ALLEGORESIS: WESTERN AND CHINESE

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In the West, in addition to being a rhetorical figure, allegory is understood to be a mode of organizing an extended text as well as comprehending a text. The fluid use of the term is the first major hindrance to an intelligent discussion of the concept. The classical definition of allegory is by Heracleitus (first century A.D.) in *Quaestiones Homericae*: "That is called allegory which, as the name implies, says one thing but means something other than what it says."[1] It tells us *what* allegory at the most general level is but fails to specify *how* alleogory is produced. More seriously, it bypasses the complex problem of asymmetry between allegory as writing and as reading. It is very tempting to view allegorical writing and allegorical reading as two sides of an issue or different ways of stating one single phenomenon, for in theory allegorical writing -- and only allegorical writing -- provokes allegorical response in readers. In practice, a reading habit informed by what might be called an allegorical mentality often brings to light a "contextual" meaning (for example, socio-political or theological meaning) independent of "intratextual" structure. Conversely, the allegorical thrust of a text, even if riddled with allegorical markers, may be lost on the uninitiated. To read a work as formal allegory one needs a set of rules to guide him to such a recognition. This may explain why the allegoricality of a text of a culture is often not discerned by readers of another culture.

In its most technical sense allegorical writing has long been classified as one of the rhetorical tropes. However, if one reads, say, the Venerable Bede's "Concerning Figures and Tropes,"[2] one notices that allegory is treated with remarkable differences from other tropes. Whereas the decision to label a passage as metaphor, catachresis, or hyperbole is obviously prompted by specific formal traits of the passage, the same cannot be said of allegory. Bede's identification of the allegorical trope often reflects a confusion concerning the use of the term "allegory": he takes allegoresis to be formal allegory. Thus the first and foremost step in the study of allegory is to separate allegorical reading from allegorical writing. Only by so doing can we give the two areas of interest their due treatment and see whatever relations exist between the two in perspective. This paper will address the problem of allegorical reading.

Allegory as a mode of reading has been defined as:

> the systematic interpretation of a text (usually of considerable length) on the assumption that the author *intended* that the reader seek beneath the surface some second or indirect meaning, or meanings, which, in the view of the interpreter, can be related to the apparent or direct meaning in a fairly systematic way.[3]

It is however obvious that this definition, while postponing the problem of formal allegory, cannot satisfactorily characterize the nature of allegorical reading intuitively conducted. It fails to provide any adequate version of the nature of "secondary or indirect meaning" as much as it fails to clarify what constraints in fact govern "reading" and "interpretation" under various forms of allegorical license.

It is essential to note that the indirection of allegorical meaning loosely describes the repetition of the act of interpretation. Allegorical understanding requires a first level of comprehension in which the world described by the text is imagined; with that job of reading done, a second round of comprehension ensures which assigns meaning to the elements of the world one can imagine. Indirection, or indirect signification, points to the fact that the surface-level meanings of the first round are in turn given further meanings. Thus allegoresis does not presuppose so much that the text has "two meanings" as that its meanings have meanings. In this respect, allegoresis shares a common ground with augury and dream interpretation.

It is also important to note the justifications that relate the surface-level meanings to the "deeper" meanings. As with any interpretive act, the discovery of deeper meanings in allegoresis may or may not conform to some conventions. In extracting meaning from an ordinary text one has the options, at least in theory, of submitting to linguistic conventions or making a Humpty-Dumpty-like autocratic imposition of meaning; in extracting further meaning from the entities of a world established in a text one may choose to follow the conventional assignments of significance handed down in one's culture (as in, say, a hypothetical or real "symbolic dictionary") or act in the absence of such guides and instead rely on inspiration, or even act in conscious defiance of the conventions. It is then clear that allegoresis may point to two very different kinds of arbitrariness, namely the arbitrariness of convention and that of personal whimsicalities. A proper study of allegoresis will differentiate these two kinds of arbitrariness, investigate the general function of such a strategy of approaching a text, and, in the cases where convention is adhered to, discover how socio-cultural environment and upheld poetics fashion the very working of allegorical reading.

Following the practice of viewing a literary phenomenon from a synchronic as well as diachronic vantage, we will discuss allegorical reading, first, in the context of the general strategy of reading and, second, in terms of its historical emergence and evolution within selected cultures. Here a distinction between nomenclature and substance needs to be brought up. Historically, the existence of a literary phenomenon does not always coincide with the existence of critical terminology to deal with it. Whereas allegoresis has long been a practice in China, it is not referred to in terms suggestive of the manifold connotations of the English word "allegory." The purpose of this paper is in a sense to narrow down the meaning of "allegory" to a level actually descriptive of a special way of reading texts, Western or Chinese.

ALLEGORESIS AS A STRATEGY OF "NATURALIZATION"

René Wellek once remarked that "the real poem must be conceived as a structure of norms, realized only partially in the active experience of its many readers"; he went on to say that "every single experience (reading, reciting, and so forth) is only an attempt – more or less successful and complete – to grasp this set of norms of standards."[4] Even though the rhetoric of the statement, in the words of another critic, "subordinates the lively and human appreciation of human achievement to something transhuman," and "puts literature on a pedestal,"[5] the view does articulate a delicate relation between writing and reading. If writing is perceived as at one end of a com-

municative transaction, "encoding" (setting up "norms" or "standards") is effective only when readers at the other end succeed in – at least partially – decoding (that is, factoring out the "norms" or "standards"). The view in fact anticipated the increasing emphasis given the role of the reader in contemporary study of literature.

In an article characteristically entitled "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics," Stanley Fish calls "meaning," be it of a sentence or a novel, an "event": "It is no longer an object, a thing-in-itself, but an *event*, something that happens to, and with the participation of, the reader."[6] Fish believes that literary analysis should be an analysis of the reader's responses:

> The category of response includes any and all of the activities provoked by a string of words: the projection of the syntactical and/or lexical probabilities; their consequent occurrence or non-occurrence; attitudes towards persons, or things, or ideas referred to; the reversal or questioning of those attitudes; and much more. Obviously this imposes a great burden on the analyst who in his observation on any one moment in the reading experience must take into account all that has happened (in the reader's mind) at previous moments, each of which was in its turn subject to the accumulating pressures of its predecessors (p. 127)

The "category of response" here described accurately points to the formidably atomistic and chancy character of reading experience in a temporal flow. However, as we all experience it, one's interaction with a literary text often extends beyond the duration of actual reading; the "rethinking" about the text, then, ought to be included as part of the "event." "Rethinking" tends to concern itself with more general aspects than detail: for example, it may neglect lexical or syntactical characteristics while engaging in the consolidation or reversal of "attitudes." If one's response during the actual reading is characterized by the excitement of immediate encounter with the vast probabilities the text holds out, rethinking is likely to dwell on how successfully the text manipulates those probabilities, what formal and thematic significance results from such manipulation, and, as a consequence, what connections there are between the text and extra-literary considerations.

