

## THE QUEST OF THE GODDESS

by DAVID HAWKES

Bereft of dates, the literary critic flounders in aestheticism. This, rather than any desire to rehabilitate a patriot poet,<sup>1</sup> must be the Occidental's motive in seeking some sort of chronology for the *Ch'u-tz'u* poems. Whether much is to be expected from the mechanical application of linguistic criteria – statistical researches into the use of vocabulary, rhyme, characteristic structural features, and so forth – is questionable. Reconsideration of my own attempts with these methods<sup>2</sup> suggests that they can indeed supply valid data, but that the precise evaluation of these data is impossible. At best they can but point up common features or distinctive usages as between one work and another. Their conversion into an exact chronology is, it must be confessed, no less intuitive and divinatorial than conclusions based on less respectable methods lacking their pseudo-scientific allure.

In the earliest form in which it has come down to us – the seventeenth-century book of the second-century exegete Wang I – the *Ch'u-tz'u* collection, if we ignore Wang I's own appended effusions, essentially represents a first century B.C. codification of a still extant but neglected literary tradition felt to be in need of restoration and revival. Liu Hsiang and Wang Pao, whose contributions (again excepting Wang I's much later addendum) are the

<sup>1</sup> The modern cult of Ch'ü Yüan as China's first patriotic poet seems to date from the war years. Cf. Wen I-to's article "Ch'ü Yüan — the People's Poet" (聞一多，人民的詩人——屈原) in 神話與詩. The article ends with these words: "Although Ch'ü Yüan did not write about the life of the people or voice their sufferings, he may truthfully be said to have acted as the leader of a people's revolution and to have struck a blow to avenge them. Ch'ü Yüan is the only person in the whole of Chinese history who is fully entitled to be called 'the people's poet.'" Kuo Mo-jo's play *Ch'ü Yüan*, written during ten days in January 1942 and compared by his enthusiastic friends with *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, accords his subject a similar treatment. Under the People's Republic this view of Ch'ü Yüan became *de rigueur*. A little book for high school students published in 1957 opens with the words "Ch'ü Yüan is the first great patriotic poet in the history of our country's literature" (張縱逸：屈原與楚辭，吉林人民出版社 Ch'ang-ch'un 1957). Reluctance to see the number of his works diminished and a revulsion from the highly sceptical attitude which many scholars formerly entertained towards the authenticity of the "works of Ch'ü Yüan" have been an inevitable consequence of the cult.

<sup>2</sup> *The Problem of Date and Authorship in Ch'u-tz'u*, unpublished thesis, Oxford, 1956.

latest material in the book, began their careers at the court of the emperor Hsüan, the literary patron who summoned to his court an aged Mr. P'i from Kiukiang, a *Ch'u-tz'u* expert who, it is quite clear from Liu Hsiang's own account of the matter,<sup>3</sup> was sought out by the emperor not with entertainment in view, but for purposes of preservation and revival, in the same way that a modern folk-song collector will cherish and pursue with tape-recorder and notebook some aged inhabitant of the Hebrides, Galway, or Tennessee to capture from his quavering accents what would otherwise not survive the extinction of his capacious memory.

*Ch'u-tz'u*, then, is the name of a literary tradition, already sufficiently antiquated to be in need of revival by the second half of the first century B.C., but still apparently flourishing at the beginning of emperor Wu's reign in 140 B.C.<sup>4</sup> The advent of Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju on the literary scene at about that time had, we may suppose, something to do with its eclipse.

I do not believe that *tz'u* was originally thought of as a genre. *Tz'u* means "words": the words of artistic composition, whether in verse or prose and whether oral or written. This proposition must be self-evident to anyone who reflects that *Li sao*, *Chiu ko*, *T'ien wen*, *Pu chü* and *Chao hun* are all indisputably *Ch'u-tz'u*, but cannot in any sense of the word be thought of as belonging to a single genre. *Ch'u-tz'u*, as a vague collective title may be compared with the "*Matière de Bretagne*" which in medieval times designated the whole vast corpus of prose and verse romance woven around the legend of King Arthur and his knights and the quest of the Grail. *Ch'u-tz'u* is the "*Matière de Ch'u*".

If, then, there is no formal consistency between the different parts of this "*Matière de Ch'u*", what is it that they all have in common? The answer to this, I believe, is that all of them represent the cannibalization by a new secular, literary tradition of an earlier religious, oral one. As an alternative to this it might be suggested that all of them are in one way or another associa-

<sup>3</sup> The biography of Wang Pao in *Han Shu* 64B (駱朱吾丘主父儼終王賈傳) contains the following statement on this subject: "Under Emperor Hsüan there was a revival of the literary enthusiasms of Emperor Wu's reign. The writings of the Six Disciplines were expounded and discussed and the Emperor displayed an inexhaustible avidity for every kind of curious and interesting learning. He summoned to his court a Mr. P'i of Kiukiang who was an authority on the *Ch'u-tz'u* and commanded him to appear before him and recite them. He also invited a number of men of outstanding talent, like Liu Hsiang, Chang Tzu-ch'iao, Hua Lung and Liu Pao, to reside at his court as pensioners of the Gate of the Brazen Horse." *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* 859 (a section devoted to the subject of "Porridge") quotes from Liu Hsiang's *Ch'i lüeh*: "Emperor Hsüan summoned a Mr. P'i to his court to appear before him and recite *Ch'u-tz'u*. Mr. P'i was very old and feeble, and had to be given gruel every time he recited."

<sup>4</sup> Chu Mai-ch'en, who found favour with Emperor Wu in the middle years of his reign, was a *Ch'u-tz'u* expert. His fellow-countryman Yen Chu, who first recommended him to the Emperor's notice, was the son of Yen Chi, author of *Ai shih ming* and member of a group of Wu poets who lived at the provincial courts of Wu and Liang. *Ch'i chien*, whether or not it is by Tung-fang Shuo, probably belongs to the same period.

ted with the name of Ch'ü Yüan: that the "*Matière de Ch'u*" is really the "*Matière de Ch'ü Yüan*" – or in another words, that *Ch'u-tz'u* may be defined as the writings of Ch'ü Yüan and his School. In fact this is merely to restate the first definition in different terms, since the secularization of a religious tradition is precisely what Ch'ü Yüan is supposed to have done.

I am referring, of course, to Wang I's statement that *Chiu ko* is a literary recasting of traditional religious material.<sup>5</sup> He makes no such statement about any other work in the corpus, and what he says about *Chiu ko* is notoriously suspect. Nevertheless I believe that this statement was an inspired and fruitful guess which might well prove the key to a better understanding of the whole collection. If we could analyse the use which Ch'u poets made of an existing religious tradition, we should, I believe, be well on the way to understanding the nature of poetic inspiration and the workings of poetic imagination in that remote and formative era of Chinese literary art.

I should like to begin an attempt at such an analysis by re-examining what must surely be one of the most variously interpreted poems in the Chinese language: *Hsiang chün*. The following is a greatly altered version of the translation I published<sup>6</sup> in 1959:

The goddess comes not, she holds back shyly.  
Who keeps her delaying within the island,  
Lady of the lovely eyes and the winning smile?  
Skimming the water in my cassia boat,  
I bid the Yüan and Hsiang still their waves  
And the Great River make its stream flow softly.  
I look for the goddess, but she does not come yet.  
Of whom does she think as she plays her reed-pipes?  
North I go, drawn by my flying dragon,  
Steering my course to the Tung-t'ing lake:  
My sail is of fig-leaves, melilotus my rigging,  
An iris my flag-pole, my banner of orchids.  
Gazing at the distant Ts'en-yang mooring  
I waft my magic across the Great River.  
I waft my magic, but it does not reach her.  
The lady is sad, and sighs for me;

<sup>5</sup> "In former times the people living in the area lying between the Yüan and Hsiang rivers south of Nan-ying were superstitious and much given to the worship of spirits. In their service of the gods they would sing, play, drum, and dance to do them pleasure. It was in this area that Ch'ü Yüan concealed himself after his banishment. Full of grief and bitterness and in a greatly disturbed state of mind, he would go out to watch the sacrificial rites of the local inhabitants and witness the singing and dancing which accompanied them. Finding the words of their songs crude and barbarous, he composed the *Nine Songs* to replace them. In this work he both sings the praises of the gods and at the same time uses the hymns as a vehicle for expressing his own resentments." (From Wang I's introduction to *Chiu ko*.)

