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LEXICAL COHESION IN EXPOSITORY WRITING:
WILL A STUDY OF THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN AN ENGLISH AND
CHINESE PARAGRAPH BE HELPFUL TO ESL STUDENTS?

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Monica Fan Fan Chiu

June 1993

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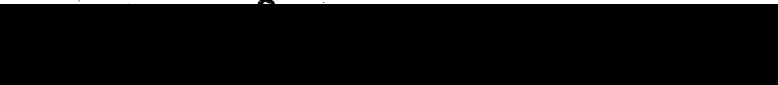
Approved by:



June 9, 1993

Kevin Burne, Chair, Department June 1993

Date



Susan Herring



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ABSTRACT

Chinese ESL students, influenced by traditional conventions of the Eight-Legged Essay when they write English expository prose, are confronted with the problem of appearing incoherent in their writing.

This paper examines the different features in writing patterns in terms of Chinese and English cultural conventions. In order to improve their writing, Chinese ESL students are urged to study one of the Chinese literary Classics, Liu Hsieh's The Literary Mind and the Carving of the Dragons, which has many similarities to English exposition.

Two linguistic approaches are applied to interpret how writing patterns and cultural conventions interact: Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan's theory of lexical cohesion, and Francis Christensen's levels of abstraction. Both are used to clarify the requirements of English exposition.

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally perceived that many Chinese ESL (English as a second language) students have difficulties with English expository writing. Having a good command of writing when they are in their own country, they are expected to perform successfully when they enter post-secondary institutions in the United States. However, when they are provided opportunities to write, they find themselves unable to write well. Anxiety ridden, these students often ask the same question: Why can I write well in my country, but I can't write well here? Faced with extensive writing assignments and seeking excellence, they are eager to find the answer to the question.

This paper is aimed at answering that question. Its purpose is to examine the differences in writing patterns in terms of cultural conventions and to suggest a solution for this problem in teaching Chinese ESL students.

In order to provide a workable approach to solve the problem, my first step is to determine the nature of the cultural differences, that is, to find out how the difference is influenced by culture in a given text. This step has special significance to my writing experience. In Taiwan, before I came to the United States and entered the graduate program, I was not aware of the

need to understand differences in writing patterns. By Taiwan's criteria I was both comfortable with and proficient in the task of writing. As a high school student, I had been chosen as a school representative to participate in a writing competition held by the municipal government, and I was awarded the second prize in the entire city. Writing at that time was indeed a pleasure to me, and I had strong confidence in it.

After enrolling in a writing program in the United States, however, I started to experience many writing problems. Unaware of the cultural differences in writing requirements, when I was asked to perform some academic writing tasks, I transferred all the rhetorical characteristics that I had been taught in my student days to the writing tasks here. The comments from the professors were different from what I had known before; this confused me. I found that the good points that elicited praise in China turned out to be shortcomings in the United States. It was then that I became aware of different cultural expectations. I felt a need to discover and interpret how cultural conventions and writing interact in order to improve my writing in the United States. After reading an essay by Bernard A. Mohan and Winnie Au Yeung Lo, "Academic Writing and Chinese Students: Transfer and Developmental Factors" (1985), I discovered that they were aware of my dilemma. They reported that the problem, among

many others, lies in the structure of Chinese ESL students' writing, which does not conform to American writing conventions. This structure is influenced, according to Kaplan (1972), by the Eight-Legged Essay that was used for civil service examinations in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) right before the formation of a democratic nation in this era. Chinese students at the present time are still taught to read and appreciate the Eight-Legged Essay as part of the study of Chinese literature. Although it has undergone many changes in both content and form, it has endured throughout the years as a primary source for writing instruction. I learned it during special training in my high school days. However, using the Eight-Legged Essay structure, Chinese ESL students can not express themselves well in the eyes of American readers. Worst of all, their writing is regarded as incoherent.

On the other hand, Mohan and Lo hypothesize that Chinese Classical texts--literary works of ancient periods--posses the characteristics of a structure which parallels English academic writing. Understanding that it was impossible for me to eliminate all the cultural traits that I have long been familiar with and to change immediately to American structure, I began analyzing Liu Hsieh's The Literary Mind and the Carving of the Dragons. Although this book has many other Chinese cultural characteristics, it indeed has a structure that is closely compatible with

that of English expository writing. This near merger of characteristics makes it an ideal transfer vehicle between Chinese and English expository writing. After refreshing the knowledge that I gained from this book, I became a more effective expository writer in English. I attributed my writing improvement to Liu Hsieh's clear-cut sense of writing structure, and would like to suggest Liu Hsieh's work as a writing model for Chinese ESL students. If they follow this writing format, their writing will conform more closely to that taught in the United States.

In this paper, I will attempt to support this contention by examining some student responses to writing assignments in institutions of higher education in the United States. I will use my own writing too, since it reflects the same features and can be examined as representative writing. I will address the rhetorical characteristics under Chinese culture in a specific essay classified as the Eight-Legged Essay and see how these specific features function in different academic disciplines. I will also attempt to demonstrate why Liu Hsieh's writing is the best choice of structural transfer for Chinese ESL students' expository writing adaptation in the United States.

I will give an objective analysis through the examination of lexical cohesion, "the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary" (274), an approach

offered by two linguists, Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan. Their approach to the analysis of a text relates how a writer's selection of his lexical resources may influence a reader's response and determine whether or not a text is coherent. Analyzing Liu Hsieh's writing through the function of lexical cohesion, I will demonstrate the rhetorical expertise in his writing, which fulfills the theoretically coherent principles recommended by English linguists and rhetoricians. This will meet the American reader's expectation and aptly manifest a successfully communicative effect in the writing.

Finally, I will use Francis Christensen's "levels of abstraction" to supplement the analysis. I hope to make American academic readers aware that the diverse writing structure displayed in Chinese ESL students' writing is culturally motivated, and hope that teachers who are aware of the real problem can provide appropriate pedagogical strategies to facilitate their students' mastery of writing English expository prose. In addition, by introducing Liu Hsieh's rich resources and writing skills, I hope to show that both Chinese and American students can be empowered to be more effective writers.

CHAPTER I

THE INFLUENCE OF THE EIGHT-LEGGED ESSAY

According to Kaplan (1966,1972), Chinese ESL students have great difficulty with coherence and organization when producing English expository writing. Many people believe that each culture has a paragraph order unique unto itself, a consideration, in the case of Chinese ESL students, that contributes to their problem when writing in a second language. Kaplan (1966) writes that "English speakers . . . favor linearity in their written discourse . . . and Oriental speakers, indirection" (p.254). An English reader, unaware of the conflicting cultural influences in analyzing the English expository writing of a Chinese ESL student, would identify the primary problem to be a lack of coherence, defined by Kaplan (1966), as ". . .the quality attributed to the presentation of material in a sequence which is intelligible to its reader" (p.5).

Bernard A. Mohan and Winnie Au Yeung Lo (1985) point out that Kaplan's assertion is based upon his reading of four compositions written by Chinese students, which "closely resemble the form and the style of the Eight-Legged Essay" (p.518). In this chapter, we will determine the nature of the difference between the English linear structure and the Chinese indirect structure by examining a specific expository example of the Eight-Legged Essay.

A. Form

The Eight Legged Essay is a part of Chinese literary heritage. It has served as the official essay form for the civil service examination in China for five centuries. Kaplan (1972) gave this specific form the following very brief introduction:

The prescription is a rather complex one. The topic for the essay was taken from the works of Confucius--the applicant had to write, among other things, three essays on the Four Books, and four essays on the Five Classics. The length of the assignment was specified; while there was some variation, most commonly, the length was prescribed at between 350 to 700 words. Certain specific stylistic features, like elaborate parallelism and "harmonious contrast" were required. The essay also had to consist of carefully specified parts, or "legs," which gave rise to the official name of the form, the Eight-Legged Essay". The specific steps, or legs, were:

chu t 'i The Topic

1. p'o t'i "The breaking open"
2. cheng t'i "Accepting the title"
3. ch'i Chiang "Embarking"
[introductory discourse]
4. zu sou "Introductory Corollary"
5. ch'i ku "First Middle Leg"
6. chung ku "Second Middle Leg"
7. hou ku "First Final Leg"
8. shu ku "Tying the Knot" (pp48-49)

Every leg (paragraph) carries its own textual requirement according to the above synopsis: po t'i, the first leg, requires the writer to pinpoint the meaning of the topic succinctly in two sentences; the second leg requires the writer to explain further in three or four sentences the meaning previously mentioned. Because "the paragraphs were conceived in pairs as complementing and completing each other" (p.53), the opening paragraph, "The breaking open," defines the topic; the second paragraph, "Accepting the title," is required to carry on the task of the preceding one, to explain briefly the position taken by the writer," (53) and to accept the topic. It is worth stressing here that the word "accept" indicated in the label does not correspond to an obvious, straightforward meaning found in an English dictionary; rather, it may be better interpreted as "to link what precedes with what follows" (p.407), a definition found in the Chinese

dictionary that refers more accurately to the characteristics of the properties in the Eight-Legged Essay. The third leg "ch'i Chiang and the fourth "zu sou" are the beginning of the exposition. They are used to elaborate what has gone before and to demonstrate "the scholarship of the writer" (53). From "zu sou" to "hou ku" (from the fourth paragraph to the seventh paragraph) is "truly the center" of exposition. A succession of these four legs requires the writers not only to explicate the essence of the essay but to manifest their rhetorical skills. A series of parallel devices are stressed: each leg should consist of two sub-legs which are arranged in order in a couplet of contrast or in a couplet of agreement. Based on the "complementing and completing" principle, these four legs are developed by revealing in each paragraph related clarifying support elements that lead, progressively, to a conclusion, i.e., the succeeding leg is the extension to its preceding one. That is to say, the fifth leg supplements the fourth leg, the sixth interprets more fully the fifth, the seventh leg "further elaborates the concept expounded in the sixth, while the final leg is an exclamatory grand conclusion" (p.53).

Kaplan indicates that because the Qing Dynasty is connected to modern times, this form has undergone some liberalization both in content and rhetorical device, but its influence seems to continue in most Chinese expository

writing. It can be regarded as typical Chinese expository writing, and is still used to qualify applicants for civil service posts. As indicated by Professor E. A. Kracke, the applicant should "know the principles of government and human conduct; his training should fit him to deal with widely diverse duties and situations; he should be mentally acute and flexible. Classical studies served these ends by showing the foundations of morals and exemplifying historically their bearing on political problems" (p.326). In a word, the writing of the Eight-Legged Essay is "exposition."

"Praise of the Humble House," by Liu Yu Hsi, is an excellent example of the Eight-Legged Essay. To decide what points are assigned in an individual paragraph, I have divided it into eight units, each referring to the aforementioned introduction. The units are numbered with Arabic numerals that are not shown in the original; neither an indentation nor a clear punctuation system is displayed. The system of punctuation in the essay is different from that of English. It is punctuated by only two marks as reflective in each couplet: the comma is used as a mark of separation within the sentence in a couplet; the period is used to mark the end of the sentence.

The Topic

Praise of the Humble House--by Liu Yu Hsi

translated by Monica Chiu

quoted from Gu Wen Guan Tze

1. po t'i "The breaking open" - two sentences to pinpoint the meaning of the topic:

The mountain should not necessarily be high, it is the fairy who is dwelling there who makes it famous.

2. cheng t'i "Accepting the title" - four sentences to accept the topic:

The river should not necessarily be deep, it is the dragon who lives there that makes it sacred. This is a very humble house; it is my virtue that makes it reputable.

3. ch'i Chiang "Embarking" - ([introductory discourse]):

The emerald moss spreads to the stone-stair; the color of green foliage emits its rays over the curtain.

4. zu sou ("Introductory Corollary"):

Erudite scholars would like to come here to chat and laugh while illiterates do not come here.

5. ch'i ku "First Middle Leg":

It is a pleasure to play a simple zither and (it is a pleasure) to receive my Buddhist script.

6. chung ku "Second Middle Leg":

There is no orchestra disturbing my listening; there is no red tape enslaving my body and spirit.

7. hou ku "First Final Leg":

In Non Yin, there is a Tsu-ge cabin; in Hsi Su, there is a Ts-yun pavilion.

8. shu ku "Tying the Knot":

Confucius asks: "What rudeness would there be?" (p.407).

Though the length of the essay is not what is prescribed (350 to 700 words), it was purposely chosen for its small scale yet complete manifestation of its specific features. The essay was written in Chinese Classic written form; the title reads "Praise of the Humble House," but if put in a modern Chinese vernacular form, the title should be read "Why Is It Worthwhile to Praise My Humble House?" This essay can be regarded as a typical expository writing form from a Chinese rhetorical perspective because it fulfills all the requirements agreed upon by the prescription of the civil service examination, and it also fulfills the following definition indicated in Writing A College

Handbook:

"Exposition is writing with a referential aim.

It seeks to explain someone or something in the world outside the writer" (p.89).

Though some American readers would categorize the above essay as "descriptive" writing because it contains so many adjectives, the essay is expository writing because the author is not really describing his house at all; instead, he is emphasizing the importance of being virtuous. According to Joy M. Reid (1989), aesthetic appeal is always heightened in Oriental writing. If students can use language beautifully, their writing will be regarded as very successful. For this reason, Chinese ESL students are prone to use a large number of aesthetic words, usually adjectives, to describe and help interpret what is generally a simple didactic theme. As a result, their expository writing will, like the above essay, very much resemble descriptive writing.

1. Elaborate style

In "Praise of the Humble House," Hsi presents many points on which to build concepts: a humble house, if lived in by a man of high ideals and noble character, will become a dignified house. To build such a concept, he presents all the constituents, all the elements, in what he thinks

is a logical way. He explains in the first paragraph, by using metaphorical language, that the mountain and the river represent the house, and the fairy and the dragon represent virtue. It is the fairy, not the height of the mountain, that makes the mountain famous. Similarly, it is the dragon, not the depth of the river, that makes the river sacred. The author then illustrates all the worthwhile qualities that he thinks may ennoble the humble house.

A. Natural scenery contrasted with implied materialism that might provide the impurity to corrupt a gentleman's virtue.

B. Erudite guests the author admires, in contrast to those illiterate and shallow persons whom he does not like.

C. A household amusement, playing a simple zither, contrasted to a luxurious orchestra, which reflects a materialistic world that can defile a man.

The seventh paragraph tells of two ancient cases which reveal that, from ancient time till now, it is a truth that virtuous people living in a humble house elevate the humbleness of the house and make it a reputable one in history. The conclusion uses Confucius's rhetorical question, "What rudeness would there be?", a famous quote from a Confucius aphorism, that a virtuous gentleman would

enhance anything rude.