Reading, construed as a string of responses in a time flow and further retrospective refinements of such processes, lends itself to observation and description because we inevitably connect our experience of a text to the mind under certain conceptual categories, or, in Wellek's phraseology, "norms" and "standards." The act of reading can be regarded as essentially a process of expectations being roused or erroneously roused, fulfilled, denied, or held in suspense, as well as modifications of expectations and attribution of significance to the pattern thereof. We derive our expectations from three areas, which are interrelated: linguistic competence, sense of reality, and literary convention.

Linguistic competence is most obvious. In English, for example, a transitive verb is expected to have a noun as its object; after the article "the" there will inevitably be a noun or a modifier. Our sense of a text is caused at the most fundamental level by the choice and disposition of linguistic elements. Verbal manipulation, in turn, plays on our verbal expectation. The encounter of a term like "light-winged Dyad" in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" prepares us for terms of similar grammatical construction and archaic flavor like "purple-stained mouth" and "leaden-eyed despairs."[7] The

syntactic and semantic parallelism in "In the morning I gathered the angelica on the mountains;/In the evening I plucked the sedges of the islets" (*Li sao*, On Encountering Sorrow)[8] orients us to expect similar parallelism.

The problems of what lies at the base of the sense of the real or the natural, and what figure as its derivative expectations, are more complicated. As is well known, world view is often equated with the sum-total of propositional statements hypothesized about the world. These are statements about the world or existence we take as intuitively true, such as "a person who starts drinking will finally stop drinking," or "a person who is in New York cannot be simultaneously in Chicago." Thus a writer, for example, does not feel the need to specify the termination of a drinking act unless there are special reasons for it, since he is confident that the reader takes it for granted that the drinking will stop at a certain point. Some statements, which constitute the repository of what might be called "public opinion," ring almost intuitively true even though they appear so mainly owing to cumulative, reinforced cultural conditioning. In Confucian society of yesteryear, for instance, regicide ranked with patricide as among the most abominable of crimes. Therefore a dynastic story writer could count on his contemporary readership to discern the "montrosity" of regicide by its mere presentation, without the further aid of authorial comment. "Public opinions" tend to be expressed in the form of terse aphorisms. When the persona of *An Essay on Criticism*, by Alexander Pope, says: "A little learning is a dangerous thing;/Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring,"[9] he obviously thinks of the implication of his statement as self-evident, in no need of elaboration. The eighteenth-century literature of England, which reflects a predilection for common sense, contains unusually large bodies of aphoristic, maxim-like utterances. After the eighteenth century, when Jane Austen begins her *Pride and Prejudice* with "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife,"[10] she achieves some wit by presenting a common opinion as if it were absolute truth.

We often judge whether a text is plausible or not by how well it conforms to our sense of the real or the natural. We expect the events of the text to fall into a chronological order at the level of the *sujet*,[11] the actions and characterization to be psychologically, socially, or culturally accountable; we also expect a general logicality. While willing to modify our expectations, we use the expectations grounded in our sense of reality to guide our excursion into a text. The expectations enable us to participate in, make sense of, and at times be surprised by, a text. An important part of our reading process is then an exercise in correlating the fictional world to our sense of the real world. As far as reading literature is concerned, our sense of the real world is often indistinguishable from literary realism, or more accurately, "literate" realism, the conventions of plausible narrative in literary as well as non-literary (e.g., historical or political) writings. For example, Chinese vernacular fiction, which imitates the dicourse of historical chronicles by taking pains to specify almost every single character's name, all the place names, and to account for all the passage of time, succeeds in conveying a sense of the real even when it may deal with the fantastic in its subject matter.

Aside from "literate" realism, literary convention frequently takes the place of the sense of reality as the basis of our expectations. To understand a literary text can mean to be able to establish some rapport with a text, such as to classify it in terms of

genre, period, or mode. As soon as such rapport is established, a reader's expectations are oriented to the convention in which he places his text: he allows his expectations of the real to be modified by his expectations of the convention where there are conflicts. He expects high coincidentality in an eighteenth-century picaresque novel. He reads the stereotyped young scholar in the Chinese vernacular fiction of "the scholar and the fair lady" caliber as an admirable character and reads him as a bore or a slob in a military romance. He is readily satisfied by the detective story's peculiarly genre-conditioned discovery procedure which is often characterized by circumstantial evidence leading to circumstantial evidence.

Expectations derived from linguistic competence, knowledge of literary convention, and the general sense of the natural enable a reader to pose questions and seek their answers, to make predictions and wait for their verifications at every moment of his reading process. Literary experience in fact consists of a string of problem-solving situations motivated and oriented by expectations. Whenever expectations fail to give a reader a reasonable grasp on a text, he resorts to one of the following three options. First, if he is unwilling to give the text the benefit of doubt, he categorically dismisses it as incomprehensible or artistically faulty. Second, opposite to the previous type of reaction, he may drastically modify his old expectations to accommodate the strangeness of the text. A third possibility, and perhaps a more instinctive reaction, is for a reader to revise his perceptions of the text in order to fit them into his expectations. Of course, in actual practice, a reader can very well switch from the first option to the other two options or he can simultaneously modify his expectations and his perceptions of the text.

The effort to render a potentially unintelligible text intelligible can occur at all levels. For example, the lines "And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves/Trail with daisies and barley" in Dylan Thomas's "Fern Hill"[12] contain at least one linguistic abnormality in "once below a time." A reader may justify it as a playful variation on "once upon a time." He may subsequently choose to see a willful change in the syntactic category of "lordly" from adjective to adverb. Furthermore he may feel the urge to give his perceptions of the lines and the one immediately following them, "Down the rivers of the windfall light," semantic coherence by reading them as descriptive of how a child feels while swinging the branches of a tree under a starry sky. On a large scale, the cacophony and discontinuity of T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland" have been rationalized as the "objective correlative" of the very sense encapsulated in the title; the irrational incidents in Kafka's "Metamorphosis" have been explained away as reflective of the guilty sense of its author.

Jonathan Culler has advanced a Structuralist formulation of the act of interpretation as follows: "To assimilate or interpret something is to bring it within the modes of order which culture makes available, and this is usually done by talking about it in a mode of discourse which a culture takes as natural."[13] One name for such a process is "naturalization," which "emphasizes the fact that the strange or deviant is brought within a discursive order and thus made to seem natural."[14] The instinctive response to a strange or deviant text is to fit it into a scheme of critical concepts which we currently uphold. Thus many problematic texts are presently being naturalized as an interior monlogue, as effecting a paradox or irony, or even as about the difficulty of writing itself. Naturalization often begins as a conservative deference to established

conventions. Upon thwarted, it may prove functional in leading to the discovery of new conventions, new critical schemes. It may, however, take the form of allegoresis, which in many cases means the postponement of confronting the problems which have frustrated other measures of naturalization.