<sup>6</sup> Hawkes, *Ch'u tz'u, the Songs of the South*, Clarendon Press, 1959, 37-8.

And my tears run down over cheek and chin:  
 I am choked with longing for my lady.  
 My cassia oars and orchid sweep  
 Chip all in vain at ice and snow.  
 I am gathering wild figs in the water!  
 I am looking for lotuses in the tree-tops!  
 The wooing is useless if hearts are divided;  
 The love that is not deep is quickly broken.  
 The stream runs fast through the stony shallows,  
 And my flying dragon wings swiftly above it.  
 The pain is more lasting if loving is faithless:  
 She broke her tryst; she told me she had not time.  
 In the morning I race by the bank of the river;  
 At evening I halt at this north island.  
 The birds are roosting on the roof-top;  
 The water laps at the foot of the hall.  
 I throw my thumb-ring into the River.  
 I leave my girdle in the bay of the Li.  
 Pollia I've plucked in the scent-laden islet  
 To give to the lady in the depths below.  
 Time once gone cannot be recovered.  
 I should like to enjoy myself at leisure.

This translation assumes a single speaker throughout: the male shaman who seeks, but fails to make contact with, the river goddess. He has hopes of her appearing. He even hears the music of her pipes; but it is not for him that she plays. For one reason or another she fails to emerge; and the shaman leaves disconsolately, after first casting jade offerings into the waters of the river.

The singer's appearing to be sometimes in a boat, which he describes in considerable detail, and sometimes on a flying dragon is not a difficulty. Ts'ao Hsü, the Chekiang shaman who was drowned in A.D. 143 while going out in a boat to seek the river god<sup>7</sup> met his death on the fifth day of the fifth

<sup>7</sup> *Hou Han shu* 114 (列女傳): "The filial daughter, Ts'ao O, was a native of Shang-yü in Kuei-chi. Her father, Ts'ao Hsü, was a skilled musician and shaman. On the fifth day of the fifth month of the year Han-an he was drowned while rowing out towards the oncoming bore to meet the god with dancing in the Shang-yü river, and his body was never recovered."

Waley (*The nine songs— a study of shamanism in ancient China*, Allen and Unwin, 1955) says that Ts'ao Hsü (he calls him "Ts'ao Yü") was going out to meet "the Dancing Goddess," following the 沂濤迎婆娑神的 of the received text. However, 困學紀聞 13 (攷史) makes it quite clear that the received text has the character 迎 in the wrong order: "曹娥碑云「盱能撫節安歌，婆娑樂神，以五月時迎伍君」。傳云「迎婆娑神」誤也。" 伍君 is 伍子胥 whose spirit became the god of the tidal bore  
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month, the day of the Dragon Boat Festival, whose great antiquity has been demonstrated by Wen I-to<sup>8</sup>. It seems highly probable that Ts'ao Hsü's craft was a dragon boat, and equally probable that the "cassia boat" and "flying dragon" of this poem both refer to one and the same vessel.

That the poem was designed to be sung by a shaman actually in motion on the water is perhaps questionable. The Hsiang Chün, we know, had an island shrine in lake Tung-t'ing, and it is true that the poem contains references to the goddess's failure to appear from her island, to the shaman's journey to Tung-t'ing, and to the water which laps beneath the goddess's hall. Nevertheless the journeys indicated in the poem must be purely imaginary ones. This becomes evident when we try to map out Ts'en-yang, the Yangtze, the rivers Yüan, Hsiang and Li, and lake Tung-t'ing — all mentioned in this poem — and find ourselves unable to fit them into an area of much less than one hundred miles square; or when we reflect that a whole day is supposed to elapse during the course of two lines of the poem. We may therefore suppose either that the poem was intended to be sung and mimed on a stationary boat moored at the foot of a waterside temple. In that case we must probably imagine a whole flotilla of boats, of which the leading one was occupied by the shaman and his rowers and the others by spectators and worshippers arriving for a seasonal or perhaps annual rite at an island shrine, probably with its back to the jungle and approachable only by water. Or else we may suppose that the poem was to be used in a performance on dry land with the shaman standing in a grounded boat, or symbolic representation of a boat, or even, perhaps, holding a toy boat — a dragon-headed

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and who was, in fact, the local river god at Shang-yü in Ts'ao Hsü's day; whereas the "Dancing Goddess" is, to the best of my knowledge, unheard of outside this text.

For the Han cult of Wu Tzu-hsü as a river god, see *Lun heng* 4 (善處): "The history books say that when King Fu-ch'a of Wu killed Wu Tzu-hsü, he boiled him in a cauldron, put his body in a wineskin, and threw it into the river. But Tzu-hsü's hate was so powerful that it drove the waters before it and made the rushing tidal bore in which people are drowned. Today in the Kuei-chi area there are temples to Tzu-hsü on the Yangtze at Tan-t'u and on the R. Chekiang at Ch'ien-t'ang. These have been founded to mollify his hatred and assuage the violence of the tide . . . The Chekiang river, the Shan-yin river, and the Shang-yü river all have this tidal bore."

There are other but less revealing references to this Han superstition in *Wu-yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* and *Pao-p'u-tzu*.

I suggest that what Ts'ao Hsü did in his boat was to attitudinize (婆娑) while singing to his own accompaniment on the castanets (撫節安歌). Alternatively, 撫節 may imply that he beat out the stroke for the rowers on a drum. He could still sing and posture while doing this. Han art contains many representations of people drumming and dancing simultaneously and there is at least one pre-Han representation of a drummer in a boat beating out the stroke for rowers. The expression 撫節安歌 may be compared with 疏緩節兮安歌 in *Tung-huang t'ai-i* l. 10.

曹娥碑 is, of course, the inscription immortalized in Ts'ai Yung's riddling commendation (黃絹幼婦外孫齏臼).

<sup>8</sup> 聞一多, 端午考 in 神話與詩, Peking, 1956, 221-38.

stick with a miniature paddle tied across its neck,<sup>9</sup> or something of the sort. It is impossible to be sure, and we are, it seems to me, entitled to choose whichever it amuses us most to believe.

If we do opt for the view that the poem implies a water-borne shaman, there is ample evidence to show that shamans did on occasion take to the water for their ceremonies, from the unfortunate case of Ts'ao Hsü already mentioned, to the numerous instances cited by Mr. Wen Ch'ung-i in his invaluable study of these matters.<sup>10</sup> Of course, it is still open to us to accept Wang I's thesis that the poem is a literary improvement, and therefore not written for performance at all, but for reading and recitation. But even if we do, the problem of how the oral originals were performed still remains to be answered.

However, none of these details of performance is very important. The point I wish to establish is that by far the best sense is made of this poem – and incidentally also of the companion-piece *Hsiang fu-jen* which follows it – if we assume that the whole of it is sung by the questing shaman, who, for the benefit of an audience of worshippers, describes the extraordinary difficulties of his journey in pursuit of the goddess, the extremely evasive nature of her behaviour when at last he draws near her, and finally his quite understandable failure to do much more than, as it were leave his visiting-card at her doorway before departing. For the goddess, it is hinted, is already closeted with a Very Important Person – none other, we are given to understand, than her male consort.<sup>11</sup> Under the circumstances the shaman, who

<sup>9</sup> A Siberian shaman in the museum at Copenhagen holds a stick in one of his hands with a tiny horse's head carved on the upper end of it, which I take to be the shaman's "mount".

<sup>10</sup> 文崇一，九歌中的水神與華南的龍舟賽神，Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, (中央研究院民族學研究所集刊) 11 (1961), 51–124.

