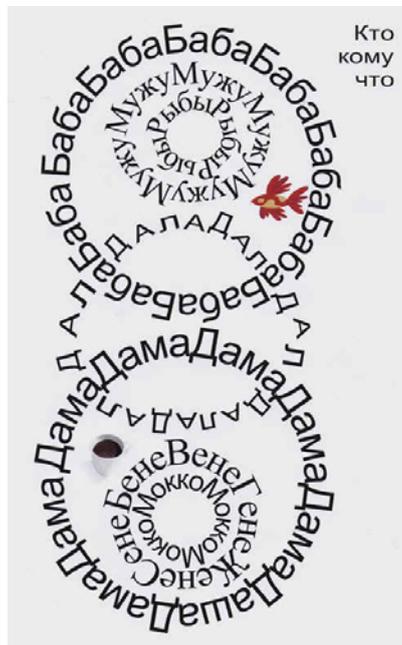
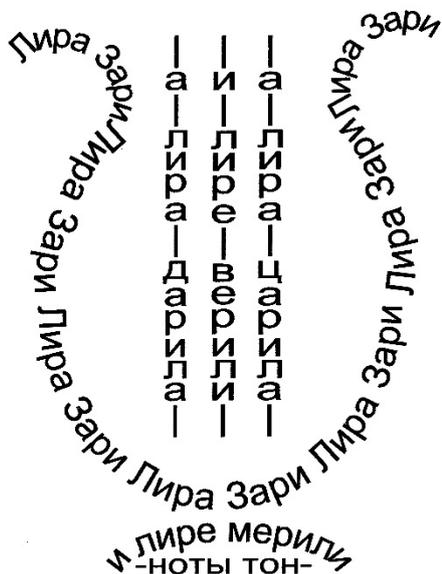
**иная**

в я в и н а я в у

**смерть**

серп – вечер – ковш  
подчёркнуто

In the poet Helen Katsuba (born 1946), in the several figured poems presented here, we see the continuation of the tradition (harkening back to French figured verses), complicated by the fact that the poem is also a palindrome. Katsyuba also has other forms of visual texts developing the tradition of Voznesensky's videoms, which also incorporates Dadaist techniques.

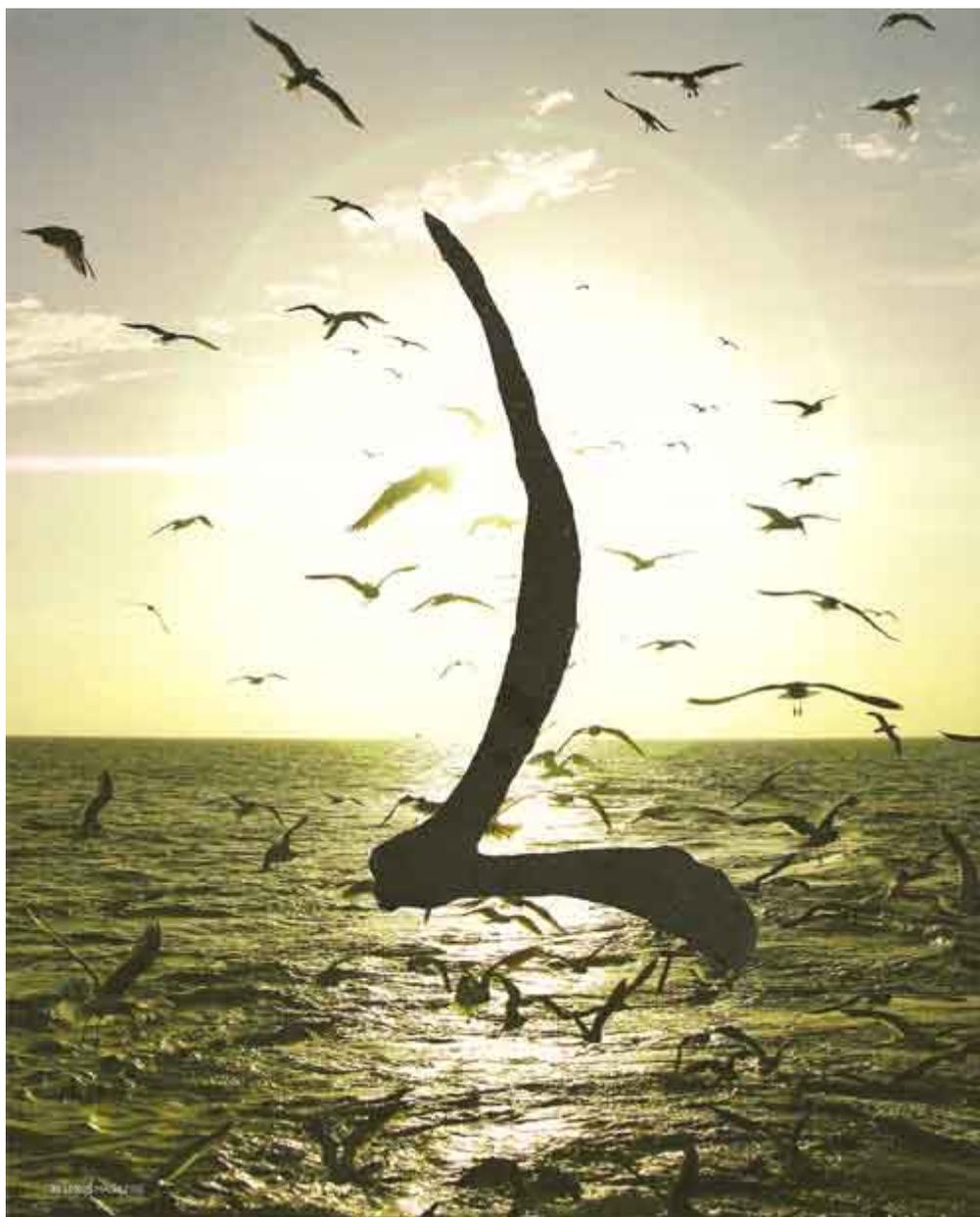


Many of Katsyuba's visual works are of distinctly applied nature, and the *POet Magazine* created by her (in co-authorship with Konstantin Kedrov) has become, I believe, a unique artistic phenomenon in magazine industry.



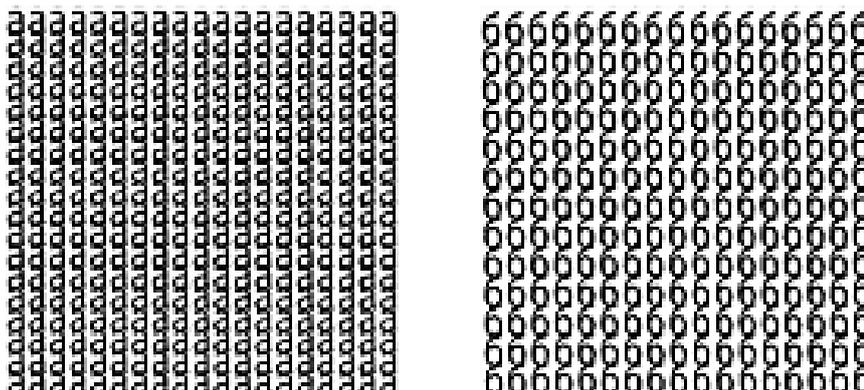
Alexander Ocheretansky (born 1946) , a poet, photoartist, editor and publisher of the magazine *Draft* (which has published avant-garde works of contemporary poets since the early

1990s) calls his new genre of visual poetry “mixed technique”. It demonstrates a lack of verbal component, when only the visual creates a certain new energy tension and notional (semantic) fields between the complex elements of the collage. The works of Ocheretansky in this genre are diverse in their topics and tasks. In the image presented here, one can still feel the reference to the verbal. A sign resembling a flying bird is no longer an image of a bird and, perhaps, is no longer a letter of the alphabet, but it is perceived both as an image of a bird and as a character. In some ways, this visual statement by Ocheretansky is connected with the visual texts of *Proletters*, when the main task is the maximum exacerbation of the energy field of the text (visual and verbal).

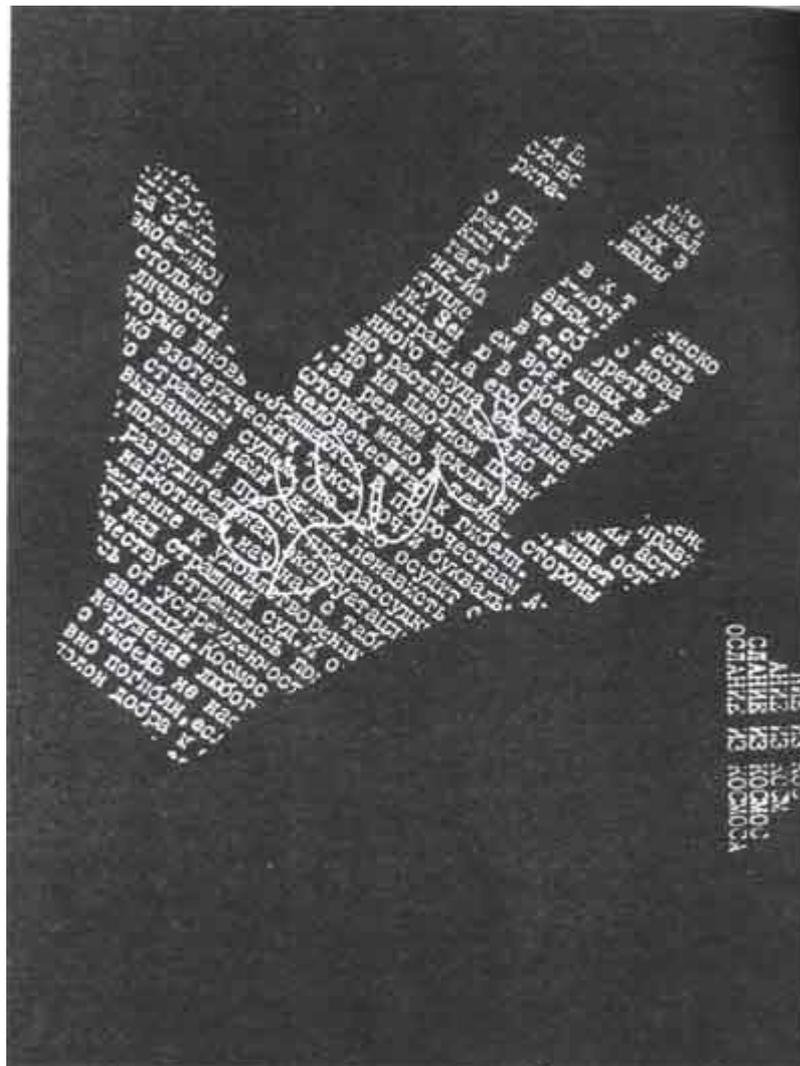


Once Anna Alchuk (1955–2008), in the title of her book *Vocabularily* (1996), revealed with maximum and ultimate focus the processes co-natural to language, that excited and keep exciting the poets working in the genre of visual poetry. Alchuk's works harken back to the

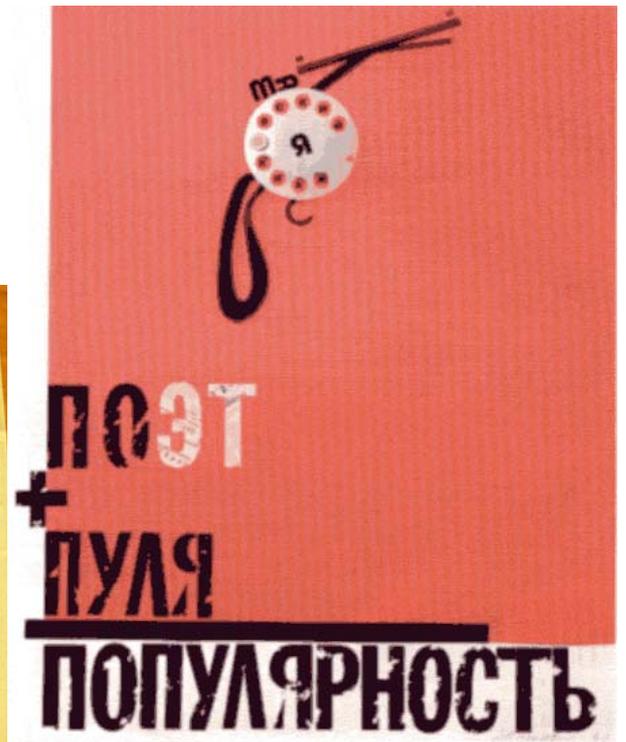
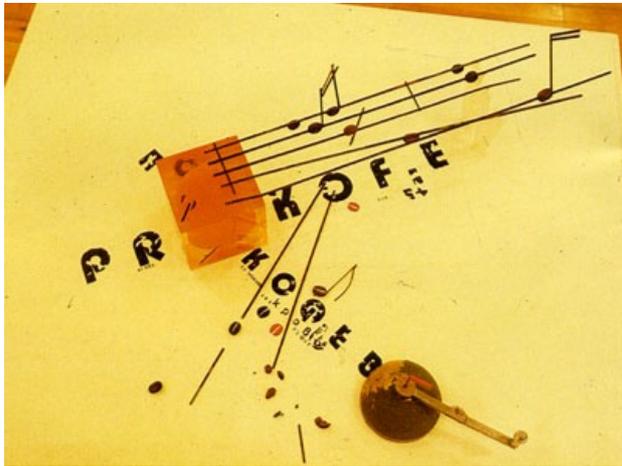
declarations of Marinetti – to the letter as the atom (molecule) of the language. Here are two pages from the book, where letters *a* or *ō*, as we see, form a kind of cellular, matrix-like space.



Here is a visual poem by Alchuk, the size of a palm, with text inscribed in the imprint of this palm. This dactyloscopic imprint of the body-text with spaces between words similar to the disintegrating flesh of the verse, this “text glove”, in which there is a strange word, and this whitish “triangle” of words in the lower right corner of the sheet causes an alarming sense of calamity, misfortune, even if you do not read this text. However, if you read into what is written, the text typed on a typewriter on this whitish glove, – this feeling is confirmed. There is a coincidence of the visual and the verbal, their potentiation, suggestion of the figurative and the visual.



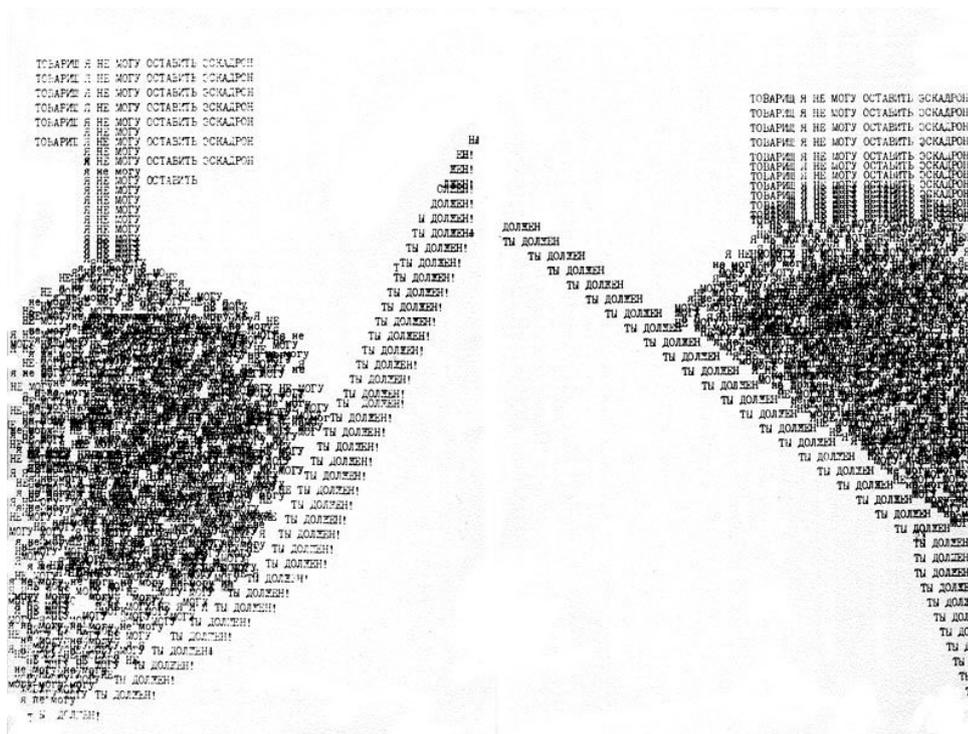
The videomes of Andrei Voznesensky (1933–2010), of which he wrote, “the Spirit, whether light or anomalous, appears to our consciousness in the form of a vision. In the new works, which I call VIDEOMES, I try to comprehend the spiritual through video. In the case of portraits of human destinies, I call them VIDEOMES”.



Here is another statement on this topic: “I consider my first videome to be the poster drawn for the centenary of Pasternak, where he was crucified like Christ. Then it looked rather unusual, the publishing house was even afraid to put his name on the poster”.

In the versagrams of Dmitry Alexandrovich Prigov (1940–2007) – one of the quintessential exemplars of visual poetry working with the letter, the character typed on an ordinary typewriter, the verses flow from the sheet with a continuous and bizarre stream of deconstructed slogans of Soviet propaganda, cliches, catchphrases, quotes from song lyrics and popular poems. Letters and

words are superimposed on each other and compressed into a ravel, forming a “noise” (a kind of technical collapse), then diverge in different directions.

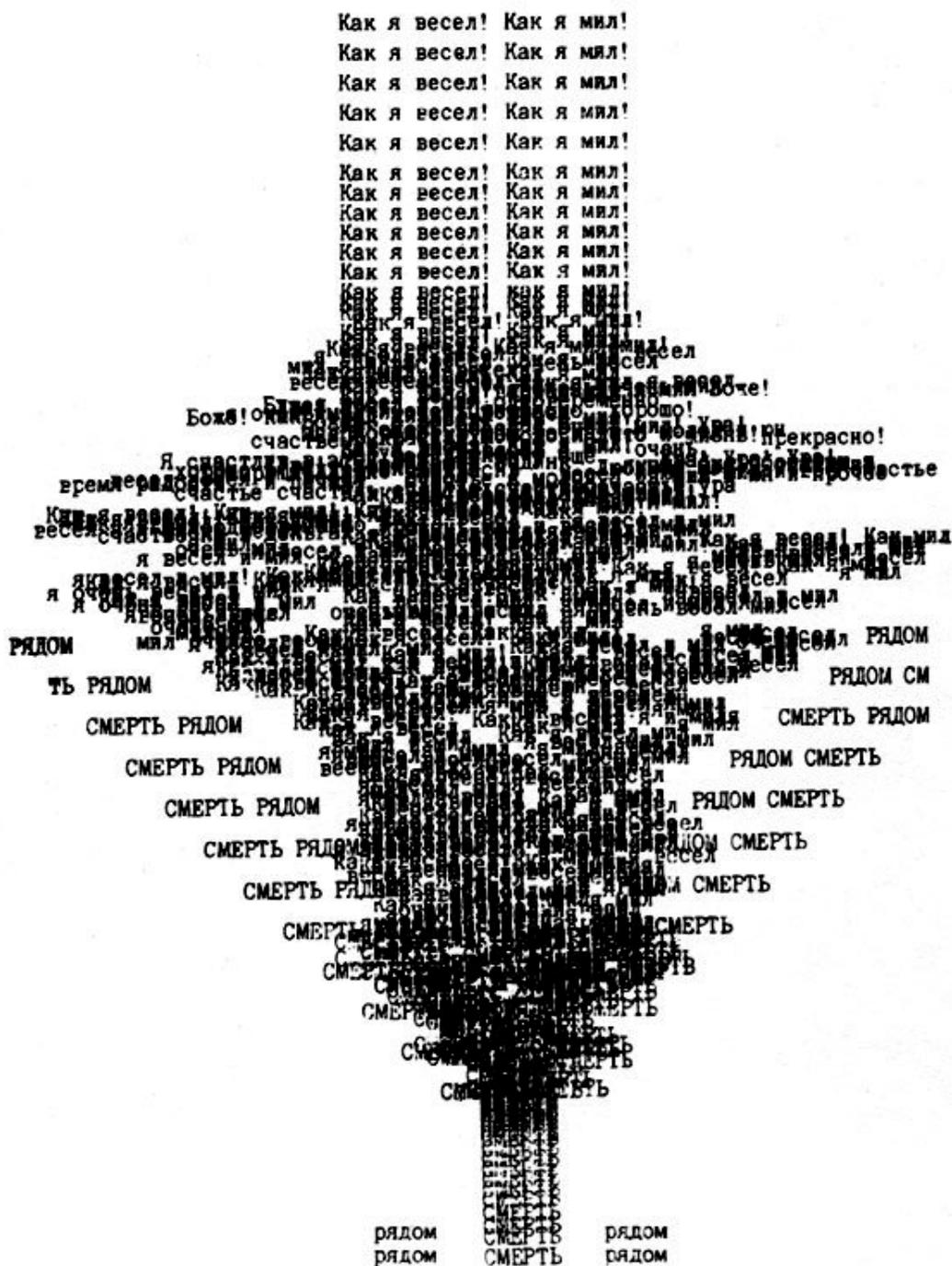


In some of the versagrams the image equals the statement: the letters and words are connected into an illustration. Reading the text, we seem to hear voices and see a moving picture.

In the work *How Cheerful Am I! How Small Am I!*, there seems to be a dispute with oneself, in which every now and then some wicked outsider voice wedges in. From the continuous homogeneous flow of the canvas of words, a new “slogan” is slowly forming – a grievous, irreversible one.

Or in an endless stream of random words, a circle of emptiness suddenly forms, and within it arises and whirls, closing in on itself, a quote from the Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”, inside of which there are words not yet manifested, pierced by a thin vertical light line. This is a kind of Suprematist composition, abstract and at the same time concrete, permeated with some invisible movement – in this case: a slow circular motion – that conceals both light and the Word in itself. Although Suprematism was originally dominated by color (the term *suprem*, which goes back to the Latin root, meant dominance, superiority of color over all other properties of painting, this term was later expanded, the color and form became complementary to each other). In subjectless canvases, paint, according to Kazimir Malevich, was for the first time released from the auxiliary role, from serving other purposes – Suprematist paintings became the first step of “pure creativity”, that is, an act that equalized the creative power of man and Nature. In Prigov's versagrams we see how the form and

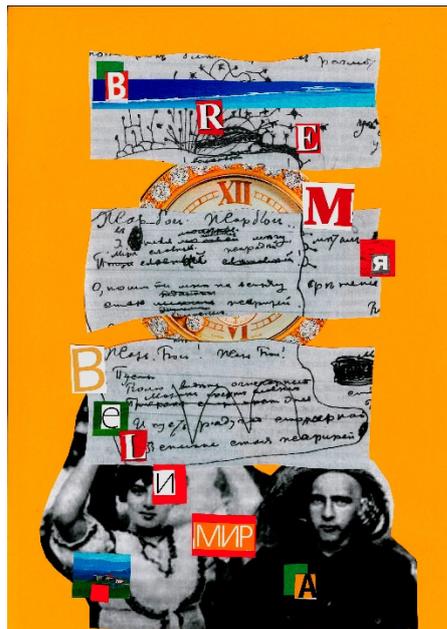
the minimal color – black (letters) and white (blank space) – create a special dynamic balance and tension of the visual and the verbal.



Allow me to say a few words about my own experiments in visual poetry, about the attempts to reveal a kind of “tension” between the image and the text.



In the early 2000s, I returned to the collages as a form of poetic utterance, to the search for a correlation between visual images (in this case it's reproductions of paintings, illustrations from magazines and portrait photographs cut to pieces) and one or two verse lines assembled from letters found in the same illustrated magazines.



The short texts in these works always present a focus or a defocus on what creates an image, and are a kind of “lyrical” statement not only of the author, but, perhaps, of the image that forms this statement.



\*

Unlike the European, the Chinese worldview is based on the idea of an organic continuity of man and the natural world: “the concordant unity of man and Heaven”<sup>16</sup>. This idea predetermines all variety of characteristics of, for example, calligraphic art in China. The introduction to the oldest explanatory dictionary of Chinese language *Shuo wen jie zi* 说文解字, compiled by Xu Shen 许慎 around 120, states that in the beginning the first prototypes of written signs were created – eight trigrams of the *Book of Changes*, which are combinations of three lines of two types: continuous (active principle of Yang) and intermittent (passive principle of Yin). They appeared from “contemplating the images of celestial bodies and the heavens, surveying the shapes of things on earth, examining the patterns of birds and animals, the outlines of the earth's surface, in close proximity using their own body as a model, in the distance guided by the appearance of things”<sup>17</sup>. When inventing written characters, “marks of the tracks of birds and animals” were taken as example (meaning the basic graphic elements of hieroglyphs: horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines and points). According to legend, Cang Jie 仓颉, the inventor of hieroglyphics, had four eyes: with two eyes he observed the world of humans, and with the other two eyes the world of spirits. Thus, Chinese writing is a testimony of communication between people and spirits, Earth and Heaven. The records were kept on the shells of turtles and shoulder blades of cattle. The ancient writing was part of the magical ritual of divination. The character for “writing” itself embodied the unity of various patterns of nature (the pattern of the starry sky or tree leaves, the coloring of living beings) and various elements of culture and artifacts of human activity.

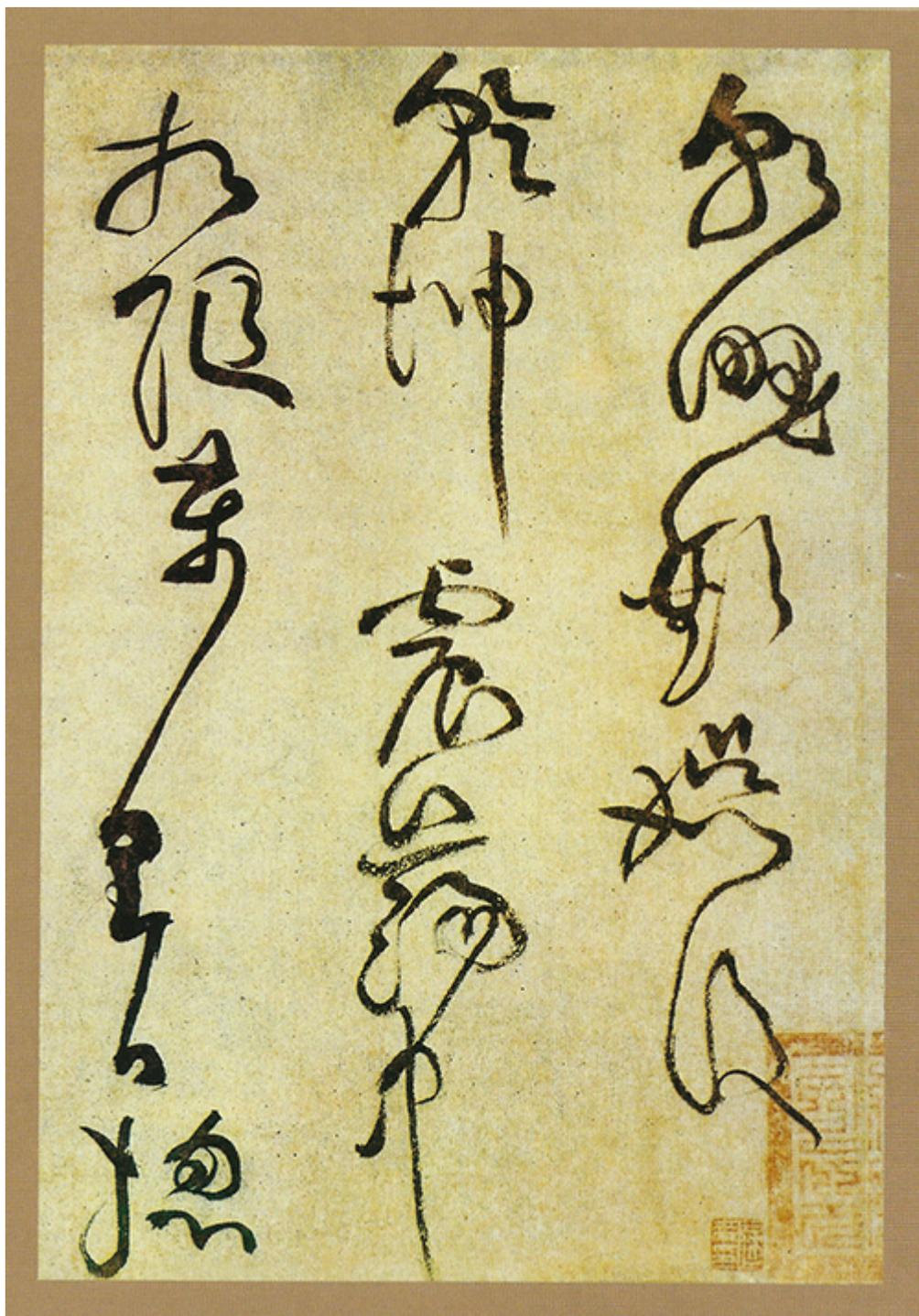
The majority of Chinese characters consist of two parts: one defines the class of objects, the other indicates its sound. The writing of the ancient Chinese was a much more accurate and profound image of the world than mundane experience. It was a mixture of things and signs, the real and the illusory, even the living and the dead. The Chinese myth of the origin of writing contains the idea of the primacy of human creativity over the material world, the cognition of essential things over which time does not dominate. The symbolic image of Chinese writing (and Chinese painting), when any image is transfused into its “shadow”, is the basis of the ancient archaic Chinese culture. The stylistic unity of the image and the integrity of artistic space in Chinese calligraphy are achieved by the work of brush, by the pulsation of the living human rhythm

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<sup>16</sup> This part of the work is based on the researches of the sinologist, doctor of historical sciences, professor V. V. Malyavin. "The Space of Chinese Civilization."

<sup>17</sup> Treatises on calligraphy and painting of the Han, Wei and Six dynasties. Ed. by Pan Yurghayu. Changsha. 1997.

in harmony with the rhythm of nature. There are several types of calligraphic writing: *li* 隶, *zhuan* 篆, *kai* 楷, *xing* 行, *cao* 草, differing in expressiveness, liveliness, symbolism and freedom in the way of writing a hieroglyph. Thus, in *cao* writing (cursive) “the elements are joined in an arbitrary sequence; the brush does not rise from the paper and during the transitions from sign to sign, so that sometimes the whole line is inseverable”<sup>18</sup>.



<sup>18</sup> K. Mamaev. Writing systems of China and Japan.

The Taoists created a special written culture of “heavenly”, or “cloudy” (sacred) writings emanating magical powers. These cursive signs-talismans combined graphics and drawing and were a clear example of the continuity of nature and spirit, images and extra-figurative. Instead of the European parallelism of the “internal” and the “external”, expressed in objective images, the Chinese form of writing asserts the correlation of incommensurable quantities, like the relationship of body and trace, sound and echo.



This created a kind of meta-space – a symbolic space that realizes the unity of the “disconnected” world. Ancient Chinese painting, for all its apparent naturalism, is very far from it, since the basis of this similarity is the self-revealing symbolic reality of emptiness, chaos, pure non-being, where absence (which is the nature of the Great Way – Tao) can be transmitted only through illusion. The space of the Chinese calligraphic writing is the “crossed lines”, the peculiar shadow folds of the world (oppositions of Yin and Yang), when the movement comes from

absolute rest and the slightest stroke is consistent with the higher integrity of life (and emptiness), co-being with it.

Ancient calligraphic writing in China is a kind of limitation, a kind of “dissipation” of unity, which is an image of transcendent wholeness, where each phenomenon has the bottomless depth of otherness, where the order of the physical world conceals another (opposite) order of spiritual being hidden in pulsation of life or, more precisely, at points and pauses in a series of phenomena. Hence the monochromatism of ancient Chinese painting, and the absence of “direct” and even “reverse” (as, for example, in the European iconographic tradition) perspective, but the identification of special relationships of the world's images. Sometimes they speak of a “parallel” perspective, of the absence of an “objective” view in Chinese painting: when the near and far, the top and bottom are reflected in each other, they contain one another, so that the space (sense of space) is transmitted by simultaneous movement, the interchange of convex and concave surfaces. This ability to see the world as if it were through a magnifying glass, to note its slightest nuances (dust particles of the world) is not dispersal, but, on the contrary, presents integrity of the vision of the hardly perceptible movements (vibrations) of the “living current of life”. When the depth is revealed not at the expense of perspective, but due to the multidimensionality and such concepts as rise-descent and convexity-concavity. When space is conceived simultaneously and as something immeasurably large, and something immeasurably small, when the world is not oppressed by the abstract, imposed by the subject order, but is free from the dictatorship of ideas, this is the world of self-liberated consciousness. Since, according to the ideas of the Chinese, space has a layered structure and is a folded depth, then wandering (spiritual wandering) is the revealing of these folds of space by means of calligraphic writing, revealing “a trace that goes into unreachable distance”. From the tip of the “brush comes the entire darkness of things, and the space of the heart the size of an inch absorbs the vastness of a thousand *li*”. Creation (writing) of space in calligraphy was interpreted in antiquity as a manifestation of a special kind of force, opposite to the physical force. This superpersonal force is associated with the spontaneous action of will (immanent, all-pervading and belonging to the symbolic plane of being) and integrity (the organic unity of form and formless). This principle of “correspondence to change” underlies all spiritual practice in China. Eastern philosophy, which would be better called wisdom, sees in reality not being, but co-being. This tradition did not know the opposition of the subject and object, culture and nature. The Chinese assertion of *suchness* (i.e., the true properties of the subject and object, not obscured by external illusions) established the internal continuity of nature and human technology, which, as believed in ancient China, improves and “completes” nature. Calligraphy

for the Chinese was a clear indication of a living unity, when “the heavenly is recreated by the human”<sup>19</sup>.

Contemporary Chinese poetry combines various ways of working with the word: the rapprochement of the word and the image as a kind of dialogue with the past, in which new possibilities of language are opened, the absorption of the European modernist tradition and the experiments of the “new poetry” of the 20th century and work with the word as an empty (asemantic) image<sup>20</sup>.

Yan Li 严力 (born 1954) is a poet and an artist. He was born in Beijing. At the age of 19 he began to write poetry, at 25 he joined the *Stars* 星星, an art association of the Beijing avant-gardists, that turned out to be the first who advocated the freedom of creativity in China, which had just recovered after the decade of the Cultural Revolution. In 1985, Yan Li went to study in the United States, from where he returned to China seven years later. In 1987, he founded the magazine *One Line* 一行, which brought together many experimental authors in China and beyond. After returning to his homeland, Yan Li settled in Shanghai, but did not lose touch with either New York or Beijing. He actively participates in literary and artistic life: he oversees exhibitions, exhibits his works, publishes prose, poetry. His poems are inspired by the processes of urbanization and industrialization now taking place in China.

In one of his visual works, *City Blues* 城市蓝调, Yan Li makes contours of figures of people from bricks. The void that opens behind these “brick figures” is a kind of visual metaphor of consciousness released from speech, and perhaps this is also a poem liberated from the general mass of the language, which forms a new gaping (shining) alarming emptiness. Yan Li speaks about the same in his poems, using the metaphor of the brick word:

*the place where several bricks were removed is called a verse*

Verse and visual works, complementing each other, create a single “macrotext”.

Taoist poetry also spoke of gaping emptiness in completely different ways, so here we see a revolutionary combination of traditional Chinese thinking with new ways of expressing it.

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<sup>19</sup> Liu Xizai. “Essay of the writing” with critical notes, (III), 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Dreizis Y. “Convergence of verbal and visual in modern Chinese poetry”.



Yang Xiaobin 杨小滨 (born in 1963), apart from writing poetry, is engaged in abstract photography. In a series of works that were shown at his latest exhibition *Postphotographism: Trace and Palimpsest* 後設應主義作品展——塗抹與蹤跡 (2008), he compares abstract images and text. It seems that the characters – they also contain Arabic numerals<sup>21</sup>, which could be phone numbers, and, perhaps, any other set of figures significant for the author – are like a mirror image of an abstract picture. The poem visually (especially if you do not know Chinese language) resembles the “shadow” of the picture, in which new “shadow” image qualities appear. This text (if we speak in terms of near-far in traditional for Chinese painting and imagine it on a modified scale) is a new, complex character consisting of other (smaller) characters, reminiscent of the trace-shadow of the image.

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<sup>21</sup> In Chinese writing, numbers (numerals) are written in a very special way, so the Arabic record of figures is the influence of European thinking.



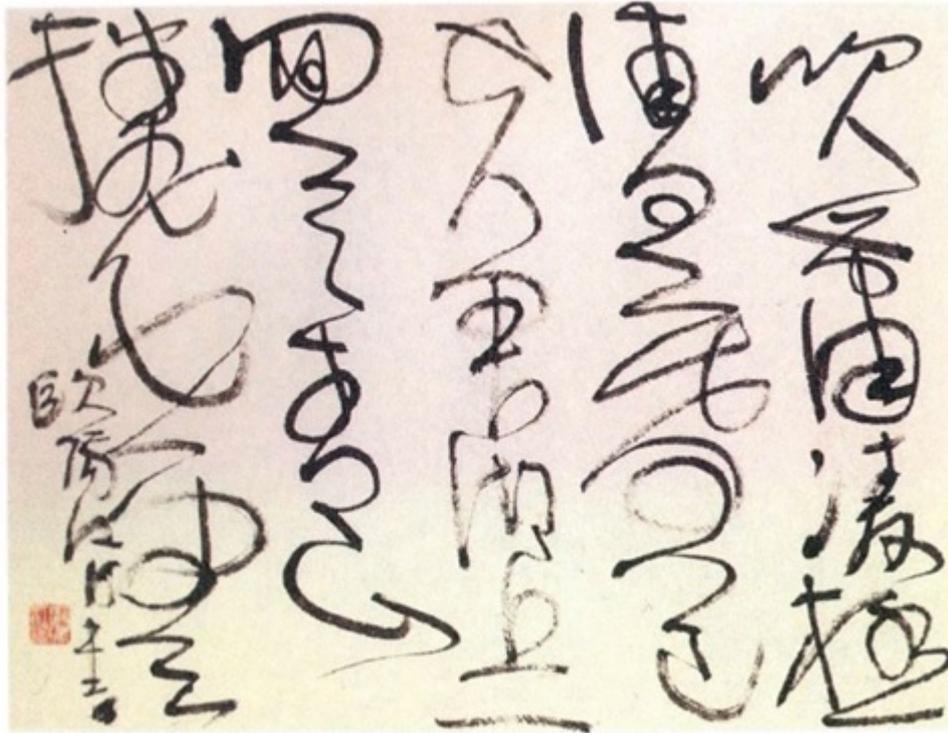
後傷口主義1100494  
■  
太殺            太了殺  
過來  
醒一好夕陽  
太笑不

【攝於北京魏公村（遺囑），2010】

32

The works of poet and calligrapher Ouyang Jianghe 欧阳江河 (born 1956), who sometimes is called the John Cage of modern Chinese poetry, are incredibly interesting. Ouyang Jianghe was born in the city of Luzhou (Sichuan Province), at the age of 24 he began to publish his first poems, and by the age of 29 he was well-established in the world of Chinese contemporary poetry. He is a talented poet, calligrapher, well-known art and music critic. Ouyang Jianghe went silent for 20 years, and then stirred up the Chinese poetic world with a complex verse structure and reflections on the Chinese literary heritage and the role of art in society<sup>22</sup>. In his work *The Yihu Lake* 歙湖 (2011) he turns to the poem of Chinese classic Wang Wei 王维 (699–759).

<sup>22</sup> Source: <https://magazeta.com/2016/09/art5-ouyang-jianghe/> © Magazeta

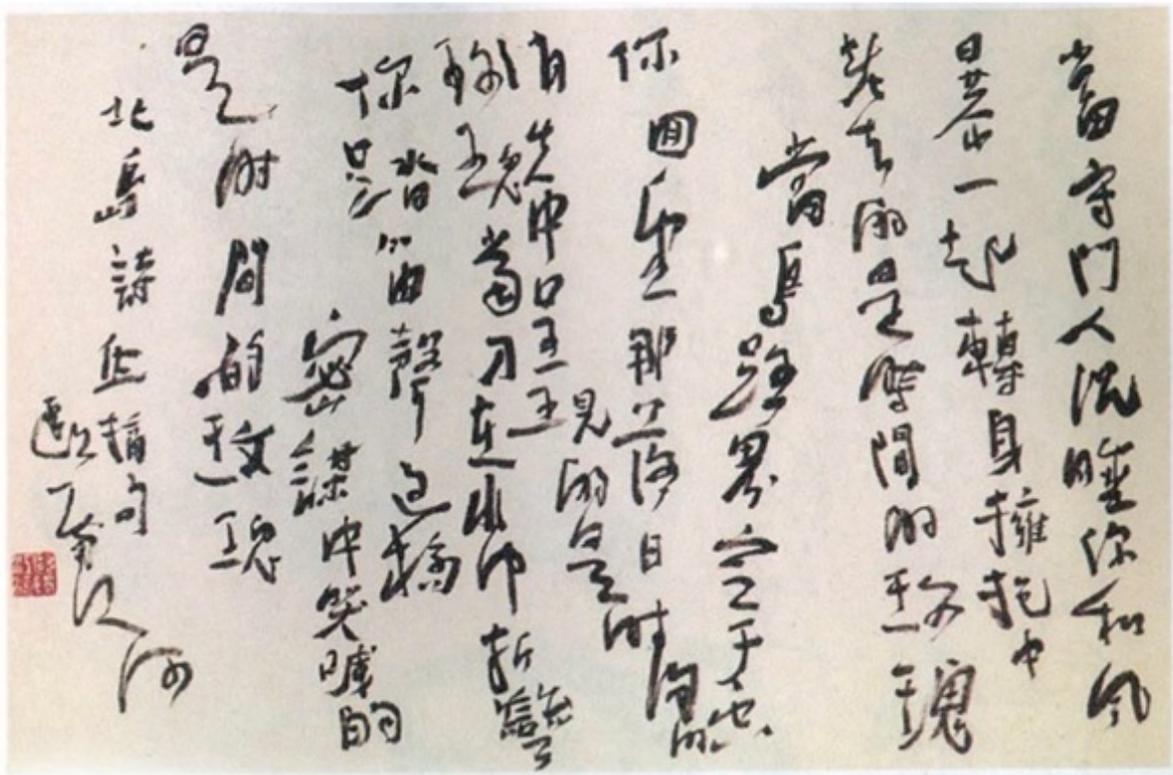


In the calligraphic text, possibly done in *cao* style, Ouyang Jianghe emphasizes the presence (literal material presence) of another poet in the modern world with his brush – in a rigid and free world, in which the traditional the art of calligraphy, and European modernism and the avant-garde are already present. Perhaps, this is the reason for the special sharpness in the outline (writing) of the characters.

Here is another work by Ouyang Jianghe from 2011, in which the poet rewrites the first three strophes of the poem of the 20th century poet Bei Dao 北島 (born 1949) *The Rose of Time* 时间的玫瑰 (2005). Characters “fly” freely, stumbling on a sheet of paper in an uneven movement. Visible images of words in the line “when birds’ ways define the sky”<sup>23</sup> are approaching cursive. Rewriting the poetry of a modern poet in calligraphy, Ouyang Jianghe opens the possibility of a new (free) movement (“flight”) of the ancient tradition.

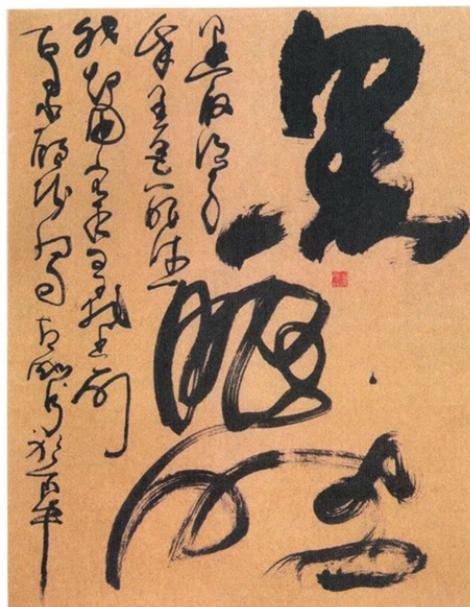
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<sup>23</sup> Dreizis Y. "Convergence of verbal and visual in modern Chinese poetry."



Ouyang Jianghe produces calligraphic works in a completely traditional, seemingly “antique” technique – on sheets of paper resembling a fan. However, the texts he paints these “fans” with are contemporary poetry (most often his own poems). For Chinese visual poetry (in this case, calligraphy) it is perfectly natural to pour “new wine into old wineskin”.

The work of Li Zhangang 李占刚 (born 1975) *Black Eyes* 黑眼睛 recycles a contemporary poetic text (a poem manifesto by Gu Cheng 顾城 (1956–1993) *A Generation* 一代人, 1968).



This text is done in calligraphic cursive. It is assumed that the reader / viewer knows this work so well (which was written only thirty years ago) that they can appreciate the beauty of its

visual embodiment. This same principle (rewriting ancient, well-known texts in cursive) was used in traditional calligraphy. In Li Zhangang's work, it is noteworthy that the first characters (the title) visually resemble something intensely dark, nocturnal, as if hidden behind these wide brush strokes (which have already lost, dispersed their integrity). And then in the next lines of the poem this integrity seems to manifest again, restored.

In the series of graphic works of the *Poet's Notes* 诗人笔记 (2007) by the artist and poet Che Qianzi 车前子 (born 1963) there are special visual images, resembling the classical ordered poetic text, existing on the brink of the word (similar to water-blurred characters) and the image that arises from this waterfall of unreadable words. The visual image of this "text" represents a kind of "shadow" of the tradition and at the same time demonstrates the perfect freedom from it.



Che Qianzi (real name Gu Pan 顾盼) was born in Suzhou, in 1998 he moved to Beijing where he lives at the moment. He began to write poetry more than thirty years ago. He is published in various official and unofficial magazines. In parallel, Che is engaged in painting and calligraphy, participates in contemporary art exhibitions. His creative works are diverse, contradictory and – as critics write of him – unpredictable<sup>24</sup>.

*Military Symphony* 战争交响曲 by Chen Li 陈黎 (real name Chen Yingwen 陈鹰文, born 1954) breaks down into three fragments, in accordance with the structure of the musical symphony.

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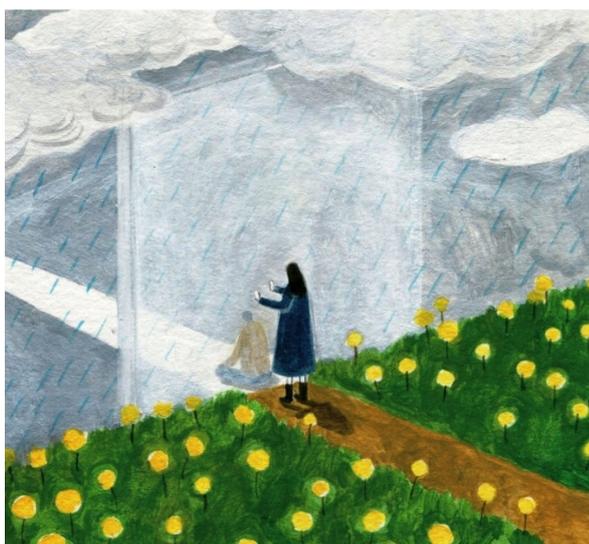
<sup>24</sup> On materials of Stikho(t)vor'e (versevagrant.com) website.



The first fragment consists of 384 hieroglyphs *bing* 兵 (“soldier”) – this character is similar to a pictogram and resembles a belligerent soldier. 16 lines of 24 characters each, form a densely organized rectangle resembling a military column. In the second fragment of the poem characters *ping* 乒 and *pang* 乓 appear (onomatopoeic words similar to firing a shot; in combination both characters can denote table tennis / ping-pong), they seem to break the order of soldiers: there are gaps, there is more and more of them – the order crumbles. Simultaneously, these characters are similar to one-legged soldiers who lost the right or left limb. The last (third) fragment of the symphony restores order: all characters are replaced by *qiu* 丘 (“hill”) – this character, close in its outline to *ping* 乒 and *pang* 乓, lacks both “limbs” – so before us is a frozen dark picture of a cemetery.

Chen Li is one of the quintessential representatives of contemporary Chinese poetry in Taiwan. He is the winner of many important poetry awards, has published more than ten collections of poetry to date and translated many outstanding poets – Sylvia Plath, Filip Larkin, Sheimas Heaney, Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz and others<sup>25</sup> – into Chinese in collaboration with his wife Zhang Fenling 張芬齡.

In the series of works *Microcosmos* 小宇宙 by Chen Li (12 selections) drawings made in a naive manner (devoid of realistic logic, but endowed with surrealistic logic) and short poems are combined: a condensed story about the complex relationships between people. Verses and drawings complement each other, the visual image is tightly connected with the verbal image, although they are diverged in the space and not inscribed into each other as, for example, in traditional Chinese painting, but exist side by side, like people (referred to in these texts) are close and separated at the same time.



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<sup>25</sup> On materials of Stikho(t)vor'e (versevagrant.com) website.

那女孩向我走來  
像一隻蝴蝶。定定  
她坐在講桌前第一個座位  
頭上，一隻色彩鮮豔的  
髮夾，彷彿蝶上之蝶

二十年來，在濱海的  
這所國中，我見過多少  
隻蝴蝶，以人形，以蝶形  
挾青春，挾夢，翻  
飛進我的教室？

噢，羅麗塔

秋日午前，陽光  
正暖，一隻燦黃的  
粉蝶，穿窗而入，迴旋於  
分心的老師與專注於課  
業的十三歲的她之間

她忽然起身，逃避那  
剪刀般閃閃振動的色彩  
與形象，一隻懼怕蝴蝶的  
蝴蝶：啊她為蝶所  
驚，我因美困惑



Chen Li uses a variety of visual techniques in his artistic and poetic practice: from complex ones, combining figured verse that resembles peculiarly transformed “concrete” poetry, to works with plastic image and phonetics of a hieroglyph (like in the *Military Symphony*, where the viewer-reader’s attention is focused on the “appearance-image” of the character). He also creates purely figured poems (similar to what Simmias of Rhodes and Aratus did in European poetry), when a poem is given, for example, the shape of the contour of the island of Taiwan *Eighteen Touches* 十八摸, or the text resembles a butterfly’s shadow in *Mad Butterfly* 迷蝶記. The shadow text appears on a paper sheet slightly washed with blue watercolor, and this bluish blur can be “read” in different ways, depending on the context: it could be a cloud, water, or sky.

趁黑，摸摸我們的心，修改  
一下密碼，免得被失戀者盜用；  
趁黑，摸摸我白得像盜匙的手，  
如果你渴，用它舀飲我胸前的夜色；  
趁黑，摸摸夜空中那透明的冂字，  
勺女冂冂，我給你我的球門，給你冂；  
趁黑，摸摸它金黃的門柱，用似是而非  
半推半就的語言和虛擬的守門員盪鞦韆；  
趁黑，摸摸天階上的鋼琴，宇宙一世只租給  
我們一次音樂廳，聽覺要攀走仙界的鋼索；  
趁黑，摸摸我鼠蹊旁的香水瓶，用一次次的  
深呼吸掀開它的瓶蓋，掀開我的人間——  
趁黑，摸摸島嶼脊椎盡處的鵝鑾鼻，它也  
有個鼻子在呼吸，它張開鵝鑾，我張帆；  
趁黑，摸摸排灣族頭目的琉璃珠，越來越胖  
的百步蛇變成鷹，羽毛插在我的髮當中；  
趁黑，摸摸童話的鐵夾，中了陷阱的山羌  
逃脫留下斷腳，做成一〇一個小米粿的餡；  
趁黑，摸摸我小米粿的餡，在我圓圓軟軟的  
胸盤上，用它餵夜夜更夜，用它止飢飢更飢；  
趁黑，摸摸卑南小孩的歌，貓頭鷹會來抓眼睛，  
睡吧睡吧在我肩上，催感傷的動物們入眠；  
趁黑，摸摸島嶼中央巴宰海族的銅鑼，一邊  
敲打一邊燒火，燒我身上的茭白筍田；  
趁黑，摸摸紅頭嶼的芋頭，摸兩下他們說是  
sosoli，快摸一下，啊soso，變成我的乳房；  
趁黑，摸摸三貂角的眼，不見貂影，只見  
月光，在大划船划過的我肩胛的海岸線；  
趁黑，摸摸哆囉滿的唇，金閃閃的溪流  
穿峽谷，吹奏出口簧琴細秘的聲音；  
趁黑，摸摸我肌膚上沉積的金沙銀沙，  
你的立霧溪在我身上製糖製鹽；  
趁黑，摸摸這一顆漂流的球，從  
黑水溝漂流到我的白膝灣；  
趁黑，摸摸你的金球鞋，  
我給你球門，給你冂，  
你給我提腳，  
送它入  
門……

However, sometimes Chen Li simply inserts the text into the “body” of the picture – the work *Spring* 春天, where the connection with tradition is clearly felt. This work interprets traditional Chinese painting freely – it is dominated not so much by the image as such – the emphasis is made, as I think, on the color perception of the image or, more precisely, on the perception of the color image (as opposed to the monochrome of ancient Chinese painting).