One of the distinguishable features of the Eight-Legged Essay is its elaborate style. It is strongly linked with the civil examination in which a sense of competition evolves because the examination stimulates the participants to demonstrate their language facility. In order to exhibit his command of knowledge, a writer would tend to employ many literary sources to vivify his meaning so as to appeal to his reader, who is, as a rule, the primary judge of the civil examination. This judge, generally a scholar of great literary sensitivity, would place great value upon the delicate language flexibility manifested by a writer and evaluate it in terms of his own self identification as an erudite scholar. In this situation, the Eight-Legged Essay provides a wide range of language complexity and subtlety for the master. To achieve the highest level of writing performance for their intelligent yet critical audience, writers of the Eight-Legged Essay rely upon highly formal language. They tend to select words having a wide range of meanings, such as metaphors with both their surface and symbolic meanings. In the above essay, this elaborate style demonstrates itself clearly in a collection of highly charged metaphors, allusions to history, as well as allegorical and moralizing stories that are associated with some specific proverb or aphorism.

2. Circular structure

The structure of the Eight-Legged Essay must also reflect this elaborate style. Robert T. Oliver's point of view (1965), namely, that "Rhetoric is a mode of finding all available means for the achievement of a designated end" (pp. x-xi), tells us that it is natural for a certain structure to develop its own form. But what structure can be best applied to function as a designated end to the Eight-Legged Essay's elaborate style? Kaplan (1972) asserts that the typical structure in the Eight-Legged Essay is a "tangential" one:

The development of the paragraph may be said to be "turning and turning in a widening gyro." The circles or gyros turn around the subject and show it from a variety of tangential views, but the subject is never looked at directly. Things are developed in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are. Again, such a development in a modern English paragraph would strike the English reader as awkward and unnecessarily indirect (46).

Kaplan claims, following this structure, "The [Chinese ESL students'] papers are characterized by an inability to get to the point and stick with it" (60). I don't agree

with his opinion, which seems to imply that all the materials the author of the Eight-Legged Essay presents are touched lightly without a center to reinforce the writer's main point of view. This is certainly not true. The reason is clear: if his version is valid, it would suggest that the writers of the Quing Dynasty for five centuries were writing meaninglessly. If the Eight-Legged Essay has withstood the test of time, it must have certain structural features that have evolved from its specific rhetoric.

Looking at the status of the Eight-Legged Essay in a civil service examination, we see that the essay represents the standard measurement of political and literary achievement. In other words, the participants are asked to challenge their writing abilities to the largest extent so that they may be appointed as high ranking officials. By this token, writers would develop a structure by which they can examine an issue from one facet to another and from one angle to many angles. Writers should, on the one hand, always make certain there is one center that attaches itself to all the other points, and on the other hand, make certain the structure allows a wide capacity to exhibit their ingenuity to the utmost by incorporating all the literary resources they are familiar with. A circular structure, such as the one defined by Howard C. Brashers (1971), seems suitable to accomplish this purpose. A circular structure has the following characteristics:

1. Successive constituents in the structure "are not drawn from the immediate previous one (like a linear structure does) but revolve around a single, central core or idea" (p.153).
2. Each constituent may begin "in material apparently peripheral and then relate or point the peripheral material to a central hub" (p.153).

The characteristics of the structure of the Eight-Legged Essay fulfill the above features. To assure that the communication between the reader and the writer is consistently smooth, the writer of an Eight-Legged Essay has to make certain his presentation provides a variety of approaches. He must also relate them to the thesis in his essay. The process can be compared to casting a fishing net. In order to get more fish, the fisherman should cast his net widely into the ocean, but in the meantime make sure one end of the fishing net is always in his hands. Functional organization of the Eight-Legged Essay not only helps the writer develop the extensive peripheral items needed, but also ensures that these widely spread items are drawn into the central theme, which is, this humble house is dignified because the person who lives in it is a virtuous gentleman. This is clearly evidenced by the many metaphorical nouns employed: mountain, river, fairy, dragon and the like. These nouns, with their metaphorical

messages, as previously mentioned, though peripheral to the theme, are not irrelevant.

The strength of the structure can be identified in the seventh paragraph when the author compares two famous humble houses in history with his own. The sentence reads: "In Non Yin, there is a Tsu-ge cabin; in Hi Su, there is a Ts-yun pavilion." The periods of time referred to are very far distant; one house is in the Han dynasty (206 B.C.- 219 A.D.), the other in the period of Three kingdoms (222 A.D.- 265 A.D.). The author, with a centered didactic thesis in his mind, can see through all these dynasties and seize two similar houses out of millions that have appeared in history. He then defines them by their nature so that the humble ones are selected and the luxurious ones are not. In addition, he can also classify them according to their similarities and finally weave them into a level-headed and enlightening demonstration. We, as readers, can not help but admire him because, by means of this circular structure, he has expertly used his ingenuity to demonstrate that he understands how to handle comparison, definition, and classification in a compressed and intensified writing performance. The advantage of this structure, according to Howard C. Brashers, "comes from its capacity to interrelate the most various concepts and make them mentally manageable" (p.153). This statement repudiates Kaplan's mistaken viewpoint regarding the

inability of the Eight-Legged Essay to get to the point.

B. Philosophical and religious influences

1. Confucianism and the Confucian Classics

The content of the Eight-Legged Essay reflects Confucianism and the Confucian Classics. Confucianism for centuries has been the central part of Chinese philosophical and literary education. It advocates self-respect, that under no circumstances should man be shamed before his peers. It is a humanistic ethic. The theme of "Praise of the Humble House" is frequently emphasized in Confucianism: it preaches that man's personal worth is exhibited by a highly esteemed virtue, irrespective of wealth and social rank. To regulate the conduct of the individual and the organization of society, Confucianism considers "harmony" as the highest tenet in its teaching. With this tenet in mind, the morality of individuals can be expected to develop into universal love. The scholar class, like authors of the Eight-Legged Essay, were Confucians; their views on literary writing were influenced strongly by Confucianism. Traditional Chinese literature, the Confucian Classics, was regarded by them as the highest guidepost of literary achievement. According to David Hawkes (1964), a professor of Chinese at the University of

Oxford, Chinese students, before taking part in the civil examination, had to familiarize themselves with the Confucian Classics, which include the following knowledge:

1. An ancient manual of divinations with philosophical commentaries.
2. A collection of documents purporting to be the conversations and speeches of the earliest kings.
3. A book of songs, hymns, and ballads.
4. The annals of ancient feudal states and the historical commentaries accompanying them.
5. Three collections of writing on ritual and etiquette.
6. The collected sayings of Confucius, the Philosopher Mencius.
7. A school book of short essays on the virtue of filial piety.
8. A glossary of the difficult words in the other book of the canon (p.88).

The Confucian Classics are literary resources for Chinese students, providing for them a repository of abundant writing materials. Familiarization with these resources forms for them an easily identifiable connection for their communication. The Eight-Legged Essay, under these circumstances, is perfectly understood by both the reader and writer. For example, in the essay "Praise of the Humble House," the author uses Confucius' question as a

conclusion: "What rudeness would there be?" This question, if asked without complete explanation, would be regarded by those who have no knowledge of it as abrupt and awkward; the question obviously calls for some additional information in order to be answered. The effect of posing a question at the end of an article not only seemingly fails to bring the article to an end, as a conclusion usually does, it also makes the article more confusing by adding a question mark at the end, tempting the reader to ask, "What kind of question is this?" "What does it mean?" But if the author and his reader are both immersed in common literary resources, they will immediately comprehend that the question indicates a close connection with an episode of Confucius presented in a Confucian aphorism. In the aphorism, when the Master (Confucius) wished to go and live among the nine wild tribes of the East, someone asked, "They are rude, how can you do such a thing?" The Master said, "If a virtuous gentleman dwelt among them, what rudeness would there be?" (p.236). This episode is not hard to trace, since most educated Chinese can recite Confucian sayings by heart. Because the reader already knows the episode and its associated point of view, the question is no longer a question but an explicit conclusion that is integrated by the most powerful authority--Confucius. Thus, the Eight-Legged Essay is completely understood by those who are familiar with the common

knowledge.

But in the eyes of American readers, because they do not share this knowledge, the essay is totally incomprehensible. With their expectations for linearity, they would think it better to concentrate on "house," if the house is worthy to be praised; mentioning too many other things like mountain, river, fairy, dragon, grass, and zither would be unnecessary and confusing. Kaplan's view on the Eight-Legged Essay, that it features "things in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are," expresses this doubt precisely.

2. The influence of Buddhism

Another influence that makes the Eight-Legged Essay different from American writing is the influence of Buddhism. Different from Western thinking that focuses more on man's value, and as indicated by Mckeen (1964), the thinking of Buddhism that underlines the Eight-Legged Essay emphasizes not man, but a supreme celestial cosmos beyond man's control. Leo Spitzer (1953) clarifies the difference between these two ways of thinking:

Take for instance a simple sentence such as "I see him. . . ." This means that English and, I might say, Indo-European, presents the impressions made on our senses predomi-

nantly as human activities, brought about by our will. But the Eskimos in Greenland say not "I see him" but "he appears to me" Thus the Indo-European speaker conceives as working of his activities what fatalistic Eskimos see as events that happen to them (p.84).

Insofar as thinking differs in the way Eskimos and English people encode objective experience, two different philosophies evolve. Unlike the Eskimos' fatalistic thinking, Berlin (1984) interprets the philosophy of English writers as being affected by a more humanistic philosophy, which imposes more materialistic than spiritual measurement. The characteristics of this philosophy stress being clear and precise. Berlin observes:

The traditional school rhetorics, from the middle of the eighteenth century well into the twentieth, in keeping with the prevalent materialistic philosophy and its associated essentially technologically world view, placed great value on clarity and precision in the framework of a rigorously logical system (p.9).

On the other hand, the perspective influencing writers of the Eight-Legged Essay may be very much like that of the Eskimos, which invokes a religious supernatural influence. More specifically, Buddhist philosophy, which influences

and guides writers of the Eight-Legged Essay, is even more spiritual comparable to Eskimos' fatalistic thinking. Being metaphysically inclined, a writer of Buddhism would interpret things beyond regular human reasoning. For example, after a farewell party a host tells his departing guest, "Good bye, my friend, take care, it's so cold outside." This simple and ordinary reminder would be largely interpreted by Buddhists as a kind of allegorical warning to "be careful, my friend, inside the house is warm, because there are so many loving friends within. Now that you are leaving us, take care of yourself on your own, without friends' help, since there are so many obstacles in your life." By the same token, writers influenced by Buddhism may tend to sort out and distinguish experiences differently from English writers, as they prefer an enigmatic and mystic language rather than one that is precise and specific. This feature, influenced by two different thinking patterns, is actually an enduring cultural-specific characteristic. In an article, "Teaching East Asian Rhetoric", J. Vernon Jensen points out the differences between the two:

We have exhausted ourselves probing the Western rhetorical heritage, which honors verbal expression, reason, cause and effect, linear linkages, directness, clear organization, unadorned style, and

the debating of opposing views so that truth will emerge more purely from the clash. We have overlooked the rhetorical heritage in the East, which honors non-expression, silence, the nonverbal, the softness and subtlety of ambiguity and indirectness, the insights of intuition, and the avoidance of clash of opinion in order to preserve harmony (p.135).

The following descriptive passages by an American journalist and an eminent Chinese writer are examples of how the two cultures see people differently.

Description of a person by an American writer:

written by Michael Fisher

His voice is a rapid baritone.

His tone that of a pumped up cheerleader.

His eyes scan the crowd.

Eyes flutter in confirmation.

Heads nod.

Shoulders slump.

By now, the crowd is enthralled.

They cheer, they clap, they bellow.

He wears a dazzling blue coat.

With a gleaming smile and

Arms extended to the wingspan

Of Magic Johnson, blocking the lane.

Description of a person by a Chinese writer:

written by Chang Hsien

translated by Monica Chiu

The song of Hsing River,
Flowed from the melancholy zither,
Each note expressed the greenish waves
Of the everlasting Hsing River.
She plied her slender fingers
On the thirteen strings
Which gently ventilated her infinite woe
Down her heart.
At the feast, her eyes twinkled
like autumn ripples,
And the slanting pegs of the zither
Were like the flying wild geese.
When she twanged to the utmost grief
Her furrowed brows were like
Spring mountain
Lowly pressed by the black clouds.

The differences are readily apparent. The American writer gives direct, vigorous impressions; the Chinese writer delivers a graceful and subtle feeling. An examination of the focus, diction, and use of grammatical categories reveals the differences between the two writers.

1. The difference in focus: An American writer's more humanistic concept makes him focus on the person he describes. His attention is more focused upon a physical description. He describes the man, the central target, through his voice, his tone, his eyes, his head and his shoulders, and then his coat, his smile and his arms; the whole sketch places the man thoroughly in the spotlight. The world of a Chinese writer is vastly different; it involves a supreme celestial cosmos beyond his control. Under this totally different concept, when the Chinese writer describes a person, in a circular presentation and with a more emotional emphasis, he refers to the person he is describing metaphorically as the mountain, the river, the cloud, and the geese, things that he thinks are equal to humans.

2. The difference in selection of diction: An American writer tends to use straightforward diction that usually gives an exact meaning. Every word chosen usually represents only one meaning, that found in a dictionary. When we read "his voice is a rapid baritone," we immediately realize his voice resembles "a male singing voice of medium compass between bass and tenor" (p.131 of Webster's dictionary). When we read about "His tone of a pumped up cheerleader," we know his tone is excited and loud. But to the Chinese writer, the words used are too metaphorical to be defined exactly. They either contain

multiple suggestions or relate some symbolic implications so that every reader may have a different interpretation based upon his own experience. In other words, the words chosen by the Chinese writer are ambiguous. When we read "Each note expressed the greenish waves of the ever-lasting Hsing River," although we feel it is beautiful, we can not give a specific explanation to the sentence. When we read, "Her furrowed brows were like a spring mountain lowly pressed by the black clouds," we know the author is implying something. But what is it? We can not give a precise answer because it is utterly inexpressible by words.