<sup>11</sup> For a similar reference by the shaman to a divine rival, see *Shao ssu-ming* 18. The person who detains the goddess in her island in l. 2 is presumably Shun. His presence is even more clearly indicated by the reference to his burial-place, Doubting Mountain (九疑山), in the *Hsiang fu-jen* poem. That Shun, under the name Ch'ung-hua, was the object of a popular cult in Ch'u may be deduced from the references to him in *Li sao* and *Chiu chang*. The legend of his death on an expedition to the south and of the search of his two sorrowing queens seems like a folk memory of the southward movement of the cult, comparable with the legend of the westward journey of Dionysus. Since the object of the expedition was the chastisement of the Miao tribes, it would seem highly probable that the ruling class of Ch'u brought the cult with them, so that Shun's southern expedition symbolizes their own southward movement, and his chastisement of the Miao their own displacement of local tribes.

I believe that my earlier scepticism about the identification of the *Hsiang* goddesses and their consort with Shun and his two queens was misplaced. Certainly the cult of the *Hsiang* goddesses (or goddess) may well have existed long before the Shun cult arrived on the scene, and it would only be after the latter event that they became identified

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has done his level best, could hardly be expected to achieve more. Everyone feels sorry for him. He feels sorry for himself. Though, curiously, the phrases which round off the poem seem to imply that his outing has been successful and enjoyable. I shall say more of them presently.

There is no question but that this poem, even though it may have been subjected to literary improvement by a poet whose preoccupations were other than religious ones, embodies a religious rite whose pattern has been evolved and hallowed by long tradition; whose very words, we may confidently assert, if we compare this with the other poems of *Chiu ko*, contain time-honoured formulae, the use of which was dictated more by ritual appropriateness than by logical necessity. Thus the shaman will convey some sense of the great length of his journey by conventional reference to the passage of time: "In the morning I do such-and-such; in the evening I do so-and-so." His route is described in conventional phraseology: "Now I bend my course towards so-and-so";<sup>12</sup> "Now I halt my pace at such-and-such".<sup>13</sup> He will, either in his own person or that of a god whom he represents, praise the entertainment provided as being so delightful that he "forgets to return".<sup>14</sup> The excuses he makes in order to explain the non-appearance of the goddess – somewhat reminiscent of the reasons sarcastically suggested by Elijah to the priests of Baal to explain the non-appearance of *their* deity – are couched in conventional language.<sup>15</sup> And finally, the parting words, "I wish I could stay and enjoy myself a little longer"<sup>16</sup> are a set formula used, as we have just observed, even in contexts where they do not seem strictly appropriate.

If the songs of *Chiu ko* are essentially religious in intent, *Li sao* is unquestionably a secular poem. Magic and the supernatural are among the themes it makes use of; but in general intent it is the personal statement of a secular poet. The traces of shamanistic influence in the poem have seemed so obvious that the mere statement of their existence is usually felt to be sufficient. In much the same way the linguistic similarities of *Li sao* and *Chiu ko* are so evident that little attempt has been made to analyse and

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with Shun's queens. (*Shan hai ching* calls them the daughters of the god of heaven.) But my guess is that the author of *Li sao* would have given the same answer as the learned doctors of Ch'in Shih-huang's court if asked to name the goddesses and their male consort. Wang I, curiously enough, appears to give the wives of Shun an adulterous liaison with an anonymous river god. He could be right. The identity of the shaman's divine rival does not affect my point.

<sup>12</sup> 適吾道: *Hsiang chün* 10, *Li sao* 172.

<sup>13</sup> 弭節: *Hsiang chün* 30, *Li sao* 96, *Li sao* 182.

<sup>14</sup> 忘歸: *Tung chün* 10, *Ho po* 7, *Shan kuei* 15.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Kings 18: "Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."

The goddesses in *Chiu ko* are "busy". See *Hsiang chün* 28 and *Shan kuei* 20.

<sup>16</sup> *Hsiang chün* 38, *Hsiang fu-jen* 40, *Li sao* 99.

interpret them.<sup>17</sup> I believe, however, that a more careful study of these influences and similarities might be rewarding, and shall attempt to justify this belief by examining the section of *Li sao* that begins at l. 94:

94. In the morning I start my journey from Ts'ang-wu;  
In the evening I arrive at the Garden of Paradise.

95. I should like to stay a while in *these* divine precincts,  
But the day is swiftly drawing towards evening.

96. So I order Hsi-ho to halt the pace  
And overlook Yen-tzu mountain without going in.

97. The road is very long and far:

I shall go up and down in it seeking a mate.<sup>18</sup>

At this point the poet's quest of the goddess has just begun. Observe that he uses the language not of narration but of dramatic performance: "these divine precincts". A whole day is made to elapse in the space of a single line, and explicit reference is made to the great length of the journey. The phrase "halt the pace" is used by the questing shaman in *Hsiang chün* in lines which also incorporate the "morning-evening" formula:

<sup>17</sup> To take the two most obvious and striking ones, there is the characteristic use of 予 as pronoun object, perhaps representing a different realization of 余 in specific syntactic contexts - as if we were to distinguish orthographically between the pronouns in "Give 'em hell" and "Give it to them". This usage is only found in *Li sao* and *Chiu ko* and no other Chinese text:

<i>Li sao</i>	66	申申其響予	
	71	夫何蜚獨而不予聽	
	105	倚閭闔而望予	
	177	召西皇使涉予	
<i>Chiu ko</i> , <i>Hsiang fu-jen</i>	17	聞佳人兮召予	
<i>Ta ssu-ming</i>	8	何壽夭兮在予	
<i>Shao ssu-ming</i>	4	芳菲菲兮襲予	
<i>Ho po</i>	18	魚鱗鱗兮媵予	
<i>Shan kuei</i>	4	子慕予兮善窈窕	
	16	歲既晏兮孰華予	

(I follow various modern editors in treating what appears to be an example of this in *Hsiang fu-jen* 2 as a case of textual corruption). The other is the expression 靈脩, used (apart from very late imitations) only in *Li sao* (22, 25, 44) and *Chiu ko* (*Shan kuei* 15).

<sup>18</sup> 朝發軔於蒼梧兮  
夕余至乎縣圃  
欲少留此靈瑣兮  
日忽忽其將暮  
吾令羲和弭節兮  
望崦嵫而勿迫  
路曼曼其脩遠兮  
吾將上下而求索

29. *In the morning* I gallop beside the river;  
30. *In the evening* I halt the pace at the northern island.<sup>19</sup>

Passing over a few lines descriptive of the poet's brilliant cortège and the aerial journey which he makes with it, we come to l. 110:

110. Now I am going to visit *this* Palace of the Spring.

I break a jasper branch to tie to my girdle.

111. Before its lustrous petals drop off,

I look for a woman below to whom I can offer it.

112. I command Feng Lung to mount on a cloud

And I look for the place where Fu-fei lives.

113. I unfasten my girdle as a pledge of my good faith,

And order Chien Hsiu to plead my suit.<sup>20</sup>

Observe once more the dramatic language: "this Palace of the Spring". Note that Fu-fei, like Hsiang chün, is a river goddess. In *Hsiang chün* the questing shaman drops his *p'ei* into the water as an offering to the goddess. In this passage the poet uses his *p'ei-hsiang*, his girdle, as a pledge. Most remarkable of all, the expression *hsia nü*, which I believe has its quite literal sense of "the woman who is down below" (*i.e.* the goddess in the depths of the river, not, as some commentators have thought<sup>21</sup> "serving-woman") is used only here and in *Hsiang chün*, l. 36. In the *Li sao* passage the poet seeks a *hsia nü* to whom he can give the jade flowers he has plucked from the paradise tree; in *Hsiang chün* the shaman states his intention of offering to the *hsia nü* the flowers he has plucked in a river islet.