In his slightly ironic visual poem *Footprints in the Snow* (1995) Chen Li comprehends auxiliary computer signs % and points, revealing new semantic “sounds”. It is also unexpected in this text that its name refers to the piano piece by the French composer Claude Debussy *Des pas sur la neige*.

%

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%

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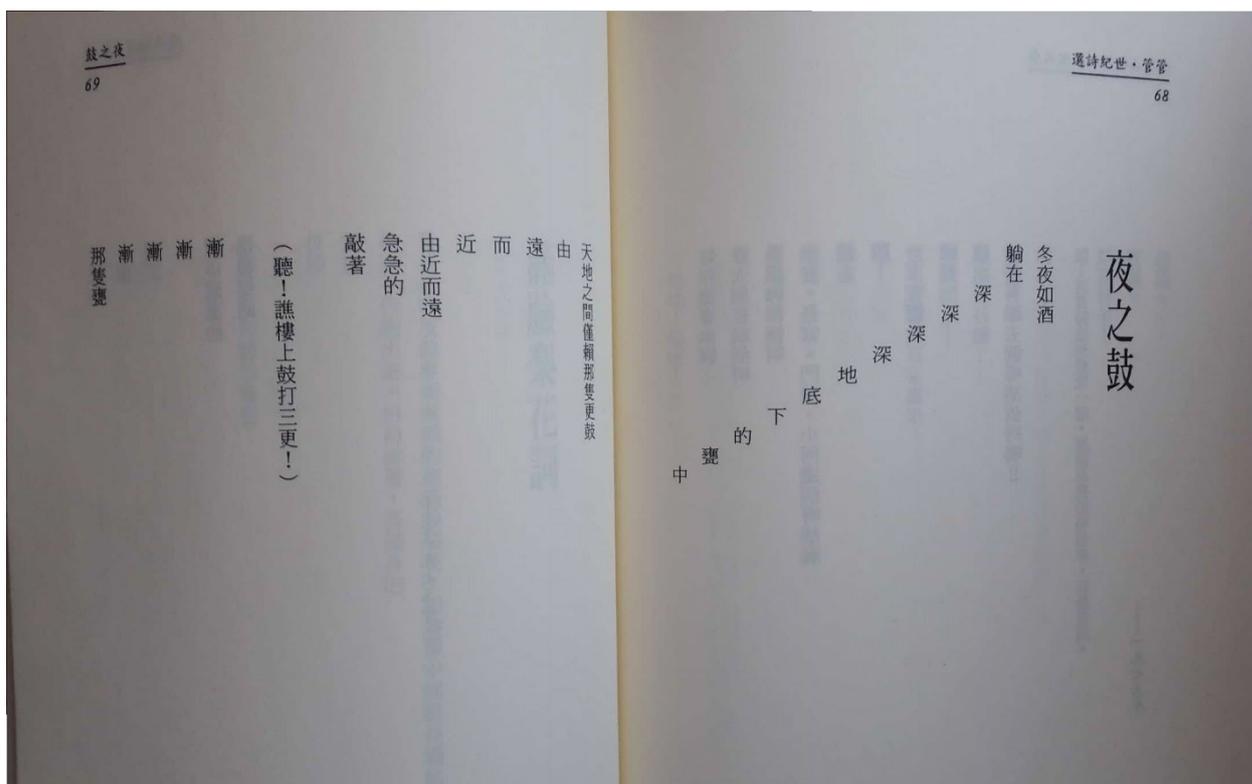
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In the last visual poem<sup>27</sup> I would like to consider, *Drums in the Night* 夜之鼓 by the poet Guan Guan 管管 (born 1929), a special graphic of the arrangement of the characters is used (enlarged spaces, arrangement of words-characters on the diagonal, horizontal, vertical). This is a fairly simple graphic technique, but in the meantime it enriches the poetic text incredibly. In Western European tradition, the “composition by space”<sup>28</sup> was actively used in the famous poem by Mallarme (1842– 1898) *A Throw of the Dice*, with which the Russian avant-garde powerfully and spectacularly worked in the early 20th century.



*Drums in the Night* is the name of one of the early plays written in 1918–1920 by the German playwright Berthold Brecht (1898–1956). Brecht included this play in his collected works, seeing it as a legitimate protest against the idealistic position of writers who, as he said, “refused to take into account the genuine, universally observed phenomena and portrayed the revolution as a purely spiritual, ethical upsurge of people”. Whether there is a reference to this play in Guan Guan's poem, we do not know, but even if there is no direct allusion to Brecht's work, the coincidence of the names may give a kind of expansion of the semantic field of this poem.

The internal structure of the poetic image, as we see, is closely related to the arrangement of words on the sheet (or on any other medium), and in the case of a hieroglyphic (Chinese) writing, the visual image of words often has an absolutely independent signification and meaning.

\*

<sup>27</sup> Here is only a fragment (two pages) of this poem.

<sup>28</sup> Term coined by the American poet Charles Olson (1910-1970).

Visual poetry makes explicit and sensorily visible what is located “on” or, more precisely, “beyond” the boundary of the direct speech utterance in language.

Contemporary visual poetry of China freely combines traditional poetry, painting, calligraphy and, enriched by the experience of European modernism, the Russian avant-garde, using this experience by bridging its own unique culture and the complex realities of everyday life. The language of contemporary Chinese poetry absorbed and reworked a lot: the elements of the classical Chinese language<sup>29</sup>, “spoken language, an extensive layer of borrowings from Japanese and European languages, neologisms, dialectisms, Europeanized syntax, punctuation alien to the tradition and even foreign words”<sup>30</sup> that are freely and consistently implanted in poetic texts.

The visual component in European and Russian poetry is always an extension of the verbal boundaries, revealing new (hidden behind the word and sign) meanings in poetic texts. When the graphic (spatial) appearance of a poem becomes no less important than the text itself, words are arranged not only by syntactic links, but sometimes also associatively, according to the internal structure of the image. Let us recall the poems of Mnatsakanova, built like a musical score, or verses by Azarova, in which, thanks to additional graphic and spatial techniques, new figurative and semantic zones of the word are born: when several opposing but not contradictory meanings coexist simultaneously creating an unexpected “explosive” unity within the same word.

In the 21st century, visual poetry includes many types of contemporary art (collage, photography, cinema, video, media and other extremely technological things: network resources, links, hyperlinks, etc.). One can recall, for example, the polyphonosemantic works of the poet Alexander Gornon (born 1946), made in a complex animation technique that combines “video” and music. However, quite often visual poetry is deliberately archaic, evading all sorts of technologies and revealing itself in the most simple ways: paper, ink, pencil, plus infinite internal freedom, plus the aspiration to preserve the authenticity of the gesture with the help of poetic will and try to reveal by this gesture what stands “behind” words.

Slipping away from the power of the word and following the iconic sign is the objective reality that finds its reflection in the art of the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. “...The time that we live in coincides with the time when the verbally oriented paradigm of culture is replaced by a visually oriented paradigm. The power of the text is replaced by the power of the picture. The power of ideologemes is replaced by the power of a hieroglyphemes. <...> However, this transition is not a movement toward a certain archaic-mythological “literal”. This is a movement to some unknown “post-word” state of civilization”.

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<sup>29</sup> *Wenyan* (Chinese 文言), or “classical Chinese” is a written language used in China before the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>30</sup> *Dreizis Y.* “Contemporary Chinese poetry”. Stikho(t)vor'e website.

Visual poetry speaks its own special language, which, as can be seen comparing the works of Western European, Russian and Chinese poets<sup>31</sup>, does not require translation, but needs an attentive and thoughtful reader / viewer capable of perceiving “preverbal”, “superverbal” and / or “postverbal” – that is, those images of the world that freely exist on the border between the verbal and the visual.

However, to describe (verbalize) visual poetry is always to follow the path of simplification and diminishment.

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<sup>31</sup> I thank Yuliya Dreizis, PhD, Assistant Professor of the Department of Chinese Philology of the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, a specialist in Chinese literature of classical and modern periods and the history of Chinese language; and Yuliya Kuznetsova, working at the Department of Chinese Philology at the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, who helped me work on the Chinese part of the article.

## Contemporary Dramatized Poetry in China. The Case of Yu Jian<sup>1</sup>

The tradition of dramatized poetry in China has a long history dating back to Qu Yuan's 屈原 (340–278 BC) *Nine Songs* 九歌 in *Chu Ci* poems<sup>2</sup>, where, as Taiwanese professor of Literature Yang Xiaobin claims, there are examples of dramatized speech, of another voice present besides the main subjectivity<sup>3</sup>. Yang Xiaobin's observation calls for our attention, because Qu Yuan's poems, including *Nine Songs* are a gem of the Chinese ancient verse collections. For instance, the voice that opens up the verse *The Greater Master of Fate* 大司命 allegedly belongs to the God of fate while there's another subjectivity, belonging to the “I” voice that speaks out his own emotions and thoughts while picturing the process of the God descending from heaven:

1 Open wide the door of heaven!

On a black cloud I ride in splendour,

Bidding the whirlwind drive before me,

Causing the rainstorm to lay the dust. (*the God of fate's voice*)

5 In sweeping circles my Lord is descending:

'Let me follow you over the Kong-sang mountain!

See, the teeming peoples of the Nine Lands:

The span of their lives is in your hand!'

26 If we only could stay as we were, unchanging!

But all man's life is fated;

Its meetings and partings not his to arrange<sup>4</sup>. (*the “I” voice, the main subjectivity*)

Needless to say, that in the original text there were no punctuation marks to differentiate one voice from the other, but stylistically there is an obvious demarcation between the two. There is a supposition that this text was used in shamanic rituals and was dramatized to implement in religious ceremonies.

In the case of the golden age of poetry in China, classical verse of Tang (618–907) and Song dynasties (960–1279) were written according to strict rules with no substantial material to

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<sup>1</sup> The research was rendered possible by the RSHF (RFBR) grant 16-24-10001.

<sup>2</sup> *Chu Ci* 楚辞 poems or *Songs of Chu* are commonly attributed to Qu Yuan's authorship, though there are disputes concerning this fact.

<sup>3</sup> Yang Xiaobin mentions Qu Yuan's *Chu Ci* poems, specifically: *The Greater Master of Fate*, *The Lesser Master of Fate* 少司命, *Man of the Xiang River* 湘君 and *Madame of the Xiang River* 湘夫人 being examples of dramatized speech (*Literary Journal Caotang*. “Drama and Comedy in Poems” by Yang Xiaobin. February 2017, pp. 9–10).

<sup>4</sup> *The Songs of the South. An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets*. Translated by David Hawkes. Penguin Classics. 2011, pp.65.

prove that there was a common implementation of dramatized speech. However, its practice was widespread in the beginning of the 20th century, when the reform of the written classical language gave birth to a vernacular style of Chinese *Baihua* 白话. The Crescent moon society 新月社 (1923–1931), a Chinese literary organization, founded by Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 in 1923, produced a great impact on modern poetry enabling it to obtain a highly colloquial register. Among the achievements of its members was breaking through a monologue style of the poet established by the previous tradition.

Xu Zhimo's *Golgotha* 卡尔佛里, *Commander-in-chief* 大帅, *Pictures from Taiping Rebellion* 太平景象, Wen Yido's 闻一多 *Tiananmen Square* 天安门<sup>5</sup> and *Swift Runner* 飞毛腿, etc. are all organized as a dialogue with all the voices being involved into the discussion (with punctuation marks making it clear when one stops and the other replies/ reacts). Sometimes a supplemented direct speech of a significant voice is indicated as in Xu Zhimo's *Golgotha*:

他到底是谁？他们都说他有	who is he after all ? They all say he has
权威，你看他那样子顶和善，	authority, look, how kind and gentle he is,
顶谦卑——听着，他说话了！他说：	absolutely humble, he says something! He says:
“父呀，饶恕他们罢，他们自己	“Father, forgive them, they
都不知道他们犯的是什么罪。	don't know what they're doing” <sup>6</sup>

Where an interlocutor is only implied, still a dialogue frame with a voice addressing the other contributes produces an impression of interactive, colloquial speech: this pattern, for instance, is sustained throughout the whole text in Wen Yido's *Tiananmen Square*:

好家伙！今日可累坏了我！	oh my ! Now I'm dog-tired!
这两条腿这会儿还哆嗦。	I can't keep my two legs from shaking.
瞧着瞧着，都要追上来了。	Look, look, they are catching up.
要不这腿梆，您也吓坏了。	if I were a slow runner, oh, you're
scared too.	
先生，让我喘口气……那东西，	Mister, let me catch my breath... well, that thing
您没有瞧见那黑漆漆的，	Did you see ? That pitch-black

<sup>5</sup> Protests against the government decision to conclude the Treaty of Versailles on the Tiananmen square during the May Fourth Movement in 1919.

<sup>6</sup> Xu Zhimo's poems <http://www.ruiwen.com/wenxue/xuzhimo/16154.html>.

没脑袋的，瘸腿的，多可怕！	without a head, stumbling, horrible!
还摇晃着白旗儿，说着话。	and they keep waving banners,
shouting...	
还开会啦，还不老实点儿！	keep holding rallies, lying!
你瞧都是谁家的小孩儿？	look, these kids whose families are they
from? <sup>7</sup>	

Thus, the notion of Mikhail Bakhtin's heteroglossia – differentiation of language in a text into many various forms – being a defining characteristic only of the novel as a genre in the 20th century can be questioned at length. According to Bakhtin,

The language of the poetic genre is a unitary and singular Ptolemaic world outside of which nothing else exists and nothing is needed. The concept of many worlds of language, all equal in their ability to conceptualize and be expressive, is organically denied to poetic style<sup>8</sup>.

But as we can see, heteroglossia can be a vivid feature of a poetic style as well as prose and Chinese modern literature provides ample proof for this. The most interesting cases of dramatized poems in Chinese literary avant-garde during the last 30 years are Yu Jian's 于坚 works *Grammar Discussion of the Word Combination “The Other Shore”* 关于<彼岸>的一回汉语词性讨论 (1993), *File Zero* 零档案 (1994), *The Flight* 飞行 (2000). Yu Jian (b. 1954), a prominent figure of the Third Generation Poets, in his full-length poems presented dramatization techniques that deviate from conventional methods of speech dramatization, and in this regard they are of particular importance to linguistic analysis.

### ***Grammar Discussion of the Word Combination “The Other Shore”***

The work originated from Gao Xingjian's play *The Other Shore* 彼岸 (1986) and was written to interpret the concept “the other shore” in terms of its everyday and religious meaning. Stylistically it imitates a *koan* – a paradoxical text framed as questions and answers of a teacher and disciples in Chan Buddhism. In fact, it is a complex *koan* with an unfolding structure centered around the search for an answer to the question “what is the other shore?”.

<sup>7</sup> Wen Yiduo's poems <http://www.chinapoesy.com/XianDai499f10a0-5ea9-4dec-be5d-8a7f6c004b24.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. by M Holquist, transl. by C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press. 1981, p. 286.

In the author's introduction and afterword<sup>9</sup> to his work Yu Jian states that it is a poem-play (*shiju* 诗剧). Although he uses the term for the first time to define the format of his creation, he doesn't make any further explanations to clarify its specific structure. *Shiju* per se is a verse drama and in Chinese modern literature it is linked to Guo Moruo's 郭沫若 verse plays of the 1920s (written under a strong influence of Goethe's *Faust*), notably *The Rebirth of Goddess* 女神之再生 and *The Burdened One of the Xiang River* 湘累. They were written in blank verse in modern *baihua* language, but it is obvious that Yu Jian doesn't make references to Guo Moruo's legacy and takes *shiju* up to a new level of artistic expression<sup>10</sup>.

This hybrid poem-play format has its own features that are highlighted below. Supposedly, any play must be to a certain extent supplemented with metatextual commentaries, i.e. parts of a drama text not for voicing by characters and intended for the staging process: characters' names, remarks, *mise-en-scène* etc. In Yu Jian's introductory remarks to the Grammar Discussion there's only general information concerning the creation of the text and its production by Mou Sen 牟森 and his amateur theatre group in Beijing Film Academy (1993), then in the afterword he briefly speculates about the movements of actors being the key to a successful drama staging. Regarding any other metatextual commentaries there are none: no place and time indications, no characters identified either by name/appearance/profession or by quantity. On the syntax level, the characters' speech is marked as direct, punctuation marks (full stops, question and exclamation marks) and the beginning of a new phrase from a new line imply a different voice taking the lead in the discussion. In addition, the text has two main variants of a sentence structure: a) questions and b) tentative answers/ guesses at the nature of the other shore. We may suggest that one voice belongs to a teacher and the others – are students/ Chan disciples' who answer and then put forward specifying questions, turn to grammar / parts of speech to define the essence of the other shore.

彼岸是什么?它是名词?

不, 它不是一个名词, 它没实体, 没有所指。

它是一个形容词吗?

不, 它不是一个形容词, 它形容的一切都不是它自身。

那么彼岸是什么?

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<sup>9</sup> The citations from the poem-play, the foreword and afterword are taken from Yu Jian's blog [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_4889207c0100cf13.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4889207c0100cf13.html).

<sup>10</sup> *Xiqu* 戏曲 – the text of traditional Chinese drama consists of two parts, verse (*qu* 曲) and prose (*bai* 白) Verse generally expresses emotion or depicts scenery while prose recounts stories or develops dialogue. Most classical Chinese playwrights concentrated on using verse, so that prose is frequently interspersed with short poems.

我说不出来。

说不出来，能动出来吗？

What is the other shore ? A noun?

No, it's not a noun, it has no substance, no signified.

Is it an adjective?

No, it is not an adjective, everything that it describes isn't its own.

Then what is the other shore?

I cannot say it out

If it can not be said, then can it be expressed in movements?

Nevertheless, these divisions between the speech acts don't clarify who specifically is speaking at the moment. Since from the lexical perspective any language peculiarities don't differentiate the voices, the existence of diverse subjectivities/voices within the text are under question. What can be stated is that there is a number of voices presented to create an impression of a multitude.

Though all the above mentioned details result in Yu Jian's *Grammar Discussion* being a blurred format of drama, still the existence of the different voices mediates the communication between the author and the reader, and enhances the possibility of staging this text as an inter-discursive interaction of drama and poetry.

What makes this work a semi-drama at the same time makes it a semi-poem: the poetic mode functions in a neatly organized frame of questions and answers with no seeming differences in syntax and lexis between the voices<sup>11</sup>. This fact allows the text to be perceived as a seamless flow of poetic utterances.

### ***File Zero***

The long poem *File Zero*, first published in 1994, caused great controversy among Chinese critics<sup>12</sup>. It adopts the stylistic mode of a bureaucratic document, where miscellaneous notes reveal

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that two different meanings of "voice" are involved in the discussion. On the one hand, "voice" can be used to refer to the attribution of (some of) the words in a text to a particular individual or entity, whether imaginary or not. On the other hand, "voice" in Bakhtin's notion of "double-voicedness" involves the use of different styles/ language varieties to project different views of the world which stand in a dialectical relationship with one another. The point here is that the existence of different voices in the first sense does not necessarily produce "double-" or "multi-voicedness." From Semino, Elena. "Stylistics and Linguistic Variation in Poetry". *Journal of English Linguistics* № 30, 2002, pp.28-50.

<sup>12</sup> There were a number of critics attacking Yu Jian's work as "a heap of language-garbage" <https://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/977/14/Yu-Jian>

in detail the life of a 30-year-old man: his birth, his grown-up life, his daily routine and the way all of these are controlled by the all-pervasive Power. The dry style of an official document language operates with dull wording, monotonous reports and numbers. The man's life is portrayed against the historical context of the Great Cultural Revolution to parody connection between individual life and public discourse.

The linguistic devices Yu Jian uses here to create a dramatized speech impression are focused on camouflaging different subjectivities, reducing them to notes/ comments made by them. In terms of punctuation, the implementation of various subjectivities (specifically teachers/ officials/ the main character) is indicated by a colon after a short report given by them. The voices of teachers and officials sound in unison with the same overload of suspicious remarks, while the voice of "I" creates a twofold effect. Although it prominently features bureaucratic vocabulary, a constant repetition of the wrongdoing (by the voice) points out to a deeply individual emotion.

不足之处：不喜欢体育课 有时上课讲小话 不经常刷牙

小字条：报告老师 他在路上捡到一分钱 没交民警叔叔

评语：这个同学思想好 只是不爱讲话 不知道他想什么 希望家长 检查他的日记 随时  
向我们汇报 配合培养

一份检查：1968年11月2日这一天 做了一件坏事

我在墙上画了一辆坦克 洁白的墙 公共的墙 大家的墙 集体的  
墙 被我画了一辆大坦克 我犯了自由主义 一定要坚决改过<sup>13</sup>

*deficiencies*: does not like physical education sometimes whispers in class does  
not regularly brush his teeth

*note*: report to teacher he picked up a penny on the street did not give it to uncle  
people's policeman

*comment*: this student's thinking is fine but he's no talker who knows what's  
on his mind

it is hoped that his parents will examine his diary report to us as necessary to  
coordinate the upbringing

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<sup>13</sup> Yu Jian's poem *File Zero* <http://poem.tuweng.com/1980/yujian/2816.html>.

*self-criticism*: on 2 November 1968 did a bad thing

I drew a tank on a wall on a clean white wall on a public wall on everybody's wall on  
a collective wall was drawn a great big tank by me i perpetrated the crime of individualism  
must

make a determined effort to mend my ways<sup>14</sup>

As Maghiel van Crevel observes, “the final two lines are the only two in the entire poem that contain the first-person singular pronoun ‘I’ (wo 我). And whereas the second half of the second line—I perpetrated the crime of individualism must make a determined effort to mend my ways—is especially ironic in its employment of politically correct, formulaic language, the preceding description of the “bad thing” works differently. Many of the modifiers in *I drew a tank on a wall on a clean white wall on a public wall on everybody's wall on a collective wall was drawn a great big tank by me* do occur in the official discourse that Yu Jian is in the habit of parodying. But at the same time, in their exasperated, breathless succession, these phrases come across as a non-reflective burst of deeply involved, individual excitement or anger<sup>15</sup>.

This poem was staged by Mou Sen and became the most famous among Yu Jian's works. Since the poem has no characters and plot in the traditional sense, during the staging process the characters were described to the actors during rehearsals. Actors were free to incorporate fragments of their own stories into the performance<sup>16</sup>.

## **Flight**

The elaborate poem “Flight” which took Yu Jian several years of work and which was completed in 2000 is a piece of work that defies any general summary. It is a mosaic of notes, riddled with quotes from Chinese classical poetry and T.S. Eliot's “The Waste Land”, scenes and clichés from daily life. What holds the fragmented picture together is the notion of *flight* – a ready metaphor for the modern consumer society, the disconcerting landscape of contemporary Chinese culture. The text images revolve around the idea of air travel and consist of a series of fragments, which in their own turn are presented by different subjectivities. Dramatized speech phenomenon in “Flight” has a number of peculiarities. Yu Jian creates *mise-en-scènes* within the texture of the poem with emphasis laid on detailed visualization and the characters' identification through their marked

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<sup>14</sup> The English translation is taken from Crevel M. *Chinese Poetry in Times of Mind, Mayhem and Money*. Brill. Leiden•Boston.2008, p.280.

<sup>15</sup> Crevel M. *Chinese Poetry in Times of Mind, Mayhem and Money*. Brill. Leiden•Boston.2008. P.280

<sup>16</sup> Labeledzka Izabella. *Gao Xingjian's Idea of Theatre*. Brill . Leiden-Boston. 2008. P. 27

direct speech <sup>17</sup>:

1. now in flight: infants well-muscled men fashion-conscious young wives fast youths and  
slow seniors the fingernails of gorgeous-looking girls  
the heating and the seats are freely adjustable and when the time comes pre-prepared meals  
are brought out without asking  
the hostesses could all be fashion models hollow smiles FACES RADIANT WITH  
HEALTH  
showing neither love nor hate "Tea or coffee, Sir?"  
"Excuse me, Madam, here's today's copy of the Financial Times."  
牛奶儿童 胸肌男子 时装少妇 快青年和慢老人 靓女的指甲在飞  
暖气座椅可以自由调节 时间一到, 配制的营养 自动送到  
小姐们都是模特儿标准 空心的微笑容光焕发  
不爱也不恨 “先生 要茶还是咖啡?  
女士, 这里有今天的金融时报。”

2. an apartment prepared for the happy family built to such precise standards  
"We are really very lucky; our children are so healthy We eat well We are a happy family"  
as if a scene in a play captured authentic human life  
him: squatting on the old toilet reading printed matter  
it takes him the read of a full-page article every time "The Secrets of a Happy Marriage"  
all it says is that you shouldn't eat too much salt You shouldn't eat too much salt and here  
again: You shouldn't eat too much salt  
her: dreaming on a Western-style mattress  
为幸福的家庭预计的套间 建造得真么标准  
“我们真的很幸福, 我们的孩子很健康,  
我们吃得好 我们有一个温馨的家”。  
犹如戏剧的现场 出现了真正的人生  
男的 蹲在白马桶上看旧杂志  
每次都都要看一整版文章 幸福婚姻的秘诀  
怪 说的都是不能多吃盐巴 又是不能多吃盐 又是不能多吃盐

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<sup>17</sup> Translation of Yu Jian's poem "Flight" cited here was made by Simon Patton, a copy of his translation was kindly sent by Yu Jian to the author of this paper. The original text <http://www.shigeku.org/shiku/xs/yujian.htm>

女的 在西梦思上做梦

There are also other types of dramatized speech cases in the poem: when another subjectivity is presented by a portrayal and a short remark (as a direct speech) typical of its daily life habits.

3. Dr Wang in seat B is a good comrade of authentic auxiliary department rank granted permission to travel abroad at the age of fifty  
a little doctor who has always worked in big hospitals more skilled on Mondays in  
imagining a red red rose than in preparing medication  
for diabetics he prattles away daily to his female patients: "Far, far away  
there is a singing island; far, far away a horse with a red mane reposes on the back of the  
moon . . ."

B座王大夫是一个好同志 原装的副处级 五十岁获准空运  
小医生 一向在大医院做事 在星期一 想象一朵红红的玫瑰 比配制  
糖尿病的药剂 更得心应手 天天对女患者说什么“在远方，  
有一座岛屿会唱歌； 在远方， 红鬃马伏在月亮背上. . .”

Thus Yu Jian in his poem “Flight” creates a multilayered structure with different subjectivities/voices presented. Linguistically, he implements various devices to fully reflect the characters' speech presentation in a poetic mode. Though this poem has never been put on stage in contrast to the other two which have been analyzed above, there's a strong tendency in it towards a drama mode. Depending on how it is read, it might be a poem (sketches and notes made from the perspective of a single subjectivity), or a drama with a number of voices formally separated from each other by different fragments but linked together in one complex unity on the ideologic conception level. Yu Jian's works in general tend to combine different modes of poetic utterances with a strong flavor of drama integrated in them and his experimental poems are open to stage interpretations.

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# Language System and Linguistic Creativity in Modern Russian Poetry:

## Syntax<sup>1</sup>

The grammatical peculiarities of any national poetry are determined by two factors originating from the most common definition of poetry as one of the forms of **verbal art**. First, they are connected with the specificity of the grammatical system of a language, whose inherent potential may be more obvious or less obvious and may be creatively foregrounded by the author (variability here stretches from typological characteristics of the language to the particular grammatical characteristics of a word, a sentence, a text). Second, they are linked with the constituent properties of a poetic text as a whole and as part of the national culture, the so-called “poetry presumption”, to use Jury Lotman’s apt appellation<sup>2</sup>. What is meant by the second set of parameters are subjectivity, multiplicity of interpretation (Levin’s “modal incoherence”<sup>3</sup> or Revzina’s “multiple reference”<sup>4</sup>), suggestiveness (Larin’s “fairytalesness”<sup>5</sup>), double division<sup>6</sup>, density of poetry (increased successiveness)<sup>7</sup>, fragmentariness (the small volume and independence of motives)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The research was rendered possible by the RSHF (RFBR) grant 16-24-10001.

<sup>2</sup> Lotman Yu.M. On poets and poetry: Analysis of the poetic text (O poetakh i poezii: Analiz poeticheskogo teksta). SPb.: Art-SPb, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Levin Yu.I. Selected Works. Poetics. Semiotics (Izbrannye trudy. Poetika. Semiotika). M., 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Revzina O.G. To the construction of a linguistic theory of the language of fiction (K postroeniyu lingvisticheskoy teorii yazyka hudozhestvennoj literatury) // Theoretical and applied aspects of computational linguistics (Teoreticheskie i prikladnye aspekty vychislitel'noj lingvistiki). M., 1981. P. 107 – 132.

Revzina O.G. From linguistic poetics (verbal adverbs in the poetic language of Marina Tsvetaeva) Iz lingvisticheskoy poetiki (deeprichastiya v poeticheskom yazyke Mariny Cvetaevoy) // Problems of structural linguistics (Problemy strukturnoj lingvistiki). M., 1983.

Revzina O. G. From poetic speech to poetic idiolect (Ot stihotvornoj rechi k poeticheskomu idiolektu) // Essays on the history of the language of Russian poetry of the twentieth century. Poetic language and idiosyncrasy. General issues. Sound text organization (Ocherki istorii yazyka russkoj poezii XX veka. Poeticheskij yazyk i idiosincrasii. Obshchie voprosy. Zvukovaya organizaciya teksta). M., 1990.

Revzina O. G. The paradox of poetic analysis (Paradoks poeticheskogo analiza) // Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Ser. 9. Filologiya. 1995. № 2. P. 147—151.

Revzina O. G. Zagadki poeticheskogo teksta // Kommunikativno-smyslovye parametry grammatiki i teksta. M., 2002. P. 418—433.

<sup>5</sup> Larin B.A. On the varieties of artistic speech (O raznovidnostyah hudozhestvennoj rechi) // Russian literature (Russkaya slovesnost'). M., 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Shapir M.I. “Versus” vs “Prose”: space-time of poetic text («Versus» vs «Prosa»: prostranstvo-vremya poeticheskogo teksta) // Philologica. № 2. 1995.

Shapir M. I. Universum versus: Language – Verse – Meaning in Russian Poetry of the 18th-20th Centuries (Universum versus: Yazyk — stih — smysl v russkoj poezii XVIII–XX vekov). B. 2. M., 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Tynyanov Yu.N. Poetic language problems (Problemy stihotvornogo yazyka). M., 1965

Gasparov M.L. First reading and re-reading. To Tynyanov's concept of the successiveness of poetic speech (Pervochtenie i perechtenie. K tynyanovskomu ponyatiyu sukcesivnosti stihotvornoj rechi) // Selected Works (Izbrannye Trudy). B. 2. M., 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Tynyanov Yu.N. Poetic language problems (Problemy stihotvornogo yazyka). M., 1965

Tomashhevskij B.V. Poetics (Poetika). M., 1996

Ginzburg L.Ya. Literature in search of reality (Literatura v poiskah real'nosti). L., 1987. P. 4–57.

Do we mean to say that diachronically the grammatical peculiarities of a national poetry manifest themselves in similar ways? This question is obviously to be answered in the negative. “The systematic character of poetic language also implies that at every stage of its development it possesses an intrinsically coherent set of expressive features allowing to render the content obligatory for a poetic text”<sup>9</sup>. Whatever the general stability of the grammatical system of a language and especially of its typological characteristics, at various stages of the development of this language’s poetic sphere one witnesses the greater or the lesser foregrounding of certain phenomena, units and categories which are of paramount functional significance because of the current tendencies within the development of the poetic language. In modern poetry the search for the new forms sharpens the interest in the grammatical means enabling one 1) to reveal the new aspects of the subjectivity of the poetic utterance, 2) to “place” it within the multiplicity of the potential “worlds” with the degree of concreteness and of the generalization the poet requires and 3) to arrive at the new modes of managing the controversy – unsolvable yet highly productive due to its very insolvability – between the suggestiveness, the charmingly imposing impact of a poetic text which the reader needs to be capable of comprehending intuitively, and the strict logic of grammatical rules standardizing usage and prescribing to the collective linguistic consciousness patterns, models and frames of forming and combining the linguistic units<sup>10</sup>. To put it in broader terms, it is the juxtaposition between the discrete and orderly character of language, the finiteness and the “structuredness” of an utterance and the indiscrete of reality as the constant flood of impressions, the fluidity of consciousness – never ending and never acquiring any final “sculptured” forms.

In the general literary language the syntactic rules serve as the main factor contributing to bringing order to the linear flow of speech<sup>11</sup>, to structuring it, to dividing it into separate utterances and to building up these utterances from the formally and semantically connected lexical units. In poetry, these syntactic rules tend to loosen their grip on the structure of a sentence and of a text. “The rhythmical division” of a poetic line does not merely cooperate with its syntactic organization – rhythm may also constitute an alternative to syntax. The inevitable balance between a human’s quest of order and his being unconsciously enamored of chaos defies the overabundance of restricting factors, the triumph of consequential predictability. This balance forces the syntactic

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<sup>9</sup> Revzina, 1990. P. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the comparison of lexical and grammatical poetics in *Gin Ya.I*. On the question of building poetics of of grammatical categories (K voprosu o postroenii poehtiki grammaticheskikh kategorij) // *Voprosy yazykoznanija*. 1991, № 2. P. 103–110, with reference to Edward Sapir’s *Language*: “...Lexical poetics is that of freedom, while the grammatical meanings reflect the dictatorship of the linguistic system, ‘the artistic entity being ravished by language’. Grammar is ‘ars obligatoria’, its poetics is that of obligation, that of the necessity” (P. 105).

<sup>11</sup> *Beaugrande R. de*, Text, discourse and process. Norwood, 1980.

structure and rhythmical structure not only to “cooperate”, but also to compete: in poetry “the density of syntactic bonds is loosened if the prosodic-phrasal connections are substituted by the prosodic-rhythmical ones”<sup>12</sup>. Multiplicity of reference as one more property of lyrics appears to devaluate all the shifter categories and makes the predicative characteristics and deictic indicators relative and ambivalent, which leads to a more active usage of the infinitive and nominative sentences free from the morphological indicators of predication. The categorizing and the synthetic potential of Russian morphology is perceived as redundant, inflexions are reduced, words may undergo conversion, and it becomes customary to create occasionalisms whose morphological (categorical) properties are interpreted by the reader of his own accord. Due to the fragmentary nature of lyrics, its moderate volume and its greater conceptual independence its grammatical “suprasegmentality” is done away with: to bring together images in his consciousness (that is, with respect to the content plane) the reader does not need the corresponding grammatical explication on the expression plane. It used to be sufficient to achieve linear juxtaposition or positional equivalence of the rhythmically organized nominative units (at the beginning or at the end of lines, for example), but now the principle of juxtaposition proves to be less obvious. It becomes more and more the reader’s task to look for the positional equivalence as conceived by the author, and if the reader accepts “the poetic presumption” he is to believe that this equivalence is there, that destroying the traditional syntagmatic relations gives rise to a certain new paradigmatics and, consequently, to some new meanings.

As follows from the above, the oncoming analysis will be carried out within the bounds of the functional-grammatical paradigm, one of its corner stones being the pronouncement “that the primary interpretative procedures used in the reading of a literary text are linguistic procedures”<sup>13</sup>. One more assumption consists in the understanding of grammar (essential for the functional approach) as a system of rules helping a natural language user<sup>14</sup> to produce and to interpret functionally different texts using the language system potential and the knowledge of the conditions under which a text functions. Otherwise stated, we will be speaking about the realization of the system (language) in a medium (poetry) through the creative activity of the **author** carrying out the operations of “selection and combination” (R. Jakobson) in accordance with his artistic intention, and of the recipient who is decoding the text on the basis of his own linguistic competence and system of expectations (R. de Beaugrande) or presumptions – linguistic, genre, stylistic, epistemic, aesthetic, etc. Bringing together within the functional approach

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<sup>12</sup> Nevzglyadova E.V. Sound and Meaning (Zvuk i smysl). SPb. 1998. P. 61.

<sup>13</sup> Carter R. Language and Literature: An introductory reader in stylistics. London, 1995. P. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Dik, Simon C. The Theory of Functional Grammar, Part 1: The Structure of the Clause (2 ed.). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 1997.

systematicity and anthropocentricity provides for the adequacy of generalizations allowing to reveal the common phenomena and tendencies within the enormous and diversified range of contemporary Russian poetry with its different but equally remote borderline cases such as those mentioned in Vladimir Novikov's article *Budetlyanka and Archaist: Natalya Azarova and Dmitry Bykov* and others: Alexander Anashevitch and Maxim Amelin, Nikita Safonov and Michail Kukin, Alexander Skidan and Olesya Nikolaeva<sup>15</sup>. For all the breadth of this specter we consciously refuse to speak about "languages of modern poetry" even metaphorically (the appellation occasionally used even within titles of monographs<sup>16</sup>). The aim of the present article does not consist in discovering certain separate authorial languages (had we chosen the relevant approach, these would have been found even within the limits of a particular poem). What our aim does consist in is considering modern poetry as the realization of the system of a national language (using its capacities and overcoming its limitations) through the linguistic activity of a special group of native speakers endowed with unique linguistic competence.

I. One of the main operations a speaker is carrying out when producing any text in a natural human language is linearization: making a linear sequence of discrete units of the expression plane and of the content plane. The principles of linearizing verbal material within a text are determined by the systemic language regularities connected with the word order, ways of expressing syntactic relations – from the intraverbal (inflexions) to intrasentential and intersentential: conjunctions, particles, pronouns, parenthetical words, punctuation marks, etc. The Russian language being synthetic and inflexional, syntactic relations between components of a sentence are expressed in it with sufficient clarity to enable a recipient to unambiguously interpret cases of coordination and subordination and to define the limits of a sentence. In poetic texts syntactic division is in correlation with the poetic division, which (in punctuationless poetry especially) brings forth ambivalent linearization – the possibility of establishing ambiguous relations between the components and the limits of sentences (in the polysubjective dialogical lyrics this may result in shifting the subjective perspective, in the narrative viewpoint migrating from one subject to another). Ulanov's remarks concerning the poetry of Natalia Azarova show that this possibility is understood by the modern author not only as a characteristic of poetic language, but also of poetic world:

*«с балкона речь вечереет  
ухом присутствует»*

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<sup>15</sup> Novikov V.I. *Budetlyanka and Archaist. Two Poetries of the Twenty-First Century (Budetlyanka i arhaist. Dve poehzii dvadcat' pervogo veka)* // *Novyj mir*, № 11, 2011. P. 169–177.

<sup>16</sup> Zubova L.V. *The Languages of Contemporary Poetry (Yazyki sovremennoj poehzii)*. M., 2010.

Does it mean only that evening is coming, just this, with no other implication? Alternatively, is it speech that is turning into an evening? Or is it implied additionally that the speech's ear is also there? Or is it slumbering with its ear in one's palms? In fact, all these are implied here, in the uninterruptedness of the world and in the concentration of speech. Language shows the fluidity of the world. Objects turn one into another; it is only human manipulation that separates them. Similarly, one action is not finished, but turns into another. Hence, among other things, the absence of capitalization in Azarova's poetry: speech never **begins**, it always **continues**.

Speech is ever eager to say more. The density of thought sometimes is created through intraverbal connections: "pora **na** joug" ("it is time to go south") contains "rana" ("wound") with its pain of distant aloofness and wanting. "Pous't' stynet" ("Let it become cold") turns into "poustynja" ("desert"), "ptenije" may be interpreted as "a song of a shadow" or as "singing turned reading". Sometimes, conversely, division is to be introduced: "(in)capacity stands in front of me" implying both achievement and capacity<sup>17</sup>.

One may make this line of reasoning part of linguistic analysis if an example from Ulanov's own poetry is considered:

(1) *Как молчание играет на пустоте  
знают четверо здесь никто не слушает их  
не дают и не просят прощения в суете  
книги в пять этажей ради них прости*  
(A. Ulanov, from the cycle *China Overall*)

It is at the juncture of the two neighboring sentences that the locative adverb *here* and the noun *books* appear, making it possible to use a hypothetical full stop in two different places. Is it 1) *Here the four of them know. Nobody listens to them*; or is it 2) *the four of them know. Nobody here listens to them, no apology given or accepted in the concomitant bustle*? Is it 1) *the five floors of books* (here two more variants emerge: either a full stop after *floors* or supplanting the *floors* with *forgive for their sake*); or is it 2) *in the bustle the five floors of books do not apologize or accept apologies*?

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<sup>17</sup> Ulanov A. "Excellent Pupil and the Flower Girl (Otlichnik i tsvetchnitsa)" // Znamya, 2012, № 7. P.223–226.

In this case the adverb *here* invariable (uninflected) by itself may freely go together with the end of the previous sentence or with the beginning of the next, this constituting its function of a syntactic determinant. It is agreement in number that makes it possible to perceive the plural form *books* as the subject for the predicates *do not give* and *do not ask*. On the other hand, as the Russian language offers the corresponding structural modification (or ‘scheme’) of sentences, this very use of the predicates in plural allow one to treat the syntactic construction in question as generalized-personal if the third line is taken for a separate sentence. Finally, the alternative readings of the last line as one sentence *Книги в пять этажей ради них прости* (for **their** sake may thus refer to *the four* in the second line) or as two sentences *Книги в пять этажей. Ради них прости* are based on the homonymy of Accusative plural and of Nominative plural typical of the grammatical system of the Russian language.

Thus, the given stanza is a good illustration to the above thesis: the grammatical (as well as the lexical and the phonetic) peculiarities of poetry come to the fore when the potentialities of the language system are seen through the prism of the essential properties of a poetic text. Multiplicity of interpretation is generated both by the homonymy of prepositional and case forms, and by the Russian language possessing certain sentence structures (verbal and non-verbal, with the expressed or non-expressed subjects) and their modifications, free word order, rules of agreement between the main parts of the sentence, and also the possibility for various forms to realize the syntactic bonds of different order – predicative and non-predicative, word-modifying and sentence-modifying. In modern punctuationless poetry these capacities of the language system are realized both within the sentence and at the juncture of the “potential sentences” competing in a reader’s mind when he is looking at the text for the first time and also when he rereads it.

The rhythmical alternative to the grammatical organization exists only against the background of the latter and never “annihilates” it completely, especially in a language like Russian, with its “strong” inflectional morphology. It was no coincidence that Champigny observed that the “mosaic” poetic technique, when “shifters become free from the missions they perform in prose”, requires a language with the developed verbal morphology<sup>18</sup>. The absence of the punctuation marks as such does not create too many points of ambiguity: grammatical dependence of words “build up” the text giving limits to its possible interpretations.

The poet’s desire to overcome the syntactic organization of the verse is enhanced by the use of the verb-free constructions and manipulations with word order either exploiting its freedom characteristic of the Russian language, or defying its limitations. These techniques are of use not only in punctuationless lyrics, but also in poetic texts with the increased significance of

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<sup>18</sup> Champigny R. “For and Against Genre Labels” // Poetics. Vol. X, № 2-3, June 1981. P. 145–174. (P. 159).

punctuation (the oncoming stanza corroborates this latter tendency through the individualized application of dashes and colon).

(2) **Цыц, барабанные, цыц, перепонки и жабры!** Ниц – седовласые зрители:  
влажные взоры, на устах пена – ценители...  
Зубки то тут, то там обнажая, облизываются, ждут,  
когда мои руки, и плечи, и шея в их небеса упадут (Yu. Skorodumova).

The adjective *drumming* (*барабанные*) separated by the verbal interjection *hush* (*цыц*) from the potential determinatum *membrane* (*перепонки*) may be treated both as an attribute to this word explicitly present in the line (the meaning of the word-combination thus being *the ear-drums*), and as an attribute to the elliptic but easily restorable *sticks* (*drum-sticks*). The musical-theatrical theme supporting the second interpretation and the nautical one (here *membranes* are rather associated with *gills*, and not with *drumming*) are corroborated by the macrotext: their mutual exchange of images is the constituent parameter of the poem, it is the basic metaphor of the poem brought to the fore by its very first line *The sea is the theatre in front of the kneeling land* (*Море - театр перед коленопоклонницей суши*) and further developed throughout the text.

The poetic division overwhelming the syntactic one is manifested through the foregrounding not only of the inter-line, but also of the inter-stanza enjambment:

(3) **Мелодраматический флер. Нелепая театральная смерть**  
**в бесшабашной (по нотам разыгранной) перестрелке.**  
Очки солнцезащитные, балетное па.  
Пуля, отлитая в Голливуде, убивает больше. Что  
на самом деле тревожит, так это отсутствие  
так называемой "любовной сцены", искушение  
опытом. Отсутствие совращает  
перспективу, тогда как последовательность событий –  
фальшивка, подобие.

**Подобно Джойсу**

**Годар предпочитает** двусмысленный  
пародийный монтаж зияние и в смерти человеческое ускользает  
разноцветные динамитные шашки

*к которым Бельмондо спичку подносит  
смехотворный и вероломный жест  
лучшее тому свидетельство крах  
классической парадигмы сказал бы критик*

*...Истлевает белая сигаретка  
в уголках асимметричных губ  
самоубийцы Пьеро – с лицом  
будущей кинозвезды. Как и Марат,  
он лежит в ванной, но – читает.  
Нечто о Веласкесе, возможно, Фуко,  
описывающего в "Слова и вещах" "Менины"  
(на ум приходят плоскости Пикассо). **Повторю:***

***насилия и не ждали.** Годар  
тогда еще был влюблен в красный автомобиль,  
в скорость, в Анну Карину. И знал,  
тогда уже знал, что **человек**  
**никогда не совпадает***

***ни с собственной  
смертью, ни, собственно, с бытием** (A. Skidan).*

What strikes the eye here is the unity of the syntactic technique in the punctuationless stanza and in the punctuated ones. The former is followed by the stanza where, in comparison to others, punctuation marks are especially significant: it begins with dots and ends up with a colon, there is parcellation after “reads”, two dashes of the author’s individual choice (one of them used after the conjunction “but”) and a parenthesis given in brackets. These examples make one think it worthwhile to substitute the diad “poetic (rhythmical) division + linguistic (syntactic) division” by the triad “poetic + syntactic + punctuation (+graphic)”. It is obvious that punctuation (or lack of it) is treated by the modern author as a new independent level of organization required among other things for building up the subject perspective (for realizing the opposition of “my own vs alien”, for example). In the following poem by Skidan the nominative-infinitive and expressly paradigmatic syntax on the level of punctuation is reflected in the absence of full stops and commas by the use of the exclamation mark, square brackets and inverted commas, all these (with the

exception of brackets singling out «М» and «Ж») denoting the other voice when it appears in the text:

(4)

*пролеты моста*

*колеса мельниц*

*рожок почтальона*

*и перегоны метро*

**<и Гете Гете конечно!>**

*не прислоняться*

*не спать*

*крепкие*

*мужские объятия*

*сентиментальная чепуха*

**"заткни пасть"**

*буквы "М" и "Ж" стерты*

Rejecting the normative punctuation (full stops and commas) which is of syntactic nature and obligatory according to the rules of standard language, the poet turns to the syntactically “unengaged” means of the graphic linearization of an utterance which he may specifically force to serve semantics – not the general and the standard, but the poetic one. Here the capital letters are of great help – both as elements of a word and of a sentence:

(5)

*Ухожу Прощай До свидания Нет*

*Обещай Думай Ушел Ухожу*

*Нет Потуши свет Теперь*

*Скажу Ты Обними Так*

*Отдать Отдаю Все Возьми  
Бери Еще Отдал Твой  
Вижу Ты Изнутри Свет  
Лицо белое Волосы летят*

*Полосы Дорога Пейзаж еду  
звяк-звяк вагон-ресторан  
Ночь Бред Горячо Насквозь —  
Лицо слепит Космы жгут*

*Спать Сплю Прощай Ельник  
Небо Снег Блестит Лыжник  
Просто Чисто Спокойно Каникулы  
Свитер красный Забыть забыл*

*Вдруг Дыра Дыры Прорехи  
Ползут Расползаются Вкривь Вкось  
Очнулся Провалы Гулко Город  
Страх страшно Идти иду  
(G. Sapgir Words)*

The space between separate words is extended, the capital letter allows “each word in a poem /.../ to be itself”, “intermediate connectors” cease to be necessary, “the word all the while approaching the Word, that is, the symbol”<sup>19</sup>.

The increased interval between the words provokes greater poetic reflection due to its polyfunctionality. It is the sign of emptiness (of quietness, of silence, of a pause while new senses and images enter the reader’s consciousness) and a space marker between words providing for their independence, as well as the syntactic position, which may remain vacant or may be filled in a more or less trivial manner. The interval may not only be increased, but also discarded altogether or be “filled” by hyphens restructuring the rhythmical and the semantic relations between the elements of the poetic text. Thus, Azarova applies the same punctuation mark – the hyphen – both for dividing a word and for bringing words together. The poet seems to be violating the typological

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<sup>19</sup> Sapgir G. “Words (Slova)” // Arion, 1999, №1, <http://magazines.russ.ru/arion/1999/1/sapgir.html>.



dilute morphology destroying the standard understanding of inflection: the latter loses its function of being the main means of connecting the components of a syntactic construction and gets an opportunity to be both an inflection and part of the root (*травму – ума – марта*).

It is no longer similar to Balmont's «Бог Океан» (*Волны морей, безпредельно — пустынно — шумящие, Бог Океан, многогласно — печально — взывающий...*), where the author's individualized usage of dashes brings together (or separates from each other) words of the standard vocabulary, lending the text solemnity and musicality. It is not dividing words into the obvious morphemic elements the way it is done by Sosnora<sup>20</sup>; it is not simple syllabic parcellation based on rhythm and sound symbolism (*А где-то за стеной Будильник до рассвета Стрекоchet на столе: «До бу-ду-ще-го ле-та, До бу-ду-ще-го ле-...»* found in a text by Sobakin). It is poetic speech rushing into the systemic properties of a language, from phonetics to syntax.

Regrettably, within the bounds of the present article we cannot allow ourselves to give a more detailed description of the obvious connection of the effects of linearization just specified with morphology getting analytical and words losing their idiomaticity.

II. Like in prosaic texts of verbal art, in poetry one comes across the syntactic techniques foregrounding the potential properties of the system of the Russian language. Here two oppositions regularly manifest themselves:

- a) the syntagmatic vs the paradigmatic (the foregrounding, the analytical) syntax;
- б) the “elaborate” (preplanned, artificial) vs spontaneous syntax.

The first two techniques varying the degree of closeness and the nature of it in a text were singled out and applied by Arutyunova to prosaic text of verbal art<sup>21</sup>. The border-line cases here are the hierarchical (syntagmatic) principle of arranging the text where “elaborating the syntagmatic relations” is of paramount importance, and the foregrounding (the paradigmatic) principle where “emphasis is laid on the connection of the utterance and the denotate, its direct and “close” correlation with the situation”<sup>22</sup>.

Here the distinction is made based on opposing the two “aspects” of syntax to each other: “the aspect of the syntagmatic connections between words forming an utterance, and the aspect of the foregrounding of the utterance when it is being transformed into a unit of communication in

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<sup>20</sup> Zubova L.V. The Languages of Contemporary Poetry (Yazyki sovremennoj poezii). M., 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Arutyunova N.D. To the Problem of the Coherence of the Prose Text (K probleme svyaznosti prozaicheskogo teksta) // In Memoriam V.V. Vinogradov (Pamyati V.V. Vinogradova). M., 1971. P. 22–30.