3. The difference between the proportion of employment of verbs and adjectives: The employment of a certain number of verbs and adjectives influences the expression of rhetorical style. Using a verb usually expresses an action; it is clear and concrete and not hard to comprehend. When we read "They cheer, they clap, they bellow" in the American writing example, the verbs describe actively what is happening. In contrast, the "action" of an adjective, serving as a modifier, is not as clear as that of a verb. Adjectives employed in the Chinese writing, like the "everlasting" Hsing River, her "infinite" woe, and "utmost" grief, give us an endlessly subtle feeling, yet they are too abstract to define. In the American example there are five adjectives and twelve

verbs. The marked majority of verbs supports J. Vernon Jensen's observation that Western rhetoric heritage honors verbal expression. This is the reason that American writing conveys such an effective and vigorous impression. In the Chinese example, there are sixteen adjectives and eight verbs; fewer verbs means fewer actions and thus less strength represented in the actions that appear in the writing. In addition, the verbs that the Chinese writer uses, like "flowed," "plied," "twinkled," are all soft verbs. The only exception is "twanged": "When she twanged to the utmost grief, her furrowed brows were like a spring mountain lowly pressed by the black clouds." This is used deliberately by the writer in the last sentence to climax the lady's endless grief. Again, the purpose is to enlarge a subtle feeling in the reader. Thus, Chinese writing under a metaphysical Buddhism displays what J. Vernon Jensen identifies as soft and aesthetic qualities.

In summation, the writing of Chinese and American writers, because of dissimilar cultural conventions, exhibits different cultural features; even if the two writers are describing the same person, they are looking at that person through different cultural eyes.

CHAPTER II

THE EVALUATION OF TEXTS IN CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

In the introduction I mentioned that I was confused when asked to perform some academic writing tasks in the U.S. under different cultural expectations; the comments from my academic readers seemed very inconsistent. In this chapter I would like to explore why their evaluations differ in terms of a relationship between different task demands and culturally different rhetorical features. Consider the following two pieces; they were written in English in my creative writing class (English 621), requiring little time and effort to complete compared to other writing tasks. The comments I received from my American teacher, however, were very positive. I would like to examine the two pieces to find out why they are considered good writing.

Dreams

1. Twilight. Nowhere. I took a walk with my son. We were attracted by a very colorful ball. We bent forward and examine it closely. It becomes a dim candlelight then a flamboyant fire. My son chased after it before I was conscious of something wrong. I cried out with all my heart. An uncontrollable fear strongly pinned me. He was there! A

yard away! Then he vanished. Yellowed grass everywhere. I heard my coarse voice rattling in a valley blast. A path! It coiled through the mountain with ten thousand turnings. Babies' gurglings everywhere; high-pitched, low-pitched substituted each other. I fell to the ground. A white cat curled on the sofa. It turned its head and gazed at me intently. I moaned in relief: "Oh! my son!"

2. I stepped on the shoulders of my first boyfriend. I was in my flower age, very slim. He wore the orange uniform of the air force. I held a paint brush. We painted the huge blank wall this way: he crouched first, then stood up. He repeated the same action so that the brush in my hand gave the wall a straight and smooth patch from low in the bottom to the very high. We laughed happily. I found my voice sweet as a silver bell. When we speedily finished the vertical painting, we went on horizontal painting. I tilted my body with his feet firmly fixed on one point unmoved. Like riding in a swing, my dark, slick hair floated here and there in arc shape. We made a big golden fan on the wall.

The reasons that American readers like these two writings are that the nature of the requirement demanded by the topic is completely compatible to one of the characteristics of Chinese rhetoric that is also reflected in the Eight-Legged Essay--the elaborate style.

The topic of "dream" suggests the field of fantasy; it is something that operates at the unconscious state, which is untouchable and inexplicable. It therefore contains abstract and mysterious qualities that lend themselves to a soft language performance. The above two examples fulfill these requirements by an elaborate diction. In it the writer has selected many words that contain simultaneously, metaphoric and aesthetic characteristics that are typically Chinese: the former provides an ambiguous, profound quality exhibited by both the surface meaning and the symbolical meaning. Sometimes there are more than two meanings in one metaphor. For example, the "yellow" grass in the first piece not only describes the grass but is also thought to be allegorical of a worried mood of an anxious mother that is like dehydrated "yellow" grass. A "white" cat not only describes the cat, but it also creates a fog-like "white" atmosphere that mystifies the transformed baby. This diction is used to produce a certain effect. That is to say, the more varied the interpretations of a line, the more likely it will be appreciated by the reader. It

offers a reader more than one dimension in which to explore the essence of that fantasy. The aesthetic diction appeals to the readers' imagination and enables them to visualize the abstractness of the fantasy. For instance, in the second example, the word "flower" in the sentence, "I was in my flower age," symbolizes the prime time of the young lady and also brings the readers an association of the form, the color, the aroma of all those things that belong to an image of a "flower"; likewise, "silver," in the sentence "I found my voice sweet as a silver bell," conveys a cheerful reflection that we can always find in the shining luster of "silver" and also delivers a feminine message that we can identify in a womanish tinkling embodiment of "silver." In short, the effect of the aesthetic diction can be put this way: although the reader has no way to grasp the essence called for by the topic "dream," his impression of imagery that belongs to a "dream" touches his imagination and gets some creative juices flowing. A colorful nature-related rhetoric and aesthetic diction serve this purpose. They bring a sensuous delight to the reader. As colorful food may whet a person's appetite, an aesthetic rhetoric can put a reader in a picture so that he can "feel" with his senses the reality of the fantasy that might otherwise remain obscure or meaningless. In such a situation a direct and clear-cut rhetoric containing no ambiguities may provide only one

meaning, thus becoming, in contrast, too narrow to cover the scope and complexity of the requirement of the topic. So we may say, then, that the performance of these two pieces demonstrates some of the objectives of the Eight-Legged Essay.

If American readers, my teacher and classmates, understand and enjoy writing that features circular structure and elaborate style, as do these two "dream" essays, why is it that they don't respond favorably to the circular structure of the "Humble House" essay? Quite noticeably, the circular structure does exist in these "dream" examples. In the first, for instance, the nouns appearing in every sentence are not linearly related, they jump from "twilight" to "nowhere" and to "I", "we" and then to "it", to "my son" to "fear" . . .to "grass", to "path" and so forth. They are peripheral to the thesis of "dream". An American reader may accept them because the dream itself implies a shapeless entity, thus no certain organization will be expected; or because the size of both sketches is small, they are comprehensively manageable by linear thinking.

In the following example, because it is very lengthy, the circular structure becomes an obstacle that prevents American readers from understanding it. It is an example of a Chinese ESL student's writing, an assignment in English 95, a basic English class. Although some of her

writing problems are typical of ESL students, by far the biggest is the structure she employs that parallels that of the Eight-Legged Essay, namely, a circular structure. I have not edited the essay.

My Way written by Grace Chang

Everyday, many people must choose whether or not to get married, to go to school, to get a job, or to change schools. In general, we face dilemmas and struggles with decision making. The difficulties of decision making will force us to consider the decision more deeply, which will take our time, and our ideas. And then we must choose that which is suitable for us. For me, my decision making process may be different due to a circumstance which happened to me.

I remember that the idea of transferring to CSU-Los Angeles came to my mind the first time last October. Actually, I was influenced a little by the persuasion of both my uncle and aunt. They always hoped that I could live with them and were both concerned about my being able to pay the expensive tuition, room and board. They also thought that by living in their house I could save room and board. Further it would reduce the burden for my parents since it was difficult for them to support me due to business recession. In addition, my uncle also

thought it would be wonderful if he had a daughter, as they only have two sons. They treated me very well as their daughter and almost every weekend would pick me up to go on a picnic. When I was new at CSUSB I often felt lonely after school every day, recalling the good time I had studying American culture and language at Los Angeles with a bunch of friends that I met there. Consequently, it became more desirable for me to transfer back to L.A.

These days, it really troubles me a lot deciding whether or not to transfer to CSULA or to stay here. From several aspects, I consider the advantages and disadvantages of choice of school. First, CSULA has the specific major (Computer Information System) I am interested in, which consists of the practice of both information management and computer application, while here at CSUSB only information analysis is focused upon under the Information System major. Second, there are lots of bus lines available on which to go anywhere in Los Angeles County; but the transportation system of San Bernardino County is not convenient. For example, it only takes 15 minutes from the school to downtown by car, it takes 43-53 minutes by bus. Third, I can save room and board of 5,000 dollars every year if I live in my uncle and aunt's house, which could pay one and a half quarters of tuition. It

just increases the burden of my parents if I stay here. Fourth, I am used to the weather of Los Angeles, and it is more comfortable for me. My nose always bleeds due to the dry, waterless climate here, and it is hard to breathe in the hot summer. But on the other hand, it could take me half of a year or more to achieve my bachelor degree because of the courses I took here could not be transferred. Even though there are so many troubles for me, I have been studying here for 3 quarters and thinking about the choice of transferring schools for a long time. But it might have been different if my uncle had lived.

One day, my aunt discussed with me about the possibility of taking care of her house and her sons. She told me that she was going to leave here for the business for a long period of time and hoped that I would move into her house. She was worried about her children and house. So she wanted me to transfer back to the CSULA, which was the nearest school to their dwelling. As a result, I begin to think about my circumstances and my position, as well as the possibility of shifting schools.

It happened a week before the end of fall on December 9, 1991. Early that Monday morning, I woke up by the telephone ringing. The night before that day, I could not fall asleep the whole night and my

heart was up and down when I picked up the phone. It was from my youngest aunt in Taipei. I was very shaken by this unusual phone call. My uncle, who took charge of the hotel business on fifth street downtown Los Angeles, was grabbed and thrown to the ground from the second floor by a rude, black man, and his head was strongly injured after it hit against the iron door. She also told me that he was rescued in the USC-medical hospital and that he would need surgery of the brain. His wife, my other aunt, was very sorrowful, tremulous, and weak when I made a call to the hospital to grasp what was going on. I am one of her few, close relatives in the U.S.A., and my father called me from Taiwan and wanted me to help her. My uncle was in a coma for a couple days after surgery.

Four days later, I just had finished my final exam and was ready to call on my uncle, but he had already passed away that morning. That night I reached her house and my aunt was hysterical. I could see the fearful, helpless, red swelling eyes and sad face. The next two weeks we started to deal with my uncle's funeral by ourselves. In this period, we encountered both the cold and the warm of human sentiment. Of course my aunt was not in the mood to think about the hotel, so the business of the hotel went down rapidly. Someone else presented to do her

the favor of taking care of hotel, in fact, he took advantage of my aunt's perilous state and desired to swallow up my aunt's corporation. She cried a lot when we were rejected by friends and requested help. It seemed that they thought we would bring them bad luck and feared to keep in touch with us. They always had good excuses to refuse to support us even if they were my uncle's best friends.

I saw the change in my aunt from depressed to calm after several months. Nowadays, she occasionally screams a little bit and talks about the past daily life of her and my uncle. We are all very angry that the criminal is still free even though he was in jail for three days and he was released because of the lack of witness. I usually go back to Los Angeles to be with her on the weekend. I hope I can aid her to get rid of her pain as well as to forget things that have come to pass.

Recently, she discussed her plan for the future and has decided to go back to Taiwan for business. Thus she inquired my opinion of transferring to CSULA for convenience of studying and taking care of matters here. I understand her situation very well and I promised her that I would transfer. I told her that everything would be fine. Right now I am quite aware of what I should do and must do. It is best to

transfer back to CSULA. Considering the needs of both my aunts and me, I feel that I had better go to school in Los Angeles.

In this example, the author uses the writing to reflect upon her inner world, in which she tells her reader (her teacher) how her decision to transfer to CSULA is influenced by many factors and how she finally decides to transfer. Judging from the topic "My Way," we can perceive that the author is trying elaborately to create a mental journey upon which she can, by giving many details, show us how the process of her decision is changing gradually; that is, from the very beginning, by a simple self-centered concern, to the ending, by the spiritually inspired guidance of a true love. Thus, she tells her reader by more than a few details how she at the very beginning had only selfish concerns, things like financial relief and weather's comfort affecting her decision. She also says her relatives love her not because of other significant reasons, but because they don't have a daughter. The terrible accident that happens one day is the turning point of the writer's decision making; it lasts for a period of time. She then continues with an added abundance of details telling how she, in the period of hardship after the accident, discovers the selfish nature of her old acquaintances and realizes how important she becomes as a

spiritual support to her aunt. By that a true love between the two developed.

Many features of the essay exhibit the "circular" pattern of an Eight-Legged Essay. In the first paragraph, for example, instead of pointing out what her decision is, she mentions many "peripheral" decisions of other people: get married, go to school, get a job or change schools. She puts off her own decision-making, which is regarded as central to the last sentence, and lets other people's decision-making revolve around it. The strength of the Eight-Legged structure, as indicated by Howard C. Brashers, is that it can "work against monotony and boredom" (p.147). However, he also warns: "overused, it produces chaos," because it has an "effect of complicating the product" (p.147). To American readers, the writer's presentation does not make sense because it is verbose. Aiming to make sense, American readers' linear logic expects a progressive, step-by-step presentation. To do this a writer should understand how to avoid misleading, trivial things. Chang's writing, loaded with so many minor details, to American readers simply becomes distracting. They are not clear as to exactly what the writer is trying to say.

The following example from an American writer in a 495 English class is an example of expert expository writing. In her writing, Wilbur deals with a substantially similar

theme--how her teaching career changes her view about her life. She presents her material in an effective linear way.

Michael Tedesco by Patricia Wilbur

Teaching jobs were scarce when I graduated with my certificate. Unless a new teacher was proficient in math, French, or some other subject that equipped her to stand out in the crowd, she was not likely to find work. A friend of mine suggested I try Special Education. The government had recently put a lot of money into this area, so that was where the current jobs were to be found. Growing up I had never really had a goal. I went into teaching for all the wrong reasons. It was a well paying job that did not take a lot of extra schooling to qualify for. I really had no idea what I wanted to do with my life.

My friend was right though. With my Special Education certificate, I was hired immediately to teach a class of learning handicapped children. Reportedly they were normal children with specific learning disabilities. Even though I had my teaching certificate in my desk, I did not feel at all qualified to do the job. I wasn't even sure I wanted to do the job.

When I arrived at my new school, midyear, I was shocked to discover my classroom was a decrepit portable out behind the school. One wall had a hole in it about five inches in diameter, which is considerably unpleasant in the middle of January. The thermometer read degrees below zero. The solitary window was frosted with blue glass which gave the room a dull sickly glow. A strong musty odor hung in the air.

Feeling a little sick to my stomach as the school bus pulled into the yard, I suddenly began to wonder what the hell I was doing here. When my first student walked through the door I knew I was not at all prepared for the task ahead. I asked him his name. He said, "Michael Tedesco."

Michael suffered from microcephalic. He had a very small head. This wouldn't have been quite so noticeable if it hadn't been for the huge buck teeth that seemed to hang right out of his mouth. His stubby hands were dirty, his fingernails chewed completely off. Chunks of food lodged between his big teeth made his smile grotesque and his breath sour. I searched desperately in my purse for a kleenex, but he managed the job with a crusty sleeve before I found one. He was terribly thin and trembled slightly. Michael was just as frightened of me as I was of him.