The shamanistic quest of the goddess lent itself well to the poet's

19	龍騁騫兮江皋 夕弭節兮北渚
20	溘吾遊此春宮兮 折瓊枝以繼佩 及榮華之未落兮 相下女之可詔 吾令豐隆乘雲兮 求宓妃之所在 解佩纕以結言兮 吾令蹇脩以為理

<sup>21</sup> E. g. Hung Hsing-tsu (*楚辭補注*) and Chu Hsi (*楚辭集注*). Wang I's comments on *Chiu ko* are best passed over in decent silence. Chu Hsi refers back to *Li sao* 111, on which he has the comment 下女謂神女之侍女也. In modern times Chiang Liang-fu follows this interpretation (*姜亮夫, 屈原賦校註*, 人民文學出版社, Peking, 1957, p. 220). The only commentator, as far as I can see, who has firmly and explicitly identified 上女 with the goddess and adduced full and convincing arguments for doing so is the Japanese scholar Hoshikawa Kiyotake. See 星川清孝, *楚辭之研究*. Nara, 1961, pp. 531-2.

allegorical theme, since the allegory *required* that the poet's quest of a mate should be unsuccessful, and the shaman's quest of the goddess was, as we have seen, invariably and inevitably unsuccessful.

I do not mean to imply that the pattern of failure was uniform throughout all the shaman's transactions with the gods. It was the female deities of rivers and mountains who persistently eluded him. The heavenly gods were willing to oblige with their presence, albeit only in hurried and perfunctory visits. According to ancient custom, river deities were sacrificed to with offerings dropped into the water.<sup>22</sup> Dwelling in the silent depths below, they were little likely to manifest themselves to the worshipper. The heavenly gods, on the other hand, were worshipped with great roaring bonfires,<sup>23</sup> and it needed little imagination to see the effulgence of the descending deity in the blaze and sparkle of the oblatory fire.

The god has no sooner descended in a blaze of glory,  
Than off in a whirl he soars again, far into the clouds.<sup>24</sup>  
sings the shaman in *Yün-chung chün*. Compare those lines of *Yün-chung chün* with *Lia sao* 141-3.

I heard that Wu Hsien was descending in the evening  
So I lay in wait with offerings of peppered rice-balls.  
The spirits came thronging down in a dense cloud,  
And the host of Chiu-i mountain came crowding to meet him.

<sup>22</sup> This method of sacrificing to the River God is extremely well attested. From the Shang period to the Later Han there must be hundreds of references to the sacrifice of animals, objects, or humans by throwing or sinking them in the water (a custom still to be observed in the English superstition of throwing pennies into wells). To cite only two examples 沈邽 (i.e. 妾) 于河 occurs in the oracle bone inscriptions; whilst in 108 B.C., on the occasion of the breach of the Yellow River dyke at Hu-tzu-k'ou, Emperor Wu sacrificed a white horse and jade *pi* by throwing them into the water. (See *Shih chi* 7). For an exhaustive study of the River God cult, see 文崇一, *九歌中河伯之研究*, 中央研究院民族學研究所集刊 9 (1960), 139-162.

<sup>23</sup> 周禮·大宗伯：  
以醴祀昊天上帝  
以實柴祀日月星辰  
以標燎祀司中司命鬯師兩師  
以血祭祭社稷五祀五嶽  
以狸沈祭山林川澤  
以鬯辜祭四方百物

Note that there is even a different verb used to distinguish between the fiery sacrifices made to the heavenly gods and the various other sorts of sacrifice made to earthly deities. 醴 was a smoke offering. 實柴 and 標燎 made to the sun, moon, stars, *ssu-chung*, Master of Fate, Wind God and Rain God, were various sorts of bonfire. Four of our *Chiu ko* deities would have qualified for the "sacrifices by burial or drowning" prescribed for the worship of mountain and river gods.

<sup>24</sup> 靈皇皇兮既降  
森遠舉兮雲中

His godhead was manifested in a blaze of radiance,  
And he addressed me in these auspicious words.<sup>25</sup>

Wu Hsien, like the cloud god, is said to *descend*. In each case a similar term is used to describe the brightness in which the god's descent is manifested. Moreover we may note that the curious term *yang ling*, to emit or radiate one's divinity, or one's magical powers, is used both of Wu Hsien in the *Li sao* passage and of the questing shaman in *Hsiang chün*. And we may observe in passing that the half-line in the *Li sao* passage about the spirits of Chiu-i mountain is identical with 1.33 of the *Hsiang fu-jen*, where the questing shaman is joined by the spirit host just at the moment when he makes his offerings to the river goddess.

It is by no means fanciful to suppose that these recurring phrases were among the liturgical formulae of shamanistic ritual which the secular poet appropriated for his own use. The nineteen *Hymns for the Suburban Sacrifices*, dating from the early Han period, contain a number of such formulae strongly reminiscent of ones found in *Chiu ko*.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> 巫咸將夕降兮  
懷椒糈而要之  
百神翳其備降兮  
九疑竅其並迎  
皇剡剡其揚靈兮  
告余以吉故

<sup>26</sup> 漢郊祀歌十九首 (樂府詩集：I)

For example, note the following lines:

九重開(兮)靈之旂  
靈之車(兮)結玄雲  
駕飛龍(兮)羽旄紛  
靈之下(兮)若風馬  
... 濟容與(兮)獻嘉觴

(From No. 1 練時日)

華燁燁(兮)固靈根  
神之旂(兮)過天門  
... 神之楹(兮)臨壇宇  
九疑賓(兮)夔龍舞  
... 沛施祐(兮)汾之阿  
揚金光(兮)橫太河

(From No. 16 華燁燁)

靈殷殷(兮)爛揚光  
延壽命(兮)永未央

(From No. 19 赤蛟)

Combined with the theme of quest in *Li sao*, and sometimes even displacing it, is the theme of the magic-making journey, a sort of royal progress through the sky in which the poet, riding in a chariot drawn by flying dragons, is attended by a dazzling retinue of gods and spirits. Strangely enough this theme – for which the poet was equally indebted to his shaman predecessors – proved a far more productive influence on the Chinese literary imagination than the seemingly more poetical, more inspiring Quest of the Goddess.

Apart from the explicitly shamanistic poems (*Chiu ko*, the "Summons" poems, and the unclassifiable *T'ien wen*) the content of the *Ch'u-tz'u* poems is classifiable into two main categories: one, which I shall designate *tristia*, expresses the poet's sorrows, his resentments, his complaints against a deluded prince, a cruel fate, a corrupt, malicious and uncomprehending society; the other, which I shall designate *itineraria*, describes the poet's journeys, occasionally real ones, but more often the imaginary, supernatural journeys to which I have just referred.

It is possible that the plaintive tone of the *tristia* element in Ch'u poetry derives from the characteristic note of melancholy and frustration which shamanistic tradition prescribed for the hymns which they addressed to their fickle and elusive deities. But so many other ingredients of a purely secular and literary kind have gone into the make-up of *tristia* – to name only one, the conventional listing of historical analogues – that the quest theme can almost be discounted as a source of inspiration in later literature, always excepting the beautiful "Goddess" *fu* by the pseudo-Sung Yü and its imitation by Ts'ao Chih, which can be thought of as off-shoots of the tradition embodied in *Hsiang chiün*, *Hsiang fu-jen*, *Shan kuei*, and the Quest passages of *Li sao*.

The idea of the *progress*, the ritual journey – usually a ritual circuit – made for the purpose of affirming or acquiring, or both affirming and acquiring, power appears in Chinese tradition in many contexts and at many levels. It is always essentially magical; but its travel may be real or imaginary, and the traveller may be a wizard, a mystic, or a king. It postulates a symmetrical cosmos whose various parts are presided over by various powers. These powers can be induced to give either their submission or their support to the traveller who approaches them with the correct ritual. A complete and successful circuit of the whole cosmos will therefore make him a lord of the universe, able to command any of its powers at will, if he is

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Probably the "九夷賓" in No. 7 (惟奏之) ought to be 九疑賓, in which case we can add these lines:

鐘鼓竿笙 (兮) 雲舞翔翔  
招搖靈旗 (兮) 九疑賓將

a wizard; to move in it with utter freedom, if he is a mystic; to rule by divine right and title with the allegiance of both temporal and spiritual powers, if he is an emperor.