Arutyunova N.D. Ligament and Coherence (Svyazka i svyaznost') // Arutyunova N.D. The Language and the World of Man (Yazyk i mir cheloveka). M., 1998. P. 481–488.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, P. 482.

speech”<sup>23</sup>. Both of these aspects may become the “dominant constituent factor” deforming and suppressing the second member of the opposition and making other sides of the syntactic organization of a text subservient to itself<sup>24</sup>. In the syntagmatic syntax “hierarchically the unfolding of the syntagmatic connections organizes the elements of the utterance allowing the author to constantly “regroup the world” through imposing various nets of relations upon its elements and creating from them different positional combinations”<sup>25</sup>. Its salient features are the complexity of a sentence, the prolixity of intersentential connectors, the coincidence between the boundaries of a sentence with an utterance, the foregrounding of the word-formation categorical transposition enabling one to use the same stem in various syntactic functions, the explicitness of the modus understood as “a sufficiently clear reference of an utterance to its author”, etc.<sup>26</sup>. “In the hierarchical prose the uninterruptedness of content reflecting the “overall” nature of reality aspires to express itself in the uninterruptedness of the outer form. <...> The hierarchical prose tends to reduce intervals in the interrupted flow, to create the overall text, a continuum making the technical devices of an author less noticeable. The foregrounding prose constantly “syncofes”, it ostentatiously broadens and increases the gaps within the narration, showing the “separateness” of each device whose significance is drastically extended. The first type of prose brings things together, it connects. The second type tends to separate and to single out”<sup>27</sup>. In the foregrounding syntax the connections between the sentences and within the sentences are broken, also minimized are the indications of the semantic relations between separate messages and components of messages. The typical features of this kind of syntax are the use of the non-syntactic means of the coherence of the text (rhythm and intonation), the increasing of the amount of non-verbal sentences, “frequent cases of non-distinguishing between modus and dictum”, etc. The weakening of the outward bonds between the elements of the text is compensated for by the “imagery unity and the creative coherence” of the literary text<sup>28</sup>.

Let us begin with considering the examples of the syntagmatic poetic syntax.

(8) *На задворках космической круговерти,  
где дожди вырастают из талой тверди  
и венчаются кроною облаков,*

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, P. 483.

<sup>24</sup> Arutyunova N.D. To the Problem of the Coherence of the Prose Text (K probleme svyaznosti prozaicheskogo teksta) // In Memoriam V.V. Vinogradov (Pamyati V.V. Vinogradova). M., 1971. P. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Arutyunova N.D. Ligament and Coherence (Svyazka i svyaznost') // Arutyunova N.D. The Language and the World of Man (Yazyk i mir cheloveka). M., 1998. P. 483.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. P. 483.

<sup>28</sup> Arutyunova N.D. To the Problem of the Coherence of the Prose Text (K probleme svyaznosti prozaicheskogo teksta) // In Memoriam V.V. Vinogradov (Pamyati V.V. Vinogradova). M., 1971. P. 30.

*чье материнское молоко  
причитается птицам за их неумолчную вредность,  
на заре плагиата, в зените крамол  
согрешивший с флорою богомол  
воплощал под ее псевдонимом свою, поверьте,  
непревзойденную верность (Yu. Skorodumova).*

This is the first sentence of the poem, and it occupies nine lines: the first six contain the space-time localizers, and it is only in the seventh line that the subject turns up. Out of the 41 words 10 (conjunctions, only one coordinative among them, and prepositions) indicate the syntactic relations, and 5 lines out of 9 begin with conjunctions and prepositions specifically. There are more than 10 predicative units in this sentence. The limitations of the human operative memory thus being “violated” in the unrhymed poem with its complicated and barely predicatable rhythm. The reader’s consciousness is made to “retain” the complex and magniloquent syntactic structure: the reader is to keep in his memory the beginning of the utterance and simultaneously to strive to reach its end. There appears a certain clash between the necessity of “suprasegmental” reading and the poetic – informative and artistic – self-sufficiency of each particular element. The reader’s consciousness “stretched along” the whole construction subjects itself to suggestive impact.

*(9) глаз, открывающий мне ресницы, как лепестки цветка,  
видит одновременно двенадцать выгнутых стрел,  
коим, чтобы подняться, требуются века  
и кто-нибудь, кто бы понял, полюбил, посмотрел,  
как из этого тела, обёрнутого вокруг  
отсутствия тьмы и света, оформленного ничто,  
берётся огромный воздух и рвётся из сжатых рук,  
и всё, что вокруг свернулось, обрушивается ничком;  
и всё становится болью – леса, небеса, песок;  
и голосом, словно пальцем, Кто-то ведёт по мне,  
снимая мягкое тело, как скомканный лепесток,  
с той пустоты, откуда делается больней,  
куда проникает только самый высокий стон  
и не уходит оттуда, покуда не станет сыт, –  
двенадцать стрел, расцветая пламенем, делаются кустом,  
и начинает биться сердце, подвешенное за язык (Yu. Idlis).*

This 16-line poem is just one sentence of 105 words containing at least 30 predicative units and being, to put it figuratively, an encyclopedia of the subordinating bonds and of the semi-predicative constructions of the Russian language. This syntagmatic syntax may be perceived as spontaneous, it does not seem to be “elaborate” and artificial – on the contrary, it produces the impression that thoughts and emotions are naturally put on paper, that these former come like waves, one after another. The oppositions of paradigmatic vs syntagmatic and of spontaneity vs elaborateness turn out to be not sequential, but overlapping, of which more will be considered below.

Syntagmatic syntax manifests itself in long homogeneous enumeration, in the prolixity of parallel constructions with the same conjunctions, both coordinating and subordinating, in the considerable predicative succinctness and multilayered character<sup>29</sup> of the structure of a sentence.

*(10) Как говорил сокровенный Сократ, сибарит, сотрапезник, создатель,  
с ханкой, на кухне, при мне, при свечах, при часах, при своих оставаясь:  
Мир обоюден, объят облепихой, он липок и лапчат,  
все мужики дармоеды, все бабы тупы на языки... (Yu. Skorodumova)*

The first line includes several homogeneous appositions, the second line contains 6 homogeneous situational syntaxemes, the third one possesses two pairs of homogeneous predicates in each of the parallel parts of the conjunctionless sentence.

*(11) То серебристый дождь, то ватный коридор  
Ночной гостиницы, то голубь над ковчегом,  
То утренний туман, то монастырский двор,  
То избы вдоль шоссе, засыпанные снегом;  
То роцца, где меня окликнул почтальон,  
Я подошел, и он подал с велосипеда  
Письмо, и тут же мир раздвинулся, как сон,  
В котором быль уже не отделить от бреда (D. Vedenyapin)*

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<sup>29</sup> Zolotova G.A., Onipenko N.K., Sidorova M.Yu. Communicative Russian Grammar (Kommunikativnaya grammatika russkogo yazyka). M., 2004.

Here one finds 8 lines comprising one sentence which contains 53 words with the conjunction *то* repeated 7 times and with the comma after *почтальон*, not allowing one to “be finished with” the presumably “complete sentence”. It should also be noted that *то* may be interpreted dually, either as a demonstrative pronoun or as a disjunctive conjunction. The first variant sounds elevated and archaic, and it would be logical to reject it, had it not been for the contradiction of the second variant to the concrete space-time localization in the line *То роуца, где меня окликнул почтальон...* Thus, this line becomes a borderline, as it were, between the multiple and the concrete, creating a transition similar to a standard example from Gogol's *Nevsky prospect* where a detailed description of whom and at what time of the day you may **usually** come across at this avenue is suddenly followed by the phrase with a definitely concrete meaning: “*Стой!*” *закричал в это время поручик Пирогов, дернув шедшего с ним молодого человека во фраке и плаще. “Видел?”*. Shklovsky interpreted this fragment as an example of “what in the old books on aesthetics would be called ‘the unity of the multiple’”<sup>30</sup>, while in Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago* and in Osorgin’s *Sivtsev Vrazhek* this technique becomes the constituent stylistic parameter of lyrical prose<sup>31</sup>. Here in Vedenyapin’s text the unity of the multiple, preparing us to the moment when “the world extends like a dream in which the real will not be separable from the delirium” (*мир раздвинется, как сон, В котором быть уже не отделить от бреда*), is created from the very first line – in the interaction of the grammatical structure and its lexical components. On the one hand, we observe the repeated *то*, blurring (multiplying) space and time. On the other hand, here we find space locators quite diversified in all respects (including the clarity of “perception”, the presence of artefacts and of natural facts, the horizontal and vertical orientation) and due to this fact activating the modus of perception in the consciousness of the reader with a sufficient capacity of visualizing verbal stimuli. To make this work, juxtaposition within a particular predicative structure of a sentence must be introduced.

(12) *Уже обезумела совесть рябины.*

*Уже наступает сезон для охоты,*

*И в очи оленям глядят карабины,*

*И тлеют сырые, как веки, восходы.*

*И хочется думать о смутных предметах,*

*Больших и прохладных видениях сердца -*

*О смуглых плечах и летящих кометах,*

<sup>30</sup> Shklovskij V. Fiction. Reflections and analyzes (Hudozhestvennaya proza. Razmyshleniya i razbory). M., 1961. P. 425.

<sup>31</sup> Sidorova M.Yu. The Grammar of Fiction (Grammatika hudozhestvennogo teksta). M., 2001.

*И хочется плакать. И некуда деться* (V. Elistratov)

Here are 5 conjunctions *и* within the sentence and in the parcellation, parallel constructions with *уже*, a sequence of homogeneous enumerations with the conjunction *о*.

(13) *Он просиял и подошел к окну,  
Дрожавшему от грохота трамвая,  
Вплетенного в живую тишину,  
Звенящую сквозь снег, как неживая.  
И вглядываясь в этот снег и свет,  
Упавший навзничь в неприятном сквере  
На комья грязи и клочки газет,  
На праведных и грешных в равной мере  
Прохожих без особенных примет,  
Он рассудил не рассуждать о вере,  
А просто верить в то, что смерти нет,  
А милость есть – как в жизни есть потери,  
Хранящие от сотни горших бед,  
С рождения дежурящих у двери...* (D. Vedenyapin)

These 14 lines are syntactically divided into two sentences where the first, the shorter one, offers a hierarchy of participial constructions each answering the question “Which?” and thus arranged on the four levels of consecutive subordination: *к окну* (to which?), *Дрожавшему от грохота трамвая* (which?), *Вплетенного в живую тишину* (which?), *Звенящую сквозь снег*. Out of the 80 words of the adduced text 6 are participles in their full form. To compare: in the present article 6 participles are to be found in fragments consisting of about 250-270 words.

It must be emphasized that semantically the components and structures of a poetic text which fall under the categories of “homogeneous” and “parallel” are very different indeed – so much so that they cannot be exhaustively analyzed within the bounds of an article. Let us enumerate only some definitely distinctive types of “homogeneous” sequences.

First of all, we should distinguish between two types of homogeneous substantival sequences:

a) those multiplying the attributes of entities by going through sets of terms or by characterizing an object from different angles (line №1 in example №10, example №14, lines №2 and №5 in example №15) –

(14) *ЛевLOSEV не поэт, не кифаред.*

*Он маринист, он велимировед,*

*бродскист в очках и с реденькой бородкой...* (L. Losev);

б) those multiplying the entities.

In the second case entities may be multiplied within one and the same denotative situation, simultaneously being present in it, as it were, and producing a conjunctive sequence «X<sub>1</sub>, и X<sub>2</sub>... and X<sub>n</sub>» (line № 9 in example №4, a sequence of homogeneous parts in the form of «O + Prepositional Case» in example №12), or these entities may act as mutually exclusive claimants to filling in one and the same “slot” accompanying the predicate (the disjunctive sequence «X<sub>1</sub>, or X<sub>2</sub>... or X<sub>n</sub>»), thus changing the situation of denotation – lines №1 and № 4 in example №15, example №16.

Various types of homogeneous enumerations may be brought together within a particular text:

(15) *И растет, наплывает тревога, трирема, трагедия, трещина,*

*и никак не растает таблетка, облатка, тусклая капсула,*

*рассосаться не может ее оболочка, обложка, обличие, облачко,*

*раствориться не хочет окно, циркуль, соль и любое творение,*

*и никак не нащупать опору, основу, корпус, остов, корпускулу* (V. Strochkov).

(16) *У одной моей подружки была теплая шуба*

*(Норка, выхухоль, песец или, возможно, енот).*

<...>

*Нерна, нутрия, шиншилла, незабвенная проза,*

*От зимы обратно в зиму проползание ужом.*

*Слишком разные слова по отношению к морозу,*

*Ни замужества, ни дружбы, только легкий снежок.*

*Потолок захочет выспаться на длинных ресницах,*

*В центре озера на скатерти замерзший стакан.*

*Волк, опоссум, кошка драная, ондатра, куница,*

*Росомаха, чернобурка, мексиканский тушкан* (N. Zvyagintsev).

Similarly, two types of sequences of space-time localizers may be singled out (they can be expressed by (prepositional-) case forms of nouns, by adverbs, by subordinate clauses): when the whole sequence forms and introduces attributes to the same space-time (line №2 in example №10), or when the members of the sequence represent alternative space-time loci (example №11). It is

quite natural that ambivalent sequences are not only possible, but also very popular (cf. line №3 in example №15); the same applies to sequences repeated with some variability (see example №16).

Finally, verbal sequences (our experience shows that they are observed more rarely) may also represent the conjunction and the disjunction of attributes; in the first instance it is the sequential or the simultaneous character of action.

The other extreme is formed by the paradigmatic syntax: the relatively small linear size of the sentence and/ or giving the problematic status to a sentence as a syntactic unit, the syntagmatic connections being not expressed or ambivalent, verblessness, nominative constructions. In this case recreating the borders and the structure of a sentence may be entrusted to the reader (a good example of it is the lyrics of Azarova, devoid of punctuation) or may remain the author's own business (the way it is done by Anashevitch in the oncoming poem when he clearly marks with dots the junctures of communicative units coinciding with ends of lines):

(17) *портной стыд  
плечный путь  
лес весь в пальто тяжёлых оттенков  
сад вышит детской тяжёлой травой  
предки на плечиках напоказ  
швы не выдержали  
(N. Azarova);*

(18) *У крана и валуна точка на спине видна.  
Это такая игра.  
Ты бы со мной не смогла.  
Металась бы в угол из угла.  
Это такая зима.  
Черная капелька, несмываемая смола.  
Ты бы со мной никогда.  
Елочные украшения, искусственная слюда.  
Мне бы Рождество встретить, мне бы купить вина.  
Это такая страна (A. Anashevitch).*

This poem by Anashevitch contains 10 lines and 50 words, among which one finds 6 prepositions, 1 coordinating conjunction and no subordinating conjunctions. There are 10

sentences in it, and only two of them (which in fact turn out to be one parcellated sentence) possess the verb in a finite form.

Giving the problematic status to a sentence as a communicative unit brings about making the status of a word equally problematic, for it loses its systemic characteristics of globality of nomination and of idiomat�icity, joining instead new formal and semantic paradigms:

(19) *лес*

*знаньем контуров*

*расс - телен*

*он*

*беснежный*

*бестелесен* (N. Azarova)

(20)

*плоть про-ступила в простоте*

*ло*

*и-умер*

*ло*

(N. Azarova)

Whereas N.D. Arutyunova insists that the paradigmatic syntax in prose is “capable of foregrounding”, syntax in modern poetry may simultaneously be called “analytical”. Adapting the reader to itself, to its principles of construction, the paradigmatic syntax forms new presumptions and expectations, connected among other things with the predominance of the Nominative case representing the word which due to its capitalization acquires the status of a sentence and becomes transformed from a nominative unit into a communicative one. The text is constructed according to the laws of the “absolute predicativeness” of inner speech: “We are always aware of what our inner speech is about. We are always aware of what situation we are in. The subject of our inner dialogue is always known to us. We know what we are thinking about. The subject of our inner pronouncement is always present in our thoughts. It is always presumed”<sup>32</sup>. Inner speech, obeying “clear and absolute predicativeness”, and written speech constitute the two opposing points of the continuum of functional types of speech “regarding the tendency to contract speech and reduce it

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<sup>32</sup> Vygotskij L.S. Thinking and Speech (Myshlenie i rech'). M., 1999. P. 318–319.

to the purely predicative pronouncements”<sup>33</sup>). For inner speech – even more so than for lyrical poetry<sup>34</sup>, the principles of creating the functional perspective of outer speech (the given vs the new, the known vs the unknown) become irrelevant. Everything proves to be equally given and new, known and unknown, and the word order fulfils a completely different function compared to the theme-rheme division, intensifying the impression of analyticity and the ambivalence of syntactic relations.

(21)

***Кафе терраса. Скатерти белые***

*взмetyны; убывающий*

*потусторонний свет. Бирючина, эвкалипт (A. Skidan).*

(22)

***Треск почвы сухой. Ящерица***

*застыла на камне. Синие зеркала холмов,*

*лопасти, львиные пасти солнца (A. Skidan).*

Should the postposition of attributes, the enjambment with the Nominative Cases “loosely hanging at the end of lines” and the ambivalent composite with the analytical noun *Кафе терраса* be treated as separate phenomena or as the component part of some general poetic technique – a special method of operating with predicativeness? The second variant is perhaps the true one. If we analyze this very technique as regards using the capacities of the linguistic system, this former proves to be very complicated and reaching far beyond such standard nominative sequences as *Ночь. Улица. Фонарь. Аптека* or *Шепот. Робкое дыханье. Трели соловья*. Having “schooled” the reader to comprehend the poetry of nominative sequences (for brevity’s sake it may be called “nominative poetry” if we proceed from the analogy with the “infinitive poetry”) the poet in the generalized referential sense arrives at the possibility to deceive the reader with his presumed expectations: *Скатерти белые* and *Ящерица* hanging loosely at the end of lines turn out to be not separate nominatives, but subjects prove to be not independent nominatives. Subjects were included in binomial sentences, and only after introducing them, the author reverts to nominative sequences. Postpositional adjectives *белые* and *сухой* make us consider the highly problematic question of attributiveness / predicativeness, which in principle cannot be solved within the bounds

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. P. 316.

<sup>34</sup> *Kovtunova I.I.* Poetic Syntax (Poehticheskij sintaksis). M., 1986.

of formal, non-generative syntax and which has been discussed endlessly in functional-communicative syntactic investigation: is the construction  $N_1Adj$  separable, two-componential or indivisible, acting in the capacity of a uniform syntactic “sign”? When the author brings together three words within one sentence – *Трещ почвы сухой* – do they generate alternative interpretations of attributive bonds? Is it *трещ сухой* or *почвы сухой*? *Кафе терраса* – is it Genitive without the preposition (the terrace of what? “*Терраса* of what? – *кафе*”) unmarked by the case inflexion, or a hyphen, “nearly forgotten” by the author (it must be noted that on the whole the Russian language does not permit such “topsy-turvy usage” in contrast to English with its endless reshuffling such as *steel blade*  $\leftrightarrow$  *blade steel*, etc.)?

It should not pass unnoticed that when paradigmatic technique is used it is impossible for the nominatives to manifest the “multiplicity of the concrete” we have observed in example №11 (from D. Vedenyapin’s text). Depending on semantics and the context the nominatives devoid of conjunctions and of modus indicators are perceived either through the viewpoint of the immediately observable deixis “I – here – now” (examples №20 and №21) or are treated as the generalized referential “nominative themes” belonging to the mental modus (example №3). But this, in fact, is “one and the same thing”. Due to this poetic technique, problematizing the predicative and the attributive relations, the universe becomes the function of the author’s inner speech. It has a paradoxical, “diametrically opposite” resemblance to a science fiction story, where the heroine finds in her house a control panel with a great number of switches named after the realia of the world surrounding her, and gradually, passing from the less sizable objects to the more sizable ones, she switches off “trees”, “the moon”, “the sea” until only one switch remains on the control panel bearing the inscription “I”. Here, conversely, the author, as it were, chooses the “on”-position, switching on for us in turn: the cafe... the terrace... the table cloths... the white ones... which are being shaken...

Acting as “constituent factors making the syntactic system of language subservient and deforming this syntactic system”<sup>35</sup>, the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic principles of construction be may viewed, depending on the level of generalization, as the typical feature of an author’s style, as a kind of “predilection” within the bounds of a literary text or within a group of literary texts, as a device used in a particular poem for the realization of a certain artistic intention, as contrasted to the opposing principle. The significant transition from the paradigmatic to the syntagmatic syntax accompanied by the change of register (from reproductive to voluntative<sup>36</sup>)

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<sup>35</sup> *Arutyunova N.D.* To the Problem of the Coherence of the Prose Text (K probleme svyaznosti prozaicheskogo teksta) // In Memoriam V.V. Vinogradov (Pamyati V.V. Vinogradova). M., 1971. P. 26.

<sup>36</sup> *Zolotova G.A., Onipenko N.K., Sidorova M.Yu.* Communicative Russian Grammar (Kommunikativnaya grammatika russkogo yazyka). M., 2004.

and of modality (from real to unreal) found in the last stanza of Vedenyapin's poem and the combination of the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic principles in Ermoshina's poem where the substantival sequences (nominative proper and prepositional-case) and the verblessness and brevity increasing closer to the end of the poem are contrasted with the expressed character of syntagmatic connections within the complex extended sentences of the initial stanzas:

*(22) Человек подходит к микрофону.*

*Утро отражается в реке.*

*Женщина летает над газоном,*

*Полулежа в красном гамаке.*

*Сонная Австралия. Зеленый*

*Летний день. Залитый солнцем джип.*

*Смуглый фермер, с детства умудренный*

*Тайным знаньем бабочек и рыб.*

*Не спеша потягивая виски,*

*В кресле у окна сидит старик.*

*Не спеша потягивая виски,*

*В зеркале сидит его двойник.*

*Девочка играет с обезьяной.*

*Негр в очках копается в саду.*

*Над зеленогрудую поляной*

*Вьется белоснежный какаду.*

***Если радость – это чувство света,***

***Выстрели из фотопистолета***

***В это небо, полное тепла,***

***И оттуда с серебристым звоном***

***На поляну рядом с микрофоном***

***Упадет Кащеева игла.***

*(23) Осень твоя колокольная, яблоко светлого плача,*

*это не больно — лодочник, маятник и карусель.*

*Если бы ты был здесь — все бы решилось иначе,  
но не искать же тебя на гипсовом дне, Одиссей.*

*Или следить за оставленным следом черной дороги.  
Только лишь кончик пряжи свяжет согласие в речь.  
Пусть Пенелопа ждет — так говорили боги,  
и круг молока в тарелке, и круга гончарного печь.*

*Если и склеится чашка, и совпадут половины  
яблока, мокрой земли, прочитанного листа,  
и след вчерашнего снега, и лед рождественской глины —  
останется все же берег и раковина песка.*

*Этот лодочник глуше и ближе  
темной жаждою стоптанных плит  
в глубину твоего пятикнижья,  
в перемолотый морок земли.*

*Терпкой ягодой, краешком, краем,  
быть наградою — слово и жест,  
а младенец уже выбирает  
первой речи законченный крест.*

The “desyntagmatization” of syntax may be supported by the “analytization” of morphology, when the lexeme appears (is presented by the author) in a verbal (textual) sequence, but in its dictionary form:

(24)  
*Наверное, не  
элегия – быть в уме,  
клубок расстояний скрадывает вода,  
рука землемера левая на нуле,  
мой карточный третий город семерка да  
за вольным кисельным берегом лед замерз,  
зверушка издалика молоко лакать,*

аллюзии (*Russian poetry, am I yours?*) –

ни мехом прильнуть, ни хвостиком помахать (O. Zondberg).

Here Zondberg begins with the grammatically acceptable binomial constructions with the expressed syntactic bonds and standard punctuation, only to gradually reject this “overt markedness”, “losing” first of all some punctuation marks and some indicators of syntactic relations, varying the word order, and finally arriving at the purely nominative line devoid of all indicators of “communicativeness” after which – through an English insertion – in the completing infinitive constructions the author returns to the realm of *Russian poetry*.

The possibility to communicate with the reader through “sheer predicativeness” – which has linguistically become a presumption of modern poetry and which is aesthetically accompanied by the postmodernist conviction that “everything has already been said” and that “the presence of text is irrelevant”<sup>37</sup> may allow one to build up verbal sequences “with no morphology whatsoever”, “tearing off” half of the page, the way it is done in Sapgir’s poem *Noch* (Night), or using one syncategorematic parts of speech (uninflected or ossified in a particular morphological form received through syntactic derivation) – cf. the beginning of a poem from Skidan’s series *Chastichnye ob'ekty* (Partial objects):

(25) так как

все-таки

между тем

ввиду недостаточности

в то же время

иными словами

соответственно

в сущности

<...>

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<sup>37</sup> *Shapir M.I.* “Versus” vs “Prose”: space-time of poetic text («Versus» vs «Prosa»: prostranstvo-vremya poehricheskogo teksta) // *Philologica*. № 2. 1995.

Skidan himself characterizes this kind of stylistics as an attempt to write, bringing poetry into elementary particles (speech acts, interjections, tropes). It is a kind of experiment allowing one to observe how conscious manipulations produce unconscious effects, and vice versa. It is an attempt to disavow versification technique, to show the inner structure of poetry from within the poetic form itself, extracting poetry from its own fragments”<sup>38</sup>. It is interesting to note that versification technique in this case is really “disavowed” – this is something one finds it impossible to disagree with. However, the annihilation of morphology is in fact just an illusion. To comprehend conjunctions, prepositions and parenthetical words in example №25 as a specific kind of “elementary particles” different from nouns, verbs and adjectives, one should be able to project them onto the system of the Russian language. The reader should at least know that *в то же время, иными словами, в сущности* are the standard unchangeable units whose morphological status is different from the free word forms of nouns like *в то же озеро, иными дорогами, в кровати*. Similarly, in Sapgir’s poem words which have lost their part-of-speech qualities and their morphological forms due to the “tearing off of the page” come to the fore not as such, but in comparison with the “analogously” formed word which remain “whole” and “unrevashed”:

(26)  
Веч  
Маш  
Машинистка печ  
Нач  
Точ  
Пр  
Прошу Вас дать мне рас  
Мать спит за шир  
Шор  
Сосед бос  
Торчит ч  
Стучит маш  
Он зовет Маш, Маш  
А под окнами шур

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38 Skidan A “Extract poetry from its own fragments”. Contemporary Russian poets about their and others' poems, new acoustics and “literary today” (“Izvlech' poeziyu iz yeye zhe oblomkov”. Sovremennyye russkiye poety o svoikh i chuzhikh stikhakh, novoy akustike i "literaturnom segodnya”) // Kriticheskaya Massa 2005, №3-4, <http://magazines.russ.ru/km/2005/3/sk8.html>.

Маш  
Тиш  
Проснется Шур  
Нет  
Выключ  
Свеч  
Ночь  
Тысячи Маш  
Тысячи Шур  
Тысячи шор  
Тысячи мур  
Тысячи кош  
Тысячи крыш  
Лун  
Стелются туч  
Он  
Впился зубами в плеч  
Она  
Мучь мучь  
Тиш  
Лишь за шир  
Шор  
В коридор  
Мур  
А под окнами шур  
Маш (G.. Sapgir)

Of equal significance as the source of producing aesthetic effect is the use of apocope and of forms with zero endings typical of Russian accidentence, these latter tending to look “exotic” compared to other forms (Genitive Plural, Vocative, short-form adjectives masculine, verbs of certain classes in forms of Imperative, etc.).

The second opposition in the field of syntax vividly revealed in contemporary poetry is that of the “elaborated” syntax, demonstrating the preplanned nature of the utterance and its organization in accordance with the clearly expressed construction principles, and of spontaneous, “sketchy” or “floody”, syntax, creating the impression of artlessness, fluidity, incompleteness of

lyrical experience, of the colloquial and natural character of speech, etc. This opposition is yet again connected with the systemic characteristics of poetry as a kind of verbal art: “At different stages two tendencies may be singled out in the course of the development of the poetic language: the first consists in distinguishing poetic language and common speech, the second, conversely, consists in poetic language getting closer to colloquial speech and engulfing everything that is accepted in the language of everyday communication. Both these tendencies may be viewed as universal and natural for a poetic utterance. The first is the consequence of a poetic utterance being related to the linguistic (sound) universe as opposed to the extralinguistic denotative universe taken care of by practical (prosaic) language; the second tendency results from the necessity to represent the poetic sound universe as potentially compatible with a fragment of extralinguistic denotative universe with its concrete space-time coordinates, thus representing – as the case of concrete realization – “the state of affairs” given in the poetic utterance”<sup>39</sup>.

At the crossing of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic syntax (the opposition considered above) the following sets of clusters are created:

- syntagmatic “elaborated” syntax;
- syntagmatic spontaneous syntax;
- paradigmatic “elaborated” syntax;
- paradigmatic spontaneous syntax.

The opposition of the “preplanned” and of the spontaneous syntax is to a great extent connected with our idea of the literary syntax and of the colloquial syntax, or of the triad of “inner speech – “outer” oral speech – “outer” written speech” suggested by Vygotsky, but it is not confined to these. Some syntactic peculiarities of colloquial speech, however, display rather vividly in the spontaneous poetic syntax. Thus, the examples of spontaneous syntagmatic syntax given below contain constructions typical of colloquial speech:

*(27) Лучше я тебе напишу,  
Как войти в соседнюю дверь,  
Направить солнце на револьвер,  
И что случится в твоей голове,  
Когда увидишь в рыжей траве  
Окна и двери такой красоты,*

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<sup>39</sup> Revzina O. G. From poetic speech to poetic idiolect (Ot stihotvornoj rechi k poeticheskomu idiolektu) // Essays on the history of the language of Russian poetry of the twentieth century. Poetic language and idiostyle. General issues. Sound text organization (Ocherki istorii yazyka russkoj poehzii XX veka. Poeticheskij yazyk i idiosstil'. Obshchie voprosy. Zvukovaya organizaciya teksta). M., 1990. P. 38.

*Глаза из олова и слюды...* (N. Zvaygintsev)

(28) *Знает ли кошка, что будет зима*

*С точкой на середине круга,*

*Про фиолетовые закрома,*

*Про её чёрно-белые руки.*

*Что мышинная наша возня,*

*Шар, живущий в оконной раме,*

*Через неё и через меня*

*С подмосковными номерами,*

*Что, забыв посчитать до ста,*

*Стоит весёлая, штыковая*

*Венецианская пустота*

*Или как её называют.* (N. Zvaygintsev)

It is important to note that the colloquial tinge of syntax here is not the feature of another character's speech distanced from the author, but of the author's speech itself.

Elaborate syntax very often manifest itself as a means of stylizing other functional varieties of language (or of its registers, if we are to use English terminology). In the international linguistics and stylistics the discussion concerning the "separateness" of the "poetic language" compared to other "registers" ended up quite logically in the second part of the XXth century with scholars admitting that in contrast to other periods in the XXth century «there is no such thing as a literary register, a code of accepted usage, in literature»<sup>40</sup> and that a literary text, the poetic ones included, may in principle acquire the characteristics of any language "register", although some linguistic features seem more "literary" than others. This capacity of a literary text ("re-registration" in the corresponding terminological tradition) was described by Carter and Nash as its inherent quality: "...The notion of re-registration means that no single word or stylistic feature or register will be barred from admission to a literary context. [...] Re-registration recognizes that the full unrestricted resources of the language are open to exploitation for literary ends"<sup>41</sup>.

The similarity between the poetic syntax and the syntax of other functional spheres of language consists not only in the fact that all these "syntaxes" borrow their resources from the

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<sup>40</sup> Leech G.N. A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry. London, 1969. P. 12.

<sup>41</sup> Carter R., Nash W. Seeing through Language: A Guide to Styles of English Writing. Oxford, 1990. P. 38–39.

same linguistic system. Modern poetic syntax is very sensitive to the peculiarities of different styles, registers, genres that lie beyond its borders, it is ready to borrow from them and to be enriched by them, and it has great capacity for mimicry and incorporation. A poem may be concocted from the ready-made cliché “refilled” lexically and reconsidered poetically (29), it may contain a fragment from a non-poetic genre (cf. *Radiobred* by Sapgir) or it may considerably deform the borrowed pattern retaining only some of its syntactic markers and/or its genre labelling in the title or in the subtitle, which gives the reader a hint that it is necessary to correlate the two sets of presumptions – the poetic and the non-poetic (30).

*(29) Обожаемые пассажиры!  
Поезд следует до остановки.  
Будьте наивно вежливы!  
Уступайте места индивидам,  
неживым людям  
и временным женищинам!  
Выходя из вагона,  
не забывайте свои мощи! (V. Agol)*

Employing the syntactic structure of other genres (or some of its elements) – the genre of “family advice” or of “recipe” (see Bonch-Osmolovskaya’s *Tolko plohie novosti* (Only bad news)) serves only as a hint giving the reader an idea of “the rules of the game”:

*(30) искусство составления списка  
блюد к праздничному столу  
или для семейного ужина  
включает многие навыки  
приобретаемые многолетней практикой  
на прочной основе важнейших  
жизненных принципов  
  
обучение ведению домашнего хозяйства  
продолжается несколько лет  
посвященных теории кулинарного дела  
заучиванию наизусть  
формул оригинальных рецептов*

*произведений лучших классических и  
современных писателей  
разговорах с благородными собеседниками*

*<...>*

*при составлении рецептов следует учитывать  
расположение светила над горизонтом  
во время жатвы  
качество поленьев в печи  
газа в духовке марку автомобиля  
на котором были доставлены в город  
молоко масло и яйца*

*для приготовления мясных блюд  
проследите животное от рождения  
до появления на вашем столе  
способы его кормления  
способ каким оно было убито  
узнайте положение суставов  
связок и мышц внутренних органов  
чтобы вы могли разрубить и разрезать  
мясо копытных птицы и дичи*

*осторожнее с сыром  
он опасен для путешественников  
зайца замените ягненком  
обитателей стоячей воды  
лишите наружных покровов  
и ядовитых хвостов  
когда испечете пирог  
уложите в серебряную коробку  
и укройте бумагой  
проследите чтобы дети  
не отгрызли уголки от печенья*

*это ломает заведенный порядок*

The author of a poem like this seems to be entering upon a discussion with the traditional grammatical idea of the reproducibility of a sentence and of a text and of the reproducibility of a word. The text and its sentences look reproducible (reproduced) because they consist of the ready-made and recognizable syntagms of the following kind formed according to the already established scheme: *обучение ведению домашнего хозяйства, теория кулинарного дела, расположение светила над горизонтом, приготовление мясных блюд*. Here of great significance is the role of the verbal nouns and other nouns with the attributive coloring, nominative sequences with Genitives, descriptive and other terminological appellations). What appears to be violations of the scheme (for example, mentioning in a recipe that it is necessary to look at the animal's progress from its birth till it gets to your dining table, or including in the study of the rules of house-keeping the learning by heart of the best works by modern and classic writers and of the talks with distinguished interlocutors) only emphasizes the all-embracing nature of the scheme easily absorbing in itself and adapting everything that lies beyond it.

What is most easily absorbed by modern poetic discourse and, simultaneously, what most readily takes the world into its stride is the genre of listing, of itemizing. Speaking about the popularity of this pattern in the postmodernist paradigm Kuritsyn adduces the following pronouncement by Kharms: "Any sequence of objects violating the connection of their everyday meanings retains the connection of the meanings essential... This kind of sequence is of non-human order and reflects the thoughts of the world of objects"<sup>42</sup>. The list of "what interests me" adduced in the same text and taken from Harms' diary demonstrates that "object" here is understood very broadly: it includes not only *sticks-canes* («палки-трости») and *little long-haired dogs* («маленькие длинношерстные собаки»), but also *cleanness and dirt* («чистота и грязь») and *serving dishes for the table* («подавание блюд к столу»), that is, both the nominative and the attributive units. A list compiled by a modern author may get very far from objects as such and may even turn into an itemization of genres:

(31)

1. ...вот направление в кино,
2. анкета за пальто,
3. меню театра (там давно

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<sup>42</sup> *Kharms D.* "Daniil Kharms' Diary Entries" (Dnevnikovye zapisi Daniila Harmsa) // Minuvshee. 1992, №11. *Kuritsyn V.* Russian Literary Postmodernism (Russkij literaturnyj postmodernizm). M., 2000.

дают совсем не то:  
там в основном идет вода,  
парад  
или развод;  
покажут деньги иногда,  
не чаще раза в год),  
4. рецепт на поезд и постель,  
5. приказ, что мне семь лет,  
6. указ на блюдо для гостей, (?)  
7. вот проездной на хлеб,  
8. рекомендация за свет,  
за телефон и газ... (V. Stochkov)

In Stochkov's poem *Vnytrennyaya opis'* containing 16 separate points with further subdivisions trivial non-poetic genres are paradoxically reconsidered not only through lexical (*меню театра... рецепт на поезд и постель*), but also through syntactic variability (*указ на блюдо для гостей... рекомендация за свет, за газ и телефон*).

Borrowing the syntactic forms of constructing texts may also be of diachronic character – cf. Amelin's deliberately archaic stylized syntax with its basic means of linearization similar to those we have considered above.

(32) *Пока тебя волна шальная, Ладья, послушай!*  
*в открытое бесследно море не унесла,*  
*прижмись ко пристани, с отрадной расстаться сушей*  
*не торопись. Ни одного на бортах весла*  
*нет у тебя, - ты что, не видишь? Ветра лихие*  
*тебе переломили мачту напополам;*  
*трещат и стонут реи. Бурной твой киль стихии*  
*противоборствовать порывам не в силах сам,*  
*без помощи канатов. Цела и невредима,*  
*ни паруса тебе; нет Бога, кому хвала*  
*валами пенными напасти проносит мимо.*  
(M. Amelin, *Cold Odes*).

It goes without saying that such kind of stylization as adequately perceived only by the

reader who has an appropriate background knowledge regarding the systems of genres of a particular language and who is aware of the grammatical devices used in constructing texts of various genres, which means that such a reader leans upon a certain system of expectations and presumptions and that elements of the **system** placed in an alien **milieu** are reconsidered.

Now the last question is to be answered: to what extent are the authors themselves aware of the syntactic techniques and ways of linearization mentioned above? It is clear from the pronouncements we have adduced in the present article (those by Ulanov, Sapgir, Skidan or those unmentioned here but easily found in the texts by other authors) that these phenomena are definitely subject to reflection. This reflection is not confined to critical papers, interviews and other non-poetic genres. The main observations given in the present article are present – with all the condensation of sense inherent to poetry – in Safonov’s text from his series *The Technique of Simplification*:

(33) *словно бы река не имела дна  
иметь подобную смелость. Нарушить предложение,  
законченное не словами, расшевелить строй согласных  
среди голых площадок из струганого дерева, рядов деревьев и  
цельных кусков мокрого песка: соударяющиеся перечисления,  
словно уже не река, а предложение о реке не имеет дна  
(когда камень падает вниз или дождь)*

The structure of the sentence is distorted, the utterance does not end in words and the words do not end in inflections, the “disturbed” consonants migrate from one lexeme to another, the emptiness (*голые площадки*) of the inter-word spaces are saturated with hyphens and other fillers-in (“material objects”), the elaborateness (*обструганность*) of syntax alternates with original verbal sequences, “whole pieces” (*цельные куски*) are formed by what is falling apart (*мокрый песок*), syntagmatic syntax within one sentence confronts homogeneous and not quite homogeneous sequences... This syntactic audacity results, on the one hand, in the endless (*бездонное*) deepening of sense, and, on the other, in changing the way of contact between the fluid object (*река*) and the supposition concerning the object. This conceptual change may be explained if we confront two sets of texts (one poetic, another unpoetic within a particular set) about “one and the same thing”. Here come some ideas of Ivanov related to Annensky’s poem *The Ideal* (Идеал) (34): “It is a library room whose visitors are already getting scarce at dusk, when gas lamps are dumbly lightened, while the adorers and the craftsmen of “The Ideal” keep laboriously to their desks. The simple idea of this poem, the gist of its riddle (and riddle it is, for the whole

life is a wearisome riddle) — a public library... – is yet another riddle gleaming through what has been solved, the riddle of the gap between the ideal and its incarnation, of the impossibility to conceive the sense (the essence) of things in those things themselves, ... in the reflections of spirit only, ... in the dusty folios ...”.

(34) *Тупые звуки вспыхивек газа  
Над мертвой яркостью голов,  
И скуки черная зараза  
От покидаемых столов,  
И там, среди зеленолицых,  
Тоску привычки затая,  
Решать на выцветших страницах  
Постылый ребус бытия* (I. Annensky)

In the present instance, Ivanov’s text is a translation of Annensky’s poem from the poetic language into the non-poetic one, the clarification of “what the author wanted to say”, of what object the reader is to be able to see behind the lines of the riddle. If we compare example №33 with the passage from the article immediately following it, here we might perhaps assert that it is Safonov’s text, which is a “translation” of the initially extra-poetic ideas into a poetic utterance, where an attempt is made to treat sentences of natural languages as objects determined by their own structure. This is the kind of translation which is of paramount importance for modern poetry in its desire to interpret the world and to carry out self-interpretation, and which needs the syntax “dissolving the objects in verbal art”, *оставляющем предметность здесь растворяться, в этой словесности* (N. Safonov).

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# Chinese Character Poetics and Contemporary Chinese Poetry

## —From William Yip to Xia Yu

The bad traditional thoughts are naturally many, and we should think of removing them. Traditions that transcend good and evil and cannot be ruled out are not necessarily few. For example, the rhetorical methods that have been born because of Chinese characters can never be undone when we use Chinese characters to write things.

Zhou Zuoren, *Preface to Raising the Whip Collection*

We have seen that on the contrary modern poetry destroyed relationships in language and reduced discourse to words as static things. This implies a reversal in our knowledge of Nature. The interrupted flow of the new poetic language initiates a discontinuous Nature, which is revealed only piecemeal. At the very moment when the withdrawal of functions obscures the relations existing in the world, the object in discourse assumes an exalted place: modern poetry is a poetry of the object.

Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*

### 1. “Chineseness” and “Modernity”

In the new cultural movement of the early 20th century, Chinese characters have been severely criticized by Chinese modern literati. Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, Qian Xuantong 錢玄同, Lu Xun 魯迅, Hu Shi 胡適, Fu Sinian 傅斯年, Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白 and others, almost unanimously determined that Chinese characters are outdated and must be reformed. Among them, Qian Xuantong advocated “Chinese using phonetic characters”, which is quite representative. His reasons were as follows:

Chinese characters are not phonetic in their form and present the late degenerate stage of hieroglyphics. They are inconvenient to understand and inconvenient to write. Their meaning is vague and the grammar is extremely imprecise. If we take the application of today's learning, nouns for new theory, new things and new events are virtually non-existent; as for the history of the past, ninety-nine percent of it is marked by the Confucius doctrine and the Taoist fallacy. This type of writing cannot be applied to the new era of the twentieth century<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Qian Xuantong 錢玄同 (1918). “China's Future Text Problems” 中國今後之文字問題// *New Youth* 新青年 4.4, 350-356, p. 354.

What this passage reflects is that in the face of external challenges, Chinese modern literati strongly feel the anxiety of losing their voices (not resigning, not knowing things). They believe that the old words (the pictogram-based ones) can only express old ideas (filled with toxins) and hinder the possibility of Chinese people leading to modern civilization (science, democracy). Moreover, they imagine that the phonetic text is a kind of directly condensed voice, that it possesses more expressive feelings, is closer to the living heart and the current world of change. Under the impact of Westernization and the national embarrassment it produced, they had no time to evaluate the situation and concluded that “Chineseness” and “Modernity” are incompatible. The traditional culture is the evil fire, and “abandoning the Chinese characters” is the drastic measure policy needed.

Chinese literati who have been immersed in Chinese characters for a long time often put Chinese and Western languages in a dramatic contradictory relationship; this is especially true for Westerners who look at Chinese characters from a foreign perspective. Wilhelm von Humboldt initially had some misunderstandings about Chinese characters, and even lamented that Chinese people lacked any creativity!<sup>2</sup>. However, in his evolving thought, he clearly pointed out that one of the major features of Chinese is its “phonetic deficiency”, which uses modern methods and has several faces: a. The number of phonemes is small; b. Each morpheme has only a single syllable; c. There is no possibility of internal inflection. In this case, in order to effectively distinguish meanings, Chinese has developed many compensation principles, and has been modified in terms of pronunciation and grammar to form Chinese characters with both sound and shape<sup>3</sup>. This kind of insight has basically made a relatively objective analysis of the existence and operational ability of Chinese characters. Nevertheless, at that time Humboldt was not as concerned about the compatibility of Chinese and modernity (including how to adopt a modern model derived from the Western context, and a new change in the Chinese from the classical to the vernacular); however, deepening our thinking it is not difficult to solve the follow-up derivative problem.

The Chinese literati who felt that they were worried about the country recognized the Chinese characters as the root of the weak national consciousness. At the same time, there are some Western scholars, especially Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853–1908) and Ezra Pound (1885–1972), who had very good ideas about the performance of Chinese characters. Fenollosa’s famous book *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* proposes the following main points:

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<sup>2</sup> Yip, William 葉維廉 (1973). “Grammar and Expression——The Connection of Chinese Classical Poetry and the Aesthetics of English and American Poetry” 語法與表現——中國古典詩與英美現詩美學的匯通 // *Comparative Poetics* 比較詩學 (Taipei: Dongda Publishing 東大圖書公司), 27-85, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Guan Ziyin 關子尹 (2009). “Western Philosophy Gradually Spreading Eastward and Some Important Issues Related to Language” 西方哲學東漸下有關語言的一些重要議題 // *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University (Social Science Edition)* 中山大學學報 (社會科學版), 219 (March), 118-127, p. 122.

a. Chinese characters imitate (and express) nature, and its configuration based on the vivid depiction of natural running shorthand graphics<sup>4</sup>. b. Chinese characters are more verb-like, but also have the role of nouns and adjectives. In Chinese, by verbs, all words are turned into dramatic poems (13). c. Chinese sentence formations often follows the procedure of natural operation, showing the “transmission of force” and the “redistribution of force” (12). d. Chinese characters are “drawings of thoughts”. They not only show the Chinese people's intuitive ability, but also use metaphors to make material implications that imply non-material relationships (22). e. After the combination of Chinese characters, it is often possible to produce the effect of the so-called “overtone” in music (32), which makes the poetry brilliant, the ideal language of the world.

Although this work has misunderstood Chinese, for example, it does not “mention the six principles of making up the characters (*liu shu* 六書), and speculates on the meaning of Chinese radicals or basic strokes out of the void”<sup>5</sup>, it has already been criticized too many times for that. However, if it is read as a poetic theory (provocative rather than descriptive), it is still a brilliant one, which can partially limit the Western language and moderately open the discussion of Chinese aesthetics. Under the help of Pound and others, the construction of imagery poetics has also become significant. If you compare the view of this set of Western scholars with the “self-contained” one of Qian Xuantong, it is probably too easy to say the “bystanders see it clearly, while the blunt are those concerned”. That is because the focus of both opinions lies on different levels. The former pays attention to the aesthetic performance of the language and wants to use Chinese to supplement the lack of Western logical thinking and phonetic writing. Under the demand of salvation and enlightenment, the latter uses language as a cognitive tool to determine that Chinese characters are full of defects.

Since the 1960s, William Yip (Ye Weilian 葉維廉) has repeatedly pushed forward the ideas of Pound and others to demonstrate how important is Chinese classical poetry and how its classical Chinese grammar has inspired Western modern poetry<sup>6</sup>. He believes that since Stéphane Mallarmé, modern Western poetry often wants to exclude narrative, descriptive or analytical elements in language. In the early 20th century, the Chinese poet gave up the classical Chinese language, and the vernacular was used as the language of poetry. It lost the inherent purity and

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<sup>4</sup> Fenollosa, Ernest Francisco (1936). *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* (Ed. Ezra Pound. California: City Lights Books), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Xia Dakang 夏康達, Wang Xiaoping 王曉平 (2000). “Chinese Character Poetics” 漢字詩學 // *Foreign Chinese Literature Studies in the 20th Century* 二十世紀國外中國文學研究 (Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publishing House 天津人民出版社), 244-264, p. 262.

<sup>6</sup> Yip, William 葉維廉 (1960). “The Still Chinese Vase” 靜止的中國花瓶 // *The Growth of Order* 秩序的生長 (Taipei: Zhiwen 志文出版), 94-115, p. 94-95.

added some disorderly particles<sup>7</sup>. Then many modern Chinese poets gradually pursued the artistry. Their main effort was to avoid some of the pitfalls of the vernacular and return to the phenomenon itself. The specific method is the reduction of the connection medium and the effort to integrate with the foreign object, opposing the structure of straight pursuit<sup>8</sup>. According to Yip, this route is also based on the body of the vernacular trying to play the characteristics of classical Chinese.

Through the comparison of Chinese and Western (English) language traits, William Yip not only refers to the key points of traditional views on poetry, but also the development path of their respective poetics. At the same time, he also highlights the mental state and aesthetic sense reflected in Chinese language and seeks its modern meaning. Specifically, his poetic analysis of Chinese grammar is often associated with a particular poetic internal quality, which is part of the *shen yun* 神韻 (poetic grace) tradition and the integration of Daoism and Zen “pure experience”. As far as performance techniques are concerned, the fractured narration and fragmentation of modernism coincide with the structure of classical Chinese poetry. As far as the inner spirit is concerned, the loneliness, introspection and detachment of modern poets are combined with the pure experience of classical aesthetics. These lectures, combined with the ontology and expression theory of poetry, merged with detailed case analysis, have formed a systematic and creative “new Chinese poetry”.

As a master of the modern poetry movement in Taiwan and Hong Kong, Yip is also a famous poetry master. He seriously considers the fusion of Chineseness and modernity, and his vision is extraordinary. According to the “six creeds” (*liu da xintiao* 六大信條) proposed by the modernist writers of the early years, “poetry is a horizontal transplant, not a vertical inheritance” (詩是橫的移植，而非縱的繼承), and the “intellectual emphasis” (*zhixing zhi qiangdiao* 知性之強調) and “pursuit of purity” are the key (*zhuiqiu chuncuixing* 追求純粹性)<sup>9</sup>. Yip’s poetics is to “purify” the Chinese, to remove the “understanding component” (*zhijie chengfen* 知解成份) that is too real, and focus on “horizontal transplantation” and “vertical inheritance”, making something bigger out of it.

Nevertheless, to put it bluntly, the “Yip system” is superb, and the more refined it is, the more it will be renewed and developed in the later stages. However, it seems to leave many suspicions, such as:

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<sup>7</sup> Yip, William 葉維廉 (1973). “Grammar and Expression—The Connection of Chinese Classical Poetry and the Aesthetics of English and American Poetry” 語法與表現——中國古典詩與英美現詩美學的匯通 // *Comparative Poetics* 比較詩學 (Taipei: Dongda Publishing 東大圖書公司), 27-85.

<sup>8</sup> Yip, William 葉維廉 (1969). “The Language Problem of Modern Chinese Poetry” 中國現代詩的語言問題 // *The Growth of Order* 秩序的生長, 165-191, p. 174.

<sup>9</sup> Ji Xian 紀弦 (1956). “Modernist Creed” 現代派信條釋義 // *Modern Poetry* 現代詩, no.13: 4.

(1) The classical Chinese poetry he is talking about is often only a part of Tang poetry, especially the kind of Tang poetry that pays attention to *shen yun* (poetic grace). There is far less narrative poetry, philosophical poetry or poetry describing the quotidian. Therefore, focusing on Wang Wei 王維 and bypassing Du Fu 杜甫, he offers no absolute representation of the tradition of Chinese poetry. In the poetics of the Song Dynasty, taking Yan Yu 嚴羽 as a representative is not enough to fully reflect the poetic tradition of “using prose for poetry, using scholarship for poetry, and using intellectual argument for poetry” (以文字為詩, 以才學為詩, 以議論為詩).

(2) Although the grammar of classical Chinese and modern Chinese has its consistency, there are also many differences. The development of modern Chinese poetry goes almost in parallel with the shaping of modern Chinese. Chinese constantly embraces foreign and contemporary elements, not being a static tool at all. In addition, the former is considered ideal, and the latter is expected to achieve similar performance effects, perhaps overlooking the fact that the two are based on different world situations or social foundations.

(3) There is a trend in modern English and American poetry, focusing on the narrative, descriptive or analytical language and paying attention to the lyrical moment (but not equal to the “pure experience” (*chuncui jingyan* 純粹經驗) that Yip emphasizes), but this is not all, and it is not necessarily the main trend. In fact, the re-development of the narrative nature of poetry and the intellectual and interventional nature of poetry are also important structures of “modern lyric” poetry.

Nevertheless, Yip still applied his creative theory to the analysis of modern poetry in the 1950s and 1960s. The first problem that must be faced here are some characteristics of classical Chinese, such as excessive analytical, deductive character, the “spacing” of time and the “timing” of space, the limitlessness of meaning not pursuing any causality, the scarcity of connecting media making the imagery exhibit strong visual independent autonomy, image concurrency, etc. How much remains of it in modern Chinese? Alternatively, how do modern Chinese poets reproduce the “valuable” Chinese characteristics?