As the other students arrived I began to gain control of myself. When they were all in their seats I outlined the day's activities. We survived that day together, and the next, and the next. Soon we became friends. But although my Principal seemed pleased with my work, I still had doubts about myself as a teacher.

As the year went on, I learned more and more about my students, especially Mike. He became special to me, perhaps because he was the first student I met or maybe because he was so desperately in need of love and affection. Michael had been physically and sexually abused by his parents. He had been taken from them and was presently living in his third foster home along with eighteen other children. Not all the children in the home were supposed to be there. Many were older and were no longer wards of the court. But having no other place to live, the foster mother, Mrs. Smith, allowed them to stay. The four bedroom bungalow was crowded but it was safe and warm.

My other students were all well loved and cared for at home. They brought nourishing lunches and plenty of snacks for recess and after school. Mike's lunch was always just a sandwich. He never had a snack for recess.

The other students on campus did not like

Michael. They made fun of him constantly. They had a million names for him. So did the teachers in the staffroom. I was successful in main-streaming all my students but him. The other teachers claimed he smelled. He did. I don't know why. Mrs. Smith said he bathed every night. But Mike was the kind of kid who would walk out the door spotlessly clean and five minutes later would look like he'd been crawling around inside a garbage dumpster. Whenever I went out at recess to check on the kids, Mike was always on his knees in the dirt. I bought a toothbrush, taught him how to use it, and sent him to the bathroom several times a day. Yet he always had strange dark things clinging to those teeth.

Pity is all I feel for anyone who never takes the time to look beyond the filth and odor to the child inside. Michael Tedesco was a sweet child. He was warm, sensitive, and suprisingly generous. He had very little to give but always shared willingly and was grateful for anything he was given. Well aware that he was different, Mike tried to ignore the cruel remarks of the other children. Many times I saw him turn his back to a group of boys so they wouldn't see the hurt in his eyes. I saw it. Yet nothing I did seemed to help.

Eating lunch with my students became part of my

daily routine. This particular day I had a large piece of homemade banana bread with butter icing along with my roast beef sandwich, grapes and thermos of milk. Michael took his usual seat in front of my desk and opened up his lunch bag. Knowing it only contained a sandwich, I asked what kind it was today. He told me it was a "margerine sandwich." Being the end of the month, Mrs. Smith had nothing to put between the bread. To compensate for this, he had a tiny chocolate cupcake with no icing. He waved the cupcake at the students hoping it would make them envious but they were busy swallowing their mini feasts. He bragged that he had made it himself with no help at all. A vision of Mike in the kitchen, with grubby, frequently licked, hands stirring batter, drifted across my mind. I believe he really did make it himself for it looked as pitiful as he did.

I had made up my mind that morning, after watching Mike at recess, to share my banana bread with him. But he was so pleased with the cupcake I was afraid to offer it to him for fear of spoiling the pleasure of his creation. Approaching my desk to give me a closer look at his chocolate masterpiece, he spied the banana bread. Licking his lips, in his own mind thinking they were equal, or hoping I would think so, he asked if I would like to trade. Since I

intended to give him the banana bread anyway, I said "sure."

Mike swallowed the banana bread so quickly I thought he might choke. I think he was afraid I was going to change my mind. Then giving me a suspicious look, he asked, "Aren't you going to eat my cupcake?"

Having absolutely no intention of eating his cupcake, I stalled by explaining that my grapes would be sour after the sweet cake so I had to eat them first. I suggested he join the other boys outside for recess. But he insisted on waiting until I had eaten his cupcake. Explaining how full I had suddenly become, I asked if he would mind if I saved it for later. He said that was fine.

As soon as the bell rang for recess he was once again at my desk waiting for me to eat his cupcake. Two feeble excuses later, he was still looking at me expectantly and I realized I was either going to have to crush this child's feelings or eat the damned cupcake. Picking it up, I took a last look at the brown crusty surface. A slight odor other than chocolate reached my nostrils but I wouldn't let my mind try to identify it. My stomach lurched as my teeth sunk into the crumbly texture. Without chewing I swallowed immediately. Another quick bite and the deed was done. Swallowing the second time was more

difficult as my throat did not want to open. Gulping the last of my milk helped to wash it all down.

Michael was beaming. No matter how hard it was for me to eat that disgusting cupcake the look on his face made it well worth while. I realized how important Michael's feelings were to me. I knew I could do it again if a similar situation ever arose. For the first time, I felt like I was really accomplishing something. I knew I could do the job. I could do it better than anyone else because I cared more than anyone else. It's the caring that makes a good teacher special. Michael made me feel special. Eating the chocolate cupcake seemed so hard at the moment and so silly now. Yet it made me look at myself from a child's perspective and that helped me to become a better teacher. It built my confidence and proved to me that I am in the right profession.

I will never forget the day Michael Tedesco and I swapped deserts. He returned to his family soon after that day and I never heard of him again. I remember watching his boney back make its way toward the door. Turning his head toward me, grinning his big toothy grin, he said over his shoulder, "You're a really good baker Miss Wilbur. That banana bread was the best I've ever eaten."

What could I reply except, "Well Mike, that

cupcake was the best I've ever eaten. Thanks for trading with me."

He took two more steps towards the door. Turned again and said sincerely, "I'm sorry there wasn't any icing on it, but I licked it off at recess."

I love him. I miss him. I hope he is happy.

Unlike the author of "My Way," who was employing circular presentation in which she related her personal experience with many persons--her uncle, her aunt in Taipei, her aunt in charge of the hotel, her father . . . this American writer with her linear presentation relates her experiences with only one person, Michael. She explains at first what she considers to be the most important thing in special education--love and care. With that point of view in her mind, she focuses on a specific person, Michael, in an interesting episode. Her material is then substantially shaped along with Michael, and every detail is connected to this central focus: Michael's appearance, Michael's personal suffering experience, Michael's personality and so forth. To achieve her purpose of giving readers a clearer understanding of her point of view, she effectively arranges the most touching moment of the episode at the end as a climax to strongly convey a touching and sympathetic feeling. Through a powerful appeal to the readers' emotions, the writer successfully

reveals the significance of her point.

By comparison, this writing is more persuasive and intelligible than the previous one to American readers--the difference lies, at least partially, in the fact that the author understands how to use a linear presentation. The effect produced by this presentation can be likened to the taking of a picture. If a photographer wants to highlight a specific subject, he does so with a close-up shot. If he took the picture from a distance, he would draw attention away from his subject by including distracting elements in it. In much the same way, the American writer gave us a close-up shot of Michael. That is the reason that through this effective presentation, the author is capable of establishing systematically a concept sharpened by a focus. The details she uses, then, will not be extraneous, but necessary to help validate her point of view.

One question is raised here: How do Chinese ESL students react to this and to the previous essay? Is the essay based on a linear structure more understandable and effective to them too? The answer is yes. However, one thing we should not neglect: the pattern of the structure is naturally evolved by many factors, such as the writer's writing motivation, the reader's evaluative standard and the type of topics, etc. As indicated in Chapter One, all in all, underlying the structure is a cultural-specific way of thinking. In circular structure, the peripheral items

as well as the topic in Chinese ESL students' essays are all natural consequences of a culturally coded thinking, namely a more metaphysical thinking which is typically featured in the Eight-Legged Essay. The topic, "My Way," gives us a clue. Kaplan indicates in his introduction in the Eight-Legged Essay: "It is a common device to use a brief quotation from some respectable authority as a topic" (p.50). Topics under the influence of the Eight-Legged Essay are suggestive and implicit. Take the following topic for instance; it is a frequently quoted topic for Chinese students: Please expound the following quote from I (a scholar and a minister of Shun) saying:

man chao sun

ch'ien shou i

Fullness of self brings decrease

Modesty receives increase

An American writer may think this type of topic is too abstract, too general. This type of topic is certainly not amenable to English linear writing. Chinese ESL students, because they have long been steeped in conventions of the Eight-Legged Essay, will be much more likely to accept and choose for themselves a topic such as "My Way."

From the above, we can conclude that the patterns of the structure will vary, as can be expected with individual writings that reflect the different cultural backgrounds. A circular structure functions to "complicate" a simple

thing. It is best utilized in creative writing, for the overall requirement in this field demands an imaginative and versatile expression. On the other hand, a "linear" structure functions to "simplify" a complicated thing. It can be best used in "expository" writing, where the requirement of the discourse type demands a clear and concise explanation. As the editors of the Field of Writing say,

Each academic area involves a distinctive body of knowledge, a distinctive array of interests, and a distinctive set of methods for making sense of the subjects that fall within its field of interest (p.260).

If students' writing is compatible with the specific field of interest, their writing is likely to be highly evaluated, as is "dream" in creative writing and "Michael Tedesco" in expository writing. Conversely, "My Way," with a structure inappropriate to expository writing, can not achieve what is expected from the readers. It is regarded as incoherent.

CHAPTER III

THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ENGLISH EXPOSITORY ESSAY

We have already discovered the advantage of using linear structure to achieve a precise effect through its function of simplifying the complicated. We also know that English expository writing demands clear expression. To help Chinese ESL students unravel the entangled ambiguity influenced by the Eight-Legged Essay that exists for them in English expository writing, we suggest they use a linear structure. However, Chinese ESL students have long been exposed to a circular structure influenced by the Eight-Legged Essay. They are not familiar with the linear structure, or how it is applied in English expository writing. It is imperative that they become familiar with this structure and its use. Therefore, we shall explore the structure's characteristics and how they are manifested in effective and coherent English exposition. Using Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan's linguistic analysis of lexical cohesion to contrast writing structures by American writers and Chinese ESL students, we can help define coherent expository writing for the latter.

A. Linear structure

According to Kaplan (1966), "The English language and its related thought patterns have evolved out of the Anglo-

European cultural pattern. The expected sequence of thought in English is essentially a Platonic-Aristotelian sequence, descended from the philosophers of ancient Greece and shaped subsequently by Roman, Medieval European, and later Western thinkers" (p.3). The essence of this thought pattern emphasizes a humanistic value:

. . .As human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a center lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language by the exigencies of human intercourse. Any attempt rigorously to eliminate our human perspective from our picture of the world must lead to absurdity (p.9).

From this point of view, in attempting to achieve a particular goal, people should know how to set forth relevant information by means of an intelligible humanistic reasoning. In other words, they should know how to focus on that particular goal and convey what they think to be the most essential information. In order not to be mistaken, they also have to make certain there are no fallacies in their thinking. Thus, the development of writing education in the United States as well as in England, according to Wikerson (1986), reflects a combination of two traditions: Aristotelian (based on syllogistic reasoning) and Galilean (based on hierarchical

taxonomies) systematizations. Writers under these systematizations would naturally develop a successively ordered presentation; that is, they would make their writing more explicit by employing an order that can be easily comprehended by a humanistic reasoning, such as from abstract to concrete, from whole to part, or from general to particular. A structure based on this order is a linear structure.

B. Cohesive ties

Based on English linear structure, two linguists, M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, have proposed a measurement of cohesion in a written text. In it, the coherence of a text can be determined by an examination of the process in which a writer's selected resources are interrelated and affect a reader's understanding. Consider, for example, two sentences, the first one reading: "Did you find my notebook?" and the second one reading: "Yes, it is in my drawer." "It" in the second sentence identifies the "notebook" in the first sentence; therefore, "it" illustrates cohesion based on substitution. A cohesive tie identifies the semantic relation of a pair of cohesively related items. In this example, the relationship between "it" and "notebook" is the cohesive tie. Using the cohesive tie concept, Halliday and Hasan

suggest that we can systematically analyze a text and decide to what degree that text is coherent.

Halliday and Hasan specify five major cohesive ties; reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. This paper will address lexical cohesion only, the reason being that it emphasizes the selection of vocabulary. When making a comparison, I will make certain that the objects used for comparing are quality or nature related. Basing my comparison on grammatical analysis would be futile, since in Chinese grammar there are no prepositions, articles, or verb tenses, all three of which find common use in English. Additionally, according to Muriel Saville-Troike (1975), "The vocabulary of a language provides us with an interesting reflection of the people who speak it, an index to the way they categorize perception, a map to their world of experience" (p.83).

Examining lexical cohesion in the analysis of a text relates how a writer's selection of lexical resources may influence a reader's response and determine whether or not a text is coherent. For example, if "a rose" occurs in one sentence and the "the flower" in another, and if these two sentences logically follow each other, the effect is cohesive, for it fulfills one of the established rules of lexical cohesion, which is, "cohesion is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur" (p.284). Likewise, if a paragraph consists of many

cohesive ties, and cohesive sense is displayed in all these ties within the paragraph between a presupposed item and a presupposing item, English readers will find that the whole paragraph exhibits a reasonably systematic consistency of presentation which meets their reading expectations; they will regard the paragraph as coherent. On the other hand, if paragraphs are developed like Kaplan's, "in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are," a feature attributable to the circular presentation of the Eight-Legged Essay, English readers may perceive that the writer's lexical choices are unrelated, and because the paragraph does not meet the reader's expectations, they may consider it incoherent.

There are two subclasses of lexical cohesion defined by Halliday and Hasan: lexical reiteration and lexical collocation. Lexical reiteration is a form of lexical cohesion which includes "not only the repetition of the same lexical item but also the occurrence of a related item" (p.279). It may be any instance of the same words, a synonym or near-synonym, a superordinate word (a name for a general class such as "vehicle," a superordinate word for "van" and "truck"...etc.) and a general word. The latter, lexical collocation, "refers to lexical cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur" (p.284). To clarify it, Halliday and Hasan indicate that "there is cohesion between any pair of

lexical items that stand to each other in some recognizable lexicosemantic (word meaning) relation. This would include not only synonyms and near-synonyms such as climb...ascent, beam...rafter, disease...illness, and superordinates, such as elm...tree, boy...child, skip...play, but also pairs of opposites of various kinds, complementaries such as boy...girl, stand up...sit down, antonyms such as like...hate, wet...dry, crowded...deserted, and converses such as order...obey. For a writer, lexical cohesion through collocation is more difficult to employ because items used to "collocate" share the same lexical environment (p.286). They are not gained through simply repeating the same word or using easily associated synonym or near-synonyms. For this reason, writing can be considered more skillful if it consists of more lexical collocations than reiterations. Lexical collocation can best express a contrastive beauty in rhetoric by using words that are related by opposition. To make clear the difference between collocation and reiteration, consider the following two passages. They are quoted from student essays in Stephen P. Witte and Lester Faigley's "Coherence, Cohesion and Writing Quality":

Passage 1

Some people have to change their behavior around different acquaintances. One reason is that they want to make a good impression on others.

5 You have to act different in front of a person who
is giving you a job interview because you want to
make a good impression. You, most of the time,
act differently to fit in a crowd. You will
change your behavior to get people to like you,
you change your behavior to agree with people in
10 the crowd.