Allegorization, the practice of allegorical reading, is then a particular type of naturalization. It is a radical measure to naturalize a text when other means fail while one is unwilling to see the text as "new writing" or dismiss it from consideration at all. Underpinning allegorical mentality are three major assumptions. First, a text ultimately refers to reality. By "refer" one means variously "illumine," "criticize," "be a verbal structure correspondant with," etc.; by "reality" one may mean "one's sense of this world," "the world as perceived by an ideology which one embraces," etc. Second, the referential meaning of a text exists in a dichotomy of obvious (surface) meaning and hidden (deep) meaning. Third, "meanings" differ in significance or gravity; generally, "hidden meaning" is more significant than "obvious meaning." "Significance" in this connection mostly arises from extra-literary consideration.

ALLEGORICAL MENTALITY AND CULTURAL PARADIGM

The allegorical mentality here is not necessarily equivalent to the kind of literary perception which enables one to detect, on the basis of formal features, a special mode of writing to be labelled "formal allegory." Allegorical mentality values the hiddenness of the significant meaning, which, carried to its logical extreme, may well mean the presence of allegorical significance in, say, a formally naturalistic text. This paradox of allegorical mentality is most apparent in the classical response to canonized texts, specifically, Homer, the Bible, and the *Shih ching* (The Book of Poetry). To treat the allegorical response to the three corpuses of writings indifferently as literary phenomena will predictably raise some objection, but one must not be oblivious to the historical fact that Homer and *The Book of Poetry* once enjoyed the privileged status of something equivalent to sacred scripture whereas the Bible is now examined as literary data in many quarters. There is some truth in Gerald Prince's remark: "the description, evaluation, and interpretation of a given text as literary depends on many purely socio-cultural norm-systems... what is feasible, perhaps, is a grammar of literary context or performance that formulates the social-cultural conditions which make a given text literary."[15] It holds up just as well to reverse the thrust of this statement by changing "literary" to "non-literary," or "para-literary." Socio-cultural conditions function prominently not merely in the taxonomic determination of a text as literary or otherwise. As far as allegorical mentality is concerned, the idea of what constitutes the significant hidden truth and how to bring it to light depends on the hierarchy of values and epistemological habit of various socio-cultural paradigms, which, needless to say, are inseparable from historical causes.

In antiquity Homer commanded deep reverence from many quarters. It was an axiomatic truth to Anaxagoras of the fifth century B.C. that the subject matter of Homer was "virtue and justice."[16] For Crates of Mallos, a Stoic of the second century B.C., as for the stoics at large, Homer was privy to the truth about things human, natural, and divine on account of his living at an earlier age in human life when the

truth was less warped and obscured.[17] Toward the end of antiquity, the Homeric poems were seen as invested with evangelical significance and became, in effect, "the sacred books of Paganism."[18]

But as early as the fifth century B.C., when the conflict between philosophy and myth was brought to the fore, the value, particularly the pedagogical value, of Homer and other myth-makers was also questioned from several quarters. Plato wanted to banish what he regarded as impious stories in the poets because young men were unable to tell figurative speech from plain speech, and he strongly objected to the view of Homer as all-wise.[19] A by far more vitriolic attack on Homer, as well as Hesiod, was made by Xenophanes (570?-478?B.C.) as reported by Sextus Empiricus of the late second and early third century: "Homer and Hesiod recounted as many as possible wicked acts of gods, their thefts, adulteries and mutual treachery."[20]

What confronted the myths of Homer and the others was a peculiar predicament. In an age when the philosopher was undoubtedly gaining ascendency over the poet, their myths could hold the ground only if they were deemed as philosophical statements. But as soon as they were judged as philosophical statements, the kind of mythology, which, for instance, had Cronus lead a blissful life even when he mutilates his father Uranus and devours his own children or had his son Zeus dethrone him and confine him underground,[21] could hardly be accepted as just and true. To uphold Homeric poems above mere poetry without subjecting them to the necessity of being defended as regular philosophical discourse, one had to declare them as a privileged body of utterances whose decoding requires allegorical exegesis.

The allegorization of Homer may carry with it a set of philosophical implications. It posits a duality of surface meaning and deep meaning, attributing greater significance to the latter. This lent itself, by a process of association, to be taken as correponding to the Platonic concept which posits a duality of the apparent world and the true world. *This* world, that which can be perceived through the senses, is not *the* world; it is only an imperfect image of a model of pristine perfection. (The idea was taken up by Christianity and radicalized to maintain that this world is a transient "state" rather than a "being".) If the spiritual man can manage to perceive the true world, the inspired interpreter can uncover the hidden meaning through allegorization. The affinity in the rationale and contours of Greek, or for that matter Western, allegorical mentality to Platonic thinking has been pointed out by Jean Pépin:

> If it is true that the visible world is the transient image, the approximate sketch of an exemplary world, the first necessarily makes constant allusions to the second, thereby constituting a kind of hieroglyph for those who are capable of understanding it. The vulgar cannot see beyond nature, but the spiritual man sees in nature, as in a watermark, the indication of the Supranatural, the visible and the invisible world becoming an exoteric and an esoteric universe. The duality of sign and signified in allegory, however, seems to be a particular application of this cosmic hermetism. (p. 47. Translation mine)

It is significant that even though Plato himself was never sympathetic to allegorists,[22] his own mode of thinking forced its own consequence in making him lay out a general scheme of literary investigation which prefigured, among other things, allegorical criticism. In *Republic* (II, 376E-379A), he discusses literature in

terms of 1) *logoi*, "the content of stories as such"; 2) *typos*, the "imprint" which stories leave on the character of the listeners, and the implicit "ethical sense" in the work itself; and 3) *hypnoia*, the reality which is to be found in the "under-sense" or "real meaning" lying beneath the surface of the text.[23]

The "ethical sense" and the reality to be discerned in the "real meaning" of Homeric narratives are understandably contingent on the environments in which they are read, the varying socio-cultural contexts with their moral and intellectual obsessions. Aristotle, for example, sees in Homer's attributing a tender relationship between Ares and Aphrodite an indication of warriors' inclination to love: "It seems not without reason that the first poet imagines the union of Ares and Aphrodite; for all the worriors show an inclination toward the love for men and women."[24] More typically, Homer has been read as an allegory concerning the nature of elements. The strife among the gods, for instance, is said to stand for the fundamental conflicts of the elements which make up the universe. Dryness fights humidity, heat cold, and lightness heaviness; water extinguishes fire, but fire dries up air. The oppositions thus perceived account for the deterioration of particulars but as a whole the elements enjoy perpetual subsistence. A more concrete example of how Homer can be used to explain specific theories is found in Aristotle's another instance of allegorizing Homer. He finds an episode in the *Iliad* an allegorical rendition of his own theory of the "Prime Mover."[25] Zeus challenges other gods to a sportive tug-of-war, boasting that no effort can draw him downward to the earth, while he can easily pull all his opponents as well as waters and earth toward him, to be hung from the top of the Olympus to flutter in the air. This bluster of Zeus, in Aristotle's opinion, illustrates the "Prime Mover," which causes the universe to be in motion while itself remaining immobile and above and beyond the universe.