In William Yip’s view, modern poets mainly use the following methods to get rid of the weakness of the vernacular:

Further omission of the connecting medium, deeper integration with the external object, trying not to rely on the linear structure and replacing it with a lot of psychological (rather

than semantic) connections (no doubt this is to some extent influenced by Surrealism) is reincorporated into the words of the classical Chinese<sup>10</sup>.

These methods can be regarded as one of the golden rules of a modernist text. However, no matter how omitted or compressed, there are always some linguistic components in narrative and descriptions of modern poetry written in vernacular. How do you explain this?

Regarding this phenomenon, Yip proposed the concept of “pseudo-discursiveness” (*jiaxushu* 假敘述) and “pseudo-syntax” (*jiayufa* 假語法)<sup>11</sup>. This should be the development of the so-called “pseudo-statement” of I.A. Richards (1893–1979) in *Science and Poetry* (1926)<sup>12</sup>. Yip pointed out that poets sometimes conform to the analytical tendency of the vernacular in order to satisfy the reader's thinking habits, and use many transitional elements, but all the images can still be on the same plane. The relationship exists independently<sup>13</sup>. The extreme examples are as follows:

(1)

the face of the deceased is a swamp  
the swamp in the wilderness is the escape for a part of the sky  
the sky that is running away is the overflowing rose  
the overflowing rose is the snow that has never fallen down.  
unfalling snow is tears in the arteries  
死者的臉是無人一見的沼澤  
荒原中的沼澤是部分天空的逃亡  
遁走的天空是滿溢的玫瑰  
溢出的玫瑰是不曾降落的雪  
未降的雪是脈管中的眼淚

Shang Qin 商禽 *Runaway Sky* 逃亡的天空

(2)

the cheongsam swings open on a tiny calf; and the one who is eager to read her  
goes to work in her body. and except for death and this,

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<sup>10</sup> Yip, William 葉維廉 (1969). “The Language Problem of Modern Chinese Poetry” 中國現代詩的語言問題 // *The Growth of Order* 秩序的生長, 165-191, p. 174.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 183.

<sup>12</sup> Richards, Ivor Armstrong (1926). *Science and Poetry* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner), pp. 13-14, 58-61.

<sup>13</sup> Yip, William 葉維廉 (1969). “The Language Problem of Modern Chinese Poetry” 中國現代詩的語言問題 // *The Growth of Order* 秩序的生長, 165-191, p. 83.

nothing is certain. survival is the wind, survival is the voice of the threshing floor,  
survival to them is – love is tickled –  
pouring out the desires of the entire summer.  
旗袍又從某種小腿間擺盪；且渴望人去讀她，  
去進入她體內工作。而除了死與這個，  
沒有甚麼一定的。生存是風，生存是打穀場的聲音，  
生存是，向她們——愛被人膈肢的——  
倒出整個夏季的慾望。

Ya Xian 痙弦 *Abyss* 深淵

(3)  
just as a giant snake changing its skin  
the city of spring is littered with wounded scales  
you encircle and gaze, then you complain: the street is not bright enough.  
lure me to dig one eye and hang it on the wire pole  
God, what I can lay at your feet, only this anger  
猶之一換皮的巨蟒  
春天的城市散落著帶傷的鱗甲  
你們圍睹，繼而怨尤，嫌街面不夠亮  
誘使我把一隻眼睛挖出掛在電線桿上  
神哦，我所能奉獻於你腳下的，只有這憤怒

Luo Fu 洛夫 *Death in the Stone Chamber* 石室之死亡

In the case of (1), the word “is” that links two images in each line is not a sign of a metaphor, but merely a medium connecting both images. According to the general operation of the vernacular, the speaker must clear the relationship between “the swamp in the wilderness” and “the escape for a part of the sky”, and only then it is enough to present the semantics. However, in classical poetry, there is no prescriptive, descriptive, and connected language between the images, which makes the relationship more free (like association and analogy or a hint at a situation). The images in the poem by Shang Qin are more profound and complicated, but the “montage technique” of the word used in it is in line with the traits of the old Chinese poem.

The example (1) shows the relationship between the phrases which is blurred. This is also true if we look at the connections between sentences. In the case of (2), according to the poem's

punctuation, it can be divided into three sentences that are in turn redistributed into five lines. The sentence flow is uninterrupted, which makes us think that the connection between the lines is so close. The first line ends with “read her”, the second line starts with “goes to work”; the second and the third lines are connected by “except for” structure; at the end of the third and fourth line, the “survival is” is repeated. However, in fact, the topic is shifted quite fiercely between the sentences. We probably know that poets are confused by the directional stacking of similar images. If more guiding words are added, the meaning will be more clear, but it may lose a sense of dynamism and pressure caused by the concentration of words.

The first four lines of example (3) seem to be describing one thing (persecution, transmutation, and self-injury), but the language is broken, and the reader must struggle to reorganize it to understand its purpose. To a considerable extent, the poet uses Chinese lacking declension and tense, and often omits the free traits of grammatical components, expanding the ambiguity. It is hard to say where he violated the grammar, but we always feel that his words are running off the rails. The focus of the first two lines may be the “I” that has been omitted, but it can be “the city of spring”. If the third line is the cause and the fourth line is the result, then the logic of this matter is also blunt. In addition to the use of many surreal images in the connotations, “discontinuous poetry” and “irrational aesthetics” are matched with each other to form a certain poetic style.

At the first glance, the above poems are hard to be called reminiscent of Chinese classical poetry. They seem to be closer to the fragmentary aesthetics of Western modern lyrics:

disorientation, disintegration of the familiar, loss of order, incoherence, fragmentism, reversibility, additive, depoeticized poetry, bolts of annihilation, strident imagery, brutal abruptness, dislocation, astigmatism, alienation (Hugo Friedrich, 8-9)<sup>14</sup>

However, after all, they write in Chinese, and the path to achieve the above effects is still closely related to the isolated syntax of Chinese. Since the Chinese characters themselves are like pieces of shiny porcelain, it is easier to practice the idea of fragmented aesthetics than in any language.

In fact, William Yip also noticed that the classical Chinese poetry tends to be static and has its limitations; modern Chinese poets are more inclined to show conflicts than to pursue the realm

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<sup>14</sup> These are the “key terms” of Hugo Friedrich (1904–1978), which are derived from the various languages of Germany, France, Spain and England since the late 19th century. They are used to illustrate the “negative categories” of modern poetics.

Friedrich, Hugo (1974). *The Structure of the Modern Lyric: from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century*. (Trans. Joachim Neugroschel. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP).

of harmony. Nevertheless, this is also the key to the convergence and variation of “Chineseness” and “modernity”. As poetry, vernacular, through the intervention of new techniques, can expand the poetic nature of Chinese without completely losing the advantage of classical Chinese.

## 2. “Character thinking” and “Narrativity”

The “Chinese superiority theory” in poetry and the poetic “pure experience” theory are important innovations of William Yip’s discourse. However, from the uniqueness of Chinese character structure and Chinese grammar, to the performance of aesthetic categories, and the relationship of thinking mode and cultural accumulation, all of it, in fact, is discussed enthusiastically every once in a while. Under the different time and space backgrounds, these “Chinese character poetics”, different in their approach, still have independent significance.

In the case of Taiwan after the war, Lin Hengtai 林亨泰 also put forward the argument of “modernism, that is, Chineseness” (現代主義即中國主義) in the 1950s. The reasons were as follows: firstly, Chinese poetry is short in form, with an emphasis on the image; it is anti-narrative, and thus “symbolic”. Secondly, in terms of words, resorting to visual understanding is conducive to alignment, and thus it is “cubic”<sup>15</sup>. His own visual poems or concrete poems, such as *Farmhouse* 農舍, *Car Accident* 車禍, *Landscape* 風景, etc., belong to this practice, but they are relatively simple<sup>16</sup>.

In the works of the 1960s, Lin Hengtai discussed that the language used by modern poets is different from the “original stone” (*yuan shi* 原石, unprocessed spoken language) of the May Fourth era, but is the same as that of the old poetry. “The meaning it represents gradually leaves the meaning used in daily life, and it becomes a language for writing”. It is therefore a “modern classical language” (*xiandai wenyan* 現代文言)<sup>17</sup>. In this case, the poets such as Luo Fu, Shang Qin and Ya Xian are also used as examples to link Chinese and avant-garde, and emphasize the nature of the modern “anti-spoken language”.

In the *A Poet’s Mirror* 詩人之鏡, Luo Fu developed William Yip’s argument about “rejection of logic and analysis” and “pursuit of pure experience” in Chinese poetry, and combined it with the “surrealism” as he understood it<sup>18</sup>. Luo Fu’s poetry in a specific experimental period is good

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<sup>15</sup> Lin Hengtai 林亨泰 (1958). “The Tradition of Chinese Poetry” 中國詩的傳統 // *Modern Poetry* 現代詩, no. 20: 33-36.

<sup>16</sup> Lin Hengtai, as a poet from the “cross-language generation”, was familiar with both Japanese and Chinese, but his Japanese was far more confident. He had to be keenly writing poetry at the level of simple “words” instead of the complicated “sentences”. It can also be regarded as a trick to overcome historical limitations.

<sup>17</sup> Lin Hengtai 林亨泰 (1968). *The Basic Spirit of Modern Poetry – On Sincerity* 現代詩的基本精神——論真摯性 (Taipei: Bamboo Hat 笠詩社), p. 76.

<sup>18</sup> Luo Fu 洛夫 (1964). “A Poet’s Mirror” 詩人之鏡 // *Genesis* 創世紀, no. 21: 2-11, pp. 9-10.

at manipulating the “automatic language” of unmanageable control, using sporadic elements and coincidences to express the spirit of creation. In fact, in the European and American language families, the probability of using this “irrational” technique is very low (surrealism is much better in art than in literature, because color lines are more unconstrained than language). However, Luo Fu and his comrades, riding the free Chinese language, actually made “surreal” envelope the Taiwanese poetry for many years, forming a situation that cannot be neglected.

In the 1970s, with the changes in political and social situation and the rise of post-war generations, the “return” (*huigui* 回歸) trend of poetry gradually formed. According to Xiangyang's 向陽 classification, there are five major trends: “reflexive tradition, rebuilding the national poetry style”, “rewarding the society, caring for real life”, “embracing the earth, acknowledging the local consciousness”, “respecting the secular, reflecting the public's voice”, “advocating Freedom, encouraging multiple ideas”<sup>19</sup>. Under this trend, the kind of poetry that William Yip praised for developing Chinese characteristics and eliminating narrative, descriptive and analytical elements was not recognized, but rather regarded as a paralyzed, westernized, and suffering from lack of substance. For example, Chen Fangming 陳芳明 believes that Yip's view on the discussion of language is “very incisive”, but the idea of removing analyticity and returning to “pure experience” will limit the development of poetry creation and lead to abuse. By way of example, Luo Fu's *The Death in the Stone Chamber* puts five lines of independent sentences together forming a poem, which escapes the reader. His later works added more cohesion words, but they were much more refreshing<sup>20</sup>.

Here we can see the confrontation between pure aesthetics and realistic aesthetics. According to critic Robert Penn Warren, there is a division between pure poetry and impure poetry: the former is pure, rejecting concepts, meanings, intellectual images, dissonance and the details of reality, the latter is the opposite<sup>21</sup>. In fact, this distinction is sometimes only relative and expedient. The “pure/impure” vision of poetry may involve two aspects at the same time. One is the content factor and the other is the method factor. Poets who tend to turn pure into impure can introduce it into the poetry lines as non-poetry components in the established poetry system (such as the life details, folk oral or piecemeal knowledge) and achieve new poetic vision. However, the partiality of pure

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<sup>19</sup> Xiangyang 向陽 (1984). “On the Trend of Modern Poetry in the 1970s” 七十年代現代詩風潮試論 // *Literature Questions Monthly* 文訊月刊, no.12: 47-76, pp. 63-64.

<sup>20</sup> Chen Fangming 陳芳明 (1974). “How Order Grows -- On William Yip's “The Growth of Order”” 秩序如何生長——評葉維廉的《秩序的生長》 // *The Mirror and the Reflection* 鏡子與影子 (Taipei: Zhiwen Publishing 志文出版), 201-218.

<sup>21</sup> Warren, Robert Penn (1989). “Pure and impure poetry” in *New and Selected Essays* (New York: Random House), pp. 3-28.

/ impure involves not only the component problem. The ideology and aesthetic tendency, as well as the rhetorical techniques and rhetorical methods that follow, are all worthy of attention.

William Yip saw a very high level of “pureness” in the tradition of Chinese poetry. It was a part of developing an idea of using Chinese characters as an ersatz homestead in the situation of “breaking off with the motherland” and “cultural dislocation”. Therefore, in this system, it is possible to accommodate the “irrational” avant-garde that possesses the experience of suffering and the pursuit of the subconscious world (in fact, it has a specific “impurity”). The original Chinese poetry textbooks were produced under the foreign perspective of Sinology in Europe and America. Even the anti-Chinese character theory prevailing in China in the early 20th century is a chain reaction under the westernization tide. Although they are exactly the opposite, they are all in a situation where cultural contact is becoming more and more intensive, and the “Chinese character” factor is placed in a highly dramatic situation, giving a key position. These ideas of linguistic determinism seem to appeal to objectivity; but each time they are manipulated, they are often used to solve their specific spiritual needs.

A similar phenomenon exists in the history of contemporary Chinese mainland poetry. Since the new period, contemporary Chinese poetry has a concept of creation with “Chinese character worship”. Yang Lian 楊煉 (the historical), Haizi 海子 (the physical), Luo Yihe 駱一禾 (the mythical) are particularly prominent. That is to say, in terms of poetics, paying attention to this issue is not something brand-new, at least one can also cite Ren Hongyuan’s 任洪淵 *The Yellow River in Ink: An Introduction to Chinese Cultural Poetics* 墨寫的黃河：漢語文化詩學導論 and Wang Yichuan’s 王一 *Introduction to Chinese Image Aesthetics* 漢語形象美學引論. Among them, Ren Hongyuan’s early statements can combine the creative experience and the theoretical interpretation:

I stared at myself in a Chinese character: the pictogram of Chinese characters presented my image, the Yellow River, my head, my body, my limbs, the lines that flow into pictograms, the strokes, rushing through the oracle bones, bronze objects, bamboo slips, silk and stone tablets. The flow of words for thousands of years is still raging. My Yellow River in ink. (...). The most important thing is my words – the language does not drag any heavy suffixes. The (...) suffix hinders the galloping and flying of the language. The word that drags the tail is as free as the person who drags the tail<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Ren Hongyuan 任洪淵 (1993) // *The Language of Nüwa: A Collection of Poetry and Poetry Criticism* 女媧的語言：詩與詩論合集, Beijing: Friendship Publishing 友誼出版, pp. 19-20.

Through the Chinese characters, the poet imagines that the body of flesh and blood and the long stream of culture can be tightly combined. The pursuit of “oriental wisdom” and “experience of no time and space”, although based on the ancient Chinese complex, is also a realization or compensation after the painful experience of a whole generation of people. Interestingly, Ren actually saw this ideal in the poems of Luo Fu (using “Chineseness” and “oriental wisdom”)<sup>23</sup>.

At the turn of the century, the Chinese mainland also launched a heated discussion on “character thinking” (*zi siwei* 字思維); there were many discussions on the poetic efficiency of Chinese characters. Artist Shi Hu’s 石虎 *Character Thinking* was the beginning of the discussion. He believes: “Chinese characters do not listen to grammar. They can even be freely juxtaposed into words”. “This kind of meaning is unspeakable, which determines the poetic essence of Chinese poetry”. “Chinese characters possess a Way; they are like images of life, like the sound of meaning. The images are juxtaposed, everything is in them. This is the whole meaning of “character thinking””. “Chinese characters are laughing at the contemporary poet in their absolute and eternal spiritual categories: it is not that Chinese characters are lost to poets, but poets are lost to Chinese characters”<sup>24</sup>. As soon as this article came out, there were many echoes. The commentators believe that carrying forward some of the inherent qualities of Chinese characters will contribute to the modern expression of poetry. However, in general, no matter whether it is to explain the language characteristics of Chinese characters, or the cultural spirit, there is no deeper and more detailed system than the one composed by William Yip.

At the same time, it has also stirred up some discussion and questioning. These reflections may be more noteworthy. For example, Gao Xiuqin 高秀芹 pointed out: “The “character thinking” is very easy to make people deviate from the difficult context of modern people's living context and modern poetry, and return to the powerful shadow of classical poetry”<sup>25</sup>. Xi Du 西渡 also believes that this proposition ignores the significant differences between modern Chinese and ancient Chinese, therefore he proposes to replace it with “Chinese language thinking” (*hanyu siwei* 漢語思維)<sup>26</sup>.

In this series of discussions, we can roughly see two comparatively significant opposing views. One is to emphasize how Chinese characters form a brilliant classical literary tradition, it is grounded in the belief that its “non-language quality” is still largely preserved in modern

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<sup>23</sup> Ren Hongyuan 任洪淵 (1990). “Luo Fu’s Poetry and the Tragedy of Modern Genesis” 洛夫的詩與現代創世紀的悲劇 // *Angel's Nirvana* 天使的涅槃 (Taipei: Shangshu Culture Publishing 尚書文化), 173-204.

<sup>24</sup> Shi Hu 石虎 (1996). “On Character Thinking” 論字思維 // *Poetry Exploration* 詩探索, no.1996.2: 8-10.

<sup>25</sup> Gao Xiuqin 高秀芹 (1997). “‘Character Thinking’ and Modern Poetry Context” 「字思維」與現代詩歌語境 // *Poetry Exploration* 詩探索, no.1997.3: 45-50, p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Xi Du 西渡 (2003). “Character Thinking, Tradition and Modernity” 字思維、傳統與現代性 // *Poetry Exploration* 詩探索, no.2003.1-2: 55-63, p. 58.

Chinese. Its poetic principles can still be emulated by contemporary poetry. The first is to pay attention to the changes brought about by the translation of words and spoken language, and emphasize that it reflects the induction of the modern mind. The dross of modern life is not covered by the words.

As I mentioned before, William Yip's Chinese character poetics tends to pursue pure experience and reject the elements of narrative and analysis. In the recent article of Shi Hu, it is stated that "Chinese characters are the frame or a pattern corresponding to all things in the universe", emphasizing that their form determines the "non-language quality". From this point of view, Chinese poetry tends to "show – present" and opposes the tendency to "narrate – speak". This kind of thinking has its own merits, but pushing it to the extreme, we see that it suppresses any complicated discourse. The "narrativity" (*xushixing* 敘事性) poetics that also occurred in China in the 1990s formed a potential confrontation with "character thinking". Look at it and you will see the problem.

The understanding and application of the concept of "narrativity" is actually quite different. Among many views, Cheng Guangwei's 程光燁 statement presents a certain generalization. He points out that this theory was proposed for the romanticism and bourgeois lyrical poetry in the 80s, aiming to adjust the traditional relationship between poetry and reality. It is based on the premise of getting rid of the old knowledge-power framework. It is not just a change of skill, but also actually a change of cultural attitude, vision, mood and knowledge. However, creativity must still be explored through narrative techniques such as experience utilization, angle exchange, language processing, textual separation, and intentional misreading. Finally, the realization of narrative intentions relies on high-level, conversational, and creative reading beyond writing, in the process of completion, and the possibility of exploring language<sup>27</sup>.

In this type of discourse, the so-called "narrativity" is obviously different from the "narrative procedure" under strict definition, which is decoupled from the narrow narrative poetry, and focuses on the "narrative meaning" that the followers (or poets) understand. It is a new poetic term produced under specific time and space (such as the specific style of the Taiwanese narrative poetry in the 1970s, which was rather biased towards the "plot"). In fact, some works of mainland Chinese poetry produced around the 1980s, such as poems by Bei Dao 北島, Gu Cheng 顧城, Yang Lian and even Haizi, still have a certain degree of narrativity and cannot be reduced to romantic passion. However, there are indeed a lot of grand narratives, heroic voices and historical consciousness (all of the above, in the eyes of many later poets, is rather "lyrical").

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<sup>27</sup> Cheng Guangwei 程光燁 (1998). *A Portrait of the Deceased Time* 歲月的遺照, Beijing: Social Science Literature Publishing 社會科學文獻出版, p. 7.

In contrast, the “narrativity” that was specifically referred to in the 1990s contained more details, remnants, or eulogies of contemporary life, as well as other various poetic qualities that could not be conceived. Therefore, a few poets seem to find that the term “narrativity” is a more inclusive term. For example, Zhang Shuguang 張曙光 thinks that he “replaces lyrics with declarative words and replaces images with details”, so he prefers to use “declarativeness” (*chenshuxing* 陳述性) to describe this feature<sup>28</sup>; Sun Wenbo 孫文波 puts forward the naming of “sub-narratives” and thinks that narrative is only superficial and methodological; lyricism is the essence and purpose<sup>29</sup>. In any case, the addition of more trivial narrative discourse has almost become the general tendency of Chinese pioneer poets (Xi Du 西渡)<sup>30</sup>. This narrative shift is precisely to treat the poetic style of the past period that is too vague, pure and romantic. Therefore, it is often associated with the concept of “transitivity” (*jiwuxing* 及物性) which tends to be involved.

We believe that the pioneers of the new literature in the early 20th century, such as Lu Xun, with their creative experience across the classical and vernacular, apparently already felt the “insufficiency of writing” in a voice of anxiety. They had to give up the “character-like” writing and instead promote the importance of “sound” and expect a kind of writing that contains stronger narrative meaning and speaking functions<sup>31</sup>. Thus, the novel replaces the splendid poetry tradition and becomes the main axis of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. It has its own development path. In the 1970s, the Misty Poetry (*menglong shi* 朦朧詩) was difficult to deal with, and concealed its wording; the purpose was actually to find a blood and sound that had been suppressed by political reality. Therefore, many years later, the theorists easily concluded that this poetry was a kind of a globalized poetry and the purity of its “Chinese charm” was inevitable.

After the Chinese mainland entered the 1990s, literature began to have sufficient conditions to dismantle the burden of history, and to face life more naturally, and it really tends to be in a state of blooming. Perhaps, under the realistic conditions of economic development, there is only a mood to talk about the “simple and beautiful” character thinking of “landscape painting”. However, as the Chinese poetry has been consistently reminded since the beginning of the 20th

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<sup>28</sup> Zhang Shuguang 張曙光 (1999). “Talks about Poetry – Answering to Jiang Tao's Questions” 關於詩的談話——對姜濤書面提問的回答 // Ed. Sun Wenbo 孫文波, Zang Di 臧棣, Xiao Kaiyu 蕭開愚, *Language: Naming of the Form* 語言：形式的命名 (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House 人民文學出版社), 235-250, p. 236.

<sup>29</sup> Sun Wenbo 孫文波 (1999). “My Understanding of the 90s: Personal Writing, Narrative and Others” 我理解的90年代：個人寫作、敘事及其他 // *Poetry Exploration* 詩探索, no.1999.2: 26-37, pp. 32-34.

<sup>30</sup> Xi Du 西渡 (1999). “Historical Consciousness and Poetry Writing in the 1990s” 歷史意識與九十年代詩歌寫作 // Ed. Sun Wenbo 孫文波, Zang Di 臧棣, Xiao Kaiyu 蕭開愚, *Language: Naming of the Form* 語言：形式的命名 (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House 人民文學出版社), 319-325, p. 324.

<sup>31</sup> Lu Xun 魯迅 (1927). “Silent China” 無聲的中國 // *Three Leisurely Collections* 三閑集 (Taipei: Tangshan Bookstore 唐山書店), 14-20, p. 15.

century, Chinese characters are natural in their “timelessness” and are “framework patterns” based on visual cognition. They are not intended to be positively directed to change into “contemporary”, “social”, “life-like”, “individual”, nor do they intend to adopt the “speaking” method or involve such modes of poetic thinking as intellectual writing or popular position.

“A poetics of narrativity” also occurs under similar historical circumstances and real-life conditions, but it points to different cares. Although their connotations are more complicated, cluttered, and even ridiculous, they generally continue the exploration of “avant-garde” in contemporary literature. Of course, this does not mean that adepts of the “character thinking” are necessarily conservative. In this era, we remind us that we are using Chinese characters to write and think about their intrinsic effectiveness. There is still a positive meaning, but the premise is that there must be a “transformation”. In other words, it is necessary for contemporary theorists to open up the performance of word thinking and experimentation. We expect an effective mutual interpretation between “Chineseness” and “avant-garde”.

According to Chen Xiaoming's 陳曉明 observations, China's avant-garde literature has gradually lowered its formal experimental posture and instead focused on the characteristics of “contemporaneity” and “openness”; it “continuously reminds the latest feelings of contemporary life to the real society, those crux or focus phenomena make the sharpest and most sensitive response”; it always remains open to the contemporary<sup>32</sup>. Although the original text is mainly about novels, it is also quite applicable to poetry, and can be used as a common point of the two forms. When the avant-garde poetry was too impulsive and obvious, it turned to the vanguard factor of the poetry to play its pioneering role and develop more vigorous writing. This is actually a more challenging task.

In fact, the early Chinese poetry developed in Europe and the United States and later in Taiwan, and some scholars and poets in the discussion of contemporary character thinking did not all stand on the opposite side of the “modernist”, but instead tried to promote the mutual use of the two. The concept of “purity” may be an important integration point between Chinese poetry and modernism for some theorists. However, avant-garde poetry—especially the kind of avant-garde poetry with strong post-modern features—continues to “incorporate” heterogeneity into “contemporary”, “speaking” and pursuing dynamic poetic concepts. These tendencies are naturally not easy to satisfy Chinese character poetics. At this juncture, we can see that the narrative theory may have a feedback effect on Chinese characters, thus welcoming the establishment of a forward-looking “new” Chinese character poetics.

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<sup>32</sup> Chen Xiaoming 陳曉明 (2001). “Avant-garde: Modernity and Openness” 先鋒派：當代性與開放性 // *Postmodern Gap* 後現代的間隙 (Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing 雲南人民出版社), 169-176, p. 171.

### 3. Character Consciousness and the Postmodern

Chinese characters are not actually “timeless”. They live within a constant level of Chinese language in its multi-level form, following the subject that can be said to change with the world being said. Therefore, we must further consider the question of how “Chineseness” interacts with the “avant-garde” and the “contemporary”. For example, Xia Yu 夏宇 (1956 –), the most original contemporary poet in Taiwan, wrote such a note:

Chinese characters, with their imagery, are particularly beautiful frozen, in a kind of poetry with a transparent cold light suggesting a light smoke. They are timeless.

There is still some wild melancholy. If at a neighboring café you look at two strangers admiring their freshly washed photos, you will feel deeply moved by comprehending the simple and ordinary powerful life movements, you will become convinced that everything can be turned into a form of poetry and will be fortunate to squander with all your heart<sup>33</sup>.

It is widely believed that Xia Yu wrote pioneering postmodern works around 1980. For decades, there have been amazing shifts in the form and character of her poetry. The previous paragraph quoted here seems quite a combination of “character thinking”, but the latter paragraph shows her inclusion of the dross of life and her method of “squandering” (rather than “tempering”).

As far as the creative practice is concerned, each of Xia Yu's poems has novel tricks that show the impulse to escape from the norm and destroy the rules. The strange thing is that each time, the “Chinese character characteristics” are also strongly used for her counter-creation. In *Ventriloquism* 腹語術 (published in 1991), *Between Showers* 在陣雨之間, *Spiritism Session III* 降靈會Ⅲ, *Quibble* 遁辭, *The Missing Image* 失蹤的象 and other poems are worth analyzing. However, here I want to make a roundabout, first saying that the *Irmidis Language Family* 伊爾米弟索語系 has nothing to do with Chinese characters:

(walking on the edge of a strange language.

Like a bridal gown that has been tried on  
but suddenly disappeared at the wedding  
the night before.)

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<sup>33</sup> Xia Yu 夏宇 (1999). *Salsa*, Taipei: Tangshan Bookstore 唐山書局, p. 143-144.

Suddenly I want to use a language that I don't understand at all.  
Express myself and be profoundly expressive,  
use all the eccentric dangerous words, such as  
Irmidis language family  
they also use Irmidis to publish newspapers  
schoolchildren's textbooks release travel guides invent crossword puzzles et cetera  
I should make up my mind to spend 10 years getting to know how to  
use Irmidis language to show love to follow the park  
cellist going home and teach each other our mother tongues  
some idioms and tongue twisters  
if you will stew my frozen tofu, you will stew my  
frozen tofu if you don't stew my frozen  
tofu you don't want  
my stewed frozen tofu –  
tofu is completely unremovable  
tied with a straw rope –  
it takes another 10 years to learn to debate accurately  
and inadvertently involving all kinds of words  
like some crabs  
can't hide their nippers  
it takes another 10 years to write poetry when the slippery  
syllables approach the throat through the tip of the tongue  
causing pure sensory sensory  
pleasure (discovering the sensual love of words):  
searching probing using  
all nicknames throwing aside the pen smiling  
sighing for that humanity has not been  
penetrated in any part by any language  
even so dear  
so skillful as  
Irmidis language

（行走在陌生的語言的邊緣。

像一件試穿過的新娘禮服

突然失蹤了在婚禮的  
前一個晚上。)

突然想用一種完全不懂的語言  
表達自己而且是深刻的表達並  
用及所有偏僻危險的字眼好譬如就是  
伊爾米弟索語系  
他們也用伊爾米弟索語辦報紙編纂  
學童課本發行旅行指南發明填字遊戲等等  
我應該下定決心花 10 年時間懂得怎樣  
用伊爾米弟索語系示愛跟隨公園種的  
大提琴手回家用彼此的母語教對方  
一些成語和繞口令  
如果你會燉我的燉凍豆腐你就燉我的  
燉凍豆腐如果你不會燉我的燉凍  
豆腐你就不要  
燉壞了我的燉凍豆腐——  
豆腐 完全不可自拔的  
豆腐且用草繩拴著——  
再花 10 年的時間學會辯論 準確  
而不經意地涉及各種生猛的字眼  
如同某些蟹類  
無法藏匿牠們的螯  
又花 10 年可以寫詩了當滑膩的  
音節逼近喉嚨通過舌尖  
引發出純粹感官感官感官 的  
愉悅（發現對字的肉慾的愛）：  
搜索尋覓 使用  
一切暱稱 擲筆 微笑  
嘆息 為了那人性中還未曾被  
任何語系穿透的部分

即使是已如此親愛  
如此嫻熟的  
伊爾米弟索語

On the surface, this looks like a poem written using a strange, minority mysterious language to maintain a sense of vivid sensuality. However, in my opinion, this is a kind of “fable”. This poem tells the way poets stick to Chinese. The Chinese we are very familiar with can be a completely “Irmidis language” – Xia Yu writes poetry in Chinese and uses it as a newly acquired language. The word is not necessarily “spiritual” or “cultural”. In Xia Yu, the word can only be material, physical and sensual.

We know that there is a pioneering genre in the Anglo-American poetry that tends to doubt the referential nature of language and treat it as a substance that can be touched and looked at. Chen Junrong 陳俊榮 (Meng Fan 孟樊) pointed out:

Most of Xia Yu’s poetry and language poetry’s anti-mainstream verse match completely, especially the clean extremely “low-limit poems” that she wants to write (only words and glyphs, no decoration, no emotions). It is a replica of American language poetry<sup>34</sup>.

This has its own insights, but to use the term “reproduction” may not be quite appropriate. Xia Yu’s way of using words is quite similar to the language poetry. Nevertheless, many of the unique techniques she uses, as well as some of the poetic effects she achieves, can only be manipulated in Chinese.

The extreme example is that she clipped her old collection of poems, *Ventriloquism*, into another new collection of poems, *Rub. Indescribable* 磨擦•無以名狀, such as this poem:

cat      today   heard  
you call me      back              one  
mixed    baroque  
understanding    cat      problem  
yes      my      forgetting  
like      ghost              my  
sin      like      opera    m

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<sup>34</sup> Chen Junrong 陳俊榮 (2009). “Xia Yu's Postmodern Language Poetry” 夏宇的後現代語言詩 // *Chinese and Foreign Literature* 中外文學, 38.2 (June) :197-227, p. 200.

y in somniahiking  
wilderness prob lem is  
cat my rotation  
if is pointless  
my softness is  
that sorry for my  
warmth is this  
free cat  
my flashing my impact  
that's it  
favori te fish (1995, no page number)

貓咪 今天 聽到  
你叫我 回到 一個  
廝混的 巴洛克式  
的了解 貓咪 問題  
是 我的 遺忘  
像 幽靈 我的  
罪惡 像 歌劇 我  
的 失眠 遠足  
曠野 問題 是  
貓咪 我的 旋轉  
如果 是 無謂  
我的 柔軟 是  
那個 惋惜 我的  
溫暖 是 這個  
游離 貓咪  
我的 閃爍 我的 撞擊  
就是 牠  
最愛的 魚<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Xia Yu 夏宇 (1995). *Rub. Indescribable* 磨擦•無以名狀, Taipei: Modern Poetry Quarterly 現代詩季刊, no page number.

Here the main structure unit is obviously not a character, but a word. After the words collide with other words, they can easily produce a kind of context. The original poems that have been cut can be reserved as backgrounds or allusions, or as ghosts of blasphemy, arguing or singing with this new body. In the same collection *Hug* 擁抱 can be perceived as a further development of Shang Qin's *Runaway Sky*, but it is more flexible and changeable, and the materiality and perceivability of the Chinese characters are maximized.

Xia Yu's recent provocative oeuvre include the use of translation software to freely shuttle between different language families and collaborate with the AI (here, the new creative subject of the post-human being). The result is a book that is born out of the occasional factor – *Pink Noise* 粉紅色噪音. If Xia Yu (and her mechanical partner) presented their work not in Chinese, but in any other language, it would become incoherent, difficult to read; then, this creative experiment could only be a one-time “performance art”. However, this collection of poems is experimentally beyond the real readability and artistry. It can even be said that Xia Yu's greatest achievement is precisely the creation of such poems, once again showing people the intimidating potential of Chinese.

In fact, in *Pink Noise*, Xia Yu continued to consciously demonstrate her Chinese character consciousness:

The Chinese characters were originally expressed in the sounds of the birds and beasts. Even today, when I face a sentence, a sudden combination of surprises like “we suspect that our slamming sounds have a very good summer” my vision is still full of intuitive joy, its peculiar freedom is almost intimate with the keen instinct and it seems that there is no bottom line. ... I just want to try to test the extensibility of Chinese, I want to push its horizon farther and draw the dotted line first.<sup>36</sup>

The extensibility of Chinese mentioned here makes us remember Yu Guangzhong's 余光中 words that he wants to put the “square character” into the wind stove, hammer it, squash it and lengthen it<sup>37</sup>. Just in terms of methods, Xia Yu is more free and more subversive. Chinese, even after being converted from classical to vernacular, still retains strong non-analytic qualities. For example, a large number of two-syllable words belong to more than one (grammatical) category

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<sup>36</sup> Xia Yu 夏宇 (2007). “Ask Poetry – The First Scene of Language Murder (Answering A-weng's Third Question)” 問詩—語言謀殺的第一現場 (回答阿翁的第三個問題) // *Pink Noise* 粉紅色噪音, no page number.

<sup>37</sup> Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (1965). *Carefree Roaming* 逍遙遊, Taipei: Wenxing Bookstore 文星書店, p. 208.

and can be used as both nouns and verbs, sometimes causing temporary syntactic ambiguity<sup>38</sup>. Poets who use Chinese writing are especially easy to manipulate the fuzzy space on the margins of the broken words, so that a morpheme moves between the adjacent words, forming an effect of mutual penetration or overlap.

Xia Yu and other contemporary poets have developed Chinese language using techniques with postmodern features. At the same time, some postmodern styles are also extended from Chinese language's own features. Chinese poetics chiefly uses examples from the old classical verse. It is not easy to implement this method in modern poetry without transformation. Since the beginning of the 20th century, this idea has been developed intermittently for a hundred years. But perhaps too much emphasis was laid on looking at Chinese characters or Chinese from the perspectives of essence, transcendence, and purity. Modern Chinese is deeply rooted in the elements of ancient Chinese and modern Chinese, and it also contains many foreign or contemporary elements. In the practice of contemporary poets, we have already seen that the structure and texture of Chinese poetry are constantly evolving. For a skilled Chinese writer, the narrow sense of thinking may have sunk into the background, or has become secondary. This factor is long gone. Even if they are positive or deliberately highlighting Chinese language, their language views or methods of organizing words are not within the scope in Chinese poetics.

#### **4. From Chinese Characters (Hanzi 汉字) to Chinese Script (Huawen 华文)**

In contemporary literature, there is a special phenomenon: most novelists feel that they are using Chinese (*zhongwen* 中文 or *huawen* 华文), and poets are used to calling the language they use *Hanyu* 漢語 (“the language of the Han”; mainland poets even started using it earlier than Taiwanese poets and more widely). In recent discussions on “Chinese language family” (*huayu yuxi* 華語語系) or “Chinese literature” (*huawen wenxue* 華文文學), examples were also mostly concentrated on the novel. As for the new poetry, in the early days, works from both sides of the Taiwan Strait mostly included all Chinese poems (*zhongwen shi* 中文詩): several histories of Chinese poetry from the mainland included the poets of Hong Kong and Taiwan in terms of the concept of overseas Chinese literature. In Taiwan, the poets of the 1950s often saw themselves as creators of “Chinese modern poetry” (*Zhongguo xiandai shi* 中國現代詩). For example, *Chinese Poetry Selection* 中國詩選 (Peng Bangxi, Moren, 1957), *Chinese Modern Poetry* 中國現代詩選 (Luo Fu, Zhang Mo, Ya Xian, 1969), all included works by Taiwanese poets. In the 1970s, several

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<sup>38</sup> Zhang Yaxu 張亞旭, Liu Youyi 劉友誼, Shu Hua 舒華, Sun Rongsong 孫茂松 (2003). “A Preliminary Study of the Syntactic Analysis of Two-syllable and Related Words in Chinese Sentences” 中文句子中雙音節兼類詞句法分析歷程初探 // *Psychology Journal* 心理學報, no.2003 .4: 433-440.

major works, such as *Compendium of Modern Chinese Literature: Poetry* 中國現代文學大系：詩卷 (edited by Luo Fu, 1972), *Compendium of Modern Chinese New Literature: Poetry* 當代中國新文學大系：詩卷 (Ya Xian, 1980), included the poets of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia using the umbrella term “modern China” (*xiandai Zhongguo* 現代中國).

In the mid-1970s, Yang Mu 楊牧 began to propose the replacement of “Chinese Modern Poetry” (*Zhongguo xiandai shi* 中國現代詩) with “Modern Chinese Poetry” (*xiandai Zhongguo shi* 現代中國詩)<sup>39</sup>. This is mainly based on the frame of “modern – poetry”, the insertion of “China” strongly highlights the meaning of “Chinese restrictions”, “cultural traditions” and “local contexts”. However, with the clarification of Taiwan's consciousness, Yang Mu began to change “China” and replaced it with “Han”, *Hanyu* or “Taiwan”<sup>40</sup>. Since then, the name of “modern Chinese poetry” has been abandoned and not used. “Chinese modern poetry” has gradually become a fixed name. In the award speech of the National Literary Awards, he concluded: “We use Chinese characters to accurately create Taiwanese literature”<sup>41</sup>. Because of the influence of Yang Mu, the use of this term for poetry became more and more popular.

In the field of new poetry research, the use of “modern Chinese poetry” (*xiandai han shi* 現代漢詩) or “contemporary Chinese poetry” (*dangdai han shi* 當代漢詩) to refer to the modern Chinese poetry in China and beyond is a more commonly accepted usage since the May Fourth Movement. The pioneer was undoubtedly the American scholar Michelle Yeh (Xi Mi 奚密). At first she repeatedly used this terms in a series of papers such as *Moon and Stars: On the Poetic Element in Modern Chinese Poetry* 星月爭輝：現代漢詩的「詩原質」試探 (1988), later collected in *The Collected Works on Modern and Contemporary Poetry* 現當代詩文錄 (1998). When her book *Modern Chinese Poetry: Theory and Practice Since 1917* (1991) was translated into Chinese, it was entitled *Xiandai han shi: yi jiu yi qi yilai de lilun yu shijian* 現代漢詩：一九一七年以來的理論與實踐 (2008) (Han standing for “Chinese”). Since then, several books on the study of contemporary and modern poetry on both sides of the strait have used the term. Lately, Zheng Yuyu's 鄭毓瑜 highly-discussed *Pose and Speech: A New Theory of the Revolution of the*

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<sup>39</sup> Yang Mu 楊牧 (1976). “Modern Chinese Poetry” 現代的中國詩 // *Literature Knowledge* 文學知識 (Taipei: Hongfan Bookstore 洪範書店), 3-10.

<sup>40</sup> In the early 21st century, Yang Mu reorganized his early collections into *Transformation and Realization* 隱喻與實現, *The Lost Paradise* 失去的樂土, *Traces of Human Patterns* 人文蹤跡, and *Sketch of the Rapids* 掠影急流, and completely removed the word “China”.

<sup>41</sup> Yang Mu 楊牧 (2004). “Re-exploration of Taiwanese Poetry” 臺灣詩源流再探 // *Traces of Human Patterns* 人文蹤跡 (Taipei: Hongfan Bookstore 洪範書店), 175-180, p. 180.

*Poetry Kingdom* comprehensively examines the traction effect of the “Chinese” factor on the poetics revolution, and pushes Chinese poetics to a new stage.

Why is *Hanyu* more mainstream than “Chinese” (*huawen*) in the poetry realm? I will try to summarize the three reasons. First, poetry is more focused on the self-referentiality of the language than the novel. The main structural unit is small: either one word or even a morpheme, so poetry pays more attention to the factors of “Chinese characters”. The principle of writing poetry is more directly related to the principle of Chinese characters. Secondly, in linguistics, there is a general understanding of “modern Chinese – premodern Chinese – ancient Chinese” (*xiandai hanyu* 現代漢語 – *jindai hanyu* 近代漢語 – *gudai hanyu* 古代漢語) evolution. *Huawen*-Chinese is not related to ancient times, therefore, in the field of poetics that emphasizes the contrast and evolution of ancient and modern times, *Hanyu*-Chinese is more applicable than *Huawen*-Chinese. That is to say, when it is compared with foreign languages such as English in synchronicity, the *Huawen* term can still be used; in diachronicity, if tradition and modernity are to be coherent, then *Hanyu* is more general. Thirdly, *Huawen* is often referred to as Mandarin (*putonghua* 普通話), based on Beijing dialect. As for Cantonese, Hakka, and Minnan, they are regarded as “Chinese dialects” (*hanyu fangyan* 漢語方言). The use of dialects in whole or in part has become a force in poetry. They may not be willing to be covered by the umbrella term *Huawen* (for example, some scholars and creators in Taiwan are used to contrapose *Huawen*-Chinese and Taiwanese (*taiyu* 臺語)).

Of course, there are also many outstanding poets and scholars outside the above framework. Yu Guangzhong used the term *Zhongwen* for “Chinese” and Chen Dawei 陳大為 used both *Huawen*-Chinese and *Zhongwen*-Chinese, and both of them had a significant Chinese character “complex”. In particular, Yu Guangzhong's exposition on pure Chineseness and anti-Europeanization underlines that the classical Chinese version is the ideal version of the vernacular Chinese, and ignores the general trend of “rewriting Chinese” of the 20th century<sup>42</sup>. Yu Guangzhong has made outstanding achievements in probing the limits of Chinese, but he still returns the classical to the modern rhetoric, which is what Huang Jinshu 黃錦樹 calls “the general poetry language dominated by China”<sup>43</sup>. In contrast, Yang Mu's “Chinese view” (*hanyu guan* 漢語觀) is more worthy of attention. He has a tendency to be elegant, beautiful, and mysterious in terms of word usage, but he is also more brave in changing the original appearance of Chinese. He

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<sup>42</sup> Gunn, Edward M. (1991). *Rewriting Chinese: Style and Innovation in Twentieth-century Chinese Prose* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford UP), p. 35.

<sup>43</sup> Huang Jinshu 黃錦樹 (2003). “On Trial Writing--On Modern Prose of Modern Literary System” 論嘗試文——論現代文學系統之現代散文 // *Lie or the Skill of Truth* 謊言或真理的技藝 (Taipei: Wheat Publishing 麥田出版社), 21-57, p. 49.

believes that a good poet should be “based on the vernacular language, exercise the style of the classical Chinese language, and reintegrate the essence of the foreign language into a comprehensive coherence”<sup>44</sup>. Therefore, his poetry is funded in ancient Chinese, but also greatly benefited from translation work.

Yang Mu’s *Hanyu*-Chinese often embraces ways of literary tradition and language, rather than focusing on Chinese characters and grammar as William Yip does. Even so, he is still fascinated by the “modernity of Han Fu and the rhetorical style of encyclopedia-like books”<sup>45</sup>. For example, the word *yiyan* 乙乙然 (“with a wabbling motion”), which has disappeared from vernacular, is taken from the Kangxi dictionary and used to describe the swimming of a snake<sup>46</sup>. He also practices a set of “embroidery” (*fufu* 黼黻) aesthetics, which becomes a silk thread that is woven into a lustrous cloth<sup>47</sup>. On the other hand, he also quite prefers to incorporate Western grammar into Chinese, especially in late poetry, often using dialectical thinking in complicated sentences, and destroying the complete “sentence” by means of branch-sentence techniques. It is extremely difficult to understand, and the “materiality” of the words is strongly manifested. Roland Barthes once said: “Modern poetry destroyed relationships in language and reduced discourse to words as static things”<sup>48</sup>. Yang Mu’s poems practice this description in gorgeous Chinese. That is the ingenious combination of modernity and Chineseness.

However, although Yang Mu’s language is influenced by English, it is still full of Chinese charm. In contrast, the poetry of Shang Qin shows another Chinese style. Take the example of its prose poem *Refrigerated Torch* 冷藏的火把:

Late in the night the power outage hunger strikes with the darkness, I light a candle and go to the refrigerator to find something to stuff my belly with. Just as I open the refrigerator and find what I wanted, I suddenly see: the candlelight, the flames are red like coral, the smoke is black as long hair, but, hey, it has already frozen. As you open up your heart, you find a refrigerated torch.

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<sup>44</sup> Yang Mu 楊牧 (1983). “The Traditional Orientation of New Poetry” 新詩的傳統取向 // *Transformation and Realization* 隱喻與實現 (Taipei: Hongfan Bookstore 洪範書店), 3-10, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Zeng Zhenzhen 曾珍珍 (2009). “Harmonious Sounds – Yang Mu Talks About the Art of Poetry Translation” 離離和鳴——楊牧談詩歌翻譯藝術 // *Human Voice Monthly* 人籟論辨月刊, no.57(2月): 40-47, p. 43.

<sup>46</sup> Yang Mu 楊牧 (2010). *Yang Mu Poetry Collection III* 楊牧詩集 III, Taipei: Hongfan Bookstore 洪範書店, p. 62.

<sup>47</sup> Yang Mu 楊牧 (2009). *The Second Book of Qilai Mountain* 奇萊後書, Taipei: Hongfan Bookstore 洪範書店, p. 401-402.

<sup>48</sup> Barthes, Roland (1957). *Writing Degree Zero*, Trans. Annette Lavers, Colin Smith (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press), p. 50.

深夜停電飢餓隨黑暗來襲，點一支蠟燭去冰箱尋找果腹的東西。正當我打開冰箱覓得自己所要的事物之同時突然發現：燭光、火焰珊瑚般紅的，煙長髮般黑的，祇是，唉，它們已經凍結了。正如你揭開你的心胸，發現一支冷藏的火把。

This poem has three major sentences, ninety-two words in all. The second sentence sounds particularly strange, with the punctuation being misused (it is not used where it should be used and is used when it should not) and the frequent insertion of phrases, the poet strongly dominates the words with his own priorities. This kind of style that is reminiscent of a literal translation with its fluctuations, reminds also of Wang Wenxing 王文興 and Qidengsheng's 七等生 prose. Huang Jinshu once proposed two basic types of "Chineseness-Modernism" and "Translation-Modernism", with "pure Chinese" and "broken Chinese" as their language strategies<sup>49</sup>. Although Yang Mu is closer to the former, his rewriting of Chinese territory is actually more extensive. He not only borrows the tradition, but also expands the combination of Chinese in translation practice. Shang Qin can be classified as the latter. From the perspective of Chinese practice, the poems mentioned above are not elegant enough; but from the perspective of modernity, they achieve an accuracy because of the comprehensive constraints of Chinese.

In fact, whether we refer to the literature we are writing as *Hanyu-Chinese*, *Zhongwen-Chinese* or *Huawen-Chinese*, there are reasons to be established. The point is also whether it is willing to open the boundaries of language, make good use of Chinese character poetics, and not fall into the myth of language traits, and is not subject to standardization. On the one hand, Huang Jinshu pushed William Yip's speculations, and on the other hand, there was a so-called "Southern Chinese Republic" (*Nanfang huawen gongheguo* 南方華文共和國) concept; in fact, the former is delicate but often applied to the "past", while the latter seems to be chaotic but rather "modern". In the latter remarks, Huang Jinshu highlights the violation and destruction of "standard Chinese" (*biaozhun zhongwen* 標準中文) in dialects, and the new species of Chinese in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia, with examples ranging from novels to poems. This kind of Chinese in the context can quite reach the original intention of contemporary poets to talk about poetry in Chinese, but has it exceeded the barrier of Chinese poetry?

In fact, the Chinese poetics as seen with a foreign eye is somewhat immature, and it has reached the depth it deserves through the systematic poetic interpretation of William Yip and others. However, this set of thinking is too static, fascinated by the inherent pattern of Chinese

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<sup>49</sup> Huang Jinshu 黃錦樹 (2003). "On Trial Writing--On Modern Prose of Modern Literary System" 論嘗試文——論現代文學系統之現代散文 // *Lie or the Skill of Truth* 謊言或真理的技藝 (Taipei: Wheat Publishing 麥田出版社), 21-57, p. 26-33.

characters or Chinese, and it does not deal with its great changes in modern times and even in contemporary times. On the other hand, we can greet it and revive it optimistically. There is a so-called “dialectology”: some words are corpses or monsters for the northerners, but they are alive and kicking on the streets of Hong Kong. If it is further extended to the level of lexicology and the borrowing of words is also expanding in Taiwan. These heterogeneous principles are still in line with the Chinese grammar, but in terms of the contemporary writing system, there are several phenomena worth noting. First, syntax and word formation are far more important than graphology, and contemporary poets are not doomed to character thinking. It is better to say that it is a word thinking or sentence thinking. Second, the Chinese character poetics based on ancient Chinese may not be applicable to the present; it is necessary to reconstruct Chinese poetics from “modern Chinese” in order to conform to reality. Third, dialects are sub-systems, which are native to Minnan and Cantonese, but are also used in the language of the Internet or in specific groups.

In fact, how to “operate with words” is more important than the principle of making words. Contemporary poets produce poetic meaning by adding “impurities”, sometimes closer to “splashing” rather than “tempering”. Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysian Chinese diaspora are “Southern”, but they are full of wild power; the situation in mainland China is also quite complicated, and it is not easy to be integrated. Take Ouyang Jianghe 歐陽江河 (1956–) as an example. He is full of a desire for grand power writing, but there is also a tendency to deconstruct. Zang Di 臧棣 (1964–) grew up and is active in Beijing. He seems to be the most balanced and pure. He prefers to disassemble and play with various sentences to develop a poetics with a sense of pleasure and meaning. On the surface, the use of argumentative discourse is to explore what is actually a language revelry, as if it has become a post-modern exercise of Yip's so-called “pseudo-grammar”. Hu Xundong 胡續冬 (1974–) from Chongqing lives in Beijing, but often brings the dialects of the land to his poems. He is also good at turning low-level mixed words into poetry with a great deal of merry-making. Hu can also be considered a part of the “Southern” Republic.

The old Chinese character poetics pays more attention to the “inherent qualities” that Chinese characters bring to Chinese. It is vertical and traceable. However, for more than 100 years, Chinese has continuously opened its borders and rewritten itself by absorption. Therefore, the new Chinese character (speech) poetics must be able to accommodate the translation component and the dialect language, preferably in a crisscross way – not only to reflect the vitality of Chinese life, but also to destroy the existing rules. For example, Yang Mu is deeply lettered in the classics of Chinese culture, and he deliberately breaks the convention and constructs a new grammar. This is a typical example. For example, Hu Xudong is proficient in Portuguese and has translated many Brazilian poems. Foreign thinking and grammar naturally infiltrate his poetry; but his Sichuan dialect (which

is also a kind of Chinese) is still the most powerful style structure and poetry factor. It is worth noting that even though Xia Yu used the materiality and discontinuity of Chinese characters to construct a very unique postmodernity; in her poems, the importance of “discourse” is still higher than that of “character”. The narrative with impurities is still more dominant than the pure word thinking. In this way, postmodern poetry is a resurrection of Chinese poetry, and it is also announcing its collapse. In fact, it is quite intriguing.