Analysis:

- A. Lexical reiteration expressed in repetition:
good impression (line 3 and line 6)
different/differently, crowd (line 7 and line
10),
change your behavior (line 1, line 8, line 9)
- B. Lexical reiteration expressed in superordination:
others (line 3)/person (line 4)
- C. Lexical reiteration expressed in near-synonym:
change their behavior (line 1)/act differently
(line 7)
some people (line 1)/they (line 2)
- D. Lexical reiteration expressed in general word:
you (line 4,5,6,7,8,9) people (line 8, line 9)

With the same theme, "change of behavior," look at the
following passage:

Passage 2

It is a job that really changes our behavior.
Among other changes, we change the way we dress;
in many jobs college graduates want to look
responsible and mature, projecting an image of
5 competence. The college student who wore faded
blue jeans is now in three-piece suits. He feels
the need to be approved of and accepted by his
boss and associates. While he talked of socialism
in college, he now reaps the profits of
10 capitalism. While in college he demanded honesty
in the words and actions of others, on the job he
is willing to "kiss ass" to make friends or get a
promotion. Indeed, working can change behavior.

Analysis:

- A. Lexical reiteration expressed in repetition:
changes behavior (line 1, and line 13)
college (line 3,5,10)
- B. Lexical reiteration expressed in near-synonym:
approved of/accepted by (line 7)
- C. Lexical cohesion expressed in collocational
opposition:
 - 1. wore blue jeans/three-piece suits
 - 2. talked of socialism/reaps the profits of
capitalism
 - 3. demanded honest/willing to "kiss ass"

If one is asked to compare the above two passages concerning the central idea of "change of behavior," he will doubtless mark passage 2 as the better passage. The difference, as the analysis shows, lies in the different proportion in using lexical reiteration and lexical collocation. Lexical reiteration, defined as "the occurrence of repeated items," contains a deep-rooted flaw: it is easy to repeat a word, resulting in monotony of the surface language, thereby reducing the interest and informativity of a piece of writing. In contrast, informativity is displayed in passage 2. The key lexical item, "behavior," appears only in the first and last sentences, and yet no one will doubt the passage is written about behavior changes. In the analysis, we have listed four "behavior change" types through lexical collocation; their employment does not monotonously repeat what has already been said, as did the first passage. On the contrary, they are variously displayed by the author with regard to different considerations in different perspectives. Thus, the first passage conveys only one message. The second passage conveys many messages, and is thus more informative.

In addition to providing informativity, the employment of lexical collocation in the second passage also exhibits a rhetorical beauty. The beauty is built on the employment of collocational opposition. The theory behind the beauty,

according to Howard C. Brashers, comes from an aesthetic appeal gained from a principle of "gradation" and "contrast." Consider, for example, the principle of "gradation":

A gradation is a series of things or ideas, which are linked by some common quality, but which differ from one another in grade, level, or degree (p.149).

The beauty in this principle, by Brashers' explanation, is built on its systematic hierarchical language performance in that "the likenesses and incremental differences embody a quality of our experience which we have found important" (p.149). The principle of contrast, on the other hand, emphasizes the sense of balance by juxtaposing "the material on one side of a scale against like material on the other side" (p.148). Because these two qualities are so precious, writing employing collocational opposition is regarded not only as coherent but also as mature. A celebrated French novelist and short-story writer, Guy de Maupassant, displays good employment of collocational oppositions in this passage from his short story "The Necklace":

She was one of those pretty and charming girls, who as if by a mistake of destiny, are born in a family of employees. She had no dowry, no education, no means of

becoming known, understood, loved, wedded by any rich distinguished man; and so she let herself be married to a petty clerk in the Bureau of Public Instruction.

In the third line, the author uses a string of related but different-leveled lexical collocative items--no dowry, no education, no means of becoming known--to describe the heroine's subtle changes as she gives up hope of being known, understood, loved, wedded to a rich man. With a combined effect that comes from graded lexical collocational items and a balanced juxtaposition of two sets of collocational opposition, the beauty of Maupassant's cohesive strength stirs us.

C. Coherence Expectations

We have already explained the features of lexical cohesion expressed in reiteration and collocation and also suggested their advantages and disadvantages as exhibited in immature writing and professional writing. Based on the same analytical approach, we will now analyze the writing of an American student, a Chinese ESL student, and the exemplary Eight-Legged Essay. Through contrasting them, we can better understand the relations between lexical cohesion and the coherence of a text, thereby providing Chinese ESL students an instructive direction for improving.

The following writing is provided by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and quoted from Betty Bamberg's "What Makes a Text Coherent?". NAEP asked American students to write about something they knew, "so that it could be recognized by someone who had read your description" (p.418). According to the provider, this writing is regarded as very coherent and the student's level is close to the level of writing of freshman composition.

When you cross the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco to Sausalito, on your right you see an ominous object in the middle of the bay. It's an island called Alcatraz. Water smashes up against the rocks and gulls fly over this godforsaken, deserted prison.

Analysis

- A. Lexical reiteration expressed in near-synonym:
ominous object/an island called Alcatraz/this
godforsaken, deserted prison
- B. Lexical cohesion expressed in directional
collocation:
on your right/in the middle
- C. Lexical cohesion expressed in collocational
opposition:
smashes up/fly over

The lexical items selected by the American student in this short passage are all cohesive, and a big percentage of them belongs to the category of lexical collocation; therefore, his writing, according to Halliday and Hasan, is not only coherent, but also mature.

The following is selected from the first paragraph of the Chinese ESL student's essay "My Way". The reason that I select the first paragraph to analyze is to aim specifically at providing responses to Kaplan's observation, after he read four Chinese ESL students' writings that he thought were related to the Eight-Legged Essay, that "The insistence of the student on the rather rigid form of the essay creates a certain amount of verbosity. Note for example the first paragraph in 'What I Think of America'; this same tendency is demonstrated in the first paragraph of each of the essays to a greater or lesser extent" (p.60). Based on the defined properties of each leg, Kaplan divided a Chinese ESL student's essay into three parts: "It might be said, in traditional terms, that the first three paragraphs constitute an introduction; the next four, the body; and the last, the conclusion" (p.60). Although the Eight-Legged Essay has undergone many liberalizations, Kaplan's division is more or less the same as that found in modern Chinese undergraduate essays. Four words representing four cardinal steps of Chinese composition are commonly taught in books that teach

composition: they are ch'i, cheng, chuan, hor, namely, the introduction, the follow-up, the transition and the conclusion. It is worth noting here that although they may look much like the English so-called "five paragraph units" as described by Rick Eden and Ruth Mitchell--"introductory and concluding sentences. With three intervening sentences connected by 'therefore' and 'in addition'" (p.416), they are substantially and structurally different. The crux of the problem still lies in the divergent conceptual difference unveiled by J. Vernon Jensen in Chapter I: The Eight-Legged Essay, reflecting culturally different thinking, requires language that exemplifies that specific culture. Take the structural features of the Eight-Legged Essay. For instance, a circular structure may begin "in material apparently peripheral and then relate or point the peripheral material to a central hub" (p.153). In other words, the Eight-Legged Essay does not start with the English writer's accustomed "topic sentence" where "a point of view is expressed which will subsequently be supported by the rest of the paper" (p.25); instead, as defined in the introduction in Chapter I, a circular structure requires a student to start with peripheral items, and by employing them to "revolve around a single, central core of idea" (p.153); a central theme is then clarified. Under the influence of the Eight-Legged Essay, the feature of employing peripheral items to start a paragraph actually

appears in every paragraph of the essay. The first paragraph becomes prominently different to English readers primarily due to the absence of a "topic sentence," and also because the English reader's expectation in a different rhetorical convention is violated when he reads the first paragraph. This causes him to reject the structure intuitively. That is, a Chinese ESL student's first paragraph does not always have a coherent topic through an English reader's eyes. Consider the first paragraph of "My Way":

Everyday, many people must choose whether or not to get married, to go to school, to get a job or to change schools. In general, we face dilemmas and struggles with decision making. The difficulties of decision making will force us to consider the decision more deeply, which will take our time, and our ideas. And then we must choose that which is suitable for us. For me, my decision making process may be different due to circumstance which happened to me.

Analysis:

- A. Lexical cohesion expressed in reiteration:
decision making (line 4, line 5, line 6, line 9)
- B. Lexical cohesion expressed in near-synonym:
to get married/to go to school/to get a job/to

change school/choose that which is suitable

If we are not aware that the student might start a paragraph under the influence of a conventional Eight-Legged Essay, judging by the high frequency of the lexical item "decision making" and its near synonyms "to get married," "to go to school," "to get a job," "to change school" and "choose that which is suitable," we might say that the lexical items the student uses are more appropriate for the topic of "Decision Making." The incongruity between the actual topic and the lexical items employed indicates one way in which the essay is incoherent. The symptom, if explained from a linear point of view, conforms exactly to Kaplan's observation that "There is a lot of seemingly unnecessary wandering around the topic. The papers are characterized by an inability to get to the point and stick with it; in the traditional English sense, they lack unity and coherence" (p.60). In comparison, the preceding writing by an American student is coherent because, as explained by Betty Bamberg, to "orientate the reader to the situation" (p.422), the writer understands how to establish the setting (San Francisco Bay) and the tone ("ominous object") in addition to identifying the topic.

The following passage is part of the essay "Praise of the Humble House":

The mountain should not necessarily be high; it is the fairy who is dwelling there who makes it famous. The river should not necessarily be deep, it is the dragon who lives there that makes it sacred. This is a very humble house; it is my virtue that makes it reputable.

Analysis:

- A. Lexical cohesion expressed by lexical reiteration:

should not necessarily be (line 2, line 3)

it is (line 2, line 4)

- B. Lexical reiteration expressed by near-synonym:

1. Mountain/river/a humble house

2. Fairy/dragon/my virtue

(metaphorically, the mountain and the river represent the house, and the fairy and the dragon represent virtue, as explained in Chapter One.)

3. makes it famous/makes it sacred/makes it reputable.

4. who is dwelling there/who lives there

- C. Lexical cohesion expressed by collocation
opposition: high/deep

In the above passage, it seems that every word employed fulfills the categories of lexical cohesion by

Halliday and Hasan; there is no single wasted word. Cohesive sense permeates the entire text completely, yet English readers are unable to understand it. Steven Witte and Lester Faigley (1981) indicate that "coherence defines those underlying semantic relations that allow a text to be understood and used" and "coherence conditions are governed by the writer's purpose, the audience's knowledge and expectations, and the information to be conveyed" (p.189-204). In other words, taking a reader's cognition into account is an important part of what makes a writer's text coherent. Notice that in the above passage, many lexical cohesive ties, such as mountain, river, and a humble house, and fairy, dragon and virtue are all metaphorically related. The lexical ties based on metaphorical association are only valid on one condition, that is, when the expectation of the reader and the writer is commonly included in the same thinking system and when they are both immersed in the same rhetorical resources. Then, the lexical cohesive ties are mutually identified and the essay is readily understood. However, when the embedded knowledge in the Eight-Legged Essay is not cross-culturally available because English readers find no relations between these ties, the intended cohesive strategy fails. Thus, there are limits on using lexical cohesion theory to prove a text coherent.

To supplement Halliday and Hasan's cohesive theory, we

may employ Francis Christensen's "levels of abstraction," a text process that is regarded as an interactive process among the text, the reader and the writer. The theoretical foundation for "levels of abstraction" is an intelligible humanistic reasoning: when a writer wants to make a statement, he should employ a structure that can be easily and mutually comprehended, such as from abstract to concrete, from whole to part, or from general to particular. He should convey what he thinks to be the most essential information in a hierarchical order under a succession of levels. Based on this reasoning, when a writer puts one word after another, the more he adds, the more precise the statement becomes. According to Francis Christensen, "All words are abstract, they are not themselves things but are internal representations of things and, moreover (except for some proper names), not of individual things, as we have seen, but of classes of things" (p.8). To clarify, he explains "Car, meaning "automobile," stands for all the millions of individual cars the world over, of all makes and of all series, models and types, with all color and equipment options, in all conditions and in all degrees of obsolescence, planned or unplanned. This car, although a concrete word, is general. Imagine someone saying, 'I just bought a new car, a Ford, a Galaxie, a fastback hardtop with a four-on-the-floor shift.' You would understand, of course, that he bought

just one vehicle--that is, that the four terms are not a parallel series to be added up, but that each one after the first is the name for a smaller class than is the one before it" (p.9). Using indentation and numbering to mark the levels, the object of the same sentence would look like the following:

1. a car
2. a Ford
3. a Galaxie
4. a fastback hardtop
5. a fastback hardtop with a four-on-the-floor shift

Level 1 is the most abstract among the five, and level 5 contains the most specific item. The way to determine the level of each added item is to study its relation to the previous level to see if it is subordinate to what has gone before. By anticipating the readers' minds and adding level after level according to the degree of concreteness of the item, a writer can see to it that an item is precisely presented.

The same theory can also be extended to apply in a group of sentences that we call a "paragraph," or a group of paragraphs that we call a "text." An awareness of levels of abstraction can encourage writers to observe

closely and to develop accurately a syntactic dexterity, if we can say that paragraphs have a grammar. The readers, on the other hand, in order to understand the writer's intentions, must recognize the structural progression, the relationship of one sentence to the next, and the continuity that results. Thus, in addition to cohesive ties, there are structures that recur and contribute to making a text coherent. That is why cohesion alone is not enough to interpret the coherence of the text. Francis Christensen's levels of abstraction can be broadly used to measure a text's coherence with a fair degree of objectivity. Based on "levels of abstraction," we may analyze the supporting materials (that is, materials added on to support and to clarify the statement) provided by writers and determine the degree of the density of the text. If a writer presents abundant supporting materials in an orderly hierarchical sequence, a reader will comprehend them immediately. The density, the sum of the abstraction levels divided by the number of sentences, of the text is regarded as high. On the other hand, if a writer does not develop ideas in any detail, the text may be said to be thin. Thus, we can see that degree of density has a direct influence on the interpretation of a text's coherence.

Based on "levels of abstraction," the sample Eight-Legged Essay can be analyzed as follows:

1. 1. The mountain should not necessarily be high;
2. 2. It is the fairy who is dwelling there who makes it famous.
3. 1. The river should not necessarily be deep;
4. 2. It is the dragon who lives there that makes it sacred.
5. 1. This is a very humble house;
6. 2. It is my virtue that makes it reputable.

