Imagery Focalization and the Profiling of a Poetic World: From Semantic to Metaphorical Coherence and Beyond

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Abstract: The paper begins with a brief overview of sense and sense-making with reference to cohesion, coherence and intertextuality. Based on a word-by-word close analysis, it charts the semantic coherence of a classical Chinese poem, *Ye Yu Ji Bei* by Li Shangyin, followed by a mapping of the text's metaphorical coherence in terms of ontological metaphors. Using the poem as a case example, the paper examines (1) the profiling of a poetic world sustained by both semantic and metaphorical coherence, (2) the interplay between images for the focalization of an image, and (3) the significance of a focal image for the profiling, and by extension the translation, of a poetic text.

Keywords: Coherence, Framing, Imagery focalization, Profiling, Li Shangyin

1. Introduction

In an anecdote of "'One'-Character-Master 一字師" (《詩人玉屑》c. 1244), the master advises a poet to replace 'several boughs' with 'one bough' in his line about early plum blossoms that reads "In front of a snow-buried hamlet, last night several boughs burst into bloom ('前村深雪裡, 昨夜數枝開')", so as to highlight the earliness of its blossom season.[1] The moral of the story for English translators of Chinese poems is that the determination of the number status of a nominal entity can be as much a poetic issue as it is grammatical. In classical Chinese poetry, or even in Chinese discourse in general, the number of a noun can frequently remain "vague", that is, without its singularity or plurality being spelt out grammatically. If any such texts are to be translated into English, it would become a grammatical obligation for the translator to decide, on behalf of the original author so to speak, whether a "countable" nominal entity is to be presented as singular or plural. But in poetry translation as a form of poetry writing, such a grammatical decision can have a significant impact on the poetic effect of the text. That is, a poetic vision projected by the entity as the key image in its singularity can be subtly and profoundly different from a vision characterized by a plurality of like entities. Identifying the key image in a poetic scene and presenting it in its singularity is what we mean by *imagery focalization*. As Bachelard (1964) points out, "With a single poetic detail, the imagination confronts us with a new world. From then on, the detail takes precedence over the panorama, and a simple image, if it is new, will open up an entire world" (p. 134), because such an image, like the seed of the apple, "becomes the real dynamic value" and "the generator of

[1] The story goes like this: Zheng Gu of Yuanzhou was seeing a visiting poet Qi Yi, who showed him a poem about early plum blossoms. The poem contained a couplet "In front of a snow-buried hamlet, last night several boughs burst into bloom". Zheng remarked, "If 'several boughs', it couldn't be early blossom, I would say 'a bough'." Hearing this, Qi fell on his knees in awe. From then on Zheng became known among scholars as the "One"-Character Master. ("鄭谷在袁州，齊已攜詩詣之。有早梅詩云："前村深雪裏，昨夜數枝開。"谷曰："數枝"非早也，未若"一枝"。齊已不覺下拜。自是士林以谷為一字師。"《詩人玉屑》卷之六 陶岳五代補) A plum blossom, incidentally, is a highly symbolic image in Chinese aesthetics and is one of the most favored motifs in Chinese poetry.

vital heart" (p. 151), and "both time and space are under the domination of the image" (p. 208). If to make sense of a poem means to see a new world being opened up by the text, then our question is: In what way can a focalized simple image, such as *a bough* as against *several boughs*, contribute to the sense of a poem?

From a text-linguistic perspective, sense-making at the discourse level is defined as a coherent mental representation of the text sustained by its formal cohesion (*Beaugrande*, 1978, e.g., p. 26; *Beaugrande & Dressler* 1981, e.g., p.103), where sense is specified as "the knowledge that *actually* is conveyed by expressions occurring in a text", while meaning as "the *potential* of a language expression (or other sign) for representing and conveying knowledge" (*Beaugrande & Dressler* 1981, p. 84,). Thus, coherence, as one of the seven elements of textuality (the others being cohesion, informativity, intentionality, acceptability, relevance [or situationality] and intertextuality), is construed "as the outcome of actualizing meanings in order to make 'sense'"; or in other words,

> [a] text "makes sense" because there is a continuity of senses among the knowledge activated by the expressions of the text. […] this continuity of senses [is] the foundation of coherence […]. (*Beaugrande & Dressler*, 1981, pp. 84, 109)

Hence at the discourse level, such a process of knowledge activation is one of making sense of a group of verbal signs that are not to be taken as discrete words.

With this conception of sense and sense-making in mind, we are going to have a close analysis of a poem by Li Shangyin (李商隱 c. 813 – 858) with reference to some of its English translations, to observe the identification of a focal image and to see how a simple image can open up a poetic world through the text's network of coherence.

2. The Poem for Analysis

Chinese script

夜雨寄北
君問歸期未有期，
巴山夜雨漲秋池。
何當共剪西窗燭，
卻話巴山夜雨時。

Pinyin

Ye Yu Ji Bei
Jun wen gui qi wei you qi,
Ba Shan ye yu zhang qiu chi.
He dang gong jian xi chuang zhu,
Que hua Ba Shan ye yu shi.