By the third century A.D., allegorical mentality, which had one origin as a particular mode of reading Homer and other myth-makers, came to be "almost part of the intellectual atmosphere in which educated men moved,"[26] in the Hellenistic world. The conflict between Homer and Greek rationalism that needed the mediation of allegorization found its counterpart in the later age. Intellectuals of Judaistic and Christian persuasions needed to find a way to reconcile sophistically rational Greek thinking with religious conviction that demanded acceptance in good faith, for example, the premise that, as the scripture is divinely inspired, it can admit of no errors or superfluous parts in its text. In the case of the Christians, they had the additional task of reconciling the Old and the New Testaments so as to view them as essentially a unified message. In any case, the allegorization of the scriptures was to some extent a means of bringing intellectual conviction to come to terms with religious convition. While continuing much of its traditional viewpoints -- e.g., to see the Old Testament events as prophetic of the future -- biblical allegorization at this stage registered a Greek influence in its tendency to treat the Bible as also a repository of philosophical statements.

Take for example Philo Judaeus (30? B.C.-45 A.D.), the most influential representative of Alexandrian Judaism. Even though he accepted the traditional rabbinic view that nothing is superfluous or accidental in the scriptures, he was unsympathetic to literalism in the scriptural exegesis of such instances as the creation of the world in six days, the creation of woman from man's rib, the tree of the knowledge

of good and evil, and the temptation of Eve by the serpant. Thus he undertook to allegorize the scriptures into statements about psychology or morals. In his *De Legum Allegoria* he reads "Genesis" as if it were about mind, conception, and perception.[27] For instance he comments: "The increst of Lot's daughters with their father represents Counsel and Consent making their father mind drunk with folly and from Mind producing unlawful offspring."[28]

In the case of Christian allegorization. one of its major purposes is to relate the Old Testament to the New. In fact the strategy was employed by the very authors of the Epistles and Revelation when they envisaged almost every passage in the Old Testament as an indirect reference to Christ. Such a practice definitely encouraged the later development of a special kind of Christian allegorization known as typological exegesis. In essence Christian typology is a compromise between a fundamentalist insistence on the historicity of the scriptural accounts and the need to allegorize these accounts. Roughly, it takes the view that all happenings recorded in the scriptures are actual happenings in time, but they also derive significance from being part of a divine design: the Old Testament events function to prefigure the New Testament events (for instance, "the crossing of the Red Sea" is interpreted as prefiguring "Baptism"). The Platonic duality of the sensual and the spiritual is here transformed into the duality of the anterior and the posterior.

Typological exegesis is not the only form of Christian allegorization. More commonly, allegorization carries on the dichotomy of apparent meaning and hidden meaning, but it tends to further classify the hidden meaning. In the *Peri Archon*, Origen (185? -254?) argues that since man is divisible into the three elements of body, soul, and spirit, the scriptures correpondingly yield three kinds of meaning: literal (fleshly), moral (psychic), and spiritual (intellectual).[29] In his reading, the episode about Lot and his daughters is, in its literal sense, a historical event. In the spiritual sense, Lot stands for the law, the daughters, Jerusalem and Samaria, the wife, the people that fell in the wildreness. In the moral sense, Lot stands for the mind, the daughters vainglory and pride, the wife the flesh, the whole episode the religious experience of Christians. A variation on Origen's classifactory scheme locates four levels of meaning in the scriptures: the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the anagogical. The application of this four-level exegetical scheme is best illustrated by Dante's exposition of the verses: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion." According to Dante, literally, the verses describe a historical journey; allegorically, they signify "our redemption through Christ"; morally, they signify "the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to a state of grace"; anagogically, they signify "the passing of the sanctified soul from the bondage of the corruption of this world to the liberty of everlasting glory."[30]

The study of allegorization in the Greek and Christian traditions reveals three similar conditions which fashion allegorization. First, some texts are singled out as privileged. The reasons underlying the choice of these texts are inextricably related to social, historical, and cultural factors. Second, the values perceived in such privileged texts vary in accordance with changing paradigms (philosophy, theology, or poetics) which, in the final analysis, confer values. Third, and most importantly, it is necessary to have an implicit view of signification which affirms the possibility of indirect

meaning and multiple functions of a text. In short, allegorization is a mode of reading defined simultaneously by two widely disparate factors: world view and theory of communication. It is then noteworthy that the generalization holds true not only in the case of the allegorization of Homer and that of the bibles – after all, one influenced the other – but in the Chinese counterpart of Western allegorization, specifically in the traditional exegesis of *The Book of Poetry*, a fact that may attest to the universal applicability of such generalization.

No other literary text in Chinese literature has received as much allegorical interpretation as *The Book of Poetry*. The earliest anthology of pure Chinese literature, compiled in the fifth century B.C., *The Book of Poetry* contains 305 poems believed written over a period from the eleventh century to the sixth century B.C.[31] During the period when it was the sole anthology of poetry in existence, it was virtually synonymous with *poetry*, and for that matter, literature. For instance, whenever Confucius mentions "poetry," he is referring to the poetry manifested in this anthology.

There has been a long tradition of allegorizing *The Book of Poetry*. The tradition is closely related to a highly pragmatic and functional view of poetry, which finds its most prominent manifestation in Confucian pronouncements on poetry. In *Lun Yu* (The Analect), 17, Confucius makes a revealing remark:

> Why is it none of you, my young friends, study the *Odes*? An apt quotation from the *Ode* may serve to stimulate the imagination, to show one's breeding, to smooth over difficulties in a group and to give expression to complaints. Inside the family there is the serving of one's father; outside, there is the serving of one's lord; there is also the acquiring of a wide knowledge of the names of birds and beasts, plants and trees.[32]

Remarks such as this induce James J.Y. Liu to think that "Confucius's conception of literature was predominately pragmatic, and even though he was aware of both the emotional effects and the aesthetic qualities of literature, these were to him subordinate to its moral and social function."[33]

Confucius' pragmatic view of poetry in fact reflects the tendency of his age to utilize poetry for purposes other than literary appreciation. *Tso chuan*, a chronicle written during the Warring-State period (403-221 B.C.), abounds in records of a special way of performing poetry known as *fu-shih* (recitation of poetry)[34], a practice institutionalized as part of the diplomatic protocol during the Spring-Autumn period (722-481 B.C.). Typically, at a state banquet given in honor of visiting foreign dignitaries, the host and the visitors were expected to alternately cite passages from known existing poems, with the aid of verbal or gestural explanation at crucial points, to express their respective views on state or international affairs. The recitation was often done not by the dignitaries themselves but by deputies who were experts in this craft.