In China the first recorded attempt to comprehend the entire space-time universe in a single closed system was made by Tsou Yen, a philosopher roughly contemporaneous with the author of *Li sao*. But Tsou Yen's ideas, though representing the tendency towards synthesis and integration in the advanced thought of his day, are obviously no guide to the accepted cosmological, geographical and religious beliefs of the majority of his contemporaries. Among the latter we observe a number of related but inconsistent ideas, some perhaps of alien origin, which were later formalized and coordinated in the all-embracing cosmology elaborated and perfected, to a large extent by anonymous thinkers, during the two succeeding centuries. But we shall search in vain for any *summa* or all-inconclusive system in the literature produced by writers of Tsou Yen's own day.

*Mu t'ien-tzu chuan* records the imaginary progress to the far west of an ancient king, and the offerings which he made to various powers in the course of it. And *Shan hai ching*, or rather the earliest stratum of that many-layered book, by assuming that every mountain and river of the known world has its guardian power and by naming the offerings appropriate to their propitiation, implies the existence of power-seeking travellers – kings or wizards – who might feel disposed to make use of the information it supplies.

The coloured guardians of the quarters also begin to appear in this period. We may presumably assign to approximately the same date as the last two writings that remarkable passage in *Mo-tzu* in which Mo-tzu himself is made to refer to the views of the astrologers:

God kills the green dragon in the east on the day *chia-i*;  
he kills the red dragon in the south on the day *ping-ting*;  
he kills the white dragon in the west on the day *keng-hsin*;  
and he kills the black dragon in the north on the day *jen-kuei*.<sup>27</sup>

This superstition would seem to have some bearing on a portentous incident in the early life of Han Kao-tzu recorded by Ssu-ma Ch'ien.<sup>28</sup> Kao-tzu had killed a large snake in the marshes, and an old woman who claimed to be the snake's mother was later found weeping beside it. The snake was the son of the White *Ti*, she said, and had been slain by the son of the Red *Ti*.

The worship of the coloured *Ti* was a state cult in Ch'in, if Ssu-ma Ch'ien's statement can be believed, as early as the fifth century B.C.<sup>29</sup> and

<sup>27</sup> 墨子, 貴義 (47).

<sup>28</sup> *Shih chi* 8 (*Kao-tzu pen-chi*).

<sup>29</sup> *Shih chi* 28 (*Feng-ch'an shu*): 其後百餘年靈公作吳陽上時祭黃帝, 作下時祭炎帝. Ssu-ma Ch'ien credits Ling's predecessors of much earlier date with having founded the cults of the White *Ti* (西時) and the Green *Ti* (密時); but probably the identification of the gods of these earlier cults belongs to the later period.

must certainly have existed in Chin by the third, since shamans from Chin were settled in Ch'ang-an to maintain this cult at the beginning of the Han dynasty.<sup>30</sup> The Five *Ti* feature as part of a cosmological system in *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, written a century later than Tsou Yen and *Li sao* and on the very eve of imperial unification.<sup>31</sup>

Political integration not surprisingly had its intellectual counter-part in cosmological theory, which was, in turn, reflected back in the religious behaviour of the governing class. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the emergence of that system of beliefs and practices which Ssu-ma Ch'ien designates by the term *feng-ch'an*. Let me demonstrate this by returning for a moment to the subject of *Hsiang-chün*. In seeking to identify the person of the deity who is the subject of this hymn, most commentators cite a well-known passage from Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *Annals of the First Ch'in Emperor* in which Hsiang-chün became the object of the emperor's vindictive ire:

Travelling in a southwesterly direction he crossed over the R. Huai and came at length to Heng Shan. At Nan-chün he took boat and was sailing down the river to the Hsiang-shan shrine when a great wind arose and nearly prevented his getting to land. The emperor inquired of his wise men who Hsiang-chün was. They replied, "According to our information, Hsiang-chün are the daughters of Yao and wives of Shun who are buried in this place." At this the First Emperor was greatly enraged. He set three thousand convicts to work to cut down the trees of Hsiang-shan and to paint the mountain red. He then left Nan-chün and returned to Hsien-yang by way of the Wu-kuan pass.<sup>32</sup>

Let us look into this excursion of Ch'in Shih-huang's a little more carefully. First of all "Nan-chün" here means not the whole commandery of that name but its administrative centre, the old city of Ying, which in Ch'ü Yüan's day was the capital of the kings of Ch'u. "Hsiang-shan" is another name for Chün-shan (the "Mountain of the Goddess") or Tung-t'ing shan, as it was sometimes called – an island in the northeast of lake Tung-t'ing, which

<sup>30</sup> 長安置祠祝官，女巫。其...晉巫祠五帝，東君，雲中君，司命...之屬... (Shih chi 28).

<sup>31</sup> In point of fact *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* gives the names of the four *Ti* who preside over the four seasons, and the names of their attendant spirits. The colours associated with them have to be matched by the earthly ruler in his costume and furnishings throughout the year. The same *Ti* and attendant spirits reappear in *Yüan yü*, however, as guardians of the four quarters. There is an almost total fusion of space and time in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* cosmology.

<sup>32</sup> See *Ch'in Shih-huang pen-chi*, 28th year:  
...乃西南渡淮水，之衡山南郡。浮江，至湘山祠。逢大風，幾不得渡。上問博士曰：「湘君何神？」博士對曰：「閩之，舜女，舜之妻，而葬此。」於是始皇大怒，使刑徒三千人皆伐湘山之樹，赭其山。上自南郡由武關歸。

*Shan hai ching* also mentions as the site of the Hsiang goddesses' shrine.<sup>33</sup> Heng-shan, the southernmost point of this journey, is the southernmost of the Five Sacred Mountains, whose successive propitiation was an essential part of the *feng-ch'an* ritual prescribed for a universal sovereign seeking supernatural sanction for his rule.

This imperial progress took place in the twenty-eighth year of Ch'in Shih-huang's reign. It began with a visit to the east, in the course of which, after discussions about the *feng-ch'an* sacrifices with various local *ju*, he ascended T'ai-shan, the eastern and most holy of the Five Sacred Mountains, and performed the appropriate rituals on its summit. There can be little doubt that the visit to Heng-shan which followed was accompanied by similar offerings, although Ssu-ma Ch'ien does not see fit to mention them, and that the subsequent journey to the island shrine of the Hsiang-chün, was undertaken with the intention of making appropriate offerings to the principal river deity of the Heng-shan area. The disagreeable outcome of this well-intentioned trip was no doubt the reason for the emperor's abandonment of the *feng-ch'an* circuit, which he had undertaken so enthusiastically, after visiting only two of the Five Sacred Mountains.

He did, as a matter of fact, visit Chiu-i mountain and make offerings to Shun, who is buried there, in the last year of his reign,<sup>34</sup> so presumably he had some time previous to that issued a royal pardon to the offending goddesses, and perhaps even planted a few trees on their bare red island. Shun was supposed to be the husband of the Hsiang goddesses, and could hardly be expected to extend a favourable reception to a visitor who was still treating his wives like convicts.

The ritual circuit of the cosmos, not in the shaman's airy flight or the mystic's imagination, but in actual earthly travel was thus really undertaken, though never concluded, by the Ch'in First Emperor. Emperor Wu's well-known predilection for magic and ceremonial also disposed him to give a favourable hearing to the *feng-ch'an* experts, particularly when all five of the Sacred Mountains were in territory which came under the imperial government's jurisdiction.<sup>35</sup> A weakness for more exotic kinds of religious

<sup>33</sup> See *Shan hai ching* 5 (*Chung shan ching*), Ssu-pu pei-yao, ed., p. 41b seq.:

又東南一百二十里曰洞庭之山...帝之二女居之。是常遊于江湖澧沅之風交淵湘沅之淵。出入必以飄風暴雨... (Ch'in Shih-huang ought to have been warned!)

The text is obviously corrupt. I think the middle part should read 常遊于澧沅之江湖湘之淵.