“Westernization” was once regarded as an important path for poets to pursue modern poetry, but it was also referred to as the crime of modern poets. The ways to defend it can be summarized as “Chinese writing” (*hanyu xiezu* 漢語寫作), “local reality” (*bendi xianshi* 本地現實), and “individual sensing” (*geti ganying* 個體感應). A similar situation has occurred in different periods in Taiwan, mainland China and even overseas. In the 1990s, Stephen Owen had posed a harsh question about Chinese modern poetry. He believed that in the poems of Bei Dao, local colors were used, but they were used sparingly. It is a kind of “world poetry” whose roots are not Chinese. Some rhetorical usages are quite different from traditional Chinese poetry, but they are common in the West<sup>50</sup>. Bei Dao studied Western translated poetry, and because of his translator's ingenious English version, he became the most famous Chinese poet in the West. However, Owen believes that the loss of poetry in the translation is more than what the publisher and the reader can imagine. There are many follow-up refutations, which can be exemplified by the meticulousness. He believes that although Chinese contemporary poetry lacks the depth of history and culture, it also has contemporary historical causes; Owen worries about what disappears in the difference between “Chinese poetry” and “world poetry”, as he worries about the same disappearance in the context of “traditional poetry” and “modern poetry”.

Today we discuss the contemporary utility of Chinese character poetics and should avoid falling back into the pool of the “Oriental features – the shadow of the West”. Contemporary scholars' discussion about Owen's ideas has opened up a space for Chinese writing – a space for blending different visions and creation. The existing Chinese character poetics must also undergo a major transformation and expansion to catch up with the fierce changes in contemporary Chinese poetry writing. Poets should pay attention to the texture and structure of language, and do not need to worship Chinese characters excessively. Of course, there is no need to hate them either. It is an extremely natural and inevitable action to deeply and flexibly grasp the language of your own time and nation, to constantly integrate new elements, and to write poetry by means of external concepts, forms or methods. The language we use, Chinese, naturally enters the line between the

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<sup>50</sup> Owen, Stephen (1994). “The Anxiety of Global Influence: What is World Poetry” // *New Republic* (November 1990): 28-32.

characters through the poet's body. Even if Zhu Xiang 朱湘 or Feng Zhi 馮至 is also writing a sonnet, it is still Chinese in the temperament, vocabulary and wording, with enough to return to the world. Although in each poem, how to discover or establish the relationship between subject and objects, things and words, is mainly related to the poet's creativity, not just relying on specific grammatical rules or writing systems.

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## Colorful Patterns of Chinese Poetry<sup>1</sup>

A wide range of aesthetic criteria, both individual and group ones, characterizes the Chinese poetry at the turn of the millennium. The multidimensional space of contemporary Chinese poetry appears to be an interesting and difficult object for research. Even a superficial description of the poetic space structure, a simple enumeration of tendencies, schools, and names that form it requires the choice of a more or less clear approach, or criterion.

Here is a small statistical example illustrating the quantitative level of development of contemporary Chinese poetry. According to the issue of the *Poetic Newspaper* 诗刊 (1986), as well as generalizations made by the literary critic Xu Jingya 徐敬亚, more than 60 poetic schools and groups formed the poetic world of China in the middle of the 1980s<sup>2</sup>. As for 2014, there were already 510 of them<sup>3</sup>. It seems obvious to consider Chinese poetry through the creative practices of poetic groups that unite poets on a common aesthetic platform with declared and manifested creative principles.

The situation in Chinese poetry in the early 1980s is to a certain extent a continuation of the poetic traditions of the “underground” period of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). That period was the beginning of official publications of the underground/ self-published authors and the emergence of new poets who were guided by this poetic line. Many significant artistic discoveries in the subsequent poetry connect with the experience of the large layer of Chinese literature previously closed to the general reader. At first, and for a long time in the future, the experienced suffering will be covered and reinterpreted in the works of poets of different generations.

The motive of returning to normal life and creative work becomes the leading one in the works of the “returned” (*guilaizhe* 归来者 or *fuchu shiren* 复出诗人), or rehabilitated writers affected by the numerous critical campaigns that shocked the country. They include Lu Li 鲁黎, Lü Yuan 绿原, Niu Han 牛汉, Zeng Zhuo 曾卓, Ji Fang 冀方, Lu Dian 卢甸, Luo Luo 罗洛, Ai Qing 艾青, Gong Mu 公木, Liu Jian 吕剑, Tang Qi 唐祈, Tang Shi 唐湜, Su Jinsan 苏金伞 and Gong Liu 公刘. Their works, which convey the tragedy of several generations of the Chinese people, are characterized by a tendency to historical reflection, special aesthetics of poetic sadness, and reflections on the role of poetry in society.

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<sup>1</sup> The research was rendered possible by the RSHF (RFBR) grant 16-24-10001.

<sup>2</sup> 李新宇. 中国当代诗歌艺术演变史. 杭州: 浙江大学出版社, 2000. 第 283 页. Li Xinyu, *The Evolution of Chinese Contemporary Poetry Art*, Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2000. P. 283.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.wenming.cn/wxys/wenxue/201405/t20140522\\_1959094.shtml](http://www.wenming.cn/wxys/wenxue/201405/t20140522_1959094.shtml) (accessed: 1.06.2018).

Alongside the realistic vision of reality characteristic for the “returned” poets, the poetic practice of the Misty poets 朦胧诗 was developed. The poetics of modernism, which became to a certain extent a reaction to the long-term suppression of the individual, to the neglect of the artistic side of poetry, the depersonalization of the hero, the author, the reader, and the stencil works of previous years can be observed in their work. Due to various critical, often contradictory, responses the Misty poetry was considered as a tendency, which challenged the creative forms and artistic norms of the traditional poetry and, indeed, could seem “incomprehensible”, “unclear”, “clouded”. Thus, the critics designed the term “Misty poetry”.

However, it should be noted that the “inaccessibility” and “obscurity” of the meaning are not the only defining characteristics of the Misty poetry. The challenge of the Misty poets was to reject the previous, utilitarian approach to poetry as a means of ideological influence, requiring only passive perception of “transparent” texts with the meaning on the surface. The earliest of these poems were written in the mid-70s; this fact allows us to refer them to the underground literature of the Cultural Revolution, which became one of the sources for the Misty poetry. The techniques of modernism, in particular, are present in the work by Guo Lusheng 郭路生 (later known under the pseudonym Shi Zhi 食指) *Believe in Future* 相信未来, referring to the end of the 1960s. The appearance of this poem stimulated the work of a group of young poets, and Guo Lusheng became the first in the movement for new poetry of the Cultural Revolution period. Following Guo Lusheng, the poet Yi Qun 依群 famous for his poem *To the Centenary of the Paris Commune* became a bright figure of this movement. If Guo Lusheng and Yi Qun’s works were some kind of experiment in the field of poetry renewal, the so-called “fairy poems” (Gu Cheng’s 顾城 *Error* 错过, *Bird of the Dreams* 梦鸟, etc.), which appeared around 1972, as well as the work of the Baiyangdian group of poets (Mang Ke 芒克, Genzi 根子, Dodo 多多, etc.) can be seen as a foundation for the subsequent Misty poetry. A lot of the Misty poets had the experience of underground literature (Yan Li 严力, Yang Lian 杨炼, Lin Mang 林莽, etc.).

Primarily, in their poems the Misty poets express humanistic ideas, focusing on the value of human life; the question of the functions of literature being the second important topic. With all the originality of each author's work, a single trend of the Misty poets to the transition from reflection on a personal tragedy to the search for points of contact of an individual with the world around him is obvious. The poets are united by the desire to create an individual, highly spiritual poetic world.

Initially they seek to reveal the contradictory processes of reality, the difficult pages of history of society and the destiny of the individual, to grasp the objective and subjective factors that determine a particular path of the nation. Through a search of the archetypes of psychology

and culture of the nation, their origins and structures the poets perceive the identity of the people, the essence of life. To a certain extent, such a transition in the worldview has been prepared by the appearance in China of translated works on Western sciences, unknown to Chinese culture before (psychology of culture, behaviorism, existentialism, structuralism, social culture, etc.). Along with borrowing Western cultural values, many poets turn to the search for roots in the national cultural tradition (Yang Lian, Jiang He 江河).

The works of the Misty poetry are distinguished by their philosophy; the combination of narrative and reasoning the poets use turns out to be fruitful. The poets mostly prefer the form of the lyrical monologue and often resort to the use of symbolic techniques. Such techniques as sensual, super-sensitive perception, illusion, deception of feelings, metamorphosis, illogical language, etc. are necessary for the transfer of the complex and contradictory inner world (Bei Dao 北岛 *Old Temple* 古堡, Shu Ting 舒婷 *To Oak* 至橡树, Liang Xiaobin 梁小斌 *China, I've lost my key* 中国, 我的钥匙丢了, etc.). To create the desired image, the poets resort to playing with time and space, the technique of editing (Jiang He *Unfinished Poem*, Bei Dao *End or Beginning* 结局或开始).

Misty poetry implies the resumption of the creative search and the establishment of the links between Chinese poetry and the poetry of the modern world. Misty Poetry returns to the aesthetics of humanism. However, the Misty poetry, not accepted by tradition even a short time ago, suddenly turned into an object of overcoming and denial.

The atmosphere of the policy of reform and openness created extraordinary conditions for poetic activity, acquaintance with Western artistic and philosophical works, which broadened the creative space and horizons of Chinese poets in many ways. After the debunking of the slave psychology of the Cultural Revolution, as well as under the influence of modern Western philosophical thought, “God” died in their soul, individual “I” takes the first place, and at least, it is released in its own attitude. The poets no longer need authority, but believe in themselves, no longer adhere to traditions, but strive for novelty. Going beyond the framework established by the predecessors, the manifestation of their own individuality become a common aspiration of the poets of the “New generation” 新生代诗人.

The main difference between the New generation poetry and Misty poetry is “anti-heroism”, “anti-worship”, “anti-imagery” and “anti-refinement” of the former, which made up the content of the poetry of the New generation and approved its basic values. Small events from everyday life of ordinary people became the object of the poets’ attention. The poets of the New generation declare: “a Poet is not a prophet, not a preacher, not a Saint with a halo on his head. A poet is ordinary, he thinks the same as any ordinary man, and he does the same as any ordinary man...

because we are all human. Of course, we admire the sun, the stars, the sea, the mountains, eternity and miracles, but yet all that we constantly ask for is to have a glass of wine before dinner, shoes of the latest fashion, a kiss of the beloved in the evening, we want all flies to die, the father to be the best friend, not a despot”<sup>4</sup>.

The poets of the New generation oppose Misty poetry in the means of expression and language style. They reject allegorical, complex images and obscure, hazy symbols, replace the “flow of narrative” with the shallow “flow of life”, the knowledge of life unfolds into real existence. For instance, working on the language, they tend to its spoken layer, require to move away from refinement to rudeness, even use vulgar language, if it can bring the power of expression to the text. Thus, vulgar and dismissive tone became the hallmark of the Macho poetry 莽汉, calling to the before-culture state. As for the poets of Not-Not-ism 非非主义, they do not only abandon imagery, but also destroy the norms of language and the readability of the text, deviate from the rules of grammar, change the belonging of the word to a particular part of speech.

The poetic discourse of the New generation is characterized by an artistic strategy of mixing fragments of different poetics, poetic techniques. The readers can observe a combination of absurd and nonsense, narrative and minimalism, pro-Western ideas of “Writing Degree Zero” (*lingdu xezuo* 零度写作) and the school of view, etc.

Contemporary Chinese poets do not use punctuation, partly as a legacy of traditional poetry, which lacked both punctuation and division into lines. At the same time, demonstrating a certain degree of linguistic freedom of the linguistic personality, the authors involve the reader into a kind of language game, offering to find their level of comprehension of the poetic work. Finally, the use of spoken language provides poets with additional opportunities for the creative understanding of the language. Spoken language was the subject of heated discussions that affected many poets, including Han Dong 韩东, Xi Chuan 西川, Yu Jian 于坚, Chen Dongdong 陈东东, Zhang Shuguang 张曙光 etc.

The phenomenon of “women's poetry” dating back to the same time period is discussed both by literary critics and poets themselves. A vivid example of this type of poetry is the work of Zhai Yunmin 翟永明, the author of the poetic cycle *Women* 女人, perceived as a manifesto of feminist poetry. The main content of “women's poetry” was a subtle lyric, revealing the inner feelings of women, who could now express them openly and call for a change in the traditional attitude of society to women. The female images created by the poets reflect the changes in the social status of women resulting from the large-scale transformations of Chinese society at all levels of spiritual

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<sup>4</sup>李新宇. 中国当代诗歌艺术演变史. 杭州: 浙江大学出版社, 2000. 第 285 页. Li Xinyu, *The Evolution of Chinese Contemporary Poetry Art*, Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2000. P. 285.

and material life on the background of the reforms and opening up. Yin Lichuan 尹丽川, a representative of the younger generation of poets, creating cynical images, ruthlessly rearranging the usual word order in sentences, referring to the poetics of “Writing Degree Zero”, deconstructs the traditional ideas of society about the value orientation of women.

The 1990s were marked by the confrontation of the concepts of “Intelligentsia/ Intellectuals Art” 知识分子写作 and “Folk Art” 民间写作 based on different understanding of the language of poetry, the function of poetry, and the role of the poet in society. Other qualitative characteristics that generalized the aesthetic experience of poetry of the last century were the “middle age writing” 中年写作, “spoken language writing” 口语写作, and “narrativism” 叙事性. Xiao Kaiyu 肖开愚, who was the first to use the concept of the “middle age writing”, contrasts his maturity and the subsequent breadth of views and experience, the ability to control feelings and not to go to extremes to the romanticism and idealism of the “young writing” of the 1980s. The latter is characterized by the desire to speak, declaim, an unstoppable flow and emotionality.

Since entering the 1990s, many of the New generation poets still adhere to the traditions of “spoken language writing”: Han Dong, Yu Jian, Xiao Hai 小海, Zhu Wen 朱文, Yu Nu 余怒, Yi Sha 伊莎, etc.

Certain features of the spoken language, namely the mobility and the possibility of changes in syntactic structures and grammatical forms up to their non-normative use, free generation of new semantic codes allowed it to be perceived as a special artistic technique designed for a certain stylistic effect. The sources of this layer of poetic language are jargon, slang, street language, dialects, sub-dialects on the one hand, and colloquial literary language, *Putonghua* 普通话, on the other.

Metaphorically using “private details” and stories that seem to float on the surface, “narrative” poetry reinforces the attention to daily life, and at the same time, maintains a parity attitude to historical events and current reality.

The new Millennium brought new opportunities to Chinese poetry, which were expressed, in particular, in non-conventional forms of work presentation. As a rule, these were public readings, accompanied by acoustic effects, video shows, performances of musical groups, i.e. they were detailed representations-concerts, performances. Most often, poets focus on topical issues of our time.

However, a truly revolutionary platform for poetry was created by the Internet, which does not impose special requirements for the work, but attracts a wider audience. These online resources, such as: *Shi jianghu* 诗江湖, *Shi shenghuo* 诗生活, *Tianya shihui* 天涯诗会 and many others brought poetry to the General reader. In response to the new conditions and demands of the

time, there appear new poetic forms with their own recognizable features, for example, the blog-poetry *weishiti* 微诗体 (微博诗歌体) with the length-restriction of 135 characters. Such works are much faster to find their readers and receive feedback. From the viewpoint of the author's initiative, Internet poetry resembles the self-publish poetry (*samizdat*) of the 1980s. Some authors publish their works on paper after gaining online fame. Net poetry has turned out to be in high demand in the era of rapid speeds, fast food and media; it has firmly entrenched in the literary life and is released in separate collections<sup>5</sup>. Internet space has created fashion for all kinds of new "forms"/ "genres"/ "styles" *ti* 体: *fanke ti* (Vancl style) 凡客体, *Yinzhuo ti* (silver bracelet style) 银镯体, *paoxiao ti* (roaring style) 咆哮体, *laji ti* (trash style) 垃圾体 etc., turned into a postmodern parody.

The structure of the poetic space is enriched with to the works of "Post 70s Generation" 70后诗人 (since the middle 1990s) and "Post 80s Generation" 80后诗人 poets, some of which came out of the network literature. Their poetry fully reflects Chinese society in the transitive period. Their works appear in the era of consumption, and are its result, and at the same time a creative attempt on the way for general development of Chinese poetry. They are characterized by the desire for decadence, to be mundane, direct, rebellious and unassuming. Vivid examples of this poetry are the poets of the "Lower Body poetry" (*xiabanshen* 下半身) Yin Lichuan 尹丽川, Shen Haobo 沈浩波, Duo Yu 朵渔, Nan Ren 南人, Wu Ang 巫昂.

The market economy gave rise to the phenomenon of "migrant worker poetry" (*dagong shi* 打工诗), the content of which, since the end of the 20th century, reflected the real life of workers, most of them are peasants who moved to economically developed regions of China in search of work. Loss of their own identification, disorientation, hard work, primitive conditions of life, homesickness, family are the main content of the works.

Contemporary Chinese poetry is intense and extensive. If Chinese poetry of the 20th century was formed largely under the influence of foreign literature and philosophy, then in the 21st century Chinese poets are ready to go their own way, preserving national traditions and responding to the challenges of globalization.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, *China Weibo Poetry Collection 2013* 中国微博诗选刊, or *China Blog-Poetry Yearbook* 中国微诗体年鉴 (since 2015).

# A Critique of the Aesthetics of “Xing” in the Book of Songs and its Correspondence to Contemporary Poetry—A Case Study of Xia Yu's Poetry Language

## 1. The Modern Transformation of “Xing” from the Book of Songs

The term “xing” 興 is first recorded in *Zhou Li* 周禮: “A *dashi* [master of music and ceremonies] is supposed to instruct in the following six arts and principles of poetry: folk-songs, direct demonstration (*fu* 賦), comparisons (*bi* 比), *xing*, elegant songs and hymns”. Thus, the Han Dynasty *Mao Shi Zhuan Jian* 毛詩傳箋 opens with a preface (the so-called *Great Preface to the Book of Songs* 詩大序) that states that poetry possesses “six principles” 六義. In the Tang Dynasty, Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648), in his *Mao Shi Zheng Yi* 毛詩正義 writes “direct demonstration, comparison, and *xing* are the means of poetry; folk-songs, elegant songs and hymns are the forms of poetry”. The former is the practice of poetry, and the latter is the genre of poetry. In the Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), in his *Shi Ji Zhuan* 詩集傳 not only commented on the three hundred poems from the Book of Songs, but also attributed a characteristic (*fu*, *bi*, *xing*) to each poem and showed that interpreting poetry according to different attributes will give different results. Since then, “*fu*, *bi*, *xing*” has more prominently become a subject of special research<sup>1</sup>. From the meanings of *fu*, *bi*, *xing* that of *fu* is the most uncontroversial. The *xing* is the most ambiguous, discussed in detail in articles and books. For example, Chen Shixiang 陳世驥 (1912–1971), studied the initial form of the *xing* character in oracle bone script and discovered that the original appearance of this image is related to the tone of the body:

*Xing* is the voice of the early ancestors when they swarmed together, and in the atmosphere of total liberation, they raised an object together and rotated... The *xing* in the Book of Songs comes from the poetry of the “brave new world”. The *xing*, in terms of form, comes from the ancient rhythm of music and the natural rhythm that is unique to the “upward

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<sup>1</sup> This information can be found in Han *Mao Heng Zhuan* 毛亨傳, *Zheng Xuan Jian* 鄭玄箋, Tang Kong Yingda's *Mao Shi Zheng Yi* 毛詩正義 (see Li Xueqin 李學勤 ed. *Thirteen Classics* 十三經注疏整理本 (Taipei: Taiwan Ancient Books Publishing Company 臺灣古籍出版公司, 2001, Volume 5, Page 14b-15a), Song Zhu Xi *Shi Ji Zhuan* 詩集傳 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua Book Company 中華書局, 1961). Xu Fuguan's 徐復觀 “The Bi and Xing in the Interpretation of Poetry – Re-establishing the Appreciation Foundations of Chinese Poetry” 釋詩的比興——重新奠定中國詩的欣賞基礎 in *Collection of Essays on Chinese Literature* 中國文學論集 (Taipei: Taiwan Student Bookstore 臺灣學生書局, 2001, pp. 91-117) gives a more detailed discussion of *fu*, *bi*, *xing* and their effects in poetry, especially for the meaning of *xing*. It states that *xing* elements in the *Book of Songs* or in the Tang dynasty poetry of the later generations does not necessarily appear in the first part of the verse, but sometimes appears at the end of the poem.

dance”. The combination of these two factors constitutes the essence of *xing*. *Xing* is instantly revealed, even including the feeling of both muscles and imagination. Paying attention to the overlapping characters and onomatopoeic sentences in the verse of the poem, we seem to hear a keynote with the *xing* scattered in the poem, and we seem to be included into its world<sup>2</sup>.

Chen Shixiang has been teaching abroad for a long time, and his way of interpreting this ancient Chinese concept has completely jumped away from the traditional chapters and sentences due to the use of language. It included the anthropological, physical poetics, and melody. As for the poets of 3,000 years ago, is this true? Or is it necessarily not the case? When readers touch this text, they are first driven by the writing of Mr. Chen and the invigorating and stimulating quality of it, the heart / mind resonates with it and obtains a fresh experience. From this sense we are able to return to the ancient times<sup>3</sup>.

Pushing the concept of *xing* even farther is Jiang Nianfeng 蔣年豐 (1955–1996), one from the younger generation of Taiwanese philosophers. He believes that *xing* means the rise of human spirit; this phenomenon can be seen in many situations, and here we are concerned with the spiritual phenomenon that occurs when interpreting the classical Chinese language. “In this study, we are more or less constructing a ‘spiritual phenomenology’”<sup>4</sup>.

He pointed out that in the Confucian classics, many natural phenomena are portrayed, and all kinds of metaphors are reinstated into a broad personal approach. Starting from the meaning of *xing* in the *Book of Songs*, we can apply it as a broader approach to Confucianism in the Pre-Qin era. Jiang’s philosophical position is concerned with the spiritual field behind the poetry.

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<sup>2</sup> Chen Shixiang 陳世驥. “On Xing and the Characteristics of Chinese Literature” 原典：兼論中國文學特質 // *Chen Shixiang Collected Works* 陳世驥文存, Taipei: Zhiwen Publishing House 志文出版社, 1972, pp. 237, 249, originally written in English, translated by Yang Mu 楊牧 into Chinese, revised by Chen Shixiang, first published in the *Journal of The Chinese University of Hong Kong* 香港中文大學學報.

<sup>3</sup> Chen Shixiang’s literary discourse is rich in persuasion and appeal. Was the *Book of Songs* 3,000 years ago really like this? It is only possible to explain the literary words and let the readers agree with the “truth”. In the modern transformation of *xing*, the author adopted the concepts of Western hermeneutics. For example, Hans-Georg. Gadamer, *The Truth and Methodology – The Basic Characteristics of Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. by Hong Handing 洪漢鼎 (Taipei: Times Cultural Publishing Company 時報文化出版公司, 1993) has a section on “The Essence of Experience and Hermeneutic Experience”: reading the classics are like adding a new experience. In fact, Chinese commentators have different focuses in different generations and are examples of hermeneutics, but they have not been seen as such before. Fu Weixun 傅偉勳 suggested that China’s interpretation can be divided into five levels: reality, meaning, implication, predicate and necessity. The fourth level is based on the timeframe of the reader, using the epoch to deal with the deep imperfections in the classics, which is very helpful for classical research. See Fu Weixun, *From Interpretation of Creation to Mahayana Buddhism – Four Episodes of Philosophy and Religion* 從創造的詮釋學到大乘佛學——哲學與宗教四集, Taipei: Dongda Book Company 東大圖書公司, 1990, pp. 1-46.

<sup>4</sup> Jiang Nianfeng, “The Hermeneutic Foundation of the Spring and Autumn Period from the Perspective of Xing Psychology” 從「興」的精神現象學論《春秋》經傳的解釋學基礎 and “On the Poetry Thought of Mencius from the Perspective of Xing” 從「興」的觀點論孟子的詩教思想 // *Text and Practice (I): A Contemporary Interpretation of Confucianism* 文本與實踐 (一)：儒家思想的當代詮釋, Taipei: Laurel Book Company 桂冠圖書公司, 2000, p. 100.

Ye Jiaying 葉嘉瑩 (1924-), who specializes in classical poetry and has been teaching abroad for a long time, approaches *xing* from the perspective of poetic expression and eight important tropes of Western poetry, such as simile, metaphor, metonymy, symbol, personification, synecdoche, allegory, objective correlative, etc., and concludes that these tropes are all within the scope of *bi*. If there is a relationship between “heart/ mind” and “thing”, “all these terms represent only a relationship between ‘heart/ mind’ and ‘thing’”; “as for *xing*, in the critical terminology of English, there is no comparable word to translate it”<sup>5</sup>. She pointed out that this situation shows the skill of making up the imagery in Western poetics. As for the *xing*, the ability to move the feelings directly when writing a poem or when reading poetry is lacking.

Through the works of scholars who have been teaching abroad for a long time, we can observe some unique things. The concept of *xing*, being alien to the Western culture, is thus even more worthy of discussion. Moreover, we should pose a question whether this kind of special oriental mode of thinking about poetry disappears after the emergence of vernacular poetry in the twentieth century.

Ye Jiaying reveals, that later poetry theorists have used various terminology, such as Yan Yu’s 嚴羽 (1198–1241) “taste” (*xingqu* 興趣), Wang Yuyang’s 王漁洋 (1634–1711) “spirit” (*shenyun* 神韻), and even Wang Guowei’s 王國維 (1877–1927) “realm” (*jingjie* 境界). Pursuing their sources, we can touch the essence of the *xing* principle in the *Book of Songs*<sup>6</sup>. Or looking at other aspects, such as those proposed by Cai Yingjun 蔡英俊 (1954-), we see that *bi* and *xing* developed into Liu Xie’s 劉勰 (about 465–532) “expression” (*wuse* 物色), Zhong Rong’s 鍾嶸 (about 467–519) “simile” (*xingsi* 形似), and finally to Wang Fuzhi’s 王夫之 (1619–1692) “fusion of feeling and setting” (*qingjing jiaorong* 情景交融)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Ye Jiaying 葉嘉瑩. “An Example of the Relationship between the Image and the Feelings of Chinese Classical Poetry—From the Relationship between Image and Affection – The Theory of Fu, Bi and Xing” 中國古典詩歌形象與情意之關係例說——從形象與情意之關係看「賦、比、興」之說 // *Kalavinka on Poetry (II)* 迦陵談詩二集. Taipei: Dongda Book Company 東大圖書公司, 1985, pp. 120, 146.

<sup>6</sup> Ye Jiaying 葉嘉瑩. “The Relationship between *Renjian cihua* and Chinese Traditional Poetry” 《人間詞話》境界說與中國傳統詩說之關係 // *Chinese Classical Poetry Review* 中國古典詩歌評論集. Taipei: Guiguan Book Company 桂冠圖書公司, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> According to Cai’s book *Bi, Xing, Expression and the Fusion of Feeling and Setting* 比興、物色與情景交融 (Taipei: Daan Press 大安出版社, 1986), Liu Xie was bound by Han Confucian reference to the political and religious dimensions of *bi* and *xing*, and thus couldn’t make use of the fusion of feeling and setting directly. Therefore, Liu Xie had to invent the *wuse* concept. Later Zhong Rong developed the concept of the “simile”. Therefore, the concepts of *bi* and *xing*, *wuse* and *xingsi* are interconnected, it shows that the critics before the Song Dynasty searched for different terms for the “feeling–setting” problem. However, Liu Xie’s *bi xing* was tied to the views of Han Confucianism. Some scholars also opposed it. For example, Zheng Yuyu 鄭毓瑜 believes that Liu Xie has opened up a broader vision of *bi xing* with the “touch things to stir feelings” (*chu wu qi xing* 觸物起情) concept. See “Re-evaluation of Cai Yingjun’s ‘Bi Xing, Wuse and the Blending of Feeling and Setting’ – *Bi xing, Wuse and Xingsi*: From *Wen Xin Diao Long* to See the ‘Blending of Feeling and Setting’” 再評蔡英俊《比興物色與情景交融》——「比興」、「物色」與「形似」：由《文心雕龍》看「情景交融」論的弱形：“Liu Xie’s *bi xing*, *wuse* and *xingsi* are not isolated techniques”.

The interchange between “heart/ ming” and “thing” (object) lies at the center of the whole tradition of lyric poetry in China<sup>8</sup>. Our modern customary term “fusion of feeling and setting” seems to be free of the emotional component. If you trace back the *xing* to the *Book of Songs*, you will find that you “first talk on another object to stir the words of poetry”<sup>9</sup>. “*Xing* is the stirring; it is the object involved to stir my intentions”<sup>10</sup>.

When Zhu Xi divided the three hundred poems into *fu*, *bi*, and *xing*, he added his definition of *xing*. Today, re-reading it, there happens almost no interaction between the heart / mind and the things, not to mention “fusing”: there is a thing (object), a wording (expression of heart/ mind), but they are not affiliated with each other and do not depend on each other. Does this parallel relationship have more space for the reader to imagine?

Reading the interpretations of *xing* in modern times<sup>11</sup>, we cannot fail to mention Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1902–1982) of the 1960s because he “differentiated from the essence of poetry to distinguish between *fu*, *bi* and *xing*”. His work touches on the characteristics of Chinese lyric poetry, and then goes into the characteristics of “feeling” in depth. “The essence of feeling, as smoke and fog, is dimly discernible and obscure. Its essence is invisible, so it cannot be objectively captured”. The poet, through the external things, gives it the sound and the image. If the things directly related to the heart / mind are spoken, it is called *fu*. *Fu* is the direct image of feelings,

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<sup>8</sup> The term “lyrical tradition” was first introduced in “China's Lyrical Tradition” 中國的抒情傳統 in *Chen Shixiang's Collected Works* 陳世驥文存, and later Gao Yougong's 高友工 “Aesthetic Issues of Literary Studies” 文學研究的美學問題 explored the concept writing that “the ‘lyrical’ tradition is a philosophical point of view”. “The core of it is to realize its ideals in the individual's state of mind”. “The lyrical ego’ and ‘the reality of lyricism’ have become an expanding and sustained world” (see *Chinese and Foreign Literature* 中外文學, Vol. 7, No. 12, later included in Gao Yougong: *Chinese Aesthetics and Literary Studies* 中國美典與文學研究論集, Taipei: Taiwan University Publishing Center 臺灣大學出版中心, 2004, pp. 95-97). This book has a preface by Ke Qingming 柯慶明, which mentions: “Mr. Gao's analysis of the lyrical tradition has also influenced the research direction of later generation scholars including Zhang Shuxiang 張淑香, Lü Zhenghui 呂正惠, Cai Yingjun 蔡英俊 and Xiao Chi 蕭馳” (ibid., p. 11). Each of the above has a monograph on “the lyrical tradition”.

<sup>9</sup> Zhu Xi in his *Shi Ji Zhuan* arranged all the poems of the *Book of Songs* under the *xing*, *fu* and *bi*, and defined them upon first mention. For the definition of *xing*, see the first poem *Guan Ju* (Page 1).

<sup>10</sup> See Song dynasty Li Jingde's 黎靖德 *Zhu Zi Yu Lei* 朱子語類 (Jinan: Shandong Friendship Book Society 山東友誼書社, 1993, Volume 3, 81, page 3a). Zhu Xi could not talk too much about *fu*, *bi*, *xing* itself, but there are more explanations in *Zhu Zi Yu Lei*. For the collection and interpretation of the *fu*, *bi*, *xing* materials in *Zhu Zi Yu Lei* and *Shi Ji Zhuan*, please refer to Zhao Mingyuan 趙明媛, “Interpretation of Zhu Xi's *Shi Ji Zhuan fu, bi, xing*”, *Journal of Diligence and Benefits* 勤益學報, Vol. 15 (November 1998), pp. 155-168.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to the ones mentioned in this article, there are special books, such as the mainland scholar Zhao Peilin 趙沛霖, *The Origin of Xing: Historical Accumulation and Poetic Art* 興的源起：歷史積澱與詩歌藝術 (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press 中國社會科學出版社, 1987), Liu Huairong 劉懷榮, *Prototype Study of Chinese Classical Poetics* 中國古典詩學原型研究 (Taipei: Wenjin Publishing House 文津出版社, 1996). There is also a chapter in the book by Ye Shuxian 葉舒憲 *Cultural Interpretation of the Book of Songs: A Study of the Occurrence of Chinese Poetry* 詩經的文化闡釋——中國詩歌的發生研究 (Wuhan: Hubei People's Publishing House 湖北人民出版社, 1994); a chapter in Gao Yougong 高友工, *The Collection of Chinese Aesthetics and Literary Studies* 中國美典與文學研究論集. There are also separate articles such as Zhou Yingxiong 周英雄, “The Language Structure of Fu, Bi, Xing – on the Symbolic Meaning of the Early Yuefu Involving Bird Images” 賦比興的語言結構——兼論早期樂府以鳥起興之象徵意義, *Structuralism and Chinese Literature* 結構主義與中國文學 (Taipei: Dongda Book Company 東大圖書公司, 1983), Gu Tianhong 古添洪, “Liu Xie's Fu Bi Xing Theory” 劉勰的賦比興說, *China Today* 今日中國 April 1974, pages 146-153, etc.

then *xing* and *bi* are the indirect images of feelings. There are two situations in this indirect image: one is from the direct experiencing of feelings, and the other is from the reflection of emotions. The former belongs to *xing* and the latter belongs to *bi*<sup>12</sup>.

The emotional state of “reflection”, between things and themes, is a rational arrangement that gives the two the same purpose, allowing the reader to associate unspoken themes with what has already been said. Therefore, Zhu Xi writes: “*Bi* is comparing one thing with another, and the things referred to are often beyond words”<sup>13</sup>. The *bi* sentence, whose subject is hidden in the object, still allows the reader to follow the image and to comprehend.

As for *xing*, Zhu Xi writes that it “first talks on another object to stir the words of poetry”, “the other object” and then “the words of poetry”, that is, the emergence of the theme, isn't it more clear than *bi* form? However, the fact is the opposite. Zhu Xi writes, “The *bi* is straightforward but shallow, but the *fu* though broad is more lasting”<sup>14</sup>. In the *Book of Songs*, although the mode of *bi* hides the theme, it is still easier to guess; the mode of *xing* has the theme below, but the reader is more difficult to touch the image of the front, and what is the theme in the following relationship. This has created a very special sentence pattern – plain and clear, but at the same time with a disguised connection, the so-called feeling and setting, but the feeling and setting are in a state of blending though not fusing completely, there is a big gap. The reader has to make up for it. This is the interesting taste of the *xing* style of the *Book of Songs* and the Tang Dynasty poetry of the later generations<sup>15</sup>.

Xu Fuguan has a brilliant text on the creative state of *xing*:

The human heart/ mind, as far as the face of feeling is concerned, is like a deep and infinite magnetic field, and the things described by *xing* are just like the magnetism generated by the magnetic field, which directly absorbs the things it can absorb. Therefore, the relationship between the objects of *xing* and the theme of poetry is not the same, it is through a rational way to connect the two; but it is directly linked by emotions, contaminated, like the so-called ‘lust after flowers and grasses’... It's just that the author's

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<sup>12</sup> Xu Fuguan, *Collection of Essays on Chinese Literature* 中國文學論集, p. 96. See also note 1.

<sup>13</sup> Li Jingde, ed., *Zhu Zi Yu Lei*, Vol. 80, p. 4b.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5a.

<sup>15</sup> How is this situation with *xing* different from that of Tang poetry? It should be a bigger poetic issue, and it can only be briefly dwelled on here. There is a work by Gao Yougong “The Influence of Chinese Language on Poetry” 中國語言文字對詩歌的影響, where he mentions that *xing* is “the natural state of writing about those things. It is a self-sufficient space, and it depends on the sentence structure. The rhetoric in the *Book of Songs* is often concentrated in two sentences, and the relationship with the poem is difficult to determine, so it seems to establish a closed independent space. But in the five-character poems of the later era, the relationship with the whole poems is gradually closer, and this space is instead open”. That is to say, since the five-character poems, the scenes of the sentences and the following themes are beginning to blend, but in the age of the *Book of Songs* it is self-sufficient and does not have to be handed over. Citations see Gao Yougong *Chinese Aesthetics and Literary Studies*, p. 87.

chest first accumulates the feelings yet to be expressed. Occasionally, something triggers it—something that may be seen in front of the eyes, or may suddenly float in the heart. ... The relationship between it and the subject is not parallel, but successive. ... At this time, the relationship between inside, outside, the host and the guest is not through management and arrangement, but only ‘triggering’, ‘accidental triggering’. This is the watershed of the *xing* and *bi*.<sup>16</sup>

The special character of *xing* has made modern scholars strive to explore it in various fields, and the angle of concern is different. The content revealed by *xing* has also changed. Ye Jiaying and Xu Fuguan both mentioned the difference between *bi* and *xing*. Both of them think that *bi* may be more rational and intellectual. Ye thinks that the various rhetoric about the image in Western poetics are almost all within the scope of *bi*. Only *xing* is a method that does not conform to Western poetry. This argument is very interesting. Unfortunately, Ye did not add evidence from Western poetry, but it is extremely worthy of further study. Xu pointed out the occasionality of *xing*. However, he reveals that behind the “occasionality”, it is actually the essence of deep emotions, impossible to frame, as the magnetic field is vast, everything can become a part of the inner expression. Therefore, this “occasionality” is not chaotic, but rather broad and lenient.

As for the research of Chen Shixiang and Jiang Nianfeng, they are looking for the spiritual characteristics of *xing*. In the beginning of the *Book of Songs*, the ancestors may have a wider range of links with other levels, even the entire nation. Nevertheless, we still need to go back to the text itself. Can the status of *xing* and the people's sentiments be confirmed? This may involve deeper exploration of the language and requires more examples of the Classics of the same period.

The above four opinions, compared with the definitions of the various styles, ratios, and simplifications from the Han to the Qing, have undoubtedly been born because of the modern vernacular analysis, scholars have transcended China's vision and transcended “literature” (the knowledge of anthropology and sociology makes the interpretation of *xing*'s meaning more stereoscopic and clear). Xu more closely considers the text of the *Book of Songs*, and under the thinking of poetry creation, he writes about three different states of *fu*, *bi*, *xing*, and his interpretation is more easily absorbed by modern age people<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Xu Fuguan, *Collection of Essays on Chinese Literature*, p. 100.

<sup>17</sup> Much has been written on the *Book of Songs* since the founding of the Republic of China. I mention only four authors, because this article is to explore the possibility of *xing*'s “modern transformation”. The spiritual connotation revealed by Chen and Jiang is a revelation of all postmodern poetry, a trace of the inner spirit; in addition, Ye and Xu are those who explore the rhetorical structure and creation of *xing*. Their argument, for the various images in today's poetry and the poet's imaginative thinking reaction, has the ability to reveal new perspectives, and it is worthwhile to continue to pursue. In the discussion of *xing*, in recent years, there have been many new explorations in mainland China from the perspective of anthropology, such as Zhao Peilin's 趙沛霖 *Source of Xing 興的源起*. In Taiwan, Cai

Twelve years ago, the author composed a paper entitled “Thinking of the Meaning of Xing in the Creation of Modern Poetry”<sup>18</sup> combining the above-mentioned opinions, I pursued the connection between the *xing* style and the poet's mind. In his long article “History Development of Xing in the Book of Songs” 《詩經》興義的歷史發展<sup>19</sup>, Pei Puxian 裴普賢 clarified the meaning of words *xing* and *ying* 應 (response) to summarize the sentence pattern between *xing* setting and the feeling: “Where there is *xing* there definitely should be a *ying*-response below”. He only proposed this model, but how does his poetry flow between *xing* and *ying* change with the main tone of each poem? In the traditional exegesis, most of them are just touched on and left as they are. Therefore, the author tries to analyze a poem from *Tang Feng* 唐風 (*Chou mou* 綢繆)<sup>20</sup> using the modern symbolic message and the intensive reading of structuralism, reconstructing the relationship between the first verse “Round and round the firewood is bound;/ And the Three Stars appear in the sky” and the image of “good man” which comes next. The words in each part are slightly changed – “in the sky” becomes “from the corner” and then “from the door”: “unexpected meeting” becomes “this beauty”, the whole sentiment is different. Under the fine analysis, we see that every word in the poem is slightly displaced, and the whole situation is changed. For example, here is a paragraph analyzing the theme of *xing*:

On the surface, “Round and round the firewood is bound” describes a daily chore, and it also means that the weather is getting cold and you need to prepare firewood. “The Three Stars appear in the sky” makes us understand that the daylight will soon be exhausted. If we look at the two sentences superficially, they have the practical functions of conveying the idea of season or daytime, and they represent the farmer's life. However, because of the inference of the following sentences, the revelation of these two sentences is undoubtedly required to be pursued by the readers. The firewood that is tightly entangled, and the

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Yingjun's 蔡英俊 *Bi Xing, Wuse and the Fusion of Feeling and Setting* 比興、物色與情景交融, Pei Puxian's 裴普賢 “The Historical Development of Xing in the Book of Songs” 《詩經》興義的歷史發展 in *The Book of Songs Studies* 詩經研讀指導 (Taipei: Dongda Book Company 東大圖書公司, 1997), can be used by scholars of all ages. Mainland scholar Liu Huairong's 劉懷榮 *Prototype Study of Chinese Classical Poetics* 中國古典詩學原型研究 traces the form of dance music in the ancient times, including religion, morality, language, art and other meanings and how it later becomes the expression of poetry. The source of Liu's pursuit lays a good foundation for the “modern transformation” idea. The compilation of this detailed information has been quoted in this article. The author believes that for the *xing*, scholars still need to have considerable literary perception ability in research, in order to “question out” the *xing*. I chose Chen, Jiang, Ye, and Xu as the auxiliary materials for modern poetry research.

<sup>18</sup> The original text was presented at the *First Poetical Symposium on the Book of Songs* 第一屆詩學會議 《詩經》研討會 at the Taipei Normal University in 1994. Later it was published in *The Opportunity of Creation* 創作的契機, Taipei: Tangshan Publishing House 唐山出版社, 1998, pp. 71-99.

<sup>19</sup> This article is 80,000 words long and lists the research status of scholars of all ages.

<sup>20</sup> Zhu Xi's *Shi Ji Zhuan*, p. 70.

admiration of the stars, is infinitely imaginative: it is both imaginative – the outside world has been frosted and turned cold, and the indoor firewood will be burning soon – but it is also tactile. The tightly bundled firewood is the same as the first time that men and women are bound together, and the atmosphere’s temperature grows slightly.

“Tightly bound” (*chou mou*) is a word with an internal rhyme, it can vividly convey the sense of urgency in which “firewood” is entangled. Compared with “The Three Stars appear in the sky”, except for the word “appear” (*zai* 在), the rest are *yinping*, the sound, is clear and high. If the above analysis shows the heat, the sense of the interior and the fire, then “The Three Stars appear in the sky” is cold. Why do people feel both the “firewood” and the “The Three Stars appear in the sky”? The poet's thoughtful vision makes us feel the lingering love of men and women in this story. On the other side, we feel a transcendental celestial order beyond control and the unpredictable aura of fate<sup>21</sup>.

If this tight and perfect structure is not studied patiently, the richness of interaction between *xing* and *ying* is not easy to detect. Therefore, in ancient times, Zhu Xi and even many interpreters sometimes complained: “*Xing* in the *Book of Songs* has nothing to hold on to”, but simultaneously realized that “there is a wide and long-lasting taste”<sup>22</sup>. We have a new concept of hermeneutics today, and a more complete criticism strategy can actually give a perspective on feeling and setting in the *Book of Songs* and make a whole new set of discussions.

Now that the concept of *xing* and *ying* became somewhat clearer, I will explore contemporary poetry that is not easy to interpret, such as Xia Yu’s (Hsia Yü) 夏宇 (1956-) and Gu Cheng’s 顧城 (1956–1993). I choose a poem by each author (*Talking with Animals II* 與動物密談二 and *Dealing with the World* 應世) and use the concept of *xing* and *ying* to speculate on the clues of each scene and the poet's mind.

In this way, *xing* and *ying* can become a part of our critical vocabulary, an entry point for poetry. However, the article involves a wide range of aspects. Generally, the *Book of Songs* experts rarely touch new poems, and they are also reluctant to touch some avant-garde and incomprehensible works; modern poetry scholars cite Western theories, and Chinese literary circles also use the ready-to-use vocabulary. To expose the ancient *xing* and the most contemporary poetry creations is not easy for both sides to adapt to.

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<sup>21</sup> See “Thinking the Meaning of Xing in the Creation of Modern Poetry”, p. 85. For a detailed explanation of the words in the three parts of the poem, please refer to the author's original text.

<sup>22</sup> Li Jingde, ed., *Zhu Zi Yu Lei*, Vol. 80, p. 5a.

## 2. Between *Fu*, *Bi*, *Xing* and the Linguistic Structure of Contemporary Poetry

The author insists that we should keep in mind only one simple concept: if ancient classics and contemporary experimental poems both can be appreciated by readers, there must be many common points among them. The differences that arise from the different age of poems lie only in appearance. In the Chinese literary world, the ancient and modern prose are already perceived to be intertwined, while the most criticized aspects of modern poetry are the grammatical changes. Therefore, in recent years, studying modern poetry the author gradually came to regarding the problems of grammar<sup>23</sup>.

However, the poetry grammar referred to here is not a study of Chinese grammar that has already appeared previously. The general linguists, dealing with things expressed in prose in ancient books, or local dialect problems, rarely study poetry. The vernacular used in new poetry has its convenience, instrumentality and analyticity. However, how should we carry on this ancient Han culture, when there are so many elegant and profound memories in the poetry's soul? In fact, it is very much in need of evolution. The modern poet is not afraid of hardships, nor is he ridiculed by misunderstanding and opens up bravely a strange and eccentric language road. Now it is a serious academic issue and it requires a lot of effort. Otherwise, we will continue to leave the poem aside and the sensuous world of this nation will eventually remain asleep.

In the Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi carefully divided the three hundred poems into the *bi*, *xing* and *fu* types, which caused controversy among different poets. However, he was clear about his own principle of sub-judgment. We can have another solution, but it is clear that the authors of the *Book of Songs* had three different imaginary directions. Compared to the vague theory of *Mao Zhuan* 毛傳 (“only exemplifies *xing* form” 獨標興體), Zhu Xi's three points are a sign of a great philosopher's understanding of the subject. Being good at understanding the *Book of Songs* does not necessarily mean following it, but if you do not touch the threshold, you can still have a bridge easing your way to distinguish the information that may be buried behind the poem through *bi*, *xing* and *fu*.

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<sup>23</sup> As for the study of poetry grammar, the author has realized the concept of “grammar” in the teaching and study of modern poetry for more than ten years and was influenced greatly by a series of works by Ye Weilian 葉維廉 (1937-) on the comparison of Eastern and Western poetics. Ye compared the Western poetry grammar with Chinese classical poetry and immediately read out their different messages. However, Ye did not further study the problems of Chinese modern poetry grammar and Western poetry, and would not think of the idea that modern poets have different grammar. For related research, see my works “The Contribution of Taiwan Modern Poetry to the Vernacular Structure” 臺灣現代詩在白話結構上的貢獻, *Genesis* 創世紀, 140-141 (October 2004), pp. 99-110, “Inheritance and Transformation of the Language Structure of New Poetry” 新詩語言結構的傳承與變形, *Journal of Chengda Chinese Faculty* 成大中文學報, No. 15 (December 2006), pp. 179-197.

Through many years of modern poetry research in Taiwan, the author discovered: the most difficult thing for readers to adapt is the syntax of poetry, and each poet always has his or her own style, which creates a way of expression, especially in Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s. Because of the literary and art policy in the Chinese mainland, the modernization of language in the development of new poetry naturally flowed into this relatively free land of Taiwan. *Genesis* 創世紀, *Blue Star* 藍星, *Modern Poetry* 現代詩 and even *Bamboo Hat* 笠 journals, each presenting a certain axis around a group of large and small poets, executed different language experiments. They have made countless arguments on the tradition of poetry and Westernization, comprehensibility and eccentricity. After decades of precipitation, they have finally left a trace of multifaceted language exploration in Ji Xian 紀弦, Zheng Chouyu 鄭愁予, Yu Guangzhong 余光中, Yang Mu 楊牧, Lin Hengtai 林亨泰, Luo Fu 洛夫, Shang Qin 商禽, Ya Xian 痲弦, Zhou Mengdie 周夢蝶, and lesser known Huang Hesheng 黃荷生<sup>24</sup>. Some poems are easier to understand, and some poems are difficult, but this does not affect their beauty. Reread these differences that you don't understand or understand. If you look at the traditional poetry clues, the problem will be clearer. The boundary and source of the image? Syntax inheritance or breakthrough? The cultural inclination of the theme and allusions? What is familiar in the tradition? What is the tradition? Who is from the West? Which originated from the West and then turned again? Or the industrial knowledge and scientific knowledge of the new city into poetry? If you pull out a long line of various problems and slowly take care of it, it is not necessarily difficult to understand.

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<sup>24</sup> Huang Hesheng (1938-), born in Taipei, was the first member to join the modernist group of Ji Xian. In 1956, at the age of seventeen (being a “successful high school” student), he published the poetry collection *Tactile Life* 觸覺生. It was referred to by the poetry peers as “I don't understand, I don't know what to say”. At the age of nineteen, he stopped writing. One year after the publication of the collection of poems, the work was published in Hong Kong, *The New Trend of Literature and Art* 文藝新潮. On the 40th anniversary of the *Modern Poetry* 現代詩 in 1993, the editor-in-chief Hong Hong 鴻鴻 visited Hong Kong to acquire these works and re-published the original poetry collection. The author has written two papers on Huang Hesheng: “Slanted Boys” 傾斜的少年 published on the 40th Anniversary of *Modern Poetry* in July 1993; another was “An Example of the Interpretation Method of ‘Unfamiliar Poetry’ – An Analysis of Huang Hesheng's Works” 〈「難懂的詩」解讀方法示例——黃荷生作品析論〉, published in the *Modern Literature Conference* 現代文學會議 of the Cultural University proceedings in May 1993.

into poetry? If you pull out a long line of various problems and slowly take care of them, it is not necessarily difficult to understand.

The poets are somewhat biased towards creating a virtual scene, “changing the shape of the outside world” to express the mind/ heart<sup>25</sup>; some tend to obey the objective quotidian, or more familiar cultural allusions, choosing a more understandable plot. If the imagery mode is distinguished, it can really help the interpretation of the poem. However, there is a kind of poetry between the virtual and the real. On the surface, the daily objects are used, but the purpose is not to narrate according to the physical clues, but to use a physical object or another real object to juxtapose the thoughts in the poet's mind. Xia Yu's language is the most representative of this kind of poetry that has been influential in the 1980s. Many young poets in Taiwan use this type of syntax.

The “virtual” and the “real” in the above-mentioned classification of poems and the third type of the “juxtaposition of the virtual and the real” are relative, the three coexist and challenge each other. In poetic studies, we see that excellent poets can come up with a special view of the world. There is no non-imagined reality, and “virtual” is also the projection of the world (otherwise, this “virtual” is hard to resonate), but in terms of the use of “images” in poetry, there can be so-called false and real differences<sup>26</sup>.

Shifting a bit away from the above three classifications, let's look back at the Song Zhu Xi, who broke the ambiguity of the predecessors and divided the entire *Book of Songs* into three categories, was it to help the poem or hurt the poem? At this point, we might realize that Zhu Xi faced the pressure of the traditional study; he had to explain the structure of the language imagination, in order to facilitate the cracking of some myths. The works of the *Book of Songs* have been edited by Confucius (551–479 B.C.). Being divided into three categories or only one category does not damage their value. Nevertheless, what about the new poetry since the vernacular movement today? Must we rely on things that are familiar to us in our heads? What if

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<sup>25</sup> Regarding the “deformation” of language, the author used Luo Fu 洛夫 and Huang Hesheng from the 1960s as the main examples, and later shifted to Tang Juan 唐捐 and Ling Yu 零雨 from the 1990s. I wrote two papers: “Discussing The Problem of ‘Transformation’ in Modern Poetry from the Classical Perspective” 在古典之旁辨解現代詩的「變形」問題 // *Genesis* 創世紀 No. 128 (September 2001), pp. 114-132; “On the Deformation Model of Taiwan's New Generation of Poets” 論臺灣新一代詩人的變形模式, *Journal of Zhongshan Humanities* 中山人文學報, No. 13 (2001 October), pp. 85-101.