The passages quoted tended to be partial quotations and were allowed to be used out of context even though they generally derived their *ad hoc* meanings by virtue of some associative link to their meanings in their original contexts. "Recitation of poetry" thus amounts to a simultaneous performance of two levels of discourse: on the surface, a match of wit and literary resourcefulness which ostensibly adds to the

conviviality of the festive occasion; deeper down, diplomatic negotiation with rough edges smoothed out and the impact of direct conflict temporarily neutralized by ritualizing the discourse into something of a game. In order for the practice to work, there needs to be, first of all, a common discourse, which happens to be a body of poetry. More importantly, it takes great finesse for the participating parties to cite, at short notice, felicitous passages from a wide range of sources to match each other at the levels of surface and deep meanings (the deep meaning being the *ad hoc* meaning intended for the occasion). All in all, the ritual amounts to a form of institutionalized allegorization. The understanding of such a peculiar use of poetry sheds light on the following elliptical remark by Confucius on poetry and competence in practical affairs (The Analect, 13):

> If a man who knows the three hundred *Odes* by heart fails when given administrative responsibilities and proves incapable of exercising his own initiative when sent to foreign states, then what use are the *Odes* to him, however many he may have learned?[35]

In the Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.) Confucianism was promoted above all other schools of thought to be an ideological orthodoxy owing to the appeal of its pragmatism and secularism. It was small wonder that Han scholars continued and enhanced with great enthusiasm Confucius' pragmatic and functional view of poetry. Among the theses in the influential "Shih ta hsu" (Major Preface to *The Book of Poetry*), by a Han commentator, were two highly instrumentalist views of poetry. Poetry is first of all perceived as useful in securing cosmic harmony and, on a lesser level, the moral excellence of society:

> Therefore, nothing approaches the *Book of Poetry* in maintaining correct standards for success or failure [in government], in moving Heaven and Earth, and in appealing to spirits and gods. The Former Kings used it to make permanent [the tie between] husband and wife, to perfect filial reverence, to deepen human relationships, to beautify moral instruction, and to improve social customs.[36]

It is, furthermore, a vehicle for the ruler and the ruled to achieve dialogue and mutual influence, as manifested in the same Preface's discussion of a special mode, or function, of poetry known as *feng*:

> The one above uses *feng* [airs/moral influence] to transform those below, and those below use *feng* [air/admonition] to criticize the one above; when the main intent is set to music and the admonition is indirect, then the one who speaks does not commit any offense, while it is enough for the one who listens to take warning. Therefore it is called *feng* [air/moral influence/adminition][37]

The almost consecrated status given to *The Book of Poetry* by the Han commentators is essentially reflective of their reverence for Confucius, who provided the guideline for their attitudes. However, if poetry and *The Book of Poetry* were synonymous to Confucius, the same cannot be said of the Han commentators, for reams of poetry had been added to the corpus of Chinese literature between the time

of Confucius and the Han dynasty. There was thus some arbitrariness for *The Book of Poetry* to be singled out, which it was, as measuring up to the noble function of poetry. The arbitrariness had remained uncontested for more than fifteen centuries until the early part of this century when the Chinese intellectual milieu was characterized by an iconoclastic desire to challenge all traditional assumptions.

For a long period *The Book of Poetry* was considered less as a literary work than as a *ching* (classic/scripture) which embodies historical truth as well as moral and political significance. If ancient Greeks tried to uncover the physical and the moral laws in Homer, ancient Chinese endeavored to recuperate the historical contexts for the poems and the moral or political admonitions the poems purportedly embody. In this sense Chinese scholars shared with their Western counterparts a dissatisfaction with the mere first-order meaning of the text and an absolute rejection of the concept of artistic autonomy.

The allegorization of *The Book of Poetry* is best exemplified by the traditional reading of its first poem, "Kuan-ts'u", whose text appears as follows:

> *Kwan-kwan* cries the ts'u-kiu bird, on the islet of the river; the beautiful and good girl, she is a good mate for the lord.
>
> Of varying length is the hing waterplant, to the left and the right we catch it; the beautiful and good girl, walking and sleeping he (sought her:) wished for her; he wished for her but did not get her, walking and sleeping he thought of her; longing, longing, he tossed and fidgeted.
>
> Of varying length is the hing waterplant, to the left and the right we gather it; the beautiful and good girl, guitars and lutes (befriend her:) hail her as a friend.
>
> Of varying length is the hing waterplant, to the left and the right we cull it as a vegetable; the beautiful and good girl, bells and drums cheer her.[38]

The initial impression the poem conveys is unmistakably that of a folk song with repetitional refrains, depicting various stages of emotional anxiety, excitement from courtship to nuptial. However, the fact that it is in *The Book of Poetry* renders it necessary for commentators who subscribe to the general exegetical principle of the anthology to undertake to uncover the purported hidden significance of the poem.[39] To credit it with carrying historical truth, some commentators have asserted that the poem is actually a delineation of the marital harmony of Sage-King Wen of the Chou dynasty and his queen. Guided by the view that poetry is of necessity admonitory, some have proposed that by eulogizing the proper relationship between man and woman, it helps to consolidate the very corner-stone on which the entire Chinese ethic-political system rests. Still others have proposed that by presenting amatory obsession, the poem stands as a negative example to admonish rulers against the same weakness.

ALLEGORESIS: A CRITQUE

Allegorization, Western and Chinese, is characterized by a general vagueness about

its rules of operation. Proclus (410? -485 A.D.) is considered as most explicit about the exegetical principles among the allegorical critics in the Greek tradition. However, after an exhaustive investigation into his basic concepts of allegorical exegesis, John Dillon declares that it is impossible to satisfactorily define or make a distinction between his two crucial terms, *symbolon* and *eikon*, on which his exegetical principles are believed to rest.[40] One main complaint about allegorization concerns the procrustean selection of details to fit into preconceived ideological frameworks. Thus Origen's exegesis of the Rahab episode in "Joshua" has elicited the following response:

> The exegete wishes to include the doctrinal notion that salvation is God's initiative, but in reading the dogma from this context he has to dissolve the events and accompanying images, in effect though not in "belief." The particular movement of the narrative and images have to be ignored.[41]

Another complaint frequently raised is about its arbitrariness and inconsistency in matching certain literal meanings of formal features to certain purported hidden meanings. Cheng Chen-to, for example, notices that there is no clear rules governing the differentiation of the poems in *The Book of Poetry* into those with the hidden intention to praise (*mei*) and those with the intention to reprimand (*tsu*), for cases abound where poems very similar to each other have been assigned by commentators to opposite categories.[42] Obviously, the issue raised by Cheng Chen-to pertains to the larger question of why some texts – such as *The Book of Poetry* or Homer – and not the others, are singled out for allegorical exegesis.