Gloss *(Yip, 1976, p. 333, slightly revised)*
[night rain send (to the) north]
you ask return date not-yet have date
Ba Shan [Mountain] night rain swell autumn pool
when should together trim west window candle

still talk Ba Shan night rain time

2.1 A Line-by-Line Analysis of the Source Text

The Title: 'night rain send [to the] north'

An alternative title of the poem is *Ye Yu Ji Nei*《夜雨寄內》'night rain send [to the] wife', which identifies specifically who the intended receiver of the poem-message should be. Yet the current, and nowadays more preferred, title serves better to suggest the geographical distance the message had to travel (i.e., from Ba Shan in Sichuan province to the poet's home in the north of Henan province) as well as the environmental circumstances in which it had been composed. Without identifying the receiver, the title seems to promise an extended subject scope beyond marital love to encompass, say, friendship, encouraging more effectively readers' empathy with the poet's solitude. Even the Chinese language owes the poem two imagic phrases *jian zhu xi chuang* 剪燭西窗 'trim candle [wick at] west window' and *xi chuang hua yu* 西窗話雨 '[at] west window talk rain', meaning reunion with friends. In this study, if necessary, the intended addressee of the poem-message will be referred to as "the private reader" as against "the [public] reader".

Line 1: 'you ask return date not-yet have date'

The text proper begins with 'you', referring to the private reader. In a twenty-eight-character poem of a terse *jue ju* 絕句 'cut-short' genre as this one, and indeed in formally highly regulated classical Chinese poetry in general, pronouns are scarcely used, unless to indicate a strong subjective feeling or to mark a special interpersonal relationship crucial to the development of the discourse, as in this case (see also *Zhu*, 1992, pp. 69-70). It is urged by "your" inquiry instead of on "my" own volition that "I" am writing this message, so to speak. Yet "I" can have nothing to assure "you" – 'not-yet have date'. The inquiry seems to have brought the poet to a sudden realization of his powerlessness in foretelling, let alone deciding upon, a date of return.

The word 'date [of return]' activates the knowledge frame of TRAVEL, complementary to the frame of LETTER-SENDING activated by the title. It is worth noting that the repetition of the 'date' at such a short interval serves to mark the TIME concept as a textual "control centre", or a motif, that, according to *Beaugrande and Dressler* (1981, p. 95), guides the reader's expectations and enables coherent text processing. Indeed, as the discourse progresses, the time motif will become increasingly prominent, and will sustain the "continuity of senses among the knowledge activated by the expressions of the text", i.e., the foundation of a coherent text-world (see *Beaugrande & Dressler* 1981, p.84).

Repetition is the most significant textual device throughout the poem to promote the time motif. Stylistically, repetition has made the poem unique among its classical peers. Cognitively, through repetition the text has called into its world again and again the longing for a date of home-returning, a moment in life when everything will be different – a concern that is top on the mental agenda of the poet and his private reader – with an overtone of what a critic has called "nostalgic beauty" (*Sun*, 1997, p. 664).

Line 2: 'Ba Shan night rain swell autumn pool'

Between lines 1 and 2 there is no formal cohesive device. So coherence has to be established through inferencing, that is, readers have to supply from their own knowledge storage some "reasonable concepts and relations" to bridge this discontinuity in order to construct the text-world (see *Beaugrande & Dressler* 1981, p. 101). The concept of Ba Shan [Mountain] to those who are not familiar with China's geography may not suggest much, but the 'mountain' in its own right can still activate a relevant amount of knowledge to maintain the textual coherence. To those familiar with China's landscape, however, the term Ba Shan will not only suggest the space distance in conjunction with the 'north' in the title, but also conjure up a rocky, vision- and access-blocking picture of mountains typical of the south-western part of the land. Intertextually, such a mental picture may remind one of the perilous journey depicted in Li Bai's (*李白*, 701–762) poem *Shu Dao Nan*《蜀道難》 'road to Sichuan is difficult', or perhaps the desolate land of Ba Shan and Chu Shui ("*巴山楚水凄涼地*") in Liu Yuxi's (*劉禹錫*, 772–842) poem *Chou Letian Yangzhou Chu Feng Xi Shang Jian Zeng*《酬樂天揚州初逢席上見贈》'in response to Bai Juyi at the dinner in Yangzhou'.

The text itself does provide a cohesion link, albeit indirectly, by repeating the 'night rain' from the title. It thus helps to confirm the coherence sustained by the letter-sending frame activated by the title. Indeed, this is the only line in the poem that is devoted to the description of a perceived scene, with the following details presented as the most note-worthy:

- [Ba Shan] MOUNTAIN: suggesting the distance and difficulty of a journey back to home;
- NIGHT: the modifier of RAIN, suggesting darkness;
- RAIN: indicating the weather;
- SWELL: reflecting the impact of RAIN, suggesting an inner tension;
- AUTUMN: suggesting the decline of the year and relating POOL to a season of "sadness" (see discussion in 4.2 below);
- POOL: a passive recipient of the impact of RAIN as an outer force, the Patient in the transitivity process of SWELL.

The line signals a process of sense-making as this: details → images → scenes → emotions → understanding and involvement (i.e., self-involvement of the poet, interpersonal involvement between the poet and the reader, and the involvement of the poet with the poem, see *Tannen*, 1989, pp. 135, 139 for a discussion of involvement in communication).