<sup>34</sup> *Ch'in Shih-huang pen-chi*, 37th year:

...十一月，行至雲夢，望祀虞舜於九疑山...

<sup>35</sup> *Feng ch'an shu* (The date of the second event referred to in this passage was 113 B.C.):

"At this juncture the Prince of Chi-pei, believing that the Emperor was about to embark on the *feng-ch'an* sacrifices, sent him a letter offering him T'ai shan and the



practice deflected him, however, from completing what Ch'in Shih-huang had failed to accomplish before he had even achieved as much, and T'ai-shan was the only one of the Five Sacred Mountains which Wu-ti ever favoured with a visit. Nevertheless, the mere fact that powerful rulers like Ch'in Shih-huang and Han Wu-ti were prepared even to contemplate a *feng-ch'ian* progress shows the extent to which the new cosmology had gained ground, and helps to explain the great influence it was to have on literature and art.

We can obtain a very good idea of its literary influence if we compare *Li sao* with the much later *Yüan yu*. *Li sao* depicts, in unmistakable colours, a magic-making progress; but the cosmos in which it takes place is not defined. Even the route is uncertain. We are vaguely given to understand that it is westward, like the journey of the sun – whose progress the poet seems at times to be deliberately imitating – and K'un-lun and points west of it are mentioned; but the itinerary could in no sense be described as a circuit. *Yüan yu* precisely delineates a symmetrical, mandala-like cosmos – the same cosmos which embellishes the backs of contemporary mirrors<sup>36</sup> – and describes a circuit which approaches each of its guardian powers in due order before achieving climax in the center, which is the hub of power.

The mandala-like cosmos had its origin, needless to say, in psychical rather than in physical facts.<sup>37</sup> It could be said to have a physical basis in the sense that our equilibrium, which profoundly affects our psychosomatic well-being, can be effectively maintained by conscious self-orientation within an imaginary frame; and the mandala-cosmos is an archetype of all such frames. But it is without physical basis in the sense that it does not conform to discernible geographical or astronomical facts.

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adjacent towns. The Emperor thanked him, and bestowed some other towns on him in their stead. Also the Prince of Ch'ang-shan (i.e. Heng-shan, the northernmost of the Five Peaks, which had to change its name because of the taboo on Emperor Wen's name) was removed from his fief at about this time because of some offence, and the Emperor transferred the Prince's younger brother to maintain his family's sacrifices in Chen-ting, annexing the fief of Ch'ang-shan to the crown. By this last act all five of the Sacred Mountains now came within the imperial jurisdiction."

<sup>36</sup> The earliest 四神 mirrors are supposed to date from the latter half of the Western Han period. The expressions 左龍右虎, 青龍在左白虎居右 found in mirror inscriptions and referring to the Green Dragon and White Tiger of the decoration, are frequently echoed in the *itineraria* (e.g. *Hsi shih* 6: 蒼龍蚺於左驂兮, 白虎駟而為右騂。Some of these inscriptions explicitly refer to cosmic travel: 上太山見神人食玉英飲灑泉駕交龍乘浮雲白虎引之直上天 (see Karlgren, *Early Chinese Mirror Inscriptions*, BMFEA 6, No. 94); or the following: [鏡]上有仙人不知老渴飲玉漿飢食粟浮游天下敖四海 (No. 215). Komai Kazuchika has a section in his book about mirrors on the connection between mirror inscriptions and the *Ch'u-tz'u* literature. (駒井和愛, *中國古鏡の研究* Iwanami, 1953, 17-27).

<sup>37</sup> Tucci (*The Theory and Practice of Mandala*, Rider and Co., 1961) calls the mandalas "psycho-cosmogrammata".

Yet the nature of the ancient system of thought of which this concept formed a part was such that transference from one plane to another was easy. What applied to the microcosm would apply also to the macrocosm, and *vice versa*.<sup>38</sup> The power-formulae employed by the mystic in his transcendental flights could equally well be employed by the ruler in his physical domain.

This ease of transference enabled the highly personal and seemingly unsuitable themes of the Ch'u poet to be adapted without difficulty to the taste of an imperial court. The *itineraria*, originally based on the magic-making flight of the shaman and used by secular poets as part of an allegorical representation of their flight from a corrupt society and a foolish and faithless prince, could be made to appeal to a ruler who was accustomed to associate travel with the performance of magic-making rituals, and who aspired, as master of all men and therefore entitled to the highest benefits attainable by man, to procure for himself the powers and pleasures which normally could be acquired only by the labours of the magician or the meditations of the mystic. This is precisely what Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju, China's first and greatest court poet, in fact did.

Hsiang-ju, observing that the emperor had a liking for magic and mysticism, said, "What I wrote about the Shang-lin Park is not really so very wonderful. I can do much better than that. I once wrote a 'Fu on the Great Man' which I did not, however, finish. I should like to get it into shape and present it to Your Majesty." Hsiang-ju felt that the traditional picture of the Immortal living in the mountains or the marshes, his body emaciated with fasting, was not at all a suitable model for mystically-inclined royalty, and his "Fu of the Great Man" was written to suit the requirements of the latter.<sup>39</sup>

In *Ta jen fu* the Great Man of the title, with whom the emperor is invited to identify himself, seems to have as his only motive for travel the fact that the sublunary world is too small for him.<sup>40</sup> The journey on which Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju conducts him and his glittering cortège is a sort of Cook's tour of the cosmos in which every god and godlet of the Chinese pantheon is

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Tucci, *op. cit.*, 23: "A mandala is . . . above all a map of the cosmos (*Ital.*: un *cosmogramma*) . . . the universe not only in its inert spatial expanse, but as a temporal revolution and . . . a vital process which decays from an essential principle and rotates round a central axis, Mount Sumeru, the axis of the world on which the sky rests and which sinks its roots in the mysterious substratum . . . (It is) reflected in the plan of the Iranian rulers' imperial city, and . . . in the ideal image of the palace of the *cakravartin*."

See also Mircea Eliade, *Yoga and Freedom*, New York, 1958, p.221: "In India as elsewhere, sovereignty is related to the sacred . . . The disciple is assimilated to the sovereign because he rises above the play of cosmic forces; he is autonomous, wholly free. Spiritual freedom – and this is true not only of India – has always been expressed by sovereignty."

<sup>39</sup> *Shih chi* 107 (p.3056 in the 1959 *Chung-hua shu-chü* edition).

<sup>40</sup> 宅瀾萬里兮曾不足以少留

included. The guardians Hsüan-wu and the Scarlet Bird, the Great Unity (a favourite deity of the emperor Wu), The Five *Ti*, Hsi-wang-mu – all are there. The *tristia* element which nearly always accompanies the *itineraria* in the more private and personal expression of preceding poets is, for obvious reasons, entirely excluded.

It is instructive to compare *Ta jen fu* with *Hsi shih*,<sup>41</sup> written by an anonymous poet who may have been a somewhat older contemporary of Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju. Lines 2–16 of *Hsi shih* describe a celestial journey in which, as in *Ta jen fu*, the Great Unity and the guardians of the quarters (Scarlet Bird, Green Dragon, and so forth) are mentioned. What follows, from l.17 to the end of the poem, is *tristia*. The motive for the magic flight, given in the opening couplet, was the poet's distress at the advance of age. The object of his flight is the prolongation of life and the perpetuation of youth. The hinge which joins the two very dissimilar halves of the poem is the sudden access of nostalgia perfunctorily mentioned in l.17 and obviously an imitation of *Li sao*, 184–5.<sup>42</sup> This wave of regret for what he has left behind causes the poet to break off in the middle of his hitherto successful life-prolonging experiment. *Ai shih ming*, another of the later *Ch'u tz'u* poems written by the generation of poets who were still alive in Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju's youth, consists almost entirely of *tristia*, but contains one brief passage (ll.21–23)<sup>43</sup> in which the poet describes himself as a Great Man, who, like the Great Man of *Ta jen fu*, finds the confines of the sublunary world too narrow to contain him.