Allegorization ultimately rests on belief. A Western allegorical critic typically believes that a given literary text represents the absolute nature of reality, be it physical, metaphysical, or divine, whereas his Chinese counterpart believes that a given literary text contains most profound moral or political wisdom. While proposing what he thinks to be the rules for biblical exegesis, St. Augustine made a statement that best sums up the lack of rules in allegorization and its reliance on belief:

> Therefore in the consideration of figurative expressions a rule such as this will serve, that what is read should be subjected to diligent scrutiny until an interpretation contributing to the reign of charity is produced. If this result appears literally in the text, the expression being considered is not figurative.[43]

It was only when changes in socio-historical conditions or general poetics undermined the belief that had sustained the allegorization of Homer or *The Book of Poetry* that either re-emerged mainly as pure literature and has been appreciated as such.

The allegorization of such classics as Homer and *The Book of Poetry* may finally go out of fashion, but the significance of such practice extends beyond some special orientations in the history of reading these texts. The practice has predisposed and fostered a special way of reading and writing respectively within the Western and the Chinese cultures. This nevertheless does not imply that allegorical mentality and formal allegory have their final cause in the allegorization of a certain chosen texts, the choice of such texts being in a sense a historical accident. The most profound cause of allegory lies in the nature of language itself. That language is capable of indirect

signification enables one to organize a discourse that achieves an allegorical effect, or to read a text *as if* it were allegory even if it is not formally justified as such. The significance of the allegorization of Homer or *The Book of Poetry* should be seen in the light of its contribution to a special mode of allegorical mentality and formal allegory, which is culture-bound.

The Homeric allegorization operates from the assumption that Homer points to the absolute nature of reality or, more generally, that the surface detail of a text is capable of representing something abidingly (that is, philosophically) true. The assumption concerning the representational function of texts has been absorbed into biblical exegetics, only in the latter the represented is specified as the divine meanings. If the scriptures contain the will of God in disguise because they were divinely inspired, a logical extension is to see the totality of the world, also of God's making, as having the same function. Thomas Browne maintains in his *Religio Medici*:

> Thus there are *two Books* from whence I collect my Divinity; besides that written one of God, another of His servant Nature, that universal and publick Manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the Eyes of all: those that never saw Him in the one, have discover'd Him in the other ... Surely the Heathens knew better how to joyn and read those mystical Letters than we Christians, who cast a more careless Eye on these common Hieroglyphicks, and disdain to suck Divinity from the flowers of Nature.[44]

If Nature, being God's creation, contains secret divine messages, man also of God's creation, may very well involuntarily encode divine messages in his literary efforts. This line of thinking accounts for why it was deemed appropriate to search mysterious Christian meanings in non-Christian texts, a common practice in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance,[45] and why some read Odysseus strapped to the mast of his ship as prefiguring Christ on the Cross.[46]

It is an undeniable fact that literary criticism in the West has regularly borrowed methods and even assumptions from Christian hermeneutics. Dante, for example, applied the Christian four-fold allegory to the reading of literary texts, and in our age critics, in their turn, have seen four levels of meaning in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.[47] Besides the four-fold allegory, Christian typology – the view that Old Tastament characters and events are "types" to be recapitulated and fulfilled in Christ and his Church – has been adapted for interpreting secular literature. Assuming the influentiality of the seventeenth-century protestant concept of typology, which emphasized God's activity in individual Christians and regarded biblical personages and events as actually recapitulated in the lives of individual Christians, Barbara Lewalski, typically, sees the typological mode of writing in John Donne, Milton, George Herbert, and John Bunyan, among others.[48] The proclivity of contemporary Western literary or aesthetic theorists – for example, such Anglo-American ones as Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism*, Kenneth Burke in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* and *Language as Symbolic Action*, and Susan Langer in *Feeling and Form* – to view every literary work, including the most naturalistic one, as "symbolic," shows an allegorical mentality continuous with the Greek and the Crhistian traditions in the way of perceiving the world, and consequently the text.

Allegorization, Western and Chinese, both operate from the premise that literature

is referential. Allegorical critics in the West tend to view a literary work as a reference to experiences of the sensible world which, in turn, refer to a more abstract structure of reality. While taking a referential view of literature, Chinese allegorical critics — the exegetes of *The Book of Poetry*, generally do not see the hidden meaning as necessarily more removed from the pale of common sense. Instead, it still refers to the experiences of the sensible world. It gains its significance because it fulfills the peculiarly culture-bound conditions for significance: capability for historical verification or moral/political edification. The influence of the allegorization of *The Book of Poetry* on Chinese allegorical mentality is first of all seen in the traditional exclusion of any literary genre other than poetry from allegorical reading.[49] Aside from the fact that poetry writing and reading were traditionally a symbol of elitism and a practical aid in one's bureaucratic career, poetry commanded great respect because the first collection of poetry, *The Book of Poetry*, was revered as an important source of moral inspiration. This may explain why whenever a classical Chinese poem was singled out for allegorization, it was done in the manner of the exegesis of *The Book of Poetry*. Take, for instance, the allegorization of the following poem by Li Po:

Pheonix once played on Pheonix Tower.
The birds have left it bare now —
    only the river flows on.
At the palace of Wu,
    silent paths
    buried under grass and blossom;
Men of Chin in their fine attire
    become ancient grave-mounds.

The Three Peaks reach halfway
    into the blue;
Between two arms of the river
    White Egret Island
Everywhere drifting clouds that
    dull the sunlight:
Ch'ang-an is invisible
    and that saddens me.[50]

Typically, an allegorical critic would be less interested in the poem's *ubi sunt* sentiment realized through a balanced description of dynastic transition and decayed artifacts as well as the contrastive enduring things of nature. Rather, he would be more interested in the metaphorical potential of the lines, "Everywhere drifting clouds that/dull the sunlight."[51] It is true that before Li Po's time the image of the clouds obscuring the sun had been made by allegorical commentators into a set metaphor referring to scheming, self-serving court officials obstructing the emperor's access to advice from his loyal subordinates. It is perfectly legitimate for readers to read this metaphorical meaning into the lines. What comes across as an excessive allegorical mentality at work is that critics should see the import and merit of the poem only in these lines and thus read the whole poem as a political allegory. They point out that the poem is, in terms of historical specificity, an allegory on Yang Kuo-chung (a

trusted official of Emperor Hsuan-tsung of Tang) and his gang's hindering his emperor from useful advice, and more generally, an allegory on wicked officials' tendency to deceive the emperor and wreak havoc on the state. If allegorical mentality is typically reductive, it is best manifested by the allegorization of this poem, which essentially reduces a poem into an image conveyed by two lines, so as to be translated into an idea.