The presence of these details marks the poet's perception of, and involvement in, the immediate physical environment. Following the transitivity registered in the SWELL-process, this perceived world converges on the 'pool', which, in turn, serves as the interface between the poet's and any prospective reader's mental representation of the perceived world as noted in *Lü* (1986, p. 50).

But how has this 'swelling' been perceived by the poet? One annotator thought it was through the visual sense of watching (*Yu*, 1957, p. 318), and this is actualized in a Modern Chinese translation: "一個人在這巴山驛館的樓頭看雨" ('alone on the balcony of the Bashan inn [I] watch the rain', Xu, 1983, p. 332), while another thought it was through listening (Jin, 1980, p. 353). In view of the fact that it was a rainy night with no light mentioned, it would be less possible for the poet to "watch" a pool swelling somewhere outside. So it should be more likely that the "swelling" was perceived through hearing. Unlike watching, hearing under such circumstances carries little, if any, volition.

While the spatial aspect of the perceived world converges on the ‘pool’, its temporal movement is measured in the ‘swelling’ of a ‘pool’. As Arnheim (1971, p. 362) observes in discussing pictorial presentations of movement:

> When you are waiting for something, the slow course of time, the succession of the minutes, is foremost in consciousness. Under such conditions you are comparing two points of time: the present and the goal point of fulfillment. The span between the two points is empty, or filled with something disorganized, uninteresting, painful.

When trapped in the capital then fallen to the advancing rebel armies in the winter of 756, Du Fu (or *Tu Fu*, *杜甫* 712–770) filled his desperate time of waiting with emptiness: “愁坐正書空” (‘sad sit just now write words emptiness’) – *I sit in sorrow just now tracing words in the air* (*Facing the Snow, gloss and translation by Owen*, 1985, p. 35). As for Li on this particular night in the autumn of 848 (or 851), unable to see his “goal point of fulfillment”, the date of returning home, his moment of waiting was filled with the “disorganized, uninteresting, painful” sound of the rain falling on a dark body of water.

In his cognitive study of meaning, J.J. Gibson has postulated in a (1975) article that “Events are Perceivable But Time is Not” (the title), which is discussed in Engberg-Pedersen (1999) – “[…] we can perceive time as little as we can perceive space. What we perceive are events and locomotions occurring in an environment that is rigid and permanent”. And three kinds of events have been identified to be “possible [for perceiving time]: the repositioning of objects, *the reshaping of surfaces*, and the annihilation or creation of surfaces” (p. 144). In the source text-world, ‘swelling’ not only indicates the power relation between the ‘rain’ and the ‘pool’ but also measures the passage of time in spatial terms. And time is painfully measured, with the profundity of loneliness being made articulate without overt explication; for there is no distraction and one cannot but listen to the falling of the rain on a pool long enough to sense the “reshaping” of its surface.

Line 3: ‘when should together trim west window candle’

With time as the “control centre”, the concern with the ‘date’ is echoed at the beginning of this line in the time-related word ‘when’ (see also *Yu* 1957, p. 318), when the text is developing from the world perceived into a world conceived by the poet from his memory and imagination. The attainability of such a world is questioned by the leading word: *he*[*shi*] ‘what[-time]’ – no date has been fixed yet, and *dang* – ‘can’ or ‘should’, whilst it is projected by the following most note-worthy details:

TOGETHERNESS. As noted by Huo (*霍松林* in *Xiao* et al., 1983, p. 1139), the mention of togetherness serves to set off the loneliness in the current perceived world.

TRIMMING [the candle wick]. Instead of many seemingly more significant things people might do when reunited with their partners or friends, the poet has picked up this trivial action from the scene. Emotional abstention of the Chinese may not adequately explain this textual act so long as its poetic significance is concerned. In the light of the thematic control of the time-motif, however, we are able to construe the trimming as another, but quieter and brighter, way of time measuring. That is, the time elapsed is marked by the growing burnt wick as another sign of “surface reshaping”. Yet whether to trim it or not is a volitional decision, an event entirely different from the scene in which one is forced to listen to the noise of the rain falling. The act of candle-trimming thus tells of an intention to continue with what one has been doing. Unlike the imposed perception of the ‘swelling’ of the ‘pool’, the act of

'trimming' is active, intentional, and volitional, which strongly suggests that in this conceived world the poet is in full control of the development of the event and environment.

WEST WINDOW. Our extensive literature research (informed by, e.g., *Wang and Liu*, 1998) has revealed little about the architectural or cultural implications of a 'west' window, except Zhao (1988, p. 48), who remarks that the ancient Chinese tended to have a skylight in the northwest corner of the roof under which the bed would be placed. And Sun (1991, p. 45), apparently drawing on Zhao (above), speculates about the likelihood of the poet sitting on the bed chatting vis-à-vis with a friend. Factual accuracy apart, if 'autumn' modifying the 'pool' cognitively indicates a period in time, 'west' modifying the 'window' serves to assure one's bearings in a space secured by the window-induced knowledge of room and dwelling. Mentioning the window sets the scene indoors, whilst being able to tell one's bearings gives a sense of security, familiarity, and being at home. In this conceived world, the volitional control involved in the 'trimming' and 'speaking/talking' is therefore coupled with the security of the shelter, a contrast to the poet's unsheltered helplessness in the perceived world where neither light nor dwelling has been mentioned.