<sup>26</sup> The above three paragraphs discuss the text, which is a brief introduction of the author's academic ideas for many years. It may be difficult for the reader to understand. In addition to the above-mentioned “deformation” series of papers, you can also refer to another paper, which is: “*Fu* Body Aesthetics Exploration – the Depth of Existence of the ‘Presentation’ Domain of Gu Cheng’s Poetry” 〈「賦」體美學探討系列之一——顧城詩「呈現」界域的存在深度, *Contemporary Poetics* 當代詩學, No. 1 (April 2005), pp. 181-201. In the third paragraph, the distinction between “virtual” and “real” is actually the difference between the “quotidian” and the “inner reinvention” in the image of poetry. For example, Huang Hesheng's *Touch of the Door* 門的觸覺 is an example of poetic imagery. The author calls it the example of the “virtual”. Xia Yu's *Mystery Experience* 神秘經驗 can be called “real”. However, the division of the two is entirely for the convenience of research.

you are not familiar with future indicators? Not familiar with things that have more essential value<sup>27</sup>? Especially in the process of modernization or westernization, what is the need for clarification in the body of Chinese culture?

These academic issues may take years to resolve. In particular, Chinese Philology faces a rapidly changing Chinese society. The study of ancient classics requires a detailed plan for energy conversion. The author can only find a way in the field of modern poetry that may make the ancient and modern no longer separate. The interpretation of Zhu Xi's *fu*, *bi*, *xing* is to classify the imaginary structure of the vast modern poetry language with the three concepts of “narrative”, “deformation” and “correspondence”. This is obviously a taxonomy that is bold and will cause all poets to object. The creators innocently express the poetry of the heart, and who of them wants to become a poet of “some kind”? However, in the vast sea of poetry, we have observed that there is indeed a “class” and group taxonomy and that there are groups close to each other. If we study it in depth, we may connect with tradition and explore some deep thoughts, and even a self-adjusting ability that is born through interacting with great cultural differences. In adaptation, it is possible to regain access to the source of cultural vitality.

In the period of the *Book of Songs*, some poems already relied on three principles. Some poems are difficult to judge, and they are more likely to appear in the same category. However, how can they be judged in modern poetry? And to say that a poet belongs to a certain class is also logically unreasonable. Nevertheless, if we look at the overall style, especially in a different form of different styles, even extended to thirty years, and another thirty years, then many messages can be naturally presented. Therefore, the “narrative”, “deformation” and “correspondence”, the three language styles are relative, because there are other “classes” on the side. Generally speaking, the forms of *bi* and “deformation” were more abundant in Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s. *Xing* and “correspondence” were extended to the 1980s and 1990s. Especially Xia Yu, who made the grammar of “correspondence” evolve to a considerable height. As for the *fu* and “narrative” categories, there are poets who have worked hard in the early and late stages. If you look at that line again, you can see that the mainland had a lot of *fu* poems since the 1990s. This article is to clarify the grammatical and aesthetic status of “correspondence”, especially in the evolution of Taiwanese poet Xia Yu in the 1980s.

### 3. The Concept of “Correspondence” and the Pursuit of *Xing* in Xia Yu's Poetry

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<sup>27</sup> Here, some poems that are alleged to be “uncomfortable” are actually grammatically incompatible with the tastes of the people. However, if they are the result of the aesthetic precipitation of the poet's pursuit for a long time, they should not be ignored because of being “difficult to understand”. If the judge decides that it is meaningless, there should be a sufficient explanation thread. Moreover, the rude judgment is often easy to stifle young creative power. Huang Hesheng's stop at the age of 19 is an example.

Xia Yu published the first collection of *Memorandum* 備忘錄 in 1984. Over the past twenty years, she has influenced a generation of young people<sup>28</sup>. Advertising copywriting in Taiwan, popular lyrics always meet the shadow of Xia Yu's language style. Looking at the comments on Xia Yu, we see that they go in three directions: one considers her to be a model of post-modern social message<sup>29</sup>; second, the best endorsement of female subject consciousness<sup>30</sup>; and the third are just appreciation texts from the poet's peers. However, the subversion of the patriarchal society by the female subject often falls into one of the post-modern social phenomena. Therefore, in addition to the resonating with a number of other poets on their different degrees of writing, it is necessary to explain the phenomenon of Xia Yu's popularity. Generally speaking, she touched a new generation. In the past twenty years, Taiwan has gradually entered a post-modern society.

A poet who has a high degree of self-consciousness in writing, like Xia Yu, exploring purely from the perspective of social issues, still loses the important quality of poetry, although leading the way in poetry. So, for example, Luo Zhicheng 羅智成, uses another wonderful image to describe the feeling of reading Xia Yu's poetry: "It's a bit like being a pilot who is invited to test a new type of aircraft. When he arrives at the scene, he sees a cockpit that is too small to accommodate, an authentic flying saucer. And this makes your rich experience and theory look

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<sup>28</sup> Xia Yu has four collections of poetry, all of which were published at her own expense and issued by Taipei Tangshan Publishing House 唐山出版社. From the material of the paper to the cover picture, all was designed by Xia Yu herself. *Memorandum* was published in 1984, and *Ventriloquism* 腹語術 was published in 1991. *Rub. Indescribable* 摩擦. 無以名狀 was published in 1995 and *Salsa* was published in 1999. In addition, *Xia Yu More Chaos Band* was published in 2002 in CD form. It presents thirteen poems and fragments from *Salsa*. Each poem is combined with a tune performed by a different underground orchestra, and Xia Yu herself reads out the verse. There is also *Poetry Now* 現在詩 No. 2 (June 2003), "The Manuscript Must be Published" 來稿必登, which is the expression of Xia Yu's concept. The content of this issue are the poems submitted to the journal within two weeks (all submissions were accepted) and the editor is a virtual position. The design resembles a pink phone book.

How does the younger generation relate to Xia Yu? No one has written on this topic so far. Many younger poets like Xia Yu, but do not express it clearly, however, they are deeply attracted to her verse. For example, Yan Ailin 顏艾琳 wrote a piece on a "queer relationship" with Xia Yu's poetry (Yan Ailin, "Because of Poetry, I Have a Queer Relationship with Xia Yu" 因為詩, 我與夏宇同性戀, *Her (Other) Side* 她方, Taipei: Lien Publishing Enterprise 聯經出版事業公司, 2004, pp. 65-67). Another young poet, Chen Boling 陳柏伶 wrote a Master thesis "As Far as We Don't Know – Xia Yu's Poetry Research" 據我們所不知的——夏宇詩研究 (Tainan: Master's thesis of the Institute of Chinese Literature at the Chengong University, 2003). Although it is not in line with general research standards, it is influenced by her vivid poetry. More examples need to be collected.

<sup>29</sup> For example, Meng Fan 孟樊, "Super-avant-garde Voices – Comment on Xia Yu's Poems" 超前衛的聲音——評夏宇的詩, *Taipei Review* 臺北評論 No. 4 (March 1998), pp. 130-145; Liao Xianhao 廖咸浩, "Materialistic Rebellion – Xia Yu's 'Negative Poetry' in the Context of Literary History, Feminism and Postmodernism" 物質主義的叛變——從文學史、女性化、後現代之脈絡看夏宇的「陰性詩」, in *Contemporary Taiwan Women's Literature* 當代臺灣女性文學論 (Taipei: Times Cultural Publishing Company 時報文化出版公司, 1993), pp. 237-276.

<sup>30</sup> For example, Zhong Ling 鍾玲, "Xia Yu's Spirit of the Times" 夏宇的時代精神, *Modern Poetry* 現代詩, No. 13 (December 1988), pp. 7-11. Michelle Yeh 奚密: "Xia Yu's Female Poetics" 夏宇的女性詩學, in *The Collection of Chinese Women and Literature* 中國婦女與文學論集 (Taipei: Daoxiang Publishing House, 1999).

very old...”<sup>31</sup>. Another example is the best-selling author Xi Murong 席慕蓉, who, shortly after the publication of *Salsa*, publicly expressed in the newspaper “I love Xia Yu”. “When she travels to outer space, no matter how dodging, whether it is fifty meters or 30,000 light years, she will hit or deliberately not hit my key points, causing me to cry suddenly when I am smiling. I never knew her personally. But she makes me feel extraordinary pain”<sup>32</sup>.

The use of the poetic imagery to describe a poem’s reading effect is quite subjective and influences the reader greatly. Li Guiyun 李癸雲, a scholar and a poet, uses her article “The Limitations and Possibilities of Modern Poetry Review” 現代詩評的侷限與可能<sup>33</sup> in trying to find a way to pass in between the two (between the huge social discourse and complete identity), but ends choosing the poetic to ease the gap between the words in the poem *Hug* 擁抱. Although she tries to explain every word, it cannot tell the maze of Xia Yu's verse.

The author believes that Xia Yu is a modern poet, and very few can read her poems with the rigorous angle of interpreting classical poetry. Every word of poetry seems to be a quotidian movement. It seems to be colloquial and has no allusions behind it. In fact, the sound and smell of each word, their weight and color are chosen in a highly rigorous fashion. Xia Yu’s way of breaking sentences and punctuation are extremely important. Since the publication of the first collection of *Memorandum* in 1986, it has been a quiet revolution of language in Taiwan.

#### A. Character of the Fresh World – Subverting the Predecessors' Language System

During the youth of Xia Yu, the style of Taiwanese poets has already taken shape. In this group of poetry stars, Xia Yu wanted to be a rebel, and she tried to find a way to completely avoid the already granted. Basing herself upon the modernist poets of the 1950s and 1960s, she carried out the transfer to the 1980s post-modern society, even if she did not mention this word, Xia Yu made a resolute and decisive turn. She avoided the style of the earlier authors as much as possible. This can be compared to the days of the martial law<sup>34</sup>, when Taiwan was slowly nurturing a society that had a sense of the global and no longer beard heavy historical burdens, where the subject and the external environment could interact flexibly. Therefore, when the new reality suddenly appeared in front of the eyes, the imagery in the poems abandoned the need to pursue the distant

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<sup>31</sup> In the reprint of *Rub. Indescribable*, Luo Zhicheng added a preface *Borders of Poetry* 詩的邊界.

<sup>32</sup> See Xi Murong, *The Lost Poetry Book* 迷途詩冊, Taipei: Round God Press 圓神出版社, 2002, pp. 96-97.

<sup>33</sup> Li Guiyun 李癸雲, “Unknown Dark Arrangement—Taking Xia Yu's *Hug* as an Example to Discuss the Limitations and Possibilities of Modern Poetry Review” 不可知的黑暗排列——以夏宇擁抱為例談現代詩評的侷限與可能, *Taiwan Poetics* 臺灣詩學 No. 6 (November 2005), pp. 179-191.

<sup>34</sup> Taiwan lifted the martial law on July 15th, 1987. Xia Yu mentioned it in *Ventriloquism* in the poem *Allegory* 寓言 (“the ban was lifted”).

other or the world of the virtual, ceased to look back at the allusions written in the books, but chose the real things encountered in front of these eyes and everyday simple words. Xia Yu is closer to the Chinese tradition of the “realistic” of the *Book of Songs* than the previous poets, closer to the “idea of extracting the image from physical objects that can be touched everywhere”. For example, writing about a lover: “He will help me finish the dumpling skin / the protein of the salted duck egg / the way he smokes is very good / he likes to tell jokes” (*Poet's Day* 詩人節)<sup>35</sup>; “He is sitting in the dark/ in glasses/ with a scent of camphor on his sweater” (*Archaeology* 考古學)<sup>36</sup>. In the *Picnic* 野餐, the realism of this “moment” is even more obvious<sup>37</sup>. When the father dies, one will generally miss his teachings and have serious and heavy feelings to cope with the issue of “death”, but the mood that really suits his 24-year-old daughter may not correspond to it. It is better to say, “My father is shaving his beard/ lip corners are already dark. / I can't bear to remind him / that he is dead” or remark on the funeral procession, “Give him a picnic in a barren highland”, “‘Life is nothing but bitterness’. / I lied. I am 24 years old”.

As for the famous sayings like “life is nothing but bitterness”, Xia Yu accurately conveys her own attitude – if there is no real feeling, it is a “lie”. For everything in front of you can be turned into poetry or you else can arrange false words. How does real life material appear in true form? This involves writing with the poet's eyes. The fun of poetry is to write a rare picture about the image of the father: “I understand, but I am afraid”. Moreover, the tension and drama of the verse is the thought that reality can only be like that. Everyone is busy sending the dead to the “highlands”, going to the picnic and returning. They leave out “him” – how familiar his body is, alone on the windy high ground. Strictly speaking, Xia Yu made good use of the “narrative” approach in the *Memorandum*. For example, she knows how to streamline and facilitate the plot. She resists the predecessors and creates a unique subject language system, which is not a distortion of the parts of speech (such as in Luo Fu)<sup>38</sup>, is not a long-distance search for the deep inner mystery (such as in Zhou Mengdie)<sup>39</sup>. She is close to the quotidian, revealing the tired or unreflective behavior of language, that is why *Memorandum* is so loved by the public.

As mentioned above, the scholar Chen Shixiang pointed out that the spirit of *xing* has the characteristic of the freshness due to the melody of the main theme. In the early works of the

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<sup>35</sup> See Xia Yu, *Memorandum*, p. 76.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 92.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 94-96.

<sup>38</sup> Luo Fu's *Death in a Stone Chamber* 石室之死亡 is a total of 64 poems, most of which can be seen in the various selections, but not completely. To read the full version, see Hou Ji's 侯吉 “Luo Fu's *Death in a Stone Chamber* and Related Important Comments” 洛夫石室之死亡及相關重要評論 (Taipei: Hanguang Cultural Enterprise 漢光文化事業公司, 1988). For the part-of-speech distortions see *Death in a Stone Chamber* 61, p. 68.

<sup>39</sup> Zhou Mengdie, *Grass of Revival* 還魂草 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Literary Book House 香港文藝書屋, 1969), the poem mentioned above is the final and the longest (p. 145).

*Memorandum*, it was really refreshing to be placed in the poetry of the 1980s. Xia Yu will turn the virtual reality into reality, transfer the ancient to the present, turn the sorrowful issues into those full of joy, and reinterpret the use of the allusions into the description of daily chores. It sweeps away the unrealistic, distorted words and melancholy temperament, bringing a fresh new world. In essence, it is close to the rise of the *xing*'s ethereal momentum.

Nevertheless, obviously, Xia Yu is not satisfied with the narrative technique of the *Memorandum*.

#### B. The Structural State of *Xing* and *Ying* – the Mutual Reference of the “Physical”

Borrowing the progress of the story to express an idea how is it possible to make it faster? Reduce the minor matter and focus on the central issues? In particular, when the content of the idea is biased towards the mind/ heart, rather than really expressing the interest of the story, it is possible to sharply cut the plot in progress. This immediately reminds me of the “montage” film editing method: the shots with a certain emotion will be juxtaposed, so that the pictures are not connected, leaving the audience to imagine all the rest. Xia Yu does not necessarily realize the film analogy, but we stand on the trajectory of the development of things and observe how the narrative techniques of *Memorandum* can become more cohesive and poetic. There is indeed a big jump in the expression in the second collection of poetry *Ventriloquism*.

As the story for the connection is reduced repeatedly, the rest is the most important message that cannot be erased, those sharp pictures, or just one picture. If the model is dismantled by *xing*, the former is a sentence (mostly a scene), and the latter is a sentence (more than a mood). In the vernacular sentence patterns, we are normally accustomed to coherent messages; comparing that to the state of the sentence 3000 years ago, we see that at that time, there was a fixed pattern of the same phonology and four-character sentence, which was not too awkward. However, in the vernacular verse, even with the same design, the gap seems to increase a lot, becomes strange, intriguing, see *Talking with Animals I*:

A About Greece.

(1) Greece is very boring and there are tourists everywhere.

But my purple shoes with green socks are valued.

(2) When I wake up every morning, I feel

The old body is no longer enough to load

The need for a new soul.

B About the thermometer.

They really put themselves in  
the thermometer, the head sticks out, consistent

- (1) Hanging to the left, the door  
Hidden, I glimpse their volley hanging faces  
are calm. Smooth glass tube
- (2) with a big scale, everyone has a different  
Counting, we call it the “the scale of sin”

A 關於希臘。

- (1) 希臘很無聊，到處都是觀光客，  
但是我的紫色皮鞋配上綠色襪子受到重視，  
當每天早上起床覺得
- (2) 舊有的軀殼再不足以裝載  
新的靈魂的需要。

B 關於溫度計。

- 他們真的把自己整個裝在  
溫度計裏，頭伸出來，一致
- (1) 往左邊垂下，門  
虛掩著，我窺見他們凌空懸掛 面容  
平靜。透明玻璃管上劃著
  - (2) 粗大的刻度，每個人擁有不同的  
計數，我們稱之為「罪惡的刻度」<sup>40</sup>

Such a poem is less likely to be understood as a connection between paragraphs and sections. However, it may be more clear to use the concepts of *xing* and *ying*. We try to divide the content into two major sections, A and B, both starting with “about...” constructions. It is conceivable that these two parts should be related. Now we will try to dismantle the concepts of *xing* and *ying*: *xing*: There are many tourists in Greece, *ying*: Greece has many thermometers (or tourists have many thermometers). The first paragraph A is also divided into two subsections: purple leather shoes and green socks are the *xing* part. As for the internal quality of this scene,

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<sup>40</sup> Xia Yu, *Ventriloquism* (Taipei: Tangshan Publishing House, 1991), pp. 22-23. There are four parts in *Talking to Animals*, all of which have different themes. The first one is "About Greece". The second one is "There is a family of nine towels hanging on the same wooden strip", the third "About the opposite side" and the fourth "About infidelity", if you want to explore again. Are these four themes related to the "animality" of human beings?

these “dressing up” illustrates the following *ying* sentence: the old body cannot get a new soul to start the morning. Let us talk about paragraph B now. The first scene is a *xing* sentence: They are all placed in the thermometer and hang down to the left; the following is a *ying* sentence: Everyone has a different count called “the scale of sin”.

When the larger *xing-ying* structure contains a small one in each paragraph, the poetry between the scene and the emotion swings a balanced rhythm. It is a poem that is very comfortable to read. Without disassembling it is generally not easy to enter its world, even possessing a habit of reading the vernacular verse.

It is unlikely that there will be such an old idea as *xing-ying* in Xia Yu’s mind, but the oriental people do love the real thing. Xia Yu grew up in the virtual age of modernism, but she goes the other way and returns, going back to the physical tradition familiar in daily life. Although the second section of the poem has a metaphorical composition, the reader can still imagine the whole description: it is shaped like a theater stage, and there are still some “real” features in the shape. Each time Xia Yu will respond to each scene, respond to the inside story of each scene, and the external and internal phases will be juxtaposed in parallel, without explanation in the middle, so that the readers will participate in the explanation, which will increase the interest of reading.

From everyday objects, such as in *Memorandum*, Xia Yu goes to presenting “things”, as in *Ventriloquism*. In her preface to the third collection of poems *Rub. Indescribable*, Xia Yu stated that she used the sentences and words cut out from the collection *Ventriloquism*, scattered them on the ground, then picked them up again and turned them into another collection of poems with a new arrangement. This can be called the first example of “conceptual poetry” in contemporary Taiwan poetry scene. She denied the process of making “poetry” in the past – first feeling, then generating ideas, merging into themes and developing verses. Nowadays, everything is full of words and is an established “image”. Regardless of whether the words are original adjectives, real words or imaginary words, they are all objects of self-sufficiency in the context of no involvement or objection. Moreover, Xia Yu uses them to order them about, how does she make one close to the other? How many new substances are born in close proximity? The poet enjoys this process akin to God’s displacement of all things. For the poet the “word” of everything is an absolute material. Every word gives birth to a world. This world overlaps with the other world and is infinite. This is the idea of the *Rub* poetry collection, but Xia Yu still does not dare to let the words go together by themselves, she just uses the words recognized in the vernacular, reorganizing them freely. However, this idea alone is enough to make the eyes of Chinese poetry wide open.

The composition of the poems combines long and short phrases. Because the titles are also drawn from the piles of words, the innate accidental character becomes the main theme. Therefore,

the whole content and the title are refracted, as in *The Problem of Morality* 道德的難題, which has only two lines:

still  
raised in a fish tank

仍然  
養在魚缸裡<sup>41</sup>

Another example is *Reading* 閱讀, which also has only two lines:

on the tip of the tongue  
a crab

舌尖上  
一隻蟹<sup>42</sup>

The title is *xing* and the text is *ying*. These short poems are more likely to catch the poet's thoughts. However, if the length is longer, you need to think it over<sup>43</sup>, like in poem *Mutual Envy* 互相嫉妒:

hidden wedges  
piece by piece  
constantly forked  
soaked in cold  
stacked  
tipping  
falling into the plural

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<sup>41</sup> See Xia Yu, *Rub. Indescribable* (Taipei: Tangshan Publishing House, 1995). This book has no page numbers.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> As for the title of the two poems and the short sentences of the text, it may be considered that the relationship is also a "metaphor". It can be viewed as follows: "The reading's ×× is like a crab on the tip of the tongue". For this "××", if you can find the reference point for the metaphor, there is a clear clue, but Xia Yu uses these verses just looking for a more ambiguous space. Then between the title and the poem, you have to use the *xing-ying* relationship to complete the effect of mutual referencing. That is to say, if you use the metaphor mode again, the *Mutual Envy* and *Postcard* will not be interpreted.

隱密楔形  
一塊一塊  
不斷分叉  
浸透著冰涼  
疊著  
傾翻  
陷入複數<sup>44</sup>

The first three sentences of the seven lines are shaped like this, the fourth sentence describes the temperature of touch, the fifth, sixth, seventh sentences resemble the dynamics of mathematics, and juxtaposed, standing next to the theme of “mutual envy”, become awkward. However, if they cite other topics, according to *xing-ying* rules, all the words may continue to turn out another possibility. Let us look at the poem *Postcard* 明信片:

not much time  
cautious little town  
not destroying each other  
going far away  
to break the glass  
nails transparent

時間不多  
謹慎的小城  
不無互相毀滅  
即將遠走  
打破玻璃  
指甲透明<sup>45</sup>

The first two sentences of the poem can be a group, the third sentence is an addition (because of the words “each other”), and it should be a separate group; the fourth, fifth, and sixth

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

sentences simultaneously express three kinds of behavior, which can be independent. Nevertheless, when they get together, they can also express a lot of meaning with the short hastiness of a “postcard”. The last sentence is the most meaningful, because it seems to be the most heterogeneous when it comes along with other events. However, readers can also associate it with the line of the previous sentence. For example, the urgency of walking away broke the things apart, and the “breaking of glass” also involved breaking the nails without noticing it? Maybe the nail (some important protective thing) disappeared and the finger is involved directly? Naked out the finger flesh? Is that the feeling of postcards travelling? The flesh is realistic, but only a part of it is seen.

“Going far away/ to break the glass/ nails transparent”, these pictures are now governed by the image of the “postcard”, so they refer to, or express the meaning of this postcard. Moreover, because of the independence of the words, they are not connected, the readers can participate freely in the process, and they enter the poem to create a plot. The poet provides only a scene (even a facet or a part of the scene), some movements, and the momentary image of the action in progress. So that the sentence is getting more and more streamlined. The pattern of *xing-ying* in the *Book of Songs* was not consciously observed in the early works of Xia Yu. However, under the constant exploration of the rules of art, the poet has changed the structure of *xing-ying* in her experiment. Every picture appears, whether it describes an action or a persona, with the characters being independent, not necessarily describing the scenery, but each time the things appear, corresponding to each other, they show a kind of mutual interest, refracting together. For example, there is a connection between the title and the meaning of the text, between the sentences inside the text, that can be combined with any other sentence to produce meaning.

If Xia Yu's poetry was originally similar to *xing-ying*, this stage now is there to expand the concept of *xing-ying*, and the ancient *xing* meaning is not easy to be understood by modern people, so we use another modern term – “correspondence” – that summarizes this phenomenon.

### C. Variants of *Xing-Ying* – The Truth of Constant Movement

In the state of constant “correspondence” of reciprocal refraction, is there a fixed idea in the poet's mind? Or do you really have some kind of embarrassing thoughts, and some ideas that transcend generality that should be expressed? In the four collections of Xia Yu starting from *Memorandum* to *Salsa*, there is no doubt that we can find the symbols of “negative” and “untrue” statements everywhere. If we use “negative aesthetics” as the main topic of Xia Yu's oeuvre, we see that she is more into it than a lot of other poets, and it is easy to collect a lot of forms.

Nevertheless, the argument we are trying to raise here is in the “negation”, in what Xia Yu might want to say through it.

There are a number of poems in *Ventriloquism* where Xia Yu uses an astonishing form to establish an area that she may recognize. As in *The Missing Image* 失蹤的象<sup>46</sup>, she used the images to replace the original words; in the *Spiritism Session III* 降靈會Ⅲ<sup>47</sup>, she created a large number of words that were rejoined by different radicals. *Irmidis Language Family* 伊爾米弟索語系<sup>48</sup> is a dream about an unexisting language “for the part of human nature that has not been penetrated by any language system”. *The Hidden Queen and Her Invisible City* 隱匿的王后和她不可見的城市<sup>49</sup>, the queen's travel plan is: “(The purpose is unknown but will turn right at every crossroad)”. In the first of the three poems in *Beginning* 開始, she writes: “(I stand on the heart of the flower, the right arm goes to the right, multiplied by 10 million times, the place where the middle fingertips are about to touch, in fact, that is the place I really want to go.)”. The final sentence reads like this, “There are countless rains that are wet /in the reflection of the glass / we clearly encountered / and could not begin”<sup>50</sup>.

Among these verses, there is a world that we are almost aware of, but that is not easy to appear before us. The philosophical taste in Xia Yu's poetry is actually stronger than in other poets. Generally speaking, the playful attitude, or the discussion of women or love, does not lie at the core of it. In 1997, the author wrote an article “How to See Thoughts in Poetry” 如何在詩中看見思想, juxtaposing Xia Yu and Luo Zhicheng. They both belong to poets with “inspiration”. This presents a way to interpret Xia Yu's “presentity” and “mobility”. “Xia Yu's ‘presentity’ teaches us to get rid of the unsuitable habits of the body. It is the unconscious discomfort that comes from long-term social customs or cultural old shells”. As for “mobility”, it goes like this: “She reveals how to enter one thing from another. It is constantly rolling and slipping. We move forward without having to have a strong and huge will to overcome all things (think of Luo Zhicheng), but you can sit and watch the changes, the things themselves will interlace the language, and will send us the will”<sup>51</sup>.

After the above two traits, another concept is now proposed: “The truth in constant movement”, it is a deeper revelation: In the case of Xia Yu's repeated negation (moving), perhaps

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<sup>46</sup> See Xia Yu, *Ventriloquism*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 52.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, pp. 38-40.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, pp. 83-87.

<sup>51</sup> The original text was presented on the Third Modern Poetry Conference in Changhua Normal University in Taiwan. Later it was published in the book: *The Opportunity for Creation* 創作的契機, pp. 143-169.

there is actually a world of truth that we are unaware of in another dimension.. I will quote Xia Yu's own statement first.

In the interview with Wan Xuting 萬胥亭 placed at the end of *Ventriloquism*, she said that since she was a child, she felt that the world was split into two, one part being the textual and the other one being non-literal. She “has realized the two very different existences and has never believed in the so-called ‘realism’”. Later, I read in a book on science fiction literature, “I hope you can understand all the possible situations in a universe. In other words, if you are wearing black shoes now, then there are others worlds of ‘you’ wearing brown shoes, red shoes, white shoes”. Xia Yu saw this, and her reaction at that time was: “In a flash, drawing inferences about other cases from one instance, ready to go into action to find a refraction between words and reality”<sup>52</sup>.

Xia Yu admits that she is amazed by the fruit of Cézanne's paintings. Every stroke of his painting is beautiful, because it is full of the choice of mind, but on the surface it is still a fruit. Painting the mountain, he makes the San Vito completely different from every angle<sup>53</sup>. The poet realizes that the subject moves, the viewpoint moves, and the mind moves, and the object (“thing”) can be constantly updated and changed. The magnitude is as large as a person that can have all possible situations in all directions of the universe.

Using this concept to interpret her fourth collection of poems, *Salsa*, we see a dramatic increase in the number of images that are virtually described as staged ones. As she said in the poem *Continue/Continue/Continue* 繼續 / 繼續 / 繼續: “I am resonated by the lower-level monsters/ materials/ collecting signs/ finding the next body to be inlaid”<sup>54</sup>.

*Salsa* has a more complicated design than the past three collections: real life, virtual life, theater sets, and each picture appears at the same time through interpretation, meaning refraction, plus a free rearrangement of the words from *Rub. Indescribable*. This makes this poetry collection rich in poetry grammar. If the word “truth” is true, then Xia Yu uses countless other people in the poem, like in novels, drama and movies, to explore this aspect from various angles, but the voice of a lyrical subject is not silent, too. The purpose of Xia Yu is not to become someone else. Her purpose is to clearly convey the multi-angle refraction that she presents when she feels the conceiving of an idea. The following is a short poem (*Tending More to Existence* 更趨向存在) that can explain it:

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<sup>52</sup> Xia Yu, *Ventriloquism*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>53</sup> The above quoted Cézanne's painting concept is from Xia Yu, *Anti-hair Care* 逆毛撫摸 Section 3, *Rub.Indescribable*.

<sup>54</sup> Xia Yu, *Salsa* (Taipei: Tangshan Publishing House, 1999), p. 81.

- (1) everyone is constantly distracted by the “complete disappearance”  
I was covered in a black cloth bag on my head
- (2) being taken to the basement  
I heard someone say  
“okay, now I let you know where you are”  
the bag is off, I see the person who brought me.  
and not far from a window lit up in the window
- (3) another person is looking at me his expression  
lets me know very quickly that I am just passing through my life  
we will not use this kind of vision again  
to look at in the story
- (4) the lazy man bought a bunch of flowers to go home  
and started to clean the house relative to that vision’s
- (4) circle is infinitely and precisely expanding  
“tending more to existence”
- (6) I think about it, and immediately three people make love together.  
I decide to admit my mistake first
- (7) for those who have to make mistakes after all  
I am leaving  
and can't repeat the sound off-tune

- (1) 大家被「徹底消失」這件事不斷分心  
我在頭上被罩下黑色布袋
- (2) 被帶往地下室的遠方  
就聽到有人說  
「好了現在我讓你知道你在那裡。」  
布袋脫開我看到帶我來的人  
以及不遠一個窗口亮著 窗裡
- (3) 另一個人正在看著我 他的表情  
讓我很快知道我只是路過這一輩子  
我們不會再用這樣的眼光  
對視 像故事中的
- (4) 懶人因為買了一束花回家

而開始打掃屋子相對於那個眼光

- (5) 的圓周正無限精密地  
擴大如何「更趨向存在」
- (6) 我思忖難道當場並立刻三個人一起做愛  
我決定先認錯
- (7) 為那些終究要犯的錯  
我走音  
而且無法重複走過的音<sup>55</sup>

The first sentence of “complete disappearance” is very interesting in intertwining with the poetry. Is it that “complete disappearance” tends to exist, or is it because the concern will “completely disappear” and the state of continuous distraction tends to exist? Xia Yu only used a slight disagreement between the two sides. On the positive and negative sides, it was questioned (or pursued) that the “trend to existence” and other mundane things.

The dramatic character of the verses of (2) and (3) play out the meaning of “complete disappearance”, being taken to the basement (which may not be far away) (the basement in the mind can be very far away), and then “okay, now I let you know where you are” – as if it is “tending more to existence”.

After Xia Yu’s textual experiment in *Rub. Indescribable*, her simple statement is no longer a metaphor. There is no need for special collage (such as the above-mentioned Talking with Animals). The subtlety of semantics can reach both the positive and the negative with the effect of constant refraction. As in the (3), the man “is looking at me his expression/ lets me know very quickly that I am just passing through my life”, the poet suddenly jumps out of the role of this life, and thus enters (4) (another more ordinary life move), enters (5) (the unique idea of the author, observing the life); then enters (6) (ideas, feelings or reflections, not actions, and this post-modern atheistic “love making” action).

From taking off the bag to the ridiculousness of “three people making love together”, the trajectory of the story is not the way we are familiar with. However, entering a poem like *The Hidden Queen* 隱匿的皇后 (cited above), the autumn hiking plan is to turn left at “every intersection”, in that way, when you hit the intersection, you slip into the other side. You cannot say that there is no subject, but you are just slipping down, not knowing when it will end. In the verses of Xia Yu, the atmosphere of an era is revealed. It is not a specific image, or a statement

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, pp. 55-56.

that can be clearly stated, but a plot of a plot. The constant moving of the subject feels both numbing, scary and subtle.

At the end of the poem, “deciding to admit mistakes first” is to say that the mistake of “making love” is still wrong before being covered? The mistake is to make a crime after all, so “going off-tune” you cannot correct it if you go, and you cannot do it again. This is the end of the poem, is it “tending more to existence”? Every sentence and every episode of the whole poem contains the meaning of positive and negative repercussions and disappearance, so that the reader cannot hold it, but will not touch it. As for the truth, it is like a projection, such as a kaleidoscope. Its aura is hard to reach.

After reading this poem, let us go back to the concept of “the truth of constant movement”. In the structure of *xing-ying* three thousand years ago, readers always hope to read the inner reality of the lyrical subject through the “setting”. The “things” of the *Book of Songs* are complicated and beautiful, and they all change for the inner existence of the “man”. Among them, there are some stable things.

Today, along the *xing-ying* clues to see Xia Yu’s poetry, after the refinement of *Ventriloquism*, wilder experiments of the *Rub. Indescribable*, in the composition of *Salsa* it is difficult to distinguish which is the main one, or in other words the *xing-ying* picture has lost its original identity. Each group of words can *xing* other ideas, and is also *yinged* by the meaning of other words. In this way, all verses are independent, moving, colliding, and combining. Sometimes, even each sentence can be split into two opposite sides: that is, as the first sentence of the poem “everyone is constantly distracted by the ‘complete disappearance’”.

If there is a truth, “it may only exist in a moment”. As for the truth and the meaning of the plot, once they are grasped, they are all sliding, never ending. Every time the background moves, the meaning inside must be updated. Try the last four lines in another poem *Continue to Talk about Boredom* 繼續討論厭煩 from *Salsa* and we will make a concluding remark for this section:

who is closer to a perfect bathroom  
who is comparing better to the bathtub  
you can't judge that ecstasy or boredom  
who is the axis who is spinning

誰更接近一間完美的浴室  
誰比較是浴缸  
你不能判斷那狂喜或厭煩

Can ecstasy or boredom be the same? Who is the axis who is spinning? In a word, the difference can be used as a transformational state of the *xing-ying* of the *Book of Songs* when it is precipitated into the poet's head in the 21st century.

#### 4. Conclusion – *Xing*, “Correspondence” and Postmodern

When referring to the tradition of Chinese poetry, most people (including foreign sinologists) immediately think of Tang poetry, the scenes in Tang poetry, and the connection between the heart / mind and the object, blending like water and milk. However, back in the era of the *Book of Songs*, the following scenes of the above examples appeared side by side, clearly indicating that they were not blended. Because the poet had this (feeling) in his heart, he unexpectedly met the (object). Such a structure is like uncovering the original appearance of the scene. Rereading the *Book of Songs* today is equivalent to punctuating this tradition, the mysterious source of consciously moving towards this.

The scenery and people in the *Book of Songs*, the enormous energy generated by their mutual rejuvenation, constantly stunned the ancient readers of the book, and they could only admire its god-like value (because Confucius edited it). What was it like? Today, new criticism can be used, and the vernacular words of accurate analysis can be explained. In addition to the interlaced image of words, the boundary between the outside and the inside, the wide-angle lens that can be learned from anthropology, the study of various scenes in the *xing* style, or the movement of *xing* – all kinds of directions may be huge poetic issues. The material is ancient, but the revelation of poetics can be contemporary or even future.

In order to solve the maze of modern poetry grammar, the author borrows the three-point method of *fu*, *bi*, and *xing* from the Song Dynasty. It is the linguistic structure of various poets (also known as the reaction mode of the poet's imaginary thinking). It is classified into narrative, transformation, and correspondence. These three classes are relative statements, and all kinds of other types must exist to be clearer about their content.

This article is a glimpse of the characteristics of Xia Yu's poetry along the meaning of *xing*. From the four collections of Xia Yu, the most cited one is the *Memorandum*. The later three books, although each time caused a sensation, has gradually become difficult to understand. If you always

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

use the “postmodern” ready-made connotation, it seems that the average critic cannot easily enter the poem text of *Salsa*.

If the term “postmodern” is really the label of our time, its connotation is also due to the participation of all ethnic groups, and the integration of various traits. In addition to diligently studying Western classics, the Chinese academic community may need to use the precious principles of post-modernity – reviewing and re-seeking its own roots, revealing the parts of the nation that are never banned, thus enriching the post-modern voice.

Poets certainly do not write poems based on ideas. Therefore, if you read the poem text carefully, you can find the atmosphere, distinguish the mind, and try to find some rare cultural revelations. A good poet sometimes unconsciously writes about the state of the future world, with far-reaching influences. However, if there is no way to enter the poetry language, then how to use the big discourse without doing the impossible as one who climbs a tree to catch fish?

The spiritual state of *xing* poetry, merged into the connotation of postmodern poetry (or various art), may be a more meaningful study. Only one analysis, although Xia Yu has its representativeness, is very limited. Therefore, this article is only like a concept, and expects that we will have no exact results.

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# **Modelling of Art Space in Modern Russian Poetry Written under the Influence of Chinese Culture**

## **(in poetry of Natalia Azarova, Alexander Skidan, Nikolay Zvyagintsev, and Alexey Alexandrov)**

The author of this article has already touched upon the theme of influence of Chinese culture on modern Russian poetry. The paper, which analysed poems by Alexander Skidan, Natalia Azarova, Alexander Ulanov, and Vladimir Aristov, demonstrated how modern Russian poets, being interested in Chinese culture, tend to balance between European and Eastern worldviews. However, they accept the possibilities provided by Chinese poetry not as exotic one, but as organic. One of the most important planes for creating a sculpture of a poem that underwent Chinese influence is the plane between verbal motifs and allusions. When the preverbal, verbal, and post-verbal exist at the same time the artistic reality both sounding and simultaneously visible is born under the influence of Chinese culture.

The continuation of the research remains highly relevant. The emphasis is on the deep levels of the reception of Chinese culture by modern Russian poets, and for me one of such aspects is the optics of a work, namely the modelling of artistic space by the poets. While the surface, fluid layers of a motivational field and problematics can be deceptive, the artistic space, which permeates the whole work with mental paradigms, is informative, reliable, and conceptual.

Studies of Chinese literature and culture<sup>1</sup> include research on artistic space, based mostly on Chinese fine arts<sup>2</sup>. It makes it easier to understand the language of poetry with its volume and complex optics.

The contemplation of Chinese works of fine arts (frescoes, scrolls, sculptures) allows seeing one picture as several ones simultaneously, trains the muscles of multi-perspective vision. Buddhas and botchisattvas on the same canvas might be depicted respectfully, from an upward point of view, and other characters at eye level or from a downward point of view. The viewer can not only look in different eyepieces of a binocular simultaneously, but also frame the image many times. The image changes its contours right in front of the viewer's eyes, because its form is open, the *qi*

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<sup>1</sup> I. Alimov, M. Kravtsova. *Istoriya kitayskoy klassicheskoy literatury s drevnosti i do XIII v.: poeziya, proza* [The History of Chinese Classical Literature from Antiquity to the 13th Century: Poetry, Prose]. St. Petersburg: Petersburg Oriental Studies, 2014; *Duhovnaja kul'tura Kitaja. Tom 3: Literatura, jazyk, pis'mennost'* [The spiritual culture of China. Volume 3: Literature, language, writing]. Moscow, IFES, 2008; Lisevich I.S. *Mozaika drevnekitayskoy kul'tury* [Mosaic of ancient Chinese culture]. Moscow, Vostochnaya literature, 2010; Sokolov-Remizov S.N. *Literatura. Kalligrafiya. Zhivopis'* [Literature. Calligraphy. Painting]. Moscow, Nauka, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> Belozeroва V.G. Prostranstvennyye postroyeniya v kitayskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve ot Khan' do Tan [Spatial constructions in Chinese art from Han to Tang]. *Sinologija.ru* [Sinology.ru]. URL: <http://www.synologia.ru>. Accessed June 1, 2018.

energy moves freely along the meridians of the artistic space. The distance between the subject and the object is relative.

Thanks to its visual character, literature is capable of creating an artistic space, showing it from different points of view and in different types of perspectives. The problem of artistic space was developed in the works of M. Bakhtin (as a chronotope problem, later supported by other scholars, in close connection with artistic time), P. Florensky (on the basis of fine arts taking into account heavenly space), B. Uspensky, Vyach. Ivanov, N. Tamarchenko, S. Brojtman, V. Tyupa, D. Magomedova and other scholars<sup>3</sup>. The efforts of researchers have been aimed at finding the internal, deep structure of a work, which permeates composition, architectonics, subject-object organisation, and other systems of the work. P. Florensky, who also wrote about heavenly, subtle spaces, believed that "the problem of space lies at the centre of world view in all the systems of thought that have ever arisen and predetermines the constitution of the whole system"<sup>4</sup>. Following the Florensky's formula "world view – space view" deep connections within the work as a whole could be seen in the artistic landscape of the work.

The visual capabilities of literature are manifold. A poet can show linear, reverse, axonometric, aerial, and other types of perspective as well as create a combination of perspectives on a verbal canvas. Let us give examples of types of perspective in painting. Due to the reverse perspective of the *Trinity* by Andrei Rublev the sacred images stream into it, gathering into a pencil of rays when the viewer steps farther back from the picture. Examples of linear perspectives in painting are "Vladimirka" by Isaac Levitan and "The Road in the Rye" by Ivan Shishkin.

An example of prevailing linear and aerial perspectives in verses:

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<sup>3</sup> Bahtin M.M. *Formy vremeni i hronotopa v romane. Oчерki po istoricheskoy pojetike* [Forms of time and chronotope in a novel. Essays on historical poetics]. Bahtin M. M. *Voprosy literatury i jestetiki*. Moscow, Hudozhestvennaya literatura, 1975. Pp. 234-407; Ivanov Vyach. *Struktura stihotvorenija Hlebnikova «Menja pronosjat na slonovyh...»* [The structure of Khlebnikov's poem "They carry me on the elephant ..."]. *Russkaja slovesnost': Ot teorii slovesnosti k strukture teksta: Antologija*. Pod obshh. red. V.P. Neroznaka. Moscow, 1997. Pp. 245-257; Florenskij A.A. *Analiz prostranstvennosti v hudozhestvenno-izobrazitel'nyh proizvedenijah* [Analysis of spatiality in artistic works.]. Moscow, 1993; Uspenskij B.A. *Pojetika kompozicii. Struktura hudozhestvennogo teksta i tipologija kompozicionnoj formy* [Poetics of composition. The structure of the artistic text and the typology of the compositional form]. Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1970; Teorija literatury [Theory of Literature]: Textbook in 2 vol. Pod red. N.D. Tamarchenko. Vol. 1. N.D. Tamarchenko, V.I. Tjupa, S.N. Brojtman. *Teorija hudozhestvennogo diskursa. Teoreticheskaja pojetika* [Theory of artistic discourse. Theoretical Poetics]. Moscow, Izdatel'skij centr «Akademija», 2004; Tjupa V.I. *Analitika hudozhestvennogo (Vvedenie v literaturovedcheskij analiz)* [Analytics of the artistic (Introduction to literary analysis)]. Moscow, Labirint, RGGU, 2001; Brojtman S.N., Magomedova D.M. *Analiz hudozhestvennogo teksta. Liricheskoe proizvedenie* [Analysis of the artistic text. Lyrical work.]. Moscow, 2005; Gjol'c K. *Teorii avtora v vostochnoevropejskoj filologii v XX v.* [Theories of the author in Eastern European philology in the 20th century]. *Narratorium. Mezhdisciplinarnyj zhurnal* [Narratorium. Interdisciplinary journal]. 2015. № 1 (8). URL: <http://narratorium.ru>. Accessed May 25 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Florenskij P.A. *Analiz prostranstvennosti v hudozhestvenno-izobrazitel'nyh proizvedenijah* [The analysis of spatiality in artistic works.]. Moscow, 1993.

It can be heard how they brush their belly against  
The roof, [and] are floating so low in the sky.  
This is like their network version:  
Does not stay online even a dozen minutes.  
Stretch like a facebook newsfeed  
From the top floors [they] already had  
Pluck out swan fluff for the summer,  
Thrown half a stick of fresh yeast,  
To pour a pocket full of gears,  
Then to fill an empty canister.  
Sluggishly neighbours shout not having enough sleep,  
But get back to bed to their wives.  
That's it, the cavalcade have flowed east,  
Leaving shreds on the antenna bars.  
It can be seen how the tail of the air reptile  
Had become entangled in thoughts, like Montaigne<sup>5</sup>.

(Alexey Alexandrov. "It can be heard how they brush their belly against ...")<sup>6</sup>

An example of a prevailing reverse perspective in poetry:

## CRIMEA

You're standing on one leg, zipping up a sandal,

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<sup>5</sup> Aleksandrov A. «Slyshno, kak brjuhom oni zadevajut...» ["You can hear how they brush their belly against ..."] // *Vozdukh. Zhurnal poezii [Vozdukh. Magazine of Poetry]*. 2017. № 1.

<sup>6</sup> Слышно, как брюхом они задевают  
Кровлю, так низко по небу плывут.  
Это как версия их сетевая —  
Не провисит и десятка минут.  
Тянутся, словно фейсбучная лента,  
С верхних успели уже этажей  
Выщипать пух лебединый на лето,  
Бросить полпалочки свежих дрожжей,  
Полный карман шестерёнок насыпать,  
Следом пустую канистру набрать.  
Вяло соседи кричат с недосыпа,  
Но возвращаются к жёнам в кровать.  
Всё, уткнула на восток кавалькада,  
Ключья оставив на прутьях антенн.  
Видно, как хвост у воздушного гада  
В мыслях запутался, словно Монтень.

and I see an oil bush, and then a magnetic one,  
and orbits of objects, coupled cautiously, -  
whoever moves their pupil will bring down the lizard as if with prayer.<sup>7</sup>

The sea snaps a rotary switch of combs, and will be placed  
differently a small group of flies, and if you turn steeper -  
you will meet with khan, [there are] two long-shankled birds with him,  
he goes through the axis of rotation, like a heap of

scrap glass. Poppies blister in soils,  
and gapers - to run through the stone to the Judgement.  
But the launch of rotation and initial accuracy of blood  
cause such admiration, that those petrified - will be saved!<sup>8</sup>

(Alexey Parschikov. Crimea)

Similar example of things getting closer, their expansion as the viewer's distance from the imaginary canvas increases, is seen in Herman Vlasov's works:

\* \* \*

without both of you as without the right words  
everything else is too incomprehensible  
where is the fabric and where is the canvas the weft and the seam  
ceruse minium oil spots<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ты стоишь на одной ноге, застёгивая босоножку,  
и я вижу куст масличный, а потом – магнитный,  
и орбиты предметов, сцепленные осторожно, –  
кто зрачком шевельнёт, свергнет ящерку, как молитвой.  
Щёлкает море пакетником гребней, и разместится  
иначе мушинная группка, а повернись круче –  
встретишься с ханом, с ним две голенастые птицы,  
он оси вращения перебирает, как куча  
стеклянного боя. Пузырятся маки в почвах,  
а ротозеям – сквозь камень бежать на Суд.  
Но запуск вращения и крови исходная точность  
так восхищают, что остолбеневших – спасут!

<sup>8</sup> Parshnikov A. *Figury intuicii* [Figures of intuition]. Moscow, Moskovskij rabochij, 1989. P. 26.

<sup>9</sup> без вас обоих как без верных слов  
все остальное слишком непонятно  
где ткань а где канва уток и шов

and finally April grace  
outer shine call of the sly pipe  
and I risk to joyfully wander  
like kurosawa on van gogh's canvas

with you even the seconds are not that fast  
arm-in-arm at times then separately sisters-fish  
grass trees stars and fires  
could settle in one palm

and the street which turret is sharp  
and the twisted ladder not Jacob's  
keep you from fiction sister  
silver gold fish<sup>10</sup>

(German Vlasov. "Without both of you, as if without the right words ...")

The filigree working with visual planes of a work, with transitions from creating one level of perception to creating another allows the poet to reach sonar depths in his works. Meanwhile an author who is only able to report creates an image, for example, as in a convex mirror, imaginary, direct, reduced. To grow up to the co-creation in poetry and to show the real and infinite, it is important to change the angle of view, placing the object as if in a gallery of mirrors and trying to return the reflected thing to the world. Compare the reflections in the Christmas ball and in the gallery of mirrors. Poetry that is 'narrating', reporting', paradoxically, has greater disturbances and distortions than poetry that is creative, indirect, and volumetric, and it is not capable of overcoming

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белила сурик масляные пятна  
и наконец апреля благодать  
наружный блеск зов дудочки лукавой  
и я рискую весело блуждать  
как по холсту ван гога кurosава  
а с вами и секунды небыстры  
то под руку то порознь сестры-рыбы  
трава деревья звезды и костры  
в одну ладонь устроиться могли бы  
и улица чья башенка остра  
и лестница не якова витая  
храни тебя от вымыслов сестра  
серебряная рыба золотая

<sup>10</sup> Vlasov G. Cerebrjanaja ryba zolotaja [Silver fish gold]. *Interpojezija. Mezhdunarodnyj zhurnal poezii*. 2009. № 2

the possibilities of spherical mirrors. It is enough to compare, for example, the intentions of Kipling (this is a high level direct message poetry) and Pound (a high level of 'complex poetry'). The imaginary, direct, and reduced image in 'not indirect' poetry, similar to the poetry of Asadov, arises regardless of the distance at which the object is located, the image is always behind a mirror. The reader is deprived of the opportunity to enter the aura<sup>11</sup> of the work, because the optics introduces distortions. The object of the image is available only as a message about it. The biographical author does not let (is unable to let) the aura to radiate. Such literature uses its visual capabilities to a small extent. The wealth of complex poetic optics is another thing.

Shifts of a lyrical poem's recipient's gaze from one of the poem's plane to another, laid down by the author, are an absolute condition for the creation of authentic lyrics. The polyocular, stereoscopic vision of the world is also characteristic of the Chinese plastic paradigm. Is it possible to see the constant of a genuine poem (the volume arising as a result of the complex optics) as an element of the national plastic paradigm, for example, the Chinese one? It is possible, if a set of typical national characteristics, which lead to creation of a multi-perspective picture, is manifested.

Among the articles on Chinese visual arts, the paper by V. Belozerova<sup>12</sup> stands out due to its greater clarity of the vision of the problem, the logic and neatness of the conclusions. Despite the fact that the author writes about a certain epoch (from Han to Tang), her conclusions also apply to subsequent periods. V. Belozerova follows her basic thesis: "Chinese spatial constructions are the most complex in the world artistic practice. The Chinese perspective is not based on the laws of optics, but on the principles of modelling of space in the national culture."

Speaking about the direct genetic Chinese influence on modern Russian poetry, it would make sense to start with Natalia Azarova as a poet and translator of Du Fu and modern Chinese authors (Yang Lian, Han Bo, Shen Haobo). Natalia named a number of her poems for me, which underwent the Chinese influence: 'the day [gets closer] to the evening ...', 'bather round-faced...', 'illuminating of things ...', 'between river and mountain'<sup>13</sup> and other poems from the cycle (or a subdivision in the book) 'The Chinese [female] Bathers. Fortune Telling on the Political Landscape'; 'Zhuangzi', 'this is the punishment ...' from the cycle 'Treatises'<sup>14</sup>; 'low drifting snow in late winter on [river] yauza' from the cycle 'Flowers and Birds', 'for a thousand autumns there have not been such an autumn ...', 'two old men run from time to meet ...' from the cycle "Rovno-

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<sup>11</sup> On the notion of aura see: Benjamin, Walter. *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1963. Ursprünglich auf Französisch erschienen in: *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Jg. 5. 1936.