Allegorical reading sometimes can be carried to absurd excess, as exemplified by the allegoresis of the following poem by Su Tung-p'o of the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1127):[52]

> The incomplete moon is hanging above the bare
> paulownia trees;
> The water-clock stops, and people settle down.
> From time to time, the recluse comes and goes,
> Distant and dim, the shadow of a solitary,
> wild goose.
>
> Startled, his head turns;
> Impenetrable is his bitter thought.
> Surveying the cold branches,
> He chooses to settle on none.
> Bleak is the empty sand isle.

The poem obviously establishes a special kind of mental landscape. It describes an aggrieved loner in terms of a solitary wild goose. However, both man and bird can be envisaged separately as haunting a forlorn location on a chill, dark night. Much of the pleasure of the poem resides in the peculiar metaphorical relationships between the man, the bird, and the landscape. The exegetical tradition of *The Book of Poetry*, nonetheless, induces a critic to specify the poem as an allegory which expresses grievances to the ruler:

> That a wild goose is startled refers to a worthy one feeling uncomfortable. That he turns his head shows his unceasing love for his emperor. That his thought is impenetrable suggests that his emperor is not observing enough. That after surveying the cold branches he chooses to settle on none shows his unwillingness to seek high position and be complacent. That the sand isle is bleak and empty means he cannot feel at home.

Allegorization, Western and Chinese, is usually a convention of reading imposed on a text which is not formal allegory. However, the allegorical mentality fostered by allegorization no doubt contributes in some way to allegorical writing. If Western allegorization has inculcated in readers the expectation to recuperate generalized, often rarefied, notions even from naturalistic characters and events, it is only natural for writers to go one step further to foreground those notions by, for example, turning them into dramatis persona. Consequently, we have a mode of writing which stresses not the uniqueness of individualized characters but the complexity of individual components that go into the making of universal human nature; or as C.S. Lewis nicely puts it: "that unitary 'soul' or 'personality' which interests the novelist is for

[an allegorist] merely the arena in which the combatants meet: it is to the combatants – that he must attend."[53] A paradox ensues. If "personification allegory," as this kind of writing is commonly designated, came into existence partially owing to the prevalence of allegorical mentality, it nevertheless goes against the very grain of "allegory" in its original sense, as pointed out by Ellen D. Leyburn:

> The proliferation of personified abstractions in medieval works is probably responsible for the gradual linking of personification with the definition of allegory. This has been one of the most confusing developments in the usage of the word, for there is nothing inherently allegorical about personification. The remoteness of personification from allegory before the association developed in the Middle Ages is indicated by the fact that Quintilian discusses them in different books in the *Institute Oratoria*. Indeed the naming of an abstraction is contrary to the essential conception of concealment which is basic in allegory. There is no veiling, either for purposes of intensification or of actual hiding of meaning, in calling a quality by name.[54]

In China, the allegorical interpretation of *The Book of Poetry*, be it sensitive reading or not, has resulted in some conditioned responses to a poetical text, which are then translated into conventionalized strategies of writing. The phenomenon may even be traced in the fourth-century B.C. masterpiece, *Li Sao* (On Encountering Sorrow), by Ch'u Yuan. As David Hawkes remarks, when the speaker of the poem adopts a female role and talks about his handsome lover, the writer is probably utilizing an allegorical device inspired by the allegorical reading of the love poems in *The Book of Poetry*, which invariably interprets the lover as the ruler and his mistress as the minister.[55] Most conspicuously, Pai Chu-i of the T'ang dynasty provided for one of his collections of poetry, *Hsin yueh-fu*, the preface and commentary exactly in the manner of the Han commentators of *The Book of Poetry*, specifying the hidden admonitory function of each poem. And it was the long tradition of employing *The Book of Poetry* for multiple communicative purposes that gave rise to poems like the following by Chu Ch'ing-yu, another T'ang poet:

"The Approaching Examination: for Chang Chi"
Last night in the bridal chamber
red candles burned low;
At dawn she goes to pay respect
to her new parents,
Having touched up her face,
in a whisper she asks her husband –
"Have I painted my eyebrows right
for the present fashion?"[56]

Besides being a description of the young marrieds on their first wedding morn, the poem, partially indicated by the title, is understood to carry a hidden inquiry from its writer (a candidate of an approaching civil service examination) to an influential mandarin (Chang Chi): "Based on this poem, what is your estimate of my chance in the examination?"[57]

CONCLUSION

The above diachronic study of allegorical reading attempts to enhance the understanding of the present state of allegorical reading. Historically speaking, canonized texts tended to invite a long tradition of allegorical reading. Today we still utilize allegorization, yet only as a last resort and a temporary expedient to naturalize a problematic text. Before we can finally place a text within the context of literary convention, we find allegorization a convenient tool. It has acquired dignity through its traditional association with texts of monumental status. It does not demand adherence to rigorous rules of operation. To say that a text derives its primary value from its concealed truth is another way of saying that its value lies in its indirect referentiality to an order of reality -- be it psychological, socio-politifal, historical, or theological -- which, since held to be independent of formal features, very well resides outside the text.

In this connection, a distinction needs to be made. To say that "The Wasteland" expresses in its chaotic form the sense of the disorientation of the modern world is to advance an interpretation which figures as a border-line case of allegorical reading. It recognizes the significance of the poem's manipulation of the form – which, in this particular case, means the absence of an articulated theme – but it does not equate the content of the poem with its formal manipulation in the manner Victor Shaklovsky, for example, identifies "awareness of form" as the content of *Tristram Shandy*.[58] Instead, it proceeds to assign a meaning, a humanly significant one at that, to the poem's deliberate structural disorganization, or for that matter, lack of apparent meaning. Thus the very lack of an articulated meaning is itself construed as meaningful. This mode of reading, which thematizes formal features, seems distinguishable from regular allegorical reading.

Commenting on the Old Tastament and its interpretation, Erich Auerbach remarks:

> As a composition, the Old Tastament is comparably less unified than the Homeric poems, it is more obviously pieced together – but the various components all belong to one concept of universal history and its interpretation. If certain elements survived which did not immediately fit in, interpretation took care of them; and so the reader is at every moment aware of the universal religio-historical perspective which gives the individual stories their general meaning and purpose.[59]

The "interpretation" as mentioned by Auerbach is obviously based on a passionate belief – that the scripture contains universal and historical truth. It is then employed to round out whatever incompletions, neutralize whatever contraditions, and work out whatever incoherences in the text, in order to give the entire scripture one "religio-hisorical" perspective. It is allegorical reading par excellence.