CANDLE. The mention of a burning candle activates the knowledge of a night scene, a scene overlaid with a color of warmth. If the 'pool' has been the recipient of the impact of the 'rain', then the 'candle' is the recipient of the intentional human action of 'trimming'. Through the process, the scene converges on an entity that issues forth light rather than emits noise. It is in this candle light that the room-space is established in perspective. To trim the candle expresses an intention and effort to prolong the action of 'talking' and to maintain the perspective. As Arnheim (1971, p. 314) observes in the visual arts, "[w]hen the source of light is located inside the picture, the meaning changes. Now the life-giving energy establishes the center and the range of a narrow world." The contrast between the 'pool' and the 'candle' scene is a complete one. It serves to trigger a chiaroscurist mental representation of the text-world as a whole.

Line 4: 'still talk Ba Shan night rain time'

The line begins with a polysemous word *que*, which in Yip (1976, p. 333) has been glossed as a coordinator 'but' in consistence with its modern usage. Yet the contrast suggested by *but* does not lead to a coherent reading of the two events in the poem, for the 'talking' does not contain any unexpected element that is contrastive to the 'trimming' in the previous scene. Even Yip himself has replaced 'but' with *and* in his actual translation: "When can we trim candles together at West Window / And talk of Pa Shan, Pa Shan of night rains" (*Yip* 1976, p. 333).

With the use of "and", the translation seems to present the TRIMMING-event as the "circumstantial background" for the TALKING-event. (See Quirk et al. 1985, pp. 930-932 and 935 respectively for the uses of *and* and *but* in terms of "consequence/result", "condition" and "contrast".) According to *Hanyu Dacidian*《漢語大辭典》(Vol.2, p. 541), however, *que* in this case should be interpreted as an adverb meaning *hai* 還 'still' or *zai* 再 'again' (the couplet is actually cited in the dictionary entry to illustrate the usage). Our revised gloss above should help render the text-world more coherent – to trim the candle is to continue, "still" and "again", the reminiscence.

The repetition of 'Ba Shan night rain' represents an extremely unusual textual phenomenon in traditional Chinese poetry of this "cut-short" genre, by allowing the phrase to take up more than one quarter of the text space. The effect can be viewed as a compositional one as observed by Huo (in *Xiao*

et al. 1983, p. 1140), that is, to capture the "spiralling interplay of time and space" by way of "the spiralling progression in sound and composition" (my translation, "[…]音調與章法的回環往復[…]表現了時間與空間回環往復[的意境之美]"). Yet in terms of transitivity, at its second mention the mountain-night-rain is no longer the agent but (part of) the patient, standing for a keenly felt moment–*shi* 'time' – in the poet's life.

3. Summary: The Profile of the Text-world

3.1 Semantic Coherence

In the word-by-word analysis above, through semantic repetition and contrast, a TIME-motif has been identified as the control centre for text processing or sense-making. The motif commands a network of the text's semantic coherence links that can be charted as in Fig. 1 below:

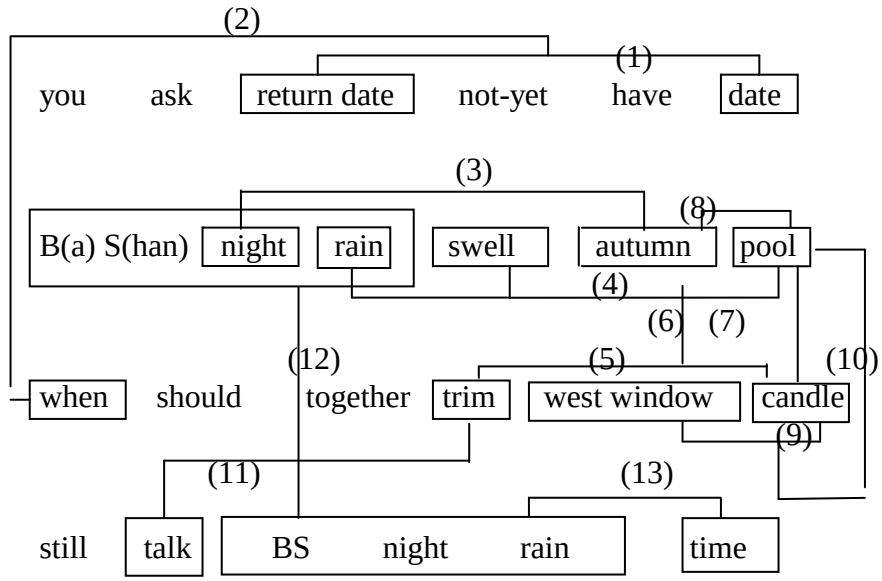

Figure 1. Network of Semantic Coherence Links

The functions of coherence links are summarized as follows:

(1) 'date' – 'date': The repetition sets up the time-motif.
(2) 'date' – 'when': Through the time-motif the link connects the perceived and the conceived worlds.
(3) 'night' – 'autumn': Both suggest a negative perspective on TIME: the darkness of the day and the decline of the year.
(4) 'rain' – 'swell' – 'pool': Apart from marking time, the event process brings the temporal-spatial environment to bear on the patient.
(5) 'trim' – 'candle': Apart from marking time, the action process, with the agent omitted, presents the patient as the focus of attention.
(6) 'swell' – 'trim': The link presents a contrast between the two scenes in terms of volition.