Sentences: 6

Sum of levels of abstraction: 9

Density level: 1.5

Cohesive ties:

S2 and S1--pronoun (it/mountain)

S4 and S3--pronoun (it/river)

S6 and S5--pronoun (it/a humble house)

To make it clear, we need to connect the ties pointed out with the sentences they connect. That is, S2 has a tie going back to S1, S4, to S3, and S6 to S5, and the relationship of the cohesive ties demonstrate that sentences 1,3, and 5 introduce new topics. It is not then surprising that we get a pattern like the following:

1

2

1

2

1

2

Because level 2 is dependent upon and subordinate to level 1, we may say that a text thus constructed is cohesive. The problem is that the #2 level is in itself not complete, but must be further developed in subsequent levels, 3,4...and so forth, until a final specific result is achieved. Clearly, the pattern of relationships in the 1-2, 1-2, 1-2...demonstrates that the writer does not provide enough supporting materials for the readers to arrive at a specific understanding. Even though the paragraph may include cohesive ties, it is not appreciated by English readers.

This pattern also reveals the difference between good and poor paragraphs. If we take passage 1 and passage 2 on pages 54 and 55, we can see the differences.

passage 1

1. 1. Some people have to change their behavior around different acquaintances.
2. 2. One reason is that they want to make a good impression on others.
3. 3. You have to act different in front of a person who is giving you a job

interview because you want to make a
good impression

4. 2. You, most of the time, act differently to
 fit in a crowd.
5. 2. You will change your behavior to get people
 to like you.
6. 2. You change your behavior to agree with
 people in the crowd.

Sentences: 6

Sum of levels of abstraction: 12

Density level: 2

S3 and S2 are tied to S1; S3 gives reason to S2, it is
more specific than S2.

S4, S5, S6 are parallels, they are tied to S1.

The pattern of passage 1 is:

1

2

3

2

2

2

By the same method of analysis, the pattern in passage
2 resembles the following:

1. 1. It is a job that really changes our behavior.
2. 2. Among other changes, we change the way we
 dress;

3. 2. In many jobs college graduates want to look responsible and mature, projecting an image of competence.
4. 3. The college student who wore faded blue jeans is now in three-piece suits.
5. 4. He feels the need to be approved of and accepted by his boss and associates.
6. 5. While he talked of socialism in college, he now reaps the profits of capitalism.
7. 5. While in college demanded honesty in the words and actions of others, on the job he is willing to "kiss ass" to make friends or get a promotion.
8. 1. Indeed, working can change behavior.

The pattern of the passage 2 resembles the following:

1

2

2

3

4

4

1

By measurement of "levels of abstraction," the contrast between good and poor paragraphs is demonstrated. The levels in passage 2 are developed more thoroughly than those in passage 1, therefore making the latter more precise, more specific, and consequently, a more superior example of English writing. In the following chapter, I will demonstrate how these "levels of abstraction" are applied, or tied to Liu Hsieh's work.

CHAPTER IV

THE MODEL OF LIU HSIEH'S THE LITERARY MIND AND THE CARVING OF THE DRAGONS

Chinese ESL students' writing is the reflection of culturally influenced thinking; it is not easy to change with a quick fix. It is also unlikely that English readers will respond favorably to the writing of a different pattern. To give a prescription without paying attention to the root of the problem, that is, unfamiliarity with the divergence between English and Chinese rhetoric, will never work completely. If the root of the problem is not dealt with, the symptoms will appear to be too many to count. We will either suggest that the Chinese ESL students hone down the general topic, or eliminate the distracting peripheral items so as to achieve a specific focus. The prescription is only partially helpful, for we neglect the fact that concept, structure and topic are all brought into play and go hand in hand under difference thinking patterns. Only if we know how to reduce the distance between the two patterns can Chinese ESL students' essays be improved. Instead of groping for an answer, like finding simplicity in an ocean of complexities, we might consider relating the second language writing directly to the first language by using a transfer, a sort of bridge, to close the gap caused by unfamiliarity with the second language. That is to say,

we should set up a writing model, an appropriate writing format, to guide Chinese ESL students, one which has features that, if not exactly conforming to those of the target language, show more similarities than differences. Students could then achieve fuller control in learning English conventions. Fortunately, Chinese rhetorical tradition provides a model that these students can use.

Mohan and Lo (1985) hypothesize that literary works of Chinese ancient periods possess the characteristics of a direct pattern in writing which parallels that of English expository writing (p.518). In this chapter, we analyze four passages from Liu Hsieh's The Literary Mind and the Carving of the Dragons with Halliday and Hasan's lexical cohesion methodology. By analyzing some selections from this book, I will demonstrate that Liu Hsieh builds cohesive relations which meet the English reader's cognitive expectations and which present a suitable model for Chinese ESL students. I will also use Francis Christensen's levels of abstraction to demonstrate that Hsieh's hierarchical organization also meets the English reader's expectations.

A. Confucianism and conceptually linear structure

In the preceding chapter, we indicated that an analysis of surface lexical cohesion alone does not suffice to prove if a text is linear or circular, since both types

appear to make use of a great many cohesive devices. To demonstrate that Liu Hsieh's writing is similar to English expository writing, we need to see if its thinking foundation conforms more or less to that of English.

Though Buddhism for a certain period (of which the Sui and T'ang Dynasties, A.D. 589-907 was the golden age) influenced many aspects of Chinese culture, it did not influence Liu Hsieh's The Literary Mind and The Carving of Dragons: The book was completed between 465 A.D. and 552 A.D., before the "Meditation" school, the origin of Buddhism, was introduced into China by the Indian master Bodhidharma. The thinking that influenced Liu Hsieh's work is China's most prevailing philosophy, Confucianism. Confucianism is a humanistic philosophy, totally different from Buddhism. In Chapter III, "Evidence from the Sage," Liu Hsieh wrote:

To cultivate human nature and emotions is the mission of the great Sage. . . . "The literary form of the teaching of the Master (Confucius) is available to us"and the graceful expressions of the Master overflow in his Aphorisms (p.16).

Confucianism, by its nature, is bound to come into conflict with Buddhism because it advocates the respectability of the man and puts aside the spirits as irrelevant to the conduct of ordinary life. It is

essentially a pragmatic and secular philosophy, merging with Buddhism and shaping the circular presentation in the Eight-Legged Essay only in one respect; that is, they both advocate "harmony" and strike a balance there.

Specifically, Buddhism requires a spiritual harmony, and Confucianism requires a harmonious discipline in regulating a country, thus resulting in the soft, ambiguous language of the Eight-Legged Essay. But Liu Hsieh's writing is influenced only by Confucianism. It is not unworldly thinking; hence everything can resort to cause and effect. Confucianism allows every individual a right to expect one point as the reason for another, or one point as the result of consequence of another. Therefore, the structure developed in Liu Hsieh's writing features this step-by-step thinking pattern. It corresponds to the inductive and deductive reasoning of Aristotelian syllogistic thinking or Galilean hierarchical taxonomies. In the chapter, "The Classics as Literary Source," Liu Hsieh reflects the thinking of Confucianism:

If one's writing were based on the Classics, the style would be especially distinguished by one of the following characteristics: deep feeling untainted by artificiality, unmixed purity of form, empirical truth untarnished by falsehood, moral ideas uninvolved in perversity, simple style

free from verbosity and literary beauty
unmarred by excesses (p.25).

The characteristics Liu Hsieh advocates, e.g. "simple style free from verbosity and literary beauty unmarred by excesses", are exactly the standards achieved by a successful American expository writer.

B. Lexical Cohesion in Liu Hsieh's Writing:

We have already pointed out that the thinking basis of Liu Hsieh's The Literary Mind and the Carving of the Dragons is congruent with that of English expository writing. Given a similar thinking pattern we can predict that the reader's expectation will mesh well with the writer's intention. In addition, we can further determine if the writing is mature or not according to Western standard by judging how Liu Hsieh handles lexical reiteration and collocation.

Consider the following passages:

passage 1

The crucial requirement in discussion is to present at an opportune moment ideas which are crystal-clear and true. Positively, one's ability in the art of discussion should help him execute his duty with success; and negatively, it may enable him to avoid disgrace. Except when dealing with a deceitful enemy, its principles have always been loyalty and truthfulness. In it one opens his heart before the ruler and

conveys his ideas in winged words. These are the fundamentals of discussion (pp.146-147).

Analysis:

1. Lexical reiteration expressed in synonyms:
true/truthfulness, help/enable
2. Lexical collocation expressed in opposite words: positively/negatively
3. Lexical reiteration expressed in near-synonym:
true/loyalty, open his heart/convey his ideas

The passage contains numerous lexical cohesive ties.

"Positively" and "negatively" constitute a lexical opposition which may produce the "contrast" effect described in the preceding chapter. A great number of lexical synonyms and near synonyms are used to avoid the redundancy caused by mere repetition of the same words. According to the theory of lexical cohesion as explained in Chapter Three, then, the passage is very informative.

passage 2

During the warring States period Sophists rose like clouds. They indulged in the so-called "vertical and horizontal intrigues" and competed in what have been termed "long and short tactics." The "Chunn-Wan" charges forward with its clever phrases, and the "Fei-ch'ien" is the embodiment of tactical dexterity. The eloquence of one

man was more weighty than the precious nine tripods; a tongue three inches long was stronger than a million troops. Brilliant and scintillating, Su Chin carried the six seals, rich and opulent, Chang I was enfeoffed [entrusted with the premiership] with five cities (p.145).

Analysis:

1. Lexical reiteration expressed in synonyms; intrigues/tactics, clever phrases/tactical dexterity, so called/what has been termed, brilliant and scintillating/rich and opulent
2. Lexical collocation expressed in oppositions: vertical/horizontal, long/short
3. Lexical collocation expressed in ordered set: three/million, six/five

Because this passage reveals evidence of lexical reiteration and lexical collocation, the writing can be judged as mature.

Passage 3

Sacrificial Prayer and Oath of Agreement

The position of heaven and earth having been fixed, sacrifice is offered to all the deities. After the worship of the six subjects has been performed and sacrificial ceremonies to the hills and streams have been properly administered, there

will be seasonal rain and gentle breezes, giving life to corn and millet. For this reason the people pay these deities whom they worship good measure in return (p.75).

Analysis:

1. Lexical reiteration expressed in the same words: deity (line 2, line 8), worship (line 3, line 8)
2. Lexical reiteration expressed in lexical derivatives: sacrifice/sacrificial

With the help of the above lexical reiterations that are used to point out the thesis by recurrence of keywords, this passage displays a hierarchical order of gradation--in order, from the greatest conceptual position as heaven and earth, to the slightly lower positions of hills and streams, to an even lower position of rain and breeze, and down to the lowest corn and millet. The beauty of gradation lowers in degree as a stairway descends gradually; thus it not only makes it easier for the reader to understand, it also presents the whole sacrificial phenomenon in a progressive order which permeates the entire passage in perfect harmony.

Passage 4

Discussion and Answer

Action should be preceded by discussion and understanding must come from investigation of the doubtful; for it is thus that one is enabled to approach the task of dealing with affairs of state in a spirit of reverence and vigilance capable of rendering one's statecraft widely effective. Therefore, in substance, the meaning must be based on an adoption of the Classics as pivot; on a selection of facts from previous times, adapted to the changing needs of the present; on reasoning which does not try to complicate matters by adducing inconsequential ramifications, and must use rhetoric which does not elaborate any embellishment unnecessarily. When dealing with worship and sacrifice, the writer should know thoroughly the rites connected with it, and in military matters, he should be versed in the art of war. A knowledge of agriculture is a prerequisite for dealing with agricultural matters, and a thorough understanding of law is the sine qua non of any attempt to pass a legal judgment. When all these requirements have been met, the writer may bring forth ideas which are transparently clever, succinctly couched in language which is both accurate and proper.

His ability to use language should appear

in the lucidity and purity of his style, and he should not aim at artifice through excessive ornament. In dealing with events he should strive for clearness and thoroughness, and he should never seek originality by seeming profound but vague presentation. This is the general outline. If a writer ignorant of the art of government wields his brush and plays with literary composition, piling random phrase upon phrase, fabricating concocting to show his cleverness, not only is his empty rhetoric refuted in the face of facts, but even the little reason he may have is buried under the pile of his own aimless rhetoric. Long ago, the Marquis of Ch'in, who was marrying his daughter to the Prince of Chin, sent along seventy beautifully dressed maids-in-waiting, and the Prince of Chin preferred the maids to the princess. A man from Ch'u sold pearls in a cassia-tinted magnolia case to a man of Cheng, and the man of Cheng bought the case and returned the pearls. If one's language surpasses his ideas, permitting the unessential to outline the fundamental, it is simply a repetition of the cases of the Chin Princess and the Chu pearls (pp.193-194).

Analysis:

This passage may be said to express the essence of Liu Hsieh's point of view about expository writing. He explains what principles the "discussion and answer" type of writing should be based on. He gives a general introduction at the very beginning of the first paragraph, going from "therefore" in the seventh line to "unnecessarily" in the fourteenth line. In it, he demonstrates his insight by expanding a string of examples:

1. When dealing with worship...
2. In military matters...
3. A knowledge of agriculture...
4. A thorough understanding of law...

This arrangement of these examples fulfills a specific application of lexical collocation as explained by Sandra Stotsky:

Collocation words would have no systematic semantic relationship with each other; they would be related to each other only through their association with the topic of the textThese words seem to reflect the writer's fund of important concepts necessary for developing the topic (p.438).

The way in which Liu Hsieh expresses his rhetoric illustrates the above explanation.

In the second paragraph, Liu Hsieh injects a note of irony by means of two anecdotes. Because these two anecdotes are so interesting, he easily evokes the same motif of the passage again. This is also an application of lexical collocation, praised by Howard C. Brashers:

Theme and variation is a much more popular design principle. . . .It consists of striking a note or motif of subject or expression, and repeating the note or motif in a new form at selected points in the essay. Each repetition is a variation that both recalls the motif and adds an increment of new meaning. Simple repetition is mere redundancy and an aesthetic mistake, but repetition which reminds an audience of something familiar and expands that reminiscence into something new would be an aesthetic triumph, resonant and sought after. Allusions, quotations, modified proverbs, loaded words, living metaphors, any figure of speech that seems familiar as soon as it is expressed--all are textual use of theme and variation (p.150).

Employing some anecdotes around the thesis, Liu Hsieh's rhetorical devices perfectly exemplify an

accomplishment of collocation cohesion. This strategy not only imbues the surface language with a lively spirit but achieves an aesthetic climax. We need to mention here that the rhetorical devices in Liu Hsieh's writing are different from those in the Eight-Legged Essay; the Eight-Legged Essay tends to use metaphysical, feeling-touched or sight-appealing adjectives to embellish an aesthetic quality. The meaning is ambiguous. The aesthetic effect in Liu Hsieh's writing derives from an application of lexical collocations; it is full of variation, yet it is very precise. It is what an English reader expects to read in an exposition.