As a study in thematic evolution the development from *Li sao* to *Ta jen fu* is clearly unconvincing. The celestial journey of the Great Man with which Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju entertained his imperial patron, is more like a regression to the ancient theme of the shaman's flight – a theme which formed only one of several ingredients in the complicated allegories of secularizing Ch'u poets more than a century earlier. Thematically *Li sao* is a far more complex and sophisticated poem than *Ta jen fu*. Indeed, the highest and most elaborate development of the flight theme, Chang Heng's

<sup>41</sup> *Ch'u-tz'u* 11 (惜誓).

<sup>42</sup> *Hsi shih* 17 念我長生而久僂兮  
不如反余之故鄉

*Li sao* 184 陟陞皇之赫戲兮  
忽臨睨夫舊鄉

185 僕夫悲余馬懷兮  
馳局顧而不行

<sup>43</sup> *Ch'u-tz'u* 14 (哀時命).

21 冠崔嵬而切雲兮劍淋離而從衡

22 衣攝葉以儲與兮左祛挂於搏桑

23 右衽拂於不周兮六合不足以肆行

*Ssu hsüan fu*, written in the second century A.D., is thematically a mirror image of *Li sao*<sup>44</sup> and stands in no sort of relationship to *Ta jen fu*. In dwelling on the exploitation of the flight theme for the purposes of court poetry, it was not my intention to suggest that the main development of *fu* lay in that direction, but merely to draw attention to the seeming paradox that a kind of poetry which evolved as a medium for the allegorical expression of seditious thoughts could, with very little modification, be adapted for the flattery and delectation of princes.

The development of *fu* is an extremely complicated phenomenon which cannot be conveniently disposed of in a single formula. Indeed, in literary theory simplifications have a way of increasing the confusions and complexities which they set out to resolve. For example, it would be necessary, in accounting for the various elements which entered into the evolution of this genre, to mention the rhetorical exercises of the sophists, whose debates and set-pieces are clearly mirrored in the dialogue structure of so many *fu* of the Han period.<sup>45</sup> We find it, for example, in several of the *fu* by the pseudo-Sung Yü, in the greatest of Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju's *fu*, and in the masterpieces of Pan Ku and Chang Heng. Yet this undeniably important element is totally unconnected with those shamanistic elements which equally clearly played an important part in the development of the medium, and could not be accounted for in a monolithic theory which sought to trace the unmixed descent of *fu* from the chants of the medicine-men.

However, there is one important respect in which I think the influence of the Ch'u *itineraria*, which were of shamanistic origin, was crucial in the *fu*'s development. If we apply the word "narrative" to the *itineraria*, its absurd inappropriateness is at once apparent. Yet *Li sao*, *Yüan yu*, *Ssu hsüan fu* do in fact record movement, and events taking place in some sort of time. The reason why the term "narrative" is so immediately unacceptable is that the development in these poems is conceived of as a spatial sequence. In the ritual circuit whose object is the accumulation of magic power, the

<sup>44</sup> For example, where Ch'ü Yüan goes to Ts'ang-wu to tell his griefs to the spirit of Shun, Chang Heng goes to Ch'i-shan and consults Wen Wang. Where Ch'ü Yüan has unsatisfactory experiences with various goddesses, Chang Heng is graciously entertained by Hsi-wang-mu and a lady called the Jade Maid of T'ai-hua mountain, but considers their characters unstable. Like Ch'ü Yüan, Chang Heng consults Wu Hsien. Like Ch'ü Yüan, he encounters the Heavenly Porter who, however, treats him with more respect, admitting him to the Heavenly City, where he listens to a celestial orchestra playing edifying music. Finally the *fu* ends, like *Li sao*, with an envoi. Chang Heng calls his a 系

<sup>45</sup> See J. I. Crump, *Intrigues, Studies of the Chan-kuo Ts'e*, Ann Arbor, 1964, p.76: "It is certainly not by chance that the *fu* of late Warring States and early Han times have for their particular province much the same territory encompassed by the term rhetoric. Arthur Waley sees a close similarity between the word-magic of early *fu* and the prose of the *Intrigues*. Hellmut Wilhelm sees a connection between 'persuasion by indirection' and the 'School of Politics', and concludes that the Han era *fu* 'matured (persuasion) from a technique into an art,' etc.

actual passage between one power-nucleus and the next, though indispensable, is not of intrinsic interest.

In the morning I started my journey from Ts'ang-wu;  
In the evening I arrived at the Garden of Paradise.

- this is not the narrative of a journey. The journey might have been a long and interesting one; but the poet's business is with the enumeration of significant places, not with the experience of reaching them. This becomes more evident as the poet's cosmology becomes more defined. The perfunctory verbal expressions denoting transit between one point and another in the celestial circuit become mere connectives linking one passage and another. The all-important structural element is not temporal sequence but spatial order: the enumeration in correct order of fixed points in the cosmos. The movement could just as well be that of a pointing finger as of a dragon-powered chariot.<sup>46</sup>

This orderly enumeration of the parts of a cosmos is already found in early examples of shamanistic literature. The Summons poems contain examples of it when they list the dangers lurking in different quarters of the universe which threaten the wandering soul. The book *Shan hai ching*, which lists the mountains of the earth in due sequence and with ritual-religious intent, consists exclusively of such orderly enumeration. Both *Shan hai ching* and the Summons poems are examples of literature conditioned by magical and ritual patterns of thought. As a literary archetype, if we can call it that, this "orderly enumeration" can appear in many guises. All kinds of litanies and invocations are examples of it, including the invocation, one after another, of the three persons of the Trinity which rounds off the prayers of the Christian church.

The archetype is in origin essentially magical and religious. The nature of its origin, however, by no means precludes its successful employment in secular literature. When we are asked to illustrate the highest achievement of the *fu* writers of the Han period with one or two examples, most of us will unhesitatingly point to Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju's *fu* on the hunting parks and to

<sup>46</sup> Conversely, and for the same evolutionary reason, description of a static scene tends to become dramatized and filled with movement. A *fu* writer does not say, "Across the lake is a little hill, at the top of which is a garden containing a high terrace with a stone staircase leading up to it" but "Rowing over the lake, climbing up a little hill, one passes through a garden. Reeling giddily, one ascends the stone steps of a lofty terrace". This may seem no more than is achieved nowadays by the writers of guide-books, and can indeed be partly accounted for by the exigencies of Chinese idiom. Yet I doubt whether that can account for the inveterate habit of dramatization as observable, for example, in Chang Heng's *Chou-t'ien ta-hsiang fu*, a poem half as long again as *Li sao*, whose topic is a straightforward enumeration of the constellations. A perfectly static description would seem indicated: yet Chang Heng treats his subject in such a way that if all the nouns were blotted out one would gain an impression of violent and continuous motion. Unconsciously the poet envisages himself not as a static observer but as a tourist.

the "Capitals" *fu* of Pan Ku and Chang Heng. The sheer magnitude of conception and design of these majestic panoramas compels us, as it did the great anthologist Hsiao T'ung, to assign them a leading place in any assessment. They stand as symbols of a supremely self-confident age - an age confident that it could explain and control everything: man and nature, heaven and earth, human society and the human heart, the whole cosmos, in fact.

It would be easy to dismiss as fanciful an attempt to link the ordered enumeration, which is found in a most extreme and highly developed form in these panoramic *fu*, with the magician's enumeration of the quarters of his divine cosmos, on the grounds that the nature of the material must itself have imposed on the poet the necessity of creating for it some such structure as we find in these *fu*. In topographical description the use of orientations is, after all, a rather obvious way of classifying and ordering a heterogeneous mass of material. To the north we find so-and-so, to the south such-and-such; in front is this, behind is that; and so on. But I am unconvinced by this common-sense view, for a number of reasons.

In the first place, the *fu* is not truly descriptive any more than it is truly narrative. The genre would never have been exposed to the attacks of moralists<sup>47</sup> if it were merely descriptive. The ancient, no doubt highly dubious derivation of "fu" from a word meaning "spread", "unfold"<sup>48</sup> comes quite close to our "enumerate" and is still serviceable to the extent that it can warn us away from definitions like "narrative" and "descriptive".