(7) 'pool' – 'candle': The contrast between the two highlights the contrast between the two scenes in the poem.
(8) 'autumn' – 'pool': In this modifier-head construction, the modifying entity relates the head entity to a specific season.
(9) 'west window' – 'candle': In this modifier-head construction, the modifying entity relates the head entity to man's residence, and via the modifier in its own sub-construction of modifier-head, to the bearings of the scene.
(10) 'pool' – 'window/candle': The entities respectively indicate an outdoor and an indoor scene.
(11) 'trim' – 'talk': Both indicate intentional actions on the poet's part.
(12) 'B(a) S(han)/night/rain' – 'BS/night/rain': The reoccurrence connects the conceived scene back to the perceived scene.
(13) 'BS/night/rain' – 'time': The modifier-head construction confirms the time-motif of the poem.

3.2 Metaphorical Coherence

Of the concepts Beaugrande and Dressler (1981, p. 97) incorporate into the concept system established in case grammars in order "to encompass mental operations", namely, APPERCEPTION, COGNITION, EMOTION, VOLITION, COMMUNICATION and POSSESSION, EMOTION is conspicuously absent in the presentation of either scene in Li's poem. The text seems to have adopted an unevaluative and "cognitive-referential" monitoring strategy, instead of an evaluative and "emotive-expressive" managing one (For these two basic cognitive processing strategies, i.e., monitoring and managing, see Beaugrande & Dressler 1981, p. 163; for their relevance to translation studies, see Hatim & Mason, 1997), as if it were reporting the scenes in a manner unmediated by the poet (except the implication of attitude in the modal auxiliary 'should'), that is, without using emotive epithets or original metaphors that tend to carry an attitudinal message. Obviously, there should be something else beneath the emotion-absent surface of the text to explain the fact that for more than one thousand years it has been read as a love poem. As Wu (1972, p. 204) has noted, "No [Chinese] poet has a greater mastery of the mysterious suggestions which lie concealed in words [than Li Shangyin]"; the poet "is so perfectly winterlike, in sentiment as well as in style" (p. 205), and his poetry "is pent up with anguish within, but its external aspects are stunningly beautiful" (p. 168). In other words, the text, even though considered by Owen (1996, p. 515) as a "more conventional" piece among Li's highly suggestive and cryptic poems, "manages" in the guise of "monitoring".

Its textual strategy of managing works more on the intertextual level of metaphorical cognition than on the intratextual level of semantic coherence. The reading of the text as an emotionally charged poem about love and longing is a culturally conditioned cognitive process of sense-making rather than an individual idiosyncratic interpretation. And culture, as ways of conceptualizing the world and experiences, manifests itself in an extensive range of the so-called "ontological metaphors" (*Lakoff and Johnson* 1980, p. 25ff, ch.16).[2] We therefore try to see how, on the level of metaphorical coherence, the

[2] The notion of the ontological metaphor represents a (cognitive) linguistic complement to Bachelard's phenomenology of imagery. Conceptually, both are comparable with Jung's archetype model of the human psyche (Bachelard referred to Jung in, e.g., *Bachelard* 1971, p. 124), because in their respective models, ontological metaphors, images and archetypes are used

monitoring surface of the semantic coherence can be made accountable for the reading of the text as an emotive poem. This notion of metaphorical coherence is informed by Lakoff and Johnson's theory but is different from the latter in that it is viewed from the coherence of the text as a whole rather than taking metaphors as discrete cases. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 25):

> Understanding our experiences in terms of objects and substances allows us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances of a uniform kind. And ontological metaphors are ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances.

Beneath the semantic surface, the following ontological metaphors seem to be at work in Li's poem:

SUFFERING IS DARKNESS. As darkness reduces the reach of the senses of man as a diurnal animal, it renders the environment incomprehensible and frightening. Thus the metaphor is deeply imbedded in human psychology, which explains the symbolic use of light in religion, art and literature (see *Arnheim* 1971, p. 313ff for a discussion of the symbolic meaning of light in the visual arts as an indication).

EMOTION IS THE CYCLE OF SEASONS. Among the four seasons, the Chinese seem particularly susceptible to spring and autumn. If in spring they see the transience of the beauty of life, then in autumn they see more withering and withdrawal than maturity and fruitfulness. "Sad is the heart of autumn" – this seems to be a perpetual message concealed in the ideogram of *chou* 愁 'sadness', which has the radical *qiu* 秋 'autumn' sitting on top of the radical *xin* 心'heart/mind'.

EMOTION IS WATER. Expressions of this metaphor are so abundant in Chinese basic vocabulary and canonic literature that, when combined with EMOTION IS THE CYCLE OF SEASONS, images such as *chun shui* 春水 'spring-time water' and *qiu shui* 秋水 'autumn water' have never occurred in Chinese poetry without an emotional touch. This underlies the significance of the image of the autumn pool in the poem.

HAPPINESS IS LIGHT. This metaphor forms an integral part of the conceptualization of happiness in Chinese culture. In an interplay with SUFFERING IS DARKNESS, it encourages an enriched reading of the candle image, on which the poet's conceived world converges before it is hauled back, as it were, through the 'talking' to the world the poet currently finds *himself* in.