To consolidate the belief that Liu Hsieh's writing fulfills the English readers' expectations and can be offered to enrich their perception and understanding, we would like again to use Francis Christensen's "levels of abstraction" to measure the first paragraph of the fourth passage. The pattern in Liu Hsieh's writing can demonstrate for us whether his writing conforms to a hierarchical reasoning.

Paragraph Analysis

Discussion and Answer

1. 1 Action should be preceded by discussion
and

2. 1 Understanding must come from investigation of the doubtful;
- 3 2 for it is thus that one is enabled to approach the task of dealing with affairs of state in a spirit of reverence and vigilance capable of rendering his statecraft widely effective.
4. 2 Therefore, in substance, the meaning must be based on an adoption of the Classics as Pivot;
5. 3 When dealing with worship....
6. 3 In military matters....
7. 3 A knowledge of agriculture....
8. 3 A thorough understanding of law....
9. 4 When all these requirements have been met....

S1 and S2 are parallel.

S3 and S4 are tied to S1 and S2.

S5 through S8 are tied to S4.

S9 is tied to S5 through S8.

The above multi-levels are grouped according to Francis Christensen's interpretation of "methods of support" (pp.166-193). From the arrangement, we can see that the overall structure is hierarchical, with four levels: the first sentence and the second sentence present

a brief definition to clarify the meaning of the topic "Discussion and Answer." Sentence 3 and 4 present a further explanation. Sentence 5,6,7 and sentence 8 would all be regarded by Francis Christensen as "details"; they "are parts of a whole" (p.172). These details are sorted into four sentences on an equal footing, and are presented as parallels to the succeeding level of sentence 2. They all point to "a part of the whole" relationship, that is, sentences 3,4 designate the "whole" principle, sentences 5,6,7 and 8 are dealing individually with sub-principles derived from sentence 3 and 4. Sentence 9 is a conclusion, and it is certainly subordinate to the previous level. It is therefore downshifted to an even lower level. According to the above analysis, the nine sentences are presented deductively from one level to another: from the general to the specific, and from the pattern of 1,1,2,2,3,3,3,3,4, contrasted with the 1,2,1,2,1,2, pattern of the Eight-Legged Essay. It is easy to see that there is a hierarchical structure in this passage that is different from the structure in the Eight-Legged Essay. Therefore, Francis Christensen's "levels of abstraction" provides substantial support for the view that Liu Hsieh's writing is developed by a sequence of linear, hierarchical thinking, and thus that English readers are more likely to understand Liu Hsieh's writing than the Eight-Legged Essay.

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF EXPOSITORY WRITING WITH DIFFERENT STRUCTURES THROUGH THE EXAMINATION OF LEXICAL COHESION

The examination of lexical cohesive ties in writing has demonstrated for us in the preceding chapters how Liu Hsieh and other writers shape their writing and display their ideas either effectively or ineffectively. Using the same cohesive methodology, we are going to analyze two student expository essays with two different structures, influenced respectively by the Eight-Legged Essay and Liu Hsieh. We will attempt to find out how lexical cohesive ties can be used to distinguish the rhetorical difference, and also to see how Liu Hsieh can teach us. I wrote the following essay before I had sufficient English expository training as a student here in the United States; it is strongly influenced by the Eight-Legged Essay. Because it is written in the typical Chinese expository manner, my Chinese friends understood it and gave it a positive evaluation. American readers under a different expectation, however, thought it to be out of focus. To give it an objective evaluation and remedy, and also because structural organization is globally prescribed to determine coherence, I will analyze the entire essay.

What Do You Know About Writing?

The writer and the reader, in my view, are the two essential elements in writing. First, what makes a writer? A spontaneous expressive impulse makes a writer, an impulse to produce the product of his thinking. This impulse may be used to sentimentally search for sympathy from his reader to satisfy some specific feeling, or to intellectually practice his influential impact; but, positively, it should be a strong enough impulse to take up a pen.

I experienced many writing impulses in my rudimentary writing periods which, relatively, were when I was ten and twelve years old. Ten years old-- it should be an age of innocence; to the writing of my developing mind, it was an illuminating age. Often forced to stay at home because of ill-health, I usually felt very lonely and played only with my faithful dog. My parents were busy directing the workers building another house. I still remember bricks, cement and wood were everywhere. Crouching with my dog at one corner and staring at the dropping chips from the saw, I had enough time to think with my tender, young brain, and will never forget how I enjoyed that solitude. It seemed I could perceive some bizarre yet strangely fascinating world, and I could not resist the recurring impulse to write. My

diary's passages often surprised my parents; they praised me for my writing talent. At the age of twelve, I faced terrible physical torture and mental pressure due to the entrance examination for junior high school. During the fifth and sixth grades of elementary school, in preparation for that examination, I attended classes from 6 A.M. until 6 P.M. Then, after a very hurried and tasteless dinner, I remember how, with my heart poignantly beating, I continued the supplementary studies from seven to nine in my teacher's home. The distance between the school and my home seemed very long. My reticent father accompanied me home every day. Dimly lit lamps reflected two quiet, lonesome shadows. Contrasted with the painful suffering, the deep warmth between my father and I endowed me with various writing impulses. I therefore wrote many satisfying offerings.

When I grew older, I gained some insight into realizing that an inspiration conceived purely by the passion of the heart is not enough; it is only a writer-based writing. This is usually characterized by gaps in logic and lack of communication with the reader. But what makes a good "reader-based" writing? What attracts the reader to the writing? Originality is the key. I remember my parents' praising comments were such as: "The child is thinking differently."

"Her thinking is above her age." Teachers were impressed: "Your writing is creative!" Many years later, comments from classmates in my 621 creative writing class included, "The advantage of your style is that there is a preciousness about it that is foreign to English writing." Both the teacher and classmates in this course liked my writing because they thought I possessed an original Oriental sense.

According to my experience, both from my rudimentary writing periods and in my 621 class, I can conclude that there is one point which should not be neglected in writing; that point is originality. The technicalities of writing--grammar, punctuation and spelling play only a minor role. In my rudimentary writing periods I was very young and possessed only the basic writing ability. In my 621 class, I, as an ESL student, commanded comparatively less knowledge of English than my American classmates, yet my writing was well-liked.

Analysis:

First paragraph

1. Lexical reiteration expressed in the same words:
writing (appeared in topic)/writing (line 2, line 5); writer (line 1, line 3, line 4);

- impulse (line 4,5,10); reader (line 1, line 7)
2. Lexical cohesion expressed in near-synonym:
impulse/search for sympathy/practice his
influential impact; writing/take up a pen
 3. Lexical collocation expressed in opposition:
sentimentally/intellectually

Paragraph 2

1. Lexical reiteration expressed in the same word:
dog (line 8, line 11); examination (line 21, 23)
2. Lexical reiteration expressed in synonym:
recurring impulse (line 17)/various writing
impulses (line 34)
3. Lexical cohesion expressed in near-synonym:
rudimentary writing periods/ten and twelve
years old; ten years old/age of innocence/an
illuminating age; torture/pressure.
4. Lexical cohesion expressed in part/whole
collocation: house/bricks, cement and wood;
wood/dropping chips.
5. Lexical collocation expressed in opposition:
physical/mental; A.M./P.M.; painful
suffering/deep warmth

Paragraph 3

1. Lexical cohesion expressed in near-synonym:
writer-based writing/(writing)characterized by
gaps in logic and lack of communication with

the reader; originality/thinking differently;
creative/(writing) that is foreign to English

Paragraph 4

1. Lexical cohesion expressed in near-synonym:
technicalities of writing/grammar, punctuation
and spelling; possessed/commanded; basic
writing ability/less knowledge of English
2. Lexical collocation expressed in opposition:
one point should not be neglected/play only
the minor role; (writing) with less knowledge
writing was well-liked.

Cohesion reiteration expressed in the same words
across the boundary of paragraphs:

1. impulse (line 4,5,10 in paragraph 1 and line
17,34 in paragraph 2)
2. Originality (line 8 in paragraph 3 and line
4 in paragraph 4)

Cohesion expressed in near-synonyms across the
boundary of paragraph: impulse/an inspiration
conceived purely by the passion of the heart
(line 2-3 in paragraph 3)

Unlike that of the author of "My Way," the above
writing is proficient in language expression. The cohesive
ties analyzed in the writing have demonstrated for us that

there is a strong cohesive sense in the writing. American readers, however, are unable to distinguish a point of focus in the writing overall. This, again, indicates that cohesion theory is not sufficient to explain a text's coherence. However, if we look into the cohesive ties classified, and observe the frequency of their occurrences, we may get a clue as to how the writer's thinking sequences are processed. We can then determine what rhetorical features in the structure conflict with American readers' expectations, and how they can be fixed.

In the first sentence the writer defines the thesis by indicating that the writer and the reader are the two essential elements in writing. She then interprets the relationship between the two by finding a medium in between, that is "a spontaneous impulse." Notice the high frequency of occurrence of this lexical item, and also notice its apparent irrelevance to the topic. It is a peripheral item used as a medium to revolve around the central item-writing. By means of this medium, two requirements are identified: first, "a sentimental search for sympathy from the reader," (paragraph 1, line 6), and second, "an intellectual practice of his influential impact," (paragraph 1, line 8). In order to complete the first requirement, the author explains how a reader's encouragement can contribute to creating an impulse which is essential in writing. Here encouragement comes from her

loving parents, and the speechless dog. (By a Chinese Buddhist concept, that faithful dog may well read her mind through spiritual communication). She indicates at length how her parents and her dog support the creation of the impulse in periods of both happy "solitude," and "terrible torture," the latter due to the entrance examination. But the impulse produced so far is only a one-sided, writer-based creation. In other words, the positive identification from her own parents and the dog is not objective. So she continues creating the other half of the impulse by involving the second element of the writer-reader thesis in her essay. She says "inspiration conceived purely by the passion of the heart" (paragraph 3, line 2) is not enough; thus her second requirement, to interpret "an intellectual practice of his influential impact," is addressed. Only by receiving the positive comments from the professor and her classmates, in addition to those of her own family, can the objective of the impulse be achieved. Finally, in "tying the knot," a basic requirement of the Eight-Legged Essay, she concludes by squeezing the entire essay into one point, one lexical item--originality. By means of "originality" her task of interpreting "how much she knows about writing" is completed. The entire essay is structured circularly: Originality presented by "a writer" stirred by an intellectual impulse and stimulated by the emotional

encouragement from good "readers" makes good writing. The structural features of the Eight-Legged Essay that employ "peripheral" items like "reader" and "writer" clearly delineate the theme of "writing." The "peripheral" items like "sentimentally searched" impulse and "intellectually practiced" impulse are subdivided even further to revolve around their center of "a spontaneous expressive impulse." Setting apart the two requirement paragraphs, 1 and 3, provides added space (paragraph 2) in which to add a necessary feature of the circularly structured Eight-Legged Essay: added space in which to enrich the thesis with additional peripheral items. Therefore, by Eight-Legged Essay standards, the ESL student's essay is good writing. In it there is aesthetic atmosphere, an emotional appeal as well as the author's point of view.

But according to American linear structure, the circular structure lacks precision, a requirement of English expository writing. Linear structure requires "an English expository paragraph", according to Kaplan (1966), to "begin with a topic statement, and then by a series of subdivisions of that topic statement, each supported by example and illustrations, proceed to develop that central idea and relate that idea to all the other ideas in the whole essay, and to employ that idea in its proper relationship with the other ideas, to prove something, or perhaps to argue something" (pp.4-5). Based upon the above

statement, Dale W. Halloway (1983) visualizes the paragraphs as sentences structured like the following two: the first is "A-B. B-C. C-D. D-E. E-F" construction; the second is "A-B, A-C. A-D" construction. Both constructions reflect a linear structure, and both emphasize the repetition of the theme (represented by "A" of the two constructions) to develop a paragraph. In other words, linear-structure-based expository writing does not allow the writer to use peripheral items to expand the writing. On the contrary, expository writers should always use only the essential item to start the writing.

The redeeming point of linear structure is that writers can "guarantee for themselves that they have not omitted any logical steps in their explanations" (p.208). In the linear case, the writer should start her essay with a central item. In the topic, "What Do You Know About Writing?" the central item should be "writing." The expository essay conflicts with English conventional expectations by using a peripheral item "impulse," to start the writing. Although examined from the standpoint of lexical cohesion, the "impulse" itself is developed cohesively, because the employment of "impulse" is not regarded by American readers as an essential item, the goal of coherence between the author and the reader is not achieved. If we analyze the unessential item using Christensen's levels of abstraction, it will appear as a

new topic and be started at level one. If a text has too many unessential peripheral items, the pattern of the text will show many undeveloped or underdeveloped #1's or #2's. Thus, the pattern of the entire text would look very much like the typical pattern we get from the analysis of "Praising of My Humble House", a pattern that resembles 1,2,1,2,1,2.... Additionally, using the lexical item "impulse" has another side effect: its meaning is not clear; thus, waiting for the writer to clarify it subconsciously distracts the reader's attention.

The ESL student strives to explain or express herself using rhetoric influenced by another cultural convention, including a greatly amplified use of adjectives. However, this only tends to make the writing more confusing, i.e., "I have enough time to think with my tender, young brain"; "I could perceive some bizarre yet strangely fascinating world"; "my reticent father"; "My parents' praising comments"; "a spontaneous impressive impulse." Using adjectives before a noun becomes the essay's distinctive trait, and we have already learned that the effect of using adjectives to clarify something is questionable, for the meaning of an adjective, depending on each individual's interpretation, may be inconsistent. Thus the author's purpose, to evoke a feeling from the readers so as to build an aesthetic sense for the essay, is defeated. And while this approach may conform to the criterion of the Eight-

Legged Essay, it strongly violates the linear expectations of American readers. In an expository essay the writing should always resort to a clear reasoning and an aesthetic sense should be constructed by arranging the writing materials vividly and precisely. An aesthetic triumph in expository writing, interpreted in the preceding chapter, is to avoid monotonous repetition by making good inferences to the theme. Liu Hsieh displays a good example of this through the use of various anecdotes.

To sum up, then, the aesthetic sense evoked from human feeling may be suitable to display in literary writing, but may not be identified as legitimate in English expository writing. Conversely, an aesthetic sense in expository writing is displayed by any approach that can convey the message clearly and vigorously.

My second exposition, given below, complies with the teachings of Liu Hsieh, and American readers consider it good, concise expository writing. Analyzing it by English expository writing standards, we can determine what strengths it contains that are paralleled in Liu Hsieh's work.