Allegorical reading invariably calls for belief of various sorts and degrees. One is often required to believe in the validity of some doctrine or intellectual principle, as well as in the validity of such a doctrine or intellectual principle's disguised presence in a text. This character of allegorical reading applies to Western as well as Chinese allegorization even though, owing to different epistemological habits, excess of

allegorical mentality is manifested in the West in the tendency to read metaphysical profundity into naturalistic texts, whereas in China it is likely manifested in critics' insistence to reduce texts in a way commensurate with their "common-sense" perception of the world. In any case, what with its lack of methodological explicitness, what with its *passé* literary assumptions which take a dichotomic view of form and content and exalt the latter above the former, allegorical reading does not sit well with the critical temper of our age. It is presently at best a temporary ploy to naturalize the problematic.

NOTES

1. Richard Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Source and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1959), pp. 39-40.
2. "Concerning Figures and Tropes," trans. Gussie Hecht Tannenhaus in *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. Joesph M. Miller et al. (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 96-122.
3. James A. Coulter, The *Literary Microcosm: Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), p. 25.
4. "The Mode of Existence of a Literary Work of Art," in René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1962), p. 150.
5. Norman N. Holland, *5 Readers Reading* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975) p. 247.
6. *New Literary History*, 2, No. 1 (1970), 125.
7. John Keats, *The Poetic Works of John Keats*, ed. H.W. Garrod, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), pp. 257-58.
8. The English text is from David Hawkes, trans. *Ch'u Tz'u The Songs of the South, by Ch'u Yuan* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), p. 22.
9. Alexander Pope, *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, I, ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961), 264.
10. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (New York: The New American Library, 1961), p. 5.
11. A novel is made of many motifs. Russian formalists designate "the chronological or chronological-causal sequence into which the reader, progressively and retrospectively, reassembles these motifs" as the *fabula* of a work and designate as the *sujet* "the actual disposition and articulation of these narrative motifs in the particular finished product, as their order and interrelation, shaping and coloring, was finally decided on by the author." See Meir Sternberg, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978), p. 8.
12. Dylan Thomas, *The Selected Writings of Dylan Thomas* (New York: New Directions, 1946), p. 79.
13. *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975), p. 137.
14. Culler, p. 137.
15. "Narrative Signs and Tangents," *Diacritics* (Fall, 1974), p. 5.

16. Hanson, p. 56.
17. Coulter, p. 27.
18. Ernest Robert Curtis, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper, 1953), p. 308.
19. Ann Bates Hersman, *Studies in Greek Allegorical Interpretation* (Chicago: The Blue Sky Press, 1906), p. 8.
20. Translation from Jean Pepin, *Mythe et allegorie: les origines grecques et les contestations judeochretiennes* (Aubier: Editions Montaignes), p. 94.
21. Pépin, p. 94.
22. Hersman, p. 9.
23. Coulter, p. 7.
24. Pépin, p. 122.
25. Pépin, pp. 122-23.
26. Hanson, p. 62.
27. Hanson, p. 48.
28. Hanson, p. 48.
29. Hanson, p. 16.
30. "Dante's Letter to Can Grande della Scala," trans. Paget Toynbee, *Dantis Alagherii Epistolae: The Letters of Dante* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1920) quoted in T.K. Seung, *Cultural Thematics: The Formation of the Faustian Ethos* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976), p. 14.
31. Kao Pao-kuang, *Shih Ching hsin p'ing chia* (A New Evaluation of *The Book of Poetry*) (Taichung, Taiwan: Tung-hai Univ. Press, 1965), p. 18.
32. D.C. Lau, trans. *The Analects* (New York: Pengiuns, 1979), p. 145.
33. *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 109.
34. For a more detailed account of "recitation of poetry," see Ho Ting-sheng, *Shih Ching chin lun* (A Modern View of *The Book of Poetry*) (Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1969), pp. 12-34.
35. D.C. Lau, p. 119.
36. Liu, 111-12.
37. Liu, p. 112.
38. Bernard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes* (Stockholm: The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), p. 2.
39. For a survey of the traditional exegeses of this poem, see *Shih Ching Ch'uan shuo hui tsuan* (A Collection of Causeries on *The Book of Poetry*), ed. Wang Hung-hsü (rpt. Tgipei: Chung-ting wen-hua ch'u pan she, 1967), pp. 54-57.
40. "Image, Symbol and Analogy: Three Basic Concepts of Neoplatonic Allegorical Exegesis," *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, ed. R. Baine Harris (Norfolk, Virginia: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, Dept. of Philosophy, Old Dominion Univ., 1976), pp. 247-62.
41. David Aers. *Piers Plowman and Christian Allegory* (New York: St. Martin's, 1975), p. 22.
42. "Tu mao-shih-hsü" (On Reading Mao's Preface to *The Book of Poetry*), in *Chung-kuo wen-hsueh yen-chiu* (Studies in Chinese Literature), ed. Cheng Chen-to (rpt. Hong Kong: Ku-wen Shu-chü, 1961), p. 11.

43. St. Augutine, *On Christian Doctrine*. trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958), p. 93.
44. Curtis, p. 323.
45. Don Cameron Allen traces the search in *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1970), pp. 201-78.
46. Theodore Ziolkowski, "Some Features of Religious Figuralism in Twentieth-Century Literature," in *Literary Uses of Typology: From the Late Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Earl Miner (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press 1977), p. 348.
47. For an account of the phenomenon, see T.K. Seung, pp. 3-49.
48. "Typological Symbolism and 'The Progress of the Soul' in Seventeenth Century Literature," in Earl Miner, p. 92.
49. Exceptions such as the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) allegorization of *Hsi yu chi* (The Journey to the West) are rare and thus only prove the rule. Incidentally, *The Journey to the West* is also exceptional in having elicited Buddhist-incluenced allegorization of a more metaphysical sort.
50. The English text is in *The Three Hundred T'ang Poems*, trans. Innes Herdan (Taipei: The Far East Book Co., 1973), p. 312.
51. For demonstrating its allegories, I will use the reading of the poem by Chu Tzu-ch'ing and Yeh Sheng-t'ao as an example. See Chu Tzu-ch'ing and Yeh Sheng-t'ao, *Kuo-wen lueh-tu chih-tao* (A Guide to a Cursory Reading of Chinese) (rpt. Hong Kong: T'ai-p'ing-yang t'u-shu Kung-szu, 1958) p. 93.
52. Both the poem and the example of its exegesis, which Cheng Chen-to criticizes, are from Cheng Chen-to, p. 8. The translation of the poem and its exegesis is mine.
53. *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958), p. 60.
54. *Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1956), pp. 3-4.
55. "General Introduction," Hawkes, p. 10.
56. The Chinese and the English texts are in Herdan, p. 441.
57. It was a common practice in the T'ang dynasty for candidates of the impending civil service examination to solicit influential court officials to read their literary exercises before taking the examination. It was understood that upon recommendation from the court officials, the chance of passing the examination would be tremendously improved. See Chu and Yeh, p. 88.
58. B.M. Ejxenbaum, "The Theory of the Formal Method," *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. Ladislav Matejka, and Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge: MIT, 1971), p. 20.
59. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1953), p. 17.