In fact, these ontological metaphors, integral to Chinese culture and poetics, are so fundamental to human conceptualization of the world and experiences at large, that they have not only delineated the mental experience of the poet at that particular moment in life but should also catalyze readers' mental representations through history and across cultures. In other words, it is through the ontological metaphors that the entities in the text become intertextually meaningful images, conveying something beyond subject matter to justify the translation of the text as a poem. And as a poem, it ceases to be an intimate message meaningful only to its private reader; instead, for hundreds of years it has been appreciated, or appropriated if you like, by its public readers as a reminiscence of certain memories in their own lives which they themselves have long forgotten, something they have entrusted to what Benjamin (1973) would call "God's remembrance".

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to chart the terrain of the mental being of humanity, either in terms of cognition, psychic energy, or the unconscious. Jung's conception of the archetypes as "primordial" images is applicable to them all: as "the 'human quality' of the human being", they "are not disseminated only by tradition, language, and migration, but [that] they can re-arise spontaneously, at any time, at any place, and without any outside influence" (*Jung* 1953/2003, pp. 11, 12).

3.3 Profiling the Text-world

Profiling, in essence, is a structural projection of the textual-cognitive basis of a text in mental representations. We have identified within the text-world of the poem two cognitively opposite scenes: one is perceived by the poet through his senses and the other is conceived by him from his memory and imagination. The two scenes are made textually coherent on the level of semantics and poetically coherent on the intertextual level of ontological metaphors. Each scene converges, through a transitivity process, on an image. The profile of the poem's text-world is shown in Fig. 2 below:

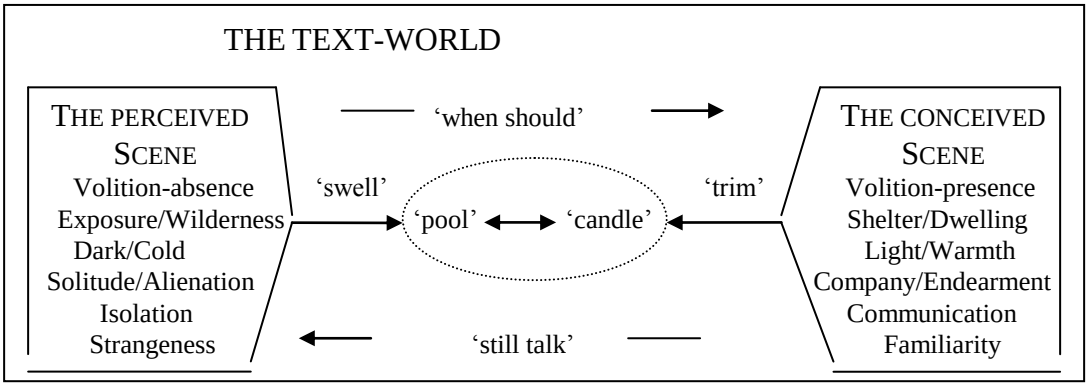

Figure 2. The Text-world.

4. Imagery Focalization: Framing, Concentration, and Translation

4.1 The Effect of "Framing"

For a text to make sense, entities in it have to be in some way interrelated so that they can form a 'sequential-hierarchical network structure' in the mental representation of the text; and in functional grammatical terms, such interrelation is the "connectivity" or "grounding" of individual entities to other entities as nodes in the network (see, for example, *Givón* 1995, sec. 8.2.3). If one agrees that in a poem, such entities are not to be viewed merely as referring to objects in the real world, or as constituents in an information structure, but as images that are rich in suggestion rather than definite in information, then the relation between images cannot be just a matter of grounding but more significantly an interplay of projection. This interplay between images will be described as a mechanism of "framing" in this section.

Fundamentally, framing does two things: on the one hand, it specifies a scene by circumscribing it, and projects the scene thus specified; on the other hand, it grounds the scene in a grander world of intertextuality for its poetic value. In this sense, every poem entails a process of framing when its language circumscribes its text and projects it as a unique world, and at the same time grounds it in a particular culture or tradition, as the frame does to a painting. The "magic" of framing shows forth in Joyce Carol Oates's following observation of what art is:

> Art is not "real" and has no need to be real, artists scorn mundane reality, […]. Let us say that "art" points to a cultural, and not an aesthetic, phenomenon: that a wilted spider put inside a picture frame somehow, magically, becomes a work of "art," but that the same spider, untouched, unnoticed, is still a work of "nature" and will win no prizes. This is a definition of art that greatly angers traditionalists, but it pleases me because it suggests how Gestalt-like and shapeless life really is and how necessary we writers (and scientists, and map-makers, and historians) are to make it sane. (*Oates*, 1970, pp. xiii-xiv)

The picture frame specifies a spider as a unique and coherent image-world in its own right, so it is no longer an ordinary member of its species, it becomes *the* spider "in communication", *the* spider "in expression" (to borrow Benjamin's words in talking about "the language of this lamp" to illustrate the linguistic being of things; according to Benjamin, every "event or thing in either animate or inanimate nature […] in some way partake of language" as such (see *Benjamin*, 1997, pp. 107, 109)). At the same time, through the framing, the spider is lifted out of its milieu in the natural world and grounded in the intertextual world of art. This is precisely what framing primarily does in the making of a poem: projecting and grounding a text-world so that it can communicate what Beaugrande (1978) calls a "non-ordinary perception of real-world experience and the awareness developed by such perception".