In the enumeration of the *fu* there always lurks a residuum of name-magic. It should be observed that Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju, who virtually invented the panoramic *fu*, does not aim to provide us with an accurate impression of any of the palaces, lodges, parks, lakes, etc. which he introduced into his account. His aim is to knock us back reeling and gasping with wonder at their magnitude, majesty and magnificence. There is moreover a constant confusion of scales and levels, of the smaller with the greater cosmos in these poems. At first glance the dimensions of the Shang-lin park appear almost commensurate with China itself. Partly this is occasioned by the historical fact that emperors reproduced on a small scale in their parks and gardens the mountains and lakes of their far-flung empire. (Traces of this tradition survived to our own day. The Summer Palace at Peking has a K'un-ming lake and a Soochow canal.) But this circumstance is deliberately exploited by Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju, and throughout the whole *fu*

<sup>47</sup> The *fu* writers deliberately aimed to "carry you away", and even if they did thereafter attempt some sort of moral edification, you would be too far gone to profit from it. This seems to be the gist of Yang Hsiung's later-life objections to the *fu*. For a discussion of Han critics' attitudes to the *fu* see 郭紹虞, 中國史文學批評, Commercial Press, 1942, 51 seq.

<sup>48</sup> 賦之言鋪，直鋪陳今之政教善惡。This etymology appears in several texts. The earliest appears to be Cheng Hsüan's commentary on *Chou li*, 5 (s.v. 大師).

no opportunity is lost of exalting us above the mundane level of bricks and trees to a higher world of gods and phoenixes. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the section which describes the chase. This is treated in such a way as forcibly to remind us of the god-attended celestial journeys of poet-magicians in the *itineraria*. Consider this:

Next, with aspiring steps, aloft he soars,  
Treads the wind's startling blast,  
Cleaves through the whirlwind's shock,  
Rides in the empty void  
Companion of the gods:  
Tramples the ancient crane,  
Confounds the jungle fowl,  
Spurns peacocks underfoot,  
Affrights the golden pheasant,  
Grasps at the rainbow bird. . . .<sup>49</sup>

As a description of what actually takes place on a grouse moor this is positively misleading. And it is not enough to say that this is hyperbole. It is a special kind of hyperbole deliberately slanted to exalt its subject out of a mundane into a supernatural environment.

Consider the beginning of this section on the royal hunt, where the emperor's train is described:

When the year turns its back on autumn and edges into winter  
The Son of Heaven goes forth to hunt the driven game.

Mounted on ivory drawn by six jade-scaled dragons,  
Fluttering with rainbow flags, with cloud banner outspread. . . .<sup>50</sup>

The chariot and team of the emperor is quite deliberately made to seem like the divine equipage which carries gods and magicians in their flights across the sky.

Nor is Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju, that great master of hyperbole, the only writer to accord the theme this sort of treatment. In Chang Heng's *Fu on the Royal Hunt*, two centuries later, the emperor's cortège is described in the following terms:

<sup>49</sup> 然後揚節而上浮

陵鷲風，歷駭駭，  
乘虛無，與神俱，  
麟玄鶴，亂昆雞，  
遊孔雀，促駿鷄，  
排鷲鳥...

(*Shang-lin fu*)

<sup>50</sup> 於是乎 背秋涉冬，天子被獵  
乘鑾象，六玉糾  
拖婉旌，靡雲旗...

(*Ibid.*)

Then, the phoenix having presented a lucky day,  
The Master of Horse made ready horses and carriage,  
Ch'ih Yu rides at the head of the procession,  
And the Rain God with sprinklings clears the road ahead.  
The mountain spirits form a protective guard;  
The Guardians of the Quarters make up the royal train,  
Hsi-ho holds the reins, and with slow pace drives to westward. . . .<sup>51</sup>

The expression in this last line which I have translated "with slow pace" is the curious one occurring in *Li sao* and *Hsiang chün* which I have discussed earlier in this paper. The Royal Hunt is, of course, a feature not only of those *fu* which the anthologists and encyclopaedists classify as "hunting *fu*" but also of the "capitals *fu*". The passage just quoted is, as a matter of fact, in part borrowed from Pan Ku's account of the imperial procession setting out for the hunt in his *Fu on the Eastern Capital*.

The Royal Hunt is only a comparatively small part of these panoramic *fu*. Even in the *fu* on the Shang-lin park, for example, only a quarter of the poem is devoted to the hunt itself and the entertainment following it. By far the largest section is an account of the park. But I think it is significant that in all of these panoramic poems the progress of the emperor comes as a climax. We are made to feel that the purpose and function of the enormously elaborate account of palaces, gardens, parks, lodges, and so forth is merely to provide a setting in which the Great Man, the emperor, who is the heroic protagonist of this little cosmos, may be revealed in power and splendour. Essentially this kind of *fu* is not the description of a place but the epiphany of a person.

What relevance have these observations to the great majority of *fu* – even, one might add, the great majority of Han *fu* – which are *not* panoramic studies of cities or hunting parks, which do *not* have the emperor as their central figure and his exaltation as their principal aim? The point I have been labouring to make is that the patterns of thought associated with what one might call the cosmological approach to art became so ingrained that they affected all literature, not only those kinds whose themes suggested it. It seems to me, for example, that we find our archetype even in so sophisticated a product as the *Fu on Literature* by Lu Chi, dating from the latter part of the third century A.D.

於是 鳳皇獻歷  
太僕駕具  
蚩尤先驅  
雨師清路  
山靈護陣  
方神躡御  
羲和捧轡  
弭節西征

This is how Lu Chi begins his *fu* after the preliminary lines of introduction:

Taking his position at the hub of things, the writer contemplates the mystery of the universe. . . .<sup>52</sup>

Then, after a few lines on the writer's contemplation of the works of nature and of art, he continues as follows:

His spirit gallops to the eight ends of the universe; his mind wanders along vast distances.

In the end, as his mood dawns clearer and clearer, objects, clean-cut now in outline, shove one another forward,

He sips the essence of letters; he rinses his mouth with the extract of the Six Arts.

Floating on the heavenly lake, he swims along; plunging into the nether spring he immerses himself.

The metaphor which is sustained throughout the whole of the opening passage of which these are the last four lines treats the creative writer as a magician who moves through the universe like the mystics and shamans of old in their celestial journeys.<sup>53</sup> Lu Chi's approach to his subject, literature, is unhesitatingly cosmological. The poet in the cosmos. Out of the systematic exploration of that cosmos power is engendered, in this case the power of literary creation – just as power of a different kind is gained by the magician through his peregrination of the quarters of the sky.

The study of archetypes in literature must to some extent involve the study of other disciplines such as anthropology and psychology, and the student of Chinese literature, exhausted with labouring in his already over-extended domain, may justifiably shrink back from those border-lands in which misleading sprites can all too easily beguile the traveller into swamps of facile generalization and crackpot theory. Nevertheless, formal description can never by itself be enough to satisfy the inquiring mind, and where new theories are lacking, old doctrine will push in. It seems to me important to use what material there is to hand for the elucidation of observable archetypes, and I present these observations on *Ch'u tz'u* and *fu* not with much confidence that they will survive intact when submitted to intensive critical scrutiny, but in the hope that other, more qualified scholars will feel stimulated to pursue the same theme to more permanently satisfying conclusions.

<sup>52</sup> See Achilles Fang, *Rhymeprose on literature: The Wen-fu of Lu Chi* (A.D. 261–303) *HYAS*, 14 (1951), 531–2.

<sup>53</sup> The "spirit man" in *Chuang-tzu* 1 (*Hsiao-yao-yu*) "inhaled the wind and drank the dew and, riding on a chariot of cloud vapour drawn by flying dragons, travelled beyond the confines of the four seas." The last line of the *Wen fu* passage may be compared with Wei Mou's description of Chuang Chou in *Chuang-tzu* 17 (*Ch'iu-shui*): "One moment he will be paddling in the Yellow Springs, the next mounting up into the height of heaven."