<sup>12</sup> Belozerova V.G. *Prostranstvennye postroenija v kitajskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve ot Han' do Tan* [Spatial constructions in Chinese art from Han to Tang]. *Sinologija.ru* [*Sinology.ru*]. URL: <http://www.synologia.ru>. Accessed June 1 2018.

<sup>13</sup> «день к вечеру...», «купальщица круглоликая...», «освещение вещей...», «между рекой и горой»

<sup>14</sup> «Китайские купальщицы. Гадание на политическом пейзаже», «Чжуанцзы», «это наказание...», цикл «Трактаты».

Rovno" [literally either "Equal-Equal", "Flat-Flat", or "Smooth-Smooth"]<sup>15</sup>; [she] pushed aside the clouds ...', 'reproach is a person ...', 'morality is ...' and other poems from the series "Masenkie" [could be translated as "Little Ones"] (the book of poems 'The Solo of Equality')<sup>16</sup>, 'December 3', 'January 20', 'February 22', 'March 18', 'July 18' ('The Calendar'); 'fate died gradually ...', "quantitative interruption of yourself ...", 'red cranes on grey' and other poems from the book "Razzavyazyvanie" [Untying down]<sup>17</sup>, etc. As we see from the list, Azarova, calling the poems that were created under Chinese influence, focuses not on the superficial (thematic) but on the deep manifestation of Chinese worldview: she names only one poem from the cycle with a 'Chinese' name 'Flowers and Birds'; in fact, only one of the works in the list has a 'Chinese' name: "Zhuangzi"; the word 'Chinese' is found only in the title of the cycle "The Chinese Bathers". Of course, some other among her works, not named by Azarova, also came under the Chinese influence.

I have already studied the sounding ideograms by N. Azarova<sup>18</sup>. The reception of Chinese culture within her poems is multi-layered: the topmost layer is thematic, then follows the graphic layer, sound one, etc. The optics level could be named among the deepest ones.

I have asked the poets I studied the following questions: "Are there any descriptions of Chinese landscapes in your verses? In which works exactly and of which landscapes? Have you used Chinese art in your poems?" Natalia Azarova's response was: "Chinese landscapes are numerous only in the Red Cranes - it is Yangtze, of course, and industrial landscapes. Another book is called 'Flowers and Birds'; this is a genre of Chinese painting, understood in a different way: in every verse, in one way or another, there are flowers and birds". As we see from the answer, the Chinese motifs are not a constant, nor a dominant, or even an optional element of Natalia Azarova's 'Chinese' poems, but, in my view, rather markers of possible presence in the work of Chinese 'space-building' as a worldview; actual presence/absence of Chinese motifs is not essential.

Turning to Natalia Azarova's optics, it would be helpful to cite Arkady Dragomoshchenko's opinion: "Sometimes it seems to me that, while offering quite identifiable assemblages of elements interconnected by habitual relationships, Azarova (as if moving away and changing the optics)

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<sup>15</sup> «позёмка поздняя зима на язуе» из цикла «Цветы и птицы», «тысячу осеней не было такой осени...», «два старика бегут от времени навстречу...», цикл «Ровно-Ровно».

<sup>16</sup> «облака растолкала...», «упрёк – это человек...», «мораль – это...», цикл «Масенькие» (книга стихов «Соло равенства»)

<sup>17</sup> «3 декабря», «20 января», «22 февраля», «18 марта», «18 июля» («Календарь»), «судьба погибла постепенно...», «количественное прерывание себя...», «красные краны на сером», книга «Раззавязывание»

<sup>18</sup> Zeyfert Ye.I. *Kitayskoye v noveyshey russkoy poezii: sinkhronnaya mnogomernost', ideogramma, vzaimoobogashcheniye i vzaimopokoreniye khudozhestvennykh elementov [Chinese in the newest Russian poetry: synchronous multidimensionality, ideogram, mutual enrichment and mutual conquest of artistic elements]. Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye* (in print)

sometimes stops the time of making the 'decision' (completion of a poem) and, by growing new insufficiency in seemingly long-established meanings of things, stops the time of the poem itself and subtly moves to another 'point of view'. That is to say that we see everything 'at once', but in a different projection, or rather, in the counter-space between meanings formed by other relative positions, where, according to Heidegger, the language, not finding embodiment and wishing for it, lives the moments of the possibility of completeness"<sup>19</sup>. There are both European and Chinese plastic elements: the flow of time is suspended within the poem and yet the poem is fluid and fundamentally not completed, as if its energy moves along meridians. "Another 'point of view'" (A. Dragomoshchenko) in this case does not lie within the poem but next to it, as if the reader observes the circumtextual space as well, appropriating it to the work.

Azarova seeks to improve the reader's polyocular vision, starting with the graphic level and going into the deeper optics. While reading the poem 'lighting of things...' the recipient repeatedly shifts their gaze from left to right to identical and yet different parts of the work. The first two parts are seemingly identical, although repetition of a word in the poem invariably gives rise to a new meaning (accumulation of energy is inevitable here); the second two parts are seemingly identical but are divided by a vertical line; the ending is common (the reader discovers that division unexpectedly leads to unity). The reader's sight during reading of Natalia Azarova's poems learns to see simultaneously both left and right flanks of the work unusual in its graphics. In the poem 'to lean against | man-and-dog ...'<sup>20</sup> Azarova shows the connecting function of her sign of division: "those silent to each other over the green fence"<sup>21</sup> become a single whole.

While cutting up an idiom and creating its unpredictable movement ('to float by using one propeller, 'fortune telling on water grounds'<sup>22</sup>), linking nouns with the epithets related to them only once ('intercalary scales', 'pedestrian hemisphere'<sup>23</sup>), including those invented by the author ('daylasting hands on water'<sup>24</sup>), Azarova allows a boundary or a cut to be made on a local scale only. The purpose of the birth of the boundary is a shift of meaning, a transfer of a part of the work to the area of its projection, which Dragomoshchenko is talking about. Azarova's 'Chinese' poems are without beginnings and endings, her poems, like trees, grow simultaneously up and down: the important thing here is the transfer of a growing, supposedly incomplete poem, striving for its own possible completeness.

Variative replay shows step-by-step transference of the poem into its projection:

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<sup>19</sup> Dragomoshchenko A. Introduction. Azarova N. *Solo ravenstva [The Solo of Equality]*. Moscow, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011. P. 3.

<sup>20</sup> «прислониться | человек-и-собака...»

<sup>21</sup> «молчащие друг другу через зелёный забор»

<sup>22</sup> («проплыть на одном винте», «гадание на водной гуще»)

<sup>23</sup> («чешуйки високосные», «пешего полушария»)

<sup>24</sup> «днящиеся руки по воде»

ships of terracotta warriors  
ships of terracotta wars  
ships of terracotta waters<sup>2526</sup>

('between river and mountain...')

The multifunctionality of repetition in Azarova's 'Chinese' poems (the development of the perception as a polyocular vision of the world, creation of a projection of the work, working with a fragment of a poem and the whole at the same time, etc.) has its part in the birth of the volume of the perception.

“The features of spatial constructions in Chinese visual arts have predetermined the following properties of the national plastic paradigm: 1) the concept of form not as a closed volume but as an open channel which visualises the through circulation of the qi energy; that required to project three-dimensionality of space and to exclude the flatness of the image, which blocks energy circulations; 2) understanding of form not as a static mass, but as a dynamic part of a single space-time continuum, which stimulated the simultaneous development and use of different types of perspective constructions; 3) perception of form as a configuration that changes in the presence of a viewer, resulting in the distance between the subject and the object of aesthetic perception being treated as a mobile and freely surmountable zone; and so on.”<sup>27</sup> Let us observe these features in Azarova's poem "bather round-faced...".

\* \* \*

bather round-faced  
my crafty oniony<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Azarova N. *Solo ravenstva [The Solo of Equality]*. Moscow, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011. P. 27.

<sup>26</sup> корабли терракотовых воинов  
корабли терракотовых войн  
корабли терракотовых вод

<sup>27</sup> Belozjorova V.G. Prostranstvennye postroenija v kitajskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve ot Han' do Tan [Spatial constructions in Chinese art from Han to Tang]. *Sinologija.ru [Sinology.ru]*. URL: <http://www.synologia.ru>. Accessed June 1 2018.

<sup>28</sup> купальщица круглоликая  
моя лукавая луковая  
ту-голую отверни-от меня руку-с-палкой  
жёлтый гной отколи-от  
моей бездонной купальни  
так твои горы и воды полны  
пупырышки яшмы плавают  
по нашему океану пешего полушария

that-naked turn-away from me hand-with-stick  
yellow pus split-off

my bottomless pool  
so your mountains and waters are full of

jasper pimples are swimming  
on our ocean of pedestrian hemisphere<sup>29</sup>

The visual images created by Azarova have volume and mobility: the bather appears before us in different perspectives, the reader shifts their gaze from her face to her arm; the change of pronouns, landscape perspectives (swimming pool, mountains, waters), time points ('turn away hand' right now, '[they are] floating' always) allows the sculpture of the poem to be outlined. The pool having no bottom (as seen by the eyes of the bather), the mountains and the waters (as seen by the eyes of the subject) are presented on the canvas simultaneously. Points of view at eye level and from top downward, inverse and panoramic perspectives not only create a stereoscopic landscape, but also give rise to a metaphor: the reality of the image arises under the Chinese influence, and the illusory (which is more real than reality in this case) under the European one. Both bathers ('my crafty oniony') and the swimming pool ('my bottomless swimming pool') belonging to the subject, the ingrowth of the addressee into a large-scale creative 'you' ('your mountains and waters are full of'), combining 'I' and 'you' with all the people ('on our ocean of pedestrian hemisphere') creates a paradoxical experience of a small pictorial locus of a bathing pool and a bathing woman in a proportionate to it large globe inhabited by many people.

Azarova lets a first person subject freely into her 'Chinese' poems, which is not typical for Chinese poetry. One of the purposes of 'I' in Natalia Azarova's 'Chinese' poems is to model the artistic landscape using possessiveness directed at its segment ('off my bottomless pool'<sup>30</sup>), to represent 'I' as what is being depicted and is visible from the object ('I am a feliny bird all covered in the solar slaps'<sup>3132</sup>), the excitement of 'I' as an observer, which grants synthesis to the separated elements of the picture ("the day [gets closer] to the evening / confusion concern in me / a woman

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<sup>29</sup> Azarova N. // Azarova N. *Solo ravenstva [The Solo of Equality]*. Moscow, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011. P. 37.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. P. 15.

<sup>32</sup> «я кошачья птица вся в солнечных оплеухах»

in a gray dress washes [her] dusty feet / a cart crawls up a mountain plateau / the woman strokes [her] calves with her palm / a naked man enters the water"<sup>3334</sup>).

The motifs' mutual subjection in Azarova's works is shown both demonstrably, by the example of the Chinese five elements ("cruel / talking about common water / analysing wood / with axe to pieces"<sup>3536</sup>) and through other elements. This can be seen, for example, in the text «red cranes on gray. the fourth»<sup>37</sup>, the fourth part of the poem or a cycle of poems «Red cranes on grey», in which mutual subjection of motifs takes place: 'morning' - 'day' - 'flow of time' - 'a dragon [has been] germinated by rain' - 'peaceful haze' - 'blue rusty thingy is floating [by]' - 'hardworking digit five on the water' is looking for 'big food' - 'bird' - 'yangtze' - 'rain' - 'red cranes'<sup>38</sup>.

The transposition of syllables, which are similar to Chinese words, in another Azarova's poem, the separation of the names of Chinese and Russian poets gives rise not to a game, but to a new unity.

\* \* \*

two old men run from time to meet  
the delta path is endless<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. P. 38

<sup>34</sup> «день к вечеру / во мне смятенье беспокойство / женщина в сером платье моет пыльные ноги / ползёт телега вверх по горному плато / женщина гладит икры ладонью / обнажённый мужчина входит в воду»

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. P.222

<sup>36</sup> «жестокие / говорящие об общей воде / дерево анализируя / топором на куски»

<sup>37</sup> «красные краны на сером. четвёртое»

<sup>38</sup> «утро» – «день» – «течение времени» – «дракон пророжен дождём» – «мирное марево» – «проплывает синяя ржавая штука» – «трудолюбивая цифра пять на воде» ищет «большую пищу» – «птица» – «янцзы» – «дождь» – «красные краны»

<sup>39</sup>

два старика бегут от времени навстречу  
тропинка дельты бесконечна

ду	фу
ай	ги
ду	эт

поговорили на террасе  
перелетая азией  
ночь лето август ритм день  
наверчен начерно

ду	ги
ай	фу
по	эт

будто им на зиму рекой  
пора-за горизонт  
в четыре щёлки

doo        fu  
ai         gi  
doo        et

talked on the terrace  
flown by asia  
night summer august rhythm day  
winded around as a rough draft

doo        gi  
ai         fu  
po         et

as if it's time for them by a river for the winter  
time-beyond the horizon  
in four slits<sup>40</sup>

Chinese motifs as an organic element of a work, that permeates the entire work but at the same time remains local, we find in Alexander Skidan. Let us turn to his two triptychs "Ignorance. Astonishment ..." and "A non-burning bush or a trail ..." <sup>41</sup>. The author declares that "the Chinese substrate is one of the elements here," it is "some synthesis." The poet says that in his poetry "there is no Chinese landscape per se, there are only references to it"; Skidan "has not turned to Chinese visual arts directly, but everything he had seen and read had an indirect effect." There are references in these Skidan's triptychs to Valéry ('architecture of fire'<sup>42</sup>), orphics (motifs of ascension and fall: 'ascended. raise up', 'down the mine sang a drooped / voice, orphic descended into the orthopedic hell'<sup>43</sup>), the Chinese culture ('calligrapher immersed in white', 'by the snow covered tea house - an indifferent / measured hand fan of voiceless speech'<sup>44</sup>). Chinese motifs are related not to the author's deep optics, but to the thematic level, performing the function of pieces of cloth thrown onto the sculpture of a poem, yet the combination of European and Chinese techniques for modelling the artistic space creates a unique picture.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. P. 252

<sup>41</sup> «Неведение. Удивленье...», «Куст несгораемый или шлейф...»

<sup>42</sup> «архитектура огня»

<sup>43</sup> «в шахту пел никнущий / голос, орфик, сошедший в ортопедический ад»

<sup>44</sup> «снегом занесённого чайного домика – безучастный / мерный веер беззвучной речи»

“Artistic space in Chinese art is interpreted as a continuous-dynamic unity, in which the background and the image are ambivalent, which allows not only calligraphic, but also pictorial spaces to be organically perceived both in positive (scrolls) and negative (reprints) reproducing modes”<sup>45</sup>. Both background and image are sometimes indistinguishable in the Skidan's poems under study.

“The non-burning bush" or a trail  
of shading in the imaginary hell of the landscape,  
incomprehensible<sup>4647</sup>

The method 'shadow of shadows' gradually shades the image down to the background.

This Skidan's text is layered: the European influence alternates here with touches of the Chinese influence, the latter, being separated from the European one even graphically (several separation markers are used simultaneously - dashes and interline spaces), yet resonates throughout the text.

here is the architect  
that erects nudity:

white,  
as would say  
an immersed in white  
calligrapher<sup>48</sup>

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ascended. raise up<sup>4950</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Belozjorova V.G. Prostranstvennye postroenija v kitajskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve ot Han' do Tan [Spatial constructions in Chinese art from Han to Tang]. *Sinologija.ru [Sinology.ru]*. URL: <http://www.synologia.ru>. Accessed June 1 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Skidan A. «Kust nesgoraemyj» ili shlejf...» ["A non-burning bush or a trail..."]. *V povtornom chtenii [Repeated reading]*. Moscow, ARGO-RISK, 1998 P. 15.

<sup>47</sup> «Куст несгораемый» или шлейф  
растушёвки в мнимом пекле пейзажа,  
непостижное

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> вот зодчий

ВОЗДВИГАЮЩИЙ НАГОТУ:

"As a result of combining three types of perspectives and three points of view the national type of spatial constructions formed in the V–VI centuries, which had no analogues in the countries neighbouring China"<sup>51</sup>. Skidan combines in a triptych "Ignorance. Astonishment ..." both linear ('the wind drives in the gut a semi submerged raft deeper into the bay') and tonal ('in the purpling sky, at the junction of land and water, where, [moving] like a dagger through star plankton, seagulls cry'<sup>52</sup>) perspectives, but uses them in different parts of the triptych, in the second and third parts. The real image becomes metaphorical:

The wind drives

in the gut

a semi submerged raft  
deeper into the bay. Otherworldly  
inhale and exhale

[being] rocked fold  
of moon breeze.

Only a gesture  
of co-presence,

in the shifting sands of sliding life<sup>5354</sup>.

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белое,  
как сказал бы  
погружённый в белое  
каллиграф

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вознесённое. вознесите

<sup>51</sup> Belozjorova V.G. Prostranstvennye postroeniya v kitajskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve ot Han' do Tan [Spatial constructions in Chinese art from Han to Tang]. *Sinologija.ru [Sinology.ru]*. URL: <http://www.synologia.ru>. Accessed June 1 2018.

<sup>52</sup> «в лиловеющих небесах, на стыке суши и вод, где, кинжала звёздный планктон, кричат чайки»

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. P. 14

<sup>54</sup>

Ветер гонит

под дых  
полузатопленный плот  
вглубь залива. Потусторонний  
вдох и выдох

Along the central compositional axis in Chinese painting not one but several vanishing points of lines leading from the contours of the object to its perspective are born. Not all of them lie on the central axis but can be located next to it. Their totality is yet another centre of the picture. How many vanishing points, so many starts, which the recipient will undertake to perceive the picture. A poem with such optics will be read repeatedly. Continuation and completion of reading will be highly probable because a holistic picture gradually appears in the course of the imposition of new layers of perception upon each other, which process fascinates a reader as a connoisseur of authentic lyrics. Such are the analysed Skidan's poems. Take the “Ignorance. Astonishment ... ” mini cycle. The first vanishing point here is the grotto of the metaphorical cave 'of the collapsed word'<sup>55</sup>, downward perspective. The second vanishing point is the look upward toward the 'ingrown into death, wailing'<sup>56</sup> pines. The third is upward, 'the junction of land and water in the purpling sky.' Fourth is at a distance, 'deeper into the bay.' Fifth - upward toward the Moon. Sixth is downward to the 'sliding sands'. In order to gather the constellation of the vanishing points in these poems as some centre of the picture, it is necessary to read the work several times. Metaphorics and realities are here considered in reader's eyes among the general collection of artistic facts.

Being among the topmost authors of Russian poetry, Skidan in the analysed mini cycles simultaneously turns to the optical capabilities of European and Chinese poetry, with the predominance of European instruments, intuitively showing how the Chinese influence shines as a layer through the European one at times and at times permeates the entire work as a paradigm.

Nikolay Zvyagintsev portrayed the Moscow artistic space, which he had soulfully mastered, in his 'Chinese cycle' “Moscow Qi”, written in 2017 under the influence of preparations for the “Biennale of Poets in Moscow: the Poetry of China and Russia”. The abbreviations of designations of metropolitan districts always reminded the poet of Chinese words — CAO [Central Administrative District], VAO, SVAO, and so on. (“I have always perceived these ZAO-CAO as real Chinese words; as if there are some Chinese islands inside Moscow (not pseudo-Chinese, like Kitay-gorod [literally 'China-town'], which has no relation to China, but the real ones, for example, the once famous Chinatown near the former Sukharevsky market (“Where clean and honest

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колеблемых створ  
лунного бриза.

Только жест  
со-присутствия,

в зыблющихся песках оползающей жизни.

<sup>55</sup> «обрушенного слова»

<sup>56</sup> «вросших в смерть, стенающим»

Chinese ..."<sup>57)</sup><sup>58)</sup>. Zvyagintsev put nine Chinese points on the map of Moscow, and, according to him, "movement from one to another clockwise looked somehow too similar" to his "own life in this city."<sup>59</sup>

At my request, the poet has written a short essay on the history of creation of this cycle, a kind of self-reflection, on which I will also draw.

The poet writes about his ability to see the artistic world that is born in his imagination with a new, Chinese vision. He talks about how he translated poems in the ci genre, "real, Chinese, in a large number"<sup>60</sup>: "And yet, after a while, it becomes clear that this is still a different vision; another, albeit absolutely comprehensible and accepted, way of communication. It does not happen when you have done translating the first poem, but after the tenth you simply realise that you have learned to eat with chopsticks ... And you can use this skill as you please. And that was what I tried to do"<sup>61</sup>. Zvyagintsev really made use of his new skill while creating the "Moscow Qi". He uses the word 'qi' ('energy') to show that his poems are not quite identical to the Chinese art form 'ci'. The actual Chinese *ci*, despite them being very old, the poet considers 'surprisingly modern.'

Depicting Moscow, Zvyagintsev largely followed the Chinese optics of modelling the artistic space. The author created a cycle of 9 poems, "by the number of the 'internal' districts of Moscow"<sup>62</sup>. On the one hand, he changed the real Moscow cartography (there are 12 administrative districts in Moscow) and stated it directly: "I'm sorry, Zelenograd, I have never considered you to be Moscow". On the other hand, he left it to the reader to extend the image beyond the scope of the work, recreating the 'missing' districts, which is also typical for constructing of Chinese artistic space.

The associations inside Zvyagintsev's 'qi' are mainly biographical and geographical. E.g., he mentions Lisa Sandunova<sup>63</sup>, because the persona is walking along Sandunovsky lane:

The Moon is about to toss a pancake

And to put a hand on the shoulder:

"Come down [to the police station], Liza Sandunova"<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> «Где чистые и честные китайцы...»

<sup>58</sup> Zvjagincev N. Avtorefleksija po povodu cikla stihotvorenij «Moskovskie ci» [Autoreflexion on the cycle of poems "Moscow Qi"]. Personal Archive of E. Zeifert.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> On the genre of ci, see Serebrjakov E. A. *Kitajskaja poezija X-XI vekov: Zhanry shi i cy* [Chinese poetry of the Xth-XIth centuries: The genres of shi and ci.]. Leningrad, Izd-vo LGU, 1979; Serebrjakov E. A. Zhanr cy: jepoha Sun: X-XII vv. [Ci genre: Sung epoch: X-XII centuries]. *Duhovnaja kul'tura Kitaja: jenciklopedija: v 5 t* [Spiritual Culture of China: Encyclopedia: in 5 vol]. Moscow, 2008. Vol.3. Pp. 58-65.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Elizaveta Sandunova was a well known actress of the beginning of the XX century.

<sup>64</sup> Zvyagintsev N. *Rukopis' [Manuscript]* // Personal Archive of E. Zeifert

("Moscow Qi. TsAO Qi")<sup>65</sup>

'ZAO Qi', for example, depicts the childhood of the persona: "A circus would begin, a dragon would take off ..." <sup>66</sup> (let us pay attention once more to the arbitrary framing of the picture by the author himself: "the circus on Vernadsky [avenue] actually stands on the border of the districts and, as a matter of fact, is in the YuZAO but for me it is linked with the above-mentioned" <sup>67</sup>), "SZAO Qi" depicts adolescence, "SAO Qi" - youth, and so on. Izmaylovsky Island appears in "VAO Qi" (the first place of work of the biographical author after graduation was located next to it) along with the 'mandelstamian' list of ships:

Go to the still city,  
Dumkracht, Tri Riumki, Olifant,  
Apostol Pavel, Bezboyazn',  
Oryol, Zhuravl' stereguschiy <sup>6869</sup>.

Zvyagintsev permeates his poems with allusions and places hopes in reader's erudition. His allusions are by no means all Chinese ones.

One Lithuanian actress  
Played a part of a prince, but not of darkness <sup>70</sup>.

("SVAO Qi")<sup>71</sup>

This refers to Ingeborga Dapkūnaitė, who played the part of Myshkin.

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<sup>65</sup> Сейчас луна подбросит блин  
И на плечо опустит руку:  
«Пройдемте, Лиза Сандунова»  
(«Московские ци. ЦАО ци»)

<sup>66</sup> «Начнётся цирк, взлетит дракон...»

<sup>67</sup> Zvjagincev N. Refleksija po povodu cikla stihotvorenij «Moskovskie ci» [Reflection on the cycle of poems "Moscow Qi"]. Personal Archive of E. Zeifert

<sup>68</sup> Zvyagintsev N. *Rukopis'* [Manuscript] // Personal Archive of E. Zeifert

<sup>69</sup> Ступайте в город штилевой,  
Думкрахт, Три рюмки, Елифант,  
Апостол Павел, Безбоязнь,  
Орёл, Журавль стерегущий.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Одна литовская актриса  
Играла князя, но не тьмы.  
(«СВАО ци»)

V. Belozerova writes that for the Chinese plastic paradigm are typical: “1) the presence of multiple points of view, which provide the dynamics of viewing the composition both in sequential visual narration (horizontal scrolls, frieze paintings, and reliefs) and in polyphonic narration (vertical scrolls, multiple-subject murals); 2) the combination of several perspectives (upward, downward, at eye level); 3) alternating of focusing the perception of the viewer on closing up and getting farther from the depicted objects; 4) the possibility of arbitrary framing of a composition by the viewers themselves; 5) the dominance of the central vertical axis in vertical compositions and alternating (like hieroglyphic columns) vertical axes in horizontal compositions; 6) the combination of inverse and direct contraction vectors with axonometric projecting; 7) the use of tonal perspective and, possibly, aerial perspective; 8) the artistic space is invariably an open system which extends beyond the limits of the pictorial field; and so on”<sup>72</sup>.

N. Zvyagintsev on rare occasions turns to multilevel Chinese plastics while designing the artistic space of his cycle:

One Lithuanian actress  
was playing a part of a prince, but not of darkness.  
And an archer six-fingered from above  
was looking after her and saying:  
"An arrow is flying, a glove is flying,  
A random moon is hanging,  
Rider in the sky with a cigarette  
Whom he finds, to those he hurries to.”<sup>73</sup>

("SVAO Qi")<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Belozerova V.G. Prostranstvennye postroeniya v kitajskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve ot Han' do Tan [Spatial constructions in Chinese art from Han to Tang]. *Sinologija.ru [Sinology.ru]*. URL: <http://www.synologia.ru>. Accessed June 1 2018

<sup>73</sup> Zvyagintsev N. *Rukopis' [Manuscript]* // Personal Archive of E. Zeifert

<sup>74</sup> Одна литовская актриса  
Играла князя, но не тьмы.  
А сверху лучник шестипалый  
За ней смотрел и говорил:  
«Летит стрела, летит перчатка,  
Висит случайная луна,  
По небу всадник с папиросой  
Кого найдет, к тому спешит».  
(«СВАО ци»)

Here, the vectors of reader's gazes are: 'at eye level' (the actress) - synchronously 'upward' (the archer) - 'at eye level' (the flying arrow) - 'downward' (the falling glove) - 'upward' (the Moon, the rider flying through the sky). The actress and the archer, that watches after her from above, are visible at the same time. But in most Zvyagintsev's qi the optics is closer to the European one, more homogeneous than the Chinese one, although multi-perspective, but changes frames alternately.

Nikolai Zvyagintsev in his "Moscow Qi", while using Chinese motifs ('dragon', 'archer', 'hieroglyph "head"', multiple mentions of 'the Moon') and techniques (different points of view simultaneously; possibility of framing the text by the reader; openness of the form), uses not only to the Chinese optics. The cycle is dominated by Russian and Moscow motifs, Antique motifs are also present ('on the Strontium Road', 'around the Trajan Column'). The space of the cycle is based on a mixed, European-Chinese model.

The interplay of the whole (the qi cycle) and a part (one of the qis) is important in Zvyagintsev. While the whole strives for incompleteness (the map of Moscow is wider than the stated districts), a single poem as a life stage is quite complete.

I would point out that the poetics of Zvyagintsev's "Moscow Qi" is in some aspects typologically (but not genetically) similar to the poetics of Alexey Aleksandrov's poems, taken as a whole. This is not only about the coincidences of motifs, which is inevitable given that both poets are intensely interested in China. For example, here is one of the obvious coincidences:

Blooms and smells a rock garden.  
The magic archer in wide trousers  
All the time thinks about her  
And with poison heals the sick<sup>75</sup>.

(Alexey Alexandrov. "In the Chinese month June ...")<sup>76</sup>

One Lithuanian actress  
was playing a part of a prince, but not of darkness.  
And the archer six-fingered from above

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<sup>75</sup> Zvyagintsev N. *Rukopis'* [Manuscript] // Personal Archive of E. Zeifert

<sup>76</sup> Цветёт и пахнет сад камней.

Волшебный лучник в шароварах

Всё время думает о ней

И ядом исцеляет хворых.

(Алексей Александров. «В китайском месяце июнь...»)

was looking after her and speaking<sup>77</sup>.

(Nikolai Zvyagintsev. "Moscow Qi. SVAO Qi")

We see here not only the same motif of 'the archer', behind which, obviously, is the mythological Archer Hou Yi (Hou I), the central image of the Chinese mythology, the solar hero who shot at nine suns, but also the same metre (with different alternations of rhymes). However, both similarities, in high probability, were not the result of mutual influence: these poems by A. Alexandrov were not published and "Moscow Qi" appeared later than the Alexandrov's. Separate thing was not incidental, though, namely the poem's multilayered allusive motivic field being born before our eyes, which arose in Zvyagintsev and Aleksandrov under the influence of different sources (their poetics as individual and mature certainly have many differences). In Alexandrov, China is the cause (one of the causes) of such poetics, in Zvyagintsev, the consequence, his recent late interest, which grew out of the similarity of the Chinese poetics and his individual one. My version is that the peculiarities of the A. Alexandrov's motivic field undoubtedly underwent Chinese influence at an early stage.

The poet himself speaks of indisputable influence of China, which "was literally next door", on his work: Alexandrov did two years of military service in Primorye, "there were many Chinese, [I] listened to them talking, to their music in Chinese markets, even learned to distinguish their hieroglyphs from the Korean ones"<sup>78</sup>. Where he served, "China is hills, a sparse forest, where trees are brushed by the wind at one angle, rivers with Chinese names."

Let us get back to the questions I asked the poets under study: "Are there descriptions of any Chinese landscapes in your verses? In which works and of which landscapes? Have you ever turned to Chinese art in your poems?" Nikolai Zvyagintsev answered these questions in the negative. Alexandrov argued that there are no specific descriptions of Chinese landscapes, there is their mood. The poet referred not to specific works of art, but to hieroglyphs, images of birds and dragons, the colourful atmosphere of the Chinese markets of Ussuriysk. A. Aleksandrov asserts the influence of Chinese books and films on him. "The first to come to mind are the film by Zhang Yimou 'Red Sorghum' and the book 'Journey to the West', taken from the library. The volume was pretty shabby, it was clear that it was only a part [of it], the pages were scribbled with a red pen: a reader meticulously noted various trifles that seemed wrong to him."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Aleksandrov A. Avtorefleksija po povodu «kitajskih» stihotvorenij [Self-reflection on 'Chinese' poems]. Personal Archive of E. Zeifert

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

Critics have already drawn attention to the simultaneous similarity and difference of the poetics of Zvyagintsev and Aleksandrov. For example, G. Kanevsky wrote: “Then you notice that the reality, slightly deformed by this fantastic shift, remains in constant motion. The multitude of objects and the total character of their interaction, the dependence, for which there are no negligible quantities, of everything on everything; there is definitely something engineerish in this view of things. And this Brownian swarming of countless protagonists distinguishes Aleksandrov from the authors closest to him, i.e. Leonid Schwab and especially Nikolay Zvyagintsev: I have often been amazed, for example, by the Alexandrov's book "Without leaving their own cartoons": how much one or another stanza is 'zvyagintsev's' by intonation and world view; well, for starters: 'The syllables do not listen to you, from under the desks Feet in some golf stockings. Ma! - hold your breath, exhale: a-r-r-rt! Here it is, a clear frame for spring.' The density of poems' population hints at the acceptance of being in all its manifestations, despite the fact that all three authors are capable of finding in the picture that stress point, by virtue of which it appears to be no longer so serene. But prowess of both Shvab and Zvyagintsev is largely determined by the ability to put the last stroke in time, to step back from the picture, to see it frozen in stillness. In Alexandrov, everything continues to move. What putting of the last stroke could there be, or installation of a stop valve, when the paints have not yet settled down, the gears still rotate in mutual engagement! That is why the Alexandrov's poems so easily flow into each other, that is why there are so many open finals ...”<sup>80</sup>. I will return below to the Kanevsky's last remark about the flow of poems into each other and the openness of finals.

The poets themselves named, among the sources of their early works, Tyutchev, Mandelstam, Boris Poplavsky, Sasha Sokolov, and metarealists as 'the favourites', Saratov authors Yevgeny Zaugarov and Oleg Rogov, American poetry, German expressionists and, as has already been noted, Chinese culture (Aleksandrov), Mandelstam, Khodasevich, Zabolotsky as 'more or less the same circle of imitation' for everyone and his 'favourites' Sasha Cherny, Vaginov, Agnivitsev, Khlebnikov, Soviet poetry represented by Aseev, Glazkov, Kornilov, Vasilyev, SMOG, Voznesenskiy (Zvyagintsev). “An author has always been more important than a [literary] movement” for Zvyagintsev, and for Aleksandrov the expressionist movement is important. As you can see, the sources of poetry for Aleksandrov and Zvyagintsev are different overall. Their poetics were formed under the influence by different sources but in the end turned out to be similar. For Aleksandrov China was influential at an early stage of his creative development, while for Zvyagintsev China was not an influential source at the beginning of his creative journey. China as

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<sup>80</sup> Kanevskij G. Alekseju Aleksandrovu: Inzhener-konstruktor [To Alexey Alexandrov: Design-Engineer]. *Vozduh. Zhurnal poezii [Vozdukh. Magazine of Poetry]*. 2017. № 1

a source, just like other sources, creates the fluid and open form of Aleksandrov's poems, which is typical for China's plastic national paradigm with its free circulation of qi energy and at the same time preservation of the free associative multi-layer weave of motifs. In Zvyagintsev, the desire to start a poem in Dionysian way and to have Apollonianly precise ending comes from the European tradition. Among his poems that underwent direct Chinese influence A. Alexandrov named "Having taken the sky on the Chinese paintbrush ...", "Flew around the garden in the night ...", "The apartments you have abandoned ...", "In the Chinese month June ...", "Noon. And the romping of [clock] hands ..." <sup>81</sup> among others, but all his poetics feeds on Chinese culture as one of the most important and early sources for the poet.

It is characteristic of his 'Chinese poems' to "combine several perspectives (upward, downward, at eye level)" <sup>82</sup>:

The boy is running naked  
To the sea, having dropped from his hands  
A stone, high above him  
A bird is flying; and for them  
The day turns to smoke <sup>8384</sup>.

The boy is seen at eye level, the stone, that fell from his hand, from above, and the bird flying across the sky from below. The author focuses simultaneously the reader's attention on the object getting farther and closer at the same time. Aleksandrov's poetics is generally characterised by combination of different types of perspective and the use of tonal (aerial) perspective, which is akin to Chinese space-building. Having depicted the boy, the stone, the bird, the poet shows how 'the day turns to smoke' ("Noon. And the romping of [clock] hands ..."). Alexandrov depicts not only the foggy but even the invisible sides of nature and art:

Breathe in the mirror, and then write

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<sup>81</sup> «На китайскую кисточку небо забрав...», «Ночью сад облетел...», «Квартиры, оставленные тобой...», «В китайском месяце июнь...», «Полдень. И стрелок возня...»

<sup>82</sup> Belozjorova V.G. Prostranstvennye postroenija v kitajskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve ot Han' do Tan [Spatial constructions in Chinese art from Han to Tang]. *Sinologija.ru* [*Sinology.ru*]. URL: <http://www.synologia.ru>. Accessed June 1 2018

<sup>83</sup> Aleksandrov A. Zvyagintsev N. *Rukopis'* [Manuscript] // Personal Archive of E. Zeifert

<sup>84</sup> Мальчик бежит нагишом  
К морю, из рук уронив  
Камень, высоко над ним  
Птица летит – и для них  
День превращается в дым.

On the surface of the water with a finger.  
These will be poems for fish,  
Which ashore  
Repeat them silently<sup>85</sup>.

("Nature has no bad pagoda ...")<sup>86</sup>

Turning to the superficial (motifs of 'Chinese brush', 'dragon', 'dragon scales', 'boats on a lake', 'snake', 'rock garden', 'archer', 'fan') and deep (optics) levels, Alexandrov creates atmospheric works with Chinese aura. But their Chinese character is deliberately broken by humour: a humorous animation of an idiom ("A rock garden blooms and smells"), a popular quote, and a false spelling mistake which misleads the reader and leads to another word ("Nature has no bad pagoda", a wordplay of 'pogoda', the Russian for weather, and 'pagoda', a Buddhist religious structure), and others. Humour, generally inherent in the poetics of Alexandrov, here takes the reader back from the Chinese picture of the world to the Russian one. The effect arises of wiping misted glass (the Russian picture of the world becomes visible through the Chinese one) or of a reboot.

Aleksandrov's Chinese poems are a hybrid specimen of modelling an art space with a predominance of the Chinese influence over the European one.

The specific weight of Chinese influence on modern Russian poetry may be different for different authors, but in each case a mixture of European and Chinese influences could be observed, the combination of European and Chinese cultures being prevalent over the fusion. The way an artistic space is modelled under the influence of Chinese culture in modern Russian poetry has a number of characteristic features, based on author's desire to create a polyocular perception of what they depict by use of a combination of different types of perspective, different points of view, and the presence of several vanishing points. In creating such a space, the Chinese motifs perform the function of a surface layer which embraces this artistic landscape. Modern Russian poets do not seek to emulate Chinese style or the way Chinese write, for the most part. The Chinese culture enters their works, which underwent its influence, in a deep way, primarily due to author's

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<sup>85</sup> Aleksandrov A. Zvyagintsev N. *Rukopis'* [Manuscript] // Personal Archive of E. Zeifert

<sup>86</sup> Подыши на зеркальце, а потом напиши  
Пальцем на поверхности воды.  
Это будут стихи для рыб,  
Которые на берегу  
Повторяют их беззвучно.  
(«У природы нет плохой погоды...»)

special optics which permeates the chronotope, subject-object relations, and other systems of a work.

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## Jouis-sens: The Linguistic Strategy in Zang Di's Poetry/ Poetics

Zang Di 臧棣 is one of the most active and creative poets in China and a poet who has pioneering significance for contemporary poetry writing paradigms. His poems often give birth to all sorts of controversies. For example, in the Panfeng polemics 盘峰论争<sup>1</sup> of the late 1990s, Zang was an important representative of the “intellectual” camp attacked by the *minjian* (“popular”) camp. Later, Lin Xianzhi 林贤治 also criticized him as the representative of the “noisy and empty poetry of the nineties”, and considered this to be “slave writing” with “a one-sided pursuit of knowledge and skill, possessing only a sense of form”<sup>2</sup>. Regardless of whether it “possesses only a sense of form” or not, this characteristic is undeniable. For example, in recent years, almost all of Zang Di's poems have been titled “...association” or “...series”, such as *Association for Boiling with Excitement* 沸腾协会 and *Little Elegy Series* 小挽歌丛书, both of which are actually no more than poems. Zang Di explains this puzzling (and even causing dissatisfaction) fact like this:

“Crowning it with the ‘association’ or ‘series’, I consciously respond to a humanistic imagination in poetry scenes and poetry structures. Because individuals cannot do associations or book series, it must mean one. The free, open, unrestricted poetic space. That is to say, poetry is ultimately produced and completed by the imagined community.... When writing “book series” and “association” poetry, it is very important to see whether poetry can reach a kind of sharing. Poetry should be shared infinitely in spirit, which is the friendship politics of poetry. Poetry shows a most fundamental political friendship. We look for spiritual fellowship in poetry. Identify the comrades in the soul.”<sup>3</sup>

In this interview, Zang Di mentions the concept of “imagined community”. “Imagined communities”, originally a concept proposed by Benedict Andersen, used to refer to the virtual nature of a nation-state. What I want to propose is that although Anderson does not borrow or misappropriate the concept of the imaginary of Jacques Lacan, the connection between the two is

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<sup>1</sup> In 1999, the Panfeng Poetry Forum held at Panfeng Hotel in Pinggu County, Beijing, was the biggest schism in the poetry development of Chinese verse since the discussions around the Misty poetry 朦胧诗. It was mainly some poets who held the “popular” 民间 position criticizing another group of poets who were labeled “intellectuals” 知识分子, and the latter also counterattacking the former.

<sup>2</sup> Lin Xianzhi 林贤治. “New Poetry: the Noisy and Empty Nineties (Part 1)” 新诗:喧闹而空寂的九十年代(上) // *West Lake* 西湖, 2006, 05, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Tian Zhiling 田志凌. “An Interview with Zang Di: Focusing on the Poetry We Hope For” 臧棣访谈: 着眼于希望诗学 // *Insistence* 坚持, 2009, Vol. 6, p. 172.

faintly visible. The reason why the national identity and the image identity are similar is because both of them imagine a complete identity through the identity with the Other. Thus, Zang Di's oeuvre, from the perspective of behavioral goals, has some inherent requirements for seeking self-identity to establish poetic integrity.

This article will discuss the three main rhetorical features and spiritual reference points of Zang Di's poetry and poetics: "Subject – Language – Other", "Jouis-sens – Mystery – Sinthome" and "Zhuangzi – Paradox – Comedy" – in order to deeply analyze the whole picture of Zang Di's writing. Among these three aspects, "language" is naturally the most obvious focus of poetry and poetry. Among these three aspects, "Language" is naturally the most obvious focus of poetry and poetics. One of the most inspiring arguments in his early work *Post-Misty Poetry As a Writing Poetry* 后朦胧诗：作为一种写作的诗歌, is: "All writing in our time, especially the writing of poetry has been involved in 'the struggle of language'", the self-winding of this language is separated from the writing of "wrestling with the things that exist in language"<sup>4</sup>. From Lacan's theory, language plays a crucial role in the field of symbolic Other: the subject is in the language and is constructed by the language Other. Therefore, the first section of this article will start from the perspective of language and explore the relationship between the subject of writing and the Other. Further discussion in the second section is how to explore the mystery and charm in the symbolic order within the framework of language. Critic Huo Junming also observed that "for Zang Di, the fascination with everyday mystery, metaphor and unknowingness and the fascination with language rhetoric and experience are inherently integrated"<sup>5</sup>. Mystery is the part that cannot be domesticated in the construction of language. It is the self-reversal of language and its meaning from the language, which reflects the expressive dimension of the poetry (relative to the language orientation of the previous section, here more perceptual complexity is involved). From Lacan's theory of traumatic jouis-sens, it is possible to dig out the language signs (or "Sinthome") in the writing of Zang Di, therein lies the great charm of his works. The third section follows the thesis of the previous section. From the pleasure dimension of the poems to Zhuangzi (Zang Di's is a great admirer of the classical philosophers/ literati), the classical aesthetics of the poetry and poetics are discussed, as well as the echo between Zhuangzi's thought and modern aesthetics (from Lacan's vision). Through the classical aesthetics of Zhuangzi, we may be able to understand the

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<sup>4</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. "Post-Misty Poetry As a Writing Poetry" 后朦胧诗：作为一种写作的诗歌 // *Chinese Poetry: Memorandum of the 1990s* 中国诗歌：九十年代备忘录, ed. by Wang Jiaxin 王家新 and Sun Wenbo 孙文波, Beijing 北京: People's Literature Publishing House 人民文学出版社, 2000), p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> Huo Junming 霍俊明. "Opening the First Page of the 'Series'". Foreword to "The Necessary Angel" 打开“丛书”第一页. 臧棣《必要的天使》前言 // Zang Di 臧棣. *The Necessary Angel* 必要的天使, Beijing 北京: China Youth Press 中国青年出版社, 2015, p. 3.

self-dissolution of the symbolic order in the poetry from Lacan's theory. These three aspects can constitute a more comprehensive and complete observation of poetry, and focus on the concept of “jouis-sens”: this paper reviews the rational characteristics of the language in the poetry (“the ratio”) in the sense of pleasure that creates a fascinating look under the dimension of “jouis-sens”.

### Subject – Language – Other

What is interesting is that the poems of Zang Di are famous for being obscure and hard to understand. There is no “ideal reader” (even readers who are extremely passionate about poetry) possible of fully grasping the so-called “meaning” of his works. We can see that although his poetry tries to acquire a certain poetic identity, his lyrical subject still relies on a special relationship with the language of the Other, and we need to go deeper. In his microblog, Zang Di mentioned, “I am really not writing poetry for poetry’s sake. I am at most writing poetry for Chinese language’s sake”<sup>6</sup>. If “Chinese” represents the big language Other in the context of Chinese cultural politics, we can easily find that in the poems of Zang Di, the subject's “desire is the desire of the Other”<sup>7</sup>. Chinese is the huge Other who specifically constructs the unconscious, and as the art of language, the poet must face the first one. For example, in the *Secret Linguistics Series* 秘密语言学丛书, Zang Di is constantly telling us:

the secret of language  
mysteriously reflected in the poem  
.....  
the language is secretly alive. living the life's  
another taste. language waiting for you to appear  
and thus letting those under the sun to have a different life.  
.....  
the secret of language depends on how poetry acts

语言的秘密  
神秘地反映在诗中  
.....

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<sup>6</sup> Zang Di's microblog 臧棣的新浪微博, <http://weibo.com/u/2451603510>, August 2, 2013, 21:08.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), p.235.

语言秘密地活着。活出了生命的  
另一种滋味。语言因为等待你的出现  
而听任太阳下有不同的生活  
.....  
语言的秘密取决于诗如何行动

Here, the subtle relationship between the subject (poetry) and the Other (language) is shown. First, the language is positioned as a secret that enters the poet's work invisibly. Language is self-contained; independent of the ordinary life of the world, but it must reflect its own hidden desires from the concrete expression of the subject, because it is the subject of the poem that reflects the desire form of the Other. At the same time, the dialectic nature of the Other and the subject is that the lyrical subject is always fighting with the language as a symbolic rule to challenge the dominance of the Other. In the poem *Transportation Process* 搬运过程, Zang once again touches on the subject and language. Despite the language resistance, the subject relentlessly repositions the language.

I moved some stones out of poetry.  
did it more than once. but I am not sure  
whether the weight that got lighter is related to poetry.

I continue to carry the remaining stones.  
each stone has a shape of a word.  
I like to do things like this –

because during the handling process,  
almost every word has yelled at me:  
“Go to hell,” or “Let me down”.

我把一些石头搬出了诗歌。  
不止干了一次。但我不能确定  
减轻的重量是否和诗歌有关。

我继续搬运着剩下的石头。

每块石头都有一个词的形状。

我喜欢做这样的事情——

因为在搬运过程中，

几乎每个词都冲我嚷嚷过：

“见鬼”，或是“放下我”。<sup>8</sup>

It is almost certain that for the lyrical subject, those words have a “stone”-like weight, and the subject needs to work hard to clear their oppression. In this process, the language presents not a passive object to the disposal of the subject, but is willing to resist. In these two examples, we can see that for Zang Di, on the one hand, the subject has to be the executor of the language Other; on the other hand, the subject also reverses some sort of cleanup of the symbolic order of the Other.

Probably no one will deny that Zang Di is a stylized poet. However, style is an intuitive and perceptual writing feature. How can we cut the discussion of poetry from the style? In his *Openings* to the collected works, Lacan first quoted the maxim of Georges-Louis Leclerc (Comte de Buffon) – “style is human”, but then made his own addition. Lacan thinks that the phrase “style is human” should be reinterpreted as “style is the object of the speech”. That is to say, for Lacan, the style represents the symbolic world of the subject formed by the person after the Other's speech, because the (unconscious) subject is of course the product of the Other's discourse. In other words, style represents the unique symbolic subject, which is pronounced by the symbolist. In an interview with Quanzi 泉子, when he talked about the theme of poetry writing, Zang Di once touched the dialectical relationship between the Other and the subject:

In poetry writing, I am concerned with the generative nature of the theme, or the independent generation of poetic space. That is to say, in the specific image space, how the theme sends out an invitation to our feelings, and how this invitation shows its linguistic characteristics. It may also be said that the theme of poetry is nothing but a special self-generating ability of language<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. *The Universe is Flat* 宇宙是扁的, p. 116.

<sup>9</sup> Quanzi 泉子. “Interview with Zang Di. Please Imagine Such a Story: Language Can be Pure” 臧棣访谈：请想象这样一个故事：语言是可以纯洁的 // *West Lake* 西湖, No. 9, 2006, p. 74.

What Zang Di tries to explain is that the subject sends an invitation to the subject in the language of the Other. Here, there are two points that deserve our special attention. First, the theme of poetry is not on the side of the content, but on the side of the language; second, the language actively invites the subject, not the other way around. This seems to explain Lacan's assertion from another angle: "Style is the the object of the speech", because the style of the poet happens to be reflected in the lyrical subject as the language object. Then, Lacan's style of "being the object of speech" may also be promoted to the style of "the object of speech as a response". However, it is obviously not a poet who is passively accepted by the language and who is led by the language. In a positive sense, Zang Di always maintains a kind of vigilance against the language. For him, language often conveys a threatening message: What does the Other want from me?

The style of echoing in the poems by Zang Di is special. His poetry does not win by subject matter, nor does it win with deliberate rhetoric. His secret of writing lies in the structure directly from the language itself, from the alertness, questioning and inquiry of the language Other. As Lacan asserts, "the unconscious is structured like a language"<sup>10</sup>, then the lyrical subject of the poetry can be said to be constructed on the language composition. Zang Di once said, "For a while, I think the most fascinating voice in poetry is the tone of speech when explaining things. Recently, I feel that the sound that I use when I use things as a message is also very appealing to me"<sup>11</sup>. The tone of interpreting things is obviously the general, normalized statement style, or the basic pattern of language composition, and the structural framework of the Other. At this prompt, we can find a lot of "tone of speech when explaining things" in the recent works of Zang Di, especially constructions like "that means that...", "A means B" or similar sentence patterns:

the hovering eagle, like the switch that was just pressed – / means that the weather is ready  
盘旋的鹰，像刚刚按下的开关——/意思是，好天气准备好了<sup>12</sup>。

"I am so busy as a paddling slave". / The trick is that other explanations may just go to hell.  
“我忙得就像划桨奴隶”。/意思就是，其他的解释不妨见鬼去吧<sup>13</sup>。

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<sup>10</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: Norton, 1981), p.149.

<sup>11</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. "What If We Really Don't Know What We Are Writing – Answering the Questions of the Poet Xi Du" 假如我们真的不知道我们在写些什么——答诗人西渡的书面采访 // *Starting from the smallest possibility* 从最小的可能性开始, ed. Xiao Kaiyu 萧开愚, Zang Di 臧棣, Sun Wenbo 孙文波. Beijing 北京: People's Literature Publishing House 人民文学出版社, 2000, p. 272.

<sup>12</sup> "Language is a Kind of Beginning Series" 语言是一种开始丛书, Zang Di 臧棣, *The Little Elegy Series* 小挽歌丛书, Taipei 台北: Xiuwei 秀威, 2013, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 84.

it is the bed of invention for its own fall. / That means that the falling things will float and continue to travel.

它为自己的飘落发明的床。/那意思是，飘落的东西还会浮起，继续旅行。<sup>14</sup>

the damn thorn, that is to say, / on the question of whether the world has been abandoned by God, / someone has lied to you.

该死的芒刺，也就是说，/在世界是否已被神抛弃的问题上，/有人对你撒了谎。<sup>15</sup>

re-recognizing the world means that we / may re-diverge into / me and you.

重新认识世界，意味着我们还有可能重新分叉成/我和你。<sup>16</sup>

and cleaning means that you must not rely on water.

而清洗，意味着绝不可一味依赖水。<sup>17</sup>

nothing is that this rain / can't wash away. This means that kindness / is more principled than we think.

没有什么东西是这雨水/不能清洗掉的。这意味着仁慈/比我们想象得更有原则。<sup>18</sup>

you read this poem, indicating that this poem is still alive.

你读到这首诗，表明这首诗还活着<sup>19</sup>

your bones are also a piece of clothing, / this only shows that I have failed more than you.

你的骨头也是一件衣服，/这只能说明，我比你更失败。<sup>20</sup>

you look like a sly new god / that is about to disappear / into the empty closet. In other words, a smoked dress / can put you back in the truth.