Within a poem or a painting, a secondary framing takes place in the form of interplay between images, that is, with some image(s) serving as the "frame" for other image(s). The visual composition of the following photograph by Shaul Schwarz, Getty Images, is an illustration of the interplay between the two door-holes and the human figure:

Framed within the camera-framed scene, the human figure becomes the focus of our attention, not as a figure of an ordinary person who happens to be on the scene gazing away at a wall but as an image bearing a message. The framing provided by the images of the two empty door-holes, while projecting the figure

as the focus, relates it intertextually to the "primordial" image of *home*. And any message it may carry touches on "the 'human quality' of the human being" in Jung's terms (see Note 2 above).[3]

Framing by imagery interplay is ubiquitous in artistic presentation. Lung Yingtai's account of a Shanghai scene in 2003 is a testimony to the effect of framing in the verbal arts:[4]

> But I can never forget that old woman. It was before the district of *Xintiandi* was built, and the whole of Shanghai had been turned into a demolition site. […] On a sea of debris, I saw a solitary doorframe still standing precariously. On the lower edge of the frame sat an old woman dressed in black, her hair tied in a bun at the back of her head. When our bus passed by, I could see clearly that her face was so wrinkled, and so blank. […] The bus sped on. I turned my head back and saw her still holding on to the doorframe on a pile of debris. Her figure receded into the distance and soon disappeared from view. But on the ruins the frame stood like a tilting question mark, an unsettling question mark. (My translation)

Our reference to cases above in which actual "frames" occur (viz. a picture frame, door-holes or a door frame) should not be construed as an implication that only actual frames can do the framing. They are just meant to illustrate, in a graphic way, that cognitive framing through imagery interplay works in the same way as perceptional framing: that is, when an individual image is framed by other images, it tends to become a focus in the scene. Looking back on Li Shangyin's poem in this light, we can see that within its text-world the 'pool' is framed first of all by its modifier 'autumn', and then, along the transitivity process, by the agent 'rain', which itself is framed by its modifiers 'mountain' and 'night'. That is to say, in the poem all these images are brought to bear on the image 'pool', projecting it as a focus, and at the same time grounding it, via the ontological metaphors, in an intertextual world for its poetic significance. The image 'candle' is likewise projected by the 'west window' and by the action process of 'trim' to be a focus. And the projection grounds it in an intertextual world beyond the utilitarian significance of its material being.

By projecting and grounding, framing restricts a space as it determines the perspective from which the space is to be viewed as a scene, and from which an image can be seen as focalized. The effect of framing is an effect of concentration. And as Bachelard (1964, p. 229) points out, "Often it is from the very fact of concentration in the most restricted intimate space that the dialectics of inside and outside draws its strength". In other words, concentration enables poetic values to be channeled, via the intertextual

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[3] This is the 4th picture, "Shirat Hayam – May 1", in the photographer's prize-winning picture story series, which has won the 1st place in the 63rd Pictures of the Year International (2006), Magazine News Picture Story, Editorial. The on-line caption of the picture reads: "An Israeli settler looks at a[n] abandoned house which is waiting to be renovated for Jewish family on May 1, 2005 in Shirat Hayam, Gaza Strip. Israel plans to withdraw all soldiers and the 8,000 Jewish settlers living in the Gaza Strip by August 2005, accompanied by the dismantling of four isolated settlements in the northern West Bank." The picture has actually been enclosed in a report on the award in *Mingpao*《明報》(2006, 03, 15, A27) to represent the series. http://gettyawards.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=awards&year=2006&award=52&n=4&work=469; accessed on 3 June 2007.

[4] The Chinese source text: "可是我一直無法忘記那個老婦人。那時'新天地'還沒出現, 只是整個上海變成了一個拆除大工地。[……] 在一片望不見盡頭的瓦礫堆中, 我看見一扇門框還危險地站著, 門框下坐著一個黑衫黑褲梳著髮髻的老婦人。車子經過她時, 我可以清楚地看見她臉上又密又深的皺紋, 一臉的茫然。[……] 車子疾駛, 我回頭看, 瓦礫堆上守著門框的老婦人愈退愈小, 很快就不見了, 可是那張廢墟上的門, 像一個歪歪斜斜的問號, 令人不安。" (Lung, Yingtai 龍應台, <誰的城市誰的家 – 我的市民主義>,《明報》(*Mingpao*), 2003, 05, 11, D10).

network sustained by ontological metaphors or archetypes, into an image as the focus of the scene. The values it has gathered are to be disseminated, or released, in a much richer way, when it is read as an image, not as an informative entity with a real-world referent. In this way, a simple, focalized image can "open up an entire world" as Bachelard puts it (1964, p. 229).

4.2 In the Frame: 'One' or 'Many'?

It is interesting to note that in Li's poem, 'pool' and 'candle' have been framed without their numbers specified. To represent the two images in English translation, as a grammatical obligation imposed by the target language, translators have to decide which noun form to use for their expression: singular or plural. So translators are forced to determine, on the poet's behalf, the number status of the two noun phrases. And the implications of the decision are not just grammatical.