Morality Versus Immorality

In a Chinese literary class, the critical judgment of a literary work would, as I have

experienced, eventually flow into the mainstream of moral evaluation. It does not matter how various critical schools have been developed or how preferable it would be to introduce a point of view other than moral approach to illuminate the particular literary product better. It seems practicing a moral approach in Chinese literature is always accepted and satisfying to the readers' minds. Teachers influenced by knowledge from the Western world would be helplessly led by their Chinese students into this preconceived ethical pattern. What does this moral standard involve? How has it become so persistently enduring? The answer is surprising. The main source comes from the precepts of Confucius, the preeminent Chinese sage, which were established about 2600 years ago. His primary concern is the five basic human relationships established between the emperor and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother and that between friends. Most students regard these precepts as completely interpreting all the relationships involving an individual in a society. Western moral values have undergone numerous modifications from time-to-time, which made me very skeptical as to whether the prevailing notion of Confucianism established a long time ago, would be still applicable to today's world.

As a high school student, I had the same question and came to my Chinese literature teacher for an answer. He was an erudite scholar and a faithful follower of Confucius. The conversation went more or less like the following:

"Teacher, is it proper for us to accept all the precepts that Confucius said in his feudal times?"

"Yes."

"But I feel very uneasy when he said that of all people, girls and servants are the most difficult to deal with. If you are familiar with them, they lose their humility; if you maintain a reserve towards them, they are discontented."

"Don't you think this is very true? Girls in general are more narrow-minded than boys."

"But narrow-minded is a universal weakness among human beings. It is not necessarily confined only to girls."

"Oh, yes, yes, I am just kidding you. Actually girls in his time did not mean women generally, they meant concubines."

"We don't have this class distinction in this democratic age. This is certainly an out-of-date idea and should be cancelled."

"Our Master Confucius never declared that he might always be right, he was very democratic too. If he had fault, his fault was like the eclipse of the sun and all men could see it. . . ."

The above exchange illustrates my point that a moralistic critic, it seems to me, always has trouble in "securing" his moral criterion. In order to convince his audience, he had to adopt an "eclectic" approach to make his standard fit his audience's requirement. That is to say, he has to select what appears to be best in his mind to make his audience first believe and then accept it. For example, where the relationship between the emperor and subject in ancient times no longer exists today, the critic might still make this criterion applicable if he explains that the relationship between emperor and subject then is similar to the relationship between the manager and the worker now (His audience may give him a reluctant compromise). But the question I raised in the conversation concerning the subordinate position of concubines in ancient times has totally disappeared now, and there is no similar case to be applied. This places the moralistic critic (the teacher in the conversation), in a

dilemma. His last resort is to "deify" his criterion by elevating it with heaven--sun, moon, religion, God. . .etc. The heaven yields an occult power which makes the moralistic critic's audience feel so small that they dare not resist it. Confucianism's being applicable today is based on the above view point.

The goal of Confucianism is to teach people how to live properly; it is a system of ethics based on man's nature as a social being, not as an individual. Literature, to Confucianism, is only a vehicle to deliver its teaching. Chinese students are imbued from a very young age to recite all these precepts. They are naturally trained when they grow up to judge all the literary works with sole insight--whether or not the virtuous are to be rewarded and the wicked to be punished. When in reality they find the opposite result occurring--the good punished, the bad rewarded--they should not be discouraged, for the mundane Confucianism is fortunately supplemented by Buddhism's salvation for the future--cyclic reincarnation. Furthermore, the strength of Confucianism becomes even more reinforced when Taoism joins in and expounds its theory that the world is governed by impermanence and only living

in harmony with nature can assure man's survival. These three different philosophies blend together and make the moralistic value miraculously far-reaching and long lasting.

Poetry based on this influence reflects a vast and sophisticated inspiration, for Chinese language has a non-inflection characteristic; it is very simple. The form of poetry is compact, also very simple; the two are compatible in form. But unlike the novelist, the poet does not need to illustrate his meaning with exact language expression; therefore, poetry's readers attempt to speculate and imagine by themselves. With a reader's involvement, Chinese poetry's creative process develops very fast. That may be the reason why Chinese poetry is always regarded as the mainstream of Chinese literature. Chinese novelists are not that lucky. Since Confucianism admires the dignity of reason and disapproves unregulated passion, Chinese novelists were kept from expressing their inner emotions. (They had to wait for their emotions to mature enough and be accepted by the standard of Confucianism). Under this restriction, they often became ordinary storytellers--their novels were usually patched up by a series of episode, with stereotyped characters

and monotonous content. Those who might be brave enough to investigate and describe Freud's sexual theory would be regarded by Confucianism as terribly salacious and rebellious. For example, it would be immoral for them to write about the touching of hands between male and female when exchanging gifts. Therefore, when they wrote their novels, they would find themselves in a serious moralistic anarchy--with a seeming obedience to Confucianism versus a sheltered sympathy for the lovers they created. The works they produced could never reach an ethical coherence, an irony typically found in Chinese novels. Under this contradictory attitude in their writing, Chinese novelists were very reticent. That may be the reason why China, with its thousands of years of history, has only a few (five or six) novels, compared with the thousands of novels in Western literature.

Confucianism's sense of reason is certainly necessary, but the natural emotion is also unavoidable. Before we learn how to live properly, we also need a motivation to live. To usurp a human's right to experience his passion is like a benevolent master's attitude toward his pet; in order to protect his pet from outside hazard he "collars" its neck with soft leather. As a human

being, one has the privilege to ask that his thirsty emotions be satisfied, his dehydrated passion be guided through ridicule, incongruities and hypocrisy; through tears and laughter-- Confucianism does not allow this. When the sense of reason "mirrors" all the virtues reflected in our life, it is the emotion that "kaleidoscopes" the illusion and chaos to liberate our hearts.

D.H. Lawrence in his article "Morality and the Novel" points out that a writer should not expect his readers to accept his moral standard, and he should not be inhibited in his creating process either. From his words, I arrive at one conclusion: Confucianism as a guideline is good to live by, but not good to write by.

The above writing is regarded by some American readers as a fundamentally expository essay. Its strengths, according to Liu Hsieh's writing, can be evaluated as the following: First of all, the presentation. It has a feature that is close to what English exposition requires, that is, the author understands how to indicate clearly the main point of the entire writing: "among many critical judgments in China, only a moral one is prevalent." An examination of the first paragraph will determine if lexical cohesive sense has been vigorously established in

introducing this central idea.

Analysis:

1. Lexical cohesion expressed in reiteration:
Chinese (line 1, line 13);
literary (line 1, line 2, line 8);
critical (line 1, line 5);
moral approach (line 7, line 9).
2. Lexical reiteration expressed in synonym:
literary (line 1,2,8)/literature (line 9);
judgment (line 2)/evaluation (line 4)/
standard (line 14).
3. Lexical cohesion expressed in near-synonym:
moral evaluation (line 4)/moral approach
(line 7, line 9)/ethical pattern (line 13)/
moral standard (line 14).

The lexical cohesion built by these lexical ties suggests there is a strong cohesive sense. Also, if the essay succeeds in communicating to English readers, we can demonstrate it is cohesive; by the positive comments on the essay from the American professor, we can infer that the sense of coherence in the essay is achieved.

Based on the thesis, a "moral evaluation," the author develops her writing by raising a question--what does this moral standard involve? The answer is Confucianism. After establishing this base for her discussion, she then further inquires into the core of the question--what is the

characteristic of this Confucianism-based moral evaluation? Why has it been so enduring? What is its influence? She then answers the questions. The entire procedure is handled in a progressive manner from the specific to the even more specific, and every subpoint is handled completely before she continues to the next one. According to Francis Christensen's levels of abstraction, we get a very hierarchical pattern: 1,2,3,4,5....This pattern demonstrates to us that the writer is able to provide the supporting materials precisely.

The second strength of the essay lies in the author's application of various rhetorical devices. Influenced by Liu Hsieh, she tries to clarify her point by inserting a conversation and by using a simile and a metaphor. The conversation is used to reinforce the thesis and to invite the readers' further exploration. The simile, "to usurp a human's right to experience his passion is like a benevolent master's attitude toward his pet" conveys a satirical disagreement towards a usurpation of a human's privilege by an authority, in that the status of a human being is relegated to that of an animal. The metaphor "when the sense of reason 'mirrors' all the virtues reflected, it is the emotion that 'kaleidoscopes' the illusion and chaos to liberate our heart," points out how, from a sense of reason a person can experience life through only one perspective and, from the passion unrestricted by

moral authority, have more vision through many perspectives. The author's critical judgment is therefore highlighted by various rhetorical approaches. That is the accomplishment of the aesthetic sense needed in expository writing. By understanding how to structure precisely and how to use a vivid language, as taught by Liu Hsieh, the author of this essay meets the American readers' expectations.

CONCLUSION

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO HELP CHINESE STUDENTS TO WRITE GOOD EXPOSITORY ESSAYS?

It is clear that writing is a cultural activity. Under the influence of cultural conventions, writers not only acquire a specific written code, i.e. writers learn how to write what is expected of them within their own culture, they also acquire the value attached to it. The value in turn influences the assessment of a text when their role as writers shifts into the role of readers. It is only natural that readers evaluate a text by certain criteria affected by a culture that they have long been exposed to. Within the same culture, the communication between readers and writers is compatible since the criteria between them are more or less similar; however, in a cross-cultural situation, they may encounter culturally different criteria, and a breakdown of communication may occur.

To solve the problem, this study has briefly explored how language, presentation, culture, and thinking are interrelated in writing. The exploration tells us that Chinese ESL students' inability to produce effective expository writing comes from an intrinsic difference in their rhetorical conventions evolving from the Eight-Legged Essay of the Quing Dynasty. Their rhetoric is strongly

influenced by a Buddhist thinking pattern that is almost contrary to the more humanistic thinking pattern that underlies English expectations. Because of a lack of formal training in English expository writing, when these students are given writing assignments they automatically employ what they are familiar with; that is, their own rhetoric. Unfortunately, the stylistic and organizational features of Chinese rhetoric, because of the thinking diversity, are very different from what is expected in the English context; therefore, the papers reflect the students' inability to write appropriately by English standards.

To assist them, teachers are suggested to do the following:

1. Emphasize to students the importance of audience.
2. Distinguish the concepts of writing in different fields.
3. Give instrumental strategies for how they might change their process.

For the first suggestion, teachers need to tell the students that it is crucial to become audience oriented, to be well informed about those for whom they write. Recognizing the existence of the audience and becoming familiar with its needs in a specific field, the students will be able to determine what kind of text they will

produce, what kind of rhetorical devices they should use, and what strategies can be applied to achieve the highest effect. Being aware of the existence of the audience also means that they can perceive if they and their readers share the same prior knowledge, so that they will not write in a manner that leaves their readers puzzled or wondering; instead, they will become more scrupulous in adding necessary clues to orient their readers' understanding.

Secondly, teachers are encouraged to explain clearly the requirements demanded by different kinds of academic writing (expository writing, creative writing, etc.) before they assign the task to the students. This is especially important for ESL students; for, as a rule, they are not familiar with an American audience's expectations. This paper has briefly explained the different thought patterns used in composing the Chinese Eight-Legged Essay and those used in English expository writing by tracing both concepts back to their respective cultural sources. English emphasizes Aristotelian syllogistic reasoning and Galilean hierarchical taxonomies while Chinese emphasizes a metaphysical Buddhism. Different thinking produces different evaluations; different evaluations direct different strategies to captivate the readers' interest, thus leading to different rhetorical features. The Eight-Legged Essay, through its circular structure and metaphorical message, is designed to bring out the reader's

perception beyond what is literally perceptible to mentally transport their thoughts from the peripheral subjects back to the central theme. A preference for numerous abstract, feeling-touched adjectives is evident in its elaborate style. English rhetoric and its specific linear structure, though different from that of the Eight-Legged Essay, is developed in the same manner. Teachers should explain to their students that the evolution of a specific rhetoric from a specific canon of culture is an expected and natural phenomenon, and that such a rhetoric should not be labeled good or bad. However, for effective language expression, language and culture, specific rhetorical features should be recognized. The purpose of English expository writing is to inform or to explain; linear structure is perfect for this purpose. It provides, as clearly as possible, a method for getting the message across. Teachers should indicate to their Chinese ESL students how its appropriateness to an essay should be considered when they employ a structure. They should also point out that theses, term papers, etc. that teachers assign are predominantly informative; that is to say, they are most likely to be classified as expository writing. If Chinese ESL students insert their own rhetoric into these kinds of essays, without considering the conflicting characteristics existing in the two styles, their writing will most likely not be evaluated highly.

After Chinese ESL students have comprehended these rhetorical differences and chosen to use the linear structure in their expository writing, rather than simply noting an empty comment of "incoherent" on the students' papers, teachers could provide them with the following helpful and practical strategies for improving their work with this new structure.

A. Refer students to numerous newspaper editorials, journals, and magazine articles and provide typical expository writing models. If students would like to explore the source of the problem by comparing line by line the linguistic differences, they are encouraged to perform analyses based upon lexical cohesion and levels of abstraction, as I have done in this paper. Based on English linear sequence, the linguistic design proposed by Halliday and Hasan provides a good approach for Chinese ESL students to check explicitly the relationship between a thought sequence and rhetorical development. Through examining cohesive ties, students can more readily discover if they have randomly used a peripheral lexical item and sacrificed the focus of the writing, one of the serious problems in Chinese-English expository writing. Francis Christensen's "levels of abstraction" is even more valuable in helping with revision. By an objective demonstration of these analyses, Chinese students can get a real understanding of how their written paragraphs must be connected.

B. To strongly culturally-bound Chinese ESL students, those who have difficulty in converting their stylistic features to Western linear expectations, teachers should refer them to their own classic, Liu Hsieh's The Literary Mind and the Carving of the Dragons. The work with its conceptually-linear structure can be used as a model of expository writing to contrast with the Eight-Legged Essay. Liu Hsieh's writing provides Chinese students many opportunities to experiment with the Chinese way of writing linearly. By emulating Liu Hsieh and perceiving the effective rhetorical expression in his presentation, students can more easily learn how to improve their expository writing. One aspect of Liu Hsieh's writing is extremely valuable: he knows how to verbalize an abstraction by orchestrating various collocational items and theme-related rhetorical designs in his writing. Teachers should point out to their students how Liu Hsieh has modeled for us how to use aesthetic strengths typically found in expository writing, namely, being precise, vigorous, but not monotonous. The strengths in Liu Hsieh's writing can best be absorbed and used to offset the limitation that students suffer from the influence of the Eight-Legged Essay.

C. Last and most important, teachers should indicate to students an important fact: it is impossible to achieve a concise and mature writing product in the first

draft. They should be encouraged to revise incessantly. Only by putting their patience and efforts to repeated revision will their expository writing improve significantly.

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