
From the book title, one expects great things here. What one gets, as one of the dust jacket reviewers (surely in irony) says, is "vintage Yip." But that is vintage Yip with a postmodern, "PC" twist. Now just like a child with its toy, the book is so misleading that one cannot possibly imagine recommending it to anyone.

The truly major work by Stephen Owen (*Readings in Chinese Literary Thought,* Harvard 1992) appeared too late to be incorporated and addressed. But such omissions as references to serious studies by virtually anyone in the past two decades are simply missing. These would be Yip's assertions that "until quite recently, when a small number of scholars began to produce studies with concern similar to mine, most articles and books on East-West literary relations have focused mainly on surface resemblances between two genetically unrelated works, the so-called parallel studies, without questioning the aesthetic grounding of each work separately, through comparison and contrast, so that the deeper, differing working dynamics of each system can be revealed" (3).

Yip sets up straw men and then heroically knocks them down. After his preliminary remarks on the Chinese language, he states, "Now... we can be more adequately critical of most of the English translations of classical Chinese poetry; as the following examples will illustrate" (38). He then cites five translations of the same poem—the most recent of which dates from 1944—with three from 1920 or earlier. That is centuries (if not light-years) ago in terms of Western sinology; nobody takes these translators seriously today in the terms that Yip does. (And it is ironic that most Chinese brought up in China who ventured into rendering Chinese poetry into English follow precisely the Victorian style and habits of paraphrase, amplification, and over-simplification that Yip here derides.) Yip also criticizes William Warburton, writing in *1788* (cited three times as "Warbuton," on 11 and 210 n. 2, and James I. Ussescw, saying, "These writers do not ask why there are ideograms and what aesthetic horizons, what mechanics have conditioned such structural acts" (10-11). Yet he himself buys into the nonsense that Chinese characters are "ideograms" (only a small percentage are), thereby perpetrating a worse misconception of his own—one central to his argument about the visual dimension of Chinese poems. (See the treatment of Chinese characters as "ideograms" in books on the language by Paul Kratochvil, John DeFrancis, Jerry Norman, and S. Robert Rymer.)

Where one agrees with Yip, there is better treatment of the topic elsewhere, not referred to by him. I agree with him that "the Taoists suggest a decreative-creative dialectic to reposit the presuppositional concrete world..." (6) and that "there is an assumption in the Taoist decorative-creative dialectic that when we achieve our original condition and become one with Tao, everything else will follow its natural course" (77). Much of this is beautifully outlined in Kuang-ming Wu, *Chuang Tzu: World Philosopher at Play* (Crossroad & Scholars of Chinese Culture, 1979).

Yip's discussion of the Chinese influence on the Imagist movement, and uses of Western models in modern Chinese literature, is bettered by Achilles Fang's article, "From Imagism to Whimsicallism in Recent Chinese Poetry: A Search for Poetics that Failed" (in Horst Frinz and G.L. Anderson, eds., *Indiana University Conference on Oriental-Western Literary Relations* [Shapel Hill, 1955], 177-79). Yip speaks of the development of landscape poetry in China. But besides early treatments of the topic on several occasions, there are important articles by Susan Bush ("Tsung Ping's Essay on Painting Landscape and the "Landscape Buddhism" of Mount Lu," in *Bush and Muirhead, *The Arts of the China [Princeton 1983], 132-64) and Ronald Brembaurn ("Buddhist Meditation Teachings and the Birth of "Pure" Landscape Painting in China." *Society of the Study of Chinese Religions Bulletin* [Fall 1981], 42-58) that are in no way drawn upon. None of these is noted by Yip. He keeps reiterating the wheel and not doing it as well as others.

This is somehow more than is true in Yip's argument that many Chinese "poems are, in essence, nonmetaphoric and nonsymbolic, in poems which the vehicle contains the tenor" (18), and the domination and manipulation is out (and in certain key ways so dated), that I cannot possibly imagine recommending it to anyone.

The part of the book I was least uncomfortable with was that dealing with Anglo-American poetry—precisely the area I know least about. Knowing what I do of the rest of the book, it hardly inspires confidence. What I fear is that readers without a background in Chinese books on the Chinese language by Paul Kratochvil, John DeFrancis, Jerry Norman, and S. Robert Rymer.

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