Different translators, either translating into or out of their native language, have used either singular or plural form for the two entities. Some examples are as follows (emphases added):

> How the rain filled **the pools** on that night when we met! / Ah, when shall we ever snuff **candles** again (Herbert A. Giles tr., in Lü ed., 1980, p. 209)
> I dream of your mountains and autumn **pools** brimming all night / With the rain. / Oh, when shall we be trimming **wicks** again, together in your / Western window? (Witter *Bynner tr., in Lü ed.*, 1980, p. 209)
> In the Pa Hills the evening rain swells **the** autumn **pools**. / When shall we sit down again together to snuff **the candles** in / The western window (*Jenyns* tr., in *Jenyns* tr. 1944, p. 84)
> Night rain is flooding **the** Autumn **pools**. / […] / When we shall snuff **the candle** / Together by the western window (*Teresa Li* tr., in *Zhang* 1957, p. 242)
> The night rains on Mount Pa swell **the** autumn **pool**. / When shall we, side by side, trim **a candle** at the West window (*Graham* tr., in *Graham* tr. 1965, p. 159)
> Pa Shan's night rain swell [sic.] autumn **pools**. / When can we trim **candles** together at West Window (*Yip* tr., in *Yip* 1976, p. 333)
> And autumn **pools** are brimmed from the lea. / […] / Clipping **the candle wick** in some night (*Sun* tr., in *Sun* 1997, p. 443)
> **The pools** in western hills with autumn rain o'verflow. / When by our window can we trim **the wicks** again (*X.Y.Z.* tr., in *Xu* et al., 1988, p. 344)
> in Ba's hills the rain by night / spills over autumn **ponds**. / When will we trim **the candle's wick** / together beside west window (*Owen* 1996, p. 515)

Lack of consistency among the above translations can also be found in an individual translator's rendering. For instance, Jenyns, who has chosen the plural form for the 'pool' and 'candle', produced in the same collection a translation of Chen Zi'ang's (or Ch'ên Tzu-ang 陳子昂, 661–702) 《登幽州臺歌》*Song on Climbing You Chou Tower*, where the singular form *a tear* is used for the Chinese *ti* 涕 'tear(s)': "[... /] 念天地之悠悠, 獨愴然而涕下" – "[… /] Reflecting on the immemorial and unending heaven and earth, / Alone with my grief I drop **a tear**" (*Jenyns* 1944, p. 27, emphases added). The focalization of the image has dramatically enhanced the effect of concentration in the translation: as if the whole poetic world, which covers heaven and earth, history and future, had been distilled into a single tear.

Indeed, concentration induced by this image is so powerful that it has found a contemporary repeat in *A Single Tear*, or 一滴淚 (lit. 'one tear drop') in Chinese, the title of the autobiography by Wu Ningkun 巫寧坤, a Chinese scholar and translator. The book is an account of his family's traumatic life in China since the 1950s.[5]

Using the plural form is grammatically correct, and maybe indicates a state of affairs closer to the real-world fact. Cognitively speaking, however, plurality has the effect of "downgrading referential intent", since plurals do not serve to specify a particular entity (see Givón 1993: sec.5.2.7). As such, the presentation of an image in the plural form may work against the effect of framing and counter the drive of concentration, at the risk of downgrading a focalized image to a plurality of *objects*. The effect would be like seeing numerous doorframes tilting on the debris in Shanghai, or several figures lingering in the doorway of the abandoned house in Shaul Schwarz's picture – Without further framing, such scenes are just too true to life to inspire concentrated contemplation in a poetic sense.[5]

5. Concluding Remarks

Our analysis of Li Shangyin's poem has demonstrated that the profile of a poetic text can be stratified on two levels of coherence network: one is semantic coherence and the other is metaphorical coherence. The two levels are interconnected via certain focal images. In the text-world of a poem, imagery focalization is achieved through framing, a term we have adopted to encompass textual projection and intertextual grounding. Framing restricts a space and enables concentration. Therefore, in translating a Chinese poem, the determination of the number status of the images is a poetic issue as well as a grammatical obligation. Together with degrees of definiteness indicated by the accompanying articles (*a*, *the*, and zero), the number status of noun entities fine-tunes the intensity of concentration. An image presented in singularity will facilitate framing and enhance concentration, while in plurality, it may jeopardize the desired effect of concentration. As a result, we propose to incorporate the identification and presentation of a focal image as a reference point for decision making in poetry translation, if a translation is more interested in re-profiling the poetic world of the source text than merely transferring its subject matter with factual accuracy. As our ancient anecdote has it, seeing a poetic world opened up by a simple, focalized image of a plum-bough, a poet had fallen on his knees – "不覺下拜" – in awe.

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[5] Wu, Ningkun. *A Single Tear: A family's persecution, love, and endurance in Communist China*. In collaboration with Li Yikai. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, c. 1993. Chinese translation《一滴淚》. Taipei: 远景, 2002. It is worth noting that a similar mode of concentration continues in the title of his daughter's autobiography, where a singularized image is used to sum up her ill-fated childhood in China: *Feather in the Storm*, or in Chinese《暴風雨中一羽毛》(lit. 'in storm one feather'), with an apparent allusion to her Chinese name 一毛'one feather'. (Wu, Emily Yimao 巫一毛.《暴風雨中一羽毛: 動亂中失去的童年》or, *Feather in the storm*. Hong Kong: Mingpao, 2007.)

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