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<sup>14</sup> "It's So Series" 就是这样丛书, Ibid, p. 179.

<sup>15</sup> "Lizard Series" 蜥蜴丛书, Ibid, p. 267.

<sup>16</sup> "Commemorating Wang Xiaobo Series" 纪念王小波丛书, Ibid, p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> "April Fool's Day Series 2013" 2013年愚人节丛书, Ibid, p. 102.

<sup>18</sup> "Slow Rain Series" 慢雨丛书, Ibid, p. 268.

<sup>19</sup> "Doomsday Series" 世界末日丛书, Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> "Thawing guide series" 解冻指南丛书, Ibid, p. 142.

你看上去就像/一个即将消失在空衣柜里的/有趣的新神。换句话说，一件熏过的衣服/就可能把你套回到真相之中。<sup>21</sup>

One must emphasize that although this type of sentence occupies a certain length in the poems, within the scope of sampling (i.e., the latest collection of poems, *The Little Elegy Series* 小挽歌丛书<sup>22</sup>), poetry with such sentences constitutes only about one-fifth of the total volume. Of course, we can see that Zang Di does tend to use “that means...” or “A means B”, “indicating”, “shows”, “in other words”, this type of sentences construct the connection between verses. In this way, it is not so much a “tone of speech when explaining things”, but it may be more accurate in terms of an “interpreting language”. What he is interested in and what he is working on is the way in which this “interpretation” model is presented. Even if he uses the “description” mode (usually “this explains...” or “A explains B”), his interpretation is not “the science of empirical analysis” for the “description” of causality (explanation), but more focused on a form of internal understanding – although his concern is not a true interpretation, but a “form” of interpretation.

As the language foundation of modern science, “interpretation” is undoubtedly a basic mode of operation of symbolic law, and one of the focuses of various schools of modern philosophy. Friedrich Schleiermacher, the originator of modern hermeneutics, believed that human beings are fundamentally the creation of language. For humans, any understanding is based on language. However, if the scientism represented by Enlightenment rationality attempts to establish the inevitability and objectivity of language and interpretation, then Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics is based on the recognition of “reasonable prejudice”<sup>23</sup>. In other words, the essence of interpretation is not only to correctly explain the absolutely unmistakable interpretation object, but the object itself can only be interpreted in the context of fusion of horizons. In a broad sense, semiotics, from the structuralist linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure to Lacan's poststructuralist psychoanalysis, although quite different from the theoretical context of hermeneutics, is also quite a matter of symbolic interpretation. Pointing. Lacan believes that Freud's theory of unconsciousness is finally implemented at the level of language. It is not only an analysis of linguistic errors and jokes, but even an analysis of dreams based on its language or rhetoric. Therefore, Lacan follows the theory of Roman Jakobson about the condensation in the dream-

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<sup>21</sup> “Lavender Series” 薰衣草丛书, Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. *Little Elegy Series* 小挽歌丛书, Taipei 台北: Xiuwei 秀威, 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p.240.

work, metaphor, displacement is a metaphor, and endless trope<sup>24</sup> becomes the basic principle of language. For Lacan, “the syntax is preconscious.... The syntactic of the subject is related to the unconscious. When the subject tells the story, there is something that secretly leads the syntactic and makes it more and more condensed. Condensed in what Freud called the kernel... and this kernel refers to something traumatic...this kernel must be marked as belonging to the real domain”<sup>25</sup>. In Lacan, not only the sliding sign can no longer form a fixed meaning relationship with the finger, but also the syntactic structure as the signifier structure itself is filled with the traumatic kernel of the real domain.

Of course, it is not difficult for us to detect the sliding state of the language in the poems, but it should be further explained that the uncertainty of the meaning relationship is also the theoretical basis of the above sentence. In the poems of Zang Di, the two parts before and after “A meaning B”, parts being connected have basically no reasonable coping relationship. One notices that the non-logical relationship established here reveals the lack and collapse of the language of the Other.

For example, in the above quoted *Beneath the Kunlun Mountain, or Although It is So Small Association* 昆仑山下，或虽然很渺小协会：“But now, the distant means: / it can blow you into the stone with a sigh of relief, / and you will wake up in the stone” the definition re-experiences the relationship between man and nature (mountain, rock...). This relationship has not appeared in the predecessors' words, nor is it marked by the logic of breaking the existing symbolic order. Another example from *Tomorrow is Christmas Series* 明天就是圣诞节丛书：“When you are asleep, / you are more like a person who is not yet born than a shadow. / The meaning is that as long as you wake up completely, / you will have endless water”. It is not difficult to see that the sun, Christmas Eve, Jesus, shadow, baby, water, sleep, and waking-up are indeed the intervening and infiltrating signifiers, sliding from one meaning relationship to another. In this way, not only the initial signifier of the “sun” is constantly changing along the chain of meanings of “sleeping”, “shadow”, “unborn person”, but the logic of “When you are asleep, / you are more like a person who is not yet born than a shadow” is the signifier of “as long as you wake up completely, / you

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<sup>24</sup> I have discussed Zang Di's poetry in the article “Desire, Metaphor and Objet petit a: Postmodern Politics of Contemporary Chinese Poetry” 欲望、换喻与小它物：当代汉语诗的后现代政治. See Yang Xiaobin: “Desire and Jouis-sens: Contemporary Chinese Literature and Culture from the Perspective of Lacan” 欲望与绝爽：拉康视野下的当代华语文学与文化 (Taipei: Wheat Field 麦田, 2013), pp. 27-29. Undoubtedly, Zang Di, like most Chinese contemporary poets, maintains a special preference for metaphor. The reason is the difference in linguistic devices, and the desire gap created by the gap between the signifier and the signifier that promotes the continuous extension of the poetry's meaning chain. This article does not focus on the metaphor in the poems, but it is still necessary to point out the key position of the metaphor in poetry writing.

<sup>25</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: Norton, 1981), p.68.

will have endless water”. It must be emphasized that the connection between the sun and the shadows, sleep and birth, or even the connection between Jesus and water is not uncommon. What is shown here is how to reorganize the symbolic order in the case of the signifier slipping, and this order to perform the function of a certain point de capiton (mainly with the words “meaning is”), but also using “when ..., more like...” or “as long as...” to perform a metaphorical signifier replacement<sup>26</sup>.

Although the words “means” and “shows” are used in many places, the latter two sentences – “when ..., more like...” and “as long as..., ...will...” – clearly represents the diversity and complexity of the “tone” in Zang Di’s works. We can see that except for “after all”, “shouldn’t have been”, “may be”, “you won’t guess”, “the problem now is...” and so on, that still exemplify quite simple examples, there are quite a few more complex sentence patterns, such as “on the surface looks like... but...”, “to tell the truth, I don’t...”, “even if there is no..., it is not...”, “for the sake of... I don’t want to let...” and so on, all over the poems:

on the surface, there are two things / that have nothing to do with the fall of life: a little embarrassing / but not embarrassing to the point of being unusual.

表面看去，两件事/都无关生活的堕落：有点暧昧/但又不是暧昧得不同寻常。<sup>27</sup>

to be honest, I don't care if you / are familiar with how frogs get through the winter – oh... / I care for hibernation / that is coming to an end, and whether you have learned to think about / the beauty of hesitation?

说实话，我才不在乎你/是否熟悉青蛙怎样越冬呢——/...../我在意的是，冬眠/即将结束，你是否已学会掂量/美丽的犹豫<sup>28</sup>

even if there is no swindler Thomas, / I can't get away from Brazil.

即使没有骗子托马斯，/也轮不到我远离巴西。<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For the relationship between metonymy and contemporary poetry, please see my “Desire, Metaphor and Objet petit a: Postmodern Rhetoric and Cultural Politics of Contemporary Chinese Poetry” 欲望、换喻与小它物：当代汉语诗的后现代修辞与文化政治 // *Journal of Chinese University of Political Science* 政大中文学报, 14th issue (December 2010), p. 241–266.

<sup>27</sup> “Letters to the Magpies Series” 写给喜鹊的信丛书, Zang Di 臧棣, *The Little Elegy Series* 小挽歌丛书, Taipei 台北: Xiuwei 秀威, 2013, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> “New Responsibility Series” 新的责任丛书, Ibid, p. 48.

<sup>29</sup> “Emmanuel Riva Series” 艾曼纽·丽娃丛书, Ibid, p. 47.

or for the sake of subtext, I don't want sand to become/ the only thing that can calm us down.  
或者为潜台词着想，我不想让沙子变成唯一能让我们冷静下来的东西。<sup>30</sup>

It must be pointed out again that, here, various syntactic structures with connected functions often connect quite distant (or even impossible) things or situations. In the poem *The Waves' Vision Is Always the Most Accurate Series* 波浪的眼光始终是最准确的丛书, what does “sand” represent on the “river bank” of the “body” does not have a clear and obvious answer. In the second and third lines of this poem, Zang Di emphasizes that “river bank” is not a “lakeshore” or “coast” – “why is not a lakeshore, there can be one hundred reasons, why is it not a coast, at least ten thousand reasons”<sup>31</sup> – the difference between lake, sea and river is that the river is flowing in one direction, while the lake and the sea have no sense of direction and lack of speed and movement. Then, the sand more or less implies that it is on the flowing river, relative to the dynamic of the river (this is also the “subtext” on the background of “calm down”). But the phrase “for the sake of... I don't want to let...” makes the static, calm, or comforting function of the sand obey the consideration of the “subtext”, and the “subtext” is not the static of the sand and the dynamics of the river. What kind of tension is there? That is to say, in the face of this tension, sand is not unique; even calm is not the only function of sand – because the next verse shows the sliding in the other direction: “The sand should go to do something else”<sup>32</sup>. It can be seen that the poem creates a new poetic paradigm by using the sentence function with the connection function to generate the virtual filling of the self-desired form of the subject represented by the signifier chain of the signifier itself.

We can also say that the language structure is treated as a kind of symbolic “semblant” in Zang Di, the original sentence form is preserved, but it is only the virtual illusion because the slip of the signifier dissolves the stability of the structure. It is the illusion of the symbolist Other that is devoted to revealing, in order to disintegrate the suppression of its authority. For Lacan, this “imaginary illusion” not only has illusory features, but also temptation features, which on the one hand replaces the thing that causes the anxiety or fear that it is originally or can occupy this position, the black hole of the real domain. It is also a completely disorderly and crazy statement – on the other hand, it also eliminates the suppression of the symbol domain integration rule.

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<sup>30</sup> “The Waves’ Vision Is Always the Most Accurate Series” 波浪的眼光始终是最准确的丛书, Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

In the interview with Quanzi, Zangdi also used “folds and gaps” to illustrate his way of dealing with the language structure in writing: “In modern writing, I think the best poetry comes from the flow between sentences. As a poet, I focus on this connection and I am deeply interested in the metaphorical tension created by the mutual movement between sentences. For me, this is also the place where modern writing appeals. From the point of view of writing, the secret of poetry exists almost in the folds and gaps between the sentences”<sup>33</sup>. From this point of view, Zang Di’s poems jump out of the modern poetry writing mode with imagery as the basic axis. Of course, this is not his invention. As early as in the creations of the 1970s, we can find that we attach importance to sentence patterns. This is also an important aspect of transcending the poetry pattern of earlier poetry. For example, “The only thing that is lost on the stone steps / is the maple leaf, the card / that remains in memory, / and only the ruthless rain”. (*Autumn* 秋, 1975)<sup>34</sup>, or “If possible / you will insist on breaking things/ but you must wait until the evening / to re-read my manuscript/ and you will suddenly feel unconsciously frightened” (*To the Optimist's Daughter* 给乐观者的女儿, 1977)<sup>35</sup>. However, Zang Di emphasizes “the mutual movement between sentences”, that is, the endless sliding of the signifier.

Zang Di’s idea about the gap between sentences echoes my discourse of the desire as an “ethical gap” in the article “Desire, Metonymy and Object petit a: Postmodern Rhetoric and Cultural Politics of Contemporary Chinese Poetry”<sup>36</sup>. However, the concept of “pli” borrowed from Gilles Deleuze is fundamentally different from Lacan’s theory of desire<sup>37</sup>. If the “gap” that Zang Di is writing about is related to the negative desire or lack of concept in Lacan’s theory, then “fold” emphasizes the Deleuze-like affirmative orientation, that is, some self-superimposition and self-generation possibility: this makes the baroque structure infinitely complicated, “a limited number of elements produce an infinite number of combinations”<sup>38</sup>. For example, in Zang Di’s “thatched small paper knife / cutting the burrs of the universe”<sup>39</sup> we can In addition, we can feel some kind of conflicting tension between “thatch” and “the burrs of the universe”, and we can

<sup>33</sup> Quanzi 泉子. “Interview with Zang Di. Please Imagine Such a Story: Language Can be Pure” 臧棣访谈：请想象这样一个故事：语言是可以纯洁的 // *West Lake* 西湖, No. 9, 2006, p. 77.

<sup>34</sup> Duo Duo 多多, *Still* 依旧是, Taipei 台北: Xiuwei 秀威, 2013, p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> Yang Xiaobin 杨小滨. “Desire, Metaphor and Object petit a: Postmodern Rhetoric and Cultural Politics of Contemporary Chinese Poetry” 欲望、换喻与小它物：当代汉语诗的后现代修辞与文化政治 // *Journal of Chinese University of Political Science* 政大中文学报, 14th issue (December 2010), p. 241–266.

<sup>37</sup> Zang Di’s interest in Deleuze can also be proved by his naming a poetry anthology he edited *Thousand Plateau Poems* 千高原诗丛: the name comes from Deleuze’s famous book *Mille Plateau*.

<sup>38</sup> Adrian Parr ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 103.

<sup>39</sup> Signature, 臧棣: *The Fresh Thorns* (Beijing: New World, 2002), p. 121. 签名》, 臧棣: 《新鲜的荆棘》 (北京: 新世界, 2002), 页 121.

grasp the kind of reintegration and superposition effect between “thatch” and “paper knife”. The unprecedented combination of “universe” and its “burrs” creates an even new layer of “folds” in the overall picture. “Gap” and “fold” are complementary here: a “fold” can also be seen as a virtual stitching of the “gap”<sup>40</sup>. If the Mobius belt is used as a seam between the inside and the outside, the inside and the outside are on the same surface – the *jouissance* fills the desire with an impossible pleasure to fill what cannot be filled. The folds then internalize the exterior (“folds” mean “the interior is nothing more than an external fold”<sup>41</sup>), forcing the language to produce a greater abundance of layers and weaving a more intricate path. In any case, in the sense of Deleuze's “folds”, language has become an unintended form.

### Jouis-sens – Mystery – Sinthome

Zang Di's poetics is a kind of poetics of pleasure. As early as the 1990s, Chen Chao pointed out that the poem of Zang Di “began with the pleasure of writing”<sup>42</sup>. Zang Di also emphasizes the importance of “the joy of language” in poetry writing<sup>43</sup>. This makes the poetic style of Zang Di and the pure desire poetics at least superficially different. So, to what extent can this kind of “pleasure” or “joy” be defined as “jouis-sens” in the sense of Lacan? Lacan once described James Joyce's writing as having a “joyceance” style, which reveals to some extent the intrinsic link between pioneering writing and greatness. The reason why Lacan called Joyce “sinthome”<sup>44</sup> is precisely because Joyce's writing is close to the so-called “jouis-sens”, that is, the text category, the symbol level “jouis-sens”. “Sinthome” is a kind of “jouis-sens”, it is the expression of coolness in the language, it is lost in the meaning of the signifier pleasure, and its “meaning” also means the impossibility of meaning.

We may first look at how the “impossibility of meaning” achieves a *jouis-sens* effect. For example, *jouis-sens* can be brought about by a negative sentence in a poem – and negation is often a negation of meaning. It does not imply any affirmative meaning behind the denial (as Adorno

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<sup>40</sup> Jacques-Alain Miller states that stitching is an alternative to vacancies, showing a non-identical appearance. See Jacques-Alain Miller, “Suture (Elements of the Logic of the Signifier),” in Peter Hallward and Knox Peden eds., *Concept and Form, Volume 1: Selections from the Cahiers Pour L'Analyse* (London: Verso, 2012), p.99.

<sup>41</sup> Adrian Parr ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 107.

<sup>42</sup> Chen Chao 陈超. “Less is More: What I Saw in Zang Di” 少就是多：我看到的臧棣 // *The Writer* 作家, No. 3, 1999, p. 93.

<sup>43</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. “The Poetry of the 1990s: From Emotions” 90年代诗歌：从情感转向 // *Journal of Zhengzhou University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 郑州大学学报(哲学社会科学版), Vol. 31, No. 1 (1998/1), p. 71.

<sup>44</sup> Lacan's *sinthome* concept uses the spelling of the ancient French *symptôme* (symptom). However, *sinthome* also contains other meanings, such as the homonym “saint homme” in French, “synth-homme”, “Saint Thomas” and so on.

said) “It is ‘anti-dialectic’ to equate negative negation with affirmation<sup>45</sup>). “The sand should go to do something else” is an example: here, “should go to do something else” just denies the current work, but does not clearly indicate what “other” should be done. In addition, the true negative sentences are also common in poems:

every day, the shadow of the end of the world / will not be the focus.

每一天都有世界末日的影子/也不会是重点。<sup>46</sup>

I walked like a crazy horse - but not because of the lonely heart, but not because the waves want to hide and wander; so, even without the liar Thomas, you can't take me away from Brazil.

我像疯了的马一样走动——/但不是因为寂寞的心灵，/但也不是因为波浪想隐瞒漂泊；/所

以，即使没有骗子托马斯，/也轮不到我远离巴西。<sup>47</sup>

毕竟，美好于孤独/并不像有没有天赋那样/喜欢按门铃。<sup>48</sup>

对岸未必不是彼岸；但更主要的，/此岸未必不是对岸。<sup>49</sup>

令我们感到羞愧的鸟/还没有出现过。<sup>50</sup>

there is no sound that has been higher than the whispers of the sea.

没有任何一种声音/曾高过这大海的低语。<sup>51</sup>

obviously, the onion does not leave the essence / of the onion in the onion. He did not find a core that / could be imagined in the onion.

显然，洋葱并没有把洋葱的本质/留在洋葱里面。他并没有在洋葱中找到/一个可以被想象的核心。<sup>52</sup>

The introduction here is of course only a small part of the examples. What I want to say is that the negation of negation comes from the eternal, absolutely negative irony like Søren Kierkegaard

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<sup>45</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E. B. Ashton. New York: Seabury Press, 1973. p. 158.

<sup>46</sup> 《世界末日丛书》，臧棣：《小挽歌丛书》（台北：秀威，2013），页 35。

<sup>47</sup> 《艾曼纽·丽娃丛书》，臧棣：《小挽歌丛书》（台北：秀威，2013），页 47。

<sup>48</sup> 《这前提或者这礼物难道还不够好丛书》，臧棣：《小挽歌丛书》（台北：秀威，2013），页 54。

<sup>49</sup> 《波浪的眼光始终是最准确的丛书》，臧棣：《小挽歌丛书》（台北：秀威，2013），页 172。

<sup>50</sup> 《作为一个节日的回声丛书》，臧棣：《小挽歌丛书》（台北：秀威，2013），页 174。

<sup>51</sup> “Distance Book Related to the Sea” 和大海有关的距离丛书, Ibid, p. 281.

<sup>52</sup> “Peeling Onion Series” 剥洋葱丛书, Ibid, p. 282.

said<sup>53</sup>. Irony, as the extreme example of escaping, embodies the important aspect of perfection – as long as we have not forgotten Lacan's description of the drive: the eternal movement of the real black hole around the book. In irony, the movement of the signifier is always out of the target, never touching the target, but constantly reminding the target. In addition, the *jouis-sens* as a negative meaning also fits Kierkegaard's elaboration of Socrates in *The Concept of Irony*: Socrates always approaches the ultimate in cognition by claiming his ignorance. In the words of Zang Di: “In the field of poetry, ignorance can bring the greatest happiness”<sup>54</sup>. He also expressed the following views in more detail on “ignorance”:

The deeper the real poet is, the more he will feel his “ignorance” about the language. This may be similar to Socrates' discussion of human “ignorance”. ... The relationship between the poet and the language, in my opinion, is very wonderful and at the same time a bit frustrating. Language is a big secret. But from the perspective of writing skills, as a poet, what we can master is only the various “small secrets” of language. For a while, this feeling almost suffocated me. This may also be attributed to Gu Cheng's “subtleties of life failure”. In my opinion, dare to admit that “ignorance” of language will help to develop a new aesthetic vision. It may lead to a useful mysticism towards language<sup>55</sup>.

The so-called “attitude towards the mysticism of language” is probably also an unusual position held by the language of the big Other symbolic order: the language Other is no longer the omniscience base of subject dependence, but rather the source of doubt. Then, the general irony is to approach the core of the cognition or experience that is directed by the ignorance implied by the negative statement—without providing any affirmative message. Let us look at a few simple examples. As mentioned above, “the same thing, say it in front of the chrysanthemum or say in front of the peony, the meaning will be very different” or “not every shortcut will have fallen leaves” or “he did not find a core that can be imagined in the onion” – each of these sentences has its own possible reference, but both cancel the possibility by negation. In the first example, we were not told, saying in front of the chrysanthemum and saying in front of the peony, what is the meaning of the concrete difference. However, what Zang Di wants to emphasize is the difference, not the different situations that are specifically manifested. Since the title of this poem is *World*

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<sup>53</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony: With Constant Reference to Socrates*, trans. Lee M. Capel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), p.278.

<sup>54</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. *Little Elegy Series* 小挽歌丛书, Taipei 台北: Xiuwei 秀威, 2013, p. 301.

<sup>55</sup> Quanzi 泉子. “Interview with Zang Di. Please Imagine Such a Story: Language Can be Pure” 臧棣访谈：请想象这样一个故事：语言是可以纯洁的 // *West Lake* 西湖, No. 9, 2006, p. 78.

*Poet's Day Series* 世界诗人日丛书, we have to read these verses as a statement of the pertinence, uniqueness and difference of the poetic language itself, and this declaration can only be through negative discourse. It can also be said that even if we do not know the rhetoric of “before the chrysanthemum”, we do not know the rhetoric of “before the peony”, but the poem focuses on “speaking in front of the chrysanthemum” and “speaking in front of the peony”. The difference lies in gaps or gullies, and this difference is triggering the subtle expression of the driving force in the (non) meaning category, because the driving force here can only be around the difference of the virtual (real domain) movement. Similarly, “not every shortcut will have fallen leaves” in a complicated poem like *If Your Eyes Are Not as Picky as the Truth Series* 假如你的眼光不是像真理一样挑剔丛书, tell us that the traces of history cannot be found everywhere, perhaps it is precisely the opportunity for the emergence of “truth”: I don't know which shortcuts will have fallen leaves, which is the only way to encounter fallen leaves. What is presented here is almost the basic essence of psychoanalysis: historical truths are only mapped in sporadic, remnant and fragmentary pieces that are not critical, obsessive. Moreover, “he didn't find a core that can be imagined in the onion” is to cancel the possible “core”, because the core we can find is only the core of the virtual or the core of the void. The poem that dissects the onion structure finally arrives at a conclusion that is very close to the psychoanalytic process by deconstructing the essence: “The emptiness of peeling off the onion is precisely a liberation of us”<sup>56</sup>, depicting the language in a metaphorical way. The fundamental characteristic of the symbolic order: the big Other does not exist, or the language does not have an absolute law. This void is the impossibility of the real domain inside the symbol domain.

Lacan's interest in Joyce is precisely that Joyce challenged the authority of the language Other, or that he replaced the authoritative symbolist with his own symbolic other. In the novel *Finnegan's Wake*, Joyce certainly has a considerable degree of writing or language pleasure in the various exercises, reorganizations, and teasing of the language. The constant homophones, puns, etc. in Joyce's novels is of course Lacan's so-called “linguisterie/linguistricks”. These gimmicks or tricks subvert the unified authority of the language Other. In the poems, it is not difficult to find the hobby of homophonics and puns. Michelle Yeh has carefully analyzed Zang Di's pun in his *Poetry Describing Objects* – “It has not yet passed the gray of time” – “gray” has a double meaning here: it refers to gray, but also has the meaning of ash. This pun opens a new space of imagination:

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<sup>56</sup> “Peeling Onion Series” 剥洋葱丛书, Zang Di 臧棣, *The Little Elegy Series* 小挽歌丛书, Taipei 台北: Xiuwei 秀威, 2013, p. 283.

gray reminds people of old age, while ashes witness the burning and destruction of past life”<sup>57</sup>. Following this interpretation strategy, we can naturally discover the many puns in the poems. From his earliest collection of poems, *Yanyuan Notes* 燕园记事, we can pull out a lot of puns. For example, in “the so-called alien land is just a hand / and often cold like a piece of frozen tofu”<sup>58</sup> frozen tofu is a metaphor for the cold and stiff after the frost, and it also metaphorizes the fragility of life in a foreign land. Even the most common food is used to metaphorize the simplicity of life.

Therefore, for Zang Di, a pun is nothing more than a way to get rid of the single meaning of linguistic signs. Moreover, the homophonic sounds that are good at it are more disintegrating the identity of the language. Wang Ao has also pointed out that Zang “uses a variety of homophonic structures to lubricate the chain of the signifier”<sup>59</sup>. In many examples, different concepts echo each other, and the “touching” friendship is indistinguishable from the anger. The so-called *jouis-sens* is nothing more than the multiple meanings of language and the multiple authority that may challenge the symbolic order.

Both homophonic play and puns reveal gaps in the language system, that is, within a certain symbolic order, there are inevitable real-world fissures. Therefore, this can also be regarded as the real domain remnant that the symbol domain cannot cover – the object *a*, the fascinating desire, the darkness of the small object, nicknamed “mystery” in the recent series of essays by Zang Di, *The Trout and Swallow of Poetry* 诗道鳟燕:

The most mysterious thing about poetry is that poetry likes to look a little mysterious.

.....

I almost don't want to say this, but people who don't feel the mysterious of poetry will not feel much poetry at all. This principle is almost irrefutable. What I actually want to say is that people who don't feel the mystery of poetry will not feel the beauty of life.

.....

In poetry, mysterious things can often be profoundly understood.

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<sup>57</sup> Michelle Yeh. “The Depth of ‘Shallow’: Zang Di’s ‘Poetry Describing Objects’” “浅”的深度：谈臧棣的《咏物诗》 // *New Poetry Review* 新诗评论, 2005, Vol. 1, p. 88.

<sup>58</sup> “Year-End Summary” 年终总结臧棣, Zang Di 臧棣, *Yanyuan Notes* 燕园记事, Beijing 北京: Culture and Art Publishing House 文化艺术出版社, 1998, p. 114.

<sup>59</sup> Wang Ao 王敖. “Recalling the Song of the Blue Knight – Interpreting Zang Di” 追忆自我的蓝骑士之歌——解读臧棣 // *PoemLife Database* 诗生活文库, <http://www.poemlife.com/libshow-49.htm>.

Everyday things are often mysterious to poetry. Our familiarity with everyday things cannot replace the mysterious meaning that everyday things bring to poetry.

.....

Whether in terms of style or poetry responsibility, beauty is a mysterious gift of poetry.

.....

Ecstasy rarely leaves a perfect mark on style. However, in the effect of poetry, it stimulates a mysterious appeal<sup>60</sup>.

In Zang Di, mystery is nothing more than an irrational sign under the surface of rational language (which is why Zang is often classified as an intellectual poet or one from the academy), and it appears in the disguise of *jouis-sense*. It is even exaggerated to call it “ecstasy”, but in any case, ecstasy must also appear as “mysterious appeal”. According to psychoanalytic theorist Russell Grigg: “The traumatism of *jouissance* lies not within its scope or its strength, but within its mystery”<sup>61</sup>. Mysterious *jouissance* can be said to be a virtual filling of desire, due to stitching the gap between desires is like being distributed on two sides of the Mobius belt – one is the desire to be vacant, the other is the rest of the *jouissance* – the two sides are actually the same side, because the *jouissance* itself is the real domain. The product of black holes is a manifestation of traumatic pleasure. This mystery, is sometimes called “charm” (stems from Zang Di’s famous assertion that “poetry is not charming”<sup>62</sup>) or “ghost”. Lacan used an ancient Greek word “*scotoma*” when he talked about it<sup>63</sup>, meaning blind spots, fainting, shadows, or “lure” to indicate a charm of small things, a ghostly existence. Then, the metaphor about language and ghostly butterflies happens to be connected with Lacan's interpretation of Zhuang Zhou's dream story.

“Let the language be captured as a beautiful butterfly. There are many similarities between language and butterfly. At least the language is compared to a butterfly, which makes me always aware that the language has an autonomous life.... The butterfly has a ghostly ability, it can fly in the moment when you reach out and touch it. This is a powerful mockery for anyone who thinks they have the ability to control the language. Of course, I don't think the language is uncontrollable... .. On many levels, as a good poet, you must

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<sup>60</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. “The Trout and Swallow of Poetry (5)” 诗道鱒燕（五） // *Poetry East West* 诗东西, 5, pp. 170-219.

<sup>61</sup> Russell Grigg, “Afterword: The Enigma of *Jouissance*,” in Santanu Biswas ed., *The Literary Lacan: From Literature to Lituraterre and Beyond* (London: Seagull, 2012), p. 291.

<sup>62</sup> Mu Duo 木朵, Zang Di 臧棣. “Poetry is Not Charming” 诗歌就是不祛魅 // *New Poetry* 新诗, 4, p. 113.

<sup>63</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977), p.83.

demonstrate the ability to control the language; but you must understand that there are still some language levels that we cannot control”<sup>64</sup>.

This “uncontrollable” and “ghost”-style “butterfly” has to be reminiscent of Lacan's allegory of Zhuang Zhou's dream butterfly in the 11th seminar of *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. Lacan believes that in Zhuangzi's fable, the butterfly appears as a kind of gaze in front of the subject (Zhuangzi), which makes the subject unable to fully identify with itself (because Zhuangzi suspects that he is a butterfly rather than a Zhuangzi). However, the butterfly represents the perfectness of the real domain, and is the cause of the desire faced by the splitting subject – the goal. As a special Other in a language, the other person who has the metaphor of “having autonomous life” is not the “symbolic Other” itself, but the objet petit a with “single-like ability”, which implodes the identity of the subject. In an insightful commentary, Geng Zhanchun 耿占春 said: “The subject of consciousness in the poetry of Zang Di is also the subject of decomposition and the subject of disintegration”<sup>65</sup>.

As far as the “diffuse subject” is concerned, the *Original Record* 原始记录 written in 1998 may be a more powerful example:

the chair says, give me  
an umbrella that covers them  
but apart from the violent shame,  
can they still leak in here?

rain says, give me a window  
with a yellow cat behind the glass.  
wisdom says, give me three eggs,  
I want to help them become familiar with  
flying at different speeds.

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<sup>64</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. “What If We Really Don't Know What We Are Writing – Answering the Questions of the Poet Xi Du” 假如我们真的不知道我们在写些什么——答诗人西渡的书面采访 // *Starting from the smallest possibility* 从最小的可能性开始, ed. Xiao Kaiyu 萧开愚, Zang Di 臧棣, Sun Wenbo 孙文波. Beijing 北京: People's Literature Publishing House 人民文学出版社, 2000, p. 277-278.

<sup>65</sup> Geng Zhanchun 耿占春. “Micro-perception and Enlightenment of Language--On Zang Di” 微观知觉和语言的启蒙——论臧棣 // *Enclave* 飞地, 1 (Spring 2012), p. 156.

the puppet says, give me a pencil,  
I want to write down these instructions,  
let the arrogance be free from embarrassment.  
embarrassment says, give me a mirror that has been broken,  
or the grammar of reflection  
to teach them directly.

the table says, give me another elevation,  
I will tell them with these four legs  
how to distinguish between slope and system.

.....

when it's my turn, I say, give it to me  
what I want now –  
two pounds of pepper, four pounds of onion, three pounds of beef tenderloin,  
because the plates in front of me are empty,  
I have to do something to fill them up.

椅子说，给我  
一把能遮住他们的伞  
但除了猛烈的羞怯，  
他们还能在那里泄密呢？

雨说，给我一扇玻璃后面  
蹲着一只黄猫的窗户。  
智慧说，给我三个鸟蛋，  
我要帮助他们熟悉  
速度不同的飞翔。

木偶说，给我一支铅笔，  
我想记下这些吩咐，  
好让其中的傲慢免于晦涩。  
晦涩说，给我一面已经打碎的镜子，  
或是把反光的语法

直接传授给他们。

桌子说，给我另一种海拔，

我就告诉他们用四条腿

如何区分坡度和制度。

.....

轮到我时，我说，给我

我现在就想要的东西——

两斤尖椒，四斤洋葱，三斤牛里脊，

因为我眼前的这些盘子都空着，

我得做点什么来填满它们。<sup>66</sup>

In the most obvious sense, this poem can be used to illustrate that in the 1990s the narrative trend of Chinese poetry, still had a hidden undercurrent. If narrative is still (at least superficially) based on a single subjective voice, the dramatic nature of poetry means that the lyrical subject has apparently produced its own fission. In this poem, “I” only joined the crowd when it was the end, and the previous summons were scattered to countless “speaking” sources, and the “give me...” appeal marked that the missing Other is nothing but a ghostly little thing. In the whole poem, the small things are transformed into various everyday things – this is exactly what “the everyday things are often mysterious to poetry” means – everything acquires its own mysterious voice. Why is it a voice, not a discourse? In fact, it is not difficult to see that the appeals of these different sound sources typically reflect the missing objects, and the way to fill them makes the black holes of the real domain get a looming effect. The sound (vocal), which happens to be one of the four local objects of Lacan's example (except for gaze, breast and feces), has its incomprehensible temptation and is therefore full of *jouis-sens*. In the end, when “these plates in front of the eyes are empty”, it means that the main body is still facing an empty plate that is in need of “filling up”. Although the material is specific, the idea of “doing something” proves this kind of filling. The desire to “fill” is still a certain distance from the realization.

I used the example of *Commemorating Hu Shi Series* 纪念胡适丛书 to analyze the split between the traditional composition (form) and special meaning (content) of the language

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<sup>66</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. *Fresh Thorns* 新鲜的荆棘, pp. 230-232.

symbol<sup>67</sup>. In this article, I want to further explore how the subject is related to the variation of the symbolic order of the Other to the objet petit a, corresponding to the development from S (A) – “the signifier eliminating the Other” – toward J (A) – “the jouis-sens eliminating the Other”. This “jouis-sens eliminating the Other” is significantly different from the carnal jouis-sens: although it is an enjoyment of objet petit a, it creates individuals who produce the symbolic domain of the ‘self’ from that vacancy<sup>68</sup>. Joyce is an example of this kind of “self”: “He succeeded in automating himself by partially personalizing objet petit a (vacancies in the symbolic domain)”<sup>69</sup>.

In late Lacan's concern, it was the subject's recognition of the vacant objet petit a (such as Zhuangzi's butterfly). In Zang Di, the mystery, charm, joy, ecstasy of the symbolic Other are the expressions of the pleasure dimension of the Other, and the discovery of the various possibilities hidden by the symbolic order. Then, the subject itself is no longer complete: his efforts to return to the depths of the unconscious are also a process of breaking the framework of rational culture. Language, the jouis-sens formed here, can only mean the symptom of the language. Of course, this is what Lacan said when he talked about Joyce and his “sinthome”.

#### Zhuangzi – Paradox – Comedy

Here, the identity of the subject and the sacred is the identity of the vacancy and the jouis-sens of language. In the traditional Chinese thought, the concept of being a lacking subject or being a missing other has its own traces, especially in Taoism and Zen Buddhism. Zhuangzi said in the *Discussion of the Equality of Things* 齐物论 that “using a finger to show a finger's not being a finger, is not as good as using a non-finger to show a finger's not being a finger”, and the signifier is clearly stated. The other has the negation of its own characteristics (and this negativeness is presented through its negative face, which is better than its affirmative appearance). The signifier is the name that occupies the vacancy of the symbolic Other. “Heaven and earth are a single finger” means that although the world is symbolized by the signifier, the signifier itself can not become what Saul Kripke called “rigid designator”, because there is no absolutely certain correspondence between the signifier and the sign. Therefore, Zhuangzi's attitude towards language can be said to be an advocacy of Zang Di's “disenchantment”: insisting on “using strange and mystical expressions, wild and extravagant words, and phrases to which no definite meaning could be

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<sup>67</sup> Yang Xiaobin: “Desire and Jouis-sens: Contemporary Chinese Literature and Culture from the Perspective of Lacan” 欲望与绝爽：拉康视野下的当代华语文学与文化. Taipei: Wheat Field 麦田, 2013, pp. 252-255.

<sup>68</sup> Lorenzo Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), p. 188.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

assigned” (*Tian Xia*), that is, the inherent non-identity of the language. For Zhuangzi, language must be a kind of trope, which is why Zhuangzi opposes serious or rigid language: “he employed the words of the cup of endless application, with important quotations to substantiate the truth, and an abundance of corroborative illustrations” (*Tian Xia*). Language cannot escape the fate of escaping, and escaping, it means that the sign can be self-denial, the language only enjoys the name of the symbolic Other in the state of self-denial.

At the same time, in Zhuangzi, in the story of Zhuang Zhou dreaming about the butterfly, the butterfly as a kind of gaze reflects the vacancy and *objet petit a*, but “Tao” as the dominant signifier of the big Other is itself a kind of “nothing”. Zhuangzi's so-called “where the (proper) course is, there is freedom from all pre-occupation” (*Man in the World, Associated with other Men*), “the incorporeity of the Grand Unity” (*Lie Yu-kou*), although more ontological, but also more or less corresponds to Lacan’s the emptiness of the Other (although the ultimate concern of the two is not the same). In Taoism, the concept of “Tao” itself has the linguistic dimension, and it naturally has the characteristics of the language and the Other in the Lacanian sense. Then, Zhuangzi’s saying that “such freedom is the fasting of the mind” (*Tian Xia*) also associates the “Tao” as the other with the “mind” as the subject: the empty Other corresponds to the emptiness of the subject. As for Lacan, the relationship between the Other and the subject “is not abolishment of the Other, nor is it absorbed by the subject, but the compromise between the absence of the subject and the absence of the Other”<sup>70</sup>.

Zang Di has spared no effort in respecting Zhuangzi. He even believes that “from the perspective of poetry history, Zhuangzi is the greatest contemporary poet who still lives in prose poetry”<sup>71</sup>. He also linked Zhuangzi's metaphysical doctrine to language operation. The mystery or the void comes up: “People like to interpret Zhuangzi's sinisterism as a philosophical attitude, a view of life, but from an empirical point of view, I feel that it touches on how a person imagines a problem. In a nutshell, it involves the topic of mysticism. This is the same path as poetry”<sup>72</sup>.

However, it must be pointed out that the lack of subject in poetry is achieved not through the absolute emptiness of the language, but by the self-disintegrating power within the Other, that is,

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<sup>70</sup> Alenka Zupančič, “The 'Concrete Universal,' and What Comedy Can Tell Us About It,” in Slavoj Žižek ed., *Lacan: The Silent Partners* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 175.

<sup>71</sup> Zang Di 臧棣. “The Trout and Swallow of Poetry (5)” 诗道罇燕（五） // *Poetry East West* 诗东西, 5, p. 206.

<sup>72</sup> Quanzi 泉子. “Interview with Zang Di. Please Imagine Such a Story: Language Can be Pure” 臧棣访谈：请想象这样一个故事：语言是可以纯洁的 // *West Lake* 西湖, No. 9, 2006, p. 75.

the perfection of meaning, that is, the jousis-sense. Then, the emptiness of the “Tao” elaborated by Zhuangzi at the metaphysical level reveals the vacancy and lack of language, logic, or symbolic domain itself in the metaphysical operation. In other words, if Zhuangzi's philosophical speculation revolves around the concepts of “none” and “virtual”, then his literary allegories and metaphors are full of irony and dislocation. For example, Zhuangzi's story about “the material of this wood is good for nothing, and hence it is that it has attained to so great an age” (*Tian Xia*) is the allegory that the symbolic order of the big Other loses its ultimate norm. “Accordingly they dug one orifice in him every day; and at the end of seven days Chaos died” (*The Normal Course for Rulers and Kings*) is a sign of the failure of symbolization. At this point, Zhuangzi has an extremely negative attitude towards the effectiveness of the symbolic order of the Other, because the chaotic real domain has not been successfully incorporated into the symbol domain, but has become a victim of the symbolization process. Even the phrase “You are not I. How do you know that I do not know what constitutes the enjoyment of fishes?” (*Floods of Autumn*) is also intended to dispel the rational logic of “A is not B, so A does not know B's enjoyment”, but Zhuangzi does not provide a positive affirmative conclusion, but the question reaching a negative goal. This counter-question is not a simple affirmation of the double negation, but a hollowing out of the original logic; it does not provide an absolutely correct logical conclusion. In other words, the collapse of the symbolic order is the critique of culture by Zhuangzi. The negative sentence patterns commonly found in the poems mentioned above are also the distinctive features of Zhuangzi's grammar. Then, the metaphysical thinking about “none” and “virtual” must be based on the negation and even reflexivity of language. Zhuangzi's “paradoxes” are precisely the paradoxes in language, which indicates that the language of the Other is not complete, but it is full of various incomprehensible and open contradictions.

There are also frequent language gaps in the poems of Zang Di, forcing the creativity of the lyrical subject to stand out from the singularity of being excluded. For example:

Peacock does not dance peacock dance. / Oh, but we are not convinced, we conclude that / no peacock can escape / our eyes.

孔雀不跳孔雀舞。/但是我们不服气，我们断定/没有一只孔雀能躲过/我们的眼神。<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> “The Peacock Dance Association” 孔雀舞协会, Zang Di 臧棣. *The Universe is Flat* 宇宙是扁的. Beijing 北京: Writer 作家, 2008, p. 41.

Infinity is not enough. Just take care / of evading you and me, the excuse is / who will let you and me not confine with you and me.

无穷不够意思。只顾躲避你我，借口是/谁让你我不止于你与我。<sup>74</sup>

In the various misplacements in the previous example, the dislocation between the “peacock” and the “peacock dance” can be seen as a part of the real domain that the symbol can't eliminate, and it collapses in the *jouis-sens* form of the *objet petit a* excavating the identity of the language. The poem *Peacock Dance Association* itself is a subtle connection and misunderstanding of a language demonstration between a beautiful natural animal (peacock) and a cultural stage performance (peacock dance). It is written on the background of Du Fu's poem *Ascending the Height* 登高, but the original “boundless” is changed to “infinity”. The purely simplistic relationship between you and me (the symbolic order stipulated by a certain language) in fact demonstrates that there is no law and the whole truth is full of this relationship. In the following part of this poem, we will read “a lot of you...”, “a lot of you and me”, “you think...”, “you and I certainly don't know at the same time...” and so on. Classical poetic language may establish a standard “you and me” order (for example, the unity of heaven and man). “More than” and “many” all indicate that the *jouis-sens* residual effect disintegrates the entire symbolic order.

The symbolic order of poetry, of course, also includes the symbolic system of poetic tradition. In this respect, Zang Di's efforts also have the spirit of Zhuangzi's “Tao is in that excrement” (Knowledge Rambling in the North):

now, no one / is saying that the moon is his gallstones.

现在，没有人再说月亮是他的胆结石了。<sup>75</sup>

I am rubbing the ears of the moon. /... / The moon's ears to touch are/ like a topaz that had just been wrapped in black cloth. / In order to get an accurate feeling, / I specially washed my hands before I stroked.

我摩挲着月亮的耳朵。/.... /月亮的耳朵摸上去/像一块刚刚被黑布包过的黄玉。/为了获得准确的感觉，/我特意在抚摩前，洗了双手。<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> “The Endless Falling Woods Series” 无边落木丛书, Zang Di 臧棣. *The Empty City* 空城计. Taipei 台北: Tangshan 唐山, 2009, p. 193.

<sup>75</sup> “Contour Science” 轮廓学, Zang Di 臧棣: *The Fresh Thorns* 新鲜的荆棘. Beijing 北京: New World 新世界, 2002, p. 199.

<sup>76</sup> “Unexpected Harvest” 意外的收获, *Ibid*, p. 119.

In the previous example, it is a bold imagination to link the pure symbol of the moon to the “gallstone”, but here, the more complicated sentence is used: “no one is saying”. On the surface, it is a denial of this, but it is only the “saying” of others, not the traumatic reality (the gallstones) itself, which makes the self-discipline of language seem to stand on the strict side (no longer said that the moon is a gallstone). Whether this kind of rigor can completely cover up the real flash is still a problem. Even the language of “no one is saying” can't clear the weird “gallstone” from the moon and its traumatic “grimace of the real”. Similarly, in the latter case, it is difficult to confirm that the “ear of the moon” deserves to be the moon with the ear or the moon like the ear. In any case, this moon ear or ear moon also disturbs the image of the moon as a symbolic norm. The feeling of “stroking” or “touching” on this ear is more or less scornful, suggesting the *jouis-sens* of the moon in its classic symbolic framework.

Both of these examples have a quite obvious comedy attitude, and they can be perceived as the special faces that are shown by the *jouis-sens*. In an earlier article on Zang Di, Chen Chao discovered that “it reveals the unseen ‘comedy’ field in this generation’s inner life (mini-drama), showing the survival and life state of this special spiritual community”<sup>77</sup>. Zang Di himself writes: “The ‘compassion spirit’, in the traditional Chinese culture, it originated in Zhuangzi”<sup>78</sup>. In Zhuangzi’s fables, there are also comic passages, some are witty, some are pure carnival, some are related to irony, and some are direct irony. The “debate on the enjoyment” is of course a typical example, which ironically exposes the self-entanglement and paradox of the logical symbolic domain. The joyful scenes of “singing thus in the presence of the corpse” (*The Great and Most Honoured Master*) and the “drumming on the basin, and singing” (*Perfect Enjoyment*) subvert the symbolic authority of “ritual” and show that the symbolic order cannot be integrated into the *jouis-sens* of the real domain. From this point of view, in Zhuangzi, “virtual” or “none” is not a metaphysical ontology. Instead, it is close to Lacan's “Thing”, which is a traumatic and refreshing source, full of pleasure and pain. Writing on comedy, Žižek offers a following explanation:

In the master's discourse, the identity of the subject is guaranteed by S1, the dominant signifier (his symbolic title – accreditation), and loyal to the definition of the subject's

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<sup>77</sup> Chen Chao 陈超. “Zang Di – The Eighth from the Spiritual Portrait and Hidden Dialogue Series” 臧棣——精神肖像和潜对话之// *Poetr* 诗潮, 2008, No. 8, p. 75.

<sup>78</sup> Song Gan 宋干. “Fantasizing Contemporary Poetry, Lin Xianzhi, Special Knowledge, Poetic Happiness, Poetic Dignity: An Interview with Zang Di” 意淫当代诗歌, 林贤治, 特殊的知识, 诗的快乐, 诗的尊严: 臧棣访谈// *Poetic View Database* 诗观点文库, <http://www.poemlife.com/libshow-1680.htm>.

ethical dignity. The identity of the dominant signifier leads to the tragic state of existence: the subject tries to keep the loyalty to the dominant signifier—for example, loyalty to the mission that gives him meaning and unity of life—to the end, but his efforts are resisted. The remnant of the dominant signifier eventually fails. On the contrary, there is a sliding drifting subject, which lacks the stable support in the dominant index. Its homogeneity is the relationship between the pure residual and the rubbish surplus, and the “indecent” and intrinsic comedy. The relationship between the stars in the real domain is maintained; such an identification of the residue of course introduces the existence of the simulated comedy state, a parody process, constantly subverting all solid symbolic identity<sup>79</sup>.

That is to say, the main point of comedy is that the dominant signifier can't continue to guarantee the ethical dignity of the subject. It is betrayed or transformed by its own residue; then, only the subject of the sliding move can appear in the comedy form with the failure of the dominant signifier. In the scene, the self-disintegration or self-subversion of symbolic identity is demonstrated. Returning to the poetry of Zang Di, comedy also means the failure of the symbolic Other as the dominant signifier. The other is mutated to act as the *jouis-sens* after being removed, that is, the enjoyment of *objet petit a*, the heavy tragedy replaced by a light comedy. Like Joyce, he uses his “language ambiguity”, that is, the playful treatment of language norms, to abolish the authoritative order of the language. The carnival of language is also a hug to the traumatic pleasure that the symbolic world tries to suppress. By acknowledging the inherent signs of it, the meaning is given to the *jouis-sens*, and the lack of the subject reveals its fascinating face. Obviously, this aspect reflects the guiding process of psychoanalysis on the subject, and on the other hand, it should be related to Zhuangzi's cognition and pursuit of Tao.

Then, can we also detect the cultural and political strategies of the poetry from the political perspective of Zhuangzi's thought? In the conclusion of this paper, what I am trying to propose is that as long as we recognize, Zhuangzi's thoughts are not only directed at the negative, but toward a subjectivity that is free but fully aware of the limits of freedom. Then, even from Lacan's vision, Zang's poetry writing also builds a new subjectivity on the basis of the perfect one. Therefore, the main body of lyrics embodied in the poems is the subject of “passing through fantasy” in the sense of Lacan, that is, the subject of the sign: instead of following the tragedy logic of the dominant doctrine, he actively takes the comedy as a signifier (*objet petit a*). By experiencing a certain singularity and ambiguity that cannot be stopped by language norms, and the mystery and charm

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<sup>79</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute, or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting for?*, p. 42-43.

that it contains, the meaning is transformed into a brilliant appearance. It can also be said that the use of language expresses the impossible. *jouis-sens*. “Passing through fantasy” certainly reflects the socio-political dimension of Lacan's theory: Lacan regards going “through fantasy” as the *act* that refers to the signifier, and he even called the fifteenth seminar *The Psychoanalytic Act* the Che Guevara Seminar<sup>80</sup>. Zang Di's poetry is often criticized as an ivory tower-style form out of touch with reality<sup>81</sup>, and its political potential is neglected. At this point, Adorno once suggested that “art is acquired by society in opposition to society, and it only takes the position as a self-disciplined art”<sup>82</sup> – it is in this sense that we may explore the socio-political dimension of poetry.

Then, from Lacan's point of view, the action of the signifier as a formal element has revolutionary potential. If Lacan's “fundamental fantasy” refers to the construction of the subject's desire based on the desire of the Other, then the “passing through fantasy” represented by the poetry of Zang Di means breaking the inherent structure of the desire to surrender to the Other, revealing the signifier. The inner mechanism of the chain and its desires and gullies resists the fate of symbolic castration. When the symbolic Other mutates into the perfect one, the signifier loses the dominant power of its authority in the look of pleasure. This process of loss is shown in the poems of Zang Di as the comical *jouis-sens* of the language. In such a poetic language, the subject who expresses the *jouis-sens* fully enjoys the freedom of public opinion and also subverts the falsehood of the mainstream symbol system (its order and oppression).

In this way, going back to the framework of this paper, the orientation of the three discourses provides an in-depth analysis of Zang Di's poetry. Through Lacan's theoretical path of language, subject, and *jouis-sens*, it reveals the inner mechanism of writing. First, at the level of language, what I observe in the first section is not only the superficial rhetorical means (most of the poems are concentrated on this), but a new writing subject formed by the stimulation of the language Other. In other words, in the writing of Zang Di, the key is how we discover that the problem of poetry language is not limited to the language itself, but how the language's operation process reflects the game between lyrical subject and symbolic Other. It must be emphasized that revealing the relationship between the two also reveals the historical subjectivity represented by the lyrical subject. Thus, the second section discusses how the language level further triggers the part of the symbol that the Other cannot cover – the mysterious revealed from the real domain, which defuses the meaning of the construction of the language order itself, making the intellectual indicator

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<sup>80</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XV, The Psychoanalytic Act, 1967-1968*. Trans., Cormac Gallagher. N.P. p. 103.

<sup>81</sup> See note 2.

<sup>82</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p.225.

change. It becomes the pleasure. Then, the reading of the poems in this thesis goes beyond the general poetry reviewing the pursuit of its ideas or meanings. It explores how the meaning of the original symbolic meaning is transformed into sensibility, but it is also the driving force of self-denial. In other words, linguistics becomes “linguistricks” in the poetics of Zang Di. In this way, the direction of “tricks” leads to the third section on how the poems reflect the comedy and irony of Zhuangzi's aesthetics, and the development of Zang Di's poetry from the classical aesthetic paradigm that was not paid enough attention to in the previous research. The new research path between traditional poetry and traditional poetics, and the contrast between traditional aesthetics and Lacan's theory, highlights the specificity and creativity of poetry.

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